

Grand Rapids. Oct. 24, 1842

My Dear Mother,

Before this reaches you, you will have heard the melancholy tidings of the death of my beloved husband. You will readily conceive that a death so sudden and shocking has overwhelmed us in the deepest affliction; made our once cheerful and happy home desolate (sic) and cast a deep gloom over all our bright prospects. It is a blow that has stricken me to the earth. And I only wonder after passing through such a scene that my reason is left. I will not pain your affectionate heart by dwelling on my own feelings, but proceed to give you an account of my lamented husband.

His health and spirits had been unusually good for the last two months. He was troubled with rheumatics (?) in his right leg last spring and summer, but he had got entirely over it. He remarked, not many days before his death, that his health was perfectly good; that he had no pain or ache about him. Said if it continued so, he should accomplish more this winter than he had since he had been in Michigan.

The Monday previous to his death, he went with Charles and two hired men into the woods to get shingle timber. He worked all day, and when he got home he found Warner Edgerton here. The evening passed pleasantly away in making enquiries about old Bennington to friends. Next morning, he was up very early and at his work. He had engaged a man to come and help through the week. This man, whose name is Thasson (?) was to saw the bolts rive (?) Or split the shingles and Turner do nothing but shave. Those who make shingles, call it a good day, work to make a thousand and a half a day. But, he shaved four thousand a day tuesday, wednesday and thursday (not capitalized). He had made two thousand and on friday by eleven o'clock when Mr. Kasson was summoned as a witness to go to the village. He then said his man was gone. He should have a leisure afternoon. (Kasson? Thasson? Hasson?)

Mrs. Hasson came in with her two children about 2 o'clock to await the return of her husband. In the course of the afternoon, one of our old neighbors came to see us and Turner went with him all over our little farm. (He) told him of the improvements he had in contemplation. When tea was ready, they came in and sat down at the table. Turner, as ever, happy to see his table well filled and myself happy because he was.

Mr Hasson did not get back from the village till after dark and so they concluded to stay all night with us. About nine o'clock we all retired. Between one and two, Mrs. Hasson's little girl was taken sick and they got

up and came down stairs with her. This child had a very bad cough and as she had been exposed to whooping cough, we were both alarmed for fear she had it and would give it to our baby. This kept me awake and I think it did my husband, as he spoke to me several times between that and three o'clock. Our child lay between us but was restless and uneasy. He observed that, perhaps, he was too warm and moved himself a little farther off. In about ten minutes after he spoke, I was startled by his strange breathing. He breathed hard and with a great deal of difficulty.

I immediately spoke to him, but did not receive any answer. His breathing continued still more difficult. My first thought was that he was in a fit. I sprang from bed, lit a candle and returned to him as soon as possible. When the light fell on his face, death was already stamped on every feature. My cries of grief and distraction brought all in the house to the room in an instant.

I unbuttoned his collar and tried, by every means I could think of to bring him back to life. He only gasped three times and all was over...who can imagine the agony of my soul at that moment. I would not...I could not have it so. Again and again, I returned to the bed I had laid my cheek to his mouth, my hand to his heart and begged of him to speak to me once more.

My heart seemed breaking and yet I could not die. Charles and Aaron were both from home and did not witness the dreadful scene. Years on years can never efface from my mind the anguish and despair of that morning. How strange it is that poor human nature can survive so much mental suffering. Could he have spoken but one word or expressed by one sign that he knew me, it would have comforted me.

After the last sad duties were performed, and he lay in his shroud, there was no expression of pain or suffering in his countenance. His face was full and very white and wore the sweet and placid expression of a sleeping infant.

His funeral took place on Sunday (sic) at three o'clock PM. The house was full of sympathizing friends and neighbours. A minister from the Rapids preached the funeral sermon. But, I was so absorbed in affliction, I have but little recollection (sic) what was said or done. The one dreadful thought that I can see him no more is with me continually. Sleep has departed from me and my appetite is so poor that I have scarcely any nourishment for my baby. I had always had an overplus (?) And had never

fed him any at all. And now he is growing poor, this is another source of grief to me.

Turn which way I will, I am reminded of the loss I have sustained. I find he was my all, my everything. I have good children, they are kind and affectionate, but they are not him. I feel that I am alone, indeed. No language can express the feeling of loneliness and desolation that is at my heart. It is a part of myself that is gone.

We had lived apart from the world so long and had been dependent on each other for every comfort...that in truth, we had become one. In all our sickness and sorrow, he was always at my side with a word of comfort to cheer me. But who shall cheer me now? The ever kind voice is in the grave and I must bear the weary load of life alone.

Poor little George misses his father, I have no doubt, he had learnt to stretch out his little hands to him and would cling to him in preference to any one else. His father was more fond (of) him than he was of any other child of his age. He suspended a basket from the roof of the shop in front of him, when he sat at his work. He put pillows in the basket and tied a string to the room and the end of the string to his bench. Here he use(d) to swing Georgy by the hour together. The child was never happier than when in his swing basket and his father seemed equally happy while he had his sweet little Jack to look at. He has eyes and complexion like his father and is thought to have a strong resemblance to him.

I believe I did not mention that my dear husband died on the morning of the 8th of october. He was buried in a corner of our lot about twenty rods from the house. His grave is (in) plain sight of the door and windows and my eyes instinctively turn towards it every hour of the day. And, I am so unreconciled, I cannot say "thy will be done." As (I) look at that little mound of earth and think that there has buried all my hopes. Oh, how hard it is to bear. The children feel the loss of their father sensibly, but they can't feel as I do.

I have been so full of trouble that I have not even mentioned your letter and bundle that I received from R. Hinsdill. I feel grateful for them both. I have not made George's frock for him yet. I intend to have him wear flannel this winter with long sleeves. He is a stout boy and flanel (sic) will become him. I have scarcely laid any plan yet for the future, but it may be a satisfaction to you to know that we have everything enough to live on and that I shall be comfortably provided for. Our revenue was

shingles . That is cut off, but we have other ways. This does not trouble me at all. Indeed, I think of nothing but the loss of his society.

Adelia

In the margin:

Mr. Hinsdill has offered to take Hollis and send him to school this winter, but I hardly know how to spare his help or his company. But feel it is my duty to let him go. He ought to go to school.

With my husband's death, ends my hopes of coming to Bennington. He had made all the calculations for me to go and would have gone himself with me as far as Detroit and perhaps all the way. The great obstacle, want of money was removed. He could have got that without any trouble. For the last month of his life, he used pleasantly to say he was making Congress wages every day. He had just got even with the world and was making something for himself when, in an instant, he was cut off. I have no reason to think but he felt perfectly well till within of five minutes of his death.

From the first time I was startled by his breathing, till all was over, the time did not exceed five minutes. He discharged about a gill (?) from his mouth. But he never moved a (fraction) or stirred (sic) the bedclothes. He lay with his hands across his breast as he always did when he slept. His death was no doubt occasioned by the rupture of a blood vessel.

Written to Mrs. Lucinda Hubbell, Bennington, Vermont