

Description

Rev. Ralph Mansfield was accepted by the Methodist Missionary Committee and sent to Sydney in 1820. This letter was sent from Ralph in Sydney, New South Wales, to his brother Archibald on 13 October 1821.

Transcription notes

- [-] is used in place of words that could not be interpreted. For multiple words [- - -]
- [?] is used after words where an interpretation has been made but is not certain
- [] – any word within square brackets has been added by the transcriber
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MS 2045 – PAPERS OF RALPH MANSFIELD – TRANSCRIPTION

LETTER 4

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Sydney, New South Wales, October 13, 1821

My dear brother Archibald,

It is with real pleasure that I avail myself of this opportunity of addressing you, from this remote part of the world. I have been, from my first embarkation, exceedingly anxious to know where and how your lot has at length fallen in this [troubled?] globe. Your vicissitudes of fortune have been numerous and trying: but by a letter from my dear mother, I am led to hope that you have eventually found a comfortable situation. I have learnt the painful [-] of the death of one of my little nephews; and trust that a visitation so afflictive to yourself and your beloved Betsy, was alleviated by consolation from above, and considered a spiritual blessing to both. This is the gracious end for which our heavenly Parent exerts his chastening hand. By this time, you have no doubt received additions to your family; and little Ralph must have grown to a fine boy. How delighted should I be to see him, and to exercise the pleasing but important duties of a god-father. May he be spared to see many happy years, and be a blessing to his parents, and an [-] to his family. When he can write, do not [-] him to forget his distant uncle and aunt in New South Wales. This is an interesting part of the world. The country and the climate

are peculiarly fine. The population is rapidly increasing, not only by the perpetual influx of unhappy convicts, but by the emigration of free settlers. The superior advantages of Australia for agricultural and commercial purposes beginning to be appreciated by the British people, there is every prospect of it becoming a great and a flourishing country. As a sphere of Missionary ascension, it presents a most hopeful aspect. Considerable good has been already accomplished, and while richer results are confidently anticipated. The[y] have several commodious chapels and one larger and elegant; and the congregations are, for the most part, numerous, respectable, and attentive. [New?] chapels are on the increase, both in number and in piety. We have Sunday schools, which are well supplied with teachers and children, and are laying the foundation of a virtuous and religious community. From the great men of the land we meet with the most liberal and friendly encouragement. In May last we commenced the publication of a monthly magazine, of which the missionaries have appointed me the Editor. The[y] designate it, "The Australian Magazine". Its sale is very good, and we hope it will be a means of intellectual, moral, and spiritual improvement. I have sent home a regular set to my mother, who will show them to you. We have formed an ancillary Missionary

Society, which has met with warmer support than the most [-] could have expected. During the first year, the contributions amounted to 200 pounds; and as we have just established a Ladies' Branch, we have no doubt that the next year will be still more productive. I am at present stationed at the metropolis of the colony, where we have two good chapels, and a handsome Mission- House.

My beloved Lydia often thinks and speaks of you and her sister Betsy. Since our arrival in the colony, her health has been often poor. In about two months after our landing, she brought into the world a lovely little girl, whom we baptized Lydia [Lane?]; but, when about seven weeks old, she was taken from us by the hand of death. This was indeed a horrific shock but that God who gives and takes away, was our "very present help". Since then, my dear Partner has suffered from a miscarriage, and still continues very delicate and poorly. She writes with me in warmest love to yourself, Betsy, our dear nephews, and (if any) nieces. Be sure to write me, very dear Archibald, at full length. Give me a particular history of your circumstances...

since I left England: for, believe me, I feel a brother's affection for you, and a brother's liveliest interest in all your affairs. I earnestly hope, you are not unmindful of your [eternal?] interests.

Compared with them, the most critical and important concerns of this life dissolve into empty air. [O?] suffer [we?] to expect, that you will seek reconciliation of your God by the blood of his precious Son! Remember me to all my old friends.

I remain, dearest Archibald, your very affectionate Brother,

R Mansfield.

[Letter addressed]:

Mr. Archibald Mansfield,

Care of Mrs. Mansfield,

Herculaneum,

Liverpool