CANADIAN LIFE AS I FOUND IT . .

Four Years' Homesteading in the North-West Territories

By

HOMESTEADER

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Preface

THESE experiences of Canadian life have been lived through by settlers in the North-West Territories, during the years quoted, and are meant, not to deter others from making a trial of the kind of life herein painted, but to point out to them more truly than has I believe hitherto been done, what that life really is, what each one must be prepared to do, and to suffer, if they wish to succeed.

I have written few trivial details of daily life; every one can fill these in according to individual means, and aptitude. I have kept more to the broad lines, that will give a good idea of what is the truth about homesteading in Canada.

This country has a great future before it most certainly, but only those who are healthy and strong, both mentally and physically, ought to be allowed to come out and help people it.

The wild free life of the North-West, untrammelled by social fads, has its attractions, but to be able to really enjoy it, or I should be better within the truth if I write, to endure it, one must have plenty of grit, and some education leading up to it, otherwise dire discouragement and failure, may be the result.

HOMESTEADER.

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CHAPTER I

Why we chose Canada

MY career was to have been that of a sailor, but after a short experience of sea life in some of its roughest phases, I was nearly poisoned through the carelessness of a cook. As a sequel my health broke down for some years, and I was obliged to give up a profession I dearly loved.

I subsequently turned my attention to farming, doctors all insisting on my leading an outdoor life, and later on I married.

Farming on a small scale, whether at home or abroad (I have tried both), does not bring in an adequate return for the outlay of strength and money, so hearing of fortunes to be easily made in Canada, I determined to emigrate.

I began by sending for all the pamphlets published by the Emigration Society in London. From these I gathered, that any young fellow willing to work, and having a small capital, say £200 on arrival clear, held the elements of future success, and quite sufficient to start on a government grant of 160 acres. I therefore got a draft for £200 on a Winnipeg bank, and we left Liverpool early in May, 1904, on one of the Cana-

dian Pacific Company's steamers; but as our baby boy was only sixteen months old, and my wife had not been able to persuade a favourite servant to accompany us, we indulged in the luxury of a private cabin. This was not perhaps the proper beginning to an emigrant's life; however, it did not attack our capital, and we have some very pleasant recollections of our outward journey, for from captain down to cabin boys, every one was most kind and obliging.

We landed at Montreal on May 16, remained a day there to get our luggage together, and then began our journey West, Saskatoon in Saskatchewan, from advice received before leaving England, being our destination.

I had been told to pay extra on the cars for seats in a tourist sleeper, and paid 41 dollars for this accommodation; but as at Montreal station there were no vacant seats, we were promised that we should get some at the next station: however, we never did, and we had either to go on in the ordinary colonist car, or to be left behind.

There was such a crowd, a perfect scrimmage between people of all nations. Fortunately we had plenty of rugs and cushions, and my wife made as comfortable a bed as possible for baby, and then we rolled ourselves in rugs, and tried to sleep on the bare wooden boards, but they were hard! We neither of us want to travel in these again; and, in fact, on arrival at Winnipeg, we were so done up, that we wished that we had never heard of Canada.

I left my wife sitting on the luggage outside Winnipeg

station, whilst I tried to find a cab, and some one to help load it up; but although there were, perhaps, a hundred loafers standing round, not one came forward to help.

Finally a gentlemanly looking man in a tweed suit came up and asked us if he could do anything for us. Soon after his arriving a cabman appeared, an Icelander, very obliging, and even amusing had we not been too homesick to be amused.

I found out afterwards that our tweed-suit man was an Emigration agent.

We made friends in the train with a man who turned out to be also a C.P.R. agent. He was most kind, and travelled with us from Winnipeg, got us into a Pullman car with splendid sleeping accommodation, dining car, etc.

We were a day and a night getting to Regina. There we had to stop on account of the floods, and the bridge being broken down, there was only one train every three days as far as New Tanner, and from there we had to walk a mile to take the ferry across the river.

It took us another day's journey to reach Saskatoon, but we paid the difference once more, and got into a first-class carriage, which we probably should not have done, had we not had our little one to consider. He bore the journey splendidly, and arrived in much better condition than we did, for luckily we had a small spirit lamp on which we could heat his food; he had been brought up entirely on Mellin's, and this and the condensed milk we took with us, kept him in perfect health all through.

Our agent friend had telegraphed for rooms to the hotel at Regina, or I do not think we should have got any, there was such a rush to this part of Canada.

We stayed two days at the hotel at Saskatoon, but as it was expensive, for the further west you go the dearer everything is, we got into a one-roomed shanty or shack, as they are called out here.

CHAPTER II

Saskatoon in 1904

SASKATOON is a rising town; there were only 700 inhabitants in 1902, and now there are some 2,000.

The houses are all wooden with the exception of one built in stone and two or three in brick, the so-called streets are only tracks across the prairie, not a tree or flower to be seen, except wild ones down by the river.

This is a bright go-ahead little place, but no one could call it pretty; I call it downright ugly, but far preferable to Regina.

Our Saskatoon shanty or shack was 14 × 16 feet, 7 feet high on one side and 9 feet on the other. At first it seemed impossible to breathe in so small a space, but we got used to it by dint of opening wide both window and door, and my wife, who thought it so small at first, one day scrubbed it over, and said that she had found it quite big!

I bought a team of three oxen, as being easier to manage the first year than horses, as I had neither stabling nor fodder for the latter, whereas the oxen, once their work is over and their harness off, are turned out on to the prairie to take care of themselves, and

are herded up when wanted the next morning. They are desperately slow, obstinate brutes, and I shall be glad when I can get rid of them and buy a team of horses, with which one can do double the work in the day.

I paid 300 dollars for my three oxen, a wagon and harness complete, and I am going to try and pick up a pony, a buck-board or rig as these carts are called, and a good cow to give baby milk.

I have bought a gun, for which I gave 30 dollars, also a stove and pots and pans—even these are very different from those used at home.

Having bought the necessary timber for building our prairie shack, I started off with another man, with my oxen and wagon, to locate our holding of 160 acres.

We had to go out over 45 miles, as all the land nearer in was taken up. The place is swarming with land agents, who buy up all the land nearer the towns, and sell it at from eight to ten dollars an acre.

The district we were advised to go to was just 10 miles over the border of Assinaboia. My sailor's knowledge came in very useful to me on the prairie, for although I had only a compass to go by, I never lost my way once.

We were two days getting out, and when the first night we got to a sort of farm, had it been the finest hotel, we could not have been more grateful for the shelter it afforded.

We were eleven men lying on the floor of the one room the farmer possessed, and you cannot think how

comfortably one sleeps, rolled up in a rug, with a saddle for one's pillow, when you are used to it, only one has to get used to it.

I left the man who had gone out with me on the homestead under a tent, and returned to Saskatoon for another load of timber, and paid a man 20 dollars to cart part of it out, and help with the building of the shack.

When this was ready I made another trip to bring out my wife and child and the luggage.

I had intended taking them out with me, but after passing several nights under canvas, one of these in a regular gale, I decided to leave them in Saskatoon till I had a good shelter for them. In the meanwhile I stumbled on a treasure of an Indian pony and bought a rig; but, by jove! you have to pay for things out here. As for the books I had read about Canada, they are most misleading; all that I have hitherto found correct, is that you can get good land for next to nothing, but that is all.

Then come inevitable expenses—the timber for building, animals, wagons, cart, agricultural instruments and so on, cost of living, which is quite double out west to what it is at home.

My land looks very good; it is black on the top with a clay subsoil, flat with no scrub to clear, a large pond or slough on it, the home of duck and wild fowl, and useful for the cattle.

The crops I passed on my way up seemed to be coming on well, but there is great waste of land, and every thing so untidily done. Of course coming out at the

end of May I shall get no crops this year, but I intend to break up as much land as possible, ready for the spring. The journey from Saskatoon to the shack was a bad experience for my wife; the trail is very bumpy, as it is a perfect network of gopher holes, and a rig is hard driving.

The first day was scorching hot, and we were glad when evening came to pitch our tent, although it is a weird feeling to see nothing around one but an immense expanse of prairie, and to hear no sound but the call of the prairie chicken or wild duck, and the tinkle of the ox bells.

The second day a fearful gale was blowing, and it was bitterly cold, such are the sudden changes of temperature one has to put up with, and I was very thankful to get my dear ones under shelter, in our first prairie homestead.

But I must remark here that the first year on a claim is no place for a woman, especially for one who had been delicately nurtured at home; it is too rough, too lonely, the work too hard, for it is impossible to get servants even if one had room to house them; they can command high wages in the towns—female servants I allude to, and then I am told do very little work.

The wages for men have been much exaggerated, for although in summer and at harvest time they can get good pay, there is the long winter when work is very scarce, and nothing hardly can be done on the farms, except to look after the live stock, and try to keep warm, which is often the hardest task of all.

CHAPTER III

Something about Plagues and Difficulties

THE mosquitoes are a terrible scourge, the place at times is black with them, and they raise such bumps.

Then during the hot weather it is too far to get fresh meat from town, and we have to eat salt pork, and to depend on the gun for a further supply for our larder. It is wonderful how clever one gets when the delicacy of one's dinner depends on one's cleverness.

The prairie chicken is very good eating; it is somewhat larger than a partridge, but very similar in taste; then the ducks are small and very hard to get, but if you want snipe you have only to fire off your gun, and if any are about they come and look at you, evidently unaccustomed to man's presence as yet.

The rest of the time we have to exist on tinned foods, and although these do not taste of the tin, they do not taste of much else.

Our nearest neighbour is 2½ miles away, too far for much intercourse, but as we can see his shack from our door, it makes a speck of interest on the vast expanse of land around us.

There are some hills about 8 miles away, where there are antelopes and wolves. We have already seen several of these latter animals prowling in the distance, but they do not come within rifle shot as yet.

I have dug a well and got several inches of water at 9 feet below the surface. Very good water it seems, but I shall of course have to go much deeper before I can get a permanent supply.

Water is a very important item here, for tea and coffee are the standard beverages. Beer is out of the question, it is too expensive; I am getting used to doing without it, and I am none the worse for not having it; in fact we are all quite well, only my wife finds the work a fearful pull upon her, although she never complains.

CHAPTER IV

June 17, 1904

I DON'T know whether I told you what our stock consists of. Well, it is composed of one Indian pony, three oxen, a cow and calf, and I am very anxious to get a few hens, for eggs are luxuries unknown out here, though in Saskatoon they only cost 18 cents a dozen, about the only thing really cheap. A neighbour has promised to bring some out with him if possible, but two days' journey in a wagon will not improve them I am afraid.

We saw the northern lights to-night for the first time; they were very clear, and formed a semicircle of yellow light in the sky. The breaking plough is busily at work, there are nearly 6 acres ploughed. Often we are up at 4 a.m. as it is cooler then to work, and we take a rest later on.

Two young fellows are going to town to-morrow, so we shall profit to send letters. They arrived last night, belated travellers, looking for land; we lent them our tent and rugs, and gave them breakfast and dinner. Occasional passing travellers are very welcome, although it gives one a little extra work. We always do the best we can for them, feeling that

our own dear ones may be some day in the same predicament.

We manage to get our mails pretty regularly, as our neighbours, although distant, always bring ours, as we bring theirs, if we happen to be in Saskatoon.

Letters are indeed welcome out here, so please write as often as possible. People tell us that after a little while we shan't care to go home, but we neither of us believe that; for my part this wild cold country has nothing of home about it, and our only idea at present is how soon we can make a small pile, and make tracks for home again. Perhaps the life later on may grow upon us, time will show.

Our dear boy is very well; he grows so tall and looks so bonnie; he is so fond of our Indian pony, and is absolutely fearless. Our cow is a very good one, the calf is a heifer, so as food costs nothing we are going to bring it up.

Thanks for the draft, it arrived quite safely. Now as I only had the shell of the other side of the shack up, which made it very cold at night, I shall go in and get a load of timber to finish it, and to get my mower. It is time now to cut my hay, before other people's cattle take a fancy to it.

This other half of the shack will cost me over 100 dollars, as I have three boardings to put instead of two, through the first wood having shrunk. One must buy one's experience here as well as elsewhere, and I shall now take care to get well-seasoned wood.

I went to a sale yesterday and got a good heating stove for 9 dollars; it is only a year old, and has

not been much used—they cost new 30 dollars, so I hope I have secured a bargain.

I am longing to get a team of horses, oxen are so slow; it took me two days to get in to Saskatoon, whereas with horses I could do the journey in a day. I left home Friday morning, drove 25 miles, and took nine hours to do that part of the trip, camped and started at six the next morning, and got into Saskatoon at 3 p.m.

I hope to haul out to-morrow, and get home about Tuesday night, as I shall take longer going home, having to take 3,000 lb. weight on my wagon, and the trail is not good. Captain R—— is with me with his team I am glad to say, and there is another young fellow going out, so we shall make up an outfit.

I expect very heavy travelling as it has been raining hard, but it was really wanted, although the crops are looking well.

The country all round us is filling up; it is wonderful to see the people pouring in, but goodness me it is rough out here. Here I am in the best boarding-house in Saskatoon, and there are two in a bed and four in a room, and that not by any means a big one, and we have to wait our turn to dress.

Vegetables are the great want with us, we have only potatoes, for we have not had time to make a garden yet, the prairie has to be ploughed, and left for six weeks so that the sods can rot, or you must cart them off, which takes too much time. We have been hard at work since we came out here, and we have still lots to do.

The house now is as ready as we can make it, but a sod stable must be built as the nights are getting cold.

My well had given good water till now, but I am sorry to say it is getting low, and I shall have to go deeper, worse luck.

CHAPTER V

July 31, 1904

I GOT your two letters almost at the same time, for a neighbour kept one a whole week in his pocket, as no one was coming down our way; such is prairie life, one can only say better late than never, I have been very busy making the shack more secure, for we have had a very bad gale blowing all the week. I am thankful to say we have weathered it, but there seems no end to the work. We have been out here two months, and been hard at it all the time, and we have very little to show for it.

I had a very bad week of it, for my wife has been completely laid up; she is better again, but hard rough work is telling upon her. We help her all we can, but outdoor work has to be done, and takes up most of our time; it may be only the heat, but if she has any more such bouts, I should like to get her home again; it would be far better for me to rough it alone, than for her to break down in health. I cannot think how any one could have told us, that the life was not a rough one on all sides. Of course down East it is more civilized, but here in the wilds we have to think hard sometimes to know even which day of

the week it is. Why, yesterday we were in doubt whether it was really Sunday; and as for church, we have only been able to go to one once since we left home.

Game is getting scarce up here, but I was lucky yesterday, and shot four snipe, and only fired five shots; I am getting quite clever, and it helps the larder's resources greatly.

CHAPTER VI

August 4, 1904

MY wife's indisposition passed off I am thankful to say; she is quite well again, and laughs at the idea of leaving me alone here.

What you have written me about a regular allowance has made me feel ten years younger, for I was dreading this winter out on the prairie; now I have decided to take a small house in town, spend the winter there, and try and get something to do, not to remain idle.

I have found a suitable house, or rather a two-roomed cottage. I shall put my cattle on tack with a herd, and go out again on my claim in the spring, and if I can make a little money I shall invest it in town lots; that is the way the most profit is made out here. I am only sorry I did not see this sooner.

We have been very busy getting in hay. I hope to get in about 20 tons. I am sick of sitting on the mower (did I tell you that it cost 58 dollars?), especially behind oxen; they don't go fast enough for a mower, and they won't turn short; in fact they want half Canada to turn in. One cannot do any decent work with them. When you have done a

day's work you are ashamed to look at it; at least I am. Horses are more expensive to keep I know; but you can do double the work in half the time, and do not risk losing your temper.

