

MY JOURNEY TO AMERICA

I sat there on the hill, alone, in the evening twilight. It was the last evening at home. Everything was packed and ready for the journey to start tomorrow morning.

Never before have the hills and mountainsides been so breathtakingly beautiful as this evening. The brook seemed to sing a sad song, and the trees bowed, and let their yellow leaves fall by my side as a parting gesture.

Everything touched my heart, and the thought to part from my dear Norway, which for twenty-four years had been my country and my childhood home, made the tears flow freely.

Mother passed away a short while ago and went to her grave. I miss her so. My husband went to America five months ago, where I am now going with my little son and daughter to meet him. This was, for the moment, the only pleasure I could look forward to. Father is supposed to come along. Poor old Father. It was so hard for him, who being seventy years old, had to say goodbye to these familiar and dear surroundings, his country, and his people. Father knew so well that a new country with a new language and different conditions, would be difficult for him at his age. But Mother was dead and he was so lonesome and now he wanted to come along with me and spend his last days in America, where he also had three other daughters.

I thought the night went too fast. I thought about my two little ones, and wondered what would happen to them in the new land. I prayed to God to bring us there safely, and if it were His will, to let us come back again.

The dawn of the next day came so quickly, and I had to hurry to get ready and to say farewell. It seemed as if my heart would break, but we had to get going now. The last hour and minute had arrived. Handshakes and goodbyes had to be hurriedly exchanged. It felt as if the heart-strings between family, friends, and us, could not be torn apart. Tears dimmed the eyes and a "God bless you and the little ones" was heard from everywhere. From many I could hear, particularly to little Harold, "You will soon be a big boy and come back here again."

The ship was ready and we were on board. White handkerchiefs were now waving between us, while the heart would break. The little ones also had to wave theirs as a last farewell. They were so happy and satisfied and could not understand why we were crying. Everything was new and interesting for them. I felt like throwing myself down alone somewhere and

crying, but I had to take care of my two little ones who were ready, right away, to investigate everything.

We were standing up on deck as long as we could and looked out over the beautiful countryside. Those snowcapped mountains and the wonderful fjords and mountainsides spoke to us in a mighty way, and we comforted each other the best we could while our thoughts flew in all directions. Father knew, so well, that it was the last time he would see these places and I didn't have much hope either to ever be back.

The trip to Trondhjem* didn't take long, and everything went pretty well. The next day we were on board the ship which was to take us to Hull, England. I was dreading the trip from now on since I had always suffered from seasickness and now, in the fall, the weather was usually more stormy. My little daughter was only two and one half years old and my son a year younger, so if I should get sick it would be terrible for them. But we had to get on with the journey and the thought of being with my husband in just a few weeks gave me courage. I also had three sisters in North Dakota whom I had not seen in several years, and it would be great joy to see them all again and for them to see Father and my children, of whom I was so proud and whom they had never seen. The joy of soon being there in company with my dear ones, reduced the fear and all and I now tried to only look forward to the reunion.

The North Sea was very rough and both the children and I got seasick and were already tired and worn out when we arrived in England. Father, who was an old seafaring man, did not feel any sickness across the North Sea and was of great help to me when our luggage had to be looked after before we got it forwarded to Liverpool. We had barely time to eat a little before they called "All Aboard!"

How I wished my husband had been here to help me now, when we all felt so helpless without him. But he worked over in North Dakota, and had rented a home for us where we were to live and it would be a happy day when we finally would be there. He was so fond of his little ones, and little Harold, who was named after him. He would be particularly interested in seeing how big and stout he had grown in these five months. He would run around now and say a few words, too.

All our conversation was about when we were going to meet everyone. I was wondering if my sisters had changed, how they would love my little ones and so on. Father often smiled through tears at the thought of seeing his own again.

He was also so proud of the children and often talked about how, particularly the child I was carrying inside of me, would be an American and a good citizen for his country. Missing home was now on our minds and also the joy of seeing our loved ones very soon.

As soon as everything was taken care of we were on board the train to Liverpool, which was almost worse than at sea, as it was our first train

*Trondhjem is now spelled Trondheim

trip, and all of us felt seasick even there. We were closed in a car by ourselves, where there was no lavatory and not a drop of water to drink. I didn't know what in the world to do, either with the children or myself. But we arrived in Liverpool and were mighty glad when the train stopped and we were brought to our hotel where we could wash up and get some refreshments. The bed felt particularly good.

