

Graham Letters

Burnt Hills 19 May 1855

Dear Brother I now give you an answer to your letter which I recived on the 13th of May which was a very welcome one for I had looked for one ever since Christmas, and expected one every day.

For the letter which I recived from you the last September told me not to write again till I recived another from you. For Dear Brother I should to have writen to you three months ago to inform you of my sisters death and the Wife of Thomas Millburn. For it makes me very sorrey to have to write such sorrowful news as I will this time have to write to you.

For that Great God that made all things did not make mens life to be long in this World for we must all humbely submit ourselves to his Allwise Judgement and Provedance. Who is our Duty to allways be ready to meet him at His Will.

For after given birth to her tenth Child which is a fine litel girl and is in very good hielth and all of them is in very good hielth at rpesant and is dowing very well but it is the greatest misfortune that ever came to Thomas Millburn abnd the greatest loss that ever came to his Familey.

Tow of the Children you know died long before you left home and Eight is livn yet. Whe gave birth to the Child on the 9th of January and she got very good maens untill the 23th. We all thought she was getin the best means she has don(e) for a long time But she has been subject to swollen lets when baring child and her leg never got beter this time as it ought to have fon(e) and the Black Erysipelus took place and the Doctor never could stop it progress which soon ended in Mortefication and death.

She died on the 30 of January after eight day secever sickness. Or ells(else) you might have seen both Thomas Millburn me and our Famielys and perhaps sum more of your Briothers in America this summer but Thomas thinks he will have to stay a bit lobnger now till his Famiely get a bit older before he can thak such a step.

And my Brother William has been very poorley this Winter he never got strangth enough nor clear of pains in his back as he ought to have don which has ended in an Abcess that is a great rot on the small of his back. It begoun to rise about the last of December which soom lade him of work and he has work no more since for it keep grawing gradually larger till it got Almost as big as a mans Head and then the doctor tought it time to lancet it and on the day a quart full was taken from it and more or less has been taken from it ever since but it runs very little now and is nearly mended but I think that if it had all been kept it would have fild four quarts.

But he is a bit better now and I hope before I have to write again he will be mended for the Doctor says it was fine Heilty matter and he is not dangerous. But you may depend upont he is a very thein man, but he has Always been abel to walk about he

has never been bedfast. Well Dear Brother I was up at my Mothers this week when her see your leteer and she says she woyuld like to see you again and she sends her greatest wishes and respects to you.

And your Daughter Jane Anne says she would like to see her Father but she says she would not come to America to see him, you may come to see her She is very well in heilth and as for all the rest of the Famiely is in very good heilth ----Well Brother you are wanted to know haw Christopher geten along with farming. Well I think he is dowing very well with farming. He has a good stock of sheep he has more now than when you left home. I think he will have between 50 and 60 sheep and he has a good horse and he only has one Cow now, he has had to sell one cow this spring for want of hay but he is going to bay another in her place.

He has a stirck and a calf And he has a good crop of lambs and he has the land in very good trim. In fact he is doing very well with Farming. Well Brother a man in this Country has to be very skillful about Farming for you have nearly duble as much rent to pay every year as you can make of them. And you may depend upont that we have very hard times.

Stock is as high as it was in the last letter I sent you and flour has rised to 3s per stone, mutton is 7d per lb Beef about the same. Potates is 8d per stone. Bacon is about 10d per lb and in fact it is the hardest times that I ever so (saw) I n my life time. But thair was the best pays in this Country the last year that has been for a long time which was a great Blessen to all the Country.

Brother John's letter dated 19 May 1855

The letters were written by hard working miners, who left school aged twelve at the latest. It is not surprising that their spelling and grammar is probably worse than yours!

They wrote as they spoke, in the local dialect, so we have attempted 'translations' to make the meaning clearer. Dear Brother, I should have written to you three months ago to tell you that our sister, Thomas Milburn's wife, has died. It was a sad loss, but if that is God's will, we must accept it.

She died after the birth of her tenth child, a fine little girl, born on January 9th. Our sister had swollen legs, and after she had the baby her legs turned black and she was very ill with blood poisoning. The doctor could do nothing and she suffered a lot until she died on January 30th. Thomas had planned to take his wife and family to America but now he thinks he will have to wait till the children are older.

Our brother William has been very poorly. He has an abscess on his back as big as a man's head. The doctor cut it open and nearly two pints of pus came out. He is nearly better now, but William is a very thin man. I saw our mother last week. She is well but wishes she could see you. Christopher is getting on well with farming. He

has 50 or 60 sheep, a good horse and one cow. He has had to sell a cow because he didn't have enough hay to feed her in winter. It is not easy to make a living at farming because the rent is very high.

Food is for us very expensive. Flour is 3 shillings a stone, meat is 7 pence a pound, bacon is 10 pence a pound and potatoes are eight pence a stone. Pay is good at the moment and we are all very thankful for that.