I hope that you do not think that we are throwing away money going into town this winter; but if you only could see the kind of place we are in you would understand our wish to get out of it during the severe weather, for I do not know a bit what the winters here are like, nor what we might have to put up with; and I dreaded keeping my wife and baby out in our shack, for if any one was ill one could not get a doctor, and if we ran short of stores, it would probably be impossible to get to town to procure a fresh supply.

After a winter spent in town we shall know better what to expect. You ask what would be the cost of putting up another room to the shack. I could do it for 80 dollars I think. But I want, if I can manage it next year, to put up another shack, and use the present one as a kitchen, and have an extra room to put up any stray people who may come along. What I am thinking of would cost me about 150 dollars, and I could get a neighbour who understands that sort of thing to come and help me put it up. We are very cramped in the shack we have. I have not got my stable finished yet; the frame is nearly up, but I have not enough wood. I am going to the bush tomorrow for poles, and sods. We plough and cart the sods up. It takes a long time to do; but it makes a good stable when it's done. The roof is covered with sods too; but I do not think that I shall have

time to do that this year, so I shall cover it with hay. You must laugh when you read the descriptions of our buildings out here, but it's really wonderful what you can put up with when you are obliged to. You have to do everything for yourself, even to being your own butcher. I have not come to that yet, as I have nothing to kill, and I do not look forward to the time when the necessity will arise. What one reads of the delights of Canadian life does not certainly apply to this part of it, but I dare say it will get better by and by, and we shall laugh over all the rough times we are going through.

I am told that Winnipeg some fifteen years back consisted of scattered wooden shacks, where to-day there has arisen a magnificent city with all modern improvements. I only hope that we shall not have to wait so long before a change round here comes.

The Grand Trunk Railway surveyors have been about here, and it is expected that in a few years the railway will reach here. This would be of inestimable advantage in giving value to the land, besides opening out this part of the country for commerce, by making easier the transport of all crops grown.

CHAPTER VII

September 4, 1904

I HAVE been making a quick trip in and out of town, for I had a neighbour's daughter to drive out, and I did not want to be obliged to stop the night on the road. It was rather rough on my pony, but she managed it well; she is really invaluable, and I was very lucky in getting her. It's wonderful what these ponies can do; they trot capitally in harness almost any distance, only when you are on their back you can't get a trot out of them, it's all canter and gallop. The heat has been terrific. It is getting a little cooler at night. We are short of water; our well gave out, and as I had no time to dig it deeper, I dug a small water hole, but it is not pleasant drinking, tadpoles and mosquitoes fail to give it a good flavour, and just now flying ants are a perfect plague. I wonder what the next one will be?

I have got a good quantity of hay stacked, and I have been helping the neighbour who helped me. I have made a sort of shed for the pony and cattle. It consists of poles with hay thrown over them. It is warm enough for now, and at all events keeps out the rain, and must suffice till my stable is finished.

I am going to take my wife and child into town in a week or ten days before it gets too cold for the drive, then I shall come back and stay out on the homestead till the end of November, so as to get my regulation six months in this year, that is if it does not get too cold; I want to do some breaking, so as to have some land ready to crop when I am able to come out in the spring. At present I have about 6 acres broken, and I should like to break another six before it freezes up.

I want to put in plenty of oats, and potatoes, and flax next year, but there is such a lot to do, and my racehorses take such a time to do anything, that time goes by, and although I am at work all day and every day, I don't seem to have made much progress at the end of the week. It takes me a whole day to go for a load of wood, only 8 miles there and back, so you see that a team of horses would be a great boon.

CHAPTER VIII

October, 1904

THE weather began to get much colder, and we had had very severe blizzards, so I thought it best to take Mabel and the boy into Saskatoon, and settle them in the small cottage.

We chose a beautifully fine day to start on the journey. We left our place at 10 a.m., having had to load the wagon and dismantle the beds before starting. We stopped an hour at the half-way house, to feed ourselves and the pony, and got to Saskatoon about 6.30 p.m., glad to arrive, for the trail was very difficult to navigate. Captain R——, who is the best-hearted neighbour possible, brought in our beds, stoves, trunks, and other paraphernalia in his wagon, and his nephew drove ours, with a good load of dry wood, which will be a great saving, as it is very dear in town. They meant to come in for a big load of stores before winter set in, and timed their journey in, to suit our convenience. It took them a day and a half to get in. We put them up whilst in town, on the floor it is true, but it was more clean and comfortable than it would have been at many other places.

I took a long day getting back, and had a fire in

sight all the way, I could see the smoke in the town, and thought that it was quite close, but it kept on in front of me all the time. It turned out to be within 4 miles of my place. You can fancy what a sight it was when I got close to it, a straight line of fire, for about 6 miles, and flames quite 7 feet high; it was a grand sight. So far I have not heard that any one was burnt out, but fancy being able to see it 45 miles away. When I got back I was greeted with the news that during my absence there had been another big fire 2 miles west of me, and section 16 was all ablaze on Tuesday night. I trust it is the last bonfire we shall have so close.

It was very lonely when I got back to my deserted shack. However, I went off the next day to the bush to get firewood, and made several journeys with loads into Saskatoon, to save the expense of buying fuel. The railway surveyors have been round again, and from what they said there is a great chance that we shall have a railroad passing within a few miles if not nearer. I wish I could buy more land, for it is sure to go up in price; every one is much excited about it. I told my neighbour I would start a town on the chance of the railway reaching us, and stand for mayor of it. You see we talk nonsense out here too. I think we should go mad if we did not try to keep each other's spirits up.

Sunday was a fearful day, a regular blizzard blowing, and we had a 3-inch fall of snow, but since then it has been glorious weather, cold at night, and in the morning, but in the daytime just fine. I worked

till 5 p.m., and then I saddled my pony and had a good gallop. It was quite exciting the way she jumped over the badger and gopher holes and mounds. She is a splendid herder, she nearly had me off the other day by being too quick; my oxen had strayed so I had to herd them back. I was at it as hard as the pony could lay legs to the ground. Whilst I headed one I called to the other by name, and before I could say knife, my pony was down on her haunches, wheeled round, and was off after the one I had called; she knows their names, and I have only to sit tight, and call them out, and she is off like a dog after them.

I did not know that she was so cute, so it came rather as a surprise, and I had a near shave of taking a seat on the prairie.

I set to getting all together that I could, stacked my hay, and then one morning when I went out about 7 a.m. I was just in time to prevent the flames from a prairie fire jumping the fire-guard and destroying both hay and shack. I fought the flames desperately till late in the afternoon, helped only by a young man who was on the trail and came to my assistance. At one time I nearly despaired of saving anything, but I am thankful to say I did save my belongings, only it was a terrible experience, and for miles around there was nothing but a blackened expanse to be seen where the day before beautiful green grass had waved.

I was much exhausted as I had run short of stores, and had had nothing but rolled oats and tea for several days.

The weather began to get much colder, and the

wolves to grow bolder. I had to be up a great portion of each night, to look after my cow and calf, so I thought it wiser to take them over to my neighbour, who had good stabling, board up my shack, and go into town before a heavy fall of snow made the journey too difficult.

CHAPTER IX

November, 1904

THE oxen I had turned out on a ranch, and my Indian pony I was keeping in town with me.

I was very glad to turn my back on the homestead for a time, and I have been helping to make the cottage more cosy for the winter, breaking wood, etc.

I did not intend to be idle through the winter, and I have been lucky in securing a job with a large estate agent, to see that the numerous horses that the firm keep are properly looked after when they come in from driving people out long distances to see land. I am to have 30 dollars a month—a welcome addition for household expenses, for my £200 were all swallowed up, and had I not had a regular allowance from home, I do not see how we could have lived. Everything is very dear out West, groceries double the price they are at home; meat is cheap, but very bad; by taking a whole quarter of beef I can get it for 7 cents a lb., otherwise I should have to pay 12 cents; a cap costing a shilling at home costs a dollar out here. In fact it seems to me, that what costs a shilling at home invariably costs a dollar here.

A whole quarter of beef seems I dare say a large

order, but we do not salt it, we eat it fresh, not all at once of course; but as everything is frozen we bring in at night what we want for the next day, and let it thaw out. When meat is frozen, you can break pieces off like you would wood. Butter in town costs 25 cents in summer and 35 cents in winter, milk 7 cents a quart, bread 10 cents per lb., or 15 cents per 21 lb., apples 4 dollars a barrel, oranges 50 cents a dozen, the cheapest sort of tobacco, 10 cents a plug, 8 plugs to the lb.

For horses you can pay any price from 270 to 500 dollars. In the spring they are dear, but in the fall and winter they are cheaper. Oxen are perhaps not so bad on a farm, but for road work they are hopeless, they work so slowly; and as I shall have a good deal of road work next year, hauling various necessaries, I shall be glad to change my team for a quicker one.

The first thing to be done in the spring is to get a decent shack built. This will cost between 250 to 300 dollars; the present one will have to be pulled down, and built up again; it is very cold and leaks when it rains hard: we had to have dinner under umbrellas, and the beds got all soaked; besides, we require more room, for people are always dropping in, and you cannot turn away any one on the prairie.

When this is done I must turn my attention to getting a team, a general purpose one, and my Indian pony can always help plough. We are obliged to have a saddle horse, for cattle and even horses will wander at times for several miles, and one must ride after them.

I have not been able to fence in a pasture yet, as

for implements you cannot buy on the hire system, but you can buy in the spring, and six months' credit is generally allowed, for which 6 per cent. interest is charged, or if for a year 12 per cent. One cannot hire from the well-established farmers, for as soon as the weather breaks, every one is in a hurry, as seeding is a very short period.

CHAPTER X

December, 1904

THIS homestead business is a very expensive one, and no one should try it unless they have from £500 to £600 to start with, and even then they would find it very uphill work.

Of course there are a lot of opportunities out here that one has not got at home; but then it is like everything else, you need capital to be able to take advantage of these opportunities.

As for the climate, so far we have found it agreeable, the summer was very hot, but the fall was lovely; now the day before yesterday the thermometer stood at 40° below zero, but really I did not feel it much colder than on a cold day at home.

One has to take great care not to get frost-bitten. I was down at the river with some horses the other day, when a perfect stranger passing me took off his glove, and suddenly seizing my nose rubbed it vigorously: it had begun to freeze without my having felt it at all. Another time I had a very nasty experience, the Boss (my employer) had sent me alone with a wagon and a couple of bronchos (half-broken-in horses) to the bush 25 miles off, to get wood. When I had got my

load and was hauling out, the wagon broke down, and I was dragged some distance before I could stop the horses. I left one horse at a ranch about 20 miles out, but I had to ride the other one into Saskatoon, where I arrived nearly frozen, and much exhausted, at past midnight, with a temperature at nearly 40° below zero. After this I was ill, and the doctor insisted on my not running any more such risks; as my employer would not allow me to take a man out with me, but required me to go twice a week to the bush alone, I let another man take my place. I was sorry to give up my work, but I had my wife and child to consider, and so when I was well again I tried to find something else to do, but only got one job to help store ice, and as the man I did this for is an agent for the sale of implements, I shall take my money out in something useful.

Down West there is very little ready money and trade is mostly done on the exchange system, or on the time system with heavy interest attached. One half the stores even pay their men in kind. We none of us refuse any kind of work offered, and I often think that many people's relations would open their eyes very wide, if they could see what some have to do at times.

CHAPTER XI

January, 1905

WELL, Christmas and New Year's Day are over once more. We were quite alone on Christmas Day. We tried to make the best of it, but we both felt rather sad, and wondered what you were all doing, but knew that you would be thinking of us. We drank your health in tea. The liquor was weak, but the strength of our wishes made up for its weakness.

That cutting you sent, telling how a grocer from London became a flourishing farmer out West in sixty days, was very amusing but rather tall talk. I wonder how much he got for writing that letter. I should advise him to go on writing, for such a vivid imagination would certainly make more at it than by farming.

I have been obliged to get a fur coat. One cannot do without one; the wind goes through the thickest ordinary clothes. I had to pay 20 dollars for this coat; it was the cheapest I could get to be any good. Mabel got her ears rather badly frost-bitten, but I rubbed them well with snow before she went near the fire, and they are all right again. I came in from a drive yesterday, with great balls of ice on my eyes, and I could not open my mouth till I had got thawed. You will say

how delightful when you read this, but I am beginning to like the wild life; there is plenty of space to move about, and one feels so free. We hope to get out to the homestead again by May 1, and do the best I can with my oxen, if in the meantime I am not able to trade them for a team.

I am sorry that our letters do not reach you as regularly as yours do us. I do not know when to post. I asked the post people, but all I could get out of them was, that there is a mail East every day; but that did not help me as to when the steamers leave, and so I have to trust to luck that our letters will get to you some day.

I went out shooting the other day with a young Englishman. We each *saw* a rabbit, and on the way home shot a grouse. I cannot say that I enjoyed it, for it was all plodding through snowdrifts. I went mostly to try a dog I have bought, but, of course, just when I wanted him, he was not to be found, he had gone for a turn round the town on a foraging expedition. I do not think I shall go out shooting again on foot, it is not good enough.

Mabel keeps well and so does the boy, but he is a terror. We have bought him a sleigh, the perambulator cannot be wheeled on the snow. We took him out in it this afternoon. He sat still for about a hundred yards, then he scrambled out and dragged the sleigh all round the town; he would not let us help him. It is wonderful what strength the child has. If he goes on as he is now, he will be a great help in a few year's time. It speaks well for the climate of this part of the world.

CHAPTER XII

February, 1905

IT is lovely weather here now, hardly any snow left. All the streets are like young rivers. It's beautifully warm in the day time; too warm, for every one says that we shall pay for it later on.

There was a talk of a bridge being built over the Saskatchewan river, and I hoped to get some work on it to keep myself in trim; but I see no signs of it yet, and even if it did begin now, it would be useless to me, as we shall be soon thinking of leaving here for the prairie. The correspondent of the *Standard* you write about, who is starting his journey paid to Canada, but with only £5 in his pocket clear on arrival, will prove nothing really as to homesteading difficulties. Of course he will succeed in getting work if he is not afraid of taking anything that presents itself; there are not half enough men down East to meet the demand. But what I should like to see him try, would be to bring out a wife and child with him, and take up a homestead in the North-West, then I guess the accounts he would write home would be slightly different. If I were alone I could get I dare say my 2 dollars a day,

because I can turn my hands to almost anything; but even then I should have to go East to the settled parts, for up here no one has any money to spend on hiring labour; we all help each other as much as we can.

I expect young P—— has given you glowing accounts. They may be true of his part of Canada, for Winnipeg and its immediate vicinity is civilized, and this part is very far from being so as yet. I don't blame him for buying a farm and staying in a civilized district, near a big town, if he can afford it, for this homesteading is no feather-bed business up here.

I hope that he has not been telling you any ghastly tales of lonely men on the trail. Of course we never know what may happen, but we don't allow our thoughts to dwell upon it, or we should have no nerves left. We do the best we can and look out, and if we break down and there is no one about, why we sit down, light a pipe if we have one, and wait till some one comes along.

My wife is very plucky, she makes the best of everything. If it were not for her I should often feel inclined to throw it all up, I see so many difficulties ahead of us.

We have very good neighbours on the prairie, very helpful ones, which is a great thing. Three young Scotchmen came out last spring; took up free grants 4 miles from our place. We saw a great deal of them before coming into town, and we shall be glad to meet them again; they stayed out this winter.

What P—— told you about the railway is all twaddle, no one can tell yet when we shall get it, but

I do know that in the spring they are to start with it from Winnipeg West and then go on from several points at once, and meet on the road. This railroad is to be opened by 1910, so they will have to hurry up, as after that all delay will mean so much out of the contractor's pockets.

We do not know which survey will be taken, but anyhow our place will not be far from a line, and then later on we hope a town will be built near us in time.

