

May 15th, 1903

My Dear Friends,

It seems a long time since I last had a paper chat with you all but my thoughts have been wondering many times to old pang of homesickness. We arrived here "Doris Court" our own estate yesterday. May 15th. And are now rejoicing that we are at last at our journey's end. On our reaching Mr. Barr's camp my husband went to survey the section of land allotted to him but he was not at all satisfied and would have nothing to do with it, so Mr. Barr went with him to look in a different section which resulted most happily for my husband, and he is now perfectly satisfied with his location and considers he is the proud possessor of as fine a tract of land as is possible to procure. As I am writing I can look out my tent door and see he's quite happy doing his first bit of ploughing on his own soil. There is no doubt it is the most beautiful land. We have plenty of wood and water which is a great boon and much to be thankful for. Our friend and traveling companion has the next land adjoining ours which is just as good. We are only half an hours drive from the stores in Mr. Barr's camp, half a mile from the prospective station, and only a few minutes from the school site. I must now hark back a bit and tell you something of our bitter experience while trekking up to the promise land.

On leaving Battleford we had a 90 mile journey through most awful country shaking us all to pieces, sometimes charging across great streams and gullies, at others driving through thick scrub. After a long day's journey we have arrived at the Government tent simply perished with cold and hunger. At the time we reached Mr. Barr's camp I think we all felt weary, worn and sad. My dear little Doris was taken ill the day before we

arrived, and seeing how very feverish she was I was terribly anxious.

However, Willie immediately sought out the camp Doctor. She had a temperature of 104. I had to poultice her and thanks to the Doctor's kind attention she soon pulled round but misfortune seem to dog our footsteps. Barnes now sickened and we thought it necessary to call in medical advice. He was much concerned about him and told us he feared it would turn to pneumonia. Owing to skillful treatment, he managed to ward it off. I suppose all the worry and anxiety proved the last straw as far as I was concerned, for I was the next to collapse with a bad chill and bronchitis, from which I was still suffering together with an abscess in my face all of which combined makes me feel very low and out of sorts.

I am writing this on May 17th dear father's Gord birthday and my thoughts have been with him. Every good wish and we hope he spends as happy a day as possible under the circumstances.

Whilst in the Barr camp we were greatly terrified of the terrible prairies fires which simply surrounded us on all sides and we had some very narrow escapes of being burned out of house and home. At one time every man in camp, every horse, and every plough was ordered out to plough round the camp to save it from total destruction.

It was terrible to witness, a terrific wind carrying all before it and as night came on it really was in an awful sight, the pitiless flames as far as an eye could see in every direction. There was a lovely lot of grass on our land when Willie first came up to see it, but the next day it was all burnt, still all the

lovely young grass is shooting up very quickly and at any rate we are now safe from fire of which I am very nervous after all I have witnessed.

16th May Willie started ploughing on Mr. Young's land on Saturday morning and in the afternoon started on his own. This morning, Monday, he has made up his mind to a good day's work as both Willie and Mr. Young are anxious to get in a few oats for the horses, but alas both are disappointed for the snow is falling and we are thankful to keep in our tent by the fire. I think all the country around here will very pretty in a short while.

We are now hunting out a nice spot for a little house which we are anxious to get up as soon as possible. The great difficulty is to get lumber. There is a gentleman in Mr. Barr's camp who thinks of returning home. He has the plan of a little four room bungalow and the timber all complete for building it. If he does go back he will sell it out-right to Willie, but he would have to fetch it from Fort Pitt, 25 miles from here.

Barnes goes to Battleford on Wednesday to fetch the rest of our baggage and Willie's plough, harrows and a cooking stove. He will be gone a week and will take all the letters down to post and I hope bring some back. You cannot have the least idea how we long for news and some papers, any literature would be so gratefully received. There is no paper sold here under 5 cents. We have any amount of prairie chickens and wild duck all over the estate and Willie, I need to say, keeps us supplied. Yesterday and to-day we have thoroughly enjoyed a delicious dinner of prairie chicken, beans and potatoes. The beans are like little white peas and are very good. They are used here a great deal

instead of potatoes which are scarce and very dear, equivalent to 3 d. per lb. We are getting some vegetable seed from Battleford to start our kitchen garden as soon as possible.

I shall be so thankful when the warmer weather sets in. I can quite understand the charms of camping then but under the present conditions it has very few charms I can assure you and what with the bitter cold and hard ground we don't get much refreshing rest. Still with all the hardships it is certainly a glorious feeling to be able to look around on our own property and feel that each day's work is for future benefit. No landlord and no rent to pay nor taxes!! This indeed compensates for a very great deal. Best love and remembrances to all relations, friends and acquaintances.

Yours ever sincerely,

Alice Rendell