

Ranch life in California. Extracted from the home correspondence of E.M.H

Frontispiece Our Ranch

RANCH LIFE

IN CALIFORNIA.

EXTRACTED

FROM THE HOME CORRESPONDENCE OF

E. M. H.

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PREFACE.

A FEW words as to the writers of these letters. George and Evelyn, aged respectively twenty-six and twenty-one, were married in the spring of 1885, and, accompanied by George's two brothers, Laurence and Bob, and a friend, H. B., they left this country for California, to seek there, if not fortune, at least a possibility of making an honest livelihood. The three brothers had all been at Stock Exchange work, and had had no experience of any out-door labour; but they were athletic and industrious. The young wife was simply a well-educated lady, with iv only the technical knowledge she gained by going into her mother's kitchen a few times to be shown how to make bread and to roast meat. These letters may be found interesting as showing how a good general education enables a girl to readily comprehend and practise those domestic duties which an ill-educated servant seems to find so extremely difficult.

It should be understood also that, after defraying the cost of their journey, their remaining capital amounted to about £500; just enough to buy their little piece of land, build their house, and stock their farm with horses, cow, and implements. Independently of what they might make by their labour, the party between them could only count upon about £100 a year to live on.

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RANCH LIFE IN CALIFORNIA. ON BOARD S.S. *Britannic*. April 22nd.

So far we have had a good passage. H— B— and I have been very bad for thirty-six hours, but are now able to enjoy ourselves. We could do it better if it were not so fearfully cold; for it is only 5 degrees above freezing, so sitting out on deck, in a bitter wind, is nearly impossible. The food is excellent, and when we were ill, the deck steward brought us our food on deck, chicken-broth and beef-tea. There are not 2 very many passengers with us. One of them, a Californian, has given us very useful information and advice. He has been warning the boys against being ruined with the gold-fever, and also warning us against Antelope Valley. He says it is rather like the Desert of Sahara, and a regular mining district. He recommends us to go farther north, to the foot hills; but we think we shall go to San Francisco, and stay there in order to consult the Consul and agents, and answer advertisements, before we settle on our land. George and Laurence would go and see the

places whilst the rest of us stayed in the city. This gentleman is going to give us introductions, and has taken quite an interest in us, and been most kind.

I had a hot sea-bath this morning, the first since I have been on board, as hitherto it has been too rough to career the whole length of the ship in hope of finding the bath-room vacant; it was delightful, as the difficulties of washing in our cabin are awful

The stewardess is very obliging, and brings 3 me tea in bed every morning. We are generally awoke by the Irish emigrants dancing jigs just over our heads; and as we don't breakfast till 8.30, the tea is acceptable. Those wretched steerage passengers! I do pity them. Every time it's at all rough, the sea dashes right over the bows, and they must be wet through from morning to night. If ever I cross this ocean again, it shall be in summer. Even in the saloon one cannot get warm. George's nose looks as if he had been ascending the Matterhorn! Our friend from San Francisco has been telling us the price of living there. Everything except servants seems very cheap. Meat is 6d. or 7d. a pound; salmon 1d. in the season, and 2 1/2d. out; fruit and vegetables dirt cheap. He says that cheap furniture is very pretty; suites of bedroom furniture, including double bed and spring mattress, can be had from £5 to £9, made of enamelled red wood.

I wish we could have begun our new life at once. This inactivity, with nothing to do but think, makes us dreadfully home-sick.

4

I am so afraid that I shall get that American sing-song voice. I have caught myself doing it once or twice already. It is fearfully catching.

NEW YORK, April 26th.

WE have finished the sea part of our journey in safety, I am thankful to say. We are staying at a cheap hotel, but it is very nice. We have two large rooms—the boys' with three beds in it—for a dollar a night each room. Our room is very large, and most luxurious after the cabin which we have had to inhabit for the last ten days. We had the most perfect day for arriving at New York, as hot

and sunny as if it were July. The entrance to the harbour is so pretty; wooded hills on each side, with comfortable gentlemen's houses peeping out here and there, very different 5 to the dirt and the warehouses up the Thames. We steamed a long way in sight of land before we got to the harbour, and felt it quite a relief to have something to look at after all those days of sea and sky alone. In one town on the shore there was an enormous elephant, taller than any of the houses, and we were told that it is a restaurant, with lots of rooms inside it. There is a large feeding place in the trunk of the creature. It looked most absurd.

When we got just into the harbour, a tender came alongside, bringing the Custom-house officers, and we all had to go into the saloon and declare our goods. After that, we and our luggage were all put on board the tender, while the *Britannic* steamed into dock with the 800 steerage passengers. They ran the luggage down a slippery board from the steamer to the tender in the wildest way. One small tin box was sent down, and, before the men at the bottom could clear it away, a huge box like ours flew down and reduced the small tin one to a pancake. Our arks all came safely, though they look very 6 disreputable already. When we got off the tender, we were put into a huge hall with an iron roof, which made it feel like a Turkish bath, and there for three mortal hours we coped with the luggage.

Every blessed thing was opened and ran-sacked! Luckily we had a charming young man to do it; but when he found our spoons and forks, he had to find another official to examine them; and then we were trotted off to a third, to do some swears and pay some duty. They priced the things low, so the duty didn't come to much. I had to pay 30s. on my saddle. Altogether, we only paid £4 duty between the five of us. You can imagine how dead I was after all that standing about in the heat, and repacking the things; and then, to my consternation, we found the barrel of china had been forgotten, and that had to be opened; but the head official saw my misery, and passed it all right without having it unpacked.

Mr. D—, our good friend, waited for us all that time, and got us a fly cheap, and saw us 7 comfortably installed before he went to his own dinner. It's quite extraordinary how kind he has been. To-morrow we must bargain about our railway. There are several routes, and one has to

bargain for everything in this country. Our cabby yesterday came down from three dollars to one! It feels like a foreign place here. The horses have bells, and all the shops are open, though it's Sunday.

IN THE CARS *en route* TO CHICAGO. April 28th.

WE had a very tiring day yesterday fussing over the railway fares. Of course we walked over Brooklyn Bridge, and the city looks very fine from there; but it is not to be compared to 8 London. The noise in the streets is something awful. They are covered with tram-car lines four abreast, and then the elevated railway up above adds to the din, and must be very obnoxious to the people who live in the main streets, as it is just on a level with their bed-room windows. We called on Mr. D—, and were entertained by his housekeeper till he came in. She said the peaches from California were “real elegant”! He gave me an American drink which was truly delicious: cream and soda-water flavoured with maple syrup and vanilla—iced, of course; everything is iced.

The common people all wear those absurdly baggy blue trousers like they do in France and Germany. The railway, too, goes straight through the streets without any sort of paling or platforms. In fact, I feel as if I were in Cologne again. Food in New York, and also on board the cars, is awfully dear. They charge 5d. for a very small glass of milk, and everything else in proportion, so we have to eat as economically as possible. I believe we can go to the Emigrants' 9 Restaurant when the train stops, and get fed more cheaply. Our luggage between New York and Omaha cost £5 extra. George and I are in the Pullman, and the boys in a first-class carriage. There are double windows to keep in the heat, and the hot pipes are under the seats; so we feel as if we were sitting on the kitchen stove, and I am very thankful for a cool dress to wear. We are just having a sort of accident. The train has been going backwards and forwards with most awful jerks. The engine cannot pull us up a hill, and, after crawling up a little way, we are running quickly down again. It is pouring with rain, and distracted officials race up and down the line! I wonder they don't request us all to get out and walk. After three awful struggles, we have crawled to the top! In consequence of this delay, we were only allowed twenty minutes for our lunch. The restaurant was a huge way off, but we raced to it and fell to. Soup, chicken, beef, two sorts of pudding, tea, and we hurried back to the train just as it

was starting, with bread and apples in our 10 hands. They took us for a theatrical troupe! and let us off 1 1/2 dols. I think we had better keep up that pleasant delusion.

April 29th.

INSTEAD of arriving at Chicago at 8 A.M., we are four hours late. We ran over a cow in the night, and it got so mixed up between two carriages that it took that time to get it out. I slept soundly and knew nothing of what was occurring.

May 1st.

WE missed our train at Chicago and had to wait there for eight hours. We walked about 11 the place and to Lake Michigan; but the town was uninteresting and the lake ugly, so we were awfully bored and truly glad to get into our sleeping-car and go to bed. The car was very full, but we were comfortable. The next day our engine broke down and another had to be telegraphed for, so that made a delay of an hour, and we arrived at Omaha very late, and had a shocking struggle to get to our other train in time; in consequence of which they wouldn't let us send our luggage by freight, and we had to pay £16 extra for it. I do think, considering the price they make us pay for it, they might take a little care of the boxes. They just fling them off the top of the trucks, and they are already nearly knocked to pieces. The railway journey is not nearly so monotonous as the steamer, but I am getting more tired every day. Eight nights in the train is rather terrible. Today we are crossing the prairies and the great cattle ranches. They look very dreary, with nothing but yellowy grass for miles, and the few houses here and there seem so lonely. As for the cattle, they are truly contemptible, so small, and their bones nearly through their skins. I hope *our* cows won't be such pitiable objects.

American women seem to be much more looked after than English; even a porter who was carrying our small luggage, would not hear of my carrying my own hand-bag; in fact he was so shocked, that one of the boys had to relieve me of it, as the porter was loaded with as much as he could manage.

BETWEEN OGDEN AND SAN FRANCISCO. May 3rd.

THIS journey seems interminable. It is horrible, not being able to undress for eight or nine days. They heat the cars to such an extent, that 13 it makes me feel quite sick, notwithstanding that we have all the windows in our section open. The scenery, too, over the prairies is so uninteresting. I did expect at this time of year it would be green and fresh, but it is all dried up and brown.

After we passed Cheyenne we saw some snow mountains, and we were ourselves at an elevation of 8,235 feet. We had a gorgeous sunset over the hills, which were nearly covered with snow; it seemed so odd, as it was quite warm and we were all leaning out of window. The snow came up to the railway track. Next morning we woke in a hideous yellow desert, the only vegetation being a small grey shrub. We breakfasted at Desert House, Green River, and lunched at Evanston. After lunch we came to some very grand scenery, plenty of snow mountains and huge red rocks of most peculiar shapes. The railway curved about between the hills, and we saw some very grand gorges; but, although much grander, I don't think the Rockies are to be compared to the Alps. There is such a lack 14 of water and of vegetation. We came through a wonderful gorge—canon they call it—with a river rushing along the bottom, and rocks towering up on each side, that reminded me of that gorge we walked up the evening before we crossed the Gemmi. After the gorge we came into a lovely fertile valley, with plenty of willows and poplars in it, and nice cozy-looking villages about. But the thermometer went down to 78 below freezing last winter, which is a drawback to a residence there. We changed cars at Ogden, and it was nearly dark when we passed Great Salt Lake. Since then, everlasting desert, with a few hills, the size of mole-hills, scattered about. Imagine nine days of railway travelling straight off. I can't tell you how thankful I shall be to get to San Francisco and rest my weary head, while George and Laurence go about to choose our future home. I feel so piggish, too, not having undressed for a week.

I have left this letter to finish this evening. It has been piping hot all day; no air to be had. 15 We stayed for two hours at a little wayside place, and, after a meal, we walked about and examined the different ways of building houses. As soon as the train stops at a station, crowds of pigs rush out to forage and pick up the bits that are thrown out. They are quite furry and have huge great ears; most of them are white and curly.

WINNEMACCA, 463 miles from San Francisco. May 4th.

We have been stopping at the above station for nearly four hours, and, after amusing ourselves and having luncheon, we have returned to our car and are trying to write letters. The thermometer is at 78 in the shade. We have strolled about the town, which is quite a large one: 700 inhabitants, and several stores. As 16 they supply the ranches 200 miles off, they naturally require a good supply. Fancy having to drive your team 200 miles to get your groceries, &c.! One of the ranches at that distance from the town has 175 men on it doing the work. We also did what will shock you terribly! At the end of the town we crossed a river, and saw some boys bathing; so, as George and I were alone, we set off triumphantly down the stream till we got to a quiet spot, with only cows to look at us, and then we indulged in a most lovely swim. The river was very swift, and quite out of our depths, even close to the bank, so it was very difficult to get out when once in. We all feel the heat dreadfully in our thick clothes, and our bath was truly refreshing. If we had not been so afraid of anyone coming, we might have remained in the water for an hour, it was so warm; but we were in a mortal fright of being caught. I have enjoyed myself more this morning than I have since we started! There are quite tall poplars in the town, which were only 17 planted last year, all the things grow so quickly here; but there are no other kinds of trees except these. Among the low shrubs near the river there were quantities of little animals running about, with black and white striped backs and tails like squirrels', about the size of large rats, and with very pretty little faces.

The boys got a bath, too, but they took it too near the town, and were reprimanded and threatened with prison. A man asked them if they were New Yorkers, and, on their telling him they were English, he would hardly believe them, as he said they talked too well for English, who "all talk with a 'haitch' and a 'ho' and a 'he.'" He was kind enough to tell the boys they did not talk badly! We had a very good lunch for 25 cents (1s.) a head: soup, two meats, potatoes, beans, cabbage and beet-root, pudding, and apple-tart. Everyone has separate little dishes for their vegetables, so one has one's big meat-plate in front of one, and a series of little oval dishes arranged all round; as a rule we have thirty dishes on the table at once. 18 There seems to be any amount of ice in these parts. In

none of our English villages could you get iced water like we do here. This place is in a valley, so like the Rhone valley, with just the same breeze blowing in the middle of the day only.

An Indian has just passed, with his face painted in bright red stripes; his hair is quite long. The women are the most repulsive-looking objects, though they are clean and nicely-dressed. There are about fifty going off by train from here. Their wigwams are close to the station; but we did not visit them, as we were told they beg so inordinately. They are not allowed to come inside the cars, even with the emigrants, but they ride on the top.

We have come here to the land of Chinamen servants, and it is extraordinary what an aversion the Americans have to them; they will hardly go to a restaurant where they are served by them.

We have had strawberries several times; they come up from Southern California, and are very nice. The trains go so very slowly. We stop as much as we go; and it is a great nuisance when we stop in the night, because of all the people snoring. There is one man in a berth near ours who snores like a grampus. There is no stopping him, and he annoys us horribly.

May 5th.

