

Christy Robertson first met her future husband James Watson when she attended the Northern Meeting Ball in 1799. Watson, who was then serving as a lieutenant in the newly formed Regiment of the Isles, was the son of a house carpenter in Dumfries. He had been in partnership in a drapery and haberdashery business there. Later in 1799, he became chamberlain to Lord Dundas on the estates of the Earldom of Orkney.

In December 1799, with a secure future, he proposed to Christy. They were engaged in April 1800 and married at Kiltarn on 6 June. Mrs Robertson's letters begin after the couple left for Orkney, on 13 June, to set up home at Crantit, near Kirkwall, where they arrived on 21 June.

Letter 1

NLS MS 19331 f55r

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 19 July 1800

My Dearest Christy

Your welcome letter I was made happy with yesterday at Novar¹ where your father & I were to dinner and returned after supper. It gave me the sincerest pleasure to learn by Mr MacGregor² that your journey turned out so agreeable and that you felt no bad effects from the fatigues of it afterwards. We feel most grateful to our several friends by the way who were so attentive to you. It was most gratifying to me to have such a pleasing account from Mr Mac of Crantit and everything in it and about it, in short of everything he met with surpassed his expectations. His report of every circumstance relating to you was the first thing that wore of that disagreeable feeling that kept by me since parting with you. I own I was not pleased with him for leaving you till Monday after he left you, as I thought he might have managed as well by waiting with you a few days more which I am convinced would have been adding a favour to what he did. But with all his gentleness he is at times very determined & he was afraid the wind might prove contrary & detain him too long. This was his excuse to me. Your letter of the 7th is altogether pleasing to me but the descriptions you give of your own happiness surpasses everything to me long may Mr Watson & you be spared together for mutual blessings to each other. He seems fully sensible of all your merit, and I trust my dear Christy will take care never to let him alter his opinion of you. The great attention & respect shown you by the society you now mix with I have been aware of since your marriage took place, & I own it is very pleasing at every period of life, but must be particularly so to so young a person as you. I trust that your own good sense will prevent your being elevated too much from the admiration

f55v

and applause you will universally meet with. To be humble & thankful for the blessings & comforts Heaven has bestowed upon you will heighten your enjoyment in them & fix the prepossession now in your favour.

¹ Novar was the home of Sir Hector Munro (1726–1805), 8th laird of Novar. Sir Hector had been Commander-in-Chief of India (1764–65). See notes on his family.

² Alexander MacGregor, a close family friend who was Rector of Inverness Academy from 1803 until his early death in April 1805. A frequent visitor at Kiltarn.

I think you are particularly lucky in so early forming a friendship with so genteel and worthy a family as Mr Laing's.³ I approve much of you being only in habits of intimacy with that good family, til you are better acquainted with the character & dispositions of the people in general. Mr MacGregor said much to me of Mr & Mrs Bakey.⁴ I have seen Mrs B's father who was a pretty gentleman in his day. Mr Mac was much pleased with his young landlady a Mrs MacBeath where he was a night after he was driven back. I told him his being beat back was but what he deserved for leaving you with so boisterous a day. He left us Tuesday last. Mr Young⁵ came here the Sunday after who does not fail in kind enquiry about Mr W & you. We were at Alness the week after you left us - where we remained two nights. Collector Tulloch & his son Harry from Jamaica came there the second night, then the next day and night with us here. Harry Tulloch is a fine lad much of our Gilbert's size and figure.⁶

Pitlundy & his wife⁷ were with us for two days and a night. They are an agreeable couple who we were happy made out their long promised visit at last.

Who has passed a few days with us but Hugh Sutherland Thuitum breakfasted with us one day.⁸ He looked very ill & seem'd distressed while here. We expect Mrs Flowerburn⁹ this evening. The gig is sent for her.

Sir Hector desired his kind compliments to you when I would write you. I suppose you had a letter from Mrs Ferguson¹⁰ by this time all the ladies were happy to hear about you. Indeed you are obliged to high & low who are unremitting in inquiries about you. I must conclude in a hurry the post is just going. I ever am

Your affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

³ Robert Laing (1722–1803) and his wife Barbara Blaw (1742–1817). They had eighteen children, one of whom was Samuel Laing (1780–1868) whose autobiography *Samuel Laing of Papdale (1780–1868)* gives further information on Christy and her husband. Laing disapproved of what he regarded as Christy's match-making among the Watsons' circle of friends and regard her as a 'dangerous busy woman'. In particular, he believed she encouraged his sister, May, to enter into an unhappy marriage with an army captain, Alexander Mackenzie Shaw of Muirton in Inverness. Laing was an old school friend of Christy's second husband, Thomas Stewart Traill, and also disapproved of this match describing Christy as 'a vulgar woman; [who] will always keep him down in society'. He thought Traill had been inveigled into his marriage with Christy 'in the prime of youth', describing her as 'a woman with five children older considerably than himself'. This was untrue. Traill was a year older than her, delighted in Christy lively mind and agreeable manner in society, and their marriage was happy. See Ray P Fereday (ed), *The Autobiography of Samuel Laing of Papdale* (Kirkwall, 2000), 43 & 180.

⁴ Later given as Baikie. Possibly Robert Baikie (d.1817) of Tankerness and his wife.

⁵ John Young (d.1815), printer and bookseller in Inverness who published the *Inverness Journal* from 1807.

⁶ Collector Tulloch and his sone Harry are yet to be identified.

⁷ George Mackenzie of Pitlundy, sheriff substitute of Ross & Cromarty. Their son Alexander died in Demerara in 1802.

⁸ Not clear if 'Hugh Sutherland Thuitum' is one person or two. To be identified.

⁹ Elizabeth Mackenzie married Robert Kilgour in 1785 and was later widowed. She inherited Flowerburn from her father and was known as Mrs Mackenzie of Flowerburn.

¹⁰ Sir Hector Munro's illegitimate daughter Jane (d.1803) who married Ronald Crawford Ferguson of Raith (1773–1841), and is referred to as Mrs Ferguson.

f56

Adress:

Mrs Watson

Crantit



Letter 2

NLS MS 19331 f57r

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 24
Oct 1800

My Dear Christy

Your sister Annie wrote you the beginning of this month acquainting you of the death of my dearest mother.¹¹ Altho' this was an event I had reason to look for, yet nature is strong, and I have felt a depression of spirits since. At the same time that I have reason to hope that she has made a happy change. But when I recollect how agreeable a person she once was beloved & esteemed by all her acquaintances & friends. What a tender affectionate parent active and useful in her day. In short she was a blessing to her own family and, I think, what changes extreme old age will bring about at the same time that there was every reason as to her to be surprized how much she retained to the last of her natural goodness & amiableness of disposition, but yet the great change upon her is a striking proof to you & to me & all her family what we will be if we come any of us to her days if we are not cut off at an earlier period. May her offspring imitate her virtues so that their latter end may be as peaceful possessing the full assurance of a happy immortality. She had her large share of the trials of life, being the mother of six sons & four daughters and survived all but Mrs McCulloch¹² and me and lost four of her sons men in their prime of life, which were all worthy characters as the heart of a parent could wish.¹³ Many incidents occur to me since her death which lay dormant till now, and help to render her memory more dear to me. It hurt me much that your father could not pay the last duty to her remains. She was burried the Friday of our sacrament the interference was really trying to me however we were carried thro' this scene as well as could be expected. Annie would give you a full account of our guests and how every thing went on. Sir Hector ordered as a fat deer which was as large as a small cow and as fat as any beef. I never saw anything of the kind so fat in this country. In Sutherland I have

f57v

We missed your assistance at the sacrament. I assume & were convinced you would be thinking of us & wishing you could give us a helping hand. Indeed all your friends & acquaintances found a blank by your absence. We were happy to have Miss Jeany Hall¹⁴ here at this time. Her health & spirits are much better than when here last. Her brother is in a rising line he is of the secret expedition an Under Secretary to some General Officer besides being a full captain. Col^l Ferguson mess'd with him on the continent and talked very favourably of him. Miss Ross¹⁵ wrote me on the Novar Family's arrival at Raith. They were all quite well & the little darling made as little account of the journey as any of them.

When I first wrote about the servants I thought it was not in the power of malice to prevent their going to you they were so keen about it themselves. Baby as well as the Deay were very keen to go

¹¹ Ann Gordon, daughter of George Gordon (tacksman of Culmailie, Golspie) and Isobel Sutherland.

¹² Mrs Robertson's sister Elizabeth Forbes (d.1814) who married Rev George McCulloch, minister of Loth.

¹³ Only three sons and two daughters can be identified.

¹⁴ Not identified.

¹⁵ Miss Ross was often part of the Novar household and looked after the children of Jane Munro and Colonel Ferguson, travelling with them to Raith and Edinburgh.

but their friends stopt them the Deay's mother is in a dying way & did not like to let her go at a distance till she would see the winter pass at least. Baby has a brother a clerk in the factory at Invergordon who wrote her a threatening letter about going such a distance particularly in the winter time without consulting him on this. She came to me in great distress, and said if we insisted she would undergo her brother's displeasure rather than disappoint you. We told her that neither you nor us would wish her to go under such restraints therefore we have resolved to bring her and Kate Ross to Aberdeen. It vexes me much after raising your hopes of getting these girls that you are disappointed. You will endeavour to pass the winter as best you can & we shall see if we can be more successful again another term that is to say if you wish it. David McRae was here lately and told me the box with the sweet meats are at last send you. The few apples I am afraid are quite spoiled that were put in the box to fill up vacancies.

Mackrae goes immediately to Glasgow to set up there in business

Doctor Munro¹⁶ made but a short stay in this Country. He is a sensible agreeable man much improved in his appearance since he was formerly in this Country. Miss Jessie Smith travelled south with him. If the Doctor does not keep her to himself she winters with her sister Mrs Ross at Edin^r. Major Ross goes to Ireland to join a Reg^t there where he is appointed a Major full pay, by Lord Cornwallis who is his friend and has taken him by the hand. This good family are in great glee it may be supposed in having matters thus to their mind.¹⁷

f58r

I began to be most anxious about you before your last letter arrived. I was pretty sure a silence of a month would not have taken place if some thing was not the matter with you, and it seems my fears were too well grounded. I find my dear you have been very ill from your saying you were so exhausted & weak and looked so ill when you got up. I guess you have had a miscarriage of two or three months. This is a bad beginning and you must take better care in future particularly about the same period that you was taken ill. It is needless for me to say how much my inclination would lead me to be about you on that occasion but this account you give of Mr Watson's tender care of you softens all my care about you, And you would no doubt feel it more soothing medicine than any Doctor Groat could give you.¹⁸ At the same time it was highly proper to call him. I am happy that you have a prospect of being retired this winter. God knows it is the fittest plan for young wives tho' the contrary is what they often have to go thro'. Tho' your balls & feasts at Kirkwall were very agreeable at the time I had my fears your health might be hurt by a continuation of them. It must be a great acquisition to you thro' the winter to have such an accomplished young man as your brother in law with you. You can have a nice concert of yourselves to pass your winter evenings agreeably. Mrs McKenzie Flowerburn was a fourth night with us and is to leave us Monday where we were most anxious to hear from you she always said I might be very sure she is now beginning to spit and faith she will not be much in the writing humour when that is the case — and indeed you should make every allowance for her it is not herself would be forgetful if she did not begin to be troubled with sickness better than health. Often did she mention you at this time & bring many anecdotes to my mind of your infancy & childish prattles which she says she will never forget frequently has she charged me to give you her blessing. She was highly pleased with Mr

¹⁶ Dr William Munro (1751/52–1832) was a slave-holder who owned plantation Novar in Demerara and a number of plantations in Berbice.

¹⁷ Not identified.

¹⁸ Dr Robert Groat (d.1828).

MacGregor for bringing Mr Watson to call on her said he many a time done her a kind turn but that this was one she was most grateful for. Poor woman she had the comfort of a visit from Mr & Mrs Kilgour¹⁹ & her three grandsons the beginning of Sep^r they were four days with her but laid on a resolution that would go to no other place so by that means I had not the pleasure of seeing them which was a disappointment to me. She was in fine spirits all the time she had been here.

Our good friend Mr MacGregor came to bid us adieu Friday eight days and left us early Monday morning as usual. You have seldom seen him in lower spirits or indeed more overpowered than at parting with us as you may suppose. The thought of our absence at the holidays bears hard on him being new to him & disagreeable too. I mean to leave this letter at some stage by the way & add a postscript to it as I have not got it away so soon as I wished. With the love & comp^{ts} of all here to Mr Watson & you

I am your truly affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

f58v

We had enough of people taking leave for some days or we came off well meant but very troublesome. The evening or we came away Joseph & his wife²⁰ and the House bye ladies²¹ & Miss Esther²² was with us they left us after supper but Miss E & Miss Annie who waited till they saw us off next morning. Direct to me at the Revd Mr Robertson, Marshall Street

McKenzie & Elliott

Milleners & fancy dress ???

???????

London

¹⁹ Her son Roderick Kilgour Mackenzie, who succeeded her in the ownership of Flowerburn.

²⁰ Not identified.

²¹ 'The House bye ladies' were Rev Harry Robertson's cousins Ann, Flora (Flory) and Helen (Nelly) Robertson, who lived close to the Kiltearn manse.

²² Not identified.

In 1800 Harry Robertson was given the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by King's College, Aberdeen and in November he went to receive it, accompanied by Mrs Robertson, their daughter Annie, their son Hugh and two servants Baby and Kate Munro. Their daughter had been sent to 'a genteel boarding school' in Edinburgh earlier in the year.

Letter 3

NLS MS 19331 f59r

Mrs Anne Robertson, from Marshall Street, Aberdeen, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 7 Nov 1800.

My Dear Christy

I would have written you sooner since my arrivl^{phere} but I wished to have something to say about our situation here. We left Kiltarn as we intended on Tuesday 28th Oct^r. We breakfasted before we set out and were at Invergordon Ferry about nine o'clock. It was lucky we had a calm hour to cross both ferries & yet it was four o'clock before we got to Fort George. We did not house there but took a walk about the ramparts while the horses were eating some corn. We saw some of the Irish prisoners at their walk which was out principal motive for entering the Fort. We came on to Nairn that night and it was late before we got there and left it by the dawn next morning. We did not see any of our acquaintances in that town. Captⁿ Robertson & his two sons²³ joined company with us at Nairn. I mean the Captⁿ from Inverness & his two oldest sons William & John. They set off before us next morning in a post chaise but were only a night before us here. They attend the Collage & have taken our lads place last year by being boarded at Mr Boyl's. From Nairn we breakfasted at Forres, and sent for your cousin Nanie Rainy²⁴ who's as much improves as you could expect from her time there. I daresay she will turn out the most shown of that family. We call'd upon Miss Charles the lady she is boarded with. I think Annie very well appointed as she seems a person of great discretion & softness of manners. We had leisure to take a walk about Forres & I think it & the country surrounding it is by farther finest we saw on our journey. There are three fine seats in sight of this town Dalvey now the property of a Captⁿ Mcleod, Moy which belongs to Col^l Grant and Burjearge which lately belonged to man of the name of Urquhart who has by misconduct reduced himself to beggary & disgrace. From this place we got at night to Fochabers near Gordon castle, breakfasted next morning at Keith and dined at Huntley, at a very discreet woman house a Miss Mellish's. The Marquis²⁵ lodges with her at present while he is getting Huntley Lodge repaired. On our way to Huntley he rode past us at such a rate we guessed who it was, you would hear of his riding from Aberdeen to Inverness to dinner the time of the hunt & danded & drunk in evening as if he had been at home. It is a pity he does not take better care of himself for he is so humane & good hearted he is adored in all the country round. From Huntley we came to a country inn where we set up all night, called Gateside next morning breakfasted at Inverury a pretty situation it is, & from thence landed here at five in the evening. The towns as I came along are almost renewed & three or four times as large as when I was at school. As for Fochabers the Duke of Gordon removed it out of its place as the old town interfered with his policy. And much are the inhabitants obliged to him for this, as Fochabers is now a pretty regular little town with a square. And the Duke has built a Kirk which surpasses any thing of the kind in the north. I am told it is a

²³ Not identified.

²⁴ Ann Rainy (1787–1872) from Creich. Later married the merchant Robert Brown of Glasgow.

²⁵ George Gordon, 9th Marquess of Huntly (1761–1853).

miniature of St Andrews Kirk in Edinburgh. After crossing the Spey which runs by Fochabers and leaving Dukes Policy

f59v

we had very bad roads almost the whole way till we reached Inverury. There the turnpike roads begin, which we found luxury after what we felt before the turnpike continue to this town & is as plain as a fine gravel walk. The fine moonlight nights happened to be warmer & more agreeable than the day we therefore travelled a stage every night with moonshine, or we could not make out our journey so soon, for in the bad roads we could only step slowly. Ww had almost constantly monstrous high mountains to ascend & descend & so rocky & stony in some parts so that we were miserably jolted. But what I most feared was that the gig would be shattered by them but luckily it brought us here without a flaw. Annie drove us all the way most dextrously. She sat forward on a box with a cushion on it we contrived for this journey. We landed at the New Inn left our horses there. Your Father called on Mr Watt who was the person he employed to provide our lodgings. He then came for us to the Inn and after taking view four winter residence we repaired to Mr Watts who had made a point of our drinking tea & supping with him which we did. Nor would they part with us till we promised to dine with them next day. They are a very kind decent family far from vulgar, and in a very thriving way. We heard there was a company of comedians in town from the Edinburgh stage and that they were to be off in a few days. This you may believe made Annie & me anxious to see them. We formed a party with Mrs & Miss Watts & went to the theatre. The play was A Cure for the Heart Ache. The farce the Jew & the Doctor, very good amusing pieces both.

Sunday I was so overcome with fatigue I kept my bed till near dinner time for I must observe my old troublesome ails came upon me days or I left home & continued the whole way. However I was wonderfully brought thro' & since I came here & have taken rest I am pretty well again. Annie went Sunday with the Miss Boyles to the English Chapel in the evening to the Roman Catholick & Methodist Chapel, which shows she wishes to see everything she can. Monday your Father engaged us to dine at Professor Stewarts. He is a sensible agreeable man & his wife a plain good woman. But in the evening the Grand tragedy of Pizarro was to be acted and at seven Annie & I slept away to the play and was at home long before him. We there met another clergyman his wife & young student a Mr Henderson this was the whole party. But to return to Pizarro I will give you some account of the scenery for your amusement, as you have read the play. The 1st scene was a view of Pizarro's tent thro' which was seen the distant Spanish camp 2d a romantick view of country of Peru. 3d a grand representation of the temple of the Sun 4th a view analogous to the Peruvian country 5th a dungeon in the rock in which Alonzo is allotted to die by sun rise, but is preserved by the brave Rolla who gains admittance under the disguise of a monk & thereby restores him to liberty 6th a wild retreat, with a torrent falling down a precipice near which a bridge is formed by a felled tree. By which Rolla attempts to escape with the child of Cora, but at the moment he ascends the bridge is shot by a party of Spaniards. Concludes with a solemn procession bearing the dead body of Rolla on a bier. The rich Spanish dresses with a seeming profusion of jewels was beautiful and the wild romantick dress of the Indian General bold

NLS MS 19331 f60r

and his followers was very curious. In short, the wholes very pleasing to us. I therefore will only observe as to the actors, that the men & women had their parts well. A Mr Beaumont acted Rolla, & a Mr Harwood Alonzo, & kept up their parts with great spirit. Mr Benerman a handsome genteel

looking man acted Pizaro, but he was too stiff and inanimate for such a character. I believe this is all we shall see of the plays, the tickets for the boxes cost 3sh each.

I will now mention all who have called upon us. In the first place Major West and his Lady. You might observe his marriage in papers, she is a Miss Mercer, but what you will wonder at she is neither young nor handsome. Some says she has money at any rate she is the niece of the celebrated Sylvester Douglas who has great court interest.²⁶ Our lodging is in Marshall Street and is a chearful well air'd place & the house very comfortable. Major Watt is within two doors of us opposite & Mr Watt the next door to us. Doctor McPherson called on us, Professor & Mrs Stewart, Mrs Esther Sutherland, Mrs Hay, a Mr Blake who was once schoolmaster at Drion? a worthy like man he is a Church of England minister here, a Mr & Mrs Simpson, our cloth merchant and Captⁿ Roy Major West's aide camp, & a Captⁿ Tovey & his Lady who live above us, & Mr Watt & Mr Boyles Family's. By this time I believe you will say I have said enough. I find the people very kind & civil but except what I have mentioned I have resisted all invitations for some time till I find myself quite well & more at home which I have hardly done yet. I should have mentioned that we brought a cart along with us which allways set of with & came up to us at night it brought all our baggage and the boys and the two maids Baby and Kate who were drove in the cart alternately as they chose. You would be surprised how much the boys walked and how little account they made of it. Thank God they all reached safe & well, and because I know you will be glad to hear it we came cheaper than any body would suppose. Beef and fish are very cheap here, more so than at Kiltearn.

Your father, Annie & Hugh join me in love and complements to Mr Watson and you. By your last letter which followed us here I am happy to find you are well again take care of yourself. I am pleased you're at last like to receive the bus with the sweet meats. I wish they may be right when they come.

I now conclude, My dear Christy
Your ever affectionate mother
Anne Robertson

We heard from Betsy yesterday she is well & returned to Edin^r Mr Parker very kindly accompanied her there. Charley Parker²⁷ has recovered the small pox. Betsy says she heard from you lately and was to write, that she replied to your first letter tho you have not received it.

IMG_2710.jpg
Address:
Mrs Watson Crantit
By Kirkwall

²⁶ Major William West married Miss Margaret Mercer, 10 October 1800, St Machar, Aberdeen.

²⁷ The Parkers' son Charles Stewart Parker (1800–68).

After receiving his honorary degree, Revd Harry Robertson returned to Kiltarn. Their son Hugh Munro Robertson had accompanied them to Aberdeen to attend College. Mrs Robertson and her daughter Ann spent the winter in Aberdeen.

Letter 4

NLS MS 19331 f61r

Mrs Anne Robertson, from Aberdeen, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 22 Feb 1801.

Mr Dear Christy,

It is now time I should own your letter by Mr & Mrs Richan.²⁸ I often meant to write you since but as Annie undertakes to write you a journal of what is going on with us here I refer to her, for I am obliged to give an account of the transactions of every day to your Father since he has left us. Not that this can afford much variety but it serves to satisfy a little natural curiosity in one so interested in us. We had it not in our power to shew Mr & Mrs Richan much attention their stay was short. But I hope they might see we were disposed to do so from the little time we had of them. They are surely and agreeable couple & Miss Richan I think a fine young creature. They spoke in the most friendly manner of Mr Watson & you. She regrets how little she knew of you. But she seems a delicate worn out person that I suppose cannot come often from home.

There is a bad cold or influenza has raged in this place since the New Year. But it is a mercy it has not proved mortal. Your sisters have had it but slightly. I have had it worst myself for five weeks back. I have been less or more indisposed. What hurt me most was a severe cough which brought my old complaint to a degree that has weakened me much & that I have not yet got the better of. But I am on the mending hand now & I know I recruit when health returns very fast.

It is more than time my dear Christy that I should now reply to the several questions in your last letter to me. You tell me you expect to be here sometime in June next, and that you are most anxious to have one with you at that time. You are not more so than I am I assure you. But then it does not all depend upon me your Father's consent must be. I did not write him on this subject as I at first meant in case obstacles might occur to him that I could not foresee. As I expect him the middle of next month, I will lose no time in letting you know whether he agrees or not. If God spares me health I have every inclination to be with you since, if it is decreed that ever I visit you, this would be the time most suitable for you and most satisfactory to me. We have not to leave this place till Whitsunday at least your Father meant this at our parting, and if my plan would take [place?] I am for Annie & myself to be on the look out for a yacht or Kings Cutter to bring us to you from this place for it would be very

f61v

troublesome for me to go home first. I have been on the look out about baby things, there is different people makes them here. The cheapest way I can think of is to buy the materials and cause make them the neatest & most fashionable manner. There is no lace used on the shirts as the frocks are trimmed with lace. I dare say it would take two pounds besides the making to get two frocks & two caps handsomely made but to have a few more it would require about five pounds. I suppose

²⁸ Not identified.

you would like a basket covered with dimmity & fringe round it. As to the jackets or under caps & shirts we could make that ourselves the making each cap is half a crown, each frock 3s 8d but they are very neat would you choose any flannel things such as petticoats & blankets to be provided here. As for your own things all you will require besides what you have is two or three skirts or safe guards, which nay married lady will give you a pattern for. Your bed gowns will do that you have already. Bed shirts you would need four at least. If Mr Watson has as many old shirts that you would not care to break down, by shortening them & slitting them down before they could pass a time very well. I have four good ones at hime, which may be of use yet.

My dear if I had things at my own disposal I would not trouble you about them but get everything I thought proper, & send the to you & what I would like better bring them along with me. I will be happy to have your answer how soon this arrives. When you wrote me back do not signify that I mentioned a plan f going to you, but that I could not determine anything till your Fathers return & when that took place you would expect to hear of our motions.

I had got this length when your letter to Betsy arrived. We are all most happy to learn that yourself & Mr Watson is well. What a blessing that you keep such tolerable health in your present situation. I beg that for all that you may be on your guard not to presume on this.

I have written Gilbert & I meant to write him with greater freedom. I told tho' I was sure Mr Watson would not trouble them about it that it would be but fair in them to pay it up as soon as possible your little money that it was so small a matter it was not worth their waiting the stated time of paying the last installment which will not fall due till five years after your uncles death.

Annie would acquaint you in her last of the shock we got here by the account of Provost Inglis²⁹ at Inverness's death. I really cannot banish it from my mind and have been the worse since I heard it. He was my early agreeable friend & always carried to me & mine as such. But what is man at his best state but altogether vanity. Had he died a natural death it would be nothing . But the melancholy

f62r

manner of it makes it a shocking catastrophe. I had this day a letter from Mr Mac on the subject, wherein he says it is now evident that he was deranged for some little time that the way it began with him was with the thinking his affairs were deranged & that he was ruined, but from every investigation that have made since his death it is evident his affairs were prosperous as ever. I desired him to acquaint me about Mrs Inglis.³⁰ He says she was for 3 or 4 days in a state of stupefaction and it was feared her brain was affected. I had yesterday a long conversation with Parson Rose³¹ who sees her every day and he says she is submissive and resigned beyond all expectation. The will has transpired, according to the account I have heard he leaves everything to his brother George Inglis³² burdened with £150 pr ann. to Mrs Inglis, who has also Kings Mills with the Town House, £700 to each of his sisters & £200 to each of his nieces. He adds this day being Sunday all his relations for the first time appeared in mourning in which they were joined by every respectable person in town. After every search that could be made fo this body it is not yet found.

²⁹ William Inglis (1747–1801).

³⁰ Isabella Schivas (d.1836).

³¹ Not identified.

³² George Inglis (1764–1846).

I am glad you have had such an agreeable letter from Susan McC.³³ I hope my dear you will soon answer it. I keep up an occasional correspondence with some one of that afflicted family. Your father very properly visited his friends at Loth & Creich he left them well. The former better than he could have expected. The house of Kilmote is to be repaired immediately & your Father says they are disposed to give every advantage they can to my sisters family. It is no wonder tho' Providence would stir hearts to do for that worthy mans offspring.

Your sister would give you an account of all the assemblys they attended and that I was tempted to go to one from a little curiosity. All the dress I have got since I came here is a Mazarine blue muslin with a small yellow leaf, and a cambrick muslin. I made a turban for this occasion not unlike what you had yourself at Inverness. I took form a miliner.

We have met with good deal of attention from our acquaintances since your Father has been absent. Tea & elegant suppress what they give most usually here. And I will mention the several places we have been at first Professor Stewarts, then Doctor Gordons, then Mr Allcocks. Then Doctor Browns with throng parties, and last week Mrs Brown came for us again to drink tea in the easy family way. They are a charming family this. Today we were again at Professor Stewarts. He & his wife are a most discreet friendly pair. They had but ourselves & Mrs Hay your uncles sister in law.³⁴ They would not part with us till after supper. He is an agreeable clever fellow He kept us laughing the whole evening & joking Mrs Hay about

f62v

Mrs Hay about a second husband and they are well acquaint and she takes everything in such good humour from him that they are very amusing when they meet. I was so ill with a cold which rages here that for weeks it was a burthen for one to write your Father I have a journal to make him of every day.

Finished at past one Wednesday morning 24th Feby 1801.

Betsy is to begin a letter for you when this goes. Hugh & George is well. There is a lad comes to teach them in the evenings. They are doing pretty well. They offer love to you. With united affectionate compts of all here to Mr Watson & you. Believe me your ever loving mother
Anne Robertson

Address:

Mrs Watson Crantit

By Kirkwall

³³ Susan McCulloch (1778-1804), a niece of Mrs Robertson. The father of the family, Rev George McCulloch, had died in December 1800 and the family had to move out of the manse to the house of Kilmote.

³⁴ None of the individuals in this paragraph identified.

The Robertsons, who had been joined in Aberdeen by Eliza, returned to Kiltarn and Christy's first child, Harry Robertson Watson, was born in Orkney on 8 July 1801. In August Thomas Stewart Traill made 'an extensive excursion through the Highlands on horseback'. On the evening of 9 August he passed near Kiltarn and by chance met Mrs Robertson, recognising her by her resemblance to Christy who he had met in Kirkwall. He was invited to stay at the manse, where he met Revd Harry Robertson for the first time.

NLS MS 19331 f63r

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 23 Aug 1801

My dearest Christy

It is with heart felt pleasure that I congratulate you on your perfect recovery from a state of danger and anxiety to be a happy mother. I had many uneasy days & nights about you and had reason to bless the Almighty for your deliverance and recovery. You are much indebted to those good friends about you who acted so motherly and feelingly towards you in your great distress when you so much required it. How lucky it is that the hearts of strangers are often more softened to us in the time of need than our own nearest friends. This is wisely ordered. You have been lucky in a skilful and tender physician but above all my dear I trust you feel grateful to the great Physician of soul [& body] Who blessed every means used for you to return you to health . . . to your friends. Happy am I to learn that Mr Watson is . . . tly recovered. You got a fright indeed by his illness but there is nothing to say when all is come to so happy a termination. You may believe it gratifies me much to find you make so good a nurse. You will find turning more agreeable every day if health serves you & the child.

This evening we have got Annie's letter of the 11th to Betsy by which we are happy to learn you are all well and that your young hero is made a Christian and named Harry Robertson. I think Mr Watson has in this as in every other respect shown a strong affection for us and great respect for your Father and tell him from me with my love that

f63v

The inclosed I know is from Miss Ross which Sir Hector was kind enough to send to be covered as I pleased. Col^l Fergusons father³⁵ left the country yesterday. I regret I did not see him. I believe the Col^l will remain some time at Novar. We were to have been at Novar a day while he was there if Mrs Parker had not turned up. In my last to Annie I mentioned Mr & Mrs Parker³⁶ arrival here on the 13th instant this day week Mrs P was taken ill & threatened with a miscarriage being three months with child. She is now pretty well again. She drunk tea in the drawing room this evening for the first time. Mr & Mrs Rainie³⁷ worthy couple are now here and most interested in you & your dear boy & happy to hear your welfare and beg to be affectionately mentioned to you, Mr Watson & Annie. Mr Parker of going to John O' Groats and even your length but I cannot be sure. Do you know there was a foundling put down at Mr Reid's last week. They cared for it with that humanity which would be expected from that good family but it has been traced already. There was a yard of

³⁵ William Berry (later Ferguson) of Raith (1743–?).

³⁶ Mr & Mrs Parker: Charles Steuart Parker (1771–1828), a founding partner of Sandbach Tinné, and Margaret Rainy (1774–1844), Christian Robertson's cousin.

³⁷ Mr & Mrs Rainie (usually Rainy): Rev George Rainy (1733–1810), minister of Creich, and Ann Robertson (1750–1833), a sister of Mrs Robertson.

new flannel about the child. Mr Reid³⁸ showed the flannel at all the shops in Dingwall and [Parse?] the merchant declares it was bought the day before by a man in his shop & that two recruits who being at some time in the shop knew the man. This led to a party being sent in search of him. He turns out to be one Davie Urquhart Glass a son of ??? nurse & a married man. The mother of the child is his own servant, and dwarfish insignificant creation she is. He is laid up in prison at Dingwall.

Our poor friend Lindorf³⁹ was in a dreadful dilemma last week by a visit from his wife daughter & a brother of his wife. They were with him from Friday till Monday & came without the least previous notice. You may guess his situation. I believe they did not leave him without their own terms. I believe his sorrows will only end in the grave from this one step of youthful rashness. If Mr Young has or is to visit you he will give you a detail of it, for I understand he [acted?] with great friendship on the occasion, but it will be best to appear ignorant till you hear it from himself. Flory Tenafilag breathed her last Friday morning & was buried yesterday evening. Her sufferings great, and Jenny was most dutiful & attentive thro out the whole time. It is about a fortnight ago she told me if she had been all she would have gone herself to attend of you during your innlying and bid me be sure to tell you she said tis lying on a death bed with her blessings to you remember I have told you this dying charge of your poor cousins. She had a genteel burial. The ????? gentlemen Mr Munro & Mr Davidson, & Gustavus Aird & Hector Bethune⁴⁰ went

f64r

all hands from this at five o'clock to convey her poor remains to the churchyard. Her first complaint kept by her to the last I never saw any thing living so extenuated as she was. Sir Hector has got accounts of Lord Adam Gordons death, & Lord Aberdeen.

I sent for you to Mr Youngs care an anker of pickled salmon done after the New Castle Method. If it turns out well of agreeable we can do more if spared to another season. The yair has done better than usual this season, any fault the salmon may have be sure to point out so as to avoid again. I have sent a box with some jars with jam & jelly. I am vexed the gooseberries were not ready before the box was sent away. If Mr Cameron⁴¹ sends his ship from the storehouse you may expect a box of apples.

Mr Davidson⁴² Tulloch and Captⁿ McKenzie⁴³ Bayfield were in church today. Mrs D was prevented by a headache. Mrs McKenzie Mountgerald & the Major were also out, who were kindly enquiring for you & Annie & begged kindest wishes you. Charley Parker is one sweet creature he always brings your little darling Harry to my view. Messrs Munro & Davidson leave the country tomorrow and Doctor Munro is expected next week.

Kiltearn Monday morning 24th Augt

³⁸ Patrick Reid – often known as Peter – of Kinnairdie (or Kinnairdy), near Dingwall, was factor on the Tulloch estates and a close friend of the Robertsons. Mrs Reid (Jacobina Anderson) had died in 1799. Their daughter Elizabeth (Betsy), born in 1781, is referred to frequently in the letters.

³⁹ Not yet identified

⁴⁰ Gustavus Aird may be the tacksman in Kilmuir Easter who was the father of Rev Gustavus Aird (1813–98). Hector Bethune (1782–1849), son of the Alness minister, had graduated from Aberdeen and was to be ordained in September 1802.

⁴¹ Not identified

⁴² Henry Davidson (1771–1827), 3rd of Tulloch married Elizabeth Caroline Deffell (1772–1828).

I wrote this with candle light and did not perceive the ink was so dim. I wish you may be able to make it out. Mrs Rainie & I are to give a call at Alness in Mrs R's carriage. Sorry I am to say Mr Bethune is far from being in good health. It is feared his complaint as consumptive as he takes fits, he has not preached for three Sundays. Mrs Bethune is very well.

And now my dear Christy take my advice & do not indulge in too much anxiety about your child for this will hurt yourself & him and be a trouble to everyone about you to no purpose. Over anxiety is an error most young mothers are liable to I know from experience but found myself unhappy. I laid on a resolution never to be alarmed at there crying when I knew they were in health, I am happy to find that that Annie is so happy with you & enjoys everything about you as she des and that she was a comfort to you in your confinement.

God bless you all and with offer of our best wishes to you Mr Watson & Annie believe me My
Dear Christy
Your ever affectionate mother
Anne Robertson

NLS MS 19331 f65r [IMG_2718.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 23
Nov 1801.

Mr Dear Christy,

Altho I am now two letters your debt I seldom experienced greater joy from a letter than n perusal of your first one. When a friend escapes form danger, or has been in a state that exposes us to any risk of losing them, it is then we know the full extent of how dear they are to us. Such were my fears for some time about you. And such my forts & pleasures on your recovery from so critical a situation. I believe you will not doubt the sincerity of my gratitude to Heaven for your deliverance and for making you the happy mother of so delightful a child as everybody who has seen him says of my dearest grandchild.

We have all great caused to be thankful how matters have turned out but I will always feel a regret not to have been of his first acquaintance. However no more of that. Whatever change you might have felt upon yourself after being so long out of the habit of writing, there was n mark of dullness in your letter which I have read again & again with pleasure. You mention keeping very thin but while your health & appetite continue I think nothing of this. It is most natural for so young a nurse as you yo be so, especially where you made so slow a recovery & brought sown by much severe illness. I forget if I gave you any directions about nursing info I will give you a few that I by experience found most salutary. Once he is past three months there is no reason for his sucking you often thro' the day as that is too exhausting with night sucking besides. You tell me Mr Watson keeps him from 6 in the morning til nine. This [is] very proper for you & that you may have a sound nap during that time. When Mr Watson happens to be a night absent, the child should be taken from you at the same time and taught to sleep in the cradle till eight or nine in the morning. His dry nurse should have his pap, or porridge, made before he awakens & after he is bathed & dressed have that ready to give him immediately so that he needs not trouble you more for the breast till your own breakfast is over. He should take a long sleep of two or three hours in the forenoon, and a short one in the evening, and about 8 or nine at night be bathed & have his little supper afterwards & then put

to the cradle where he should sleep till you go to bed yourself & be ready to call for him. You should not give him the habit of sucking when you are asleep. Always have the breast out of his mouth before you go to sleep, and have his seat little head up upon the pillow just by your own, and your arms under his body or otherwise as suits you best. I hope you have got a handy trusty girl for his maid & that there is no necessity for your washing or dressing him. Indeed you should not nurse him much, but when you suckle him as it is too fatiguing for you.

The rash that you say was on his face is very disagreeable I own, but a common remark is that the most beautiful & finest skinned children afterwards have that. You three oldest brothers had a perfect crust on their forehead and cheeks till three or four months old. Everything that strikes these eruptions is suddenly dangerous. And when Annie wrote your little darling was so ill it struck me it might be owing to this cause. You must have been all very unhappy upon this occasion. I bless God that he was well before I knew of it. I will not say how much long to see the dear lamb. What I always found give most relief to the children under the itch was

f65v [IMG_2719.jpg]

when they were very ill & the eruption either wet, or dry & fiery, I would poultice their bodies round and always keep kail blades to them thro' the night. And I would bathe them when using either of these with the water like Summer Watter, & coloured with milk. Poultices give great relief when their little feet are seized with it, which torments them much especially in the night time. It is only at night I always used the poultices or blades. The former was always made of fie barley meal boiled till quite like sowance & spread out thin upon a cloth & a little sweet oil or fresh butter spread upon it. And it will come off in the morning if this manages as Asit went on without dirtying any thing. If his head is struck out you should poultice it from the back of the neck to the crown or a nail blade in the night but beyond the crown I would not put either least you draw the humours to the face. You no doubt observe that he is not costive. Small doses of rhubarb & magnesia were the only medicines I dealt in for the children at his age. If I except antinomial wine, which is a sovereign remedy in all the complaints of children. Indeed I seldom wanted it. Dr Groat will give you it & direct you how to use it. But as you are so intimate & have access to see him so often its hardly necessary for you to use this wine, as I suppose you hardly give anything of this nature to the child without his advice. These simple directions experience teach every mother that is despises to attend to these things but as you had not seen the management of young children before in case they should be of any use I think my duty to lay them before you. I hope the rash will be wearing off Harry now as it wears off at the end of three or four months when it appears so early. Except on the head where it often continues & returns with the teething when the rest of the body is quit clean. You will find it very comfortable to wear a piece of flannel on your breasts now that the cold weather has commenced. I daresay I need not put your mind how necessary it is for Mr Watson to take care of his health & expose himself as little as possible during the winter. I hope his counting times now over and that he will not have occasion to be much from home with the short day. Of all things I hope he will not be under the necessity of being at sea in the night time. I think it highly necessary for him to wear flannel next his skin if he has not already done so.

You would no doubt be grieved to hear of our worthy friend Mr Bethune's death. We will not see his like again his loss cannot be made up to us & I am sure you would be shocked to hear of the amiable youth Harry McKenzie's untimely end which reminds us so much in our own misfortune in the loss of our ever beloved & lamented Harry.

We were on a visit to Kinnairdy two nights. The second day we . . . with Mrs Bethune in complement to daughter in law Mrs Divie Bethune. They are a very agreeable couple they are both high set in religious sentiments inclining to Haldenism. But their manners rather attract than other

ways. Himself is as chearful and pleasant as any I know. They winter at Dingwall. They have two daughters one of them a clever little girl with them & herself expects to lie in every day now.

Our party at Kinnairdy was select and agreeable. Mr & Mrs Davidson who were perfectly at ease with us Capt Dond Mckenzie of Roggie a genteel man and Eneas Barkley this is all we saw of him but a call here. His stay was as short as last year. The former Capt Mac is now come to his ultimatum by the . . . & rise of stocks his fortune is 40000. Til it came to this sum his uncle . . .

f66r [IMG_2720.jpg]

Colins will he could not touch it. The money must be laid out in lands in Murray, Inverness, or Ross-shire. He is now the only Beau in Dingl. I hope he may fall to the share of one of the Dingl Bell's. I think he would be well appointed with our sweet friend Miss Betsy Reid. I was in the garden of Kinnaridy I got of your first letter. I can assure you all your friends there were happy at its arrival as well as myself. Much are you obliged to them for the whole family seem as interested in whatever relates to you as to Miss Betsy.

We spent a week most agreeably with our friends at Creich we went & returned very comfortably in Mr Parkers carriage he came here with us on his way south. Your kind favours by Mr Parkers return I received at Creich and I am not the less pleased & sensible of your attention in writing that I have not acknowledged it till now, but I thank you my dear for the affectionate manner you express yourself to me. Betsy & I were the more gratified that we did not look for letters at that time. The gentlemen returned highly pleased with everything & every person they saw at Crantit. They were in raptures with sweet Harry & expressed themselves in the highest terms of esteem for Mr Watson. Mr Rainie say that you cook as well as could be expected of so young a mother & nurse & he says Annie's looks are much improved. It is no wonder tho' she should where she is so happy & so much caressed. I suppose she will get a husband amongst you before she leaves you. As you seem so happy together I thought it a pity to separate you this winter.

The person you mention to Betsy I was not much struck with at first sight but he turned out a most agreeable guest during the week he was here. It happened we had a run of genteel company Sir Hector & Mrs Hay, Doctor Munro and Mr La'Balmondeire a very agreeable little man and a particular friend of Gilbert. We had these two again to dine with us since. We had this day Mrs Col^l Sutherland her new son in law Col Robert McKenzie & his wife Miss Kath Suthd that was. Col^l Robert is a well informed sensible man and made himself very agreeable while here, but I am told he is a very peculiar temper. It is certain he and his first wife never were happy but it is his fault unless he is happy now for there cannot be a sweeter temper than Kattie Suthd. Very kind were her inquiries for Annie & you & regretted she could not see you. Few guests that from gratitude we should be happier to see they were here 2 nights

Lower third of page torn off

f66v [IMG_2721.jpg]

that you made his stay at Kirkwall very agreeable. His father has an estate in England & Scotland and is an agent in the Sweddish iron trade the branch our friend is to follow. They have a dwelling house wharffs & stone houses in London. He is gone there a few days ago to prepare for the reception of the whole family who follow in a few weeks to pass th winter in London. Bell McCulloch & Bell Rainy arena here & join me in affectionate compliments to Mr Watson you & a kiss to sweet Harry. I ever am your most loving mother. Anne Robertson
I heard from Miss Ross I hope you have replied to a letter she mentioned having wrote long ago

Address:

Mrs Watson Crantit

By Kirkwall

On seeing my paper run out
this double which I hope you ?????
now a little leisure to her ????
?????

NLS MS 19331 f67r [IMG_2722.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 20
April 1802

My Dear Christy.

