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THE LETTERS OF A REMITTANCE MAN TO HIS MOTHER



'I NEVAH DRINK WITH STRANGAHS'

See Page 29

**THE LETTERS OF A
REMITTANCE MAN
TO HIS MOTHER**

BY W. H. P. JARVIS

WITH FRONTISPIECE

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1908

TO
GEORGE EDWARD DRUMMOND

A LOYAL SON OF THE MOTHERLAND
WHO HAS WON FRIENDS, HAPPINESS, AND SUCCESS IN CANADA
THIS BOOK
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

THE

**LETTERS OF A REMITTANCE
MAN TO HIS MOTHER**

I

◆ *An Ultimatum* ◆ *An Extraordinary Creature* ◆ *A New Acquaintance* ◆
◆ *Looking Swagger* ◆ *Business Postponed* ◆

WINNIPEG,
August 18, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

This is a beastly, horrid place, this Winnipeg. You will be astounded when you shall have read my experiences since arriving here yesterday—the uncouthness of it all. As you will readily conceive, I took full precautions that I might put up at the best hotel, always having in mind the need to maintain appearances, while it is well to save one's feelings from being jarred by coming in contact with people who lack a full appreciation of what is due to a gentleman. My inquiries led me to drive directly to the Cecil Hotel upon my arrival, having gathered that it was the best; besides, 'Cecil' has an English ring about it. I secured a room, gave the clerk of the office an order for my lunch, and then expressed my desire to have a bath.

'No time for a bath,' said the fellow: 'lunch is off at two.'

Having heard much about the peculiarities of these people, I mastered my indignation and reasoned with the man. I said: 'But, my dear fellow, surely you can prolong the luncheon a few minutes whilst I have a wash? What! Eat luncheon coming off the train without first taking a bath. Couldn't think of it! Why, no gentleman would dream of doing such a thing. I insist upon it—I must be allowed time to wash.'

'No lunch served after two p.m.,' was his calm reply.

This made me angry, and I gave my ultimatum: 'Look here, my good fellow, if you do not prolong the luncheon-hour till I shall have washed as a gentleman should, I shall leave your hotel, sir—I shall leave your hotel.' After asserting myself so strongly, I fully expected an ample apology and compliance with my desires. Picture my surprise when the fellow coolly leaned over the counter and touched the bell, ordered the boy who appeared in answer to look after my luggage, and resumed his conversation with some person whom he was entertaining. I was never so astounded in all my life. Here was I, an Englishman, a son of a gentleman in a country belonging to England, with money to pay for what I needed, practically turned out of an hotel—for what? Simply because I would not permit myself to become a beast. Had anyone told me such a thing was possible I would not have believed it. I do not know what most gentlemen would consider the proper course under such conditions, but I exclaimed—*sotto voce*—'Extraordinary creature!' and marched out of the place with becoming dignity.

On regaining the street, I called a cab and explained my position to the driver, and soon had the satisfaction of sitting down to a nice chop after a refreshing bath. Here another peculiar phase of the possible obtaining in this land of incongruities came within my experience.

I had been watching for some time the bearing and general deportment of the fellow who was waiting upon me, and noted that his physiognomy was that of an educated man, when an incident happened which drew us into conversation. As soon as he opened his mouth I knew that he was a man of breeding, and there being no one about at the time, I ventured to ask him a number of questions. From his replies I gathered that he was a Carthusian, who had lost his patrimony in sheep-farming in Australia, and had drifted to this country. His telling me his name was Jenkins, a West England name, led me to ask if he was of the Jenkins of Wilks (you must know the Jenkins of Wilks, one of the most distinguished families of that county), and I received a reply in the affirmative. I had a few more words with him at lunch to-day, when he showed great knowledge of the country and its extraordinary inhabitants. The upshot of it all is that I have made an appointment for this evening, at my rooms, with the idea of gaining what knowledge I can from his experience.

I did not do much yesterday afternoon and evening, except unpack my luggage and loiter round until it was time to retire,

as I was very tired.

This morning, however, I felt very fit, and, deciding to see what I could of the town (these people call it 'city,' if you please), I dressed myself in my riding-breeches and shooting-jacket, and went for a walk through the business section. I dressed myself in this fashion, as I contemplated calling upon some of the land dealers with a view of ascertaining particulars as to the price of agricultural land, horses, etc., and I thought that if I dressed as I did, those whom I came in contact with would see that I knew country life in England, and could judge of a horse, etc., and that I was not likely to prove a fool in such matters; besides, I flatter myself I look rather swagger. You know you always did say, dear Mother, that I had a good figure. I did not make any calls before lunch-time, as I had much to attract my attention, and this engagement coming about, I postponed it until I should have had a talk with Jenkins.

This town with its ways is so funny, and the people all talk with a horrid American accent. Their trams they call 'street cars,' their shops are 'stores', and so on, *ad lib*.

Now, my dear Mother, I must close. My next letter, I trust, will be more interesting, but I can hardly as yet collect my wits. With lots of love to the Pater and the rest,

Believe me,

Your affectionate son,

REGINALD BROWN.

II

◆ *Jenkins Invaluable* ◆ *He Makes a Loan* ◆ *Characteristic Humour* ◆
◆ *An Accounting* ◆ *Jenkins Overjoyed* ◆

WINNIPEG,
September 2, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I can quite understand the Canadian Government putting a tax on farming machinery, but I do think they might allow one's marmalade to come in duty free. Having purchased a farm in a locality somewhat remote from any of the larger towns, though in a very good game country, there being ample prairie chickens and ducks in the vicinity to give one a pleasant hour or so of sport to break the monotony of a day of toil, I set about laying in a store of food. As you can easily believe, marmalade and jam entered largely into my commissariat, and it was when making such necessary purchases I became aware of the unreasonableness in the tariff of which I complain.

I have found Jenkins an invaluable acquisition; in fact, I should be lost without him—he knows everybody, he knows everything. As I told you in my last letter, it was my intention to improve my acquaintance with this man, brought about by such extraordinary circumstances, thinking he might be of use to me, and my hopes have been more than realized. Not only did he tell me where I could buy a farm in close proximity to good shooting and fishing, at no very great figure, but he has also told me where I could buy a hunter for the small price of \$500—only £100! An extraordinarily low price for a good animal in this land of high prices, is it not? I have always so built my hopes on having a hunter, should I ever become a colonist, and now to think they may be realized. Possessing a hunter of one's own will make it possible for one to fancy himself a squire at home, and so utterly apart from these commonplace Canadians. The best of it all is that Jenkins is to come on to the farm with me (The Oaks I call it, in honour of The Oaks, the name of the dear old place at home), and also a pal of his, Buckingham.

Buckingham I met the first evening I went out with Jenkins; in fact, Jenkins has a host of friends, all, however, like himself, stony-broke. Buckingham, however, is his closest chum, and I have become so attached to these two that I have entered into an agreement with them, whereby they are to come out and work for me on the farm, I, in the meantime, becoming their banker to the extent of a few hundred dollars, they agreeing to pay it back in labour. I think this is a very wise agreement, because it is so much nicer associating with those one is conscious are one's own social equals, than to have to put up with the uncouthness of these 'horrid' Canadians. I shall always think of Canadians as being 'horrid'—it expresses one's feelings so nicely.

In my last I promised something by way of a description of this place and its people.

Winnipeg was originally a Hudson's Bay Company post, which was called Fort Garry. It took its present name some time in the year 1874, and since then has grown wonderfully. The streets are broad, as are the pavements ('sidewalks' they call them), but the buildings are much scattered. I believe the real reason for this is that real estate interests have caused the town to spread, though I did ask one man as to the reason of the disintegrated appearance the town presented, and he told me that the original settlement had been made by a cyclone (such as I believe they frequently have in the Western States) coming over the border, picking up a neighbouring town, and transporting it through the air, till it finally dropped it at the present site. Of course, this is an attempt at humour, such as is characteristic of these people. I fail to see the humour—but they say here that an Englishman has no sense of humour—though I must admit the story conveys a very good picture of what the place is really like.

There is an odious familiarity in the manners of all whom I meet, and whenever I ask a question, a smile of amused tolerance appears upon the faces of those whom I question, which is so annoying. In fact, one is not treated as respectfully as he would be were he one of themselves, not to mention an English gentleman.

Why, do you know, I once asked a bar-tender (they do not employ barmaids in this country, and call the men 'bar-tenders') to put some soda in my whisky, and he said: 'All right, old chappie.' Did you ever hear of such impertinence?

Jenkins says this was in keeping with the manners generally obtaining among these people. And only to think, we must recognize them as British!

Now that I am about to leave for The Oaks and say good-bye to the haunts of man, I think it would be right if I were to give an account of the £1,000—or, to put it in this wretched money, the \$5,000—the Governor had put to my credit in the bank here.

The account is as follows:

200 acres of land	\$3,000.00
1. Hunter (Nero)	500.00
2. Guns and ammunition	400.00
3. Rifles	300.00
4. Marmalade, jam, biscuits, potted meats, etc.	200.00
5. Amount advanced Jenkins and B.	200.00
	<hr/>
	\$4,600.00

You notice that this would leave me \$400.00 if I had not spent some \$200.00 in personal expenses since arriving here. I have, therefore, \$200.00 with which to begin farming, an amount which I consider ample, as I am informed that oxen will do instead of horses for farm-work, and are cheaper to purchase and cost less to keep. We are to buy our farming equipment at the nearest town as we require it, and I believe oxen are easily obtainable in all towns. I may say the farm I have purchased is described as having house and stable and of good soil. I bought it on the recommendation of Jenkins, who personally knew the agent who had it on sale. Jenkins was so overjoyed at my having obtained this great bargain that he got in a wretched state of intoxication immediately upon my purchase. This is a failing of his, of which I trust I may be able to cure him.

I must close now, with heaps of love to all,

I remain,

Your affectionate son,

REGINALD BROWN.

III

◆ *A Setting Out* ◆ *Obstreperous Oxen* ◆ *A Retreat* ◆ *New Ways and Means* ◆
◆ *No Damage Done* ◆ *Game in Plenty* ◆ *Local Economy* ◆ *Fair Play* ◆

THE OAKS,
WINTON, MANITOBA,
September 15, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I am thoroughly convinced that oxen are the most detestable creatures on earth. As I intimated before, I decided to purchase oxen in lieu of working horses as a method of offsetting my extravagance in purchasing a hunter.