I looked with sorrow at my little ones who were sick and exhausted in many ways. Little "Tulla*" was so patient and waited so lovingly while Harold was undressed and washed and put to bed. Then it was her turn. She asked so often, "When will we be with Papa?" Her little arms around my neck, and her, "Dear Mama, you are so good," often brought tears onto my cheeks and even though I didn't feel I did much, this gave me courage and strength. She was an outstandingly good, patient and sensible little angel. I had taught her to pray to God, and so often she folded her hands and said, "Dear God, let us soon come to Papa."

We travelled on a Line which we believed to be the best, and here I was with two little ones and in a position where I ought to have waited til next year. I had to have the best of care, and this had been promised us on this Line. Therefore, I was quite satisfied when the agent in Trondhjem told us that we would get free care by both doctor and nurse, if we got sick, which I feared, since I always suffered with seasickness whenever I was at sea.

We arrived in Liverpool the last day in September. My father wanted to look around in town and went out alone. It was already late, and in a little while all the lights were lit and this made such a difference to him that he didn't know where he was or where to go. He tried to ask, but no one understood him and he didn't understand anyone. Here he had his first experience with a foreign language. He walked back and forth more and more afraid. Finally, a fruit peddler who understood a little Norwegian came to his rescue. So, at 10:00 p.m. he came back to the hotel completely exhausted. I had been so restless and was so happy when he came back.

Father was a sensible man, and I thought he would be able to take care of himself, but this time it was a close call. He had bought some fruit from this peddler and when he told his story to the interpreter on board, he found out that he had paid 75¢ too much for the fruit. Father wanted to get the money back and went out again to the place which was close by. This time he recognized the area, and sure enough, Father came back without the fruit, but with his cents. This incident resulted in the agent (the interpreter) making strict rules against anyone buying fruit from these peddlers again, as they always tried to cheat the immigrants.

Early the next morning we were told that a passenger boat would leave Liverpool bound for Philadelphia in the afternoon, and that anyone who wanted to could go with it. A bigger boat would leave two days later, if anyone wanted to wait. Many chose to stay till the third of October, but most believed, as we did, that to leave two days before the other boat

*Tulla is a nickname which means a toddler (a girl)

would bring us two days earlier to Philadelphia. I felt so tired already and the little ones were so tired and dissatisfied, already showing signs of fatigue from this trip's adversities, they didn't let go of me for a moment. Therefore, I believed that two days would shorten the trip for us all and the sooner we arrived, the sooner all would be well. The agent also believed that it was best for us to leave with the first boat, and based on his word, we decided to leave on October 1st.

We were taken to our cabin, which I thought looked very dark and depressing. There was no daylight. Not a ray of light when we closed the door. But I figured we would rather be on deck in the daytime and perhaps it would be best for the children to take their naps when it was dark. We were certain we would have some type of light in the evening, but even then we were disappointed.

Now we had come to the part of this journey I had dreaded the most. The Atlantic Ocean had left a certain mark on my mind from my school years. And I had decided, in my earliest childhood, never to travel to America because I then had to cross that terrible, huge ocean. One of our neighbors traveled across, a few years ago, with his family. One of his children died on board and was submerged into the ocean. This had left its mark on my heart which I could not forget. And now, when I with two little ones found myself on board an ocean-liner, to travel over to America, this memory became alive again. But, of course, I knew that not a sparrow falls to the ground unless it is the will of God, and that He, who stilled the storm on the Sea of Galilee, would guide and lead us across the ocean. I asked Him earnestly to protect us in every way. And the storm in my heart quieted down after I had stayed in the cabin for awhile.

The conversation with the children was about Papa, and that this big boat would take us over to the land far away where he was. Tulla smiled so heartily. She had learned so many songs to sing for Papa, and on this trip she tried so often to sing them. Harold didn't understand too much about our talk, but he too repeated "Papa" when we talked about him.

Soon we were called to dinner. The tables were set and we sat down together. But since the food was totally different from what we were accustomed to, nothing tasted good and we went to bed almost without any dinner. I asked for milk for the children but was answered that milk was for babies, not for big children like mine, even though Harold was not yet one and a half years and Agnes only one year older. There were signs posted on board, "Milk for Children". I so wished this was our last day on board, instead of the first.

