

Addressed to: Mrs John Johnston, Stromness

From: M^{rs} Ja^s Johnston, Quebec 14th August, Rec^d 1st Oct^r 1800

Quebec August 14th 1800

My Dear M^{rs} Johnston,

I have to thank you for yours of the 17th March which I have now before me; it gives me pleasure to learn that all friends in Stromness were then well.

I have likeways to acknowledge the receipt of your agreeable favour by the Hero, Cap^t Preston, which I duly received as also a parcel containing stockings from you and socks from M^{rs} Urqhart for your unckle, as also stockings for M^r Purss. It then being so late in the fall I had not an opportunity of writing to you, I wonder not at your reflecting upon me for not having wrot last year. But pray do not attribute it to the want of esteem for you, being conscious that I am such a poor hand at making an apology I will not attempt it but hope in future to make it up.

But O my dear friend what afflicting news have I to write you, news that while I write wrings my heart and to read will tear your tender feeling bosom. Alas we have lost our general friend your dear unckle; he is no more; in him I have to lament the loss of one of the best of husbands and my dear children a most tender and affectionate father. God was pleased to call him to himself on the 8th of last April after a very severe illness of three months the most of which time he was entirely confined to his bed, all which he bore with the greatest patience and resignation to the will of God, and I trust is now reaping the fruits of all his goodness; and may it be our great study my dear friend to prepare for that great event that, when we may be called to render an account before our great Juge, that we may be received with forgiveness into his favour.

My children, thank God, are both well and desire to be kindly remembered to you & M^r Johnston, not forgetting their cousins, your little ones. It gives me great pleasure to learn they are such promising children. God grant that you may live to have great comfort and happiness in them.

I had the pleasure of hearing from Mrs Halcro(*) by her son, Joshua, who appears to be a very fine boy. I fancy he will remain here in this country for he don't seem at all to like the sea. I am sorry to say that I find it impossible to procure for you your harpsichord. Upon inquiry I find that it was disposed of soon after you left the country.

As M^r Purss writes M^r Johnston, he will no doubt write you fully with regard to the affairs of your unhappy mother. Your Aunt Irvine and your Cusins James and Mary are all well and desire to be remembered to you.

Your friend M^{rs} Woolsey likeways desires to be kindly remembered to you. Pray present my most affectionate compliments to your aunt M^{rs} Macky and daughters, to M^{rs} Urqhart

and children and all the rest of our relations in Stromness; wishing you all manner of happiness and hoping to hear from you by the first opportunity, with best compliments to your husband,

I remain your sincere friend and affectionate aunt

Margaret Johnston

* Note – possibly in fact meaning M^{rs} Urquhart rather than M^{rs} Halcro !