PIONEER DAYS

BY

MRS. FANNY MAKEPEACE JAMESON

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REMINISCENCES AND INCIDENTS OF PIONEER DAYS 1895

CHAPTER 1

PART 1. THE JOURNEY

I have often wondered what it would be like to look back over the years and picture the changes that have taken place in a country new to you in your youth. As I near the declining years of my life, the panorama that unfolds itself is almost like the memories of a dream. I realize that the changes have been many and stupendous.

Picture in your mind two small girls with their father arriving in Alberta on a morning early in June, in the year 1895 A.D. Up to that time my life had been spent in the large industrial city of Manchester, England, and in various cities in the United States. We left Omaha, Nebraska, on Monday evening at 6 P.M. on June 3rd, taking a train to Sioux City, Iowa, and from there to St. Paul, Minnesota. We travelled on the "Soo Line," through the Dakotas by way of Minot, Hankinson, North Portal, to Moose Jaw in the North West Territories of Canada. What a dreary looking country North Dakota was in those days with hardly a building or an animal in sight for hours at a time. The conductor on the train told my father it was the most monotonous run he had ever experienced. We wnt through North Portal on Tuesday at midnight and our hand luggage was examined there by U.S. Custom Officials to see if we were smuggling anything contraband into Canada. It was not a long process with us for my father was an experienced traveller, and "knowing the ropes" (as the saying is) had shipped our heavier luggage "in bond" straight through to Calgary from Omaha.

I must now mention an incident that took place at the beginning of our journey and the consequences that came later on. We had a pet dog with us, a black, purebred Pomeranian,

which we were all very fond of, and in the hurry of changing trains at Sioux City, she was almost forgotten. My father hurriedly gave me our tickets with instructions to wait for hime at St. Paul, and rushed back to get the dog. The train was pulling out when he arrived but the baggage man threw the dog to my father. In the excitement her chain and drinking dish were forgotten and my father just managed to climb aboard for St. Paul. On arriving there and during a short stay, we were able to obtain another chain for her, and also some breakfast that we fed her in "relays", for one of us girls had to stay with our luggage which was quite numerous.

Nothing of any importance happened during the monotonous ride to Moose Jaw, except the long wait at North Portal, owing to so many settlers' effects being examined by the Customs Officers. We kept our little dog with us as much as possible and gave the baggage master a tip to be kind to her. In due time, 9 A.M. on Wednesday morning, we arrived at Moose Jaw and the first person we noticed was a Mounted Policeman in his red coat, but at that time we thought he was a British soldier. It gave us quite a thrill, but greater still, was when my father pointed to a large building and told us to look. There, proudly floating in the breeze was a "Union Jack." We had been living in the United States for more than three years and I will always remember how my blood grew hot in my veins as I looked at it, and thought of all it stood for. It was to us a link in a strange land.

Part 2. THE JOURNEY

We had not long to wait in Moose Jaw, just having time for breakfast and then we boarded a C.P.R. train coming from Regina, Saskatchewan. There were a lot of new settlers on board. My father asked the conductor if we could keep the dog with us and offered to sleep in the colonist car, which I must say was most uncomfortable, unless you had plenty of rugs and cushions with you. He agreed and we all stayed there a good part of the day with out little dog. A robbery had taken place on the train the night before, the conductor informed us, and that the men, two of them, were still at large. We also saw Canadian Indians for the first time at Moose Jaw, and as there seemed so many of them, I afterwards wondered it that was why the Mounted Police were there. My father bought a number of Indian curios to send to relatives in England; these were made of beads, leather and feathers, also polished buffalo horns. We wach got a pretty basket made of scented grass, for the squaws appeared very clever at this sort of work.

Our tickets were for first class tourist coach and we had engaged sleeping berths. My sister and I retired early as we had experienced a more exciting day that when travelling through the Dakotas. Among the passengers were a number of young fellows eighteen and twenty years of age; they were Norwegian colonists bound for Vancouver, with an English immigration agent in charge of them. In the afternoon the agent asked my father if we could sing, and if so, would we sing for them as they felt very lonely being so far fromtheir own people, and unable to speak English. Of course we were very willing to do so, and asked the agent

what kind of a song they would like and they all wanted, "Home Sweet Home," which we had to sing several times for them before they were satisfied. We then sang the lovely old Irish Emigrant song, "Isle of Beauty Fare Thee Well," that they liked almost as well as the other and finished with several old English songs. They all thanked us in their own language.

We saw natural gas burning when we passed through Swift Current. At every place we had stopped, there were Indians in their blankets, beaded leggings and moccasins; they had all kinds of buffalo horns, and elk horns, beaded work of every description and the pretty baskets made of dyed sweet grass. Always there were one or more Mounted Police around. Our next stop was at Medicine Hat and it was the largest town we had seen since leaving the States. Having quite an interval here, we had plenty of time to see the black bears kept in an enclosure near the railway. It was evening when we left there and went to our berths. The next morning my father told us of a curious thing that had happened to him during the night. He had decided to sleep in the colonist car with out little dog. Our portmanteaus and bags were there, as well as our travelling rugs and some cushions, so he was comfortable enough and the weather was quite warm. He was the only occupant of the car. After my sister and I went to our berth he decided to make up his bed and get some sleep as well, as he had been up the night before at North Portal. About midnight he was wakened by the growling of the dog, and there was a man bending over him as though to rob him.

At the same time the dog sprang barking at the man and then my father saw another man farther down the car. The dog's bark and my father's call brought some of the train men, but the robbers escaped at the end nearest the baggage car. Nothing more was seen of them, although a long search was made. The light was so dim my father was unable to recognize the men but he said they were fairly well dressed. However, we heard nothing more of them. We also met a Mr. Jackson, a lawyer from Calgary, who gave us a lot of news about the country, especially north of Red Deer and Lacombe where we were going. He pointed out the South Saskatchewan river and we had thought it would be a large river, but were not greatly impressed, and told him we were disappointed because it was not as big as the Mississippi at St. Paul. We had seen some large rivers, the Hudson in New York State and the Missouri when we lived in St. Joseph, Missouri. We thought Assiniboia was pretty dreary, such a lot of alkali lakes, very short grass and hardly any flowers. We saw plenty of antelope, coyotes or prairie wolves as they were called in those days. Lots of rabbits and gophers and thousands of water fowl of all kinds as we travelled nearer to Calgary. We arrived in Calgary at 2 A.M. on Thursday morning and found that the train for the North left at 7 A.M. We went to the Immigration House while my father rushed away to find a customs officer to take our extra luggage and furniture, out of bond. He eventually located one and just as the train was pulling out, my father got on board; I imagine our friend, the lawyer must have told him where the official could be located. We found some very

kind people at the Immigration House, Keatings, a family of Americans, whom we got to know real well later on, also a Welsh family, Jones; they took pity on two little lonesome girls and helped us with out bags and baskets, as my father was nowhere to be seen. I had always kept my own ticket and my sister's ever since we left Sioux City. We had been told to go North with these people anyway, as they were also going to Lacombe and the conductor would see to us. Well !, it really seemed we would soon be at the end of our long journey. My father and our friend of the day before, Mr. Jackson, appeared in our compartment soon after we started and he pointed out the places of interest to us afain, with old landmarks. He was a most sociable travelling companion and did not forget the two home-sick little girls he met on the train as I will tell more about him later on in my story.

As there were only two trains a week between Calgary and Edmonton, my father was lucky to be able to travel with us as he would habe had to stay in Calgary until 7 A.M. on Monday morning. We were anxious to go by the Thursday train as we had written to my brother to meet us at Lacombe on June 6th; he had come to Red Deer early in September 1893 and had taken up a homestead, eight miles south and east of Lacombe and twenty-two miles east of Red Deer as that was the only town near at the time he came West. The country around Calgary as we went north was very bare and bleak looking and so cold. When we left Omaha the temperature was 90 degrees fahrenheit, but in Calgary it felt about 50 degrees. As we travelled on, a fine rain was falling and rain storms became frequent. Our first experience of June

rain was that it was far from a warm one, such as we had been accustomed to. The country was also changing and from Didsbury on, there were trees and abundant green grass. We thought Innisfail the prettiest town we had seen since entering Canada. The trees were so green and good for tired eyes which had looked upon nothing but widespread prairies for the last three days. We arrived in Lacombe at 4 P.M. and were very sorry to bid good-bye to Mr. Jackson who was going on to Edmonton. We were thoroughly tired and hungry, for we were too excited to sleep or eat the latter part of our journey. We wondered how my father could talk politics, enjoy his dinner and appear calm. The train just seemed to crawl along and we were anxious to see our brother. He was waiting on the platform with a friend of his, and introduced us to quite a few people who were his neighbors and had gone to town that day. Mail day always brought a crowd of people in mild weather as letters were eagerly looked for. Then we went to do some shopping and to see some pet bears that were chained up near the hotel. I must mention that one of the sons of the Welsh family we met at the Immigration House, Tom Jones, who seemed so very big to us, tried to scare us with tales of Indians. I often thought later, that it had a strange effect on my sister as she seemed terribly frightened if an Indian came near her and of course we saw many of them in the next few years.

We also went to see the Methodist minister and the manse they were building for him. My brother's friend was helping

with it and he took us over and introduced us to Mr. Chegwin, who was the first Methodist minister in Lacombe. My father and brother having finished buying supplies, started for our new home, riding in a heavy lumber wagon, a bit different from the soft cushions of the trains. It seemed a long cold drive but my brother assured us it was only ten miles. The road through the timber had not been cut then, or "opened up" as the settlers called it. A steady rain was falling and in spite of our rain coats were chilled to the bone. It was a very disagreeable ending to a tiresome journey we thought as we circled around sloughs and clumps of trees and brush, the horses never moving off a walk. My father had insisted on putting the raincoats in one of the gladstone bags and very thankful we were for their protection. The trip home lasted four hours as there was no sign of a road, just a few wagon tracks. The sun had set behind the hills and trees before we reached the head of the Valley where my brother's log cabin was situated. Mrs. Kilby, a kind neighbor, had cooked a hot supper for us and had a nice bright fire going in the stove. That fire was the best thing I had seen, it seemed, for ages ! After supper and a little chat, we thanked the neighbor for her kindness and retired for the night and slept like a top as we had been very much awake since 2 A.M. The fresh cold air and long tiresome drive had made my sister and I very sleepy. Thus, we made our debut into the Great North West.

CHAPTER 2.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS

After a good night's sleep and rest we felt ready for anything that might turn up. The household duties seemed very light to me as I had always been used to a large number of rooms. My brother's cabin consisted of one large room, curtained off at one corner with large rugs for a sleeping room for us girls. My brother informed us that he would not be at home for dinner. He and a neighbor were burning a kiln of lime about a mile away, so he would carry a lunch with him. This neighbor from Missouri, George Hendricks, lived six miles south of us and appeared unusual, being six feet four inches tall and weighed about two hundred and fifty pounds. This distance seemed a long way off for we had been used to neighbors living in the next house to us in a city.

We had been hoping my brother would show us around the farm and tell us all about this great new country. However, after dinner we decided to do some exploring ourselves. Everything was so quiet that we found ourselves getting drowsy instead, so we would up that first afternoon with a nap. We thought it must be the effect of our journey byt my brother told us it was the altitude. Let me say here that the new settlers seemed to be affected the same way we were and wanted to eat and sleep all day. An Irish family by the name of Ross, who came from near Queenstown in County Cork Ireland, lived about three miles down the Valley. One of their boys a lad of sixteen told us he could "ate and slape" all day aond we certainly agreed with him. They had arrived in the Valley in April and were getting used to the climate.

My sister and I were quite venturesome, and not having met with anything more dangerous than a rabbit, decided to go to the lime kiln taking a hot dinner to my brother. Mr. Hendricks tried to tell us there were wild animals about, such as bears, lynx and coyotes but as my brother had not told us anything about them we did not believe it. Well, we started out quite bravely with the dinner basket and did not see any of the wild animals he had mentioned. We were told to watch for a landmark in the shape of a large square rock as big as a kitchen table. We sighted this in the distance and made a bee line for it and just as we got close an animal poked its head around one side. To say we were scared would be putting it mildly. We were just petrified. What kind of animal it was we had no idea as it mostly resembled a small rhinoceros, minus the horn onits nose. When we got over this shock and our voices came back to us, we started to shout as loud as we could in the hope that our brother would hear us, and in doing so, frightened the animal. We caught a good glimpse of the creature as it ran off and the noise it made convinced us it was a pig, but such a pig. It was dark grey in color with long legs, extended body and a great long snout, also utterly devoid of hair. After a while we plucked up courage to go on and find the lime pit, which we knew could not be far away, as the lime stone had been dug up around where we were. Finally we arrived and told Tom of our adventure. He had a good laugh and then told us the pig belonged to Mr. Hendricks, who had brought it along so he could feed it. On asking what made it look so funny, he told us Mr. Hendricks had shaved the hair off the pig for coolness and that it must

have been wallowing in a mud hole for it really was a white pig.

