

Well Rutland, Vt., March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1855.

Ever dear cousin Mary - With emotions of deep sorrow I take up my pen to respond to your very welcome letter dated Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>, 1854. I little thought when I opened that letter that I should so soon have to announce to you sad tidings - I little thought how soon with me the strongest ties of life would be severed.

Perhaps you had not heard of Mother's ill health, but since Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>, 1850, she had been suffering from an affection of the throat and lungs. The first six months after she was attacked she was confined to her bed nearly all the time. After that, she recovered very slowly until she was able to sew and do some light work about the house, and continued thus to do nearly the whole time until the middle of last Sept. when she was attacked with a lymphatic affection of her arm, which became very much swollen and quite painful. After two weeks confinement she partially recovered, but was never as well as she had been, and soon we discovered that she was gradually declining, but we felt no immediate alarm about her until Sunday, Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> when she was attacked with a lameness and swelling of her right foot and limb. As she had had similar affections frequently before, we hoped that it might not prove to be anything more serious than she had before experienced. But as it appeared no better on Friday, following, we called in our family physician and he said that it was a dropsical affection, and different from the lameness which she had before suffered from. On Saturday she appeared to be more comfortable through the day, and just before dark I received and read to her your last letter. At eight o'clock in the evening she commenced coughing, and raising in considerable quantities, - and her coughing continued

with hardly any intermission until daylight next morning, when she appeared completely exhausted and sinking very fast. She did not revive after that time, but continued to sink rapidly, until Tuesday, about five minutes to twelve o'clock at noon, <sup>when</sup> her spirit took its flight.

She appeared to be very sensible of her situation, and talked with us very calmly about dying, and in a manner very comforting to us.

We feel our loss to be an irreparable one - The hands that have ministered to my wants since life began, are folded now forever.

Physicians called her disease bronchitis at first - it appeared to be almost entirely in her throat, - but she had a cough from the beginning, and it has been very distressing, a good deal of the time, and she has raised a great quantity of very bad looking matter. Since her death the Doctor called her disease tubercular consumption.

Louisa has been confined to her bed since the 25<sup>th</sup> of Dec., with a neuralgic affection of the back. She suffered extremely during the first three or four weeks of her illness. She was unable, a few days ago, to rise in bed without assistance, but we think her to be slowly recovering. She has three children - her youngest, a little girl of five years. They have lived the last three years in Pittsford, where they enjoy many privileges and comforts which they could not have while in Hubbardston.

Your friend Lorette Mead, and Family, are in usual health. They reside where they did when I last wrote you. She has two children - the youngest, a little son, I believe, about a year and a half old. Josephine Boardman was married in Oct. 1850, to Mr. Joel Baker, of Lebanon, N. H. - a brother of Mrs. Aldace Walker. She has two children - her oldest a little girl of three and a half years - her youngest a son but a few months old. Maria L. Proctor was married in Oct., 1852, to Mr. F. S. King, who resides near her father.

Louisa Smith was married in Oct., 1850 to S. F. Holbrook, and resides in Alstead, N. H.. She has a little son about a year old. Many other changes have occurred in the circle of your acquaintance which I would like to mention, but it tires me to write, and I must, therefore, be brief. You can hardly imagine how much our town has changed since you was last here. The population has, probably, doubled. Buildings of all kinds have multiplied, and business increased to a very great extent, - exceeding that of any town in the State. The congregational society here have erected a splendid church edifice, which will be dedicated about the first of May next. It is of brick and covered with slate, 84 feet long & 64 wide, - containing, 104 pews, and capable of comfortably seating about 600 persons. The expense will probably be about \$13,000. The walls inside are frescoed, and it is said to be the best church edifice in N. H.. It stands opposite the old church, and a little North of the old academy building.

I can give you but little information concerning Castleton friends - Mr Caswell was here two days ago and said that they were all much as usual. Your father had just recovered from an ill turn and was then comfortable - Uncle Guernsey's health is very feeble - we may expect to hear of his death at any time.

I have always felt, Mary, since you left, that you might entertain some not very kind feelings towards me - I hope that I am mistaken however, & if words of mine have ever caused you one painful feeling, I humbly ask your forgiveness. I have always wanted to see you and explain to you some things, <sup>that</sup> would be too tediously long to write. Hoping that you will ever cherish kindly feelings towards me, and that you will as often as possible write to me - I will, after writing a word about the weather, draw this to a close. We had three weeks of good sleighing, in Dec., but none of consequence since. We have had several days of extreme cold weather - the thermometer here on the hill, standing 24 degrees below zero. Hoping you will write me again ere long, I will now close. Ever your affectionate cousin,  
Edward Harrison Pearson.