When I landed at Winton, the nearest town to the railway to The Oaks, I put my intention into acts, and purchased Moody and Sankey, two sleek, well-fed, guileless-appearing bovines, four years old. I immediately took quite a fancy to the animals, the more so as all with whom I spoke assured me that oxen were preferable to horses for a beginner, because they require less attention, and are less particular about what they eat than are horses. I am still persuaded that this argument is sound when it applies to oxen which are trained, or broken, as the expression is here. To make a long story short, I had these wretched oxen which I had bought, brought round to the hotel where we were staying the morning we were to leave town. (It is the custom in this country to call the veriest settlement a 'town,' and I find myself doing even as the Romans.) The loafers from the hotels gathered on the street to see us set out, all with idiotic grins upon their faces. To Jenkins, from the fact of saying he had driven oxen in the colonies, I gave the team in charge, and he untied them from the post, and, with our belongings safely packed in the waggon, the guns and rifles easily attainable should we meet any wild animals, we moved ahead. I mounted Nero and took the lead, and with my eyes roaming over the boundless prairies, I began dreaming of the Indians and bison which once possessed these plains, when I was brought down to the present by hearing Jenkins exclaim: 'Get up, you horrid Canadian ox, or I shall hit you.' I turned Nero's head, and saw that the team had come to a stop, and that Jenkins was hitting Moody with the whip. The crowd, or some of them, were walking towards the waggon when I rode Nero back. Moody first put his head in the air, then down to the ground, and then started to back, while Sankey decided to go ahead, and got his leg over the trace. Buckingham caught Moody by the horns and gave him a pull. 'Better build a fire under him,' shouted one of the crowd. 'Get into the scrimmage,' called a man to me. (This fellow, I believe, is an Englishman, who has been 'civilized,' or imbued with the customs and language of the country.) 'Twist his tail,' came from another, and on this advice Jenkins acted. I was now off my horse and beside Jenkins, to see if I could do anything. I picked up a stick and hit the obstreperous Moody over the flank, when he immediately sprang forward, and Sankey with him, and away they went down the road, dragging Jenkins by the reins, who, as they turned off the road to the right shouted: 'Gee! gee!—no, I beg your pardon: haw!—you ugly brutes.' But they tore off across the prairie, and the crowd roared with laughter as our goods were scattered along the route, while we did our best to keep up. Across the path lay a wire fence, and they went into this at full speed, breaking through; but a wheel catching in a post, their mad career was stopped, and Moody was thrown on his back, kicking wildly. When we arrived, I could not help laughing at the sight, and Jenkins remarked: 'Look at the beastly antics the blooming animal is kicking up.'^[1]

The men came out from town and immediately suggested that we untangle the oxen, which they finally did for us, and we found that the animals were not injured further than being badly cut by the barbed wire. We all went back to town, and collected our goods and chattels on the way, and two days later left again for this place.

While in town I visited several of the shops again, and in one of them I saw some appliances made of two straps connected together by a chain, which I learned were hobbles, used for fastening the feet of horses together that they might not run away. I asked the shopkeeper if they could be applied to oxen, and was assured they could. As I had been warned about a steep bit of a hill which lay on the way to this place, and that I should not let the oxen run down it, I conceived that if I should hobble them at the top of the hill there should be no danger of them going too fast.

When we again set out and when we came to the hill about which I had been forewarned, I stopped Moody and Sankey

on the brow and put the hobbles on them. They were at first very reluctant to move, and it was only after considerable urging that I induced them to budge. Finally I got them going by the liberal use of the whip, and away they started. I immediately saw that I had made a mistake in hobbling them, as it made them break into a kind of a canter which they could not maintain, and the first thing I knew was that they had fallen down and the waggon was pushed down on top of them. Fortunately, just then a man accustomed to oxen came along, and very kindly helped us to extricate poor Moody and Sankey, and I was delighted to find that neither was injured.

Our new friend saw us safely off for this place, at which we safely arrived at last.

From a conversation I had with a very nice chap, whom I met in town during my stay there, I gather that my oxen have had but very little training, and that the names 'Moody' and 'Sankey' had been given them as satire on account of the reputation oxen have of inspiring profanity. This may convey a good idea of our experiences with these horrid creatures. Jenkins assures me he has never known any such, and his experience had not embraced Canadian oxen. As he expressed it: 'My dear Brown, I have never had to do with horrid Canadian oxen. The oxen I have had to drive are those the poets sing about, the gentle, mild-eyed creatures one heard of in one's nursery days.'

We are now fairly well settled at The Oaks, and though the house is nothing more than a 'shack' (the Western name for a small shanty built of rough boards), we are quite happy.

The game in the vicinity, though small, is abundant, there being no end of prairie chicken (a species of grouse), while the ducks in the autumn are very abundant; and I have a large lake, or slough, upon my farm, in which, I am told, they congregate in the autumn.

The prairie, as you know, is a vast level plain almost totally devoid of trees. It is covered with grass and wild-flowers, many of which latter are pretty, but have no perfume.

The sunsets here are really glorious, and now that the harvesting season is here the sky is lit up at night by countless fires caused by the farmers burning their straw. Some of my neighbours whom I have seen tell me that I should plough my land this fall (autumn), so as to be ready for 'seeding' in the spring; but others, again, say I can plough it in the spring and then plant my corn.

As I am having a man train Moody and Sankey, and as I lack the implements necessary, I have decided to forego these operations until the spring. As I find myself short of money, and as I feel I shall need some for my expenses this winter, and it will be necessary to purchase machinery in the spring, I think I must call upon you for a hundred pounds or so, to see me through. Please see the Governor on this point. When you have explained matters to him, I have no doubt he will send the needful.

Many of the settlers here 'swap' work and machinery — that is, one man works so many days with his neighbours, and then his neighbour works so many days with him, and a like trade is made with their machinery. In this way they manage very nicely; but of course, being an Englishman, I cannot become so intimate with my neighbours, but must have a complete set for myself.

By way of getting in training, we three are now digging a well, or rather deepening one which has gone dry. It is already quite deep. One of us works in it for ten minutes at a time, and then the other hoists him out by the windlass. By this method we have deepened it as much as a foot in a day. A visitor one day told me that we were using most of the time 'hauling' each other out of the hole; but I believe in fair play, and turn about is fair play.

With kind wishes and hoping you will use your good offices with the Governor, I remain,

Ever your affectionate son,

REGINALD BROWN.

IV

◆ *An Invitation* ◆ *A Peculiar Beast* ◆ *Advice Impotent* ◆ *Dignity Sustained* ◆
◆ *Education* ◆ *The Law of Custom* ◆ *Burlesque* ◆

THE OAKS,
WINTON, MANITOBA,
October 20, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I have your letter enclosing £20, for which I thank you. I can not quite understand the Governor's idea of not sending me any more money with which to buy machinery until the spring; but perhaps it is because he may consider I would be unable to use it as it should be used, or he has been reading some of the absurd accounts that I hear are being published at home about the remittance man here. How absurd all this talk! Why should not a man get a remittance if he has anyone who takes a pleasure in giving it to him (as I know you have pleasure, dear Mother, in giving me this £20 out of your pin-money)? And it was so very, very opportune. The very day it arrived, Carlisle, a wealthy chap who has a large establishment about twenty miles from here, called on me, and asked me to attend a meet which was to take place at his farm within a few days.

The quarry was to be coyotes, a species of jackal. I was only too delighted to accept, and it was attending this meet that delayed my acknowledging your kindness, which you will believe I value the more when I say that were it not for your money I would have been unable to accept Carlisle's invitation, for one must have money upon such occasions. Though the local shopkeepers readily give me any supplies I desire, I would have been at a loss to know where to seek ready cash on such short notice.

And now I must tell you of the meet. We were booked to be at Carlisle's on the evening before, and by six o'clock a host of fellows had arrived, all ravenously hungry after riding through the invigorating atmosphere of an autumnal afternoon. Carlisle is a bachelor, and his whole establishment is looked after by men, and so our dinner was rather of a rough-and-ready character. It was good, however, and of a substantial nature, such as an active life on the plains demands. Added to this, there was an abundance of wine, so it may be said that we 'dined.'

On the following morning we gathered in the yard and looked over the horses. Among the many was a piebald animal, such as I have often seen in pictures, but never before in the flesh. I asked one of Carlisle's fellows concerning the animal, and he said it was of Mexican stock, a pinto. 'He's mean,' said the fellow. Carlisle and his friends kept looking over the animals, and finally their attention was attracted by the pinto. When this occurred I drew among the group, as I desired to know more about this animal. 'He's a peculiar-looking beast.'

'Yes,' answered he. 'He's peculiar in his looks, and his ways and means are more so. He's as mean a brute as I ever met.'

'What am I to understand by "mean"?'

'Mean—ugly, bad-tempered, vicious. It's a Western phrase.'

'Do you mean to say he will bolt with one?'

'Not bolt; he'll throw you off.'

The horse was small, with sleepy, languid eyes, and stood with drooping head and reins thrown on the ground before him, in the manner in which these horses are trained to stand. He looked anything but vicious, and as I considered myself a pretty good horseman in England, I did not relish being chaffed, as I thought, by Carlisle. As I said before, we had 'dined' the night before, and I thought the wine still affected Carlisle enough to make him forget what was due to a guest.

'But, my dear chap, you don't mean to say that this horse can throw a man taught to ride by a riding master in England? It's ridiculous! I'll ride him.'

'No, you'd better not—he'll throw you,' said Carlisle.

The assurance of Carlisle's tone irritated me, while I noticed others were watching me with an expectant grin, and some who were slightly intoxicated were making remarks which made it impossible for me not to insist upon riding the animal.

It appeared very much as if they were trying to 'bluff' me. I was satisfied the animal was perfectly harmless, and that sport was being made of me. Just then Bronco Jack, the fellow I had first spoken to regarding the animal, sidled up to me and whispered: 'Better steer clear of him, stranger: he bucks.' I did not know what 'bucks' signified, nor did I care. I walked up to the animal, caught the reins in my hands, and although he was saddled with one of the uncouth saddles commonly used in this country, and which I was unaccustomed to, I put my foot in the stirrup and threw myself on the seat. The horse remained perfectly quiet. I got well seated, tightened the reins, and gave the animal my heels.

Just what happened next I do not know. I felt the horse go several times into the air, and at each descent my head jolted horribly, my jaws came together, and an awful shock ran up my spinal column.

The next thing, Carlisle was lifting me to my feet and brushing the dust from my clothes, while the horrid horse stood with the same vacant, innocent expression in his eyes, though vaguely watching me, and the crowd was convulsed with laughter. I never felt so humiliated in my life.

'All right, old chap,' said Carlisle; 'this will be part of your education.'

He and the others went on to explain how the wild horses of the plains were given to these tricks, and finally, for my edification, and the entertainment of his guests in general, he asked Bronco Jack to show what bronco-busting really was. Bronco Jack immediately mounted the horse, who, however, seemed to know with whom he had to deal, and refused to 'buck.' The rider gave him his head and dug his heels into his ribs. The sleepy, apparently broken-down horse became a veritable demon. His head went between his fore-legs, he rounded his back into a bow, and again and again he sprang into the air, to land with his four feet close together. The jar on the rider must have been tremendous. Then he tried jumping sideways, and twisting while in the air—all to no purpose. The man sat tight, and finally the horse gave up the game. The same vacant stare came into his eyes, and the wild nature, erstwhile rebellious, was again dormant.

Carlisle's meet was a happy one, and we spent two or three very happy days. Before we left for our homes, the whole party rode in to town. With Carlisle I walked into one of the bars to have a whisky. A roughly dressed fellow was drinking, and the moment we entered, hailed Carlisle. 'Hulloa, Carlisle! Come and have a drink. Bring your friend. How the h— are you?'

'Oh, very well. Just been ridding the country of a few coyotes.'

He drew up and shook hands with his rough-looking friend. I did not like the man's looks, so held back. 'Come on,' said Carlisle, 'and have a drink.'

'I never drink with strangers,' I replied.

Carlisle then had a drink with the fellow and joined me.

The bar-room was now filled by the other fellows coming in, and Carlisle issued a general invitation, but his new-found friend held back.

'Better join us,' said Carlisle; but the fellow put his hand in his pocket and drew out a large silver coin, put it in his eye like a monocle, and said in a most affected tone: 'I nevah drink with strangahs.'