What P—— told you about selling one's claim is perfectly true. One can sell a claim and take up another, but one cannot take out a patent for the second one. One can never have its title-deeds, neither sell mortgage or even rent it out on shares, for it always belongs to government. I think that if ever I sell my claim I shall not want to buy another; only I am afraid that when I get the place cropped and more comfortable, I shall not like to sell it, after having gone through all the hard times, and built up a home.

Our nearest neighbour, Captain R——, came into town yesterday, and he has fallen so in love with this country, that he is selling property at home to invest the proceeds on his place here.

He took out a seeder with him and told me it would be as much for my use as for his. I must take out a plough as I have not got one; the breaking plough I bought first is only used for turning up the sods.

I expect that this year will be a pretty hard one, but I shall fight through it, God helping me, and we hope next winter to be able to stay out, for this town business does not pay.

We are having another cold spell now, 40° below zero nearly every day, but one can bear it very well, if there is no wind. We are told that it will be worse next month. I hope not, for it is most uncomfortable to go about packed up like a mummy.

We expect an awful rush up here in the spring, we are told that it will beat all records. Some are already coming out in spite of the cold, and go straight on to the land. Those coming now are from the States, they don't seem to feel the cold at all.

Mr. J—— is in England and if you send to his address he will bring anything out. What I want you to send is a Union Jack; I cannot get one here, and I should like to have one to fly on Sundays; it would look like a bit of home.

The Scotch neighbours were in town the other day, and met an old schoolfellow of theirs who was having tea with us. It is strange how one meets in unexpected ways.

These neighbours have done wonderfully well. They have a good big shack on one grant, a small one on each of the two others, a sod-barn, a cow and calf, poultry, hen-house, three horses, 20 acres each broken, and they only got on their place last June, but had £600 capital between them. As for the living part, I should think there was a certain amount of drawback, for men are rather at sea in housekeeping matters; but as one of them told me there ought to be no waste on a well-regulated farm. If they can't eat the bread they have made, there are the dogs or the poultry, and as a last resource the British Museum, where it would

sometimes be as great a curiosity as the Fiscal policy.

They have really accomplished much more than I have, but then they were three men together and I was alone.

CHAPTER XIII

March, 1905

LAND here is going up in value, and there is a quarter section adjoining my homestead—very good land, that we think it would be advantageous to buy; it was selling at 6 dollars an acre, and now it is worth 8 dollars and going up steadily. In five or six years the money invested will have doubled itself; it has good quality hay on it, and of course buying it would increase the value of my homestead, and is a perfectly safe investment. The surveyed railroad is close by, and the town site will probably be only one mile away. The wife and I have decided to sell out some shares, and buy this quarter section, and if we ever want the money again, we can always realize it, for land is being bought up very rapidly, and there are now hardly any free grants to be had round our way.

At present I should only use this land for pasture, and later on when I have the implements it will be just as easy to work as the other. There are no small implements out here, they are all fitted to work several hundred acres, so you must not imagine that this will mean too much work for me; it will only mean more money coming in by and by.

I should have written sooner, only I have not had a moment to spare. A cousin of my wife's arrived, and I took him off seeking land, and I was away a week. I got him located within 8 miles of my place. Since then I have been out to our homestead with a load of things, and I was going out with another yesterday, but it turned out too stormy.

I hear that the farmers are beginning to seed, but it is risky, as we may get bad weather yet.

The oxen have come in, in pretty good fettle, only the old one is useless; he is dead lame, and will never get right. I could not sell him outright, so I left him at a sale stable, and when I returned from hauling out, I found that he had been traded for a range pony in foal. She is useless to me this year, but I shall keep her so as to have the colt, and as I cannot work with only two oxen, I have bought another pony for 75 dollars. It is a good one and worth the money. I paid 60 dollars for my Indian pony, and this one is bigger, and has worked on a plough all last year.

There are several churches in Saskatoon. We prefer the Presbyterian services. The parson belonging to the Church of England is a very good man. He only came here in October. He was at Battleford with the Barr colony, and told us of the hardships he endured. The colony's crops suffered so much from frost, and food and necessaries ran very short.

CHAPTER XIV

April, 1905

THE winter is practically over, and so to-morrow I hope to take my wife and boy out to the homestead, with the rest of our belongings. I have bought some seeds, and I intend to make a garden this year. I shall try and buy a pig, and a few hens; but oh! how the money runs away in this country.

Our parson told Mabel the other day that he would come out our way this year to hold services, so I hope that we shall be able to go to church, we shall all feel more civilized.

I had a very nice birthday treat. I spent it on the trail. I caught a bad cold the day before through sleeping on the floor at the homestead, as the beds had not arrived, so you can guess what a pleasant time I had, rather different to my last birthday at home; dinner this year consisted of a cup of coffee and a piece of bread!

I went back to town yesterday to fetch Mr. S——, his wife and two little girls. I am pulling out early in the morning. Mabel is glad to have her cousin within reach, for the feminine element is wanting out West.

By a lucky chance I have at last sold my oxen and

got a good price for them. I got 200 dollars for the team, and I am getting another pony so as to do the work with them, and when my little mare foals she will be able to work too. Anyway I am crawling out of a hole by degrees, so please do not worry over my complaints, it does one good to grumble openly sometimes.

Mabel and the boy are quite well, which is the principle thing, and my wife is quite happy, for an old Manitoba farmer, to whom we had shown some hospitality, came up the other night, and brought her six hens and a rooster—a present. I only hope that she will not kill them by too much care. I know she has been running out already a dozen times a day to feed them, and if one cackles she is off to look for the egg. Now we only want the pig to complete our menagerie. We had rather a tiring day the end of last week. We had five teams up at our place, eight men and seventeen head of cattle, and all had to be fed. Since we came out again we have not had a single day without some one turning up; all the neighbours come round to say that they are pleased to see us back.

I am going to haul out the cousin's lumber for him, so for the next ten days I shall be on the trail. I shall be glad when it is done; but as some one must do it, it may as well be me, and so put a little in my pocket, if only in return work by and by.

CHAPTER XV

May, 1905

I GOT to town on Monday afternoon, and left again on Tuesday morning. I went in to get a load of lumber for S——. I had arranged to cart it all out, but I am glad to say that he has found some one else to do it, so I had only one load. It would have meant ten or fifteen days on the road for me, and they are getting pretty bad just now with the frost coming out.

We have Mrs. S—— and the little girls staying with us till their shack is up. Jack gets on very well with them, and flirts quite comically with the eldest. Poor S—— is laid up at present with a touch of pleurisy. I had to go and fetch the doctor for him, and I got home just in time to find that my little mare had foaled. The colt was a fine one, but I am sorry to say only lived three days, the mother had no milk to give it. I tried to bring it up with a bottle, but did not succeed. The mare was ill, and I was afraid that I should lose her too, but she is all right again, and I am soon going to break her in. She is only three years old—too young to be bred from, still I think that she will make a fair pony, and if I decide to sell her in

the spring, I shall probably get a good price for her. In the meantime she costs me nothing to keep.

The one I bought has turned out a real good beast, a bit crazy at times, but she is always all there when I want her. I am seeing about another one, for I must have three to do any good ploughing. The one I am after I know is a good one. I do not consider that I have done badly with my cattle, for if you recollect I bought three oxen, harness and wagon, for 300 dollars. I shall have the wagon, which is as good as new (value 70 dollars), the old ox traded for the pony (value 45 dollars), the other two oxen sold for 200 dollars. I got one year's work out of them, so you see I am 15 dollars to the good on that deal.

To-morrow I am starting to deepen the well, and next week a young fellow from the next quarter is coming to help me. I hope that we shall not have to go very deep as it is rather difficult work. Young A—— is a very nice lad; he comes and does chores, that is feeds the animals and does odd jobs for Mabel, whilst I am in town, and will not take any remuneration for it, so I have taken him on now, to help with the well, and later on to help me finish my sod-barn. After that is finished I shall try and get a little breaking done, so as to have a nice lot of land to crop next year, only it is useless trying till we get rain, for the ground is far too hard and very dry underneath. Seeding everywhere is nearly all done, and the wheat in some parts is germinating well. The oats I have sown look as if they will do fairly by and by also.

It is really wonderful the number of people coming

out this year from the States, and from home. They seem all substantial people too. Last year you saw people on the trail with a wagon, a little timber, a few stores, and that was all; but this year you meet people with all implements wanted, quite new ones, and plenty of timber and stores. Homesteads are very hard to get now; one has to go at least 70 or 80 miles out from town to procure one any good, and land is being bought up fast, but I am sorry to say not with any idea of settling on it, only as a speculation.

I hear that we shall most likely have a school here next year. We now have the required number of children in the district to be able to claim one. I rather hope that we shall not get it, for I do not see why I should pay school rates and taxes before Jack is ready to go to school. He is so big that they have counted him of school age. Mabel has sown some flowers, but I am afraid that they will not come to much, for the hens are capital gardeners. They lay well, however. We have only six hens and we get five eggs every day. You do not know how they help the salt pork to go down, for we have eggs and bacon for dinner, and bacon and eggs for tea, each day of the week; then on Sundays we have bacon and potatoes for dinner, and potatoes and bacon for tea, just for a change. I shall soon be ashamed to look a pig in the face; as it is I am half ashamed to face the hens, for when I see one on a nest I invariably lift it up, to see if there is an egg under it.

Do not be anxious about the well digging, there is really no danger. I think that I shall not have to go deeper than 35 feet.

My Union Jack has arrived, and so I flew it on Sunday, to the envy of my English neighbours. One suggested that I should cut it in half, and let him have half, or that they should each take their turn with it, but I said that they could all come over and look at it.

When I first hoisted it I told Jack to take off his cap. He evidently understood that it was the right thing to do, for every time he went by afterwards he took his cap off and said, 'How do you do, Mr. Flag. The cousins are leaving to-morrow for their homestead, and Mrs. S—— is feeling now what we felt last year, only more acutely, for she has not yet taken in that half the things we are used to at home, we never get here. One shakes down to roughness after a time, and so will she I dare say, but a little more civilization would not come amiss for us all.

We live in hopes that some day, not too far distant, we shall have built up a nice home. Even now our little shanty is supposed to be as homelike as any to be seen here, and I must confess that things appear much less hard than they did a year ago.

CHAPTER XVI

June, 1905

I HAVE secured the land I spoke about previously, and we are going into town in a day or two to settle the business. It is a splendid bit of land, only separated from mine by the road allowance, and by and by will help to make a very good farm, for 160 acres out here is no farm at all. I wish I could buy a whole section, it would be a good investment.

We have got a doctor now within 6 miles of us—an improvement—and it is said that he is going to get a store opened, and have a post office. I hope that this is true, as it would be very handy for us.

I was told also the other day that the C.P.R. had begun to lay rails from Saskatoon, 25 miles S.W.; if it is true, we shall have the railway 12 miles from here.

Do not worry about our eating tinned foods; we do not eat any this year, they come rather too expensive, and so we follow the Canadian plan, and have porridge for breakfast, with coffee and plenty of home-made bread and farm-produced butter, salt pork and beans for dinner, and ditto for tea. We used to have eggs for tea, but we have three hens sitting, so eggs is off.

I went out shooting this afternoon with a friend

and we got four ducks and five snipe, so we shall have a finely stocked larder.

You will be amused when I tell you that we have two lodgers, brothers, who have a claim a mile west. They are building their shack. They have their meals with us and sleep at a neighbour's, as we have no room. We did not want to be bothered, but they had nowhere else to go, so we could not refuse. It gives Mabel more work, which is the worst feature about it.

Last time I went to town I got stuck in a mud-hole on my way home, and asked a man, who fortunately came along, to give me a hand out with his team. He spoke such bad English that I thought I would try him with my best French. You would have laughed if you could have seen the man's delight when he heard me speak. I thought he was going to embrace me. He told me that he came from Lyons and had not been spoken to in his own language since he came out three years ago. He took a lot of trouble to help me with his four horses, which with my team got me clear, after being stuck over an hour. I shall not forget that trip in a hurry. I had breakfast at 5 a.m. and tea at 6 p.m., nothing between but two apples, and the worst was that I could not get a drop of water on the road, either for my team or for myself; besides, I was overladen. I had 700 feet lumber for the well, five bags of oats, and stores. I can assure you that I was glad when I reached home. The half-way house was full when I got there the night before, and I had to sleep in the grain shed; but I did not mind that as long as my horses had shelter.

I am glad to say that the garden is progressing; peas and beans are coming up well. My oats are also promising a good crop, but it is much eaten by the gophers; they are small animals, but they can do a lot of harm.

CHAPTER XVII

July, 1905

MY husband was going to write you a long letter, but one of our Scotch friends has come to help him build a haystack; the hay being all cut and ready to be carried, so they are very busy.

Baby Jack is out with them superintending, and carrying away the tools for his own amusement. He is growing so fast, rather sunburnt, but his hair all rumpled up in tiny curls, his cheeks still rosy, he looks a thoroughly healthy child and has such pretty ways, when he is not in a rough mood. He says his little prayer very sweetly every night, "God bless dear Ganpas and Ganmas (and never fails to add) me have two, Daddy, Mammie, Aunties, Unkles, little Jackie, and make him a good boy. Men." This is just as he says it.

Last week Jack and I went to town with daddy to get thinner things, for the heat is intense, although we have had some heavy thunderstorms. Jack was great fun; went about the town as if it belonged to him. He walked into the largest store with 5 cents in his fat fist, gave it to the first shopman he saw,

and said quite gravely, "Chokies," which I had to translate into a stick of chocolate.

The garden is a great joy; I helped to plant it; there is a little of everything in it and lots of potatoes. Fresh vegetables are worth a great deal to us. Lately we have been living almost entirely on mushrooms and radishes; they are nice for a change. Of course, I have dried beans that I soak and make a white sauce of; they are the only vegetable just now; my husband is very fond of them; but one tires of the same thing when one has it too often. We have plenty of milk, home-made bread, eggs, dried apples, prunes and marmalade.

This autumn we hope to build and get things more shipshape before the winter. It will be a great comfort to have a room apart to sleep in, and will make the life out here less hard and rough in many ways. I will send you the plan of our wee cottage. Edward will probably bring out some of the lumber next time and get it stacked by degrees, then it will be seasoned and dry, so as to be able to build directly the haying is over.

Edward had to leave off work and go in to Saskatoon for stores; we had run nearly out of them, and I am sorry to say one of his horses fell ill, and he had to sit up with it all night. He has been obliged to leave it in town in the vet.'s care, and will have to go back and fetch it if it recovers. He came in dreadfully tired; he had not closed his eyes for forty-eight hours, and had been on the worry all the time, as I was not very well when he left home. He had had previously two

weeks of sitting on the mower, for he had cut the captain's hay as well as his own, and he will be going into town directly again to see how the horse is doing. These long journeys take it out of one; we shall be glad when we get a store nearer.

CHAPTER XVIII

August, 1905

YOU will be sorry to hear that I have lost my horse. The vet. did all that he could to save it; it rallied a little, but its strength was exhausted. This will be an awful loss to me, as I have not been able yet to do much breaking, and was counting on doing a great deal this fall. I have also so much hauling to do, as I want to get our cottage built before the winter, and my two other horses cannot do it all. It is very trying just as I was getting along nicely. I have only another month before me, and in that I must also haul out all the firewood we require for the winter, so I must get another horse, and that means an outlay of at least 100 dollars.

If I were alone I might get some harvesting to do, so as to help make good the loss, but I cannot leave my wife and boy. It is bad enough when I am obliged to go into town; she is alone for three days. She always says that she does not mind, but her nerves are not as strong as they were, and she gets very nervous at night. This life is certainly telling upon her, as it is bound to do; it is hard enough for a man, but it is worse for a woman. She has kept fairly

well, but feels the heat very much. We are having some of the New York heat wave, worse luck to it.