That afternoon we decided to catch a wild rabbit to keep as a pet and had noticed a number of young ones running around by themselves. My brother's cat was a wonderful hunter and frequently caught weasels, but it was so savage we could not touch it. After a very arduous chase we finally caught a rabbit and put it in a hutch we had made and fastened on the log wall of the house, placed very high to be out of the reach of wild animals if they came around. We fed our pet on lettuce and carrots out of the garden and put a little can of water in the hutch as well, then fastened the door up tightly. It became quite tame and we were very fond of it. One morning when we went to feed the rabbit, we found the door open and our pet missing. Of course we blamed the cat and wanted my brother to shoot it, but he refused saying there were hundreds of rabbits but only one cat to keep the gophers out of the garden. We had not seen any gophers then, so told him that was just an excuse. Cats were very scarce in 1893, and later we were very glad we had her for she killed a very large weasel that had taken a heavy toll out of our chickens. This pure black cat was obtained when a very small kitten at Blackfalds, or "waghorn," as it was then named after the first Postmaster. My brother carried it home in his pocket.

We found life on the prairie very free and easy and learned in time to adjust ourselves to this new way of living.

It was then the middle of June and the Valley looked a beautiful place. Everything was so fresh and green and the ground covered with flowers of all colors, which were all new to us except the Sunflowers and Bluebells. The Moccasin, or Lady's-slipper, were a pleasant surprise for it resembled an orchid and we thought them very pretty. There were purple Shooting-stars, wild Ceraniums, Honey-suckle and masses of wild Roses which were the only ones that had any scent. We noticed and thought it quite strange that the birds did not sing, just twittering a little in the early morning. There was a member of the Jay bird family, called "Whiskey Jack" (stragge name) that would annoy us with its incessant chattering. The Woodpeckers, knocking on the house, frightened us at times and when we chased them away, we found a large hole in the wall as round as though drilled with an auger.

During all this time I had been trying to wash up a large trunk full of my brother's clothes, also our own. The water was so hard, the soap just curdled and made sticky spots on everything, but however, I decided I had to do something about it so asked Tom how he managed to wash his clothes before we came. He explained, you will have to make some lye, and proceeded to show me how it was done. First of all, I had to sift the charcoal from the wood ashes and as we burned nothing but wood in the stove that seemed easy enought. Then fill up a three gallon iron kettle we had with ashes and pour enough boiling water over them filling the kettle. Let stand until clear and pour off as much as possible, being careful not to get it on my hands or clothes.

I was skeptical about all this but it softened the water all right, and I then started to wash his clothes. He had been baching for two years, so I expected the worse. Well I found what I expected and much more. The linen tableclothes had been used to wrap around large pieces of beef and were covered with blood stains. A friend of ours, who was a dyer by trade from Paisley Scotland, had been experienced on my brother's clothes and the result was such a conglomeration of color, seldom seen. White linen shirts were dyed a dirty slate color, woollen underwear a salmon pink, socks a primrose yellow, his white woollen football jersey a peculiar shade of dark greenish blue and his white cricket flannels were a murky looking dark blue. The rest of his clothes were a queer color that looked like a mixture of them all. His system of washing had been to put everything into the copper boiler, sheets, pillow cases, towels, dish towels, dusters, socks, shirts, underwear, handerchiefs, and proceeded to boil them all together. Tom added to my consternation by telling me that the charwomen in England certainly earned their "half crown" a day going out washing; I was too amazed to speak. I then took a good look around, seeking the quilts we had given him when we left hope. These were made of homespun , except one that was really a hand quilted top quilt, very fine work and was made by our Grandmother Makepeace about the year 1840. The heavier quilts, also hand done by our Great Grandmother, were lined with homespun blankets and were very warm. I found the largest one, a lovely dark green, and that had been used to cover the stable door on the inside to keep the snow from drifting in

and to close the draft off the horses. Another had been used to blanket a sick horse, and the best one, a cotton bedspread, I found covered with mud, for it had been put over the wall to keep the snow out. There was no use saying anything as the damage was done, but those quilts would have been very comfortable on our beds when the temperature ranged around fifty below zero. Log houses were not the warmest habitations in those early years. Such housekeeping, and I told Tom he ought to be ashamed of himself, but he just laughed and said I was too particular. Anyway he argued, I did not need the quilts as he had lots of blankets. My father felt sorry when he say how they had been used and said that he had helped his mother when she spun the wool for the heavy quilts, and the quilting must have taken a lot of time. So much for bachelors ! I am sure they did not appreciate a woman's work, for Tom said they had served a better use that way. I was too disgusted to argue but remembered what the Bible said about trials and tribulations and thought I was having my share now. To compensate for my above indignation, he then offered to show me how to make biscuits, bachelor style, without milk or baking powder. Just flour, salt, baking soda and water. They were very light and when buttered tasted very good.

The next excitment or adventure I had was learning to milk a wild cow, add I must say I was very afraid of her, she was so large and had extremely long horns. I had seen Tom tie her to the fence and milk her and it seemed easy enough, but she sensed I was afraid of her so watched me all the time while I milked her. The mosquitoes were terrible, so I had to build and light a smudge

for she would not stand still long enough to be milked otherwise. I would not go near her head so milked her where she stood on picket, with one eye on her and the other on the pail and I considered myself lucky if I got away with all the milk, for more often she sent pail, stool, milk and myself spinning. Finally I mastered her and could lead her around, but she was always nervous and bolted at the least sound. We got even with her one hot afternoon in August. My brother told us to change her picket at noon and put her on the edge of a small slough surrounded by willows. My sister and I were going into the bush to pick berries, and just as we passed the cow she gave a loud bellow, tossed her head and came racing towards us and Elizabeth, being curious to see what had happened, started to investigate. I tried to stop her but she went to where the cow had been, but could see nothing from the trail to cause such a disturbance. A minute later I heard her scream and she came running as though bears were after her. The cow and my sister being stung in the eye because the cow had stirred up a wasp's nest. There were no berries for supper that night and my sister nursed a badly swollen eye for a week. We left the cow for the men to look after, being in too big a hurry to get away from there ourselves.

I had quite a time learning to bake bread. Up to that time we made the soda biscuits before mentioned, so my father insisted on my learning to bake good bread. My brother had some royal yeast cakes and by following the instructions on the box I made lovely light bread, so that was another accomplishment I had learned in the West. I have always used Royal yeast cakes since, for they kept well and we could lay in a stock of them.

About this time, the middle of June, my brother decided to buy another team of horses. They left one morning for the "Brewster Ranch" and would not be home that night as it was some distance away. This was to be our first night alone with howling coyotes for company outside and a yapping dog inside, barking at all the noises she heard. About two o'clock in the morning we were awakened by the barking of the dog and the flashing of a lantern in the window. I had taken the precaution to barricade the door as often Indians travelled through to Lacombe from Buffalo Lake. I called "who's there" and a voice asked for my father. I recognized the voice as belonging to our Scotch friend Mr. Walker. He left word for my father and brother that the Norwegian settler had just died that night and to go over as soon as they came back. He then went on down the Valley to stay with the Jameson boys at their shack until morning. That ended our sleep and we lay in bed wondering if any one else would be wandering about and listening to the voices of the night. How thankful we were when daylight came and later my father and brother returned home. We gave them the message and they went across right away promising they would return that night. Next day the Norwegian was buried in the cemetery at Lacombe; attending the funeral were some of the men of the neighborhood. I have never forgotten that, for it did not seem possible that death could come out there among the flowers and sunshine.

It was quite a roundabout way to go to town so my brother decided to blaze a trail through the bush. My father had made up his mind not buy any "unbroken" horses after their visit to the

horse ranch but try and get som e from the older settlers, and gentle if possible. One morning he started for Lacombe on foot with this idea; going through the bush for the first time. Towards evening we began to get quite anxious about him, wondering if he had lost his way so decided to go and look for him. However, before we left, the dog started barking and running towards the bush trail and in a few minutes we saw my father leading a mare with a foal running at her side. The mare was only halter broken and very nervous, so my father had led her all the way from town. The colt was quite gentle and soon became a great pet. The mare would only allow us to go near her when the colt was feeding. We heard of another mare that was gentle and well broken, so my father made another trip. This time it was to a horse ranch, owned by a Mr. Hughes of Wolf Creek, North of Lacombe. There he bought a mare Molly, very gentle and broken to ride, so my sister and I took a great liking to her and we were soon riding all over the country and especially to Lacomber on mail days. My brother broke the other mare to ride as well and my sister and I enjoyed these rides right up to winter, visiting some of the ladies in the Canyon district we had met at the Sunday services held in the Canyon school house. My father insisted that we learn to ride without a saddle, with just a blanket and surcingle and sitting sideways in the horses in case they got scared at something or fell off. In those days the girls and women rode side saddles and it was some trick to learn to ride sidways without a saddle. The nervouse mare was a bad actor for a long time, when we put the side saddle on her and when riding

together one of us rode her with the blanket and surcingle. She was much easier to ride than Molly who seemed rough after riding Vic. The horses all seemed so nervous and if a gopher scurried across the trail or a bird flew among the bushes, the horse would shy away and jump, and without the saddle, we usually went sailing through the air. The bumps and bruises we received, their name was leggon.

The fence around our garden was made of poles pat between' two large posts and held in place by wire. It looked very strong to us but Tom had warned us not to let any cattle around and if we did see any coming, we were to head them off. What he meant was to chase them away. Well ! we though, if they were anything like our cow we would not dare to go near them and as we had not seen any cattle, only heard them at a distance we did not worry over them. We want outside as much as possible when the weather was fine and on this particular morning my father and brother had gone up into the bush to cut logs for an addition to the shack, as they were called by the old timers. It was them we saw a herd of cattle and a large bull pawing up the earth and bellowing, some distance away. They seemed to be heading for the shack. Our first impulse was to go inside and close the door, then I remembered the garden and my brother's instructions. We both rushed out with a broom and axe handle I had found, but the cows just stood and looked at us, but all the time that bull was getting closer. At last we had a happy thought, we would try our "umbrellas" on them. We rushed into the house, grabbed the umbrellas and ran to the nearest cow, suddenly opening it. That had the desired effect.

In a few moments we had them all on the run and headed down the Valley. My brother just laughed when we told him how scared we had been and said those were our neighbor's cattle and some of them were milch cows. Well ! they looked pretty wild to us, especially that big bull.

CHAPTER 3.

OUR NEIGHBORS, THE RAIN AND MOSQUITOES

A half a mile east of us, on the next quarter section, lived Mrs. Kilby, who was so kind and had supper ready for us the night we arrived. Between our farms ran a creek and in June and rainy weather, it was full of water, so we decided to visit her later on; we could see no way of crossing it except by wading. She always rode horseback when she came to see us and carried her little girl in front of her on the horse. We thought she was pretty wonderful. We found out later that all the women rode horseback who were not too old to learn.

We had a neighbor, Mrs. Chapman, who lived on the same section, three quarters of a mile away. My sister had gone there one evening with Tom and the lady had invited her to come again, also sent an invitation to me. One Sunday afternoon, we decided to walk there. Mrs. Chapman told us a lot of things about the country and offered to show me how to make butter. My brother had bought the cow from them, and I was very anxious to know how to churn and wash the butter, so she told me all about it and also her churning day. I had often wished to know how the ladies fixed up their log houses and what they did to the walls, so I

observed all I could that afternoon and determined I would make ours look nicer too, just as soon as our luggage and furniture arrived, although it was three weeks since we came to the Valley and no sign of it yet. My father had taken it out of bond the morning we arrived in Calgary, June 6th, and we had enquired for it every train day. Calgary was only a little over a hundred miles from Lacombe but it might as well have been a thousand. Mrs. Chapman asked us if we were going to the big celebration in Lacombe on July 1st. We said we were and asked what it would be like. She told us there would be Indians, lots of horse races, bucking horses and more Mounted Police. We wondered why the Mounted Police. It was to be the first Dominion Day celebration in Lacombe. Mrs. Chapman gave us a pressing invitation to stay to stay to supper but we thought we would not do so on such a short acquaintance. She seemed surprised and we wondered why, but then we had not learned the hospitality of the West, also, we were in a big hurry to reach home and ply my brother with questions. He always told us we were to inquisitive but we had to find out things hence the question. Anyway, we reflected, Mrs. Chapman had asked us lots of questions too - all about the fashions in clothes, the latest songs and the plays at the theatres, and how we liked the country and our journey from the States, so we did not care what Tom said, for he never liked to answer any of our questions, therefore we would ask the Neighbors. Everyone asked us first thing how we liked the country, joked with us about the mosquitoes eating us up, (we had experienced plenty of them in the States,)

Indians running off with us and having our scalps taken, wild animals killing us and lots of other unpleasant things. The talk about Indians left a great impression on my sister and she always seemed terrified of them. Our brother never seemed to hear the joking, my father simply smiled quietly, but we were amazed and that made the jokers roar with delight. In time we became used to it, but the scalping story remained with us. These stories were to make us tough they said. What queer words they used for things, we called a piece of meat tough and they called people tough. Just what was meant by that I did not find out until long after. There were various kinds of tough, tough luck, tough going when the trail was rough, a tough guy, a tough deal with some one and so on.

