

17)

Tillicoultry Jan. 15th, 1855, 24 Commercial Buildings

Dear Brother,

I should have wrote to you before this time. I have not much time except in the evening and little Johnnie is always prattling about that I can scarcely get my papers kept upon the table....so instead of night I have taken day. I have availed myself of the opportunity of Handsel Monday. I daresay you will almost have forgot about it for there will not be anything of the kind with you. It is always kept up with us it is the only idle day I have in the twelve months....Dear Brother and Sister we wish you all a good new year and many happy returns to you all. We received a letter from you on the 8th of November and we were happy to hear by it that you were all well. I was quite glad that you had so many news to inform us. I see by it that Peter Cousins Statements of America has to a great extent been false but it is always the case of those who come home again. They must make some excuse for returning and the blame is very often laid upon the place instead of themselves. I have not seen any of them since we received your letter but we heard that he was going to Saline to his father. His mind cannot be much at ease when he shifts so very much about. His sister in law mentioned to us about his sisters being very disagreeable in the house. They must surely must have been something wrong amongst them.....

Dear Brother you say that you would wish very much to see us all and I have no doubt you would. I would very much wish to see you and wife and family and I must say that I feel much indebted to you for the trouble you have put yourself to in inquiring about my business and I think that the encouragement is very good if we were just across the Atlantic. It is the only thing that I am afraid for. I think Elizabeth would make a better sailor than I would do however. I have no doubt if we happen to leave the place that we are in but we will leave this country for America....

I am still liking this place very well. I have fallen in with a very quiet family but I will never be able to make much money as everything is still continuing so very dear. We had a very plentiful harvest last year they are plenty in the country the dearth of provisions is attributed to the war that is making so much commotion amongst us it is hurting trade very much. It is very low here at present there is many a family in utter want of the

necessaries of life. I am afraid this will be a poor Handsel Monday to many one

Our aunt Janet died about 3 months since she was seized something the same as my father. She was stopping at Bridge of Allan near Stirling.... I must say that I am scarcely able to inform you how our friends are as the most of them are a good distance from us. William Curror Shifted last term to some where about Kinross. I mentioned in some of the letters that I sent you that Robert was here working with our masters and he went away yesterday to see his father and mother and to have his Handsel Monday with them. John is still in Lochgelly and Helen's husband too Your acquaintance William Lindsey has bought the Coupsteps and I think stopping in it.

Dear Brother I am happy that we have now the opportunity of receiving letters from you so regular. I hope you will not be long in writing us again and send us all the news you can about you and about my business not to put yourself to much about for I have still a notion that I would like to come out some time and I believe the sooner the better. You mentioned that there is difficulties to encounter with you as well as at home that is a thing we must look for where ever we are as long as we are here below..... I am happy to say that we are all in good health at present thanks be to God for his goodness. Hoping will find you all sharing the same blessing.

Elizabeth joins me with kind love to you not forgetting the Mrs. and family. My paper will not admit of saying much more at present unless I take another. Perhaps I may take a larger sheet next.

No more at present but remains your loving Brother William Reid.

Note:

Among the rural population of Scotland, Auld Hansel Monday, is traditionally celebrated on the first Monday after January 12. This custom reflects a reluctance to switch from the Old (Julian) style calendar to the New (Gregorian) calendar. January 1 is the earliest day on which Handsel Monday can fall. An 1825 glossary marks Handsel Monday as an occasion "when it is customary to make children and servants a present". On this day, tips of small gifts were expected by servants, as well as by the

postman, the deliverers of newspapers, scavengers, and all persons who wait upon the house. In this respect it is somewhat similar to Boxing Day, which eventually supplanted it.

#17. Letters From Scotland to James Reid 1833 - 1868
From William, brother, January 15, 1855

Transcribed by Roger S. Reid Jr. and Glynis Aritake, September 2014