On receipt of your agreeable letter of the 22nd of last month your father wrote Mr Watson which prevented my writing till now, or indeed made it unnecessary, in which I hope gave you satisfying assurances if we are all spared till then that we shall visit you next year & I trust you so not doubt my good will and wishes to see you in your own house. The prospect of seeing you here soon rejoices my heart together with Mr Watson & darling Harry. This consideration made us not propose to Annie to come home till you come together which must be a pleasing circumstance to her as she has been so happy while with you the I would be a sad parting to her to come home singly. I hope by this time Mr W will have got Lord Dundas's approbation to leave the Island for some time & if business or health or both should require his taking a journey south I suppose your plan will be to land here in a cutter & love you here till he return. My dear how could you have a shyness to visit us in case a certain affair would take place. It would be the very thing we wish for to have you here then. But of this we are yet uncertain as to the time it depends when a certain person comes to Scotland which about a month ago I heard would not happen this 3 or 4 months. But we expect to hear soon something decided upon the subject. I know that Betsy's plan is whenever she hears the time you fix to be here she will hasten north to meet you & be with you as much as she can. She has been at Douglas Park these three weeks past. Mrs D was very attentive to her & wished her to remain much longer with her. I had a letter the other day from Mrs Parker where she expressed her self with the greatest affection towards Betsy, & wishes to act to her as if she were her own. Much does she owe her all that family. I suppose she would write you of the Highland Society Ball which was a splendid thing. Mrs Parker writes me she heard the other day from Mrs Ferguson that she is five months gone in the family way & quite well & means to be in the country soon after Sir Hector. I heard Dr Wishart was to go up & travel north in company with them in case of accidents which is a proper precaution. Her coming to Novar is a pleasant prospect to us all. May God preserve her in health & every good

I am happy to tell you that yesterday we had letters from Willm and Gilbert both perfectly well thanks to Heaven. The latter mentions a letter he had from Annie of the 10th November and expresses himself in the warmest terms about his friends in Crantit dear creature his letters breathe so much goodness, gentleness & propriety, that I am often astonished at it. I am much gratified that

Wm means to settle in Demerary and I trust it will be for the mutual comfort of your brothers to be near one another besides the advantage which may be to both particularly Wm. Gilbert seems to approve of Wm's conduct since he went to Surinam and says he was obliged to leave it with hundreds besides. He says Mr Gilbert Douglas was with him for a day or two. Innes Arthur went in the same ship with him had only a passage of 29 days & he is settled with your cousin Robt Douglas. Innes has grown a tall genteel looking lad. Poor Donald (Courage?) has lost two sons in that Country, Hector and George & John Aird has lost another son there who was doing well. It distresses Gilbert much sad intelligence of this kind. What cause of gratitude have I to merciful Providence who has spared my dear children yet & in such comfortable circumstances, while others are suddenly wounded.

I am sorry to tell you that Mr Wilsons family have sustained a great affliction in the death of one of their daughters who was married to Mr Sherrieff Mercht at Leith. A charming young woman, who was the darling fo her family & she seem'd Harry's favourite sister.

We have also sustained a loss in the neighbourhood by the death of the worthy Sherrieff Pitlundy about ten days ago. He was carried off by a short fever to the inexpressible loss of his disconsolate widow & family. Luckily his son Wm is at home.

Bell McCulloch left us this day fortnight she was to go the way of Creich. Your father conveyed her by the hull road to the big ferry and came back the same track that night. She seemed to regret leaving us & was so anxious to be home she could not be longer easy with us. O much much is she to be pitied. SHE has too acute a feeling for her own peace of the distress of her family. Before she left us we heard of Wms return home from you. He seemed highly pleased with his visit. You may believe my dear it is gratifying to me to hear you shine as mistress of a family & a landlady and that you & Mr Watson are so attentive to your friends. You remark to have met with some false friends, but I approve much of you carrying fair with them but guardedly, for open ruptures are sad incidents in society & few that get a little time in the world but may say from experience they have met with false friends. The mercy is when they have it not n their power to hurt and that there are some real ones still to be met with. As I have formed so good an opinion of Mr Laings & Baky's family, I am thankful you have the same sentiments towards them as at first. I regret to find that the latter amiable

f68r [IMG_2724.jpg]

couple leave the country on account of bad health.

Miss Jeany Hall has been with me this fortnight. She begs her blessing to you & Annie and says she will be on the look out when a cutter comes to Cromarty & enquire if you are on board. She is happy at the thought of seeing you & hopes you will condescend to call on her. I do not know a better girl. Her bror Hector is liberal to her. But that makes no change but to the better on her.

I am sorry to say poor Mrs Sutherland has not been well, or this length of the spring her complaints seem nervous. She is not in a family way which I regret. Gilbert has made his mother a remittance of ten pounds which is just come to hand & Mrs Douglas added five to it as it came to her care there good accounts of Wm Munro from Jamaica. Robert Ross is Gilbert's overseer & he seems highly pleased with him. There is a good account of John Bethune & Willie & Harry Munro. Hector Bethune preached Sunday before Easter English sermon & Gallick prayer as first public exhibition at Urray it was thought best he should first preach in a strange place and I am told he gave satisfaction to is audience. The Alness family are as well as could be expected beginning to pick up a little. Poor Mrs B herself continues rather dejected. Miss Betty Munro is still with them. SHE goes south next month I am told to her nieces marriage which I hear takes place in June. It is Miss Betsy Douglas is to be married to Mr Laballmondier. He was a near neighbour and friend of Gilberts in Demerary had made a genteel fortune & is an elegant most agreeable little man. He was

here last autumn with Doctor Munro. Your friends at the house by are well happy at the prospect of seeing you again. Gentle & amiable as usual. In return you need take no notice of Esther or her complaints. I hear she is better for a week back.

I am much obliged to you for thinking of sending me geese this season too. I hope you need not send them to Leith they will keep till you come yourself but if you hear of a vessel coming before then that will call at Cromarty it will be best to send them to the care of Messrs McRaes. As I suppose you will have some small empty jars to spare you will better bring a basket with a parcel of them to fetch back some sweet meats with you. If you were not to come in a cutter I wouldn't propose such lumber in your baggage. I am pleased to hear Mrs Duffus remains another year in your service. It is not an easy matter to get the like of her. I am doing with baby too at this time. I could hardly mend myself neither by changing.

Your father went this day to the synod at Fortrose. There is like to be great altercation there about the settlement of Fearn & about poor John McKenzie Kindeaces tutor. The presbytery of Tain persecute him to a man most maliciously. No doubt he has a levity of manner he had better want (particularly a man of his profession) which they have made their own use of & libelled him. It seems he used to ??? When at College & grieve his righteous spirit. By the bye I hear he is married or to be soon to a Miss Gordon in Strath Naver. I have seen the Miss Reids about a fortnight ago they were so good as spend a day here. Miss M [Aikian?]

f68v [IMG_2725.jpg]

was a few days last week here & a cousin of hers Miss Justina Ogilvie a stout a stout glumdalclutch of a girl she is. Mr Mac was only once here since the new year & then only Saturday night. I have some hopes he may be here the end of this week. I heard from him once since last here. The weather has been so stormy till now that I did not wish to come in the hurried way he can come. Everything is very backward. We have not wanted a new fleece of snow every week until this one. The bushes are beginning to bud & the walks to look rather green the gardens are now almost dressed & I hope they will be pleasant by the time you arrive here. Uncle Hugh has returned from College about a fortnight ago. He & Miss Hall offer best wishes to you Mr Watson & Annie. I ever am

Your affectionate mother
Anne Robertson
I long to hear from you.

Address:
Mrs Watson
Crantit
Kirkwall

NLS MS 19331 f69r [IMG_2726.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 2 May 1802

My Dear Christy

I am favoured with your agreeable letter of the 11th. It makes me happy to learn you are all in health & Mr Watson getting free of his ails. I trust that a jaunt to Rossshire will do him much good he requires a relaxation from business, as well as a change of air.

If you are going to wean Harry next month it is a very proper time for this. May is reckoned too trying for a change of this kind. Altho I signified a wish to that you should not wean him till you would bring him here, I by no means wish you on that account to keep him a day longer on the breast than suits your health and your convenience. And as you keep so thin I am entirely of the Doctor's opinion the sooner you wean hi now the better. The near prospect I have of seeing you all here rejoices me much. It is surely the most favourable time for a trip of this kind. You will just bring Sir Hectors stockings & the geese along with yourself it will be needlesnow to think of any other conveyance.

I am happy to tell you that Sir Hector arrived about a fortnight ago. He is in very good health & looking as well as could be expected. Worthy man we are as usual much the better of having him amongst us. Your father is often with him. I was there Sunday last to dinner & all night. I am engaged to dine there tomorrow. I goto hear Hector Bethunes maiden sermon in Alness he preached before in Urray & Tarradale, poor fellow I wish how well he may get thro' which I hope he will. I her he gave satisfaction in both these places, the rest of that family are as well as could be expected. Your Father preaches Sunday at Dingwall for Mr Rose himself & Mr Donald McK are gone to the general Assembly, chiefly to support John McKenzie who is persecuted & libelled by the Presbty of Tain. Mr Macintosh of Tain is gone south before them. I dare say he would rather face the half of the Church than these two gentlemen.

You will with me be pleased to hear that Col^l & Mrs Ferguson are by this time on their way north & are expected early next month. Doctor Wishart went to Raith in order to travel north along with them. They travel but a stage each day, to make it little more than an airing to her. Heaven grant the journey may answer well with her after every precaution. Sir Hector seems very fond of his grandchild little Jean Ferguson. He told me he asked Miss Ross to come down this summer but she could not, which I regret.

f69v [IMG_2727.jpg]

Sir George Mackenzie Could is to be married the first of May to Miss Mary McLeod 5th daugr of Guineas. He saw her about ten days ago at Tarbat House fell involve at first sight & put the red hot question other that evening. Don't you think folks who were high enough before will be now in the clouds. What fine romantick marriage this. But it is not popular with his clan however this is no matter to be thought off.

Do you know John Simpson at Dingwall is caught at last he was married of this month to Miss Justina Ogilvie from Inverness a short time after she was here. Since her mothers death she lived with Miss jeanie Hall & was on a visit to her cousins the Miss Aikins when she got a husband by the bye. I dare say you will have the particulars of this match from Miss Betsy Reid which are funny enough. But t us the way of the world now while some are rejoicing others are mourning. The Drying Family in addition to their great affliction have got account of their son Sandies death in Demerary. He was a fine promising youth.

We had the pleasure of a long promised visit from Mr & Mrs Mckenzie Millbank. They only dines & skated all night they left us yesterday. There only Themselves two, the girls are at Cromarty on a visit to their aunt Mrs McKenzie Aichilty who now lives there.

Mr & Mrs Divie Bethune brought Jeanie Millbank south with them. She is again with Miss Charles. She s turned out a fine smart girl. Betsy & she will be happy to meet in Edin^r.

I heard from Betsey after she had a pleasant tour with Mr & Mrs Parker to Inverary. Much does she owe these good friends of hers. She was to leave Glasgow as next week. She can remain for little at Stirling with her agreeable friends Captⁿ & Mrs Tovie & from thence proceed to Edin^r where she has the offer of a bed from Mrs Manson which she accepts as Mrs Col^l Suthd now lives with her daugr Mrs Col^l McKenzie.

Your conjecture as to poor Mrs Sutherland was right. She is far from well. You may judge this when her mother was not for three months in church her complaints are hysterical and low spirits. She was among the last this would be expected to happen. I allways till now referred mentioning her in hopes I could say she was better but there is little of this. You need not mention her in return. If better I shall let you know. But unless anything now should occur I hardly think I need write now again until you come. I will soon expect to hear from you, saying that Mr Watson had a favourable reply from Lord Dundas & that you have fixed n a time to set out for Kiltarn. The beginning of the month we had fine weather

f70r [IMG_2728.jpg]

for a week but since snow almost every day, & frost in the night so severe that betwixt this & the caterpillar we will have no fruit this season which is a pity. However I thrust the country will look so well by the time you reach that you will enjoy it.

I regret that you are again disappointed in Mrs Duffus. I will be on the inquiry to hear of somebody to suit tho' I have no great hope of success. Mae Smith would answer well is she were not so high in her demand of wages.

It will certainly be a pleasant acquisition to your society that Mr Laings respectable family assemble again under the paternal roof. Your father had Annie's letter I know not if he replied to it. She will now be preparing to come home. I wish for her own sake poor girl she may relish it after being so long happy with you. We are much obliged to Mr Watson for this great attention to her, as for yourself I would expect this from you. Hugh is gone a visit to Creich & Loth, that he might have it over before you arrive here.

You can now write under Sir Hectors cover as oft as you please while parliament sits. I am vexed I could not avail myself of this now.

All your friends enquire often for you & are happy to find you are coming & the darling stranger Harry eve him kiss from grandmama Your father joins me in love to you Mr watts & Annie Believe me My dearest Christy

Your affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

The Noble Pagosdie was here two nights on his way south. He spoke in the highest terms of Mr Watson & you — and not with indifference of Annie — Mac is well by last accounts. I saw hi twice since Christmas & then only for a night. The academy breaks up the first of June. Mrs McDoanld from London is come to her mothers. I forget if I have mentioned this before.

Address:

Mrs Watson Crantit

By Kirkwall

Christy and her husband went to Edinburgh in the early summer, where Mr Watson had meetings with the agents of his employer, Lord Dundas. They must have travelled by Kiltarn, where Harry was left with his grandparents.

NLS MS 19331 f71r [Image 2019-11-02 11.04.57.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson). 21 July 1802

My Dear Christy,

Your agreeable favours on your arrival in Edin^r gave all here much pleasure to find the journey had agreed so well with Mr Watson you & your fellow travellers.

Your darling boy Harry has been our delight since you left us, he is in perfect health thank God, & improving every day it is lucky how easy he has got the two teeth. Annie mentioned to you every one who sees him admires what a fine child he is. Just now Mr Simon Fraser Belladrum & his Lady called here together with Mr & Mrs Mckenzie Mountgerald the former left Demerary in April last & saw our Gilbert just before they set off. They are a most agreeable young couple.

Your friends at Novar often enquire for you they sometimes call at the door but are so considerate they will not come to the house. Jean Ferguson was feverish for some days with an inflammation in her face supposed the effects of the whooping cough which has almost left her. She is better yesterday & today and I hope will soon get perfectly recovered. Mrs Ferguson bid me say to you she had commissioned Miss Ross for some things, but begs of you not to uncommode yourself bringing any parcel for her she would be sorry if you did. I think you were lucky to meet so many agreeable friends at Mrs Hays. I could well believe how obliging & kind a friend you would find Miss Ross, just the same as you parted with her. I cannot account for Mrs Ls coolness have you seen her since. I sent her a cask of apples last winter & wrote her with the ship masters receipt but I never since heard from her. I wish she may have got them in good order they went at same time with your box to Cromarty.

Captain McKenzie Bayfields death is very melancholly

f71v [Image 2019-11-02 11.05.28.jpg]

He languished a few days after a fall from a wild horse he used to ride his venerable father has sustained a heavy affliction in his death. The good old woman at the Housebye breathed her last on Sunday 22nd after suffering much & was burried Thursday after. Your cousins bear the loss with Christian resignation. Next day there was a draught from Gilbert of a hundred pounds which you will allow was a very seasonable consolation.

We have every day this week been expecting a letter from you and are all rather anxious your father quite impatient. Mrs Ferguson informed us Miss Ross mentioned to her your having gone to Stirling which so far made us easy but now we long to hear from yourselves, and also from Betsy we have not had a line from her since you went south.

The weather has been constantly rainy since you left us till within these three days, so much so we could hardly have a walk with dear Harry. Fond is he of walking about every fair hour. He is now well acquaint with us all and we are getting so fond of him that the thoughts of parting with him begins to be painful enough. We wish to hear how you liked your jaunt to Stirling & how you found Betsy & our worthy friends Captⁿ & Mrs Tovey & family. I hope Mr Watson has taken advice

for his stomach complaint, and that you will both get stout & plump before you return to us. What a pity Betsy was kept from you when you might have been so happy together ll the time you were in Edinbr. What crosses does headstrong humour occasion. God help those who have most to do with it. This letter was accidentally blotted which you must excuse as I am too lazy to write another. Not must you signify to have received it as we are prohibited to write to you by way of punishment that you may not hear of Harry. The sweet lamb has his love to Papa & Mama & himself & Ba has the pet at Papa & Mama, for not asking oftener for them.

Annie is to write on hearing from you. Wishing Mr Watson & you a safe & speedy return.
Believe me Dearest Christy

Your ever affectionate Mor

Anne Robertson

Grand Papa is quite fond of the boy & is getting a coachy for him

f72r [2019-11-02 11.05.57.jpg]

I make no doubt but you will remember what I said to you about our dark print rather than a bonnet. I am to note below a few trifles which if convenient you will bring me & I will pay at meeting — 2 Bandeus of middling broad black velvet ribbon – a few yards narrow black ditto – 4 small jet buttons for the sleeves of a black gown – one ouz black bugles – a sh worth needles – a small butter print – a paste runner – 2 ouz Spanish flies ???anted good – 1 ouz Tartar emetic – a sh worth spirit of salt. We get every kind of perfume or chemical preparation of the worst quality even at In^s. You should get an ounce of orris root powder it makes the finest perfume and very cheap 4^d the ounce. You should get a phial of antinomian wine the best medicine I know for children when good. Please bring me a pair of black turkey shoes, and a sh scissars. I would enclose the cash but as I am so soon to see you thinks it needless to make you have double the postage to pay. If this should arrive when you are leaving Town give yourself no trouble about the above articles.

I am happy to learn Mr Shaws estate sold to such advantage offer my kindest respects to him if still a fellow lodger of yours. Mac was here the end of last week left us Monday. He begged to be kindly mentioned to Mr W & you. I am pleased to hear such good accounts of Mr Douglas's family. Has Mr Labalmondiere appeared for his interest yet.

You have been lucky to be in Town during the races & Mrs Billingtons presence & performances.

A letter is just arrived fun Betsy wrote after parting with you. I am gratified you had even this time of each other. I for this will not overtake you but I will let it have the chance.

Friday 23 July

f72v [2019-11-02 11.06.16.jpg]

Mrs Watson at
MacGrigors Lodgings No 3
Princes Street
Edinburgh

NLS MS 19331 f73r [2019-11-02 11.06.48.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney, 29 May 1803

My Dearest Christy,

With much pleasure do I take up my pen for the first time, to you, since my confinement with the influenza. Your father and I were attacked about the same time. In the morning I got up very well, before mid day I felt all my frame disordered, and at night very feverish, with a swelling and inflammation in my face which continued pretty violent for several days. In short I found it necessary to keep my bed for a week, and my room another week. I have reason to be thankful I am now quite well only a little week still, but I hope the fresh air & a little exercise will restore this soon. Your father was differently affected. He had a sore throat, oppression on his breathing and a severe cough, but he did not confined himself a whole day to bed. His appetite was quite gone and he is much reduced. We had the doctor attending us we were so ill. However your father preached yesterday which will convince how much he is recovered. He did not preach the two Sundays before.

Lady Munro and Miss Rose were like to slip the grip, as they say with the influenza, but I hear they are getting better slowly. Sir Hugh would, I believe without breach of charity be well pleased to be in possession of his mother is jointure. Taininich was very ill with the influenza. He was about an hour here Saturday himself & and Mr R^d Robertson who is much with him. So Hector came home the day before he told he met him on the road, and said with great ease he was sorry his daughter was despaired off. Alas sorry am I to tell you this is the case, our much valued and amiable friend is now considered in the last stage of the consumption. I had a few lines from Miss Ross, she mentions you in the kindest manner and begs her love to you, and then adds “O my Madam we will I fear soon lose our dear and much esteemed friend. She is very ill quite feeble, the cough has been incessant for the last fortnight and she breathes with great difficulty in short her sufferings have been great. My time just now wont suffer me to give so full and particular an account

f73v [2019-11-02 11.08.08.jpg]

as I could wish. Her poor father was much shocked at the great change she saw on her. God help the poor kernel. He has one satisfaction which is never man paid more attention to a wife than he has done, but you know already his tender care of her ever since she has been his wife. The dear infants are well and thriving. Sweet lambs they cannot know their loss when it happens, but to them it never can be made up. Our poor friend will make a happy change. It is a pity we do not always keep in mind that we are but in a state of probation here and as our happiness is so liable to change we ought not to prize the possession so much as to render us miserable when a change comes. I’m sure I never lov’d a sister more than I have done that dear suffering angel.” She says she will write you as soon as she can.

Your father has been two days with poor Sir Hector he is much distressed but carries with fortitude. He ?????? day hears, but no change to the better, and it is not expected.

Last week we had a letter from Betsy on her arrival in Harwich. Dear creature I am pleased to think she is in Britain again. On the declaration of hostilities she says every body was leaving Holland as fast as possible that could do it. She crossed with two packets that were crammed with

passengers and it was feared they would be the last before an embargo would be laid on them crossing again. Mr Sandbach was under the necessity of remaining a short time behind which distressed her a good deal, but she had the protection of a good many friends who were to accompany her to London. I expect every day to hear from her from thence. She regrets leaving that charming country so soon and we found her letters entertaining enough since she went to Holland. But I suppose you will hear soon from her yourself. What a deplorable prospect war is at best. God help these devoted countries where the scene of action lies.

I understand my dear Christy by Mr Watsons last agreeable letter, that perhaps by this time you are laid aside. May God send you a happy time you have every reason to hope for the best from the merciful deliverance you had the first time which is the time of greatest risk. I have an impression that you will not be long ill at this time. I reckon myself unlucky that cannot have the satisfaction of being with you on such an occasion, though I am sensible I could be of no material use, yet it would I know be a mutual comfort, but my dear this is not a state we can expect to have all our wishes. And I am so thankful when I consider you under the protection of so tender and affectionate a husband, that I am conscious he will let you want for nothing that human aid can do for you and so skilful and discreet a friend and physician as Dr Groat at hand is the greatest blessing and ease of mind. Above all I commit to you to the care of the great Physician of soul and body, who is a present help in every time of need. We will be anxious to hear of you. I hope you will admit no stranger to your room for 8 or ten days after delivery the exertion of speaking to them sooner than this, may occasion weariness. You are constantly on our mind and our most fervent prayers and wishes to heaven or for your welfare. I hope sweet Harry he will be a good boy and not asking to be too often with Mama to make noise to fatigue or disturb her.

You would hear of Mr Parker's arrival quite recovered but owing to the war he is returned again to London. Mrs Parker writes me that the nursing her young James

f74r [2019-11-02 11.10.49.jpg] *Paper torn on right side*

goes on well altho he suffered a good deal with the influenza a general calamity here with all ranks & ages and tho' severe it . . .

We have not seen our friend at In^s these three months & seldom . . . I suppose he will be over next week when the vacation takes place. . . . =ship is not yet determined.

We are to have the sacrament Sunday comes eight days. We are . . . pare for it, as it is so early of the season. I don't suppose we will be . . .

Wed^y 31st last night post brought a few lines from William . . . Stabrock to embark for Trinidad a trip. Gilbert & G Rainy . . . Jack Bethune had just stepped in on him while writing and . . . Well two days before. Gilbert Munro is set up at Trinidad . . . Sutherland is keeping very well, and the rest of the Ten. . . The House bye Friends are well except that they also . . . influenza. John Robertson has got a son.

I look forward with pleasure to the end of July when I hope . . . you heart. I regret we do not find it expedient to have you? . . . of party, I would gladly submit to any trifling inconvenience . . . the sweet creatures own account, and surely more so to do wh?? . . . gratify you so much, but my dear we will be glad to be with ou? . . . can, and must submit to some drawbacks.

Hugh and Annie happily for your Father & . . . have held out yet. Poor Annie had enough . . . todo between us. They unite in love and complements to you & Mr Watson. God bless you & send us pleasing accounts of you is the most ardent wish of your ever affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

On 22 July 1803 Christy gave birth to her second child, Andrew, and on 3 August Dr and Mrs Robertson arrived. They stayed at Crantit until 29 August.

NLS MS 19331 f75r [2019-11-02 11.14.52.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 9 Sep 1803

My Dearest Christy,

It is now more than ten days since our painful absence has commenced. We kept sight of you while in the boat and on the ships deck till a heavy shower of rain forced us down which I fear you could not avoid, and may have been the worse of. When I came up again, even Crantit was out of sight, and I could only guess where it lay, and bless its dear inhabitants, and I repined much (so foolish was I at the time) that the ship went so fast, and I all at once so far removed from you all. I was distressed for you my dear I know from long experience what your feeling mind would suffer on parting with us all. By this time I presume you have had a few lines acquainting of our safe arrival. Our voyage could afford no variety only to say we were all less or more seasick and altho opposite the Ord at twilight the day we left you it was ten at night on Wednesday or we came here. We did not even stop at Cromarty it was very comfortable to come here straight without any interference as our spirits were rather low. Our passage was in the whole as agreeable as we could expect no storm or high winds to frighten us. The Cap^t was very discreet, and did every thing in his power to make us easy. Your kind & prudent foresight directed you to send provisions we found useful, & necessary, as they had nothing on board we could relish much.

As you promised to write by the first post I hope we shall have a letter from you tomorrow or Sunday. On a variety of accounts I am anxious to hear from you particularly as my little darling Andrew was rather feverish the morning I parted with you. I trust he got soon well, but my mind being at the time so agitated made me perhaps think him worse than he really was. And how dies my lovely Harry att I know he will be missing danno Papa and Mama Annie Ann and Uncle Poo. His sweet prattles are allways present with us. Indeed these dear creatures have got a faster present hold of my heart than I could have imagined, til I left them.

f75v [2019-11-02 11.15.09.jpg]

I told yourself when with you and now I repeat it again the pleasure it afforded me to see you smooch beloved and respected in the circle in which you move. But to see yourself and Mt Watson so happy in each other, and as you ought to be, exceeds everything to me. Give Mr Watson my blessing and tell him I cannot forget his attention to us all and to myself in particular and sensible I was how much he had other ways to occupy his mind at he time. I long to know that neither of you have been the worse of your various fatigues and trouble s at this time. God bless you both and may you enjoy many many happy years together. I suppose our kind agreeable friend Landaff would pass a few days with you after our departure. I beg you offer him my most cordial remembrances.

I will allways think with much gratitude of the polite attentions paid to us by all your friends. To Tankerness and Mrs Bakey I beg warmest respects. Miss Bakey we cannot forget, while Hugh is present and sweet Fanny I will not readily lose sight of. But indeed I am much interested in all that amiable family.

Mention me with much kindness to Mr and Mrs Manson. Tell my sweet young friend Miss Manson that I will allways think of her with pleasure, that I hope we shall yet meet, and I trust she will not forget me.

To Mr and Mrs Yule, Mrs Turine, Miss Grace Traill, Mrs Erskine, and Miss Groat & offer my best wishes, or to any more of my acquaintances who will have the goodness to ask for us. I know you can say everything to better purpose than I should say but indeed I cannot say all I think of them now, but I have a pleasure in repeating their names now or whatever else brings the time to my remembrance. I was so happy with you and them. I hope the Miss Laing's are well and have in their usual friendly manner been calling on you to console you for the absence of those who left. Please offer our wishes of respect & good will to every individual of their worthy family.

Since we have come home our few good neighbours have been calling on us. This day Millbank had dined with us. Himself and Mount Gerald came here about the schoolmasters salaries but they have adjourned till another day as no more of the Heritors were present. Millbank appeared for Balcony. He told his daughter Miss McKenzie heard from Betsy a few days ago which is the only accounts we have of her yet. Mr Rose was a night with us he is looking better than I saw him this seven years.

Your father next day after he came home went to call on Sir Hugh on Sunday ??? he was there he sent a message he could not see him or any other person when he could he would let him know. He is much to be pitied. He has lost the only object he sought on earth in whom he had compile??? nty. He blames himself for not making her better.

f76r [2019-11-02 11.15.19.jpg]

known in the country he says he was her jailor in London & the same for nine months in Rosshire. Poor man was not happy with her and he seems miserable without her. He asked his cousin Miss Ross Kindeace to come and live with his daughter and after she came from Geanies in Easter Ross for this purpose to Ardullie he would note as much as see her. He next applied Milltown to send his daughter a little girl as a companion for his girl. She came and her aunt Mrs McKay to deliver her, and he would neither see nor receive them. The inconsistencies with which he carries is like derangement. His wife's brother a Mr Law has been with for some weeks. I hear he rides on a poney every day about the country but interferes with none. He rode several times here abouts and round the church yard. He is a stout decent looking man. I am told there came an eruption all over Sir Hughs body occasioned no doubt by grief fasting & the agitation of his body & mind. Your father went next day after he was at Fowls to . . . on Sir Hector when he was received in a very different manner. Tuesday after we ??? ???? ???? on special invitation. Mr Hugh Rose who lives now at Bayfield with his lady were expected and came to dinner. They are an agreeable couple. Mrs Rose very sweet looking woman rather pretty. Mr Rose Dingwall, Mr Dallas Contin, Mr Hector Bethune, and a Mr Ross from Rotterdam young preacher came all four by chance to dinner. I am sure some if them did not want to meet altho chance brought them that day. We had the finest variety of fruit at the desert I have seen at Novar. The finest red and white grapes, peaches, nectarines, melon, plumbs, apricots & & I was wishing you had been there to have a share. Charles Ross Ankerville was that day with us too. He was asking for you, but as yourself says were I to mention all who do so it would fill my letter. Mrs Hay and Mrs Watson are to remain at Novar till the end of this month, both looking much better than when they came.

Kiltearn Thursday 15th

I have your much valued letter of the 6th now before me. I cannot express how we all rejoiced when it appeared every one taking a peep & impatient till the other had perused it. Thank God you are all well for I had many fears about you, especially for sweet Andrew. What a mercy that he got so soon

well. Oh! my dearest Christy I well guessed what you would suffer at parting but this is a punishment we must undergo for the happiness we felt while together. So my dear Harry att missed us so long & was mindful of us as to put in our chairs for days. What a warm hearted sensible creature at his age. Many would have no word about us after the first day. Often do we think and speak of him & of you all. We feel most grateful to all our good friends for their kind solicitude about our safety. To them all but particularly to amiable Mrs Bakey I wish again to be fondly remembered. How interesting the most minute circumstance now is that we are acquainted with the several parties much would I have enjoyed Major Moodies visits & his performances on the bagpipe as I am partial to that kind of music. Mr Mansons letter will be worth keeping I presume. My favourite Mary would rejoice at being detained with us much longer than she expected. I believe worthy Captⁿ Richan to be sincere his regrets for not having a day at his house but we are fully sensible of his kind intentions, also of Dr Groats. What strikes me most of all you mention is that the brave and resolute Bishop of Landaff should feel disconcerted at the change of our absence. I am sure he would remain as long as he could with you both would be better for it

f76v [2019-11-02 11.15.49.jpg]

Mrs Watson Crantit
Kirkwall

[To right of address]

Your father wrote Mr Macdonald about that same unlucky box his answer is At Mrs Watsons desire I forwarded the box to Mr Paterson at Leith. I have inquired about it and find it still lies there. This day I have shipped it on board of the Eliza for Cromarty. You see after all we have not Mr Mac^d to blame for our disappointment but Mr Paterson. Indeed neither did their duty.

We have the Alness family with us for two days. They are now here and offer you their best respects Miss Jess Bethune Dingwall is of their party & Thomas Munro who's become a greater buck than you knew him. Do you know it is said he languished for Miss Jean Culcairn, and N Bethune does the same. The letter goes next week for the ladies to Larg, take no notice of this in return I mention it to cause you laugh. Nor will you make mention of the particulars about Sir Hugh

[To left of address]

You did very right to keep Betsy's letter as you gave us the contents. We have heard from her last night in reply to hearing of our return home. She is quite well paid the visit at Mr Gladstones. They live in style. Mr G is a man of taste. Mrs G the same agreeable person she ever was. Miss Jack Robertson came back with her for some days this letter is chiefly pressing Annie to go to Liverpool immediately but we can't think of her going this winter. Betsy expects to line in the end of this month dear creature God send her a happy minute.

And Mrs McLeod really came to you on Tues^y I would have been well pleased had I remained to see her but her visits seem a precarious kind of pleasure. Her bro^r was here a night since we came home. He & family are well and the cash Mrs M sent by us Mr Urquhart sent for last week. We have heard from Wm & Gilbert since our return, thank God, both were pretty well by Gilbert's letter which chiefly treated about a donation left the poor of this parish by a native of it who was long in that country and left this place I believe before we came to reside here. He was Anderson to name, has a brother at Inverness who succeeds to the rest of the fortune. Gilbert sent a copy of the man's will enclosed and the postage came to a guinea. I am afraid you will not make out this confused scrawl. Yours is all correctness to this. I make out every word with ease. All here unite in

love & blessings to you Mr Watson and Harry. Believe me ever yours Anne Robertson. The above presented . . . 100

[Below address]

You will excuse me to offer my kind wishes to Miss Banks Mrs Duffus poor Betty the rest of the servants we cannot forget how much they were all disposed to oblige us. Hope Miss Banks will not leave you in a hurry.

NLS MS 19331 f77r [2019-11-02 11.18.33.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 16 Nov 1803

My Dear Christy

Your last letter gave me that satisfaction I allways feel when I hear of yours & and your dear family's welfare. To hear that Harry's conduct is so much improved, and that he is so reasonable on the score of Betty's nursing his brother, I am highly pleased with, and make no doubt of his daily improvement. Indeed I never saw anything about the dear fellow I could blame him for, and with a little attention he will be the finest boy I know. I am no less pleased that Andrew improves so fast and the sweetest of boys as I left him. He has every appearance of continuing handsome I therefore reckon it a compliment that he is reckon'd like me.

I need not assure you how happy it makes you want to hear of the welfare of all your agreeable friends & neighbours, particularly Tankerness's amiable family. I sincerely regret the accident befel Mr Tom. I hope by this time he has got quite well. I rejoice to hear Mrs Bakie holds out so well. My dear Christy as you are on that friendly footing with her put her sometimes in mind of following advices of her physicians as to regimen, and the use of preventatives, for she is too good to others to take that care of herself a constitution so tried as hers has been would require. Often think of her with a mixture of affection and anxiety, & regret how little prospect I have of much intercourse with so charming a friend. Nothing but her own goodness could lead Mrs Laing to suppose that she had not paid us sufficient attention for we all retain a greatful sense of hers & her family is polite hospitality. I am pleased you agree with me in my opinion of Mrs Manson. She struck me at once as a character the more she was known the more esteemed. It was certainly the greatest token she could bestow of her confidence in, and respect for you, to allow you so much of her sweet daughters company. Her letter was to meet a most agreeable surprise and I hope she had a reply to it in course.

I am sorry the lawsuit you mention is not like to be decided as we could wish. What a shabby recompense for their expenses is the some offered the witnesses. To say the truth I would suppose three times that sum hardly sufficient to make up the trouble.

Mrs Yule must have an anxious time till Mr Yule return. I hope this trip will help to recruit his health. It will be a disappointment the Bishop of Landaff does not return by land and take Kiltarn on his way. I should like much to see him here.

f77v [2019-11-02 11.20.56.jpg]

These wrecks you mention are dismal things but the loss of the crews when that happens is truly melancholy. We observed an account of the wrecks in the papers. I hope Mr Watson has felt no bad effects from the fatigue to took upon this occasion.

Annie left me in the last of Oct^r Monday. Her father accompanied her to Inverness they set up at Mr Macs. Hugh left us the week before & boards & lodges with the Rector, who came the Saturday before she set out here by way of bidding Annie adieu at home. He left us early Monday but they did not til after breakfast.

Annie was lucky in agreeable travelling companions Mr Mitchell & his pupil young Mr Urquhart. She was as lucky in fine weather. We heard from her twice from Glasgow but I refer you to herself for news. Your father remained at In^s till Friday went that day to Kilmorack to preach for mr Fraser who is in a declining state he came home from that Monday. The Tuesday after Annie left me Christy and Bell Rainy came here & their little brother Harry, he with an intention to stay with us thro the winter. They left me n the Thursday Christy to meet Mr & Mrs Manson at Invergordon they went south by Fort George. Bell went home I could not get her to stay a day longer with me, she was so anxious to leave her father & mother alone, and her father wrote begging not to urge her to stay, as he could not live without all his bairns. George Rainie is gone to the college at Aberdeen. My friends were very kind in visiting me when alone. I am much obliged to them but they cannot make up to me for the society I now want and to tell you the truth I now prefer being alone, when I have not the company which I like best. I know not if Annie mentioned to you that your brother William came to England about a month or 5 weeks ago. He left Demerary in May last on account of his health. It was thought a tour tho' the Islands might do and then go back, after passing three months in this way and the greater part with his friend Gilbert Munro who now lives in Trinidad and acted the part of a brother to him, the Physicians in August gave it as their opinion that the only thing to save his life was to come home to his native air, which he seems to have complied to with great reluctance. Fro what he writes of his own case I fear he is consumptive, he says for two years back he has been often troubled with spitting of blood. He has taken lodging at Camberwell near London for the benefit of a pure air. We heard thrice from him since he came to London. In his last letter he writes in better spirits. He has put himself unto the hands of an imminent Doctor from his advice following a regimen he says he finds himself much better already. His Father has pressed him to come home immediately on the first impulse. Mr Sandbach sent him a strong invitation to winter at Liverpool. However much I long to see my dear son again I would not wish him to come here at this season it might be against him if it were but for the want of an agreeable change of society when he might relish it. You know how wretchedly we are situated from various causes in this respect. If he came to Liverpool I would be satisfied I think the society of his sisters should be a strong inducement. But I find he is rather inclined to return to Demerary without going further north if his health permits. We have all demonstrated in the strongest terms against this altho' he were to recover from the first day he came to England it would be madness in him to return for a season. I know not if Annie mentioned him to you. But at first we did not wish to alarm you about him you have not heard from him & would wish to write him. His address is at Mrs Chalmers St Martins Lane No 36 London.

I had three letters writ by Betsy herself since she was delivered. I cannot express what a comfort it is to me that she had so favourable a delivery being her first. I had many anxious thoughts about her. She just made such another fine recovery as you made with Andrew. I am very much gratified

with having a namesake. I make no doubt of your wishes to shew me the same filial affection in this & every other occurrence, but so far as I am concerned I am much better pleased you have got the dear boys first. You will perhaps follow your mothers example to have three boys before you get a daughter. Betsy mention in her last

f78r [2019-11-02 11.21.05.jpg]

letter that little Anne Sandbach is just recovered the cow pox. I think this is a happy discovery to all the human race if this specious of inoculation turns out dual to expectations entertained of it at present. If you have not done it before you should lose no time to try it with Andrew.

No doubt Dr Groat will have fresh matter on his return from Edinburgh.

Sat^y Nov^r 19th

Have just got your of the 9th cur^t I am charmed with all your good news particularly Miss Laing's great and good luck.⁴⁴ You had really a merry wedding to it. I know nothing more pleasing than to see so many fine young people rejoicing on such an occasion. The Lady carried on this affair very slyly, when nobody had an idea of it. I cannot but adore the constancy of the gentleman after so long an absence and his discernment to find out the beauties of the mind. I dare say she will make an agreeable sensible companion. Please offer our hearty congratulations to any of that good family who now remains with you. I regret on your account that is like to be but a short time. I suppose Miss Laing now will soon follow her sisters example, and good Mrs Laing be left solitary as to her family as I am now.

I wish Miss Stalker & Mr Watson equally happy, altho they have not a share of the good things of this life. What a stupid conduct in Mr Alison to give so long a sermon on such an occasion. Wonder what the Bishop will think of all these proceedings in his absence this is rather tantalising to him, could he but step forward now how ??? but he should be even less ambitious. I am sorry all hopes of seeing him are now past. He is certainly a very agreeable friend, and a man of good heart as well as a good head. What is Captⁿ Sutherland about does he rest quiet in his island. We have got his marrow in our neighbourhood. I am told his grief is over long since & that he is now in high spirits.

When your father was from home he met Doctor McKenzie Pitlundie who took his promise to visit his Mo^r and him at Drynie your father and I went accordingly on Friday of last week. It happened to be Halloween the young folk were very merry with their nuts and apples. Saturday we came home much against their will. This the first visit but a call we gave Mrs McKenzie since the Sheriffs death. She is a discreet sensible woman very fit for her great charge. It is a great comfort to her to have William so much with her. He has some thoughts of going to India and has a good birth in view there but in these critical times has put it of for a season, & in the meantime is appointed surgeon to the Ross shire Militia who are now at Aberdeen. William was allways promising and has turned out a very genteel sensible young mantis attention to make his mother and sister as happy as he can is praiseworthy. His sisters have turned out better looking than they promised especially Miss Priby. Herself and the Doctor came here Wednesday and left us yesterday. Proby plays well at the piano and they made a shift to amuse themselves tolerably solitary as we are. I only had Kattie Munro here with them who they took notice first in Jeans account now on her own. They brought her along with them to Drynie. Jean McKenzie lives constantly there, and very kindly treated. These sisters are tow pretty girls what a noise they would make if on a footing with some others. Miss Mary Kincaig is the great Belle now in this quarter she returned last summer after being two or three years n London. Her looks are agreeable but her manner is most admired great good

⁴⁴ Marriage of Eleanor Laing and David Blair, 5 November 1803, Kirkwall. Daughter of the late Robert Laing. David Blair Esq younger of Borgue.

humour and ease without forwardness, a good deal such a girl as Miss Manson would be with mixing as she has done. Last night we had a letter from Mr Sandbach with the pleasing news that Demerary had surrendered to the English on the 19th Sept^r without a drop of blood shed. You cannot imagine what joy this diffuses to all our country men residing or concerned in that colony. Mr S and Annie were to leave Glasgow the 17th She will have a pretty good idea of that city now. Hugh writes one he likes the banking business very well. We expect himself & the Recotr some Saturday soon. He gives close attendance but there is such variety of company to the office it makes it chearful. It is a comfort to him poor fellow this near us. Annie's absence this winter surely makes a great blank to me, but I have been gradually prepared for this. I am happiest when alone for there I converse with either of you or perusing your letters or writing to either of you. And I have one comfort I would not perhaps be so sensible of could you all be with me, that is the solicitude you all have to make me as happy as possible by your attention than which nothing can gratify more next to your presence. Should I not be thankful that I have the pleasing of seeing you again & when I think it might be otherwise I would be bad to complain. Your chequered letter was perfectly legible to me, and will be pleased to have such as offer as suits you. We were diverted at some body's being a little puzzled in going thro it.

f78v [2019-11-02 11.21.45.jpg]

Mrs Watson Crantit

Kirkwall.

[to right of address]

I meant to write you last week, but as I had nothing material to say I wished to wait till I heard from William again, and my letter to Miss Manson would satisfy you in part and I depend upon Annies writing you from Glasgow. Miss hall let me know patience was run out about a cutter going your way. So she was to send the box a fortnight ago to Leith. I hope by this time it is some way or other approaching you. I am next you will have so few apples when it comes with the box containing your hat, and some napery for sweet Andrew together with the uncertainty other reaching safe makes them but a trifle. The hatts I think genteeler than any of that kind I have seen. Had we got these when with you we would have satisfaction in them. Do you hear of Mr Shaw the Rector hears from him some times but of late he has not mentioned him. We begin to be seriously alarmed about the invasion now. I trust Gid will confound the designs of our barbarous enemy. There surely never was a period more critical in prospect to the fate of this country than the present.

When I was at Drynie I called at Milbank, Mountrich & Mountgerald. All were enquiring very particularly for you. Miss Jenny Bethune has recovered her fever, and so has Miss Christy Bethune it was lucky the fever did not spread in either family.

[to left of address]

At last there have been a company of volunteers raised in Alnes. MountGerald is Capt, Mr Cameron Lieut & Barclay Ensign. Mount Gerald has been rather poorly of late with a neglected sore on one of his legs it confines him much to the house. He is rather better , but still halts a good deal with it. They are like to lose a good deal by the failure of Burns the Architect who was undertaker for their new house the finishing of it is much retarded. It is as compleat a house as I have seen of its size but a ridiculous house for that property, it would be more suitable to Fowlis. It is said it will cost two thousand before they get in it. I believe it gives them enough of vexation by this time. Is not this one proof to you of the folly of being over anxious about a ????? ??? you remember a good unbegun yet. Sandy Sutherland has got an Ensign in the Rossshire Militia you see we are all become soldiers. I never saw Mr Suth^d in better heath and spirits. Our house bye friends

are well & beg to be cordially remembered to you. With our united love to you Mr Watson & a kiss to each of the children from danno Mama I ever am your truly affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

[below address]

Mrs Miller is much distressed she has just heard of her Bro^r Mr Harry Robertsons death he went to bed in health and was found dead in the morning. Mrs Captⁿ lived with him near London.



NLS MS 19331 f79r [2019-11-02 11.24.00.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 31 Dec 1803

My Dear Christy

I was much gratified by your last letter to find that young your dear boys were well as I could wish, and that dear Andrew has got his first tooth, with so little trouble. It is a good age he gets them. I presume by this time another has followed, and that the cow pox is well over, every day comforts the public confidence in this mode of inoculation, which is one of the happiest discoveries to mankind in general. If time makes good the hopes entertained of it. I was happy to learn his jaunt to Birsá agreed so well with Mr Watson, and long to hear he found his excursion to Wall, and South Ronaldsey agree equally well with him. I long much to hear again from you I fear the late storm has stops the communication by post for weeks. For my part I am ashamed of my own laziness. No doubt I had nothing to communicate but the truth is by some inward accident I was prevented to writing the two last posts and then it was too late but I have a plan to guard against this in future.