We went up on deck before bedtime, but the wind was strong and I thought it would be best to go to rest with the little ones. I heard from many, "we can expect storm", and this added to my dread. I went down in our Dark* cabin. I had to leave the door ajar to see to undress the children. We had no light even later in the evening. I still believed we would get some light later but was disappointed. It was impossible to put the children to bed in the upper bunk as they were too small to take care

*The word for dark in Norwegian is mørk - so this was a pun.

of themselves at night. Besides, they were afraid in the dark and were not feeling well after an already long time of travel.

I knew so well that if a storm developed I would be unable to care for them if they were in the bed above me, so I put Agnes down by the foot-board of my bed and Harold next to me. It was terribly cramped, but I felt better having them close to me and thought I could easily endure this for a few nights. My thought was that I could sit up once in awhile if only the children were all right. I wanted them to be their best; healthy and happy, as usual, when they met their papa in America.

Soon they slept so peacefully and knew no more. Again, I put our lives in God's hands and sat down on my suitcase with the door a little open to get some rays of light from the outside. There I sat until Father came down with the news that there were more rumors among the passengers that a storm was approaching. It was already a bit windy.

I couldn't sleep at the thought of how little there actually was between us and death. Just this ship between us and the ocean's depth. After midnight the wind got stronger and I started getting seasick and had to vomit again and again. I was satisfied as long as the children were all right and slept. But it didn't last long until they too started to throw up. We had a terrible first night on board. Father helped us all the best he could, but the little ones wanted mama, and I could not help them. (If the reader has ever been seasick, he knows how it feels.) Father ran to get water, which they wanted continually, and he became all tired. But he could get dressed and go up on deck to get fresh air, while we had to stay in bed where we had neither light nor air. In this way we continued every day and night. None of us could lift our heads from the pillow. I was so helpless and sick, but what hurt the most was that I couldn't care for the children the way I wanted to. I so wished that there was someone who could have helped me to take care of them. Father brought them a little food, but they could not eat. They needed care more than food.

Every day the storm increased, and every moment I thought the ship would not right itself up again after it dipped down. For every beat of the propeller, my head seemed to burst. Everything on board was tied down and not one person was allowed on deck anymore. Father brought me news many times a day. He was very worried about us, and tried to get a doctor to come but the interpreter just laughed and said it was only seasickness, which would soon go over anyway.

The children were more quiet now. Harold had not uttered a sound since the sixth day we were on board and slept all the time. I, myself, could not do anything more for them since I was very miserable by now. My mind was too weak to understand that this sleep was not natural. I knew they were in bed and that they were asleep, which pleased me. But I could not think any more.

Father came in often with greetings from other passengers who had been seasick, but who had recovered and now told me to keep my courage up. But I was indifferent to everything now, and too sick to follow any conversation. He said they had set sail to keep the ship in the wind, but that was

only one day and it tore to shreds like paper.

Father stroked the little ones and tried to talk to them, but from Harold there was not a sound. Agnes opened her eyes a little, but soon fell asleep again. She wanted water, that was all. But poor old Father was beside himself with worry. He, himself, had stayed in bed most of the last two days, yet he had daily tried to ask the interpreter to send the doctor in to see us.

This day he thought, "I dare not be alone with my daughter and her two little ones any longer, because I do not know when they all three will die, and I need help!" With this message he went to the interpreter, who, in a little while, came in with a bowl of soup which I absolutely could not think of consuming. He talked in a strict manner to me and said I would not survive till we crossed the ocean if I did not drink this soup. Immediately I remembered my neighbors who all became ill and saw their child submerged into the ocean, and right away I tried to drink the soup while he held my head. This was the first time I had had any kind of nourishment in my mouth since the first evening at dinner on October 1st. Today it was October 11th. But the soup was out of me before he was out of the room.

The little ones were breathing heavily in their fever, which I did not understand, but which he understood better. I could not say much, because all strength had left me. In a little while he came back and said that the doctor would come in a few minutes, which he did. The doctor had a lantern in his hand, which he stretched way into our little cabin, but he himself did not come in. I tried to use all my strength to turn in bed to take advantage of the light to see my dear little ones, whom I had not seen in eleven days, even though we lay in the same bed. My first glance at them shocked me and I uttered a loud scream, which the doctor right away hushed. He told Father to keep quiet and not let one single person on board know that we had the measles!

