English Prairie 10th Oct 1844

My Dear Mother

I think you will be glad to find that I am able to date this letter at the place I set out for. Thro' the goodness of God I have reached here at last in perfect safety, without any accident, or unusually unpleasant occurance, and upon the whole I have had a very pleasant voyage. The weather has been very favourable through the whole route. I have met with as kind treatment as I expected, and I have no doubt but my health has been improved. I do not know that I was ever better than I am at the present time. I reached this settlement last night about nine O clock and met with a Kind feception. Peter went from home yesterday but is expected to return this evening and I have reason to believe that he will be glad to see me and assist me all he can. I sent you a letter from New York which I hope you would receive in due time. I remained there rather longer than I intended, but I found that I was only one hours sail from where John Woodward lives, so I thought I would pay him a visit, and I did so and remained there three days. I found him in good health, working hard, and probably better off than he would have been had he remained in England. He rents a small farm for which I think he pays 2 Dollars an acre. He has a few cattle, hogs and sheep and two horses &c. With the latter he works about amongst his neighbours and I should think makes pretty well out. His wife was very Kind to me, she is older than he is. They have no family. I might have enjoyed my stay in New York had I had a friend there to go about with me, but as I had not, and being obliged to wander about by myself, I was very glad when I had to leave it. I was part of the time I remained there at a Boarding House, the other time and part of the at a Mr Simpson's whose wife is a native of West Burton. He Kindly took care of my luggage and allowed me to sleep in his house. Mrs Simpson was in the Country, or I should probably have found a temporary home. He would have shown me round the city but business

prevented him. He is a bricklayer &c and employs several hands. At his house I saw a young man from Thoralby of the name of Heseltine, a Nephew of Mr Heseltine's of Askrigg, and another of the name of Wray from [Mss. illegible] New York is a large and flourishing City. Its site is very level, there being but little rising ground in it, most of the streets are an immense length running East and West and North & South for miles; in many of them rows of trees have been planted which shade the foot path in hot weather and in general have an agreeable effect. Most of the houses are built of brick. Immense quantities of goods are exposed for sale, also ready made clothes,& shoes &c. Indeed almost everything that a person can want either for comfort or ornament is there to be met with. And this remark applies to all the American Cities I have yet seen. Tho' there is no uniform price for Articles they may be bought at the same rate or nearly so through the whole route I have come, with the addition of carriage. Most goods are dearer here than in England and some cheaper. But I must give you a chapter on the subject at some other time. I left N Y on Monday evening the 23rd of September to go up the Hudson. It was quite dusk when we started, just about Sunset but the night was fine, clear and moonlight but cold. The scenery on the banks of the River in many places is quite of a romantick kind being rocky, steep, and covered with timber. The stream is broad and deep, and gives you a good idea of an American River. We reached Albany a distance of 145 miles about noon of the following day. The boat is not one of the fastest that ply between the two places or we should have been in by break of day. On arriving, I went to look out for a boat proceeding up the Erie Canal I soon found one and took a passage. In the Evening we started. The next morning I found myself in the beautiful valley of the Mohawk, and very near the River . The canal ascends this vale for a distance of more than one

hundred miles with the river frequently by its side and mostly in view. The scenery is rich and varied being formed of water cultivated ground, and hills covered with trees, displaying a foliage of various hues. There were also to be seen neat cottages, pleasant farm houses and flourishing towns and cities. Many parts of it strongly reminded me of Wensleydale from Middle ham bridge to Estholme bridge. Perhaps this part of America will appear more interesting to some of you, probably Elizabeth if I say that Margaret Davidson resided in it for some time. The whole distance I travelled along the canal was between three and four hundred miles, leaving at Buffalo. I quite enjoyed this part of the journey, the weather being fine, and the Boat going so slow that I could walk as fast along the tow path. And this I frequently did. There are houses, towns or cities along nearly the whole line. The traffick upon it is immense: boats proceeding east were met every two or three minutes, and one morning I counted nearly thirty before breakfast. I intended when I began to count to continue for the whole day, but I gave up in despair about 9 0 clock. We past a vast number of orchards, most of the trees were richly laden with fruit - ripe and delicious. Much of it would probably be left to rot upon the ground. The best land is at some distance from the canal - as a flat and consequently to some extent swampy part of the country was chosen but even this part of America is no disgrace to it, nor would it disgrace any country. And I frequently thought that it would not <u>blush</u> were it placed beside the fairest portions of England, beautiful and rich as that country is. It is true some parts of it are what some persons take the whole of this continent to be - <u>swamp</u>,<u>forest</u>, <u>or</u> <u>stumps.</u> But I think I dare predict that their reign ~~is near~~ is near its close, as they have no charms in the estimation of the industrious farmer.