The whole crowd roared with laughter, including the bar-tender, while I blushed crimson. It would have only made things worse to get angry, so I said nothing. In fact, I am learning that the less one says in this country the better.

The man who was the means of my discomfiture, I learn, is quite a good sort. Has been to Oxford, and is one of the successful Englishmen in this country. His reputation is that he is a hard drinker, can ride any horse that runs, and owns more head of cattle than any other rancher in the cattle districts further West. He was in town on a visit only.

This is assuredly a wonderful country.

Affectionately yours,
REGINALD BROWN.



V

◆ *Christmas on the Prairie* ◆ *Moody Dies* ◆ *A Test of Strength* ◆
◆ *A Mental Picture* ◆ *The Soul's Unburdening* ◆

THE OAKS,
WINTON, MANITOBA,
January 10, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

The winter is now on the prairie. The Christmas holidays are over, and we have settled down in our 'shack,' determined to make the best of our environments until spring.

The hamper you sent out from home did noble service, and I can assure you we all appreciated it.

Christmas Day with us was fine and cold. The great unbroken surface of the prairie seemed weird and desolate, and highly calculated to fill one with moodiness and homesickness. Looking through the window, one's eye would seek the horizon, and thoughts would come of all at home and what you were doing there. This prairie fairly enchants one, and in its dreamy whiteness there is the look of death; but again it has its power over one, so I'll seek diversion telling you of our Christmas.

We did not rise until eleven, or rather at that time Jenkins rose and cooked our breakfast. By twelve we all sat down, and, after our meal, we opened your hamper. It was quite exciting. I, of course, undid the fastenings, while Jenkins and Buckingham stood near and speculated on what it would contain, making jokes, etc. We all knew it would be generous, but the half-dozen of Burgundy was more than we expected, while the three bottles of Scotch whisky were just what we wanted to entertain any of our friends who might call.

In this country one's taste naturally runs to the more ardent spirits, and increases with residence. A man seldom drinks wine in the West. Jenkins immediately sampled the whisky, and pronounced it good, and took charge of the bottles. We all drank your health, and the healths of all our friends. After that we went to the stable to visit Nero and Moody and Sankey.

I should mention here that the villainous Moody has died since, and fearing a like fate would overtake Nero, I have sold him for £10, keeping Sankey to work the farm in the spring. A neighbouring farmer told me I had starved the poor beast to death, but I cannot believe this, for while we never rose very early in the morning, we used to give all the animals quantities of hay every evening, and they certainly had enough to eat. I must admit that during several very cold days we neglected to water them, but surely the lack of water for one day would not kill a big strong ox.

After giving the animals all they could eat of hay and oats, we went back to the house and drank a few more toasts, after which we read for a bit, and then I began to get dinner. Fancy your humble servants cooking a Christmas dinner! Our utensils are at present limited, so I was forced to make the soup in a frying-pan. You just boil a tin of oysters in a little water, and throw in some butter, pepper and salt. After dinner some of the neighbouring fellows from home came round, and the Scotch was again produced. Some of our friends were our guests till morning.

From Christmas until now existence has been a dreary monotony, with nothing much to do except smoke, sleep, and eat. By way of amusing myself not long ago, I wrote some verses, which, while not altogether poetry, I forwarded to a Winnipeg paper for publication—more to see if the editor would have the hardihood to publish them than for any other motive. He mutilated them, put them in a dialect, as he termed it, and prefaced them with the following:

'The verses following are evidently the outpourings of the soul of some Englishman who has not yet been assimilated. We have ventured to add the effect of dialect, thinking that with this flavouring they will appeal more strongly to our readers.'

Here are the first two stanzas:

A PROTEST

This is a 'blawsted' country;
It's awful, don't you know—
So very hot 'tis scorching,
When not o'erlain with snow.
Colonials are such 'boundahs,
One's nerves they irritate.
They should be taught their places,
Our ways to imitate.

Their names for things are fiendish:
They call our cotton 'thread,'
And 'wheat' they keep on naming
The corn to make one's bread.
Disdaining our enlightenment,
They say, 'What's in a name?'
And 'Custom makes the language,'
Whilst we should rule the same.

I do not exactly know the idea of the 'dialect,' but I can fancy the editor doctoring up my poor tribute to the muse and smiling, as these people do when talking to an Englishman. It's this long-suffering, patronizing smile that irritates one most in this country. It conveys such an air of fancied superiority on their part, and is particularly out of place when one considers the light in which we hold them; but the worst of it is, that our opinion of them does not seem to trouble them a bit. Of course, I never show my irritation to them as I express it to you, but you can understand one's feelings.

The long-drawn wail of the coyotes coming across the prairies is putting me out of humour for writing, so I will close. Again thanking you, and hoping to hear from you soon,

I remain,

Yours affectionately,

REGINALD BROWN.

VI

◆ *Hope Renewed* ◆ *Right and Wrong* ◆ *The Verdict of the Soil* ◆ *Realization* ◆

WINTON, MANITOBA,
September 2, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

The farmer's life is not for me: of this I am thoroughly convinced. I have sold The Oaks, and put all the proceeds over and above my indebtedness, some £100, into the purchase of some land in the neighbourhood of the new finds of petroleum made recently in this country, and I am sure that I shall do well in my investment. I did not decide upon this course without giving the matter due deliberation, and I have the assurance of both Jenkins and the agent handling the property that immense fortunes have been made in other countries by those who bought early—'got in on the ground-floor,' as they express it here—in the oil-fields, and I see no good reason why oil should not exist in this country as well as in any other.

From the accounts I see in the papers, there is certain to be a duplicate of the Pennsylvania or the Balkan fields here in Western Canada, and I have decided to gain a portion of the money to be made by shrewd investment.

My essay at farming has not been successful. The £100 the Governor sent me to buy machinery with was nearly all absorbed to pay my debts contracted during the winter, and nothing was left to buy the necessary implements, so I engaged a neighbour to plough some ten acres for me. I found one ox insufficient for the work, and sowed the corn by hand, the old-fashioned way.

The chap who ploughed the land for me told me I should do it by machinery, but I reasoned that the way they did it in the olden days (I remembered well the pictures of the husbandman sowing corn in my school-books) should be good enough for a beginner. I find that by machinery the seed is sunk three or four inches into the ground in drills and covered to this depth. Although I harrowed the land so thoroughly that there was not a seed left in sight, the seeds were soon exposed and eaten by the gophers (a small animal like a ground-squirrel) and the birds, for the weather subsequent to my planting was hot and dry, and the high winds which prevail on the prairies swept away the loose soil.

This would probably not have happened to such an extent had I ploughed my land last autumn, as the time lost by ploughing this spring permitted the escape of the moisture resulting from the melting of the winter snows, which is depended upon for the germination of the seed when the spring is dry. I am further informed that by deeper planting of the seed by machinery greater moisture is gained, as there is a clay subsoil impervious to water, which retains that resulting from the melting snow, and, in a general way, the deeper the seed is planted, the more benefit it will receive from this moisture.

All this is what one must learn by experience, and I am now strongly of the opinion that a young fellow coming out to this country, a stranger, to take up farming should engage himself to work with one who has made a success of the business, and thus acquire the necessary experience. That's why I say farming is not for me, for I could never bring myself, unless prompted by dire necessity, to enter the employ of one of those uncouth creatures one finds the most successful in this country. When I came to realize that I should have practically no returns from my land in the fall I visited the chap who ploughed the land for me. He was working in his garden, and a very nice garden it was. When I told him of my trouble, without looking up from his work, he replied: 'Yes, you fellows come out here thinking that you know it all. You won't do as you see others doing, and then you curse the country and all that is in it.'

This demonstrating the humour the boor was in, I did not prolong my call, but spared his churlish temper the questions I had intended to ask him, and returned home determined to sell out, and have done with it.

When I offered my land for sale, I found that the lake on my farm, of which I was so proud, was everywhere considered a detriment, which goes to show that these people have no soul for sport, nor yet for the picturesque; hence the small price I was able to realize for my property.

I should be very distressed over all this did I not feel assured that I shall do well with my petroleum lands. Trusting that you will approve of my action, and knowing that I have your best wishes for my good fortune,

I remain,

Your affectionate son,

REGINALD BROWN.

VII

◆ *Charity* ◆ *Farm Life* ◆ *A Mistake* ◆ *A Suggestion* ◆

RANKIN'S FARM,
WINTON, MANITOBA,
September 15, 1—.

DEAR MOTHER,

Jenkins is a scoundrel and I am an ass. Had anyone told me before I learnt to know this man that an English gentleman could be so thoroughly unprincipled as Jenkins has been in his treatment of me, I should not have believed it. I am now convinced that he persuaded me to pay twice the market value of my farm, to the end that he might share in the profits of the agent selling; and that he refrained from telling me the better course in the cultivation of the same, as its proper working would entail efforts on us all; and that, finally, still unsatisfied, he betrayed me still further into the purchase, from a rascally agent, of land such as any man may have for the asking in this country. It fairly staggers one's trust in humanity. Here I am without a sou, robbed and deserted by him I trusted as a friend.

Nor do I gain a word of sympathy. Rankin, the man for whom I am now working, and to whom I told my troubles, on hearing the tale, spoke as others, too, have spoken: 'You fellows, when you come here first, at once seek out an Englishman with whom to deal. You will not trust Canadians. It may be natural, but it's unwise, and the result is you fall a prey to the first remittance man who catches hold of you. I've heard your story a hundred times.'

I asked him if he could give me employment, to which he replied that he did not suppose I was much good. 'But I guess you have to eat, and the harvest will soon be on. I'll see if you are any good.'

It was hard not to resent this patronizing speech, notwithstanding its spice of kindness. However, it was Hobson's choice, so here I am, one of the 'hired men,' though in all other respects one of the family. There is no social distinction between the employer and the employee on the prairie farm. We all work equally hard, and all dine together and submit to each other's pleasantries. Half-past four each morning we are aroused, and a considerable part of the routine is gone through before breakfast, at half-past six. The work agrees with me. I am thoroughly tired out each evening, and when not quite exhausted, feel wonderfully fit and well.

I have had great attention attracted to myself recently, through my being the victim of an accident which afforded a great deal of amusement to all save myself. I may say that my distress was caused by my not understanding the meaning of the word 'corn' as used in Canada. Corn is the name these people give to maize.

In my thirst for knowledge last winter I asked whence the fur which the great-coats almost universally worn in that season are made, and was informed that it was 'coonskin,' or racoon, to speak correctly—an animal which lives in the vicinity of 'corn'-fields.

Three or four of us were working on some 'scrub' land—that is, land on which there were small bushes or scrub—when I saw a number of small animals which I thought were coons. They were moving along slowly, and paid no attention to me. I shouted out: 'Look at the coons! What pretty little creatures!'

'Catch them!' shouted one of the fellows in reply, and I immediately gave chase.

They quickened their pace but little, and I had no trouble in catching them up. I caught one of them by the tail, when—oh, horrors! I was nearly suffocated with the most horrid odour. The little beast was a polecat—a skunk—and now I hear nothing but 'What pretty little animals!' etc., as these fellows chaff me unmercifully. I had an awful time; everybody avoided me, and even the dogs would bristle and growl at my approach. I was given a complete change and a tub of water in the stable; but though it is now ten days ago, I am not yet rid of the feeling that I smell unpleasantly, and have been unable to regain the friendship of the dogs.