I have not yet enough land broken to count as my duty, so I must hurry up, or it would put me back a year for obtaining my patent for the Government 160 acres. I have had nothing but misfortune dragging on me all this year. It is not for want of working; I work as hard as I can. I have to stop sometimes, I simply cannot go on. I feel quite well and have a good appetite, but nothing but salt pork and an occasional bird is not very strengthening I suppose, unless perhaps when you have been used to it from childhood.

We had a dish of new potatoes yesterday, but they were only the size of marbles. I shall not be sorry when they are fit to eat. We have had no potatoes for nearly three months; we eat the boiled beans instead; but, as I said before, one tires of them.

You would laugh if you could see the shifts we are put to, but it is often no laughing matter to us at the time.

I have nearly all my hay stacked, about 16 tons, and I have some 7 tons of upland grass to cut when the spears have fallen out. I shall buy a few loads of oat straw, and with my own I hope that I shall have enough to see me through the long Canadian winter.

Thank you for the draft received safely. It came just at the right moment; it has enabled me to make up a good team. I came across it quite by chance, and having the money I was able to snap it up, and now I shall do my work comfortably. I have come into town to get lumber and stores; I hope to take out a good

load. I meant to haul out to-day, but the roads are so bad from the heavy rain, that I have put off the journey till to-morrow. I must go then, fine or stormy, for stores are exhausted at home.

The D——'s have been very kind to me, helping me with my work when they could ill spare the time. One of them has been with me a fortnight, aiding me with my barn. I am glad to say that the walls are up and part of the roof.

I think that you would be interested to know how we build sod stables here. You plough a 14-inch furrow 2½ inches deep; cut your sod 2 or 3 feet long, then build your walls 3 feet wide, just as you would build with bricks or stone; you use no mortar, but fill up the cracks with loose earth, and then after rain has well soaked it, it cakes quite hard. The utter absence of any stones on the prairie land seemed so strange to me at first, they would be so useful for foundations; but I really think if we came across one now, we should stop work and sit down and contemplate it as a great curiosity. My barn is 24 feet long by 18 wide and 8 feet high. My fowl house and pig stall are of the same materials as the barn. I am digging a deep cellar in which to lay the foundations of the new cottage. The building of this will be the next business. Some friends are coming next Saturday to haul the present shack on to the site where the other one is to be.

Before the bad winter gales begin I hope to have the other house finished. It is to be 22 feet long by 20 wide, one long room, a bedroom and kitchen. My old shack I shall take to pieces, and build a lean-to

on to the house; this will give us another bedroom for a friend, or for Jack later on.

The binder is coming to-morrow to cut my oats. They have come on well and will be a great help this winter. I saw some oats cut this week in a hundred-acre field that the binder could hardly get through; and it is expected that they will yield something like 80 bushels to the acre. The wheat looked equally good. I only wish that I had even half as much; but it was not possible to put any wheat in this year, I had too many other things to attend to.

Our Scotch neighbours have a fair crop—15 acres of wheat and the same of oats. I went and helped to get them stacked, and I had the honour of lifting the first sheaf and of putting the last on the stack. Tom says that he hopes that I shall be in town when the first bushel is sold, to wet it with something better than prairie dew.

I am thankful to say that no liquor stores have been opened as yet in our district, and I sincerely hope none ever will be.

You ask about mails this winter. I shall go on going into Saskatoon as long as it is possible, and then when it is no longer so, I shall have them transferred to a place called Loganton, 9 miles from us, and I and my neighbours will take it in turns to ride over and fetch them.

If you are sending a parcel out by parcels post, please enclose some fishermen's helmets, woollen comforters and gloves. We get the magazines regularly every week; they are a great boon to us all, for when we have read them we pass them on.

CHAPTER XIX

September, 1905

I HAVE bought two more little pigs, Yorkshire breed, to bring on ready for next spring; the other one I bought some time back I shall kill about Christmas. I don't know how the killing is going to be done, as I have never had anything of the kind to do.

I hope that I am taking out my last load of lumber. I took last time 1,600 feet, and I expect to take the same quantity to-day

The team I bought has turned out very well; one horse is seven years old and weighs 1,050 lb., another is three years old and weighs 960 lb.—this one will be a splendid beast when he is fully developed. I paid 187 dollars for this pair, quite a bargain just now, and I was able to snap them up because I had the money, and their owner wanted ready cash. You should have seen Mabel's delight when I drove up with the two new horses in the shafts, and my other two tied at the side.

The best news at present is that the C.P.R. is building a road from the East through Saskatoon to Edmonton, and it passes 18 miles north of my place. They have

begun work, and it is said that they will have 50 miles of rails laid this fall, so now we can put several inches on to our height, and say that we are 18 miles from a railway.

The G.T.R. may come within 8 miles, no one knows exactly, but there is something in the wind, for the agent who sold me the land offered me a good increase, if I would sell it back, but I told him that I was not taking any just at present.

My barn is finished and is nice and warm. I have room for six horses and three cows. I must get another cow for the winter, for the one I have is going dry; she is due to calve in February, and it would never do for the boy to go without milk, as he is a great milk drinker.

As soon as it freezes up I shall kill my pig, ugh! This is the job that I dislike the most, and I shall be glad when a regular butcher establishes himself somewhere within reach.

I have a nice lot of potatoes, not very big, but plenty of them, so we ought not to starve this winter, and I shall not go out more than I can help on any long journeys; I had enough of that last year.

I have got in my crop of oats. You would have laughed if you could have taken a peep at us. I was alone, and Mabel would come and unload for me whilst I made the stack. It's wonderful how she makes the best of this life, she is always ready to turn her hand to anything. As for Jack, he must have a finger in every pie and gives his opinion on everything in general. He is very proud of himself just now, for his hair has

been cut " like daddy's "—he parted with his curls last Sunday ; it makes him look so much older.

We drove over to see the S——'s the other day, they are getting on all right now, but are not in love with this country. They all look half starved, and cannot manage the salt pork yet ; they have no garden made, so of course have no vegetables of any sort, and the people round about will not sell any, as they generally have no more than they want for their own consumption. I am afraid that the S——'s fare rather badly. It requires a good energetic manager, like my dear wife, to surmount the many difficulties and discomforts of a settler's life, and to be able to make even a shack look homelike. It is a pity that the S——'s could not have had land nearer ours, we could then have done so much more to help them settle down more comfortably, for there is a lot to learn when one first comes out to the North-West, and at times one pays a heavy price for the learning, if one has no more experienced monitor at hand than one's own previous knowledge of what is right in the old country.

Our days are so fully occupied at home that we have no time to spare for social intercourse, or at most only a few hours now and then at rare intervals, so that even the eight miles lying between us precludes our seeing each other often.

CHAPTER XX

October, 1905

WE have had a very cold snap, but it only lasted a few days, and now it is cold still, but the weather is lovely and clear. Last week we had a heavy frost that spoiled three-quarters of my potatoes, as I had not been able to store them properly. This is a trouble, for it not only affects my winter supply, but I shall have to buy more for seed, instead of having them by me, and this constitutes an expense I could very well have dispensed with.

I have been very busy all this time building the house. It is not finished yet, but it begins to look very nice. I think that it will be warm; anyhow, we shall have room to move about. The living room is 20 by 12, bedroom 12 by 10, kitchen 8 by 10, cellar 6 feet deep, 15 by 15. When it is done and we are in it we shall feel more civilized.

My mails are transferred to Loganton. It would be impossible, during the worst part of the winter, to go into town every month, as I have been doing hitherto, on account, principally, of all the hauling I have had to get through.

I am taking out a good load of stores this time;

enough, I hope, to last us several months. I must come in again for a load of coal, but not just yet. Mabel and the boy were to have accompanied me, but it turned so cold that she thought it safer not to, for fear Jack might get frost-bitten.

M—— is in with me. We did not have such a cold trip as we anticipated, and we took it in turns to drive. I have had my hands full whilst in town collecting stores of every description, and various odd garments for wife and child.

You must not worry any more about their being left alone when I am away in town. Some of the neighbours always go and stay with them. The loneliness for my wife and the anxiety it caused me were more than we could go on bearing, so I am glad that that is remedied.

I could not help smiling at what you say about shooting deer. I am not so soft-hearted as I used to be. Want of fresh meat and necessity are very hardening masters. One does not like to kill, but one has to do it, or go without, and unfortunately we have very good appetites. Why, the other day we bagged three grouse, and half an hour after they were shot they were in the oven. I shot them quite close to our door. Our dinner was certainly sent to us that day, for we were out of pork entirely.

We are putting the finishing touches to the house, for we want to get into it as soon as possible. The man who was to help build failed me at the last moment, and so young D—— is giving me a helping hand and I must say that we are making a good job of it. D——

has been with us seven weeks; he works so neatly. Of course you know that he is one of our Scotch neighbours; they form a delightful trio, so straight and true. So do not worry about us this winter. I think that we shall be able to make ourselves pretty snug when we once get into our new domicile.

We want very much to get some good shapshots of the new shack, but somehow those we take do not turn out any great success, so you must be kept waiting a little longer.

CHAPTER XXI

November, 1905

WE have been having some terrible blizzards. The other night I went out to look to my horses, and at one moment I had to lie flat on the ground to prevent myself being blown over. Thank God we have had no damage done so far. It really seems to us that out here on the immensity of the prairie, so far from all human aid, we realize more fully His protecting power, and our hearts are more truly thankful as each danger passes us by, for each storm does constitute a danger, when you think of the force the wind must gather in its uninterrupted course over so many hundred acres of prairie, without a single tree, or any obstacle but a few wooden buildings here and there, to break its wild career.

The freeze up has set in now, so I shall get a quarter of beef, 50 lb. of dried fish, and kill the pig. I mean to have a hunt and shoot a deer; I ought, perhaps, to add, if I can.

I am glad to say that a store has been opened six miles away, along a good trail. It will be a great convenience later on, instead of having so often the long journey into Saskatoon. We were asked to a dance to

celebrate the opening of it, but we were not able to accept the invitation.

Things are humming a little round us, you see; the land agent told me the other day that the value of land here had again increased, which was cheerful hearing.

We have at last got into our new house, and it is a great joy to us after all the discomforts of the old one. There is still a good bit to do to the interior, but that can be done by degrees; the principal part was to get in, before the weather was too severe.

We have been talking a great deal about home lately, and wondering when we shall be able to afford a trip. Mabel predicts we shall manage it in 1907, but I am sceptical about it; time will prove. It would, indeed, be glorious to be able to spend a winter with you again; our visit must always be paid in the bad season, as the spring and summer time is very fully occupied. The worst feature of Canadian life is that the working seasons are so short, you have to crowd so much into such short periods.

Jack had a very happy birthday on the 12th, and fully appreciated all the pretty picture books sent him. The dear boy is a great comfort to us, and certainly his presence takes away a great deal of the monotony and loneliness of prairie life; he is growing fast and keeps as sturdy as ever.

We are getting some heavy snowstorms now, and I must hurry up to get all the wood I can collected. I have hauled a good lot I am glad to say, but not enough to last the winter if it turns out a long one. I have secured a good load of coal, to help keep the heater going well all through the nights.

CHAPTER XXII

December, 1905

WE had no opportunity of posting letters so that they should reach you before Christmas, but we hope that these will for the New Year. We trust that it will be a happy one for you all, and bring you no further anxiety over your Canadian exiles.

One more year has gone by, and, thank God, we have managed to keep straight amidst much crookedness.

I left home yesterday morning, but did not get into Saskatoon till this morning. I had the young horse on, and as he had never done any road work I had to take it easy.

I did not want to come in, but was obliged to get some Christmas stores. Jack is much excited, and wanted his mother to write to Santa Claus and tell him he wanted a ball and a watch, and as I am in town I do not expect that Santa Claus will disappoint him.

We are having a few of the English fellows round about us to dinner on Christmas Day. We have not much amusement to offer them, but still it will be nice for all of us to meet together on that day. All our thoughts will be in our several homes across the sea, as I know yours will be with us.

My colt is getting on well, and he ought to be able to take his share of the work next year. He is very gentle, and I can do what I like with him. I might trade my team for a better one, but I do not care to. I know them and I can trust them to do their best whatever difficulty we may be in, and that is a great thing out here where you have these long trips to make.

There has been great excitement over the elections. I was called upon to act as Poll Clerk at the doctor's, 6 miles west of us, on election day. I did not agree with the Liberal side and so voted for the Conservative candidate. The Liberals, however, have got the majority—a big one of 142 votes.

The proceedings were very tame; the only stirring incident was a dog fight. I wanted to register it, but they seemed to think that it would not do. It takes the people here a long time to see a joke. The box of woollen goods has arrived safely, and the contents will be very useful, only you made a mistake with the mittens; what we use here are closed with only a thumb, like the fishermen wear; but never mind, Mabel is knitting them into shape.

These mittens are very important things. You cannot touch anything in winter without having them on, for everything is frozen, and if you take hold without having your hands covered, it sticks to you and takes the skin just as if you had burnt yourself with fire. There is again a great talk about having a school for our district, so I suppose the Government is going to give us one.

CHAPTER XXIII

January, 1906

WE had as pleasant a Christmas Day as we could have away from home. We had just a few friends to spend the day—the captain and his nephew, our Scotch boys, and the two R——'s. They all seemed to enjoy themselves.

Mabel gave us a very nice little dinner. We sat and talked and smoked, then we had afternoon tea, smoked again, and at 6.30 p.m. had the remains of dinner for supper.

After that we had a few songs, and wound up with "Auld Lang Syne" and "God save our King." We all drank your health, and you would have been astonished if you could have dropped in upon us; you could never have thought you were in a shack on the prairie, for our friends all turned up in perfect fig, and one of them confided to me he had not had a shirt collar on for over four years, and between you and I, I do not think that he derived much comfort from having it on then. They all said that it was the first real Christmastide they had had since they left home, so we were all the more glad that we had been able to offer it them, and in pleasing others, feeling far less lonely and homesick ourselves.

New Year's Day we went to spend with the captain and his nephew. They entertained us most hospitably, and we passed the afternoon building castles in the air. They all made up their minds to go home in 1908, and get me to mind their places, whilst they are away. I thought it would be much better if we all went home together, but I am afraid that our castles have no solid foundation and are likely to crumble over our heads, as we could not leave all together, nor could I look after all the holdings if I were left behind. However, it is understood in the meantime that we are, God willing, all to meet again next Christmas Day for another dinner.

We are having lovely weather, of course cold, but not too cold as long as we get no wind; it is the wind out here that makes it so bitterly cold. If any one asks you about the climate, just tell them that I went out driving in a flannel suit yesterday, but do not tell them anything of the fur coat I had over it, nor of the fisherman's helmet that I wore under my cap. Our little cottage is very nice and warm. You have no idea what a comfort it is to be able to live like civilized beings again, for this is a palace to what the old shack was, and Mabel has made it look quite homelike in spite of not having much furniture; but our pictures make the place look very smart, I am glad that we brought them.

I got a proper scare coming home from Loganton post office the other day—I got caught in a snowstorm, and was lost for a time. I must have driven round in a circle, for five times I came to a deserted shack.

I tried letting my horse find its own way, but the poor beast was properly lost also. It was not a nice sensation, I can assure you; but I am glad to say that I was only lost for about an hour, then the weather cleared, and I could see a light in the distance and made for it. I found that I was only 4 miles from home. I shall not go again when the weather is at all doubtful. If I had driven my Indian pony she would have brought me straight in, but I had one of the team not used to go in single harness, and he was a perfect fool without his mate—felt lonely I suppose, as his master certainly did. We killed our pig at Christmas, and it has proved very good eating. Young D—— shot it, and then we bled it, for neither of us knew how to compass its death any other way.