The second Sunday we werein the country, an old English couple walked up the Valley to see the little English girls. They were Mr. & Mrs. Roe and came from the Midlands but had lived in Sheffield, Yorkshire, prior to coming here. We enjoyed their visit very much; they stayed to tea and then walked home again refusing a ride as Mrs. Roe said the exercise was good for them. She invited us to spend the next Sunday with them. They lived in a sod house right out in the Valley two miles away, with their two sons, Alfred and Frank. It was Alfred Roe who was with my brother at the station the day we arrived. Mrs. Roe had brought an old English Harmonion from England, which looked like a small organ. Another family of new settlers who lived a mile further south were also there. They were Mr. & Mrs. Robert Simpson from Paisley Scotland and has two small boys; the eldest was five

years old and a perfect mischievous boy, the youngest was "Wee Robin", aged three. Mrs. Simpson played the harmonium and we had a regular song service, Bible reading and Prayers. We all enjoyed it very much as it brought our old life so much nearer to us. A Sunday or two later we went to the Canyon school to a Service at noon; the Methodist minister from Lacombe held the Service and the people from miles around attended. It was there we first met more people from the British Isles, Mrs. Ross from County Cork Ireland and her sons and daughter, Mr. & Mrs. Goodwin Cooper with their daughter and two sons, a number of people from Ontario, the States, and various bachelors among whom was E. J. Tate, afterwards a Methodist Minister. We were surprised to see so many people living out here; Mrs. Townshend and her son Robby also attended at times - she became one of my best friends, when I was married and went to live further down the Valley.

It was near the end of June when the rainy weather began; up to about the 20th, the weather had been fine. I shall never forget how the roof leaked and the only dry spot was under the big ridge pole in the center of the roof. Our furniture had not arrived yet and we were thankful for that. My brother put tar paper sods and earth over the west side of the roof to protect the beds and our clothes. As my father was a great believer in that verse "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do" he had laid in a stock of knitting wool for just such an emergency. I was asked to knit socks for my father and brother, and my sister had to darn any that needed it; so we sat and worked away only stopping to get the meals. Father had nothing to do but smoke and

read and Tom cut the wood, (for me to dry in the oven) also read too. I don't see why Elizabeth and myself did not read as well. There were cracks between the floor boards so the water ran into the cellar, saving me the bother of mopping it up. Apart from the rainy afternoon we had on our arrival to the "shack," we had been having the most beautiful weather, now what a change, grey murky skies, mist all over the Valley and a very cold temperature. Those June rains were really cold. One afternoon before the rain started, my brother said it looked as though we might have the June rains. The sky had clouded over so he started hauling dirt and throwing it up on the roof, much to our astonishment. I must here describe the "shack." It was 18 feet long and 14 feet wide. Built of peeled logs, and the roof had three large logs called ridge poles; a big log upright in the center of the room supported the highest ridge pole, and small poles were nailed to the ridge poles. These were covered with hay, then tar paper, and then sods and loads of dirt covered them, to fill up all the cracks and crevices. I did not examine the roof until after the rain. The storms started after we had terrific thunder and lightening; not a downpour, but a good steady heavy rain that soaked into everything. After the first day, the roof began to leak. It seemed to be all over, but there was the corner over by the stove that was dry, so we piled all the bedding there in as small a space as possible. I perched up there with my head against the roof, knitting socks. Housework was out of the question except dishwashing, for if we left the dishes on the table, they

washed themselves. It was quite a sensation to sit at the table for meals with the water running steadily down the back of your neck. We put the table under the center ridge pole and the food in a row just under the pole, the rest we'll leave to the imagination. We were thankful for two things, first, we had a good fire, so the atmosphere was not cold but humid, second, our furniture was in the baggage room at Lacombe, neighbors had brought word of it; "safe" from the leaky "shack". When the rain finally stopped, we went outside to dry off, but the roof continued to leak until the next day. I suggested that we put a new roof on the shack, but my brother assured us there was no need as it would not leak for another year. "Just fancy", an ordinary rain would not come through, he said. "Such philosophy", also that was the only time the bachelors washed their floors, when they mopped up after a rain like that. I could quite believe it. I must mention how useful our umbrellas were. We could sit in a chair and put up the umbrella and kepp off the leaks for a short time, bit it got to be very tiresome holding them up for long. This life was full of ups and down, and the downs had it. We were young and could see the funny side of life.

After the rain came the mosquitoes. Mosquitoes, we never imagined anything like them. There were clouds of them. They drove everyone and everything frantic; all the desire was to get away from them, but where? There was no such thing as wire mosquito netting around, so my brother said we would have to do as the Indians do, smoke them out. I have often wondered since which was the least of the two evils, but I believe the smoke was. It

would not breed disease as sometimes mosquitoes do and was more like a disinfectant. Smoke from green willows; whenever I smell it yet, I think of those early days and mosquitoes and can almost feel the sting. Our blood must have tasted good to them as Elizabeth and I were bothered far more than my brother was; my father's pipe helped him. The poor horses; when we went out riding we each carried a bunch of green willow switches on the saddle. A bay horse took on a grey color when covered with these mosquitoes, so we used to ply the switches and ride fast to create a breeze. Eventually I shut them out of the house with fine lace curtains we had, which I tacked right over the windows and had hinges put on, to open from the outside. Necessity being the mother of invention.

CHAPTER 4.

LACOMBE"S FIRST CELEBRATION

July 1st 1895

At last the great day arrived, when we were to drive to Lacombe for the first "Dominion Day" celebration held there. The day was fine, sunny and warm, so my brother decided to go the new way he had blazed through the bush, as it cut off about two miles. The roughness of the road did not bother us at all as that was part of the adventure. Everything was so new, and when we reached the ridge of hills on the east side of the Lacombe Valley we had a splendid view of the country around. We named the hill we were on Arnold's Hill, as a settler by the name of George Arnold lived on his homestead at the foot of it. Lacombe looked like a field of

tents, which were Indian "teepees", my brother told us. The Indians from the Hobbema Reserve, near Ponoka were there in full force as well as a lot of non-treaty Indians. A lot of them wore the costumes made out of Hudson Bay blankets, grey with black stripes running horizontally around. They must have been very hot in them. In great contrast were the Indian runners, young bucks, tall and athletic, all muscle and spare of flesh. These Indians were naked except for a loin cloth. Their faces and bodies being painted red and yellow, bracelets and weasel skins adorned their arms while Eagle feathers and small skins were fastened in the long black braids of their hair. To see them run was a thrilling sight; they seemed to leap through the air, their feet just skimming the ground. Before the sports started a number of these "real Indians" as we called them sat in a large circle on the ground. In the center was a big drum and seated around it about a dozen Indians, young and old. On the outside of the large circle were the squaws, some of whom were quite young, squaws with the papooses squatted on the ground near by. At a signal the "Tom Tom" started and the squaws shuffled round the circle chanting. It sounded like ki, i, i, i, i, and kept that up all the time. By and by the spirit moved one of the bucks, for he leaped high in the air with a yell and started dancing. It looked as though he was stalking something as he crouched along. After a while another Indian from the inner circle around the drum leaped up and danced, yelling all the time until all inside the large circle were dancing except the one beating the tom, tom. Suddenly the first one stopped, came over to the drum and squatted down; there were a couple of large pails of mixed candies near the drum for refreshment for the wild dancers.

The poor squaws still kept up their shuffle and ki, i, i, ing but no candy for them. After a while all quieted down and then an old Brave got up to make a speech with lots of gestures; I think he was the Chief of that band of Crees. My father got an interpreter to tell us all about it. The old Chief's name was Samson in English and he was telling all the others about the "Good White Mother", (Queen Victoria), who lived across the big water, and how she looked after them. It was a very flowery speech and wound up with warning them to beware of the fire water (cheap whiskey) of the white man. This was a peace making "Pow Wow", and the pipe of peace was smoked. Later on there was another kind of "Pow Wow", that might have been serious. We noticed there were three Mounted Police in their red coats watching the Indians pretty closely. There must have been five or six Indians at least to every white man there that day, perhaps more; there were very few white families here then. After dinner the horse racing started and then the excitment began. As nearly as I can remember it was all Indian races. As many Indians as could possibly crowd in, started and how these cayuses ran; they rode bareback when racing, for I never saw a saddle on any of the race horses. Some of the races were just a short dash, others were half a mile, a mile, and evenlonger. A terrific yelling accompanied them all, not from the spectators but from the riders. The white people cheered the winning horses. It seems an Indian has to yell when he is racing. There were squaw races as well; they had a surcingle around the cayuse and knelt on his back, grabbing the mane, and they rode a wild race. On cayuse stumbled just at the finish throwing the squaw over its head; something scared it and it bolted the track running towards the wagons.

We all thought the squaw was killed but she was only very badly bruised all over; the pony's leg was broken, so it was shot by one of the Mounted Police and the Indians ate it at the Pow Wow that night. Mr. W. F. Puffer, the butcher in Lacombe, (who was afterwards the first M.L.A.) had given them a large steer to be slaughtered for the Pow wow too, so I imagine the Indians would have quite a feed. My sister and myself got quite a "scare" while watching the Indians racing. I had noticed a group of young squaws a short distance away watching us all the time. I suppose we looked "green" as they called it out here, for we had only been in the country three weeks. They appeared to be arguing with one another and finally a young girl about twelve years old stepped out from the rest and ran towards us; as she ran past me I saw her grab my sister's hand, wt her own finger and wipe it across the hand. She looked at her finer and then ran back to the squaws. I looked hard at them and they all smiled at me; my sister was terrified and clung to my father. All the stories we had heard of the scalping came back to us. We asked Tom what it meant and he said the Indians had put a sign on her and must be after he scalp; she had the most beautiful golden, auburn hair. We moved away from that vicinity and the races lost their charm, my sister begged to be taken home. Some of the Indians that were painted looked "savage" enough for anything. Elizabeth had a very white skin and afterwards, when we saw how a lot of the women used powder on my sister's skin. At any rate there was no scalping and I told my brother he ought not have told her that. We prevailed on my father to go home early and so missed the most thrilling event,

the scalp dance at night. I imagine there was quite a wild time, from what the neighbors told us who had stayed later; some one had given the Indians "fire water" and some of the old braves tried to incite the younger ones to go after the "Indian Agent" - "if they were younger he would die with his boots on", a great expression in those days, especially from our neighbors just across the "line". My father said it was all nonsense we had heard as the Mounted Police were ther to keep order among the Indians. My sister and I got a bad scare about the scalping, especially when we heard what happened at night, and we remembered it for a long time. There were no guns among the Indians at the celebration, but they all carried a long hunting knife in a sheath at their side. I shall always remember the picture they made around the "tom tom"; it was just like the stories we had read of the wild Indians in the Western States years before. Inspite of the watchfulness of the Mounted Police there was a lot of fire water and as the day wore on some of the "bucks" began to get ugly. About sundown we prepared to leave for home. The furniture and other luggage had arrived some days before, as the neighbor had told us, and as they were also leaving early offered to take some of it in their wagons. We were very glad to avail ourselves of their kind offer. The Indians danced their war dance as well as the scalp dance; nothing serious happened for the young Indians were not so warlike, and also afraid of the "Mounties" so they had to be content with their barbecue. The next time we went to Lacombe you would not believe there were any Indians in the country; not one "teepee" was left. We always looked back on that day as our most thrilling experience. We were certainly tired out when we reached home.

Busy days were ahead as another room had to be built in to the shack or cabin as we called it, there being no room for all our furniture and luggage. It was very interesting to watch the log walls going up. My brother had been in Ontario one summer and learned to swing an axe and build log buildings. He had stayed with relatives of father's in Kent county Ontario, near Lake Erie. The logs there, were very large, a lot different to the ones out here. We were to have a board roof on the new part; no more leaky roofs for us. The living room, at least would be dry.

Our garden was very good. My brother had planted it early and we really enjoyed the fresh vegetables which were a great help to our menu. We also had plenty of fresh eggs, milk, cream and butter, but very little fresh meat. Plenty of bacon but we did not look upon that as meat; it was just a breakfast dish. We still had old potatoes from the year before but they did not taste very good. We did not eat rabbits in the summer and the partridges and prairie chickens were too small and very wild until the fall. What a blessing those little snowshoe rabbits were to the settlers that first winter. We heard of a family who lived quite a way south of us, living on rabbits and salt for a while, with barley coffee to drink and a little dark bread made from the four x flour the Indians used for their bannocks. Nearly all of us drank coffee made from roasted barley, ground up in a coffee grinder. The grinder was a most necessary article in our housekeeping; it manufactured a change from tea or milk all the time. My father never could drink real coffee, but the barley

coffee suited him all right. It had an appetizing smell and tasted good with cream and sugar in it, especially in the cold weather. We had plenty of preserved blue berries and some wild berries called saskatoons that my brother had dried the year before. An early frost in June 1893 had killed the strawberries, raspberries and gooseberries, also the saskatoons. Black currants, cranberries and blue berries were left these being the Fall fruit that blossomed later. I was afraid to go far in the bush to search for the former so contented myself with blue berries. These with dried apples were the only fruit we had all winter. Such a thing as an orange or lemon we never saw in the stores. After a while we were able to get dried prunes. Just before Christmas we got a few raisins, currants and candied peel, to make a cake and pudding. These were certainly a great treat as we had not any for months. It seemed like Christmas to have a plum pudding once more. Ontario apples were very scarce and only bought as a luxury. As soon as the zero weather came the men in the neighbourhood for miles around formed parties and went to Buffalo Lake, forty miles by the trail, to fish. They took a tent and food and camped there returning home with a wagon box full of frozen fish. These were mostly Jack fish or Pike, and were very good eating when caught in real cold water. Rabbits, fish and pork with an occasional roast of beef was our meat diet for the winter. We did not have many hens so only killed one for a treat on a birthday. Christmas day we had a big round of beef; the real old English Christmas dinner. After that first winter we had plenty of beef of our own to kill. My father always insisted on keeping a few pigs to have ham and bacon, especially for the summer with corned beef as well.