I do not blame the animals—it is the only way they have of protecting themselves—but I do think that something should

be done to secure a uniformity in the application of terms throughout the Empire. I really think I shall write a letter to *The Times*, pointing out the dangers arising from present conditions.

Do not worry because I have been compelled to enter the service of a farmer. He is a decent enough chap, and not unsusceptible to the humorous sallies of my fellows, though when I attempt any pleasantries, he fails to comprehend, and looks at me in a vague sort of way, as if he did not understand. Nor do I believe he does. I try to explain; he mutters and seems suspicious.

With best love to all,

I remain,

Your affectionate son,

REGINALD BROWN.

VIII

◆ *Comparisons* ◆ *The Same in Australia* ◆ *The Stern School* ◆ *Comparison* ◆
◆ *Preparing to Reap* ◆ *Intent Discerned* ◆

RANKIN'S FARM,
WINTON, MANITOBA,
September 20, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

It has been a great surprise to me to find that our parson here, Mr. Reid, an old countryman, does not dislike Canadians at all, but is quite fond of this country and its people. Mr. Reid is a public school and University man, which makes it all the more surprising. He is on very friendly terms with Rankin, and it was on Sunday afternoon when he dropped in on his way home from holding service in the school-house near here that I met him. His parish is quite extensive, and he has all the work he can attend to.

After he bade Rankin good-bye he spoke very kindly to me, and I walked on the road some distance with him, he also walking and leading his horse. I had made some remark complaining of the want of respect shown to Englishmen by the people of this country.

'Look here,' he said, 'what kind of a time would one of these farmers' boys have if he were landed in upon a crowd of public-school boys at home? Would your form at home have taken such a boy to themselves and made life a treat for him, or would you have treated him as an outsider?'

I could answer only that we should not have been entirely affectionate.

'Well, then, how do you suppose these people can sympathize with you? In fact, Rankin here, I have no doubt, employs you more out of kindness than because he cannot get a man to suit him better for the money he pays you. This is kindness, and as such should be appreciated by you.'

'But,' I said, 'Englishmen seem to be disliked.'

'Not at all, except what they bring upon themselves. And then think of the class of Englishmen who come out here. We were three boys in our family, and our father used to say that if we did not get on well at home, he would send us to the Colonies. I came here because I fancied the field for my labours, and, please God, I am leading a useful life; but my two brothers are in Australia, and are no more a success than you will be here if you take to drink and don't learn to meet your fellow-men half-way. This is a land of production, and to make this land produce one has to work, and consequently a man's worth is estimated by the amount of work he can do. You will find that an education in the classics won't do you much good unless it is backed by a naturally philosophical temperament.'

'Are there many unsuccessful Englishmen in Australia?' I asked.

'Yes; the misfit and the failure are more numerous there than in Canada. That is because Australia is farther away from England than Canada is, and there is less chance of a wayward boy drifting back home from Australia than from here to embarrass his family; consequently more prodigals are sent to Australia. It is not fair to the Colonies, and it is no wonder that the Colonies object.'

Here the incident that happened to me in the bar-room, when the so-called 'civilized' Englishmen brought so much ridicule on me, came to my mind, and I said that I had met educated Englishmen who had caused my discomfiture.

'Yes,' replied Mr. Reid; 'until you broaden your sympathies you will find that there are none so prone to hammer sense into you as your fellow-countrymen who have assimilated. In fact, no person has a greater contempt for the tenderfoot than they, or is more inclined to display it.'

I smiled at this and asked him if there was any hope for me.

'Yes, decidedly, after you have been broke, and go hungry several times, in the midst of plenty, for the want of money to buy a meal. There is nothing like hunger to bring a boy to his senses, especially if he has strength of character enough to abstain from vice.'

We chatted away for some time, till some remark of his prompted me to say: 'You must be a democrat.'

'I don't know that I am altogether a democrat, but I will say I am much more of a democrat now than I was before I viewed life in Australia and Canada. The struggle for existence in a new country is a test of character, and the temptations lying about try the soul. Perhaps it is that the sight of a man who can talk of swell London clubs or quote Latin verse blacking one's boots, and rushing with the money so earned to the nearest bar-room, is most conspicuous from the height of the fall; but such spectacles I have seen frequently enough to destroy much of my erstwhile veneration for birth and education.'

I now stopped to bid Mr. Reid good-bye. 'Good-bye,' he said, shaking my hand. 'God bless you! I hope I have not spoken too plainly to you on points concerning your deoprtment. For most strangers to do so it would be a sign of friendship. I do it because I conceive it to be my duty, as well from the friendship I entertain for you because I think you will yet turn up trump.'

As you will readily fancy, this conversation has given me deep thought. I wonder shall I ever become 'civilized'?

Operations on the farm are now directed to preparation for the harvest. To me the approaching operations will be highly interesting, and I shall gain all the information, and write you a full account of same. You may call it my essay on harvesting, and I will fancy myself back in school.

To-day, as I was working about the yard, one of the fellows who were employed near me said: 'Ho, Sam, did you ever hear a remittance man's description of farming in Manitoba?'

'No,' replied Sam.

'It is this: "'Tis nice upon the wintah's morning to get up and look out upon the open prairie, and see the little buttahflies making buttah and the grawshoppahs making graws.'"

This was said so that I could overhear it—it was intended I should overhear it. How ridiculous! Butterflies don't make butter, nor do grasshoppers make grass.

Your affectionate son,
REGINALD BROWN.

IX

◆ *The Reaping* ◆ *The Harvest* ◆ *The Prairie Settler* ◆ *The Colonist's First Requisite* ◆

RANKIN'S FARM,
WINTON, MANITOBA,
September 27, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

The very life of Rankin's Farm—indeed, that of the country as a whole—is the harvest. The cutting of grain throughout the length and breadth of the land is now in full swing, and the binders (the machine that is used to cut the grain in this country also binds it into sheaves, and is called a binder) are everywhere reducing the broad fields of yellow corn into sheaves, which are piled into stooks by the men who follow after, and then they are gathered up in waggons and formed into stacks, or, in some cases, as with us, are carried directly to the thresher, where six or eight men 'pitch' the sheaves to the 'cutter' on either hand of the 'feeder.' The cutters have each a table before them, and as the sheaf is flung on these he cuts the twine that binds it, and slides it in front of the feeder, who pushes or 'feeds' it into the thresher in its disintegrated form. The thresher proper is a cylinder of wood or iron in which spikes are inserted in rows, which revolves at high speed, the spikes passing between other rows of spikes in the body of the machine. This loosens the grain and the chaff from the straw; the latter flies from the machine and the former goes through the separators and the cleaners, in which the chaff and 'seeds' are removed, and the clean corn pours from a spout into bags ready to receive it. All is done with amazing speed. We work hard, needless to say—and such appetites we have!

The weather these days is glorious. The air in the morning is chilly and bracing. At noon it is hot, and the evenings deliciously cool, with delightful sunsets. Far over the prairies are to be seen the great fields with grain half cut, and the pillars of smoke arising from the steam threshing 'outfits.' Now is tribute gathered from the soil, and the fires which gleam through the darkness of the night speak of the corn being separated from the chaff. In cutting the fields, which are most rectangular and often square, the binders start on the edge and wind round and round the field, and as the grain is cut and stoked the border so treated sets off the uncut portion with effect.

The harvest is a bounteous one, and even the good humour has infected the 'hired men.' These farmers all complain of their hard work, but, nevertheless, they seem to enjoy life, and I never yet met a people who were so thoroughly devoid of care or bore—at least, the semblance of being so. The life, however, is certainly one of hard work, and I often contrast the life Rankin leads with what I pictured should be mine ere I set foot in Canada. Though the life here is hard, it commends itself to one as being infinitely preferable to that led by many of our people at home, who, with equal labour, gain their livelihood and nothing else. The farmer here owns his land—something to leave to his children. The prairies' bleakness is mitigated, and even overcome, by the planting of trees, while in many places, where the settling of the districts has prevented the recurrence of prairie fires, Nature is asserting herself, and trees are springing up. The prairie is practically treeless only because the fires have gained the upper hand.

As a rule, the prairie farmer tills but a portion of his land. One finds these fellows holding anywhere from one hundred to fifteen hundred acres, and even more, and tilling but 25 to 75 per cent, of the same. Of course, some of the untilled land is poor or worthless, but the great portion simply lacks draining and clearing. To picture this great country peopled, tilled, and cultivated to its full, is to view the Empire's greatest asset. Men here from Eastern Canada have told me the tale of the early settlement of Eastern Canada, and hardships endured by the United Empire Loyalists and the early Scotch settlers in overcoming the wilderness in Ontario and in Eastern Canada generally, and I cannot help thinking that the task before the prairie settler is but slight in comparison with that faced by the Loyalists and the wards of Lord Selkirk.

I am now convinced that the first requisite of the successful colonist is a cheerful disposition and training to work. The nature to be content on the prairies alone amid hardship is not contained in every man, while the ability to do hard work in dreary, monotonous forms is largely the product of birth; but where the two are combined, or the latter exists to a marked degree, there you have an ideal settler, a man who can, be his fortunes what they may, secure for himself an

independence within a decade in this vast extent of latent corn-fields.

Your affectionate son,
REGINALD BROWN.



X

◆ *An Impetuous Shot* ◆ *The Shooting of Rankin* ◆ *The Advent of Winter* ◆

WINTON, MANITOBA ,
October 23, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Such a dreadful thing has happened—I have shot a man. The last of harvest saw a fall of snow, that quickly went. There followed then a month of weather almost ideal, called in this country 'Indian summer,' which bears an individuality all its own. A frosty night is followed by a day of glorious sunshine; the air has power to lend exhilaration to one's spirits, while the sky takes on its deepest blue. The leaves of the shrubs and bushes turn yellow and red, and bedeck the landscape close at hand, and tinge that upon the distance. It seems as if it were a recompense for the winter close at hand.

One such day I gained permission to go hunting prairie chickens, and Rankin lent me his gun. I set out, and had the best of sport, and so kept on and on. The air was bracing, and it seemed that I could walk for ever; but all at once I noticed the sun was getting low, and I set out on my return. As I was getting close to home I came upon a bluff of poplars, and all at once I noticed something moving about among the trees of a projecting cluster at a distance of about a hundred yards. I stood looking at its erratic movements: it stood still, and then it seemed to dart out of sight, to reappear somewhere else. The locality was a place none of the men ever went to, as it lay some distance from the house, and there was nothing to attract anyone there. All this I reasoned, and felt sure it must be some wild animal, so I let drive.

My shot was answered by most awful human shouts and yells, and a man sprang from out the bushes and shouted, 'Don't shoot! don't shoot!'—as if there were any fear of my shooting again when I knew it was a man.

I ran towards him, and he pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and held it to his face. When I caught him up, he was swearing like a trooper. I told him I had not done it on purpose, to which he replied with a torrent of abuse. I never heard a man swear so violently, and such names he called me! He said I was a 'fool, d—— fool of an Englishman, who should never have been turned loose in a civilized country,' and a lot more such rot. Just fancy! How these people think that this is a civilized country, and in comparison with England! I told him that I had thought he was a wild beast among the bushes, and then he wished to know how I thought I could injure a wild animal with a small shot-gun at about a hundred yards. This made him start off with another volley of oaths and abuse.