I have ordered a few trees to be sent up in the spring from Ontario, some fruit trees and some firs, so as to try and make this place look a little less bare and lonely.

Another night I got a worse scare. I was riding home over the trail, hearing wolves howling round about, when suddenly something jumped up against me and began scrabbling my leg. I had nothing but a short crop to defend myself with, and in the dark night I could distinguish nothing. I made sure it was a wolf and hit out with all my strength; but by the yelp the poor creature gave, I knew that it was a dog seeking protection. Also a little further on I came upon two men in a buggy, to whom the dog, a wolf-hound, belonged; but I had a proper scare that time, I can assure you.

CHAPTER XXIV

February, 1906

WE have been having very bad weather, blowing half a blizzard off and on, and the temperature at 45° below zero. No one has been to the post office, so we have had no mails for a couple of weeks, and the snow is very deep. I have no sleigh, but hope to get one, or borrow a neighbour's early next week, for we are wanting home news badly. This last week I have had a very lively time. When I went out on Sunday morning I found my well frozen, and I could not get a drop of water for my stock. I got a neighbour to come over, and we worked hard all the afternoon at it, and all Monday, with the glass still at 45° below zero—very jolly, I can tell you—and of course when all was fixed and right, a thaw began to set in; but it cannot last, and we shall probably pay for it next month.

We had a meeting the other day to form a committee for the school. The Government has granted us a school, and formed us into a district—so much for progress even on the prairie.

I went to the meeting and made my maiden speech, which I need not tell you was not a long one; but the

Yanks and Canadians were having it all their own way, and I did not quite see why the English should be left out in the cold; so now the school has three trustees, one of each nationality. We expect to get the school-house up soon; we have seventeen children of school age in the district.

I did not want a school just yet, for it will mean about 25 dollars taxes a year to pay; but on the other hand it will make land go up in value. The school-house will be about 2½ miles from us.

We are also going to try and get the roads made this year. If they were, it would mean far less wear and tear to our rolling stock; but I suppose that we must not ask for too much at a time.

We are getting on fairly well this winter, only we are rather short of wood; we have to burn green wood, and we have none too much of even that; but till I get bob sleighs I cannot use my wagon to go and get more, and the horses having no work are pretty skittish. When I take them to water it is all I can do to hold them. The last time that I went down to the bush my team ran away from me. I only caught them up a mile or two on, where they had run into a bluff and could not get out. It was a piece of luck overtaking them so soon and having nothing broken. It is no joke going to the bush alone with fresh horses, when the thermometer stands as low as it does now.

My cow has not calved yet, and so I have to go 2½ miles to get milk for the boy. The heifer is in calf and will make another good cow, I hope, towards the end of the year.

I hope to get a good bit of land broken this year to crop next. I am putting in 8 acres of wheat, and all I can of oats, so as to have feed and seed for next year. I shall have all my seed to buy this year, and seed potatoes also to replace those we had frozen; it really seems to be always buy, buy, buy. I often wonder if we shall ever get truly ahead. At present we do without anything that is not absolutely necessary. We often, in sailors' language, make a topsail do for a foresail; still with all the hardships and discomforts we have to put up with, I do not think that I should care to change this sort of life for any other now, there is something so grand and free about it, every one is so busy with their own affairs that they leave you and yours alone. If you want to see a friend you can go just as you are; quite as sure of a cordial welcome in your old working clothes as if you had on the finest broadcloth; but all the same for the wife there remains too much roughness for her to take the same view, and for several years to come she must miss many of the refinements of the old existence. This appears to me to be the greatest drawback to a settler's life.

I want to get a riding plough if I can manage it, so as to be able to drive the four horses, for they are sometimes more than I can manage on an ordinary plough, and I often wish that I possessed four arms and four hands.

The cold snap continues and we have a great deal of snow, several people I am told have been found frozen on the prairie, but in nearly every case drink has been the cause of the tragedy. No one who cannot give

up the drinking habit should ever think of coming out to the North-West; there are too many difficult situations to be navigated almost daily, where a clear head is the only means of avoiding disaster. A town is being started 20 miles north of us, Asquith is to be its name; it is on the line to Edmonton, and 500 dollars worth of plots have already been sold, and the hotel begun. I am told that a surveying party is coming out to survey a line from Saskatoon to the Goose Lake district, also that the Grand Trunk Railway will most likely run north of the lake; if it does we shall be in luck's way. I must get as much breaking done as I can, for this is my last year, and I must have 30 acres in crop before getting my patent for the land I had from Government; it would never do to be put back a year. I am getting 12 bushels of wheat to put in for my seed next year, and 20 bushels of seed oats. The ploughing season is so short that it is impossible to do a great deal of breaking, unless one has help and good horse power. There are a hundred other things to be done—haying, cutting wood, feeding cattle, getting water for domestic use, milking, and so on through a whole series of unavoidable duties, that when all is got through and has come on to one man's hands, he has to look pretty slippy if he wants to do a day's work in the field.

My wife does all she can, baking, washing, ironing, cooking, but I must do the roughest part for her, or she would be utterly worn out. Potatoes are selling now at 1 dollar a bushel, wheat costs 1 dollar to cut per acre, and you have to find the man and his four horses

and supply the twine for the binder, and after that it costs 6 cents a bushel to thrash. I have been rather unlucky in my last trip to the bush. Just as I was loaded and ready to come home I turned over before I had got a hundred yards, and I had to make my load all over again. I was not alone I am glad to say, a neighbour was with me. I bought a set of bob sleighs, or I do not know what I should have done for wood.

CHAPTER XXV

March, 1906

UP to now the winter has not been severe. Had it been we should have been pretty cold, I expect; as it is, it is none too warm at times; we often think of the home winters when we used to stoke up a big coal fire, and still say how cold it was.

Those winters would be like summer to us now. Here when you wake up in the morning there is a nice little coat of ice on the sheet where your breath has frozen, and your head is all white with a kind of hoar-frost. When you go to get breakfast, butter, milk, porridge are all frozen solid, and you have to wait till you can thaw them. We are used to this now, and it hardly troubles us.

We have lost, I am sorry to say, eleven hens, frozen to death, although they were in the barn with the horses and cows. This means a great loss to us, as good poultry is rather difficult to procure.

There have been quite a lot of dances given this winter out here, but we have been to none; we were asked, but we did not see the fun of turning out in the cold to see some thirty men dance with about eight women; for that is something like the proportion.

The thaw has started and the snow is rapidly disappearing; the sun is warm and we get warm winds; in another week there will be very little snow left, and the grass is showing through in patches; every day makes a difference now.

D—— and I are off to-morrow to town to get a good load of stores, so that as soon as we can work the land there will be no town trip to hinder us, for I hope to get some 50 acres ready for crop next year, and so get a first return. It is very uphill work the first three years. I only hope that the result will eventually be worth it, as the older settlers say it certainly will be.

The crops ripen very quickly; a crop that is quite green to-day may be fit to cut in three days' time, then there is a rush, and hence the necessity for having all your own implements, for if you have no binder you have to wait till others have done, and when they are ready to come to you, your crop is too ripe, and you lose half the grain most probably.

It is the same with the seeding. If you have no seeder and get some one to bring theirs, their own work is done first, and your seed is put in too late, and does not get a chance to mature and ripen.

I do not think that you understand how the land is worked. We plough with the breaking plough 2 inches deep, the sods turn over just like a telegraph tape, no break in the furrow; when that is done you have to go over it with a disc or roller, made like so many soup plates on edge; you go over the ground four or five times with this, to cut up the sods as fine as possible; then harrow four or five times with the

seeding harrows; and then if the ground is fine enough, you can seed; if it is not fine enough, you put the disc on again till it is. So, you see, there is plenty to be done before you can put your crops in. You go ten times over each acre before seeding it.

Now to answer Mr. C——'s questions about his son coming out here, and as to what prospects he would have if he came.

As to going to a farmer for a year, if he knows nothing of farm work that would be the best plan, only he must be very careful who he goes to. As to going into partnership with any one I should certainly say NO.

If he comes out to a farmer he must be prepared to do all kinds of work, clean horses, feed pigs, cut wood, be at any one's beck and call, take a turn at cooking, and washing up; in fact, do a great deal that a stableman would refuse to do at home; and mind you, this is no fancy picture, but an absolute reality if a lad comes out intending to become a good farmer on his own account later on.

Even if he knows something of farming, I should not advise the taking up of a free grant if he comes out alone, for there are no homesteads to be got now except nearly 100 miles out from Saskatoon, and to a young man knowing nothing of this life, going out that distance alone would probably mean death, or going crazy within six months. If his father can afford it, I should advise both of them to come out, take a look round and buy land in a settled part; it would be a good investment, for land is going up rapidly in value.

As to capital C—— would certainly require from £400 to £500 to work it properly; to build shack, stable, and buy all the agricultural implements needed, also to live till he got some return for his labour, and he would even then have to be very careful and economical. I know that many start on less, but they half starve; and you see young men of 20 and 25 looking 40 or 50 years old, broken down all round. The rough life, extremes of heat and cold, and the everlasting pig diet play havoc with the best of us.

Certainly if the lad has plenty of grit, and does not mind taking anything that presents itself, dirty work as well as clean, he would in time do more here than at home, but he must have grit and much power of endurance, and not think that he is better than the man he sees all tattered and torn, such a one as one would like to give a coin to at home, for that man may be, and often is, a farmer who, after some years of toil, has made a very decent pile; but has forgotten to care for the more civilized ways of his younger days in the old country across the seas.

There is a great sentiment of equality in the North-West of Canada, and this new-comers very often run counter to, and so have to pass some very uncomfortable moments, for if they seem to know a lot no one will give any help. It is far best for greenhorns to forget all they learnt at home, or appear to do so, and begin their education afresh.

CHAPTER XXVI

April, 1906

I HAVE had another stroke of ill luck, one of my horses that I worked all last year turned baulky, impossible to get him to work, so I brought him into town and tried to sell him, but all I could do was to exchange him for another, and pay 45 dollars as well.

The horse I have now seems a good one so far; it is a heavier beast, more of the farm-horse type, so I hope to get on with my work. All my stubble is ploughed ready to seed down; I shall seed it and then get the garden in order. We should be glad of some cornflower seed, the mixed kind; it would make our place look more homelike, also some vegetable marrow seeds; we got seeds last year and had a few marrows, but they were put in too late, and the plants got frozen; still we know that they would grow, and if early would keep nice and fresh in our cellar. We are glad that the long winter is about over; it has been very long but mild during the greater part of its duration, but all the same, these long winters, through which one never knows what the next day may bring forth, are very trying, and I dare say we have not seen the worst yet that Canada can show us.

I brought wife and child into Saskatoon this trip. I thought that the complete change would do them good, especially my wife, for what with the blizzards and a continual dread of prairie fires, she has somewhat lost her nerve, and has had many sleepless nights.

When we reached town we found the hotel quite full, so we are staying with friends who are always very kind to us. Hospitality is practised out west in a real genuine manner; it is one of the things that strike a new-comer most vividly, and we have found it given us ungrudgingly on all possible occasions, and we have tried in our turn to repay it by acting in like manner towards any and all of the people who have passed our way and needed it, and by so doing we have been often rewarded by making pleasant acquaintances, and passing some hours in conversations, that have helped to break the monotonous sameness of our daily life.

We were rather glad to get back home again, for the roads are very soft and slushy, which makes it unpleasant driving, and there is always some amount of anxiety as to what may have happened during one's absence, when one leaves a certain amount of stock behind. Up to now, I am thankful to say, we have always found everything in perfect order after one of our rare absences all together.

CHAPTER XXVII

May, 1906

I HAVE got my oats seeded; not very many, only about ten acres. I hope that they will turn out a good crop. Now I am breaking every day and shall, I trust, get a good bit broken and backset ready to crop next spring.

I have a hired man coming to me to-morrow, a young lad, the son of a Scotch doctor; he has only just come out, and he is waiting to try and get land. In the meantime he is coming to me for 5 dollars a month, and all found, of course.

He will be a help to me if he will work, but I do not know how he will like turning out every day at 5 a.m., and this must be done, for there is much to look to before one can have breakfast and begin the regular work on the farm.

We have been very busy lately over the school business; we have had two meetings. One day I left home at 9 a.m. and only got back at 12 p.m. That day I was riding a bucking horse, and never knew whether I should land in the saddle or on the prairie; it was not a pleasant experience, but by the time I reached home all the buck was out of him, and he has been much more amenable ever since.

The riding plough will come in useful now for back-setting and stubble ploughing in the summer, but for breaking I can do just as good work with the ordinary one, and it is not so heavy. The ground is very hard, and we are wanting rain badly.

We had an election at our house a week ago, to elect a district Counsellor for the Local Improvement Board, so I hope that they will soon begin to mark out the roads and grade them; they are badly wanted, for the old trails are full of mud-holes.

On Saturday when I got home I found three men asleep on the floor, they had been stuck in one mud-hole after another, and had taken a week to get as far as my place from town. The poor fellows were pretty well disheartened, and since they left at noon to-day, I heard that they were stuck again 3 miles up the trail. How they will get to the homestead allotted them, some 80 miles out, I cannot conceive. My garden is not finished seeding yet, but I shall get my potatoes in in a couple of weeks' time so as to have some early; this must seem funny to you, as by that time you will probably be eating not only new potatoes, but green peas as well. We have a duck for dinner to-morrow, minus, alas! those nice adjuncts. This duck fell to a neighbour's gun, so he is coming to help eat it, very pleased not to have the cooking of it himself.

CHAPTER XXVIII

June, 1906

I HOPE that you will like the photos I am sending, and that they will counteract the bad impression the other ones made upon you. You can show these as of a settler's home after two years' occupation. The one of the house represents the back and the bow window side; in the distance you can see the barn. Inside the fence are flower beds all round the house. The man ploughing is myself. It will give you a good idea of the prairie, and how the land is turned over. The middle horse is the colt I bought last fall; he is now just five years old. I broke him in and he follows me about like a dog; the one in the furrow I bought at the same time, the other I got this spring. They are all working well. The furrow I am in is 650 yards long; good exercise, is it not?

Up to the present I have now 42 acres ploughed, and I am going on breaking as long as I can, but unfortunately I shall have to stop soon, as I must cut my hay before the spears come into it. The oats are looking well; a record yield is expected this year in the North-West. There has been no frost and plenty of rain; in fact, we are getting rather too much just now.

We are sorry that the first photo of our shack gave you such a shock; it certainly does look rough, and I must confess that we are glad to have a better dwelling-place now. The first one was taken from its worst side, and was never intended to include the shack at all, only the cattle and pony. Seeing what it was, you will not wonder that I did not dare face our first winter in it; but there are hundreds out here who live in places no better than that first one.

We are expecting soon to put out tenders for the building of the school-house. I do not think that there will be much delay now. The railroad building is also going on fast, both the Grand Trunk and the C.P.R., and the town north of us is progressing too.

There is a still bigger rush out here this year than last, people going even 175 miles from town; these are principally from the States. Land is going up steadily in price round here, it is selling at 13 and 14 dollars an acre, and very little left to sell. I wish that I had a whole section instead of only half of one; it would be very valuable, as what I have is thoroughly good land, and if I get a chance later on of buying more, I shall certainly take it.

We have had very bad weather, wet and cold; it has cleared now and it is fine again, but the mosquitoes are getting unpleasantly lively.

CHAPTER XXIX

July, 1906

I BEGAN haying some ten days ago, and we are having very hot weather. I can only work the horses two hours at a time on the mower, it is too hot to keep them at it longer. I am up every morning at 5 a.m., and I rarely get to bed before 10 p.m., for after the day's work is done, there is the cattle to see to for the night, the horses to clean, so when all is finished I am about done up myself.

