

Wolfe4

Elk Point via Vermilion

9.10.10

Dear Mother:

As I told Kitty last week, the weather was very unpleasant when I got to my homestead first. Still in spite of getting soaked wet, I did not get cold. It has been fine since except for one wet night. Arnott and I pitched the tent as best we could, at first we tied the ropes at one side to the wagon and drove pegs at the other side. As it was very low and uncomfortable, we spent Monday cutting logs and laid 4 rounds of them, then on Tuesday we put the tent up on this and banked it all round with earth after filling the chinks with chips. This is a great improvement as we can walk about in it now. My head doesn't even touch the stove pipe. You see, so as to get as much heat as possible, we put my range near the front of the tent and the chimney is at the back, so the pipe runs nearly the whole length of the tent. My range has room for 4 pots on top and has a fair sized oven. By the way I am a pretty fair cook, strange to say. I can make a fine plain cake but the sweet ones generally burn on top, or else are not cooked in the middle.

So far bread has been a failure as we are too tired to keep up a fire all night, and the tent gets too cold for the yeast to work.

It was a good job we raised the tent, as late on Tuesday night Mr. Drew (Mr. Arnott's father-in-law) walked in on us. I can't say I like the old beggar as he is too fastidious for a homestead. He has been rather rude to me once or twice too and seeing that he is living with me, that is a bit strong I think. The worst time was on Thursday night last. His beastly fox terrier was sniffing to the plates which were just dried, so I caught him by the back of the neck and was on the point of giving him a good toss on his back when I remembered he was a great pet, so I just jerked him back a bit and didn't upset him. Old Drew took him out of the tent and I supposed petted him. About 5 minutes later when I had nearly forgotten the incident, he came in again and said "There is one thing I do 'ate (he always forgets his H's) it is cruelty to animals, and I cannot understand how anyone, especially anyone who professes to be a Christian (this was a hit at me for saying my prayers every night and morning, an example which I noticed he followed last night) can be cruel to a poor dumb animal. If I see cruelty to animals I shall

be sorry I came out here, and my wife will be sorry too when she comes." It occurred to me to say I was already sorry he had come, but I didn't say a word at all. Mr. Arnott was awfully wild and I am pretty sure he gave it to the old beggar later on when I wasn't there. Next morning Mr. Arnott apologized as best he could.

We spent most of Wednesday fixing up a chimney at the back of the tent. On Thursday I ploughed about half an acre as I thought it would be well to have it for potatoes, carrots, etc. next year. I had a great deal of bother with the plough as it is a new one I brought out from Vermilion and it wasn't running right. In the end I had to get on one and alter the beam. It works fine now; the last half of the bit I ploughed is nicely done, though I am saying it shouldn't, but the first part is very bad. Oxen are a bit nicer to plough with than horses.

On Friday and Saturday I helped Mr. Arnott to cut logs and draw them out of the wood. We got 26 logs each 27 feet long out in the two days. He is to help me build my house in return day for day.

I have not got any letters from any of you for nearly a fortnight; we can only get letters once a week here at the best. The mail leaves Vermilion on Thursday from now on instead of on Monday, so that Thursday will be the best day for you to post letters to me.

We had an immense lot of stuff on the wagon when coming here. I will give you a list so that you can tell anyone else what to bring when they are going homesteading.