TO-DAY we reached some real Swiss scenery: fir-trees going up to the snow-level, a lovely river rushing down the valley and turning saw-mills. Everyone seems occupied with the timber trade. We all sit on the steps outside the cars, so we get a good view of the scenery, and directly the train stops we all swarm out. Even if the train goes on, it goes so slowly that it is quite easy to jump in again. Directly we passed 20 into California, the scenery became delightful. We might be in Switzerland; there is just the same scent of the pine-trees, and it is altogether lovely. We are between 7,000 and 8,000 feet high already. They say we are travelling at the best time of year, for a month or so later the dust is so dreadful that the windows have to be kept shut. They expect us to get up early, for the train stops for breakfast at 5.30 or 6 o'clock. We get out and fetch our coffee and bread and have our meal in the car.

PALACE HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO, May 7th.

HERE we are, in the lap of luxury. I never was in such a splendid and enormous hotel in my life. George and I have a large bedroom, 21 with bath-room and lavatory attached, and hot and cold water laid on. They always have the washing-places outside the room. The waiters are all blackies; they look so funny, with their white shirt-fronts and tail-coats.

The last day on the cars was really enjoyable, as we passed through gorgeous scenery. I cannot imagine how they ever built the line. It was up above the snow level, and we passed for forty miles under snow-sheds. They were made of timber, so we could see through the cracks, but it was enraging to get mere glimpses of a beautiful blue lake and snow-mountains. The noise, too, as we went through them was deafening. At the summit there was a little village, at which we stopped. It must be unpleasant to live where there is snow on the ground all the year round!

After we got down below the snow level we came out of the sheds into entrancing scenery. We had three engines on, as our train was very long, and the railway was most perilous, overhanging precipices, and going over bridges of 22 timber which are not filled up at all, so you look down through the woodwork to the bottom of the ravine. I never saw such appalling places! About sunset we stopped at a little village among the hills, and went out for a stroll. The flowers were lovely, the most brilliant yellow roses growing wild, and gigantic geraniums growing over the houses. All day I sat on the step of our car, and I looked like a sweep by the evening. The last night was wretched, for the car in front of us lost an axle, and we were nearly jolted off the line for twenty miles.

When we reached this place, we had a bother with the luggage, and my box, on which I relied for clean clothes, did not turn up at the hotel till 4 o'clock, and, as I had got to the hotel by 10 A.M., I was rather hungry by that time. I had my bath at once, as I expected my box directly, and I could not bring myself to put my clean body into my filthy clothes which I had been wearing for ten days. There is a large courtyard to the hotel, paved with white marble, and we sit there in great rockers. We have 23 fruit at every meal; breakfast is always begun with a huge plate of strawberries and cream. The cherries are enormous, and so is asparagus and other vegetables. We have called on

Mr. Stanley, the Consul, and he says the Immigration Society is quite to be relied on, so I suppose George will go and see some of the land they advise.

[*Note by Editor.*

Here shall be interpolated parts of letters about the journey that were received much later. Surprise was expressed by friends at home at the extraordinary length of time the journey had taken, and questions were asked which produced the following replies.]

24

AFTER Omaha, we went by emigrant-car, which, though not bad for the men, was awful for a lady. For the first three days there was only one other woman in the car, and she quite a common person. Of course the men smoked all the way, and, as they were quite common lumbermen and miners, they smoked the most filthy stuff. They were all exceedingly nice and polite to me, which was a great relief, as they looked so very rough. Our rugs and my little pillow were very handy, as the seats were only plain wood. The car is made on the same plan as the Pullman which George and I came in as far as Omaha, so I was able to lie down most of the time. The washing accommodation, &c. was dreadful. Now you understand why my letters at first were rather doleful. I did not intend to tell you about it; I thought it would worry you; but it is past and over now, and I sincerely hope never to go through anything so unpleasant again.

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Letter from GEORGE on same subject.

YOU ask Evelyn to tell you about the journey. When we got to New York we went to all the different offices to see how cheaply they would take us across to San Francisco. The Pennsylvania Company offered to do it for 122 dollars each, first class; the New York Central for 103 dollars; and the Erie for 111 dollars. This we learnt from the agents, as they get your tickets cheaper than you can get them from the Company direct. One of the agents advised us to go first class to Omaha and emigrant car on. He said it was quite comfortable, and lots of American ladies did it; so, after a long consultation, we decided on that way, and bought our tickets, first class to Omaha and emigrant car

on, for 60 dollars each, which was, of course, very economical. As we were to have several hours at Omaha, we thought we could inspect the car, and, if we didn't like the look of it, change our tickets for first. However, we got to Omaha so late that the other train had been waiting twenty minutes for us, so we were hurried into our car and had no time to change. It was not so nice as we had been led to expect; so I saw the conductor, and asked if Evelyn and I might change into first class, but he refused unless we paid full price all the way from New York. Considering we had come half way, we thought we could not possibly agree to being swindled like that, so we decided to go on as we were; but it was a trial for Evelyn. The boys preferred it to first class without Pullman, because they could sleep so comfortably. If ever you come out, you could get a ticket *viâ* the Niagara Falls for about 120 dollars first class, then the Pullman car will be about 25 dollars, and food 2 dollars a day, so the journey can be done for about £35.

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Letters from EVELYN continued.

STOCKTON STREET HOUSE, May 8th.

THIS afternoon George and Lawrence started off to see the Lake County. They have met with a very nice Englishman, who is going to put them up while they look out for land and will help them choose. We shall try and get some Government land, "homestead" land, for nothing. Bob, H. B—, and I have come here, as it is less expensive than a hotel. It is a sort of hotel, only they expect one to go out to get all meals except breakfast. My room is 50 cents a night: it is small, but quite clean and comfortable. The washing here is expensive. A Chinaman charges 10 cents (5d.) a-piece for everything except handkerchiefs, and a white washerman charges just double. Naturally, after three weeks' travelling, we have an awful accumulation of dirty clothes to be washed. One great nuisance here is that the servants are much too grand to clean one's boots. The boys get theirs done in the street. The money here is so horribly big. Twenty-dollar gold pieces are like five-shilling pieces, only twice as thick. Food seems cheap here: we had dinner at a restaurant, and I had for 20 cents (10d.) a huge plate of roast beef, twice as much as I could eat, potatoes, asparagus, a cup of coffee, and bread and butter *ad libitum*. For 10 cents you can have almost more strawberries and cream

than you can eat at a sitting! Mrs. Stanley, the Consul's wife, has called upon me, and they have asked me to go and stay at their country place, about fifteen miles off, from Tuesday till Saturday. It will be very nice for me, as it is such a bore here, having no sitting room, and having to go out for meals. It is really very kind of them. Mr. Stanley is going to drive me down. They say Lake County is ninety miles north of San Francisco, and as fertile as it is lovely. I sincerely hope we shall be able to settle down there.

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May 9th.

THIS afternoon we made a little excursion to see the Seal Rocks. First we went in the cars: they go without horses, but are hitched up to an endless rope, which revolves in a groove between the rails. We went four miles for 2 1/2d. each. They tear up the hills and down again at an appalling speed. I forgot to tell you what steep hills this town is built on. The pavements are boards, and in one street extra boards have to be nailed across to prevent passengers slipping, just like a gangway on to a steamer. When we left the cars, we went in a train out to the Rocks. It looked very like Ilfracombe; and we sat on some rocks in a little sandy bay for a long time watching the waves roll in, and could hardly realise it was the Pacific and that we were so far from home. We saw the seals very well from the cliff, about 100 yards from the nearest rocks. There were swarms of them crawling all over the rocks; it was a most curious sight, but they smelt horribly and kept up an incessant barking. They took such splendid headers into the water. They are of a bright yellowy brown colour.

SAN RAFAEL, May 13th.

I AM now staying with Mr. and Mrs. Stanley in a perfect little Paradise. The house is quite a small wooden one and only plainly furnished, but exceedingly comfortable. It has a verandah all round, covered with delicious honeysuckle, which scents the whole house and garden. From my window I have a lovely view up and down the valley; the hills are covered with trees of every variety of green from the palest early spring green to the dark shade of the fir trees. There are eucalyptus trees all along the roads, and there are several houses to be seen nestling amongst the trees on the hills.

The people in this valley are mostly English. There are quantities of humming-birds buzzing about, apparently gathering honey out of the flowers with their long beaks. It's most extraordinary how they manage to stand still in the air, and then, when they have made up their minds, make a dart into some bush. The honeysuckle here grows into a sort of hedge, great thick bushes of it, and the humming-birds are always dipping their beaks into the flowers and chirping so funnily. The flowers are lovely, and the roses grow in such profusion, the place is quite a paradise of Nature. If only one had a small income and could live out in one of these valleys life would indeed be charming. The gorges, "gulches" as they call them here, are simply lovely, very precipitous, and the trees growing among the rocks. I so wish you could be here to see it, you would revel in it; and the air, too, is so light and refreshing, just like it is in Switzerland. It is not at all hot, and there is a pleasant breeze blowing. They say it is the same all the year round.

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The boys came with me yesterday to luncheon; we crossed the bay in a steamer, and came here by train; the railway runs through the valley. George writes that he has seen an eighty-acre farm to be had for 1,000 dollars. It has a house on it, and five or six springs of water, with pipes laid on, and it adjoins 160 acres of Government land, which one of the party could take up. There is also a piece of Government land, 320 acres, to be had. They are going to inspect them both. I never knew anything like the cool way people shoot each other in the public streets at San Francisco: in the last few days since we have been there, there have been two murders in the streets close by us. It is very dangerous, because they are so very likely to shoot the wrong person. Imagine our having murders committed in Regent Street in broad daylight! When they have nothing to do, the men seem to go out shooting each other for fun!

I am afraid this idle time is a bad preparation for the hard work in prospect; for there is 33 nothing to do, and the people here pretend they are living in the tropics and can't venture out till 4 o'clock. I call it quite cool. It's much hotter up in Napa Valley, I believe, as there they get no sea breezes. The roads are capital, and lots of people ride bicycles.

It is so odd being eight hours behind you; in the afternoon papers we read the speeches that are made the same evening in the House of Commons, so it seems as if we read the speeches several hours before they are made.

Last Monday I went to lunch with the wife of Mr. D—, who was so kind to us at New York, and she took me to China Town. Everything is very respectable above ground; but they have three stories underneath, where they live in the most utter filth. Mrs. D— went once with a policeman, and says she never saw such horrors. We looked at their shops and went into their Joss House, where they pray to their repulsive old idol. It was a wonderful place, with 34 exquisite gold carvings, incense burning, and peacocks' feathers arranged in patterns.

May 15th.

MR. STANLEY has taken me to-day for a little excursion up among the hills. The road was steeper than the Lynton one and full of rocks and ruts; I had to hold on tight. Our destination was the most perfect little lake surrounded with hills wooded to the very top. Mr. Stanley fished, but as it was windy he only caught eight or nine trout. The red and the bright blue dragon-flies skimming over the water were exquisite. We came back by a better road; part of the way ran along the top of a ridge, and we looked down into a deep valley on each side, such delicious fertile valleys, with clear streams running through them.

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STOCKTON ST. HOUSE, May 17th.

THIS is our last day in San Francisco. We have received our marching orders and are to start to-morrow for Lower Lake. This is the name of a little town on Clear Lake. It's about ninety miles north from here. They have not yet fixed on the land, but they hope to get some five or six miles from the lake. George and Laurence are with Mr. M—, an Englishman, who is teaching them all sorts of useful things.

BURNS VALLEY, LOWER LAKE, May 20th.

WE have fallen on our feet in this valley. We are among a large number, quite thirty 36 English ladies and gentlemen, all well connected. They are so kind to us. George and I are staying with a Mr. and Mrs. K—, who have asked us to stay for a month if we like, and the boys are dispersed among the bachelors of the colony. All the farms are within a few miles of each other. Laurence is staying with two brothers, public-school men and perfect gentlemen. Really, I think the life out here will be very jolly; and if we can settle near all these nice people, it will be charming.

I must tell you about the journey up here. We left San Francisco at 8 A.M., and after crossing the bay in the steam ferry, we came by railway to Calistoga, and from thence had to drive for six hours on the stage. You never saw such a ramshackle old vehicle in your life. It was a waggon with some sort of springs, I believe, and two seats, each large enough for two, into which were crammed six people. I never was so shaken in my life, for the road was awful; quite as precipitous as any in Switzerland, and rough 37 into the bargain. For six hours I held on like grim death to a post next to me, till my hand was cramped and stiff. We were flung up and down again like peas, and the dust was suffocating. Just before we reached Lower Lake we met George and Laurence, and then Bob and H— B— got down and went to stay with a brother of the man we are staying with, and we drove on to Lower Lake, where Mr. M— met us and drove us up here to the K—'s in his spring waggon. It is four miles and a half from the town. Mr. M— is the man who brought the boys here to see the place, and is such a kind, pleasant fellow. The K—s have two little boys, aged four and seven, and Mrs. K—'s sister lives with them to help. Of course they have no servants, no one has out here, and it is wonderful how hospitable they are when one considers they have to do all the work themselves.

It is extraordinary, too, how nicely the men keep their little houses; they are so pretty and so tidy. They manage to cook quite good little 38 dinners, and make the bread and do everything for themselves.

The house is made of rough wood, plain boards with narrow ones nailed over the cracks to keep out the wind. It is just the same inside as out. There are two sitting-rooms, three bedrooms, and a kitchen, and two "cabins" out of doors, which are occupied by Miss May (Mrs. K—'s sister) and her brother. There are also barns and stables, &c., quite close. It is beautifully neat, with lots of pretty things and pictures about. One room is very cosy. There is a verandah all round the house, which is pleasant to sit in, and when the garden is grown up, it will be lovely.

The climate is perfect; hot, but with a fresh breeze, and the nights always cold.

There are a great many young bachelors about, farming on their own account, and they seem to be always "dropping in" at one another's houses. Yesterday, after luncheon, we walked to Mr. S—'s and found half-a-dozen men, who had "dropped in." All the men seem 39 about six feet three inches high, and wear top boots, a kind of dark blue linen trousers, little striped cotton shirts, instead of a coat, over their proper shirts, and large flappy felt hats They look queer, but comfortable, and everybody is *so* shabby.

Yesterday we killed a large snake on the verandah, quite a harmless one; but they all say there are rattle-snakes about. I have not seen one yet; they are very slow, luckily, so one has time to run away. The harmless ones look very squirmy; some of them are three or four feet long.