Canning meat of any kind was unheard of in those Pioneer days. We kept a barrel of salt beef and a barrel of salt pork and dry cured pork in a cool place usually the milk house. This was built of logs in the side of a hill and floored with flat stones and had a roof that did not leak covered with sods and earth for coolness. On a hot day it was a treat to go in that cold milk house or (dairy) as we called it and get a cold drink of milk or buttermilk. We hung the hams and bacon in cotton bags in there too. The windows above the door and at the back were covered with wire screening. After the first summer we sent to Ontario for wire netting. No more "smudges" for us.

It was one of the early Sundays in July that my sister and I walked down the valley to pay a visit to Mrs. Chapman, who had two brothers, John and Joe Jameson. We had never seen John, but Joe had paid us a visit one day when he came to see my brother. They were friends of borther, having known them ever since Tom came to the Valley early in September 1893. He and his partner lived in their cabin until their own was built. Mr. & Mrs Chapman and the latter's brothers, who were known as the "Jameson boys", arrived in Alberta from London Ontario on April 14th, 1892. Their father came in the fall of 1893, a younger brother Nathaniel in 1894, and their mother arrived in the summer of 1896, going to Pleasant Valley to stay with her daughter for a couple of months. Mr. Jameson's house was two miles south of us on the edge of the timber. There was a real good spring og good water on his land in the bush. Mrs. Jameson came home before the cold weather and we drove over to see her; she was a real "old timer" from Ontario, being born in "Little York" (as Toronto was called then) in February 1835. She went with her father to the

/Queens' Bush" in County Grey, when she was ten years old. Many were the stories she told of the emigrants who came from Ireland, Scotland and England in those times and the hardships they suffered clearing the heavy timber off their land grants. Her name was Elizabeth Wilson the town of Listowel is near where she lived when young. Mr. Jameson whose name was Aeneas, (a Greek name) was born at Galt, Ontario. His father, also called Aeneas, built the first Hotel in Galt. Mr. Jameson was born on July 12th 1833. He was sixty years old when he came to Alberta and Mrs. Jameson was sixty-one when she arrived here. We always enjoyed going there for a visit and having her come to visit us; she was a wonderful neighbor and taught us many things, useful in our Pioneer life.

CHAPTER 5

MORE EXPERIENCES WE START HAYING EPISODE OF THE BEAR
THE SKUNK AND OTHER BEAR STORIES

Haying commenced about the middle of July. My brother, not having a mowing machine of his own, made a "deal" with a neighbor, Cecil Ewing, (who lived near the Canyon) to put up the hay on shares. There was lots of hay where we lived but not so much in his vicinity, so this arrangement was satisfactory to both. Being a bachelor there was no necessity for him to go home, so for three weeks we had the pleasure of his company, which we all enjoyed. We were always on the look out for new ideas, and freely exchanged our views, gaining a good deal of useful information in this manner. We were quite sorry when that part of the haying was over and he returned to his homestead near the Red

Deer River Canyon, about five miles away. As there was still some hay to be put up in some smaller sloughs in the timber, I went along. My job was to rake up the ground with a hand rake, where the hay cocks had been, (wasn't that English). There were four of these sloughs edged with trees and willow brush, leading into each other. As the hay was loaded into the rack, I raked up and cocked the remainder. It was a new experience for me but I soon got used to doing it. All went well until I reached the third slough, which as I entered I spied a large black animal on the other side of it, that looked like a dog with its tongue looling out. I had never been afraid of dogs in a city but as I looked at this animal I felt a queer shiver go up my spine to the roots of my hair. I went on raking but took care not to go too near as I did not know whether the dogs in this new country where savage or not. Just then it heard the rumble of the wagon and disappeared I then went on to the last slough and told what I had seen; I asked Tom what it was and he said, "it must be Mr. Turnball's dog, who lives West of here." I had my doubts, remembering the queer feeling when I first saw the animal and made up my mind to find out if it was a dog, suddenly remembering the"bear" stories we had heard along with the Indian tales. It was then the middle of September. The next Sunday we heard that out neighbors, Mr. & Mrs Harry Chapman, while out riding after their cattle across the valley, east, had seen a bear two miles away. The horses smelt the bear and bolted, almost throwing Mrs. Chapman out of her saddle. Our old friend, Mr. Hendricks, came

up from his farm a few days later, (he lived six miles south down the Valley) and told us that their neighbor Mrs. Russel was sitting in front of her cabin in the cool of the evening, when a big black bear came out of the bush close to her. She called to her children and they all rushed to the cabin and barricaded the door. My brother had tried to stop Mr. Hendricks from telling this story; I had made up my mind that it was a "bear" that had startled me in the hay slough, and taxed my brother about it. Of course, he said, he had told me it was Mr. Turnbull's dog, so I would not be afraid. I found out from Frank Roe later that Turnball's dog was a yellow one.

Episode of the skunk. As we neared home one evening from our haying in the bush, we were met about half a mile from home by out sister; she wasin a state of great excitement. After clawing her down a little, she told us there was a skunk in the addition we had built on to the house, which was only partly finished. It seems she had gone to her trunk to get some of her clothes and as the door had been left open, she arrived in time to see a skunk disappear inside. She slammed the door shut and ran up the trail to meet us, for she heard the wagon coming. The entrance to our cellar was through this new addition and we kept our milk, butter, cream and eggs in there until a milk house was built. There were shelves all round the cellar. Of course that was where the skunk was hidden when Tom finally located it. By this time the odour of the skunk was terrible so my brother just shot it and hauled it out. My brother's clothes were buried in a hole. Father threw everything out of the cellar and sprinkled lime t
thickly oever the floor and walls. Needless to say there was no supper that night, we were all too sick to eat; that was the most unusual

experience. I began to develop nerves after that day; up until then I was not easily scared. We wondered what was going to happen next. For the next month we camped outside we could not eat or sleep in the house. That was the last of the haymaking and the finishing of the house began, also the vegetables and potatoes were dug up out of the garden and stored in the cellar as soon as the skunk smell had left it.

I must now go back in my story a little and mention an event that took place earlier, about the middle of July, just after we started haying. There was a family of "old timers", who had come to Alberta in 1887 (possibly earlier than that) before the railway was built; their name was Haines. They came here from Wyoming and were real Westerners. They had been living in log houses built into the bank of the creek, that today bears their name, and there is also a small town named after them. They decided to build a large hewn log house. Well! in those days an event like that called for a "dance", so invitations were issued to the whole countryside from Buffalo Lake to Lacombe. As Mr. & Mrs. Chapman and their brothers were great friends of the Haines family, of course they were especially invited and could bring any of their friends. They invited Mr. & Mrs. Simpson and family and my sister and I. We were told to put on clothes that would stand a hard wagon ride and to take our others to wear at the dance with us, as we could change when we got there. We left Chapmans right after dinner and it was after seven o'clock at night when we arrived. It was twenty miles away with no trail until we struck the road to Buffalo Lake, a good many miles away. It was tiresome riding,

sitting on a board across the wagon box and winding around sloughs and skirting muskkegs, clumps of trees and willows. Such a long, hot, weary afternoon. The children were completely tired out, went to sleep and had to be held to keep them from falling out of the wagon box. As the day cooled off into evening, the mosquitoes came and they sure were fierce. Very glad indeed were we when Mr. Chapman pointed out the Creek and said it was only two miles farther on. I still don't know how the ladies stood it, each holding a heavy sleeping child; Mr. Chapman held the eldest Simpson boy. We tried to keep the mosquitoes away as best we could with willow switches. We all were wishing for a good "smudge". Finally we arrived, all had a good hot supper; lots of roast beef, potatoes, pickles, pie and cold milk to drink. The children were put to bed and we got ready to go into the new house to dance. Mrs. Haines was a real old time Rancher's wife and gave us a most hearty welcome. The dance was a great novelty to us, especially the style of dancing and the calling off of the square dances and quadrilles. The dancers swayed their bodies to the music and moved their arms up and down. When we had learned to dance in England, we were not allowed to move our bodies or arms, just our feet. We gazed in amazement and the thrill of the evening was watching the "square dances", which were fast and furious. A man moun ted a table and "hollered" at the top of his voice unintelligible words to us. Such a noise the dancers made, you could not hear anyone speak. My sister and I were too scared to ty and dance even a waltz or polka, which we knew well. The quadrilles I could not call dancing, so different to what we had been taught. The girls were swung around until they were dizzy and staggered when the men released them. As the night wore on we danced a little but never the square

dances, just waltzes, schottesches and polkes. We found them exhilarating enough, even to us young girls who could stand it. Towards daylight they danced what was called a "hoe down" and wound up the dance with several of these. If the square dances were fast, these "hoe downs" were twice as fast and noisy and the party ended, noisiest of all. Everyone was laughing and shaking hands, saying it was the best dance they had been to. After breakfast we started on the long trail home and arrived in the middle of the afternoon, very tired but quite happy and with lots of news to write to my brother in New York and my cousins and friends in England. Such a dance and such a journey. After that we were completely Westernized. When we related our adventures to my father he was much interested. My brother had no use for dancing, a good game of cards or an interesting book was more in his line. He laughed a good deal at out description of the square dance and "hoe down". He had seen one or two of these dances and considered it a waster of energy. Later on when we learned to dance them, he thought we had taken leave of our senses. Then we laughed at him for an old "stay at home." Mrs. Chapman had insisted on us having a late dinner with them before we walked home. We were very hungry and thought that was extremely kind.

About this time there were a nubber of Church Services held in the school house, six miles away. We all drove over ot the service and met a lot of new neighbors, who, like ourselves had arrived that spring and summer. Mrs. Ross whom I have mentioned before was one of these who always attended the Service, walking six miles most of the time. We often wished to visit her and her daughter and shw would tell us the most interesting stories of her life in England.and Ireland. We liked

her very much. Some of the stories were very droll, some quite humorous and others very tragic. It was always a great treat to visit her and she became very friendly, especially when we told her we had seen the "Cove of Cork", her farm in Ireland being situated near there. Our other great friend was the English lady Mrs. Roe; we visited her as often as we could because she only lived two miles away and we could walk there. Such a lot of useful information and methods of work I learned from these ladies. I often look back on those visits too, and consider them as some of the happiest times of my early life here. It was like entering a haven of rest, such a peaceful atmosphere and so like the "Old Country", we loved so well. The English lady and her family had come two years before and she had learned to adapt hereself to the new life. This family were my brother's greatest friends, so were John and Joe Jameson. A very sad incident occurred in their life in September. Mr. Roe had not been very well all summer and decided to go to England for the winter, Mrs. Roe and the boys to stay here. On arrival to Calgary, he became very ill and went to the hospital there. Mrs. Roe was sent for as his condition became serious. He developed pneumonia and died shortly after her arrival. Burial took place in Calgary. We all missed him so much, and it seemed hardly possible that he was dead; he used to walk up to see us quite often. Mr. and Mrs. Roe were the first visitors we had in Canada. I had never thought of people dying out here and it always seemed so strange, especially some one we knew. It made a great impression on our young minds; everything had to be re-adjusted. Death seemed more natural in a city but out here where the skies were so blue and sunny, the earth so green and covered with flowers as well as the wild life of animals, birds etc., death seemed to have no place. Mr father quoted

that passage from the Bible: In the midst of life we are in death, humor and pathos make up life wherever we go.

