

Edinburgh 18 December 1843

My Dear James

Although you seem to think that because, waters wide between us roll, all our friendship should cease yet I do not think so, and am not inclined to let you off so easily. I have heard of letters coming from Johnnie & you to different cronies in the town, but as I think we (Peter & I) are about the oldest acquaintances you have and you might have sent us a scrape of your pen if it was only to make a boast of among our friends, but should this reach you which I hope it will, I trust that some night when your work is done you will say to yourself "should auld acquaintance be forgot." No [?], if it will and you will grasp the gray goose quill with the valiant resolve of writing a letter to your old chum John Kennedy. And now James how goes it with you and the rest of your family, how rolls the tide of life in the wilds of the far west. You will have seen more than you have eaten by this time and have seen life under many a different aspect. I daresay you many a time think that if some of your old friends were beside you and seeing what you have seen they would be a little astonished. I doubt not but you have seen a "possum up a gum tree" or a "big raccoon sitting on a rail" along with many other scenes with which we are accustomed to associate a life in the woods. So much for preliminary. My Mother, Father, & Brother are all well. Peter is still in Cowan & Strachans but I am here at 61 South Bridge doing a little in the Hat trade on my own a/c. The Club is thriving wonderfully it now numbers 25 although several have left. Fortie has gone to London. I suppose you will have heard that James Campbell has got spliced to Miss Dobson he has got a house in Nelson St but still continues true to the Thistle. And W Gilberts wife has got a son and John Gilbert who was married to Alice Cleghorn, has got a daughter all thriving so you can see things are going a little ahead. Robt Somerville & Wm Bishop are still the old hands by the by Willie has a kind of hankering after Miss Stewart in Hanover St. I dont know how it will end. I have not seen Miss McArthur this some time but she was fresh and blooming the last time I saw her. Her brother has joined the club. We had a most splendid Hubbies How jaunt this summer, two carts a fiddler & a fifer. It was a most splendid day and we enjoyed ourselves first rate many a time Johns' name was mentioned in connection with the jaunt before. Our annual supper takes place on the 21st of this month when I have no doubt but that your health as corresponding members of the club will be drunk with all the honors. Various changes in the mercantile world have taken place Graham & Weddel left the bridge and gone to the High St. Ogilvie the Tartan warehouse Corner of Hunter Square have gone to the North Bridge beside Marshall & Aitken, and Harrison & Halket are into the shop where Abernethy used to be James Grinton has got a splendid new front and it is now about one of the best shops on the bridge. You can tell Mr Lunn that old Charlie Howden was buried last week. The rest are just plodding away much the same as you left them Fred McKensie you will have heard was out in America and had some letters for you but as he did not get your length he sent them per post. he came home again and after staying here some time embarked again for the states but the vessel was driven back by stress of weather and he is staying here all winter but intends going out in the spring I suppose that you will not care much now about Church Establishment & dissenters but while writing you I may as well mention how things are getting on you will have heard all about the disruption that took place in

