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## A Week on the Homestead

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Wolf Willow.

I OFTEN read letters on the correspondence page of various Canadian papers complaining of the loneliness of homesteading life. Now this may be true in the case of some bachelors, and yet, under similar conditions, many bachelors are as cheerful and contented men as you would wish to see. A good deal depends on the individual, and on the point of view. Some people are morbid and lonely any place. I have seen as sad and lonely faces on the streets of Winnipeg as I have ever seen on the prairie.

A great deal of pity is extended to homesteaders' wives, and no one pities many of them any more than they pity themselves. One must cultivate adaptability. I am thankful to say that I can adapt myself to almost anything—"let myself loose" in Winnipeg and have a good time, or settle down in the country, "count my blessings one by one," and enjoy myself.

This is my second venture homesteading, so I can talk, not from a rooming house in Winnipeg or Edmonton, but from the soil itself.

We had a free homestead in Manitoba, proved up, sold out, and now are on a purchased homestead in Central Alberta. On the claim in Manitoba all I cared for in particular was that we should be reasonably near a school, as I had two boys, just coming old enough to attend. I thought this the main thing; to other things I could adjust myself. We were favored in having the school, were very comfortable, and got a good start, selling out for a fair figure.

We have now been on the homestead in Alberta for six months, and are fifteen miles from a town, much farther than we were on the free homestead, and are on a thinly settled locality, and the settlers that are here are mainly foreigners. That sounds forbidding, doesn't it? But they are Swedes and Hungarians, who are a good, industrious class of people.

We came here the first of July, and I am not going to say much about this beautiful summer, as it is easy to be comfortable almost any place then. How I tidied my house and then went to filling my cellar with wild fruit, which I enjoyed picking under the blue sky, and among the wild flowers on the hillsides of Alberta; how I, nearly every time buggy or wagon went on any errand, buying cows, pigs, hens, for wood, hay, or just "exploring," loaded up my small flock and went too, and had new sights and sounds to think about when I got home. I did not stay at home and look out of the window, and "wish somebody would come." But, moreover, I got up early, hustled through my work, and was not unduly unprepared for visitors, if they should have come.

We all enjoyed the scenery along the Battle River, near Irma, with its mighty hills and singing rapids. We saw it in all its aspects, from early summer until the autumn dyed its wooded coulees with red and yellow, and turned its hills to brown.

Now, in November, everything is bleak, the trees are leafless, and the river frozen in places, the birds flown south, and yet I find homesteading more than bearable.

I am going to describe a week in late November, perhaps the most disheartening time of all the year, if one is of the disheartened persuasion.

I will start with a Saturday when we all went down to fix a crossing over the river, so that the children could go to school on Monday, as they had not been yet this term, being too far if using the summer crossing.

We chose a place just above the rapids, where the hills on either side are accessible for a rig, and all went in a wagon. The ice was very glary and would be too slippery for our unshod pony to be driven across with the children. When we reached the river the team was blanketed, and the boys and men carried great bundles of straw from a stack near and spread it in a drive-

way across the river, and along the bank which had to be followed for a piece—everyone working, perforce, to keep warm. Then there were holes in the ice, and water dipped out and sprinkled over the straw to freeze and make a footing for the pony. After this was done we went down to the rapids, which were roaring as usual.

All at once the little nine-year-old called out, "Oh, look at the cookies!" And sure enough the swirl of the water broke off pieces of ice, then whirled them round and round just enough to round them nicely, the current carried them away, and then more were made. "Yes," I said, old Mrs. Rapids is doing her Saturday's baking. Then we watched a couple of ducks alight in a bit of open water, and one of the men reached for his gun, which the men around here seldom go without. "Bang!" The valley echoes rang, and there was a nice fat duck to take home.

We loaded up again in the wagon, and started on the return trip. The short November day was drawing to a close, and we hurried along, as the outdoor air had sharpened our appetites, and visions of roast pork "and sich" tantalized us.

But what is that grey shadow gliding along the side of the hill, like a bit of the hill, itself in motion? "A coyote! Reach me the rifle." The bullet went whizzing through the air, and seemed to hit him—to pass through him, but it didn't. He could be seen, easily loping along at some distance.

"I don't believe he was a real wolf at all," said one boy who is given to imaginings.

Home, and the heater has kept the house nice and warm. The range is soon going, and the dreams of supper realized, and the food fades away as mysteriously as did the wolf.

That night about bedtime the rattle of a rig is heard in the silence, the dog barks, answered by far-off coyotes, and a neighbor comes with the mail. It is understood that whoever "goes in" will get all the mail for the nearest neighbors. Our friend is hailed as joyously as if he were Santa Claus, as we take from him our letters and our dearly beloved Western Home Monthly, Canada Monthly, Family Herald, Winnipeg Tri-

### FRIENDLY TIP

#### Restored Hope and Confidence.

After several years of indigestion and its attendant evil influence on the mind, it is not very surprising that one finally loses faith in things generally.

An Eastern woman writes an interesting letter. She says:

"Three years ago I suffered from an attack of peritonitis which left me in a most miserable condition. For over two years I suffered from nervousness, weak heart, shortness of breath, could not sleep, etc.

"My appetite was ravenous but I felt starved all the time. I had plenty of food but it did not nourish me because of intestinal indigestion. Medical treatment did not seem to help. I got discouraged, stopped medicine and did not care much whether I lived or died.

"One day a friend asked me why I didn't try Grape-Nuts food, stop drinking coffee and use Postum. I had lost faith in everything, but to please my friend I began to use both and soon became very fond of them.

"It wasn't long before I got some strength, felt a decided change in my system, hope sprang up in my heart and slowly but surely I got better. I could sleep very well, the constant craving for food ceased and I have better health now than before the attack of peritonitis.

"My husband and I are still using Grape-Nuts and Postum."

Name given by Canadian Postum Co., Windsor, Ont. Read, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.