About this time near the end of September, we had a very bad storm. My father said it was the equinox. Alfred Roe was over that afternoon helping my brother and as it was raining so hard with high wind and terrific thunder and lightning, he decided to stay over night, for we urged him to do so. We could hear the trees falling and crashing in the timber north and west of the house. They seemed quite close at times. The log house shook when the blast hit. My sister and I were seated at the table reading some adventure stories and the men were seated at the table smoking and talking. My father began telling a story of the North of England; it was one of the Ettrick Shepard's "Tales of the Border", and called "The Story of the Long Pack", and adventure that really took place in Northumberland and was extremely interesting. Just as he reached the most exciting part of the story a blast of wind, stronger than any of the others, shook the building dislodging a pile of lumber stacked in the new addition and leaning on the log wall. As these fell with a great clatter and bang, we both screamed and rushed to my father. I had been reading a story of Indians in the Argentine and thought it was Indians sneaking up on us in the storm; my sister was too terrified to speak; even the men were silent for a while, then my father spoke in a matter-of-fact tone saying:- "I wouldn't like to be on the Atlantic tonight". My brother laughed and said: "Neaither would I"; and he and our visitor started to figure out how fast the wind was travelling. Finally my father finished the story and to this day I still remember quite distinctly the "Story of the Long Pack". When the wind quieted down a little we went to bed but not to sleep; the scare we had kept us awake and we

lay listening to the moaning of the wind in the trees and imagining all sorts of things happening outside. We still thought Indians were prowling around and although we had asked my brother to go out and look around and he could not convince us to the contrary. That was certainly the wildest night I ever experienced at that time of the year since living there. Next day the sun shone nearly as bright as usual but the ground was very wet. It had been anice open fall until then.

Some time later, our neighbor Mrs. Chapman came over with Mrs. Haines, the lady at whose house the dance was held in July. There were no blueberries where she lived, so they came to the Valley to pick some before winter set in. By this time the berry season was nearly over but I had found a patch on the section north of us, so we all went there to help her pick the berries. We all noticed a weasel running around hunting for mice and gophers. It had already started to turn white and Mrs. Haines said we were going to have an early winter; this was in mid October. I told my brother when we got home and he said it was time to point up the shack. This meant mixing a thin plaster of lime and sand and filling up all the cracks in the plaster between the logs; the storm in September had loosened a lot of it. I thought that a good fun and a nice change from housework and undertook to do the outside of the house myself as I liked to be out doors. Well! it was not so funny when I had to climb a ladder to reach the gables balancing a board of sloppy mortar in one hand and hanging on to the ladder and trowel with the other. I thought if my brother could do it, I could as I was not so helpless as all that. He intended to have a joke at my expense I found out later. I turned it on him instead; he was very agreeably surprised at the result of my exertions. I had been taught that if a thing was worth doing at all, it was worth doing well. I declined the job of doing the barn, but as long as we lived in the

log house and I was at home, I went over and pointed up the walls just before freeze up. After the episode of the skunk we had a nice log milk house and it was my delight to keep it well plastered and white washed. I was learning to adapt myself to this new life gradually; I had a thorough training in cooking and sewing in England and learned to make lots of fancy cookery and different meat, fish and egg dished in the United States, so that made it much easier for me. I also learned how they washed clothes in the States and it was the same way as they did out here.

CHAPTER 6

MY FATHER'S TOBACCO JAR. VISITING THE NEIGHBORS. I GO TO THE FAIR. OTHER DANCES. THE HOOT OWL.

Many times during the summer Mr. Hendricks had brought his wife to visit us. They always rode horseback on these occasions and brought their dog along; a lovely black and tan collie dog. One day he did something that annoyed his master and Mr. Hendricks caught the dog by the hind legs and hit his head against the log wall. We thought that was the most cruel thing we had ever seen and never liked him after that. I used to wonder if he ever beat his wife as he had an awful temper and was so big and strong. His wife never had anything to say when he was around. One day she pointed to my father's tobacco caddy; it was a very fancy one of mahogany trimmed with bands of ivory and silver. We took if off the shelf and handed it to her, never taking out the tobacco for we did not think plug tobacco would interest her. She looked it all over, remarked what a nice one it was and handed it back to me. As the lid was still on I never looked in. She persuaded my sister to go home with her and stay all night as her husband was going away and would not be back until the next afternoon. We all waved good-

bye and went back into the house. After a while my father reached for his tobacco caddy to have a smoke. Such a look came over his face. I asked what was the matter, so he handed me the caddy. To my surprise it was empty, the three plugs he had in it were gone. I immediately told him how Mrs. Hendricks admired it and told me here grandfather had one like it. I thought that was not true, we had never seen one like it, My father had bought it when a young man on a voyage to Russia a good many years before. Tom had a great laugh when he came in and said he know Mrs. Hendricks chewed tobacco. My sister confirmed the fact when she came home. She told of a cruel incident that happened while at Hendricks. The day she came home Mr. Hendricks was back and in the morning went to the barn to milk the cow. She kicked him and he lost half the milk, landing near the horses who promptly kicked him and landed him out of the barn door on to the manure pile. He called for Pet (his wife) to come for the milk grabbed a neck yoke and beat the horses, went to the house for his gun, shot the cow, cut her throuat and dressed the meat after skinning her. She told us that Mrs. Hendricks chilled the liver and they had it for dinner; as it was cold weather the meat would keep. My sister and I looked upon him as a barbarian after that.

The show came on November 5th, that year, and I well remember the day as Tom and I had driven to Lacombe to buy a good heater for our living room and to bring home a barrel of apples we had sent for to Ontario. They were winter apples and we were notified by the station master they were there. It started to snow soon after we left home that morning and it was dark when we arrived home; we had gone to Lacombe in the wagon and the snow hindered our travelling. Joe Jameson came up that evening for mail and tobacco and stayed to help us unload

the apples to see if any were damaged. The first half of the barrel were Northern Spies, Joe said, one of the best winter varieties and the rest were Detroit Red, another good keeper. Not one was bruised or damaged; a young cousin of ours who lived at Chatham Ontario had personally seen to the packing of them. He was telegraph operator there and afterwards stationagent. I think that was why we got them so speedily; he sent a telegram telling us when they left Ontario. What a winter that was, so much show fell and soon the whole country was white except for the trees.

Towards the end of November, we were invited to a dance at the home of Mrs. Joe Whitehead, some Yorkshire people who lived at Lake Side, about five or six miles away. We had to go through two miles of timber before we came out in the open. It was a dark night except for the snow. How the people found their way, I could not tell; all the trees and openings looked alike to me. We went with Mr. & Mrs. Chapman in their sleigh and with another neighbor called Mrs. J. Mahaffey whose husband was working in the mountains that winter. John and Joe Jameson rode horseback. My brother did not go as he did not care for dancing. We finally got there, got thawed out and them went into the room where the dance was. We were not allowed to sit down much as girls were very scarce so, before we knew it, were dancing among the others. It was then we learned to dance the square dances and quadrilles I have mentioned before,we were told to listen to the "caller off" and we would know what to do. What "aliman left" was we could not make out, or swing your honey sounded queer to us. However, we watched the others and did as they did and got through somehow. We drove home in broad daylight after having had a good lunch at midnight of sandwiches, pie, cake, tea and coffee, also a hot breakfast of beef steak, potatoes and

hot biscuits and jam, tea or coffee. The ladies all helped and took cakes and pies with them to the dance. There was always lots of young fellows there, the country in those days was mostly settled by bachelors on their homesteads. There were very few married people the first few years. Our next dance was at the Brewster ranch and that was farther away. One of the Brewsters had been away and his friends gathered there to welcome him home. We went with Mr. & Mrs. Chapman again and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. We were known as the little English girls, although I was seventeen and my sister fourteen; we were just about the same size. John Jameson played the violin at these dances; at times some one helped out and gave him a rest. The boys went in the sleigh with us to that dance as it was a long ride. There were some bachelors from the Blind Man Valley, mostly Englishman and on Canadian, the boys called Jack Tipping, who played a guitar and Mr. Plowright and a young fellow called Ed Wigmore played mandolins. That was quite a band in those days. During the interval, after lunch was served, there was quite a lot of singing and reciting. Mrs. Chapman came to us and asked if we would sing some of the latest songs for them. We did so and after the first line or two the guitar and madolins played in accompaniment for us. We had to sing to or three songs before they were satisfied. We thought it strange that so few of the Canadian and American girls and women could sing but hardly ever sang in public at all. We had been taught to sing ever since we could remember. That was the last dance of the winter for us. More snow fell, and we had to stay at home. Our only exercise was snowing balling and racing down the trail and back. We had to get out in the fresh air. WE often thought of the beautiful moonlight nights of the summer and fall. As December wore on we started to think about Christmas. We could not go to town to buy present

so I decided to make some for each of the family. Knitting seemed the best thing and a smoking cap for my father, which I had sent from New York by our brother there, together with a few other gifts. He sent us a boxful of useful and ornamental things and lots of candy, also books, the illustrated papers from London, "The Graphic", and "London News" so we fated better than most of our neighbors. We were all sorry for the little girl across the fields; she was seven years old and had no toys of any kind, no candy or nuts or apples, so we got a large stocking and filled it with everything we could except a doll and sent it over on Christmas Eve. It was joy to one child at least. There were no schools where we lived and she was the only child of school age, we offered to teach her. She was bright enough and very intelligent but not keen on learning; we had to bribe her with sweets to get her to learn anything. In the very cold weather we could not get through the deep drifts across the fields. One night her parents took my sister with them to a party some miles away and I offered to keep lily and teach her another of her lessons. She was not in the mood to be taught anything as she had wanted to go to the party; she was very fond of bread and jam, so I had to promise her a large slice of bread and jam before she would do anything. Then, I was surprised at the ease with which she learned everything I taught her that night. When the lesson was over she looked at me and said, "where's that bread and jam?" She told me that she and her mother had not had any tea, sugar or butter or jam all winter but her daddy always had his tobacco, so I gave her more bread and jam, also weak tea, then she was quite happy going to bed without a murmur; I had expected to have to sit up and coax her to go to bed. She was really one of the smartest little girls I have ever met; so quick to see or hear anything and so quick to learn anything she wanted to.

We had lots of prairie chickens that fall and in the winter a few partridges. These were very good eating and we all enjoyed them; some I stuffed and roasted, others I made into a stew, and my father's favorite was a chicken pie. We never tired of them, as we did the rabbits. When the first snow came, they would sit in the trees and did not seem at all afraid of us; they used to call to each other in the early morning. One very bright moonlight night, we stepped outside to watch the rabbits playing around our grain stacks, all of a sudden, quite close to us, we heard a sound like "whoo whoo." We were frightened at first for we could not see anything near us. It sounded again almost above our heads and looking up we saw a great white owl perched in a tree near the house and apparently watching the rabbits playing. These owls would swoop down and pick up these snow shoe rabbits; they were very cruel and we used to find bits of white fur scattered around. Eagles and hawks had been very plentiful that summer and were not the least afraid of anything but a gun. One afternoon our little black dog was sleeping up against the house when an eagle swooped down on her, intending to carry her off. Nell leaped up and started barking as loud as she could, which brought my brother running from the barn. The eagle lit in a tree not far away, so Tom went for his gun. As soon as the eagle saw the light shining on the gun barrels, he soared away up in the sky and for a long time never came back. It had taken a heavy toll of our chickens that summer, but my brother had never happened to be around. However that gave the dog a scare, and whenever Nell saw a shadow over her in the sky she barked enough to waken the dead. No hawks or eagles came around where she was.

I should have mentioned earlier the Lacombe Fair. As near as I can remember, it was held very early in October. One of us had to go to Lacombe and as the men were very busy, it was decided I should go. Mr. and Mrs. Simpson were going on the old trail we had travelled the first night we came to the country. I was to meet them at a point two miles across the Valley, at a certain time and take my lunch. I had shopping to do first, and then visit the Fair. I did this and while shopping we met Mrs. Chapman and a friend of hers from Buffalo Lake, Mr. Mathew Cook's daughter, Mrs. Jim Brindle. We visited the Fair together. Mrs. Simpson was with us a while and then went with her husband to see the horses and cattle, pigs, poultry etc. We went to see the needlework section, home cooking and vegetables. There was a wonderful display of beautiful hand made quilts from Ontario, brought by the settlers from there, also lovely print dresses, aprons, embroidery of all kinds and hooked rugs. It was wonderful display and Mrs. Brindle said she wished her mother could see the beautiful quilts. I was amazed at the quantities of vegetables and canned fruits, some must have been from the year before as there were strawberries and raspberries, also saskqtoons; I can't remember all I saw but there were some very large cabbages, lots of carrots, turnips, onions and potatoes. Sheaves of wheat, oats, and barley. D do not know whether the grain was ripe, it may have been as we had wheat and oats that year too; the next year we had nothing. Seeing all the things at the Fair, urged me on to fresh efforts. The butter pats were round with cows' heads patterned on them, the hams and bacon made me feel hungry and there was home made cheese as well also honey. I though the whole Fair very wonderful.

Chapter 7.

WINTER. AURORA BOREALLIS & SUNDOGS. CHRISTMAS IN A NEW COUNTRY. MY STEPMOTHER AND YOUNGER SISTER ARRIVE FROM ENGLAND IN MARCH.

