

## THE LIFE OF A SUCCESSFUL FARMER.

I WAS born at Wanborough, near Guildford, Surrey, on January 22nd, 1864, and I stayed in that village for the first twenty-two years of my life.

Starting as a lad, at the age of ten, my first job on the farm was pig-minding on the corn stubbles and rook-scaring, for which I was paid sixpence a day. Schooling was taken in between whiles whenever the farmer could spare me, and I was constantly being taken away from school up to the age of twelve, when the education laws came into force insisting that no-one should go to work until they had passed their twelfth year.

From this time on I was employed as a full-time worker on the farm as a plough boy, which meant being up in the morning at five o'clock under a carter with a four-horse team driving the plough, as in those days four-horse ploughs were the rule for farming on heavy land. Carter boys at that time of day were treated very severely, especially by some of the strictest carters. Each four-horse team had to plough his acre in eight hours, but fortunately the fields were long ones (about eighty rods), which only entailed about twenty turns a day. Nothing but a 9-inch furrow was used, except for fallowing for roots, in which case the furrow would be 10 inches. My wages for this job were five shillings per week.

In my early days there were no holidays, or recreations even. If you asked to go to a cricket match, this is what



THE AUTHOR AT HASTINGS IN 1951

the farmer would say: "If you want a half-day, you must be up at four in the morning and work up to mid-day; then you can go." This applied to boys and men as well. Work was the order of those days, not pleasure. Now, farm workers are blessed with the half-day on Saturday—good for man and good for master.

### I AM A CARTER.

From onwards, until the age of fifteen, a pair of horses was allotted to me to drive on my own, and pair-horse ploughing was my job, for which I received twelve shillings a week. I well remember the first time I had to plough and veer out on my own: I was a long way out across the field for the first time all alone—but I let nothing deter me; I was going to do my best to be a ploughman. I succeeded too.

Soon I was allotted a three-horse team with a plough to drive. This I thought was a big step in my ploughing and farming career. I was then about nineteen years old and earning fourteen shillings per week. From this age the most I earned was sixteen shillings.

Every carter took his turn on the road carting corn to the different mills, and it was then that the decorating of the horses was the rule of the day. The bells would shine on the horses' heads, there being three on the first horse, two on the second, and one on the third horse, and the brass martingales all shone like silver on the horses.

Then up in the morning early to groom your horses and plait their manes and tails with straw, each aiming to make his horse the best on the road. Three horses single would pull a thirty-sack load of wheat. A shilling or a bundle of straw was given to the carter for beer money and later on a shilling per load of corn was allowed by the farmer, and more often than not when it was delivered at the mill the miller would open up his heart and present you with a jug of the best ale. If a long journey was taken the mid-day meal had to be provided for, which meant taking fodder for your horses and pulling up at a well-known public-house, as was the usual custom in those days,

for something to eat. The publicans, of course, were delighted to see a team or two of good horses standing in front of their houses, and would always willingly provide the carter and his boy with pickled onions or some other sort of refreshment, and if it was anywhere near Christmas time hot elderberry wine was to the fore of the menu. One particular public-house which always used to give these things was the "Three Horse Shoes," near Guildford.

### POTATO CULTIVATION.

As the years went on I continued under a good old master and farmer, who, though not educated, is what we call nowadays an A.1 farmer. The farm consisted of six hundred acres of arable land, and was good wheat-growing land, properly farmed both in cultivation and manuring. No artificial manures were used in those days, excepting Peruvian Guano, which was a suitable fertilizer. This was in 1880, but as time went on Kainet came on to the market, and was soon broadcast over the land where potato crops were to be produced. The potato land was usually heavily dressed with the dung cart, anything up to twenty loads per acre being used. I may mention here, however, that round about this period only an acre or so of potatoes were grown on a big farm, until a well-known Scotsman came and set up farming on an adjoining farm, and, curiously enough, it was he who set potato growing industries into motion. From then onwards a large number of acres were employed for potato growing on the farm, and proved to be a very beneficial crop to grow indeed. Not many varieties were grown, though, at first, "Old Rock" and the "Champion" being the chief ones, but as the industry became more popular new varieties soon sprung up, such as "The British Queen," "The Giant" and "Up-to-Dates."