H. B— and I have already begun farming on our own accounts, for we have turned our bodies into "chamois" pastures! I was simply devoured on the stage coach.

There is no grass hay here, which seems very odd; it is wheat or barley or oats hay, cut when it is quite green. They very rarely let their grain ripen. It is being cut now, and I am thankful to say this sort doesn't give me hay fever.

40

Our party and five other men are at this moment chasing a few sheep all over the fields, but hitherto the sheep elude all their vain endeavours, and don't seem to want to be shorn.

We breakfast at 7 and dine at 12, and have supper at 6. The water is drawn out of the well by a mule, which is always going round and round in the most patient way.

May 21st.

YESTERDAY we went up to see a farm of 160 acres, which is for sale; and after tramping up and down hill in the sun, we went to dinner with two young men, who have a capital house, with such an exquisite view of the lake and the mountain on the other side, which is so like Pilatus, only not quite so big; it always is the 41 loveliest purple colour. The two young men gave us a very nice lunch and delicious bread; they must be quite good cooks.

May 22nd.

I HAVE been doing some cooking to-day, and also starching and ironing. The washing is awfully expensive, and I don't expect we shall be able to afford to send anything out excepting the large things. They never iron their sheets here and no one seems to possess a mangle.

I have milked the cow to-day all right; yesterday I failed ignominiously. She is so dreadfully nervous, the least thing frightens her and makes her jump and nearly kick the pail over.

42

Letter from George. May 23rd.

I HAVE been waiting to write till we could tell you that we had fixed on a place, but we have not decided on anything yet. I am afraid we shall not get any Government land, as all the land in this immediate neighbourhood that is worth anything has been taken up. However, I sincerely hope we shall be able to buy land here, as everybody is so extremely kind and nice, and it will be so jolly for Evelyn if she can be near these English ladies. We have seen some very good farms, but our resources are so limited that we have not been able to afford them. We saw a splendid bit of land yesterday of 100 acres, with nearly a mile on the shore of the lake. The owner wants about £1,000 for it. He would take £200 down and leave the rest on interest at 6 per cent. for five years;

but it would leave us too little capital to work with, so we had to 43 decide against it. To-day we are going to be drive round the neighbourhood to see some more places. Although we are all in a hurry to start as soon as possible in our work, still we are advised not to be in too great a hurry. Everything in this colony is far nicer than either of us expected.

Letters from EVELYN continued. May 27th.

I DROVE into town yesterday for the letters. You would be amused at what they call "town." It consists of a very broad street, in which are two stores, the post office, the hotel, a tiny Roman Catholic chapel, and a Methodist one, with a few houses scattered about. The stores are such confusing places. They sell everything, 44 and they keep everything mixed up. I drove Miss May in Mr. M—'s cart, and we went on past the town to the market gardener's, Peter de Lucci. Isn't that an aristocratic name! You would not appreciate being driven by me on these roads. On our way to town, Piper the horse (a regular elephant and used to ploughing) went very deliberately, but, coming home, he nearly pulled my arms out, as the go-cart, with only us in it, was so light, and he wanted to tear down the hills full tilt. It was rather hard work holding in such a beast in the middle of the day, with the thermometer nearer 90 than 80. It is such a comfort that the nights are so cool, and the large verandahs keep the houses at a pleasant temperature. The principal plague is that of flies. The kitchen walls are black with them; but we have no mosquitoes. On Sunday evening we had about twenty English here, and, as it was the Queen's birthday, we all sang "God Save the Queen." I wonder if she would have been edified if she could have seen us all, in this little wooden house, singing away so heartily.

45

It is very disappointing to find that none of the Government land is worth having: it is all so covered with brushwood that it would cost nearly 40 dollars an acre to clear it. Still, with great care, I think we shall make enough to live on for the next few years, till the grapes and other fruits begin to pay.

No English servant could be got to do the work that these English ladies do. They begin at 5 or 6 in the morning and go on at it all day. Excepting for a stroll in the evening, they very rarely go

out anywhere at all. It strikes me they work much harder than the men, who are continually sitting down in the shade for a gossip, while the poor women go on at it from the moment they get up till they go to bed. You see there is so much more must be done than at home. For instance, if you want water, you must either get the mule harnessed to the windlass of the well or else turn it yourself, and then bring the buckets of water into the house. Children get dreadfully spoiled here, 46 because they are always about and must be kept quiet somehow.

The rabbits here are called "cotton-tails," and the hares "jack-rabbits." They eat up everything green in the most shocking way; the fences to the vineyards have to be made "rabbit proof" to prevent the little beasts getting in; and the worst of it is we can't eat them, for they are covered with sores, mange or something of the sort.

I must tell you of a clever dodge for cleaning knives which I have learnt here. Scrape a bath-brick, and then rub the sand on to the knives with a raw potato. The moisture of the potato makes the knives beautifully clean, and it is very little trouble.

You cannot think what a treat the letters are; ask everyone to write to me. If one man goes into town he generally brings out letters for all the colony, and takes them round to the different houses.

I am so glad we didn't go South, as the lack 47 of water there is terrible. In Los Angeles it is bought by the square inch! and the weather is cool here to what it is there; but, to my mind, it is more than hot enough here. It seems so odd to have such continued fine weather and blazing sunshine, and it will probably go on like this till November, by which time I trust we shall be settled in a house of our own.

June 1st.

OUR plans are a little more settled, for the boys have decided to make an offer for a farm of eighty acres close by here, which is for sale. The land is said to be valuable grape land; but some of it will have to be cleared first, which, I am afraid, will be very hard work. Of course the well has to be dug and the house built first of all.

For the next month we are all going to Mr. White's. There are two brothers, one of whom is going away for a month, and we are to feed the other in his absence and stay in their house: cheap rent, isn't it? And we shall have all the milk, eggs, and butter off the farm. I think it's a capital plan, as I shall get into the way of cooking and doing household work generally, and shall have Mr. White to help me. I daresay our own house will be ready in about a month.

The heat is very trying, 108 in the shade. I went down yesterday for a bathe in the lake, and at 5.30 in the evening the glass was at 94 degrees and the water quite warm. We had a large picnic on Saturday, and for two days before were busy cooking; an undesirable amusement, I can assure you, what with the heat and the flies. We were a party of forty-two at the picnic, including children, and all were English excepting two American wives of Englishmen. It seemed odd to be here with such a tribe of English ladies and gentlemen, all so nice and pleasant. 49 We started at 8 A.M. in waggons of all sorts. A waggon here is not necessarily the great heavy thing one associates with the word at home, but a light cart with four wheels, holding two people in front and two behind. On this occasion there were vehicles of all sorts, even the stage-coach with a team of four horses. Mr. M. K—drove me; he is a splendid whip, and took us along at a fine rate, notwithstanding the roughness and steepness of the roads. Behind sat George and Mr. F—. Odd, wasn't it, for two sons of K. C. B.s to be sitting side by side in a cart in this distant part of the world! We reached our destination, Long Valley, at 10, and formed our encampment in a shady place by the side of the creek. The creek was wonderfully cool and clear, and had green trees and shrubs and grass growing along its banks. A delightful contrast to the dried-up appearance of everything near us, for it is the hottest and driest year anyone remembers. We tried to get a bath, but the water was so icy cold that we had to content ourselves with paddling. The land we were 50 on belongs to a man who owns a large dairy farm. We went into his milk-houses, &c. He keeps them cool by having running water through them; so we had to hop about on pieces of board. His churn goes by water-power. We saw the milking going on; there were about seventy cows and about twenty little calves. These were all shut up in a house by themselves, and when the cow was ready the milkman came and fetched its calf. It was very clever of him to know them apart, for they all seemed the same age. The drive back was delicious

in the cool of the evening, except that the darkness comes on so suddenly, and it feels dangerous to drive in the dark.

51

June 4th.

TO-MORROW we go to Mr. White's, and my work will really begin. It will be such a convenience staying there, as it is close to our land and to the place we think of building on, if we can find water there, which is the chief concern.

There is an exquisite view of the lake, and the mountains beyond, from the spot.

The climate here is a regular swindle! It is pouring with rain, and for two days has been so cold that we have huddled over fires. The early mornings are always cold, which makes it doubly atrocious to get up so early. I shall have to turn out at 5.30 or 6 to get breakfast for these hungry men. They all eat mush for breakfast, the same as our porridge. We have bought some stores and furniture to begin housekeeping with. We paid 4d. a lb. for pounded white sugar (moist is cheaper, but it requires chopping up with a hatchet); 6 dollars for a barrel of flour containing 200 lbs.; 8 dollars for a set of springs for our bed, and 5 dollars for a wool 52 mattress. The single-bed mattresses for the boys were 3 dollars 50 cents each.

We are all engrossed in drawing plans for our house, which is not so easy to do when you are not able to have any passages, and all the rooms must open out of one another.

The rain is a blessing to put out the fire in the pine mountains. It has been burning for about a week, and the smoke extends for miles and miles, covering the hills like a huge cloud. An enormous amount of timber must have been consumed by it.

We shall be glad of any newspapers, but letters are the greatest consolation. Do write every week and ask everyone to write often. Don't send the *Sporting Times*, there is a glut in the market of that!

53

Letter from GEORGE.

WE have bought a farm at last, about half a mile from the K—s. Evelyn and I went up this morning and arranged about it. It consists of eighty acres, all on a gentle slope towards the lake, and is certainly the most lovely spot about here as far as the view goes. It is part of the farm of 160 acres belonging to Mr. White, so we shall have him for a near neighbour. We are to pay 1,200 dollars for it, 600 dollars down and 600 dollars in three years.

I am afraid making money here will be a longer process than we expected. Here as elsewhere, money makes money, and little can be done without capital; however, we must do our best, and as long as the money holds out we shall work entirely on our own farm, as, of course, every stroke of work done on it enhances the value of the place. We have been already acknowledged to be excellent workers; Laurence and I have done some ploughing, 54 harrowing, and cutting down trees. There are no improvements on the land we have bought, it is not even fenced, so that alone will run away with a lot of money. That man Kingsbury told us, before we came out, that there was no occasion to fence, as stock ranches were not allowed. That is all a lie, and extra good fencing is required if you grow vines, in order to keep the rabbits out, for they eat up every vestige of green that appears above the ground. Fencing eighty acres would cost about 750 dollars, so you see what a serious item it is. Of course, we shall only fence at first the part we plant with vines.

55

Letters from EVELYN continued. June 7th.

HERE we are at Mr. White's, and I have been housekeeping for two days now. We had a man to dinner to-day, so I was the only lady to six men.

Perhaps you will be interested to know that we had vegetable soup, which was rather too peppery, as the lid of the pepper box fell off just at the critical moment; then we had roast beef, a sort of joint I never saw before, so I cannot describe it. It was not difficult to cook. I simply put it in a tin in the oven with a pat of butter on its back; and when it was done, in about an hour and a half, I took it

out and poured a little hot water over it, which made the gravy. We also had potatoes and a sort of cream cake. Yesterday we had fried beefsteak and onions, and a pudding of corn starch.

I made a splendid batch of bread the day we came, eight good-sized loaves, and they are all 56 gone in two days! My bread is very good, which is rather a drawback as they eat so much more of it. Besides the bother of making bread so often, we have to make the yeast here about once a week. It's made of potatoes, hops, salt and sugar. One cupful of old yeast is put into it to start the new batch, which is then put away to rise in a large stone jar in a cool place.

We stayed a couple of days with the B—s before we came here, and they took us for a most lovely drive. In the midst of fine trees and beautiful scenery, we came upon the most desolate spot possible, a sort of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was the second largest quicksilver mine in the world; but it is hardly worked at all now, the price of quicksilver having gone down so much. The cabins were deserted, and it looked inexpressibly dreary.

We have just been setting three hens, one on six turkey's eggs and two on thirteen hen's eggs. I hope I shall rear them all right; but chickens 57 have awful vicissitudes in their little lives here. They are allowed to run about all loose in the farmyard, and sometimes the hogs eat them, and the hawks and skunks look after them, so they have a bad time generally. The skunks really are too disgusting. The Scotch terrier here ran after one about the same size as himself, and came back smelling so awfully that we had to shut up every door and window in the house to keep out the odour. This house is high up on a hill overlooking the valley, and yesterday I went down to Mrs. K—'s to get her sister, Miss May, to come and bathe with me in the lake. On my way back Mrs. K—gave me a sack of carrots, turnips, and onions. You would have been astonished if you could have seen me trudging up the hill, with my hair all flying loose in the wind, a huge hat on, and a sack on my back. I was pretty hot by the time I got back, and no cooler by the time I had lighted the stove. I had to get tea before the boys came back from town; also I had to chop some wood. I made “scrambled eggs” for tea, 58 by the recipe-book. I had not the ghost of an idea how it was going to turn out, but it was quite a success.

June 9th.

I HAVE been working hard the last two days washing and ironing; but the boys helped me a good deal, or I could never have got through such an accumulation: six dozen pocket-hand-kerchiefs, one dozen shirts, besides all sorts of other garments. There is a very fine wringer here which saves a lot of trouble. Yesterday I got up at 6 o'clock, made the bread, which had been put to rise over-night, made the breakfast and helped eat it, washed up, and all the morning was washing, or cooking the dinner, shelling peas and peeling potatoes. Luckily 59 the boys will eat milk-puddings. We had to go on washing after dinner till 3.30, when I tidied up and had a rest till after tea, when I swept out the sitting-room. To-day I have been ironing till my back aches horribly.

I have sent off to San Francisco for our dinner-service and glass. Five pounds, which in England would buy a lovely set, will here only buy the thickest white delf, which an English servant would turn up her nose at for kitchen use. I am so glad I brought a breakfast set with me, as the cups here are so clumsy, and half an inch thick.

June 12th.

OUR boxes have at last arrived, and are arranged all round Mr. White's verandah. 60 Some of them are rather smashed, and the handles are torn off. It is a mistake having handles to those chests. Strange to say, not a thing is broken in the china-barrel. I quite expected, after the way it had been thrown about, that everything would be reduced to dust. All honour to the man who packed it! I am so glad to get at my washing dresses and cooking-aprons.

Yesterday Miss May came up to teach me how to starch, which is a disgustingly difficult job. I had lots of collars and shirts to do. They are busy digging the well, which is over a splendid spring of water—for they have already come to water at six feet deep. They have a regular well-digger helping them, as it is very difficult to build a well quite straight.