Of course, I could not dream of continuing my engagement with a man who used such language to me, so I requested him to pay me up, which he did. It was my employer I had shot.

I left his place cursing myself for an ass to have allowed myself to be cheated out of my money by Jenkins, and placed in such a position.

I came to this town, where I have since been stopping at a cheap hotel, trying to get other employment. I have not succeeded, and have been advised to go to Winnipeg. I must get something soon, as my money is nearly spent.

The weather now is dreary and cold. I walk out every day for exercise, but the wind is chill and the sun obscured totally or in part by leaden clouds. There is a touch of sadness throughout all Nature: the snow hanging on the bushes makes them bow their heads, as it were, and the few remaining birds chirp in a plaintive sort of way. It all gives one the hump most dreadfully, which seems to impress my misfortunes upon me.

Your affectionate son,
REGINALD BROWN.

XI

◆ *A Canadian Gentleman* ◆ *The Social Side* ◆ *A Shocking Accent* ◆
◆ *A Wonderful Phonation* ◆ *Loneliness* ◆

WINTON, MANITOBA,
November 10, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I have made such a wonderful discovery—I have found a Canadian who is a gentleman. He is an engineer by profession, has been doing survey work in this neighbourhood, and has been stopping at the same hotel with me for the last few days.

This evening we were both sitting with our feet on the stove, when he opened the conversation by asking how long I had been in the country. It is very strange how these Canadians can guess so much of one's antecedents.

I answered his question, and we soon fell into quite an animated conversation. He told me of his experiences throughout the country, and gave me much valuable information. I was delighted to meet so entertaining a companion, and in my enthusiasm I said:

'But you must be an Englishman: you talk quite like a gentleman.'

He looked at me for a moment with a sort of puzzled expression I could not quite make out, and then he said: 'No, I am a Canadian.'

'Oh,' I said, 'I beg your pardon.'

Again he looked at me in the same puzzling way, and then smiled.

As here was an educated man, brought up in the country, the idea struck me that this was a good opportunity to find out the reason why Canadians disliked Englishmen. To my question he replied:

'Canadians don't dislike Englishmen except in the localities where the remittance men concentrate, and even there only the remittance men are disliked. Why, in Eastern Canada the Englishman is very popular, and an Englishman with fair address is taken up by the society folk in a manner that your people at home would never dream of doing to a Canadian unless he had the highest introductions. This trait of our people, in its extremest forms, we call "Anglomania," and the disease is growing, and, as a complication, the English accent is making its appearance.'

'The English accent? I don't understand you. There is the English language and the Englishman's way of speaking it; there is the American or any other accent.'

'It is the only thing to call it,' he rejoined. 'If you ever lived in Halifax, Ottawa, or Victoria, British Columbia, you would know what I mean. Of course, the better class of Canadians don't affect it; it is limited to the socially ambitious. It is very distressing, however, though fortunately epidemic only in the three places I have mentioned, and there only with a faction of the people. In Halifax the presence of the military is the cause, in Ottawa the Governor-General and his staff, and in Victoria it is just habit, quite extreme enough to be styled a disease.'

'This is very funny; I don't understand it quite,' I was forced to remark.

'Funny! Certainly it is funny, or worse. But it is not indicative of a widespread dislike to Englishmen among Canadians. Now, don't understand me to mean that I dislike the Englishman's manner of speaking. To me the Englishman's voice is very pleasant, and that of the English gentlewoman, in its soft modulation, is delightful. It is the affectation of some of our own people, I dislike.

'I may say,' he continued, 'that the greatest shock these people got was when the Prince of Wales came out here; for, try as they would, they could not distinguish any accent in his voice at all, and consequently were much disappointed.'

'Oh!' I said.

My companion looked at me for a moment, and then made a reassuring gesture with his hand, his peculiar smile playing over his features. 'Don't be alarmed,' he said; 'there is absolutely no danger of an insurrection. The Canadian people as a whole are among the most loyal of British subjects, and as I have said before, those of our people who are emulating the ever-memorable Jack Daw are happily few in number, but their accent is the most wonderful phonation in the whole realm of acoustics. You should hear it before you return to England.'

'I shall,' I said.

'To give you a sample,' he said, 'I once heard a girl say she laughed, and laughed, and laughed, and nearly split her sides laffing.'

'How wonderful!' I could not help exclaiming.

Here my companion retired to his room, and I have been writing this letter ever since. To-morrow I leave for Winnipeg. I have not money enough left to pay my fare, so I am going to the next town, where perhaps I can earn enough to carry me the rest of the journey; if not, I shall walk. Not to be hampered with luggage, I am leaving the most of my effects here.

The porter has just filled the stove full of wood for the night, and I am left alone in the sitting-room, with its dingy pictures hung about its smoke-begrimed walls, so I too shall say good-night.

Your affectionate son,
REGINALD BROWN.

XII

◆ *England and Christmas* ◆ *Heat and Cold* ◆ *Home Truths* ◆ *Hospitality* ◆ *The Remittance Man* ◆ *The Gentleman* ◆ *Opportunity* ◆ *Hunger and Thought* ◆ *Hope Eternal* ◆

PLUMMER'S HOTEL ,
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA,
November 20, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Want of proper food and the lack of any companion with whom I can exchange ideas has had a most depressing effect upon my spirits, and last evening when I arrived here I was particularly depressed. Every man I saw seemed to be my enemy.

Leaving the station and walking up Main Street the wind was cold and raw, and flakes of snow were in the air. Everybody seemed in a hurry, yet all seemed in good spirits.

As six o'clock came and the crowds of girls came out of the offices and shops laughing and hurrying to their homes, they seemed to me to be my enemies. The boys snow-balling each other and shouting in the street seemed to aim their missiles at my sensibilities, and it would have relieved me to box their ears.

All was bright and full of life—I alone was depressed. And then I began brooding on why I was different from those I saw around me. I was educated—they were not. They were happy—I was not. I envied them their happiness. My education is the product of much time and money, yet it is useless. It teaches me to suffer rather than to bear pain.

The jingle of the bells on a passing sleigh is gay and strong in confidence. The clammy hand of Despair does not muffle the sound, but I turn from the sleighs to the crowd and the shop windows.

In the stationer's window I saw Santa Claus with a tin horn in one hand and a Union Jack in the other. Both the figure and the emblem reminded me of dear old England—England and Christmas. The thought seemed to me a Mockery—the diabolical inspiration of despair. The crowd continued to hurry past, and in its mass I continued to see signs of contentment and of happiness in the faces of souls obtuse and uncultured, yet their happiness and their contentment show that they are active units in society, which I am not.

The coldness of the atmosphere fairly gripped my heart, so I sought the warmth of one of the hotels. I entered what they call out here the 'rotunda,' and sat down in a seat near a coil of steam-pipes. Gradually the heat penetrated my body; my muscles relaxed, and a great contentment came over me. Here was warmth at least, and being warm my hunger did not press me so hard.

It was now the hour for the evening meal, and I hear the word 'dinner' spoken by the members of the crowd about me. One man asked another to accept his hospitality, and the other refused, giving an excuse. How I wished the invitation had been given to me!

A man flopped down in the seat alongside of me. His face was flushed and bore signs of too much wine.

'Fine night,' he said.

'Yes,' I replied.

'Cold.'

'Yes, very cold,' I answered.

'You're an Englishman?' he asked.

'Yes.'

'Thought so,' said he—a remittance man. Remittance men ain't no good for work, but sometimes they make flunkies and bar-tenders, or further West they join the Mounted Police. The Mounted Police is nearly all made up of remittance men, and there ain't no better force on the top of God's green earth. Say! will you have a drink?'

What effect liquor would have in my famished condition I did not know, but I said 'Yes,' and went into the bar and asked for a glass of port wine. My host called for whisky, and drank liberally. As he drank he looked at me a long time, and asked: 'Remittances coming regularly?'

I replied that the Governor had refused to send me any more money, to which my new friend replied:

'He does right. If you're any good, you'll make your own way in this country. Been eating regular lately?'

I was first inclined to resent the question, but as the fellow seemed good-natured, I answered that I had had nothing to eat since early morning.

'Better come and eat with me,' he said.

This was evidently an invitation to dinner, and I replied that I would be glad to do so.

He led the way to the dining-room, and we sat down.

The immediate prospect of a good meal to be eaten in comfort caused a glow to pass through my body. As I took my soup the stimulation of the atmosphere outside, which had lately benumbed me, came upon me, and I felt the hilarity that had lately appealed to me as almost diabolic in the throng outside.

My friend ate and talked, and did each in an erratic manner. He said to me:

'You're going to try and get a job?'

I replied that I was.

'Well, then,' he said, 'let me give you a pointer. Chuck those pants you have on!—pointing to my riding-breeches—and put on a pair of white man's pants, and your chances will be better.'

I told him that these were the only garments of this nature I had with me, the main part of my wardrobe being in the country.

'Well,' he replied, 'as soon as you get the money buy a cheap pair of pants, and your chances of success will be better. With those things you have on a man could spot you for a remittance man a mile off, and being a remittance man ain't the best recommendation on top of the earth for a job in which you are to make yourself useful.'

As the fellow was talkative, and as they say only drunken men and fools tell the truth, I thought that here was an opportunity to gain the truth. My friend was drunk—he was not a fool—so I asked him what objection people had to remittance men, that they would not employ them. He jumped in his chair, and brought his fist down on the table so that the glasses rattled. His eyes shone out, and he stared at me.

'Why don't they give remittance men jobs?' he repeated. 'They don't give remittance men jobs because they are no d—— good. They are no good before their parents send them out to this country to get rid of them. They can't make a living in a country where they are used to the ways, and yet they expect to make things go here, where they don't know the ways—and they don't seem to want to know the ways. If they did you'd get rid of those pants. Why are the remittance men no good at home? For the simple reason they ain't taught to be. From asking questions, the way I size the proposition up is that the remittance man is kept "lally-gaggin" round home doing nothing but making himself look pretty until he is twenty or twenty-two, and then his people come down to earth and find that it is about time he was earning a dollar or two for himself, especially as he is cutting up mean. Then they pack him off to Canada to become the free and independent gentleman farmer. They tell him to be sure and be a gentleman, and he generally is, for being a gentleman is to have the ability to borrow money on your face, when you don't know how in the devil you are to pay it back, and care less. That is why I never lend money to a remittance man, for the remittance men are mostly gentlemen. No, sir,' my host continued, and he got more and more excited. 'I don't want any remittance men working for me. They are a class of fellows who

ain't been brought up like me. They have never been turned loose and made to rustle round at sixteen years of age, and their ideas of making themselves useful—well, they ain't got any ideas on the subject at all. It ain't because they are English that they're no good: it's because of the training they get in England, or the training they don't get—take it as you like it. Look at me. I rustled round the farm back east when I was nine years old, going to school in winter, and I got all the schooling that was good for me in the winter, and I've got a store up the line with a few hundred acres of wheat land and some cattle on the plains further west. I've earned them all, and how to ask a man for the loan of a \$5 bill I don't know.'

'Give me the opportunity and I will make money.'

'Give you the opportunity! give you money! No, sir; the opportunity is here, right round you; but you've got to lay hold of it yourself, and before you can lay hold of it you've got to see it; therefore, young fellow, learn to size up your fellow-man. Don't be ashamed that you are alive, or ashamed to let the world see you alive. And be honest above all things—be honest; no matter how hungry you get, stay straight. You can shake yourself clean of hard luck, but dishonesty sticks like a mortgage on a widow's farm. It's worse than whisky is with me, and it ain't my fault I'm drunk now.'