In 1884 it became necessary for me to give up my team of horses, as the extra potato growing was more than the old foreman could manage. The farm was then growing as much as fifty acres of potatoes, which of course, entailed a good deal of book-keeping, and it was I who was appointed to assist in the work.

## A FOREMAN'S WORK.

My first foreman's job was to see to the potato diggers, who then did all the digging by hand. I remember on this first occasion of my foremanship I had as many as seventy forks digging. This entailed a good many horses and carts to take them to the pits. Thirty horses and as many carts were employed during one week at this potato harvest. Then there was the corn, which was all stacked and which all had to be kept full account of, and I well remember the good old sort which was grown in those days, called "Rough Chaff," which in that same year yielded fifteen sacks per acre.

But this was not all. Two big flocks of sheep were kept nearly all the year round, Hampshire Downs being the chief flocks kept, and folded in herds. These, with the fattening of a hundred and fifty bullocks and numbers of pigs, kept the farm in perfect condition.

A year later, in 1885, the death of one of the partners of the farm occurred, thereby laying yet more responsibility on my shoulders, as for one whole year—from March, 1885, to 1886—I was chosen to keep full account of all the work done on this six hundred acre farm. This, of course, meant the bringing to mind of my school education, which, I am sorry to say, had dwindled somewhat, although I had done some night-schooling, but to have this extra responsibility laid to my charge was a big job. I carried it through straightforwardly for both man and master, although my master did not once scrutinise my books to see what I had written in them. I have often thought back and wondered at the confidence which my master must have placed in me at that time.

This ended my work on the farm where I was born and had lived for twenty-two years of my life, having been brought up by very strict parents, who themselves worked on the farm I mentioned for thirty years. (My father died in 1881, when I was seventeen years old.)

## A FARMER AT TWENTY-TWO.

In 1886 my career as a farmer really commenced when I took over the managing of a four hundred acre farm with the son of the deceased brother of the farmer for whom I had worked from my boyhood days.

It was not a very happy task to be master in a case like this, when a young man of twenty-two had to be over old men of the farm who were between sixty and seventy years old. For a couple of years my young partner and myself worked doggedly together, and I may say that this new farm that I had taken over was in a very bad state of cultivation, and as I said to my farmer friend one day: "This farm is going to take me five years to pull round," but by sheer hard work and study, often knowing what it was to have sleepless nights, we carried on.

I was then a single man, my good old mother attending to my comforts and wants, but here I must add a word about the weather in that year when I took over the farm. It was so severe that the frost was barely out of the ground when it was time to put the spring corn in. The frost was in the ground until the 20th March and dust blew on the ground.

This farm was growing twenty-five acres of hops, and here I found myself obliged to humble myself and ask for advice from the old hop-garden men, although I had been used to working in the hops from my boyhood on my old farm. So I soon got over the hop industry difficulty.

As time went on, the farm began to improve, though they were very bad times. I may say that the land was fairly light, but with the sheep to consolidate and fertilize the land an improvement began to show itself for the work I had put into it.

After two years had passed with my young farmer he had a business of his own, which he inherited from his father, as auctioneer. Some of the farm land was given up, so that I was left with a smaller farm to attend to. This was called Priory Farm.

## WIFE FROM HAMPSHIRE.

Then, as most young men, I began to think of having a wife, and my choice rested upon a young lady from Hampshire, and I was married on 22nd January, 1889. Then came all my comforts and help. We both carried on to the best of our ability, my wife, as time went on, taking over the poultry. At that time we were paid so much per head, usually about a penny, for rearing fowls and about the same per dozen for gathering in eggs. These were the wife's perquisites, and she did the job thoroughly, although she was a recruit amongst the fowls, letting nothing daunt her whatsoever. If an acre of hops happened to be left untrained, it was she who would go off and see to them. Then in time we were blessed with a family of three sons and two daughters, who were all brought up and sent out into the world from Priory Farm.