I sank back on my pillow so weak and powerless. What was the matter with the little ones? I had not heard what was told to my father. I knew they were unwashed and unclean in every way, but "what has made them red as a piece of meat?", I thought. I had so little experience with illness. Only twenty-four years old, and now alone, sick and miserable myself, on a stormwhipped ocean, in the middle of the Atlantic. I could not think straight. Everything turned around in my head and made me dizzy.

My poor father understood more than I did and he cried aloud. "Aa^oh," I cried. "If only I had Mother here." She would have understood more than any doctor and would have helped us all in every way. The want of Mother, the knowledge of my children's illness, and my own condition, being in transit to a foreign country - it all overwhelmed me and I fainted, while calling in my heart, "Mother! Mother!"

When I regained consciousness, I was still alone in the dark with Father and the children. "The wind had subsided", said Father, but the ship rolled almost the same way as when the storm whipped the waves. While I lay there in a daze, the interpreter came with another man and said

they were sent by the doctor to tell me that my children had the measles, and they were now bringing them to the hospital on board, whereupon they would also bring me to the hospital. A ray of joy went through my heart and thanks to God for the help. When I heard it was the measles I was satisfied, because I thought they would soon overcome just a childhood disease.

In a little while, they came back and carried me in there, too. The room was so light and the beds clean. Agnes lay there with a clean night-gown on, and Harold lay in a bigger bed that I had to share with him, which pleased me. They had both been changed, but were both so broken down and were red all over and looked more dead than alive. I tried to talk to them, but Agnes could only open her eyes a moment and then they drooped and closed again. Little Harold did not hear or see anything. He had been unconscious for many days now. I got some broth, and could keep it down this time. Agnes was fed something from a spoon. I did not know what it was. A man came in now and then and looked at us, but I could not understand him. Most likely he was an assistant doctor. I felt stronger already after I knew the doctor had seen us and we were in a better room and had also got some nourishment.

Both Father and I slept good in our new room. The worry in Father's heart had eased now since we were taken care of. He had been nurse for so long that he was quite exhausted. He still had to wait on us some, but knew that the doctor would now help when necessary.

The 12th of October we were surrounded by thick fog and could not see a foot out from the ship. The foghorn blasted every minute, and everyone was anxious to know if we were in safe waters, as it was said that rocks and reefs were in our course. The speed slowed down more and more until it seemed as if the ship did not move at all. The passengers were worried and everyone wished they would soon come into the harbor, which we would have been by now, if only the ship would speed up a little. There were rumors that any time now the pilot would be on board and when he came, very soon this journey would be over and we would arrive Philadelphia.

I looked at the children every time Father came with news and wondered if they would be strong enough to be taken on the train to North Dakota. Never ever did it enter my mind that we would have to be taken to a hospital. Always the thought was to continue when we came ashore. Neither did it ever occur to me how we could get ourselves off the ship and on to the train. I could barely sit up in bed myself, and I had two sick little ones and our luggage to tend to, as well as Father.

I rejoiced, like a child, when Father told me that the pilot was on board and he said our ship would arrive in Philadelphia on the 14th of October. I tried to get up and get dressed so we could get ready to leave the ship with the others. But I had no strength and could not stand on my feet. I tried for hours to comb my hair, but my arm was so weak that I couldn't lift it high enough to reach my hair, and had to give it up.

The ship was now in harbor and there was a terrible turmoil among the passengers as they tried to get ashore as fast as possible. Father and I

talked about and wondered when our turn would come. We knew the agent would call us, and we wanted rather to be the last ones to be called off the ship. The children lay there undressed still, and I didn't feel up to dressing them.

While we sat and talked about these things, there came a knock at the door and in came the interpreter with a man he introduced as a doctor from Philadelphia. I wondered why he came, but he at once started to examine the children and felt my pulse. I did not understand their conversation, but I saw from the doctor's actions that he was giving orders for something. Tulla was a little better. She drank some orange juice, and also talked a little today.

After the doctor left, the interpreter told us that the children and I had to go to a hospital and Father to a boarding house. By now, our agent from Philadelphia had also come aboard and from now on he would be responsible for us and he told us the same things as the doctor. Our hearts sank on hearing this news. I knew Father didn't have too much money and all I had was twelve paper dollars, which I received for my "droner" in Liverpool. The agent, Mr. Wright, asked how much we had and said Father would manage fine for in two days, he said, I would be out of the hospital and along with Father on the train. We felt encouraged, and I thought two days would go fast.