We are taxed for the school-house, and last Monday I went and paid part of my tax by working a day on the roadway. I had to plough one round of a furrow, 4½ miles long—how would that suit a home farmer? I must admit that I found it rather a long stroll.

We received the parcel safely. You do not know what a joy it is to get anything that we know comes direct from the old home. Jack was delighted with his portion, and remarked that Ganma was a very sensible woman to send him suits instead of all toys. He is such a quaint little fellow, and so old-fashioned; this of course is the natural consequence of being always listening to older people's talk, and having no children to associate with.

We have put up about 30 tons of hay, enough to last me a twelvemonth, I hope. A neighbour came to give me a hand and help stack it, and of course I shall pay him back in kind.

The young Scotch lad who came to me has left again; he was no good for my work, he thought himself above the work, so I am alone once more; but I cannot afford to feed any loafers, we both of us have to work hard ourselves and have no time for the so-called pleasures of life, at least at present.

Well, we are all of us out here looking forward to the time when our difficulties will be things of the past, and we can afford to drive round and see others doing the work, like the farmer is doing in the picture I sent you, cut out of a pamphlet published by Government as an encouragement. Personally I do not see when that time will come, but we all live in hope that it may one day.

We are thankful for one thing, and that is we have no real ill health to contend with. I have never felt so well in my life, no pains of any kind, if I except the present moment as I have a pain in my arm; but that is nothing chronic, only a kick from a too affectionate horse. I shall be glad when I can build a stable with a wider passage behind the horses' hoofs.

CHAPTER XXX

August, 1906

I THINK that I shall be cutting my crop next week, my neighbours are cutting theirs at present. Round here the crops are good, but near the town they do not look worth cutting, they are so full of weeds. In this district we shall be in full swing next week. My oats are not bad, but they might have been better; anyhow, I hope I shall have enough for food and not have any to buy, for oats at 45 cents a bushel take all the gilt off the gingerbread.

I have been over all my ploughed land twice with the disc. I shall have to go over it again twice, but I must stop now as a neighbour wants to use the implement and I can finish later on.

My heifer is due to calve soon. She is a beauty, quite a picture, and my last calf is equally good, so they will set me up in stock. The cow gives us all the milk we require and more butter than we can eat, so we salt it down in earthenware pots, for use when perhaps we might not have enough.

We are sorry you do not think much of the photos last sent to you. With houses all round you the situation looks very lonely, but it is not really so desolate as it

looks. We have nice neighbours if a little way off, some of them are always dropping in. Why, last Sunday we had over twenty visitors.

A few nights ago we hitched up at 6.30 p.m. and went to the store for mails, then drove by moonlight to the D——'s, our Scotch friends, woke them up at a quarter to eleven, had some tea and got back home at midnight. It was a lovely drive. I suppose that you at home would think us crazy, but at this time of the year night is the pleasantest time, cool and no mosquitoes.

Yesterday it was 88° in the shade at 8 a.m., so that the cool nights come as a great boon.

It is rather hard to give you an exhaustive list of all our neighbours, they are so scattered. There is an English family 2 miles east of us, husband and wife, three girls, and two boys; then we have three other families, 3 miles east also, they are Americans; a Canadian family 2 miles north; these with the captain and his nephew, our Scotch boys and the R——'s, form the nucleus of our colony.

We all meet at times, either when we go to the store or to church at a place called Car, 2 miles distant, where a service has been held lately by a young student. Our school-house is nearly built; it is supposed to open on September 3 next, and it will be used as a church on Sundays.

I have been very busy the last few days taking the old shack to pieces. I am going to build a larger kitchen with it; the one we have is too small for the hot weather; the cottage will perhaps not then look

so cramped. We were quite offended at your saying that it looked cramped. Why, it is one of the largest places out here.

I regret also that you think that I look as if I had not enough to eat. I assure you I get plenty, and besides I have an uncommonly good appetite.

At present I am feeding up two pigs with a view to eating them in the winter. In the summer one does get pulled down a bit what with the intense heat, a good proportion of hard work, and the constant and forced eating of salted pork most of the time.

CHAPTER XXXI

September, 1906

I HAVE been much occupied helping my Scotch friends get in their harvest; two of them went off on the threshing gang, so the remaining one and I got in the crop. It was very hard work, but luckily we had fine weather.

I have had to come into town for stores and to buy a set of harrows, as I want to get my land worked up ready.

I was much amused at the letter you sent me. The cutting is taken out of a local paper; it has all got some truth in it as far as Saskatoon itself is concerned. The C.P.R. are going to make it their prairie centre, and have paid a very high price for lots in the middle of the town, only this will not, I am afraid, as your correspondent seems to think, make any great difference to the price of outlying lands. As to having a railway a mile from us, it may come about in time, only so far I have heard nothing to confirm such a rumour. Saskatoon is growing at a wonderful rate; every time I come I find some change, and it gets quite difficult to find the proper way in. The Grand Trunk Railway is laying rails 20 miles north of us, and the C.P.R.

18 miles west. Land my way now is worth 12 to 13 dollars an acre, bare prairie land; broken it is worth 15 to 20. I have had people round already wanting me to sell the whole place next year, but I certainly should not think of doing so. I have a place of my own, and I am creating a home that I hope will one day be a comfortable one. No, I do not believe in selling a home that you have made all yourself, not only by spending money on it, but by counting every stick about it with your own hands.

I do not think I could put up with life in England now, I should feel shut in. Here I have space around me, I can do as I like, and no one thinks the better or the worse of me, whether I am driving a buggy or a wagon, whether I am in working overalls or otherwise. Would it be the same in the old country? I shall give notice to Government next month that I mean to apply for a patent, and then I have to write again for it six months later, when the three years' occupation are completed, and the regulation duties are done.

CHAPTER XXXII

October, 1906

WE are having lovely weather just now. I am getting my land worked down as fast as I can, and my garden produce stored for the winter. We shall not have to go without potatoes this winter, I hope, unless they get frozen in the cellar.

I drove in to-day with my wife and boy to get some winter clothing, for it is decidedly cold, and heavy frost at night, although such bright sunshine in the daytime. I hope that it will not freeze up yet, for my stubble is not all ploughed. I tried to finish it the other day, but my plough went wrong, so I cannot do any more till I get it fixed up—that, I trust, I shall be able to do as soon as I get back home.

Some knowledge of machinery and the ability to set right oneself, whatever goes wrong, is another precious talent to possess out on the prairie. Luckily I am very handy at anything of the sort, and can doctor most implements when they require it.

I shall, if all goes well, put 45 acres into wheat next year; so if it succeeds it will be my first paying crop, and will help me along to meet any liabilities I may

then have; but I shall have to have hired help, I could not handle all the work alone.

I am sorry to say my rig is almost played out, a consequence of the rough trails we have to drive constantly over. I shall have to look about and find another, as we cannot do without it; it is the only means that my wife has of going any distance, when I am not able to drive her, and there are often little things wanted that she can drive the Indian pony to get, and so save my time for other work.

We have a new post office opened only 6 miles away, along a very fair trail; the other post office was 10 miles off, so this is a great improvement, and a general store and a butcher's shop will also probably be opened there as well.

The place forming 20 miles north of us called Asquith is destined to become a small town—and next year they hope there will be grain elevators as on the new C.P.R. branch line—and in a few years will become our shipping town, unless we get one even nearer on the Grand Trunk line, which is within the range of possibilities.

The survey for the Grand Trunk line is registered, and the line, as I said before, is begun. There was a talk of its coming much nearer than 18 miles to us, but it was all talk I am afraid. The Canadian Northern is the one we really look to, for there is some hope of its coming within 6 miles; that would, indeed, be grand.

CHAPTER XXXIII

November, 1906

I HAVE been hauling a load of wheat into Saskatoon for my neighbours. They had two to haul, and so I took one; but we had a bad time on the road. It had rained heavily the day before, and after being on the trail all day, we had to sleep on the floor at the half-way house, rolled up in a horse-rug. One of my horses had got a touch of rheumatism, so I had to put my third horse on to come to town. He is not used to the road, and is very slow compared to the others. I hauled 51 bushels—a heavy load to haul 45 miles. I had my oats threshed out; they gave 378 bushels—not bad from 7½ acres. The thresher put through 318 bushels in 42 minutes, that is going some, is it not? The threshing bill is just under 20 dollars, our school taxes over 25 dollars, and to improve matters coal is now 16 dollars instead of 8 a ton, so the extra draft came in very useful.

We had a concert in the school-house on the 9th. My wife was asked to be on the committee, and she could not well refuse. It took quite a lot of arranging to get it up well. However, it turned out a great success and was much appreciated.

A neighbour had friends staying with him. One turned out to be a good pianist, the other sang very well. Two young girls gave a dialogue, which Jack reported to his daddy as a very pretty catalogue! A very fair gramophone selection and a violin well played completed the programme.

We had "Soldiers of the King" in the first half, and the "National Anthem" to finish up with, as it was the King's birthday. After the concert was over, sandwiches, cake, tea and coffee were handed round, and then dancing began. It is the first bit of gaiety that we have taken part in since we came out, and I think that we rather enjoyed it, but we should not care to begin again often; the Western dances are very odd, and end in a regular romp.

Jack was four years old a few days ago. He was delighted with all the pretty things sent him. Daddy also brought him a mechanical Indian from town, which was a great joy. Mummie made him a cake, and as we had roast beef and baked potatoes, it was quite a birthday dinner, and the wee laddie quite realized that the honours of the day were his, and went to bed saying he had spent a happy, happy day. He says the quaintest things at times. During the heat I had often to run after him to make him put on a hat. He must have heard us talking of the danger of sunstroke if one went bareheaded, for one day he took a cloth and covered his horse's head, explaining to me that he was afraid the horse might get a sunset!

We have been putting up storm windows to our bed and living room; we have got a nice rug, and warm

felt shoes for us all, and a rocking-horse for Jack, who has been longing for one so long, and has written various scribbles to Father Christmas to that effect.

We may manage a proper kitchen table by and by; at present we have a few boards nailed roughly on to a post.

I ran a rusty nail into my foot the other day, and have had to have the doctor; but I am glad to say it is all right again, although still rather tender. My wife has had a bad time of it I am afraid, for she has had to look to everything, as I for several days could hardly get across a room even, without the aid of two sticks. I suppose the pork diet heats the blood and causes small injuries to bring about disagreeable results at times. We shall be glad when we can get on to a more wholesome diet.

CHAPTER XXXIV

December, 1906

WE have been having fearful weather all this time, blizzard after blizzard. I went to town again with one of the neighbours and we got caught in a blizzard, rather a bad one, but luckily we were only half a mile from the stopping place, and our teams had the sense to make straight for it. The snow was so thick that I could not see my horses' heads, and the cold was terrible; I have never, I think, been so cold in my life. However, we got to town and back without being frost-bitten. Others did not fare so well, for I heard that poor S—— was in hospital, with both feet frozen. It is a sad business for him, and a great trial for his wife.

I also heard that a school teacher had been found frozen to death, lost on the prairie. Certainly this winter has commenced rather badly. I only hope that it will not get worse, for I have all my firewood still to get up.

Next year ought to be a good year for the crops, for no one remembers such deep snow as we have now, over 2 feet deep; not very pleasant to walk through, I can assure you.

We are beginning to think about Christmas. We are going to have the same crowd as last year, so you can think of us on that day, a few forlorn Englishmen doing their best to imagine that they are at home. New Year's Day, if fine, we go and spend with our Scotch neighbours. Some other people invited us, but they are too far off for us to go there at this time of the year; we might be caught in a storm and not be able to get home for two or three days.

My animals are all well up to now; my heifer has calved and given me a fine bull calf, which I shall try and keep, as he will do for our winter's food next year.

You must not mind or get anxious, if you do not get letters so frequently for a month or two. We avoid as much as possible going far from our shacks, unless obliged to, when the snow lies so deep over everything, for it is not easy to find one's way for one reason, and another is the fear of being overcome by the intense cold.

CHAPTER XXXV

January, 1907

OUR Christmas and New Year's festivities are over. On Christmas Day we had eleven men to dinner; all our bachelor neighbours, in fact. After dinner we had selections on the gramophone a neighbour brought over, and after supper we had songs, and smoked till midnight; luckily my wife does not object to the fumes of tobacco.

On New Year's Day we went to our Scotch friends, four miles north of us, to dinner. We had a very pleasant time, but it came on to snow, so we had to stay there all night, which was rather a tax on a bachelor's establishment; but with wife and child I could not risk losing our way on the prairie. The weather moderated next day, and we were able to get home early, and found our animals none the worse for their master's absence; but it is, as I said before, always a risk in winter to go any distance from home, especially accompanied by one's womenfolk. Wood is giving out, and it is doubtful when I shall be able to get to the bush for any more. This is turning out a terrible winter, storm after storm, and we are now almost snowed up; we

have 3 feet of snow on the prairie, and some drifts are over 6 feet deep. It is hard work, both for men and horses, to get about; the cold is intense, and somehow we seem to feel it more this year than the last two winters.

For three days past the thermometer has been at 45° below zero, only I am thankful to say there has not been much wind; had there been it would have touched us up pretty sharply, when looking after the stock night and morning.

I am afraid that we shall hear of a lot of misery this winter; the bad weather came on so suddenly that people had no time to prepare for it. We have come through so far none the worse; very cold at times, for our heater is nearly played out, and I must get another when I can go into Saskatoon.

You ask about steam ploughs; well, we can get them out here, but it is really no economy having them to work your land; you have to disc and backset and harrow the land after them. Three dollars an acre is charged for breaking alone, and one has to supply fuel, food, and water. Fifty acres would cost me 150 dollars, so you see it is cheaper to buy another horse, with which I could do not only my breaking, but all the work that follows as well. As for the cost of keeping horses out here, you cannot judge by what they cost at home; hay costs nothing but the trouble of cutting it, nor more does straw; we grow our own oats, and look after our animals mostly ourselves.

I bought a binder, and I am going to cut several neighbours' crops to help repay the cost of it, but I

must have sufficient horse power to draw it, as it is a heavy implement.

The weather is getting much colder; it is at 58° below zero to-day. It certainly makes one feel inclined to sell and seek a warmer climate. We had to go off, notwithstanding the snow and cold, to struggle into town, for the coal and wood were giving out. W—— went with me. We had a terrible time, We waited two days for coal, and then had to go home without any; lines all blocked, trains snowed up, and the town quite out of coal. Several families were living together so as to keep warm, economize fuel, and share stores. No mails had got through for some time.

Here in the country we are nearly as badly off, only I managed to secure a load of dry wood, a neighbour let me have a half ton of coal, and I bought another heater stove, only it was a hard time, we both got frost-bitten; I got my nose and eyelids, and W—— his ears. For days we were a picture to look at, but we are getting all right again now; still my nose is very tender.

I went on the way home to inquire how the S——'s were. Poor S—— has had seven toes amputated; on one foot there is only the little toe left. He intends to go home with his wife and children next winter before, as he quaintly said, "I lose any more of myself."

CHAPTER XXXVI

February, 1907

WE have, thank God, weathered the winter very fairly hitherto, and this week we have had lovely sunshine—such a treat after the fearful cold of the past month; the deep snow made it worse by increasing the difficulty of looking after the stock.

If all the people coming out this year knew what this winter has been like, they would turn back to the homeland if they could, I think.

I have been taking advantage of this fine spell to get up a good lot of wood, for I expect this is only a lull in the storm, and bad weather will come on before long.

My wife and the boy have only been able to go out of the house four times since last November; it is weary work for them being shut in for so long.

I hear that Saskatoon is all right for fuel now, but at one time it was in a bad way. At some places down the line they held up the trains to get fuel and stores, and at one place the settlers threatened to smash up the cars for firewood. We, at any rate, were a little better off on the prairie.