## AT WEY HILL FAIR.

To return to the hops. The chief market for these was Wey Hill, a fair right away out in the country in the West, between Andover and Salisbury. Besides being the chief hop market, it was the meeting-place for the brewers from the West. The hops were sent in bulk by road to this old-fashioned hop fair, and we always put up for a week there, opening up our samples and showing our goods to the best advantage for the brewers and merchants to buy. Some very interesting fair days have been spent, for the fairs were held, not only for hops, but also for cheese, where it could be bought in bulk, and if you wanted a good cart-horse, Wey Hill fair was the place to go for it. Also many are the occasions when hops have been bartered or chopped over, as we always called it, for a colt. The good old eightpenny ale was always on sale in the old mud huts which existed in those days for public-houses. Then there was the large sheep fair, where anything up to twenty thousand were penned. You could get your winter flock there; the lowest price I can remember for lambs being ten shillings per head. It was the habit of all the hop farmers to have a booth at the hop fair where they could

have their hamper of provisions for the week. This market went on for about twenty years, the market for hops now being the Borough of London right up to the present day.

## THE CORN HARVEST.

Earlier on I mentioned about the crops of corn grown in the eighties. No machines were then used to cut the corn, every bit being cut by hand with the fag-hook. At harvest time extra hands would come in from near and far to help cut the corn, and these were housed in the barns and sheds, etc. As I have said, heavy crops were grown as a rule, which entailed much hard work to gather the corn together into ricks. The work would be set out very carefully by the farmer so that there should be no hindrances either in the field or on the stack. There would be a carter and his mate in one field in a gang and another head carter and his mate in another field, with separate gangs at the ricks. I have known one gang with carter and mate to clear sixteen acres of heavy wheat in one day, which meant they had to put two whole stacks together in one day. I may say that in those days all the stacks built were round, everything going like clockwork to gather in the harvest. The farmer always used to say: "Forty loads a day, boys, and plenty of beer," beer in those days being very plentiful. One gallon was each man's allowance, and even if he asked for an extra pint it was not refused him. In these days when I write there is no beer and no life at all in the harvest field as there was then. Another prominent feature of the harvest field was the gleaners, who would pick up all the stray ears of wheat and store them for their home-made bread in the winter. Some of the old women would gather as much as two good sacks of corn.

## THE HARVEST SUPPER.

The happiest and jolliest time came, however, when the harvest was all gathered in—the harvest supper, when all the men and women, united with their master, enjoyed a hearty meal of roast beef and plum pudding. No caterers were employed to get this meal ready on the big floor of

the hop-kiln. The labourers' wives set their brick ovens and their coppers to work to cook for these hearty men, women and lads. After the supper the farmer would perhaps say a few words of thanks and would then be called upon to sing the first song. This used to be his song: the alphabet and as many verses as you like now. Everyone would join in these old ballad songs and make merry. The following are just a few of them:

- (1) *You will never miss the water 'till the well runs dry.*
- (2) *We all ploughed our acre, I will swear and I'll vow.*
- (3) *We are all jolly boys that follow the plough.*
- (4) *I have courted her the winter long, and part of the summer, too, and all the harm that ever I done was to roll her in the foggy dew.*
- (5) *And I traced her little footsteps in the snow—don't you know.*
- (6) *John Barleycorn.*

But the greatest favourite of them all, especially of the writer, up to the time of writing, was "The Farmer's Boy."