[—— I left the canal at Lockport thirty one miles from Buffalo, (but

sent my luggage forward in the boat, as I had entered at Albany to go there) and went by railway about twenty miles to Niagara to see the Falls. There was nothing particular to see in going along: this part of the country appears to have been recently entered upon there being much timbered land, and ~~te~~ to the right there was the most extensive forest I have yet seen, being bounded only by the horizon. I took it from its situation to be a part of Canada. I left Lockport about noon on Tuesday the first of October and reached Niagara in two hours. The first sight I had of the far famed falls was from the railway carriage, at a distance of perhaps two miles. I had not a view of the face of the falls, but merely a Kind of side glance. But even this imperfect and first sight prepossessed me in its favour. Just below us at a great depth the sullen river moved along ~~ju~~ as if it desired to have another [illegible] Mss. tumble over the rocks it had just left or rather perhaps I should have said appearing as if it wished to return and chastise the King of cataracts for the little ceremony he had used, and for the want of sympathy. The lofty banks of the river were rich in rocks and timber. We reached the village of Niagara where there are four or five large and respectable Hotels, and went immediately to the falls. I must tell you that a young man was with us who had come up in the same boat, a native of the State of Ohio, who had been to the falls 3 or 4 months before but had not seen enough of them. You had better reach out the "Youth's Instructor" which has in it an engraving of the "Falls". Look to the ~~right~~ left hand. Just at the verge of the water there, upon the top, within an inch or two of the precipice I stood and looked around, above, and below. I heard the deafening roar of the water, and saw the boiling foam below. This was the first part I visited. I then went down a winding staircase to the bottom between the two falls. I may here remark that the space is much greater between the falls than the engraving shows. When

on the bottom I collected several nice pebbles and should I ever visit England I can treat my Friends by presenting t[hem] with one each. You will see in the engraving the point of an island w[ith] overhanging shrubs: I stood there close to the water and cut a spray of cedar that hung over the edge and was wet with the spray from below, and while there I was myself sprinkled with it. There is a wooden bridge across the first stream and by this means I could approach the edge of the great cataract. Near there a circular stone tower has been erected from the top of which there is a rich treat. Both falls are seen from this point the one on the right the other on the left, and the River below white as milk before you. And when you turn round to look on the river above the sight is almost equally grand. The best description I can give you of this view is by saying that the Ure just above Aysgarth bridge resembles [it] only not on so great or grand a scale. And these Rapids as they are called extend above for a considerable distance. There are several small islands just above the falls and one large one upon which very fine timber is grown. There are also two or three dwellings and a very nice paper mill. I was rather surprised to find Houses just above the falls; but I found that if a person had all the property between the two parts of the stream(and it divides but a short distance above, but the width is great) he would be a wealthy man. The Rocks forming the falls are not in a line directly across, but are quite in a slanting direction, and front towards the Canada side, from which side alone a full view of the falls is to be obtained. The day was very fine, and being in the afternoon the rays of the sun fell directly upon the fall, and two or three bright and beautiful rainbows were formed some directly along the bottom and I observed one spanning the height in the centre of the immense colume of water as it descended. The engraving gives but a

faint idea of the magnitude and grandeur of this justly celebrated place. And no pen is capable of describing it. The immense body of water, the height and extent of the falls, the rich and wild scenery around, the roar of the water, and the dense and immense columes of smoke rushing as from a mighty furnace below, conspire to form a picture too great and too grand to be portrayed. I believe some persons are disappointed when they first behold this place. The fault is in themselves. They should not have formed so extravagant notions respecting it. Those who go there should go to learn. And I think if they do so they will not regret going. Perhaps the best thing connected with the Falls is that the more and oftener they are seen the more is the beholder astonished and the better is he satisfied. I left Niagara the next morning at six o clock by Railway for Buffalo which place I reached in two hours. A gentleman in the carriage informed me that during the last summer not less than twenty thousand persons have been to see the falls from the American side. The first thing I attended to at Buffalo after partaking of a little breakfast was to look for a boat to take me along the Lakes. I found one which was to sail the following afternoon. I engaged a birth and went on board. Two young men from Gurnsey who came along the canal with me were going the same way to land at the same place. Buffalo is a large and flourishing place. Here I first saw, since my arrival in this country, four Indian women - the original inhabitants. They looked as though the whole of their property was on their backs and probably this was the case. They were well but cumberously clothed. Two of them I observed had men's hats on, with broad girdles such as livery servants wear. On Thursday the 3rd at 4 o clock P M we left Buffalo, in a strong, large and splendid Steamer, and went thro' the Lakes Erie, St Clair Huron and Michigan and reached Southport on Tuesday night the 8th Inst without any accident. This route is the cheapest and at present the best, tho' it is about 500 miles round as we proceed