The first load of lumber has arrived for the house, so things are beginning to look quite hopeful. We have engaged a carpenter to come for three weeks and build it, with the boys working under him. I will send you the plan when it is definitely arranged.

61

We have only one cow here, and she is nearly dry, so we are always being left destitute of butter, as we do not get enough in from town to last very long, and then have to content our-selves with treacle. It is so difficult to know what to cook when one has neither butter nor milk nor suet.

You would have been amused at my salad yesterday. I had a quarter of a cabbage left (they are so enormous that they will not get into any saucepan whole), so I chopped it up small, and made a dressing of eggs, mustard, sugar, salt and milk; there was neither oil nor vinegar. The boys ate it all up, and said what good salad it was. We have plenty of vegetables, and I experiment upon them. Beet-root is very good hot!

62

June 13th.

THE well is finished. It is ten feet deep and six feet across. The house is the next thing, and the carpenter says, if the boys work well, it will be done in a fortnight. I think it will be pretty comfortable; but we are only to have one sitting-room at present, and I am afraid it will be rather dreadful when they are all smoking of an evening. Our bedroom will be a gorgeous apartment, 12 ft. by 18 ft. We have so many pretty things, that I think we shall make it look very nice for a rough place.

The carpenter is to dine with us while the house is building, for which he will take two "bits" off his day's wages. Two "bits" is 25 cents: of course there is no such thing as *one* bit; but everyone talks of two, four, or six bits. It's very confusing.

I wish very much we could have brought E. F—* to help me. There is so much cooking 63 to do for six of us, and the house always wants cleaning, and I am very weary by the end of the day. I can

quite understand how all the ladies here seem to have had all the fun washed out of them. The men get much more variety, as they often work for one another, and then they get a good gossip.

A girl friend of the writer's.

We have had a very pleasant Sunday. I cook the dinner on Saturday, so take a holiday, and to-day we have had a jolly ride. The horses, you must understand, are cart horses, and my saddle-girths won't reach round the creature at the proper place, so we put the saddle very forward. How we wish you could come here. You would be surprised at the civilisation, after what one reads of life in the American cattle-ranches! Why, even the bachelor establishments have table napkins at dinner!

64

June 26th.

ISN't it enraging? The money we sent to San Francisco for our dinner service and glass has been stolen on the way. It was sent in greenbacks and not registered, so we have no redress. Yesterday I took a holiday. After washing up after dinner, I left the boys to get their own supper; but I cooked a huge pile of rock cakes, all of which they devoured. Then I went for a round of calls on Mr. White's horse, and finally stayed to supper at the K—s. They had friends, and we were quite a party in the evening, over twenty people, and we sang songs (they like George's and my singing so much), and were quite festive.

I am getting on with the work all right, but one cannot keep things very tidy in this house, there is no room to put away anything. I intend to keep my new abode beautifully clean, and not let the boys do any cooking in the 65 sacred precincts of my kitchen. Men always make slops when they cook. It was terribly hot on washing-day, but not so hot up here as down in the valley. Did you ever try to starch a shirt-front? It nearly drives me out of my mind, it is so hard to do. I can do the cooking better. We have to pay 4d. a pound for mutton, 6d. for beef, and the butcher comes once a week; but the worst of it is that the meat will not keep any time in this heat. I have found that little Kensington School of Cookery book very useful, because it is so simple. Mr. White has a packet of papers from Kensington, telling in the most minute way how to cook things. I wish you could send me some, particularly for puddings. There is no suet to be had, and very little dripping, as the meat is baked.

We buy lard in tins. They have mush and eggs for breakfast, meat and pudding for dinner, and eggs and cakes, or perhaps cold meat, for supper.

H. B— and I have been riding into town—whenever I say town it is Lower Lake I mean—to choose a stove, and, coming back, we saw 66 Rags, the dog, run after something; so H. B— and I promptly hurried our horses on, and, when we reached them, our noses instantly told us it was a skunk. The brute ran in amongst the horses' legs in an instant, and covered us with its filthy smelling stuff.

H. B— got awfully messed, and we rode off as hard as we could lick. The beast was very small, but some are as large as little bears. They will turn and attack a person sometimes. I never smelt anything so shocking in all my life. H. B— had to change and wash his clothes and hang them out.

I bought to-day a box of apricots to make jam of; it cost one dollar, and there are 25 lbs. in it. Last year they were a cent a pound. Blackberries are the most expensive fruit.

67

July 3rd.

THIS time last year we were all at Maidenhead together! I wonder if we shall ever have such a happy time again. It is very pleasant to look back upon in this hard-working life. To-day is the last day of the Henley Regatta, and don't I wish we were there! I have actually got some spare time to-day, as they have been so busy with the house that the cart has not been to town, and we are nearly out of provisions. The cow only gives two small cupfuls of milk a day, and we have had no butter, only treacle, which I do not find appetizing. The scum from the apricot jam was a pleasant change.

Next week I shall have another man to cook for, who is coming up to build the chimney. It's rather horrid having them to dine with us, particularly when they spit on the floor; but it will soon be over.

George and Laurence and Bob have done all the roofing; ten thousand little oblong bits of wood had to be nailed on with two nails apiece. 68 Meanwhile Christianson was making the window-frames. Working on the roof in the hot sun has upset them all rather in their digestions.

The thing I complain of most is my feet swelling so much with standing about. They feel as if I had chilblains all over without the irritation. I ought to have had shoes two sizes too large.

Our little chickens are so sweet. The hen we set on thirteen eggs has hatched thirteen chickens, such little pets. There are eighteen altogether. We feed them several times a day, and keep them carefully shut up. We think of buying an incubator, and doing a great deal of poultry farming. Generally about here the chickens run loose, feed themselves, and are devoured by pigs or hawks.

The floor of our new house is nicely planed, tongued, and grooved; and if only the workmen will refrain from chewing and spitting over it, it will look very nice.

View of Clear Lake and Konocti Mountain from our Ranch.

69

Letter, same date, from GEORGE.

WE hope to get into our house in about ten days. It will be about the largest house in the valley, and commands a fine view of the lake. The rooms are a good size, the sitting-room 18 ft. square, and the verandah 46 ft. long and 10 ft. wide. The whole house and verandah is roofed with "shingles" made of the celebrated Californian red wood, some of which is exhibited polished at the Kew Gardens. I daresay our roofing would be worth £100 in England: it cost £15 here. The pieces are about 18 in. long, and vary in width from 4 in. to 15 in. They are nailed on overlapping, and have the effect of tiling. It took us five days to do it; it has to be very carefully done, as each shingle has to be picked out so as to find one to exactly cover the cracks in the last row.

It has been a great advantage to us to find such a good water-supply. We shall have a 70 tank in the house, and connect it by a pipe with the well, so that we shall have water without the trouble of carrying it in in buckets.

Letters from EVELYN continued. July 8th.

THE old man who is come to build the chimney is very quiet and no trouble, and eats about as much as a sparrow. He asked Laurence if we “dressed for dinner!” as he had brought another pair of overalls. These are blue linen trousers like the Swiss wear. Wasn't it lovely!

I think it would be a capital idea to make a little book of our adventures. It would give a good idea to intending emigrants in our class of 71 life of what they will have to put up with. The emigrant car was the finest adventure; but George wouldn't let me tell you many queer details for fear of worrying you. I certainly was utterly miserable in it. I told Rose some of the funny things. The worst part of the life is what I never for a moment calculated on—its loneliness. Of course the boys, coming back after working and joking together all day, don't understand my being depressed, and think I am discontented. I must get a nice companionable dog like dear old Vixen. The dog here is very amusing; when it's an extra hot day he goes and sits in the pig's drinking trough, and lies there, with only his head out of the water, for hours. It has been fearfully hot lately. The glass was at 102 in my kitchen at 9 o'clock in the morning. The washing is the bane of my life: it is no joke in this hot weather.

They are thinking of planting olives, which pay well; but it will be four years before they bear. Anyhow, the first three or four years 72 must be very uphill work; but then we hope to get such substantial returns as will repay us for these years of waiting.

July 13th.

TO-DAY George and Bob have been to Sulphur Bank, and bought a cow. They drove her back the five miles, and the little calf as well. The cow's name is Becky, and she is very large, white in colour, and very tame and affable in her manners. I have persuaded George to let me do the milking. He thought I had enough to do already; but we have made a compromise, and I am to give up washing-up after supper.

73

Wednesday.

I HAD to leave off writing on Monday, so now I am able to tell you that Becky is a great success; she is very easy to milk, and I like doing it very much, only that the calf is such a little nuisance. It is supposed to have a third of the milk; but it will try to suck my hands while I am milking, and I have to beat it away all the time.

Did you know that calves were born with teeth? I did not. Becky is most quiet and gentle, and gives quantities of very rich milk. The calf is shut up all day in a pen away from the cow, who roams about as she pleases. When I milk her, we drive her into the pen, and when the performance is over we turn the calf out and leave the cow to her hay. After that is finished comes the tug of war. Nothing will induce the calf to go back, so we all five chase her about for perhaps half an hour before we can catch her. Last night George got hold of her ears, and H. B— of her tail, and, as they wouldn't leave 74 go, she tore off through the bushes and brambles, and dragged these unwilling wretches after her.

I had such screaming fun yesterday. The end of the verandah looks on to the “Corral,” divided from it by a good high fence. I was standing on the verandah, gazing at a lot of little black pigs guzzling beneath me, when suddenly the thought struck me to catch one. There was a bit of rope handy; so I made a noose in it, and let it down with care and some trouble over a little pig's head. In a few minutes the luckless little pig walked off and was pulled up abruptly. He couldn't at all understand what had happened, and kept running away and being pulled up. Then the rope caught in another pig's leg, and the two piggies kept falling over and biting each other, as if each thought it was quite the other's own doing. At last, George went and undid them; and then, after tea, I tried the sport again, and caught a big pig, who pulled the rope clean through my fingers, and ran away, uttering the most piercing yells. We all had to run after 75 him, and, after a good deal of bother, caught and unfastened the poor brute.

I milk at a quarter to 6 in the morning, and at the same hour in the evening. It is rather a tie; but I am more likely to be regular than either of the boys, and the same person ought always to milk.

This climate, or the hard work, makes George dreadfully restless at night. He wakes me up three or four times with pouncing about in the wildest manner; and one night, when he was clawing about all over the bed, I asked him what was the matter, and he said he was catching the chickens!

76

July 20th.

YESTERDAY we actually went to Church! A clergyman from San Francisco came up to see the K—s, and held a service for us all in the school-house, or rather outside it, as it was too small and too stuffy to hold us all. There were about fifty present, so we gathered together under some trees. The hymns went very well, as he chose some that are in our Ancient and Modern edition as well as in the American Church hymn-book. They are forced to use a certain hymn-book, whether they like it or not, in the Church here. We had Matins, Sermon, and first part of the Communion Service out of doors, and then went into the school-room for the rest of the service. It was very curious having the service out of doors, with all the carts and waggons of the congregation tied up round about, and a few stray chickens wandering among us. The horses must have thought their masters had gone mad! It was a very long service, and we were not back 77 till 2 o'clock; and, as George and I had gone fasting, we were both rather exhausted.

I had got up at 5.30 to milk my beloved cow, but then went to bed again. They all laugh at me because I think so much of my Becky, and say I think more of her comfort than I do of theirs! The calf is a little fiend; it bit my finger so hard that it bled, and I had to finish milking with one hand. I smack it hard now when it interferes. It curls its body round the cow's hind legs so as to be able to whisk its tail in my face: it does it on purpose, because it knows I have to leave off milking to shove it away, and then it gets a suck.

My stove is come, and is a beauty. It stands out into the room, so that one can walk round it. It has six large holes at the top that have lids, which you can take off or not according as to whether you want your saucepans to boil slowly or fast; a boiler, and a large oven. It cost 48 dollars; but that included two large iron stock-pots, one large boiler for clothes, three sorts of 78 frying-pans, a

gridiron, a tea-kettle, several sorts of baking-tins, a coffee-pot, and a large saucepan with holes all over the bottom. I cannot imagine the use of it. We had to buy saucepans besides, at a dollar each, made of agate ware—grey shiny stuff, very easy to clean.

We are going to have our sitting-room papered; and Mr. White drove us into town to the stores to choose the paper and the rest of the things we want for the house. The chairs cost five shillings each, and are made of a pretty light wood; there were none of those lovely red ones to be got like Sir George Grove brought home.

We are all so anxious to get into our house, which we hope to do in a few days.

My greengrocer, Peter de Lucci, is such a pleasant fellow, an Italian. To give you an idea of prices, I will tell you what we bought this morning of him for four bits (2s.). Two vegetable marrows (summer squashes they call them), half a large bucketful of French beans, a 79 dozen beet-roots, a dozen turnips, and five enormous onions.

I forgot to tell you last week that Becky and her calf cost 50 dollars. It's dreadfully expensive to keep her. A cow or a horse costs just double as much to keep as a man, when the hay has to be bought. Next year we shall have grown our own hay, of course. Becky has a box full of bran and salt and water and her hay twice a day. Everyone scolds poor George for letting me milk; but it's such a pleasant change from housework, and it's absurd to say it is hard work, and that it makes one's arms ache. It is as easy as possible. You can't think how fat George and Bob are growing; but they drink such quantities of milk and cream, that no doubt that is the fattening cause.

We cannot make butter in this very hot weather. Everything goes bad in the most rapid manner. Even the yeast has to be renewed every three or four days; and half the week our fare is bacon, which Bob and I detest, so we are almost entirely vegetarians.

We have bought a pair of horses and their harness, from a man who wanted to go home, for 250 dollars, which is considered very cheap. One of them will do for riding, but they are supposed to be for ploughing.

July 31st.

WE are in our house, but it is in an awful mess, and, what is worse, must continue so for another week or more while they are building the barn, for we must have our horses up as soon as possible. It is so inconvenient having no horses of our own to send into town for our mails or any little thing we need.

I really am at my wits end to know what to provide to eat. The tinned meat and salmon is very good, but too expensive to eat always, and 81 bacon has palled upon all of us. To-day we shall feed on peach-tart. The pastry is made with cream instead of butter, and it does just as well. I bought a large box of peaches for 2d. a pound. Vegetables and bread never fail us. The yeast, though, is a trial. We got some from the K—s on Sunday, but George broke the bottle coming up here; then he went to the B—s for some, and that wouldn't ferment properly, and took thirty-six hours to rise, by which time I had given it up, and got some more from Mrs. C—'s, which at last is a fine success, and the shelf of my store-room is swamped with it.