But by my delay I have it now in my power to inform you that a few days ago we had a letter from Gilbert dated the end of Sept^r he was then he says in perfect health, and mention Mr Watson & you with much warmth and anticipates the pleasure we would derive from our visit to you, which I hope he has had a full account of since from us. Gilbert mentions Wm McCulloch as a well doing clever young man, and who's views he means to forward to us much as lies in his power. He says Tom is well also, Robert Douglas & John Bethune. And all the young men our acquaintance are well. Indeed their friends have heard from them. He supposes Harry Munro would like as well to be still a planter there as farming Limlair. Now Harry is set up in a shop with one Grant at Inverness in a cloth & haberdashery shop. He is a fine spirited lad. It was a great pity to bring him home he was doing so well where he was.

I have often heard from Annie since she left me, she is very mindful and her letters most entertaining, of which I presume you have had several yourself. She is quite happy in her

f79v [2019-11-02 11.24.41.jpg]

friends at Liverpool and says, that as yourself Betsy enjoys much domestic happiness. That you both possess this blessing I cannot be sufficiently thankful for. Without it every other enjoyment is embittered. Ann Sandbach I learn is a fine child she had the cow pox. Mr & Mrs Parker were at Liverpool Charley and the Nurse Betsy when I heard last. They are on their way to Bath to winter

there and to remain a week with their friends. It would be a happy meeting. Indeed Mrs Sandbach owes them much friendship.

We have not heard for a month back from William. They have at Liverpool heard from him often. I regret he has declined passing the winter there, which Mr Sandbach repeatedly intreated him to do. But it is a blessing he says his health mends apace which I sometimes fear is not the case from his late silence. Gilbert regrets his having been obliged to come home, but he is lucky to have him to manage his affairs in his absence.

Here we had an uncommon fall of snow which lasted for a fortnight and the first for several days as severe as I remember. Since the thaw we have some very mild weather but suddenly very severe gales, between which I suppose are sending you a number of poor unlucky wrecks. God help them, there has lately happened a number on most of the coasts in the Kingdom. The very day, this day month the storm began Mac and Hugh came here late Saturday, Sunday was so stormy they left us just as we went to Church, and it was lucky they did for it snowed so much that night and drifted all next day so much they could not travel with safety, poor fellows. They had little pleasure of this visit. They came here Wednesday last the Rector was engaged Christmas Day with his friend Wesh & next day with Provost John. At one time they did not expect to be here at this time, for when Mr & Mrs Manson, & Miss Miller was here your father engaged himself to pass the Holydays at Mrs Millers but she about 5 or 6 weeks ago got accounts of her only brother Mr Harry Robertsons death on hearing this we put off our engagement. Tho' I regret the cause I was well pleased to be off from various reasons particularly having been much seized with rheumatick pains in my limbs for two months. I have now got quite free (unless before rain) and that since the severe frost. The Milbank family were kind enough to press us to be within thumbnut we were pleased to be then engaged. They are passing the merry days between Coul and Connonside, the residence of the two McKenzie Knights. I hear Jenny Bethune is to be married to Mr McAdam. He saw her last summer at the sacrament of Loggie & was caught. You need take no notice of this till I hear more of it. All the Alness family are now at Ardullie. They did not go till Tuesday. Hector went Monday as Sir Hugh dined that day with his mother, Mr Rose & Hector, the Knight & the Ladies were all the party consisted of. I am told he was very chill and absent all the day. I left them at 8

f80r [2019-11-02 11.24.48.jpg]

in the evening. He did not bring Miss with him. She is a fine child. Sir Hugh permitted Miss Ross Kindeace total with her here in Lady Munros carriage. She danced two high dances, very neatly, and sung two songs very well for her age. I hear Sir Hugh dines Monday at Ardullie when the party will be thronged. Christy Bethune Hector and Hugh were here two nights this they are to be all with us next week on their way from Ardullie.

The Rector & Hugh are our only guests except the house bye ladies a matter of course we resolved this as we can have none of that society most dear to us. This house is now a contrast to what it was this time last year it was a seat of mirth & cheerfulness then indeed. And blessed be God there is cause to rejoice still when we hear of all your welfares. But still tis hard. As you observe it is a cruel fate to have you all so far from me. I am thankful to have the Rector & poor Hugh now who is looking very well and seems very much pleased with his new situation, but I refer you to himself who writes before he leaves this. I believe the Rector will be pleased at the shortness of his visit at this time the still solitariness of this house now to what he has seen it damps his spirits.

This moment has your welcome letter of the 22^d arrived with vexed at my own remissness & anxious to hear of I cannot express my satisfaction on perusal of your letter. With much interest have I attended to the various intelligence contained in both your last letter. It is a particular pleasure other Mr Watson enjoyed his visit, and returned in good health. And that sweet Andrew has got so happily over the small pox. And as you were circumstanced I approve much of your fortitude.

There could be little risk in inoculating a child so healthy and well nursed. The attention of your friends and neighbours to you during Mr W's absence is just what I would expect from what I have seen of them. You are very lucky in three such pleasant & accomplished young friends as Miss Laing and the lovely Mary's. I had another very agreeable letter from Miss Manson. I am but a bad correspondent. She must wait an answer till I have something new to amuse her, but give her my best thanks. Hugh sent the few apples for the Marys Fanny & was from me Hugh put in a slip of paper with complements. It was a plan of his own to shew good will as the present was not otherwise worth offering and was a poor picture of what his heart would bestow. The fruits looked well when packed but after being so long unopened I fear you say better of them than they deserved. I hope the hat pleased. I dare say it will become you well and a colour fit for winter or summer. This night we heard from Willie, he is so far recovered he has returned to London. He daily expects to hear from Demerary which will determine his motions. All our friends are highly elevated at that colonys being again in the hands of the British Government. With our united wishes for a good new year and many happy returns to you

f80v [2019-11-02 11.25.04.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Crantit
Kirkwall

[left of address]

Mr Watson & dear children I ever am your most affectionate mother
Anne Robertson

PS There is an allot to the present enjoyment of our friends at Liverpool by the death of Mr Adam Sandbach Mr S's only Bro^r at Stabrock he was a promising young man. Mr Sandbach is in great distress. We was one of the acting partners for his Bro^r & Co there. Wish you may make out this scrawl having had many interruptions.

[below address - written by Hugh]

Kiltearn 31st Dec 1803

Mr dear C

I have a letter begun @ Inverness & meant to have finished it here, but I did not wish a certain person to see it, I couldn't get a private enough opport^y but shall finish it as soon as I return to Inv^s which will be on Tuesday. Your own affec^{te} brother H R

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Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 3
March 1804

My Dear Christy

Nothing prevented my writing till now, but that your father wrote to Mr Watson, and his welcome reply just arrived as I began to long to hear from you. It affords us the most unfeigned pleasure to learn that you both and your darling boys were well as we can wish.

I have no to acquaint you that my poor niece Susan McCulloch departed this life on Friday at eight at night the 17th of last month. her sister Annie writes me it was very unexpected at the time, but that she had for 10 days laboured under a severe reaching cough, great heat, and thirst. These symtoms disappeared for two days and although she was much exhausted, they thought she was recovering but Friday even^g about six o clock she became very weak and faintish continued in this state till eight when she expired without a sigh or groan but shut her eyes as if falling asleep. From the recollection of what she was when herself her family must have felt I regret at the . . . parting. But upon the whole there is a great cause to be thankful that her sufferings are now happily at an end, and that have no further concern about her which could not . . . if she had even recovered to be as well as ever she was. What a smart pleasant girl she was when last here when she, & her brother William set out from this for Loth together, and you with them, little was I aware that this would be the last sight to me of her. Unlike was she then to the misfortune which so soon came upon her.

When we see one here and there of our friends drop from the stage of life, it should remind us of the uncertainty we have of this world at every period of our existence . . . thankful it was not Bell, or Annie, that was taken away. If it was either of them we would feel cause to go unto mourning, but now I would think it wrong for what there . . . every cause to reckon a deliverance, so that for the present I have not even mentioned her death here. There is still less reason for you taking any notice of it. I believe since I wrote you that worthy Mrs Miller lost her only sister Mrs Captⁿ Robertson, she did not survive her brother long she died also at Brimingham and Mrs Manson went there hearing she was drawing near her end, but did not overtake her in life but saw the last duty paid her, and no doubt saw her effects taken care of. They are a rich family her bro^r left her the half of his fortune, it is said amounted to 8000 which if she has not made a will falls to Mrs Miller.

I was pleased to see your hand addressed to your brother as if he had been here. It was forwarded to him. Our friends at Liverpool were in some mistake about his being north so soon, for himself never said to us he would come till the warm season. He rather seemed anxious to return to Demerara, but we entreated of him not to think of this for a season, if he passed the summer here he will recruit well I trust. I suppose you will soon hear from William. I cannot help regretting that he has not visited his friends at Liverpool. They have repeatedly pressed him to come to them.

We are happy from the hint Mr Watson gave in his letter that we have the pleasing prospect of seeing him here this season on his way farther south. It will no doubt take some time before he return. Your father and I entreat, and hope, you will come along with him and bring the dear boys and Betty with you, or whom you please, w^t out the dear creatures I would not desire you to come, I beg you may not mention trouble

f81v [2019-11-02 11.31.22.jpg]

As to them, what would be out greatest enjoyment now. It is not probable this exclusion would suit you so well again uniter season, and I think such a change would be much in yours, and the children favours, while Mr Watson can be disposed with, no fear but you can leave your household affairs in

such order and in a train that matters will go properly in your absence. Betwixt Miss Banks and Dame Costin I think you will not be at a loss. I am glad the former is yet with you and I hope she will not leave you till it please God you return from this. If she must then I presume you will soon wean Andrew. April is reckoned the best season for this the nights being short and new cow milk coming in. He will be then 9 months a very good time for him. You should not keep him at your breast so long as you did Harry, and if you are getting so thin as then the sooner you wean him the better. I know from experience how averse you will be to wean him.

We had a visit from Hugh Saturday, Inverness agrees well with him for he is looking well and likes his situation. He was no less the at an assembly lately and had the honour to dance with Miss Catherine Munro (Culcairn is now on this side after having been two months confined in Town with the gout). He was here a night last week on his way. Hugh left us on Tuesday. On Monday we all hands dined at Tennoord and had a feast of good things. Our party was Mr & Mrs Brodie, the House bye's, Our Noble Selves and Kattie Munro, who I have had with me since Christmas. She is a sweet tempered modest girl and I am the better of having her. Hugh left the Rector very well, but as he has got a double charge he could not conveniently come back with Hugh, besides he has now but half the inducements he had, since all his young friends of this house have taken wing. No piano or musick is to be heard in this dull mansion now.

We have been pretty quiet all winter. Since I write you we had Miss C Bethune her aunt Mrs McLeod and Kattie a week with us. They seemed pleased with their visit. I had Mrs Sutherland a week with me I never saw her better or more agreeable, I have some hopes she is in a family way, at least I never saw her so like it. Sandy Suth^d has got an ensigncy in the Rossshire Militia and is gone to Aberdeen which seems to gratify his wife a genteeler situation than his former one. Esther & I had many long cracks about "old lang syne" which she liked much. I had not so much of her society since she changed her state. She expressed herself with strong affection for you. I have not seen any of the Reids family since Annie went away, which I regret but I mean to call on them soon.

We should be very thankful, the leg dreary winter is well over with us it has been little frost or snow, but much rain and calm weather so that the talks in the garden are as green as they were May last. The curran & gooseberry bushes are budding and so are the hawthorn hedges. The Christmas rose, and the snowdrop, have been blown since early in January, and other flowers now beg to peep. Notwithstanding the mild winter very severe and sudden gales have come at intervals, which has done I believe more havoc at sea than more stormy winters particularly the gale of the 10th of last month was dreadful. On that night the Buxar from London to Cromarty was lost opposite to the river Don near Aberdeen and every soul on board perished, crew & passengers 28 souls. Who the passengers were is not yet found out. Captⁿ Allen Robertson bespoke a passage on her but luckily for him she did not get away so soon as would suit him. You will be sorry to hear he is failing in consequence of the failure of the Banff Robertsons, with whom he was connected in trade.

Do you ever hear of Mr Shaw I find he has sold his elegant house at Inv^s which vexes his best friends and draws reflections from those disposed to find fault. I cannot but regret from my friendship with this genteel young man that his conduct is not what his friends would wish or expect from him.

I am sorry to find from Mr Watson that our amiable friend Mr Baikie is complaining again.

f82r [2019-11-02 11.31.32.jpg]

I hope it is not a return of her former cruel distress, remember us with affection to all this worthy family. How do they at Mrs Laing's do they hear often of Mr & Mrs Blair. And how does Mr Laing do this winter I confess I reckon him one who can make himself very agreeable. I had another very kind letter from Miss Mary Manson some time ago but I have really so little to say can be interesting to her I cannot reckon my letters worth postage however if you think proper I will write

her, she is a sweet girl who I would be happy to oblige. Offer my kindest remembrances to her, and to Mr & Mrs Manson. Also to the rest of our good acquaintances but particularly our friend the Bishop of Landaff we are pleased he sometime thinks of us. I assure we have not forgotten him. Wish he may continue to see us going or coming the next time he goes south.

Hugh was much gratified with a kind letter from you. How much am I obliged by the affectionate manner in which you mention me there. Altho I often acutely feel the distance betwixt me and my dear children, yet I feel that absence rather increases than abates their duty & affection to a degree I might not know were they allways near me. Thus I have to say of you all. Your attention in frequent writing your solicitude all for my comfort in every respect, are blessings I feel with gratitude to the giver of all good, and then to you my dear children.

We have this day heard from Mr Sandbach all our dear friends there are well but I refer you to Annies letters from whom I suppose your hear frequently. She tells e she has from you. Her letters are most interesting since her departure as she is at pains to amuse me with a description of every thing she sees worth mentioning but you will no doubt have all this from herself so I need add no more.

Monday March 5th

Who was at church yesterday and dined with us here but Mr Reid Kinnairdyhe says Betsy was plagued with sore eyes, and Miss Reid and Justina had bad colds, which prevented the seeing me, but that they meant to be soon here. He drunk you Mr Watson & the boys with great glee.

Poor little Mary Bertram by the overturn of Mr Donald Maryfields gig at her fathers door, had her arm broke a week ago. I hear she is like to do well. Mrs Mckenzie was much crushed in the side but is getting better. When you consider the place they fell, it is a wonder they escaped in life.

The lower ranks have been very sickly, in the country. William Munro the Taylor did lately of a fever. And poor Hugh McInlay in Ballevard, had lost three daughters, of whom Eppy his oldest daughter was the last, and turned a stout pretty girl. One family in the Glen of Alnes lost 4 daughters, and a son in six weeks of these fevers, the youngest of them twenty. It was a moving scene to see the burial of two of the girls at the same time pass our windows on a Sunday morning

I had a good letter from William lately he writes now in better spirits than when he came to London. I flatter myself you and he, will pass a part of the summer together here I will make everything as comfortable for you as I can.

By your letter to Hugh, I see you have been very gay about Kirkwal. I am happy to find you have enjoyed a new year in such health & spirits. With love and complements to you Mr Watson and the dear boys in which you father joins and in hopes of hearing from you soon, I ever am your most affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

f82v [2019-11-02 11.33.08.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Crantit
Kirkwall

[to left of address]

By a letter just come from Kilmote our friends there are as wells could be expected.

Your friend Mrs Fraser the late factors wife died last week of some weeks illness. She was very kind hearted and has left a throng & I fear a destitute family but t us to be hoped the Marquis of

Stafford will take care of them I am sorry to hear that worthy Mr Gordon Carrol is in a dying way which he foresees himself with great composure and resignation. Few mended a more uniform exemplary good life.

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Mrs Anne Robertson, Tain, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 20
Apr 1804

My Dear Christy,

I have the pleasure to inform you that your commands for me send by Cromarty came safe to hand and next day your welcome favour by post reached me, before the arrival of these Was as yourself beginning to be anxious to hear from you. Much am I gratified by your unearned attention to say everything that can please me in your letters. Your duty and affection is what I cannot be sufficiently humble and at the same time thankful to almighty God un bestowing such amiable children upon me. To look to their last letters often, is a source of enjoyment that cheers & comforts me till the next arrive. But above everything to hear that you & yours are well as I could wish is pleasing to me. The beautiful purse resented to me by Miss Baikie is a mark of her friendship, and goodness, I cannot forget. I will allways keep it as a remembrance of her. It is as pretty as the fair bestower. I beg you say everything for me to her and assure her I lay a due value on her present. I give a sight of it to everyone I think has taste to admire it and its quite a new thing here. Much do I regret anything should happen to give a pang to her young & gentle heart, which I know her amiable mothers illness must occasion. I pray God her present sufferings may not terminate in her old complaint. Is there no remedy, n medicine to change the habit and prevent the return of so fatal a malady. I have heard of Strathpeffer water as a cure for the old complaint, you well know what is it for rheumatisms. But I only hint this to you by the bye. I beg you say in your next how this good lady does, in whose welfare and that of every individual in her family I am much interested.

I am convinced our friends in Liverpool will think highly of the specimens Miss Baikie has sent them of her elegant handy work. I would fain hope they would think of some suitable return as it is in their power, but as for me except I were to write her a letter of thanks, thats all I can now think of and I am rather averse to begin a new correspondence. You can say if you think it proper or expected.

That Mrs Manson should act so genteel a part by you, I am not surprised at. Whatever is friendly and delicate I would expect from the opinion I have of her. I am to hear of the welfare of this good couple, tell their sweet daughter I will write her soon.

Most sincerely do I feel for Mrs & Miss Laing. They may well say indeed that afflictions do not come singly. May he who has wounded them support and comfort them as they require. Their departure from Kirkwall will make a sad blank to their friends. It will be a shock to you to part with such uniformly kind friends. The death of that pretty boy in his parents absence is doubly distressing. Unlike was he dear child, to be so near his end last summer when I saw him.

I am sorry to hear that Kirkwall has been so sickly. I should suppose the influence which visited us last year has not reached you till now. Should it attack you I should advise you to give up the nursing at once.

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I am much pleased to hear Mrs Turin has got the better of so severe an illness to her and her sister. I beg to be kindly remembered. What a pity the Worlds gear should make such a difference betwixt such near friends as those you have mentioned. It was certainly agreeable enough that thee stranger gentlemen who visited your place in consequence of the wrecks, were altogether such an acquisition to your society thro the winter.

We have not the least idea of going south this season. Your father has some thought of being at General Assembly next year if spared but no farther at present. He considers Liverpool too great a distance for him. I cannot say how much the prospect of seeing Mr Watson and you and your dear children at Killtearn pleases us. I pray God nothing will occur to prevent this happiness to me. I flatter myself you Amy meet your brother William. His last letter informs that he was to leave London in May. He saw George Hall, and George Sutherland, lately. They are both captains & men of much merit he adds.

I hear Mr & Mrs Parker are gone to London from bath and return soon to Glasgow. I learn Bath has agreed well with both. You may perhaps have observed that George Rainy has obtained a prize at college, it must be a great gratification to his friends that he is so good a schollar, and so promising. We had a visit from Hugh the beginning of the month. He is looking well and getting taller he told me he had writ you a short time before so I refer you to his own information. It is a comfort to me to get a sight of him at times you may believe. He left the Rector well, but he is so much engaged ;east term he cannot come near his old friends.

About a fortnight ago we dined at Mr Brodies Mr Reid & his family were of the party. They made a point with us to dine the Monday after with them. There was a gentleman of the name of Stevenson from Berwick dined with a very intelligent pleasant man. He came north to take a lease of the salmon fisheries. Mr George Simpson was there besides. The Miss Munro's were asked but made their apology. We remained here till Thursday. Tuesday we dined at Mountrich but returned at night to Kinnairdy. Wed^y was a presbytery day at Dingwall which your father attended and I remained with my friends. I just called upon the Miss Munro's & on poor Mrs Flowerburn who is much gone. She is not half the size she was. On Monday we called at Millbank. They are all well there. They had just got home two little Foreigners children of their Brother the late Doctor George Bethune. Their mother was a Brigand. They are yellow, ugly things. I think it would be best to leave them in their own country but their aunt seems very tender of them and much interested. Miss Jenny goes to live with them to her own house at Dingwall at the term. As to her marriage I look on it now as a piece of wit of John McKenzie's as I hear nothing of it now. He lives at Millbank with his pupils, is that they have a throng family for the present. I need not tell you how agreeably the time past with me the few days I spent at Kinnairdy where your health was allwise a particular toast. Miss Betsy is to spend a week with me on our return from the east.

I accompanied your father here on Monday last the 16th the Synod met here on Tuesday last it was your fathers turn to preach. All the gentlemen and ladies in the Town assembled to church to hear the discourse, which seemed much approved of by all who heard it. I am happy of an opportunity to have enjoyed the society of my worthy friends here before their departure for the south. They propose leaving Tain early in June. Mr Ross goes south with them. You cannot imagine what a regret all ranks here have at losing I may say the best ornament of their society in this worthy family. Mrs Miller is much affected as it draws near a period to leave place where she lived many happy years but she has good reasons to make the change and I hope it will answer well.

There is a house taken for her in Frederick Street, Edin^r. Mrs & Miss Miller, Mr & Mrs Ross were kindly solicitous in their inquiries about you & beg to be remembered in the kindest manner to you. I have now passed near a week most agreeably with my dear friends

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here, if anything could exceed their former kindness that have shewn it now. I expected Annie McCulloch to meet us here, she came yesterday poor girl she looks very thin. She left her mother well, she tells me she heard from you lately.

I return you my best thanks for so large a share of smoked geese. I think they are the finest I have yet seen. I sent the rector his pair, and I brought a pair here. Your handsome webs of table cloths shews what a notable person you are. I sent them to Mr Tait who is proud of getting them and promises to do them in his best manner.

Mrs & Miss Miller & all your friends here join me in offer of kindest respects to Mr Watson & you. Give a kiss from dannu Mama to the Der boys. Ever My Dearest Christy

Your truly affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

Mrs Miller brings Mr Ross's two oldest daughters with her to Edin^r. Good wishes to Mrs Costin. I give her joy of her daug^r.

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Mrs Watson
Crantit
Kirkwall

NLS MS 19331 f85r [2019-11-02 11.34.52.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 19 May 1804

My Dear Christy

I was made happy by yours of the 8th to learn that you Mr Watson and the dear children were then well, as I was anxious to hear from you particularly about your intentions of coming here this season, and sorry am I defined anything should occur to prevent you from being here now. We have had a severe cold spring, but for a fortnight back the weather has been charming the vegetation rapid, and the country is looking well, and the gardens are very sweet now, so that if the lovely boys were here they would enjoy them. I regret every day now you are not here particularly when I am walking without doors that you might share with me in all the beauties of the season to be seen now.

When you my dear intend a visit to this country, it is so troublesome a journey, besides what it is for the mistress of the family to arrange matters for her absence so long that you should if possible lay your plans to be three months away at least. This, or half the time would be but the same trouble to you to prepare for, and by rights you should be here the end of this month or early of the next. I dare say you will not take it amiss if [I] should propose that the children and you would come in a cutter the first that sails, and Mr Watson to follow you, and return home with you. And our friend Llandaff would I dare say convey you here, who I assure you we will be happy to see. If Mr Watson or you thinks it unkind to propose what would separate you, impute it not to this my dear, as I will be very sorry even to think of what might prove disagreeable to either, but to my eager wish to have as much of yours and the dear childrens company here, as his business will not permit his leaving home so early as we could wish. I suppose you or he cannot be well absent from the market, as it takes place early in August, and this will scrimp you sadly in time you put of your visit till the end of June. I know my dear now that you have resolved to gratify me and yourself you will make every exertion that you own good sense, & love of propriety can dictate. I am happy you have no plans of going to Liverpool this season. In that case I could only ask before expect a sight of you, besides it is too formidable a journey to take rashly and people would need to consider it while so as to be prepared for it. I know it will be a disappointment to your friends there that you cannot see them. I had a letter from Annie a few days ago from Chester where they spent a very pleasant gay time during the race week there, I suppose you have by this time had an ample account of this excursion from herself I will forbear to say more on the subject, only to observe that I am much

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pleased the weaning agreed with Anne Sandbach so well that her mother did not suffer from the milk. The measles are here as well as with you, but of a mild kind. I would reckon it lucky to have all childrens diseases over them early, so I wish yours may have the measles over or now they could not take them at a better season of the year. If yourself keeps stout its well judged to keep Andrew on the breast for a few weeks, but if you were getting thin you should not persist in this. Dear creatures I will be anxious to hear of them soon & will expect to hear from you on receipt of this of your motions

Mrs Arthur Risolis died about three weeks ago after having been brought to bed as long, of a seven month daugh^r the poor infant lives, and three boys. Is really unfortunate to lose so sweet woman. She has been in a deep decline for two years, she died with much composure & resignation.

I had the pleasure of Miss Betsy Reids company here for ten days. She is really an amiable girl. Soon after my return from Tain her father & sisters she formed a party to come here & dine with a Mr Stevenson from Berwick, who was some years Mayor of the Town. He has now the salmon fisheries of this county, and is an intelligent agreeable gentleman. Culcairn & Mr Cameron was here that day Hector & C Bethune & two young lads of the Drynie family. I could prevail with her to prolong her stay which I would have liked much. She rejoices in the prospect of seeing you soon. I wish Landaff and she would make it up. I think they would make an excellent match. I was joking herself about him, & I think I have given a favourable opinion of the gentleman, if ever they meet. If I had not a good opinion of both I would not even such a thing to either. Many a conversation I had with about you & the boys. Miss Annie & Miss Johana Munro were with me a week they left me yesterday and begged to be kindly remembered to you. Poor Miss Annie I feel for her in the severe shock she got by the death of our amiable friend Mrs Ferguson. She endeavours to keep her spirits pretty well but I do not think she has got the better of the shock yet. These ladies meant to visit me in winter when I was alone but betwixt colds, and changes of weather, put it off till now.

By the last account from William we look for him every day. He had engaged his passage on board the Macduff Captⁿ Clarke who is daily expected at Cromarty. I cannot help regretting he did not take a trip to Liverpool if but for a few days. They pressed him to pass the winter there. It would have a good look that he saw his sisters before he came north but there is no accounting for the motives some folks have for being singular. Take no notice of this in return I will wait to write Miss Manson till William arrives. I am convinced Williams arrival will be a spur to you, & very natural and right it should be so. I should be very happy & thankful

f86r [2019-11-02 11.35.10.jpg]

and so I feel in the hope of seeing him once more after every scene he has gone through but what a variety of ideas his coming occasions in my mind the important & various changes in our own family since he left us have been sources of joy and grief to me such as might be expected in this changeable, transient life. Every one asks for you & is happy in the prospect of seeing you here soon. I have nothing new to say but have writ this scrawl in hurry in hopes to spur you Oh how I long to see you and the dear children our acquaintance Betty will be the nurse that accompanies you. It gives me sincere pleasure to hear that our amiable friend Mrs Baikie is well and all that good family. Also that worthy Mrs Manson has escaped so dangerous and illness. You have been very gay with the crews of these Men of War. I enjoyed to hear that their society was so agreeable. Your father and your cousin joined me in love & best wishes to Mr Watson & you

I allways remain. MyDearChristy

Your ever affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

Hugh & Mr MacGregor made us a visit this day fortnight. I did not see the Rector before since Christmas, a change you will observe. He looks thin he has had two classes all the season to teach. He desired me mention him in the kindest manner to you with the best thanks for the geese he was quite gratified your attention. Hugh looks well.

What do you think of Mr Sh—w our young agreeable friend. O what a pity I am told after spending everything his estate is to be sold this week. I am really mortified at this more than I can ow say. What blind creatures we are and how little can we say what s best for us. Who would tell me this about this time two years I would not believe them.

God bless you my dear & grant me a happy meeting wt you soon.

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Mrs Watson

Crantit

Kirkwall

The Watsons all intended to visit Kiltarn in the summer but Mr Watson was detained in Orkney by estate business and so Dr Traill accompanied them. They sailed from Orkney in a navy cutter, leaving in 23 June and arriving on the evening of 25 June. They stayed at Kiltarn until 29 July. It had been agreed that they would leave the children with their grandparents. Traill and Christy arrived in Orkney on 31 July.

NLS MS 19331 f87r [IMG_2730.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 1 Sep 1804

Yours of the 21st Ult to My Dearest Christy gives me the sincerest pleasure to learn that Mr Watson and you are quite well and fit to enjoy the gaities and benefits arising from the market. It is surely a joyous time with you at Kirkwal. I cannot forget what a new and interesting scene what I witnessed of it was to me last year. I have the inexpressible pleasure to say that your darling boys continue as well as we can wish them. Only think of lovely Andrew. He now walks across the room by himself and proud is he of his performance. He often laughs with such glee that he tumbles down and I assure you no young man can have greater alacrity of falling with ease upon his bottom. It is hardly to be believed all his little tricks, he scolds, and beats ups occasions but to show you how well bred at the same time, he kisses his hand when desired. None enjoys his little acquirements more than Harry. We think he still looks about him at the mention of Doctor Trail, Papa, and Mama. Harry is just time in beside me and n being informed that I was writing you he must get pen, ink, & paper to write Mama a letter. I am happy to tell you that Harry very luckily does not attempt to go any farther, than the bank or fore garden alone. And as for the scaffolds he never thinks of attempting them hitherto. The gardens are a great amusement to both. Harry has access when he pleases to the east garden by the parlour window which is so low he can go out & in without any assistance with ease, altho' he has allways somebody with him. Andrew cries, and scolds, if he is brought paste gardens now he knows them so well. George Rainy left us this day. The children became very fond of him and he of them. He delighted in nursing Andrew. Miss Flory is gone to Creich with him to pass a month with her friends there. You would hear our Friends at the Mill were happily relieved of their anxiety by a remittance of 100£ from their bror Gilbert.

You will regret to hear that our dear William had two severe attacks of that pain in his loins, and which surrounds him internally. When very ill it threw him both times to a smart fever, which went off with a brisk perspiration. None of them exceeded 24 hours but yet they reduced him a great deal. Nor do I think him yet s well as when you were here. He takes a ride with a dry day, but has not been well enough to go any where since I let wrote you. The rainy weather which we had here to an extreme after you left us was much against him. It was lucky he gave up the plan of going your length this season. I do not think he can venture to Suthd or Inverness as he proposed. On every account happy would I be to see Doctor Trail here soon again, but especially in Williams, he had such confidence in him as a friend as well as a physician.

We had the report of Mr Shaws marriage to Miss Laing from Inverness, and very soon after saw it in the news papers confirmed. Your father was at Novar a day. Mrs MacCae had a letter from one of Mr S's sisters which signified neither her friends or his were pleased with their Union. As a proof of this altho her mothers house was in town, they were married at an hotel & set out immediately for Glasgow

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Whatever is in this most sincerely do I wish this young pair every happiness that the married state can bestow and I make no doubt for all that the tongues of malice have said against him, but he will prove one of the best of husbands. Unwilling was I ever to believe what was to his disadvantage and it gives joy to my heart that the disagreeable reports we had some time ago of him, prove false. It is strange what a pleasure some have in bad report, even of those who never did, or would not hurt them.

Since I first saw Miss Laing it struck me she had a resemblance to Mr Shaw which I am sure I told you. So that they make good the common remark that man and wife generally resemble each other. I think this is the case with another pair you have mentioned in whom we are interested. So Mrs Richan and her beautiful daughter have at last arrived at home. I am afraid I cannot expect seeing Doctor Trail here so soon again as we fondly expected. You will by this time have observed how Mr Laing relishes his sisters marriage.

My dear niece left me on Tuesday last she makes indeed a great thank you to me but my poor sisters health has for some weeks been at times rather alarming so that she was impelled thro' anxiety to leave us much sooner than we or herself intended or wished. It was a severe trial to her to part with the children and they became very fond of her. She begged to be affectionately remembered to you. I think she was to write you on her getting home. I was Thursday at Novar all there are much as you saw them. I had no opportunity of any thing more than general things with them all. Miss A Munro and her sister Christy, have been there upwards of a fortnight past they were all making kind inquiries for you. Last week I had a letter from Mrs Man she said she was to write you before she left Cromarty which I suppose happened last week. Mr Man was called away by his mercantile affairs sooner than he expected which deprives us of the pleasure of seeing them again at this time as they intended. I regret to find that he has been rather worse since he was here.

I had a letter from Liverpool of the 24th August, all friends there well. I dare say you had chiefly what it contains, but there is one paragraph relates to Betty Miller which you are interested on and therefore I think the sooner you are informed of to the better. Betty applied William to write Annie to enquire for her bror and know from him the cause why his friends had not heard from him since his arrival in England. Annies reply is as follows "I am just returned from the American Hotel where I was accompanied by Mr Sandbach at Betty Millers request I called upon her brother Captⁿ William Miller of the ship Maria. I had a pretty long conference with him. In a dining parlour of the hotel, where he dines every day. When I mentioned his mother and sisters, he seem'd much gratified. You will please tell this to Betty and that her Bror arrived in this port on 21st of July with a cargo of American cotton and that he is to sail for Philadelphia the 29th Augt which he said he was sorry would put it out of his power to carry Betty along with him on this voyage but begged I should mention to her, that t is at present his intention to return in three month to this port, and on his arrival here he will write her fully when he hopes to have the pleasure of her company returning. And that some ladies of his acquaintance going out for America on his next voyage where she shall find it more agreeable than on the present occasion. He told me he had written his mother n his arrival here He is a healthy looking good humoured little man. His wife & family are well. By this you see you can not depend

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a day after the term. Her brother is bent on having her and she seems equally desirous to go to him, which is natural enough on her circumstances. I took care to say nothing of her mothers illness, and if her mother continues ill it will be needless to say any thing of Betty's plans, til there is a prospect of her recovery. Her poor mother is to be pitied if she lives till the parting take place. I must say for Betty she has given me much satisfaction since you parted with us. She has been so sedate & solid and anxious about the children and everything relating to them, and never wishes for a moment out

of their light. Your father & William join me in love & affection to Mr Watson and you. I remain Mt
Dear Christy yours ever
Anne Robertson

Miss Bell Mcleod and Miss Bell Urquhart arrived here just now to pass a few days. Mrs Mcleod & her daugr are come to pass some time at Strathpeffer. Lady does not join them for some time.

So many naval officers, and other respectable strangers must ass much to the gaiety of your society of late. Mr Shearer's present is really genteel. You may depend upon it if any of your friends come our way we shall shew them every attention in our power. I never doubt but Mr W and you will look in ups us on your way south. There is to powerful an attraction now here to doubt it. Harry has go this two new suits which enough at present so that I am pleased you have not provided any. The frocks signify less.

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Address

Mrs Watson Crantit
Kirkwall

NLS MS 19331 f89r [IMG_2734.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney 12
Oct 1804

My Dearest Christy

I have now to thank you for your several agreeable letters by Messrs Munro Shearer and the past by post. ??? I have reason to bear is past. The letter and parcel sent by him came free by post but we neither saw or heard any think of himself which we regret as he seems an obliging easy man. Happy am I to find that Mr Watson and you are well. A better proof you cannot give than that your friend s and you are happy together in the several nice parties you mention being at. Also the late gaities of the Market. Long may you have health and spirits to partake of these social and innocent amusements without health they would soon become a burden. I flatter myself you will not feel the worse of the fatigue and late hours you have had. The several things you sent the children fit to a wish, but the shoes, which are so small they will only do for Andrew, but being o concern about Harry on this account as we have got him supplied from Inverness. The great coats they both admire, and when Andrew has on the dark coat and red cap with his pretty fair hair appearing, he is such a curious little daring that are all delighted with him. He walks stoutly now with all his getting his eye teeth of ate, with no more trouble but being a few days rather fretful which is not his usual. Do you know Harry talks of his Papa and you oftener of late than after you left us. He is so sensible he thinks it is time you should return to him, but he is quite in a bustle when he observes a boat coming near this shore, he cries out its Capt Camerons boat with Papa and Mama, and must go and see them. They keep excellent health but they were of late looking paler than usual, as perhaps stye got too much fruit. I gave then a slight vomit which gave the little trouble and I think they were much the better of it. We have given up the bathing in the sea now but we get salt water to the house . I think they were both the better of the bathing particularly Andrew it strengthened him much. Not a spot or speck has either at present on the head or elsewhere which is a pleasant circumstance for the dear lambs. Harry is no less pleased with his great coat. Whenever he gets anything that pleases

him he says I will bring this home to Harry's own house, and when he observes any of us get letters he expresses his disappointment the he has not a letter from Mama. On the occasions a letter is written and delivered to himself as from you, which satisfies him completely.

He is daily improving in sense & stature. I am much obliged to you

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thinking of the carpet pattern its just what I wanted.

Since I began this your welcome favour of the 1st came to hand. I attend to all your directions concerning Betty, and will observe them with care. She will be supplied by your father with cash for the journey, and we will contrive to plan it so as to make her travells as easy for her as possible. She desires me to think you in the most grateful manner for the interest you take in her. She is quite relieved, and thankful, you are not angry with her for leaving the children this winter. She wishes to know if her sisters husband has returned from Fair Isle yet.

A successor to Betty has given me a good deal of thought already, and I have several in my view. I have not yet just fixed on one but will in a few days. You may depend upon it my dear Christy that every thing in our power will be done to make separation betwixt Betty and the dear fellows as easy as possible. I am getting a little bed made for Harry to lie along the side of my own which as he & I are now very great I think he will like better than being with any but Betty. She has managed very well with both at night, but will not have it so with any other that is with ??? I have one allways ??? The other bed in the children's room, and will take care it will be allways so. Never think of their trouble the dear creatures are easily managed and give little of that to what they afford us of pleasure. Indeed they are a constant source of delight. The girl you proposed for the children would do very well and we would have no objection to, if she were not at present other ways engaged.

One of the stages you proposed for Betty, I am heartily sorry to say is done away by the truly melancholy death of Mrs Henderson. By a letter I had yesterday from Annie McCulloch she informs me that on Thursday even of last week the 4th I think she with her son & grieve went on board a vessel bound for Aberdeen, where she meant to pass the winter and had some of her family there at school. SHe had her herrings, and the different produce of the season, on board. On Friday morning. Young man went to the shore to spy if the ship was in sight then when the first object that caught his eye was Mrs Henderson's lifeless corpse floating ashore. He soon after perceived several other proofs that all was lost. There were nine English men on board, besides the cow and the Clyth Family. This is a most deplorable catastrophe. Much will she be lamented. Mat God pity her numerous young family, and may they inherit the promise for the fatherless, & the ???. But the loss of such a mother is irreparable to them.

Next to the above I truly regret the unlucky failure of Mr Patterson. He was such a genteel agreeable sort of man that I am sorry it should be his fate to fall under the odium and ill will which of course he will feel from those who are the sufferers by him. I trust Mr Watson has escaped any material loss by him. I really deplore to hear is confined in the prison of Wick.

Hugh wrote you a few lines on his arrival to ease your mind about the children. Mr McGregor came along with him on Saturday even & for the first time since you were here, he lefts Sunday forenoon. William & Hugh set out for Creich Tuesday last. They have had fine weather since to their jaunt. They had not fixed on a time for their returning. This week I had a call from Mrs Munro Poinzfield, and from Mrs Hay by way of taking leave, Sir Hector & Mrs Watson called another day for the same purpose. He leaves Novar for London the 22nd Mrs Hay & Mrs McCae travel with him. The latter told me with tears in her eyes the sisters had used her most harshly all along, which I suppose will prevent their presence in the same summer residence in future which I am sorry for on their own account. Mrs Mc told me a certain ??? wished to preside at home

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as well as here which was one cause of her ill will to her. I think Mrs Mc is very unfortunate in having lost, so soon too, so very agreeable a husband as Mr McCae is described by Doctor Haydell to have been. Everyone who has seen her here allows her to have conducted herself agreeable & unassuming and I believe is humanity and pity for her situation and ill health, that induced her friend here to give her so much attention. No man you know can do more disinterested actions.

I am much pleased to learn that the acquaintance of Doctor Haydell is such an acquisition to Mr Watson and you. It is very agreeable that he should be the means of doing away with that spite which his friends so causelessly kept up against Mr Watson. What has no solid foundation must soon give way.

Hugh Munro called twice this week. I think he looks much better than when I first saw him. He told me he was to reside with Doctor Wishart as he must go thro' a course of mercury as the only cure for his complaint the liver, and he goes to Cheltenham in the spring. This I hear is a pan of his Fathers. What a loss to him now the death of his amiable sister. He tells me General Ferguson is well, and the dear children very promising.

Jack Richie your old acquaintance and a young brother of his and his two sisters who lived with Mrs Scobie Ardmore were here a night on their way south. Jack is turned out a smart clever fellow. He is now set up in business at Liverpool & on friendly habits with our friends there. He told your father Mrs Sandbach was reckoned far gone in a family way before he left Liverpool but perhaps this is no news to you.

. . . friends I have mentioned were . . . ing very particularly about you and . . . ry one of the admiring your dear little . . . The Miss Richies told me Mrs Scobie . . . immediately to be married to one Jopland a marble cutter and then set off with him for Newcastle his place of residence. They seem hurt at this marriage they say he is rather vulgar and not her equal altho' a good sort man in his own way.

I rejoice that Mr Shaws marriage is so agreeable to his wife friends, as the malicious reports of hm in this country were false. They have every reason to be satisfied . That they will be a happy couple I make no doubt of. His sisters are afraid he may carry shy to their poor things he is their chief dependance to bring forward in life. I am convinced if you are spared to meet them you would give a hint to Mrs Shaw how creditable it will be to her if to shew attention to her sisters in law. This will be gratifying their brother even if ??? Himself were to carry shy to them for the treatment his mother has given him.

My dearest Christy I am now more uneasy than ever that you should go to sea at such an unfavourable season. Unless you get a cutter or some fine Shinto bring you, for Gods sake stay at home if possible put it off till spring. When giving you a detail of Mrs Hendersons hard fate I did not consider that you might have a full account of it before me. I am happy the posts go twice a week on every account. When I am enjoying the prattles & play of the dear boys, I grudge that you are not seeing them. I well know how much Mr Watson and you will miss them with the long evenings when you are more at leisure from company. Harry is now by me and offers his love to his mother as he sometimes calls you. With every good wish to Mr Watson & you I remain your truly affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

f90v [IMG_2737.jpg]

This day I have heard form Betsy. She there announces what Mr Richie told us which is expected to take place early in Decr. With expecting you so longing September, and with bad health for two months with rheumatic ailments I have stupidly neglected sending the sweet meats. The apples are now ready I will send a box to be send from Cromarty if an opportunity offers soon for Orkney or

to meet you at Leith. AT last I have got a sort of letter made out which you will please send and deliver if you are not ashamed to in such a scrawl from to another. My chief complaint is now in my hands & fingers if they were not so crippled I would write it over again. This is the season people are on the move and we have new comers every day as unexpected as if from the clouds so you know what an interruption to regular correspondence form me.

Mrs Watson Crantit
Kirkwall

Miss Annie is every day here since I was indisposed and very attentive. I am getting much better. I have not been confined to bed a day but a good deal to my room while my feet were pained that are quite well since I applied leeches. Your friend Mrs McLeod has been here for two days she begs to be kindly remembered to Mr Watson & you. She has been at Strathpeffer with Miss Isabella who was in poor health . She goes to Edin^r from the Northern Meeting which is going n this week. Lady Grant joins her mother at Rosskeen and visit their friends at Gueneas.

NLS MS 19331 f91r [IMG_2738.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 27 Oct 1804

My dearest Christy

Unless something in articular should interfere I wish to acquit weekly how your dear boys do and it is with pleasure that I now say that are well and chearful as we can wish. In my last toy I wrote rather in an undetermined manner about a successor to Betty. I know it will relieve your mind that I have one now in the house for a week past. Miss Annie was last summer in Cromarty and found that George Sandersons people wished much for a place for their oldest daughter. From what Miss Annie saw of her, and the character Miss Hall gave of her, who she often assisted when Miss Hall had any hurry. Miss Annie told your father & me, that she hoped we would be as well appointed as with any other we could get here about. As we considered her an honest mans child that she was brought up with good example, we thought it as well to give her a trial. We sent for her and her mother came with her, and delivered her thankfully on our on terms. Her appearance is not so showy as Betty's but I am hopeful she is fit for her charge as Betty was where she got it. She has been used to nurse and handles the children purpose like enough. She seems cleanly and good tempered, and lively, so that she amuses the children in a way that they are become fond of her already, which is a greater relief to me than I can say. As they doted so much on Betty, I was much afraid it would not be an easy matter to bring them so soon to bear another. It is very lucky that Batty was not obliged t leave us till they got acquaint with Jean. Poor Betty I a convinced has many a sore pang at present to combat with but she says everything to conciliate the children to their new maid, and gives her every instruction she can for the benefit of the dear pets. So that I must in justice say for her that she gave me satisfaction by the propriety with which she has carried since you left her here. I advised her as much as I thought proper to remain with the children this winter as it was possible for her to be disappointed in her present prospects (without any fault in her brother). I wished in her own account as well as the children, but I saw her so bent on going I did not cause t insist farther than advice. I am convinced she has repented before now she did not follow my advice. But there is no help for it. Poor girl I sincerely wish her every success. I think her an honest good hearted girl above the common run. We would willingly have taken your nurses sister at your suggestion, but she was waiting of her niece ???? Your namesake, who was in service at Mr Tait's, and seized with a

f91v [IMG_2739.jpg]

a bad fever of which she has since died. This was the engagement I told you she had. I could not bear the thought of taking hr after attending one n a fever and where there is yet danger of her own taking it. It is well to be free of blame or second causes, whatever may or may not happen.

