A Lady's Life on a Farm in Manitoba

Mrs. Cecil Hall

Table of Contents

A Lady's Life on a Farm in Manitoba

Mrs. Cecil Hall

Produced by Mark Hamann, Juliet Sutherland, Charles Franks
and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team.
This file was produced from images generously made available by the
Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions.

PREFACE.

These letters were never intended for publication, and were only the details written to our family of an every−day life, and now put in the same shape and composition; not as a literary work, but in hopes that the various experiences we underwent may be useful to future colonists intending to emigrate and farm, either in Manitoba or Colorado.

M. G. C. H.

A LADY'S LIFE ON A FARM IN MANITOBA.

* * * * *

Queenstown, April 14th.

What joy! four hours in harbour given us to recruit our emaciated forms and write you a few lines of our experiences and trials. You wished us to keep a diary with every detail, which we will try our best to do, beginning by telling of the cheerless journey to Liverpool in rain, the elements even seeming to lament our departure. The bad weather has lasted more or less ever since, just one gleam of sunshine brightening us up on leaving the wharf, but we saw nothing of the Mersey or the surroundings. The only thing that struck us most forcibly was the smallness of our ship, though it was 6,000 tons. It has just been re−docked and overhauled, and still smells horribly of paint and full of workmen, whom, however, we drop here, in exchange for 1,200 emigrants. These, with about sixty first−class passengers and a hold full of potatoes, form our cargo. We began life bravely last night, enjoying a very good dinner, and after playing a rubber of whist retired to our berths congratulating ourselves on what excellent sailors we were going to be; but alas!... Dressing this morning was too difficult, the ship rolled fearfully, even the friends who came with us thus far, and consider themselves first− class sailors, think that it will be more prudent to go by train through Ireland home, instead of waiting for the return boat of the same line which calls here on Sunday and is to take them to Liverpool. We almost wish we could turn tail; the prospect of ten days more of the briny ocean is not what at this moment we most fancy. However, in the short time we have been in harbour we have been recruiting to start afresh, and hope for better weather.

* * * * *

Mid Atlantic.

Dearest M.

I sadly fear I must have contributed more paving−stones for a certain region; for many good resolutions did I make in starting, and not one of them has been kept, not even so much as writing daily a portion of a letter to be sent home from New York. And now my long story will have to be cut short, and the doings of the last fifteen days will have to be crowded into a very limited space; for we are in sight of land, and our excitement can only be compared to that of school boys the last day of the term. The joy of landing will not be unmingled with regrets in parting from our fellow−passengers, with whom we have become fast friends; and we are inclined mutually to believe in transmigration of souls, and that we must have known each other in some prior state. Some are going into Minnesota, three of them having bought 13,000 acres in the Red River valley, which they are going to farm on a large scale, and hope in four years to have made fortunes, another owns mines in Colorado, having been one

of the first pioneers of the San Juan district; he is in a fair way to a princely fortune. I fear golden apples will not be strewn on our paths, even though we are bound the furthest west. Fifteen days have we been out of sight of land; two days out from Queenstown we broke a piston−rod, which obliged us to lay to, in a fearfully rough sea, for five hours. Next day one of our four boilers burst, and again another piston−rod; which accidents, combined with contrary winds and heavy seas, reduced our speed to nearly half for the remainder of the journey. Our spirits have not flagged, as, thanks to various small games such as pitch−and−toss, running races when the ship was rolling, quoits, and cards, we have not found time unbearably long. The last few days we have had big sweepstakes on the run of the ship; but, unfortunately, none of our party have won them. One evening we had a concert; but you may imagine the talent on board was not great when they had to call upon one of us to accompany the *prima donna*, and the other to sing a second in a duet; another evening we danced or rather tried to our band consisting of a concertina and a flute, played by two of the steerage passengers, but the vessel rolled so persistently that we often lost our equilibrium and reeled like drunken men and women.

I must stop: curiosity bids me go on deck. We shall shortly be in the quarantine harbour, the entrance of which is said to be very fine; though I very much doubt our being able to see anything, as, in spite of being in this much boasted climate of the new world, it is raining and is dull enough to rejoice the hearts of true John Bulls like your daughter's.

* * * * *

NAVY YARD, NEW YORK, April 30th.

I hope you will have got our letters sent off by the ship's boat the night before we were allowed to land, as, though we arrived in the quarantine harbour at 7 o'clock, it was too late for the Custom−house and medical officers to inspect us; we therefore had to lay to, and only moved up to the wharf about 8 o'clock the next morning. We were greeted by a most kind letter of welcome, and the first thing we saw as we got to the dock was the Navy Yard Tug with the Commodore and daughters on board to receive us; and, thanks to them, we had no difficulties or bothers. The Custom− house men went through the form of opening two of our boxes and inquiring into the age of our saddle, which had been used but looked terribly new, hardly as if it had been in wear six months, which is the given period for things to pass in free of duty. We then steamed round New York through much shipping and under a most marvellous new suspension bridge, which is to join New York and Brooklyn, to the dockyard; where we had another most hearty reception from our hostess. They had all been in a fidget at our being so many days late, and directly the ship was telegraphed off Sandy Hook the last night, in spite of the pouring rain, the Commodore had gone down in the tug to the Quarantine Harbour to try and get us off.

Since our arrival we have been doing New York, and are woefully disappointed in the size of the streets. Fifth Avenue I expected to find a Parisian Boulevard with trees lining the side walks, instead of houses of all shapes and sizes, which are good inside, judging by one of the large ones we went to see, but nothing much from the outside. Day−light in the streets is almost shut out in the City part of the town by the endless telegraph wires and advertisements hung across, to say nothing of the elevated railroads built on iron girders, which circulate round at the height of second−floor windows. We have made a good deal of use of the railroad; it is pleasanter than our under−ground, the atmosphere being rather clearer, though at first it is startling to see the twists and curves the trains give to get round the corners of the streets, and to watch the moving of objects at about forty feet below you.

I am not at all surprised people do not care to drive much, as tramways pass through every street almost, and all are so badly paved that paint and springs would suffer. The ferry−boats which ply between the cities, starting every five minutes from different wharves, astonished us most; waggons, carriages, all drive on twenty at a time, and three or four hundred foot−passengers, the latter paying two cents per passage.

On the whole I think we have seen almost everything that is to be seen. We spent an afternoon in the Central Park, lunched at both of Delmonico's restaurants, dined at the invitation of our banker at Pinards, where the roses were lovely, the centre bouquet measuring two feet across, and each lady having different−coloured bunches on her serviette; a play at Walleck's, theatre both pretty and well−ventilated, and a most splendid exit, the stalls on the same level as the street the whole place seemed to empty itself in about five minutes; and a day's expedition to Statten Island, from which we had a lovely view of New York, its surroundings, and the whole harbour. To−morrow we are to go for three nights to Washington, returning here to start westwards on Monday, though everybody tells us we are going too early in the year. The spring in Manitoba has been very late. A , writing on the 26th of April, says they are just starting work, but cannot do much at present on account of the water from the melted snow not having run off. The rivers have broken up. The Red River carried away one of the two bridges at Winnipeg. He happened to be in town at the time, and although he didn't see the bridge go, saw it afterwards and the jam. The ice was blocked for about a mile above, tumbling all over the place, making the river rise about ten feet an hour, washing out all the neighbouring houses. It lasted about ten hours, then crash it all went, floating quietly down the stream, the water receding at the same time. There has been so much snow this year, which makes everything backward; but it has all gone in a week. It must be quite marvellous how quickly it disappears, as, going from one farm to the other, distance about seven miles, starting at 4 o'clock A.M. with the thermometer showing twenty degrees of frost, when the sun got up it was so hot he, A , couldn't get back. Next morning, starting equally early, he only travelled two miles; the snow was so soft the horses sank at every step above their knees. He was trying to take a sledge−load of hay over to his Boyd farm. The cattle there having run very short lately, they even had to take some of the thatching, which was of hay, off the roof of the stable to feed the animals. We may have difficulty in getting up to Winnipeg, as the railroad is washed away within about eighty miles of the place, and the passengers are transferred to a steamer, which takes them twenty miles to another train. There was a fear of famine in Winnipeg, as no provisions could be got up. Lots of emigrants, when they saw the water, turned back. Good−night, we have packing to do to be off early in the tug which takes us over to Jersey city to catch our train to Washington at 10 o'clock on the Pennsylvanian Railway. The Commodore's son, who is home on leave, goes with us, and we have many introductions. We are bidden to a reception at the White House, and have been vainly endeavouring to get into some of our hostess's smart gowns; but, alas! they are all too short, so we shall have to be content with our own black foulards.

* * * * *

RIGG'S HOUSE, WASHINGTON, May 2nd.

We had our first experience of drawing−room cars coming down here, with very comfortable arm−chairs, and one seems to do the journey of 200 miles easily, in about six hours, through very pretty country. I never saw such people as Americans for advertising; all along the line, on every available post or rail, you see, Chew Globe Tobacco, Sun Stove Polish,

We enjoyed the reception at the White House. Our invitation was from 8 to 10 o'clock P.M.: we arrived before the doors were open, and had to wait some few minutes in the entrance, which is glazed in, and where the drums of our ears were sorely tried by a noisy military band, which when you get into the rooms and at a distance sounded well, but not just alongside. After depositing our cloaks, we filed by two and two past the President, shaking hands with him and the wife of the Secretary of State, who receives when there is no Mrs. President, and then wandered through the six remaining rooms, being introduced to several people as Mrs. H of England, and Miss W of England, which we thought would not convey much to their minds excepting that we were two very un−smart Englishwomen; though we were much consoled about our clothes which did not look so peculiar, every sort of costume being worn, even to bonnets. No refreshments are given, so that we were glad that supper was included in the Menu du jour at our Hotel.

I shall not pretend to describe Washington to you. Any guide−book would give a more satisfactory account, but it

is much more my idea of a city of the New World; the streets are well paved, are nice and broad; then the houses are generally standing in their own grounds, with trees and flowers; altogether it may be called an elegant city. The people were most kind and civil to us. One afternoon we made two cabinet calls on ministers, but the other afternoon we went for a drive across the Potomac to Arlington, the ancestral place of the Lees, which was confiscated after the war and is now a soldier's burying−ground. It has an exquisite view across the river. The only thing that distressed us was the bearing−reins on the nice little pair of chesnuts in the buggy. The reins are crossed over their nose, passed between the ears, and fastened tight to the saddle, which forces the head right back and nearly saws the mouth in two. We never rested until we had loosened them, which was supposed to be the reason why the horses broke in their trot afterwards, as they were supposed to require a support.

The weather has been quite delightful, bright sunny days but not hot; and if only the houses and hotels were not kept at such a suffocating temperature, we should be very happy both in and out of doors. The artificial heat has completely knocked us up in Brooklyn. We had a lovely big room with a large bay window besides another window, where we often retired for a blow of fresh air; the result has been that we both have had bad crying colds.

* * * * *

CHICAGO, May 11th.

We are now half way to Manitoba, and have really done the journey thus far so easily that it seems nothing of a drag; and if it wasn't for the Atlantic, A would not seem to be at the end of the world, which we fancied whilst in England.

We left Brooklyn on Wednesday morning, very sorry to part from the Commodore and his family, who have been most kind and friendly, trying their best to make us feel at home. Unfortunately, having only just got the appointment and lately taken up their residence at the Navy Yard, they could do no entertaining. Anyhow, we have had a very pleasant insight into the home life of America, which differs in small ways a good deal from ours, and in character, habits, and everything there is a widish gulf between the two races.

Our train here was a splendid one, stopping only about sixteen times, and doing the nine hundred miles in thirty−six hours. We had a section in the Pullman, which makes a double seat facing each other by day, and at night the two seats are converted into a bed, with the second bed pulled down from the roof, on which mattresses, blankets, and sheets are all arranged with a projecting board at the head and foot, and a curtain in front, so that one is quite private, and we slept like tops. We had also a dining−car on, where every luxury of the season, to strawberries and cream, were served by the blackest of niggers in the whitest of garments, for the sum of a dollar a head per meal.

Only fancy our delight, after leaving Harrisburgh about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, to find friends in the train, people from an adjoining county in England who knew all our friends, and with whom we had much in common. I need hardly tell you that we did chin it until our ways parted at this station, they going to the Grand Pacific, we to the Treemont which had been recommended to us as being a quieter hotel for ladies alone.

Men make these hotels their club, where they smoke and lounge all day; but as there is a second door for ladies, one is not bothered in any way unless you want to go to the office for information.

We are astonished at the enormous piles of buildings in this city; land, one would think, must be cheap. All the shops cover an equally large area, though, in many, several offices are on one floor. It is too marvellous to think, when one looks at this place, that three and a half square miles in the centre of the town, which is now in regular handsome broad streets, the fire of eleven years ago should have so completely burnt everything to the ground,

though now not a vestige of the conflagration is left. The houses have even had time to get quite blackened with the smoke of the soft coal they use, which is found in great quantities all through Pennsylvania; the mines and furnaces we passed on our way up.

The country the whole way was very pretty. We crossed the Susquehana river, which is grand in width and scenery, and started the Juanita through a chain of mountains turning in and out with every bend of the river, so that one felt always on the slant and could generally see either end of the train. Unfortunately it poured with rain the whole way, so any distant views or tops of mountains were invisible. Some of the country is like England, undulating, rolling, well−cultivated fields, enclosed with pailings which overlap each other and would be awkwardish obstacles in a hunting country; but one misses, like abroad, the cattle we saw one or two stray cows, but little else. Around Chicago it is a flat plain, and, as there has been a good deal of rain lately, water is out everywhere. For the last hour of our journey we came through the suburbs, and, as there is no protection whatsoever to the line, we had to come very slowly (about seven miles an hour), ringing a great bell attached to the engine to announce our arrival, as children, cows, vans, go along the line in the most promiscuous way; it is extraordinary that more accidents do not happen. By law, I believe, the train ought to go very slowly wherever lines cross each other; anyhow they must ring the bell, the result being that the bells seem going all day when you are anywhere near the station. We were given introductions to one or two people here, one gentleman putting himself at our disposal to show us around straight away; and we visited the principal shops, streets, park, which is land reclaimed from the lake, and the tramways, which are worked with a pulley from a centre about six miles off. A Chinaman in San Francisco was once heard to describe the said tramways as No horsey, no steamy, go helly.

The weather has, unfortunately, been wet and much against sight−seeing, the streets in consequence are too indescribably dirty, mud inches deep, and everyone is so busy making money that they have not time to pull up those who are responsible and insist on the streets being cleaned, though the money is yearly voted by the municipality, and generally supposed to be pocketed by the authorities. We leave this to−night for St. Paul, much impressed on the whole with Chicago. There are one or two more sights I should like to have seen, such as the two tunnels under the river, but I fancy one leaks and the other is unusable for some other reason. I should also have liked to have been to one of the Niggers' revival meetings; but not to the pork manufactory, where pigs go in alive, are killed and cured ready for exportation in less than twenty minutes. Our friends went there this morning, and the descriptions they gave were not particularly inviting. The lady hadn't been able to touch a mouthful of food all day afterwards, and declared it would be years before she could eat pork. I also have been dying to see a house on the move, but had to content myself with looking at a large brick house, which not three years ago had been moved back 150 yards bodily. Chicago is getting too old a city, and ground is too expensive, for people to be able to change the sites of their houses when the fancy takes them; in St. Paul or Winnipeg we may have the satisfaction of meeting one coming down the street.

* * * * *

THE MERCHANT'S HOTEL, ST. PAUL, May 16.

We left Chicago Friday night for this place at about 9 o'clock, and, thanks to a letter of recommendation to the conductor, two lower berths were assigned to us, and we even had the privilege of not having the uppers pulled down. It is a curious regulation in the Pullman cars, that should the upper not be tenanted it must be opened or else paid for by the occupant of the lower; so unless one takes a whole section one is bound to have a great board just above one's head, which in nine cases out of ten prevents our sitting up in bed, and one never can have much ventilation.

We were awoke earlier on Saturday morning than we either of us quite appreciated, to be in time for breakfast at La Crosse at 7 o'clock. La Crosse is a large settlement of sawmills on the banks of the Mississippi, for cutting up

the wood brought down by the curiously flat−bottomed steamers worked by a paddle in stern the same width as the boat, and which push innumerable rafts of wood before them. We saw several of these steamers, and were detained for a long time on the bridge which crosses the Mississippi, said to be a mile and a quarter long, whilst the farther end of it was drawn aside to allow of two steamers passing through. Our railroad skirted the banks of the river, and we were very excited at seeing an Indian and his squaw in a canoe going down stream. The conductor of the car conversed with us a good deal the whole way, was most anxious to know all about our comings and goings, and told us he would be glad to learn the train by which we returned, as no ladies would ever be allowed to leave Manitoba. Unfortunately we took his advice about the hotels in this place, and on arriving came to the wrong inn. This one is the most frequented, being close to the station, but certainly is not as pleasant, either as regards company or situation, as the other, the Metropolitan. We found one of our fellow Atlantic passengers at the last−named, and I never saw anyone so genuinely glad to see friends. He is one of the three men we told you about, who have invested in thirteen thousand acres in Minnesota. He is down here trying to hurry the contractors who are to build their houses and stables at Warren; also to buy farming implements and lumber. His horses and mules he intends buying at St. Louis. He gives a most vivid account of all the roughing they have under gone. They are living in a small way−side inn, nine men in one room with no furniture. One of them managed one night to get hold of a stretcher in lieu of a bed, and just as he was settling down to his first beauty−sleep a carter came and told him to move on, as the stretcher was his. He suggested that as we are to pass Warren we should pay them a visit on our way up; that he would take up a tent and furniture, besides provisions; but I do not think it sounds inviting enough, as, though I do believe we should do the community a good turn, besides the pleasure of our company, they would have a tent and a few luxuries after our departure, instead of feeding, as they daily do, on beans and bacon, living in a filthy hotel and having had nothing to wash in until they bought themselves a bucket. Last night, just after we had gone to bed, a loud knock was made at our door, and a man asked if we intended getting up to−night, at which we were furious; but he persisted in the most determined way in questioning us as to whether it wasn't Mrs. H 's room, and we had time to get more than angry before we recognised A 's voice and simultaneously both jumped out of bed to receive him, *en deshabille*. It is very nice of him coming all this way, four hundred miles, to meet us. He looks much the same as ever, only as brown as a berry from the reflection of a fortnight's sun on the snow. He is wonderfully cheery, seems glad to see us, has so many questions to ask of you all, and swears by the healthiness of the Canadian climate and the life they lead at the farm. We are none of us ever to be sick or sorry again!