The ambulance was there, and I and the little ones were helped into it after saying farewell to Father. The agent told me that I had to give all my money to Father because it was dangerous for me, being sick and a foreigner, to have money in the hospital. It could be stolen, he said, so Father got my twelve dollars. I knew that even if my father was old, he was quite sensible, but I dreaded that he should be left alone and I worried more about him than about myself and the children.

I could never even try to describe my feelings as I was lying there in the ambulance pulled by a huge horse. Now we were in America, over the ocean, but everything looked so dark. My heart was so heavy. The last promise I gave my mother on her deathbed was to tend to and to be good to Father. And now, suppose something should happen to him, alone as he was in this foreign country. I didn't know where he would be and he knew nothing about where I was. I forgot my own troubles completely now at the thought of Father.

Soon after the ambulance had left, the agent came to my father and said he (the agent) had to get my \$12. My father could not understand at all what he meant, and would not give him the money. But then the agent said, "You must go on the train which is expected any moment. Your daughter will stay a month or two, maybe three, in the hospital and you can not stay here." Now my poor father didn't know what to do. In his eyes the agent seemed to be a big swindler. But just then came a Swedish man who turned out to be of help. He had traveled on the same boat as we, on his way back from a visit to Sweden. He spoke English and wanted to know what all this was about. The agent answered that I would need the money later and that he was responsible for me. The agent was thus forced, on the Swede's orders, to give my father a receipt for the money and also to send

me a postcard in which he told me that Father traveled to North Dakota the same evening we parted. He was to tell me that all was well with him and for me not to worry. The agent promised to do this the same day, so I could know the next day that he had left, but I received the card eight days later.

When we arrived at the hospital, the children's beds were ready. They (a few words were not clear here) received care right away, and several doctors came to examine them. I was allowed to sit up in a reclining chair awhile and was glad that no particular examination was given me, as nourishing food and rest was all I needed just now. If only I had understood how to be calm and be rested. I felt I had to look after the children all the time, and did not understand that this was the nurses job now. There were two wards in the hospital and one nurse for each ward. Besides thirteen children from three to fourteen years old on our ward when we arrived, there was a young Norwegian man. The nurses asked him to tell me various things about the rules. and so on.

The second day I was there I was told that I could not go into the children's room one more time, or I would be transported to another hospital where I would not see or hear them at all. Tulla cried and called "Mama" all the time. She did not understand the nurses when they talked and was deadly afraid when they came to give her medicine. As soon as she saw them she screamed all she could and when they held her nose to make her take the medicine, she was furious and screamed, "Mam, come in", till I was quite sick. She got internal bleeding and often I wanted to go in there as I thought she was dying from exhaustion when they were finished with the shots and all the other necessary things. I used to knock on her door and tell her I was there and asked her to be good and told her I would come in in a little while.

I was often overcome by fear (a few words unclear) and sometimes cried till I could not see. My nurse often came and put her arms around my neck and said, "You must not cry", but I didn't know what she said. Only God understood me, and He seemed to have forgotten and left me too, when I needed Him so much.

My son lay there the same way, unconscious and quiet, always with eyes closed. I didn't know where Father was or how he managed. I didn't have a penny to buy a piece of paper or a stamp, so I could not write a letter to my husband. I could not see my little ones any more, and I, myself, was barely able to get up from the chair and walk around a little.

After the young man left, four days after we arrived in the hospital, I wondered how I could know what date and day it was and so I got this idea to write every day inside the cover of my Bible* the date and day as well as how things were. This I did every day I was there.

One day when I told him about my journey, he asked if I had written to my husband and told him about how things were now. I had to tell him I had no writing materials and did not have a penny. When he heard that, he gave me four sheets of paper, four envelopes and four two cent stamps. In a hurry I wrote a letter to my husband and told him that I was in the

hospital in Philadelphia and Father was in a boarding house here some place. As I wrote, I learned from him that I should prepare myself to stay one or two months in the hospital, which my nurse had asked him to tell me. He knew that I thought I would be out of the hospital in a short time, and wanted me also to tell my husband this. My hand shook so I could not continue writing for awhile, and tears dimmed my eyes so I could not see. In my heart I prayed that the Lord would help me with what He would send me. I knew He loved me, but He wanted to test my faith.

I have often wished that I could have told the young man how his help was welcomed and appreciated, and how often later I have wondered if he had not helped me that time, what would have happened? He also wrote the address of the hospital, which I did not know, and told me it was a "pest-house" I was in, and that I did not pay if anyone should ask for payment, as everything was free.