A neighbour here had a baby lately, and when Mrs. K— went to see her, three days after the child was born, she found her sitting up in bed kneading the dough. She had neither nurse nor doctor, only a neighbour with her at the time. After a week, she was up and doing all the work as usual; and she is a slight, delicate little woman, a Canadian. It is extraordinary how well people get over that sort of thing here.

82

I am so delighted to be in our roomy house, even though it will be some time before we get quite straight.

August 6th.

THE heat is tremendous! This is the month for earthquakes; I hope we shall not have one to knock our house down. They are still building the barn; and when it is done we shall be able to get rid of the carpenter. This sort of work wears out the clothes terribly. I sat down yesterday evening to a pile of thirty-six pairs of socks and stockings wanting mending, with holes the size of the palm of one's hand staring me in the face. It is a bother having no fence up yet, 83 as the cow and the chickens keep marching into the house to see what they can get.

Mr. White bought me a lovely cow-bell for Becky when he was down at Napa, and I strapped it round her neck in the evening. Next morning she turned up very late (as a rule she is always waiting for me), and she had been half milked, and the bell was gone. I suppose some camper did it.

Everyone is burning their brush to make the feed good for the cattle, the result being that the view is enveloped in clouds of smoke; and it seems to make the heat still more oppressive.

We saw the most wonderful meteor the other night; we were sitting on the verandah, when suddenly everything was lighted up brilliantly, and this enormous meteor flew across the sky. It was a sort of green, electric colour.

Mr. White's hog has paid us a visit, and turned over a very heavy coop with the little chickens in it, and devoured six of them. We had a great desire to poison the brute. H. B— happened to ask for a glass of water at a neighbour's 84 house a few days since, and after drinking it he remarked that it was rather thick, whereupon Mrs. C— said, "Oh, yes, the hog fell down the well a few days ago!"

August 10th.

I HEARD yesterday that I can get a washer in the city for three dollars, so I shall send for one. One of the boys will turn the handle if it is too hard for me. What a pity there are not ironing machines too!

Last week was terribly hot; we didn't know what to do with ourselves.

The barn is finished to-day. It has four stalls, a very large one for the cow, room for eleven 85 tons of hay, and a waggon shed. Altogether, including labour, it cost 100 dols. We have bought a waggon for 70 dollars.

Yesterday being Sunday, we had a holiday, and the K—s drove us to Cache Creek, where their sheep-ranch is. They own about 2,000 acres and have about 3,000 sheep. It was too lonely for Mrs. K—, so they came to live here.

The road was through lovely scenery—over-hanging cliffs on one side, and precipices on the other. We had dinner at the M—s' and then drove on to the B—s', who live by an exquisite little creek. There was such a quantity of wild vine growing about; we are going again, when the grapes are ripe, to pick them and make jelly of them.

We bathed in the creek; it was not deep, but deliciously cool and refreshing after the heat and dust.

Mrs. B— persuaded me to relieve her of a pet lamb, which she had picked up half dead and looked after for three weeks. The wasps were a 86 perfect pest; it was horrible having to eat one's food with six or seven on one's plate.

I brought my little lamb back, and it is a dear little creature, very tame, and follows me everywhere already. It won't drink its milk without sucking my finger; but it has such sharp little teeth, I don't enjoy feeding it much. It was called Baby, but I have changed it to Bimbi, after Ouida's story.

Our fellow-traveller from New York to San Francisco is coming to see us and spy out the land. He can't stand the heat down south at Los Angelos, and the amount of irrigation brings on malaria.

Bimbi has been sitting on my lap like a cat would, and is now trying to eat some wood shavings.

When you send out small sums of money, the best way is to buy greenbacks in England and send them in a registered letter.

87

August 15th.

I RODE into town yesterday evening, with H. B—, to get the mail. He has bought himself a very nice little horse, which he let me try, and he rode one of our cart-horses—an amiable old lout, rather like an elephant as regards size and temper. The new horse goes splendidly, though it has only had a saddle on about six or eight times.

Bimbi is getting so fat and so fond of me, that she won't leave me for a minute, and bleats in the most piteous way if she cannot find me. She lets me wash her, and is quite a companion to me.

They are now making an enormous tank over the well about ten feet from the ground. The tank itself is about six feet deep, twelve feet long, and four feet wide. There will be pipes from it to the house, and we shall be able to water the 88 kitchen garden with it. The pump cost 15 dollars, and acts very well.

As there is such a drought this year, everyone's well is running dry; in town the scarcity of water is dreadful, and lots of families have camped out by the creek, which is about a mile and a half from town. They all live in carts.

The K—s have had a bother with their well, but ours is full. They say, in an ordinary year it will run over the top, and have to be drained off.

George has been making our bedroom comfortable. He made a large hanging cupboard with a shelf at the top, on one side of the fireplace, and then we put up a board between that and the wall for a washing-stand, and covered it with American cloth. It has a rail under it for towels. Our chests make very good dressing-tables: mine stand one on the other, and George made legs for his. Altogether it looks very comfortable, though we have not bought an elegant “suite.”

89

The heat is somewhat unbearable. How I should like to be transported to the Engadine, in my astral body perhaps, for a week's refreshing. The glass has been as high as 119 in Lower Lake. And just imagine the joy of starching and ironing shirts!

We have all to contribute towards building a large room, to be used for services or musical entertainments. I don't care much for the idea, as one is usually much too tired in the evening to go out anywhere.

90

Letter from GEORGE. August 23rd.

WE have been too busy lately to write letters, but I must now tell you some particulars of what we have done. The house will have cost us rather over 450 dollars, the chicken-house about 10 dollars, the pump, tank, half-inch pipe to house and barn, 65 dollars, making the well about 32 dollars; the barn, 105 dollars. In all about £133.

The house is 44 feet long and 18 feet wide, without the lean-tos. The lean-to on one side is a large verandah, 10 feet broad, and on the other side is the kitchen, store-room, &c.

The barn is 16 feet by 22 feet. It contains stabling for cows and horses, and on one side has a waggon shed, with double doors into the barn, so that one can drive in without unhitching the horses.

91

The tank is 4 feet by 12 feet and 5 feet high, and is raised 10 feet from the ground, with a roof over it to keep off the sun; it will hold about 1,800 gallons of water. The water is laid on to the house and barn, there being two hydrants at the house; one outside the kitchen and one in the bath-room.

So much for what we have already done. I am afraid we shall not be able to plant much this year, because of the expense of fencing, so we are going in for a chicken-ranch, which, as far as it goes, is very paying, and will enable us to go on with our improvements out of the profits.

Now for a few statistics. We have at present 22 hens and 2 cocks, without counting the young broods, and for some time past have been getting 10 to 12 eggs a day, which we use ourselves. Eggs are worth 30 cents a dozen, so, if we started this year with 200 hens and 92 sold 8 dozen a day, it would mean a yearly return of 750 dollars from the eggs alone; but, of course, that is merely an example of what might be done, because we should go in for raising chickens, and then we must calculate the cost of feeding, &c. Our difficulty, of course, would be there being no railway from Lower Lake, and that we should have to drive our eggs seventy miles to Santa Rosa.

We ought to get some big contracts in San Francisco, if we go in for a chicken-ranch on a large scale. The cost of feeding, and of building enough chicken-houses, would, of course, be considerable, but could be done with little outlay in comparison with the return. Of course, we couldn't buy 5,000 hens, but with incubators we could soon raise them. An incubator with 70-egg capacity would cost about 70 dollars. The price of eggs varies from 10 to 40 cents a dozen.

One thing I can assure you, we don't intend to sit down quietly out here. We intend to make something pay, to enable us to come home again some day. We have already made our 93 chickens succeed better than anyone else about here, and there is no reason why we shouldn't succeed with a larger number. The lack of capital is, of course, our great drawback; but if we cannot have it, we must go on gradually, and raise the chickens as fast as we can.

Letters from EVELYN continued. August 29th.

WE had a splendid ride on Tuesday. We made up a party of six, and Mr. S—lent me his horse, which has been used to racing, the consequence of which is that it always bolts 94 when it is with other horses. It only ran away till it got a good bit ahead of the others, and then danced about till they came up. There was a full moon, and it was a lovely evening, and I did enjoy it so much.

Our nice travelling companion, Mr. M—, has unexpectedly turned up; so the boys are taking a holiday, and have gone out shooting. In his honour we bought some butter, the first we have had for over two months, and we enjoyed it so much. If ever I get back to England and home comforts, I shall feel very greedy. It is so difficult to cook anything nice without butter. We had some lamb this week; it was very small, and about the consistency of boots!

We have finished our sitting-room at last; the paper is very pretty, and, what with our Liberty's curtains and Rose's lovely mantel-border, and all my pretty little ornaments, it is quite nice. I wonder if you think of me when you see the Swiss women doing their washing and milking 95 their cows. You can't think how I pine for a wooden trough, and cool, clear water running through it all the time; also for a comfortable costume of trousers and a garibaldi. I wonder if I shall be as ugly as the Swiss women by the time I come home "from exile."

Our happy family is very amusing. The sheep-dog Nick, the lamb, and the kitten all feed out of the same pan at the same time, and they play together in the most absurd way. The kitten seems very fond of Bimbi, and rubs up against her in a most confiding manner.

I have given in to the bachelor idea of having white American cloth on the dinner-table instead of a common washing cloth. It saves a great deal of washing.

96

September 6th.

WE have had a little picnic up to Cache Creek, intending to gather wild grapes, but the Indians had taken them all. We had a pleasant drive there, excepting that the road is so appalling, and I was driven by a young man who drives full-tilt the whole way, whisks round sharp corners, and over all sorts of bad places. We found a delicious deep pool in the creek, and had a lovely swim. I came back in the heavy waggon, and was nearly shaken to death. We started at 4.30, when it was only 99 1/2 in the shade! It would have been cooler later; but it gets dark now quite suddenly at 7 o'clock, so we dare not put off our drive longer.

On Wednesday Mr. and Mrs. K— came to supper. We had salmon-cakes, cucumbers, beetroot and cream, mutton cutlets, tomatoes, 97 blackberry tart, and grapes. I have just bought between sixty and seventy pounds of unripe peaches to make into jam. The lost cost 2s.

The other night a skunk killed five hens, bit off their heads, and sucked their blood. The next day they carefully blocked up the places by which he could have got into the chicken-house, and after tea George went to shut the place up for the night and found him inside! He shut the door and yelled for a light and a gun; Bob and H. B— rushed off with a gun and a revolver, and after riddling the beast all over with holes, they at last killed him. The smell was simply appalling!

98

September 17th.

ON Tuesday we had another little dinner party; seven men and myself. Our guests were bachelors, used to dining on one dish and cooking it themselves, and they just enjoyed their dinner. I seem to be always writing about food and cooking; but you understand what an interesting subject it is to me just now from its novelty, and I must describe this dinner.

First, salmon cakes—it is the only fish I can get that is nice and dainty; then curried eggs, roast chickens, apple tart and custard, and Victoria sandwiches with sugar icing. The chickens were an awful extravagance, but Adamson came round in the morning to say that he hadn't been able to catch his sheep on the previous evening, so he had not got any mutton for us. It was a dilemma, as we couldn't have men to dinner and give them no meat, though, of course, we often have none ourselves. It is 99 always doubtful if one can get any meat in town, and five miles is a long way to go on spec, so we slaughtered the old cock, and George shot quite a young chicken with the same shot. The dish presented a most extraordinary appearance, one bird being as large as a small turkey and the other the size of a pigeon. They were very good indeed.

One of the kittens was found nearly dying yesterday; it was lying quite immovable. I dosed it with brandy, and after lying for several hours in a drunken sleep, it got up and lurched about the kitchen in the most absurd way, and finally recovered. I wonder what was the matter with it!

I shall be very glad when the winter comes, the heat is still so trying. I ought to be ironing shirts at this moment, but my feet are so tender that I must rest them a little. After a washing-day and an ironing-day, my feet feel as if they were just a bundle of nerves.

100

Next summer I shall arrange some outside blinds to the kitchen, like there were at that little Châlet between the glaciers at Saas Fée. Do you remember having coffee there? The sun makes the kitchen so hot. Our sitting-room is well shaded by the verandah, and keeps cool.

September 24th.

IT has actually been raining to-day. It came on to pour in torrents in the night, and has been showery all day, but quite sunny and bright between whiles. You can't imagine how refreshing it is after the awful heat. Only three days 101 age it was 112 in the shade, and this evening the boys have actually lit a fire and are sitting round it.

The rain has made all the pine-trees and the manzanita-bushes smell so deliciously.

Of course the rain put out all the fires, and, when the clouds rose, it was quite a treat to see the view which the smoke has hidden for so long; but there are now hideous black scars on the hills, where they have been burnt.

I have been lucky this week. One day Mr. White drove me to town in his go-cart, just for the sake of the drive and the fresh air; and yesterday Mrs. B— came and took me for a drive.

She gave a little party a few days ago, to which none but unmarried people were invited. So George and I had a *tête à tête* supper: the first time we have had a meal alone together since our three days' honeymoon.

It's rather a bother milking Becky in rainy weather; I have to do it in the stable, and 102 getting there is a somewhat sloppy job; but I wouldn't give up milking her for anything.

I want to get another cow after Christmas, when Becky will be giving less milk. A young Jersey, with her first calf, would be nice, and then I could train her up to my ways.

Becky has got a little curly white fringe between her horns that you would covet.

Last night there was an eclipse of the moon, which the boys got up to look at. It would take a good deal more than that to turn my poor old carcass out of my comfortable bed.

I am very thankful I brought a pillow, as the only ones we can get here are square little mattresses, most uncomfortable.

I have just bought fifty-seven pounds of apples to make jelly of for the winter; they were two and a half cents a pound.

I send you photographs of our house. Poor Becky has come out minus her head.

You ask what we feed our beasts on. Wheat-hay, for which we paid 12 dollars a ton. It is now 17 dollars. We bought five tons, and now 103 that we have got the hay up here, and Becky is being fed instead of half-starved, she gives quite five quarts of milk, and the calf has nearly the same amount, so that we are now able to make plenty of butter, which is an enormous comfort.

We shall do better for meat now the weather is getting cooler; we shall take half a sheep every week. You asked, too, why we cannot eat the rabbits; it is because they are all covered with sores.

