

To Major Anderson.

Sydney, N. S. Wales. 3/3 Mo. 1837.

To Major Anderson.

My dear friend,

I felt obliged and gratified by the receipt of thy acceptable favour of the "14th Nov^r." and should have answered it by return of the "Governor Philip," but for reasons that induced me to defer the pleasure of conversing with thee: my attention was then much occupied, in conjunction with my dear Companion, in preparing for the press, two Tracts, in the form of Addresses to the Inhabitants of these Colonies, which we have thought it our place to print, & which engrossed much of our time & thoughts at the period in question. And by a little delay, I knew we should probably soon have it in our power to forward copies for the use of the Establishment at Norfolk Island, when I should like to accompany them with a letter explanatory of our wishes respecting their disposal, & on other subjects of interest. I should not have studied to economize time & paper in this way, with thee, but that, I must frankly acknowledge, the claims that continue

to accumulate & press upon me, as our engagement lengthens in duration, render the necessity for doing so imperative.

The interesting detail of affairs with which we were favoured, was very satisfactory; abating however those minor causes of solicitude & annoyance which have arisen to mar, in some degree, thy comfort, & which are almost inevitable in the government of a Community such as that over which thou hast been honoured to preside.

I had hoped, I must confess, that all causes of uneasiness in which Officers might be implicated, had by this time ceased. Judge then of my surprise & chagrin at hearing that your Minister, Atkins had re-

turned (and, as I learn from the tenor of an ill-natured, & according to the editor's own admission, a priori statement in the Colonist) in consequence of some difference of opinion between him & thee, regarding a verdict returned on the death of a Prisoner who not very long before had received corporal punishment. I have not seen

Atkins, nor am I prepared to enter into the merits of the case (from want of data) were it even required of me: but looking upon the broad face of the affair, I can readily imagine with what avidity such a coincidence as the death of a prisoner and his recent punishment, would

be laid hold of by any who might watch for an occasion of offence, even though there might not be any just ground for censure, with reference to the conduct either of the Surgeon or the Commandant.

With respect to the opinion of a disinterested and honest observer, - as I would suppose your officiating Minister to be, - I should make some allowance, & not an inconsiderable allowance, - in the absence of authentic & conclusive information enabling me to determine as to its rectitude in such a case, - for the possibility of an impression having been made on the mind of such an one by the evilly-disposed (considering how little opportunity he has had, owing to the short time he has been among the Prisoner Population, of estimating, or even conceiving the arts of Prisoners of a description that must abound in every penal Settlement) - an impression which, if produced, though it might conscientiously, & with the very best intentions be acted upon, might nevertheless be very far from correct. - In passing judgment upon what has transpired, the Colonial Government and the enlightened portion of the Community at large, will, I trust, not fail to do thee justice, as well as others who may be

concerned; and not decide upon ex parte or imperfect evidences along with the prejudiced & the evilly disposed. From the hasty, & often deliberately perverse decisions, and censures of such we cannot expect always to be exempted, but rather must hope to be enabled, by best help to live down their evil reports.

On our last return from the interior we had the pleasure of lodging for one night at Petty's (late Cummins') Hotel, at the same time as our old friend Septimus Campbell, with whom it was pleasant once more to hold intercourse; as well as to hear orally of your welfare as a family. The dear Children, no doubt, will have made advances in stature, and in the development of the yet more attractive qualities of mind. May these keep ample pace with the former; and unitedly constitute them of the number of the virtuous & the good, rendering them, in short, all that their best friends can wish them to be. When we consider how easily the minds of children are biassed in favour of evil or of good, the responsibility that devolves upon parents must be acknowledged to be great; particularly in regard to what they teach them to value and approve. A constant reference to their own secret convictions of right
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and wrong, & a course of mental discipline that shall dispose them to submit to the restraints of conscience that they may secure the peace of mind which such conduct ensures; & also accustoming them to refer to the Scriptures as the ultimate standard & test of human opinions & practice, making these sacred records both judge & jury, as it were, in regard to all their actions; - these are, in my estimation, among the foremost of the means placed within our power for giving a right direction to the youthful mind.

We have put up a small parcel of the tracts I have alluded to, also a larger proportion of those addressed to Prisoners, to thy care; & shall feel obliged by thy causing the latter to be circulated among them, from time to time, in the most effectual way that may suggest itself to thy mind. I may ask thee to do this with the more confidence of its not involving any impropriety, from the Governor having been pleased to express, in a note to ourselves, his approval of the tract, and from the Government having also undertaken measures, at our suggestion, for rendering them accessible to the Prisoners composing the Iron Gangs at the respective Stockades.

In notice

I notice thy observation regarding one or two of the more serious Prisoners making profession with us. Time, and subsequent conduct will shew how far such professions are sincere & genuine. Though even those who at the outset might be among the sincere, are liable to be turned aside through the pressure of the many temptations that surround, & the imbecility of human resolution if Divine help be unsought for or neglected.

Meanwhile, I may say for my friend Jas. Backhouse, as well as myself, that we rely with pleasant confidence on thy discrimination, & conscientious concern to promote what is really good under whatever form it may appear, for securing to such as may feel conscientious scruples on any points connected with our peculiarities as a religious body, & whose conduct bears the general stamp of sincerity such religious liberty as is accordant with Scriptural precept & enlightened reason; a liberty which will never be incompatible with, or opposed to that due restraint, & subordination, which is essential to the well-being of a Penal Settlement.

Our friends Daniel & Charles Wheeler arrived here in safety, & in improved health, in the early part of last month, after having visited the Society, Georgian,
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and Leeward Isles, the Sandwich & Friendly (or Tonga) Islands, & New Zealand; an engagement that affords peaceful retrospection to the visitors, and respecting which many testimonies have come to our ears that it was generally acceptable to the visited. - Expecting to make some stay in these Colonies, they have disposed of their little vessel (which has carried them so safely over an expanse of ocean not far short of 40,000 miles in extent) to a Merchant in Sydney.

J. Backhouse & myself have taken our passage to Hobart Town in the "Francis Freeling" which is expected to sail about the 8th inst. We are very busy packing up & making the needful preparatory arrangements.

J. Backhouse unites with me in kind regards to Mary Anderson & the dear Children: Our Christian remembrance to our other often remembered friends at the Settlement, especially Dr. Ellson. We often think of you with lively interest, & many pleasing retrospections; & shall be glad to hear from any of you, especially from thyself, whenever circumstances may favour. Letters will probably find us for 12 or 15 months to come, if directed to the Post Office, Cape Town, South Africa, though it may be some months ere we reach that Colony,

having to make a short stay at Hobart Town, Port Au-
gusta, King George's Sound, Swan River & the Mauritius,
in succession on our way to the Cape.

With the salutation of Christian regard,

Believe me to remain,

thy sincere friend,

George W. Walker.