We have been a long drive to−day, starting at 11 o'clock, and only back just in time to do our last packing, send off this letter, and dine before we go on to Winnipeg at about 7 o'clock. We drove across a bridge on the Missouri to Fort Snelldon, a miniature Aldershot, with huts and tents, and a beautiful stretch of grass for manoeuvres or galloping, on to the Minhaha Falls, where, we stayed some time gazing and admiring and even walking under the falls. The volume of water falling seemed extraordinary, but was completely eclipsed by the falls of St. Anthony at Minneopolis, which we saw later. The latter originally fell perpendicularly; but to utilise them for the enormous saw−mills built at the water's edge they have been under−planked, so that the water goes down in a slant. We were most fascinated by the sight, and watched the torrent from various points of view.

Minneopolis is much like other Western towns we have seen, semi−detached houses standing in their own grounds, the grass in many instances well kept, but utterly destitute of flowers, which one misses so much. This place, St. Paul's, is beautifully situated, built on both sides of the river, the banks of which are very steep. Good−night; in twenty−four hours more we hope to be at our destination in the far North−west. But we are not to go out immediately to the farm, as we are arriving rather earlier than A expected, and the men who have been living with him all the winter cannot turn out before Friday to make room for us; so we are to stay in Winnipeg for a day or two.

* * * * *

WINNIPEG, May 18th.

Here we are, and we do feel ourselves really landed in the far North, after a most prosperous journey the whole way. We arrived quite on time last night, rather an unusual thing with these trains, particularly since the floods, when the passengers were dependent on the steamer, we saw yesterday as we passed high and dry on the prairie, which had to convey them from one train to another across the floods close to St. Vincent.

O the prairie! I cannot describe to you our first impression. Its vastness, dreariness, and loneliness is appalling. Very little is under cultivation between this and St. Paul, so that only a house here and there breaks the line of horizon. There are a few cotton and aspen trees along the Red River Valley, but with that exception the landscape for the last fifteen hours' travelling has been like the sea on a very smooth day, without a beginning or an end.

We were met at the station here by one of A 's friends, who drove us out about a mile and a half from the town across the Assiniboine over a suspension bridge built exactly opposite the old Fort Garry, and somewhere close to the spot where our first English pioneers must have landed from the river steamer some twelve years ago to a very comfortable house belonging to another mutual friend, a dear kind old gentleman whose wife and daughter being away has placed the whole house at our disposal until we can get out to the farm, which we find is sixteen miles off.

It will be very difficult to describe everything to you. To begin with, the depot or station presented a curious appearance, such crowds of men loafing about with apparently no other object but to watch the new arrivals; so different to English stations where everyone seems in a hurry either coming or going. And then the roads we had to drive along defy description. The inches (no other word) of mud, and the holes which nearly capsize one at every turn. Even down Main Street the roads are not stoned or paved in any way. We bumped a good deal in our carriage, and for consolation at any worse bumping than usual were told, This is nothing, wait until you get stuck in a mud−hole out west. Then our route, thanks to the floods which have been very bad this year and are still out enormously the upper floors of two−storied houses only being visible in many places, was most intricate. We had to be pioneered over a ditch into a wood, supposed to be cleared, with the stumps of trees left sticking about six inches out of the ground for your wheels to pass over, on to a track, and then through a potato garden to the house.

We were quite ready for our supper, it being about 8 o'clock when we got here; and the food at Glyndon, where we stopped twenty minutes in the middle of the day to put away the contents of sixteen dishes of some various mess or another, had not been of the most inviting of meals; and though the chops here were the size of a small leg of mutton and had the longest bones I ever saw, hunger was the best of appetisers, and we did credit to our meal, which had been cooked by our host.

This morning we were awoke by the same kind person depositing a can of water at our door for our baths. He gets up very early, as he has to fetch the water, milk the cow, feed the calf, etc., all before breakfast and starting off for his office.

There is a man−servant here who gets 5 to 6 pounds a month, apparently to do nothing, as he is the only one on the premises who can afford to be idle and smoke his pipe of peace; but servants are so difficult to get in this country, and our host being on the move, having got a better Government appointment at Perth, is anxious not to change now, so, like everybody else, puts up with anything. The last servant they had in this house was the son of a colonel in the English Army, who was described as a nice boy but very lazy ; but this man−servant hasn't even the recommendation of being nice. He was out at the farm working for his board and lodging, and no wages for some months, but A could not stand his idleness.

We all had to cook our breakfasts this morning, and as everyone was, by way of helping, either making toast,

poaching the eggs, cooking hunks of bacon, or mending up the fire, the stove was pronounced much too small. The moment we had finished our meal we had to retire upstairs and make the beds and tidy up a little; a half−breed woman living about half−a−mile off is supposed to come in for an hour and wash up and clean the house, but if it is bad weather she is unable to get through the mud; therefore when the ladies of the establishment are away the house is left a good deal to its own devices, the dust and cobwebs not often disturbed.

* * * * *

C FARM, May 21st.

Our last letter to you was written with the first impression of our colonist life whilst in Winnipeg, where we had a very good insight of the way English people will rough it when they come out. It would horrify our farmers to have to do what gentlemen do out here. They are all their own servants. That lazy servant in Winnipeg, we were told, gave notice to leave, because one night he was requested to keep the kitchen fire in so that we might have a kettle of hot water when we went to bed.

We spent as little time as we could at our suburban residence, so as to save him any extra trouble, always lunching and sometimes dining in Winnipeg; and though all the restaurants are bad, still the food was almost as good as what we cooked ourselves. Our chief mistake for our first meals was that we put everything on the fire at the same time, and, funnily enough, our fish boiled quicker than the sausages, and they again much quicker than the pudding. Once there was a bread−and−butter one, about which there has been a good deal of chaff, as it was supposed to be first cousin to bread−and−milk!

The weather was very bad, constant rain, and we had a fair specimen of Winnipeg mud. To these buckboards (which is a buggy with a board behind for luggage), or to any of the carriages, there are no wings to protect one from the mud, so that we always came in bespattered all over, a great trial to our clothes. But in spite of the rain and bad weather we were determined to come out here on Friday. We hired a democrat, a light waggon with two seats, and started during the afternoon in the rain, hoping it might clear which it eventually did when we were about a third of our way. It was awfully cold, and the jolting of the carriage over the prairie so fearful that our wraps were always falling off. I had always understood the prairie was so beautifully smooth to drive over; but found it much resembling an English arable field thrown out of cultivation, with innumerable mole−hills and badger−holes, and natural cracks about an inch wide, which drain the water off into the marshes. If your carriage is heavily weighted it runs pretty easy; but woe betide you if driving by yourself you bump up and down like a pea on a shovel.

We nearly upset, shortly after leaving Winnipeg, as a house was on the move, or, more properly speaking, had been, as it was stuck in a mud−hole; a load of hay, trying to get round it, had stuck as well; and the only place given us to pass was fearfully on the slant down to a deepish dyke, into which a buggy had already capsized. We caught the first glimpse of our future home eight miles off, the house and stables looking like three small specks on the horizon. It is very difficult to judge distances on the prairie, and the nearer we seemed to get to our destination the further the houses were removed. The farm had an imposing appearance as we drove up to it. Mr. B , who met us at the gate, was most anxious that on arrival we should be driven to the front door and not to the kitchen one, which, being the nearest, is the handiest. He, poor man, has given up his bed and dressing−room to us, and we find ourselves very comfortable.

* * * * *

C FARM, May 24.

The two young men, Messrs. H and L , who inhabit a tent about two miles from here, and who are building themselves a stable, are going into Winnipeg to−morrow for more lumber; and as I don't know when I shall have another opportunity of sending letters in, I send you a few lines. These two men have been living with A all the winter, and only turned out for us the day we arrived. It was such bad weather they hoped and speculated on our not coming; so that when we were seen in the distance there was a general stampede to clear out. I must say I should have been very loth to turn out, during this cold weather, of a comfortable house into a tent, and, had I been they, should have wished us somewhere. We have already had a taste of the cold in these regions. Friday, when we drove out here, was bad enough; but on Saturday, when E and A went into town again to take our carriage back, they were nearly frozen with the biting wind and sleet they had to face the whole of the sixteen miles home. On Sunday the thermometer was down to 22, or ten degrees of frost, with a bitter north−west wind, and we had an inch of snow on the ground; and though the sun melted most of it, the thermometer at night went down again to 24. I don't think I ever felt so cold in bed, in spite of a ton weight of clothes. Luckily the stoves are still up in the house in summer they are generally put away in the warehouse to give them room so that we have been able to make a light both night and day. We are told the weather is most unusual; anyhow, it is mighty cold. Those poor men in the tent have suffered a good deal; one night the pegs to the windward gave, and the snow drifted against their beds as high as their pillows. They luckily have got a stove, but are obliged to leave their door open to allow of the pipe going out; unfortunately they have no extra tin or iron to put on the canvas round the pipe, which is the usual way to prevent it catching fire.

To describe our life here will take some doing, and, after the novelty has worn off, it will not amuse us quite so much; nor shall we be so keen of helping our Abigail, who is the wife of the carpenter and maid−of−all−work, in everything, excepting that she must always have a great deal to do for a large household like ours, consisting of four men and our two selves, and we shall always want employment, and I don't think we shall either of us care to ride or drive much.

We have fallen into it (the life) wonderfully quickly; completely sunk the lady and become sort of maids−of−all−work. Our day begins soon after 6 o'clock by laying the breakfast, skimming the cream, whilst our woman is frying bacon and making the porridge for the breakfast at 6.30. Mr. B and A are out by 5 o'clock, in order to water, feed, and harness their horses all ready to go out at 7 o'clock, when we get rid of all the men. We then make the beds, help in the washing−up, clean the knives, and this morning I undertook the dinner, and washed out some of the clothes, as we have not been able to find a towel, duster, or glass−cloth, whilst Mrs. G cleaned out the dining−room. The dirt of the house is, to our minds, appalling; but as Mrs. G only arrived a few days before we did, and all the winter the four men were what is called in this country baching it (from bachelor), namely, having to do everything for themselves, it is, perhaps, not surprising that the floors are rather dirty and that there is a little dust. The weather is much against our cleaning, as the mud sticks to the boots and, do what you will, it is almost impossible to get it off; not that the men seem to have thought much about it, as, until we arrived and suggested it, there was no scraper to either door. Poor Mr. B was rather hurt in his feelings this morning on expressing some lament at the late sharp frosts, that all his cabbages would be killed, when we said that it was a pity he had sown them out of doors, as he might almost have grown them on the dining−room carpet. He also amuses us by lamenting that he did so much cleaning and washed the floors so often; he might just as well have left it until we arrived. Our time is well filled up until dinner, at 12.30, at which we have such ravenous appetites, we are told, no profits made on the farm will pay our keep. At half−past 1 when the men turn out again, we generally go out with them, and some out−door occupation is found for us; either driving the waggons or any other odd jobs. There is a lot of hay littered about, and that has to be stacked; also the waste straw or rubbish which is burnt, and the fires have to be made up. Three−quarters of an hour before either dinner or supper (the latter meal is about half−past 6) a flag, the Union Jack, is hoisted at the end of the farther stable if neither A nor Mr. B is about, we undertake to do it to call the men in; and they declare the horses see the flag as soon as they do and stop directly. The class of horse here is certainly not remarkable for its good looks; but

they are hard, plucky little beasts, and curiously quiet. The long winter makes them, as well as all the other animals, feel a dependence upon man, and they become unusually tame. The cows, cats, and everything follow the men about everywhere. They used to have to keep the kitchen door shut to prevent one of the cows walking in. A has got a jolly old cat who follows him like a dog, sleeps on his bed, and sits next to him at meals. Mr. B has a dear colley with whom he carries on long conversations, particularly on the subject of the coolness of the morning and the water in his bath; so you see we have plenty of animal life about. The men at the tent have a black water−spaniel, which greatly prefers our fare and warm house to the tent, so is nearly always here.

* * * * *

May 25th.

We over−slept ourselves this morning, it being a dull day and no sun to wake us up, so that it was past 6 before any of us made our appearance. The way we work here would rejoice Uncle F 's heart and amaze some of our farmers' wives and daughters. My advice to all emigrants is to leave their pride to the care of their families at home before they start, and, like ourselves, put their hand to everything. We have had some funny experiences; but for all our hard work we get no kudos or praise, it is all taken as a matter of course. I would not live in such a place for worlds, but while it lasts it is great fun; and I think we have done good by coming out, if only to mend up all the old rags belonging to these four men. We were much in want of dusters, etc., the first days, and were told that when the three months' wash which was in Winnipeg returned we should find everything we wanted, instead of which there was a fine display of torn under−linen, and stockings by the dozens, which we have been doing our best to patch up and darn, but no house linen. We shall do as much washing as we possibly can manage at home, I expect, as the prices are so fearful, to say nothing of the inconvenience of being ages without one's linen. I will just quote a few of the prices from our bill of the Winnipeg Steam Laundry. Shirts 15 cents, night ditto 10 cents, vests and pants 25 to 50 cents, blankets 50 cents, counterpanes 35 cents, table−cloths 15 to 35 cents, sheets 10 cents, pillow−slips 5 to 15 cents, night−dresses 15 cents to 1 dollar, petticoats 30 cents to 1 dollar, etc., everything in proportion. We thought one dollar per dozen all round was exorbitant, but when hardly anything is less than eightpence (as a cent, according to the exchange, is more than a halfpenny) it seems ruinous.

We get 4 dollars 80 cents only for the sovereign here, being tenpence short of the five dollars.

* * * * *

May 28th.

Our weather is improving, to−day has been lovely; but alas! with the warmth have come the mosquitoes. I don't believe you will ever see us again; they (the mosquitoes) bite so fearfully, even in the day−time, that they will devour us up entirely. A is having wire coverings made for the doors and windows; but, unfortunately, owing to the floods after the melting of the snow, all the stores which ought to have arrived in Winnipeg a month ago have been delayed, and the shops are very short of goods of all sorts and kinds. There are said to be 4,000 cars with provisions, etc. between this and St. Paul. A and I spent an afternoon at the other farm, Boyd, which he rents of a Mr. Boyd, three thousand acres for 40 pounds a year. It is covered with low brushwood with a few trees here and there, and a good deal of marsh, and therefore unfit for cultivation, so they keep it entirely for their cattle and for the cutting of hay in summer. It is a much prettier place than this, the house being surrounded by trees, whereas here we haven't one within seven miles, though last year they did their best and planted nearly five hundred round the house as avenues to the drive; but only a few survived the drought of last autumn and severe cold of winter, the rest are represented by dead sticks. We tried to see the cattle at Boyd's, but they were away feeding on the marsh and could only be looked at from a distance, as we neither of us felt inclined to run the chance of being bogged or of wetting our feet.

In coming home we called at the tent, and I was surprised to find how quickly Messrs. H and L were building their stable, which is to be large enough to hold two stalls and a room beyond, which, when they have a house, will make a good loose−box; but for the time being they intend to live in, either sleeping in the loft or tent.

To build a house or stable is not very difficult; but with no carpenter or experienced man to help it wants a certain amount of ingenuity. You lay out your foundation by putting thick pieces of oak called sills on the ground in the shape of your house. In town these sills are nailed to posts which have been driven eight feet into the ground; but on the prairie are simply laid on the flat; on to the sills come the joists, planks 2 x 6 placed on edge across, two feet apart. Then the uprights, which stand on the sills two feet apart, form the walls. To these you nail rough boards on each side, with a layer of tar−paper in between if building a stable; if a dwelling−house, on the inside you put against your rough board, laths, and then plaster, on the outside the tar−paper and siding.

The floor is made by nailing rough boards on the joists, then tar−paper, and on the top of that tongued and grooved wood fitting into each other, to make it air−tight.

The roofs, which are almost always pointed on account of the snow, are composed of rafter 2 x 4, two to three feet apart, with rough boards across, then tar−paper and shingles; the latter are thin, flat pieces of wood laid on to overlap each other.

We send you a small sketch of our buildings, which will give you a better idea of these frame houses than any description. They can be bought ready−made at Chicago, and are sent up with every piece numbered, so that you have no difficulty in putting them together again.

Our own house is twenty−four feet square with a lean−to as kitchen. The dining and drawing−rooms are each twelve feet square, separated by sliding−doors; A 's bedroom, the entrance−hall, and stair−case dividing the remainder of the house. Our front−door is not quite in the centre; but, thanks to the verandah, one does not perceive it. Above, looking due south, we have a bed−room, dressing−room, and large cupboard for our clothes. There are two other rooms at the back for the men.

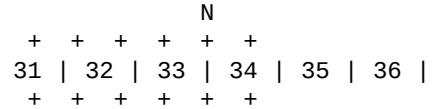
The other house is for the labourers, of whom there are eleven, with a woman as cook, the wife of one of them; it is also for a warehouse, where all the spare implements and stores are kept.

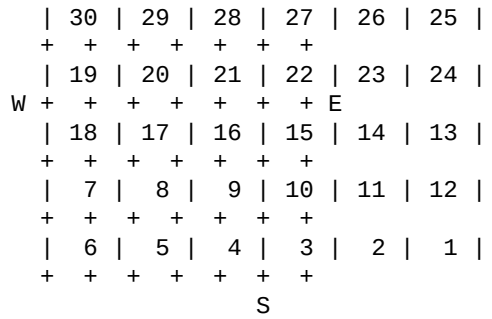
Besides these houses we have two good stables, one holding fourteen horses, the other the remaining six (also the cows, pigs, and chickens during the winter); piggeries; and last, but not least, my chicken−house. A has presented me with a dozen hens, for which he had to pay thirteen dollars, which with the seven old ones are my special charge, and are an immense amusement and occupation.

