

The Rev. Neil Maclean to his sister-in-law Mrs Alexander Maclean, widow of Alexander Maclean, Surgeon 64th Foot (1782-1818) from Manse of Tiree 16 December 1851. Beacachadh Castle Transcripts, Red Boxfile: HACM. Typescripts. Working Copies. Made 1958-1860. Maclean Letters 1805-1851.

My Dear Sister

After a long interval of silence, I wish it were in my power to communicate anything which might be gratifying to you but alas! This is not at present the case, for you are already aware of the severe and unexpected domestic calamity with which we have been lately visited. It has pleased God to call away our dear Donald, after one day's illness which no person supposed to be in any way serious till the last moment. He expired gently on the evening of the 26th ulto. like a child falling asleep, without a sigh or a struggle. It was only afterwards I understood that at night and during the forenoon he had been complaining of some unusul symptoms, such as some oppression in breathing and great coldness in his limbs, but these were not thought in the least alarming, as he had been riding about on the two previous days, and had been much exposed to the weather.

This blow has fallen heavily and somewhat suddenly on us; and tho' we are taught 'not to mourn as those who have no hope' tho' we know that it is our wisdom as well as our duty to be resigned and submissive under the rod, and to accept the evil along with the good, yet how human nature is weak, and cannot but feel many a pang under such sore trials.

His poor Mother has submitted to this bereavement with the most exemplary resignation, and acted throughout with a degree of fortitude and composure which I really could not have expected. Her own health has been exceedingly frail for some years, and her constitution much shattered; and however she may be enabled to bear up for some time it is not likely that she can long outlive so severe a shock. It is a common observation that misfortunes seldom come single; this may perhaps be only the beginning of ours tho' Heaven alone knows on whom the blow may next descend.

As to myself, tho my health is sufficiently good, I feel my spirit greatly prostrated by this stroke. I shall endeavour to bear it as becomes me. Tho' one precious link has now been broken off, there are still some remaining ties which will bind me down to the world some time longer, if such be the will of providence.

In the midst of our affliction, however, it is a source of some gratification to know the great attachment and affection felt for him by all classes of persons here, o and the feeling of deep sorrow and regret which was manifested on hearing of his untimely death. When the tidings spread, I [-----] there was scarcely a dry eye in the

whole Parish. Even the people at the Light house Establishment here, whose families he was in the habit of frequently visiting professionally, tho' in some measure strangers, were observed to shed tears in abundance over his grave. In his intercourse with the Inhabitants, he was always gentle and kindly in his demeanour towards them, and certainly very successful in his practice among them almost in every instance. All our neighbours have been unceasing in their attention, and in performing every friendly office which the occasion required.

I did not feel myself well able to go out on the day of his funeral, which took place on the 1st Instant, and thought it better for several reasons that I should not make the attempt.

We have had no public worship since. I intended to have gone out last Sabbath, but was afraid I should be unequal to the task. Every one, indeed, dissuaded me from it, none of the Parishioners, as I was told, either expecting or wishing that I would make such an exertion. In our remote Insular situation we are rather out of the reach of any aid of that kind especially at this inclement season of the year which I greatly regret on the present occasion.

We are happy to learn that you hear frequently from your Alick.....[who was serving with his regiment the 94th Foot in India].