Mrs. Chapman's brothers had gone to wash gold on the Saskatchewan River, near Edmonton, and when the first snow came they returned to the Valley. Joe Jameson came up one night to see if we were still here; pretended the cold and the snow, also Indians had scared us out. Before Christmas John and Joe Jameson decided to go to the "Canyone" to poison coyotes. There was a good trail on the Red Deer River, made by the men hauling coal from somewhere near Tail Creek to Red Deer. It was bitter cold weather while they were away, with the thermometer at 40 degrees below zero at night. We asked them how they kept from freezing to death out in the open and they told us therw was very little wind in the canyon and on the river, as the banks were so high. They built two large fires some distance apart, then spread spruce boughs and their blankets on them and slept between the two fires. They put out their poison baits as soon as they got there. Next morning they picked up about twenty coyotes; the next day and a half, they got twenty two more. They had asked my father to come for them on the third day he had taken them down. He did so and had quite a trip as it was still extremely cold. The boys sold their coyote skins to Mr. Brumpton in Red Deer and got a dollar and a quarter to a dollar and a half for them. We thought that was a lot of money for coyote skins in those days. Actual money was the one thing that was very scarce. One night Joe came with this banjo and we had a musical evening, singing "darky" songs we had learned in the states. My father's favorite song was called The Banjo an the instrument for me sung by a negro slave. Joe used to sing it and it soon became a favorite with us all. That winter we learned a lot of new card games but whist still remained the favorate especially when one of the neighbors dropped in for an evening. I always played

too, to make the fourth, and I used to think it very tiresome as the game would last three hours sometimes. Reading was my favorite recreation and my brother George kept me well supplied; he knew the kind of books I always liked. My brother brought an accordian with him and we learned lots of new songs and some old English ones my father liked, to with a few dances, card games, visits from the neighbors, musical evenings and our reading, the winter passed pleasantly away.

I will never forget the first time we saw the Northern Lights, and such a display. The real Aurora Borealis, colored, moving lights in the sky to the North and East, flashing high overhead at times. We thought it a most wonderful and marvelous phenomenon. One morning, clear and cold, my brother called to us to come outside and look at the sun. There were bright lights on each side of it. We asked what they were, and he told us they were "sun dogs" and that we could expect some real cold weather. We had had lots of cold weather so wondered how much colder it could be. A day or two later the thermometer dropped to 50 degrees below fahrenheit and fires had to be kept burning all night to keep things from freezing. Towards the end of January the thaw came and the sun shone brightly during the day. This thaw was called the "chinook" and was caused by a warm wind from the Pacific Ocean coming through a pass in the mountains. It was really surprising how the snow started to melt and the drifts went down. A trail was soon opened through the bush to Lacombe and a good supply of groceries laid in. Tom told us the worst weather was yet to come. February was a bad month.

We had word from England that my stepmother and sister Eva would be arriving in Alberta about the first week in March. This letter came just before Christmas. We were very excited as out first Christmas drew near. The men folks had gone to Lacombe early in December and got

dried fruit, currants and raisins etc. for the baking. My. brother also went up articles from New York for the festive season, chocolates, nuts and eating raisins, figs and some small toys for the little girl on the next farm. Father invited two Englishman to spend Christmas with us; Mr. Lockwood was quite elderly and had been a butler for a wealthy family; his partner was a young fellow, about a year older than my brother, his name was Bert Richards, from Gosport near Portsmouth in England. Mr. Lockwood camr from Aldershot. My. father had been a strong Liberal under politics in England and Mr. Lockwood was a Conservative and also a strong churchman. I used to listen to them arguing about the British Government and also church affairs. Mr. Lockwood had very strong idesas on both, also how young people should behave. I used to think he would like to shut all children and teen agers in a room and never let them out; we were never allowed to speak when he visited us. I used to wonder if he ever had been young himself and how his partner put up with him; everything had to be his way. Father said it was because he was a bachelor and had never had much to do with children or young people. My brother, sister and I entertained the young fellow and left father and Mr. Lockwood to their reminiscences of England in their young days. It is funny how old people always think their childhood was much better than ours. Christmas seemed a quiet day to us who were used to going to Sunday School concerts and taking part in them, then there were always parties both at home and with relatives and friends. Next day, boxing day, Mr. Lockwood invited us down to their place to spend the day. He was a very good cook and had a good old fashioned English dinner for us. He had roasted a large round of beef among other things. In the afternoon and Indian from Buffalo Lake called in to get warm; his name was Peter Canchise, and he spoke English fairly well. It appeared his squaw had made moccasins

to sell, he was on his way to Red Deer and showed us the moccasins. My father and Bert Richards each bought a pair, the others were too large for Mr. Lockwood and Tom. Before the Indian left Mr. Lockwood made a pot of tea and cut a pile of bread and butter, also put a plate of beef on the table and invited the Indian to sit down and eat. He did so and when finished, much to our surprise cleared all the rest of the food off the table,merely saying "papoose" as he put it in one of his large pockets. After he was gone we all voiced our astonishment of such a proceeding. That should have taught us a lesson but it did not as I shall mention later.

The days were very fine and sunny that first Christmas, afterwards it was very cold and fires had to be kept up night and day. We used to take it in turns sitting up for so many hours; the early part of the night was usually my sister's turn, from 10P.M. to 12 midnight. One night, just before New Years she was reading a story in one of the English Christmas numbers called "The Haunted Man" by Charles Dickens. I was going to take the next watch and answer some of my Christmas mail. We had all just got nicely asleep when my sister came rushing into our bedroom woke me up and then threw herself on the bed. I finally was awake enough to shake her and ask her what had happened. She said she had just put more wood on the fire and started to read again when she heard a noise outside the window; of course she thought Indians right away and fled from the room. My father was wakened by the noise she made and got up, he was a veyr light sleepter and the least noise disturbed him. He told me to stay in bed and he got up smoked read and attended to the fire until 6 o'clock when I got up. Next night my

brother took the long turn and we never let Elizabeth do the fires again; she was far too nervous. Some kind of wild animal had been around but Tom covered up the tracks so we never knew just who or what it was; we had no blinds on the windows in those days, just muslin curtains, anyone could see through the living room and kitchen windows. Everything was so still you could hear a pin drop. The nights were so dark and so long, just like we used to read about in our school books about travellers in northern Canada and the United States.

The weather grew colder as January passed and only a few adventurous spirits were abroad. Our neighbor Mr. Kilby used to come over in the evening for a game of whist about once a week and some of the young neighbors defied the cold and came for a musical. On moonlight nights, when the weather moderated, some of the married people drove over in their sleighs. Once in a while we would clear the kitchen and have a dance. Early in February the kitchen was all finished and a room fixed for my brother above the kitchen as my stepmother and sister had sailed for Halifax and would soon arrive in Lacombe. We decided to kill a pig and also have a party before she arrived. Mrs. Roe and her sons came over; the boys to help with the killing, and Mrs. Roe for a visit as we had not seen her very much since Christmas. A day or two later Mrs. Roe came over early one morning and she showed me how to make the English pork pies, brawn and sausages. We were very busy for a couple of days getting the meat salted and put away and then we inbited the nieghbors over to s upper one evening while the weather was mild. These little parties were enjoyed by everyone. We sang, played games, told stories and enjoyed ourselves generally. Soon after that my father had news that my stepmother would be in Lacombe on a certain day. My father took the sleigh and drove to Lacombe early one morning to have the shopping done before the train came in about four in the afternoon so as

to get home before dark. The snow was very deep in the timber that spring. On the way home my stepmother saw the wolf and asked my father what it was; he looked and sure enough it was the wolf skulking through the trees not far from the trail. He whipped up the horses and soon were at home. My father told me afterwards we were not to go up the trail into the bush on any account. It was a favorite walk as the snow was packed by the sleigh runners and made walking easy; we had often gone for a walk when the weather was mild. I often wondered after that if it was a wolf that had scared Elizabeth the night she sat up reading for the wolf was not far up the trail they said. However, it was never seen again and in time we ceased to think about it. There were plenty of coyotes around howling and yapping at night but they were cowardly and would skulk away if you went after them. A wolf was different; you could not frighten it away unless you had a gun. Lynx were plentiful too in those early years; the first time we heard one calling we thought it was a person calling for help. Such a weird noise, sounded like a human voice at times. Badgers too were often troublesome in the Spring and Fall; if you got between them and their hole they would come at you and show fight. We always gave them a wide berth.

CHAPTER 8

Spring 1896

Easter was early in 1896; Good Friday being on April 3rd. My stepmother showed me how to make the English Hot Cross Buns. We kept Easter as we did in England. We had a short Service on Easter Sunday morning and sang the Easter hymns, then my father read the story of the Resurrectionoand we talked of the Easter Services at our Chapel in England

We were Wesleyan Methodists; my father's people were all Episcopalians, but my mother and also my stepmother were Wesleyans. My stepmother's birthday was on April 4th, Easter Saturday, so we invited some of the neighbors to tea and also to make her acquaintance.

About this time we bought a cow from Tom Ross, down the Valley. The new cow's name was Joan, shw was a good milker and quiet to handle. My brother and I wondered why Ross sold her as they were always on the look out for good milk cows; we found out later to our sorrow.

At last the snow began to disappear and although it was freezing at nights, the winter had broken; there was still ice in the sloughs but mostly the ground was bare of snow. We had been shut in for so long, my sister and I decided to walk down the Valley to visit Mrs. Roe. They had moved from the sod house a short time before, into a hewn log house near the trail. By picking our way we thought we could make it without getting too wet. All would have been well if our younger sister, Eva, had stayed at home, she insisted on coming and my stepmother made us take her along. We had gone about a mile when Mr. Chapman and John Jameson came riding by and told us the ice would not bear us up, and we could not get around the slough unless we went a mile east. It was then about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, so we decided to risk the ice, the water would not be very deep anyway. All went well until we were half way across when all of a sudden we heard an ominous crack. We stopped, and one of us tried it a little further to the left; nothing doing, the only way to cross it was to go straight ahead. We made a chair of our hands and carried Eva across, but we waded in ice cold water up to our waists. We did not loiter but hurried on to Mrs. Roe's as fast we could. As soon as we got there Eva began to cry and we could not stop her.

Mrs. Roe gave us some dry clothes and the boys built up a big fire in the stove. We all had tea and sat around visiting. When our clothes were dry enough to put on Alfred Roe hitched up his horses to a low sleigh and took us home. We were none the worse for our wading in the water, but as soon as we got home my young sister started being hysterical again. In vain we and Alfred told my stepmother that Eva had never got wet at all as we had carried her, but she continued to scold us. That was the last time we ever took her anywhere again, unless we had the horses and Elizabeth never would even then. It was shortly after this that one or two families who had come to the country be covered wagons decided to go back. The hardships they had suffered in the winter just past was too much for their wives and families and they left for the United States. Their diet had consisted chiefly of rabbits, salt, turnips, black bread and barley coffee. So many of the early settlers had to live like' that. The long cold winter months had been hard on animals unused to this climate and high altitude and many were the horses and cows brought in by the settlers that perished the winter of 1895 - 1896. The tough Indian cayuses seemed the only horses that could rustle in the snow and live. So many of the settlers who came hundreds of miles by wagon from the states of Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska, arrived so late in the summer that the haying season was practically over and the grass had little nourishment in it, if cut after August. That and lack of proper shelter caused the loss of stock. There was a family by the name of Bean who lived about six or eight miles south of us towards the Red Deer River, who left Alberta in the spring of 1895 but returned the same fall, having found no better location; they were one family of settlers who came by covered wagon from the mid-western states. They suffered terrible hardships the winter of 1895 and were one of the families who existed as I mentioned previously. It is to the amazing courage and endurance of these

early U.S. settlers that Alberta owes so much. They were wonderful pioneers, taking things as a matter of course, without complaining as so many of the later settlers did. This small tribute I pay to them. Many of the children and grandchildren of the early U.S. pioneers are some of our most prosperous and enterprising farmers of today.

The spring really came with a rush. As soon as the snow was gone from the hills, we found our first crocus; they were pretty pale purple flowers exactly shaped like the crocuses in England, only they have a fuzz on them. A short time after this we became acquainted with some new neighbors who live west of us in the bush about two miles away. They are Charlie and Frank Stevenson and they hail from Iowa. Our colt Topsy developed distemper and as our remedies did not seem to help her any, my father decided to fetch these new neighbors, acquainted through a friend, Mr. A. Bagley, who had come some time before, from their home town. They immediately came over, took one look at the colt and asked for a pail, a piece of old leather and some sulpher. They put the leather in the pail and set fire to it; when burning good they threw in the sulphur and held the pail to the colt's nose, poking her head down close. After a minute they took the pail away, backed off themselves just as the colt began to cough and sneeze. You can imagine the rest, the abscess in her throat had broken and the pus flew all over. In a very short time she was completely well again. Such a primitive method, but a very good cure; we were astonished how quickly Topsy was well again.

CHAPTER 9

Great Expectations

The Garden and Crop... Also Pigs

At last the weather was warm enough to start putting in the garden. Tom was already sewing his Red Fife wheat. He also had a small piece of ground for an experimental garden, to test the different varieties of wheat, oats and barley for germination and the length of time it took each variety to come up and mature. We were all interested in that part of our life; my father and I were the gardeners. George, our brother in New York, had sent us a great variety of vegetable seeds and flower seeds and we made up our minds to try them all. So, early in May we started; the garden soil was a very deep black loam. We had seen the vegetables that we could grow on it so had great expectations. Mrs. Roe had shown us her garden the summer before, and my sister and I were quite thrilled by the look of it, so my father and I put in a large garden. I always loved to work in a garden and in the States I had grown lovely flowers of all kinds, so thought I would try them here. The seeds all came up well and we kept the long rows free of weeds. By the first of July everything looked fine. We had cress, radishes, and lettuce in abundance in Jun e.