After five days I was moved into Tulla's room. Harold was moved to a room of his own. I was so happy to be together with my little treasure, and she laughed and smiled and would not let me go out of the room, as she was so afraid I would not come back again. I could also go in as often as I wanted to Harold, who now lay under oxygen all the time. He knew nothing and did not miss me so, therefore, I was more with Tulla. The nurse always asked where my husband was and where my children's father was but I did not understand. (I learned many words they used by rote, and thought I knew what they meant, but they did not understand me when I tried to use them. (This part was unclear and I guessed).

One day my nurse built, with books, a likeness of a coffin and put her head down in it with her eyes closed. I now understood well that the meaning of this was that Harold, my beloved son, could not live and it was necessary to know what to do or to say. Crying was almost all I did all the time.

Finally I had received the card about Father's travel, which was a great joy for me. But not yet a word from any of my relatives in North Dakota. My husband had been transferred away from the city we were supposed to live in, and did not receive my letter. So the first letter I received from him was the tenth day I was in the hospital.

I know nobody can understand my position who has not tried what it is like not to understand, or be able to make oneself understood. Aa^oh, how I wished I had somebody to talk to. Again, my longing for my mother overwhelmed me. She had died so recently, and I missed her now so terribly. I would have thrown myself into her arms, and there I would have received comfort and advice, now when I needed it more than ever before.

The days passed. There were not many left in our ward of the hospital. One after the other had been picked up by their parents and every time a feeling of pain went through me. One day, when we tried so hard to make ourselves understood, I remembered my contract which I received in Trondhjem where all the agents' names, for the whole journey, were written and which I had in my purse, which I had given to the nurse when I first came to the hospital. I took her arm and guided her (which I always did when I

wanted something) to her medicine cabinet and pointed to my purse, which she took down for me. I found the contract and gave it to her. It was written in Norwegian, but she read, "The agent in Philadelphia is X*." She became very excited and ran into the other ward and showed the other nurse my contact and thereafter to the telephone. I believe she mentioned X many dozen times. That was all I understood of the conversation. He promised me when I left for the hospital to look in on us often, but he totally forgot about us.

Thursday the last patients left the hospital. Now we were the only ones left. We had now been here for three and a half weeks. So far, I had never said, "Let God's will be done." I had always prayed that Harold should be well again. I so wanted to keep my son. But today, when I looked at him, I fell to my knees by his bed, with little Tulla by my side, and asked God if it were His will, to take him home soon. After my prayer, I bent down and asked him if I should greet Papa and tell him they would meet in Heaven? Now you may laugh, if you will, but I believe he heard me and understood me, because he opened his eyes, looked at me and tried to speak. I interpreted it as a "yes" answer to my question. It was also the only time since the sixth day on the Atlantic Ocean that I believed he heard me when I talked to him.

Saturday, while we were giving him oxygen, the Lord came and took him home. It had to be my own son I saw dying for the first time in my life. Aah! what an impression this made on me when I stood there and looked at him.

I was trembling with emotion, and my heart was at the point of breaking. I could not shed a tear while the nurse closed his eyes and put cotton over his eyelids. I almost wanted to tear her away from my son, and ask her to stop this, which looked like tyranny.

I had a brand new little suit, which I had saved for him to wear when he met his Papa. This, I asked to dress him in now. I shouted and took the nurse's arm so she could understand me, but it was in vain. A man came and covered him with a sheet and took him away from us while I was writhing in pain and sorrow.

I thought I couldn't stand this any longer. If only I had had a single soul to talk to. I stood by the gate and looked after the man till he disappeared between some buildings. When I didn't see him any longer, I threw myself down on a table which stood in the hall, while my heart would break and I cried till I was quite weak.

Little Agnes wondered why I didn't like the fact that Harold was going to Papa now. She thought the man came to prepare him for the trip to Papa. She was my only comfort, the only one who understood me and who I understood. My nurse came and embraced me. She also wept. I understood these sympathetic and loving expressions, but not her words. She was always very good to me and hears now felt like healing balsam on my heart, wounded by sorrow and adversity.

*The name was erased and replaced with W.

