Pedlars Creek Friday Feby 14th 1845

My Dear Mother & Brothers & Sisters

As you have all been so kind as [to] write to me I thus formally address my letter to you all. Your letter had given me very great satisfaction and afforded me much real pleasure. It is ye first I have received from you and from Europe, it breathes a kind and affectionate spirit; and then it is not only from you all but from each. In my first letters from home this is what I like and what has filled my heart with comfort. It appears to me that you have not one of you forgotten me, and I hope you never will. You can stretch out the hand of affection even across the wide Atlantic. I thank the Lord that I have still relatives in the world who think about me and pray for me. Perhaps if you had known how precious every word is that comes from home in this "far west" you would have sent me a few more, but I thank you for what has come. Your letter reached me on Saturday the first of Feby about 7 O clock in the evening. It had reached Solon on the 24th Jany; it had thus been full two months in coming. It had been sent by way of London the next you send put on it "via Liverpool" and contrive to have it there a day or two before the Mail Steamers leave for the United States which I think will be about the 1st and 15th of each month. But you may see by an Advertisement in some Lpool papers. I can my dear Mother quite enter into your feelings when you talk about being deprived of those who are near and dear to us, for I have in the same short space of time you mention, lost (in a certain sense) both Father and Mother, Brothers and Sisters, Relatives and Friends, Home and Country. What a loss! and yet I am still alive. Bless the Lord O my Soul! I am glad to find that you betook yourself to God the only sufficient helper of the helpless. I have often thought about you and knew that if you did not do this that you would break down. And then my heart has been uplifted to Him that you might be enabled to cast upon him all your

care, and receive His Grace to support and comfort you. I have often said"my earthly father has been taken away but thou O Lord hast promised to be to me a Father" and as such I have tenaciously clung to him and claimed his help and blessing. Now He has promised to be the Widows Husband and you must contrive to apply to him for help. Let us have God for our friend and then all will be well whether we may be in England or America. We must apply to God in Christ to make us ready for another world, and then, but only then, we are fit to live in this. We cannot promise ourselves to meet again on Earth but O Let us meet in Heaven. The day after your letter came to hand I began to be unwell and for a few days after I was quite confined to my room. My sickness has been a severe attack of Dysentery to which some persons in this country are rather subject. And new comers are especially subject to it. But I am happy to say that I am fast recovering being almost well again. I am inclined to think that my sudden incarceration (you will soon understand what I mean) has to some extent been the cause. Till then I had had active out of door exercise almost every day, and I think I never enjoyed better health. I have left English Prairie, and I suppose I am now upwards of a hundred miles further west. My luggage is still there. I was quite comfortable at Peter's and they would have been very glad for me to continue with them. But I knew that it would not do for me always to remain there, and as a Young Man who lived in that Circuit (the McHenry Circuit) was about to take a journey west I thought I would accompany him especially as that was the direction I wanted to take. As I told you, in my last I was about to go to Chicago, a distance of 50 or 60 miles. I went with Peter and there posted the letter. It is a place of immense trade situated on the margin of Lake Michigan, receives the produce of an extraordinary extent of country (shipping it East) and supplying the inhabitants of that portion of

country with articles of merchandise. We went very pleasantly in a light waggon drawn by two horses, and were three days in making the journey there and back. The weather was cold. As I have left my journal at the Prairie I am not very well off for dates, but it would be the second or third Sunday after my arrival that I first Preached in Peter's house, it was quite filled with respectable and intelligent people, since then I have preached almost every Sabbath and several times during the week. in different places.
There is here a large field to labour in and but (in comparison with England) few labourers. Everywhere there is an anxiety to hear the Gospel preached. My prayer is that the great head of the Church may bless my feeble efforts. I received at Solon the last Watchman, which left Askrigg the 22nd of September, as I was going to McHenry, a distance of 10 miles to attend the Quarterly meeting which was held on a Saturday (as all the Quarterly Conferences, as they call them, in this country are held on that day) the Presiding Elder had just commenced to preach when I arrived.After Sermon the secular affairs of the Circuit were attended to. This is but a new circuit having only been formed last Conference consequently the official members are but few. After this meeting of office bearers we went to dinner about 4 O clock In the evening a prayer meeting was held when the Elder gave a very sweet exhortation. On Sunday morning a Love Feast was held which commenced about ½ past 8 O clock. After that at 11 the Elder preached and then the Sacrament of the Lords Supper was administered. In the Evening I preached. You will thus see that the Quarterly meetings in this country are important seasons. If possible all the Members of the Church belonging the Circuit are present to attend the Religious Services. All the meetings I have mentioned were held in the Court House, where the judicial business of the county was transacted. The County Seat has now been