Last week I sent a box of apples for you to Cromarty by the ship Culloden which was at Fowlis taking a lading of wool for Mr Cameron. Macaulay the tide waiter at Cromary was n boar dto who I gave the box in charge. He has acquainted me two days ago the box was shipd on board the Active Captⁿ Smith from Inverness to Stromness. I hope you may have it by this time, if not make inquiry at Stromness in receipt. It is really desirable to get it thus quickly conveyd rather than send it by Leith as apples is the only thing it contains except 4 large & 6 small pots of sweet meats. If any of them is rather thin to give them a few boils with a small portion of loaf sugar will remedy it. To avoid this I believe the white I am got too much even to singeing which vext me to a little but I hope it will pass. Poor Annie McCulloch was very active with them and desirous to have them right and plenty of them. There might have been more if I had pots at hand, as the fruit was plenty.

Last Sunday the Novar family were in this church no preaching being in their own. Sir Hector made a point we should go and dine and stay all night . Next morning the 22nd we met at 7 in the Gallery where we breakfasted. At eight we all set off . . . journey for London. Sir Hector and Mrs Hay went in one carriage together. Mrs . . . Mrs McCae in another. From Inverness the plan was that Sir H Mrs Hay & Mrs McCae would travel together to Edin^r. Mrs Hay was far from being pleased at this plan & said that morning she had thoughts of remaining a while at Inverness. However, travelling free of all expence was a powerful motive even with her. I rather thinks went off next day. The sisters carried so ill to Mrs Mc that it is thought they wish not to be asked again to Novar. Carrying in this manner to the poor woman who was disposed to please all and give offence to none had the reverse effect to what they . . .

Annie Munro was at Novar a month before they set off and her sister near as long. Mr Hugh Munro remains till spring with Doctor Wishart to take a course . . . of medicines for the liver complaint proceeds to Cheltenham in spring. He is . . . out a genteel sensible young man, very like his sister, and seems to resemble her in disposition.

Last Tuesday your father and I made out a visit had long promised to the McKenzies at Millmount. We meant to stay till Thursday but in hopes of seeing Mrs Sutherland we remained till Friday. Mrs Sutherland was visiting her friends in the Highlands, and was taken ill at Gladfield which detained her a few days long . . . deprived us if the pleasure of seeing her. However she was so far better as to . . . to Knockbreck before we left Milnmount. She promised see us here in her way out of the country sometime next month. Col^l McKenzie has three fine children the oldest a boy, one of the girls about two months old, born at Milnmount. This place is one of the prettiest situations on a small scale I ever saw. Balnagowan behind and Tarbet House in front. The elegance without & within the house of a piece. The furniture by far the best in the country. They are really an agreeable couple and they laid themselves out to make the time pass agreeably to us. They . . . to have some of their neighbours , as Cockburn Ross and Mr Rose Bayfields family . . . neither had returned since the Northern Meeting. Indeed Mr Hugh Rose's family have got a sudden call and gone to London. They meant to have wintered in the country. I have not heard the case of their sudden departure.

f92r [IMG_2740.jpg]

We were lucky to good weather for our jaunt and I think myself rather better of it. I was anxious to make out this visit while Batty was here, as far as I can guess there little chance of my being of the winter a night from home or abwsentfrom my dear bairns. I mean to be the first week after Betty leaves us sleep in the garret till I see how jean and Andrew goes on. I still mean the little bed to Harry which he seems to relish much.

I learn that William & Hugh left Creich on Monday last and were to be at Kilmote that night. We will be looking for them home the end of next week. When Andrew passes the laundry door he must go in and look about for his uncle. I wrote you and Miss Manson lately which I hope you have had by this time. I have little more to say . . . so full in my last. I told Mrs McCae what you told me of Doctor Hatdell and the friendship betwixt him and her husband. She told me she had just seen him at the Governor of Goree's and was introduced to the doctor by humbug by no means knew he was a person so interested in Captⁿ McCae. She seemed much affected and at the same time pleased and thankful to you for the intelligence and said she would enquire in her return to London for the Doctor as of all things she wished to know something of his last illness but had seen none who could give her that satisfaction. Did you learn if he left anything or if she can make anything by her husband.

Your father joins me in most affectionate wishes to Mr Watson and you. I ever am your loving mother

Anne Robertson

No word from Liverpool since my last. When you reply to this mention Mrs McC as of yourself not as an answer to me. It was possible Betty could go by the ship the box went by but we have inquiries for a ship which would be much easier than a land journey for her.

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Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 11
Nov 1804

My Dear Christy

This will be delivered you by poor Betty who's tender care and affection for the children while with them and their attachment to her makes me part with her, with regret. I believe she now repents having left them this winter with all her heart but it was necessary for me to be determined and have another in her stead as there is no saying how soon her brother may arrive and send for her. She is to be pitied parting with the dear children, but I hope a few days will make them pretty easy Harry is who gives me out concern Andrew will be easily diverted, but the other is a sensible dear creature that he forgets nothing or nobody. I have the satisfaction to tell you they are already as fond of Jeany Sandison as could be expected, and she is a good natured smart girl. Harry is fond of his little bed which is now ready. Bell McCulloch is to sleep in the garret beside Andrew and Jean, as her sister did before while here. I will have Jean Smith besides for some time with them after Betty goes as they are fond of her. So my dear Christy I hope you have no occasion to be uneasy about the sweet fellows. You shall soon hear again how they go on.

William and Hugh, and Bell McCulloch along with them came from their Sutherland excursion on Thursday last. The former wrote you since he came home, and would acquaint you of Christy Rainie's marriage, and that Mr Parker is just about setting off again for Demerary. Last week a box arrived with a beautiful chambery gown and a black winter hatt for me, and bonnets for the House bye ladies and some other little matters from Mrs Sandbach but at present I refer all particulars to Betty.

Your father has given Betty two pounds for her travelling expenses and whatever is over he desired her give it to you and account for it as part of her wages. I have sent a pair of white silk which Doctor Trail left here, and a white vail of yours, but nothing like a lace tucker did I see after you left us, altho a narrow search was made to what you left this was all I could find belonging to either. It is now determined that Hugh goes in a few days to Liverpool to Mr Sandbach who has interested himself in a friendly manner for Hugh. Mrs Colonel Sutherland is to be here Tuesday first on her way south. With our united love & best wishes to Mr Watson and you I am my dearest Your truly affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

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Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney.
Christmas Day, 1804

Mt Dearest Christy, before now I suppose you have received Williams letter, with the account of Betty's safe return here, and since one from your father to Mr Watson which is one reason for delaying to allow a reply to your several valued letters by post and by Betty. I cannot express how much I regret that she left us, at all, as it has been such a source of uneasiness to Mr Watson and you. She left us a fortnight at least sooner if not a month than was at first thought of but for the opportunity of the horses that can with Bell McCulloch, and then the fear of a storm at this season that might make the roads impassible. Had your letter of the 11th ultimo come to hand before her departure I certainly would not part with her altho another was come in her place, but as you wished to engage another in your former letters and expressed no wish to keep her I was the less desirous to keep her longer. I assure you my dear that I am happy at her return since it tends in the least to make Mr Watson and you easier with respect to the children. Most readily do I enter unto your feelings. Well do I know by experience what it is to a parent to part with a favourite nurse. Williams dry nurse and one of the best I ever had married from me and I would have given any thing reasonable that I could keep her. I assure you that first when she resolved in leaving us your father and I were quite uneasy on the children's account as you could be. But as I saw Betty was entoxicated with an uncertainty and more an object of pity than other ways I did not choose to irritate you by being particular about her, but now in order to vindicate myself that I did press her to remain with the children as much as I thought consisted with propriety. I will just mention what passed altho now so old a story. When her mothers letter came setting forth their obligations to you and Mr Watson and praying her to stay the winter with her dear Mrs children, and that she would have her blessing, and leave at Whitsunday to go on peace to America, she was a little staggered, said she was at a loss, and wished she had some friend to advise with. I replied that I was ready to give her the same advice I would give my daughter, if in her place. I said there were many chances against her brothers coming this season, that remaining with the children when absent from their parents would confer a lasting obligation not only on them but on the Doctor and me. Her great objection was that her brother might be offended. I told her if he was so, at what all her best friends approved of she would be at no loss if she would never go to him. At last she consented very cordially to stay and the next day I was going in my great glee to acquaint you with this news. When behold she came like someone almost frantick saying what had tempted her to agree to stay, and blast all her flattering prospects in the world, I asked if she was really in earnest, and when she said she was, begged she might think coolly upon the matter, that I would defer writing a day or two, for I was sure she would repent. She insisted on me to write immediately lest she might repent. I told I would and that I never would bid her again stay, but I would often have been very well pleased had she offered herself, but instead of that came often to me to look for a successor, and how happy she would be to see the dear boys something reconciled to another, but from the moment she saw another in her place she seemed quite miserable, and it was easy to see half a bidding would keep her poor creature. I really pitied her then. The night she came the Doctor was from home at a pres^{bty} in Dingwal next morning all the letters were sent him so that he was prepared to see her and carried better than you would expect considering he lost his fancy of her since she first refused to stay with the children. They were upstairs when she arrived I called them down Andrew stared at her for a while as if he should know but said nothing. Indeed he never seemed to miss her he grew so fond of Jean. When Harry appeared his dear eyes filled and he ran off, but soon returned very well pleased.

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You can hardly believe neither could we how well the children behaved after Betty left them. The morning she went off I went up to watch when Harry would awake. When he did he soon asked where is Betty I told him she had gone for some cloaths to the washing house but would soon return, that he was to get a ride that day on Dickie and that he might be ready in time I would dress which he readily agreed to as nothing is such a bribe as a ride on Dickie who is become a great favourite. He then went down to breakfast with us, got his ride and thro the day hardly came in but in starts he was so taken up building houses with Robie and playing the ball or a ba'. Robie by the bye is his greatest favourite in the house next to Betty. We kept him up to supper which was a ploy, until he was quite sleepy, but when he went to bed he called for Betty and asked me where she was. I told him she had gone to see a bonny brother of hers who was to give many fine things to her, and give her a poney saddle and bridle for him which would come with this seemed to please and he fell asleep in two minutes. For the first three nights he cried about a minute or two and that was all we always kept him up and amused till quite sleepy. This was all he cried for her he is so manly he rather suppressed than indulged crying. After this he would go to bed quite pleased and said he would not go to the little bed Grand Mama caused make for him. He would bring it to Crantit. He would sleep in his own bed until Betty would come back alone, that he knew very well where she was and when she would return she told him herself. In short we were quite delighted with them for they never were happier or in better spirits than during her absence. I only mention this, in case circumstances may so happened that she may separate from them again, you should be the less anxious than you have been. You say very properly as to the opinions of the world on this occasion it is to be imagined all feeling reasonable people will only approve of what you did to relieve your own mind. For Gods sake my dear take care of yourself consider your situation and what a duty it is in you to divert & keep up your spirits not only on your own account but for the sake of every one you love, and that dearly loves you. When you reflect that the time will be soon over when you have the pleasing prospect of seeing your lovely babes again I trust well as you can wish them. As to my going south next season I determined that long before I expected the children to winter with me, altho' I think I could not have a better or more agreeable reason, but I have severals. One is I expect William will not leave us next summer. Tis a mercy he is tolerably well but I do not expect he will be well enough to leave us soon. Your father has no intention of going to Liverpool next season, but if health serves goes the beginning of May to Edinburgh and may be two months absent. The wish of my heart is if you come in spring to keep you here till it please heaven your happy time is over. Every thing in my power to render you comfortable will be my greatest pleasure and I know Mr Watsons goodness on every occasion will lead him to acquiesce if you will. I beg my dear you order your fears with this view or you leave home. We will say no more about it till it please God we meet, when we shall settle everything as will be most agreeable to us on either side.

From the fatigue of the journey, and perturbation of her mind, it is lucky that Betty has not been an hour confined since she came back here. As to her plans of going to Liverpool unless her brother had sent for her there I know not what madness seized here to propose such thing when Annie wrote me in the most positive terms she not to go there or even leave her place till she heard from her bro^r that was his directions for her. As to Jean Sandison you need take no thought about her. Only in gauged her while the children were here, as I thought you might have another in view at home that might suit you better, but the doctor would not part with till Whitsunday or if she gives satisfaction perhaps longer. However as you felt so much for her disappointment I gave your considerate present which she received with gratitude and very unwilling to trouble you in this manner as she said she had done nothing for it. So much for servants. Harry and Andrew are quite well and hearty,

they are both much improves especially the latter, he speaks a good deal and knows the names of everyone in the house. This morning

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in coming downstairs he bouled Miss Bell as loud all the way that we heard him in the parlour, and he set us all a laughing. Harvey came in to my room this morning and after wishing him a good Christmas I asked him what Andrew was doing. He answered, that he was quite wicked the day. Pray what is he doing. Running and jumping in the garret. Harry is quite amusing now about dogs & horses. He has some new story every day about them, this day we asked his toast, and by way of wit he gave Dickie. In short they are a constant source of amusement to us. How we shall do without them I do not like to think of. Even your father looks forward with concern to this. They are such a pleasure to poor William at this dreary season but I cannot be thankful enough for what a blessing and delight the darlings are to us. As we are so much the better of them I trust it will alleviate your care in some degree. This being Christmas day I think I cannot pass it more agreeably than chatting to you about your dear children. We have no party today but we are at no loss for a party at home but my own health would prevent this if we ????? other wats meant it. This rheumatick complaint still sticks by me nerd I expect to be free of it till the warm season return. I am now worst thro the night every bit of me is occasionally pained but then it shifts from one place to another which is reckoned more in my favour but to my hands it has kept constantly since it first seized them. I have not filled out tea these three months part but thankful should I be I am not quite laid aside. I have not been one day yet wholly confined to bed. I was in hopes thro' the harvest Doctor Trail would have been this way but since I dispaired of the pleasure of seeing him, I have consulted Doctor Wishart. He thinks it is a gouty rheumatism I have got, and has . . . me some medicine I. Am now taking & which I expect will do me so. . . . you know my complaint tho' painful is not dangerous so do not be uneasy. I have been lucky in having B McCulloch here this winter.

It was a disappointment to me to part with my dear Hugh so much sooner than I expected but as this plan was reckoned advantageous for him I nothing do say, but he was terribly hurried away at last. On the whole he was lucky on his outset, in a comfortable conveyance & speedy passage to Leith and good weather on his journey to Liverpool. We have heard from Hugh on his arrival there but no word since but are in daily expectation of hearing of dear Betsy's happy minute. May the Almighty grant us good accounts of her, I cannot let her out of my mind an hour at present not but I have every reason to hope for the best. You should not think my dear Christy that your not being apprised of this matter sooner proceeded from any want of due regard and confidence but rather from a shyness which you feel yourself of announcing these things in writing even to your nearest, unless inquired at or some good reason to prompt you to overcome this delicacy. She said nothing to me till I inquired.

I suppose Hugh would acquaint you that the week Betty left us we had a visit from Mrs Col^l Sutherland and her son Captⁿ Sackville and a little boy a son of his who went south with his Grand Mama. He is a fine boy and was much taken with the children. They were here two nights. The week after that we had Lady Grant and her cousin Miss Urquhart Rosskeen three nights here. She seems in much better health & spirits than when we saw her formerly here. Both these ladies were enquiring particularly for you. They admired the children & made much of them. Harry & Lady Grant became quite well acquaint.

Mr Hugh Munro Sir hectors son was here three days together with Dr Wishart with whom he now resides. He is a genteel pleasant young man. He puts you much in mind of his father and dear sister, and I believe he is like her in disposition. He said that seeing your children brought many old

stories to his mind when he resided with his worthy Grand Mother at Drummond. He begins to think himself better and I think his looks and colour much mended which is a good sign.

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Mrs Watson
Crantit
Kirkwall

[to left of address]

Your table cloths are it last come home, but I think it needless to send them to you at this season but keep them here now til yourself come. I took a peek at them under the papers, and they look very well indeed.

Mr McGregor came here Thursday even^g & and will leave Wed^y next so we will not have much of he looks very well & offer his kindest wishes to you both. He is charmed with the change on the children since we saw them last. Cullodens marriage has not yet taken place. The destined bride Miss Jane Munro has been seized with a bad cold. Many many happy returns of the season to you both. I am happy to think that holy days amusements will divert your longing at present. Forgive if I have forgot anything you wish to know.

[right of address]

So Hugh found his way to Mr Shaw, who was allways very kind to him it gives me pleasure to hear of the happiness of this young couple.

Much do I regret the languishing state of our amiable friend Mrs Baikie without a prospect of relief in this world. What a beautiful set of jewels you mention Miss Baikie to have got. If she had them from my lover he must be a favourite one she would receive such valuable presents from. I think he must be a lucky man that wins her heart. I beg to be most kindly remembered to our agreeable friends Doctor & Mrs Yule and Dr Trail. Also Mr & Mrs Manson and Miss Manson when I get better I will answer her agreeable letter. I had near forgot to say that . . . Andrew dances and sings I have lost my skill or he will have a genius for musick. With the noted best wishes of all here to Mr Watson and you I ever am My dear Christy your truly affectionate Mo^r

Anne Robertson
Dec^r Sat^y 19th

NLS MS 19331 f96

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 14
Feb 1805

My Dear Christy

I began to be very anxious to hear from you when I was made happy by yours of 22^d last month to understand that Mr Watson and you has kept good health during the winter, and that holidays

went agreeably on altho' not so gay as usual from the absence of some agreeable friends and from indisposition of others. Such changes must be felt by social feeling hearts such as yours, but what must occasionally take place in every society. My rheumaticks I have reason to be thankful are much easier than when I wrote you last, but since I had a very severe cough & cold of which however I have got perfectly free. William has held out wonderfully well thro' the winter which was a blessing in every respect particularly to me who was so much of an invalid that I could not shew him much attention if he required it.

Your dear boys are well as you can wish, during a prevailing cold. Harry had a slight touch of it, and the cough for a few days. He would come every other while and tell me "Indeed Grand Ma I am very ill with the tould" thank God this is the only thing like a complaint he has had since he came here. Dear Andrew was for a few weeks a good deal troubled with a bowel complaint owing to his being breeding his four eye teeth, two of which has made their appearance, and the other two very near, after this the teeth will give him little trouble I expect. I spoke to Dr Wishart when he had the bowel complaint he said it was the best thing could happen to him, by far the safest kind of teething, I was of the same opinion myself. At the same time he had a complaint called the chicken pock about a dozen of blotches they were very sore while they kept out both these kept him thin & rather fretful but they are happily done away, and for ten days back he is quite himself again quite chearful and full of little tricks. He goes every day to his uncles room takes his keys and points to a trunk where he keeps apples for them, and wait there till he gets his apple. The second year makes the most striking change in life you will see the greatest change and Andrew from an infant in the arms to be running about and aiming at every word spoken to him. Indeed he is the most interesting dear little fellow as ever I saw.

When you wrote to me last the accounts of our dear Betsy's delivery had not then reached you, but the first post would bring it to you we have been made happy from time to time with hearing her having made a fine recovery and that her young Englishman is very promising. When we last heard the something was not over but Annie mentions he is to be named Samuel for an uncle of Mr Sandbach is who acted the part of a parent to his

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family who were left orphans. This gentleman left a fortune among his friends, and advanced for Mr S to begin the world, which was the foundation of his being so early in life arrived at independence, oh that it is a proper gratitude in him to keep up his name and his own at the same time. As Mrs S recovered so favourably her confinement did not hinder Mr Sandbach, Annie, and Hugh, from being at several gay parties, and often at the theatre during the holydays. Hugh has been very lucky to be under the direction of so sober and solid a man of business as Mr Sandbach. I pray he may be enabled to make a good use of his present advantages. Annie would tell you what a splendid entertainment she was at on New Year's day, at your acquaintance Mrs Gladstones. It was on that day her son was baptised, but I will for a beer any more of your news, as I am confident you had all this from herself. Mrs G was allways my favourite of that family, and I would just expect her great fortune would not spoil her agreeable temper, and disposition. I am much pleased that herself and her friends, are on such friendly habits.

William would acquaint you of our valuable friend Mr Roses death. He surely was a superior man and we have no chance to see his like hereabouts again. He is really a great blank in this neighbourhood, and to your father in particular, they had real friendship for confidence in each other. He looked on himself as a dying man since he was ill this time two years, he often since told your father that he had studied his own case, and knew he could not hold out long. About 10 days before his death he grew very ill and feverish. He had Mr Donald & H Bethune much with him the former seldom left him. He told them that he knew he was near his hand, that he had made his will

two years ago, and had left them & Mr Hay his executors. Had set his house in order, and hoped they would not find it difficult to settle his affairs, that he thanked God he did not fear death, but was perfectly resigned when it pleased Heaven to call him away.

By the death of his only sister in India which he heard a weeks before his death, she left him thousand pounds. This when recovered, he ordered Miss Rose to have the interest of during her life. After that the principal to be divided betwixt the Alnes girls, and Mr Donalds children. This is very humane indeed. He left several small legacies equally considerate but I suppose William acquainted you of them. He left a remembrance of a curious seal ring for your father. On Sunday the 6th Jan^{ry} he sat to dinner & supper with his two friends, and the doctor and after he had gone to bed at eleven they sat with him till one. He insisted they would all leave him which they did to except Mr Bethune who watched that night. He says he rested pretty well till about six when he awoke and was much oppressed and restless for about an hour. After then he fell asleep again. About ten they were surprized he had not stirred, when they looked over him he was gone without a throb or a sigh. A sale of his household furniture and library are to be sold off the 12th next month. A catalogue of his books is printed we have just got one of them. Many a curious thing I am told he had in his repositories. He had a fine taste and was always collecting something new or curious. For one article there are several Indian shawls he had from his sister to be no disposed of.

But altho we regret Mr Rose much, there is at present another dear friend in whom we are all much interested who has been for some weeks in a critical situation this is no other than our greatly valued friend Mr McGregor. When he left us after the holidays he had contracted a cold, and neglected taking proper care of himself but went to the academy every day till he was quite overcome and fevered with a most violent cough. I fear the cold fell on his lungs. I had a few lines from him the other day. He says the doctor thinks him much better and that he feels so himself but adds, I am as yet very weak for starving is the order of the day. I take a very little thin chicken broth with a crust of bread in it and that is my whole allowance, though thank God I could take a great deal more for a fortnight I have been confined to bed the doctor thinking that the safest in this cold weather. I am allowed to sit up an hour or so in the evenings and it is during that hour that I am writing". Fear much he will fall onto a decline like the rest of his devoted family. Mr Imray cold here this week and gave pretty near the same account he gives himself. He told Mr Mack was thrice blistered from this, & the violence of his cough with the very spare regimen allowed him I am sure his lungs are much affected. Doctor Robertson attended him in whom I knew who he has most confidence. Mr Young is his friend that pays him constant attention. When he was worst his own only boy

f97r [2019-11-02 11.45.40.jpg]

was dangerously ill. He wrote here in the most thrilling manner I know not whom he lamented most his friend or his son. I am told all the Town regret him and that the magistrates have ordered when he is better that the pupils attend him in his own house and avoid the trouble of going near the Academy.

The father went yesterday to christen another son to Mr Bertram the name Alex^r Primrose. You would hear that he has failed for 3 or 4 thousand pounds a sum enormous for people in their way. Is no said they were bankrupt before they came to this country after all they really to be pitied with their strong family in such circumstances. But Mr Barclay, one Denham a farmer near Dingwal & young Findlay Elenach is brought in them for a thousand pounds They are still more to be pitied.

You would hear it made a noise in the country Culloden & Miss Jean Monros marriage Culcairn & his daughter went south the beginning of winter to Edin^r and it was said Culloden was to follow when a new carriage arrived from London, has arrived sometime ago but the gentleman has not stirred. It is the tale of the day he has cooled upon it and that Culcairn was to give three choices.

First to marry his daughter, or then pay a forfeit of ten thousand or last of all to fight Culloden who is not reckoned a hero. This is really dragooning a man to terms, which should be far beneath the dignity of either side, if they were possessed of real dignity. Talking of marriages Jean McKenzie Inchcoulters daughter was lately married to one McGregor a coppersmith at Dingwal, who is reckoned worth 500 pounds and in good business. Poor Kathy Munros marriage has not taken place as soon as was expected. Mr Dickson came at the appointed time and waited a few days with them at Drummond, said it would not suit him to conclude the matter then, as he will be under the necessity of leaving her alone in a strange place till he would return here again, which will be in May, or June next. We hope matters will be then happily concluded. But delays in these cases are sometimes dangerous and always rather disagreeable. He dined here with them upon a Sunday, he was rather a good-looking gentle little man. If every other way he is good as his appearance she will be very lucky.

I am sorry to find by yours that our amiable friend Mrs Baikie continues to suffer without hope of much relief in this life. These symptoms you observed to me of her, of a cecession of pain where usually fixed, so reduced to skin & bone, and the same time her ancles swelled to an enormous size, would indicate her dissolution approaching fast. But she has lingered it out so long, that her case is very uncommon. I am astonished to hear that Dr Heydel should propose returning to Africa if all be true that was said of his matrimonial plans. How does the lady carry with all this. It is melancholy to think that Mr Barry's throng family are like to be deprived of so respectable ahead. Poor Wm Munro Ellenach died lately of a similar complaint, after suffering a long time. I sincerely wish Mr Barry may get better. Poor young woman Mrs Alison had a hard fate. Mr Stalker is really to be sympathized with to get such a charge at his advanced stage.

I am sorry indeed to hear of a good friend to Bishop of Landaff's ill health. I will be glad to hear how soon he gets well again. Were it only heart aches he complained of I would not feel so much for him, as I think he has it in his own power to remedy this. I still wish I could get himself and Miss Betsy Reid acquainted. I think they would be a most agreeable couple and suit one another very well. I forgot to mention that the town council of Dingwal has it in their power to choose a minister, this living being a Crown presentation their Member has got it to them. They have made choice of young Colin as we called him a brother-in-law of Mr Donalds. He said he is so well off in Stornoway he will not leave it. If he refuses Mr Donald McDonald of Barvas will have it in his offer, it is thought he would like to come. He is a cousin of ours, and married to Miss A McDonald that was a step daughter of Mr Kenneths.

The thought of seeing Mr Watson and you soon, is to me the most pleasing prospect, but like every other pleasure has its alloy, as a prelude to parting with our dear boys, for all the hurtings I have had I cannot think of this but with pain. Parry often consent to stay behind with me and take care of the fruit when they grow. Only think of Andrew yesterday was a very fair day, and he took Bell McCulloch by the hand made signs to go out, she went and allowed him to take his own way, With a hold of her hand and his Little boots on he walked on every step to the house bye where much caressing & a joyful reception ensued.

f97v [2019-11-02 11.46.09.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Crantit
Kirkwall

[to right of address]

I literally had a long letter from Mrs Parker where she expresses herself with much kindness about you and yours, and to know when you were going south and a very pressing invitation to Mr W & you to see her at Blackhearn. Mr & Mrs Tennent still reside with her but were preparing to go to a house of their own. Poor Mrs P has had a miscarriage since Mr P went abroad. She has had so many of these that I fear the chance is against bringing more to the full term. She was for two months she never quitted her room and thro' the day constantly lay on the sopha. Betty is well and offers her love to you and all her friends. She is pleased to hear her bro^r in law is come home & that they are all well.

Remember me kindly to Miss Manson & her worthy parents tho' she has come last, not least beloved. I will write her soon as my hands are getting better. Its very extraordinary we have been a long time unheard from Gilbert who used to be so regular even our friends at Lv^{pl} has the same complaint. It is so far is satisfactory we hear from others he is well.

[to left of address]

We are much shocked to see the loss of the Lord Abergavenny East India man in the yesterdays papers. Many are wounded heart will this fatal event occasion. There are three young men from this country lost of the passengers. A son of General Hugh Baillie of Rosehall who died lately, he was step bro^r to Mrs Coll Sutherland. I am told he was an elegant youth. The other Mr Manson of Tains oldest son, and a brother of Mr Innes Banker at Tain. What a blow this to their parents.

All here unite with me in affectionate wishes to Mr Watson and you, hoping to hear soon from you I am My Dear Christy

Your truly affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

The Watsons visited Edinburgh in the spring and, since Traill planned to set up as a doctor in England, they travelled from Orkney together leaving on 25 March. A fishing smack took them to Aberdeen from where they travelled by road to Edinburgh, where the Watsons lodged with friends. Traill travelled on to Liverpool.

NLS MS 19331 f98r [2019-11-02 11.46.26.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Edinburgh. 29 Mar 1805.

My dear Christy

Yours from Aberdeen of the 27th came to hand yesterday. Although I anxiously longed for this pleasure, it was damped by the disappointment of seeing being so much longer than I expected. However as it was necessary Mr Watson should push forward, and as it has saved your person in your present situation so much fatigue I greatly approve of what you have done. We were constantly attending to the art of the wind blew from and observed it contrary ever since you proposed coming here.

Thank God your dear boys are well as your heart can wish. They now enjoy the gardens and this fine weather which is health for them. Harry has been quite taken up looking at the sea and

observing every boat coming up the Firth and even sweet Andrew speaks of Papa & Mama & a boat coming. It is particularly lucky for me to have the deer lambs with me at present that my spirits have received severe shock.

Oh my dear! how shall I express my feelings to you on the death of our amiable and ever to be lamented friend Mr MacGregor. He wrote me thrice during his illness and for some weeks a temporary recovery was expected, but the last week of his life the fever & all the unfavourable symptoms returned and soon cut off the thread of life. From my knowledge of his delicate constitution, and the tendency of his family to consumption I did not expect he would recover from the first symptoms of his illness but I hoped he might see out the summer and that I would once more have him under my own roof. William saw him the Wednesday before his death he was then so weak he could not turn in bed, but was sensible & collected as usual and asked for us all – but was not able to speak much at the time. As William could be of no use he came home Friday. On Sunday the 24th he breathed his last at 7 in the evening. I am

f99v [2019-11-02 11.46.39.jpg]

convinced he has made a happy change from a world of much anguish & affliction to him, so is that for him we should not mourn but for our own loss we have much, much, cause to lament for we shall never again meet with one who was to all our family like him. But to me his loss is more than to you all, for he remained at Inverness and I considered that one of my family near me – everywhere I turn me and every scene that presents here brings former agreeable incidents to my view with their contrast, but all these are over to return no more. Little did we expect on the 4th of last January, when we bade him farewell it would be our last parting. Often was I more apprehensive about him. I seldom saw him in better spirits, and he was looking well. He intended to be back in three weeks with Mr Young to see William, and if he could to bring him back to Town with them. I know his good friend Captⁿ Shaw will feel his loss, he was one of his most attached sincere friends. I am sensible this melancholy event will damp in part yours & Mr Watsons happiness in meeting your agreeable friends at Edinburgh. Mr McGregor's death is a public loss at Inverness, they will not readily get the like again to the Academy. He is lamented by all ranks there. Mr Young & Mr Imray have carried all along like affectionate brothers to him, and Mrs Cummin was most attentive during his illness. I shall ever feel grateful to these good friends, for soothing the bed of death to the best of men. He was lucky in a faithful careful servant.

But when we consider the case of others we have many consolations – to compare this with the shocking and timely exit Mr Barkley. I assure you for some time this rash deed, cast a horror on all this neighbourhood. Unfortunate man that had not fortitude to stand the shock a little longer for by letters since his death from his Bro^r Eneas he was ready to come forward with every assistance and with 500 st in the first instance. I hope from this he will sympathize with his unfortunate Widow and her Family, poor woman she is as well as could be expected from her deplorable circumstances.

f99r [2019-11-02 11.46.46.jpg]

All his near friends are much to be pitied. I hear the Bertrams don't feel at ease since this sad accident took place & no wonder.

William went Tuesday to town to pay the last duty to our dearest friend, who is remains were laid in the “narrow house” on Wednesday the day you reached Aberdeen. William is not yet returned – from some necessary engagements, which you can know hereafter, your father could not attend this last duty to his friend, which luckily had no other inconvenience than denying a gratification to himself.

I will say nothing of our friends at Liverpool as I suppose you know more of them yourself than I do. They will feel & know their loss by this day. Poor Hugh he will feel acutely being so long

lately happy with & strongly attached. It is the first trial to him of this kind. The enclosed you will be so good as forward from your father to Mr Mitchell an acquaintance of Mr Watsons and tutor to Mr Gordon of Braelangwell.

Be kind enough to remember me to Miss Ross Ankerville and Miss Miller. I am deficient to both these ladies in writing but assure them you can it was not from indifference but from my hands being so affected with rheumatism. It was with difficulty I wrote to you & Lvp^l. Offer my kindest respects to Captⁿ and Mrs Shaw who's welfare will allways afford me pleasure.

Harry & Andrew offer their love to Papa & Mama. Betty is well and offers her duties. The Doctor & Bell join me in every good wish for yours & Mr Watsons health, & happiness during your travels and happy return.

My Dear daughter
your truly affectionate mother
Anne Robertson

Your Father proposes being in Edin^r early in May. There was a sideboard Captⁿ Shaw left with Mr McGregor your father wishes you to find out if it was as a loan, or a present Mr Shaw gave it for if the latter it will be set to sale and your father wishes to purchase it, as one much to his taste. Excuse the defects of the scrawl. My mind is so much occupied with an distressing subject. I can at present think of little besides.

f99v [2019-11-02 11.47.00.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Captⁿ Shaw's No 13 South Castle Street
Edinburgh

[left of address]

You can just find out whether Mr Shaw means to claim the sideboard. I will expect to hear from you as often as your leisure permits. My kindest wishes attend Dr Traill I regret much not having the pleasure of seeing him. I suppose he will not return with you.

Mr Watson's work had required him to travel on to London to meet with Lord Dundas. Christy remained with the Shaws in Edinburgh.

NLS MS 19331 f100r [2019-11-02 11.47.14.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Capt Shaws South Castle Street, Edinburgh. 10 April 1805.

My dearest Christy

You are agreeable letter relieved my anxiety much about you, as I feared the journey might be too fatiguing for one in your situation, but you had gentle leaders (happily for you) who would take every care of your health. The variety of going by the coast was certainly an agreeable change. So Mr Watson is, or hers, set out for London by this time I think he is lucky to be accompanied by so agreeable fellow traveller as Mr Shaw. I am truly pleased that Lord Dundas & himself will meet before he returns. I'm convinced that a personal knowledge betwixt him and Lord D will be in Mr W's favours. I can well believe how easy and happy you will feel with your present agreeable hosts. It will be a mutual comfort to Mrs Shaw and you to be together during your husbands absence. If Mr W does not come on early in May it will be high time for you to leave Edin^r and surely remain with me as I proposed to you sometime ago. My spirits never required more such a fill up as your society at present. I hope Dr Traill is well remember us all to him. He will be a great acquisition to you both, indeed his society will be that whenever he happens to be. When I saw Mrs S-'s marriage in the papers I began to suspect it was not so respectable as her friends could wish, but I am mortified to find it is so despicable as you describe it. Poor woman there is every reason to believe she will soon have cause to repent such a shame. I truly condole with her family. Her death would surely be a comfort compare to this conduct.

I am happy you say nothing of Mrs Shaw's health. I hope she is well as you take no particular notice of the contrary for I was last week a good deal shocked to learn from Miss Baby Munro (who dined here with her sister Miss Rose, and Miss Mary Aikin) that she heard from her sister Miss A Munro that Mrs Shaw just dying. Many young married ladies of delicate looks have often a consumptive look, from the natural consequences of their change in life, and I soon began to flatter myself this might be the cause of such a conjecture. I beg you say nothing of this to Mrs Shaw for very little might make her apprehensive from what is most likely her present situation. Womens minds in this situation have so many groundless fears, that what they would only laugh at another time might be of serious consequences in certain situations

f100v [2019-11-02 11.47.47.jpg]

Mrs Brodie from Ardullie came here yesterday, Lady Munro, & Miss Rose accompanied her, and sat here about half an hour. As she announced her visit the day before we had the dear boys in full dress waiting them. You would be delighted to see the politeness of Harry, and the good behaviour of both the dear little fellows. The ladies seem charmed with them, and treated them with plenty of nice apples & sweeties.

George Rainie left us this day for home he has been here a few days on his way from Aberdeen he is a modest fine lad, and excellent scholar. He got an ugly cold which has left a cough. I do not much like at his time of life, but as it is taken in time I hope there is no fear, he got better while here.

Do you intend to visit your cousins Mrs Parker, & Mrs Tennant before you return. I know it will be a disappointment to them if you do not, but what I dread is the fatigue to your own person. You should write them at any rate if you cannot see them. I am happy to hear our agreeable friends Mrs & Miss Miller are well, likewise Mrs Coll Suth^d Mrs Hay, to them I beg to be kindly remembered. Have you seen Miss Ross yet or Coll Fergusons children. Your father had a letter from Sir Hector a few days ago, he says he hopes they will meet at Edin^r in May. Your father proposes leaving this about the end of April, or first day of me so I suppose you will meet before you set out for the north.

I well know my dearest Christy what a shock you would sustain by the melancholy news of our dear & ever to be lamented friend. It grew with you from your infancy to love, and esteem him. There are few who who's share it falls to meet with one such friend as he was to all this family another such we need not look for, which makes the loss irreparable to us. To me it is a blow particularly affecting there is not a room of the house or a walk I take but puts me in mind of him. And I hardly believe at times that I cannot see him more. I am convinced that Mr Shaw will regret him much as they had a very warm friendship for one another. I know your good sense will lead you to suppress your feelings mixing with strangers but I believe you will feel an alloy to all your present enjoyment from this unexpected breach upon us. And you would I suppose observe in the papers a very just and well conceived character of him in a few words, nothing more than was due. Inverness seems sensible of his merit and do not expect to have his place so well appointed again. His death is a great loss to the rising generation. He was dotingly fond of your Harry I used to joke him that Harry would in a few years be his pupil, and how this would remind of his getting old, and the days of other years. Alas I little dreamed this was to be our last meeting what heightens my distress is that it was out my power

f101r [2019-11-02 11.47.54.jpg]

to one sight of him during his long illness of more than two months but no more of this, till it please God we meet. I know our friends in Liverpool will be in great distress particularly poor Hugh who had the warmest affection for him. I have nothing new to add or to amuse. Indeed my spirits are very unfit at present for anything of that kind.

Your dear children are well as you can wish them, and a peculiar blessing to me at present. All here unite in love to you & kindest respect to Mrs Shaw. I ever am My dearest Christy

Your a truly affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

Miss Annie is just called and begs the favour of you to choose a printed cambric gown for Miss Flory & Miss Nelly acquaint their price and she will send the money by your father. E last season pattern might answer them equally well and it will be a little cheaper. I dear see if you got genteel Chambery's at an equal price they would like it as well or better than cambricks. They have got a remittance this week from their bro^r Robert of 50 stg.

I thank you for your kind offer of purchasing commissions for me I know not a fitter hand for it than you. Miss Annie begs the favour you bring her an ouz so of white netting silk for mitts, of a middling round size for if too fine it would be feckless. If you can conveniently get a cheap summer bonnet for Bell McCulloch it would be a seasonable gift if green be fashionable it would suit her tender eyes. A yard or two of spotted lens to make a cap for each of the house byes would be as cheap a thing as you can get, and they stand in need of it, and they have been very fond and attentive to the children. Please bring me some needles and darning ones particularly. If anything

occurs to me again I will let you know, but articles of dress I have little occasion for, I considered my dear deceased friend as a brother and if spared will wear mourning for him as such

f101v [2019-11-02 11.49.18.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Captⁿ Shaw's No 13 South Castle Street
Edinburgh

Dr Robertson attended the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May 1805 and carried a letter from Mrs Robertson to Christy.

NLS MS 19331 f102r [2019-11-02 11.50.17.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Edinburgh favour'd by Dr Robertson. 27 Apr 1805

My Dear Christy

Your last letter gave me since pleasure to find you hold out so well since your arrival in Edinburgh, to enjoy health is what will make you relish the society & various amusements now before you, and I approve much of every young person who has these things in their power to improve these opportunities, as they do not often return to those removed at a distance from the metropolis, and such a change as you now have lays in a store of knowledge & ideas, to reflect and improve upon, in more retired scenes. William wrote you this week by post which you will have in course, and I hope my dear you will fall in with his solicitations. [Gap] need has my spirits of such a solace as your presence would be to me, and it will be the highest enjoyment to poor William. I would fain hope you will never think of taking lodgings in Edin^r if it be possible for you to come here, where thank God you can have every aid and comfort your situation requires. I leave you for particulars to your father who is equally desirous with me that you should lie in here.

Inclosed I send you four pounds from Miss A of the house bye for two gowns for Flory, & Nelly, of the spriged or best green Chambery with their complements and best thanks they are much gratified with your attention, & says what is true they could not employ a better or fitter hand.

Your charming boys are well as you can wish but I leave a full account of them to your father.

I forgot to say the ladies wish for white belts to the gowns. I ever am my dear your truly affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

f102v [2019-11-02 11.50.24.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Edinburgh

Favour'd by
Dr Robertson

Revd Hector Bethune, the young minister of Alness, was also to attend the General Assembly and carried a second letter for Christy.

NLS MS 19331 f104r

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Cap^t Shaws No 13 South Castle Street, Edinburgh. 8 May 1805.

My Dearest Christy

This will be conveyed to you by Mr Bethune of Alness, who is so good as call for my commands before his departure for the General Assembly. I rejoice to hear of your fathers safe arrival in Edinburgh, and that he found you well as we could wish, & the agreeable friends you are with. There was so much snow and stormy weather here last week we were afraid it might detain him on the Highland road, but as he made so expeditious a journey & says nothing of the weather I hope it was not so bad as here. I am happy at the prospect of seeing you so soon. So it is likely you will travel north in company with Mrs Coll^l Sutherland, to whom I beg to be remembered in the kindest manner, and I hope herself & her young folks will stop here at least a night by the way. I understand our worthy friend Mrs Millar makes a point with your father to lodge with her, this is of a peice with that steady friendship we have on all occasions experienced from her, and it is a great ease of mind to me used to be so well appointed, at least till he can look about him. Please remember me with affection to Mrs & Miss Millar, to Mr & Mrs Manson, or any other of our good friends that enquire for me.

I have not heard from Liverpool since the doctors absence, nor have I anything new to add that has occurred since. Your darling boys are in perfect health & spirits. Harry is quite in a flow when he is told you are coming. William & Bell McCulloch joined me in love and complements to your father & you, and kindest respects to our amiable friends Cap^tⁿ & Mrs Shaw.

Ever and your a truly affectionate mother
Anne Robertson

f104v [2019-11-02 11.51.47.jpg]

I entreat my dear that you may travel deliberately and not fatigue yourself. How happy would I be to have you once safely placed under this roof. I trust heaven will grant me this much wished for comfort. I am happy you are to travel with one of such experience & goodness as Mrs Sutherland,

and I know she will record it and acquisition to have you for a travelling companion. I will expect a few lines from your father or you just before you set out.

Christy was pregnant and, with Mr Watson still detained in London, she set out for Kiltarn at the end of May and on 15 June her third child, Peter Miller Watson, was born in the manse. Mr Watson joined her there, Peter was christened, and on 21 July they left for Orkney, with the three children.

NLS MS 19331 f106r [2019-11-02 11.52.51.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 2 Aug 1805.

My Dearest Christy

I cannot express what painful feelings I suffered on parting with so many of the dearest objects of my heart. Every way I looked, thinking I saw, or heard them speak, I thereupon threw myself over the bed, till the gig returned from Dingwal and it was time for one to prepare for Tenoord. William Bell & I went in the gig and when we were half way betwixt that & Drummond we met the Knight of Fowlis. He made us one of his nice bows, & passed without saying a word. There was only ourselves Mrs Bethune & Miss Munro there. We passed the day as agreeably as the state of my spirits would admit. William put down the ladies at the Ardullie gate in the evening and we remained to supper to Tenoord.