Wolves have been very plentiful this winter, but

so far I have not succeeded in killing one. I had a shot at one, but it was nearly four hundred yards off. I missed it, but gave it a big scare. Luckily they are very cowardly creatures, and are easily frightened away.

Game has been very scarce ; I have scarcely shot any, although I always carry a gun or rifle. I hope to get a few grouse later on as the weather gets milder.

I am very glad now that I have had no wheat to team into market ; our neighbours who had some loads have had a most trying time.

Our nearest bush for cutting wood is four miles away, and I can assure you that in winter we find it quite far enough to travel.

The prairie is quite bare of trees. This, of course, is a great advantage to settlers, as there is no clearing to do before beginning to break the land; but in winter the absence of trees allows the wind to sweep down upon us in its full fury, and in summer we feel acutely the want of shade, so I have planted a few trees, but at present they are only about 2 feet high, hardly high enough to be able to smoke one's pipe under, but it is interesting to watch their growth.

CHAPTER XXXVII

March, 1907

MAILS have been all delayed owing to the line being snowed up, so they are coming in now all mixed up, none the less welcome I need hardly say. I pity sincerely any one out here whose people at home neglect writing often. Letters are such a joy when one is so far away from all the old associations, and the loved ones left beyond the sea.

The winter has been hard, but we have stood it bravely, and we are none the worse. The horses are looking well and fit for work, the cattle also, so I must not complain. I am rather proud of the fact that they have always had their feed, however difficult to get to the stable, and only one day had to go without water.

We had another bad storm last week, and of course I was out in it, but I managed to reach home before it got to its height. We must still expect storms, but the worst is over, I hope.

Snow is beginning to disappear in places, and the buds on the trees down in the bush are ready to burst forth; everything indicates an early break up. When I was in town last week water was commencing to run over the river ice; this ice was 6 feet deep this year.

I saw the Immigration agent; he had just returned from a relief expedition, 140 miles out, to a family which had not been heard of since November 1. He found them alive, although pretty low down; they were living in a hole dug in the side of a hill; they still had some food, but scarcely any fuel; they had already burnt their beds, table and chairs. They just lit their fire for cooking, then put it out and retired to their hole, only getting up to cook their meals. The agent said that they did not seem downhearted at all; the man only wanted to know whether the present winter was considered a hard one.

I was obliged to go to town to buy stores, and to see whether the implements had got through. I wanted a seeder and a plough, but I had my trip in vain as far as the latter were concerned, none had come up the line; they are hurrying all kinds of food stuffs in first, as a rush from the prairie is expected, for many people will not have been able to travel at all this winter. It has been real bad for horses as well as for human beings. I have often had my horses half-way up to their backs in the snow, and once I had to get down and literally dig them out; I had driven into a deep snowdrift. Another bad fix was when I ran out of tobacco and there was none left at the store; a pipe is such a companion, that one misses it almost as much as food. I hear that there are great plans for railroads this spring; the Government is moving in the matter, and pushing on all it can, and not too soon either, for all the timber is nearly cleared out, and if no fuel is got into the country, people will

be obliged to quit this part of it. A number of people already are selling out and starting for the Peace River district, where the extremes of cold and heat are said not to be so trying. Needless to say, I am not thinking of joining them; homesteading once in a lifetime is quite enough for me; I do not wish to begin over again.

I hope that the vegetable marrow and cucumber seeds have been sent, for I want to get a nice lot of plants this year, and the marrows keep well all the winter—a great advantage when you can get no fresh vegetables but potatoes. Mabel's flowers were a great success last year; that is her department; I take charge of the common but more useful part of the garden.

Well, here we are nearly at the end of the month, and I have had to come into town again; I got in last night. We had a lovely drive and got loaded up ready to pull out this morning, but of course it is snowing hard again. I shall not be sorry when we get home, for I have a heavy load, and the trails are getting bad, the snow is soft and slushy. I have a three-horse drill and a riding plough on my load, besides stores. It will be rather a work of art to get home without an upset; still if I had waited I could not have hauled out my implements.

The weather is gradually breaking up, we are having warmer weather; but the snow is still deep, and as it is beginning to rot, it makes it very heavy travelling, and we have had also very bad storms. No one who has not been through this winter can imagine what it has been, and a good many will carry the traces

left by it for a very long period ; it has, indeed, proved an anxious time.

It was very kind of Mrs. W—— to cable for news of us. The cable could not reach us, nor could we have answered it if it had, but it was so good of her to think of doing it ; it is nice to know that people think of one when one is going through a rough time. Well, it is nearly over now, and we will try and forget the bad times when the better ones come round once more.

I got home with my big load safely the other day, but a few days later on I had a fine time down at the bush—I smashed my sleighs all to bits, upset six times. I have never had such an experience in my life before, and I was pretty hungry too by the time I got home ; from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. is a long spell to go without food, especially when you are working hard all the time. I cannot carry food with me, for it gets frozen hard. It is a pleasant kind of life you will be thinking, still I can assure you that there is something fascinating about it, and I should be sorry to leave it altogether now that I am more accustomed to what I can call its vagaries.

The homestead inspector is to come out soon. We are eleven in this district who have been out our three years, and therefore are eligible to receive our title-deeds for the 160 acres, the Government free grant.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

April, 1907

WE are getting one day hot and the next cold—not pleasant at all—and snow is still with us, and looks as if it meant to stay a little longer. I am afraid that we shall not get on to the land till the end of the month, if even then.

This long winter has been no joke, and at present the food question is becoming a rather serious one; we are all getting short of hay. I put up 30 tons, enough to see me right through the winter and spring under ordinary circumstances, but I shall run out of it before the end of the month. Of course as soon as the snow goes I can cut a supply, but we do not know when the snow will take itself off.

We had another bad storm last Thursday, about as bad as any we have had this year; there seems to be no end to this winter somehow. The riding plough I told you that I had bought cost me 72 dollars. I have been very busy putting it together; I had to bring it out in pieces; I think I have succeeded in getting it into working order. Horses are very dear, but I have bought one from a neighbour, a 3-year-old, half-Clyde bred. I have known this colt since he was

a week old; I am giving 140 dollars for him. It is a good price to give, but as horses go now I have got him cheap, and being a young horse I shall have the training of him. In that way I shall know what I am doing. Buying older horses of strangers out here is more or less buying a pig in a poke. If the four horses work the plough well, I shall be able to get a good bit of land ready for next year.

I want to have 100 acres ready for wheat crop if possible. In that way I shall hope to put a little money in my pocket, instead of all going out as it has been up to the present moment, and hard, slow, uphill work it has been too.

We have great hopes of a railroad out here this year. The surveyors were here this week. The present survey goes right along the south line of my land. Of course they may not take this one, but if they do not, the second one will not be more than a mile north of me. I hear that they are to hurry up and survey 75 miles from town, and start grading this spring.

We hope for the best, but one never knows how things may turn out, and we fear that we may still have to team our wheat the 45 miles into Saskatoon.

You wonder how we have kept warm this winter; well, it was quite a puzzle at times, but we did manage to keep fairly warm. Green wood is rather hard to burn, but by keeping the new heater at full blast, it burns pretty well. A neighbour, as I told you, let us have half a ton of coal, and that helped us on quite a lot, for it enabled us to keep the fire in all night during the coldest snap, which, with wood alone, we could

not have done. We ought to be thankful, for a great many people on the prairie had not even green wood to burn, and had to double up with others just to keep warm. I know a house about 5 miles from us, where nineteen people were living together, and this in a two-roomed shack, its size 14 by 16 feet, and that is only one example out of many such this winter; still better crowding like that than to be frozen to death, as one poor family seems to have been. I am sorry to say that this year we shall not be able to plant our potatoes, peas, etc., till quite the end of next month. Early vegetables and fruit are the things we miss the most in the North-West.

I may have a pupil this year, a young fellow from home who wants me to teach him Canadian farming. I have written and painted in true colours what he may expect if he comes out. If he is a nice lad he would be a help, but if he has too high an opinion of his own dignity, like that other young fellow, he would be a great bore.

Some Englishmen who come out are terribly green. Did I tell you the story about one living not far from us, who thought that bran was very good food for cattle, so he bought three bags of it and SOWED it in the ground; he also SOWED a bag of oatmeal, so as to grow his own porridge. This is not romance, for it really happened.

Another man started to plough, and went up and down the same furrow all day, and could not make out what was wrong with the plough, yet these men are now turning out real good farmers.

CHAPTER XXXIX

May, 1907

WE were without mails for seventeen days, none could get to Saskatoon. Everything had been looking so well, as if we were going to have an early spring, when bang comes the winter down upon us again, blizzards and storms. Saskatoon nearly ran out of food; four butchers had to close, for they could not get the animals in to slaughter. Now a regular wash out is feared, and here on the first of May we are not able to touch the land, we still have so much snow on the ground. It is really provoking, for it will make us so late with our seeding, and then we shall have a great risk of frost in the fall.

We had a great time of it going to town during the fine spell we had a couple of weeks ago. I took Mabel and Jack for a change, but the trails were rotten and the team was slipping and sliding all over the place. In some parts the snow had thawed and then frozen over, but of course not hard enough to bear the team.

We went into one water hole and stuck there; the water was half-way over the horses' backs. I jumped in, and getting Jack under one arm held the horses with my other hand. I told Mabel to jump; she obeyed me and no mistake, but jumped right into the water.

Well, we all got safely out of it, but we had to walk the rest of the way, 4 miles, so as to try and keep warm, and we were none of us sorry to arrive at a store and get into dry things. The boy came off best, as I was able to hold him all the time. The horses behaved beautifully; as soon as I spoke to them they stood quite quietly. If they had been so minded they could have sent the whole outfit to kingdom come.

The new colt is doing well; he just goes along like an old horse. I am very pleased with him so far. I had another increase in my stock this week—a small calf, so now I have my barn pretty full, and, all told, it is quite a lot of work to get round to feed and clean them in the morning.

I shall have a lot of building to do later on; I must put up another stable, for the one I have is no longer big enough, and I must have a granary too.

I am going to seed my neighbour's crop for him, and also to cut it, at so much an acre. He is to repay me in so much return work in harvest and haytime. In that way I am sure of help.

W——, who has been helping me this winter, has now got work at 75 dollars a month as tree inspector for the experimental farm he was working for last year.

On my birthday we had a dinner party! One of our Scotch friend's birthday was four days earlier, so we combined and celebrated the two events together, by a meeting at our house of the usual crowd, and we had quite a pleasant time talking over all that we meant to achieve in the future.

CHAPTER XL

June, 1907

I HAVE been rather slack in my letter writing lately, but I have been so very busy. It has been a frightful rush to get the seed in; it has meant work from sunrise to sunset all along.

All my seeding is done now and the wheat crop looks well; oats are just beginning to show through, and if the warm weather we have now continues they will come right along.

I had to change one of the horses, the oldest one, last week, and traded it in part payment for a younger and heavier one. I have not had time to do any breaking yet, I hope to begin this week.

My hands feel half crippled; I have been driving four-in-hand for the last three weeks, and I can assure you that it is hard on the hands when you are at it from 7 a.m. till 6.30 p.m.

I have 35 acres of wheat and 18 of oats, so I hope that that will give me a good lift out of the monetary mud if all goes well later on. We had somewhat cool weather till about three days ago, but now it is quite hot and the mosquitoes have come out thickly;

it was 80° in the shade—rather nice after 58° below zero, but 80° in the shade is a little too much coming so suddenly; however, if it makes the crops grow we must not grumble.

I have heard nothing further about the pupil I spoke of; perhaps my very plain letter frightened him and he intends going in for something more civilized. He is quite right not to come if he feels that he could not put his shoulder to the wheel and bear with all the discomforts that are every settler's lot at first.

Thank you for offering to give me a stable. It will cost about 150 dollars, for timber is very dear now, and is still going up in price. I shall put up one 16 by 26 feet, that will give me four good double stalls and allow a passage behind the horses. For the present, one stall could be used as a corn bin, as I have only four horses and my Indian pony. I shall patch up my other stable for cattle and pigs and poultry. I had to leave all my stock together last winter, but I should not care to continue to do so, it is unhealthy for the whole lot.

I was rather dreading the idea of putting up another sod-barn, for the season is so short this year, and all the time I should be building my team would be standing idle.

We are very busy over the first of July celebration at our school. We are going to have sports, horse races, and a dance at night, to help pay for the school stable which is being given by the ladies of the district to the school.

All the Canadian women ride astride; it seems very

queer till you get used to it, then it really does not look so bad and it is much safer, for the western women do not appear to be able to stick on to a side saddle.

CHAPTER XLI

July, 1907

OUR school sports went off very well and were a great success, at least financially; but all thought of them has been put out of our heads by your offer of a trip home; you cannot imagine how excited we all are. I think that I can manage it better this year than next, for next year I hope to have over 100 acres in wheat.

We should prefer coming via New York, as the journey via St. John's is bad in winter, and our harvest will be so late this year, that we shall not be able to leave here before the first week in December, I am afraid, and we must be back again before the break up, so as to be ready for spring work.

A terrible event has taken place since I last wrote.

On Wednesday, in the midst of a violent storm, the brother of one of our nearest neighbours went out to shut the stable door, and was struck dead by lightning. When I picked the poor lad up I could not believe that he was dead; he was lying on his back, his eyes wide open and a smile on his face.

It has been a terrible shock to us all, for young

R—— was such a straight honest fellow, with not an enemy, liked by every one who knew him and only 25 years old.

I think that this sad death, the first in our midst, will change many of us and make us think more seriously of the life to come, which any of us, like this dear lad, may be called upon to enter at any time without a moment's notice.

I remember an old Indian General telling my mother that we ought not to pray against sudden death, because every moment of our life ought to be a preparation to meet it, and his words made a greater impression because some three days later he died quite suddenly.

We are having very wet weather and bad storms, and unfortunately I have a lot of hay out; I am afraid a great deal will be spoilt.

The crops round my way are looking well, much better than last year; mine is all headed out and quite a picture, so I hope for a good yield and a big price in the fall.

Our place is beginning to look more like a farm now, with a crop growing, more land ready to crop, and a good pasture up. I got that up last week, and the first thing one of my horses did was to jump the barbed wire and cut himself; luckily he got off with very little damage, and he gives the wire a wide berth now. I do not suppose that he had ever seen barbed wire before.

CHAPTER XLII

August, 1907

I AM in Saskatoon to get the lumber for my stable, so as to try and get it all up before the cutting of the crop comes on, which I expect will be in about three weeks from now.

We have shut up house and all come in together for the agricultural show. It is pretty good considering the newness of the country. There is a good show of cattle and horses, much better than I expected to find.

My wife was very tired and unwell, but I think that the change did her good, for we were all suffering rather from nerves, from the shock caused by poor R——'s death, so the outing did us no harm; now we are settling down to work again.

At last I do believe that we are going to have a railroad; one of the railway men came out the other day to see about the right of way. All of us hereabouts have given a free right of way, so I trust that will help them to hurry up. It is rather hard to have to do so, especially for those whose places will be badly cut up. As for mine it will not really do it much harm,

as it goes across the only piece of land that I do not care about, and if I can have the railroad through there, it will put a greater value on to my land than the railway could afford to pay me for the acre or two that it will take. We are promised 30 miles of rail by this fall. Personally I doubt if they can accomplish this; still when work is begun there will be hope for next year. Anyhow, we have done our best to further the opening up of this part of the prairie lands.