removed to a more central place. Bro Vallett the preacher in charge of the M^c^Henry Circuit is a very nice man and truly pious, I was at his house at different times and was very kindly treated, indeed I met with several friends, and had many pressing invitations to pay visits. But I could only make a conditional promise, and tell them if I had an opportunity I would be glad to do so. I think if you could sometimes have seen me when at Peters you would have thought me In a fair way for becoming an American farmer. Sometimes you might have beheld me amongst the timber dealing destructive blows upon a sturdy oak. One while you might have seen me with an immense whip a little ahead of a yoke of oxen hitched to an American Waggon, then again I was perhaps running at the rate of six miles an hour having a half bushel of grain in my hand and perhaps thirty hogs at my heels, scattering the grain to give them a little employment. But I must hasten on. On Saturday the 21st Decr 1844 I left Peters to come out here. That is I left for the West. I may literally say thet "I went out not knowing whither I went" Heb 11.8. But I cast myself upon Abrahams God. I had some intentions of making towards Galena; and I had two objects in view one to see the Country, the other to try to meet with some kind of employment. I find that I have not space to give to you the [ms. illegible] my journey; nor yet to detail the (to me) marked interposition of [Divine?] Providence by whose goodness I have no doubt I am in my present situation. But I must try to say a little about two days on which I was out. Christmas day and New Years day. I have told you that I left English Prairie on Saturday the 21st Decr. I walked that day 10 miles to Queen Ann Prairie where my companion resided, I remained all night at Bro' Valletts and Preached twice next day. On Monday morg just as the sun was rising we started in earnest. On Wednesday the 25th (Xmas day) we set off before day light from my friend's brother's House and went about two miles to

take breakfast with one of his Sisters. After we had walked seven of Eight miles further we saw a little to the right of us journey east along one of their trails a party of Indians men women and children, they had a few of their Poneys along with them, and had they been in England they would have looked like a set of respectable Gypsies. They were going to Milwaukee, and the whole tribe to which they belonged, with their Chief, was in the neighbourhood. We dined at a place called Rockford, and had Roast Turkey and minced Pie, quite Christmas fare. When at this place I could not help reflecting upon the great and sudden change that has taken place in this part within a very few years. Only a short time ago the Prairie bloomed in vain; all might as well have been an unproductive waste, but now flourishing Cities are to be seen as if the produce of a single [illegible] and comfortable Farms are ~~to be seen~~ visible in every direction. We went about 12 miles beyond Rockford and towards dark we turned away from the road to a Farm House and asked to remain the night we were kindly told that we could be accomodated. Two Ladies were papering a Room! We were entertained with everything we could have wished for and had nothing to pay. Our host had been about seven years at that place and came from the Province of New Brunswick. But I must be short. On the first of Jany I was alone and walked about twenty miles, it was a beautiful day, about noon I was only about four miles from Galena and ten from the Mississippi. Altogether I walked after I left Peters near Two Hundred miles more than one half of it alone, and I am now in a Store. I am about 40 miles to the south [north] east of Galena and six north west of Mineral Point, where I lived three weeks. I came to this place Thursday before your letter reached me. This is what may be called a country place tho' rather populous. Nearly all the inhabitants are miners. I am quite comfortable and shall probably continue here for some time. The gentlemans name I am with is Wasley, he is a member of the Church,

and a very nice man. He is married and has one Child an infant. Coming here as I did an entire stranger and at a dead time for business my wonder is that I have met with a situation at all. But Mr W has not yet even seen my testimonials. He could have done without anyone till the Spring. But he made me an offer & I accepted it. I am boarded in the House and till the 1st of April I have ten dollars a month. From the 1st of April I expect I shall have fifteen. This is quite as much as I could expect. And all being well It may be the prelude of something better. Thus I hope you may make yourselves quite easy on my account. I judged as my Brother has done that for the present it would be better to take a situation. But I have not said farewell to farming. Mr. Wasley was the first person I applied to for a situation. I could not have become connected with the Stores about English Prairie as they sell Spirits, Rum &c! I might perhaps in a pecuniary sense have done better in a town but I prefer the Country. From the tenor of your letter I think it will be as well as Edward says to dismiss for the present the subject of your coming out to this Country. If I think it advisable that Ann should come I will send for her. I may however just observe that my opinion is that if you were all out you would do better than you can in England. I would rather be in this country with one hundred pounds than in England (tho' I love it) with five hundred. I believe that I could soon become more comfortable here. But it is well not to be in a hurry. I must tell John that this is an excellent country for stock, and they can be kept very cheap. Sheep do well and are very profitable. Tho' I did not mention Barzillac in my last I have not forgot him. I have made many enquiries relative to his case, and I have no doubt but he would do well should he come to the United States. The great difficulty is to know where to go and what to do. And it is quite impossible for me to act for another and to say that a person should come here or