On Sunday Mrs Lockhart, Miss Betsy Reid, and Mrs Aird came to church here Mrs Lockhart brought her two little daughters with her Miss Anderson & Miss Jane McKinnon rode the latter remained here all night. She is going to London by the first ship she is a kindhearted creature, and regretted she was not so lucky as overtake you, and that she was so vexed she did not know when you was at Inverness. But off Mrs Lockhart I wished to make a day with her and have the Kinnairdie family & Mrs Aird with her, she only agreed to drink tea on We'day and we asked Miss Mary Robertson & Miss J Bethune on the same day. Monday we sent William to invite Mrs Lockhart again to dine with us on Wed^y but she declined coming altogether said she had refused several invitations in the West and was determined to visit nowhere while at Tulloch unless for a call. Mrs Aird & Miss Betsy Reid came here to dinner remained here all night & left us after breakfast yesterday. Mrs Aird & her little daughter went home in the evening in Mrs Lockharts carriage. The other ladies remain with us till Saturday. Mrs Aird was making kind inquiries for you, said she would reckon herself lucky to have seen you.

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Your father was on Tuesday dining at Novar. He thinks Sir Hector rather on the mending hand. Gordon Clunes was there for some days he called twice here, & was asking particularly for you. I was glad to see him looking well and quite recovered.

Friday morning – John Dou returned Wednesday even^g. He came that day from Loth. How happy it made us all to hear of you are at the dear children getting to the end of so long & fatiguing a

journey in health and safety. Heavens grant you may have got equally safe over the Pentland Firth, all here were put in spirits Wed^y night & Betsy Reid thought herself fortunate to be here to partake of the good news. John is returned full of your generosity and so he may he has been an expensive hirer to you. Mr Watson would have paid him well with the half of what he gave John. I may well say know what your cousin Anne McCulloch said last year that the sun had left us with yourself. Except the two first days we have had dark foggy weather either rain all day, or pouring torrents evening or morning in short the country is quite drenched in water, but I believe I never paid more attention to weather. I was every hour on the lookout and thinking what roads you had to go through under fog & wet. Sunday & Monday were very rainy & very foggy here so that we concluded you could not go to sea either of these days but that is little to be regarded if you get well over at last. You desire me not to be anxious as little of that as I can, I trust much to Mr W's presence and patience, that he will not urge going to sea till the people think perfectly safe but these thick fogs (which I never saw last so long at this season) or bad things at sea. Oh! What a precious cargo that little boat that wafts you over contains. Oh I long for the middle of next week till I hear how the sea agreed with Harry & Andrew, and their remark upon so new a scene to them. So my darling Harry was troubled with sand in his eyes when Kiltearn or his friends there were mentioned. What a manly spirit and at the same time what a kind heart he has got. And my smart, sweet knavy Andrew amusing everybody from home as well as at home. I am conscious from my own feelings you all required such an enlivening travelling companion. And lovely Peter you may well call him the good that gave you so little trouble. Happy am I, that little mixture I sent for him, was serviceable

f107r [2019-11-02 11.53.08.jpg]

If good wishes we do, it would be salutary. It is not the first I felt worst, but every day, I feel the painful blank the absence of my dear children more and more, and as for the last two months it passed like a pleasing dream with me. May I be truly thankful for a happy meeting & parting, & that we have still a prospect left of similar ones to come. Not one in this house master or servant but wears a gloom often, & nothing is heard, in every corner but what Harry or Andrew said, or did, on such & such a time.

I beg you may mention me to all your good friends who I know will feel the acquisition of having Mr Watson & you with them again after feeling the want of you. I wish they had wanted you for a month more at least. I suppose you got none of your proposed calls made out. Indeed you did a vast deal to get to Dornoch that night, what a sad trial you had to get up the Ord. I am glad Mr & Mrs Pope for their own sakes, as well as yours carried so handsomely to you. Our friends at Loth will sadly regret your leaving them for one night if you are detained longer than Sunday at Houna. It was a great gratification to them to get the site they had a view.

The inclosed came yesterday to hand it seems an Edinburgh letter & I hope contains good accounts of Mrs Shaw. I have nothing new to add since I left you no word from Liverpool, I fear you & I have our peace to make up there for our silence.

The ladies, the Doctor William & Bell unite in love & best wishes to Mr Watson & you & give twenty kisses to the dear boys from Gra Ma & Ma Bell. It is no lie we sometimes take a great speaking of them. Kind wishes to Betty I hope she will keep the boys in mind of Kiltearn, as she did of Crantit. Tell your Deay her friends are well, and I wish she may be no discredit to her country. Miss Hall is returned here & offers her kindest remembrances to you. It was the day you left this I had a letter from Mrs Colonel Sutherland mentioning the safe delivery of Mrs Colonel McKenzie of a boy. I wrote Miss Ross since you left me. I had a kind letter from Mrs Man making kind mention of you and a sad regret Mr Watson did not call again as he promised. Mr Man is much better. Take no notice of this. God bless you all. Believe me my dearest Christy your ever affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

f107v [2019-11-02 11.53.33.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Crantit
Kirkwall

[left of address]

Mr Bertram has been backwards & forwards here till this day he goes South poor man I believe he is at a loss what to do yet

NLS MS 19331 f108r [2019-11-02 11.55.19.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 30 Sep 1805.

My Dearest Christy,

As you did not remain so long with me as to partake of the fruit at Kiltarn, and as by that means I lost so much of my satisfaction in them, it has been an amusement to me to preserve a few of them, so that they might not be altogether lost to you. I have tried a few of the large gooseberries on the young bushes. They are the first trial I have made of preserving that kind, anxious to have some right, their syrup is over boiled which has spoiled their look but they will pass by way of variety. There is only one jarr of them. I think the red fruit makes by far the highest flavoured & most agreeable preserve to the eye, & taste. Below I send a note of what is in the box. You know I bottled some gooseberries for you, which was forgot to be sent with your baggage. As there is no apples this season to send, and as on trying them I find them very good, I hope I do best to send them now, all the apples in the new or fore garden, is the few sent in the box for my dear Bairns. We will have a peck in the upper garden but they are so worm eaten they are not worth sending. I never saw a season so malignant to our trees.

The Deays parcel is sent, & a bed gown & shirt of your own and the gilt whistle & Harry's tambourine.

2 Jugs of red rasb Jam for Mr Watson as I learn this is his favourite sweet meat

1 Jarr red curant jelly

1 ditto preserved red mogul gooseberries

2 ditto small rd in Jam

1 ditto large white gooseberries

2 small pots for Harry & Andrew

For yours Anne Robertson

NLS MS 19331 f109r [IMG_2743.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 9 Oct 1805

My dear Christy

This is to acquaint you that your parcel by Mr Fraser of Tain came to hand yesterday perfectly safe. I return you my kind thanks for this new token of your attention. The ribbons are beautiful and suit to my taste. The other articles most useful. Poor Ma Bell left us about a month ago. She would have willingly passed the winter here but the harvest being to look after & finding both her mother and sister in poor . . . she became very uneasy to be with them, but I will forwarder ribbon by Gordon Clunes who is now at Novar. His father was there for three weeks, left it a few days ago. I have now to inform you that I have sent a box to Cromarty for you, as I was informed the Industry Captⁿ Cruikshanks of Stromness lay there. I sent it to Mr MacAulay's care who I hope has forwarded it and the turkeys Mr Young sent you. They have been taken care of by Mr Sutherland the vintners people since you were here. Miss hall bespoke a place for the lambs & William wrote Mr Young to forward them immediately as there was so good an oppty at Cromarty. I have sent oats for the ??? Sea sto?es. I greatly wish you may have these fine articles by the Industry. This is all I could do in the matter. As to the cask of malt liquor you had lying there I fear they are the worse of the delay they have got. I know not if you gave any late orders about them but MacAulay informed us they were t be returned to Inverness. So we gave no directions annent them. The box for you contains some pots of sweet meats I suppose by this time what you brought is near exhausted. It will be a pleasure to me if you get them safe, and you did not wait partake of the fruit with me, which I assure you I felt with regret whenever I visited the garden during the gooseberry season. Often & often did I wish for your presence and that of my dear bairns to partake. I am conscious they feel no want of whatever is good for them. At their age they soon forget the past, when their present little wants are supplied, which are few & easily gratified with good . . . dear lambs they are the easiest to mannage I ever saw. And the remembrance of all their sweet prattles , and interesting manners during the happy time they were here is a source of consequent amusement now. Our dear friends are all well. They have sent the trunk she sent by Mr Fraser.

Yours of the 1st September came to hand about the time I was beginning to long to hear from you. I knew the Market and its consequences would occupy you so much that you could hardly write sooner. I am happy to think your time is agreeably . . . that you had so nice an acquisition of strangers to add to your enjoyments. You entertained us much by an account of Andrews exploits. I just think I see him ranging from stand to stand with his . . . everyone staring at him, he laughing loud & exclaiming of everything that tickled his fancy Bhi me own? I am convinced my favourite Harry was not wanting in sensible remarks on all that passed which would be interesting to me if you had leisure or room to insert them. We were happy to learn the continuance of your welfare by a letter from Betty to Jean. The former begins to think wisely as she expresses how happy she finds herself in her present situation. She can hardly meet with another so good & suitable for her.

So our amiable friend Mrs Baikie is no more. As we have every reason to believe she has made a happy change from a state whence she had no prospect of relief, there is no reason on her account to mourn. But to her numerous friends in Kirkwall her loss makes a sad blank to you my dear in particular, to Mr Baikie and her fine family the want of so affectionate & indulgent a Mother is an irreparable change that will be long felt by them. How I feel for Miss Baikie on this melancholy event. It is only the lenient hand of time can make such a shock to be thought of with due resignation, where time and experience has not yet taught that such changes in the course of providence must be. But alas I feel that even with me who has seen & gone through much sorrow I still find find that recent wounds renew & set old ones a bleeding again and requires all that fortitude I am mistress of to conceal from troubling others. Excuse my dear this digression about

myself. I offer my condolences & best wishes to Miss Baikie and Miss Fanny dear creature. How does Mr Baikie hold out

f109v [IMG_2744.jpg]

Sir Hector I am sorry to say continues in the same declining state. He is now often seized with a reaching which is a bad symptom & reduces him much, so that I am sorry to say that there are no hopes of recovery. He was so good as ask me & the Doctor there the day Miss Ross & the Ankerville family were there after Lord Ankervilles death, on their way south. As soon as they could get ready after the funeral, they left tarlogie. They only staid here a night. We came off after tea but Miss Ross & I occupied out little time together to the best passing over many subjects. She is remarkably thin, but I never saw her face look better. She was much affected at visiting Novar again & the remembrance of former happy days overpowered her at times. You would hear her father expired beside her in the carriage while they were at an airing. She told me he took his breakfast that morning rather better than usual, that as they were returning on the Tarlogie side of Tain chatting he ceased to reply & when she looked at him his eyes were fixed & his colour changed pale. Before she could call to the driver to stop and he had come up to the carriage he was gone. She jumped out got the riding servant to go in the carriage & support the body till they got home. Miss Ross ... home on foot & she says she was in such agitation & fright she knew not well what she was about or how she got home. This was a very great shock to her. Often did she mention you with much regard & was vexed she had it not in her power to show you more attention while you were in Edinburgh. I said everything I could of how sensible you were of her kind regard. She promised to write me but I have not yet heard from her. Mr David Ross is a genteel looking man for all his being lame. Mrs Ross is an elegant little woman, but she has no pretensions to beauty. They had a fine boy named David with them which is all they brought north of the children. I hear she lies in at Edin^r & afterwards go to Bath. There is report that Mrs Ross was left 20000£ by a friend in India. Sir Hector is rather doubtful of it at least that it is near so much. I really wish this was true as they are at present a distressed family. The loss of income of 1200 a year by his Lordships death makes a sad reverse in their living. You would hear that Major Baillie Fort George died the same day with his father in law. His wife is gone to live with her mother. She is left very destitute. But Lord Moira has intersted himself to get her a pension.

Mr William Watson from London was three weeks at Novar. He Mrs MacCa? & Miss ??? Dined here a day while he was there. You may remember him & a pretty little women his wife here about twelve years ago. He is a cousin German of the late Revd Mr Watsons.

Miss Katherine Millbank and Mr Alexander McKenzie of London her own cousin are to be married about the idle of this month. The friends were not at first for it but since it would have made them unhappy to prevent their union, the worthy man her father has agreed & portioned her with fifteen hundred pounds which is a good thing for a young man setting u in trade. I find Mrs Hector Mckenzie his mother still holds out very foolishly against the match which is rather unreasonable as I consider any risk on her side. Mr M & his sister & the three Millbank ladies called here on their way to Kincaig where they were about a week. We engaged the to spend a day here on their return, which they did and all night. Next dat Thursday the 26th last month was appointed for Mr Stewarts admission to Dingwall. We all set off together for the west. Your father and I went straight to Dingwall stop at Miss Jenny Bethunes till it was time to go to church. We were engaged to dine that day and pass Friday at Millbank which we did. They are a most kind agreeable family. But to return to the settlement it was Mr Donald Mckenzies turn to preside there. His text was in the 7th Car of Matthew & the 15th verse "Beware of false prophets" &c &c. He gave four tokens of false prophets, the first was that they blew a trumpet of their own fame and . . . of I am holier than thou. This was a hit to Mr S on account of a pamphlet he published of his own

experience. And the next was that they constantly kindled a flame and made every exertion to sow division in society and to carry away the people of other parishes from their own pastor to hear them. The other tokens were all of a piece. In short the whole discourse consisted of a libel against popular ministers. All ranks of thinking people were shocked and the young folks laughing. Both Mr Calders were present and Mr Macintosh of Tain, who was here a night on his way west. If on so solemn an occasion people were disposed the appearance of peoples faces was very queer. A certain person was in a rage. Mr Stewart it is said often changed colour but sat it out with much composure & since I am told he never mentions the matter when others introduces the subject treats it with much mildness. You saw him here & his manner & appearance I think rather in his favour, everyone agrees in saying he is blest with sweetness of temper, and is a sensible well accomplished man, so that I hope he will be an acquisition which we have great need of. Everyone expected what Mr Donald would do was to panegyrics on Mr Roses Memory & set him forth as a pattern to his successor. Had he gone to an . . . on this subject many would excuse it but guess my disappointment that he did not give a hint about him. I never was so uneasy in church before, I felt for the heat of a stranger. We were kept four hours in church. He varied the text in English, but the discourse was verbatim the same in Gallick which is not commonly the case on these occasions. On our way home Saturday we sat about an hour at Mr Reids. Miss Betsy told me she heard from you that you Mr Watson & the children were just going to visit a Mr Rhea's. I will long to hear that you returned quite well from this excursion. They are very moderate people as you know but were greatly hurt that their friend should be so unhandsomely handled by Mr Donald. However he has done himself most harm in the long run. Your father had a letter from Landaff just on leaving you after the market wishing for his interest in behalf of Mr Connel the . . . dents son in law as candidate for the procuratorship of the Church of Scotland. He is . . . good wishes can go. The Doctor forget to reply to Mr Watson about a request he made to find him a young

f110r [IMG_2745.jpg]

man who would teach & preach once in three weeks in his parish. This quarter affords none fitted for this situation but Mr Ross at Alness, who will not undertake to teach n any terms. This you will please let Mr Watson know. So Mr Scott is such a favourite at Mr Yules, I will be glad he continues in the same favour with them, but I scarce think he would gain the same place in my esteem that Dr Traill so much merits, without prejudice to the other. Doctor Traill is now physician to Mr Sandbach's family. They hope in time he will fall into good practice. Poor Hugh thinks himself lucky in his friendship. I had a wish that Annie would come home before the winter it is now determined she will not, her friends insist on her remaining with them & when I consider how happy she is there, you may believe I do not repine. I had a cold a fortnight after you left me but since I have been better than for a twelvemonth before, so that this being the case with me you & the rest of my family may be less anxious on Annies remaining at Lrpl this winter. I fear they will send Hugh to Demerara after all. What does Mr Watson think of this plan for him. I would wish to have his opinion about Hugh. I have heard from Mr & Mrs Sandbach lately about Annie staying and last night I heard from Hugh. All there were quite well the one yet in the country but has come to town to a grand musical festival they have there once in the 5 years. Hugh is delighted with it. They have Mr Billingtoun & many of the first musical performers from London, but I know Annie will give you a description of all this. The long . . . Wt India fleet is not yet arrived which is trying to those concerned. I had a letter from Mrs Parker the other day acquainting of Mr Parkers safe arrival. He came by the Brilliant a r...ning ship to Greenock. Whenever he heard the combined fleet left the W Indies, he set of without waiting convoy. You would Mrs Parker has got a daughter names Susan, for a favourite and only sister of Mr Parkers. She tells me the child was very ill. the doctor told her if she would not change the milk she would lose her child. She had got good nurse for her but this

must be a disappointment as she had plenty of milk. The Creich boys have gone by sea from Spinningdale to Leith, so that we will not see them here on their way. They pass this winter at the Colleges of Glasgow. I excuse this change to be near their friends. They are to live with Mrs Tennant I hear.

About a month ago we were on particular invitation to one in the new house at Mountg^d. Our party was Mr Munro the factor, Mr & Mrs Chisholm from Ding^l and a sister of hers. Its really a handsome house very convenient & well laid out and well furnished and a charming situation. I am told Mr Mitchell has taken the farm of Mountrich & Captⁿ Jack Castle Leod Strathskea formerly an appendage to Mountrich and about to take the old house & farm of Mountgerald. Culcairn and his daughter are set up at Cromarty House. They were at the Tain races. Miss Christy & Ann Bethine were there with the Roses. Culloden was not there the reason was too obvious to all. Culcairn I have just heard has challenged Culloden to mend the matter but the matter was not so concealed altho Culloden accepted the challenge, but just he was preparing his pistols the sheriff put him under arrest and both gentlemen bound over to the peace. What a mad part Culcairn has acted all along in this unhappy affair.

Tell my dear Harry that his favourite horse Dickey & the rest fo the horses are well & would be pleased to give him a ride. I am well pleased that he and Andrew have got such nice horses of their own and Harry a saddle & bridle so nice & fine. I hope they will be very good who get such fine things. Give a kiss to sweet Peter from me. What I give to see him now. Tell Harry his wright poor Hugh Innes died three weeks ago of a fever of ten days. He was very sickly for years and it is lucky for him he did not languish longer. Old Ann Matheson at Drummond is dead & buried this day.

Last week we had a visit of Mr Aitkin & his daughter Miss Jess for a day & night. She is a most elegant figure & looking better than ever I saw her. Alleck Millbank is here on a visit before he leaves the country he goes with the young couple to Edin^r. He is a sensible pretty boy. There a fine boy Duncan Drynie with him. How they would enjoy Harry & Andrew. I often tell how well Harry & they would agree. The guests I have mentioned to be here are a gratification, but we at this season are subject to a set of stragling guests we neither expect or wish for. This description are a tearing burthen to the spirits. For instance we have now the third visit of Murdoch since you left us. There are accounts come of poor Annie Grants death. She was carried off by a fever at Demerary and of Mr Charles Downies death at the same time. He died at sea on board the Elbe of which he was Captⁿ. Mr Sandbach laments him. He was reckoned a fine young fellow and doted on by his family. I feel much for them. William wrote some time ago so I hope you will excuse my silence. I waited to have something to say. I fear I have tired you. With love & blessings to Mr Watson and the children Believe me Mt dearest Christy

Your ever affectionate Mother

Anne Robertson

Mention me to Mr Mansons & Yules family & all enquiring friends

NLS MS 19331 f111r [IMG_2746.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 20 Nov 1805.

My Dearest Christy,

On Monday the 4th of this month I with a leave heart parted with my dear William at ten at night the sea smooth as glass & a beautiful moonlight night as ever I saw at this season. He took the Fowlis boat and brought all his baggage along with him. He called at Alness point for Miss Christy & Anne Bethune who returned in the boat next day. They got down about one in the morning. George Robertson went to Cromarty wt William. Who was politer than Culcainn he passed a day with him and invited to remain with him while in the town, but this he declined. He sailed on Wednesday on board the Macduff and had a passage of twelve days rather rougher than we imagined as the weather was mild with us on shore most of the time. We heard from him yesterday dated Monday the 18th the day he arrived. Its a marvel he is in perfect health. He was to have written before his departure but he went off sooner a week than he expected but I suppose you will hear from himself as soon as he gets settled n London. You may believe I feel his absence a severe blank and never pass his room with our regret. But when I consider how little enjoyment he had here but from any little attentions from me it is part reconciled me to his departure. I feel the absence now of all my dear children but to be reconciled to this is a piece of fortitude necessary for me to exercise or I would not have to do it. And when I hear they are well thankful should I be. I have the pleasing hope of seeing you as soon as circumstances permit. I should be thankful when I consider the case of others. What a glorious victory to this nation is the late one over the combined Fleet but it has its alloy in the death of that great Hero and amiable character Lord Nelson. Many a good wife, mother and sister are in deep affliction on this occasion while the publick at large rejoice but this must be of course.

Tuesday 26th

Wm desired me excuse him to you for not writing before his departure and I would have done so at least a week ago which you will see by the above date if I had not been engaged in performing a melancholy duty to our worthy friends at Mountgerald, which was to witness the death and funeral of their charming boy James. Sunday was a fortnight he was in the church. I thought he was not so lively or looking so well as usual but this passed unnoticed. On the Friday following he was sent out to walk as usual but did not go far when he said he must return his back & sides were so sore every step he made. He went to bed and was heavy & rather feverish but not to alarm them much till Sunday morning when he became faintish. They sent for the doctor . He was blistered the back & legs and everything possible done but the doctor as soon as he saw him declared he was past all remedy. After Sunday evening he never spoke and lost all feeling . I did not hear he was ill till Tuesday evening. Your father heard at Novar that day the doctor was attending him. We went Wedy to call and about an hour after our arrival this dear cold breathed his last and I waited till I saw everything proper done in laying out the body which I examined minutely and found from the shoulder down to the hip on th eleft side of his back all marked red & blue. It seems the afflicted parents have the aggravating distress that this darling this idol of their heart is torn from them by a second cause. When Miss Katherine Millbank was married her brother Alleck went so far with her to the High School Edinburgh. He had a Shetland pony he made present of to Jamie & a most boys was delighted with the horse. One day the people at the . . . potatoes saw Jamie mount the horse and fall out over his head. They ran to him & found him lying on the ground crying and his hat driven at some distance. It was said the horse struck hi too but when they took him up he desired not the mention his fall to any of the servants fo they would tell his Papa & Mama and then they would be angry and . . . his horse away. The country people are ready to speak when they should not but in this case when the should have told immediately what happened they were silent. Every aid was denied till too late. On Saturday his parents got a hint that he was hurt and whenever they enquired at their dear creature he owned the truth at once. You may easier imagine than I can describe their

situation. The poor man himself was like . . . distract for some days. Her own composure and resignation is really exemplary but yet I am afraid of her.

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She is far advanced in the family way and was sometimes like one stupefied and was seldom even relieved by tears indeed I think grief came to being past tears. We left them before dinner on Wedy but promised to be back Friday to dinner which we did and remained till Sabbath morning and we came home to breakfast. The burial was not till Saturday, her brother Mr James Fraser & Mr Fraser Kilbockie came that morning to the burial, her sister Mrs Fraser came before the Childs death & her husband was there. They had all the Dingwall & neighbouring gentlemen were there and had a refreshment of cake wine & spirits. They . . . raised the burial about two o'clock. There were plenty of country people at it well entertained with whisky bread and cheese. A the day was so short they judged properly in only having the friends of the family together with Doctor Hector Bethune & ourselves. Her brother did not leave them till Monday. My dear Christy I have been the more particular on this affliction . . . may be a warning to Mr Watson & you about your own dear boys who are so fond of horses to keep them from horses as much as possible but when you can have a careful person along with them. Tell my darling Harry that after hearing this sad tale I hope he is not too forward with horses. I know he will be sorry for the pretty boy James Mackenzie he used to be always pleased to see him. Miss Mary Robertson was there with us & when we left she begged her remembrance to you. She tells Mrs Gladstone was was lately safely delivered of a second son.

On the 18th curt a Mr Fraser Gorthleck a writer to the signet was going with his lady son & daughter from their place in Inverness shire to Edin^r by Fort William & Glasgow. On the other side Fort William a place called Tyndrum they unluckily set out at six in the evening a pitch dark night their driver never went the road before and sent their riding servant to the next stage before them. At a mile & a half distant from the Inn they had left there was an angle in the road and instead of humouring this road the driver went straight on the horses & carriage plunged down a precipice thirty feet high. The carriage was broke in a thousand pieces, Mrs Fraser hurt & bruised terribly & lying in a water nine inches deep. In this situation his daughter who was not materially hurt supported his head and tore of her habit to roll about her fathers head having lost hat & wig. His Ladys leg was broke the bone sticking thro the skin & her wrist dislocated, she in a separate place from the rest. The boy & the driver were thrown of the box on a grassy part of the precipice & were not hurt. The horses were safe also but it was two days before a road was cut to get them out of the place they had fallen to. The riding servant returned to meet & was alarmed they were not coming when he reached the fatal spot and heard their cries he galloped to the Inn got torches & people to draw them up. In this deplorable situation were they drawn up with rope and blankets & carried to the Inn which they reached about nine or ten. Mr fraser a very respectable . . . & in great business died twenty hours after the accident. His Lady lies at that uncomfortable place in a very critical situation. The gentlemen fro the Aird had returned late the night before from Mr Frasers burial he was their particular friend & they were deeply impressed. They said he was in general the most cautious & prudent of men, and the most tender of husbands. What a dreadful accident this all the country is moved by it. **They were about fifty lead miners** . . . They could not be got up alive. He was buried at Boleskine where his property lies.

Sir Hector is now very low & weak. It is more than a month since he left his own bedroom to the large front room in the west end of the house & the stair head room next it had the bed taken out and a parlour made of it where they dine since he gave u coming down stairs but now he does not leave his room. About a fortnight ago your father had a very serious satisfactory conversation with him., which lasted about two hours and none but themselves present. For a fortnight they tried him

with the fox glove. He thought himself much the better of it, as it freed him of the [asthma?] But then, it is so powerful a medicine, that it weakened hi to that degree, they have given it . . . much. Hew was very reluctant to employ Wishart but nw he is uneasy when he is absent and does everything he desires. He has raved a good deal for a few days, but again his intelligence is quite restored. Within a month Culcairn has sold every part of land he had in Kiltarn and Alness parish to Sir Hector who has paid him thirty thousand pound for this purchase. He has . . . but Dalmore & his lands in Rosskeen. What a handsome property Sir Hector has now in this country. Sorry am I to think he will not enjoy longer. Many a day since I wished him to be an heritor in Kiltarn, it would be good for us this had happened twenty years ago.

By your last very agreeable letter I was happy to find you are all so well and that you got the box so safe and so expeditiously, also that the turkies came alive. If anything in the box helped to renew Kiltarn, and his friends there, to my dear Harry it was well bestowed. I hope sweet little Andrew has some idea of us yet. Give the sweet fellow a kiss from Grandmama. Gid bless Tham & preserve therefrom accidents & evils. The shirt you mention I beg you present it from me to Betty with my kind wishes. I only regret it is not a better present as I hear Petter is thriving so well and that I am so pleased she trained him a clean good child as I would wish. Lovely creature that he is what would I give to see him now but wishes are vain on this score for the present. Tell your deay that all her friends are well her sister has just left the House bye & gone to be cook at . . . & Kate that was there her cousin is gone to Novar. Poor Kat Rosses daughter Mary . . is dead. I forgot if I mentioned a strange correspondence betwixt Culcairn and Culloden. They have both distributed them to their friends. I would not to obtain the Prince of Wales stoop as . . . he has done too bring about a marriage betwixt Culloden & his daughr. Where was his pride. I t is full blown and I fear poor Miss jean will be the victim. Mr Imray was here a night last week in the

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course of his rounds. He seems a sensible modest kind of man. Who had we here lately a day & night but Mr John McLean of Carriacou, once known to us by the name of Jock McLean and a favoured scholar of Mr MacGregor while at Drummond. He did not hear of his death til he reached London, he said he was much disappointed as he promised himself great happiness in seeing him again, that it was the wish of his heart to have it in his power to serve him, so sensible he was of the great benefit to him of having ever been his pupil. He goes back immediately. I am told he has done well & in a fine way. He is a smart sensible little fellow & looks fat & fair as if he had never lived in the torrid zone. He remembers you well & seems attached to our family. He corresponded close with by beloved Harry as long as he lived.

Miss Gun is now on a visit at Alness herself Miss Christy Mr Bethune Mr Cameron and Mr Tom Munro dined here & all night & left us this day after breakfast. Mrs Straith & her two children are still in Alness. They expect Mr John Bethune this week. They have a very throng family all this season. We understand Mr G Robertson New York has failed for an immense sum, His poor sisters have not yet heard of it, what a blow to them , I am sorry for it indeed. Take no notice of this as from me. I your housekeeper to leave you, I hope not. Your deay I expect begins to be reconciled to the distance from her friends. What does the fool mean If she had gone to Edin^r as many does would she long more than others like her. I do not like that turn in her. Jenny Wright has left me and I have got one in her place who understands her business pretty well.

As to my dear Hugh going to Demerary I am entirely of Mr Watson's mind and yours on this subject it depresses me much the thought of his going. But strange as it may seem his Father is quite keen about it and presses him on. I wonder Annie never said a word on this subject to me. It is hard one poor lad could not be provided for in such a pace as Liverpool.

Let me hear fro you win receipt of this. With joint love & good wishes to you Mr Watson & the dear children. I ever am My dearest Christy
Your truly affectionate Mor
Anne Robertson

I am much obliged to the kind friends who enquire for me pray return them my best wishes especially to Mr & Mrs Morrison & their sweet daughter. I am glad Dr Trails sister is so well disposed of I think Smelly is a good man & remember it must be no ordinary person you fix on for my favourite Miss Manson. I am sure your opinion will have some weight with her. I am pleased Mrs Gordon left the place without your interference with her. Pray is she a widow. She is rather a genteel looking one. The Millbank family are much distressed at Jamies death as it was from them the horse came. They have heard fro the young couple since their arrival in London.

NLS MS 19331 f113r [2019-11-02 12.14.59.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 9 Jan 1806

My Dear Christy, it is with the deepest regret I now inform you that our much esteemed & sincere friend Sir Hector Munro is no more. He departed this life about one in the morning on Friday 27th Dec'r. On Christmas evening he became very low and an express was sent for your father, after he got to Novar he revived again knew your father & spoke to him. He rested tolerably & your father came away thinking he might hold out for some days, but next morning Friday before we got out of bed we had a note from Dr Wishart informing the melancholy event aforementioned had taken place. He continued much as I wrote to you last, for the latter six weeks of his life he did not leave his bedroom. He was much relieved of the asthma & dropsy by the use of the foxglove, but then nature seemed exhausted. He lost his strength a pace, & was for a weeks carried out & in to bed every day two hours before his departure he was out of bed, & retained his mental faculties to the last, spoke a few minutes before his death, & without a groan or struggle died away as if falling asleep. That day your father & I went up and indeed I must say I never saw a sight that struck me more with the vanity of this world than on entering the room where he lay, the easter front room, where we have seen many happy scenes with his amiable daughter. When I saw the remains of him who was one of the handsomest & stoutest men of his day, reduced to mere skin & bone, a senseless mass, who would might approach him now the same as to the meanest. He who was the ornament of the North for forty years back & kept up the old Scots hospitality as a great family, the only one that so did in this quarter, when I saw all this at an end, I assure you it pierced me to the heart. His manly fortitude & patience through all his illness was exemplary. In him our family has lost a most sincere friend. If your father was but a few days from him, he would miss him & say he was sure Dr R would come today if something particular did not hinder him. Since confined to his room he had several very serious and satisfactory conversations with him on his own situation & future prospects. In the course of conversation they both shed tears. His body was searchclothed and put in flannels, and on Monday he was just in the most beautiful coffin I ever saw, made by his own carpenter. Then he was locked up in the drawing room where his worthy mother lay in the same state till the day of his burial. We went up on Monday came home in the evening, then we went up Friday and remained till Tuesday evening when all was over. It was odd that a man of his exact turn

gave no particular directions about his funeral. This being the case Mr Munro wrote to Sir Alex^r a few weeks ago he saw the recent sad event fast approaching & was at a loss how to act till he would have his advice. Sir Alex^r in reply said if his bro^r would not leave the necessary directions, his wish was to do everything in the handsomest stile, suitable to his rank & fortune. And so every thing was conducted with great propriety by Mr Munro. Colonel Clunes came as his nearest relation & chief mourner, his son Gordon came with him. The dinner was in the Gallery, a table covered from end to end of it, with a profusion of meat, and every variety the season could afford, salmon & veneson not excepted, with every nicety & wines of every description of which there is

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a plentiful stock remaining to his heirs. You know what a good provider he was. They sat down precisely at one, & got up at half past two they required their time they had daylight to finish the burial. There was forty to fifty sitters, of which his old friends the Provosts & Magistrates of In^s and Fortrose made up a part. The table was covered with beautiful damask with his arms, and his handsome set of silver table plate was displayed that day, I believe for the first time, & an elegant set of china with his arms & crest. There was you may believe a great concourse of commons. His remains was carried on mens shoulders & to gratify his tenants as more honourable reckoned here than a hearse.

Not only all the house got mornings but all the farm & out servants all about the place down to the old shepherdess – & honest Jannet Ross.

Poor John Munro who was very much interested at this time was superintending a brewing of beer & went up a trap stair to look after something in the brew house and fell from the top to the bottom of the stairs. It is a wonder he was not killed on the spot, his head was much cut and his collar bone and two of his ribs broke. He is like to steal thro' but I believe he will be very helpless hereafter poor old man. We have had stormy weather fro three weeks but luckily Tuesday last, the day of the burial was calm & fair from morning to night. We was always lucky. Worthy man. Your father & I were there the day he died & on the Monday after, Friday following we went up & waited till Tuesday evening till all was over. We thought it but what we should do to pay every respect & attention while his remains were there, besides Mrs Watson had no lady or female friend with her but me, poor woman. She has lost a kind brother. I kept constantly with her, sometimes I would go & sit a while with poor Miss McRae & Miss Baby Munro, who kept their rooms constantly they did not interfere with W but at meals. McRae is really the picture of grief. I heard her tell Miss B she should be thankful she had her fathers house to go to, that she had neither father nor mother, sister or brothers to receive her, or any friend particularly interested in her or yet a home. She was quite at a loss what to do. I really felt for her. She told be Sir H had settled a hundred a year for like on her last winter.

I was much hurt to hear Mr Shaw has sold his estate & report says he has made after all a moon shine flitting. Mrs M told me she had a letter lately from Mary Shaw, that she was in great distress. She was then at a boarding school with her sisters, but that they must very soon go back to their mother. She would rather go anywhere then to her mother again. She said she would gladly go to business if she had money to set her going. She says nothing of Mrs Shaw or her brother as if she supposed Mrs knew this already. O Christy this is lamentable. How little has this young man done with all his money. I hope he has at least secured for them, the portions of his orphan sisters. Have you heard of late from or of that sweet girl Mrs S. What do you think of Mr Malcolm Laing's marriage. I am told his wife is a very plain looking girl. I thought he was never to marry. Did you see his wife.

You would be hurt to see the death of Mrs Col^l Duff in the papers it was said a fever of a few days carried her away and of so malignant a nature it baffled all medicine but by private accounts

its certain she died of hydrophobia. She had been bit nine months before by a favourite lap dog, that it was slight

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a scratch she made no account of it and made the dog lick it much. On account of two servants they wish to conceal the nature of her complaint. It that were bit by the same dog. She at last wished to bite every one who came near her. Poor young creature her gay career was soon cut of in a very shocking manner.

On the 27th ult^o as we finished tea at Novar a note was delivered your father from Mr Watson South Ronaldsey to acquaint us he was at Kiltarn. We set of immediately and were very happy. It was with difficulty we prevailed on him to remain with us till Monday I supposed from a delicacy least he might keep us from Novar. Your father brought him there for a variety Saturday forenoon, went thro' the house & shewed him the place. If he was then low had been as usual he would have been very well pleased to see him there. On Sunday he preached a most capital elegant sermon. I kept Mrs Sutherland & Miss Annie to dinner, they were much gratified, said it was long since they saw so agreeable a stranger. He was in excellent spirits & looking well, and was stored with so much pleasant anecdote particularly in church affairs so that your father was highly gratified by his visit. You will grudge the less the black in his absence makes in your house at this time since he made so seasonable a visit to your parents our spirits certainly required such a fill up. Your father & I sat to dinner alone on Christmas & new years day. We had resolved on this for sometime as our worthy friend Sir Hector was so low & who would not want us when he was at home on these occasions. Since I could not have those I wished I preferred being alone from the recollections of former happy days. Oh what a contrast to the last year when we had your darling boys who amused, & were the delight of us all and my dear William, and our amiable and ever to be lamented Mr McGregor how blind to the future how little did I dream this would be the last sight of him. In short the last has been a severe year upon us begun with the loss of our good friend Mr Rose soon after our dearest friend, then poor George Sutherland & has now finished with worthy Sir Hector. May we be prepared for the troubles of the next, as no season passes without less or more.

John Bethune came home about three weeks ago and looks very well. He saw Gilbert the day before he left the Colony in July last in good health. His being with them has made his family very gay at present which is natural. They have gone all hands down to Cromarty to pass the holy days with Culcairn & his daughters. From Mrs Straith down to little Kate, they have not returned yet. Mrs Bethune & Miss Betty Munro her sister where as usual at Arduilie.

I have corresponded regularly since you left me with Miss Ross to acquaint her particularly about Sir Hectors health. She is constantly at She never misses mentioning you in the most interesting manner & regrets she does not hear from you. She tells me the dear children are quite well, but no accounts yet from General Ferguson from the Cape. I sincerely wish Sir Hector may have left something to Miss Ross. All his keepings were sealed the day he died by Geanies, who came from Ding! for this purpose. Excuse the melancholy strain of my letter at this season. I would have addressed you sooner but waited until all was over that. Might tell you about the funeral.

Your most agreeable favour of the 18th Ult^o reached me while Mr Watson was here his accounts of you were latter than your letter. I was charmed with his news of you all, especially to hear how my dear boys are improved. Tell Harry I am much much obliged by his paragraph in your letter, and will remember it to the dear fellow. I am delighted to hear Peter has got so happily over the smallpox since this is the case I much prefer this to the cow pox of which I have yet put little faith in. I gave your message to [Mrs Mckie?] who rejoices to hear of you

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Mrs Watson
Crantit
Kirkwall

[left of address]

especially of the dear lamb Petter God bless him. I regret the disappointment of Doctor & Mrs Groat, and wish they may in future be more fortunate. I am pleased to hear my little favorite Panny has been your guest at the holydays. This change will be much in her favour. Sure I am if the spirit of her dear departed mother has the power to look down on this world she will be pleased to see her with you. I hope England agrees with M.... & Miss Baikie. I will be glad to hear Mr Mitchell has recovered. Let me hear soon from I pray Heaven that ugly fever in Kirkwall may not come near to Crantit.

Your father joins me in wishing you Mr Watson & the dear boys the complements of the season with many happy returns of the same. I remain my darling Christy

Your affectionate & loving mother
Anne Robertson

Mrs McKen and Miss Baby offer kindest remembrances to you. I should be thankful I am quite well and free of rheumatic complaints this winter

[right of address]

We have of late heard often from Liverpool they mention some live geese that came from you of which they had one Christmas Day all well. We heard thrice from William since he left us I suppose he will be leaving London for Liverpool by this time.

I saw your Deays sister lately she gives great satisfaction at Ardullie. She bids me say all her friends are well and that both her father & mother have kept better health this winter than for years before. I told her the order her sister gave to use the cloaths she left at her fathers.

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Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 26 Feb 1806

Mr Dear Christy
My Dear

I was getting anxious to hear from you, when your agreeable favour of the 3^d appeared, which afforded your father & me that gratification we allways feel on hearing that you, Mr Watson, & the darling boys are well as we could wish, after getting over slight colds. Thank God this was the case, when an alarming fever was so near you. I am pleased to hear Mr Mirchel has escaped the grim Tyrant at this time. Last night we had the agreeable surprize of our good friend Mr Watson, & a young lad a nephew of his stepping in here about tea time. He has been disappointed of a ship to

bring him home. I am happy he has come away. I cannot but regret he has so rough a journey at this season. I was just going to write doubt Mr W requests bringing it himself.

It is pleasing to me to learn you spent the holiday time so agreeably among your friends, & they with you, that they were all well when your letter came away. I lately heard from your sister Annie she informs me William had arrived at Liverpool the 5th to their great joy after so long an absence. He writes us he kept excellent health since he went to London of which I am rather doubtful. He does not complain but from necessity. Ann says she was struck with his pale sickly look. I am really pleased he is now with his friends there for sometime. She says Doctor Traill's chemical lectures are much thought of by the best judges, that he had rather a genteel than a numerous audience but observes profit in this instance is not so much his object, as to bring him unto notice but I run on without thinking you have all these matters more particularly detailed than I have. By a letter from Hugh last night all friends were well Mr Sandbach had gone to Glasgow where he remains 12 days. This would have been a fine opportunity for Annie to return home if a few months more advanced in the season. She seems anxious now to come herself. While your father & I enjoy our present health we leave it to herself & her friends to settle her motions. She finds . . . to her comfort at her time of life. You know for her sake I . . . myself the gratification of her society. I am sometimes surprised myself how much this reconciles to my present solitariness, what I mean by this is if I were surrounded by a much more interesting society than has fallen to my share still I feel it solitary in absence of my own family. No others can more fill up their place to me.

In my last I gave you a full account of our worthy friend Sir Hector's death & funeral, but knew nothing then of his settlements, and very little is yet known here of his will, which lay with Mr Coutts the banker and is

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now in Sir Alexander's possession who inherits Novar and all the landed property of his brother, it is understood. Sir Hector's keepings were sealed in presence of Geanies Culcairn & Mr Munro the day he died, and by Sir Alexander's orders were opened and examined by the same party & inventories taken of everything. But no late will or papers of consequence were found, but a note wrote & signed by himself, ordering the gardiner's grieve, & Hugh McLean a hundred pounds each. To all his servants a year's wages more than what was due them. To Don^d Aird his body servant 20 pounds a year for life. To Mrs Watson & Miss Betty 50l pounds a year each, the longest liver to enjoy the hundred. I fear poor Mrs Hay is overlooked but she has herself much to blame for this you know.

His son Mr Hugh Munro has ten thousand settled him besides the Barrack Mastership which is equal to a guinea a day. I am happy this amiable young man is left so independent. The dear creature General Ferguson's children are handsomely provided for. By their mother's marriage contract, all her fortune is settled on them. The will at London was made in 97. So I am afraid Miss Ross Ankerville is not remembered by Sir Hector. She was a favourite of his, & from the recent death of her father & the situation of her family, we hoped he would do something genteel for her. I heard from her last week. She seems to have no hopes herself of this. She enquired kindly for you. Several I believe will be disappointed, it was a country report each of Mr Munro's daughters were left 500, but I believe they did not expect it themselves. It is a pity Miss Baby was not left a genteel remembrance being in the house during his illness & death & often one of those who watched him. He left his best gold watch to Mr Munro. This is all known yet of his settlements in the north. Worthy man in him all our family have lost a sincere friend & we had many enjoyments by his life, but expected no gain by his death therefore we are not among those disappointed. Poor Mrs McCoe found herself in an awkward situation after Sir Hector's death therefore went on board the first ship for London from Cromarty. Hector Bethune preached a funeral sermon. The friends from Novar were present, the Sunday after the interment. Next Sunday they came here were engaged to dine

here we kept them till Tuesday. The party consisted of Mrs Watson who slept in the easter room, McCaw & Miss Baby in the new room, Harry Munro and a Mr McKenzie from Edin^r a very sensible decent man who is a second cousin of Sir Hectors came to pass the winter not thinking he was so low or near his end. I suppose had hopes & went off disappointed. These gentlemen slept in the garret. They left us seemingly pleased with our attentions. But to tell you the truth I was pleased to have so good an opportunity to show poor McCaw this attention. She might well see every other person keep off. Whatever the world may say she is a good hearted obliging person. Mr Munro went w^t her to Cromarty.

Miss Betsy Reid was so good as come & pass a few days with me two days after. Jess Aikin Rose Munro came, the night before the storm fell. They were with us a week which was very agreeable to us. I never saw your friend Betsy look better even to' she was a good deal troubled with the toothache. I wish it were now she was here. I would send for her

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were it not the new fallen storm, and our good friend is so ill with a cold it would be introducing him to the disadvantage to a young lady, when he was unwell. Indeed I am happy he has happened to come here now for he caught an obstinate cold which required some rest & attention.