round as we had to proceed up Huron lake and down Michigan, as you will perceive if you can get to look at a map of North America. At Mackinac between Huron and Michigan there had been a short time before I was there four thousand Indians, Men, Women and Children to receive pay from the United States Government for some of their lands. They receive pay in goods for such a number of years. The indians were quite in their element and made speeches expressive of their pleasure in having the white man for their friend. They are a very indolent, and when not ill used very harmless race of people. I would quite as soon sleep in the wigwam of a Red man as in the House of a white. But I shall probably not even see one as they are about as seldom in the neighbourhood as they are in England. I left Southport the following day and reached Peter's dwelling about 9 o clock in the evening. The distance is about 25 miles. The land for the first half of the way is chiefly prairie and has a rich park like appearance. The rest has a good deal of timber upon it tho' it is by no means close and would be easily cleared. The timber along the whole way and all about here is oak. I paid from Lancaster to Liverpool 20/ Liverpool to N York 3.10.0 N Y to Albany by Steam Boat 3/ two for myself and one for my bed. From Albany to Buffalo along the Erie Canal between 3 and 4 hundred miles 2/2 dollars for myself and nearly 3 for my luggage. From Buffalo to Southport about 1000 miles for myself 7 dollars and one for my luggage. And then I had to purchase provisions from N York, but I had them very cheap, as I got them at the Stores as I came along. If I had boarded with the boats I should have been a great deal out. But I saw all along the necessity of being economical.

[— Perhaps any opinions expressed by me now respecting this country would be considered premature, I may however say that I have not yet been disappointed. I have found it to be much as I expected to find it. Of course Land that has remained for ages without being cultivated

must have a wild appearance. But the hand of industry soon transforms it. It looks as though it would say "come settle upon me and cultivate me and I will reward thee" If I could procure about here a few acres of Land I should not fear to start labour upon it with my own hands, I am satisfied that I could subdue it. But about here it has been nearly all taken up, and within the last two or three years. There is plenty to be had at second hand, but at a higher price. However I am in no hurry. I intend to look about, and if suitable land cannot be had in one place it can in another. I would like to purchase 40 acres and get a sort of home for you . I shall act with prudence and care. Now I want you to write to me immediately and tell me if I should wish you to come if you will do so. If I think we can do well here I will after I am sufficiently acquainted with the country, desire you to come, but if I do not see a good prospect I will not so wish you. And what I want is for you to have your minds made up before I write again either to come or stay. You may depend upon it I shall not lead you astray, if I can possibly help it. It is quite impossible in a letter to tell you everything you would like to know, instead therefore of information you will sometimes have to rely upon what I may think will be the best. For myself I have never once regretted that I left home and friends tho' in doing so I felt as Keenly as a person can feel. The views I had respecting America when I left have been confirmed. I thought and I still think that there is a better prospect here than in England for those who have their living to work for. And I do think that if we were all here we should not be sorry for it. Peter has received me very Kindly, and made me welcome to his house. He is very much like my Father both in appear nce and manner and I am almost ready to fancy that I am now with him. Could he have been here instead of me I am sure he would have been delighted. Peter

is going to Chicago, a distance of fifty miles, and I am going with him. We start tomorrow (this is Monday the 14th) I shall post this letter there. Peters' live in a log house. But I can assure you I eat as heartily and relish my food as well, and Keep as sound and find it to be as refreshing as if I were in a palace. Thanks be to God.