Here I might put in a word about the old ballad singers of those days, who used to come round selling old ballad songs, as long as your arm. Every boy and master, as well as the carters, knew some of the songs mentioned above, and I think that I can safely say that I knew and could sing fifty of these old songs. I was not satisfied with this, however, but had to join the fife band round about the year 1881, and in the following year I took up church bell ringing, which I have done up to this time of writing in 1942. I was also in the church choir for over fifty years as tenor singer.

#### MACHINERY COMES TO THE FARM.

At this time farming began to improve. Machinery was coming to the fore. Where we had been in the habit of mowing the clover grass with scythes, mowing machines began to appear. An old saying of the workmen was: "Ah, you may have your new machines for mowing, but you will not get any second cut." These words never proved

true though, for we found that the growth of the grass cut by the machines was not stopped. Then instead of the women turning the swarths by hand, along came the hay turner and the side rake, which proved itself to be a great labour-saver for the farmer. Also there was the four-sail reaper to cut the corn, but men still tied it by hand. Not long after this the binder came into being.

I ought to mention that I have always had the firm opinion that the men who used to fag the corn used to drink about and delay the harvest, so that when machinery came on to the market the farmer was able to be independent and do without the faghook. Farmers were then getting more scientific in their business.

Artificial manures, which were frowned upon before, were now recognised to be the one thing to get the full benefit out of the ground. The dung-cart was not abandoned, but it was found that half a coat of dung balanced with artificials was more to the farmer's advantage. This period I am writing of is in the '90's.

At the end of my tenure of office as foreman the prices for all cereals, in fact everything that a farmer had for sale, were as follows: Wheat was about £1 to 25/- a quarter. Oats 12/- to 14/-.

#### THE LABOURERS' WAGES.

I have not yet mentioned anything about the labourers' wages. They were, I might say, very low, from as far back as 1889 onwards. Thirteen shillings per week was the standard wage, but later, in the '90's, they rose to 15/- a week. Of course, the rent for their cottages was low—1/6 to 2/- being the maximum. Almost every cottager had a pig in his sty, using the manure to dress his garden and his pig to put in the pork tub. Many are the pigs that I have killed and dressed for these labourers. Thus, with their pigs and their gleanings, they were able to bring up their families satisfactorily, and some of them were very large in those days. Every Saturday the labourers' wives were to be seen with their large baskets walking the four miles to the nearest town and returning loaded with the week's rations.

## A BIG VENTURE FOR ME.

This ends my career as foreman for my old master, who had employed me for 17 years, during which time he had had all my savings for the thirty years invested in the farm. He informed me that he was going to give the farm up at Michaelmas, 1902. As I had had no interest from the money invested in the Priory Farm, I decided to venture on taking the farm over by myself, as I also had some very good friends who would help me as regards money. Thus I corresponded with agents, who, after they had found my character to be satisfactory, decided to give me the possession of the farm. I had no capital and very little to venture on this farming on my own, but, as I have said before, good friends came to my aid, and when I sold anything the money was always paid promptly, which gave me a good start and enabled me to pay for my labour—that is until I came to the expensive business of gathering in the hop harvest, of which I had a big acreage. In my very first year I was blessed with a big crop, which meant a large outlay in the gathering in of the crop, but good fortune was with me in many ways. I must say here that I had some very good labourers, especially in the curing of the hops, which is a great advantage to any hop-grower. I was rather worried about the money needed to settle up for the picking of the hops, which meant a lay-out of about £240, but one of my friends impressed on me the fact that he was still willing to fulfil his promise to let me have any money that I wanted. I had been picking for about a week, which meant that if I could market them I would receive a cheque large enough to settle my account with the pickers and labourers.