go there. Everyone who comes to this Country will have to look about for himself, and judge for himself. If he should make up his mind to come I would recommend him to make direct for the Western Country, and come to me. I will do the best I can for him. But let him bring Jane and the children along. I suppose he would not come this year, or at all events not till I can have a letter from you, and you receive another from me. The Autumn is quite a pleasant time to take the journey but a person should not start later than the beginning of August. Let me have sufficient notice if he should come and tell me if I am to provide a house &c Dwellings are not so plentiful here as a person would immagine and some of them are only moderate. I think Barzillac's object should be to secure a Farm as soon as he can meet with one to suit his mind. But at first it would perhaps be as well to turn himself to something else. I do not doubt but he would find employment at his business. I have been told there is a good opening for a Butcher at Mineral Point six miles from here. But no one can tell till a trial has been made. However if he was out here he could look about and act as he might judge best. If a person is industrious he will be sure to get along. Barzillac would find little difficulty in maintaining himself and family even at first. Many persons about here do well at Mining. Almost every day I hear of some one having struck a rich bed of mineral(Lead ore) But there is some risk in this calling as a man may labour for months and even years and find very little tho' this is not usual; the ore being so very plentiful. And no one can tell where to find it so that a novice has quite as good a chance as the most experienced in mining operations. Every one has to make trial by sinking a hole &c.

Some of the remarks I have just made will apply to Johnson Walker, and others who may think of coming. As to Mr Walker I think if he should emigrate he will not have occasion to regret the step (provided he lands

safe, and that will have to be risked) I think he will be able to make a comfortable home. He would find sufficient employment as a Saddler or he might with advantage turn himself to farming. If he intends to continue at his business I think he would have to go to some town, as in this Country articles of Saddlery are purchased ready made, and chiefly in the cities and large places. The farmers here generally take a load of produce and carry back the articles they want.But they can sell their grain &c for money and then they can purchase with money what they want. If they chuse they can of course barter. I give preference to the part of the country I am now in, tho' for farming I believe I am a little too far west and I think if Mr Walker should come out here he would be satisfied. That is I think it will be best for him to land on the shores of Lake Michigan, at Milwauke or Southport. For farming operations I believe the Southern part of the Territory of Wisconsin (where I now am) and the Northern part of the State of Illinois offer inducements that cannot be surpassed in any part of North America. I suppose the best situations are all taken up but Land can be bought cheap at second hand. And a man (or woman either) would be fastidious indeed who could not be pleased.

[——Where I am there is an immense quantity of unenclosed land and that is free for anyone, so that a person can keep almost any quantity of stock and only have the trouble to look after them sometimes. In summer there is nothing to pay, and good hay for winter can be had for the labour of cutting the grass and leading it home to stack. The season is so favourable that hay making is no trouble, and this state of things will continue for many years. Pork is selling for 3 to 5 cents a lb Beef about the same. Flour about 2 cents a lb. Oates 25 to 31 cents a bushel. Butter 18 cents a lb. Tea Coffee Sugar Rice &c taking the average are about half the price they are in England. Stone masons have

two Dollars a day, Carpenters about a dollar and three quarters, as they canework all the year. All Mechanics have about 2 dollars a day. Servant girls receive 2 dollars a week,about twenty pounds a year. About English Prairie labour is not so high, for instance a Joiner there receives a dollar a day (and I think his board) but I give you the rate of wages &c as paid here. There is no paper money current about here all is specie. And there is no copper in circulation, I do not know what it betokems but such is the fact. I think there is a very fair description of this district of country in the twelvth volume of "Chambers Journal" entitled "Eight months in Illinois". I did think the picture rather too flatering, but I begin to fancy that it may be near the truth. But it applies more specially to the South of Illinois in some particulars. The Winters about here being in general very cold, tho' mostly dry and frosty with a few inches of snow on the ground which continues for three or four or even five months. This winter there has been but little snow, the land barely covered and the weather has been variable, but very little rain. The winters here are very pleasant when the show lays on the ground to the depth of say six inches, there is then a great deal of sleighing which is a very pleasant mode of going about.

