

CHAPTER IV

The Family

OUR FIRST BORN ARRIVED IN THE GREY DAWN OF JUNE 16th, when the scent of wild roses came down the village street, carried on the dewy breeze of morning. It was at a time of great heat but there had been a cooling rain in the night, and so the hour of Jack's arrival bore that odor which is dear to every prairie dweller—that good earthy smell when the rain has laid the dust. This bit about the scent of roses is all hearsay on my part. I was not noticing anything except the handsome young stranger who had come with the dawn; his round pink head covered with soft-silky brown hair, tight little ears and doubled up fists covering his eyes; his perfect finger nails, and his regular breathing—that was the sweetest sound I ever heard. He came with a cry of distress, but that was soon hushed when he found he was among friends. There was a white and blue-lined cradle ready for him, with white blankets and a down pillow. But I wanted him beside me in his white shawl; I think that was the most exquisite moment I have ever known!

Before the week was over his two grandmothers had arrived. My mother-in-law was ecstatic in her praise of the baby's beauty. She said she had never seen such a beautiful child. My mother, who already had ten grandchildren, was more conservative. "The child", she said, "is well enough. We should all be thankful that he appears normal and healthy; looks do not matter, and children change greatly anyway. If he is as good as he