Soon after this we finished our dinner, and my friend left, and I and my thoughts were again close companions. I left the hotel and walked out into the night. The stars stood out as glittering points in inky blackness, giving promise of greater cold. But I soon gravitated back to this hotel, and have passed the hours far into the night writing this letter. How I shall pass the remaining hours of the night I know not. Hunger is a great stimulus to thought, and it is probably because I have been thinking of what my host of the evening said during dinner that has made his ideas part of this letter. One thing I have decided, and that is that there is something I lack which prevents me from entering into life where force of personality is the gauge of success. Or is it something I possess in excess—self-consciousness or what?

Pardon me for detailing my troubles so strongly, but setting them on paper seems to give a vent to too much thought, the inspiration of my condition. The problem which attributes bad to success has taken hold of my fancy, which was stimulated by the ideas of my erratic friend at dinner.

Do not be distressed at my experience: I feel that I shall yet come out on top.

Your affectionate son,
REGINALD BROWN.

XIII

◆ *A New Friend* ◆ *A New Mode of Life* ◆ *A Mode of Life* ◆
◆ *The Remittance Man* ◆ *An Interesting Study* ◆

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA,
December 5, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I have your letter in which you say that the Governor takes great exception to my purchase of oil lands. His criticism is no doubt just, as I have been trying to sell my holdings, and cannot get even a fraction of what I paid for them. I have been to every real estate office in Winnipeg.

You will be astonished when you learn that the diggings I now occupy are those of the rascally Jenkins. For several days after my last letter I wandered the streets looking for work, and succeeded only in making a few cents, no permanent billet to be had, when one evening I aimlessly entered the bar-room of one of the hotels, and I tumbled on Jenkins. I would have passed him, but the fellow held out his hand; I took it. I had not received a friendly word since that dinner with my intoxicated friend, and a sympathetic word even from the man who had cheated me was not unacceptable.

Two companions were with Jenkins: one, of the name of Howard, had, so I was told, just received £100 remittance from home, and was celebrating. I was introduced, and was invited to drink with my new friends. This was followed by a general invitation to supper, which was turned into a great celebration, Howard insisting on buying champagne. We all then went to Jenkins' diggings, where there were several beds, and an additional one was improvised for myself.

Drinking and feasting were kept up for several days, till the remittance was all spent. I accepted their invitations to meals, for I thought I might as well have the benefit of the remittance as have Howard and Jenkins drink it all. I spoke to one of the bar-tenders, when both Howard and Jenkins were very drunk, as to who Howard was. 'Oh,' the fellow replied, 'he is a well-known remittance man about town; his money comes regular. There is one thing about remittance men: when one has money, they all have money.' This last remark I accepted as being for my benefit.

When the time for headaches and repentance came, Jenkins spoke of going back to work. He had been employed as a waiter in a restaurant when Howard's remittance came, and he returned to his employment and was reinstated. His meals are part of his salary, while the cakes and pies he is able to smuggle home help Howard and myself to keep off starvation.

The one large room we all occupy is over a shop, and is heated by steam. In one corner there is a small gas-stove, on which we make tea and occasionally cook food, when we have it to cook. This is a great convenience, as Jenkins frequently brings in something that is the better for warming up; and when Howard or myself get any money—I by earning it, or Howard more frequently by borrowing from other remittance men—we buy beefsteaks and have a grand feast. It is very much like the life I passed on the farm, only our supply of food is very intermittent.

December 7.

Jenkins has lost his position, and we are in most awful distress. When he received the money due him he went and got drunk, and now we have nothing, and I find it more difficult every day to earn anything; there seem to be fewer odd jobs obtainable. The cold is very great, and it is very distressing to work out in it; besides, I am not sufficiently clad, the greater part of my clothing being in the country. Jenkins and I sit in one room most of the day—Howard has gone into the country—and when we do go out we hurry along the streets to the nearest bar-room, where we get warm, and leaving that, hurry on to the next, or into the hotels, where people stare at us. A group of us Englishmen, all acquaintances of Jenkins, were gathered together in one of the hotels the other day. Every one of the party was stony-broke, yet in the party was a Cambridge B.A., an ex-lieutenant the Royal Navy, and a man who had passed his third year in medicine at Edinburgh. Bad as my circumstances are, there was not one in the group better off than myself. The party compared notes, and each told of his endeavour to get work, and how disheartening the result was.

For myself I have made several acquaintances in the hotels among Englishmen down in their luck, and I find consolation in their society—I suppose in keeping with the law that misery likes company. The remittance men all arrive down about eleven o'clock in the morning, and file into the public rooms of the hotels. I have watched them often and amused myself picking them out from the general public. They walk in, hands in their pockets, and glance round till they see a seat where a newspaper has been abandoned by the late occupant. They immediately sit down and read the morning news, and it is generally not long before their friends join them. Another place to study the remittance man is the post-office, on days when the English mail is due. Long lines of anxious faces stand before the general delivery wicket, and when one gets a cheque there is a great rejoicing by his friends as well as by himself. Such a group will probably be seen later in the hotels.

I have lately fallen in the habit of studying other Englishmen down in their luck, and I find the subject very interesting.

The night is cold outside, and Jenkins has just come in informing me he has some food. Where he procures the stuff he brings home I do not know, but I think he gets some of it from his old friends, his former fellows, in the restaurant. The ethics of all this I don't dwell upon mentally, so will not do so here.

With my best love to all at home,

I remain,

Your affectionate son,

REGINALD BROWN.

XIV

◆ *The Salvation Army* ◆ *The Helping Hand* ◆ *The End* ◆
◆ *Lieutenant Jones* ◆ *Daylight* ◆

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA,
December 10, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I have your letter of last Monday week. One of my chief regrets is that my experiences cause you distress. Otherwise I do not feel them so much myself, as something always seems to intervene between me and starvation, and I have taken to studying my fellow-men from this plane. In the very battle for existence in which I am engaged I find a magnetism. The primitive instincts are developed, and to me the aspect of life is changed.

As my environment is changed, so I look towards those factions of society which are yet accessible to me.

Yesterday the weather moderated, and it snowed a little. In the evening, as I tramped the street, I came upon some members of the Salvation Army holding forth at the street corner. As I stopped to listen, they broke up their little meeting, and invited all to follow them to their citadel or meeting-house. I fell in line, and soon found myself seated among their congregation. The Salvation Army has existed now many years, but this was my first contact with it. As its name implies, it has an organization similar to an army—that is, the executive is composed of lieutenants, captains, colonels, and so on, up to the chief executive, General Booth, the founder.

The service comprises prayers and singing of hymns by all, and addresses by different members of the staff, and testimonies by adherents, the trend of the remarks of the latter being towards certifying to the improvement of their lives since coming under the influence of the Salvation Army. Of doctrine there was little said by anyone. They speak of each other as 'brother' and 'sister,' and outside of 'saving souls,' as they term gaining converts to their cause and adherents to their force, their purpose in life seems to be the relief of suffering and poverty, wherever found.

The staff-captain who led the meeting told of measures that were being applied by the Army for the relief of the distress in the city. He pointed out that there were many unsuccessful in Winnipeg to whom the idea of accepting bare charity was demoralizing, so the Army maintained soup-kitchens, where meals could be had at cost price, and a tailoring department, where old clothes given to the Army were repaired and sold at smallest cost to anyone in need.

During the meeting the idea that struck me most forcibly was that the Salvation Army appreciates the fact that human nature is the same wherever met, and that their whole system is based upon this.

The members of the staff are largely, if not entirely, drawn from those among whom they work, and are trained by work among the fallen and the needy. The consequence is that they never separate sympathy from their charity. They do not feel that they have fulfilled their duty completely by a mere act of giving, but they take those to whom Hope is a stranger to themselves. They give the man or the woman who has conceived all mankind to be an enemy their hand, and they call them brother or sister. In no way is this more clearly instanced than by the nursing they give to the spirit of independence and pride, which is seldom altogether absent in the human being, by their principle of selling at a small cost rather than by direct gifts of absolute necessities.

These were the impressions I received as I listened to the several speakers during the evening, and, as I have told you before, my late experiences have schooled me to view men and things without bias.

I stayed till the end of the meeting, after the majority of those in the benches left. Several of the staff who took an active part in the meeting came down to the main body of the hall, and a young woman with a face bearing a rare light of happiness came and sat beside me. She leaned over towards me, and said:

'Brother, are you saved?'

The question to me was so unlike any that I had ever before met that it frightened me, or rather, I was afraid of its very evident significance, so I replied:

'I do not understand you. What do you mean?'

Her reply left no chance of evasion: 'Are you prepared to meet your God?'

In the days before I knew the force of hunger I would never have taken the question seriously, had I ever been met with it, but the stern hand of want opens the soul to the entertainment of promptings at other times shed by the indifference to which health and plenty is father. I answered: 'I do not know.'

Lieutenant Jones, as she was called, then talked to me in a manner I have never been talked to before. She asked me about my present existence and my past life, and when I told her that I had been reared in all the luxury of an English home, pointed out how little I had been taught to feel the responsibility of life. Then she pleaded with me to give up the search for personal pleasures, and lend my efforts to doing good for others. To this I replied that all my exertions were at present required to keep myself from starving, when she told me that the Army would always be ready to render me what assistance it could.

As I walked home my thoughts ran in a new channel, and in the general flow I felt the spirit of hope and trust in my own abilities, a confidence new to me. I felt as if I had reached bottom, and from henceforth my way would be upward.

Affectionately yours,
REGINALD BROWN.



XV

◆ *No Englishman Need Apply* ◆ *Mr. John Fleming* ◆ *'Bellows Pants'* ◆ *The Reason Why* ◆
◆ *Englishmen Do Succeed* ◆ *Education* ◆ *A Trust* ◆ *As Romans Do* ◆ *True Charity* ◆

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA,
December 14, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

This morning I picked up a paper that was lying in one of the vacant chairs of the hotel; after I had glanced through its news columns, I turned to the advertisements, and among them I saw:

'WANTED—Man to work in warehouse. No Englishman need apply.—FLEMING AND Co., Wholesale Grocers.'

I looked at the thing and was puzzled. 'No Englishman need apply.' Surely there could be no objection to Englishmen because they are Englishmen. This is part of the British Empire, of which England is the head and centre. What objection could Fleming and Co. have to employing Englishmen? I thought the matter over, but came to no decision save that I would apply for the position, and if I did not get it, I would at least find out why Englishmen were objected to.

I asked the locality of Fleming and Co.'s office, and was directed by a policeman. It is in the wholesale district, being part of the second floor of a large warehouse. I mounted the steps and entered directly into the office. Desks with clerks leaning over them and tables with typists at work were spread over a large floor-space. A railing a few feet high, through which were several gates, divided the clerks from the area for customers. A young clerk came to the railing as soon as I entered, and said:

'Anything I can do for you?'

'I wish to see Mr. Fleming,' I replied.

'Which Mr. Fleming? There are two.'

'Either,' I said.

'Do you want to apply for work?' said the clerk, looking me over.

'I wish to see one of the heads of this company.'

