

can imagine how I am plagued with them. The house is never empty and as we are the only people here everyone coming and going stops to dine with us. Not once have we been alone at breakfast and there are never less than four or five with us for dinner. In fact I have not had time to unpack a third of our things, so you will not be surprised that you have not received the napkins I promised to send you for I do not know where they are. I am afraid that we shall lose some of our stuff. There is so much rain that the house and sheds are damp and things get mouldy.

Our Commandant<sup>66</sup> makes the service so hard that scarcely anyone can stand it. He has driven Mr. Monck,<sup>67</sup> the commissary, crazy. On the 28 of last month he went off into the woods and was not found until yesterday evening. My dear John must have had two hundred Indians out hunting for him, and after all it was a soldier who found him. The poor man is quite harmless. It is only his work that bothers him, and he tried to have things done by verbal orders so as not to conflict with the Commandant, but nothing proved satisfactory and it affected his mind.

I have had to stop writing to receive poor Mr. Monck. What I said about him being crazy is not true. He is melancholy and looks very wild and seems to be in great trouble. He says that he often saw the Indians but that he hid from them. He came to see me and I have succeeded in persuading him to eat a mouthful. He did it just to oblige me for no one else has been able to make him eat—strange, too, after having been seven days with nothing but water. He is going on with his work as usual but I hope the Colonel will send for him to go down. He is a good man. I am afraid he will never recover from this melancholy. It seems to be in the family. One of his brothers shot himself some years ago, and he evidently intended killing himself for he left a farewell letter. He had no weapons and perhaps thought he would starve to death, for when the soldier found him

66 This was Lieutenant Colonel Robert McDouall of the Eighth Regiment, commandant at Mackinac from the spring of 1814 until the evacuation the following year. Although Mrs. Askin's letter is written at St. Joseph, the garrison was almost immediately established on Drummond Island, where it remained until 1828. See *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, *passim*, especially XVI, 714.

67 G. W. Monck, assistant deputy commissary general at Mackinac from June, 1815, until the removal of the garrison to Drummond Island. See *ibid.*, XVI and XXIII, *passim*.