His farm here, as he has other land elsewhere besides the Boyd Farm, consists of 480 acres; half of one section and a fourth of another.

All the surveyed country in the North−west Territory has been divided into townships thirty−six square miles, and they again into sections of a mile square, which are marked out by the surveyors with earth mounds thrown up (at the four corners) in the form of right−angled pyramids, with a post about three feet high stuck in the centre. The mounds are six feet square, with a square hole on each side. To the marking of sections a similar mound is erected, only of smaller dimensions.

The sections are numbered as shown by the following diagram:





The Townships are numbered in regular order northerly from the International Boundary line or 49th parallel of latitude, and lie in ranges numbered east and west from a certain meridian line, drawn northerly from the said 49th parallel, from a point ten miles or thereabouts westward of Pembina.

When the Government took over the territory from the Hudson Bay Company in 1870, two entire sections in every fifth township and one and three−quarters in every other, were assigned to the Company as compensation. There were also two sections reserved as endowment to public education, and are called School Lands, and held by the minister of the Interior, and can only be sold by public auction.

The same was done for the half−breeds; 240 acres were allotted to them in every parish. Their farms are mostly on the rivers, along the banks of which all the early settlers congregated; and to give each claimant his iota the farms had to be cut up into long strips of four miles long by four hundred yards wide.

On every section−line running north and south and to every alternate running east and west nine feet, or one chain, is left for roads. Our farm−buildings are not quite in the centre of the estate, on account of having to make the drive up to the house beyond the marsh on the eastern boundary.

I have drawn you a plan of the farm; the spaces covered with little dots are the marshes: the one on the west extends for miles, and has a creek or dyke dug out by Government to carry off the water. From the drawing it looks as if there was much marsh around us; but this bit of ground was the driest that could be found not already taken up. As it was, A purchased it of a man who has some more land nearer Winnipeg, giving him five dollars per acre. The Nos. 30 and 31 mean the sections of the townships.

For emigrants wishing to secure a homestead, which is a grant of 160 acres given by Government free, with the exception of an office−fee, amounting to ten dollars on all the even−numbered sections of a town−ship, he will now have to travel much further west, as every acre around Winnipeg is already secured, and has in the last two years risen most considerably in value.

The Canadian Pacific Railroad Company, which was given by Government 25,000,000 acres, besides the 25,000,000 dollars to make the line across the country from Thunder Bay on Lake Superior to the Rockies, sell their land (which is on odd−numbered sections of every township for twenty−four miles on each side of the track, with the exception of the two sections, 11 and 29, reserved for school−lands) for two dollars fifty cents, or ten shillings per acre, to be paid by instalments, giving a rebate of one dollar twenty−five cents, or five shillings per acre, if the land is brought into cultivation within the three or five years after purchase.

A man occupying a homestead is exempt from seizure for debt, also his ordinary furniture, tools, and farm implements in use, one cow, two oxen, one horse, four sheep, two pigs, and food for the same for thirty days; and his land cultivated, provided it is not more than the 160 acres; also his house, stables, barns and fences; so that if a man has bad luck, he has a chance of recovering his misfortunes.

In one of your letters you ask if a poor man coming out as labourer, and perhaps eventually taking up land as a homestead or otherwise, would encounter many difficulties. I fancy not, as both the English and Canadian Governments are affording every facility to emigrants, who can get through tickets from London, Liverpool, or Ireland at even a lower rate than the ordinary steerage passenger. They can have themselves and their families booked all the way, the fares varying from nine pounds five to the twenty−eight pounds paid by the saloon.

On board ship the steerage have to find their own bedding and certain utensils for use; otherwise everything else is provided, and, I am told, the food is both good and plenty of it. Regular authorised officers of the Dominion Government are stationed at all the principal places in Canada, to furnish information on arrival. They will also receive and forward money and letters; and everyone should be warned and put on their guard against the fictitious agents and rogues that infest every place, who try to persuade the new−comers into purchase of lands or higher rates of wage.

We heard the other day of an English gentlemen being taken in by one of these scoundrels, and giving a lot of money for land which on examination proved to be worthless. Luckily for him, there was some flaw in his agreement, and his purchase was cancelled. Men who intend buying land should be in no great hurry about their investments; the banks give a fair percentage on deposits, and it is always so much more satisfactory to look around before settling.

E has been very busy arranging the garden; a most fatiguing process, as she has to cart all her own sods to make a foundation and then heap soil on to them; but having brought a quantity of seeds from England she feels bound to sow them, and hopes they will make a grand show later on, and the place quite gay. You should have seen the beam of delight which shone on the countenance of a stranger who had come out from Winnipeg for the night, when on arrival he was immediately pressed into E 's service to carry water for these said seeds. The temperature is now at 64 degrees, and, as things grow as if by magic, we hope they will soon put in an appearance. Oats planted only a week ago are now an inch above ground. We have had a nice breeze the last two or three days, so that the mosquitoes have not worried us so much.

The prettiest things to see here are the prairie fires at night. The grass is burnt in spring and autumn so as to kill off the old tufts and allow of the new shoots growing for hay. The fires look like one long streak of quivering flame, the forked tips of which flash and quiver in the horizon, magnified by refraction, and on a dark night are lovely. In the day−time one only sees volumes of smoke which break the monotony of the landscape, though I don't know that it is picturesque. With a slight breeze the fires spread in a marvellous way, even at the rate of eight or nine miles an hour. The other day A and Mr. H , whilst putting up their tent, did not perceive how near a fire they themselves had lighted at some distance was getting, until it was upon them. They then had to seize hold of everything, pull up the tent pegs as best they could, and make a rush through the flames, singeing their clothes and boots a good deal.

The pastures on the burnt prairie are good the whole summer, and animals will always select them in preference to any other. The wild ponies, be the snow in winter ever so deep, by pawing it away, subsist on these young shoots and leaves of grasses, which are very nutritious and apparently suffer little by the frost, which only kills the upper leaves but does not injure what is below. The mirage is also very curious; the air is so clear that one often sees reflected, some way above the horizon, objects like the river, trees, and even the town of Winnipeg, which we could not otherwise see; we could actually one evening, at sunset, distinguish the gas−lights.

* * * * *

Sunday.

This is a real day of rest, and the men really do deserve it. We all have a respite, as regards breakfast, it being at 9

o'clock instead of 6.30; and do we not appreciate the extra forty winks! The whole day is spent more or less in loafing, we having no regular church nearer than Winnipeg, sixteen miles, though an occasional service is given at Headingley, eight miles off. The men lie stretched on the straw−heaps in the yard, basking and snoozing in the sun. We generally have some stray man out from Winnipeg, and are much struck with the coolness of their ways. Colonial manners, somehow, jar a good deal on one; they take it quite as a matter of course that we ladies should wait on them at table, and attend to their bodily comforts. On the other hand, they never seem to object to any accommodation they get, and are perfectly satisfied with the drawing−room sofa for a bed, even with sheets taken out of the dirty linen bag, which has been once or twice the case when our supply has run short. I don't object to their coming, only that our Sunday dinners have to be in proportion, and as all our provisions come out from Winnipeg it is rather difficult catering. We have no outside larder or anywhere to keep our meat and butter, so have instituted a lovely one by putting all our things down the well, which is nearly dry and is under the kitchen floor. In winter there is never any need of a larder, as the meat is frozen so hard that it has to be twelve hours in the kitchen before they can attempt to cook it.

Our food is very good and we have the best of all receipts, ravenous appetites for every meal. Our breakfast consists of porridge, bacon, and any cold meat, jam, and any quantity of excellent butter and bread. Dinner, a hot joint and a pudding of some sort, finishing up with coffee. Supper, much the same. We have coffee for every meal, and, as the pot is always on the hob, anybody can have a cup when they like. The men have about two cups apiece before breakfast when they first get up. We never mind any amount of coffee, but wage war against the cocktails, taken before meals as appetisers. A cocktail is a horrid concoction of whisky, bitters, sugar and water, which are all mixed together with a swidel stick, which stick is always on the wander and for which a search has to be made. Nipping is too much in vogue in this country, but we are told that a lot of support is wanted, the air is so rarefied and the water has so much alkali in it, and therefore not supposed to be healthy, but it is most beautifully clear and delightfully cold to drink.

It certainly does disagree with the horses and cattle when first imported into the district.

* * * * *

June 3rd.

If you happen to know of anybody coming out here, and so many do, and you would like to give A a present, I wish you would kindly send him a few table−cloths, dusters, towels, and pairs of sheets; in short any linen would be most acceptable as we are so short. How these men managed when the linen went into Winnipeg to be washed, and was sometimes kept a month ere it came home, is a mystery. These extra men living in the house have none. They facetiously describe their ideas of dirt by saying, if the table−cloth, however filthy it might look, when flung against the wall didn't stick, it went on for another week; if it stuck, was then and there consigned to the dirty−linen bag.

Since we have been here we have instituted a weekly wash, every Monday and Tuesday. E and Mrs. G preside at the tub all day, and even then our sheets and towels often run short.

Every colonist ought to provide himself with two pairs of sheets, half a dozen towels, two table−cloths, and a few dusters; and as those things and his wearing apparel, if in use six months previously, are allowed into the country free of duty, they might as well bring them over as everything of that sort in Winnipeg is so fearfully dear I do not like buying anything there. We sent for some unbleached calico the other day, worth twopence−halfpenny; was charged twelve cents or sixpence a yard. Besides the four yards of calico there were ten of bed−ticking, also ten of American cloth; and the bill was six dollars seventy cents, nearly seven−and−twenty shillings. Everything is equally dear, the demand is so much greater than the supply. Beef is tenpence to thirteenpence a pound, mutton about the same, bacon tenpence, pork tenpence, chickens four and twopence each. We use a good deal of tinned

corned beef; and very good it is, it makes into such excellent hashes and curries and is so good for breakfast.

A also wants a pair of long porpoise−hide waterproof boots sending out; they are quite an essential, as after the heavy rains water stands inches deep in our yards, and he has so much walking into the marshes. In the spring, when the snow has melted, the sloughs or mudholes along all the tracks and across the prairie are so deep that horses and waggons are repeatedly stuck in them, and the men have to go in, often up to their waist, to help the poor animals out. The only way sometimes to get waggons out is to unhitch the horses, getting them on to firm ground, and by means of a long chain or ropes fastened to the poles, pull the waggons out which as a rule have previously had to be unloaded. The clothes these men wear are indescribable. A at the present moment is in a blue flannel shirt, a waistcoat, the back of which we are always threatening to renew. Inexpressibles somewhat spotty, darned, and torn, and, thanks to one or two washings, have shrunk, displaying a pair of boots which have not seen a blacking−brush since the day they left England. Coats are put on for meals, to do honour to the ladies, but seldom worn otherwise. The coarser and stronger the clothes are the better. A 's straw hat is also very lovely, it serves periodically for a mark to shoot at with the rifle on Sunday mornings, or when company come out from town. We both of us feel much like our old nurse when we are doing our mendings, cutting up one set of old rags to patch another; but thanks to ammonia and hot irons, we flatter ourselves we make them almost look respectable again.

There is a half−breed called L'Esperance who lives about eight miles from here, on the banks of the Assiniboine; and one of our neighbours telling us the other day he had several buffalo robes to sell, we drove over to inspect them, and saw some real beauties for ten or twelve dollars; at the Hudson Bay stores, in town, they ask sixteen for them. L'Esperance himself wasn't at home when we got there; but his wife, a fine, tall woman, speaking a peculiar French patois, showed us around, also the pemmicain, which is buffalo−meat pounded, dried, and pressed into bags of skins, it keeping good for years in that way. It looked nasty, but the children were chewing it apparently with great relish. Whilst in the shanty we heard a great noise, and, running out, found our horse, which had either taken right or been stung by some fly, tearing past us with the buggy through the old lady's potato−field into the bush. E tore after it, and in a few hundred yards came up to the horse standing trembling, and gazing at the shattered remains of our poor vehicle. He had tried to turn the corner, when the whole thing capsized topsy−turvy, and he had almost freed himself of all the harness; luckily he was considerate enough not to have given that one more struggle which would have indeed settled the whole question, and obliged us to foot it on our ten toes home. Curiously enough the shafts were not broken, but the splinter−bar was. There was quite a procession back to the shanty, the half−breed woman and one girl dragging the buggy, one child carrying the cushion, another the whip and wraps, and E leading the horse. We set to work to make good the damage as best we could, with thin strips of buffalo−hide, and started homewards; but without buying our robes, not daring to add to our weight. The man at the ferry−boat gave us an extra binding up, and by going cautiously we got home, though we feared every moment would be our last, as regards driving, as the bound−up parts creaked most ominously all the way, and we fully expected at every rough bit to go in half. The horse is generally so quiet that we never mind where we leave him standing. I luckily have just given A a new carriage, which will come in very handy. It is to be a democrat, double seats, and one long enough to be able to carry luggage. These small buggies are beautifully light, but will carry next to nothing; and we always have difficulty in accommodating all our parcels every time we come out of Winnipeg.

* * * * *

June 6th.

A waggon is going into town to−morrow to fetch a sulky and a gang−plough, and some potatoes for seeding; and we hope a few also of the latter for eating, as hitherto our only vegetables have been white beans and rice. You may be wondering what these ploughs are: a sulky is a single−furrowed sixteen inch plough, to which are harnessed three horses, a man riding on a small seat and driving them instead of walking; and a gang is a

two−furrowed twelve− inch plough, and drawn by four to six horses, and which will break over four acres a day; the sulky about three. A has had one for some time, but as yet only the deep ploughing or backsetting of last year's breaking has been going on, and until the seeding and harrowing is finished, which ought to have been done before now, but this year has been delayed by the lateness of the spring, and the snow being so long in melting, no fresh breaking has been begun.

There are still about two hundred and eighty acres to break, or, more properly speaking, two hundred and forty, as forty acres are in marsh, in which water stands so deep no cultivation would be possible, though, later on, the marshes yield beautiful crops of hay; rather coarse−looking stuff, but undeniably nutritious, and not distasteful to either horses or beast. It has often been speculated as to whether there was any means of draining the marshes, but, owing to the extreme level character of the country, you could get no fall, and tiles would not do on account of the severity of the frosts, which penetrate deeper into the ground than the drains could be carried. The Government have cut good−sized ditches at right angles to the river, and they are found to be the only practical drainage which is feasible, and, when once cut and the water set running, have no tendency to fill up, but gradually wear deeper and broader, so that in time they almost become small rivers. We have one running through our west marsh, and on a bye−day we sometimes fish in it for pike; not that any of our party have been successful, but some of our neighbours catch fish, and very fair−sized ones.

The land is wonderfully rich and good. A black loam (which colour is no doubt due, partly, to the gradual accumulation of the charred grasses left by prairie fires), of about two feet in depth, with a clay and sandy sub−soil, and in which, they say, they will be able to grow cereals for the next twenty years, without manure or its deteriorating; though if there was only time to do it before the snow falls, it seems a pity not to put the manure on to the land instead of burning it, as they do at the present moment. Perhaps when all the land is broken, which they hope will be by the end of next summer, they won't be so pushed for work as they are.

The ground here requires a great deal of cultivation. It is first of all broken with a fourteen or sixteen inch plough, so shaped that it turns the sod over as flat as possible, generally from the depth of two to two−and−a−half inches deep, the shallower the better, and then left to rot with the sun and rain for two months and a half.

It has often been tried, and with very good results, to put in a crop of oats on the first breaking, sowing broadcast and turning a very thin sod over them; and the sod pulverizes and decomposes under the influence of a growing crop quite as effectually as if only turned over and left to itself. There are also fewer weeds, which is of importance, as it often happens that the weeds which grow soon after the breaking are as difficult to subdue as the sod. If the soil is nice and soft a man and team of horses will break an acre and a half a day, and average throughout the season an acre. The breaking goes on until the middle of July, and the end of August the backsetting begins, which is ploughing the same ground over again about two inches deeper.

The following spring the harrows (which are disc of a peculiar shape, twelve to eighteen razor−wheels on an axle, and in going round cut through and break any sods), are run over repeatedly both before and after the seeding; the ground is also rolled and then left, and for the two−and−a−half bushels of oats or two bushels of wheat−seed per acre, hopes for a grand return being always entertained.

By some experts late autumn sowing is strongly advocated, as, during the fall, owing to the dryness of the atmosphere, there is scarcely any growth; so that the grain sown late cannot germinate, nor can it absorb water or rain enough to rot it, the winters being so dry. And when the first days of spring come the snow melts, the starch of the seed has changed to grape−sugar, and begins to germinate; so that the young plants will in no way be damaged by subsequent droughts, nor by the frosts which sometimes come after heavy rains in August and much injure the crops. At the present moment we are craving for rain, and should the crops not be as plentiful this year as expected, on account of the drought, I should feel much inclined to try autumn sowing.

Before the prairie is broken, the turf is very tough, and requires a great deal of force to break it; but when once turned the subsequent ploughings are easy.

Our chief difficulty and trouble are the stones; they generally lie just beneath the surface, differing very much in size. Some are huge and have to be regularly trenched round and horses harnessed to a chain put round them to raise them out of the ground; when they are put on to the stone−boat and conveyed to the boundary fence. It generally falls to E 's and my special lot to drive the stone−boat or the waggons, whilst the men with crowbars and spades go before the ploughs clearing them all away, for fear they may blunt the shares and throw them out of the furrow.

The last two or three days, when not stone−picking, A and Mr. B have been stretching the barb−wire with which they are enclosing the property; and there has been great chaff about our Jehuship. The wooden posts along which the wire is run are put in the ground, and they then have to be rammed down with a fearfully heavy wooden mallet, which I can hardly lift. To get purchase on the mallet A mounts into the waggon, which accordingly has to be driven quite close up to the post without touching it.