1 range, 12 lengths of stove pipe, 2 elbows, 1 damper, 1 kettle, 1 porridge pot, 2 enamel basins to wash up in, 4 augurs, 2 pickaxes, 2 post hole augers, 2 logging chains, some ropes, forks, knives, spoons, 3 pulley blocks, 60 lbs. nails, 4 pair hinges, a latch, a hack saw, 200 cartridges, Arnott's gun and rifle, 12 lb. hammer, crow bar, 2 pikes, 2 chisels, wrench, 1 gallon can of oil, lamp, lantern, axle grease, rule, steel tape measure, 4 bread tins, (brand) mixer, 2 baskets, some assorted bolts and nuts, 1-1/2 doz. candles, frying pan, spade and shovel, 5 axes, 1 tent, 2 pair Hudson Bay blankets, 1 pair sheets (flannelette), clothes line and pins, Vaseline, blacking, (black) lead and brush, candied fruit, dates, macaroni, chocolate, cloves, ginger biscuits, arrowroot biscuits, 50 lbs. flour, 20 lbs. flake oatmeal, 20 lbs. sugar, 1 tin marmalade, tin jam, 10 lbs. maple syrup, thin corer, 2 boxes yeast cakes, tin baking powder, 4 cans condensed milk, 2 lbs. dried peaches, 2 lbs. dried apples, 2 lbs. dried pears, 1 lb. tea, 1 bottle Yorkshire relish, 1 tin (bloaters), 2 tins sardines, 2 lbs. butter, 1 tin pineapple,

2 lbs. haricot beans, 2 lbs. salt pork, 1 ham, salt, 2 lbs. raisins, coffee, soap, lemon and strawberry conserves, matches, 4 lbs. rice, 5 lbs. l....., blue bag, 1 lb. lye. Bird egg powder, tapioca, onions, cups and saucers, plates, ( ), tea pot, sugar basin, butter dish, egg cups, pie dish, pepper, cheese, and washing board and tub. 4 window sashes, glazed; enough 2x6 timber to make frames for them. 1 plastering trowel, 2 (tel.....) chains, 4 loaves of bread which we ate on the way, my trunk and bag, Mr. Arnott's trunk and the plough, a bag of potatoes and a bag of carrots and beets. So you see we had a good load besides two bags of crushed oats for the oxen.

I think I have told you most of what we have, although there are, I know, some things left out.

I wish I had my house up.

\*\*\*\*

Elk Point via Vermilion  
23.10.10

Dear Mother:

My house didn't grow any bigger since this day week, but I hope it will grow a good bit this week. On Monday morning I started out with the oxen team for the nearest lumber mill, said to be 9 miles from here. Arnott hired another team and sent Mr. Landis, the man he has building his house, with them. I think the mill is a good 14 miles. Anyway, it was getting dark when we were loaded up, so we stayed the night with the lumber men. The whole gang is French except one, and he is English. Most of them knew a little English so we got on famously. They are really very nice men and not at all as bad as they are painted in stories. We got back here at 4:30 on Tuesday. I brought 798 sq. ft. of timber one inch thick and Lanais brought 803. On some of the hills we had to tackle both teams to one load and then go back for the other load. Of course I do not want the lumber yet, but I was afraid it might freeze up and not snow for some time and then of course oxen could not travel, so I thought it better to get it while I could.

On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday I was cutting logs and on Saturday I drew 17 of them up to the house. It doesn't sound much to only draw 17 logs, but you see I had to snake them out of the wood and load and unload them.

On Friday morning I walked over to Elk Point for the letters (5 miles) and was lucky enough to get 5; two from you, one from Sally, one from Fan and one from Saidie, besides an enclosed one from Pindy and the Daily Mail. So you see I was very lucky.

The nights are pretty cold here now. Some days the ice doesn't melt till about 1 o'clock. On Saturday when I got up I happened to look at the thermometer and it was 6 degrees below freezing in the tent, in spite of 4 of us sleeping there. Still we sleep soundly enough, but I don't take long to get the fire going in the mornings.

I guess you will like to know what we eat, so I will tell you. I make stir-about in the morning and we have that and coffee and plain cake (flour with salt and baking powder) with butter or golden syrup for breakfast and the remains, if any, of the stew of the night before. We got butter from Mr. Arbow for 20 cents or -/10 a pound. For dinner we have the same with haricot beans sometimes, and at night we have an Irish stew made from 2 grouse, whenever Arnott or Lanais can shoot them; potatoes, beans and macaroni (and carrots and onions when we can get them) and of course we drink tea. So you see, we live fairly well. We have finished the ham that we brought out from town; while we had that we were still better off. Last Saturday week I bought 2 dozen eggs for 50 cents which was not dear I think. We have to pay 50 cents a bushel for potatoes or about seven pence a stone; very dear I think, still they are good ones.

