Portobago in Marilante, 2 June 17—

Teer Lofen Kynt Fater:

Dis is te lat ye ken, dat I am in quid healt, plessed be Got for dat, houpin te here de lyk frae yu, as I am yer nane Sin. I wad a bine ill, leart gin I had na latten yu ken tis, be kaptein *Rogirs* skep dat geangs te Innernes, per cunnan I dinna ket anither apertuniti dis Towmen agen. De skep dat I kam in was a lang tym o de see cumin oure heir, but plissit pi Got for a’ting wi a’ kepit our Heels unco weel, pat Shonie *Magwilivray* dat hat ay sair heet. Dere was saxty o’s a’ kame inte te Quintry hel a lit an lim an nane o’s a’ dyit pat Shonie *Magwillivray* an an otter *Ross* lad dat kam oure we’s an mai pe dem twa wad a dyit gin tey hed bitten at hame.

Pi mi fait I kanna komplin for kumin te dis quintry, for mestir Nicols, Lort pliss hem, pat mi till a pra mestir, dey ca him Shon *Bayne* an hi lifes in Marylant in te rifer Potomak, he nifer gart mi wark ony ting pat fat I lykit mi sel: de meast o a’ my Wark is waterin a pra stennt hors, and pringin wyn an Pread ut od de Seller te mi Mestir’s Tebil.

Sin efter I kam til him I nefer wantit a Pottle of petter Ele nor is in a’ Shon Glass hous, for I ay set doun wi de pairns te dennir.

Mi Mestir seys til mi, fan I kon speek lyk de fouk hier dat I sanna pe pidden di nating pat gar his plackimors work, for de *fyt* *Fouk* dinna ise te work pat te first yeer aftir dey kum in te de Quintry. Tey speek a’ lyk de Sogers in Inerness.

Lofen Fater, fan de Sarvants hier he deen wi der Mestirs, dey grou unco rich, an its ne wonter for day mak a hantil o Tombako; and des Sivites an Apels and de Sheries an de Pires grou in de Wuds wantin Tyks apout dem. De Swynes te Tucks an Durkies geangs en de Wuds wantin Mestirs.

De Tombako grous shust lyk de Dockins en de bak o de Lairts yart an de skeps dey kum fra ilka Place an bys dem an gies a hantel o Silder an Gier for dem.

Mi nane Mestir kam til de Quintry a Sarfant an weil I wot hi’s nou wort mony a susan punt. Fait ye mey pelive mi de pirest Plantir hire lifes amost as well as de Lair o *Collottin*. Mai pi fan mi *Tim* is ut I wel kom hem an sie yu pat not for de furst nor de neest yeir til I gater somting o mi nane, for fan I ha dun wi mi Mestir, hi maun gi mi a plantashon te set mi up, its de Quistium hier in dis Quintry; an syn I houp te gar yu trink wyn insteat o Tippeni in Innerness.

I wis I hat kum our hier twa or tri yiers seener not I dit, syn I wad ha kum de seener hame, pat Got bi tanket dat I kam sa seen as I dit.

Gin yu koud sen mi owr be ony o yur *Innerness* skeps, ony ting te mi, an it was as muckle Clays as mak a Quelt it wad, mey pi, gar mi Meistir tink te mare o mi. It’s trw I ket Clays eneu fe him bat oni ting fe yu wad luck weel an pony, an ant plese Got gin I life, I sal pey yu pack agen.

Lofen Fater, de man dat vryts dis letter for me is van *Shams Macheyne*, hi lifes shust a myl fe mi, hi hes pin unko kyn te mi syn efer I kam te de Quintrie, Hi wes Porn en Petie an kam our a Sarfant fe Klesgou an hes peen hes nane Man twa yeirs, an has Sax Plackimores wurkin til hem alrety makin Tombako ilka Tay. Heil win hem, shortly an a’ te Geir dat he has wun hier an py a Lerts kip at hem. Luck dat yu duina forket te vryt til mi ay, fan yu ket ony Ocashion.