I observe without being much surprized that Betty has taken leave of you. If she has any prospect that she conceives will be more advantageous than remaining with you, or if she thought you could not easily part with her, she might be fool enough to hope this rash step might enhance her value with you. I would not wonder if she is already at her repentance and if she finds you have another engaged, that she will be for playing the same farce over again she did here. She now shews there was more of self than sincerity in the work she made about parting with the children. I cannot recommend any person to you now besides those you heard of yourself when here. As for the Sandisons I know them now too well to wish any of them on you. Bell Kemp is not to leave us she is the one your father or I would wish most to keep we have, but as she is good natured honest & handy, & very fond of the children, I would never hesitate to part with her to accommodate you — but Mr Watson assures me he has one or two in his eye whom you will be fully better appointed than you have been, and then the expense of sending one all the way from this place, and the risk of changing, longing to be back, is very teasing, as your Deay does. Tell all her friends are well. I saw her two sisters this week you may tell her Sir Hugh cruelly turns her father out of his farm the first term, all the indulgence they expect is to remain for one ear yet in the house. Tell that her parents wish of all things that she would settle where she is. Write me soon your resolve about a nurse.

Dear Petter will be nine months the 15th of next month, longer than the beginning of April you should not keep him on the breast, on your own account. What you have done is well for each of you, but giving long suck exhausts a woman's constitution too much.

Have you yet any thoughts of going to Liverpool this season if you have bring the dear children here & I will get a nurse & every thing they will require if you go it would do well for Annie to return with you. Your father or I have not the least idea of going South this season. I am much obliged by Mr Watsons kind offer & nothing would be more agreeable to me than the plan you propose if it were in my power, but I should think it best for you, to pay your own visits while you are in good travelling condition.

It is not fixed yet when my dear Hugh goes for Demerary. Indeed it touches me to the heart that no other plan has cast up for him. George Robertson, Hugh Munro the smith's son & Sir Hector's late valet Donald Aird all go at their own expense this summer to Demerary. They are three genteel lads & if spared have a good chance to do well. The boy Hugh you saw with us had indented to go there, and another lad from this Parish & a son of McLenan the plaisterer. The last three are indented each for 3 years.

Bell Rainies marriage was almost as great a surprize to us as to yourself we had no certainty of it till the week before it happened. I know little of Mr Kennedy, but he has the character of a sensible judicious man, who understands country

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affairs & farming well, which I think is a very fortunate turn for a country clergyman. Bell is an excellent girl and I believe will make a creditable ministers wife. I had a long letter lately from Mrs Parker. It was to relieve our anxiety about Gilbert saying Mr Parker had heard from him by their ship Highlander lately landed at Greenock. She brought a good many bales of cotton that grew on Kiltearn Estate belonging to Gilbert Robert'n & Gilbert Rainie. Mrs Sutherland was brought to bed of a daughter about a montage. She is names Jannet, herself has made a good recovery, but the child is rather weakly She thinks it wants a month of its time. There was letters this week from her brothers Robert & William both well. Robert was at New York a week at Mr Gilbert Robertsons, but neither saw or heard of Mrs Robertson. This I fear would prognosticate no great happiness in this union. He was a week at Mr Divie Bethunes he and his family quite well & very kind. Mrs Parker informs that Mrs Tennant will be laid aside in March. I understand Mrs Sandbach expects ti lie in in June next. I believe I did not tell you before that Mr Cameron Drummond is married to a daughter of Captⁿ Alpin Grant, she lives till Whitsunday at her fathers. Mr C as you may suppose has deserted us here. We only saw him once since he changed his state, in great glee.

Mr and Mrs Dickson have come to Glasgow to live. She expects to lie in every day. Dickson was lately this way. Do you know for all my attentions to her she did not trouble herself to write me a line since she left the country tho' she promised me to write. Her sister Mrs McGregor has got a son.

We have a report that Mrs Mckenzie Grei?e is dead. She was a very agreeable sensible woman. I suppose it is too true.

Your father sends by Mr Watson one of the pamphlets published by Culcairn for you. This unlucky business is like to turn out more serious than ever. Mr Gordon Drakies challenged Culcairn, on the 15th curt Saturday they appointed to meet at seven in the morning about two miles from Cromarty. Coll Ross his cousin was Culcairns second, Captⁿ McKenzie Rogie, now of Newhall, was Mr Gordons second. On the preceding evening Jack Roy came to Doctor Macdonald engaged him to be next morning at the same hour at the neighbouring wood prepared as a surgeon. It is reported that the Doctors maid overheard the conversation, being a discreet person run to inform Mr Swan a justice of peace of this affair, who issued warrant against the parties, had abut five next morning a party of Volunteers skulking in the woods waiting them. At 7 two carriages appeared s first. The Volunteers rushed out of the woods & surrounded the carriage. It is said Culcairns face grew blue with rage at having been interupted. When they interrogated the Volunteers by what authority did they dare come near them they produced the warrant & threatened to shoot both horses & driver unless they would comply. After much abuse on one side & threatening on the other both parties were obliged to return to Cromarty surrounded by the Volunteers, were put under arrest till Mr McLeod the Sherrif appeared who bound over the principals to the peace for three years under a penalty of 3000 pounds. But still there are fears the matter will not rest here. Mr Sherrif Kinmilies, & Mr McIntosh Ballespick are rather threatening and hastily disposed against Culcairn. Culloden has a strong party at Inverness on his side. It is said Mr Hugh Rose is now on an embassy as a mediator of peace between these gentlemen. This has been a badly conducted foolish affair from first. I fear the poor lady will be one fatal victim. I am told she neither eats nor sleeps.

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Kiltearn Sunday 2^d March

Our agreeable friend Mr Watson lives us I hope much better than he came to us. He gave us another excellent discourse this day. I was rather scrupulous about his preaching but he seems not to feel himself the worse of this kind service to us all particularly to your father who is only getting well of his cold & toothache.

We have seen Mrs McKenzie Griene's death in the papers this day. Read the inclosed scrawl when you have an hour's leisure. I wish you may make it out as I had so much time I sat down when at leisure to give any chit chat as occurred.

What would I not give now my dear for one day's uninterrupted enjoyment of your company. But wishes are vain in such cases. Miss Jeany Hall is here for a month. Past your father & I asked her to pass the winter here. We cannot have a more discreet modest guest. She joins me & your father in love & complements to you Mr Watson & the dear children

I ever am My dearest Christy

Your affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

Mr John & Hector Bethune was here a day and night lately. The former is little changed from the same fine agreeable lad we knew him of old.

I wished to introduce Mr W at Kilmote for a comfortable night's lodging. I know they would be pleased to shew him attention on account of his hospitality to their Wm but a certain person did not approve of my plan.

Mr Watson when you see him can give you anything I may have forgot and his nephew will divert Harry about Kilmear.

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Mrs Anne Robertson, Kilmear, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 16 Aug 1806

[Postscript] There are such a concourse of nobility and gentry on the roads now to the north Anne was detained 2 days at Perth and the same at Inverness for want of horses or carriage and some stages had difficulty to get an apartment to sleep in. This accounts for the causes of our anxiety about her but she will soon give you an account of her journey. Anne has her father's nature. She seems a very lively child and quite at home already. This is really an unexpected pleasure.

My Dear Christy,

I persuade myself you will hear with deep regret the death of your amiable cousin William Forbes, and the dear companion of a part of your early years. This dear youth cut off in the bloom of life is a greater mortification to me than I can express both on account of the pleasing prospect of so near a relation, so promising in every respect, but as the only remaining offspring of my valuable brother. As for his mother, she has been a hard fated poor woman and from my heart I pity her now. What may not a short time produce. About a month after Betsy's delivery she writ me she had a very good letter from William saying she had been quite well since he went to Tobago that his property there was doing as well as he could wish considering that he found it in a neglected state and that there was nothing he wished more than to be acquainted with and have a friendly intercourse with his father's friends. But alas this is a pleasure providence saw fit to deny us. You would readily know that my brother George & William had an equal share in this property, that if George

McCulloch had lived he would failing of Wm Forbes have succeed to all. George was an elegant youth indeed and his uncles were very partial to him. Altho my dear brother William who allways acted with delicacy & propriety put the respect upon his oldest sister to make her oldest son his heir, yet failing of him he left it to my William & his heirs. The truth is he had a strong partiality for me of which this is a proof. Mt brother George willed all his property to George McCulloch & his heirs so that Tom McCulloch now falls into his share of Culloden estate in the island of Tobago. If it were an inheritance of much greater value it is purchased at too dear a rate. It was my wish that none of mine would ever come to it and that the dear youth himself might be spared to enjoy it. Besides I fear it is but an uncumbered property, which has for years been at the mercy of managers. This has been particularly the case since the death of Mr Hugh Forbes and a Mr Wilson, who were worthy characters, and the interested friends & executors of my brothers.

I suppose your bror William must go abroad to make the most of his share of Culloden. God grant he may not go in the case, poor fellow. He is not strong to combat a warm climate. We have heard from him since he left Liverpool but nothing yet of what he means to do. A Mr Mcleod who lived near my dear nephew and who married your uncle Johns widow acquainted your father of his death and adds that he was cut off by a short illness early in May last, and universally regretted all over the Island.

I told you in my last that I was afraid Miss Rose would not be tenderly treated by her nephew. Herself & Mrs Brodie wished of all things to pass the little remainder of their days in Arduillie, and only wanted the house & gardens & a cows grass. Or at any rate to remain till next Whitsunday till a new Tennant would enter, but Sir Hugh has acted on this occasion just like himself. He compelled his aunt to leave Arduillie six weeks after his mothers death before the first anguish of her grief was subsided and next day has a sale which lasted two days of all the household furniture farm stock &c in order to pay the debts. This came to about 5 or 6 hundred pounds besides the crop on the ground which will about pay the debts. There was 4 hundred of this due Sir Hector. It is surprising he did not cancell this debt. Miss Rose & Mrs Brodie went the first week to Mountgerald on particular invitation. Then went to Alness where they yet remain. She had a good right to go

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there having passed the legacy Mr Rose left her to this family & Mr Donalds. It is now she feels the folly of this, she has only thirty pounds she can call her own instead of seventy a year she might have had if she had accepted Mr Roses legacy, which was the interest of a thousand pounds his sister who died in India left him, and is come home 12 months ago. She tried to get a house in Nairn bu tin the middle of term this could not be obtained, but Culloden has lately agreed to give her his house at Ryefield in Ferintosh just opposite to Arduillie and ready furnished. I believe she leaves Alness this week. This was very good of Culloden when her own nephew turned her out, without knowing where to lay her head. Is not this situation of Miss Rose a striking instance to us what people may come to or they leave this world. Sir Hugh made her a kind promise of fifty pounds a year, but I wish he pay perform this. I was at the Arduillie soup but purchased very little. The furniture was all very old but sold well.

You will be rather surprized to hear that a man of Sir Hector Munro's exactness should have his settlements litigated in consequence of which there several copies of his will printed and sent to his legatees. The dispute lies between Sir Alexander, and General Ferguson and Mr Hugh Munro the Barrack master. Sir Hector made a will in 98 where he leaves the place of Novar to his brother with the house furniture plate jewels gardens farming utensils cattle &c with an income of 15 hundred a year bu left him under trustees till all his plans ins intail are fulfilled. What these are I have not learnt. In that will 98 he leaves all his money & debts . . . in India to his natural children, which would amount to ninety thousand, but in a codicil to this will wrote with a letter to his agent Mr

Charles Macintosh & signed by himself in October last, he there expressly says that whatever he ordered in his former will beyond a certain sum is now null & void to his natural children, that this money it was his will should be laid out in making purchases of land as near his estates in Rossshire & Murray as possible. Col Ferguson & Mr H Munro wish to keep by the first will & wish to prove Sir H not fit to make out a will in October before his death. Sir Hector possessed all his mental faculties to the end. I had no idea he had so much money remaining. How much would his memory be revered had he left a few thousand in humane legacies and charitable donations. I regret he has not remembered Miss Ross or yet cancelled the 4 hundred Lady Munro owed him, or at least left it to Miss Rose, but at the last his mind seemed wholly bent on leaving a great landed property and laying the foundations of a great family, an infatuated ambition to a man who had no heirs of his own body. Down his sisters have been dealt hardly by. Mrs Hay says her brother left there the wrong side of a shilling. Mrs Watson & Miss Betty are left fifty pounds a year each for life the longest lived to have the hundred. All these matters you may suppose occasion some stir & speculation here. Lady Munro, with her Sir Alexander, does not come this season to the north. It is no wonder if he should be pleased at having his hands so tied up. He can neither give a lease or receive the rents or constitute a factor, all this is left to trustees. In the first will the trustees are Mr Coutts the banker a Mr Coutts Trotter & a Mr Antrobus all of the same House, Mr Ogilvie the army agent Mr Gordon Embo, Sir Hugh Munro, Provost Macintosh at Inverness & Mr Alexr Brodie. In the last codicil he has struck the last mentioned 4 except Mr A Brodie. The trustees are left five hundred pounds each but those struck of get none in this codicil stands but enough of this!!

I was not more relieved of anxiety for a while then when I last had the pleasure of yours being longing to hear of you and all your dear family. I made out every word of your . . . old letter, so that you need be at no loss at any time to write in it in the same manner. I also received your box and mat of fine fish in the highest order. You have provided me in hard fish for the season at least, Not one of the sweet meat jars were broke from the best to the worst and you have sent sufficient for me and yourself. I have now got some sweetmeats and kippers ready for you as I suppose the present scene of the market will exhaust your little remaining stock. Indeed my dear if not there real value that makes you or me send these things to each other but that any intercourse of this kind shews we are thinking of each other and all the little attentions displayed by you on receiving your boxes gives my spirit a fill up and a pleasure that I know will be a reward to you for this trouble. The thoughts that you did all this to please & testify your affections, and that the dear little fellows were prattling about you of the time at Kiltearn & their friends there, are gratifications to me next to being with you. I am delighted with your account of your charming boys particularly of lovely Petter. God bless them and spare them to be an ornament to society in their day. All your dears friends are well and not a little gratified at her testimonies in her own way of her remembrances of them. What an example to poor servants when they have good example from the master & mistress. I will get a letter from some of them to her in the box. Her friends are rightly pleased

f120r [IMG_2754.jpg]

& so am I that she has agreed to stay with you her sister Kate that was cook at Ardullie is gone to Mr Rainies at Creich to be cook maid there where she will be very comfortable. Your father had a letter from Captⁿ Parker saying Mrs Parker was delivered of a fine boy on Sunday the 10th mother and child in a good way I suppose on every account this boy will be George Mr Parker was absent as usual on these occasions but was expected home next day. He had been on a tour of the Western Isles with a party. Mr P has made a genteel present of plate to Mrs Kenedy, such as table and tea spoon dealer & salts and a set of china from Mrs Tennant. Kennedy returned in great spirits after visiting them they pleased with hi & he with them. He was here night on his return. I meant to have written you a fortnight ago but just like yourself detained from it by trifles two of which I will

mention. Your father & I went a fortnight ago to Strathpeffer to pay our respects to our good friend Mrs Sutherland who with Col Mckenzie & family waits the mineral. After spending gall the time we could spare with her we dined at Millbank where we were previously engaged with a party Mr McKenzie Knockbains wife & two daughters, Miss Martha Mckenzie Princes Street, Miss Hectorina and Miss M Robertson & Mr Stewart of Dingwall, & for the first time Mrs S is a lively pleasant little woman himself is really a worthy superior sort of man. I never expected our busy esteemed friend Mr Rose would have a successor that promises to be so agreeable to us. He seems most desirous to be well with your father. He plays the violin with taste & seems possessed of a most gentle temper. We slept at Millbank and dined next day at Mountgerald with several gentlemen who attended there at a group of an overstock of cattle and all the trock in the old house which sold well. We came home in the evening brought Miss M Robertson with us who was so kind as to pass a week with us. She is a kind hearted woman. She allways mentions you with much interest and begs her best remembrances. Her brother Colin is come from India with his wife and family. They have two children with their grandfather in Forres & will be soon north. All those friends friends [sic] I saw at Millbank were making the kindest inquiry's for you & yours particularly Mrs Col^l Sutherland and her daughter who called here a day she was going for a start to Millmount. She said she still regrets she was then so ill she could not see you on your way. Justina Reid dined with us at Milbank & Mr Stewarts. Her father & sisters have a good time at Edin^r they are not returned yet. Mr Reid had a pollypus in his nose but with little trouble but then it is apt to grow again he waits till the Doctor s see him out of danger this by using causticks to the roots of the pollypus, at intervals which is more painful far than the cutting of it.

I am much pleased to hear these young relations of Mr Watsons are so agreeable to you. It will certainly be an acquisition to you, the society of a fine accomplished girl such as Miss Crombie to remain the winter with you and I think it would be much in her own favour two as she moves in a genteel circle with you. It pleases me to hear that a branch of the Laings is established in Kirkwall again especially a family who have been so partial to you. Mr Laing is certainly an acquisition to any society, that with a sensible good wife are really agreeable circumstances. I observe what you say of Mr Shaw and agree with you in opinion of him. But I regret his poor young wives situation. Mcdonald minister of Forres has brought all the Miss Shaws to live to his manse at Forres, as himself lives at a farm a little way in the country. He has taken a friendly & guardian charge of them to superintend their education. Has any of them been sent to Kirkwall as I think you once mentioned.

I am gratified of the good people you are pleased to mention, such as the Tankernesses, Manson, Yules, Richans. I beg you mention me in themes friendly manner to them. I would just expect from what I saw of them the Miss Urquharts would turn out genteel women after a finished education. Remember us in the kindest manner to the good bishop of Landaff. Your father will be allways happy to meet him. Annie has at last left Liverpool and all her dear interest there. She writ from Edin^r she was so lucky as have Dr Trail & a lady of her acquaintance to travel with her. She was to wait a day or two for a party to travel north with which as you see by the date of this at the beginning I kept three days in hopes of her arrival that I could just tell you she was here but she has not got away soon as she expected.

IMG_2755.jpg

Address:

Mrs Watson Crantit

Kirkwall

[Left]

Tuesday the 19th Surely Annie waits a party. We are on the look out for her every evening since the 15th. She should have writ us again. I fear by this you think my silence unkind but God knows it is not for want of thinking of you hourly & on the anniversary of the month you passed here last summer every scene was fresh in my view. I will dispatch this today. I can now tell you I saw Lady Munro. Your father & I called upon her. She was very kind and easy, and called here in return and said as they now had an interest in the parish of Kiltearn she would come Sunday about to church here. Her young folks ride out on ponies. She said she would make them ride this way to see me as they were with their governess when we called of course we did not see them. Mr Hugh Munro the Barrack Master is now in the country lives at Dr Wisharts. He has taken the farm of Ardullie from Sir Hugh at a hundred & seventy pounds a year. It is said a hundred is full value for it now. Your grand uncle Colin Robertson paid but two chalders for it when he had this farm, and it was valued at fifty pounds only to the deceased Lady Munro. Mr Munro throws down the old house & builds an elegant new one on a small scale.

With united love to you Mr Watson & the darling boys. I ever am My dearest Christy

Your affect Mor Anne Robertson

[Right]

Mountgerald has set the old house & farm above the road to Captⁿ John Castle Leod. He is making a compleat repair on the house. He made great offers for Ardullie & so did Wm Grant that is married to Miss Jean Houston. Each offered a hundred & fifty for it. Our good neighbours Mr & Mrs Munro left Drummond and gone to a farm on the highland part of Novar estate. Drummond is not yet set Mr Cameron still lives there has the garden house & grass this season for twenty pounds. Major Fraser the laird of Inchcoulter's brother has left us after being here two days superintending large repairs in the house of Balcony. The Major is a sensible agreeable man. I will not shut the box I am to send until Anne arrives. You will be apprized when it is sent. Miss Hall is now here she left me the two last months. No word of Hector Hall yet which bears hard on her. I am vexed to hear the marino sheep is yet at Cromarty. From the end of April till the latter end of June we had a charming dry season, but since this country has been dreadful with torrents of rain almost every day. Last week we had tremendous storms of thunder & lightening & uncommonly heavy rains for a few days it has cleared up & we have charming . . . still continue & have a good harvest yet. There is a great crop on the ground in this country.

[Below]

The sacrament was last . . . at Ferintosh about six thousand of a congregation . . . 1700 communicants. Miss Clementina Simpson . . . a few days on her way there. We are to have the sacrament here Sunday come eight days or the last Sunday this month.

Annie is just arrived and . . . utter astonishment who is come with her but dear Anne Sandbach. We never heard the least hint or . . . proposal of her coming is not this good of them to allow her. There was . . . Captⁿ Sackville and a son of Bighouses travelled from Edin^r with . . . All quite well thank God. You would be diverted to see us all particularly the Dockar as dear Harry used to [say?]. I wish he were here now when there is so nice a little sweetheart for him.

Oct 1806

My Dear Christy

I thought to have sent you the box with the sweet meats long ago, but the want of an opportunity detained me fir weeks, & then I thought it as well ti send it and the apples together. I have put the apples in a cask this season as we had more to spare than usual, could I be but sure of an opportunity straight from Cromarty I would have sent another cask, but if they go by Leith it will be dear bought to pay freight for what is sent. There is eleven kippers sent, and if the things would reach you speedily you would have some satisfaction in them. I send some play things for my dear boys the same as last year as I heard they were pleased wth them and I filled uptake bx with a few boughs of hazel to shew Harry how roots grow on the trees. There is a few whips in the cask tho' of small value will please them for a day as well as better. There is just the jars of sweet meats, I put them for convenience of carriage in the largest jars you sent, but what you wish to keep longest I would advise you to melt down & bring them to a boil and put in small pots, for the inconvenience of large pots is, that the sweetmeats when once broke open are read to run & ferment and then lose their flavour. You have had such a run of genteel company I understand since the commencement of the market I fear your stock is nearly exhausted. How happy will I be that this reaches safe, altho' it is not near so much or such a variety as I could have wished.

Mr MacAulay has promised to forward the things as soon as possible, also the merino sheep which are I fear

f121v [2019-11-02 12.26.09.jpg]

in Cromarty. The tupe lamb died by some accident, but the ewe lamb has got another ewe lamb. Mr Young proposed taking back the ewe lamb, and sending another tupe lamb, but the price he gets for these tupes are so enormous I was ashamed to apply about another. It is a pity Mr Watson or yourself would not write Mr Young on this subject. The ewe & lamb is yet with a farmer near Cromarty. Mr McAulay said he often applied shipmasters to take these and that they refused, but I think the best plan for Mr Watson would be to bargain with one of the Leith shipmasters coming to Kirkwal to take the sheep from Cromarty & Mr McAulay the tide waiter, will find them for him.

When you meet with a pretty little apple present that from Anne Sandbach to her dear cousins, who she often speaks of as acquaintances they are so often mentioned, & quoted for patterns of goodness to her. She is just such another fine lively child as yourself was at her age.

You may believe we were relieved of much anxiety I hearing over dear Hughs safe arrival in Demerary, and of the happy meeting between him and his brother Gilbert. He wrote us thrice within the first month after his arrival, least some of them might not come to hand but fortunately all came safe.

Annie has got your last most agreeable letter, bu which we are happy to learn you & yours are well, especially yourself after all your fatigue & trouble with rounds of company, & so long a time of these English gentlemen of such high rank & fortune, of course guests of ceremony to a landlady of feeling & propriety, such as you, my dear. However easy & pleasant their manners might be it was a charge which few would mannage so well with as yourself. We are much pleased & gratified with your various intelligence which Annie will reply to by post long I suppose before this reaches you.

I ever am. Mt Dear Christy

Your affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

The Deays letter came here a month ago as I thought then to send of the box by itself. I hope your dairy maid will not leave you this winter.

f122r [2019-11-02 12.26.16.jpg]

List of sweetmeats & other articles in the box

2 jars strawberry jam

1 ditto rasberry for Mr Watson

1 white rasberry jam

1 ditto preserved cherries

1 ditto red jelly

1 half peck winter pears

A few nuts in a paper bag

f122v [2019-11-02 12.26.26.jpg]

Mrs Watson

Crantit

Christy was in poor health from the beginning of this year. On 15 May 1806 her fourth child, William Robertson Watson, was born at Crantit.

NLS MS 19331 f123r [2019-11-02 12.26.26.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 9 Sept 1807

My Dearest Christy

This morning Mr Watson South Ronaldsey's very friendly letter to your father reached us, and altho we have every reason to rejoice, and be thankful, for the termination of the narrative it contains yet you may believe we are shocked, and surprized, that so much trouble should come on Mr Watson, & you, from a cause, so unexpected, and unmerited, on Mr Watsons part. There is a remarkable interposition of Providence to be seen in your having such honourable, and faithful friends as Major Moodie, and Mr Watson, as your guests at so critical a period. We know the most gentle peaceable dispositions are the most courageous when once roused to a certain degree, and we believe this to be the case with our dear Mr Watson we have no doubt had he followed his feelings as far as himself alone was concerned, but he would at least as readily meet Major Stewart, as he would do him. But thank Heaven that he was preserved from such imminent danger, and that there was friends so able, and willing, at hand, to interfere, in a case which required as much delicacy, & prudence. But blessed are the peace makers. They will have their reward. I wish you may find out the names of all the authors of these inflammatory letters to Major S that you may know really who these enemies are, besides Captⁿ S & Mr R. their being active in a business of this nature is no wonder. But alas that so many in a Christian country, under the appellation of gentlemen would be capable of laying a snare, for the life of an innocent man. To what Regiment is this same Major S

connected! His conduct from beginning to end of this business says little for his head or heart. My dear Christy the account our worthy friend Mr Watson, gives us of your fortitude, and prudence, during the whole of a transaction so serious, and so important to you, gratifies me beyond what I can now express and we all feel equally pleased at the moderate manly conduct of Mr Watson in such disagreeable circumstances. I trust you will be allways equally fortunate in frustrating the designs of those who have malicious designs against you. The ways of the wicked may prosper for a time, but we in general see that even in this life they are punished in the end, and fall into those snares they contrive for the objects of their envy & malice. It is now more than time that I should thank you for your several agreeable letters, believe me the most minute circumstances in each of them was particularly interesting to me, but especially your last from Birsay. I assure you it would be my greater ambition could I have accompanied you & yours to that romantick summer residence, often have I in thought been along with Mr Watson & you in your pleasure boat on the lake and travers'd with you on these charming Links you describe so well Indeed I was delighted with your account of this place. But above all that your own health was perfectly recovered after so severe an illness before you was confined with the young stranger dear William — and that you and he continue to do well. What a blessing I reckon it that the darling boys have got the better of that formidable complaint the chin cough. It was an excellent plan for you, and them, to go for change of air to Birsay. I was just resolved to write you on your return from that, and to congratulate you on getting the gaities, and bustle of the market as usual agreeably over

f123v [2019-11-02 12.28.25.jpg]

little thinking what a disagreeable scene was before you, but o what cause to be thankful to our merciful preserver that you are all spared, and in health.

When your maid Christy Munro returned here I was confined to my room. I used to keep her hours beside me telling me about the boys & all at Crantit which theme seemed to be her chief pleasure, poor creature. I liked to see what a grateful sense she had of your kindness to her, she never speaks of you to me without tears. She was a great fool to leave you. I believe she very soon repented this step, but as you recommended her to me I got her to be dairymaid to Mr Duncan Simpson. She is very well there and they seem pleased with her. I a told she & a sister of hers serving at Kinnairdy are going to be married soon. Two sisters of hers have been married to Ferentosh men since she came home. Christy sends many blessings to you and the children.

On the third Sunday of August the Sacrament was dispensed Dingwal. For several weeks before we were engaged with our good friends at Millbank to lodge there, and as Annie never wishes to be separated a night from Anne Sandbach they insisted on bringing her with us which we did. The dear creature behaved well and sat the three following days very composed in church. Mr & Mrs Davidson & a charming young family have been at Tulloch for some months, they attended most decently every day, and both communicated on Sunday, altho' they are of the Church of England.

Mr Donald held the Sacrament on the same day at Fodderty contrary to every opinion but his own, no doubt thinking this might disconcert Mr Stewart, but in this he only punished his parish people by keeping them from Dingwal. There were few their but his own, & some of them came to Dingwal. Mr S is an accomplished gentleman's well as an amiable clergyman, and Mrs S a smart agreeable little woman. They were both most attentive to your father & me, we dined with them Thursday, Sunday and Monday. Mr Bethune assisted at Fodderty I believes friends wished he had been at Dingl but Mr S did not put it in his power, no doubt as he is of a party inimical to Mr S. None of the family came to the west at this time even his wife kept at home.

I believe there never was such a crowd seen at Dingwal before. You may judge of it when I say there was a thousand communicated there. All the clergy there were the most popular characters in

the north. They were Mr Calder, Mr McIntosh of Tain, Mr Bain from Inverness, and your father, with Mr S himself at their head.

On Sunday last the 5th cur^t the Sacrament was given at Alnes for the first time since Mr Bethune was settled there. There was no crowd hereabout just enough, and every thing went on agreeably. Hector performed on Sunday well beyond expectation all ranks were pleased with him. The assistants were Mr Ross Loggie, & Mr McAdam, Mr Urquhart Rosskeen and the Doctor here, Mr Donald &. The young wife was well assisted she had Mrs Angus Bethune, Mrs Straith and Miss Christy with her. They had most genteel sumptuous dinners on Sunday & Monday at the manse, Mrs B is a sweet tempered fine young creature, and laid herself out to act with propriety and be attentive to all ranks. Hector has been lucky to get her. Indeed they promise to be a happy pair. Alnes is now a comfortable place the manse is newly painted & the garden much enlarged with a wall near as high as that at Novar. Sir Alexander and Lady Munro communicated at Alnes, and dined at the manse on Sunday. They were both very frank, & agreeable. Sir A followed his worthy brother Sir Hectors method of being very gentle on such occasions to his minister. On Wednesday of last week he sent 4 dozen of wine to the manse the half sherry & half port a hind leg of large bullock, a large fat sheep, a pig & a ham. Mr & Mrs Urquhart where guests at Novar. The Doctor and I were pressed to be their guests also, but we only dined on Saturday. We preferred being in our own beds at night, the weather was rainy & cold, & once we were set in the gig it made little difference going home, as to Novar. Sir Charles & Lady Mary Ross both partook of the sacrament at Kilmuir, & Loggie this season and attended the preaching every day. Lady Mary is a very popular character are pleasing when the great are good & exemplary in their conduct. Alas that he who we were once most interested in is an exception to every good

f124r [2019-11-02 12.28.45.jpg]

Ever since Lady Munro came to the country we found her very easy & friendly disposed to us. Indeed the Doctor and I, and Taininich, (who is now very intimate at Novar) were his only old acquaintances, and we find Sir Alexander no less kind. He chatted an hour with us this day, & old Mr John Baillie with him. Lady Munro was in the habit of coming to this church Sunday about. As soon as the weather grew good for his daughters walking this summer Sir H sent her two Sundays & made the cook and chambermaid sit in the front seat with her, just out of spite to prevent her Ladyships coming again. One day Sir Alex^r & a friend of his a very worthy gentleman Mr Duff Consul of Cadiz came to this church & they sat with Mount Gerald.

Annie and Ann Sandbach we left at Alnes the Sunday & Monday night of the sacrament. Ann is really a nice creature & so lively & sensible she is the delight of all the house. She often reminds, your father & me, of what you was at her age. Now I wish you saw her and that any of my dear boys were here with her. When we point out any propriety of conduct to Ann we quote my own ??? Harry to her and how he & even little wicked would do so well in such & such a case. You judged well my dear, that it was particularly gratifying to me that Mr Watson & you had the goodness to call your youngest boy William Robertson. I assure you William feels the token of your esteem with due gratitude. Few have a more kind or generous heart than William, were it in his power. We heard from him the other day from Ramsgate, where he passed a few weeks, and a few friends that were there with him. Annie would tell you we had agreeable letters from our dear Hugh so late as May & June. He and Gilbert were quite well thank God and what do you think of the dear fellow that has already sent me a barrel of sugar it is now at Glasgow. I am happy to find that he corresponds regularly with you so that I need not and large about his letters. We lately saw a Mr Hector Downie here from Demerary youngest son to Mr Downie, Urray, a fine young man & very intimate with our friends.

I need not say what we feel towards Major Moodie and Mr Watson. I beg you offer our grateful acknowledgements to them when you see them, and with love to Mr Watson and the dear children, I ever am, you are truly affectionate Anne Robertson.

[In different hand from H R]

My Dr Christy

My sentiments are so fully expressed above that your mother has left me no room to add any thing but my few prayers that the Mr Watson & you may ever continue under the care of a kind providence, to defeat the designs of your enemies.

[difficult to read]

f124v [2019-11-02 12.29.01.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Crantit
Kirkwall

[to right of address]

There was nothing I had more at heart when I wrote to you last sent to acquaint you that I received the straw bonnet which you so kindly sent to be made up for me at Edinburgh very stupidly I forgot it. It is a beautiful bonnet & suits taste in every respect the ribbons a beautiful lilack and white shot satin. I am sure it must have cost you very high. I forget if I told you Mr Sandbach sent me by Annie a handsome black velvet pelis for a winter hap to guard against the rheumatism. How much I am obliged to my ?????? for so liberally supplying me in genteel haps. I know not if Annie told you Mr Sandbach sent us half a pipe of best Madeira. I never bring a bottle of it to table but I regret I have not those friends I would like best to partake of it with me but I hope in the course of next season I will have the great happiness of seeing Mr Watson & you here.

Miss Betsy Reid has sent a box with some sweetmeats for you which I enclose in one I send with sweetmeats for you myself by the first opportunity.

I will be anxious to hear again from and that your health & a nurse too, has not been affected by your late alarm.

[to left address]

I have taken your kind indulgence in not writing till I was better. I was very thankful to be so recruited as to be able to go to Dingwal. The weeks before this we had the Alnes family with us for the first time since their marriage owing to various circumstances the young folks were two days with us, Mrs Bethune Mrs Straith & Miss Christy about a week & Miss Mallardette the governors at Novar at the same time the family having gone a tour of visits through the country. She seems a fine easy girl and enjoys being here. The week after we came from Dingl, we had a party consisting of Mrs Lockhart her sister the Reids and Mitchells, and Miss Mackenzie's Drynie. All we saw were enquiring particularly for you. All the circumstances & attending the two sacraments may account for our being taken up and for our late silence adieu.

NLS MS 19331 f125r

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 3 Nov 1807

[Postscript]

Our harvest is in this fortnight past but many in the country have not cut down all yet. The crops especially potatoes have failed. It has been an unnatural season & the worst harvest since 82. We have constant floods & rain every day.

My Dearest Christy,

Your much longed for, and interesting letter of the 19th last month came safe to hand, and relieved us all of a good deal of anxiety as you justly supposed we would feel from the content of your last letter. Happy are we to discover that this disagreeable affair has so far ended to the credit & satisfaction of Mr Watson and you and frustrated the malicious designs of your enemies. I always believed that the unprejudiced, and well thinking, would take your side in this business. There is nothing so soothing to the mind under trials & crosses, as the approbation of those we love & esteem. We will be much indebted to Mr Watson to inform us of the opinion of Counsel or whatever relates hereafter in a matter that threatened such serious consequences at first, and their is every cause of thankfulness on our part to a kind providence that all is now in a train to give no more uneasiness to you.

Your father and I have seriously weighed Mr Youngs proposal with regard to our dear Harry, and consider it as the result of the warmest friendship, and esteem, from Mr Young to Mr Watson and you, and that it is a plan so advantageous for Harry's education that it should not be declined. If you at any time remove the dear boy at any distance during his education, we consider that he could not have every advantage, in any other public place, he would have here. It would surely be an advantage to any boy to be under the direction of a man of Mr Youngs acute parts and good sense who has the complete education of his own son so much at heart. He considers it would be a mutual advantage to his son & yours to be brought together. As he has it so much at heart to have a companion for his son I make no doubt but he may have another in view, failing of your sending Harry. Mrs Young seems a kind well meaning woman and I am sure will carry as tenderly to Harry as to her own son. We suppose you would not send him sooner than next summer. In the mean time I rejoice to hear that Harry and Andrew are so well appointed in a teacher and under the inspection of so superior a man as Mr Yule, but as you observe there is no knowing how long this teacher may remain in his present situation, this should be an inducement to send Harry to Inverness. Although this plan would yield me the great happiness of seeing my dear boy oftener than I had reason to expect and as Mr Young observes would be a strong attraction to bring Mr Watson & you oftener to this quarter, let me assure you that pleasing as these prospects are to me, I would not by any means advise the proposed plan for Harry if I did not believe his health morals and education would be attended to in a superior degree. I most readily enter into your feelings & Mr W's on parting with Harry and Andrew even thro' the day and well observe that . . . this . . . but a prelude to more painful partings if you and they are spared long together, to the heart of a parent every change in their growing years are of importance such as their first going to school and the diseases of infancy well over . . . every new tooth that

f125v [IMG_2757.jpg]

appears. No subject can be so pleasing to me as the minutest circumstance relating to the dear fellows. I am delighted with your description of Petter and sweet William. It is saying much for

them that they are equally promising with Harry and Andrew for their age. God bless them all. After the shock you met with how happy am I to find that your health particularly when a nurse did not suffer, that your silence was owing to the many pleasing engagements & interferences you mention. How happy I am to learn that my sweet young friend is become a happy mother, I mean Mrs Balfour. You will mention my warmest congratulations to herself and her amiable daughter when an opportunity offers. Indeed they have both a sincere return in their good wishes to me. I rejoice on their account that Captⁿ Balfour is such a man as we would bestow Mary upon. From my good opinion of her, I would expect that she would not readily forget what she owed to you when your friendship was of some importance to her. I wish Miss Bakie was now well married. I observe what you have said of Captⁿ R. I hear from all hands he is genteel & accomplished but then his circumstances and I was very sorry at a late report that his uncle was like to be wheedled into a marriage at Edinburgh by some clever piece who has a plot on his fortune. If Doctor [H?] returns to you this winter I would not be surprized if he and Miss B should make it up again. I hate these take in marriages with worthy men and I regret to think they so often take place. I think the young ladies of Orkney are lucky to get so quickly out of the Market as you mention. I suppose Mr Mitchell and Miss Trail is a good equal match. What is our good friend Mr Watson South Ronaldsay want when he suffers all the fine girls to be taken away from him. Your visit from Lord Kinoul and his suite was no doubt an agreeable incident and particularly as his companion was a man of such pleasing gentle manners as to bring to your remembrance our late dear much lamented friend. One of this description is seldom to be met with. Lord Kinouls inviting Mr Watson & you to Duplin castle was very proper & just what he owed your civilities. He was at the Tain races I suppose his return paid much attention there to Miss McKenzie Kincaig which set the people on making a match betwixt them. If she were his choice I think he would be well appointed. He met with her afterwards at the Northern Meeting at Inverness but I have heard nothing further of this match. I saw a gentleman from the meeting say Miss Kincaig was accounted the most elegant dancer there Miss Hectorina the best singer and that Miss McKenzie Millbank who is lately returned after being more than a twelvemonth with her sister in London together with the two other ladies were most admired at the meeting. It was thought very gay and well attended this season.

I would send this under Mr Laings cover if I were sure he would be in Kirkwall when this reaches. It must be a blank to you when such an agreeable member of your society leaves you. Such painful feelings we now feel at the Novar family leaving us. After the valuable friend we lost in that family I never expected to receive so much friendship as I have done from Sir Alex & Lady Munro. The latter lived very retired till Sir A came to Novar but we allways found her very accessible and herself or the children would sometimes call two or three times a week upon us and were very easy & agreeable. They wished to keep in the same manner as he did, with all worthy Sir Hectors friends & neighbours and were very charitable to the poor. Sir A gave five pounds to . . . throng parties and had all their dinners served up upon silver plates, with varieties of wines, and two courses & a desert when they had parties. But chance companions every day to dinner as in Sir hectors time was not their way. None went but for a call unless by invitation. I was repeatedly asked to come in the easy way. Sir Charles Ross is the only great family now in the country receives company in the old hospitable fashion. Lady Munro was kind enough to leave a good many medicines with me she happened to have for family use. Sir Alexander is an astonishing young looking man at his time of life. He is naturally more lively than Sir Hector. He talks much with the address and pollish of a man who has seen much of the world and with that a warm kind heart. I forget if I mentioned a proof of this to you in his making a present to Miss Rose of a hundred pounds on hearing of her nephews cruelty to her. At first Sir Hugh promised her fifty pounds annually but will not give her a sixpence nor hear of her . . . But I much fear we will not see Sir Alexander again. He was several

times ailing before he left us and drooping a good deal. Young and old left Novar with regret. I passed ?

f126r [IMG_2758.jpg]

days very pleasantly there the week before their departure. Mr McLeod Geaneas was there at the same time and Mr & Mrs Fowler of Fortrose.

We have also to regret the absence of the Tulloch family Mr & Mrs Davidson are an amiable young couple and have a charming family of four boys and two girls. They had a niece of Mrs Ds a nice little girl a Miss Todd who is an orphan but left a fortune of sixty thousand pounds when of age. Your father and I spent two days at Tulloch lately. Mrs D accompanied by Mrs Munro Pointefield & Miss Dunbar came here to call and to invite us to make our own day. Mountgerald and our Kinnairdy & Mr Duncan Mckenzie Castle Leod were the company. They went off in the evening but ourselves and next day Mrs D insisted on our remaining and as a further inducement to dine with Lady Mary Ross, who was to be there on her way to the Northern Meeting. She came quite alone only her maid in the carriage with her, business detained Sir Charles from coming that day. I heard . . . of lady Mary before but she came fully up to my expectations. She is little short of . . . Grace Traills . . . with a pleasant face and most fascinating of manners. She has four daughters but no son yet. She went for Inverness next day after breakfast and then we took our leave of this charming family. Mr D went to London a month before his family on the decease of one of the Directors of the bank of England and he is appointed his successor, this place was a favourite object with Mrs D and seems to gratify all his friends. Mrs Munro & Miss Dunbar remained there during the Mr Ds absence till they set out last week . . . she did the honours of the [table?] very well indeed. Both these ladies were making kind enquiries for you. Mrs Davidson is goodness itself and studies to make her guests easy & happy. She . . . turns to all the rooms to see herself everything is as it should be. She is as domestick as you . . . and knows everything goes on in the family. They have an elegant girl, a governess called [Meann?]. She dined at two with the children but drunk tea and supped with the family. I feel for the Miss Reid at parting from such kind friends. Mrs Davidson consumed Justina about all domestick affairs and found her advantage in this. She would be every day with her in her own room when none else saw her. Mrs Davidson told me smiling that Justina was her secretary and counsellor, in short she was but a stranger in the country and would not know what to do without her. She made the genteel presents when she came down & was like a kind sister to them. But likely you have all this from your friend Miss Betsy before. We asked Mrs Davidson to dine here which she readily agreed to but the children got ill with a mild sort of scarlet fever or raisin their skin which prevented her leaving home, till so near the time of her departure she could not come here to dine.

What cause have I to be thankful that our dear Betsy has made so happy a recovery . I heard from her since she is on foot once & Annie two or three times. She mentions in her last having been churched and the child christened Harry Robertson after your own good example. She had a Miss Kelsall and two Miss Ortons cousins of Mr Sandbach's on a visit & two [Jacks?] Lovers of theirs who accompanied her all to church. She says they looked liker a marriage party than anything. The child is thriving for his age and the nursing goes on well. These are particular blessings. The Miss Ortons have four thousand pounds each. No wonder . . . the young men keep sight of them. No late accounts from Demerara but we are . . . expecting to hear from our beloved friends there. How gratifying that our dear Hugh has been yet so mindful of writing his friends. I am really pleased that you hear so often from him. He will like to hear from you of his two favourites the Mary's of Kirkwall. We hear often from William till the last few weeks. I fear he has got a cold, or some of his old complaints from his silence. I wish you would write him. I know he is always pleased when he hears of Mr Watson or you.

Miss Betty Munro and her niece Miss Baby Douglas from Edin^r have been here for a month. You know what a favourite Miss M has always been with your father. They are both amiable dispositions and have been easy guests for us. They leave us tomorrow. Miss M winters with Miss Rose who went last summer to live at Nairn & Miss D goes to winter with her cousins Captⁿ & Mrs Sutherland at Forres. Both these ladies were happy to hear of you and yours and offer their best wishes. I hope Miss Degrauers has been lucky in her marriage. I think Miss Jess Ross would be a very fit successor to her to execute your commissions in London. She has been here a week, is a genteel looking girl, and seems good tempered and obliging. She remains at Tennoord till next month. She then goes to Douglas Park. She has an invitation from her aunt there to remain till winter is over so I suppose she will hardly set up in London till early in spring but you will hear her motions.

[IMG_2759.jpg]

Address:

Mrs Watson Crantit

Kirkwall

[Below]

The Tenoord family are rather in distress of late a few weeks go they had accounts of poor George Munros Tenoords death. I never saw Mrs Sutherland look better or in better health. They are two fine children her daughters. She is every day expecting Mr Sutherland from England. Our friends at the House bye are well and offer all their best wishes to you. I wish how soon the cask & box may reach. I am sorry the fruit is so bad & little worth your acceptance but I know you will take the will for the deed.

[Left]

Poor Betty Miller I am sorry for her and that her blindness to her own happiness when she was so well off has turned out so fatally to her. She was an honest sober well disposed girl so that I hope she will be happy. Had she any idea her case was so bad. Consumptive people often have hopes to the last. So the decent Oman her mother was called away in May last and kept from seeing what would be so great a trial to her. Sure I am that Mr W and you supplied their wants chiefly while on the beds of languishing & death for which you will have your rewards. It is a joy to my heart to hear of your feeling sympathizing disposition.