Saidie seems to have had a great time on her honeymoon. She wrote me a fine long letter and told me all she saw. I am very glad she liked the album. I thought it would be a curiosity at home. I expect it was a bit late, but I could not help that as I sent it the very first day I was in town. I had quite a job to think of anything that would get through the Customs.

The photo of the James S..o(?) is rather nice. You don't often see one in which every one is smiling and no one giggling.

I am afraid you will think my house very modest after the designs you sent, but we will try and build a better one on your land next year. Sally and Kitty did finely on their exams, didn't they.

Everyone has a coffee mill in this country as most of them grind their own coffee, so it will be easy to get one here. I don't know whether they are as good as the one at home though. They don't look as good.

There are not any blackberries at all here, none nearer than British Columbia, I think.

I thought Sally has the Berhuaseland(?) Bonds stowed away in her own treasures, but I am not sure. They came due in May and November anyway.

Arnott and I hired a Mr. Jackson to bring out a load of shingles, etc. for our roofs from Vermilion, so we have most of the material on the ground now.

I don't know the price of wild ducks at Edmonton, but I guess they would be hard to sell. You could buy them for 10 cents, -/5 in Vermilion. They are all gone south now; the lakes here are all deserted.

If I were you I would book second class on the boat and colonist on the train. When you are on the train, you can walk along and see how the first class people do and change if you wish. The trip will be warm enough, except the drive from Vermilion out here. The train will be rather too hot, I expect.

\*\*\*

Elk Point  
Vemilion, Alta.  
30.10.10

Dear Mother:

Arnott went to the post office on Friday but I didn't get any letter from home, so I suppose it must have missed the mail; however, I got one from Sally and one from Mr. Sullivan. He began his "Dear Sir", I wonder what happened to him as they all called me Billy all the summer.

On Monday I got on generally with my house and on Tuesday morning I started in great spirits, but at about half past nine I foolishly put the head of an axe into the cap of my right knee. It didn't go very deep and I patched it up with sticking plaster. It didn't bother me much that day or the next, but on Thursday it was so stiff and sore that I had to lie down all the afternoon. On Friday it was so sore that although I lay down all day, I began to be afraid I would have to go to Vermilion to see a doctor. Yesterday it was a lot better and today I can walk pretty well. I would never have believed such a little cut could pain so much. This would hardly be worth telling you, except that it explains why the house hasn't grown faster. The house is just as high as my shoulder all round now.

Working with an axe is a bit dangerous at the best. Arnott put a big cut in his right boot without cutting his foot the other day, and Lanais, the man he has working with him, cut a piece right out of the ball of the thumb of his left glove and never even scratched his hand. That was a tight squeak, wasn't it. You see, we have all had a lesson now so you may be sure we will be careful in the future.

I felt very down in the mouth all the week and once or twice I was almost sorry I came out to Canada, still I never quite repented. We had a little snow on Tuesday last and quite a lot fall from 8 o'clock to 11 o'clock on Wednesday morning. It remained on the ground till Friday when most of it melted. The shallow lakes are frozen over and don't thaw even at midday, and the ground is frozen down about 2 inches. I had to use a pick to get some earth to put round the bottom of the house.

So far we have been able to break the ice on our well by banging the bucket on it, but I expect we will have to use an axe soon.

You will probably imagine from this that we are half dead with the cold, but we aren't. Most days I wear a trousers and overalls over it, and a flannel shirt and a sweater. No under clothes nor coat nor waistcoat. I don't know why we don't feel cold, but it is none the less true that we don't. By the way, woolen clothes covered by cotton ones makes a splendid combination as the wool keeps you warm and the cotton stops the wind.

Ever since last Sunday we have left the two oxen loose with bells strapped to their necks. We had no bother in catching them till last Thursday when they got in with about 30 of Tom Arbow's cattle and wouldn't wait. I couldn't help, and after chasing them a couple of miles, Arnott gave up. On Friday he and Lanais went after them and after about 2 hours, brought them back. They are kept tethered again since.

