Shenstone, 19 February 1838.

My Dear Mother,

I certainly ought long ere now to have acknowledged the receipt of the joint= present, which arrived here, in perfect safety, yesterday fortnight; but one cause of my delay has been the wish to send you back the basket, as requested to do by Pulham; hitherto, however, nothing had occurred worth your acceptance. It appears that the basket which you sent to Gower St was not sufficiently large to contain the Stilton cheese intended for me by Pulham, and he therefore substituted another, which being I suppose an old favourite, and of very superior construction, he requested I would return; as I shall do directly the weather breaks up, and I can once more venture from home as far as Birmingham

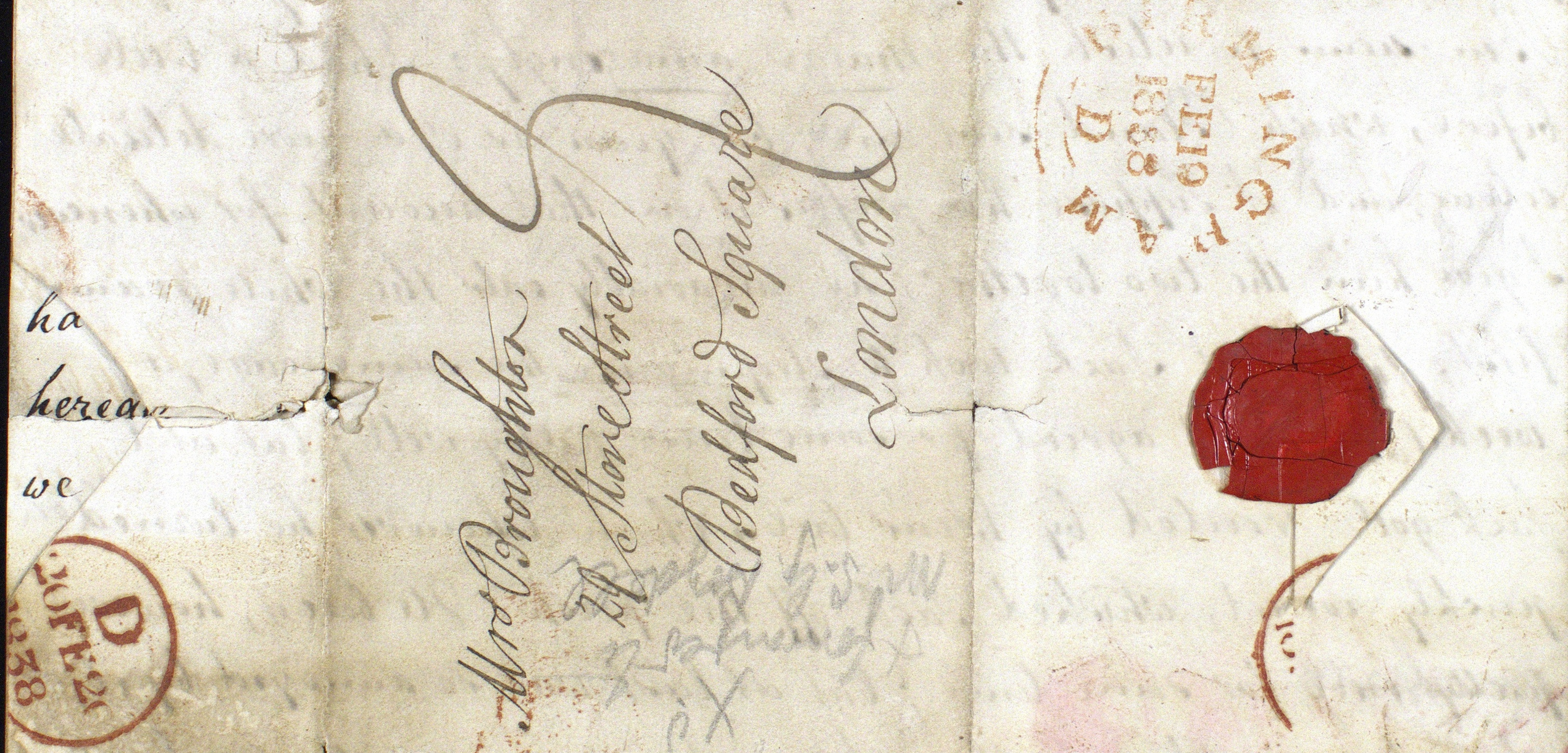
It gives me great sorrow to hear of your illness; but I trust 'tis nothing that an attention to Mr. Nichelle's dietary injunctions, and a return of milder weather

will not suffice speedily to remove. I do beg and desire that you will do as he desires in the article of beverages; & that if you are in need of any cash, you will not fail to apply to T. Francis for some, on my account. The remarkably severe weather, I doubt not, has affected your health, as it has most other peoples'. We have both of us been far from well for some time past; and even I, who never coughed before in my life, have been affected with a tightness at the chest, which has troubled me a good deal, but I suppose this is no more than I must expect as I grow older. The weather here has been dreadfully severe; but luckily coal being pretty cheap hereabouts, and we having providentially laid in a good stock, we have managed to keep ourselves tolerably warm, as long as we were in doors, and sitting over the fire; and the state of the roads has been such that we have scarcely been out of doors since the frost began. I have done little more than sit still, and read all my books over again; Your Bible I have nearly gone through from beginning to end. This morning I have been amusing myself with "Keeper's Travels in Search of his Master," which is the oldest possession I have in the book way, except one. I recollect your bringing it me one evening from London, nine and thirty years ago, and that I could not go to sleep till I had read it. The still older volume is Mrs Barbauld's Histories for Children, which you also gave me, and was the first book I ever possessed; but 'tis so long since, that I cannot remember the time when I was without it.

Your presents were all very acceptable. The Gloves fit to a hair, and are wonderfully warm. The socks also are just the right size, and I am desired by Lucy to thank you for them, and to say that she finds them extremely comfortable. Ben seems to relish the maize amazingly: I had a little before, which Bland sent me; but yours is of a more delicate colour, and I suppose he prefers it on that account, for whenever I give him the two together, he invariably eats the white grain first. He and Jack took to sleeping in the same cage, a few weeks ago, and agreed for some time pretty well; but at last Jack got affronted by Ben's tail, which whenever he turned quickly round, whisked Jack off the perch. He bore it, however, pretty well for some time; but at last was so annoyed by it, that he would not allow Ben to come upon the perch at all, but compelled him to sit at the bottom of the cage; so we were forced to separate them, apparently to Ben's sorrow, who was better tempered than Jack, and very fond of him.

Tell Pidham (if you see him) that he shall hear from me as soon as I possibly can summon up resolution to commence a long letter; & say that the Stilton cheese is superexcellent. So are your Pens, and the Running Nails prove very useful. I saw in a Newspaper something of what

you mention respecting the System of Education proposed to be adopted in Sydney; and so far as I could understand the account, it appears that William's opposition had been successful; but we shall doubtless have "a full, true, and particular account," ere long, and also, I hope, receive letters from them. — Your Herald and Morning Post came to hand. I can scarcely say, just at present,



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when I shall again be in London; but hope no very long time will elapse first. You are right as to the Sausages being too salt; the want of sweetness in the Cherries arose from the jar not having been stirred before your bottle was filled. Accept our united love, & believe me to be, my Dear Mother,

Your affectionate Son

James Broughton.