Bell Kemp left me this time twelvemonth which I regret as her like is not allways to be met with. She went from me to Novar. Lady Munro is so pleased with her she brought her to London be her laundress there. I gave Jean S her leave. I believe it was no plan of hers to leave me so you may understand me on this head without saying more. I have a Jenny McDonald engaged to be Ann Sandbach's maid a daughter Tom McDonald in Dingwall, whose appearance & character promise well. For two years I had the best cook I ever had but she has so wicked a temper none of the servants will stay with her so I am to part with her at this term. She had a hand in putting Bell and Tibby Ardross away. Tibby is now daye at Captⁿ Sackville Sutherlands at Rhives.

[Right]

I regret your parting with a servant of such importance as a nurse that pleased you. I might be ion the look out for you but if you can be tolerably appointed at home I think it rather better. So much for servants. It was lucky your health & the nursing did not prevent your attending the holy communion. I think you had a numerous meeting on the whole.

I am not surprised though your milk is not so flush now as on former occasions. I experienced this myself just about your age but William I trust you'l find will thrive well as the rest by the good method you take with him. The Doctor and Annie join in love to you Mr W and the dear boys. I remain My dearest ever yours Anne Robertson

C Munro continues at Mr Simpsons this term it seems her marriage was a false report. She was here last Sunday making inquiries for you & begging me to send her blessings.

It was felt that Christy would benefit from her 'native air' and so, on 4 July, she left Orkney with her four children, arriving at Kiltarn on 6 July. Harry began to attend Inverness Academy, lodging with their friend Mr Young. Christy left Kiltarn for Orkney, with Pater and Andrew, on 6 October. William was left with his grandparents.

NLS MS 19331 f127r [2019-11-02 13.07.08.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 9 Oct 1808

My Dearest Christy,

The Doctor returned here in good health and spirits about nine o'clock Friday morning after parting with you. When we saw the boat landing we could scarcely believe our own eyes they would be so soon back. Your father wrote Mr Watson by the Friday post but notwithstanding I cannot think of losing another day in forwarding the enclosed to you & making a double letter, but the contents I am persuaded will make ample amends, as they bring Mr Watson and you such pleasing & minute accounts of your darling boy Harry. It is most gratifying to think that he is so happily situated, and that the dear boy himself has the good sense to feel the advantages he now possesses.

I will so well Friday morning as to breakfast with Major & Mrs Fraser and having the doctor with us after so clever a performance thro' the night seeing you and your dear children safe on board, & the ship setting off with a favourable breeze so expeditiously, raised all her spirits, and made the breakfast pass very agreeably. On my expressing my regrets they had been disturbed in the night, they at least, had the politeness, to say they slept so sound they heard no noise, not even dear Petter when he was taking up out of his sweet sleep. (Nothing went to my heart more at the time and his crying) Major & Mrs Fraser spoke in the handsomest terms of you, and begged that the Doctor to drop to them a note when we heard from you. We pressed them to spend Friday with us but they assured us, it was not in their power as the expected company the next day.

After bidding you adieu I stood in the window of your room till the boat was passed out of my sight. Then I sat up watching the appearance of the sea the clearness of the night, & the wind till I thought you & your dear lambs were on board. I then lay down in your bed as prepared for you and here I have kept possession since, & my niece with me. We were happy to see Friday keep up so tolerably and the wind as far as we could judge continue favourable, so that we fondly hope you got

safe home that evening. I trust in God my dearest Christy that I may now congratulate Mr Watson, & you, on your happy meeting after so

f127v [2019-11-02 13.07.15.jpg]

so long, and to him, I am convinced a painful absence. I shall ever feel gratified to him for the handsome manner he has indulged your parents with yours & the dear children society. May the Almighty reward him with having you all restored in health & safety to him again and may Heaven bless you with every comfort in each other this world can be stow.

Friday night and all day yesterday turned out most awfully stormy and though I had every reason to believe you were from the sea before it gale came on, the horror I felt through the night has left and anxiety on my mind since that I cannot banish from me till I hear from you.

I have availed myself of the liberty the address of the enclosed gives us. You see our dear Annie has not lost sight of us since parting. Mr Fraser came here with her letter last night, which is really a solace I had need of. As to my feelings since parting, almost with every thing dearest to me, I leave you to guess by your own, which will give a better idea of mine, than, anything I can say. I sometimes wander from room, to room, & any movement, or sound I hear I think for a moment I may meet one of the dear objects, so far now removed from me & when the fond delusion wears off I fly to my sweet pet William who is now my chief solace. I have the pleasure to say, that he is as well as you can wish since parting, and is allways, merry, & playful. Last night he sat on my knee from teatime till he went to bed at the table in the parlour sometimes taking a turn with Annie thro the room & then on my knee at the table amusing himself with his playthings. Poor Ann Kemps attention is doubly roused to him now. In short from the youngest in kitchen to Grand Papa, & Mama, he is the first object of attention. Our dear Anne had a bad travelling day yesterday for their crossing Dreumuacher and for the people crossing to the sacrament at Ferintosh. We all this morning have been looking at crowds to their middle in the sea, to [reach?] the boats as the tide does not favour them at this time of day. I dare say many will get their death by sitting out after this bathing. Nothing new has occurred everything here is as you left us only the gloom that hangs about us from your absence.

Miss Annie is now here and joins with Miss McCulloch & the Doctor in our best love to Mr Watson you, and to dear Andrew & sweet Petter

f128r [2019-11-02 13.07.21.jpg]

Twenty blessings & kisses from Grand Mama to them. Offer my best wishes to Miss Crombie & Miss Garioch. With my most earnest prayers & wishes for the health & happiness of you & yours I remain my dearest Christy
Your ever affectionate mother
Anne Robertson

You have left your bathing gown, and Peggie a flannell peticoat and a shawl, all will kept till the fit opp^{ty} cast up.

I beg to be kindly remembered to Peggie & Dannie & to the Costine if you please. None so interested in can be indifferent to me. As to the better thought I leave you to say everything kind for me.

f128v [2019-11-02 13.07.27.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Crantit

Kirkwall

NLS MS 19331 f129r [2019-11-02 13.07.43.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 21 Oct 1808

My Dearest Christy

Yours of Saturday the 8th Cur^t arrived here on Saturday morning the 15th following. The joy your letter diffused thro' all this family can be easier imagined, than I can describe it. To me to hear that you and your dear family got safe home Friday night, and slept at your own comfortable home, was a balm to my mind, the most heart soothing news I ever received. I wrote you last week with a heart full of the most painful suspense, seeing how your father returned from you so well, and expeditiously, that all that day we attended to the wind and weather, & were happy at its proving so favourable, and made ourselves almost sure you would get home as you did. But early Saturday the wind wakened me, I got up to the window, could see nothing, but the greatest darkness, and the most dreadful storm of wind and rain. The dread then of your being in danger, or frightened, and my darling Peters cries when taken up out of bed, to go away, constantly haunted me till your welcome favour arrived. Happily for the Doctor he was so convinced you were home that night he had no pity on me but fretted at any doubt of your safety. It is my dear with the greatest pleasure that I congratulate you and your amiable husband on your happy meeting again. Heaven has rewarded him for indulging us with you, and your lovely boys society so long, by getting you back in health, and so expeditiously at last. May we all unite in gratitude to heaven for your safe & expeditious passage. I trust I will not forget it, or be so faithless again. All your friends, and indeed the whole parish were anxious to hear of you, & pleased to know your voyage was so favourable. I wrote Betsy Reid next morning, and had a most kind and grateful return from her. I make no doubt but she has dispatched a letter for you by this time.

I know my dear you will be anxious about the state of my health. Thank God I am much better than when I parted with you. Those feverish attacks, and weight on my breath I have got quite free off. I have more the command of my person to rise, and sit, my pain being much less. The inconstancy of the weather is much against me, it is so rainy & stormy since the dreadful Saturday the 8th we have scarce and one good day from morn to eve. I have been wonderfully supported since your absence the truth is my mind was so absorbed about the safety of you and yours, that I made but light account of the parting or anything besides. Sometimes

f129v [2019-11-02 13.07.53.jpg]

I with a fair hour look out as if to see my dear boys, & Anne at the usual diversions with their gigs, when thoughts of the past and present, produce a few sighs, & tears. I then go to my darling William who is now my great solace. I have the pleasure to say he is as well as your heart could wish since you left him he gets every day fonder of Annie, & he walks alone from one end of the room to the other much steadier than when you left us. We often call on Andrew, & Petter, & Ann, to him he laughs & looks about him says Nan Nan. A few days ago I tried him by calling for Peggie. I had him in the parlour he turned and cried to be out, and pointed to be upstairs, we brought him to the garret, he looked first at the bed Peggie used to be in, and then went to the other bed, to find her & the dear fellow cried till we got some things to divert his attention. You may depend we will not

be rash to try the same experiment again with him. He is one of the sweetest, best tempered children I have seen at his age. If there is a fair hour of the day he has a walk to Taenifilag which he relishes of all things.

Blind are we to everything that passes, but what our eyes behold. While you were safe & happy with your friends at home, my mind was on the rack about you, when I little dreamt of poor Annie's distress on the Highland road. I suppose she would write you of all herself from Glasgow. Mr Allick Millbank was taken very ill, the day he left Inverness, & he continued so ill they were obliged to remain at Pitmain all the stormy Saturday & that night, and luckily got a doctor in that neighbourhood to visit him. He had tons better, & worse till they reached Perth, before then they discovered poor Alick had got the scarlet fever. He was much better when they parted at Perth, he proposed going to Edinburgh next day. By the time our travellers got to Stirling, poor Annie was so worn out with fatigue of body & mind, that on calling on Cap^t William Fraser who lives at the Castle of Stirling she fainted away. Wm immediately sent for the first physician in town who gave her restoratives, that soon recovered her. The races were at that time in town, so every Inn was full. She made directly for Captain Tovies, that amiable couple receive them, as children. George Rainy had a bed from his cousin in the Castle. Their worthy hosts pressed them to pass a few days with them, but the doctor advised to push forward to Glasgow in case she might have the scarlet fever in her habit. They found all friends at Glasgow well as could be expected, and had a warm reception from all, but our dear Annie was taken so ill she was obliged to go to bed. She met with the tenderest care, and Mr Parker sent for a doctor immediately, who said she was quite worn out, prescribed as much beef stakes, & port wine as she could be got to swallow, with panada, and madeira. She wrote me on Saturday said she was up at breakfast that morning and sat all the day before with her friends that she hoped to be fit to prosecute her journey on Monday the 17th When it was fix they should depart with Mr Parker to accompany them he waited for them which is very good of him and I suppose the reason why Mr Sandbach did not come to meet them. I regret Annie did not remain a week at Glasgow as she required repose and the . . .

f130r [2019-11-02 13.08.00.jpg]

She writes that my dear Ann Sandbach after the shock of the first days journey behaved like a little heroine and was in every respect as agreeable as she could wish. If they set out on Monday, I fondly hope before now they have come safe to their journeys end and have all had a happy meeting. I will long much till I hear this. Annie says Mr & Mrs Manson, & Miss Miller were on a visit at Glasgow and only left it the morning of the day she arrived. Jess Ross set out for London the week before. Mrs Sutherland did not come near me since you went off, till she heard I had a letter from you. She came & passed two nights here this week. She offers her best wishes & congratulations to you, on your getting safe home, as does your friends at the House who are all much as you left them. Your father acquainted Mr Young of your arrival. We had a very kind return from him says dear Harry is quite well, and happy to hear you were at home, that he smiled when he heard Willie was left at Kiltearn.

Saturday 22nd. On Thursday last, the Doctor went to Mrs Lockharts roup at Kindeace. There was very little furniture sold, and the little that sold went at so higher price he would get anything of the kind much cheaper out of the shop. I own I am very well pleased he let them alone, but I approve of the purchase he made, a handsome 4 year old shot or young ox for one of our winter beeves. On his way the doctor breakfast at Kincaig where he met Sir Charles & Lady Mary Ross. They were on a tour of visit to Brahan, Castle Downie Lovats place, Scatwell &c. Sir Charles and Catboll who was of the party gave a pressing invitation to your father which he means to avail himself of on their

return home. Miss McKenzie Kincraig was of the same party, herself & Miss Wishart Sir Charles's oldest daughter, were to ride on ponies. Mr Kennedy of Lairg came to dinner here yesterday left us after breakfast on a visit to Mr Downie Urray, there is a great friendship betwixt them. He waits to preach two Sundays for the old gentleman as he has no assistant at present. He left our friends at Creich well after the return from Larg Jamie Parker & Ann Rainie remains at Larg till Mr K's return. Mrs Rainie sent a bearer for the command she had here and got them safe.

Annie wrote to me from Perth and from Glasgow. I inclosed a letter for you she sent from Inverness which is the reason I did not address you immediately on receipt of your last. I wished to have some information of the Anns to give you. God grant me pleasing news of their safe arrival at Liverpool.

This is a fine morning and dear William is now beside me after returning from his walk. He looks charming, and is on[e] of the merriest little pets that I have seen. Tell dear Andrew, and Petter, that I love them much, and that I expect to hear they have been very good boys since they went home give them a kiss, & loves from Miss McCulloch & me. You judged well that she would be a comfort to me, since I have none of my own she is the friend of any I can enjoy most at present. She takes every trouble of my hands, and studies everything to promote my health.

f130v [2019-11-02 13.08.09.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Crantit
Kirkwall

[right of address]

Just as I was closing this, a letter from Hugh Munro (the boy we sent from our service to Demerary) his parents sent us a perusal of it. He mentions the welfare of our Gilbert and Hugh. This letter was dated the 19th of August last. It has come by the ship Demeray. It is very hard if none of us hear from our friends by the same opportunity. However it is a blessing to hear they are well. The Doctor & Miss McCulloch joined me in offering every good wish for the health & happiness of you Mr Watson & the dear boys. Believe me My Dr Christy your ever affectionate mother
Anne Robertson

[left of address]

So Traill of Westhove is no more. How infatuated in a man that had so much to leave not to make a will. I am happy that worthy Mr Alcock's family will make what you mention obviously of his effects, but I suppose not near so much as they expected. I see in the newspapers the death of a Mr Innes at Edinburgh, whom we suppose is one of Lord Dundases agents.

Mention me with kindness to Mr & Mrs Yule and my valued friends who may be so good as enquire for me.

If you please offer my good wishes to Peggie and Dannie.

[below address]

Did your baggage gestate, sis the contents of the boxes & the little cask escape accident

NLS MS 19331 f131r [IMG_2761.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 4 Nov 1808

My Dearest Christy

I cannot express how much yours of the 9th last month has gratified me. In place of being a trouble to me to go thro' with it, I have gone over it again and again with much interest. I know how much it adds to the comfort of the mistress of a family to find her house in order, as you have done after being fro a time from it. You are by your own account very lucky in housekeeper. I give Miss Crombie, and her, credit for their attention and industry during your absence. But I give still ore to the worthy landlord who's presence I presume was a good spur without taking from their merit. Many in his place would occupy their time so much . They could not do much settled work tho never so disposed to do well as they have done. I partake with you in all you have mentioned knowing how comfortable you will be, as your time must of course be occupied with your friends for some time giving & receiving visits. They will be sop pleased to have you safe back they will value you more than ever.

I am delighted with your accounts of your darling boys Andrew & Petter tell them I am much pleased to hear they have got the poem "my father" so distinctly. I guessed well it would delight their father to hear them repeat it. I hope this is a prelude to their being fine schollars. Tell them every good day I look to the green plots, & gravel walks, and think with pleasure of the happy times when dear Ann and they used to play there from morn to night. If sweet Petter wishes to be back to grandmama she would be no less pleased to have him. Often is he the subject of our conversation. Dear tender hearted creature that longs much for his bairn. William is as sweet and bold a little pet as can be, now that he steps with ease tho' the rooms alone, not will he sit a minute on any knee unless we are at the tea table with him. He is as fond of Nannie Kemp now as he was pf Peggie. He is out every day there is a fair hour and nothing he enjoys so much as being out. After that he takes a long sleep. He has none to disturb him. He allways wakes in the finest spirits Got bless him he is a great pleasure to us all.

I had the satisfaction to have a letter from Annie dated the 26th Octr acquainting of her own and Anns safe arrival in Liverpool and what a happy meeting they had with Mr and Mrs Sandbach. Her parents are charmed with Anns improvement since she left them. They think her much fairer than she was, the sun burning it seems wore off entirely

Lines missing in image

f131v [IMG_2763.jpg]

them. Mr Parker accompanied them from Glasgow, who paid them every kind attention during the journey. They had very bad weather allmost the whole time. A Miss McClaggan accompanied them a niece of Mr McInroys who winters at Mr Sandbachs. But I suppose yourself has heard ling ere now from her.

I cannot be sufficiently grateful to Heaven that you are all laid up safe in winter quarters without any accident or disaster. No wonder tho' the peculiar protection of Heaven should attend you, who makes such exertions to make your parents happy. Their sincerest blessings shall allways be with you. It is no little gratification to me that your time here passed so agreeably. You think if it with complacence. You know it was my wish you would be happy, seeing you and your dear children enjoying yourselves out & in, and up and down, made me happy whither I was with you or not and

the recollections of these pleasing scenes are now a great solace. I beg you may not be over anxious about my health and spirits, the former is so much better that this week I have returned to my own room. Till then I occupied your bed room. My mind is more reconciled than I could expect in so short a space to the absence of all those so dear to me. But the solace I feel in hearing frequently from them and the consideration that they are so much better than they could be with me allways. I have cause to rejoice for them and myself when I look around me and consider my many comforts I would be bold to complain. Your father paid a round of visits this week. He was the first night at Catbools. The next at Ballnagown and the next at Millmount. He met with great kindness as well as politeness at each place. The Doctor says he never saw a couple that has the art of making their guests feel more easy than Sir Charles & Lady Mary Ross. At Millmount they were all kindly enquiring for you and happy to hear of your safe arrival at home. They insisted if I ere soon were that we would see them soon again but I will not venture to visit so far this winter.

I know you will be sorry to hear that Mr & Mrs Chisholm of Dingl have lost their only child Kenneth Chisholm a pretty promising boy of 8 or 9 years age. He was seized with the scarfe fever and only held out a few days. The disconsolate parents are in deep distress as may be supposed.

Donald Allan the grieve at Novar died rather suddenly. He was Sabbath last to hear preaching at Ferintosh and died Tuesday evening.

Mr Kennedy of Lairg was here three nights on his way to and from Urray where he went to supply the old gentleman Mr Downie 2 Sundays. He is a near relation it seems of Mrs Downies which I did not know before. All the Creich family were at Lairg at the sacrament and he left Ann Rainnie & Jamie Parker there till his return. Mr Cameron came here the day your father went to his visits. He left us next day. He brought a letter from Mr Rainie to Miss [Horry?] saying that his son Gilbert left her a legacy that from the affection he had for her, from the recollection of her tender care of him during his infancy he bequeathed to her a sisters portion and if she was not alive at his death he left the same to Miss [Janie Horthy?]. Mr Rainie writes with great complacency

f132r [IMG_2764.jpg]

On the subject and really seems much gratified at this part of his sons will. My Gilbert sent by the Demerary a copy of Gilbert Rainies will, with a state of their copartnership but nothing has yet transpired of the particulars. But what I have told you every thing remains as it was till Whitsunday next. We had no letters from that quarter by the Demerary. Indeed Gilbert & Hugh had so much to do at this time by the death of their amiable cousin that I did not expect to hear from them and is thankful to hear from others of their welfare.

There was a Mr Charles Man from London here since I wrote you last, he passed a day and night with us. He is just such another good looking agreeable man as his brother Mr Sandy Man you saw here. He is reputed rich. He keeps a number of small craft employed upon the Thames River which they say is very profitable. He intends setting up a trading vessel betwixt Cromarty and London and accommodation for passengers upon the same comfortable plan as the ships betwixt London and Leith and the rates no more than those already in this trade.

I approve of your new dresses much particularly that you appeared in at Mr Laings pray has he got any family or is there any on the way. I beg you mention . . . kindly to my good friend the Bishop of Landaff when you see him. And say everything kind for me to the good people who were expressing a wish see me among them.

Monday the 7th I thought to dispatch this yesterday but was interrupted. Messrs Harry and David Munro dined who were kindly enquiring for you and yours. The later told me he saw your Harry at Inverness often, that he formed a party one evening to go with him to the dancing school to see Harry perform, which was friendly. He says he is really a pretty boy and much improved

. . . Mrs Munro & Mrs Sutherland dined with us yesterday . Mrs S had a letter from her cousin Jess Ross, who s now set up in business for herself in London. She . . . of me to acquaint you if you imply her, or recommend her to any of your acquaintances that she will be proud to serve you to the best of her powers. I regret I have not her full direction but she lives in Golden Square.

There was a kind note from Miss Jessie Smith inquiring for us all but for you in particular. She was happy to hear of your safe arrival at home from . . . Mr Young. Miss Nelly is much in the same poor state you left her, but Miss Hory and Annie have a fill up from what I told you. All your friends here about beg their remembrances to you. Miss Hall came here from Cromarty on Saturday. Herself Miss McCulloch and the Doctor join in love & best wishes to Mr Watson & you & a kiss from me to dear Andrew and Petter. I eve am

My Dear Christy

Your truly affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

Yesterday was a fine day. I went fo rat first time since I was ill to church felt no bad.effects from it. I know you will like to hear this as a proof of my recovery. My niece will allow me take no trouble yet which is a blessing to me as I was much weakened by this last ??? Dear William is just returned from his walk is laughing & quite canty.

Christy's husband, James Watson, died in her arms on 27 December 1808 and was buried in the Cathedral on 31 December.

NLS MS 19331 f133r [2019-11-02 13.12.22.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 21 Jan 1809

My Dear Child

Words cannot express the anguish of heart your father and I have felt since Tuesday last, on receiving Mr Youngs three letters giving the melancholy accounts of the death of her most beloved and ever to be lamented son in law Mr Watson. This is a blow to us, severe, as it was unexpected, and for you my dear our hearts bleed, in the loss of the best of husbands, and the best of men. When I would wish to comfort you, I can only mingle my tears with yours. We loved our dear departed, as one of our own sons and feel for him as such. We had every reason to do so, for we never met was the smallest circumstance to vex us thro' him, but on the contrary, had every enjoyment our hearts could wish, since our connexion with him to place. You may believe it wounds my heart that I should not be with you, in your great distress, but I commit you to the care of Almighty God, who has wounded you, he only can support, and strengthen you to bear your irreparable loss. Our fate is fixed as to her dear Mr Watson. He is happy with his God forever, we have no cause to mourn for him but for ourselves, immoderate grief will not bring back what we have lost. Let us strive for a pious resignation to the will of Heaven. But I own the attainment is difficult when deprived of those who were the joy of our hearts, and the delight of our eyes. The accounts our valuable friend Mr Yule gives, of the feeling and propriety, of your behaviour, thro' the most afflicting scene in life, is the greatest solace our hearts can receive at present. I entreat you my dearest Christy to take care of your own health, consider you have a double part to act now for your dear family, what a blessing to

have these dear pledges of love, to comfort you now, and all so promising. Whatever your worldly circumstances may turn out, let not that trouble you, have no fear but my dear Mr Watsons wife and family will be provided for, and that thro'

f133v [2019-11-02 13.12.38.jpg]

sources which we cannot at present foresee. You have affectionate brothers, who are able, and willing to serve you, and other friends interested in you. It is your fathers, and my anxious wishes, for you that as soon as your affairs will permit you, that you repair here with your dear family, and while it is the will of Heaven to spare us, it will be the fondest wish of our hearts, to render you every comfort and solace in our powers.

That amiable pair Mr and Mrs Yule have acted the part of parents to you in your great distress, for which we feel sentiments of the highest gratitude. Heaven will reward their goodness, we cannot return our obligations to them.

From the descriptions you gave me in your last letter of the illness of the best of men, I was much alarmed, being aware of the dangerous nature of his complaints, but still I hoped for the best, and little suspected the fatal blow was so near.

Were that are consolation, I assure you that high and low in all the country regret your loss, all your particular friends here about feeling affected for you. Mr & Mrs Mitchell and Mr Bethune, Doctor Wishart, and several others called upon us this week, who kindly condole with you and us. Our dear friend Betsy Reid mourns for you as a fond sister. She promises to see me, as soon as the weather, and her troublesome toothache will permit her. I forgot to say the Mount Gerald, and Mr Reid were of the kind friends who visited us this week.

I know you will like to hear that this week we had two very agreeable letters from my dear Hugh, which came as a balm of comfort to our afflicted minds. Himself and Gilbert were then well. They are dated the 23rd and 24th Oct^r. He says that Gilbert was determined, if spared to be in Britain this season but such is the uncertainty of everything in this world, that I look forward with trembling to this hope.

f134r [2019-11-02 13.12.45.jpg]

I had a letter from Mrs Sandbach the beginning of this month all well then. Poor Annie I fear this will go hard with her, for her amiable brother was her first favourite, and poor Hugh will be a sincere mourner if he lives to hear of your afflicted case. We had a most kind sympathizing letter from Mr Young yesterday dear Harry was then quite well, but he was not acquainted with his irreparable loss when this was wrote. Our darling William is now by me, and well and thriving as we could wish. If that were possible he is doubly more interesting to us now, and formally.

I need not say how anxious we are to hear again from you, not that I wish you to write often, this is too much for you, but with every other favour I know Mr Yule will drop us a few lines occasionally to let us know about you. The blessings of your parents allways attend you and you are constantly present in our minds with many loves to our dear Andrew and Petter. May the Almighty guide and comfort you is the most fervent prayer My Dear Child

of your ever affectionate & afflicted mother

Anne Robertson

In addressing you I feel so agitated I cannot say more now.

f134v [2019-11-02 13.12.51.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Crantit
Kirkwall

NLS MS 19331 f135r [

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 22
Feb 1809

My Dear Child — your truly affecting and most interesting letter of the 19th last month I received with thankfulness, after the most painful anxiety about you, your father replied to this letter on receipt of it. I have a deep sense of the exertion you have made, and the shock it must have cost you to gratify me by the mournful detail contained in your letter. Well did you judge that it would gratify me to know something of the last scenes of one so dear to me as my beloved and ever to be lamented Mr Watson. Oh! when I think of so young a man, with every blessing this life could bestow before him, and yet to leave all with so much composure, and resignation to the will of his God is a proof of his superior mind, and the upright virtuous life he led. This my dear is our great solace now. He is forever happy, we have no cause to mourn for him, but for ourselves “The latter end of the righteous is peace” and this was his. I have often perused your letter, and oftener gone thro’ every scene it describes with you, for that, you are never absent from my mind. Your letter is, what the poet calls “the joy of grief” to my heart. I bless God my dear that enabled you, to sweeten the bed of death to the best of men and go thro’ the most trying afflicting scene of life, with that feeling and propriety of conduct, that endeared you to all around you. The dying counsel and advice, of the best of men to you, and the part you acted I admire! You were, a pair indeed, worthy of each other! These scenes will be a source of pleasing reflections to you hereafter, that you cannot well enter to at present. I well know when we are deprived of our chief support, & comfort, the world appears a chaos, even our best remaining blessings, are in a manner insipid, to a heart so deeply wounded as yours, even reason or religion, cannot suppress grief altho’ the best soother. The power of God on the heart, and the lenient hand of time, that can blunt the edge of your grief. The Almighty has wisely ordered that time should wear off sorrow, or we should be miserable creatures indeed. Our blessed Saviour has left us an example in every trying situation. He did not forbid moderate grief — wept for his friend, when he was brought to the grave of Lazarus. The apostle James says “is any afflicted, let him

f135v [2019-11-02 13.13.26.jpg]

him pray” There are times when the mind is more clouded, & distracted, than usual, that a few fervent sentences addressed to our God, is found the best resource to soothe the wounded spirit. My dear I am but a miserable comforter to you. I know your own good sense will suggest many better things than I can say and may the presence of God the best comforter constantly attend you. May he in his mercy spare you, and your dear children to be mutual blessings to each other. You have that great blessing that they are as lovely, and promising, of their age, as the heart of a parent can wish. Dear William improves to our best wishes, he attempts several words now, and I think gets very like Andrew. Of late we have had several feeling and very friendly letters, from our valuable friend Mr Young. He speaks of our dear Harry with that affection as if his own. I think it fortunate that our dear boy is now so happily situated. We had a letter from Mr Young Saturday last Harry & that

good family were then quite well. He says that Harry and his Hugh are the best schollars in their class, which is very pleasing. Mr Young expressed a wish to hear from you, and if you have not done it I think it will be highly proper in you to write him without delay. He mentioned having wrote you.

I wrote Miss Ross Ankerville, and Miss Miller since Mr Watsons death, and had very friendly, feeling answers from both. Miss Ross says “when you write Mrs Watson, you will do me the favour, to offer her my sincere sympathy, and my affectionate remembrance — in her present situation I think it best not to plague her with a letter. Miss Miller wished to be remembered to you in a similar manner.

We had a most excellent letter from Mr Parker on your account, and the same from worthy Mr Rainie who feels sincerely for you. I believe I told you my poor niece left me on the 12th Jan^{ry}. I have had too good letters from her, with most anxious inquiry’s about you, and the tenderest regret from her mother, and sister, for your amiable husband and fervent wishes for your comfort & support. Your father would mention that all our friends, from the east, & west, have been calling upon us, and many kind inquiry’s about you. Indeed if that were any comfort, high and low, all over the country lament your great affliction.

Our amiable young friend Miss Betsy red came here on a Wednesday and remained with us till the following Monday. She is a sweet sensible girl and a pleasing guest to us. You and yours was a constant theme betwixt us our prayers and tears were often mingled together, for you. Your first letter to me came the day after she left me. I promised & will acquaint every time I hear from you.

f136r [2019-11-02 13.13.33.jpg]

This far had I reached when your much longed for, and welcome letter of the 6th current to your father reached us this day. It is remarked that trials do not come alone. It seems you have had a new scene of distress in the sickness of your servants. Mr Garricks illness at this time is truly unlucky. God grant his speedy recovery, and that os the poor girl who I am sorry for. Heaven grant this alarming sickness mat stop here, and that you my beloved daughter, & your dear children may be preserved from the infection. Offer our blessings, and grateful thanks to the best pair living, for their unwearied attentions to you. This last of bringing you and the children to their own house is of a peice with all their other good offices to you, and may heaven reward them. Please to mention us with our most grateful feelings to all these good gentlemen who were all so attentive, and disposed to serve you at this time. We are pleased to hear of the several soothing sympathizing letters you have had, and particularly Mr Handysides. I trust it will be well for you that he seems a gentleman of so humane a disposition. What you mention of your own affairs is pretty much what we supposed, and hw could it be otherways with young people beginning in the world as you did. The time was just come when you could make the world but God saw it fit to prevent this, and as he did, he will stir up instruments to do for you, and yours, that is yet hid from us. My dear as I told you before let not your worldly affairs give you much uneasiness. You have enough without that. Every comfort your father & I can render you while we live, it will be the pride of our hearts to render you, and yours — and nothing we now long so much for, as to fold you once more to our hearts. You will not reckon it officious my dear Christy if I ask you, are you in a family way or not. If you are Gids will be done. Altho’ that does not lessen the distress of your mind, you have many sisters in affliction in the Kingdom this day. Many sorrowful widows, mothers & sisters, mourning their friends fallen in Spain, who have the aggravation that the precious remains of their dearest after being mangled by the hands of a cruel enemy are huddled into a motely heap in one great pit. I well judges that our dear and amiable Mr Watson would be lamented all over orkney and no wonder poor people if they should mourn, they will hardly meet his like again. I really feel for all your

domesticks and for his poor neice Miss Crombie, it will be a dull going home to her. I often think with

f136v [2019-11-02 13.13.43.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Crantit
Kirkwall

[left of address]

pity on John Costin and his wife. They have lost poor people the best of masters remember me kindly to them and the rest of your domesticks that I know.

Sir Charles Rosses second brother Captain James Ross Farquharson died a few days ago of a short illness. Miss Farquharson of Invercauld a great heiress worth six thousand p^r annum. He married a few years ago. Hw was a pleasant & very handsome young man, but all his world advantages could not procure long life to enjoy them. Your father joins in love and blessing two you, and kisses to the dear boys from me

I ever am your truly affectionate but afflicted Mother
Anne Robertson

[right of address]

Sweet Peter I can believe him to say very affecting things. I cannot forget some sayings of his when here that struck me at the time. We had a very kind sumpathizing letter from Mr and Mrs Sandbach and from poor William who expresses the greatest affection for you and interest in you & the dear children.

Your friends at the House bye and Tennoord put on mournings. I have got a black bambazeen, and dear William had got black muslin & black cotton with white dotes for frocks. Well does he look in them, bit alas for the cause that he dear lamb should so early wear such a garb. Tuesday last Mr Bethune got another daughter and thought to the full term, but the other will not be a year till th end of this month. The young infant died suddenly on Saturday. Mrs B is doing well. Has Mr Miller been written to or is there a reply from him. I am sorry for Mr Laings poor state of health. I fear this rough weather is against his taking a voyage.

[below address]

Has Mr WatsonSouth Ronaldsey gone south yet or when we will be particularly anxious to hear of your health if any one could write us a few lines once in 8 or 10 days, just to say you and the poor boys are well. We know how it must distress you to write often.

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Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 2
May 1809

My Dearest Christy

Since I was gratified by your last letter, your father wrote Mr Yule once, and you twice, and as he wished to address you on matters of business (though I might be equally willing) yet as he was so much more capable of advising you on all these subjects, I thought it proper to defer my letter for that time. While we are left in this world of trouble and care there is a necessity for our attending less or more to our interest in it. Woes me that you have so soon for so much to do. But nothing is so ill but might be worse. Thank Heaven that it is your confidential friends, and not strangers, that you have got to go alloying with thro' all the extensive intricate business of your dear & amiable husband. Altho' we now long to hear from you again I make every allowance for this as you have so much to occupy your attention and so many letters to write. Most sincerely did I enter into your trill affecting account of your return to Crantit. I was aware that this would be a scene of deep distress to you. Often my dear have I read this letter over and over, with a melancholy pleasure. However trying leaving Crantit was to you I am convinced the change was in favour of your health, and spirits. Heaven will reward these valuable friends who snatched you & your dear children fro such imminent danger. What a mercy that you escaped such a dangerous fever, and that those who had it, made a good recovery, and the the rest of the domesticks escaped being infected by it

There is another subject in your letter most interesting to me and that is your being in a family way. From the beginning of your distress I was deeply impressed that this was the case, and indeed it was more natural to suppose this than otherways. Altho' this is a lot that falls upon many, I have always considered it the most trying situation to a woman of a feeling mind such as yours, but he who has willed this to be your fate is all sufficient to support you thro' this with the rest. I have myself known several of my own acquaintance in a similar situation wonderfully carried thro. Your great grand father Mt John Bain of Dingwal the first Presbyterian clergyman there, and a most respectable character died in the prime of life. And his widow a most excellent woman, he left with four daughters and one son, and this before the widows fund commenced.

f137v [IMG_2766.jpg]

The fourth daughter was a posthumous child. I am not certain you know that this child turned ??? your own kind friend and worthy grand aunt Mrs Douglas Fyrish. You know what a blessing she turned out to her family & friends, nay to all the neighbourhood where she resided, and if it be the will of the Almighty to spare and bring to the world, the dear pledge of love, you are now with, we should hope that providence may have a set part for an ornament and blessing to the society of its day.

My dear child you are never absent from my thoughts by day, or by night. Your father and I wish we had you, and your dear boys here before July. We must yield to whatever is most for your interest and agreeable to your inclination. If there is anything I can do for you here let me know. Remember any maid servant you wish to keep by, do not hesitate to bring her here with you but you will understand me when I tell you whatever you wish us to approve to come straight from yourself not as my suggestion. Be assured my love it is your parents chief object at present, to render your every comfort in our power.

You may believe it is most agreeable to us to hear that our dear Betsy was safely delivered of a fine boy. I have heard thrice from Ann since, thank God she has made a good recovery. No doubt you will be hearing from that quarter yourself. In a paragraph of Mr Sandbach's letter informing me of this addition to his family I cannot help transcribing a paragraph of his letter relating to you.

"I know enough of Mrs Watson by what I hear from others to admire and feel a high respect for her. And from the regard which a very short acquaintance made me feel for her late worthy husband. I shall consider it a city incumbent join me, when opportunity serves, to contribute somehow to the comfort of this he has left behind."

This from him is more than pages from another, as he is a man of few words, who's manners to do more than he promises. A proof of this I had yesterday from Annie, where she informs me the little boy was christened and named James Watson, in memory of your amiable husband. I am more gratified on this occasion than I can say and so is your father. I know your sisters have got their wishes in this name, especially poor Annie, who has hardly yet recovered the stock her health received from loss of her highly valued friend. Of late I hear she is greatly better and that before her sister was laid aside so as to be fit to act as landlady for her. May the little stranger be spared for a blessing to his parents and friends.

You by this time may wonder at my silence but I have had a severe attack of my rheumatick complaint for five weeks past. It affected my back & sides & right hand most. I took every care of myself and seldom left my room till I got better for the last ten days. I am greatly relieved and was last Sunday in church which was the first good day we had of the this month. Thro March we had summer like mild weather, but

f138r [IMG_2767.jpg]

since cold easterly winds with rain snow & hail every day. If the weather got milder I would expect to get soon well again. Who do you think I have now for my guests by Mr & Mrs Rainie on their way to Glasgow. We expected Miss Anne Rainie and Jamie Parker, as she appointed the our gig to meet them as far in the hill road as it could go. When they appeared, a sight of the good old couple was really an agreeable surprize. They look as well as could be expected sandbar the severe affliction of their sons death with that resignation to the divine will which might be expected from their piety and experience. They are a most worthy couple. I am not surprized that their children were longing to have a visit from them. It was only a few days before they left home that they resolved to accompany the young folks. They set out early tomorrow in our gig for Inverness. Mt Rainie rides his horse as cleverly all the way to Inverness, as one of his sons could do. He preached the Gallick here Sunday to as good purpose as ever I heard him. Anne is a smart sensible girl and seems very good hearted. They desired their best remembrances and condolences to you for whom they feel most sincerely. As soon as they reach town they send for Harry & Hugh Young and wish to make up their acquaintance with Jamie Parker who is a fine gentle boy. They were quite delighted with our dear little William, who is so lively & good natured at the same time and prattles now most sweetly. Jamie would not wish to be wish to be a minute from him while here, and he was as fond of Bembie as he called him.

The week before last was the synod week. We had Mr Smith Cromarty & Mr Hugh Ross the new minister of Fearn the night before the synod. They returned here on Wednesday with your father to dinner together with Mr Urquhart Rosskeen and left us next day. Hr Hugh Ross is a worthy character. he is reckoned as good a schollar and his sermons as good composition as any clergymans in the north and yet the unreasonable people of Fearn parish on the day he was to be settled, locked the church doors and would let none enter there. A great concourse of people gathered. They mobbed the gentlemen & clergy threw sticks & stones at them, so that the settlement was given up that day. Nine heads of families presented petition to the Presbty saying if Mr Ross would promise them to go where they pleased for baptism & other church privileges, he might expect a peaceable settlement that day. Mr Ross said it would be his pleasure to perform Avery duty of his situation but he would make no rash promises to them. The next week the Presbty met with Geaneas & a throng party of constables and the heritors and the settlement was performed without any disturbance. Since the[y] set fire in several places of the thatch of the offices and burnt down the roofs. A reward of footy pounds is offered to discover the perpetrators. On Saturday last your father went to the burial of Colonel Robert Mckenzie of Millmount. He was a genteel good hearted man but so worn out a constitution that his death was no surprize. He saw Mrs Sutherland who was kind as usual and

pressed him to stay with them that night but he returned in the evening as Mr Rainies people came here the day before. Mrs Tenant had a son about the same time as Mrs Sandbach. Mrs Rainy told me Mrs Parker expected to be laid aside before July was over. Honest Mr Aitken died last week after a long illness with dropsy & jaundice. Your father wins me in love & every good wish for your health & comfort and blessings & kisses to the dear boys. I ever am my dear child

Yours truly affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

f138v [IMG_2768.jpg]

Mrs Watson

Crantit

Kirkwall

[right]

Our darling William improves as much as we could wish, he is really growing a lovely creature pure red & white. He is much thinner in the face so that he has no longer a look of Millbank. We think he gets very like Andrew. You need not be afraid now that he will be dumb. Just within this month he has come all at once to aim at every word and short words or monosyllables he says distinctly. When he wishes to leave the room he makes a bow, says day for good day. He aims at all the servants names. He calls Andrew the horse boy Anna and who I bid him repeat Peter he says Peepee so you can tell his brothers what their bairn would call them now. He says out & home & go & now and tea , & hen he calls flesh of every kind. If he is not pleased he says so - so in the sweetest funny way. Your father no doubt wrote you of Mr Young's friendly visit . We hear often from and of dear Harrys welfare. I send enclosed a lock of sweet Williams hair which you will surely like to see.

[below]

Remember me once more to the Costins, give them my thanks for giving their son the name of the best of masters which highly proper in then since you approved of this. How does Miss Crombie do Is she at Crantit now.

[left]

Offer my kindest respects to Mr & Mrs Yule. I cannot cease to admire their constant attention to you. We were much relieved and gratified by Mr Yules last letter to your father. His letters are so interesting to us, they are quite a try when they arrive. His account of dear Andrew & Peter & their progress as schollars is most pleasing.

The other day a matted parcel with 2 dozen cod and a box with 8 fine ??? Geese came here from Cromarty, in the best order. Altho I heard nothing of them before or since, I well knew the usual kind token of love & duty. Indeed my dear this is more than I expected at the time. Why trouble yourself when your mind is so oppressed with a load of care. I wish to know if any of these are meant for Kinnairdy or Inverniss. Betsy Reid told me she had a latter from you, which she reckons a token of friendship she cannot forget. Both Belle and Annie McCulloch have recovered from fevers since the latter went from Kiltearn. In her last she mentions with gratitude having a letter from you. Mr Sutherland left Tenoord a fortnight ago. They have heard of his safe arrival in England. All friends here are well and wishes to be remembered to you.

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Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 13
June 1809

My Dearest Christy

Collector Pringle dit not bring your boat the length, he left it at Cromarty, and went from that by Ferentosh to see some friends he had there. From this place he sent us your letter, with a polite kind one from himself, making an apologie for not seeing us here, being in a hurry to push forward to the south country. Had he come in your boat this length and gone from this to Ferentosh it would be much easier for him. I assure you it was a disappointment to us we had not the pleasure of seeing him, as he had seen you so lately, and could give us an account of various things that cannot (as you observe) be so easily conveyed in a letter. We rejoiced to hear that you were so well then as to be at church, and to hear that you had made these exersions, as they would become more formidable, the longer delayed. I can readily imagine you have little inclination to mix with large parties, but your health and spirits require that as often as you can, you will be with these good friends, who have shewn themselves so deeply interested in whatever relates to you.

I find by your last letter that there is a new Factor appointed for Orkney every occurrence that brings our irreparable loss to view, is a knell to my heart — even the things we know must take place. I wish on every account Mr & Mrs Bruce, may be agreeable good hearted people. This will be peculiarly favourable to you. I know they are lucky as far as they have any interference with you. We will long to hear from you again & know your plans.

I have now the very great pleasure to inform you, that your dear Harry is now here. The academy broke up as usual the beginning of the month, on Tuesday of last week we sent the gig to Kessock for them, 7 they arrived safe here at 4 o'clock. I mean Hugh Young your Harry & their tutor Mr Donald McRae. Both are looking well and very promising. They dance two high dances remarkably well. Harry every body admires he is grown tall and handsome. He has now a more striking resemblance of you than I ever thought he would have. Several think him like his uncle Hugh, he certainly has a strong family look of him. The first thing he did before he sat down was to find out William. It does one good to see how he dotes on W, and he sweet fellow is quite delighted with the boys as he sometimes calls them, and at

f139v [2019-11-02 13.14.42.jpg]

other times by their names. Not a word but he aims at, and the sweet prattler is the favorite of every one, he grows prettier every day, is lively & sweet tempered. In short my dear you have great blessings left you in these dear boys. We have every cause to be thankful that are so promising. Harry makes excellent progress in his education & writes a pretty copy hand and may soon write your letter.

Our worthy friends Mr & Mrs Young propose a visit to us before the boys return, but they wished to put it off as long as they can till they hear of your motions.

The Doctor regrets the catalogue of your books is not yet forwarded to Mr Young as he fears it may be too late now to get them printed & sent back before the market. We anxiously look for the letter you promised to send by post. We hope the plans you have adopted to dispose of your furniture is the best you can fall upon.