[— It may be as well to say a little about the voyage for the benefit of any who may think of emigrating. A good and new Ship should be secured . Let the emigrant apply to respectable parties in Liverpool. Great caution is necessary in selection of a vessel, and the cheapest is not always the most desirable. I would recommend everyone to keep out of the Steerage. That is the place for the Irish and for filth. Employ the Ships Cook, he will be worth all he may charge; all has to be prepared for him, and he bake's roast's or boil's as the case may be. The Emigrant should find all his own provisions, takin nothing but water from the Ship. Have a good stock of potatoes a ham or two Coffee

according to family, some fresh meat to last say a week, some fresh baked bread to serve a few days, but take no bread from home except it be a little oat bread, Some Flour, sea biscuits, Eggs butter preserves pickles, Tea Coffee Sug a little oat meal and whatever would be likely to "take at sea". A little of the best Brandy in case of sickness. A person should have provisions for six weeks, it would be better to have a little over rather than run short. Rice Currants and Raisins &c are good, a person at sea wants humoring some, and should not begrudge the outlay of a few shillings in making preparations; but there is a difference between having necessary articles and being extravagant. Articles of crockery had better be bought, well packed, and other portable articles that are necessary in housekeeping. There are two extremes to be avoided in bringing luggage to this country; do not be afraid to bring what is really useful, that might fetch but little at a sale and be of value here, but on the other hand persons should remember that they are not removing to the next town, and that in coming up the country here they may have to pay smartly for their "whistle". And besides much luggage reguires much attention. It is well to have a tolerable stock of clothing. Wellington Boots are much used here and may be had very cheap. If you wish to know any more you must be so good as send questions, and I will try to answer them.

There is living at this place a young man of the name of Coates I think Kearton [?] Coates from Gunnerside he is a cousin to Mrs George Metcalfe of Askrigg. He came into the Store yesterday morning to enquire where I came from, as he had heard of me. Several of the inhabitants are English from Cornwall.

There are about 60 members here connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church. A new place of worship was erected last Summer and I expect it

will be opened this Spring. None but the Methodists Preach at this place. I do not hear that Coopers in America make so many articles for sale as they do in England. Pails are made by machinery and are sold very cheap, and I think the farmers make their own cheese moulds. But Flour barrels are made by [hand?] and are very much used. Tailors are much in demand and get along first rate. I think no one who will be stady and industrious need fear to come, there is plenty of employment and sufficient remuneration. I often think about William Atkinson and [Skelgill?] Tell him I did not see his freind as I was not very near to where he lives. You can tell Mr. Milner of Richmond that I was only a few hours at Cleveland, as I was anxious to get to the end of my [journey] I did not even call upon Mr[?] thwaite, as it was not known how long the Steamer would remain, [and I did] not like to risk being left behind.

I would like you sometime to send me a pair of mittens and a pair of gloves both warm and good. They will do in a year or so. If you should not have another opportunity perhaps Barzillac may come and he can bring them. But send them by some one who can deliver them to me. Do not let either of them be <u>all blue</u> grey. Say the gloves white and the mittens <u>spotted</u> or striped. Think on <u>warm</u>. I think about writing soon to Mr Lawson of West Burton, he will perhaps have been expecting a letter from [me] for some time. But I could not send desirable information to him before. That is I could not give him the particulars I can now.

I find that I am almost at the end of my <u>room</u> but not of my <u>tale</u>. I would like to say something <u>to</u> and <u>about</u> many of my relatives and friends, but I cannot do as I would. I often think of them, and desire my love to them all. Names I cannot mention on account of the number. You must begin with my Grandfathers and Grandmother to go to all my acquaintance. I purpose writing in a few months to my Uncle Barritt. Next time you

send to Hullet Hall tell them. I do hope if my life and health are continued that I shall see you all in this World once more. In a few years if you should not come to the United States I shall probably pay you a visit. The Lord grant it may be the case.

I shall be very glad to receive Edward's Letter of particulars. He must fill it well as I love long Letters. You must pardon all inaccuracies as I have had to write as I could. You know what Shopkeeping is.

I am with great affection your would be, dutiful Son and Brother

Matthew Dinsdale.

My address

M Dinsdale

Pedlars Creek

Wisconsin Territory

North America.

Not United States