## SELLING MY FIRST HOPS.

In those days the hop market was at the Borough of London. I drew a sample at the end of my first week's picking, and went off there eager to sell my first crop of hops. You can imagine how anxious I was to get some cash, but on that day, the very Monday on which the market opened, I had no bid for my hops. To make matters

worse, there was a very bad storm on that night with severe winds, and on the Tuesday when I walked round the fields I found hops blown, poles broken and hops scattered in all directions, and the further I went the more damage seemed to have been done. On returning home from my little tour I said to myself: "I have had trouble before and I have always managed to pull through." I remember saying to my wife: "The hops are all down on the ground." Her remark, however, was: "Here is a hop letter for you. It is from Gaskain, the hop factor, London." Hurriedly I opened this letter, and found in it a bid for the hops that I had put on the market, which was 90/- per cwt., but, badly as I wanted the cash, I hesitated about accepting this offer, as I knew perfectly well that everybody's hops had suffered from the mighty gale of the night before. A telegram had to be sent at once to say if I would accept the offer or not. I hesitated, and it took me a long time to word this telegram, telling first of the disaster that had befallen the hop-crop, and saying that I thought that the hops on the market were now worth a good deal more than the offer sent to me, but I did not refuse it, but asked it to be taken into consideration the plight of the hops that were left. I was successful in selling the hops that day for £6. This eased my mind considerably, for I knew then that I had enough cash to pay for my hop-picking.

In the meantime my trusty friend had sent me a cheque, which I returned with grateful thanks for his kindness, and as the hop-picking went on I found that the hops were not damaged enough to spoil the sample. I got on and picked the whole crop and my friends the brewers came to my aid, buying the hops as fast as I could pick them, and my worry ended at the conclusion of the picking and I was left with a pocketful of cash. I always consider that it was these hops that really started me in life.

## A ROAD WIDENING JOB.

I was not, however, satisfied with farming alone, and when a contract was put out to widen a road I thought I saw a chance to earn a little ready money. So I put in a

price for dealing with the narrow road, called Dark Lane, although I did not know much about the removing of banks. My contract price was £40. The road surveyor called on me to find out what I was going to do and I stated my price. "Very well," said he, "get on with the job at once. Your price corresponds with mine (£40 10s.)." So I thought myself quite an expert surveyor. The work started with contract prices for the men, and to my surprise I earned £15 out of the job. (1902.)

This happened to be at the time of the Boer War, and everybody was most anxious to read the scanty news and how the war was going on. In 1901 Mafeking was relieved after a siege of 260 days, and Ladysmith after 118 days. Kimberley, too, was relieved after 123 days of siege.

#### I SELL MILK, ETC.

This year also happened to have a very dry summer. Corn crops were very bad and the potato crops very short, but farming, and good farming at that, was my one object. First of all I bought a couple of cows. Customers came along offering to take the milk at a shilling a gallon. I was still retailing milk at 2d. a pint, but this retail trade soon began to fail when another man started delivering milk to the houses, putting an end to my own small retail business at my door. This new method of retailing to the houses has succeeded to the present day.

Then I also started doing a bit of dealing with anything that happened to come to hand: with poultry, pigs and calves; in fact, anything that would turn over an honest shilling.

#### A CHAIRMAN FOR FORTY YEARS.

To add to my many jobs, I was elected on the Parish Council, of which I have been a member ever since, putting in forty years of chairmanship. I was also elected as guardian councillor on the Rural District Council, of which I am still a member, whilst my churchwardenship and position as school manager took up a good part of my time as well.

Farming now was beginning to make very good progress, especially, as I have said before, with the machinery; in fact, it was fast becoming a practicable job. Hop farming was, of course, my main feature. Blijths on the hops occurred very frequently, entailing a good deal of study in their combat. Quassia Chips and soft soap were the two main items used to cleanse the hops affected, and thanks are due to the new discovery of powdering the hops to clear the blight. One powdering suffices now to cleanse the whole hop fields.