'All right; there is Mr. John Fleming, office manager, at that desk,' said the fellow, pointing in the direction of a large, heavily-built man in the centre of the office, and opening one of the gates for me to enter.

My assurance began to leave me as I approached the office executive. Mr. Fleming was reading and sorting out letters. He had a strong face, and I noticed him replying to one of the clerks who questioned him without taking his eyes off the letter he was reading. I felt he would be a hard man to persuade to employ anyone he did not wish to. However, I came up to him and said:

'Are you Mr. Fleming?'

'Yes,' he replied, without lifting his eyes.

'I see you are advertising for a man to work in your warehouse, and I would like to ask for the position,' I made bold to say.

'Yes, I wanted a man, but I said no Englishman need apply.'

His attention was all on the letter he was reading.

'How do you know I am an Englishman?' I inquired.

'I have heard you talk, and caught sight of your bellows pants. How do I know a mule is a mule?' He was still reading.

'Do you mean to say you won't employ an Englishman because he is an Englishman?' I inquired.

'I do,' said he.

'Oh,' said I, 'I thought that the position was one you did not think an Englishman would accept; but as I am in distress, I have made up my mind to take anything I can get to do.'

'Good God!' I heard him mutter, 'this is a new one.' And then he said, 'Sit down a minute.'

I sat down in one of the seats, and in a minute he laid down the letter he was reading and turned to me. He looked me hard in the eye for a second or two, and then he asked how long I had been in this country.

'Two years,' I replied.

'Well, have you not learned in that time that you are no mortal good on top of earth, that there is something lacking in your make-up which prevents you from assimilating with the men who do things? To tell you the truth, I am sorry for you fellows. I am not the first one who has advertised for a man and added, "No Englishman need apply." In fact, complaints have been sent over to England about it, and the knowledge of this is not calculated to do this country any good, for it will tend to keep the better class of Englishmen away, while it is not so likely to influence the remittance men among the better educated, nor the scum from the slums.'

'Well, why do you insert such advertisements in the papers?' I asked.

'Because there is a bunch of remittance men in the city who read the advertisements every day, and apply for every job that's vacant, totally indifferent whether they are competent to give a fair return for the wages they receive. Besides, an Englishman is a born kicker, and if you give him a job he is sure to make trouble, and uses his spare time in writing letters to the newspapers. There is no inherent dislike to Englishmen in this country; in fact, in the East there is a strong friendship, and the Anglomaniac is not absent.'

'Do you mean to say that no Englishman will make a success out here?' I asked.

'Not at all,' said Mr. Fleming. 'I have several in my office, but they came to me, not as Englishmen, but as book-keepers and accountants, or I took them very young. A boy who does not start to make himself useful at sixteen years of age is hardly likely to prove a success in after-years. Some of the best artisans in this city—carpenters, bricklayers, tailors, machinists—are English; but when they hunt a job, they do so naming their trade, not their nationality. English craftsmen are always looked favourably upon, because the apprentice system, as you have it in England, tends to thoroughness. But as to the class to which you belong, the trouble with you is that your people bring you up to be what they, in their minds, fondly term "gentlemen." Now, the attributes which go to give a man a social polish set him apart from the common herd, more or less. Besides, the education of a gentleman carries with it the acquiring of expensive habits. In fact, your education has been towards the spending of money, not making it, and what your people bring you up for with extravagant tastes unless they can furnish you with funds to maintain them, I don't know. I will give my sons an education far superior to any I ever was able to obtain, but then, I will see that they either go into the professions, or I will give them a taste of business in these offices during their holidays.'

'I am sure an education in the arts would not do anyone harm in any vocation,' I said.

'No, perhaps not,' said Mr. Fleming; 'but while you are attaining it you should be learning business methods at a couple of dollars a week in an office. A boy of about twenty thinks more of himself than at any other period of his life, and won't stand being told things by someone he regards as his social inferior. Excuse me taking up your time in this manner, but I have been thinking a good deal about the Englishmen problem in this country lately, and I want to put our position right.'

'Then you can't give me a position in your warehouse?' I said.

'No; I have filled it already, and by a man I fancy will give us better satisfaction than you would.'

I turned to go, and said 'Good-morning,' as Mr. Fleming turned again to his letters.

'Wait a minute,' he said. 'I have a note here from our parson, and he wishes me to send a man up to the Maple Leaf Hall to help the ladies, who are having a tea and bazaar in aid of the church. I think you will be more agreeable to them than one of the men out of the warehouse. Besides, we are very busy. Now, you go up to the Maple Street Church Sunday-School, and tell the ladies who will be there that I sent you.' As I turned to go, he put his hand in his pocket, and handed me five dollars. 'Here,' he said, 'are five dollars. If you are like most remittance men I have met, you'll get drunk; and if you are worthy of a hand-up in life, you'll buy a cheap pair of trousers and chuck those things you have on. Have a good meal and a shave, and be at the Sunday-School at two o'clock. Excuse my remarks about your "bellows pants," but in view of the reputation your countrymen have earned in this country, you will find life will be easier if your appearance is not conspicuously pointing to your nationality. No one but an Englishman would be hunting odd jobs in riding-breeches.'

Mr. Fleming turned again to his work, and I left him.

It is not necessary for me to assure you that I did not betray the trust, but arrived at two o'clock at the Sunday-School. The ladies were putting up decorations and arranging the tables for their sale of work, which was to be the following day. I got on famously with them, and they were very nice, and I quite enjoyed the surroundings. Mrs. Fleming asked me a good many questions about myself, so I fancy her husband had been talking to her about me. She asked me to return in the evening, which I did. She was there, and called me into a corner, and undid a large bundle, which proved to be an overcoat. She asked me to accept this as a Christmas gift from her husband, and, of course, it would have been folly for me to have refused it.

'When you get up in the world again, you can give an equal gift to someone in need. In the meantime, accept it as a loan.'

This was certainly a tactful way of putting it.

I was there three days at the bazaar, and Mr. Fleming gave me another five dollars, which I turned over to Jenkins as a contribution towards our rent. Jenkins, however, returned home drunk that evening, and had a bottle of whisky with him, so I am afraid my money went into the wrong channels.

I must now bring this somewhat lengthy epistle to a close.

My new overcoat is a great comfort, and is making me feel quite hopeful.

Affectionately yours,
REGINALD BROWN.

XVI

◆ *Why Do They?* ◆ *Colonization* ◆ *'There is a Tide'* ◆ *A Promise* ◆

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA,
December 22, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I have come to the conclusion that the application of the term 'remittance man' is extended to all Englishmen not engaged in any permanent occupation. While the term is not in our vocabulary at home, it is every day used here, and even appears in the press.

The following appeared lately in a local newspaper:

'Another case of suicide occurred at the C.P.R. station this morning. A young Englishman by the name of Hopewell entered the lavatory of the station, and, putting the muzzle of a revolver in his mouth, pulled the trigger. Death was instantaneous. Hopewell was seen in the general waiting-room some time before he committed the rash act, and though his actions appeared queer, no particular attention was paid him.

'He is said to be well connected in England, and was well known around town as a remittance man. He lately received quite a large cheque from home, which he dissipated in a most extravagant fashion in wine and dinners for himself and friends. His money exhausted, he became despondent, which led to his taking his life.'

I knew Hopewell, but not intimately. He was a friend of Jenkins, who introduced him to me one day. From Jenkins I gather that poor Hopewell read for the Church, but took to living too fast, and gave up his studies, after which his people induced him to come to Canada. It appears to me this is a poor atmosphere in which to try moral reformation.

Why do English parents and guardians permit, and even prompt and encourage, wayward sons to come to the Colonies, where licence exists, and where moral restraint is not? An Englishman coming to this country naturally seeks the society of his own kind, even as I did, failing to recognize that, while the atmosphere that education gives and breeding conveys may be retained, dissipation and want tend to deaden moral sense and breed unrighteous principles.

Christmas is now close at hand, and as a great rush exists among the shopkeepers, it is not as hard as it was to get 'odd jobs.'

Many of my evenings I spend at the Salvation Army meetings. The last one I was at was distinguished by the presence of an officer who is connected with the Army's emigration work. You may have seen in the press that the Salvation Army has inaugurated a system under which it is to bring desirable emigrants from home to Canada.

The Commissioner, as he is called, led the meeting, and told his hearers of the methods the Army was using in carrying on this work. They did not take the vagabonds from the slums, but they picked from the great host of applicants, such ones as were accustomed to lead useful lives at home, and calculated to work out their destiny here. The work of the Salvation Army is among the masses, and the training of the officers is thorough to the point of gaining them a great knowledge of men, of human nature. After all, success to the point of a competency is the sequence of being able to do things, but great heights are attained only by those who have a knowledge of men.

This thought was mine as I walked home through the stillness of the winter night, though the words that Lieutenant Jones has again spoken to me were stored for meditation.

There are some men who will attain success under almost any circumstances; there are those ever predestined to failure. Of the latter class I am afraid a great many are here — the outcasts of Europe. A land may be one of golden opportunity — to those who see, who grasp, and who hold and convert.

The Salvation Army is giving a grand free dinner for the poor on Christmas Day, and I have promised Lieutenant Jones

to accept their hospitality.

Wishing all at home a merry Christmas,

I remain,
Ever yours affectionately,
REGINALD BROWN.



XVII

◆ *Christmas Cheer* ◆ *A Fellow-countryman* ◆ *A Friend at Court* ◆

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA ,
December 26, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Yesterday was Christmas Day. To me, and I fancy to most people in my condition, Church service has at all times more than anything else the power of transporting one by the memories it recalls; but Church, with its Yuletide decorations, its music of 'gladness and great joy,' brings up its bygone anniversaries in panorama to move the soul to the acme of that condition known as homesickness.

After morning service I visited the Salvation Army to be their guest at dinner. I had a little money, and my presence there was not the outcome of actual want, but was due to the invitation of Lieutenant Jones.

A large room was filled with tables, and the supply of food seemed unlimited. The officers of the Army were everywhere, shaking hands with and welcoming all who came with a spirit of friendliness which no one could mistake for anything but genuine. Any and all who came were saved any scrutiny which might indicate a question as to their need of such hospitality or their worthiness of its bestowal. In the crowd that gathered were men of all nations; their creeds were mostly of the past. Through the rags and uncleanness of their persons in many were plainly seen the stamp of erstwhile ease and plenty; many were remittance men. Some of these had countenances of stolidity, and some seemed to avoid scrutiny, but the markings were unmistakable.

I sat down by the side of a good-looking fellow who was occupying a bench in a corner. A great look of dejection was on his face. He paid no attention to me, so I made some conventional remark about the weather.

'Yes,' was all the return I got.

'You are an Englishman?' I asked.

'Yes,' he replied.

'How long have you been in the country?'

'Two years.'

'The same as myself.'

After a moment's pause, he turned to me:

'What part of England do you come from?' he asked.

I told him, and we soon found that we had mutual friends. He told me then a tale of hardships in working for a farmer some distance from Winnipeg. The man did not understand him, nor he the man. Bad food and hard work six days in the week, and glum silence or dreary hymns on Sunday. As the winter settled down, he went into the woods to cut fuel, and remained at this till the week before Christmas, when he came to town with his hard-earned money. He lent a chum a few dollars, and the rest had been stolen by a degenerate fellow-countryman. So my new acquaintance had gravitated to the Salvation Army.