Not long after this, my stepmother decided I should go to Lacombe to do the shopping. She called me into her room and told me I was to leave at 6:30 A.M. next morning and go with Mr. and Mrs. Chapman. I tried to tell her that would be Saturday, and I was not ready to go as it was always a busy day with me. No arguments availed, so I had to go. I was up bright and early, ate a lunch and started to walk the three quarters of a mile to Champmans' house. We left there at 7:30 A.M. and as the bush road was almost impassable took the road to the west past Mr. Ash's place and still west. The trails were in terrible condition and we

had to go miles out of our way to avoid the muskegs, and skirt around the sloughs. The horses walked every step of the way. It was a lovely day, birds twittering and calling from the trees by the way and flowers were plentiful, wild fowl, ducks and snipe were in abundance on lakes and sloughs, these are very good to eat, either fried, roaster or made into a pie. I also saw lots of wild strawberries in the grass around the sloughs. There was no early frost that year 1896. It was all new country to me; the trip was very tiring, sitting on a board covered with a rug across a single wagon box, at some of the jolts I thought I was going to be thrown out. We reahbed Lacombe about noon, having passed Bruce's farm and also the Nichol brother's place. It must have been 12 miles, the roundabout way we went. We returned home the same way as the trails made better travelling for quite a few miles out. It was 7:30 P.M. when we reached Chapman's place. My sisters met me on the trail (they had been listening for the wagon) and gave me all the deatails of their day. It seems they had been put to work to do the things I usually did, and were not all pleased. They had also found a lost hen stuck between two upright logs in the pig's den. They went with Tom later to bring home the groceries, meat and other articles I had bought in Lacombe. Quite an orgy of shopping for me that day; I very rarely went to shop, as my sister was fonder of that job than I was, hence her displeasure when she found me away in the morning. I sometimes wished she had gone in my place and got all the jolts and bumps; I was quite stiff the next day, but as it was Sunday I could rest a bit and read.

The fruit that summer was very plentiful, gooseberries and raspberries grew on the beaver dam below the house to the west, at the end of a slough and hear the ravine that takes a bend just there. An old

Indian once told my father that fifty years before we lived there, lots of beavers around. There was a large four-roomed beaver house not far from the "Dam." Dew berries, something like raspberries, only growing on a trailing vine were on the hill side, and black currants along the creek in the Ravine; saskatoons, choke cherries and high bush currants, as large as tame gooseberries, with a long bloom, dark red in color, and when cooked tasted like black currants. I never found out their name but they made lovely jam and jelly. Late in September, there came lots of cranberries too; they were very sour and it took lots of sugar to make jelly from them. I picked, canned by the cold pack, and preserved sixty quarts of the wild fruit that summer and fall, starting with the strawberries which were very plentiful that June. Bluebarries, the old standby, were also a good crop and I made lots of jam from them too. We all enjoyed it; the fruit was a great help to our menus. The first year, we had no variety and had to reply on dried prunes and apples to help out the blueberries.

We buy another pig, a large white Yorkshire sow. She became a great nuisance, always getting out of her pen and once she followed the men folks through the bush for three miles to the top of Arnold's Hill. We hunted all over for her and finally found her in the muskeg, late in the afternoon. She was tired out with her journey, covered with mud and glad to get into her pen and be fed; no more bother with her that night. Next day they decide to put a ring in her nose, so we all turn out to see it; we all had a grudge against her, as she would always come grunting around the kitchen door just at dinner time, and a grand chase we had to get her back in the pen and usually returned to the house to a cold dinner. My father sat on her back to hold her while

my brother put the rings in her snout. At first touch, off she went my father hanging on to her and riding her. We all laughed so much we could do nothing to help, and father calling to us to head her off the fence. My stepmother waved her white apron and we all chased after her with sticks but it took a long time to corner her, and drive her into the pig house. That was where they finally put a barricade around her and ringed her good. Such excitement and laughter, even my stepmother said it was the funniest thing she ever saw, father riding the pig, and laughed too whenever she thought of it. Father couldn't see the funny side for a long time, said it was no child's play hanging on to that big sow. My sister and I just hated pigs; they were always doing something. Many were the stories we heard from the neighbors of the troubles they had with their pigs, so that was some consolation. Dear me, pretty nearly a whole page about pigs, "the bone of our young lives," only enjoyed when we were eating them. No wonder Frank Roe used to come over to hear them squeal when they were being killed; we thought him a regular barbarian until we had lots of pigs of our own.

One evening in May, a nasty wet night, I was told to go over to Kilby's for the mail as Mr. Kilby had just got home from Lacombe. My stepmother was expecting some special letters from England. I hestated at first as I knew I would get a good soaking, walking across the field and slough, where the grass was so high; to go around by the orad would take too long and it was getting late, also I was more liable to get lost as well among the trees. Off I started, as fast as possible. The mail had arrived alright and in addition there was an important looking letter for my father and a large package addressed to the Misses Makepeace c/o of my father. I was very curious to know

what was in that parcel so hurried home. To our great delight it contained chocolate creams, bonbons and French creams; what a treat, after not tasting any sweets like them for two years. It was a present from the Mr. Jackson we had met on the train when we left Moose Jaw and parted from at Lacombe, He evidently had not forgotten us. Father's letter was very important, and offered him the job of enumerating for the Conservative Government, the settlements north and east of Wetaskiwin. There were Swedish colonies also Russian. The Swedish settlers were very intelligent and believed in gobernements and they readily gave my father the information he asked for. Very different were the Russians; they looked upon anyone connected with a government with the greatest suspicion and ditrust. My father finally had to find an interpreter to tell them all he wanted to know, how many people lived in that house and the father's name, so the government would know how many people lived inthe country. My father told us these Swedish and Russian settlers lived much the same as they did in Europe, sleeping between feather beds, especially the Scandinavians, he was very well treated by these people who trusted an Englishman. The Russians had no use for any form of government and at first my father could not get even a night's lodging. Luckily the weather was fine, although the nights were cool. Before long, he posed as just a traveller and then could stay all night; he noted how many people lived there and the next morning after breakfast, paid them, and asked their name. By so doing he was able to find out what he wanted to know. The Scandinavians, on the other hand asked for news of the different parts of the world. My father had a few new york papers with him to read at odd times, so he left them with these people, who treated him to the best in the house, including a good bed. They were wonderful

settlers father said, so clean, thrifty and industrious, also very religious. Some Russians treated him well too, but it was hard to break through their reserve of suspicion and distrust; an Englishman was all right but not as a government representative. Their houses were of logs with thatched roofs, and the doors were also thatched on a frame. As my father did not know the country he was given a guide from the Hobbema Reserve, an Indian by the name of Joseph Whitford and was a Protestant. His people had all been christianized by the McDougal Missionaries. A Mr. Bouchier, from southern Alberta had been to our house and given my father the necessary papers and instructions and also told him he could get a guide at the Indian Reservation. On their long rides my father would sing some of the Methodist well known hymns and then Joseph Whitford would join in and sing it in the Cree language. Sometimes my father rode alone to the different settlements and often met Indians. He always carried a good supply of plug tobacco and also candy; when he met an Indian he would say, "Smoke", and my father would give her candy or a small coin, they always expected something. At first the long days in the saddle tired him as he was not used to riding so far, but gradually it ceased to bother him and he thoroughly enjoyed the scenery of the different places he went to. It was quite an experience of him and he gained a lot of knowledge of the country and inhabitants.

We buy another cow from Mr. Howell, the druggist in Lacombe, white Bess and her calf Beauty; she was a good milker, gentle and easy to milk. It was my chore to help with the milking, as Tom would often be away and I was the only one who had learned ot milk. Later, we bought a Black Angus yearling heifer from a neighbor, Tom Hitson, who was staying at Kilby's that winter. Father seel our first cow "Birdie" to the butcher in Lacombe, Mr. Puffer and he gets the Indians to tan

the hide for us for a robe; they do so and it is so stiff we can't use it for a robe for there was too much glue left in it. It was a very large hide, as she was a big light Roan shorthorn cow, almost purebred.

Now that the weather was fine we drove to the Services in the Canyon school house. It was rough riding in the wagon; we all could go that way and six of us helped to swell the congregation. Sometimes we rod horseback as that was the best and easiest way to travel, but only had three riding horses, so some of us stayed at home; as a rule Tom, Elizabeth and myself went, and sometimes we took Eva along, she did not ride by herself then, as sometimes the horses would get scared and shy at the least noise.

About this time, one of our neighbors to the west, about three miles away, Will Smith, had his father and sister visiting him from the States. He had invited my father and stepmother over to supper one Sunday. Of course we returned the compliment and invited them to visit us. We found Miss Smith very sociable and friendly and we visited each other a lot that summer and for as long as she stayed at her brother's. One day along in the summer she got quite a good scare. As she was riding through the bush she ran into a badger; she jumped off her horse, got a big stick and tried to drive it away. It wouldn't move and her horse was getting very restless. Finally she gave up, ran to her horse and backed him down the trail until she came to an opening, then she circled around through the bush until past the badger. She was very much excited as the horse came galloping up to the house. She said she was not a bit afraid of the badger until it started to snarl and come towards her on the fight. Then she ran for her horse. Usually Miss Smith was a very clam sort of person. Tom said she must have been between the badger and its hole. She warned us to leave

badgers strictly alone and to go out around them instead of trying to pass them in the road as she did. When she was ready to leave my sister and I got our horses and rode part way back with her, hoping to see a badger as we had never seen one. However, it had disappeared, and as often as we rode that trail, we never caught a glimpse of a badger. This was in the early summer of 1896.

A short time before, Mr. & Mrs. Chapman had moved to the lower end of Pleasant Valley. She had been such a good neighbor and friend to us from our first visit to her. We were so sorry to see her leave, as they were going to live near Mrs. Haines (where we went to our first dance) and it seemed so far away. Mr. Chapman decided to go where it was not so closely settled on account of his stock. Later on in August, Mrs. Chapman's Mother, Mrs. Jameson, came to join her husband and sons and lived just two miles south os us. She came from London Ontario, and was a wonderful neighbor, teaching me lots of things. As a little girl she had gone from Little York (Toronto, as it is now) up into County Grey with her father in 1845 and they were pioneers there in those old days. As our other friend Mrs. Roe had moved near the trail, their houses were not far apart so we could pay them both a visit the same afternoon. We were quite at home riding horseback so the distance was nothing, even to walk.

We were getting near to the rainy season again when my stepmother became very ill and the doctor ordered her to be kept in bed. The roof of the house had been made watertight as we supposed, and so I was not thinking about a leaky roof. However, the rain came down so hard and lasted so long that one part of it leaked and that was the side where my stepmother's bedroom was. As it only leaked a little, she did not want to be moved so we arranged our umbrellas as a sort

of tent over her and put pans to catch any drip. She was under a kind of canopy and we kept a good fire in the heater to ward off a chill; at least we kept her dry and she looked upon it as a sort of adventure. I often wondered after what would have happened if her illness had turned to pneumonia; there was only one C.P.R. doctor in Lacombe, Dr. Richardson and he was worked to death. However, "all's well that ends well", a favorite quotation of my brothers' to us, when we told him of our trials and tribulations. My stepmother soon recovered and used to find great pleasure walking in the garden which was coming on well, especially after so much rain.

My brother decided to have some more land plowed. This was called "new breaking", and hired one of the Roe boys with his yoke of oxen to do it for him. This was something new to us girls and we used to walk up the trail to see the oxen working. Frank Roe always cut a pile of willow switches before he started and kept them at each end of the furrow. We argued with him that it was very cruel to whip them so much, but he only gave us a 2queer look and told us we had never plowed with oxen. One afternoon, my father went to help him with the outfit as the flies and mosquitoes were terrible. We had taken them a can of tea and some lunch. Frank said he could manage the rest of the afternoon, so my father came back to the house with us. I heard him telling my stepmother he had "run his sould into more sin that afternoon than he had done in his whole life." We found out afterwards that the only way to drive oxen was to swear at them. We thought that was a terrible thing byt my brother and Frank just laughed when we told them they should be ashamed of themselves, to use bad language on the poor oxen. That was the only time we ever saw oxen working and they were so very slow that horses were always used afterwards.

