

The land round Hastings is mostly under cultivation, but there are no fences. The houses are dotted in quite thick, the farms varying in size from 80 to 160 acres. We had new potatoes to day

for the first time. They came from Missouri, but new potatoes grown in Hastings have been already used here.

Most of the fruit - strawberries, cherries, raspberries &c sold here, is brought from Chicago, 650 miles. In time people will have plenty of fruit here.

Mary is sitting at the opposite side of the table writing home, while Jeffery sits at the end looking at his picture book and asking questions. He often makes curious remarks.

Your affectionate son

L. E. Pendergast.

Hastings Neb. June 30. 1878

My dear Papa

Your first addressed to Hastings, came two days ago, also a card from uncle Joe yesterday. Mary sends a note for aunt Nannie. I enclose a slip from a Madison paper sent by Col. Thornton ~~at~~ but I do not know who wrote it.

I had supposed Mr Thornton was older but he has twice had to give up work and seek relaxation on account of ill health. Last night we had one of those tremendous thunder storms so common in these regions; they do not last long, but come often generally after a day of unusual heat and rain usually falls in torrents for a few minutes and then ceases. The lightning is usually almost continuous, the thunder only at intervals.

I work in the office all the time now and see and hear but little, consequently have not much to tell. Jeffry seems not to be very well the last few days. He has had a cough, particularly at night, ever since we left Omaha and from its long duration without apparent cause, May thought perhaps it was whooping cough in a modified form.

He plays most of the time with his kitten and his blocks. He is learning to build with the latter. They are much better than the cubes which I used to have, and which were not available for building as brick shaped blocks are.

We usually go out for a short walk after supper and often see fine sunsets, but there is nothing in the shape of scenery as at Omaha. We expect to return there after this work is over, if not called elsewhere.

Last evening I had to work in the office from 7 till 10, making a day of 12 hours. Any extra work of this kind seems to use me up more than it used to do.

The pamphlet by the Revd J. E. cause. What a flowery writer he is! I never hear from Charley now. I have no idea that he would ever be a successful farmer, any more than his father. He would always want to be spending time and money on improving, when he ought to be doing something to bring in dollars and cents.

If he ever gets Address, I expect he will get into difficulties by means of it, attempting costly changes, renovations and improvements. California farming is little better than gambling for they generally get an immense crop or none at all.

This really our rainy season and it seems as if we had a good deal of rain, but you would probably think it dry enough. The soil is so porous that in a few hours after heavy rain the ground is dry almost everywhere. Drainage for agriculture will never be needed in this country. Cellars are not walled and are quite dry. It seems as if this condition of the soil ought to be one element of healthfulness. Mary sends her love.

Your affectionate son
F. E. Prendergast.

July 1st 6. a.m. Mary was taken sick last night about midnight, and at between 2.30 o'clock, another son was born. The doctor says she and this boy are doing very well.

Hastings July 3rd 1878.

My dear Papa

The Doctor came in again to day and said he should not come again unless sent for. He thought Mary and the baby getting along very well. She was sick only about two hours. The baby has dark hair and seems to have dark eyes. He is a good baby, sucks his thumbs and nurses well. A kind neighbour came in (by previous arrangement) when Mary was ill, and we had engaged beforehand as nurse a young married woman from New York, recently come here, as nurse, so we again escape having a "professional" in the house, though Mrs Churchill has acted in this capacity before. All turned out well and the doctor (Sowers) a Pennsylvanian is our next neighbour. It is favourable.

weather, warm days and cool nights,
Mary has a very pleasant room
which helps.

I have no time to write more
Your affectionate son
F. E. Prendergast.

Hastings. Neb. July 7th 1878

My dear Papa

Mary and the baby both
continue to go on well and she
makes steady progress towards recovery.
To day is an unusually sultry day
for this country where we almost
always have a breeze.

Jeffrey seemed to have been rather
out of sorts lately and we consulted
the doctor about him. He thought
his liver was disordered and remarked
on his unnatural size of stomach.

J. J. has been quite unwell the last
few days. Dr. Towers seemed to think
Omaha not a very healthy place and
thought our residence there might
perhaps have something to ^{do} with
it, remarking that all the river towns
were more or less malarious and
that even residence on the high bluffs

if within two or three miles of the river was no safe guard.

In fact to come down to the bottom facts, very little of this new western country seems to be exempt from such influences, unless one gets to the extreme north, away up at De Pere or in those latitudes.

It has turned out better in every way that we have been here during the present time, rather than at Omaha. We have had more house room ^{and} a pleasanter house, and Mary has had more friends to take an interest in, and visit here.

Just now Jeffry is running round with a cork tied to a string, playing with the kitten.

Yesterday I walked about seven miles down the line and back, being gone all day. The country looks well, and in one place I saw some grain cut.

1878.
I don't like my place here very well, the work is very confining - this is the only the third day I have been out much since being here, and there is a good deal of worry, for Mr. Ainsworth is not a very pleasant man to get along with, being rather of resent the nervous and petful disposition. I sometimes work all day in the office with him and hardly exchange a word with him about the work or anything else. Indeed he is one of the most peculiar men I have ever met.

This event has of course had an influence on our movements, and but for it I should have accepted the first offer to go to Red Cloud on this same railroad.

Your affectionate son
F. E. Prendergast.

Hastings Neb. July 14. 1878.