What kind of a rifle did Tom buy. Is it a new .22 or what. I hope he bought a magazine rifle as the single shot ones are very difficult to reload here during January and February. He ought to get the little Winchester repaired and get Pindy to practice with it and bring it out when she comes.

I got the gun on Friday. It is very nice indeed. It is just as I wished in everything, except that the stock is a shade too straight. Still I expect I will soon get used to that. I haven't shot anything with it yet.

We seem to eat a terrible lot here. Four of us are getting through flour at the rate of 2-1/2 to 3 lbs. per day, besides a lot of flake meal. We have also used

up 40 lbs. of sugar and 2 lbs. of tea and 1-1/2 lbs. of coffee in 30 days. It beats me where we put it, but I suppose it is a good sign. I guess it would madden Fan though.

Old Mr. Drew is getting tired of his homesteading experiences. He was talking about abandoning it the other night. He seems to have expected to get land like England which has been cultivated for about 2000 years. Of course it is nonsense to expect to get crops like you do at home, or prices either, but then you can get so much more land here than you can at home that that makes up the difference.

I think it would be a good job for Arnott if his father-in-law did clear out. For instance, he has ordered a lot of pure bred fowls from the Government Agricultural farm and he hasn't anything to feed them on or anywhere to keep them.

I remarked the other night that the eggs he will get will cost him about 25 cents each if he is lucky, and about 50 cents likely enough. I bought 2 doz for 50 cents last time I was at the store. He has no business of fowl until next year or the year after when he could feed them, but he imagines that he will make money on them. Besides, I would not begin by buying costly June bred. Any old things would do to practice on as he will probably freeze them this winter.

Butter is dearer now. We have to pay 25 cents a lb. For it. Can Pindy ride yet?

\*\*\*

Elk Point  
Vermilion  
"Sweet Saturday Night"  
12.11.10

Dear Fan:

Arnott and Mr. Drew are going to Hopkins tomorrow and as the mail goes from there on Monday, you will get this as soon as Kitty gets the letter I wrote last Sunday.

We had cold weather here all the early part of the week. Wednesday night was the coldest. At 10 o'clock it was 5 degrees below zero Fahrenheit and on Thursday morning when I went out for sticks to light the fire, it was only 4 degrees above zero. It warmed up a bit on Thursday, and on Friday it was only a little below freezing and at noon the snow got damp. Today was a lovely day, just a few degrees below freezing and no wind. I had my coat and waistcoat off again and my ears and hands bare. It felt quite hot after the cold spell, and yet it was cold enough

to keep the snow dry.

My house is now 11 logs high all round, about 7 ft. 8 inches. I think I am a great genius at building it, as I did every thing all alone. I expect Mommy will be afraid I will get hurt, but she needn't as of course I couldn't possibly lift even one end of each log alone, so I had to arrange a pulley gear to hoist them, and it is by pulling down on the rope that I hoist the logs. The gear is 4 to 1 so that I only have to pull a bit more than 1/4 the weight of the log. The trouble is that it takes a long time to adjust the gear for each log, so that it is a very good day's work to get 4 logs fitted. If I had another round of logs up, I could get the joist of the next floor in, so that I would not be so nervous when walking on the wall.

If the weather will hold on good or middling I will try and get a good upstairs built, but if it comes on too bad I may be forced to put on the roof pretty soon.

Still it isn't too bad in a tent even with a zero temperature. The trouble is to get water. You see, it takes so long to make boiling water from ice. Then it is hard to manage food too. Our potatoes and onions are all frozen on us, even in the warmest corner of the tent, and once or twice the bread was nearly frozen. The milk and butter have to be thawed out too.

The photo Kitty sent is of three servant maids at Hollybrook who came over one afternoon about 1901 or 02 to be taken. Pretty much the same time as we took Ritchie's (?) photo and Mr. Casey's(?) daughters, etc. I guess Kitty will know them. I forget their names or perhaps I never heard them.