Got Almichtie pliss yu Fater an a de leve o de hous, for I hana forkoten nane o yu, nor dinna yu forket mi, for plise Got I sal kum hem wi geir eneuch te di yu a’ an mi nane Sel Guid.

I weit yu will be veri vokie, fan yu sii yur nane Sins Fesh agen, for I heive leirt a hantle hevens sin I sau yu an I am unco buick leirt.

A tis is fe yur lofen an Opetient Sin,

Tonal Mackaferson

Directed—For Shames Mackaferson neir te Lairt o *Collottin’s* hous, neir *Innerness* en de Nort o Skotlan.

(Literal translation:

Port Tobacco in Maryland

2 June 17-

Dear loving, kind father,

This is to let you know that I am in good health, pleased by God for that, hoping to hear the same from you, as I am your own son, I would have been badly taught [ie brought up] if I had not let you know this, by Captain Roger’s ship which goes to Inverness, in case I do not get another opportunity like this this twelvemonth again. The ship that I came in was a long time on the sea coming over here, but pleased be God we all kept our healths very well, except for Johnnie Macguillviray who always has a sore head. There were sixty of us all came into the country hale of lith and limb and none of us all died except for Johnnie Macguillviray and another Ross lad and maybe those two would have died if they had stayed at home.

By my faith I cannot complain for coming to this country, for Master Nicholls,m Lord please him, put me [to work] for a good master, they call him John Bayne, and he lives in Maryland by the River Potomac, he never made me do anything but what I liked to do myself, the greatest part of all my work is watering a good, proud horse, and bringing wine and bread out of the cellar to my master’s table.

Since ever I came to him I have never wanted for a bottle of bitter ale, nor is it like [?] John Glass’ house, for I always sit down with the children for dinner.

My master says to me, when I can speak like the people here that I will not be ordered to do anything except make his blackamoors work, for the white people are not supposed to work except for the first year after they come into the country. They all speak like the soldiers in Inverness.

Loving father, when the servants here have finished with their masters, they become very rich, and it’s no wonder for they make a great deal of tobacco; and these crab-abbles and apples and the cherries and the pears grow in the woods without dykes [ie walls] about them. The swines the ducks and turkies walk about in the woods withour masters.

The tobacco grows just like the dock-leaves in the back of the laird’s yard and the ships they come from every place and buy them and give a great deal of silver [ie money] and goods for them.

My own master came to the country a servant and well I know he’s now worth many a thousand pound. Faith, you may believe me, the poorest planter here lives almost as well as the laird of Culloden. Maybe when my time is out I will come home and see you but not for the first nor the next year till I gather together something of my own, for when I have finished with my master, he must give me a plantation to set me up, it’s the custom here in this country, and therefore I hope to allow you to drink wine instead of twopenny [ale] in Inverness.

I wish I had come over here two or three years sooner than I did, since I would have come the sooner home, but God be thanked that I came out as soon as I did.

If you could send me over by any of your Inverness ships, anything to me and/if it were as much clothes as would make a quilt it would, maybe, make my master think more of me. It’s true that I get enough clothes from him but anything from you would look well and bonny and if it please God if I live, I will pay you back again.

Loving father, the man who is writing this letter for me is one James Macheyne, he has been very kind to me since ever I came to this country. He was born in Petty and came over as a servant from Glasgow and he’s been his own man for two years and has six blackamoors working for him already making tobacco every day. He’ll win home [ie come home] shortly, and all the goods that he has gained for himself here, and buy a lairdship for himself at home. Look that you do not forget to write to me always, when you get any occasion.

God Almighty please you father and all the rest of the house, for I have not forgotten any of you, nor do you not forget me, for please God I will come home with enough goods to do you all and my own self good.

Ì know you will be very proud, when you see your own son’s face again, for I have learned a great deal since I saw you and I am very book-learned.

All this is from your loving and obedient son

Donald McPherson

Directed – For James McPherson near the Laird of Culloden’s house, near Inverness in the North of Scotland)