We have had a misfortune with our chickens: we poisoned them with some tinned mackerel; five died, but the rest were dosed with lard, which cured them.

George has been poisoned too; he got poison oak. It is a tree that affects some people horribly. His arm swelled up, and he had violent headache, and felt queer all over, so he has not done much work this week.

Mr. S— has been hauling a lot of gravel from the lake for us. He had our horses as well 104 his own, and his big waggon, and hauled some for himself and some for us; but, as he wanted a little and we wanted a great deal, we had the best of the bargain.

Oct. 9th.

IT's quite nice and cloudy to-day! We English don't half appreciate the climate in England. You cannot think how wearying it is to have nothing but glaring sunshine and almost unbearable heat for five months at a stretch as we have had. A cloudy or rainy day now and then would be such a relief. The variety at home 105 is much nicer. I quite long for a dense damp fog.

We have got Christianson up here again. He came to make a horse-trough, and to deepen the well; but instead of doing the latter, he has persuaded the boys to dig a new well quite high up on the hill. If he finds plenty of water there, we shall be able to irrigate the whole of our land with no expense and very little trouble. He uses the divining wand, and has traced the stream of water up from our well to where another stream joins it; and if there is any dependence to be placed on his willow wand, it ought to be a very strong stream.

Certainly this divining is very curious. Mr. F— had two wells pretty close together; but both had most disagreeable mineral water, and he wanted another for drinking purposes; so Christianson, who knew that there was originally a good well about a quarter of a mile off, traced the stream to right between the two nasty wells. They dug there, and found plenty of good water.

I cannot understand it, as the wand does not act at all if you hold it over the water in the well; and it only acts with some people, not with others.

It is a forked twig, the ends of which you hold with the point sticking up in the air; and as soon as you walk over water, the top of the fork bends right over towards you. It acts a little with me.

I don't expect we shall go in for grapes at all; they don't seem to pay unless you can keep three dozen men or so always working at the place, and have a cellar of your own, and understand wine making. If we grew them in small quantities, we should have to sell them to the Water Company at a ridiculously low price. They have a cellar and make wine; but as the wine sells for only 2s. a gallon, I don't see that there can be much profit for anyone.

Blackberries, gooseberries, and olives pay far better, and I expect that is what we shall go in for if we get this well for irrigating.

The chickens seem likely to pay best of all.

107

The people about here don't work so hard as our party does; and labour is so very expensive that I don't wonder they are not making much money.

One of our neighbours owns sheep, and, luckily for him, wool has gone up tremendously. It is not so lucky for us, for, in consequence, no one will sell their sheep to be butchered; and our butcher has been to tell us that after next week he will have to give up selling meat, as he cannot get any to sell. I cannot think what we shall do!

We have been so bothered with Becky. On Monday morning she had vanished, so H. B— rode over to Sulphur Bank, her old home, to see if she were there. She had been there, but she came back only an hour or so after they had started. Tuesday evening Bob did not latch the stable door properly, so the calf got out, and they both went off together till Thursday, during which time we were without milk and butter; and this morning the calf jumped out of a tiny little window and got all the milk.

108

We have had the surveyor here to see about our boundaries before we put fencing up. It would be annoying to put them up wrong and then have to move them.

This morning I washed up breakfast, swept the kitchen and sitting-room, made the bed, made bread, did all the washing, and cooked a hot dinner for seven people between 7 and 12 o'clock. Don't you think I was expeditious? Certainly I find my work far less tedious than I did, and can do more in the time.

109

Letter from GEORGE.

WE have been hauling lumber to make our fences with during the past week, and we are going for some more again this. We have also been trying to get water 100 ft. above the level of the house, so as to enable us to irrigate a large portion of our land; if we can get it, we can plant blackberries and gooseberries, which return 500 dollars or 600 dollars per acre, which is more than double the return of vines or olives.

But after going down 12 feet we have come upon tremendous rocks; and after spending a whole day chipping at them, we have decided to leave it alone till we have more time. If we cannot get the water on the hill we cannot grow blackberries, which require 30,000 gallons of water every year per acre.

Any way, we shall begin by planting some olives in the rocks, and an acre and a half of alfalfa grass, which we can irrigate from our present well and tank. Also we are going to plant about 10 acres in hay. The worst of it all is that, wherever we plant anything, it must be fenced, which is very expensive.

It will cost us about 500 dollars to fence in what we hope to plant this winter, that is doing the work ourselves; it would cost 750 dollars if we hired labour for it.

The chicken ranch we still hope to make a success; but it will take some time to increase the number of fowls to what we want in order to make a really good thing of it. We can't afford to buy 5,000 hens at half a dollar each.

The mill where we get our lumber is seventeen miles off, so we can only go every other day, as it is a long pull for the horses coming back with a waggon-load of wood.

We are paying 10 dollars a thousand for pickets to fence round the house and barn, and they all have to be sawn into a point at the top to prevent the chickens flying over. They are put one inch 111 apart, so that nothing can get between. We put cedar-wood posts every 8 feet.

The other fencing further from the house we intend to make of three 8-inch boards and two 6-inch on the top, and a post every 5 feet.

Fencing like this is as near rabbit-proof as possible, though nothing will keep them out entirely, as they burrow underneath.

Meat is our great difficulty at present, but we expect someone will butcher in the winter. We luckily got two legs of mutton last week.

112

Letters from EVELYN continued.

IF E. F— is really thinking of coming out, I will give her some hints about her clothes. She should have quite dark cotton dresses, navy blue or something of that sort; and she should have several loose white muslin bodices, a kind of loose dressing jacket, unlined.

When the glass is 120 in the shade, the cooler clothing one has the better. Also be sure to have sleeves made loose, so that they will roll up.

Coloured aprons made of duster stuff are best; they don't look dirty so soon as white. Shoes should all be thick, and, above all things, all be a size too large.

She should have an old ulster to put on the first thing in the morning, to milk in. And remind her to bring a soft pillow, an unattainable luxury out here.

No, we have no mosquitoes here, which is a blessing.

113

The American papers are very fine. I must send you an advertisement I cut out of one the other day.

CHOLERA! CHOLERA! CHOLERA!

When the Cholera comes prices will be high. Buy your Coffins early and **AVOID THE RUSH**. Seize this opportunity and get a good article, and one that will suit you. The undersigned has the finest Stock of Coffins ever offered for sale in this town.

114

Oct. 22nd.

THE rains have come so early this year, and everything is so thoroughly flooded, that I don't expect we shall be able to get any land ploughed till February or March. Everyone is rather disgusted about it.

We can only get into town on horseback, and it's impossible to fetch lumber for the fencing, or anything, for some time to come. The roads are a quagmire! and just in front of our house is a dreadful sort of place into which Mr. S—'s horse sank right up to its stomach. It was dreadful to watch its struggles to extricate itself.

Thanks for the receipts. I do all sorts of cookery that one's cooks at home never attempt. Just now I have a pig's head, and am going to make a brawn.

Mr. White has just been slaying hogs, and has 115 sent me some sausage-meat, and some liver and kidneys.

I have not got over my disgust at touching raw meat, and especially “innards.” The liver was most repulsive to touch and cut up.

I have fifty little tarts to make, for a dance in the New Hall to-morrow night; but I don't think anyone can come, owing to the state of the roads.

We had quite a piece of excitement yesterday. A man rode up to ask his way to Sulphur Bank. He rode with his hand on his revolver, and told us if we saw a man on a big brown mare with double girths to keep out of his way, and fire at him, and we should be liberally rewarded.

The only description he could give of the man was that he was young. Why, there are half-a-dozen men about who might answer to that description, and I should be sorry to shoot at anyone in that casual sort of way.

He is supposed to be hiding in the 116 mountains at the back, and may turn up at any moment to ask for food. Fancy having to entertain a murderer, with all the boys out! Thrilling!

He has already shot two of the men after him; one he killed, and one he only wounded.

Last Sunday we had quite a pleasant day. After morning service, Mr. B— asked George, Laurence and me to dinner, after which we went on the lake in a tiny sailing-boat, and then went back to the B—s' to tea.

They have eight fat dumplings of fox terrier pups, only a fortnight old, and most fascinating. When their cheeks are gently stroked towards the corners of their mouths, they slowly and apparently reluctantly yawn; such long, sleepy yawns! I was so pleased with the performance that I kept making them do it “all the time,” as the Americans say.

October 31st.

THE night before last, George and I were awoke by the most awful smell of skunk, and we heard a regular skirmish going on outside our room, on the wood-pile where the safe is kept. It's a thing made of wire gauze, in which all the food is kept, to preserve it from wasps and flies. In the morning the smell was still appalling, and about 11 o'clock I heard squeals and yells coming from the stove wood, which is stacked closely and neatly on the wood-pile.

I yelled for the boys, and, after some trouble, we managed to find the beast, who was wedged in, and a revolver put to his head soon despatched him. They are very pretty, black and white striped, and with a huge tail like a fox's.

In the evening, we heard a noise at the safe, and George, thinking it was one of the kittens trying to crawl up, as usual, went out with a 118 light, and almost pulled another skunk off the wire to which it was clinging. Luckily, he didn't touch it, as their bites are very poisonous. He retreated, and, after a council of war, we determined to poison the little wretch. So, after shutting up Nick the dog, Bimbi, Baldy the old cat, and Huz and Buz the kittens, in different places, we put down some strychnine in some meat, which polished him off during the night, and we found his corpse this morning.

The nights are extremely cold now, but the days very hot still. I hope E. F— will like pets, for we spoil ours terribly. When I go to milk, I lead the way, followed by Becky, who is generally waiting outside for me, Bimbi, expecting her share of the hay, and the three cats, who take the deepest interest in the proceeding, as their greed for warm milk is insatiable. I held up one of the kittens and milked into its mouth one day, to its great delight.

I am writing in the kitchen, to keep an eye on a huge thing of tomato-ketchup which is 119 boiling on the stove. It smells very savoury. The tomatoes cost 2s. a box, 1 x 1 1/2 ft. and 1 ft. deep. Not dear, were they?

If our English servants once felt the comfort of these American stoves, they would never put up with our ranges. It is so much handier having it low, so that one can stir things easily, and in hot weather it is a comfort to have the fire all shut in. I don't take the covers off, so that I can keep my saucepans as clean outside as in.

120

Sunday, November 8th.

IT has now been raining ever since Wednesday morning, with the most incredible result. All the brown earth, which has been parched up ever since we came, has suddenly sprouted up a lovely green. When we saw it yesterday, just before dark, there was a hazy suspicion of a green tint coming over it, but to-day it is beautiful.

The consequences in our new house are not altogether desirable. The doors won't shut, and there are one or two leakages in the roof. The fire-wood, too, is soaking, and it is very difficult to make a cheerful fire.

We are told we shall get crowds of mushrooms, as all the land up here has been used as a sheep-ranch, and wherever the sheep have been, mushrooms come up in abundance.

Drying the clothes I washed was most difficult—some on the verandah and some before the 121 fire. Just as I was beginning to iron, Miss May arrived to help me make apple-jelly, which I had not intended to do for a week, as I was too busy; but she persuaded me to do it, as she could not come to help me again, so we turned to. Ninety-seven pounds of apples were waiting to be done.

We had to stew the apples to a pulp, and then put them into clean flour-sacks to drain the juice out for jelly, and then rub the pulp through a sieve for jam. The jelly is lovely, and is a beautiful red colour, though the apples were quite green. And my hands are shocking! the apples have stained them black. It was a tiring day, for, excepting while I ate my meals, I never sat down from 7.30 A.M. to 7.30 P.M.

When E. F— comes out, she ought to bring some galoshes—old-fashioned india-rubbers.

It's impossible to get servants here, unless you are rolling in riches. A common American woman would want £80 a year; and a Chinaman, to do the cooking alone—not a scrap of 122 housework, as they will not mix their work—would want sixty dollars a month.

We are so much obliged to you for the papers you send. We all read the *Church Times* all through, and the boys even read the *Girls' Own Paper*. Any odd papers—a stray number of *Truth* or a mag.—are read with avidity.

The boys have been building a cow-shed on to the side of the barn. It is too wet to plough, and too wet to haul any more lumber for the fencing, so they are rather at a stand-still.

123

November 27th.

WE were to have had a dance last week in the New Hall, and a great many Americans were coming to it from Lower Lake; but it had to be put off on account of the rain and the awful state of the roads. It was not settled that it could not take place till the very day, so everyone had done their cooking for it.

I had made fifty tarts, twenty-five with apple-jelly and twenty-five cheese-cakes. My puff pastry was very successful, and my tarts looked most inviting! We have managed to get rid of them without much trouble.

Not much has been done in the farming line during this last wet week. They have grubbed a few trees, and have made a bridge over the stream, and built a new chicken-house, as our only one is not large enough for ninety chickens. They have made the roof extend a long way down 124 on one side, so as to cover a row of nests, as they say the fowls shouldn't lay in the same place they roost in. Also they went on with the picket-fence, and they made a duck-pond near the tank. There had been an old well there, which they enlarged and banked up.

December 6th.

I had quite a nice days' outing on Monday. It was suggested that we should all club together and eat our Christmas dinner in the Hall, so George and I went round in the K—s' spring waggon, to interview all the English. We found the roads in a fearful condition after the rains, 125 quite bogs in places, and the horses went in up to their knees sometimes. The weather was lovely, and everything is so fresh and green.

I ended up the day with a most ludicrous adventure. George dropped me at Mrs. B—'s gate for me to interview her, while he drove home, and then came back to meet me at the K—s', where we were going to tea. Mr. B— insisted on escorting me to the K—s', across the fields. They warned me it was very muddy, so they provided me with a pair of india-rubber top-boots, about six sizes too big, which I slopped along in.

It was getting rather dusk, so when we got to the last field, we cut across it, instead of going round. The result was that we stuck in the mud. My boots, being so huge, came off at every step, and after floundering hopelessly a few steps farther, we stuck hopelessly.

I was up to my knees, and was so unsteady, that I fell forward, and my arms were promptly covered with mud. When I had been helped up, I said, "I hope I shan't sit down," and the 126 words were hardly out of my mouth, when Mr. B—sat down. He couldn't get up without help, and I was so weak with laughing, he did not get much assistance out of me; however, he staggered up, and we proceeded a few yards more, he sitting down again three times. We then were obliged to yell for help, which arrived in the shape of Mr. K—and a lantern; but even he could not extricate me till I walked out of my boots.