The two old mares we drive are more than difficult to turn or stop to a nicety, the result being that once I went too near and broke off a piece of the waggon. Another time, after a corner−post had been driven in most securely with props, E drove up against it, taking the whole concern away bodily.

The weather is quite delightful, no mosquitoes as yet to speak of; but the two big marshes on either side of the farm harbour them dreadfully.

Wild duck also abound in these marshes; there are thousands about, and we have found many nests and been revelling in the eggs, a delightful change to our regular *menu*. The nests are very difficult to find; we two went one afternoon in the buggy to look for some, and the men declare we looked in the marshes themselves for them, which was not certainly the fact; though after driving round all the outsides, and not having been warned that the marsh on the eastern boundary of the farm was very deep, we came home that way, not at all liking the water coming up to the axle−trees and the horse floundering about at every step. To turn back was as bad as to go on, and as we saw wheel−tracks along the fence we stuck to them, thanking our stars when we got through safely.

* * * * *

June 12th.

We have had a real visitor lately I mean one who has brought a change, and a toothbrush; and for the auspicious event we rigged him up a stretcher bed, the most comfortable of things, canvas stretched on to a wooden frame, with a mattress on the top. You could not wish for anything softer. He was one of our ocean companions; his nickname of Mike still sticks to him. On getting to Winnipeg at night he had great difficulty in finding our whereabouts; even at the Club he was told the only W known kept a store in Main Street. Luckily from the Club he went to A 's livery stable, which is exactly behind it, where a man offered to drive him out forthwith, having driven another man here only four days ago; but he preferred waiting till the morning, getting here somewhere about 9 o'clock, when he was set down immediately to work to stone the raisins for a plum cake, and when tired of that had to help A planting potatoes. He declares he never will come here with his best clothes and a boiled shirt on again, as we have worked him so hard.

The accounts he gives, in an exaggerated Irish brogue, of his experiences in Minnesota have kept us in fits of laughter. The description of their first drive, when both he and his companions were all bogged; and how that twenty−seven mules and twenty−eight horses bought at St. Louis all arrived one night at the station about 5 o'clock, after sixty hours' travelling with no food or water, had to be unloaded from the cars, and they hadn't a

halter or even a rope to do it with. Eventually they got all the poor beasts into a yard with wooden pailing round, but, something startling them, they made a rush, the fence gave way, for which damage the proprietor charged them ten pounds, and all galloped straight on to the prairie, and it took the men all night getting them together again. One pair of horses disappeared altogether; but were brought back when a reward of thirty dollars was offered; they had wandered nineteen miles.

Mike slept in A 's room. They talked so much, and told so many funny stories, that we despaired of ever getting them down to breakfast; Mike declaring he would like to bring his bed along with him, as he hadn't slept in one, or been between sheets since leaving New York, six weeks previously. We drove him over one afternoon to fish in the creek about two and a half miles off; but as we had to go in a light waggon, and with only one spring seat, both Mike and A had to hang on behind, with a plank as seat, which was always slipping and landing them on their backs at the bottom of the waggon. When we were about half a mile from home E made a wager that she would get through the wire fence and home across the prairie before we could get round and the horses be in their stable. We had a most exciting race; the gates, which are only poles run from one end of the wire to another, were a great impediment, and I believe it was really a dead heat, through all the labourers entering into the joke and rushing to unhitch the horses, which were disappearing into the stable as E was at the kitchen−door.

I fancy that on the whole, in spite of his hard work, Mike enjoyed his visit, not only for the pleasure of our society, but as he had never seen a piece of meat, nor anything but pork and beans and bad coffee at Warren, nor had a bed to lie on, nor as much water as could be held in a tea−cup to wash in; he must have felt he had dropped into a land of Goshen by some happy mistake.

To give you a clearer insight into our daily life, and as I have nothing really to write about this week, I think I cannot do better than copy out our journals, which we try to keep regularly, though in our monotonous every−day life it is sometimes difficult to find incidents to chronicle.

Monday. Wash and cook all the morning; E and A plant willows in the marsh during the afternoon. I wander about the prairie in search of a duck's nest I saw yesterday and thought I had marked; but the tracks, stones, and ridges on the prairie are so alike, that it is almost impossible to remember any place; anyhow, I cannot find the nest. I could not take it yesterday, as I was riding, and the animal will not stand still to let you mount, and had I had to scramble up on to her I should certainly have broken all the eggs I took. An exhausting day with a hot wind blowing; we are craving for rain, and thankful for the slight showers that fell during last night. It is marvellous how quickly vegetation will grow. Some sample wheat planted in the garden, of which there was no sign yesterday, thanks to the rain and sun has grown quite an inch by 6 o'clock this evening. The grass is beginning to look so green and nice.

Tuesday. E and Mrs. G finish their wash which they could not get through yesterday. I go up to the tent, with Mr. H to drive his waggon, and help to unlumber the wood he brought out yesterday from Winnipeg. Riding on these waggons loaded, and without a spring seat, is anything but pleasant over the prairie, but Mr. H is so accustomed to it now that he can stretch himself on the top and sleep soundly; and once or twice, coming out from town, has found himself in quite the wrong direction by allowing the horses to go their own way.

E and I spend our afternoon cleaning up the tent.

Wednesday. A and I drive into Winnipeg. We have had various commissions to do, and A had to attend a meeting at the Club. Mr. W. H has most amiably put his house, consisting of two rooms and a kitchen below, at our disposal whenever we want to rest; so I spent my whole afternoon there, nominally reading the St. James's Gazette, but, I fancy, indulging in forty winks whilst waiting for A . We afterward dined with the judge in his very nice pretty house called The Willows, driving home later. The cold was so great that A , who had brought no great−coat, was forced to run behind the buggy some way to get warm and produce circulation. The prairie fires quite lovely, on all sides, quivering high flames for miles, and the night being dark, they looked very

bright.

Thursday. Was so tired after my day in town that I breakfasted in bed; disgraceful! By the time I get down the family have all dispersed to their various works. After dinner E and I drive a waggon over to the Boyd Farm to fetch oats for Mr. H . The students, who haven't much to do, are enlisted into the filling and loading of the sacks; rather glad, we fancy, of some occupation. On our return we found a friend of Mr. B 's, who, having heard of our proximity, he living at Headingley, has come over to dine and sleep. Our parlour sofa, as usual, is called into requisition. It will soon be worn out, so many sleep on it. I think last week it was occupied nearly every night.

Friday. We have had very smart company to−day, as the judge, his wife, niece, and another man came over. We hoped they would star to dinner, and had killed fatted calf ; but I fancy the ladies dreaded the prairie by night, and insisted upon returning we could hardly persuade them to take a cup of tea fearing that they might be benighted.

Saturday. Hard at work cleaning all the morning. Mr. B 's friend leaves after dinner, and I drive the mares in the waggons whilst the men stretch the wire−fencing. E rides to the tent with letters. We sustained rather a shock to our nerves to−day; about 12 o'clock a buggy was seen coming towards the house just as we were sitting down to dinner, and as our food was scanty we did not know how we possibly could feed three extra men. Luckily they only came to enquire their route to the tent, and it was a relief when they drove on; though we felt we ought to have given them some food, as the tent could only provide bacon and biscuits.

Sunday. Mrs. G , our factotum, has a holiday, and goes over with some of the other labourers to spend the day at the other farm. E and I have to undertake the *menage* for the whole day. Our mutton, a leg, was very nicely done, also our vegetables, rice, and beans; but the evaporated apples, which we use much, required boiling previous to being put in a tart, which we neither of us knew. Therefore they were not done, and the crust was all burst. The men from the tent, who generally spend their Sundays here, were allowed some dinner, on condition they washed up afterwards.

* * * * *

June 18.

I am afraid our letters will not be so interesting as the novelty wears off: the monotony of our life may begin to pall upon us. We hardly ever go two miles beyond the farm; to take our neighbours at the tent their letters or parcels brought out from town, is about the limit to our wanderings. We did drive one of the waggons to our neighbour Mr. Boyle to fetch home some oats the other night, and we also have been into town to pay our respects to the Governor and his wife. We happily don't want much outside attraction, for we have so much to do on the farm. The men work us pretty hard, I can tell you; as, besides all our indoor work, we have had three afternoons cutting potatoes for seed, until our hands are too awful to look at, and the water is so hard that we never shall get them a decent colour again. Some white elephants" potatoes, planted three weeks ago (thirty in number we cut into 420 pieces) already make a great show, and will want banking up next week. About ten acres of ground close to the house have been reserved and are called the garden, in which have been planted turnips, flax, beet−root, lettuce, tomatoes, and potatoes; in short, all the luxuries of the season. But I am afraid none will be ready before we leave, if we carry out our idea of going to Colorado early in August.

We have been craving for rain, and at last, luckily, had a delightful shower a few days ago, which has freshened us up and will make things grow. There is no grass as yet above four inches in height, and this time last year they were hay−making. The men are beginning to fear there will be none; but with a little warm weather and a certain amount of rain everything grows as if by magic, so we may still hope to have a good season.

Only very few of the garden−seeds have made their appearance, which is disappointing after all the trouble they were; but the wild flowers are beginning to come out on the prairie, small bushes of wild roses are all over; there are also very pretty sunflowers, a tree maiden−hair, several different vetches, sisters, yellow−daisies, many we cannot name, indigenous to this country we conclude.

* * * * *

June 26.

We quite feel as if we had been here years instead of about five weeks; and though it was prophesied before we left England that, after turning the house up−side down and making the men very uncomfortable with our cleanings, we should then go on strike, it has not been altogether fulfilled. We certainly did try to clean up a bit, but we still help in housework, and have to do as the servants at home. If we expect visitors, or on a Sunday, put on a tidy gown; otherwise we generally live in the oldest of frocks (which are more or less stained with either mud or the red paint with which we have been painting the roofs of both the stable and the labourers' house), very big aprons, sleeves to match, and our sun−bonnets. E has concocted for herself a thin blue−and−white shirt, and as she generally lives with her sleeves tucked up, her arms are getting quite brown and sunburnt. Our boots are the only things we do not much like cleaning, they get so soon dirty again; and we have come to the happy conclusion that unblacked boots have a cachet that blacked boots have not. When we first arrived the men promised to do them for us every Sunday; which promises, like so many, have partaken of the nature of pie−crusts.

We are both of us delighted to have come, the whole experience is so new, and what we couldn't have realised in England; and I am sure, in spite of the *bouleversement* of the bachelor *regime*, it is a great pleasure to the men we are here. Our Winnipeg acquaintances tell us that A is quite a changed man, so cheery and even bumptious, and that everything is now What we do at the farm.

It is all very well, however, in the summer; if obliged to stay through the winter, it would be quite another pair of shoes. The thermometer often registers forty degrees of frost, though the effects of this extreme temperature in the dry exhilarating atmosphere is not so unpleasant as might be imagined, but the loneliness and dreariness of the prairie with two or three feet of snow would be appalling. The cold is so great that you have to put on a buffalo coat, cap, and gloves, before you can touch the stove to light the fire, and notwithstanding the coal stove which is always kept going in the hall to warm the up−stairs room (through which the pipe is carried), the water in buckets standing alongside gets frozen.

Then the blizzards, which are storms of sleet and snow driven with a fierce wind, and so thick that it is quite impossible to get out of doors, or see at all, would be too trying.

Even to get across the yard to the further stable the men have to have a rope stretched as guide so as not to lose their way; and these storms sometimes, as they did this last year, continue for three weeks consecutively.

The snow on the prairie is never very deep, but it drifts a good deal, and was to the depth of twelve feet on the west side of the house.

No work can be done much in the winter on account of the cold and snow, so that from the middle of April, when the snow begins to go, until the beginning of October everything has to be rushed through and as many hands put on as they can possibly get, who are all discharged at the end of the summer and only two or three kept to look after the animals. After threshing, these men have little or nothing to do: digging out the well to water the horses, teaming hay into the town on sleighs, and fetching timber over from the other farm, is about their only outdoor occupation. All the animals in the shape of horses, cows, pigs and chickens are huddled together in the stables for warmth.

* * * * *

July 5th.

We have received our letters most unexpectedly to−day; two of our gentlemen coming out last night from town brought sundry parcels, newspapers, etc., but never thought of turning round to see if all was safe in back of carriage, declaring it was such rough driving they could only think of how to hang on and not be jolted out, so that by the time they got home, letters, a horse−collar, spare cushions, etc. were all gone. It was too late to send after them; but one of the men started back at 3:30 this morning, finding most of the lost things strewn broadcast over the prairie, even to within a short distance of Winnipeg. He went on to feed and bait his horses, at the same time enquiring for letters, finding ours just come in, and which would have lain there until our next opportunity.

Our variety to−day has been the absence of our cook, and we are again left in charge, and we flatter ourselves the dinner was immense. Stewed−beef, rice, mushrooms, (of which some were rather burnt, others not quite done enough, but that is a trifle), yorkshire pudding (baking−powder making an excellent substitute for eggs), and an apple tart. What more could you want? We are quite ambitious now, and have curries, rissoles, etc. A used to say he hoped, we should not expect either him or his friends to eat our dishes, as they would have to go to bed afterwards for at least three or four hours; but they very much appreciate any change made in the *menu*.

We are longing to make bread, which takes up a great deal of our factotum's time, as it has to be set over night and kneaded three or four times the following day; but are begged to defer that amusement until within a few days of our departure, as it would so entirely upset our American trip if we had to attend A 's obsequies. The bread is perfectly delicious, so light and so white in colour. The flour is excellent. It is not made with brewers yeast, but with a yeast gem dissolved in warm water, to which is added a handful of dried hops boiled beforehand for about ten minutes, and strained. To that is added a cupful of flour a teaspoonful of salt, and one of sugar, and the whole is put into a warm place to ferment; when fermented, which takes about twelve hours, into a cool place, where it will remain good and sweet some time.

A Receipt for Bread−Making.

Put ten large spoonfuls of flour in a breadpan, and add enough warm water to make it into a thin batter, add half a pint of yeast, mix well, and, having covered the bread−pan with a cloth, put it in a warm place near the stove over night. During the night it should rise and settle again. In the morning add enough flour to make it in into a thick dough, and knead it on a bread−board for ten minutes. Put it back into pan for two hours and let it rise again. Grease your baking−tins, knead your dough again, and then fill the tins half full, put them close to the stove to rise, and when they have risen thoroughly, grease the tops of your loaves with a little butter (preventing the crust breaking and giving it a nice brown colour) and put them into the oven and bake for an hour to an hour and a quarter.

As E had not Mrs. G to wash up with her, she enlisted one of the men, and it was very funny to see him in a hat three times too big for his head, pipe in his mouth, sleeves turned up, drying the dishes and putting a polish on them. Talking of hats, E has at last got one and a half, it literally covers even her shoulders, and at midday she declares she is as much in shade as under a Japanese umbrella; for trimming a rope is coiled round the crown, the only way to make it stay on the head. Of her gloves there is only the traditional one left; the other is among the various articles we have left on the prairie, bumped out of the buggy one day when she took them off to take care of them in a shower of rain.

That driving on the prairie is loathsome, but if we want to get about at all we must do it, as we don't like the riding horses. At the present moment we have got one of the plough animals, which is rideable. The poor beast was frightened one night three weeks ago, during a fearful storm of thunder and lightning, and ran into the barb wire,

wounding itself horridly on the shoulders and neck. The skin had to be sewn up, and it cannot wear a collar for the present so we have it to ride if we like. It is not a slug like the other two.

The thunder−storms here are frightful; they are also very grand to watch, as we can see them generally for miles before they come up. We, luckily, have about ten lightning conductors on the houses and stables, so that we feel safe. A thunder−bolt fell pretty near the other day, destroying about six posts and the wire of our north fence. Thanks to the rain we have lately had, and the warm sun, we find such quantities of mushrooms all over the prairie. They grow to such a size! We measured two, one was 21 1/2 inches round, the other 21, very sweet and good, and as pink underneath as possible. The labourers have been so pleased with them that last Sunday they began picking and cooking them in early morning, going on with relays more or less all day, so that by the evening they couldn't look another in the face, and it will be some time before they touch them again. We have them for every meal.

Our diaries here are more or less public property, and as we have been nowhere or seen anything at all exciting since we last wrote, I am going to copy down from the journals the incidents, if any, of the last week. You seemed to appreciate it the last time we sent you home a copy, but you must forgive if it is somewhat of a repetition to our numerous letters. The weather, for one thing, is daily chronicled, as it takes up much of our thoughts, so much in the future depending on its being propitious just at this time of year, when the seeds are all sown and the hay almost ready to cut.

Tuesday. Beautiful day, so warm and nice, without being hot; everything growing, too, marvellously; even the seeds in the garden, which we began to despair of, are coming up.

The men have been very low, on account of the scarcity of rain; but we have had one or two thunder−storms lately which, have done good, and in this climate I do not think one ought ever to give up hopes. E has been painting wild flowers, which at this moment are in great profusion and variety all over the prairie, most of the day, varying her work by painting the doors of the room, which were such an ugly colour, a pale yellow green, that they have offended our artistic eyes ever since we have been here. I am said to have wasted my whole morning watching my two−days−old chickens, supposed to be the acme of intelligence and precocity. The afternoon was spent in shingling the hen−house. It was only roofed over with tar−paper laid on to the rafters, which answers well if the wind doesn't blow the paper about, or that it has not any holes; but as the hen−house is only a lean−to of the stable, the roof of which we have been very busily painting, it has been trodden upon a good deal in getting on and off the roof, and, in consequence, the paper is much like a sponge, letting any rain in, and drenching the poor sitting fowls; but with the shingles overlapping each other on the tar−paper, the roof, will be quite water−tight.

Wednesday. Our factotum has gone into town, and we are left in charge, E parlour−maid, Mr. B scullery−man, and I cook. We have heaps of mushrooms at every meal, a most agreeable change to the rice and white beans we have only hitherto had.