#### SHOW THEM HOW TO DO IT.

As years went on the old ploughing matches came into fashion round about 1912, and the farms had, of course, to be entered for competition. I had the honour of being awarded the cup for the best farming of under 200 acres for five or six years in succession, and I still have much pleasure in showing these cups that I obtained to my friends even now. I was not like some farmers of the present time who possess motor-cars to run round the fields in to see their men, and I think the best thing for an arable farmer to know is how to use the farming tools himself, so that he can demonstrate to his men how he wants the job done. For instance, if you know, as I do, how to plough a straight furrow and set a plough to do it, you can argue with your ploughman and take hold of the handles of the plough and show him, and the same thing applies to the seed-lip. I have often taken the seed-lip from a man and shown him which foot to put forward first. I will leave it to the judgment of the reader as to which foot he would start with when sowing. If every farmer in the country knew how the work should be done, farming to-day would be carried on in a much more practicable way, with not too many scientific methods, although I admit that some are essential in the business. These are true, hard facts of how to be a prosperous farmer. Where do you find nowadays a farmer who can build his own stacks or has any idea of the size of the steadall he wants for his acreage? All these are important factors in the plan of farming.

## SHEEP FARMING.

Another branch I went in for was sheep farming—the Golden Hoof, as it is called. I was never without my flock of sheep penned on the roots during the winter—six months of the year. But it requires a good shepherd, and I can safely say that I was blessed with one of the best, who really understood his job.

“You give me the cake and the hay and I will make the sheep for you,” was what he used to say, and they were always ready for market in tip-top condition. On three occasions I was awarded prizes for the best sheep in the market. Cattle, too, can come under the same category—it is the cattle man who studies his cattle that brings the farmer prosperity.

I had yet a few more strings to my bow. The killing of pigs, castrating and general doctoring of the animals were all undertaken by me, and no “vet.” was ever called in excepting in very serious cases. I will just give you one remedy that I learned as a young man from my father, and many are the wounds I have dressed and cured with an oil which was used very much in my early days, and that was Driffield oils and old-fashioned tallow candles. One more item which, though small, should be remembered, and that is, in the words of the old song, “Work, boys, work and be contented.”

## THE GREAT WAR OF 1914.

As time rolled on the Great War of 1914 began, and if ever there was an anxious and hard time for the farmer and his men it was then. The four long years presented many difficulties in getting men to do the work. The young men were all taken, two labourers went and few old men left, but what there were were good. Any farmer that could grow, as I did, with intense farming, was sure to come out on the right side, and throughout that war-time we concentrated on what few things we had left, and we let nothing deter us from getting on with the job. In spite of all these difficulties, however, that we had to contend with during those days of war, thanks are due to the fact that we did not receive bombs, as we have in this war, to

destroy property wilfully, and what a relief came, I might say to every soul on earth, when news came at eleven o'clock on that morning of 1918 to say that the war had ended. No more work was done on that day. Every man came to the farmhouse, where there was a barrel of beer on the table, thanking God for the good tidings.

## BRIGHTENING VILLAGE LIFE.

My time was not entirely taken up with farming alone. I had some thoughts for the villagers, for then there were no buses to take them to even the nearest town, and though they might manage to get there by other means there were no cinemas to entertain them. So the only thing to do was to set up an entertainments committee in the village. This organised dances, concerts and whist drives to be held in the Village Hall, which was always very well filled, and the proceeds went towards the buying of chairs and a piano, etc. All the items of the concerts were provided by local talent. Also in the village was the Old Man's Friendly Society, of which I was secretary for three years, as well as the West Surrey Benefit Society, to which nearly all young men belonged. Then there was what we termed the feast day in July, when there was arranged by the Central Office at Guildford an excursion to the sea-side. Over two thousand people took part in this, and on that day the village was deserted, as a good many members and friends joined in the holiday. Provision had to be made to get to Guildford Station, and two horses and waggons were used as buses for this purpose, but everybody heartily enjoyed the trip.