For a week past Miss Annie Munro favoured us with a visit. She has her little ward Jeanie Ross here with her, a fine smart child a godlike Anne Sandbach. She enjoys being here with the boys and they are very good to her. You would hear I suppose of Mrs David Rosses marriage to Captⁿ Alex^r

McKay brother to Lord Rhea. Miss Munro says he is an excellent young man free of dissipation & solid and sensible. Miss ? is to Paris a few weeks with her friends at Newtown. She begs me to offer you her kindest remembrance and to assure of our sincere regret, and sympathy, in all your distresses. She is indeed a kindhearted sensible girl. I have been the better of so much of your company. We have gone over many things, and the scenes of happier times.

Betsy Reid was lately here for a night only She offers you her blessings and begs I would inform you that the sprain in one of her fingers has for weeks prevented her writing, and you from not hearing from her. I believe they will be all hands at Mrs Lockharts rous which takes place on Thursday the 15th.

I know you will be pleased to hear that the wright work of all the new part of this house is lately finished, and looks much more comfortable for it. We have got a handsome sideboard of Junors make just the same as the one at Balcony only smaller to suit the room. We are to get chairs from the same quarter for the drawing room and then in a time of need we could occupy it.

Our neighbours at Balconiyare well, & seem to enjoy their new residence. They have called upon us, and we upon them occasionally, but they have not yet got things in such order, as they wish to receive company. They have seen none yet.

Last week I heard from Liverpool, all friends were well and enjoying the country, but my dear Annie I think by her own account is yet but delicate. God grant the country air & exercise may recruit. In her last letter she acquaints of herself & Mrs Sandbach having sent me a crate, with a sett of blue & white table English China and a box with some dresser me there I will send you a description of. They are sent by a Captⁿ Yule who is expected to this shore with coals about the end of this month.

f140r [2019-11-02 13.14.49.jpg]

I need not I hope assure you how much your father and I long to see you here. We are happy to hear that Petter & Andrew are such good boys & nice scholars. Harry often mentions them & all his other friends and offered his love to them.

Your father wins me in love & blessings to you and the boys. Believe me ever, My Dear Christy
Your ever affectionate Mother
Anne Robertson

Remember us in the warmest manner to our much valued friends Mr and Mrs Yule, they & the other good people who are so kindly interested in you have our sincerest blessings. May God reward them. Offer out kindest respects to our agreeable respected acquaintances Major West is his Lady arrived yet in Orkney.

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Mrs Watson
Crantit
Orkney

NLS MS 19331 f141r [IMG_2769.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 5 July

1809

My Dearest Christy

I have now your two welcome letters before me of the 10th and 22d June, the latter by Mr Barry who you may believe we received with great pleasure, being so near a relation of our valuable friend Mr Yule besides the peculiar satisfaction it yielded us, to enjoy the society of one who had seen you & the dear boys well, a few days before at Crantit.

I sincerely regret the distress you have suffered by these severe pains you describe, the want of rest they occasioned must have deprest your spirits and weakened you so much. There is one comfort altho' they are severe they are not reckoned dangerous. I know what this complaint is from my own experience but I have generally observed when a woman suffers much before hand with these pains, that the last and most serious time is easier & sooner over. I trust in God my dear child that this will be the case with you. I hope you have your nurse by you from the beginning of this month as you need not wonder to be taken by surprize. Much much does it hurt my mind that I or any near connection of your own could not be with you on this trying event but the uncertainty of your own plans with many other causes makes t needless now to be repining. Many things occur in life to shew us how little we can rely on an arm of flesh and to turn our thoughts to the all powerful God, who will do all things best for us, as he sees fit. I think my dear it is a duty upon you to have Dr Grot by you at this time as your Friend and Physician. I know it would be the wish of Annie's heart to be now with you, but dear creature she has been very poorly for a long time and requires nursing herself. It must be a great comfort to you and a great ease of mind to us that you have such faithful attached servants about you which is much to their own ??? and character. Your father and I approve much of you bringing your housekeeper here, she being one you know so well and so agreeable to you above all, as she was so fortunate as to have so much of the good opinion of our ever dear Mr Watson. She will be most welcome to us. We know your kind generous heart is wishing us to any thing you ????? I suppose you will bring your own chest of drawers along with you

f141v [IMG_2770.jpg]

and a white bed quilt. If I remember well, I think your tea china was a handsome set. I wish you to buy the off fo bus but is any friends you wished to oblige has a view to them, I beg you may not think of them for me. We have no weather glass. Of convenient bring us yours. If there is a pocket spy glass or any little matter that I can get merely as a keepsake of your dear husband it will be a precious gift to me. Oh my dear how I long that you & your lovely family were once surely lodged here. I am aware that ounce your interest in Crantit is over you will not wish to remain long in Orkney. Your father & I approve much of your keeping by your own house while it suits you, especially as you have yet a title to it, and if you had not, no good heart would grudge you the use of it in your present circumstances. At the same time that we feel most grateful to the worthy friends, kind offers who wished to make you so independent of what might happen. I think you judged well to decline all visiting to town. To see a few agreeable friends at a time is highly proper, you would entirely droop without this.

Your father & I approve of all your plans hitherto and I trust this will allways continue. Mr Younf I know will use all dispatch with the catalogue.

Mr Barry arrived here the Tuesday after he parted with you. He left us Monday last the 3d. We could not prevail upon him to prolong his stay. He did not think himself the least the worse for his journey here. He never complained of any ail while with us and he seemed in very good spirits all the time. We were much obliged to you for sending us such a guest. He seems a long man of an

accomplished superior mind, of pleasing gentle manners, I sincerely hope his present journey may prove the means of his recovery.

I have now the comfort to inform you that last nights post brought a letter from our dear Hugh dated the 11th May. It is the first we had from him since he heard of our dear, and ever to be lamented Mr Watsons death. His letter is. almost feeling tender one. The dear fellows heart is deeply affected by the loss of so much valued a friend. He and Gilbert were, thank God, in health when he wrote but their minds in great distress on your account, that it was their intention in future to contribute to the comfort of you and yours as much as possible. He said he as t a loss how to address you but that he would write in a few days and to his own letter I refer you.

f140r [IMG_2771.jpg]

I am sorry to tell you of the death of Mrs Munro Culneskia. She had been on a visit to her brothers at Inverness & returned Saturday was a fortnight with Mrs Fraser & her mother, to the bankers house at Ferintosh. Her husband went to meet her there and after being in church she and Robert in coming home Sunday evening took a wring ford on the Rover Conan opposite to Dingwal. Here horse went down in a deep gully and she fell of and was swept way by the stream. Her poor husband threw himself from his horse to save her but in vain. He would have been drowned himself but a soldier that could swim had just happened to be n shore jumped in and got him out. Her body was found in half an hour & was brought to Doctor Wishart at Dingwal where every mean was used to restore her to no purpose. The following Wedy she was buried and a very throng & melancholy burial it was. SHE was an excellent young woman and her fatal end made in a impression on all this neighbourhood.

Captⁿ Yule arrived here two days ago brought me a crate of blue English china, all safe to one single shallow plate. He brought a barrel of sugar in a present from Mr Sandbach, and a box with some dress from your sisters, I will describe in my next. There is a buff gingham frock & trowsers fro dear William & the same of muslin & a smart black hatt. I dressed him in the gingham & that immediately and he was so delighted with them they durst not be taken off till he went to bed. Lovely did he look in them. Dear harry & High Young enjoy this place much. They are dotingly fond of William & he of them. Harry was to write you this week but as I wished to write you he will address you next week, with a postscript from me. He joins me in warmest affection to you Petter & Andrew, of who we are often talking & oftener thinking. I am vext at your exersions to write me so much. I entreat you write n more till your are fitter for it but cause your house keeper or clerk write a few lines every post to say how you are.

To an overruling providence who is all sufficient in every time of need I commit you. I remain
My dear child

Your anxious but ever affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

NLS MS 19331 f143r [IMG_2772.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Crantit, Orkney. 27
July 1809

My Dearest Christy

It gave your father and me the greatest comfort to hear of your safe delivery by Mr Yules welcome and much esteemed letter to me, the reply to it, I hope has reached him before this time. What cause have we with grateful hearts to return thanks to Almighty Gd for this signal deliverance to you at a crisis, which we all looked forward to with much anxiety but I trust you have found less formidable than you expected. As you suffered so much before, I always hoped that your most trying time would be of short duration, and that you would have a good recovery. Glory to God for this, what cannot he do for this own & bring them thro' beyond our hopes, when he os pleased to prolong life. I rejoice to hear that the dear little stranger is so stout and promising and that the nursing has begun so agreeably with you. This natural & pleasing employment, I trust will turn out the best amusement for you an the sweet innocents society the powerful soother of your wounded mind. What at one time we may view as out misfortune we often find turns out our blessing. May you derive every blessing from this addition to your family the heart of a find mother can wish for.

Miss Tomisons letter of the 15th was most ratifying and satisfactory to me, and I have often perused with pleasure every particular of it. The writing, and diction, does her much credit and confirms me in that good opinion of her which you and others have given me of her. It is a great relief to my mind that a person of her discretion is allways about you and is to accompany you here. I am much leased that poor Marry Reid was still fit to attend you and that you was not obliged to change from her upon this occasion. I insist that Miss Tomison continue to write me will you are at least a month or five weeks after your delivery.

On Saturday last we had the pleasure of Mr & Mrs Young here to dinner. They left us after breakfast Monday, accompanied by the dear boys Harry & Hugh. They & Mrs Young went in the gig. Mr Young & their teacher rode a horse back. After the pleasant society of Harry &

f143v [IMG_2773.jpg]

Hugh for 7 weeks I assure you we feel a blank from their absence. Dear Harry, for a few days before he left us was dull at times, but parted with us with a good deal of spirit. Tho' Hugh was returning with his parents he said he would rather stay at Kiltearn. Every one was fond of Harry, he is a pretty spirited boy, and very kind hearted. He was quite pleased when he was told he had another brother. Th innocent creature observed to me that surely Mrs Tumin brought hi to you, for that she gave you William. Mr Yules account of Andrew & Petters remarks about their little brother is most amusing to me, and pleasing it is that. They enjoy health, and are every way so promising.

But to return to Mr & Mrs Young they were met happy to hear of your safe delivery & that yourself and the infant were doing so well. I never saw so much of Mrs Young before. I think her a sensible agreeable woman that improves much upon an acquaintance. They are both very fond go Harry. Our worthy friend Mr Young indeed seems interested in what ever relates to you. He told me he was to write Mr Yule whenever he returned to Town. He has got a hundred copies of the catalogue of Mr Watson's books printed. He sends 50 by Leith and 50 copies by his partner Mr Eccles who is determined to be at the Orkney Fair. So that will make sure to have the catalogues one way or other.

Thursday last Miss Bets Reid & Mr Mitchel came here to tea and to invite the boys next day to dine at Kinairdy and be at a dance at Dingwal in the evening. They accordingly went and enjoyed the ply much and returned Saturday forenoon. Miss Betsy would not art with them till Monday if it had not been so near their departure. Our dear friend Miss Betsy was most happy to hear good accounts of you. What a lucky circumstance that you could be kept so quiet, and all the house to yourself during your confinement. I trust that your health will be nearly confirmed before Mr & Mrs Bruce arrives in the country, which I am sure will be a great ease of mind to yourself. You judge well my dear not to leave your own house, while it suited you to remain there.

I look forward now with much interest to the time as it approaches near that I can again infold you my dear girl and your lovely boys to my heart.

Mr Yules most obliging letter to the Doctor of the 19th is just come to hand. How pleasing to us to find that you and your sweet infant are doing so well, that your strength (which was so reduced) was then so much renewed. I fondly hope that health will continue with you but still I advise you

f144r [IMG_2774.jpg]

be cautious of going about or taking any trouble you can for the first month. You will offer the Doctor's kindest respects and mine to Mr & Mrs Yule say what a sense we have of their goodness to you at all times and ??? with the rest. As Mr Yule's letter does not require an answer he puts off writing to him for the present and as I wrote him last week. I hope Harry's letter has reached you which he was most desirous to send you.

We had a Mr Ross a worthy clergyman from Aberdeen & his son and a Mrs Hunter his sister in law here two days of this week. They left us yesterday. They came north chiefly as a jaunt of pleasure & a recruit to their health. They lodge at Rosses in Dingwall and attend the Strathpeffer mineral very day. Mrs Hunter is a well informed agreeable woman, a widow. I find they are people in very dependent circumstances. Mr Ross had a letter of introduction to your father from Mr Bentley. He in a very handsome feeling manner regrets the irreparable loss we have all sustained since he had the pleasure of seeing you & your charming family here last season. Mr Ross was so fond of you William he said he was sure he would spoil him if he were going with him. If Wm were not so sweet tempered he would . . . a risk of this as it is, everyone gets so fond of him he is a pretty creature, and now speaks every word, and has the most sweet engaging tongue of his own. The boys were dotingly fond of him and quite sorry to part with him. When we ask him where they are, he says, "Boys home gig". The West India fleet is arrived but we have no news yet from that quarter. Heaven grant us favourable accounts of our dear friends in Demerary. We had a letter lately from William and one from Annie ten days ago all well. Mr & Mrs McInroy & their son was then a month at Mr Sandbach's were not to leave them till the arrival of the fleet. I presume before now you have letters from LV^{pl}. William Munro Tennoord is arrived at London, your father and his mother had letters from him. He proposes being in the north in a few weeks, but makes a very short stay. Johana Munro now Mrs Tod & her little boy have been all summer at her fathers. After suffering much she was lately delivered of a still born child. Miss A Munro & little Jane Ross continue at Newtown. I will long to hear good accounts of Mr Barry

Your father joins me in every good wish for a return of health strength & every blessing to attend you. I remain your ever affectionate mother

Anne Robertson

NLS MS 19331 f145r [IMG_2775.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Orkney. 25

Nov 1809

My dear Christy

Your much wished for letter of the 25th Oct came in course, and it relieved our minds very much to find that you, and your dear boys were then well. But I assure you it was a real disappointment to

your father & me, to be informed at the same time that we could not expect the pleasure of seeing you and your lovely boys this winter, a happiness we all looked forward to all this season. But we should be thankful that it is not the want of health with you, or yours that has detained you. We are much obliged to our faithful friend Mrs Yule, and to you likewise for taking as much trouble to explain the reasons of this change in your plans to us. As your best friends, who understand the nature of your amiable husbands business best, and has your interest most at heart enter with yourself into the propriety of your remaining so smooch anger in Orkney. It is our duty to approve and fall in with whatever my ultimately tend to your comfort and interest.

Now that it was proper for you to leave Crantit, you could be nowhere (but here) is satisfactory to us, and beg under the hospitable roof of your best friends Mr & Mrs Yule, who Heaven in mercy has moved to be your best support when you so much required it. You may believe we will one to hear the result when your accounts are presented to Lord Dundas. May he who has the hearts of all men in his hands, influence his Lordship to act a humane part towards you. But if he should not, let not you my dear be disheartened at it. God is all sufficient, and I trust will enable you to support this with that propriety & fortitude you have done all along in the most trying situations. My very heart is melted when I begin to reflect upon what you have gone thro' now near this twelvemonth past, and your leaving Crantit was not the least trial, a place so long your own, and where you spent your happiest days, as you observe. I am not surprized at its being a trial to you to visit there now, but, as Mr & Mrs Brice have carried so well to you since they came to the country, and incline

f145v [IMG_2776.jpg]

to keep up their attentions to you I approve much of your shewing a sense of their good will to you, besides it shews a liberality of spirit to carry on in a friendly manner to our successors. At the same time that I feel the very mention of such a change a shock to my own and. I therefore will dwell no longer on a subject too deeply printed on your mind already.

Mrs Sandbach would no doubt infer you that our dear Annie has been in very bad health for two months. On the 12th of Sept'r she was attacked with the ague, which returned every day less or more severe for two or three weeks. It ended for a week with violent bilious reachings but thank God by every salutary remedy and care that human aid could give, her health and strength returned by degrees, and as soon as she was fit to venture on a journey, Mr Sandbach insisted that she try the waters of Cheltenham famous for all bilious disorders. Mr & Mrs S and the two Anns set out on the 2d instant for Cheltenham and after a very pleasant journey got there safe. Mr S passed some days with them at Cheltenham and returned to Livp as his business would not permit him be longer absent. Your sisters return by a different route, by Bath &c and as it is weather awkward for ladies to travel alone, he had kindly invited your brother William to meet them at Cheltenham and accompany them home. I wish no adverse whim or circumstance may prevent Wm embracing so happy an opportunity of seeing his sisters. You see what a valuable friend Mr Sandbach is to all our family when occasion requires and the real friend is him who exerts in time of need, and his present exertions for Annes health is an obligation not to be forgot by her or us, together with all his former kindness to her. For some time I suffered much anxiety on Annes account. My only comfort at her absence was that she had superior advantages for her health to what she could have here I have had a letter from her & Mrs S since that have been at Cheltenham the last of the 17th. By accident they met at their walk with Lady Grant and her sister Mrs [Aziote?]. As neither knew of their being in that place it was an agreeable surprize to each of them.

On the 8th of this month your father & I paid a visit at Millmount where we spent two days very agreeably. We were much entreated to lengthen our visit. She sent her own elegant carriage for us, and home with us. We long promised this visit, and when we offered it, she begged of us to acquaint Miss Baby Munro, and take her with us, which we did. I regretted the absence of our worthy friend

Mrs Col^l Suthd. She went south in Sept^r in a hurry to meet her son Mr Robert Sutherland from St Vincent. Mrs McK has a tutor for her boys and Miss Jenny Grant to teach her girls music &c &c. She is a pleasant genteel girl and a charming performer. She had her sister Mrs Sutherland there and 3 children. And Mrs Doctor Forbes and her daug^r

f146r [IMG_2777.jpg]

from Sutherland on a visit with Miss Sutherland of Syberscross a very pretty girl. The first day Captⁿ Sackville Sutherland and a bror in-law of his Captⁿ Colin McKay & Captⁿ McDarmid dined with us. We called at Rhives the forenoon of next day and at Mr Mathesons. Mrs M made kind inquiries about you & family & begged to be kindly remembered to you.

Sir Hugh Munro arrived a few days ago at Fowlis. He is come from London to vote for his friend Sir Charles Ross. There is a strong canvass for the County betwixt Sir Charles and a Mr Innes of Lochailsh supported by Lord Seaforth. His interest is so strong with his own numerous clan its supposed he will carry altho most of the county wish Sir Charles success, as rather a popular character.

On Wedy last a party arrived here to breakfast. Blind Mr John McKay from Edin^r to vote for Sir Charles (he purchased Little Tarrel from Captⁿ Robertson) and Captⁿ Andrew Fraser late of India your cousin and another cousin of yours Miss Jean Robertson who you may remember here with a niece of hers Miss Gilchrist & a little boy a nephew, it was when Miss Foster was here. They left us that forenoon being all in a hurry. We were happy to have even this short visit of such agreeable friends. Miss Robertson brought the inclosed letter for you and a small parcel. As it was only tied in a paper without a seal I took the liberty of opening it to let you know what it contained. It is a piece of mourning print just a gown . . . which I suppose Mr Munro has made you a present off out of gratitude for your attentions to him when at your Fair Miss R tells me he is in a very thriving way and a well behaved young man. He sent 5 pounds by her to his father and is kind to several of his friends in this parish.

I am much pleased to find that our agreeable acquaintances Major and Mrs West so kindly remember us. I beg you present kindest respects to them & that we are allways happy to hear of them & their young families welfare. I think their governess whatever her merits maybe was born under a lucky star to have such a respectable match. I regret the fair ones of Orkney to have lost such a prize but it is well said there is a particular destiny in marriage. Your father had very kind letters from each of the Mr Munro's since they reached London. When they left us they were resolved to go by Liverpool. But when they reached Edinburgh they found there was a necessity for their hurrying forward. Their cousins Miss Barbara & Mary Douglas accompanied them to London and Mr Labalmondier met them there and accompanied them to Bath where he resides. They remain with him this season. Mr Wm Munro writes your father from Portsmouth, after he had his baggage on board and his passage engaged he missed the ship by a few hours which was very disconcerting. He was not to leave that port till he would go by another vessel which was to sail soon. Miss Robertson told me he was to be married to a young lady in Jamaica whenever he returned there. His last letter was very kind expressing much attachment for all our family & particular ??? wishes for you.

f146v [IMG_2778.jpg]

Invergordon Twenty seventh November 1809

Mr Watson

Kirkwall

RB Aeneas Macleod

[left]

Miss Johana Robertson called here lately before her departure for Liverpool for our commands and Miss A Munro was here a night after our return from Millmount to bid us adieu before she set out for Edin^r to deliver her young charge Jean Ross to her mother. I suppose she will not return till next summer.

I have the pleasure to inform you that a few days ago we heard from Mr Young. Our dear Harry & all other friends there was quite well and my own sweet pet is thank God as well as e can wish him. William is really so sensible and engaging for his age that often do I wish you saw him. If this should find you at Elisdale you will offer mine & the Doctors kindest respects to the amiable mother and daugr, Mrs Manson, and Mrs Balfour say we will allways think of them with a pleasing remembrance. I regret I am not acquainted with Captⁿ Balfour. I ever am your truly affectionate Mother Anne Robertson

[right]

I can easily believe how comfortable your amiable friends make you. Many it please Heaven to grant health to you & them. I congratulate you on passing the winter with so pleasing a society. Had I known sooner of your plans, it is not this year I would withhold sending a few sweetmeats and fruit. I had a few pots waiting your arrival that you might dispose of them as you please, but now it would be too late to think of sending them. What charming weather all October & November was till last week. We had a slight fall of snow for some days every week grudging you did not embrace the fine fair weather. There is a good drop all over the country especially of potatoes which, a blessing to the poor. Our wheat seed time is now finished. I am sorry we did not see the Bishop of landau coming or going south. 4 ... & time I should.

[below]

I beg you excuse my late silence and let me hear soo from you. How does Mr Barry hold out. He is I think a interesting young man. What is become of the poor ?????

NLS MS 19331 f147r [IMG_2779.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Orkney. 14 Mar [1810?]

Mr Dear Christy

When I am long with our hearing from you I feel anxious and my spirits a good deal depressed which was the case before the arrival of your most welcome letter of 19th Ult^o. Indeed it was a cordial to my heart to find that ou are your dear boys have enjoyed the greatest of worldly blessings good health thro' winter and that your amiable friends Mr & Mrs Yule had bikeways enjoyed a better state of health than usual to this trying season to delicate people. This I am sure was felt by each of you with a mutual gratitude to heaven. The continuance of this & every other comfort to those who's friendship we owe so much will at all times be my most ardent wish. I would have wrote you sooner but waiting to hear about Harry. Mr Fraser after giving the cocks play to his scholars, returned Saturday last from Inverness. He saw Harry often and dined with him a day at Mr

Youngs, that worthy family are well, and Harry & Hugh improving in looks & growth, and in their education as could be expected. I wrote Mr Young enquiring about them all, after the Holydays. I have not had a reply yet, but he made one too good an apology by Mr Fraser. His principal clerk, Angus McDonald it is feared is in the last stages of a consumption and Mr Carey laid up for weeks with a bad cold but he is better. This has just harassed our good friend so much, we need not be surprized at his silence. I pray his own health may not suffer by having so much to do at present.

We heard from William yesterday. He had a severe cold caught on his way from Livl to London but was well when he wrote. On his arrival in London he found his highly valued friend, Mr John Downie a corpse without hearing he was ill. He died of four days illness his complaint was very deceiving for both the physician & surgeon who waited on him thought him much better four hours before his death. That a severe & unexpected blow this to the worthy old couple at Urray. To them he was a most attentive & generous son. He was indeed a genteel warmhearted young man. The poor young creature his wife is much to be felt for. She was reckoned lucky in getting him. They were only about nine months married. William says she bears her great misfortune with as much propriety as could be expected.

Our dear friends in Liverpool were well on the 27th last month when Annie wrote with proper consideration for our peace of mind, to acquaint us of the melancholy accident that happened there by the fall of the spire of St Nicholas's church the oldest church in Liverpool. This dreadful catastrophe happened on Sunday morning about ten o'clock & 25 persons were killed under the ruins. The greatest number of the sufferers were the charity school girls but there is a mixture of mercy to be seen in every event, had this happened ten minutes latter where all

147v [IMG_2780.jpg]

the congregation met it would have been a more deplorable event. We had Annie's letter before any of the accounts in the newspapers reached us. Praises to Almighty God that none we are interested in were hurt or any of their acquaintances. But I need say no more on this subject as I suppose Annie has acquainted you of it before this time. Mr Sandbach's generous conduct towards you is more than ever I expected and is really to be admired. He is not one of those that will undertake for more than he can afford, but as he is both able and willing I think it is much to his hour and Heaven I trust will reward him. I enquired at Mrs Wathen who had access to know every particular about Col^l John Ross of Balnagowans death. She says there was nothing more relating to his death came to his friends but that in the heat of the battle of Talavera he was shot through the head and never spoke and died immediately on the spot where he fell. He was a young man of amiable disposition that was generally liked, and the idol of his own family. When he used to reside with his mother, who was rather particular in associating chiefly with the grand and serious and the clergy, he was never heard to find fault with this but was allways content, and shewed the greatest attention to her society so that they were delighted with him. It is said before he left England he subscribed handsomely to the Bible Society. He fell the same day with our much lamented friend and countryman General McKenzie Suddie. Add to the afore mentioned gentlemen General McKenzie Fraser all cut off so close to each other. I fear Rossshire cannot boast of their like again for an age.

You will regret to hear that Col^l Ross that was married to your early acquaintance Kitty Smith is no more. He died early in January on his march from Spain to Portugal. She came to Inverness in November last to visit her friends and meant to return to meet her husband in May and bring Miss Jessie with her but death soon blasts the fairest prospects & this hard fated family have often felt it. She has no family but one fine child a daughter which she has with her.

I am glad you have had late accounts of my dear Hugh, the last we had was about the same time. He then thought you were here with us and mentions you and the dear boys in the warmest terms affection. He now lives with Gilbert at his place called Kiltarn in Berbice. He allways tells us that

directing to him at Demerara is enough pr packet via London. There needs no postage be paid with letters sent to Demerara or any colony belonging to Britain, and the packets are the most certain mode we find of conveying our letters. Hugh mentions some chance of Gilberts coming home thro this season but I do not flatter myself with this prospect. I was pleased at him saying the crops in that colony promised better than they had Doen for some years which I told seem there is much need of.

Miss Betsy Reid our amiable friend spent lately a day and Hugh with us. I had not seen her before since summer last. She told me it was a long time since she heard from you, that she wrote you in harvest last when she was staying with Mrs Lockhart and expressed her surprize and regret at not having a answer from you since. She is so interested in you & yours, that I beg you may address her on receipt of this. She would have made a longer stay with us, were it not she has Mrs Anderson Udolls youngest daughter in charge since she and two of her daughters went to reside in England for Kiss Justina's health. They return in may to the north.

Miss Campbell the young poetess, I am told was born in Shetland, her father was a doctor, and I see by the papers died lately after returning to that country. I am told her mother was a sister to a Mr Scot I saw here once along with your friend Lieut Smith of course a sister in law of his. Her father was assistant surgeon in some regiment at Fort George when some of Miss C's poems first made their appearance and happily for her they were conveyed to Mr Youngs hands. He saw so much native genius in these juvenile perform

f148r [2019-11-02 13.17.21.jpg]

-ances that he enquired about the circumstances of Miss C. when he found out that her parents had a throng family, and in such poverty they could afford no education to their daughter, as her genius deserved. On this information he brought Miss C to Inverness and kept her two months at his own house till he settled her with Miss Grant the boarding mistress there where she now is. Mr Young has acted with that generous interest in Miss C which he allways performs wherever he processes a friendship.

You will be sorry to hear that Mr Cameron Culcraig has lately failed for 5 thousand pounds all the country regrets him as he was a spirited honourable man but as his funds were limited to begin with, he was rather rash in entering to plans to extricate him which it is thought only involved him the more. It is thought his creditors will be favourable as they had a good opinion of him and at least leave him in Culcraig which I wish much the case

[strip cut out]

Mrs B was delivered about 5 weeks ago of a daughter. She was dangerously ill, before, and after delivery, but I am pleased to have it to say that she is now perfectly recovered and nursing a young Kathrine Munro.

I approve much of the pan you adopted with regard to Miss Barry, and shews the benevolence of your heart, to suppress your own feelings (even in what is painful to you) for the good of those you esteem. I am convinced Mr Yule will feel this obligation to his neice as it deserves and it was a right to do a kind office to the orphan daug^r of a respectable clergyman. I am happy to find that Mr Barry's health is so much restored, as to resolve to enter the matrimonial state. I sincerely wish him health and every blessing this state can bestow. I forget if I saw the lady you mention for him.

I am pleased to hear the good people you mention have all recovered such dangerous illnesses. This has in the whole been rather a healthy winter here, but in some districts the country such as the heights of Creich & Kincardine a malignant pluretic fever broke out which cut off many of the peasantry. Captⁿ Matheson of Sheeness fell a victim to this disease. He was a good character, and

married to blind Mr John McKays oldest sister. It is to be remarked that he in the West part of the County of Suth^d Mr Biggary of Midgarty in the east, Mr Boag at Dornoch in the middle, all died. Within a short time of each other all passed the three score & ten.

Thursday & Friday last week, we spent at Mountgerald. Mr & Mrs Wathen Mr Sewart of Dingwal Miss Bethune of the someplace Miss McKenzie Millbank Mr Bethune Dr & Mrs Wishart made up our party. We all seemed very easy of course agreeable there was many kind inquiries among them for you. We have had a good deal of frost & snow with very cold weather since the spring commenced, which with colds on both sides prevented till now our having much entercourse with our new neighbours but they have shown from various obliging attentions a desire of being well with us is shewn which you will allow is a pleasing change from that residence.

Your last letter reached me on the 1st cur^t the fast day just before I went to church. I am angry with myself being so long silent knowing what your anxiety must be about the dear boys. Willie is the darling [of] us all. His grandfather doats on him he walks and follows him close about the doors and wishes to imitate him, especially when he goes to write calls for pen ink, and paper, till he write a letter to Mama Watson. He was lately set with us at table with a few friends he observed materials for punch set down. Then he turned to the table boy & cried “Sandy put down the vine” which gave us all a hearty laugh. You judge right that I would enjoy the sweet infant James at his present age. The innocence & helplessness of young infant & their peculiar sweetness endears them to me but I am happy that our sweet friend Mrs Yule enjoys his attractions which I will enjoy at any period.

f148v [IMG_2782.jpg]

Mrs Watson

Kirkwall

[left]

The house by ladies offer you their blessings they have lately heard from their brothers with a remittance of 60 pounds fro each of them. You need not be uneasy of my being a night or two from Willie there little chance of that more for some time but he is well appointed for careful and nurses this house besides the kind attentions of his friends of the House bye. Betsy Reid has just acquainted me she had a most pleasing letter from you so take no notice of what I have said about her now.

The Doctor joins me in kindest respects to Mr & Mrs Yule to Major & Mrs West or any others who may be kind enough to enquire for us. Give a kiss to dear Andrew & Petter from Grand Papa & Mama & bro William who is now prattling near me.

I ever am, my dear daughter, your truly affectionate mother Anne Robertson

[right]

I am highly gratified at the presents come from Lvpl. I only regret I have it not in my power to act some part. Sir Hugh Munro left Fowlis for London yesterday. He has not left many blessings behind him. Unhappy man that now has so much good in his power and best I will say no more on this subject. I wish you may make this out on several readings being wrote in a hurry not to love the post. Our friends at Loth & Criech are well.

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Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltarn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Watson), Orkney. 28

April 1810

My dearest Christy

Yours of the 21st cur^t has rejoiced your father and me to find that you and your dear boys have enjoyed health since we last heard from you and that the amiable pair you reside with are well. Happy are we on every account that you are now on the eve of getting your affairs so arranged as to have it in your peer to be soon with us, an event which we now ardently wish for. Yesterday your letter came to hand and this day the Doctor had a letter from Annie saying that Mr & Mrs Sandbach were on the first week of May to attend the Chester Races, and on their return, to prepare with all dispatch for their journey north. It is probable they will be here by the end of May, and they fondly hope you to be here before them. They bring Annie and all the children with them. Instead of two post chaises they mean to travel in a coach, with 4 horses. God grant us all a happy meeting which will be to your parents the greatest happiness we could expect in this world. Oh may we be thankful that we have children who are all so desirous to contribute to our enjoyment.

With much pleasure would we insist on Mr Yules friendly proposal of accompanying you here, but with Mr Sandbach's family and servants it will not be in our power to accommodate him as we would incline and would regret if he would meet with anything here to risk his health, to whom we would incline so much to shew every attention & render every comfort in our power. So my dear yourself will enter unto this. You know when I proposed a visit from Mr Yule I was not then aware we would be so crowded. I can readily enter into Mr & Mrs Yules feelings on parting with you and the dear boys. They partly look upon you as their own & well may you call them your second parents. I am obliged to you for explaining so much of your own affairs to me but at present I will decline making any remarks

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on this subject as I hope to have it in my power to converse with you on this with many other topics. I am much gratified our dear William has it in his power at present to render you a service. I know few more disposed to serve his friends if he could.

Our worthy new neighbours Mr & Mrs Wathen and the Balcony family dine with us Wednesday first. Who was here two days of this week but Mrs Doctor Grant. She wintered at Millmount where her daughter Miss Jenny acts as governess. She is a genteel accomplished girl. Mrs Grant is a full cousin of the late Colonels Mackenzie. She was ensuring very kindly for you. Rose Munro and her husband were here at the same time they returned from Spain last winter. The deceased Mr John Downie was married to your acquaintance Miss Mary Shaw, sister to our unfortunate friend Mr Shaw. They married about a little more than twelve months ago, and she was then reckoned very lucky. I am glad to hear it thought there will be something genteel is reversion for her.

I am really happy to hear of the safe delivery of my sweet friend Mrs Captⁿ Balfour of a fine boy. I sincerely wish her every joy a mothers heart can wish in him, and present my kindest respects to worthy Mrs Manson & her. I am pleased at your visit to them.

Since the long day and good weather, I frequently hear of our dear Harry, and have the satisfaction to say he was in perfect health a few days ago, and so was all the rest of the good family at Mr Youngs but poor Angus his Clerk who still languishes under a consumption.

Our darling William is well as our hearts can wish, a sweet tempered sensible child for his age & very lively. He now asks when Mama Watson will come here and where is she, and repeats all his

brothers names. It is probable Mr Sandbach will make but a short stay here. Business will oblige him to leave us sooner than his family, so my dear you may miss him which I know you would regret, if you stay longer than you propose in your letter. Your father wins me in kindest respects & every good wish to our much valued friends Mr & Mrs Yule to whom we shall every feel grateful for their uncommon friendship fo ryou. Kiss my sweet boys fo rme & say how happy grand Ma is in the prospect of seeing them soon That Heaven may grant us a happy meeting & you a safe voyage over the Pentland Firth

f150r [2019-11-02 13.16.19.jpg]

prays your ever affectionate Mother Anne Robertson

Please off our kindest respects to Major & Mrs West to any others our agreeable acquaintances in Kirkwall

f150v [2019-11-02 13.16.25.jpg]

Mrs Watson
Kirkwall

NLS MS 19331 f151r [IMG_2783.jpg]

Mrs Anne Robertson, Kiltearn, to her daughter Christian (Mrs Traill), Liverpool. 1 Jan 1813
Birth of a girl.

My Dear Christy

I for some time past resolved that as soon as I could wield a pen my first letter would be addressed to you. I cannot in proper terms express my gratitude to Heaven for blessing you with so safe a delivery of a fine girl, and in favouring you with so happy a recovery. I had great hopes with the blessing go God, this time would be more favourable than former occasions of this kind to you, being under the care and direction of Doctor Traill superior skill and tender attentions about you. Few are more sensible of the improvements and advantages in the present times for women at such critical periods than I am.

I have the most lively feeling of your attention to write me s soon on your recovery and while my heart rejoiced at the perusal of your letter, I trembled least so early an effort might hurt your health. Let me assure you that the most minute circumstance [it?] Contained relating to you and your dear infant was important & pleasing to me. I return you and your dear friend Doctor Traill my warmest acknowledgements for the proof of your affectionate esteem, by naming your daughter after me. May she be spared to be an ornament to her sex and one of the many peculiar blessings of both your old age.

Mrs Sutherland produced a letter she had a few days ago fro Miss Barbara Douglas where she makes kind mention of the friendly hospitality her brother Mr R Douglas and his sister met with from Mrs Sandbach and you while at Liverpool. It seems to have made an impression on their minds. They said much of Mr Sandbach's lovely family & that your James was a charming boy, and for young Miss Traill, she was everything could be wished at her age, resembles her father much,

and promises being a beauty. It is an old remark that daughters who are like their fathers are generally lucky. As Annie informs you regularly about your dear boys here, and the progress they make in their education, I have only to add that they have, thank God, kept the best health since you parted with them. Even Peter since he got doses Dr Traill recommended for the thread worms, no longer complaining of their troublesome symptoms, and has the best of health. Peter & William are as fine easily managed children as I would desire. And poor Andrew if he would give up his thoughtless ticks would be a fine fellow too, which I would fain [hope?] he will drop when he comes to think or reflect on right from wrong. He is certainly an uncommonly quick boy when he pleases. We have that pleasure they are all good geniuses, dear fellows, altho they are certain cares. We would be very dull without them, and you may

f151v [IMG_2784.jpg]

depend upon it that their comfort & welfare in everything good for them, is the chief object of attention with their aunt and me. They all understand the Gaelic now, and speak a good deal of it, they have learned several Gaelick songs, which helps them to understand it. Each of them have good ears, and voices and pick the words and tunes quickly, when we are set in the evenings in my room at the geography cards or at singing. I often think as you have so feelingly expressed in your last to me, what we would mutually give, to have you one hour set amongst us, but as this is not in our power, may we be thankful, that at the conclusion, of an old year & the beginning of a new one, we her of our mutual welfares. William has been my bedfellow for near a twelve month. Our chats in the morning are diverting, very often about James as he calls him, and his cousins, what they are like now, and how tall? At first all the boys thought we joked them when we told them they had a little sister, but now they are convinced, and happy on this acquisition. There's no end to the questions about her, what like she is, if she can laugh, speak or walk & how she is dressed? I assure you their affection for you is not in the east abated. Nothing convinces me more of this, than the joy they show on the arrival of a letter from you. Mr James Tait was here yesterday and told me he returned the day before from Inverness, where he saw your Harry in perfect health & spirits. We heard from the dear boy himself often this winter.

Annie wrote Mr Sandbach on Christmas Day where she mentioned the safe arrival of the box and cask. Altho the former was a good deal shattered, everything it contained was in the best order. I know not how to thank my dear Betsy & you for your generous attentions to me. The gowns are a new stuff here and much admired. They are a most comfortable water dress, and fit us both, as well as if we were beside her who made them. The scarf is beautiful and the bonnet suits me to a nicety. I like the lightness of it. My capes really beautiful and becoming. Your father returns his best thanks for his present. As for the boys they are in ecstasies on seeing their books, [totums?], letters, and shoes &c and offer their love and thanks to their dear Mama & aunt for their presents, & to their sweet brother Jamesy for the [totums?]; they long much to see I'm & their sweet sister. They offer love to all their cousins. They were this day much engaged with their new game. Andrew is up to it already. They likewise dances a good deal. They have their cousin Antoinette Robertson with them. She seems a modest sensible creature I think. Miss Forbes has merit in having trained these girls so properly. Antoinette sees your Harry often, and admires him for his amiable disposition & she saw all his acquaintances at Inverness do the same. Every article in the cask came safe not a plate or cup broken. They are all most useful to me, and really handsome of their kind. What a large supply of the finest picked I have seen you have sent; and the ketchup will be most useful. I will observe your direction about the wallnuts. How I regret I have no suitable return to make you. I know your good will my dear child, but I grudge any expense to you who have so much to do in the genteel appearance you have to keep. I know you will study genteel economy but having so lately set up a family in so expensive a place requires great attention. Indeed the pretty gown & cap you sent me in

the former box might suffice for a long time from you. I am quit delighted with your chit chat letter in the box as you call it. Much do I approve of your not dining or supping out this winter and even restricting your evening visits to your own street. Your apology is sufficient to all who think properly, and this care is the best means to preserve your own health & that of your dear infant. What a pleasure to me, that I am represented in so amiable a lady to beer God Mother. I hope Miss betsy Robertson is arrived & delivered our packet of letters from Kiltearn. I regretted not seeing her here before she left the north. I will be happy

f152r [IMG_2785.jpg]

to hear that she found her good mother and all her friends at Liverpool well.

We were gratified to hear the respectable figure Mr Gladstone made at the late elections. Annie & I read all the proceedings & speeches, on that occasion with much interest, were happy to see that liberality with both parties, that prevent disagreeable quarrels afterwards, which we have seen sometimes happen.

We hear Miss Probbie McKenzie was married on the last day of the old year to a Mr McDonald water to the signet in Edinburgh. This gentleman is son to a writer at Inverness. We have had no invited party at the holydays but who gave us an agreeable surprize on the last day of the year but blind John McKay on his way from Sutherland to Edin^r. He enquired particularly about Mrs Sandbach, you and your families. I told him how pleasant you felt at the time you spent at his house when you are at Edinburgh. He is really a pleasant guest, and it was with regret we parted with him on the first day of the year. He left us after breakfast to be at Achnagairn to dinner. He told us our friends at Kilmote were well. He had been with them, the week before he set out. He went to bid his sister Mrs Gordon of Loth adieu.

I know it will gratify my dear Betsy & you to have it from own hand that my health after so long an illness, is now restored more than once I ever expected to be. No doubt I have not got stung yet, but thank God I a free of pain, yet a little swelling and pain in my wrists, and some of my fingers, and I feel a stiffness in all my joints, and when there is a change from dry to wet in the weather, I feel flying pains wherever I had them formerly; but, thank God, they are not severe & were of soon. tell Doctor Traill with my sincerest & best wishes how much I feel obliged by his salutary advices. The drops he sent me, were the first that restored my appetite & digestion. The w.... Bath I used thro' the summer, and harvest, twice or thrice a week, and four it str. . . me a good deal. I have not taken the drops for a long time. In harvest Doctor W. . . . thought I was getting fat again, ad advised me to take the full dozes of calomel . . . week, to prevent an attack of my complaint in the end of the year. I did so till . . . frost set in, and I should be thankful ???? yet escaped. I a often troubled with acidity in my stomach and feel great relief from calcined magnesia. This winter a cough attacks me bit not constantly, and seldom deprives me much of rest at night. It is commonly attended with a ticking in the breast and throat. The last month was the mildest Decbr I remember, til within the last week, we had calm clear weather and gentle frosts, so that our walks & roads were drier and safer for methane thro' all the last uncommonly wet season. I found myself better during that time than since my trouble commenced.

I have been this particular about my own health as you have repeatedly wrote that the Doctor was so good as wish to have my state of health minutely described to him.

It is often a source of comfort to me that my dear Mrs Sandbach and you are so near each other & so much of one mind. May each of you be long, long blessings to each other, after I am no more! My earnest prayers to the Almighty is to send her a safe and happy minute. What a blessing that she enjoys such good health.

Be so good as to offer my love and thanks to my dear Anne Sandbach for her pretty pin cushion. Say I will keep it for her sake; assure her, how much I would like to accompany her on some other visits to you. Sure I am, you have many a special chat.

Your father, Annie and the boys join me in wishing the Doctor, you and dear young ones, and all Mr Sandbach's family a good new year with many happy returns of the same. May God bless you all. Believe me, my dr Cristy

Your ever affectionate mother, Anne Robertson

f152v [IMG_2786.jpg]

Mrs Traill
St Anne Street
Liverpool

[left]

Saturday the 2d. I did not get this sent of yesterday as I intended; as I wished to enjoy Mr McKays agreeable company. The damsons came quite safe and are uncommonly fine. All the addl things Mrs Sandbach sent in the box are high useful and acceptable. She need never scruple to send any old things she had no other use for here.

The house bye ladies are well and offer their most grateful thanks to each of you for your pretty presents. Each of your donations to poor Jenny are well bestowed, who thinks more of them than she can say.

[right]

I had your six blankets washed by, and waiting your orders, since last summer altho' you were so good as desire me to keep them since. I thought it proper to send the tow best of the blankets in the box with the crib &c which was dispatched on the 20th Decbr by the ship George from Cromarty to London. The other four blankets hall be disposed of as you directed.

Please offer my kind wishes to Miss Tomison in which all here & the boys join me. They have always a kind remembrance of her. I presume your brother William is now with you, as you mentioned having invited him down to the holydays.

I also much out of the habit of writing and ??? so little the command of my hand and comitted so many blunders in this scrawl, I was going to write it over again if Annie had not persuaded me you could make it out as it is. Your father has the pleasure of a letter from Mr Yule dated the 14th Novr, all well.