Up to this time there had not been a sign of frost and our garden was a thing of beauty and a joy to contemplate; everything had grown so much after the rain that we had our share of radishes, cress, lettuce, onions and peas. Such a nice change from potatoes, carrots and turnips that we did not appreciate the latter. The flowers were lovely particularly the pansies, sweet peas and asters, these were simply gorgeous and I never tired of walking among them. The mignoette scented the air, so different from the prairie flowers we thought. Alas! for our hopes; we had walked all through the vegetable garden the night of Ju 20th, and remarked on the wonderful growth, the next morning July 21st when we looked out of our wonderful growth, there was a white frost over everything. An hour or two of sunshine and you could not see a green thing left in the garden. The carrots, turnips and potatoes were as black as the ground. What a great disappointment that was. My father and I had spent a great deal of the time and care, especially among the vegetables, and anticipated a nice variety of the winter. It was late in May before we could start gardening the spring of 1896, so we had to put in long hours as it. So much for experiments. My brother had warned us we might have frost but as a rule that came early in June, after the rains. We were told not to try and grow beans or corn or anything that needed lots of hot nights. In the fall when I took up the garden stuff, the potatoes were the size of hickory nuts and the carrots and swede turnips, the size of a small stick, half an inch through; they were only good to flavor suop or stews. The year before, 1895, the vegetables had been so large, especially the potatoes The frozen potatoes had a peculiar sweet taste but we had plenty of them.

As the haying time approached, we used to notice a light haze over everything and the sun was like a red disk. This lasted for weeks and my brother told us there was a big prairie fire somewhere south and west of the Red Deer River. About this time, we heard of an awful accident that had happened to a young boy neqr Red Deer; he had both legs cut off by a mower, while helping his father in the hay-field. The man had got off to do something to the mower when the team started up and the knife being in motion, the accident happened. This incident made a great impression on our minds when we heard the boy was dead; it was hard enough to live on the prairie in the best of health.

A short time later, our neighbor, Mrs. Kilby, came home from working in a hay camp thrity miles away; she had had a very bad fall and as she was too ill to work, her husband brought her home. The day after they arrived home the little girl Lily came over and asked me to go and see her mother who had sent for me. Of course I hurried over and found such a sad state of affairs, the poor woman in bed and not a soul to do anything for her except the little seven year old girl. Her husband had had to see about getting some hay up for their animals and then harvesting the bit of crop they had. They had plenty of small potatoes, but very little else. I prepared some food for her and the little girl, cleaned up the house and gave her a cool wash. She said she felt a little better, knowing she would not be all alone any more, as I promised to come every day and do what I could to help her. I was not very big myself, as I only weighed 78 lbs., but I knew how to do lots of things and was sympathetic and that helped a lot, she said. When I got home and told my stepmother, she said she would walk over the next day and see what could be done. Mrs. Kilby

was a great knitter and thought perhaps she could sell handknit socks in Lacombe. We ordered quite a few pairs for ourselves, stockings as well, and she was quite pleased, as she said it made the time pass more quickly; I was glad to get away from my knitting as it was a job I thoroughly disliked. My father told some of his friends in town about Mrs. Kilby, so she soon had more orders than she could fill. It was months before she was able to get around again; the doctor said she had bruised her spine, and she had to lie in bed to give it a chance to heal properly. My stepmother had insisted on sending for the doctor as soon as she had seen and talked to her; she always liked Mrs. Kilby and helped her a lot. There were lots of blue berries that fall and the little girl used to pick them for sale. One morning I was very busy and could not go over to see her mother until I took her some dinner, so I sent my young sister Eva to ask Lily how her mother was that morning. Eva was to pick some berries for pies. She came rushing home quite excited and said, "What do you think, when I asked Lily how her mother was, she said, " my papa says, if you ask me any questions I was to say I didn't know." I asked my sister if she had asked any questions and she laughed and said "No", but Lily told her the funniest things. Lily was a very precocious child and I puzzled over that for a long time but finally decided I would go over and see Mrs. Kilby as usual. I never liked Mr. Kilby, so did not pay much attention, and as his wife was able to get up for a short time each day, later on, decided to make my visits fewer in future. I had been in the habit of giving the little girl lessons in reading on these visits, she was such a sharp child, it wqs a pleasure to teach her.

About this time we got word from Mr. Reid in Lacombe that the hay balers were in our vicinity and would be at out place in a day½ or two. As we had quite a few stacks of hay to be baled, we thought they would be some days at out place. Next morning my father, Eva and I left for Lacombe to get provisions and about 60 lbs. of beef, (it looked like a whole hind leg of beef) and were just ready for home, when Mr. Burris, the postmaster came running out to the road waving a long letter which had been overlooked when we asked for the mail. It was quite a surprise to us as we were not expecting an English letter. It was from my father's lawyer in England and enclosed was a draft on the Bank of England for thirty pounds, payment of an old debt. We loaded up a few more extra to celebrate and got another surprise when we rached home, the hay balers had arrived for dinner. As there was no meat, one of the men offered to catch some young roosters, which he did and others helped pick them, so they had fried chicken and vegetables and pudding, ready in a hurry, and a number of bales made by the time we reached home. Such excitment when they came, our sister told us; Tom was out after the cattle and they had an early dinner, so while she rode around finding hime, my stepmother had to be very busy cooking. The men were all good-natured; she told them we had word they would not be there at our place for a day or two. We enjoyed having them; it was something like having threshers. Most of them came from north of Lacombe and Wetaskiwin.

I used to wonder if Mr. Kilby resented us going there and talking care of his wife; at any rate, she had been left alone and was not able to move ar all. They were poor in those days, and the little girl ran barefoot, although it was turning colder. One day she said to me, "You know if I pick up nine bushels of potatoes, my papa will buy me

a pair of shoes so my feet won't get so cold", I felt so sorry for her that when I went home I hunted out a pair of my sister's shoes and took them over to her early the next day. Such a delighted child your seldom see, and how she danced up and down in them. She was quite elfish looking too, and had a queer trick of looking at you sideways. She turned out to be a beautiful woman, and married a wealthy mine owner in the mountains of B.C. Being the only child of her age in the district, everyone noticed her; we intended to see that she had a good Christmas that year and she did. It seemed to us (who had been brought up in a city and had lots of toys and amusements when we were "little tots") an unhappy, narrow life for a child of that age. I remember how very sorry we all were for that little girl, my stepmother especially, and how kind she was to Lily and her mother, helping them in so many ways. It was now well into the month of November and my father's birthday was on the 30th, so we decided to celebrate the day. Mr. Kilby had been lucky enought to shoot a large deer, so we bought a haunch of venison. Such a treat, after wild fowl and salt pork. The rabbits had the disease that winter and were not fit for food; we had not killed our steer yet either, as we did not want to freeze it too soon, and the weather had been very stormy. I think our neighbors would rather go hungting than work at home.

As the snow was too deep to do much walking away from the house, we used to take a walk around it, as the wind kept a space clear. One morning, a bright sunny day, we walked around and in the snow saw large foot prints of some wild animal' they led right up to our bedroom window, and there, we could see where it had laid down. We followed its trail up over th4 hill into the heavier timber and then we decided to turn back. The tracks in the snow were as large as a bear's. We

thought it must have been after our chickens or maybe the pigs, which were always closed up tight at nights. Tom had warned us about hungry marauding animals when winter came. There was also large wolves up in the bush and would hear them howl at night; such a blood curdling sound. My father and brother used to see them when cutting logs for a new barn add rails for fencing. There had been one or two the year before, perhaps more, only they never saw more than one at a time. We lived on the edge of the timber that ran from the Battle River to the Red Deer, sixxmiles away in the Canyon; bears, lynx, wolves and deer were often seen in the fall and winter. The deer travelled mostly in November, after a snowfall but the bears holed up for the winter. Lynx and coyotes seemed very plentiful and the wolves always stayed around. We did very little horseback riding in the winter and never went into the timber; sleighing was practically our only means of travel then. We told our neighbor, Mr. Kilby, about the lynx sleeping under our window and he followed thetracks for two days and finally shot it, brought it to our house and threw it into the kitchen. Such a thing! he told us he had put seven bullets in it before he killed it. It must have been as hard to kill as a cat. When he threw it into the kitchen we got a real scare. My sister would never sleep on the couch by the bedroom window again, so I had to; father teased her and called it her bedfellow and that settled it. It measured six feet from the end of its nose to the tip of its tail.

CHAPTER 10
EVENTS, FALL & WINTER, 1896

So many things happened that fall and winter. In September 1896, the Liberal Government brought in the Dukhobors and Galicians as new settlers. Tom and I went to Lacombe to see them. They were a wild

looking people and dressed in unbleached cotton, with loose trousers, and a long coat, belted at the waist with a band of leather. They wore sandals on their feet, were very dark skinned and had long black hair. They were called Europeans, but I had to ask my brother what part of Europe they came from, and he told me sourthern Europe. They got off the train, when it stopped at Lacombe, to walk around as they were bound for Edmonton and North country. Such a change of climate for them; they would have to wear their sheep skins before long, I thought. We had been Russians when we arrived in New York who looked liked them and they all wore sheep skins. It was only the Galicians who came to Alberta, the Dukhobors stayed mostly in Saskatchewan; I don't think I ever saw a Dukhobor up here. The Galicians were originally Russians who founded a colony in Galicia, a province of old Austria.

That spring, Joe and Nat Jameson left for the Saskatchewan River to wash gold, and John followed in June. That was the spring John lost the sight of his right eye; a tumor on the eyeball burst and destroyed the pupil of the eye. After it healed up, he went North too. It seemed very lonely without they boys, as they used to come up quite often. Mr. & Mrs. Chapman left early that summer as well. The Ross's lived a mile and a half further down the Valley, so we were the only young people left. Mr. & Mrs. Mahaffey were also our neighbors and lived about three miles east and south of us in the other side of the Valley. Nat Johnson came home early in the fall from the River. His mother had come up from Ontario that summer and was staying with her daughter, Mrs. Chapman, in their new home, near the Haines ranch. Later on, about the middle of November, John and Hoe came home. There were quite a few dances and partiewwthat winter at the neighbors house.

Shortly after the party we had for my father's birthday, Nat Jameson came up one evening with an invitation from Mrs. Chapman for us girls to go and spend Christmas with them. We had become well acquainted with Mrs, Jameson by this time, having been to visit her, and as she was going to Chapman's as well, with John driving, my father and stepmother consented to our going. We were to start right after breakfast on the morning of Dec 3rd, as it would take all day to get there. The worst part was getting to the trail used by the coal teams from the Red Deer river to Lacombe, all down Pleasant Valley. We had to break a trail through the timber on the east side of the Valley and travel north east to the coal trail. That took most of the morning and it was quite cold, although the sky was clear and the sun shining. When the sun went down it got very cold. John said it was at least 20 degrees below zero. We passed lots of teams and sleights loaded with coal, bound for Lacombe, so the road was in good shape for travelling and we had a fast team that seemed to eat up the miles. When we were breaking a trail through the timberland, we saw tracks of wolverines. We were told they were one of the most savage of the wild animals out here; the tracks resembled those made by a bear and were quite large. We also saw lots of lynx tracks and an occasional wolf track. It was a wild country in those days and not a sign of a cabin anywhere; we travelled for miles without seeing a sign of any habitation. we were very glad when we sighted the Walter's ranch, and further on, the Haines ranch. After passing the last one, Nat informed us we had only two miles further to go. It was quite dark when we finally reached Chapman's on the Creek. Joe was already there and he came out and took the team, after helping us girls and his mother out of the sleight.

We were all stiff and cold with sitting so long for there was no place to stop and get warm until we were near Walter's ranch, so we decided to drive right on. Nat had brought his banjo along, and played and we all sang songs and hymes until we were too cold to do anything but wrap ourselves as snugly as possible in the robes we had with us. Such a relief, to be able to stretch our limbs and get warmed up at the heater. Mrs. Chapman had the house so cozy and warm and a good hot supper waiting for us, their dogs had given warning of a sleigh coming and they guessed it would be our party. We were tired after our long ride so everyone retired early, for we knew we would be up late the next night, Christmas Eve. We were up bright and early next morning, ready to help Mrs. Chapman prepare the Christmas dinner, and such a feast it was; apples and nuts fresh from Ontario, a real treat in those days. Lots of roast chicken, another treat as beef or deer meat was our standby, plum pudding, pies, cakes and cookies of all kinds. Chirstmas Eve, Grandma Jameson, as we all called her, told us stories of her childhood in Ontario, also stories of the "banshees" in Ireland, which were quite thrilling and some very scarey. After that, we sang the old songs until bedtime. Christ-mas Day, in the afternoon, we rode tobogganS down the steep hill to the creek; Chapman's house was on the top of the hill overlooking the Creek. The day was bright and clear and we were all outside enjoying the mild day, so much warmer than the day we drove down. Christmas night passed with us young folks playing charade and pàdys from the fairy tales. We rigged up a stage and had one or two real plays, the others enjoying it immensely, they said. We ended the day cracking walnuts and butternuts and talking about other Christmases, in the countries we had lived in before acoming to Alberta. All too soon our holiday was over and the next day we were trabelling the

coal hauler's trail, back to our homes in the Valley. It was a very happy Christmas for us and its memories will always remain with the four of us who are still living. On New Year's day, we had some of the friends who lived near, in to our Christmas dinner. My Step-mother had decided to wait until we were home again, so we had two happy endings to a very disappointing year, as far as crop and garden were concerned. I would mention that Mrs. Chapman had a baby girl born on the new ranch in September, so there were two children, Harry aged four and Elsie three months old, that Christmas 1896.