Thursday. Hot day. A went into town to some meeting at the Club. We have been dreadfully tormented with mosquitoes today, also the big bull−dog fly, which, whenever the kitchen door was left ajar, came into the house in myriads; but we find that Keating's powder most effectually destroys them, and in a very few seconds. We have been busy making a mattress and pillow for Mr. H , really one does not realise how clever one is until our genius is put to the test in an establishment like this. E and I drove up to the tent after supper with our handiwork, and had great pleasure in seeing it filled with hay. Our drive was not of the most enviable: we had a waggon with no spring seat, only a board, which was always moving, to sit upon; one horse would tear along, the other not pull an ounce, in spite of applying the whip a good deal, and we were nearly smothered with mosquitoes, I never saw such clouds of them, and on our return home there was a general rush for the bottle of ammonia, which is the only thing that allays the irritation.

Friday. Excitements have been crowding in upon us to−day. Bob, one of the labourers, who went into Winnipeg yesterday, only arrived home at 3 A.M. this morning. He left town at 6, but the night being dark he lost his way, and finding himself on the edge of a marsh, having a feed of oats with him, wisely unhitched his horses, tied them to the wheels, and waited patiently for daylight. Just as we were sitting down to dinner, three men who have been surveying the Government ditch near here, came and begged to be fed. Luckily we had soup and plenty of cold meat; but our pudding the less said about that the better. We always have the evaporated apples as a stand by, and they are delicious; so with quantities of butter and milk we never need starve.

Then in the evening, when Mr. B was going to the stable to serve out the oats for the horses, he came in for the finish of an exciting race between two of the plough horses. The jockeys or riders were told forthwith that a waggon was going into town the following morning, and that their services would be dispensed with in future. Just as we were going to bed we heard A coming in, and with him a stranger who turned out to be our cousin, only fifteen days out from England, *via* Canada. He looks very delicate.

Saturday. We had made no preparation for E. P last night, so he had to occupy the parlour sofa, and says he slept like a top; doubtlessly did not require much rocking, as he had travelled through almost without stopping. We were busy all this morning writing letters for the discharged miscreants to take into town. It has been very hot and close all day. I, rode up to the tent, and hurried home, seeing a thunder−storm coming up, which was grand; and it was very lucky that I got home, as it began to rain at 3 o'clock, and is still pouring in perfect torrents at 10 o'clock P.M.

Sunday. The yard is in such a fearful state of dirt, and the water standing inches deep, that it has been nearly impossible to move beyond the door. I put on A 's long waterproof boots, and managed to get as far as my hen−house, and found two of my chickens dead.

Another sitting hen has been a source of great anxiety, as she will peck her chicks to death as they hatch, and out of a sitting of eleven eggs we have only been able to save five birds. A wet Sunday hangs very heavily on our hands here, as there is nothing to be done.

Monday. Big wash as usual all the morning, and just as E and I were to drive a waggon over to Mr. Boyle for some oats which required fetching, we had quite a scare. A *lady* and gentleman were seen to be riding up. We both of us rushed up−stairs to put on some clean aprons to do honour to our guests, who, with another man, also out from town, remained the whole afternoon. We have never dined as many as nine people in our vast apartments before, but we managed very nicely.

We have had heavy showers with a high wind, and the thermometer down to 50 all the afternoon. We tried to persuade our lady visitor to stay the night, A offering to give up his room; but she persisted in going back, and, I am afraid, will have got very wet, in spite of E lending her waterproof jacket.

Tuesday. The household had a long turn in bed this morning, Mr. B only getting down at about 7.15, when various things were offered him to prop open his eye−lids when he did appear.

The weather has been slightly better than yesterday, but the wind has been high, and it was really quite cold; varied by slight showers of rain in the morning. In the afternoon we all made hay. I worked my rake until my horse beat me by refusing to move in any direction excepting homewards; and I had to call A , who was stone getting, to my rescue. He, with judicious chastisement in the shape of a kick or so, made the horse work. E and E. P loaded hay. Thanks to the late rains the marshes were heavy, and they very nearly stuck once or twice in going through them. There were no mosquitoes, which was a blessing, but one is never troubled with them in a high wind.

* * * * *

July 9.

You should have seen A and his equipage start into Winnipeg two days ago. He and the men from the tent had to go in and bring out a waggon and the new Cortland waggon (my present), and they had to take in the broken buggy to be mended. So they started with a four−in−hand to their cart, the broken buggy tied on behind, and another pair of horses behind that again. The buggy they say very nearly capsized going over the bridge of the creek when near Winnipeg, otherwise they got on beautifully; but it was a funny arrangement altogether, and they seemed to cover a quarter of a mile of ground as they left here. Winnipeg grows in a most astonishing way; every time we go in, a new avenue or street seems to have started up. Emigrants, they say, are coming in at the rate of a hundred a day. A few years ago the population was about five thousand, in 1878 about ten, now over forty thousand, a fourth of whom are living under canvas.

It was estimated last winter that the building operations this season would amount to four million dollars, but double that amount is nearer the mark, and many are obliged to abandon the idea of building on account of the difficulty of getting timber and bricks. Every house or shanty is leased almost before it is finished. Winnipeg, as you know, was formerly known as Fort Garry, and one of the chief trading stations of the Hudson Bay Company. Of the old fort, I am sorry to say, there is very little left, and that is shortly to be swept away for the continuation of Main Street. The Governor, now occupying the old house, is to have a splendid building, which, with the Houses of Legislature, are in the course of construction, rather farther away from the river.

The town is built at the confluence of two great rivers, the Red and Assiniboine, the former rising in Minnesota, and flowing into lake Winnipeg 150 miles north, navigable for 400 miles. The Assiniboine has many steamers on it; but the navigation being more difficult, the steamers often sticking on the rapids, it is not much in vogue with emigrants going west, particularly now that the railway takes them so much more rapidly.

There is a large suburb of the town the other side of the Red River called St. Boniface face, the see of a Roman Catholic Archbishop; possessing a beautiful cathedral and a great educational school for young ladies; for some reason or other we never managed to get over there to see it, though the cathedral is a grand landmark for a great distance.

The railway traffic also is enormous. During the flood 4,000 freight waggons were delayed at St. Vincent; now they are coming in at the rate of 4,000 per week, and still people cannot get their implements, stores, fast enough. We have asked several times for some turpentine at one of the shops, and the answer always given is, It is at the depot, but not unloaded.

We have been wanting turpentine to mix with the brown paint with which we are painting, the dining−room doors. But first of all the paint fails, and then the turpentine, and I fully expect our beautiful work of art will not be finished before we leave.

* * * * *

July 12th.

It is very certain that no gentleman ought to come out to this country, or, when here, can expect to prosper, unless he has some capital, heaps of energy, and brains, or is quite prepared to sink the gentleman and work as a common labourer.

The latter command the most wonderful wages, there is such a demand for them that one can hardly pick and choose. A plough−boy gets from four to six pounds a month, an experienced man from eight to ten pounds, besides their board and lodging; a mechanic or artisan from fourteen to sixteen shillings a day; women servants

are very scarce, they get from four to six pounds a month. We were so astonished at the wages in New York; the head gardener in the Navy Yard was receiving one hundred and fifty pounds a year, his underling, seventy−five pounds, the groom one hundred pounds. It is surprising to me that the whole of the poorer classes in England and Ireland, hearing of these wages, do not emigrate, particularly when now−a−days the steerage in the passenger ships seems to be so comfortable, and that for about six pounds they can be landed on this side of the Atlantic. We have nine Britishers and two Canadians on this farm, and the amount of ground broken up does everyone great credit, considering that the whole place is only of a year and a half's growth. Since we arrived we can mark rapid and visible strides towards completion. The house has been banked up and grassed, a fence put to enclose all the yard, and we have actually had the audacity to talk about a tennis ground, which would take an immense deal of making, from the unevenness of the soil. The water, having no real outflow, makes itself little gullies everywhere, which would be very difficult to fill up level; but I don't know that, until we are acclimatized to the mosquitoes, said to be the happy result of a second year's residence, that we should feel inclined to play tennis, as we could only indulge in that diversion of an evening when work was ended, and that is just the worst time for these pests. They spoil all enjoyment, we never can sit out under the verandah after supper which we should so like to do these warm evenings. They bite through everything, and the present fashion of tight sleeves to our gowns is a trial, as no stuffs, not even thin dogskin, are proof against them, and our faces, arms, and just above our boots are deplorable sights. Ammonia is; the only remedy to allay the irritation. I am not drawing a long bow when I say that in places the air is black with them.

The poor horses and cows are nearly maddened with them if turned out to graze, and the moment the poles across the road are withdrawn they gallop back into their stables. The mosquitoes are great big yellow insects, about half an inch long.

The house and country at Boyd's farm is much prettier than this, from the lot of trees round it, and the ground not being so flat; but we wouldn't change for all the world, it is so stuffy, and the flies and mosquitoes are much worse there than here, where we catch the slightest breeze of wind, which always drives them away. We were dreading making the hay in the marshes on account of them.

I do not think we shall suffer much from the heat, as nearly always, even in the hottest part of the day, there is a breeze; and as yet the nights are deliciously cool, we have never found one blanket too much covering.

We talk of going an expedition up west next week, taking the carriage and horses, and driving as far as Fort Ellice. I don't know that we either of us look forward to the expedition very much, as we fear we shall have to rough it too greatly; but, on the other hand, it seems a pity not to see something more of the country. There are hardly any inns or resting−places; the accommodation may be fearful. We hear that about fourteen people are lodged in one room as an ordinary rule. A has gone into Winnipeg to make arrangements; and if he finds we cannot depend on the inns, we shall take a tent, and camp by the towns, going in for our meals to restaurants.

* * * * *

In the Train 200 miles West of Winnipeg, July 24, 1882.

As we seem to stop every two or three miles for some trifling cause or another, I am in hopes I may get through a long, maybe disjointed letter to post to you on our way through Winnipeg to−night, which we wish to reach about 6 o'clock, giving us time to drive out to the farm before it is quite dark. I told you we were proposing a trip up North−west, and we really have had a most successful journey. A has a friend, Manager of the Birtle Land Company, who with others has bought up land, intends breaking so many acres on each section and then reselling it, hoping thereby to clear all expenses and make a lot of money besides; and as he had to go up and look after the property, it was settled we should all go together, and very glad we are that we did do it, though we have had some very funny experiences. We are pleased to find that all the North−west is not like the country around

Winnipeg, so awfully flat and without a tree; on the contrary we have been through rolling prairie, almost hilly and very well wooded in places.

We started last Monday, the 18th, having got up at 4:15, which we did not think so terribly early as we might have done before the days we were accustomed to breakfast at half−past 6, but had even then a terrible run for the train. We had had some heavy thunder storms on the Sunday; and though we allowed two hours and three− quarters, to do our sixteen miles into Winnipeg station, the roads were so heavy, and the mud so sticky and deep, that we really thought we should be taken up for cruelty to animals, hustling our poor little mare. As it was, we arrived just in time to get into the cars, our packages and bundles being thrown in after us as the train was on the move. Luckily we managed to get all on board, and found plenty of friends travelling west; one a Government inspector, a most agreeable man, who has to certify and pass the work done on the line before Government pays its share of the expenses. He was telling us how he and two other men spent three hours finding names for all the new stations along the line, and could only think of three! The stations are placed at the distance of eight to ten miles apart, and they are bound not to have any name already taken up in Canada, so that for a railway extending over three thousand miles to the Rocky Mountains names are a difficulty. We did him the favour of writing out a few, taking all the villages one was interested in in the Ould Countrie, for which attention he seemed much obliged, and has promised a time table of the line with the nomenclature of its stations when opened. They are building the Canadian Pacific at the rate of twenty−five miles a week, and every available man is pressed into the service, so that it is not so surprising the poor farmers cannot find labour. The wages, two dollars to two−and−a−half a day, are more than we can pay. There has not been much engineering required or shown on this line, as we went up and down with the waves of the prairies, had only two small cuttings between Winnipeg and Brandon, three hundred miles, and were raised a few feet above the marshes; but considering how fast they work and how short a time they have been, it is creditably smooth.

We disembarked at a city called Brandon, which last year was unheard of, two or three shanties and a few tents being all there was to mark the place; now it has over three thousand inhabitants, large saw−mills, shops, and pretentious two−storied hotels. We found our carriage, which had been sent on two days previously, waiting for us at the station, as we were to have driven on that night to Rapid City; but, owing to the Manager not being able to get through all his business, and his not liking to leave the two labourers he had with him on the loose, for fear they should be tempted by higher wages to go off with someone else, we decided to remain that night at Brandon, and were not sorry to retire to bed directly after dinner, about 8.30. We were given not a very spacious apartment, the two double−beds filling up the whole of it. In all the hotels we have been into, they put such enormous beds in the smallest of space, I conclude speculating on four people doubling up at a pinch. We luckily had brought some sheets; the ones supplied looked as if they had been used many a time since they had last been through the wash−tub. I cannot say we slept well, chiefly, I think, owing to lively imaginations and the continual noise of a town after the extreme quiet of the farm; and as there was only a canvas partition between us and the two men, who snored a lively duet, we had many things to lay the blame to.

We were on the move again about 5.30, intending to breakfast at half−past 6, and start on our travels directly after; but somehow, what with one thing and the other, the various packing away of our different packages and parcels into our three waggons, it was past 8 o'clock before we got off.

We were rather amused at the expression at breakfast of our waiting−maid when asked to bring some more bread and then tea. She wanted much to learn if we had any more side orders.

Alcoholic spirits are quite forbidden in this territory; to bring a small keg of whisky and some claret with us we had to get a permit from the Governor. I am afraid the inhabitants will have spirits. The first man we met last night was certainly much the worse for liquor; and though in our hotel there was no visible bar, an ominous door in the back premises was always on the swing, and a very strong odour of spirits emanated therefrom.

Our cavalcade, A and the Manager in the democrat, we two in a buggy, and the two labourers with a man to drive in another carriage, produced quite an imposing effect. We had to cross the Assiniboine on a ferry, and then rose nearly all the way to Rapid City, twenty−two miles, going through pretty country much wooded and with hundreds of small lakes, favourite resorts of wild duck. The flowers were in great profusion; but we saw no animals anywhere, excepting a few chipmunks and gophirs, which are sort of half−rats, half−squirrels. The chipmunks are dear little things about the size of a mouse, with long bushy tails and a dark stripe running the whole length of the body.

Rapid City is a flourishing little town of some fifty houses, and is growing quickly. It is prettily situated on the banks of the Little Saskatchewan, and has a picturesque wooden bridge thrown over the river. We had lunch, picnic style, and a rest of two hours. There was a large Indian camp just outside the town, and as we sat sketching several Indians passed us. Their style of dress is grotesque, to say the least of it; one man passed us in a tall beaver hat, swallow−tail coat, variegated−coloured trousers, mocassins, and a scarlet blanket hanging from his shoulder. The long hair, which both men and women wear, looks as if a comb never had passed near it, and gives them a very dirty appearance. They all seemed affable, and gave us broad grins in return for our salutes.

The Indian tribes on Canadian territory are the Blackfeet and Piegans. The former used to number over ten thousand, but now are comparatively few. The small−pox, which raged among them in 1870, decimated their numbers; also alcohol, first introduced by Americans who established themselves on Belly River, about 1866, and in which they drove a roaring trade, as the Indians sacrificed everything for this fire−water, as they called it, and hundreds died in consequence of exposure and famine, having neither clothes to cover them nor horses nor weapons wherewith to hunt. Luckily in 1874 the mounted police put an entire end to this abominable sale of whisky.

The Indian is naturally idle to eat, smoke, and sleep is the sole end of his life; though he will travel immense distances to fish or hunt, which is the only occupation of the men, the women doing all the rest, their condition being but little better than beasts of burden. The Indian of the Plain subsists in winter on buffalo dried and smoked; but in spring, when they resort to the neighbourhood of the small lakes and streams, where innumerable wild fowl abound, they have grand feasting on the birds and eggs.

The tribes living near the large lakes of Manitoba, Winnipeg, and Winnipegosis have only fish as food, which they dry and pack for winter use, and eat it raw and without salt which sounds very palatable?

When the Dominion Government obtained possession of the North−west Territories, by the extinction of the Hudson Bay Company's title in 1869, it allotted to the tribes inhabiting the country, on their resigning all their claims to the land, several reserves, or parcels of ground, which were of sufficient area to allow of one square mile to every family of five persons. On these lands the Indians are being taught to cultivate corn and roots. Implements, seeds for sowing, and bullocks are given them, besides cows and rations of meat and flour, until they are self−sustaining. They are also allowed five dollars a head per annum, so that several wives (polygamy being allowed) and children are looked upon as an insured income by a man.

This treatment by Government has been very successful, and many tribes are abandoning their precarious life of hunting. Horsestealing in former days was looked upon by the young men as an essential part of their education; but now the settler need be in no dread of them, as they are peaceably inclined and kept in check by the mounted police, a corps of whose services and pluck all who have had any dealings with them cannot speak two highly. The officers are men of tact and experience, and the corps numbers about 500 strong. They move their head−quarters from fort to fort, according to the movements of the Indians and the advance of emigration.