I am very glad Kitty and Mommy are looking over the negatives as they can pick out a few interesting ones. I think there are about 8 or 9 dozen in a tin box (in dozen boxes) under the bed besides the ones that are in the pigeon holes in the desk. There are also some in the second or third bottom drawer of the desk.

That was rather a good joke of Arthur's to put up Sloane and Bill and himself as Maori chiefs. It is what his uncle would like to do, but I guess he didn't enjoy it against himself.

I am glad Dirk is behaving fairly well, still I am afraid there would be trouble in bringing him out here. You could write to the "Canadian Pacific Agent, James St., Liverpool" and tell him you are coming out in March and ask what it would cost to bring a hound of about 60 lbs. weight to Vermilion or Edmonton, and also ask if he would have to be quarantined on landing and if so, for how long. On board ship most dogs are kept merely chained and in charge of the ship's butcher,



but it would be necessary to muzzle Dirk as well. Altogether it is doubtful if it would be worth while. If he would be quarantined, I wouldn't bring him.

\*\*\*

Elk Point  
Dec. 13th, Tuesday

Dear Mother:

You will be glad to hear that I am living in my own house at last. I slept here last night for the first time. Landers and Jackson were here last night too, but they finished mudding the walls at about 3:30 today and have gone home now. The house seems very empty without them now, the alarm clock ticks so loudly that it seems to fill the whole place upstairs and down.

Of course the house is very far from finished yet. For instance, either of the floors isn't laid nor are the shingles on the roof. The roof at present consists of 1 inch boards laid lengthways and covered with tarred paper. It keeps out the snow and keeps in the heat fairly well.

I had to pay each of the men \$2 a day and feed them while they were plastering and \$1-1/2 a day while they helped me with the roof. Altogether the wages bill was \$22 and 50 cents; still it was worth it I think, as I was in a bad fix. It gave them enough to do too. They first shovel away the snow and then light a big fire, then while the ground is thawing a bit, they light another big fire and boil a tub of water. Then they shovel away the remains of the first fire and dig up the earth and mix it with the hot water. Then Jackson plasters while Landers mixes the mud and keeps it hot.

Once the outside was done, it wasn't so bad as I borrowed a heating stove from Landers and fixed it up inside.

I had to get up every two hours last night and stoke up the fire in order to keep the mud on the inside from freezing. You see, if you keep freezing and thawing it, it all tumbles off. I will have to do the same tonight and for several other nights, but as the logs are beginning to thaw out, I expect I need not keep quite such a fierce fire going in order to keep the house warm, so that it may do to get up every three hours. The alarm is very handy now, as thanks to it I don't have any bother sitting up. It takes nearly half the day to saw enough wood for the night.

When Arnott went to Vermilion for his furniture, Mr. Drew didn't keep up half enough heat in their house, and the inside plaster froze several times. Consequently, it is falling off in spots now and they are all mad. That was a good lesson for me. I had one narrow escape too. I made up the fire at 11 and got up at 1, 3, and 20 past five. The temperature near the floor was about 40 each time except the last when it was only 33 or 1 degree above freezing. I must try and do better tonight.

I got the Constitution with the announcement of Uncle Frank's wedding in it last Friday. Uncle Harry ought to go and do likewise now.

The Arnotts are rather nice. I think you will like them. I had dinner and tea there the last two Sundays. I like Mrs. Arnott. It beats me how she is so nice, seeing whose daughter she is. Still the old lady isn't so terribly bad, though rather a boss I fancy. At any rate, Mr. Drew can't cough when she is in hearing. He, Mr. Drew, is a bit nicer than he was, too. I expect it is that they are more comfortable now.

That was a nice rowdy strike they had in the South Wales colliery, wasn't it. Worse even than last year's strike in Cork.

I see the Veto(?) Conference broke down as it was pretty sure to do, so that there is to be a new general election almost at once. I wonder will Mr. Barry(?) have the cheek to stand again. I expect not. Willie Wood ought to have a good chance. I expect the election will be all over before you get this. It looks to me as if the fiscal reform party would get it this time.. I expect there will soon be as much bother with the English Customs as there is now with all the rest of the world.