My dear Papa

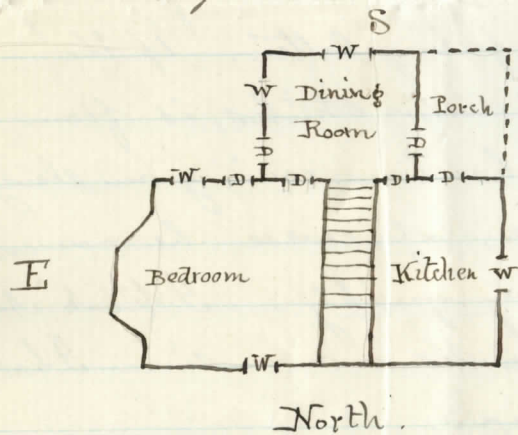
No letter from you the past week. Mary continues to improve steadily but not very fast and the present very hot weather we are having is not favorable to rapid recovery.

The baby is very little trouble, much less than Jeffry was, sleeps a great deal and does not stay awake much at night. He will be dark, with probably dark blue eyes.

Jeffry has not been well lately, to day however he is feeling better. If the trouble, as the doctor thinks, is from the liver, and has been coming on slowly for some time, of course he cannot get over it very quickly. I think it must be two weeks or more since I had a letter from you.

Mary sat at dinner at table to day

for the first time and has been up most of the day. She is now sleeping on the wire woven mattress with only a coverlet between her and it and finds it much cooler than with the mattress on top of the wire. We do not have many hot weather luxuries here as ice is $1\frac{1}{2}$ per pound and is not delivered, so few go to the trouble of sending for it. I dare say the constitution is just as well without it, but it is a great luxury, & helps in keeping milk, meat &c fresh. We are fortunate in having a good house here - good as houses go, it is arranged thus



two rooms upstairs over the kitchen and bedroom. the porch enclosed with trellis.

Row window on east side of bedroom

Like most western houses it is all doors and windows with no hall. It answers our purpose very well and is quite a cheerful little house. There is a good well 120 ft deep and a cellar.

The bedroom is of good size, the other rooms quite small.

There is no other house within 200 feet of us and no fence of any kind round the place. The house and lot is valued at £ 260 and as it is rented at £ 48 a year the owner ought to get good interest on his money - nearly 20 per cent. However he pays taxes. It is almost impossible to find houses to rent here.

The immigration still continues and the white covered wagons still pour in. Money is scarce, but people are busy to and the crops promise well. The harvest has fairly begun. Mrs Churchills husband (she is Mays nurse) went out to work as harvest hand to day. Wages 8/-

a day and all found.

I send a slip about Chicago which
you can read and send on to uncle
Joe. I have written to him to day.
It is too hot to write more.

Your affectionate son
F. E. Prendergast

Hastings. Neb. July 28. 1878

My dear Papa,

I forget date of
receipt of your last, which enclosed
one that I forwarded to Col. Thornton.
Mary has had a letter from J. W. W.
daughter Bessie who is at Madison
with her mother. She says Col. and
Mrs T. are at Winthrop Mass. near
Boston settling up Mr Thorntons
affairs and that they will be there
~~till~~ September. He owned a good
deal of land available for building
sites in that neighbourhood which
might be called the Howth of
Boston though only four miles from the
city. Mary is almost entirely recovered
now but the baby has not been quite
well the last few days. He seems
better to day. The doctor seemed to think
the late extreme heat the principal
cause. Jeffry seems much brighter

and better lately, plays out of doors more and has some color in his cheeks again. We have cool (comparatively cool) weather now with one or two showers every day. Quite pleasant weather, but not so good for the harvest. A great deal of grain is cut with headers. This looks the prettiest easiest way of all of harvesting. The "header" is a three wheeled machine pushed, not drawn, by four horses (the cart is literally ^{on two wheels} before the horse!) the cutting gear, being at the extreme front, then come the horses - four abreast, then the driver who steers the machine with the small moveable hind wheel. The grain is cut from 6 to 12 inches below the head and is conveyed by a broad endless belt into a large box carried on an independent wagon moving alongside. When it is full its place is taken by another and

the loaded one deposits its load at the stack. Six men with eight horses harvest about 20 acres a day.

I wrote to Dr Jackson (who was our doctor at De Pere), relative to J. J., he does not seem to think anything serious is the matter with him.

I had a letter last week from Omaha from Mr Cleburne, Union Pacific engineer, ~~also~~ saying he expected to take out a party shortly and asking if I wanted a position, but I should not leave here except for something better or more permanent, and the indications are that there will be work here for some time to come.

Mary is going to call this boy Frederick Francis. She had a brother, and has an uncle named Frederic and the name Francis occurs twice on my side of the house and once on her side. I ~~do~~ like the name well enough as it stands, but not

its probable abbreviation and shall probably call him "Fritz", the German abbreviation. He is very quiet; very different in that respect from what J. J. was and will often lie still awake in his crib for a long time which J. J. would never do.

Your wall paper looks nice. There is some on one of the rooms here, which has just the faintest tinge of green in it and which has a pleasant effect. Buffs are good except that they show the dirt too much.

This is a cool afternoon with heavy showers. Dry Nebraska is losing its character and is growing like climates further east. Mary sends her love.

Your affectionate son

J. E. Prendergast

Aug 4, 1878

Hastings, Neb.

My dear Papa

I have yours of July 15 and 20th also a card from muller of July 20th and a joint letter from aunt Nannie and aunt Flora from Loughgilly. This ^{is} one of our intensely hot days and we have had two or three tremendous thunderstorms lately, the last one the severest of the season. Mary is pretty well, but has a new trouble in ~~the~~ neuralgia which comes in the form of jaw ache and comes ^{and} goes mysteriously. I have suffered much from it sometimes, but not often. The baby was quite sick last week and the doctor seemed to think it quite a serious case of internal fever and constipation, but he is comparatively well now. Jeffy is as usual, but has a bad breath, and I don't think his state of health satisfactory, but it