Oh! how cold it felt to plunge into the mud in my "stocking feet"!

Mrs. K— took great care of me; she put my feet in hot water, and wouldn't let me go home that night, but made me sleep there.

On further consultation, the idea of a united dinner was given up, so we shall have a large dinner party of the bachelors of the colony instead.

I am already beginning to plan my Christmas dinner, but I will not tell you, for you will think I am always writing about food.

I pine for a Buszard's cake.

127

Though the sun is so hot, they have not been able to plough yet, or even dig the holes for the posts for the fencing. The earth is still so saturated, that the holes fill with water. They have been able to drive some posts without digging holes.

We have been finding out about the price of olives. They will cost us 105 dollars an acre to plant.

128

December 20th.

ON Monday I had a quiet day of incessant cooking, but I had no midday dinner to prepare, as George and Bob were gone to the Mill, and Laurence and H. B—were decorating the Hall for the dance.

Poor George has had to go to the Mill every time. It's very cold to start in the dark at 6.30, and it's a very long and tiring day.

The long-talked-of dance came off on Tuesday. It began at 8 and was kept up by a few till 4 A.M.! The American visitors were gratified, I think. The decorations took their fancy; but the supper was *the* thing. At their own dances they don't have suppers, and really our display looked very tempting. All the English had cooked for it, and there were cart-loads of good things. The tables were all spread, and then covered over with cloths, which were removed at supper-time.

129

The dancing was very German, exactly in the style of the Germans we met at the Maderaner Thal; and they had a "caller" to shout out what they were to do: "Bow," "Swing partners," "Promenade," &c.

I wore my wedding get-up, and it looked very nice.

I danced till 12 o'clock, and was very tired next day, and found the family wash even more objectionable than usual.

At last my washer is come, but is rather a sell. It only does tolerably clean things, such as sheets, towels, table-cloths; but it won't do shirts at all.

130

Letter from GEORGE.

ANOTHER week gone by, and very little progress.

On Monday we hauled 620 feet of lumber for E. F—'s cabin.

On Tuesday we all helped at the decoration of the Hall.

On Wednesday I helped Evelyn with the washing, the others making a small fence round the chicken-house, to prevent the cow eating the hay out of the nest-boxes.

On Thursday we tried ploughing again, and although the ground was far too wet, we did a little, and then went on with that everlasting picket fence.

On Friday Bob and I hauled 300 pickets from the saw-mill; but the roads are still very bad, and it was a hard day for the horses. We give them one hour's rest at the mill, and we are away from 6.30 A.M. to 6.30 P.M.

131

Saturday we did little but kill and pluck our Christmas turkeys. We knew nothing whatever about it, and had to refer to Mrs. Beeton every two minutes for instruction.

In the afternoon we went and fetched our load home from where we had left it the evening before, as it was too dark then to bring it across our miry wood, where, in places, the wheels sink in up to the axle.

132

December 18th.

EVELYN and I drove into town on Monday, to lay in our stores for Christmas; and the others went on with the fencing, which does seem an everlasting job.

We have given up ploughing at present, as the people here tell us that if you turn up the earth glassy, you spoil the land for years.

We have finished driving in all the posts, so we can continue the fencing at odd times.

The principal job we have done this week was hauling the lumber for the cabin we are going to build for E. F—. In an ordinary way no one would think of hauling during this wet weather; but we must have the wood, and a neighbour of ours went for some at the same time.

We had an awful job of it. The roads were fearfully bad, and we stuck at the first hill. Fortunately, a team we met coming down the 133 hill came to our rescue, and we surmounted that difficulty, only to stick quite fast four miles further on. We tried putting F—'s horses on; but the united efforts of the four horses wouldn't move it, so we left our waggon there, and put our horses on to F—'s waggon, and drove home.

Next day we took F—'s waggon and horses and brought back a portion of the load; but a mile and a half from home the axle broke, and we had to unload and leave everything by the side of the road.

The next day we had to get our broken waggon into town to the blacksmith's, which was a most difficult operation, and, when it was mended, we had to pick up our two half loads which were lying about the country.

134

Letters from EVELYN continued.

GEORGE has told you that we went into town for some shopping, and really nothing else has occurred this week, except poor George's worries with the lumber-hauling. It is a nuisance!

There was such a commotion in town, as two men had been shot on Sunday afternoon. There had been a quarrel, and one of the two combatants was shot, and a poor boy near was shot by mistake. It is extraordinary how they seem to carry loaded revolvers about with them, and use them on the slightest provocation.

135

December 26th.

JUST received your Christmas cards and letters, and am enjoying them so much, as I am actually spending the evening alone. The boys are all gone to a dinner at the S—s'; and though Mrs. K — asked me to spend the evening with them, I was so tired with the exertion of yesterday, that I preferred a quiet rest, with Nick to take care of me. He is very fidgetty, and doesn't at all like there being no men about.

You can't think how glad I am that Christmas is over, and I feel rather a wreck; but, as the dinner was an undoubted success, I rest happy.

We, that is George and I, dined on Christmas Eve with Mr. S—, who drove up for us in his spring-waggon, and put us up for the night, as it was impossible for me to walk back in the dark and the rain.

On Christmas morning we had hoped to have had a little service in the Hall; but the weather 136 prevented people coming, so we were driven up here, and I set to work at once.

Miss May took compassion on my loneliness, and came, to prevent my being the only lady.

One of our guests couldn't come, as he had upset himself out of his waggon, driving back in the dark from town, on Christmas Eve, and dislocated his shoulder.

Now, you really must hear about my Christmas dinner!

We had killed our turkeys a week before, but, owing to the damp and warmth of the weather, they smelt shockingly. I could have wept, as I did not know what to do about them; but, finally, I decided to risk it, and when cooked they were perfect, as tender as possible, and not at all gamey.

The plum-pudding and mince-pies were all that could be desired, and we had also tipsy cake, victoria sandwiches, meringues, and dessert. We had a light wine that tastes like hock, and was nice and wholesome, which all the wines out 137 here are not, notably a claret at 50 cents the gallon, which has the property of an emetic!

The manzanita has just come into flower; the leaf is a very shiny green, and the flower is like a little snowdrop. We decorated the table with it, and it looked so pretty. I am sure it didn't look much like "roughing it" in California!

There were eleven of us altogether, and we were a very merry party, and drank everyone's health "at home."

My cooking was much appreciated. It seemed so funny having to dish up and then sit down to dinner, and after dinner to have to wash up. Miss May was very kind indeed in helping me.

You asked how long the days are. It gets light at about 6.30 and dark at 5.30, and it does it suddenly, without any twilight worth mentioning.

January 2nd.

THAT brute Becky has gone off! She went on Wednesday afternoon, and to-day is Saturday, and she is not back yet, and we can't find her anywhere. The boys went over to her old home, but could not find her, though she had been seen there this morning. She will have gone dry if she doesn't come home to-day or tomorrow. There seems to be a conspiracy among the cows, for the G—s' and the C—s' have also gone.

We had to buy some Swiss milk to help down our tea.

The K—s have a lovely Jersey cow, that gives quantities of rich milk, but the disgusting beast has taken to drink it all herself; and they have had to arrange a sort of machine that will prevent her getting her head round, and yet allow her to heat her hay. Did you ever 139 hear of such an odd proceeding on the part of a cow?

It has been uncommonly cold the last few days. At 7 this morning there were eight degrees of frost, and not a drop of water to be got, the pumps and pipes all frozen.

These wooden houses are awful in cold weather; they don't seem to keep out the cold at all.

George spilt some cold tea on the kitchen table when he was getting breakfast, and it promptly froze hard.

The picket fence is nearly finished, and the gates are up and look very nice.

I don't see why you should wish we were in Virginia, except for the shorter journey. We could make quite as much money here as our cousins do there if we had the capital they have. The climate here is far nicer, and we could not possibly have a nicer set of neighbours, nor live so cheaply anywhere else.

I think that for poverty-stricken people who have to live away from England and home nothing could be better than this. Of course, we have a good many more hardships than the boys in Virginia have, but it is only because we have so much less money.

Jan. 10th.

STILL bitterly cold at night, but it gets quite hot in the middle of the day, so it is difficult to know what to wear.

On Tuesday Mr. White took me for a drive in his go-cart, and we drove to Sulphur Bank to see after Becky, who is there, but gone quite dry, so it is no use having her home. We have been ten days without milk, except what Mrs. K— gives 141 me when one of us can go and fetch it. It makes cooking doubly difficult.

On George's birthday we had the K—s to supper, and I was gratified afterwards by hearing that Mrs. K—had said she had not had such a nice dinner since she had been in California. We had turkey, plum-pudding, and a port-wine jelly.

We have bought seven turkeys, six hens and one “gobbler,” as they call the old cock. They are very profitable creatures, as they are worth as much as a sheep! and are very little trouble to keep. At present they fight the chickens, and one poor turkey got stuck in the little hole of the chicken-house in its endeavours to get in and roost with the chickens.

Laurence and Bob went to the mill to haul more lumber for E. F—'s cabin, which they are going to begin at once, on Tuesday at 6.30 A.M., and did not get back till Wednesday at about 6 in the evening. They drove into a 142 hole, and Laurence went flying into a chemisebush. (You must pronounce it as if it had two ss.) We were alarmed at their long absence.

They are now going to fence 20 acres, which they will plant half with vines and half with barley for hay. The fencing has to be rabbitproof. The posts are five feet apart, and the boards nailed on with only an inch between the bottom ones.

George says I am to tell you that fencing 20 acres will take 620 posts and 240 panels, and it will cost us about two dollars and three-quarters per 1,000 feet.

143

Jan. 16th.

I HAVE had an invalid to nurse this week, for George was quite suddenly smitten down with severe lumbago, and had to go to bed for two whole days, and have mustard poultices on, and really was quite in tortures and unable to move himself. Then he as suddenly got quite well. It is a very common complaint with the men about here.

Lawrence has been after another cow, and came home in triumph with the most absurd little creature. It's a sweet animal, but so ridiculously small after my huge Becky. She had a calf in September and is expecting another in July. She cost 30 dollars, and is three years old.

The boys are hard at work on E. F—'s cabin. I shall indeed be glad to have her to help me. I was ironing the whole day yesterday.

144

On Wednesday they cleared a place for the cabin. On Thursday, Bob brought twenty-nine posts and three turkeys from town, while Laurence sawed the sills for the cabin; and when Bob came back they laid and levelled-up the sills. On Friday, George helped, and they put the joists and flooring down; and on Saturday they got up all the walls and the rafters. So you see it does not take long to build an extra room here, when you have the wood to hand. The hauling it has been the worst part of the job.

There was a sharp fall of snow this morning, and Konocti mountain, the other side of the lake, was half covered; but it did not lie on the ground here at all. It is beautiful weather now, but rather cold.

145

Jan. 31st.

YOU ask how we are getting on. Of course we have to be very careful; we do not eat meat every day, but we have lots of eggs and milk; and, except on Christmas Day, we never have any liquor in the house.

Mr. K—says he thinks this is the easiest place in the world to make a *living* in. For instance, in summer, when the roads are good, a person, with a waggon and team, could make 5 dollars a day with hauling lumber, and people are always wanting lumber.

Now I must answer some of your questions. Fleas. No, we have none, because the boys keep the stables and the chicken-houses so clean; but our neighbours have swarms. We have no hogs, and that is another reason for our exemption.

The price of food you next ask about. We pay 5.75 dollars for a barrel of flour, which is as much as four sacks of 50 lbs. each. Potatoes 146 3/4d. a pound. Sugar about 4d. or 5d. a pound. Meat from 4d. to 7d. a pound. Butter 1s. the pound; but we never buy any. Eggs vary from 12 1/2 to 50 cents a dozen. Tea, very good, 2s. 8d. the pound. Coffee very cheap. It is difficult to tell the price of groceries, as it is the custom here to buy a dollar's worth of a thing and leave the storekeeper to give you as much or as little as his fancy dictates.

How near are we to gold mines? There is one at Sulphur Creek, about fifteen miles off; but it is not worked much now. At Sulphur Bank there is the largest quicksilver mine in the world; but there is not much going on there, as the price of quicksilver is low. It is said that one of the Rothschilds offered thirty million dollars for it in 1879. It seems incredible. Burn's Valley, in which we are, is fifty miles from the Pacific, as the crow flies.

What to say about the prospect of making money is very difficult; indeed, in a newly-settled place like this, it is impossible. Thirty years ago the ground that San Francisco stands 147 on might have been "homesteaded" (had for nothing from the Government). This place may become a popular health resort if only the railway comes on from Calistoga to Lower Lake, and then our land will be very valuable.

We have been to town to buy the things for E. F—'s room. A mattress cost 3.50 dollars; a spring ditto, 4.50 dollars. Two beautiful blankets, 4 dollars. Carpet, 35 cents a yard. The boards are so rough that a bit of carpet was necessary, and cheaper than good flooring.

148

Feb. 7th.

THIS week E. F— will actually arrive. Her room looks very nice. We have put up a blind; and the curtains are made of cheese cloth, and a bit of lace off an old parasol along the valance.

Miss May has been up for two afternoons helping me make the carpet: she is so good to me. It has been exquisite weather all the week, so hot and lovely, that we sit with all the windows and doors open.

Mr. F— is in San Francisco. His shoulder has been very bad, and he will have to go home for a long rest. He will meet E. F— and look after her.

George and I have been on the rock pile getting up maidenhair fern, which grows there in abundance. We have planted it in boxes, hoping to keep it alive through the summer.

149

[*Note by Editor.*

E. F— is a young lady who went out to live with Evelyn and help her in her domestic duties.]

Feb. 14th.

E. F— has arrived, and I cannot express to you how thankful I am to have her, or what a comfort she is and will be to me. She seems quite inclined to be happy and to like the life. The coach journey from Calistoga to Lower Lake 150 rather appalled her, and she declares she is black and blue from it. She is agreeably surprised at our comfort, and especially at her own room, which we all took great pains to make nice for her, and which she greatly appreciates.

We expected her on the 10th, and George went to Lower Lake to meet the coach, but, to our deadly disappointment, returned alone. You would have been amused to see our excitement on the afternoon of the 12th, when George went again to meet the coach. As soon as there was a chance of their being in sight we betook ourselves to the top of the rock pile, from whence we can see the road at least a mile and a half off. There, armed with opera-glasses, we waited quite three-quarters of an hour with our eyes glued on the distant road. The excitement when they at last appeared, and the grabbing at the opera-glasses for a view, was very amusing. We then raced home, and awaited their arrival in calm repose on the verandah, as if we had been sitting there all the afternoon. George is delighted with her.