To-day I was walking down the street when Mr. Fleming overtook me, and was passing, when he placed his hand upon my shoulder, and asked me how I was getting on. I told him very well.

'I see you got rid of the bellows pants,' he said.

'Yes,' I replied.

'You made a good impression on the ladies at the bazaar. There's nothing like making a good impression on the ladies.'

'Possibly,' I said.

'Yes,' he continued, 'my wife has spoken several times about you, and wondered if you always have enough to eat. I finally promised to hold a job for you in the warehouse, and there is one open now. If you report to-morrow, you can go to work. Wages are not very high, but you can live comfortably on them in a modest way. Good-morning.'

So I go to work to-morrow to be permanently employed. I shall probably work too hard to be inclined to write much, so my letters will naturally be less frequent.

Kind regards to all.

Affectionately yours,

REGINALD BROWN.

XVIII

◆ *Success* ◆ *A Partner* ◆ *Western Humour* ◆ *A Ridiculous Story* ◆ *Borrowed Plumes* ◆
◆ *As Does the Roman* ◆ *Square with the World* ◆

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA,
February 10, 1—.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I to-day received a full month's pay for my work in January in Fleming and Co.'s warehouse. I feel I've earned the money, and done my work as well as any man could have done it, whatever his nationality. I feel that I am now building up from rock bottom.

I have some very good news for you—more good news. A few days ago I received a letter from a real estate firm here asking me what price I wanted for my land, my petroleum land. I called on them, and said in a joke ten thousand dollars. The fellow said he would take it. I was thunderstruck, but said nothing. When an Englishman makes a joke, no one in this country sees it as such; so it was in my case.

The real estate man then went on to talk about 'the railway' and the 'divisional point' and I soon gathered that a railroad was being built through the district in which I had bought my land, and that a 'divisional point,' which means a new town, was to be located on the land to which my petroleum land adjoined. This caused a great jump in values, and I am to be one who will reap the benefit. As I have said, it was only by sheer luck, for really, had the land man been able to detect that I was joking, I would not have got nearly so much. In fact, I would have accepted twenty pounds for the property, and here I am getting two thousand pounds for it.

So now I feel that I am a remittance man no longer, but a successful land speculator, or what you will. It matters not what you call me as long as I am not called a remittance man. To sum up, I have been in the country two years, and I have doubled my capital.

I have talked the whole matter over with Lieutenant Jones, and she advises me to stay working where I am till spring, and then to buy another farm—this time after I have personally inspected it. I have decided to do this. I will buy a farm with horses and machinery, and will hire workmen. I will have nothing to do with any man who wears what Mr. Fleming calls 'bellows pants,' and will cut the whole tribe of remittance men.

This, however, I do intend to do—namely, to take a partner in the deal, for Lieutenant Jones has said 'Yes.'

She is reluctant to leave the Army, but a life on the prairies is not altogether wanting in opportunities for doing good. She is eminently practical in matters pertaining to a farm, having been born on one.

It is a strange thing, but since I have begun to work for Mr. Fleming I have cultivated a great dislike to Englishmen of the remittance man type, and I get angry when it is hinted that I am one of them. I smile and yet pity them when I see the new arrivals on the street and in the hotels. How confident they are of how much they know! What a great awakening they will yet receive!

Amusing stories are continually being circulated about remittance men, and the following appeared in the local press:

'A large percentage of Western humour is arrayed against the remittance man, but there have been few stories told at his expense more mirth-provoking than the following, or perhaps it is because this story is rather at the expense of the old folk at home. Here it is:

'An Englishman was given a thousand pounds by his father to begin life as a farmer in Western Canada. After receiving this patrimony the dutiful son came to this country, bought 160 acres of sage-bush and gophers, took up his quarters in a neighbouring town, and blew in the remainder of his money. When cash and credit were alike gone, he put pen to paper, and wrote his fond parent as follows:

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"When I was leaving for this country, you told me that if I made a success of farming in Western Canada, you would send me an additional £1,000. Now, I beg to inform you that I have here a farm, and upon that farm have eighteen head of gopher. These gopher are the sleekest and fattest gopher in all the country round. I therefore lay claim to the £1,000, as promised.

"Your son, etc."

The return mail brought the following reply:

"MY DEAR SON,

"I am delighted to hear that you are attaining success in the Colonies. I enclose the £1,000 you requested. Your mother sends her love, and says she does hope you will be careful and not get hooked by the gophers.

"Your affectionate father, etc."

Of course this story is most ridiculous, but the ideas you people in England have of things in this country make any deception possible, and I know many remittance men who would gladly practise any such trick.

Another story, which is vouched for here, is that a man borrowed a farm for a few days from a friend, and when his father came to visit him he was shown flocks and herds, fields and gardens, by his son as his own. After the father had given the son a large cheque, he went away wholly satisfied, while the prodigal visited the nearest town and began to celebrate on the strength of his father's latest gift.

While my success may be called accidental, I feel it is genuine. My experiences and the hardships I have gone through have taught me many things. For instance, I know now that the opinion other people have of one and one's own idea of one's capabilities and worth are generally far asunder.

Lord Chesterfield said that gentility had ancient riches chiefly for its foundation, and while the methods of 'Vanity Fair' are desirable quantities, yet this attainment should be preceded by a training to usefulness; for, just as money makes fine manners and fine speech possible, so it is necessary to their perpetuity. Fine ways are an ornament to money; money is not an ornament to fine ways. In other words, the youth should be taught how to make money before he receives his training how to spend it.

I have likewise learned that it is never well to dress conspicuously. The passing of ages has not dimmed the truth of the saying, 'When in Rome do as the Roman does.'

I shall close now. Perhaps you had better write Lieutenant Jones to my care. We may go to England on our honeymoon, but I hardly think so. I greatly desire to see the Great West, the Rocky Mountains, and the Pacific coast. Besides, Sarah—that is my sweetheart's name—would rather not visit England for a year or two yet. What her reason is I do not know. I did not ask her. I never ask her reasons for her actions and ideas, as she is always right. Why should I?

Your affectionate son,
REGINALD BROWN.

P.S.—Through a delay in the mails, the twenty pounds you sent me for Christmas did not reach me till after New Year's Day. With it I purchased a new great-coat, and I placed the balance in the bank. The coat I received from the Flemings I have given to the Salvation Army, together with five dollars, in keeping with the spirit in which it was given me.

XIX

◆ *The Battle of Life* ◆ *A Burglar* ◆ *The Farm Labourer* ◆ *The Flower of Courtesy* ◆ *A Toss-up* ◆

THE OAKS,
NEAR PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE, MANITOBA,
November 15, —.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

We have finished the last of the threshing, and are settling down to winter conditions, which season is now upon us. The 'harvest help' I have dismissed save one man, whom I shall retain through the winter, so Sarah and I are practically alone in our happiness. She insists that she does not find the work of the house too much, and refuses a servant for herself. Domestic, I may say, are here hard to obtain and harder to hold. They are quickly picked up as wives by the settlers.

My operations for the summer have shown a good profit, and so I feel myself a successful Canadian farmer; and now, as I look back upon my past experiences, I ponder upon what advice I could give the well-balanced and wholesome youth coming to this country, a stranger to the existing conditions, that he might be saved such hardships as I have gone through. Not that I regret my experiences now that they are past: they did me good; but all who separated themselves from their patrimony as I did could not expect to have it handed back by a freak of Fortune. Experience is more easily gained than £1,000 or £2,000; indeed, there is a saying here that the first 1,000 dollars (£200) is the hardest money to make, and it is quite true.

If a young man has decided that he has the physical strength to do the hard work, the animal spirits to maintain cheerfulness in a lonely life, and the moral stamina to keep away from dissipation and drunkenness, let him, when he comes to Western Canada, separate himself from his money—not as I did, but by putting it in the bank—and let him spend at least a year in the service of a farmer. He will then be able to judge of the life he is contemplating; his associations will give him a knowledge of men, and the work will harden his muscles.

No thought of what the world will think should deter him, as, in this country, a man can lose caste only by showing an unwillingness to take a man's part in the struggle for existence. The scheme of parents paying a farmer here to teach their sons farming is a fraud. Such 'pupils' are held in contempt alike by themselves, by their tutors, by the hired men, and by the community at large. They are saved no unfit associations.

A boy working on a farm can learn the industry and character of his fellow-workmen, and can choose wisely his assistants when he takes up his own land. He can do more: he can learn the difficult virtues of each section of country, the proper price to pay for land, horses and cattle, and he can gain knowledge of what implements to buy to work a farm.

About that greatest bugbear of English parents, the demoralizing influence of associations with the ordinary farm-hands: Every stage of society has its own latent demoralizing influences, but my experience has not taught me that that of the farm workman is especially dangerous. The average farm workman here is a chap who owns 160 acres of land (a quarter section) or so, and who is struggling to earn money to buy machinery and get together the few hundred dollars necessary to give him his first start in life. He is full of ambition and industry, and his ways are economical. Surely the society of such a man cannot be baneful, even if he talks ungrammatically and his sense of humour is perverted? The society the boy fresh from England should avoid is that of the remittance man.

So much for the guidance of the youth contemplating the life of the Western Canada farmer. To him who has ambitions for a clerical or commercial life general rules are harder to lay down. So much depends upon natural acumen. In a general way he should dispossess himself of all exaggerated ideas of his own importance. If he appears friendly, he will find the people will receive him as a friend. He must be prepared to work.

It has been said that courtesy is a flower that does not bloom in Canada. I think these complaints are largely unfounded. Here rush and hurry is more general than in England, and busy officials are sometimes forced to stay a flow of irrelevant questions by impatient replies. It must be admitted, however, that 'Yes, sir' and 'No, sir' are not forthcoming with the

readiness they roll off the tongues of servants in England.

While I was at dinner at a small country hotel the other day an Englishman, evidently an Oxford don, came in and sat down at the same table with me. He had some soup, after which the waitress came up and rattled off: 'Roast beef, roast pork, boiled corn-beef, and cabbage!'

The don said he would have roast beef underdone.

'What's that?'

The don repeated in slow and impressive tones:

'I'll have some roast beef underdone—what you call rare.'

The girl went off with a toss of her head and muttering to get the 'rare' beef.

If that girl were dismissed for incivility she could have a like position elsewhere in an hour, while her late employer would be long in replacing her.

To me the incident was highly amusing. It was a toss-up which face expressed the greater contempt.

I had another good laugh at a remittance man the other day. I found him frantically trying to lift the back wheels of a trap, as the horse harnessed to it had his feet in a brook. I inquired what the matter was. He replied that the horse wanted a drink, and I noticed the animal was tugging at his check. I undid the check, and the animal soon satisfied himself.

And now I must close. Sarah sends her love.

Ever your affectionate son,
REGINALD BROWN.

BILLING AND SONS, LIMITED, PRINTERS, GUILDFORD

FOOTNOTE

[\[1\]](#) The custom in Western Canada is to harness oxen in the same manner as horses.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

Although there are no chapter titles in the book, the page headers are very descriptive so they have been included at the beginning of each chapter.

The following changes were made to the original text:

Page 7: changed chicknes to chickens

Page 23: changed shop-keepers to shopkeepers

Page 41: changed here frained to he refrained

Other than the addition of 2 missing periods and a quotation mark, minor variations in spelling and punctuation have been preserved.

[End of *The Letters of a Remittance Man to his Mother* by W. H. P. Jarvis]