

Grand Rapids, July 19th 1839

My Dear Mother,

What shall I say in return for your letter and bundle. Alas; I am "poor even in thanks". Tho I feel it all. Everything came safe: the Callico (sic), the cap stuff, the ribbons, the needles, thread and lucre (?); it must be a pinch in good earnest that draws the last mentioned article from me—

How come you to know so well the things we needed most? You preferred to send the right articles. I stood in need of a callico (?) dress very much, but was determined to get along without buying as long as possible.

We have to trade on orders from Mr. H. at the stores and allow almost double to what we should; if I had the money; I have never been in a dry goods store but once since I came here. I then went with an order. The prices for goods were beyond all bounds of reason: And when I remonstrated, the merchant told me, he had much rather keep them than to sell them at that price, for he never expected to get anything for them.

I was so mortified and disappointed (sic) I did not take scarcely anything. The man saw how I felt, and apologized for his plainness and told me if I had more money he would accommodate me with goods on the most reasonable terms, and I do not doubt but what he would. He went into an explanation again with an order. The piece of cotton cloth, you mention, we do not stand in need of at present. We got a piece in winter very nice wide factory cloth. It was twenty two cents a yard.

We have all been well shirted. I have made four apiece: for Turner and the boys, that are new and good. Caroline is well pleased with her dress. It is good as any callico (sic) we get here. Her father got her a dark blue callico (sic) this summer. She cut and made every bit of it herself.

I never put a hand to it; And it fits nicely; the one you sent me is exactly the thing. Just such as one I needed and ribbons are beautiful. I don't know as I shall ever were (sic) them for I don't go any where or see any body. Yet, I like to look at them. They remind me of by gone days.

I have no wish to go anywhere or see anybody here at home. 'Tis well I feel as I do, for now I have the blessings of peace: quietly and leisure.

My poor neighbours take tea with me often, but I make no difference with them in my dress or table. They and always welcome; provided they will not urge me to return the visit, and this they rarely do.

I was very pleased with the description you gave of your plight when sister Catharine arrived. It was so natural, so like home troubles. I could see you search for the old bedroom as plain as tho I had been there. I would not mind how high the old house got if I could drop in upon you and presumed Cash cared, but little for that.

I was pretty much in the same condition when Mr. Egerton got here except that my square room was in order. It was a little after noon. I just gone into my bedroom to lounge awhile on the bed.* till the men should go out from dinner. I left them round the table. I had not laid long when I heard an exclamation of surprise and pleasure from Charles and on going to the door, who should I see but Mr. Egerton with the paper bundle in his hand?

Mr. Hinsdale and Galushia were with him: Caroline seized the parcel and ran off with it. While I aided them through the pots and kettles to another room, after seeing them comfortably seated, I collected my ideas as well as I could and got dinner for them. While they were eating, I read your precious letter and looked over the contents of my windfall.

I was surprised you could put so much in so small a compass. Caroline has completely outgrown her shoes. She wears a full size larger now than she did a year ago. However, they will not come amiss. I can sell them for twelve shillings. Shoes is (sic) one of the most difficult articles to get here. They are poor and dear; there is enough of them such as they are.

Dry goods are cheaper here now than they ever have been before. But, they are very dear now. Provisions keep up the same as they were last year. Pork and hams eighteen pence a pound. We are now using bacon or smoked pork. The whole broadside of the hog bone and all is salted and smoked like ham. We could not get any other that was good.

What we have had is sweet and good. We don't use any back meat or flour, and finkin (?) that most of the people live on.

Turner has a shake of the ague every day or two. It has now fallen into his limbs. He is very lame in his hip and one knee. He limps about as bad as the Rider that used to live on the mountain. Those that have the fever and ague are apt to have bloated feet and legs. Finally, everything that's bad follows in the train of ague.

Turner has been sick more this summer than he was ever been before in his life. Put it all together. He grows poor all the time, his clothes hung on him like a bag. And yet he works nearly all the time when he does not have the ague. It is impossible for he can't stand (?) alone.

Charles has lost all his color and looks like a sick girl. Bule (?) has had it as hard as his father or Charles. They all went to see if they can live here. I don't see much object in staying any where if a body has got to be sick all the time. It would be my choice to quit the country but I shall not urge it awhile; let them have a fair trial.

If they don't die a hardening, they will do well.

And so, Olive has a son; and Laura daughter. Every letter brings news of folks from all quarters. They make the least press (?) about it here of any I ever saw. Children are born and grow up in this place, Heaven only knows how.

The latter part of last February, I was called from my bed at twelve o'clock at night, by a man that lived about a mile from us in the woods. He told me his wife was sick and I must go, so up I got and started off. We had to go through thick woods where the pine trees were so tall that they seemed to mingle their tops with the clouds.

I took hold of the man's arm to help me over the brush, stumps, and fallen trees. And as I scrambled along, I thought of father and mother, and all of my far away kindred. But I kept my thoughts to myself for the companion would not understand them.

We soon arrived at the low log cabin where the sick woman was. The man then went in another direction and got a young woman. And in an hour, the child was born. I got along famously.

Both women thought Miss Hill* knew everything and I thought best not to undeceive them. They gave me much more credit than I deserve, however, I let it all pass. In a week the woman was quite smart and able to talk about the house.

"Heaven tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." Mr. Edgerton, gives a very favorable account of your baby says it's very good natured. That's the best quality a child can have. They are double enough them. A crying child is scarcely worth saving.

The 4th of July, we got up celebration here; in the woods. We made out, men, women and children twenty-five.

Turner made a table and seats under some beautiful maples not far from the house and each one took their own provisions. I never saw people enjoy any thing as well as they did. The children were wild with joy. It was something new to them all. Such a set of little ragamuffins you never saw together. But they were happy and I was happy because the rest were. As the party was my suggestion (sic), I held myself responsible

to see that everything was on the ground that was necessary. My neighbours were liberal in the quantity they brought on, but the quality we will pass over. They were satisfied and so was I. And in the main, it was a very pleasant affair. But my good man had the ague that day and was unable to leave his bed till sundown. The boys were able to go. I keep well and so does Caroline and Hollis. If I should get sick, I don't know what would become of the rest. I take as good care of myself as I can. And hope you will the same. Take care of yourself and don't work when you are sick. You have too many years over your head to slave as you do.

Turner has not been home in three days; he is at work at his corn (?) up the river. He wants to raise corn enough to fat his own pork this year. The horses were at work drawing lumber so he engaged a man to come down the river and take him up in a canoe. The man came according to the agreement last tuesday (sic) morning and found him sick abed. The night before he had a severe turn of Cholera morbid; was sick all night, but he got up and put up his provisions and went off. He is determined to do something for himself. To depend on others for what he wants is leaning on a broken reed.

Finally, to work for other folks is a mean business anyway—and we are all heavily tired of it. I could not begin to tell you the annoyances of going to others for what we might just as well have of our own. I wish I had written my letter a little sooner...That you could have answered it by Mr. Edgerton. I don't know as I have anything more to say than I say before: If you could send it; we shall buy land with it. If not, Somebody must buy it for us. Turner will use the money that comes from Watson to build a house if his health should be better. He will be able to do a good deal on the house himself. The boys want stay here and get land of their own. This is written so bad, I am ashamed of it, but I can't help it.

Let me hear from you as often as you can...

Yours, very affectionately,

Adelia

In the margin

I don't know as Turner will have time to write. In (? If) he should not, I will take this time to thank him for his exertions in our behalf and hope he will be rewarded.

*Adelia Hill, herself.