I just got a letter from Eva Munton and one from Foster. Eva invites me down for Christmas; very decent of her, isn't it. Not much chance of going though. She says I ought to tell you to bring out your china, linen, and woolens as she says they are so dear here.

Foster writes in rather a grown up, perhaps(?) swallowed, style different to what he used to do. He seems to think you and the girls will find things terribly hard here. I often think the same, though it seems to me like a foretaste of heaven to have a house to get into out of the cold. For instance, it's lovely to have to stand the pan on the stove when you are washing the crockery and not to find the cups frozen onto the saucers when you go to wash up, and not to have the forks and spoons clinging to your fingers. I didn't get frozen since, but Arnott got

his finger tips frozen on Sunday. They keep their oil can outside as it leaks, and he went out for some oil without his mitts. He wasn't out for five minutes. It hasn't been more than 30 below zero yet.

A week ago last Monday, yesterday, Arnott and I had to start out on one 9 mile trip for hay. It was 15 below zero and a beast of a wind against us. I hated to go, but couldn't help it. When we got to the hay stack, a cake which we took with us for dinner was frozen. Still we chewed most of it. It wasn't so bad coming back as the wind went down about sunset.

On long trips like that, it is safer for 2 to go as we can then take turns to walk to keep warm. I wish you could see my house. I am awfully proud of it. The others all say it is the highest in Elk Point, but I think Markstead's is as high. His is a lot bigger and has a cottage roof so doesn't look so high. The roof of mine is just over 27 ft. long, the front end being supported on poles and forming a sort of veranda which we can case in later if we like. It looks funny in front but the design is good and properly braced from an engineering point of view, which is more than I can say for Arnott's. I am tired of advising Arnott to put cross pieces to keep his rafters from spreading, but he keeps putting it off. I don't think they will, but I would not be a bit surprised if they did spread and smack down any day.

I didn't get any letters from home last week. I suppose you are writing long Christmas ones.

\*\*\*

Elk Point  
Vermilion  
22.12.10

Dear Mother:

I expect you will have got the kitchen window decorated now with holly and roses. There doesn't seem to be any holly round here.

It looks as if Christmas will be rather tame here, however as it is a Sunday, it will be rather quiet everywhere.

Mary(?) and Florence Ward got a lot of presents, didn't they; by the way, what's an epergne. They got several, whatever it is.

Quite a lot of things have happened round here lately. Arnott had a very narrow escape a week ago today. He and Landers had gone to the lumber mill on Wednesday and were coming back with two loads on Thursday. Landers wasn't able to get the loan of a sleigh, so he took a wagon and Arnott took a sleigh. Coming up the hill on their way back they had to put the 4 oxen on one load as usual. Just as they got to the top with the wagon, the hind wheels skidded off the trail and the whole thing upset, breaking one wheel. Arnott was sitting on the load and jumped for his life as it went over. Luckily the load didn't roll over a second time or it would have caught him. They had to leave the load and go back for it and the wagon next day.

On Monday last we had to go for a load of hay. I drove on the way back. The runners of a sleigh are a lot closer together than the wheels of a wagon, so that it needs very careful driving. I got on famously over the most dangerous bit, but when I thought I was alright and had sat down nice and comfortably, the left runner of the front sleigh struck a stone and over the whole load went. We had to undo the ropes and pike every bit of it off and then when we had righted the sleigh, I forked it on again while Arnott peaked it. We had about a ton of hay so that it took a long time. In the end it was 10 o'clock when we got back here.

They have got up a literary society here. It meets every Wednesday at 8:00 p.m. at Elk Point school house about 2-1/2 or 3 miles north west of me. I am to speak next Wednesday to prove that a woman is as good at business as a man. Last night was the first meeting I went to, as I didn't hear of it till then. There was a good crowd there, some of them came a long way too. The river is frozen solid enough now so that there are people from the other side there. We had a tip top time too. There were two recitations, a reading, two songs, a speech, a short debate on whether it pays to homestead in Alberta or not, a mandolin and guitar duet, and a mouth organ solo accompanied by the guitar. The same man played both; he fixed the mouth organ to his shoulders by a wire bracket so as to have his hands free for the guitar.

