

**A LADY'S LIFE ON
A FARM IN
MANITOBA**

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A Lady's Life on a Farm in Manitoba by Mrs. Cecil Hall

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MRS. CECIL HALL

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FARM IN MANITOBA.

BY
MRS. CECIL HALL.

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1884.
E.T.C.

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PREFACE.

THESE letters were never intended for publication, and were only the details written to our family of an every-day life, and now put in the same shape and composition; not as a literary work, but in hopes that the various experiences we underwent may be useful to future colonists intending to emigrate and farm, either in Manitoba or Colorado.

M. G. C. H.

Flotcher, 2 Nov. 1943

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QUEENSTOWN, April 14th.

WHAT joy! four hours in harbour given us to recruit our emaciated forms and write you a few lines of our experiences and trials. You wished us to keep a diary with every detail, which we will try our best to do, beginning by telling of the cheerless journey to Liverpool in rain, the elements even seeming to lament our departure. The bad weather has lasted more or less ever since, just one gleam of sunshine brightening us up on leaving the wharf, but we saw nothing of the Mersey or the surroundings. The only thing that struck us most forcibly was the smallness of our ship, though it was 8,000 tons. It has

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just been re-docked and overhauled, and still smells horribly of paint and full of workmen, whom, however, we drop here, in exchange for 1,200 emigrants. These, with about sixty first-class passengers and a hold full of potatoes, form our cargo. We began life bravely last night, enjoying a very good dinner, and after playing a rubber of whist retired to our berths congratulating ourselves on what excellent sailors we were going to be; but alas! . . . Dressing this morning was too difficult, the ship rolled fearfully, even the friends who came with us thus far, and consider themselves first-class sailors, think that it will be more prudent to go by train through Ireland home, instead of waiting for the return boat of the same line which calls here on Sunday and is to take them to Liverpool. We almost wish we could turn tail; the prospect of ten days more of the briny ocean is not what at this moment we most fancy. However, in the short time we have been in harbour we have been recruiting to start afresh, and hope for better weather.

DEAREST M.

Mid Atlantic.

I sadly fear I must have contributed more paving-stones for a certain region; for many good resolutions did I make in starting, and not one of them has been kept, not even so much as writing daily a portion of a letter to be sent home from New York. And now my long story will have to be cut short, and the doings of the last fifteen days will have to be crowded into a very limited space; for we are in sight of land, and our excitement can only be compared to that of school boys the last day of the term. The joy of landing will not be unmingled with regrets in parting from our fellow-passengers, with whom we have become fast friends; and we are inclined mutually to believe in transmigration of souls, and that we must have known each other in some prior state. Some are going into Minnesota, three of them having bought 13,000 acres in the Red River valley, which they are going to farm on a large scale, and hope in four years to have made fortunes, another owns mines in Colorado, having been one of the first pioneers of the San Juan district; he

is in a fair way to a princely fortune. I fear golden apples will not be strewn on our paths, even though we are bound the furthest west. Fifteen days have we been out of sight of land; two days out from Queenstown we broke a piston-rod, which obliged us to lay to, in a fearfully rough sea, for five hours. Next day one of our four boilers burst, and again another piston-rod; which accidents, combined with contrary winds and heavy seas, reduced our speed to nearly half for the remainder of the journey. Our spirits have not flagged, as, thanks to various small games such as pitch-and-toss, running races when the ship was rolling, quoits, and cards, we have not found time unbearably long. The last few days we have had big sweepstakes on the run of the ship; but, unfortunately, none of our party have won them. One evening we had a concert; but you may imagine the talent on board was not great when they had to call upon one of us to accompany the *prima donna*, and the other to sing a second in a duet; another evening we danced—or rather tried to—our band consisting of a concertina and a flute, played by two of the steerage passengers, but

the vessel rolled so persistently that we often lost our equilibrium and reeled like drunken men and women.

I must stop: curiosity bids me go on deck. We shall shortly be in the quarantine harbour, the entrance of which is said to be very fine; though I very much doubt our being able to see anything, as, in spite of being in this much boasted climate of the new world, it is raining and is dull enough to rejoice the hearts of true John Bulls like your daughter's.

NAVY YARD, NEW YORK, April 30th.

I HOPE you will have got our letters sent off by the ship's boat the night before we were allowed to land, as, though we arrived in the quarantine harbour at 7 o'clock, it was too late for the Custom-house and medical officers to inspect us; we therefore had to lay to, and only moved up to the wharf about 8 o'clock the next morning. We were greeted by a most kind letter of welcome, and the first thing we saw as we got to the dock was the Navy Yard Tug with the Commodore and