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W7/28

Darlington Maria Island

5th October 1846

My dear friend,

Your favor [sic] of the 25th August came duly to hand, and I have to return my best thanks for your kindness in having made the necessary arrangements about the remittance.

I was quite delighted to hear from our mutual friend Mr. Cairnduff, that you had apprized [sic] him of the rumour relative to Dr. Hampton coming out as our new Comptroller General. _ I need scarcely tell you how anxiously I look for the confirmation of this report, not merely from motives of personal advantage, but because I sincerely believe the best interests of the public service, and the reformation of the unhappy prisoners would be extensively promoted [sic] by the appointment and when I consider how strong were the Dr^s objections to the present system, I am disposed to anticipate his declining the Office unless armed with power sufficient to remodel, or at least to modify it to a considerable extent.

In this view I am strengthened by the recall of Sir E. Wilmot, which order must have been issued almost immediately after Dr. Hampton's arrival in England.

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There has been what will doubtless be deemed a searching enquiry into the working of the system. Circulars from the Lt. Gov. having been addressed to the Visiting Magistrate, the Superintendent and Religious Instructor of this Station, and to a great [sic] number of persons throughout the colony, containing a series of questions or **heads[?]** touching the Health, Industry, Moral, Religious and intellectual culture of the convicts; the extent of their daily average labour & leisure; their habits of decency, and whether they appear to be progressing towards amendment or are becoming more hardened & inveterate. _ Upon these points the opinions of those addressed are requested in order to furnish a clear and it is believed a satisfactory report.

That information of such vital importance should have been sought for in this form, I most sincerely regret, for I too well know, that many of those to whom such queries have been submitted will not risk their personal interest by replying to them unsatisfactorily.

The way, in my opinion, in which so important a subject should have been investigated would be, to have appointed a commission [sic] from home composed of persons thoroughly conversant with

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the most approved methods of convict management, and the principal features of their enquiry should have comprised the manner in which the prisoners are Classified, located and employed; the description & extent of supervision maintained over the Convicts; the means of Religious, moral and secular instruction afforded and the individual progress made in these respects; the nature & amount of crime committed; the number & description of punishments inflicted and the repetitions of such upon the same men; and lastly, I think, the proportion which the convict population tried before the Supreme Court, Q^r. Sessions, & police magistrates of the colony, bears to that of the free brought before the same tribunals.

From such data, I apprehend, a tolerably fair estimate might be formed of the system, especially when acquired by competent [sic] and disinterested individuals._ The information listed would be fact and such alone. I firmly believe is wanted by the British public.

I must now touch on a more private subject_ You will I dare say have heard rumours of rather a peculiar nature - in short of my intimacy with Miss Laing the Governess at S. Lapham's - and as you have

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hitherto invariably **evinced[?]** much Christian & friendly sympathy towards myself and those dearest to me, I will at once acquaint you of how I am situated.

You will remember that I some time ago mentioned about my dear little girl being much with M^{rs}. Lapham's family with whom she was also receiving instruction, this of course brought me into frequent conversation with Mifs [sic] L., of whom I have heard you had some acquaintance during your missionary labours, the kindness shown to my little Mary Ann won my esteem and inclined me to think seriously of offering all the recompense I could make._ The disclosure of such an intimacy may have been deemed premature on my part, but when my peculiar position is considered, I hope my friends will not believe that I have acted with hasty improvidence _ I have every reason to believe that the object of my choice is possessed of every quality essential to **___[?]** happiness, and that the attachment is sincere.

Now, my dear friend, I have opened my mind very freely to you, because I feel convinced of your good wishes and regard for my selfs [sic] as also for that of my dear Mary Ann, and I therefore ask you whether this state meets your approbation or not. In it I have studied my child's [sic] happiness as much as my own, and were I not [sic] firmly persuaded of the sincerity of Mifs [sic] L's affection for M.A. I should assuredly not have gone so far.

I am so happy in having M^r. & M^{rs}. Cairnduff

[text written at 90° against left side, over top of previous text]

near to me as we frequently meet together sometimes here and **at others[?]** at Long Point.-

I will now conclude hoping that your dear wife, family and yourself are enjoying good health and every other blessing essential to happiness in which sentiments my dear little Mary Ann most affectionately unites with me.

I remain my dear friend,

Yours sincerely

James Boyd

P.S. I anticipate having the pleasure of paying you a visit about Christmas when I hope to be able to put you in possession of some astounding facts connected with probationism.

J.B.

[text written at 90° along centre of right side]

James Boyd

5/10 Mo 1846