151

We have at last got our Becky home again; she is evidently going to give us an addition to the family.

February 21st.

THIS week we have been so bothered with our new cow Bessie. She got away on Monday with some stray cattle, and did not come home to be milked. On Tuesday and Wednesday it was impossible to go after her, as one day was the funeral of one of our neighbours, whose death has been a great grief to all the colony, and the other day Mr. Stanley was here, and they couldn't leave him.

But on Thursday they began the chase, and the whole of that day, Friday, and Saturday 152 morning were they tearing madly after her, either on foot or horseback. Finally she was captured and brought home, almost dry. The little I have milked from her is almost butter, from having been shaken about so much.

February 27th.

I AM thankful to tell you that Bessie's milk has come back again all right. She is a sweet-tempered little beast, and I am getting quite fond of her. I think the animals are the pleasantest part of this life.

I am looking forward to having two cows to milk in the summer, and two little calves to attend to, as I shall remove them from their mothers promptly, and bring them “up by hand.” It saves a lot of trouble afterwards.

153

We are so plagued with coyotes just now. I never heard them till this last week, and now they come round the house nearly every night, and the noise they make is quite blood-curdling! long weird howls, like Vixen [a colley at home] used to make when the bugle was sounded. They sit up and do it out of “pure cussedness,” as they say out here. Last night they were running about on the little platform between E. F—'s cabin and the house—after the meat in the safe, I expect. They keep me awake dreadfully, and it is a noise that frightens one. E. F— is awfully scared at them, too.

I had no idea E. F— was such fun. It's quite delightful to be frivolous again, after so much solitude. I have laughed more in the last fortnight than I have since I left England.

We are so surprised to hear of the C—s going to Florida. People say the climate is very trying there. You have quite a mistaken idea of the Southern Californian climate at home. It is much the same as we have here—frosts in winter the same; only, when the thermometer stands as 154 high as it does here, it is awfully oppressive and enervating, on account of the near proximity of the desert; and the amount of irrigation necessary, seems to give people malaria.

This is supposed to be quite the finest climate anywhere about, and this will soon be discovered when we have the railway up here from Calistoga.

We have had immense delight in unpacking E. F—'s big boxes, and seeing all the lovely and useful things you have sent me.

We are going to have our entertainment this week for the benefit of the Hall, and especially for the purchase of a harmonium for the services. I think I told you that, when we cannot get a parson, we have a little service, conducted generally by Laurence.

155

Letter from George. March 21st.

THE entertainment was very amusing. It was on the plan of a penny reading—recitations and songs alternating, and “Box and Cox” to finish up with. I was “Cox,” and E. F—was Mrs. Bouncer. We took 61 dollars at the door. There was an account of it in the little local paper yesterday; but the copies were all sold directly it came out, so I cannot send you one.

Yesterday twenty of our olive-trees arrived, and we are going to plant them out to-morrow, also a hundred Jersey Queen strawberry-plants. We are expecting twenty more olive-trees. They are rather expensive, costing 50 cents each. In planting olives among the rocks, you have to dig holes four feet square and four feet deep, so that the roots shall not come in contact with the 156 rocks till they are strong enough to force their way through the crevices.

The peach- and plum-trees that we put in about a month ago have begun to bud, and nearly all the 130 vines we put in the garden are showing signs of life.

We have not yet sown our alfalfa, as we are still afraid of frost, but we hope to get it in in about a fortnight's time. We have got all the lumber down now for fencing it in; we are doing the alfalfa field with second-class lumber, at 8 dollars a thousand, and, as we have hauled it ourselves, it came very cheap. You see, it is an inside fence, and does not require to be so strong. First-class lumber comes to about 15 dollars a thousand feet at the mill.

We are not doing so well with our young chickens as we ought, on account of the hawks, which have eaten so many. We have now two hens sitting on 22 eggs, two sitting on 18 ducks' eggs, and one hen sitting on 7 turkeys' eggs, also two turkeys sitting on 20 turkeys' eggs. We 157 have bought a brooder from the Petalunga Company, and it has four partitions and runs. The runs will be covered with wire to prevent the depredations of the hawks.

Letter from EVELYN. March 26th.

WE have had no end of worry over the endeavours to get a nurse to come up here, and, finally, we have decided to go to Vallejo, and take up our abode there with a very good one, as no one will come to us.

That forty-mile drive to Calistoga will be rather dreadful for me, but we shall drive our own horses and take our time over it.

E. F— will pay a course of little visits, and just come up here to wash and bake.

They are all working tremendously hard just 158 now, ploughing the alfalfa field and planting forty olives; and they are going to put up a windmill, for which they have hauled the lumber. Christianson is coming to show them how to make it.

It is to act as a pump, to pump the water from the well up into the tank.

Unless the tank is full I get no water through the pipes into the house, which is the case just at this present time, owing to their having been too busy to pump, so we have to go to the well for our water, and a disgusting nuisance it is.

We have sixteen sweet little ducks out and a quantity of little chicks. Our old gobbler actually had the cheek to run after me and try to peck me, this afternoon, but a well-directed kick soon checked his career.

He made for Miss May yesterday, and she retreated before the foe in a very undignified manner; he is really a very formidable creature, exceptionally large.

It has become so hot, and the flowers are perfectly lovely. Everywhere is carpeted with 159 nemophila and a sort of small sun-flower, and, as there is any amount of the most gorgeous maidenhair on the rock pile, we always have plenty of bouquets.

The maidenhair is that large sort, and grows so huge! There are also some curious orchids.

[*Editor's Note.*

EVELYN and her husband drove to Calistoga on the 31st March and the 1st April, and went from thence by train to Vallejo, where, on the 3rd April, a little daughter was born to them.]

VALLEJO, April 24th.

GEORGE and I are going to Church to-morrow, Easter Sunday, and I expect the decorations will be lovely. I shall go into the Roman 160 Catholic church, too, to see them, as, with the wealth of flowers they have, they really ought to produce something worth seeing.

Nearly all the inhabitants here are Roman Catholics.

I wish you could have a cart-load of the flowers from here; the arum lilies grow almost wild, and larger than I have ever seen them, and the houses are covered with roses and sweet peas, which climb up even over the roofs.

The lemon-plant is a tree out here.

Letter from GEORGE. LOWER LAKE, May 12th.

WE are at home again, and got through the journey very fairly.

Evelyn caught a bad cold, but is better now. We both quite enjoyed our holiday at Vallejo, and the people there were so uncommonly kind to us, sending us daily presents of flowers and 161 fruit and jelly. They took quite an interest in Evelyn and the baby.

Our new cow and calf arrived to-day. We gave 30 dollars for them, and are much pleased with our bargain.

We have now three cows and two calves, and are expecting another shortly.

The fence round the alfalfa field is completed; it is over 1,600 feet round, and contains about four acres of alfalfa and timothy grass. All our trees and vines are in full leaf, except the olives, which look very seedy; but we think they are still alive.

The strawberries are doing well.

The windmill is a great success for drawing the water, and looks very well from the valley.

We hear the railway is certainly coming here next year, which will considerably enhance the value of this property.

We shall then have to consider whether it will be worth our while to sell it, as we shall get a great deal more than we gave.

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Letters from EVELYN continued. May 30th.

Poor E— has “poison oak.” It is a most tiresome disease, as it sometimes lasts for two or three months, and pulls people down terribly. E— has her hands covered with blisters, and, besides their being so sore, they are very irritable.

She has bought herself a very good horse for 100 dollars, but it is rather young and skittish for a beginner. I should have advised a more steady old gee.

We have had to buy our hay for this year at 5 dollars a ton. That is considered cheap for wheat hay.

We all went to Lower Lake the other evening; E— on her new horse George driving me and the baby.

We had such a return journey! E— started first, and soon after we had set forth, Fox, our horse, went dead lame; so we crawled along, and presently we came up with E— in the most unhappy

state of mind, as her horse 163 absolutely declined to go home; so she had to get into the back of the waggon and lead him along.

Soon it became pitch dark, and the roads are so rough, that we were obliged to get out and walk.

You would have laughed if you could have seen our melancholy little procession stumbling along; first, George in the waggon with his lame horse, then I and the baby, then E—leading her horse. The dog did his best to cheer us all up.

June 13th.

WE had such a scare last night. Our water-tank fell down, and it will cost a great deal to rebuild it. It has looked very crooked for some time, but the carpenter thought it was quite safe. However, he was mistaken.

George and Bob were both out for the night, having gone to a “convivial” at Cache Creek, 164 and about 4 A.M. came an appalling crash, and we all rushed out on to the verandah in our night gear, E — thinking an earthquake had happened. We soon found out what it was.

George has been working out lately, as there is not much to do here. He can get 2 dollars a day. It is the easiest thing in the world to make a living here if a man is industrious; but I am more and more hopeless of our ever making enough money over farming here to come home again. It is the old story—want of capital. No one out here expects to be rich; one can make a living, but nothing more.

We have just received *How to be Happy though Married*, and we nearly wept, we were so disappointed with it. We all expected something very amusing, and it is a regular Sunday book.

The weather is quite lovely; hot, but with a nice breeze, and the nights quite chilly.

A friend of ours here has gone off to the plains to try and make some money. He and his five 165 horses get boarded, and he gets besides 125 dollars a month. Not bad pay, is it? He drives a machine, I believe, which combines a header, thresher, and a thing to put the grain into the sacks,

and, no doubt, sews them up too! They have such extraordinary agricultural machines here. You know they don't reap grain as we do at home, but cut off the heads only, leaving the straw standing.

We have just bought a capital little second-hand cart for 50 dollars, which includes harness. It is a sort of gig, with capital springs, and runs very smoothly. Old Buck, one of our waggon-horses, is very steady, and trots along with it quite nicely. It will give me a great deal of fresh air, and enable me to take Baby out in the evenings when work is done. She is, fortunately, the best of babies, and lies awake and placid for hours in the hammock while I am busy. I think a baby makes me more home-sick instead of less, as I pine to show her to you all.

E— has been to several riding parties and picnics lately, from which I am debarred 166 because of Baby. She was thrown from her horse at one of them and badly bruised.

Things are not looking very lively. The alfalfa is dying for want of water, and we cannot irrigate it because of the loss of our tank.

July 4th.

GEORGE is working tremendously hard at rebuilding the tank, which is on stone foundations this time. We are having to fetch all our water from a neighbours, which in this awful heat is killing work.

I hope the young man you write about is not coming here to settle, for with only a capital of £100 it would be madness to attempt it. There is no homestead land to be taken up here; and if there were, £100 would be no use at all to start it with. It is ridiculous to try and make a fortune here without plenty of money to start with: fruit costs so much to put in, and one man could not look after a large orchard without 167 assistance, and labour is the most expensive item of all. A labourer who knows something of gardening can get 360 dollars a year, with a house and cow as well. I really think the men who go out as day labourers make the most money.

I went for a lovely ride on E—'s horse yesterday. Just as I had started I met young F—, who offered to come with me, to my great delight. He is such a nice boy, and so handsome; but his get-up was peculiar. A dirty flannel shirt, open at the throat, blue linen trousers, top boots, and a very large straw hat, like those flappy Leghorns.

July 20th.

DREADFUL news! Swarms of mosquitoes have come upon us, and the heat is oppressive. George and I are fearfully bitten. I suppose having had rain so late this year is some excuse for the infliction.

Laurence is gone to stay for a week with a man 168 who, with his brother, lives in a most lonely place in the woods, some distance off, too far to see much of the English colony here. His brother was going away for a week, so he persuaded Laurence to go. The night before they went he spent here with us. He was so pleased with the cheerful look of our kitchen and bright range and complimented me on Baby's appearance, remarking that she looked so well cared for, which remark pleased me, considering how hard I have to work to keep her nice.

When we were all sitting out in the moonlight he sang us the following little song out of Besant's *Uncle Jack*, which, pathetic as it is at any time, is to us doubly so. He sang it to the tune of "Jack's Yarn," and we all joined in a melancholy little chorus.

The ship was outward bound, when we drank a health around ('twas the year fifty-three, or thereabout),
We were all for Melbourne Ho! where, like peas, the nuggets grow,
And my heart, though young and green, was also stout.

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I was two-and-twenty then, and like many other men, Among that gallant company afloat, I had played in the eleven, and pulled five or six or seven, In the 'Varsity or else the College boat. We were rusticated, plucked, in disgrace, and debt, and chucked, Out of patience were our friends—and unkind, But all of us agreed, that a gentleman in need, His fortune o'er the seas would surely

find. So we liquored up and laughed, day by day aboard that craft, Till we parted at the port and went ashore; And since, of that brave crew, I have come across a few, And we liquor and we talk, but laugh no more. For if damper and cold tea the choicest blessings be, We are certainly above our merits blessed: And a gentleman in need, as is readily agreed, May very well dispense with all the rest. But as each man tells his tale, 'tis monotonous and stale, As if adventure's game was quite played out; And every honest chum, to the same hard pan must come, And no more luck was travelling about.

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'tis how one in far Fiji, went beach-combing by the sea; One in Papua pioneered and died; One took coppers on a car, or mixed nobblers at a bar, Or in country stores forgot Old Country pride. And how one lucky swain thought he'd just go home again, And was welcomed with cold shoulder by his friends; And how one dug for gold, and, as usual, he was sold; And how one peddled pins and odds and ends. And how in coral isles one courted Fortune's smiles, And how one in a shanty kept a school; North and south and east and west, how we tried our level best, And did no good at all, as a rule. And how some took to drink, and some to printer's ink, And shepherded or cattle-drove awhile; But never that I know—and so far as stories go— Did one amongst us all make his pile.

171

Well, 'tis better here than there, since rags *must* be our wear; In the Bush we are equal—every man. And we're all of us agreed, that a gentleman in need Must earn his daily damper—as he can.

[*Note by Editor.*

THUS shall end these extracts, in perhaps a melancholy note; but for those in charge of young men seeking a fortune, and for young men themselves, it is well that it should be understood that without capital “a fortune” is as difficult to make in California as in England.

Nevertheless, the foregoing simple and unstudied records, lasting over a year and a half of a very hard-working life, show that there are still places in the world where educated people may make an

honest living by the labour of their hands, and yet not be entirely cut off from the society of their equals.]

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