## WE TRAVEL ABOUT.

As we got older my wife and I decided that we would like to see more of the world around us, and so we went first of all on a trip to Wales, etc., then to Cornwall, and later to Scotland—all by road transport. But we were not content with this, but wanted to go still farther afield. This time we went to the Mediterranean, to Malta, Algiers, Barcelona, Lisbon and the famous mountain Vesuvius and to Pompeii. This trip proved most interesting, as was also the one to the West Indies, where I spent four months



travelling, visiting all the British Islands in the West Indies, seeing the sugar, tobacco and cocoa growing; in fact, everything to a strychnine tree, including a scrubbing brush tree. We also visited the oil wells of the famous Pitch Lake, of which I must make special mention. This so-called lake covers an area of about one hundred acres and the pitch is refined and sent out all over the world. I had the pleasure of walking and seeing the pitch being dug up, about six inches in depth, and carted away in trucks to the refinery, but by the next morning the pitch would have risen again to the same level as it was before. This, I was told, had been going on for one hundred years, and yet the whole one hundred acres had only been lowered by four inches. Another island I visited was named Bermuda, where they need neither bricks nor mortar to build their houses, but simply saw out bricks from the rock where they intend to build their houses, and all they have to do is to lay these sand bricks, which are nearly white in colour. From there I went on my way home to New York, U.S.A., to see the sky-scrapers and avenues with railways both under and above.

#### I RETIRE FROM FARMING.

In 1933 I thought that I had done enough farming, and so I eventually retired and went to live in the village, but still kept on all my duties and offices mentioned before. My one great hobby was bowling. We had a very strong little team in the village and were willing to give any club a sound game, winning the cup several times—presented by the M.P.

The following was written by opponents on one occasion:

- P stands for Puttenham, winners this year.
- U for united, no clubs do they fear,
- T stands for triers, they are each of them.
- T stands for Turvil, at bowls a real gem.
- E for excitement, we have at some ends.
- N stands for nerve, on this much depends.
- H is for honour, gained winning the cup.
- A for applause, when the captain steps up.
- M stands for Marshall, the last letter here. A sport to the backbone, let's give him a cheer.

On the bowling green at Guildford, too, I gained several prizes and spoons, and in 1938 I won my colours and medal from the Surrey County Bowling Association.

Snooker was also another pastime, although it did not interest me while I was farming, and I only took the game up when I had retired. It is, however, a game which I much enjoy with my bowling pals.

My family have now all gone out into the world, except one daughter, who is still at home with me. The other daughter has been resident in the West Indies for twenty-one years, whilst two of my sons are farmers and hop-growers and the third is in the motor trade.

#### NOTE ON THE WEST INDIAN TRIP.

At last I was crossing the Atlantic, and at last a dream of years had come true, that, please God, I should see the West Indies and the Spanish Main. I could scarcely believe that I was on board a West Indian steamer, and could by no possibility get off it again, save into the ocean or on the farther side of the Atlantic. It was on the morning of the 26th of November, 1921, that I began on the old route to "Westward Ho!" and I was bound far out over the high seas to leave the Old World behind. It was indeed like a dream, but there I was, in the chilly November weather, with frost and fog, bidding farewell to the white cliffs of Dover. As we passed Boulogne, on the French coast, the sun just peeped through, and there I could still see old England watching with careful eyes the calm seas, looking then like an English lake. But we were soon out on the wide open waters, beginning our long journey towards the unknown land. The turmoil of the engines at night seemed to sound as if the ship was talking to the waters beneath. It took a couple of days ere I could realise that I was really on a journey, for the first time, across the broad ocean, and that I was not to be seen or even heard of for at least six weeks. To my surprise, however, we were not cut off so much as I had imagined. The ship had something above the deck that was more than a dream—something with

wires that stretched from one pole to a second one; then inside a little cabin, high up, was a man with instruments attached to his ears and with his hands handling other instruments. He was actually receiving messages from the dear Homeland, and sending them back to the land I had left a few days ago. Among others, a message went from me. It was all very wonderful; instead of being cut off miles away from the English shores, I was still in communication with those I had left behind.—*Written at Trinidad.*