I hope my next will abound more in particulars. Please to take to Mrs Brougham three vols of "Prideax connection". You will find them in the Book case. I am very sorry I did not return them before I left home but I had quite forgot. Remember me Kindly to her. I am obliged to her for the loan of them. Give my Love to all my relations and friends as if I mentioned them by name. My Grandfathers and Grandmother and all the rest. My Uncle and Aunt Barritt &c And tell me when you write how they all are. Ann,Dorothy,and Elizabeth had better learn to spin yarn, and it would be a great advantage if they could cut out Coats vests and pantaloons, not to work for other people (as I do not yet know if it is of advantage to do so) but for ourselves. Many Women in this country card and spin and weave all the clothing the house requires and they also cut and make it up. Tell Mr & Mrs Walker I expect to write again before they will start and I hope to be able to give them information I cannot at present. Arthur Thompson would do as well in almost any part of this country. I cannot say yet how [it] would answer for Matthew and Edward but I have little doubt but they would find America to answer better for them than Askrigg. I shall however bear them in mind. And I have not forgot Eden, but she will wait patiently a short time longer. In the Newspapers I saw at N York and as I came along there were many advertisements for Milliners and Dressmakers &c.

Peters' are taking up their Potatoes, I have been helpingthem. I am very glad to be able to inform you that they have in this part an

excellant kind, as I was given to understand the potatoes in America were not good. I do not know that I ever saw finer or eat better, and they are a good crop. Those I brought with me will be useful as they have no early sort. Tell my Uncle and Aunt Thompson I am obliged to them for the kind present I received at their House. I hope they are both better than when I left. Peter has a few Tobacco plants growing near his cabin. I have often thought I would like to treat my Grandmother with a few leaves, but this pleasure is denied me. Remember me to Mr Brimstead and tell him if all is well I shall send him a letter as soon as I have anything worth communicating. I must get acquainted with Methodism as it is found in this country. Tell Thomas Lawson of W Burton and my friend George Metcalfe of Marcett that I shall not forget them. Tell George I hope our [i]ntercourse will be renewed in Heaven if we should not meet again on Earth. He must remember me to his Father and Mother Sister & Brother and also to Mrs Mason.

Yesterday the Watchman containing the Stations of the Preachers reached me (Salem?) it had laid at Solon, two miles from here, about a week. You may judge how much I value anything that comes from Askrigg when I tell you that I intend to preserve the cover that was round it. I think James Robinson has directed it. And one of my Sister has put upon it my own name. Remember me to James and tell him [I] have the seeds in very nice order. Nothing has happened to a single parcel. They will be very valuable. This being [a] new settlement the people are quite behind with gardens and orchards.

I have just read over my feeble effort to describe the falls of Niagara. You must pardon my folly for making the attempt. This task is infinitely beyond my powers. And I am ashamed of what I have written.

I have this morning been talking to a person of the name of Holderness who is well acquainted with old Mr Holton of Pattrick Brampton.

You can tell Sam or Betty. You will see from the statement I have given that coming out here has cost me about 10.0.0. If 3 or 4 were coming together I think the expence would not be quite so much. But any one may come out for that sum, and be quite comfortable all the way. Those who come here should come to "Live not to like". And if they can live - and of this I think there is little doubt - let the liking follow if it can. Mrs Sill returns you her grateful thanks for the Shawl you sent for her. They are all well pleased with the spice, tray [?] my Aunt gave me and brought it this distance "safe and sound". I have found here the communion of saints and I experience that, that God who rides upon the stormy winds and calms the raging seas is my God. My own helplessness I feel, but I look to Him for strength and guidance. And in a strange land he will not forsake me. The future is not known by me, but I hope I shall have the pillar of Cloud and the pillar of Fire to guide me and protect me by night and by day. Give my love to the "Local Brethren". Tell Mr Barrett that the second book I looked into at this place was Mr Tafts lives of Holy Women. Light clothing is required here for summer and warm for winter. You will please to prepare me a pair of warm gloves or mitts. Peter has 5 children 3 boys and 2 girls. Tell J Whitely they wish to kindly remembered to him and Ann. They are obliged for the letter he sent. With love to all I am very affectionately yours

M. Dinsdale

Peter and his family desire their love to you. We have talked about Askrigg and its inhabitants day by day since I came.

I could almost wish that my sheet were five times as large as it is. But as my space is limited I must conclude. I should very much like to have a plan every half year if one could be printed on a double sheet of paper so that I might receive a letter at the same time. But you

must not enclose one in a letter as if there is anything besides a single sheet the charge is very high. I think frequently of you all, and pray often that we may be the Children of God here that we may all meet and live together in Heaven. Whatever besides we attend to let us be sure to "seek first the Kingdom of God".