On leaving Rapid City, we took a shorter track than what is generally taken, thereby saving ourselves at least forty miles to Birtle. Our first night, distance about twenty miles after luncheon, we spent alongside of a small store−house on the Oak River; we had passed some very comfortable−looking settlements that afternoon, one,

where we got information about our road, belonging to a man called Shank, who had been settled about four years, and had quite a homely−looking shanty covered with creepers, and garden fenced in. At Oak River we had rather speculated on getting both food and lodging; but when we found the fare offered no better than ours, we decided to have our own supper, getting the woman to boil us some water for our tea. We also refused the lodging. The house was scrupulously clean, ditto the woman, but we couldn't quite make up our minds to share the only bedroom with her, her husband and two other men, one ill with inflammation of the lungs, rejoicing in an awful cough, and rather given to expectoration; so we had our first experience of real camping out. Our tent was an A tent, just big enough to allow of two people sleeping side by side; the only place to stand up in, was exactly in the middle, but we arranged it very fairly comfortably by putting some straw under our buffalo robes, and our clothes as pillows. The men had to make their couch under the carriage with whatever cloaks we didn't want, to keep the dew off them; and by lighting a large smudge to keep off the mosquitoes, we all slept pretty well, though Mother Earth is very unrelenting. If, however, we wanted to change our position we were sure to awake. The following morning, Tuesday, the men had a bathe in the river, which we very much envied them; though, having brought our india−rubber bath, and there being plenty of water handy, we did very well. We were off again at 7 o'clock. Our breakfast bill of fare not much varied from that of last night tea, corned beef, ox tongue, and bread and butter. The country through which we passed was not so pretty as on Monday, with fewer trees. Our cavalcade was increased by another man in his buggy, who was on his way to Edmonton, and he travelled with us most of the day. Mid−day, after eighteen miles, we came on a small settlement of four Canadians, who were just finishing their dinner. They were very nice, delighted to see ladies, placed the whole of their place at our disposal, and though, of course, they could do but little for us, we were not allowed to wash up our plates nor to draw our own water. They had everything so tidy and nice, rough it was bound to be. Like thousands of Canadians, they have taken up land, 240 acres apiece, and are working them together, with two yoke of oxen and a pair of Indian ponies. Whilst we were resting, the Manager drove on to find his farm; but as they have bought several sections in different townships from the railway company, it was difficult to find out on which section his men were working. The only thing he knew was two of the numbers of the section and that the Arrow river ran through the property. The Canadians told us that Ford Mackenzie, for which we had been steering all the morning, was six miles further on; so that when we left them about 2 o'clock (amidst many expressions of regret; they repeated to us several times how delighted they were seeing ladies, not having seen a petticoat since they came up last spring), we had to wander many a mile before finding either the ford or the farm. As it was, we mistook the ford and had to cross and recross the river three times, which we, in our buggy, didn't at all appreciate; the banks were so steep we felt we might easily be pitched out.

At Mackenzie's Ford we found a wretched man who, having settled here two years ago, and was getting on well, had last month brought his wife and children up by steamer on the Assiniboine, where they had caught diphtheria; two children had succumbed to the disease, and his wife, he greatly feared, couldn't live. We luckily had some whisky with us, and were glad to be able to give him some, as the doctor had recommended stimulants to keep up the poor woman's strength.

From him we heard where the Manager's camp really was, and reached it, very tired, about 7 o'clock, to find everything in the most fearful state of disorder and mismanagement; not even a well dug to provide water for man or beast. The men had mutinied, ten of them gone off, and only three and a woman as cook left; she had known much better days, and was perfectly helpless and unable to manage the stove or the cooking in a shed made of a few poles with a tarpaulin thrown over.

A is the most splendid man; whatever difficulties there are he makes light of them; and directly the horses had been unharnessed he set to work to put our tent up and lay out our supper, which was improved by the addition of some fried potatoes. Our table was the spring seat of the waggon, our seats the boxes; the stores have come in, or our bundle of rugs; and though the ground was harder to sleep on, as we had no straw under our buffalo−robe, still we got a fair amount of rest at night. Two very pretty Italian greyhounds we had brought up with us kept our feet warm, as it was quite chilly, the dews being very heavy. The men were horribly disturbed all night by the mosquitoes, which were in myriads. No smoke of the smudges really keeps them off, though it stupifies and

bothers them a good deal.

On Wednesday, contrary to expectation, we got some water to wash with, the Manager having had a hole dug. Water is so easily procured with digging, and at no great depth, that there is no excuse for not having it in abundance. We then spent our morning, whilst the men were going over the various sections, in trying to teach the woman to, cook, making biscuits, which were not a success, mending clothes, and writing up our diaries; so that the time flew all too quickly.

We drove on twenty−two miles in the afternoon, and, being all down wind, were pestered with mosquitoes and most fearfully bitten.

The country much the same as the previous day, very little taken up; but the wild flowers lovely. We counted forty−two different specimens; those yellow orchids you are so proud of at home, also red tiger−lilies, phloxes, and endless other varieties. Birtle, another mushroom town, looked so pretty and picturesque as we came down upon it, by the evening light, situated in a deep gorge much wooded on the Birdtail−Creek.

You would have laughed to see us arrive at what we thought our destination a nice house on the top of the opposite hill belonging to a friend of the Manager's, where we were to be hospitably entertained. The house was locked up, but that was no obstacle; we forced the windows open, and whilst A put the horses up, the Manager went down the hill for water, I foraged for eatables, E for wood to light the fire, and we very shortly afterwards sat down to a very fair meal; our neighbours' bacon and tea, but our own bread. Luckily a Winnipeg lady, hearing of our arrival, came up to offer her services in the shape of food or lodging; the latter we two gladly accepted, instead of pitching our tent outside the house, which was already full, three bachelors living there and our two men intending steeping between the walls, *coute que coule*. The house we spent our night in was a log one, and though unpapered, looked very comfortable, and was prettily hung round with Japanese fans and scrolls, and various photographs. We had a funny little canvas partition in the roof allotted to us; but were not particular, and did great credit to our feather bed.

And how excellent our breakfast was next morning, porridge and eggs; we hardly knew when to stop eating. We started early to Fort Ellice, one of the Hudson Bay forts, hoping to find the steamer on the Assiniboine to take us back to Winnipeg; but unfortunately it had stuck on the rapids. So after waiting twenty−four hours at the fort, we determined to drive down to the end of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and so home. The old fort is very little altered from what it used to be, surrounded by its wooden pailings, and having a store on the left side of the entrance gate, where all the Indians come to make their purchases in cotton−goods and groceries in exchange for their blankets, moccassins, or furs. The Assiniboine we crossed just before getting to the fort, on a ferry. It is a grand winding river with fearfully steep banks, 380 feet almost straight up, which was a pull for our horses, the tracks being very, bad, and not well engineered, going perpendicularly up the hill. Mr. Macdonald is the boss at the fort, and had known two of our friends who were up here several years ago.

There is a Lincolnshire man farming on a large scale settled not very far away from the fort; but we had neither time nor inclination to go further north. We hoped against hope that the steamer might get up, but on Saturday gave it up as useless, and settled to drive towards Gophir Ferry, trying to find a friend who, when out at C Farm, told us he was living on section xxvii by 13, and near two creeks. For the first five miles our road lay along the Beaver Creek, which was pretty; but afterwards the scenery much resembled Winnipeg, flat and uninteresting, not a tree, and without even the beautiful vegetation and flowers we had had on our previous drives. We had to stop several times to look at the section−posts, it was quite an excitement to mark every new number we came to. Our road took us pretty straight to the Mouse Mountain trail; but at a shanty being advised to leave the track and go straight over the prairie, we overshot the tents we were in search of by a short distance.

Our friend had not returned from Winnipeg, but we made ourselves quite at home, pitching our tent alongside of his men's. He had four Englishmen working for him, two of them were tenant−farmers at home; one man, who

had been out two years, had had a large farm near King's Lynn, and has taken up a section close by; but as he bought his land too late in the spring to do anything to it; beyond hoping to build himself a shanty before the winter set in, he is working for our friend, who has 2,000 acres. Another of the men was a newly−arrived emigrant; he and his three children were nearly devoured by mosquitoes, and were most grateful for some concoction we gave them to allay the irritation. He had been quite a gent in his own country, but bad times and alcohol I had been too much for him. I don't think he at all relished the work he had to do, ploughing with oxen all day, They plough almost entirely with oxen up in this country. The oxen are easier to feed, and don't suffer so much from the alkali in the water. But most of the Englishmen when they first get out here dislike using them, they are so slow; and I should agree with them.

A great many new−comers find the ways and means difficult to conform to, and would give a good deal to go back; but after they have been out a year or two they drop into fresh habits and seem to like the life.

On Sunday we started late, for two reasons. The horses which had been very restless all night, driven mad by the mosquitoes, could not be found, having wandered over the brow of the hill to the river edge, to catch the slight breeze blowing; and secondly we thought we would have a rest, and did nothing but regret it all day, as the heat, was fearful, and as we went down wind the mosquitoes were ditto. Also we got into camp very late at Flat Creek, where we had hoped to find a freight train, to get on as tax as Brandon, whereas we had to camp close to a marsh just outside the city the city comprising a cistern to provide the engines of the train with water and half a dozen tents all stuck on the marsh. We were rather amused by the name of one lodging tent, The Unique Hotel ; in other words, beds were divided off by curtains, so that you were quite private!

We pitched our tent on the highest spot we could find; but the mosquitoes, to accommodate us, left the marshes and came in perfect myriads around us. We lit smudges on all sides, but as there was hardly a breath of air the smoke went heavenwards, and consequently we had to sit almost into them and could hardly see to eat for the denseness of smoke. Query, which was the worst, the evil or the cure? That last night was the most uncomfortable of the whole lot, and I don't think any of us disliked the prospect of a comfortable bed. But in spite of all our roughing we have enjoyed it, and very glad we went. It is satisfactory to know that all the prairie is not as flat as around us at C Farm, that it is rolling, and covered with bluffs or brushwood. A is pleased, as he has seen no ground as good as his own, and declares he wouldn't exchange his 480 acres for thousand up west. The land is certainly of a much lighter nature, having more sand in it, and is easier to get into cultivation in consequence, but he doesn't think it will stand the same amount of cropping.

The trails, which are only tracks made by the half−breeds and Indians on the prairie, have been good throughout, but in spring are full of mud−holes or sloughs.

The new carriage has turned out quite a success and been very useful, as it has carried all our clothes, buffalo robes, buckets and oats for the horses, our provisions, etc., even to our tent, the poles of which were slung along the carriage just above the wheels, and the whole so light that A pushed it easily three or four hundred yards when we were moving our camp at Fort Ellice.

* * * * *

QUEEN'S HOTEL, WINNIPEG.

July 25.

We cannot fancy ourselves in this elegant brick edifice; but it's an ill wind that blows no one any good, and had we not been nervous of driving sixteen miles in a raging thunderstorm last night you would not have received a letter by this mail. The heat is so great that I am afraid my ideas won't flow. It is a hot thundery day, cloudy and

close, the thermometer is at 109 degrees in the shade, and everything one touches seems to be at melting point! Unfortunately we have had all our cool things for our journey, and they are too dirty to wear in a live" town. These three last days are the only days we have had to grumble at the heat; and, I expect, if we bad been out at the farm, quietly doing our various works, we should not have felt it so much; but a tent on a hot day is like a stove−house, quite fearful.

We have had a very successful tour of seven days, sleeping five nights on Mother Earth, which was mercilessly hard. Lived chiefly on corned beef, tea, and marmalade, three times a day. Driven 173 miles, nearly the whole time in pretty, sparely inhabited, wooded, and undulating country. Had another 300 miles to and fro in the train, and arrived here last night hoping to get home to our own beds, when we distressed at finding no buggy from the farm, though we sent them a telegram early in the morning before leaving Flat Creek, which we conclude they haven't received.

Just as we were starting, and before our small packets could be fetched from the station, a fearful thunder−storm, preceded by a dust−storm, came on; and we had to take refuge in an hotel, which, contrary to our expectations, was not only clean, but comfortable. The climax to all our troubles has been that the man from the livery−stable was unable to get our hand−bags, so that we actually had to go to bed last night and get up this morning without a sponge, comb, toothbrush, or any blessed thing. We were nearly sprinkling ashes on our heads and rending our garments when the fact was broken to us; but, considering we had no other clothes to fall back upon, we suppressed our feelings (and drowned our tears) in sleep, putting in nearly twelve hours, as it was 9.15 when we woke this morning, and it was not very late when we retired. We had neither of us slept well the night before, and it had been a hot, suffocating day for travelling, so that we were very tired when we got in. What useful things hair−pins are! I have always found them excellent bodkins, button−hooks, wedges for misfitting windows, but until to−day had never realized what a capital comb they would make, held tightly.

I don't know that we have had any very amusing adventure; but the whole expedition has been an adventure, and therefore, as it proved the business of the day, it was taken seriously I mean, we hardly laughed when we all shared the same drop of water in a bucket to wash our face in turns, and then hands, drying ourselves with the same towel, which was not always of the cleanest, and when we shared the same tin cup to drink out of. Of course we managed to get in a very fair amount of chaff. I used often to drive, and it was said that if ever there was a hole or stone on the trail I used to bump, bump over it, shooting the others almost out of the carriage, so that there were cries of danger ahead, when they declared they had to hang on to each other for safety.

We had to leave A behind us yesterday at Flat Creek with the carriages and horses, to follow us in a freight train, and he has just turned up, very hot and weary and out of temper with the railway authorities, as they make so many unnecessary difficulties in unloading. Instead of following us directly yesterday, as he was told he would do when he first put the horses on the train, they did not start until late in the afternoon, and have been travelling all night, A sleeping very peaceably in the horsebox.

We are to go out to the farm as soon as the horses have been fed and we can reclaim our lost baggage of last night.

I am thankful to say that we never came across any snakes during our expedition, though they are said to abound by Brandon and further west. The only one we saw was when the conductor on our train brought us a parcel and showed one coiled up inside. It was a trial to our feelings, but I believe it was dead. There are none around Winnipeg, not even a worm.

* * * * *

C FARM, July 30th.

We found the most lovely batch of letters, almost worth being away from home for ten days, on our arrival here at 12 o'clock P.M. on Tuesday, which completely revived our drooping spirits; we were feeling rather limp and tired after a long day in Winnipeg, and losing our way across the prairie coming home. It was very dark, and the only guide we had was when the vivid flashes of lightning reflected the farm−buildings; as it was, we drove through the big marsh, the mosquitoes nearly eating us up; and A so worried by them that he couldn't think of the trail, and trusted to the horses finding their way. The joy of coming upon our own fence is better imagined than described. I pictured to myself that we should be like one of our labourers, who, having gone into town just before we started up west, lost his way coming out, unharnessed his horses and picketed them, and sat down quietly, waiting for daylight before he ventured on. It is marvellous that anyone finds their way on the prairie. There are numberless trails made during the hay−harvest, which may mislead; and in a country which has been surveyed, some time back, the section−posts have almost entirely disappeared, the cattle either knocking them down or they having been struck by lightning.

We found our bedroom very full of mosquitoes, so that our sleep was much disturbed, in fact we never slept properly till after the sun rose; but our letters cheered us up and were far more refreshing than ten hours' sleep.

The netting over our windows had got torn from the tacks, so that the mosquitoes had come in by shoals just to show how they appreciated the attention of having things made easy for them. Otherwise, we are not generally much bothered with them in the house, netting being over every door and window.

The cat sometimes thwarts our protection by jumping through them in the morning, and no thumpings seem to impress her with respect for the said net.

We are told the mosquitoes will be gone in a fortnight; certainly the big yellow ones have lived their time and are, not so plentiful, but they have been succeeded by a small black species which is quite as venomous, and not so easy to kill.

We went to Church yesterday at Headingley: quite a red letter day. It was only the second time we have been able to manage it in the ten weeks we have been here; and though it was very hot in Church we were ashamed to take our gloves off, on account of the scars.

The Church is quite a nice little building, and the service delightful after so many weeks of not hearing it. We had to take our horse out, tie it to the churchyard paling, and put the dog, in the buggy to take care of our goods and chattels.

We are getting quite low at the thoughts of leaving this in ten days' time; being rather like cats, attached to any place where one has heaps of occupation, and where one is kindly treated and well fed, however ugly that place may be.

We have been very busy haymaking since we got home, and a grand stack is in the course of erection nearly opposite the dining−room window. You never saw anything so astonishing as the way the oats, potatoes, etc., have shot up in our absence. Even the puppy, which we left a fluffy ball, seems to have grown inches. Then, all my chickens are hatched, and are an endless pleasure and anxiety. I am supposed to spend hours over them.

We have received four sheets of official paper from Mr. W , full, of directions about our journey to Colorado, describing his home, etc., even to the nickel−plated tap we shall find in his kitchen, which is to supply us with an unlimited amount of water. He tells us we need bring nothing but a saddle and a toothbrush, he will find all the rest; and that we are to make it a note that it is one of the strictest rules of mining camps that guests are never

allowed to pay for anything. As we hope he is making a fortune by his mines, we shall not have so much compunction of accepting these terms. We are to sight−see, climb I mountains, go into the mines, fish for trout, and do nothing the live−long day but amuse ourselves.

I am afraid A will miss us terribly, dear old soul! He is very fond of having us here, and is always bemoaning our departure. I think it will make a great difference to him and to his humdrum hard−working life, as we are always cheery and have never had a difficulty or annoyance of any sort.

* * * * *

August 6th.

We are rejoicing now that we have settled to go to the Rocky Mountains, as the hot weather we speculated on avoiding has come in with a rush, and for a whole week the thermometer has been at 80 to 85 degrees. One morning before a thunder−storm, when it fell forty degrees in a few hours, it was up to 90 degrees. We have had some rain, but not the heavy if storms we have seen wandering round which generally follow the course of the Assiniboine a relief to our minds, as our hay is still out.

It has been cut nearly all round the property outside the fence, in spite of the risk one runs of having it subsequently claimed by the owner of the section, who is generally a half−breed, a loss only to be avoided by leading it home at once, which we are doing.

This has happened to our neighbour, with whom, I am afraid, we do not sympathise very keenly, as he had taken up the marsh which our men cut last year, and had the full intention of doing again this year, so they looked upon it in the light of their special property.

We have only two waggons working here, as nearly all the men and horses are gone over to Boyd's; and as our hay is a mile and a half away, we don't get much more than five loads a day, so that the stack does not grow very fast.

Our excitement this week has been a cricket match with Boyle's Farm; four of their men we challenged. It really was too amusing. They had a bat and ball, stumps, but no bales, and played on the prairie, which was so fearfully rough that it was almost dangerous, the ball shot in such various directions after hitting the tufts of grass. Everybody fielded, but a ball going into the wheat−field behind the wickets was not counted as a lost ball. The total score of the two innings was only ten, and in one our opponents went out without a single run; so you may fancy the howls of either applause or derision at every ball.

