

NLS GB233/MS19329

Notes made by David Alston 2014

1 Thomas Traill, Kirkwall to Mrs Watson  
Invitation to a Course of Chemistry in the Lodge Room

2 Thomas Traill, Kirkwall to Mr and Mrs Watson 10 June 1804  
Present of portable chemical apparatus 'as a small but sincere mark of friendship & esteem'.

3 Thomas Traill, Kiltarn to Mr Watson, Crantit  
Mrs Watson at Kiltarn - often thoughtful - she confesses that Kiltarn is more dull than it used to be - 'the absence of her own dear, dear J'  
Harry is grandmama's favourite - Andrew is weaned  
Comments on the country and it's people. 'Never met with a woman of more amiable or agreeable manners than Mrs Robertson'  
Mr H Robertson and Mr McGregor expected tomorrow.  
Mr Wm Robertson has not yet arrived but is hourly expected by the George packet.  
p.s. Andrew will soon be walking

7 Thomas Traill, Liverpool to Mrs Watson, Kiltarn 1 June 1805  
Describes a visit to the lakes with long, appreciative description  
'the passenger contemplates with wakeful astonishment the amazing work of nature'  
Gratitude to Sandbachs for their hospitality.  
Has found 'a tolerable situation at Kendall but cannot yield more than £300 and my ambition soars at higher things'.

8 Thomas Traill, Liverpool to Mrs Watson, Kiltarn 29 May 1806  
Little spare time after composing his lectures - low spirited and dull from causes explained in a late letter to my uncle  
Kindness of Sandbachs.  
Hugh's departure will be very unpleasant to me but it will be much to his advantage. He is in very good spirits and seems well adapted for a tropical climate. Mr Sandbach presented him with a gold watch and chain.

11 Christian Watson, Crantit to Dr Traill 31 Jan 1807  
Your departure made a blank in our little society. Describes closeness of friendship between Hugh and Traill.

13 proposal by Traill: 'beg leave to offer my hand, and what I trust shall ever accompany it, my heart'. 5 July 1810

15 30 July 1810 from Kiltarn. Explains her circumstances, lack of possessions, asks him not to feel committed to his proposal.

17 5 August 1810 Traill repeats proposal. Will consider children as his own.

The couple then wrote to each other, growing closer, exchanging verses, discussing poetry and other literature, joking. This includes a period when Christie was in Edinburgh. Traill sends a ring and is looking for a suitable house in Liverpool. She returned to Kiltarn on 30 April 1811 and only then told her parents, who approved of the match. They offer to keep the children with them but Christie wanted James to be with her.

Traill's poem: Kiltearn.

Kiltearn! Abode of my fondest attachment!  
Tho' distance and mountains divide me from thee,  
In vain her rude ramparts wild nature opposes,  
Each haunt that I lov'd in sweet visions I see.  
I picture thy groves as they glow with the morning  
While trembles the dew-drop that spangles the spray,  
As melts the grey mist on the brow of the mountain  
And carols the sky-lark to welcome the day.

When noontime proclaims the full splendour of summer,  
How grateful the shade of thy wild wooded vale!  
Or mine be the bliss, with the choice of my bosom,  
To catch from you upland the sighs of the gale.  
Delighted my eye wanders o'er the fair landscape  
Where Nature profusely has varied the scene,  
Where fades the green slope in the azure ting'd mountain,  
And woods, fields, and villas lie scatter'd between

Thy limpid wave shines the bright mirror of Nature,  
Inviting the swimmer his art to display,  
While gently the breezes, the white sail distending,  
Securely impel the light bark on its way.  
And mark how sublimely the giant Benwevis  
Exults his proud summit still heavy with snow:  
But oft is he veil'd in the deep volum'd cloud-wreath  
When sunshine illumines the vallies below.

But dearest to me is the mild hour of evening,  
When floats every object confus'd to the eye,  
And Wevis' huge outline in purple invested  
Is faintly discoloured and blends with the sky.  
How blest could I stray by thy long winding seabeach,  
When twilight and stillness o'er Nature preside,  
With Her who supremely commands my affections,  
Whose love is my treasure, my hope, and my pride.

Or should the full moon shed her purest effulgence  
On rock, and on mountain, on wave, and on tree,  
Wouldst thou, my dear Christie, prefer the bright season,  
That mildly serene is an emblem of thee?  
The tempest toss'd seaman exulting discovers  
The blue hills of Britain from Ocean arise.  
Such rapture, Kiltearn, this heart shall acknowledge  
When next thy lov'd mountains salute my glad eye.