Musical talent is abundant here. Boyd the telegraph man is the best of all. He is a sort of Music Hall on the fiddle and very good on the mandolin and the banjo, and plays the cornet better than I do. The other day I was passing his house and heard the cornet, so I went over to see and there he was practising while he was cooking his dinner. It is a trumpet cornet he has.

I felt awfully down in the mouth for the last week, ever since Landers and Jackson left, but last night's meeting seems to have done me a lot of good as I don't feel

half so bad now.

By the way, how will you manage for beds and blankets when you get here first.

I expect you will pack up all your blankets, but then you see, they won't get to Vermilion till a long time after you do. I think I had better get one bed and blankets for it next time I go to town, and you and Fan and Kit could all tumble into it till your own stuff came along. What do you think?

Will Tom come out here first for a bit before he goes to work. It might possibly pay him to look round at the land north of here as soon as the snow melts.

We have had glorious weather now for a week. All the neighbours say they never remember such a fine winter up here.

I have more than half of the upstairs floor planed now. It is rather a tough job as the wood is green and not dried yet. Would you rather have one good sized bedroom 16x12 for yourself and the girls, or two little ones 8x12 each. If you have two little ones, you will have to go through one to get to the other.

I got the proper joists for the upstairs floor in today. There are 12 of them. It took me pretty nearly the whole day to get them up and fit them.

\*\*\*

Elk Point  
Vermilion, Alta.  
28.12.10

Dear Eda:

Many thanks for your letter which arrived the day before Christmas Eve, also for the Advocates. It was really very decent of you to write to me and tell me lots of news which my people left out.

I would give a great deal for a chance to go to the Town Hall once or twice now. I didn't even have the time to try ice skating this year, although there is a lake on the estate here and it was frozen for a long time before the snow came.

You see, I was in such a hurry to get this house up that I didn't like to take even a half holiday. It takes quite a while to build even a log house. I had to choose the trees (and they don't all grow straight even here), cut them down,

trim the branches off, chop off the lengths I wanted, then get the two oxen to haul the logs out of the wood one by one with a logging chain, load them on a wagon or sleigh and fetch them here, and after that hoist and fit them. There are 80 logs in this house which means about 75 trees, as I think 5 trees made 2 logs each.

I only went twice to the rink in Edmonton as it wasn't much fun. The pace is entirely too fast for my taste. It gave me all I could do to keep up, then it was badly managed or rather it wasn't managed at all. You wouldn't have liked it either if you were there.

I am glad to hear that Foster is to be Secretary to the Leaders meeting as it will do both good. I expect it will do Foster a big lot of good as he is rather like a Hermit Crab; he likes to get into a shell and stay there. If he would only go skating now, I would have hopes of him being some good after all.

It is a good job that the old manse has been let again. It should be a good place for a veterinary surgeon. We have got a grand "Mutual Improvement Society" here, only they don't call it that. They call it a "Literary Society", still "a Rose by any other name would smell as sweet". It meets at Elk Point school house every Wednesday at 8 p.m. The school house is just an hour's walk from here. People come from miles around to it, so that it is usually packed. Last night I had to stand as all the seats were occupied, even though the temperature outside was 12 degrees below zero. I made quite a speech there last night to the effect that "a woman is as capable of managing a business as a man". Rather an ambiguous title for a debate, isn't it, but the people here seem not to have seen the second meaning, so I didn't enlighten them.

They have odd methods of managing a debate here. Before beginning, each side chooses one judge, and the chairman chooses a third. Then these three sit up in front like a jury. They then have 4 speeches, 2 for, 2 against. The leaders then reply, after which the judges each write down the verdict and put it in a hat. The meeting is then open to the public who say what they like. Then the hat is opened and the verdicts announced. Then a critic who holds office for 4 weeks gets up and criticises the whole thing, speeches, speakers and all. The procedure seems odd to me, but it works well. There is lots of musical talent in the settlement, both vocal and instrumental, and one or two very good reciters, so that we have usually a very good programme.

