

On Board the Retribution Prison Hulk Sheerness

December 4, 1817.

Dear Wife,

I hope that these few lines will find you in an good state of health as can be expected at this unfortunate crisis as it leaves me at the time thanks be to God for it, and I hope and pray that he will give me fortitude to bear all my misfortunes and I hope dear wife you will take it as patient as possible for I trust we shall meet again, perhaps not in our country but in a foreign. The chaplain of the ship informs us that there are favours of this kind held out to those whose former good character and future conduct deserves approbation, and I trust that myself and my fellow sufferers will merit this favour which takes place in the course 12 months or so, at which time, if it should happen, I am persuaded you will cross the ocean and follow me. If I can attain this I shall be the happiest man in the world. You will, if you can, come at the expense of the government.

We expect to sail in the course of 15 days for Botany Bay and I hope dear wife you will delay no time in furnishing me with my clothes or a little money, my razors, scissors, a jacket knife and needles. My brother should see to Mary Huntley and Mary Knighton for a little money. I hope I shall be able to recompence them in time, for I hope to live once more, if not in my own country. You will apply to the wives of Brassington, Wightman, McKiswick, Buston and Pittison and arrange matters to send all our clothes off together. Take them to Derby as Mr. Eaton promised he would bring any thing we had to send where he brought up the other men, but if they should not come in time for our sailing away you will send them by coach as with all the others.

Apply to old Mr. Fletcher Loscar and my friends about to send my character, as I hope it will be of great service to me in another country. Give my best respects to my brother and sisters and their husbands and family. Also to all relations and friends. I would have you persevere in the work of shortening my time with Mr. Goodwin and other gentlemen. I hope if you don't follow me into a strange country you will conduct yourself in a religious manner and if fortune should not favour us to meet together in this world, we shall meet never to part again. I should like my Brother Robt. to bring up his children to a little schooling for it is a portion which no man can deprive them of. Send me a good pair of strong shoes, also at same time send my two hones for razors. I Remembered my love to you all. Farewell and the Lord be with you all

I am dear wife
your affectionate husband

Josiah Godber

Inform Brassington's wife to get his character from his old employers. There will come to Ripley Post Office a letter for John McKiswick which you will forward immediately to his wife at Heanor. Send me a little tobacco.

Mrs. Rebecca Godber
Ripley
Near Alfreton
Derbyshire