May last since then Free Churches (so called) have been building all over the country. Begg of Libberton has got one nearly opposite Clerk St church, Clason has got one at the corner of Buccleugh. St Guthries is building right betwixt the assembly hall and his own church in the Lothian Road in a hurry, but they are building him a new splendid one next to the riding school It is making a great stir just now but is gradually abating and I think the time is fast approaching when they shall merge into the Class of Evangelical dissenters, even as they are I cannot see much difference for Candlish preaches in Johnstons and Alexander was preaching in Candlish's last night They affect to despise the dissenters but it will not do and I think the next generation will have much difficulty in deciding between them James Simpson Esqr Advocate is delivering another series of Lectures in the Cowgate chapel at the request of about 3,000 workmen the profits to be devoted to the erection of baths for the Working Classes on an extensive scale. We have at last got Adam Black elected Lord Provost! The railway betwixt this and Glasgow is prospering during the summer we had Special Trains every week by which you could leave this in the morning, go through to Glasgow, down Clyde 40 miles, up Loch Lonbo cross the country and get a sail on Loch Lomond and home at night all for 65 shillings but I suppose that in the land of your adoption where the steamers go ahead so fast and the railways so much faster and so very cheap this would be thought very little off but in our old worn out sober working country we consider it something very wonderful. Sir W. Scotts Monument is getting on rapidly it is more than half up and I think that when finished it will not only surpass everything in the "land of brown heath and shaggy woods" but its equal will not be found on the face of the earth a fit memorial of him whose fame is universal and who wrote not for one but for all mankind We are going to have a splendid statue of the queen put up on the institution at the foot of the mound thus adding one more to the beauties of Auld Reekie. The bill for the bringing of the Glasgow Railway into the green market is to be brought into Parliament in the beginning of next year and so I hope that when you revisit auld reekie you will see the trains coming through Princes St Gardens and the Markets and Physic Gardens made into a large depot as it is now almost certain that the east coast line of railway to London will be adopted and it will meet the Glasgow line at the No[rth] Bridge the Newhaven Railway is running from Canonmills and they are working away at a tunnel from Scotland St to Somervills Butter and Cheese warehouse You may tell John that James Blackie died this summer but Johnnie is as fat & ruddy as ever Jerry Bell Johnnie Watson & the rest are all as lively as ever We received a paper from Mr Lunn last week and along with this I send a Scotsman in which I hope you will get something to pass a few leisure minutes and now James how goes it with the good lady your Mother I have always been told that America was a land of Gallantry but of any word that has come to Edinr I am not aware of having heard her name mentioned Give her all our kind remembrances and in particular remember my Mother to her who when she heard that you were gone so far into the woods said Im vexed for poor Mrs Lunn I wonder how she gets on in the middle of such a place I wadna like to be her for something [?] I daresay Mrs L will enjoy herself in the backwoods as much as anybody Our Winter has not yet commenced the weather being open & mild but we expect to catch it yet, by the time this reaches you I suppose you will be in the midst of a canadian winter which I believe is no joke and on a much larger scale than we are accustomed to here. you will have sleighing matches and skating matches not to mention shooting in all varieties including buffalo deer and Wild Bears with perhaps a rap now

and then at an Indian. How goes it with the Indian village near your location. has it been your good fortune yet to smoke the calumet or pipe of peace with the red man, and how does savage life come up to your previously formed idea, anything in the style of leather stocking or the dreadful [?] eh! I suppose not but see and do not get too thick with some of the young squaws and become the progenitor of some hopeful halfbreed not Black but Red Douglas's, but I do not think you need any advice on that score as it would take all the charms and persuasions of some young Merrimac Indian to make you cross the borders so that you will not can tell whether there is as much fun in a mackinaw blanket as in a shepherd's plaidie. How do you like your new mode of life. What do you get to eat. What kind of a church have you. Is there any trade goes on beside. What sort of encouragement would a young fellow such as myself have if he were coming out. What would he get to do Are you enrolled in the Militia, and many other questions I would ask but in the meantime I shall say no more, but I hope you will take this letter as a mark of remembrance from a sincere friend and at your first leisure write me a long answer and tell Johnnie not to be behind hand let him put a slip inside of your letter and I shall write him next I suppose his ideas of life are a good deal enlarged since he left Scotland. I can conceive that his store will be a leetle different from our Plate Glass lustre affairs but for all that a mans weel or wae as he himself thinks sae and I doubt not but you would all be comfortable if you would just think it and now in conclusion I wish you John, Mother & Father every one of you well and that you may prosper, and that I hope we shall yet meet on this transitory scene and have a glass of ale together for auld lang syne May God bless you all is the worst wish of your sincere friend ardent well-wisher and old companion do not be long in writing

John Kennedy

20 Dec^r I have just seen the Misses Gilbert and when I mentioned that I was writing to you they both requested me to send you and John their compts and their best wishes for your welfare which I have now great pleasure in doing as it will shew that tho absent you are not forgotten

JK

Mr. Lunn. Dear Dear Uncle. I take the liberty of adding a word. I received your letter of [?]. I had no intention of going to America I agree with you as to the careful consideration I ought to give to the subjects proposed. My letter was merely sent to collect practical strictures regarding your locus & the country at large which might be serviceable to others. I mentioned my Grandfathers health. he is now entirely recovered. He is leaving Quarryford & is going to Leader-foot farm. All the rest of Mrs Lun's relatives are well. a letter came from James to my Uncle John & one from yourself

« A note written at right angles to the other writing » Mr Coats compts to Mr Lunn he received his letter and will write shortly his folks are all well

JK