I hope it will continue as well as it has done so far. It does me a lot of good

to go there as it is very lonely here, where very often I don't see anyone for quite a while.

Kitty and Mr. Copithorne(?) would have had a great time on the Continent if only he had been a bit stronger, still I expect they saw a lot. Don't you wish you had gone with them.

I can't think of any name suitable for this place unless I copy your example and call it "Glenford". The Dominion Government knows it as S.E. 34-56-6, W.4. This doesn't sound very practical, does it.

It isn't exactly a (height) and it isn't a hollow; it is nearly flat, about half of it is wooded poplar and spruce. There is a little lake on it. You can see Moose Mountain to the north. It looks close, but it is nearly a day's journey.

I went there for a load of lumber and it took a day to go and load up and a day to come back and unload. I stopped at the lumber camp alright. Lumber men seem here at least to be a very much decenter sort than you would think from reading stories.

Glad to hear Mother is looking well. I think it is quite likely that she may like this country in the summer anyway. If she doesn't, I suppose we will all have to pack up and come home again.

I expect Mr. Wolfe will feel very much annoyed about that invoice. Mr. (Michael), the customs broker tells me he had to send it back again as the Customs officer "Frank Osborne" would not accept it, unless the country of origin was marked on the front. I am very sorry to be the cause of so much trouble to him.

("Mui...bile dictu") it wasn't I put the (matrimonial?) ed in the advocate.

\*\*\*

S.E. 34-56-6 W.4  
Elk Point  
Vermilion  
29.12.10

It's odd that you get chill blains. I never do, although I sometimes get frost bitten. I wonder which is worse. W.F.W.

Dear Tom:

This is to wish you many happy returns of your birthday.

Mummy tells me that you never wore either vests or drawers when you got here. You will wear them fast enough and wish you had two or three sets on sometimes.

Not only will you wear drawers under your trousers, but you will wear overalls over them. I wouldn't bring out any overalls though if I were you, as they are cheap enough here. It would be well to bring drawers and vests, about 3 each, a reasonable number of pairs of socks, as you wear two pairs at once in the winter.

On real cold days I wear three pair. Boots are a lot cheaper and I think as good or better at home then here. If I was you I would get one pair without hooks, that is eyelets all the way up, as the western stirrups will smash the hooks at once. Get the boots to fit you with only one pair of socks on, as they are only for summer use. You can't very well wear them in winter what you put inside them.

Tell Mummy that my trunk was a good deal damaged. The cornet case which was inside it was not smashed, but the cornet itself is damaged a bit. If I were you I would put the clarinet in your cabin luggage, and Pindy had better bring her violin in the cabin too. Pack the fiddle with soft paper in its case, lock the case and put a "wanted" label on it, but don't wrap up the case.

I think me C. Kelly is right that canvas or sacking is the best thing to pack clothes and blankets in. The best thing to pack ware in seems to be light barrels like apples and some sorts of biscuits are packed in.

Mr. Hosford or Ben Hill could tell you any day what berths and cabins are vacant on any CPR steamer. This would save you writing to Liverpool.

Mummy says you say Kit would be too soft hearted to use a whip driving cattle.

I never even carried one when after them; of course I didn't do much driving. What you do is just get after them with the horse. They usually run fast enough, and if they don't, your horse will bite them if you let him. The usual trouble is that they go the wrong way or scatter. By the way, whatever you do, don't be fool enough to try to homestead so late in the year as I did. If the weather had been bad I don't know how I would have managed, even as it was I had a pretty hard time. I wouldn't do the same again for a good deal. The first of September is the very latest one should get to this place. I didn't get here till Oct. 1st.

*...ends here..more pages somewhere? ....*



*NOTES: You'll have to check a lot of the names..some are hard to read, also, some are misspelled, e.g. He spells "Arbow" rather than Aarbo. Also, there is a "Landis" mentioned, but also a "Landers"..you may be more familiar with these names than I am. Anything doubtful is put in brackets, or an initial then .....*