* * * * *

August 17th.

The Farm with all its toils and pleasures is a thing of the past; we were both very low when we turned our backs upon it and its inhabitants just a week ago. We have been in such robust health the whole of our three months, hardly a headache or finger−ache. Our maid−of−all−work life has suited us, and we have acquired such an immense deal of practical knowledge that for those reasons alone, we might be gratified and pleased we came. Since then we have been staying with Mike in Minnesota, where we were either riding or driving (anything to do with horses) all day long. Driving four miles, jumping the horses over a pole, taking them down to water, having a mule race (which was truly amusing as the course was just in front of the house and several bolted home), and driving, a gang plough, were a few of the diversions found for us. Our host was most kind and anxious to make us comfortable; he worked heaven and earth to get his house ready, the contractors having taken so much more

time than they said; anyhow, he turned the carpenters out of the house the day previous to our arrival, carried in the furniture, nailed up mosquito blinds, and did many things himself, so that everything should be in spick and span order.

As these men, Mike having two partners, are farming thirteen thousand acres, they are on a much larger scale as regards buildings, numbers of horses, etc., to anything we have seen before. Their living−houses are about double the size of C Farm; they have also huge stables, which A fancies will be cold in winter, but have a most imposing appearance, as have also their implement house, sheds, etc. The land seemed much the same as ours, a rich black loam, but very much wetter, marshes everywhere. They have broken two thousand acres since the beginning of June, and were busy, whilst we were there, cutting hay, Mike hoping he had already got over five hundred ton up!

We drove one day to see a neighbouring farm which is said to be the boss one in all the country, belonging to a man who has been out five years. He was just starting to cut his two square miles of wheat, and we watched the seven self−binding machines with great interest. They seem as light as a reaper, and the machinery comparatively not intricate.

We were driven through some standing corn, which was rather agonizing to our British ideas, but he thought nothing of it. The straw was four and a half feet high, and he hopes to get forty−two bushels to the acre. His farm being on the Snake River, and having many creeks running through as drainage, is a great advantage. His vats were pronounced no better, if so good, as ours at C Farm.

We remained at Warren a day longer than we had intended, as we got to the station just in time to see our train move off. We accused Mike's Irish groom, who is quite a character, of bringing round the carriage too late on purpose. If he did, I think all the party forgave him; we were very happy, it gave us another night of A 's society. Mike was low at our going. Poor man! one cannot be much surprised at his liking to keep us, as, besides the fascinations of ladies' society, he has no neighbours whatsoever, and, excepting the two men he has in the house, there is not a gentleman nearer than Winnipeg. He offered me seventy−two dollars a month to be his housekeeper. E was to have two dollars a week as parlour−maid, which she considers an insult; or she might have seventy−five cents a day if she would drive the ploughs.

Servants and labourers get higher wages there than in Manitoba, all the men were averaging thirty−five to forty dollars a month and their keep. They were all Swedes and Germans, of whom there is an enormous colony in the state.

We are now trying to spend our day at Council Bluff, a large junction of the Grand Pacific Railway, having come in here at 8 o'clock this morning, and our train to Denver not leaving till 7 o'clock this evening. The hotel is right on the station. The weather is so hot, that as yesterday, at St. Paul's, where we also had to spend a whole day, we have never summoned up courage to go beyond the door. It was suggested we might take the tram and go up into the City; but E has a notion that one city is much like another, particularly on a hot day.

It is curious how Americans live in hotels; there are several families in this, and if my letter is not very intelligible you must forgive me, as I am writing in the grand corridor to try and catch the slight draughts of air blowing through, at the same time that half a dozen children are playing up and down.

The scenery yesterday from St. Paul's all along the banks of the Missouri was very pretty. We both of us sat outside the Pullman as long as daylight lasted, feasting our eyes oh the water, trees, etc. The height and luxuriance of the latter seemed quite incomprehensible after the total absence of forest scenery for so many months. It is pretty round here; and by the time we get to the Rocky Mountains we shall have got beyond the stage of thinking a hillock a mountain, and fairish−sized trees not so wonderful after all; but at the present moment we are in that pleasing state, ready to admire anything and everything. We hope to get to Denver on Saturday night, and rest

there Sunday and part of Monday, and we also hope to get to Church there. Mike offered to drive us into Warren last Sunday; but as the service was a Swedish Presbyterian, we didn't think we should be much edified.

* * * * *

DENVER, August 2lst.

We arrived here Saturday evening, very tired and not at all sorry to exchange the Pullman for a comfortable room and bed, which we had telegraphed for, and therefore not, like so many of our fellow−passengers, obliged to seek shelter elsewhere. The Pullman's are most comfortable, and for a long journey like ours nothing could be so good; but I am glad that in England we don't have either these or the ordinary American car in general use. The publicity is so odious, and one does get bored by the passengers constantly wandering up and down the train, and the boys who pass and repass every ten minutes selling books, newspapers, cigars, candy, and the unripest of fruit, which they are always pressing you to buy; to say nothing of chewing, spitting Americans one has to countenance all day long. The last four−and−twenty hours of our journey have been very tiring. The scenery has been so monotonous; endless long undulating plains like the waves of the sea, covered with grass quite dried up, a few flowers, and a bee−shaped cactus. The heat was very oppressive, a hot sirocco, wind blowing which; obliged us to keep our windows shut on account of the fine alkaline dust. E had her window open last night, and awoke this morning to find herself in a layer of ashes.

We skirted the South Platte River most of the time; it was only a bed of shingles, wide and shallow, with not a drop of water in it. These plains, extending for thousands of miles in all directions, are the great ranching, or cattle−farming districts, formerly the favourite breeding−grounds and pastures of the buffalo, which, alas! have all disappeared. We only saw a few tame ones amongst the herds of cattle; they have been killed in the most ruthless, indiscriminate way for their furs, and will soon be things of the past.

We wondered much, with the river and every visible stream so dry, how the large herds of cattle and horses were watered; but have since been told that water is so near the surface the herdsmen have no great depth to dig to procure any quantity. We thought we could have made a good pick or two amongst the horses, but we didn't care for long−legged ugly big−horned cattle brutes. Here and there was a herdsman mounted on a small Indian pony with a high Mexican saddle, enormous spurs, and a long lasso, galloping and dexterously turning his animals.

Our train had to pull up several times and whistle loudly to turn the animals off the track, there being, as usual, no rail or protection; but pulling up for them was not half as exciting as on Thursday night, when we stopped repeatedly to turn a man off the train who, not having paid his fare, nor apparently intending to do so, had swung himself in some marvellous way under the cars, hanging on by the break. Whenever we slackened speed he jumped off, walking quite unconcernedly alongside; but the moment we moved on he got on again. We never knew how far he continued his perilous ride, I fancy that even the officials gave up remonstrating; anyhow, as long as daylight lasted and we could watch the men, no efforts on their part seemed to make the smallest impression.

Three hours before getting into Denver we had our first glimpse of the Rockies, and although they were then only in the blue distance we were quite excited about them; and at Greely Station (much impressed on our minds by having read Miss Bird's book just before coming here), we came in full view of Long's Peak, almost wishing Mountain Jim might still be alive to ascend it with us, and the whole of the gorgeous range; and quite one of the loveliest sights I ever saw was watching two thunder−storms on either side of the Peak break and disperse, whilst the reflections from the sunset−glow lit up the rest of the heavens. The railway and Denver City itself is about thirty miles distant from the mountains, but the atmosphere is so clear that they look as if quite within an easy gallop.

It is difficult to understand why the town has been built so far from the mountains, situated as it is on a sandy, treeless plain. It is growing, like most of the western towns, at a tremendous pace, and we are lodging in a luxurious hotel, our room on the fourth floor numbers 454. We found the avenues of trees lining every street an immense boon this morning in going to church at the cathedral.

The heat, though great, is not so oppressive as either at St. Paul's or Omaha, but then we are at the height of 5,000 feet; and this afternoon the air has been cleared by a thunderstorm preceded by a great sand−storm, which we watched from our windows encircling the town, so thick that mountains and all view was obliterated for the time being.

Denver is a great resort for invalids, chiefly those suffering with asthma.

* * * * *

August 22.

Before leaving Denver we went to a gunsmith and invested in a fishing−rod and numberless flies, with which we intend to do great execution. We also went to the exhibition, opened a month ago and still unfinished; one of the leading men, to whom we had a letter of introduction, showed us everything. It is chiefly interesting to miners, as the display of minerals from Western America is unrivalled. There seemed, in the specimens, enough gold and silver to make us rich for ever; unfortunately our ignorance on the subject of ore is too great to thoroughly appreciate it.

* * * * *

OURAY, August 24.

It is not easy to sit down and write after forty−eight hours travelling, as we have been doing since leaving Denver on Monday night at 7 o'clock; but in such scenery and air so exhilarating we do not feel as tired as we expected. You should have seen the omnibus, stage−coach, charridon, or any other name you please to give the lumbering vehicle in which we performed our last twelve hours' drive; it looked truly frightening when it drove up to Cimarron depot, one tent, last night, to pick us up, intended for twenty passengers and any amount of luggage, and swung on great straps. It was wonderfully well horsed, and we changed our teams every ten miles; but only then came at the rate of five miles an hour. We both of us started for our sixty−four miles' drive on the box−seat with the driver, who happened to be an extremely nice man and an experienced whip; in former days he had driven the stage−coaches across from Omaha to San Francisco, a journey of three weeks. But he took up much room on the seat, and every time he had to pull up his horses his left elbow ran into me, until he guessed my ribs would be pretty−well bruised.

About midnight, when our only other fellow−passenger turned out from the inside of the coach, I entered it, though I expected nearly every moment would be my last, the bumping was so fearful. I managed to get a few winks of sleep towards morning. E sat outside all night, finding it very difficult not to drop off the coach from drowsiness. The early hours of the morning, after the moon went down until dawn, were truly wretched, what between the outer darkness, the flickering of our lamps, the unevenness of the road, and the clouds of dust, and one almost began to wonder if the journey was worth so much trouble.

But with daylight we quite altered our opinions; as really I do not think, if you searched the whole world over, you would find anything more beautiful than the Uncompahgre valley and park looked in the morning light.

Mr. W met us at 5 o'clock A.M. at the Hot Springs, so called from the boiling water that gushes out of the ground, and which is said to give the name of Uncompahgre to the district, that being the Indian word for hot water. He brought us out hot coffee and food to refresh us, and drove us the last nine miles up the valley. We came slowly, thoroughly enjoying the scenery. On either side of the road are well−cultivated farms. Within two miles of Ouray the park narrows into a magnificent gorge, bounded on each side by precipitous cliffs of red sandstone, covered with pines and quaking aspen, the whole crowned by arid peaks. From this gorge you suddenly come upon the town, situated in an amphitheatre of grand gray, trachyte rocks.

Our house is in Main Street. The ground floor is an office; our four rooms are on the first floor, to which we ascend by a wooden staircase outside.

Every nook and corner is filled with some curiosity or mineral specimen. Our host being a great sportsman, there are various trophies of the chase a mountain lion, wild sheeps' heads, bears, cranes, even to a stuffed donkey's head; there are also cabinets of fossils, specimens of ore, etc., and great blocks of the same piled on the floor.

Our family consists of our two hosts, Messrs. W and B , two Indian ponies, a mule, two setters, and two prairie dogs, which are reddish−buff marmots. We are only to remain here one night, and, if thoroughly rested after our journey, go up to the log cabin in the Imogene Basin, 3,000 feet higher. We are both looking forward to it immensely. It is right in the heart of the mountains, 10,600 feet, and with no one near us, as all the mines surrounding the cabin belong to a company which had to suspend its works last month for want of funds, so that they are not being worked. The air is glorious, and we feel already perfectly restored to our usual health, though we are warned that strangers cannot walk much at first, the air is so rarefied, that one is soon out of breath. Anyhow the atmosphere has been so clear that it much added to our enjoyment in seeing the ever varying beauties and distant mountain view all along our journey from Denver here.

We unfortunately came through the Grand Canyon at night. Had it been clear the porter on the car was to awake us to see it; we could quite picture to ourselves its beauties by the scenery in the Black Canyon we came through yesterday by daylight. The engineering all along the line is marvellous, the way we rose nearly 7,000 feet by a zigzag over the Marshall Pass, or the Great Divide, going down nearly as many feet on the other side and then through these canyons, which are only narrow gorges for a raging torrent to rush through on its headlong career.

Our train was a very narrow gauge with bogie wheels, and we twisted so, in and out of the bends of the river, that the engine often looked as if it might easily come into contact with our carriage which happened to be the last. It is the great advantage of the Pullmans they are always on last to the train when passing through any pretty country, and when there are no other carriages of the same, so that one can sit on the rear platform and see all the scenery.

We entered into conversation with two Germans, and were amused by one of them surreptitiously bringing us two pink trout from his luncheon at the wayside hotel, we having remained in the carriage for our frugal meal; and though we had got to the Sweets stage felt hound to begin again, and much enjoyed our fish. The food provided at these wayside inns is generally so bad and dear, a dollar a head charged for sixteen to eighteen dishes, of almost uneatable messes, that we prefer the tinned meats and fruits we have, in our luncheon basket; and for drinks we have beautifully iced water in all the carriages, the ice being replenished at every big station.

The last forty miles of our railroad journey was over a line only opened ten days ago, by which, I am thankful to say, we avoided twelve hours more of the stage−coach and a night in a Colorado inn, which, we are told, is anything but pleasant, there always being many more bed fellows than what one bargains for; and we should not have seen the Black Canyon and its thirteen miles of grandeur and sublimity. The railway track is cut out of the sides of the over−hanging rocks, and in places is built on a bed of stones in the creek itself.

The rocks at times almost seemed to meet overhead, then widened, we crossing and re−crossing the torrent by wooden bridges which shortly are to be replaced by iron ones. The colouring was so beautiful, the chasm being generally in shade with the mountains above standing out in glorious sunshine, covered as they were in many places, even as far down as the water's edge, with pines. Nature is marvellous in its productions, but the ingenuity of man is also wonderful, and we quite came to the conclusion that the scenery of that canyon was worth coming all these thousands of miles to see.

* * * * *

OURAY, August 27th.

The name of Ouray, given to this town, is from the last chief of the Utes, who, with his tribe, lived to within a couple of years on a reserve down in the Park. The first stake is said to have been struck by white men in 1865, but no cabin was built until 1874, and from that time the town has been growing rapidly, having now about 1,000 inhabitants. In the south−west portion of the basin in which it stands, and where the waters of Canyon Creek flow into those of the Uncompaghre, there are some lovely canyons and picturesque gorges, and here, in places where the hot springs overflow the banks of the main stream, the rocks are covered with maiden−hair and other ferns. These hot springs serve to keep the river unfrozen even in the severest weather.

* * * * *

MOUNTAIN BAT'S NEST, IMOGENE BASIN,

August 29th.

This is a glorious region, and we send you the enclosed sketch to show our picture of comfort and perfection. I assure you, nightly as we sit down to our evening repast, or later round our wood fire in our parlour, we congratulate each other, and fancy we would not change places with the highest of the land, the air and life are so intoxicating.

After twenty−four hours in Ouray we came up here, sending the darkie Henry and our luggage on before us in a waggon. We have brought nothing but the bare necessaries of life all our heavy boxes are gone to Chicago to await our return being warned to bring as little as possible, on account of the difficulties of transport in the mountains, also of only being allowed 50 lbs. weight on the coach, every extra lb. charged ten cents. We ourselves rode up here, arriving about 6 o'clock, and found poor Henry waiting outside, not having been able to get into the cabin, the door−key being carefully in Mr. W 's pocket; but as everything is always left in order it didn't take us long to make ourselves comfortable; and as at sunset the cold had been piercing, a fire soon lit was very acceptable.

This cabin is quite unique. It consists of two rooms on each side of the front door, with a tiny passage used as larder, wood−hole, saddle−room,

Our room is our bed and drawing−room combined, which is hung all round with every imaginable skin, wolf, skunks, lynx, stuffed animals and birds, guns and traps, to say nothing of shelves covered with different specimens of ore taken out of the adjoining mines. It was quite creepy, the first night, having to sleep with a bear's head at the foot of our bed, with a stuffed fox just over our head, which has the most awful squint, and is the first object that catches the eye on awaking, and a dried root, the fibres of which so much resemble a man's beard that it looks horridly like a scalp. The hay−mattress on our bed has to be; shaped into grooves for our poor bones to rest comfortably. In the day−time it is covered up with skins, and then is called the lounge.

Our washing−stand is primitive, a box standing on end, in which our tin bason and cans are concealed, so that we can consider our parlour" quite correct. Our other room is the kitchen, and fitted up with four bunks against the wall, which Mr. W and Henry occupy. We breakfast and dine out of doors, at a table placed just outside the cabin, and on the only bit of flat ground we have near, as we are situated on the slope of a mountain, and a most beautiful stream of water runs about forty feet below us with the clearest and coldest of water. One of our first occupations in the morning is to take the animals down to water, and afterwards to picket them in amongst the long grass, growing in great profusion and height during the short summer on all the foot hills and wherever there is an open space. The first afternoon we were up here we went for a ride round Imogene basin, and were delighted with the wild flowers, which are quite innumerable columbine, phloxes, blue gentian, dandelions, harebells, vetches, and fifty other species. E picked a good many, and hopes to draw them for the benefit of you all at home. The flowers shoot up almost before the snow has melted, and make the most of their short existence which lasts about two months and a half. We tasted the bear berry, which grows as a bush and has a round brown berry, quite bitter, but, as its name shows, is much appreciated by the bears, who come any distance to get it.

* * * * *

September 4th.

We are enjoying this mountain life; the weather is all we can desire, and we are in the most robust of health. We live almost entirely out of doors, sketching all the morning, in the afternoons making expeditions either into some of the mines, or over a mountain−pass; and for tender−feet the name given to all new−comers, are pronounced to be good mountaineers; but our ponies and mules are so sure−footed and pleasant that we follow any trail, however narrow and uneven, with the greatest confidence.