After these three years spent here we are so looking forward to a few months at home, and so escape the worst part of the coming winter. We have the last one still on our minds, with all its bitter cold and anxieties, and we are doubly rejoicing at being at home this year, although the experiences of last winter may not be repeated this coming one. Of course the time of leaving must necessarily be somewhat late; it will depend entirely on what sort of a fall we have. I shall have my grain to team in, and I want to plough all the stubble I can, for I shall have quite 140 acres to seed next year—100 acres in wheat, and 40 in oats. This would have made it difficult to get away next year, so we are all the more delighted that you have offered us a trip this one.

My Scotch neighbours will take care of my horses, the dog, cats, and poultry, and I do not think that it will be difficult to find a lodging for the cattle.

Jack is very excited at the thoughts of going to see you; if he does all he says he will, he will quite scare you; he is very independent and a regular know-all. At the show the other day he gave me the slip whilst

I was talking to a man who had a herd of Jersey cattle. When I looked round for the youngster I found him in a stall with four Jersey calves, quite at home, and giving his opinion on their good and bad points.

I have not been able to get in any hay yet worth speaking of; what I did get in was so soaked by the rain that I have to begin haying all over again.

I am going to a bush 25 miles from here with two wagons for dry wood. I am not looking forward to the trip, for it means an uncomfortable night on the road in the open.

We had our first Church of England service at the school-house last week, and a meeting afterwards to consider whether we should continue to have one. We decided to have a service every other Sunday, but we are only to have a layman to officiate. The Church of England is very slow in looking after its members; the Methodists and Presbyterians are much more active, and do not seem to mind what trouble they take. Young D—— has undertaken to build the stable and has started now. G—— and I will help him when needful, so I am free to do my other work. It will be a treat to have a good building.

The wife and I went and chose the site, and she declares that as she has become quite a fair carpenter, she will drive a lot of nails to help; she can saw a plank far straighter than I can.

Just now housework is very heavy on her, having D—— and G—— to cook for besides ourselves, to wash up, and then start and do it all over again; it is generally between 8 and 9 p.m. by the time she

has finished her day, such is life in the North-West at present.

If I enter into all these details, it is that they may be helpful to other intending emigrants, that they may realize what the wife of a settler, however delicately brought up at home, has to put up with, and to deter those coming who do not feel the courage necessary to face all the trials and hardships that must be gone through, during the first four or five years, at all events, of this kind of life.

CHAPTER XLIII

September, 1907

WE are watching the crops like a cat watches a mouse, the fear of their getting frozen is very present with us; they are looking well, but harvest being so late makes frost so much more to be feared. It would be such a disappointment to lose it all, but I am sorry to say it will not be fit to cut for nearly a fortnight, if then. The garden has done uncommonly well, considering how late it was put in; we have more vegetables than we can get through just now, for everything comes on almost at the same time. The vegetable marrows are as good as ever; we are eating them up fast, because the frost will probably spoil a good many; we have given a lot away as well. Tomatoes will do nothing, the spring was much too late; last year they got frozen when still quite green.

The flowers are looking very pretty; there is a bright little border in front of the door and a large round bed just in front of the bow window; it makes a nice bit of colour and smells so sweet, it has a border of mignonette right round, and pinks, scarlet flax, godelias, lupin, and dwarf sweet peas; we have also a

long row of sunflowers to make a sort of shelter from the wind.

I have begun cutting a neighbour's crop; the binder is working well, but I have had a lot of trouble with the twine, it kept breaking, and that sort of thing is very trying to one's temper. I shall hope to finish this lot of cutting in another couple of days, and then I shall get on with my own crop. It is looking well, I could not wish to see it looking better, and I think that it will yield about 30 bushels to the acre; the oats ought to yield between 50 and 60. Of course one cannot be sure, as we have to cut our crops nearly green this year. We are all in mortal fear of frost. We have had two slight frosts already, but they have done no harm so far.

We shall have a fearful rush this fall to get stubble ploughed, the harvest being so late. I have 50 acres on my own place to plough, and 40 on land that I have rented, so I shall have to bustle as soon as threshing is over.

I ran short of lumber the other day for the stable, so I went and got some more at the new town, "Asquith." It is a nice little place, there are several stores already, a very good hotel, also best of all two elevators up, that I trust we shall be able to team our wheat to this year. If we could, it would be a great saving of time. I left home at 7 a.m. and got back at 7 p.m., rather a difference to the Saskatoon trips.

We are having most extraordinary weather now. I began to cut my crop, did half a day's cutting, and

then I was stopped by the rain, began again two days later and had to wear a fur coat, it was so cold, and to-day for another change we have had a snowstorm. We are trembling for fear of the wheat getting frozen.

CHAPTER XLIV

October, 1907

I GOT through the cutting of my crop at last, although I was much delayed by rain and snow. Lately I have been very busy stacking my oats for spring feed, and getting wood from the bush, also working as much as possible on the land and waiting patiently (?) for the threshers to arrive. There is a lot of threshing to do this year and machines are scarce; I have been waiting for over ten days and no signs of them yet. If they do not hurry up it will be a dreadful rush to get away, as we want to, by December, and I am afraid that I shall be landed into bad weather for my road work; it is bad enough when fine, for both man and beast.

My crop, I am sorry to say, is frozen, but as all the crops are in the same condition more or less, I shall hope to get a fair price when I can market it. To-day I finished hauling up winter food to my neighbours, for my horses during the time we are away.

It seems too good to be true that in about six weeks we shall be home again. We are wondering if we shall appear much changed. We have been leading a life that must roughen one somewhat, but we have tried

to be nevertheless faithful to the old home traditions, and the presence of a refined woman on a homestead exercises a widespreading influence. The S——'s have quite made up their mind to go home this winter, and really S—— is no longer fit for this country after having his feet so crippled.

We are having lovely weather just now, about the best weather we have had during the whole year. It is sickening not to be able to get on with my ploughing on account of this delay in threshing; it will mean such a hustle in the spring.

I heard yesterday that the patent for my land had been issued, and so I am writing to the Registrar to apply for it.

We are going to have quite a clearing out this year in this part, old C—— R—— is leaving his place, his nephew, who is working for me, is going home. I should not wonder if he travels with us. R——, whose brother was struck by lightning, is leaving also; another neighbour has sold out, and there are two or three more we hear are wanting to sell, so this will be a rather lonely part of the world this winter.

They are hard at work on the railroad. It is expected that they will get out here before Christmas. They mean to haul grain this winter, I hear; it will certainly be a great help to us next year.

The site for our town has not yet been selected, but I should not be at all surprised if it is chosen within a mile from us; we may yet get off the cars on our own place when we return in the spring.

It is really wonderful what progress we are making

towards better civilization in the few years that we have been out in the North-West. When we first came here we had no nearer town than Saskatoon, 45 miles distant, and very few neighbours, and now every bit of Government land is taken up, and very little other land remains to be bought; we have a store and post office 6 miles away, a town 20 miles off, a railway fast approaching us, so I think that in the near future we shall find our life out in this part of the world far more pleasant.

CHAPTER XLV

November, 1907

WE had a lot of bother over the threshing; I could not get any of the machines to come to me, so in the end I had to go out on a threshing gang with a team, so as to get a man to pull in to me. I started last Tuesday on the gang, and they came and threshed me on Friday, but when they had only 8 acres left to thresh, the machine broke down; however, they patched it up and managed to finish me on the Monday. I can tell you that I was not sorry to see the last of them; it is no joke having to feed eighteen horses and the men to look after them. As for me I have been up every morning at 4 a.m. and have not got to bed till 11 p.m., and now I have to go up to the boys with two teams, to help them with their threshing, in return for their help.

They will be through on Wednesday probably, and then I shall start teaming my grain to town. I shall have to go to Saskatoon after all this year, but it will not take me long; I shall take one team and then my other one will meet me half-way with another load. I shall change horses and go back to town with it, and so on till all is teamed. I shall start, all being well, on

Monday morning, but I do not expect to reach home again till Saturday; a week on the road all the time is something to look forward to!

The wheat has turned out better than I thought it would; it is frozen and has shrunk, but still it is not a bad sample. It yielded 23 bushels to the acre; it ought to have gone 30 if it had not been frozen. The oats went 44 to the acre instead of 50; it is rather disappointing.

I threshed out 444 bushels of oats and 810 of wheat. The threshing bill comes to 77 dollars, so when all expenses are met, there does not remain a very large percentage for the poor farmer, unless he has a great deal of land under crop, and neither fire nor frost destroys it, for one has both of these enemies to contend with at times. The weather is fine, cold morning and night, but we have not been obliged to set the heater going yet.

We had a surprise visit from the S——'s. We had unfortunately just finished a nondescript meal, breakfast and dinner combined, to save trouble, as my wife was very tired; but of course she had to begin all over again and cook another meal. She has been kept pretty busy, on the go all the time, and I have to be up at 3 a.m. to-morrow to get to the D——'s. I shall be glad when all is finished and we are on our way to England, home, and beauty, not forgetting a good glass of English ale.

Now about Mrs. H—— and her son, I shall be delighted to answer any questions, but I cannot take young H——. All my plans are made for next year,

for I must have help all the time, as I shall have 150 acres in crop, and I mean to break up the quarter I bought.

The railroad is being worked at hard; it is said that in thirty days it will be in working order. What a change from the utter isolation when we came out in 1904.

November 14. I have been much worried. My crop, as you know, was badly frozen, but still I thought that I should be able to get rid of it. Well, I started to team it. I took in two loads and got only 33 cents a bushel for it, and that after a lot of trouble; then I took another and got 30 cents. At present no one will take any more frozen wheat. If I had known the bother I was going to have with this wheat, I would never have gone to the expense of having it threshed. It is going to be a bad year for farmers, a good many I am afraid will go under; the banks are very close and will not lend money, and even if one tries to sell horses or cattle, you cannot get half their value; no cash is to be had, there is none in the country. Elevators are closing down for want of money to buy wheat. Any one with large capital could buy any amount now at very low rates.

CHAPTER XLVI

Saskatoon, 1907

I SHOULD like before closing to say that the Saskatoon of to-day, 1907, is very different from the town we found in 1904; it has grown in an almost incredible manner, and there are now some 5,000 inhabitants; there are five churches, the Knox Presbyterian Church, a Baptist one, St. John's Anglican Church, St. Paul's Roman Catholic one, a Methodist Church, and the Salvation Army has a corps in which some seventy members are enrolled.

There are several schools: the King Edward School, at which both high and public work is done, and where candidates are in training for examinations as high as first-class teaching certificates; the Queen Alexandra School, to which only the junior pupils are admitted, those below the third standard. The Nutana School was the first established, and later on chose to form a district of its own, and the river became the dividing line.

There is a small hospital capable of treating about forty patients. I believe this is in charge of nuns of the Order of the Sisters of Charity. Unfortunately there is a good deal of typhoid fever about, not only

in the town but on the prairie. People are not careful enough about the purity of the water they use; slough water is drunk and becomes an easy source of disease. I am pointing this out as a warning to those coming out to take up land, to, above all things, first make sure of a healthy water supply by sinking a well and covering it over. The conditions of prairie life are so difficult to steer through at first that it is no wonder that many fail to reach any kind of haven. Examples of great success have, I know, been brought prominently forward, but by the side of these how many failures have been passed over in silence? With ourselves I believe that the worst part of the hardships is a thing of the past, but no amount of a better state of existence will ever make it a pleasant life for a woman, unless perhaps for one who has been inured to hard living from her earliest years.

The want of intercourse with those of her own sex and standing, the impossibility of procuring feminine help in domestic arrangements, the constantly recurring solitary hours, all unite in making such a life far from a pleasant one, and, in the long run, must tell on the strongest nerves.

Our district is, as I have said before, the Goose Lake one, 45 miles from Saskatoon. It extends over an indefinite area. The Goose Lake land comprises the Loganton land, the Delisle land, the Harris land, but the nearest post office to the Lake is at Tessier, near the home of Doctor Tessier, a most genial kind-hearted man. The nucleus of a town is already formed there and will probably grow in time, for these

towns seem to spring up like mushrooms, and develop in a very short interval. The crops round Tessier were mostly in stock before the frost came, although, as with us, some had to be cut on the green side, lowering the grade somewhat. Dr. Tessier had 60 acres of wheat that averaged over 20 bushels to the acre; his neighbour went still better, 26 bushels to the acre, all No. 2 Northern.

The railroads are certainly trying to see which will get to Goose Lake first, so we farmers ought to rejoice in the near future, if we are some of us in the dumps just now; at least I speak of my own experience. My wheat was put in too late and so was late ripening, and the frost caught it badly. Well, better luck next year.

Asquith, the new town I spoke of, is located about 27 miles west of Saskatoon, and its future seems assured, as both the C.P.R. main line to Westaskiwin and the G.T.P. main line to Edmonton run through the place, the main street of the G.T.P. town site being a continuance of Asquith main street.

There are two elevators already up, and two more building; there is also a talk of a flour-mill. Considering that this town only started sixteen months ago, its progress is marvellous; it has a bank, a large and handsome hotel, four lumber yards, three general stores, a drug store, two restaurants, a butcher's shop, three implement firms, two draying firms, a saddlery, and even a newspaper started.

Asquith has two churches already built, a Baptist Church and an Anglican one. I hear that soon a

Presbyterian Church and Manse is to be built also. There is a physician in the town, a medallist of the Manitoba Medical College, and it really looks as if Asquith might double its population in a very short time. The sudden shift of the G.T.P. from a more southern route to the location in the Asquith district gave this part of the country a prominence it would not have had otherwise. We only hope that the line passing our place soon will give us a lift up too. The grading of this railroad is done to within 6 miles of our place, and steel will begin to be laid as soon as possible. I am told that wheat will be bought and hauled on it early next year; this will be a great help to us all in the Goose Lake neighbourhood. The S——'s have sold their place and left yesterday for British Columbia. We hope to start for home the end of this month. We will wire our arrival at New York, and by which liner we are sailing.

CHAPTER XLVII

December, 1907

ARRIVED, sailing on *Cedric* bound Liverpool.

Notes

THERE is one statement made during my earlier experience of prairie life that I subsequently found was not borne out by actual fact, I refer to Canadian hospitality.

When asked for it is never refused, it is true, but it has as a general rule to be paid for, settlers out West simply cannot afford to give away anything ; 25 cents is invariably charged for a meal, whether it is a good or an indifferent one. This applies equally to what are called the stopping houses, places where people on the trail can find a night's lodging for themselves and their teams when unable to go on to their own homes.

The lodging generally consists of a mattress or a rug on the floor, and as animal life in various shapes is very numerous, there is matter for great caution in many of these stopping places.

I arrived at one on a very dark night, cold and hungry, some 15 miles from my holding, saw my team under cover and gave it a feed, then asked for a meal for myself. Bread was put before me with some of the syrup that is so much eaten out here. I eat the bread and looked at the syrup, expecting something more sustaining to follow ; but I got nothing that trip but some slices of raw suede seasoned with salt, and a cup of tea. For this sumptuous repast I had to pay 25 cents and 10 cents for the team's entertainment, but I must add that in many of these houses one gets a very fair meal, always for the same amount.

Some friends of mine had a queerer experience. They

arrived at a shack where an old Dutch couple lived; they were given quite a decent meal, very clean and well cooked, but when they expected to sleep on a mattress on the floor of the shack's one room, the bed was turned broadside on, the kitchen table put across it, and all four laid down together, their heads on the pillows and their feet on the table; but the most comical part was that the old woman was put in the middle, for fear that she might fall out.

Of course there are no buffaloes left now, but we have near us a trail called the bone trail, along which the Indians used to carry buffalo bones to trade at the Hudson River Settlement; and on this trail one often finds not only bones, but sometimes entire heads, whilst all over the prairie there are buffalo wallows, kind of oval-shaped holes that are distinctly unpleasant to drive over.

Skis are very useful for quick travelling in winter when one gets used to them. Personally they have caused me many a tumble, but a young Norwegian near us covered 45 miles the other day in about two hours.