

Susan Apthorp Hall

(1 Feb 1790 – 22 May 1829)

The National Intelligencer, May 28, 1829

On Sunday evening last were respectfully deposited in the Eastern Burying Ground of this City the earthly remains of Mrs. Susan Apthorp Hall, wife of David A. Hall, and only daughter of Chas. Bullfinch, Esq. The calmness of the hour, the beauty of the scene, and the sympathy of surrounding friends, were not inappropriate to this solemn service, nor to the purity of her whose obsequies they attended. Long since had she expressed a wish that, at such an hour, in that place, when nature smiled, and by the radiance of a setting sun, her body, when life had fled, should be committed to its parent earth. In the Christian virtues of her life, and the just hopes which they authorize, her friends have a source of rich consolation in her death.

The subject of this notice was exemplary in all the relations of life. As a daughter, she was affectionate and studious of her parents' happiness; as a sister, the kind friend and advisor; in the married relation, she was the attached and devoted wife; in her religion, zealous and sincere, liberal and enlightened; pleasing and ready to be pleased in the social circle in which she moved, and ever active in her benevolence to the poor. She bore the protracted sufferings of her decline with patience and composure, and was habitually and constantly prepared for the summons of the Angel of Death. Confident in the promises of the Gospel, she anticipated, after the struggles of this life, the joys of a happy immortality. She was taken from this world on the morning of the 22nd instant, after a composed and pleasant night -- the first which for weeks she had passed -- but her hour had arrived, and her pure spirit left its frail tenement without a struggle or a groan,

The orient blush'd, the morning brightly gleam'd,
And beauty lay o'er earth, and sea, and sky,
When she, long wasted by disease, awoke
From her last sleep on earth, and pois'd her wings
For heaven,
A smile was playing on her pallid cheek,
Like sunbeams gliding o'er a wreath of snow;
It was the last, fond, lingering smile, of deep
And strong affection; for she loved, and was beloved,
Of many. The cold dews of death now settled fast
Upon her brow, "I die, my God!" she said,
And clos'd her eyes, and took her flight to Heaven.

Ellen Susan Bulfinch. Family Letters, 1890

The health of their daughter, Susan Hall, had been always delicate. She was fond of the mild climate of Washington, and had been the better for her life there, but as the spring of 1829 came on she failed rapidly, and died before the end of May. Her parents met the bereavement with that religious trust and elevation of character which distinguished them, but her mother wrote, "This event makes a chasm in our circle which we shall perceive while we remain here. We do not yet know what effect it will have on our future determinations. I feel as if nothing here can reconcile me to remain long separated from New England ties," and all realized that one of the strongest reasons for a continued residence in Washington had been removed. The way for a return seemed opening also in another direction.