The scenery everywhere is far beyond our sketching capacities, but we find spoiling many sheets of drawing−paper a never−failing amusement and occupation; and we can sit out anywhere, as neither snakes nor mosquitoes are known in these altitudes. Our darkie's criticism might be discouraging, he saying he cannot understand our wasting so much time on things not at all like nature, were it not counterbalanced by the praise given us in the Ouray Times which paper we sent home to you last week. The balsam pine, which is about the only tree we have, is rather monotonous and sombre− looking, being of a blackish−green; and we have not here, as in the valley around Ouray, the beautiful sandstone and porphyry rocks for background; only never−ending blue distances, brought out so clearly on account of the extraordinary dryness and purity of the atmosphere.

We have been escorting two men to−day over a pass 12,500 feet, part of the way to San Miguel, going as far as the ridge, from whence we had a most glorious view and panorama, as we could see into the valleys and canyons some miles below; Mount Wilson, which unfortunately was shrouded in dark, stormy clouds; a range of mountains in Utah called Sierra la Sal, about 120 miles distant; and a long way into New Mexico.

In returning home we got into clouds, and could hear a thunderstorm raging in the valley below us, for some little time losing our trail, and not sorry when we found it again and were able to descend from higher regions, the cold was so intense; not so surprising, as we found when the mist lifted that snow had fallen on all the surrounding peaks.

* * * * *

IMOGENE BASIN, September 12th.

Two days' after our expedition to San Miguel we awoke to find ourselves in a white world, the snow being two inches deep. It is said to be a most unusually early storm, but it was not altogether a surprise: the glass had been falling and storms had been audibly growling all round us. The snow only lasted about twenty−four hours, just

long enough for us to realise and admire Imogene in its winter garb, and enable us to try and walk in snow−shoes. We did not attempt either going up or down hill in them, so that our performance was confined to the small space in front of the cabin.

With the exception of this one storm our weather continues lovely; bright, sunshiny, warm days we do not even require an extra jacket out of doors until after sunset with a slight frost every night.

Last Monday we started early, taking provisions with us, and spent a long day in Red Mountain Park, sketching the marvellously brilliant scarlet peaks, whilst Mr. W shot grouse, of which he got three and a half brace. The grouse are much like ours, only larger, and roost in trees. These parks abound in game. We have been wishing to see a bear; at a safe distance, perhaps, but have never succeeded, though several have been killed since our arrival. Whilst shooting, Mr. W came upon the fresh trail of one and its unfinished meal of a gophir not very far from where we lunched; only fancy what a stampede there would have been had the bear appeared. We are always looking out for thin trees round which a bear's claws would overlap, and therefore they could not climb, to take refuge up in case of danger; but they very seldom attack, unless wounded or a she−bear with cubs. In the spring and autumn these parks abound in deer; but in summer they go above timber line to graze on the succulent bunch grasses and to be free from flies. There are also mountain−sheep, coyotes, and foxes, and along the streams several beaver; but we never have seen any animal bigger than a prairie−dog, or smaller than a coney.

Chipmunks and the mountain−rats disturbed our slumbers at night, running about the cabin, and I do not at all think we should like our dormitory were we not watched over during our slumbers by a cat, the most sociable of beasts, who as a rule sleeps between us, and protests loudly if we either of us move or wake him.

* * * * *

September 7th.

By degrees we are learning something of the mines and miners; also are beginning to know all the packers who daily go up and down the trails, each with a train of ten donkeys carrying the ore from the mines. The men's appearance is of the roughest, but they, one and all, are most civil, both of speech and manner. Women are rare in these districts, the wife of the manager of the Wheel of Fortune Mine being the only one living up here. She has been here two years, and is quite idolized by the miners and trappers, as she has never been known to refuse hospitality to any. We were much amused, whilst going through the Wheel of Fortune tunnels last Saturday, to hear one of the miners ask who we were, and when told with the ready answer, natural to this country, that we were Duchesses, he wished much to know if that was not something like the Prince of Wales.

We went into a lower shaft whilst two fuses were fired in an upper. The anticipation of the shock was worse than the realisation. Each of us carried a candle, and the concussion blew them all out; but beyond that, the smell of gunpowder, and smoke, we experienced no harm, and as we had matches and the candles were soon relit, we had not to grope our way back in darkness.

We have been into several of the tunnels on the eight well−defined lodes in this basin, also into some in Sneffels; these veins may be all traced through into Red Mountain Valley, which seems to be the volcanic centre of this neighbourhood. The porphyry vein matter or ore−bearing quartz, having decomposed more readily than the trachyte of the mountains which they intersect, in some instances, as in the peak just above our cabin, they have cut deep notches in the summit of the ridges, making the outline very jagged and rugged looking.

The mineral wealth around us is astounding, hundreds of rich mines have been discovered in all the surrounding mountains, and are being discovered now. Three men, whilst at dinner a month ago in Red Mountain Valley, in picking round with a small axe where they were sitting, knocked off a piece of rock which, when analysed,

proved to be so valuable a lode, that they have since then sold their claim for 125,000 dollars.

Any man can stake a claim of 1,500 feet on a vein if not previously done; but he has to expend 100 pounds on it in the first five years to enable him to obtain a patent from Government, which secures the property to him for ever.

There must be a certain amount of excitement to miners as to what treasure will be produced after every blast of gunpowder; but oh! how I should hate the life, living underground in these subterranean passages, which are all more or less wet from the water percolating through the rock, and never able to see the sun or the beauties of nature. The wages of the men are enormous, able miners getting four dollars a day; sorters, or the men who break and turn over the stone, three and a half.

Mr. W had a hard life when he first came out here in 1877; as he and his partner worked with no other help for four years underground mining, besides having to build their cabin, being their own blacksmiths, assayer, cook, and he declares he enjoyed it immensely, with the exception, perhaps, of the first winter, when, getting in their supplies very late, they had to live on bacon (and that rancid) and flour, but little else.

Stores for the winter have to be brought up in October, as the trails early become impassable, and all outer communication can only be kept up on snow−shoes. The snow averages about seven or eight feet, though in this basin it has been known to be thirty− eight deep, but in the Uncompaghre Valley and down by Ouray it averages only a few inches. Animals are left out to graze there all the winter.

* * * * *

THE RANCH, UNCOMPAHGRE PARK, September 16. Ten miles below Ouray.

Amidst many tears and regrets, we have torn ourselves away from the cabin, where we could have spent another month or six weeks in perfect contentment; but a storm being predicted, and duck−shooting and fly−fishing being part of our Colorado programme, we accepted the loan of a house on a farm down in the valley, and are installed in it. It wanted a certain amount of pluck, on first seeing our accommodation, to come down. Our house is one room, thirty feet long by about eighteen wide, an open roof with plenty of air−holes, and no partition whatsoever, excepting what we have made by hanging three blankets from a rafter, behind which is our bed (or lounge in day−time), the washing−stand, a box set up longways, and a tin bason, an arm−chair which consists of two pieces of wood, and an old wolfskin, much worn, and a rickety table, at which I am writing now, lighted by a candle stuck into a bottle. On the other side of the blanket−partition is the kitchen stove, big table, store shelves, a pile of saddles, Mr. W sleeps in a tent outside; Henry in a waggon: he, poor man, is not at all happy, as he imagines bears and coyotes are nightly intending making their evening meal off his portly form. He is the greatest coward I ever saw, and came in horror confiding to me that he had seen a snake, yards long, which Mr. W killed the day following, and it proved to be a small water−snake, hardly ten inches.

Henry affords us a great deal of amusement; he does not at all presume, but, in his quaint way, wishes to tell, and asks so many things, queries which often are almost unanswerable. The day we spent in Ouray on our way down from the cabin here, we much distressed him by not striking a show in the street, and not wearing smart clothes which had a tong, if it were only to show that we consider Mr. W a big bug.

He left his wife in the South eleven years ago, and, in spite of all our protestations and lectures, informs us he is going to marry again, as in the Bible he reads that it is wrong for man to live alone.

It is a matter of infinite surprise to him how we can remain out of doors with no covering to our heads, he could not stand the rays of the sun as we do; and why our complexions in consequence are not as dark as his is a mystery to him.

* * * * *

THE RANCH, UNCOMPAGHRE PARK, September 24th.

Although this house does consist of only one room, is situated in a stony field, with not a tree near us, and that we are not having good sport, either trout−fishing or duck−shooting, we should be quite happy and contented were it not for the B flats which abound, the first we have come across, which, Henry assures us, are not from dirt, but grow in the pine−wood. Why are they not, then, in the log cabins which are entirely built of pine? We have not disclosed the fact to Mr. W , he is so thoroughly enjoying his holiday, as we know that we should be instantly ordered back to Ouray, where he would have to begin his work. Whilst he is out shooting, we make expeditions, exploring over all the foot−hills. One day, after wandering up a beautiful valley, we came upon a Park or Mesa, and I do not ever remember having seen such a view: miles of grass on which wild cattle and horses were feeding, with clumps of trees artistically dotted here and there, and for background the orange and scarlet tinted foot−hills, pines on higher regions, and a glorious panorama of snow−capped mountains beyond. But for the mountains, one might almost fancy oneself in some English park, and at every turn we felt we ought to come upon an Elizabethan House. There were many tracks of deer, but none were visible. We overtook a man driving a team of ten oxen with lumber, and of him asked our way, as one might very easily lose oneself in these rolling park−like glades, intersected with deep canyons, with no trails or roads, excepting here and there one made by lumberers. In coming down the hill again, close to a large saw−mill, we watched a man breaking in a horse of five years old. He had secured a dozen, all wild, in a corral or fenced enclosure, and had thrown a noose over this one's head. He was trying to draw it up by means of a thick rope to the fence, the rope getting tighter and tighter as the animal backed or tried to gallop round with the other horses. Finally, when the poor brute was almost choked, and perspiration was streaming down him, he allowed the man to go up to him, who very dexterously and quickly slipped a halter over its head. The horse then was tied up to the post, the others turned out, and the man intended keeping him there until the following morning without any food, when he would put a saddle on, and ride him, and hoping to sell him as broken for eighty dollars.

Many of these horses are not broken at all; we were shown a good−looking mare of thirteen years old who had never had a bit in her mouth.

* * * * *

THE RANCH, September 29th.

This is the country I should like to have a farm in, were I bound to emigrate. In this valley every sort of grain and vegetable seem to grow in the most luxuriant way, and we have been feasting on tomatoes, cabbages, beets, lettuces, etc. The butcher, who is also greengrocer, sent a potato twelve inches long by nine round, hoping the ladies would take it in their trunks to England as an average specimen. Then on the Mesa or parks above the foot−hills, large herds of cattle can always graze through the winter. We have had jelly made of squawberries and the Oregon grape, which is excellent. There are also wild gooseberries and black currants, both of which we have found. This ranch is 160 acres; the only buildings the owner has put up are the dwelling−house and one shed as a stable and implement−house. Hay last year was selling at 10 to 12 pounds a ton, potatoes 3d. to 6d. a lb., oats 4d. a lb., and everything in proportion; eggs 3s. to 4s. a dozen all the year round, milk 6d. a quart; so that any man ought to make a very large profit, the land originally costing him nothing, and, excepting in hay or harvest time, very little labour required. Oats are cut very green and stacked for winter fodder. These fertile valleys are very limited in number, and as the consumption must be on the increase, mines being discovered and opened out, some

time must elapse and the railway come nearer, ere competition reduces the prices, or the farmer's profits are lessened.

The people round are most kind and friendly, and would be more so had they received the slightest encouragement; but Mr. W gave out we wanted to know no one, that we were not to be in Ouray, and that all our time was to be taken up seeing the country. We went one day up Bear Creek, as Mr. W was asked to see a mine, and dined with the manager and his wife. They gave us a sumptuous repast, and tried to persuade E and I to remain the night, though we were only about four miles from home; but even we two are not enough un−Englishified as yet not to object to sleeping with two other people. They had only one room for kitchen, bed, sitting−room, and it is curious how little one now thinks of the bed standing in one corner, the washing−stand in another, whilst kitchen−stove, and scullery fill up a third. I suggested that when strangers did sleep there they gave them the adjoining cabin; but was told that a trussel bed put alongside of the host's took no room whatsoever. Mr. W tells a funny story of a picnic party in the mountains in an old cabin of his, which only contained one room, and where five women and six men had to sleep the night, the women occupying the bunks, the men (after promenading outside whilst the women were getting into bed) sleeping on the floor. They all laughed and talked so much that daylight almost appeared before any of them got to sleep, and there was a regular stampede under the blankets among the ladies when a match was struck, one of the men objecting to his neighbour lying alongside of him with all his clothes on.

* * * * *

October 3rd.

How the time flies! in forty−eight hours from now we shall have said good−bye to the most fascinating of regions, and Ouray and the Rocky Mountains, with all the glorious scenery, will only live in our memories and be things of the past.

I fancy one could never tire of it, and wish so much I could describe the view we had from our Ranch looking up the Uncompahgre. the valley bright yellow with the grasses and aspen trees turning colour from the frosts, the scarlet dwarf oak on the foot−hill, and the mountains lost in the blue distance. During our six weeks' stay we have tried all the different phases of life. The cabin life in amongst the mountains and miners, the Ranch, and town, and certainly give the palm to the first−mentioned. As we anticipated, our Ranch life was brought to an abrupt end the moment we owned to Mr. W how our slumbers were disturbed with the B flats; we had to return into Ouray, and have been living here some days.

Mr. W found such an accumulation of work on his return, that, excepting at meals, we never see him; and have to content ourselves wandering and exploring on our ponies all the different trails, and we shall soon be acquainted with every one within miles. The only ride we do eschew is the Toll Road up the park, the only piece of flat ground anywhere about, and fit for cantering along. It is the favourite resort of the ladies of the town, who are smartly arrayed in very long−skirted habits ornamented with brass buttons and velvet jockey−caps, and who must naturally look down upon us as disgracefully turned out in our every−day gowns and broad−brimmed hats, which, to say the least, have seen better days.

Ladies riding alone are required to pay no toll; a custom we think ought very much to be encouraged all over the civilized world.

We have spent one more night at the cabin in Imogene, leaving Henry in Ouray and doing for ourselves; and whilst Mr. W and the expert, for whom we went up, were inspecting mines, we two fetched the water, made bread, and had a general sweep out. The cat was supremely delighted to see us, and could not apparently make enough of us when not allowed on our knees, stood up against or walked round us.

The heavy snow−storm of last week destroyed all the grass and flowers; they were so high when we left that a mule could hardly have been seen whilst grazing, and now they are laid quite flat with not a vestige of their beauty left. The wind was very high as we went up the canyon, so we had to hurry past the patches of aspens growing on the rocks and having very little hold for their roots, which were being blown over unpleasantly near us.

This will be the last letter you will receive, as when once started we shall go as fast as the stage−coach, rail, and steam− boat can take us to England, I having had a telegram which hurries us home.

Good−bye, we look forward immensely to seeing you all again; but we have had such a pleasant trip throughout, without a single *contretemps*, that we can but be delighted we came, and shall always look back with immense gratification on our six months' sojourn in the Western hemisphere.

* * * * *

LONDON, December, 1882.

Since arriving in England I have received the following letter from my brother in Manitoba, and as I want this book to be a sort of guide to colonists I think it well to add it:

C FARM, November 14th.

I am writing now to send you a kind of statement of our farm accounts; though it cannot be quite correct, this year's crop of oats not having been thrashed out, so that the calculation can only be approximate.

1st. *The Land*. The cost of the land is taken as the first purchase−money and the amount it has cost to bring 410 acres under cultivation.

2nd. *The Buildings*. They consist of two dwelling−houses and two stables; one of the houses, being for the men, is also used as a warehouse and granary.

The contract price was very low, and also the price of timber; now both gone up, but put down at the original cost.

3rd. *The Horses*. Valued, I think, rather low at 250 dollars a team; 500 dollars for the stallion. The 4,326 dollars include their cost; the amount of oats and hay they have eaten.

The Cows. Include their original cost, hay and percentage of keep. The price of cattle now is high; we sold two cows this summer at an average price of 75 dollars.

Implements have been reduced about 35 per cent for their two years' wear.

Carriages being new, we have taken nothing off them.

Pigs have the cost of their feeding added; the young ones taken at an average of ten dollars.

Furniture. A slight deduction for wear and tear.

Oats. We are calculating 2,500 bushels off 181 acres.

Hay is difficult to calculate; I do not think we have 400 tons. The price now is very low; 5 dollars a ton, and it

would cost us three dollars to get it into Winnipeg.

Potatoes are uncertain. They are worth one dollar a ton now, and if we can manage to keep them during the winter they will be worth a good deal more; but they are difficult to keep, although we have a good root−house; If the frost happens to get to them they will all spoil; and it is difficult to keep the frost out, going as it does twelve feet into the ground.

The Fence is quite worth the money; so you see that putting most things at a low price, one has a certain profit, though not in hard cash; and it is satisfactory to find that one hasn't been working for two seasons for nothing. No one expects a farm to pay in this country during the first two years.

Original Value. Dollars.		Present Value Dollars	
Land, 480 acres	4,110	worth 30 dollars an acre	14,400
Building 2 houses and 2 stables	4,814		4,814
Horses¢l horses 1 stallion	4,326		3,000
Cattle 84 cows	2,668	80 cows and 46 calves	3,700
Carriages	229		229
Harness	407		300
Implements	1,810		800
Pigs	125	Pigs and 29 young	350
Poultry	20	33 chickens	40
Furniture	495		400
Profit and Losses	10,681		
Oats		2,500 bushels at 50 cents	1,250
Hay		400 tons at 5 dollars	2,000
Potatoes		1,000 bushels at 1 dollar	1,000
Flax			100
Wire Fence			500
	29,180		32,888

N.B. The profit and loss comprises the wages to labourers and cost of living of both masters and men.

This estimate is given after two years' farming.