She had called the agent, and he came now to the hospital for the first time. I did not recognize him. He came and spoke Norwegian to me and asked if I knew my child was dead? A strange question, I thought, but when he said who he was, I knew right away, since I heard the nurse mention his name so often on the telephone that day she saw my contract. I was too sick when I was taken off the ship to recognize him now. He said my son's funeral would be Monday afternoon, but if I wanted to I could go on the train today. Of course, I chose to stay over, but the thought of being there two more nights almost suffocated me. I had no peace, and could neither sit nor lay down, but every minute I went into the empty room where my dear little Harold had been lying almost four weeks.

My nurse sat so faithfully by my side almost all the time. The agent said Friday that he would send a man on Monday who would take us to the funeral and thereafter to the train, where we would continue the last leg of our journey to North Dakota.

Awhile before the time he was expected, my little nurse was dressed and so lovingly put her arms around my neck, kissed me and said "Goodbye". She was so insistent that I should understand her. Again and again she said "goodbye". I had learned in Norway from a boy who was home on a visit what "good boy" meant, but now it was almost painful that she would call me "good boy" when I was ready to go to my son's funeral. I could not understand that she would call me "good boy". I also knew what "good girl" was, and wondered why she couldn't have said "good girl". It didn't occur to me that she was leaving. But then she went out, waving back to me all the while, till she had opened and closed the gate, and stood outside with her "hand luggage". Now when she waved her handkerchief and called "good bye" to me, while I sat in the window and watched her, I suddenly realized that she too was leaving.

I had, for so long, been in a nervous and upset frame of mind, that I could not control my feelings, and burst into tears. I wanted so to say farewell to her. At once, she put down her suitcase and came running back, because she too knew I understood her. We said goodbye with arms around each other while tears flowed freely. I have often wanted to tell her how her actions imprinted memories deep in my heart.

Now we were all alone. Aah, how it felt lonely and sad. The minutes were like days until the messenger came, who brought us to the last parting with our darling, which had to be done quickly in order to reach the train before it left.

There he lay, my love, so thin and pale, but so peaceful. I knew how his father would have wanted to see him, even if it was in death, and we could have shared the pain together. There were no organ tones, hymns or sympathy. My daughter and myself made up the gathering. There was not a single flower. Oh, how I wished I could have placed a little rose on his coffin or his grave.

It was so different from Mother's funeral which I attended not so long ago. Then we comforted each other, two sisters and two brothers. But now I was alone, suffocated by pain, and no one understood me. I would rather not

dwell upon the parting with my son, in the funeral parlor, and by the grave down by the beach, where the waves licked close up to his grave.

It is over thirty-six years ago now, but the memories in my heart are still overwhelming, and every time I attend a funeral I think about not being able to place a flower on his grave.

The messenger who was to bring us to the train came and took my arm and I had to leave. I can not remember much from then to the time I was on the train. My mind was so foggy. Little Tulla cried and wanted to bring Harold along. She would not be comforted until sleep gave her rest on the bench in the train.

Now we were only two on this, the last part of our journey. Now I only wished we were at our destination, and I could do what I wanted in my new home and my new country. I wrote to my husband Saturday that we left Philadelphia on Monday and it was estimated that we would arrive Thursday afternoon. But because of different kinds of complications, we didn't arrive before Friday evening around midnight.

My husband, who was transferred to another place, had asked the people at the station to keep an eye on all passenger trains, since he, himself, could not come until Saturday, and if any relatives should not make it in time to the station when I arrived, there would be more difficulties for me again.

Father and my youngest sister had been at the station on Thursday and met all the trains, and the same on Friday, but they had been told that the train I was on, arriving in the evening, did not have any immigrants on it, and therefore they didn't wait, but would be back Saturday.

I looked forward joyfully every hour - to soon be there - and when the name of the station was called, I was very happy. My heart beat faster now, and I awakened little Tulla, so she could be dressed and ready to meet Papa and her aunts. But when the train stopped, there was no one there to meet us. I stood there with Tulla in one hand and my suitcase in the other and waited and thought maybe they were delayed and would come a little later. But since no one came, I tried to ask.

I had become so accustomed to not being understood, that I almost didn't think it was worth asking about anything. The man I talked to, ran to fetch a Mr. Johnsen, and him I understood. He spoke Norwegian very well. He asked me to sit down till he had finished with the train. He was one of those who had been asked to look for me and he knew all of my relatives, also my father. He lived only two blocks from the house my husband had rented. I was happy to hear all was well and to be able to talk, and to understand as well.

He took Tulla on his arm, and we walked to what I believed was going to be my home for awhile, but discovered that no one was there. Mr. Johnsen then took me to his house where his wife met me with the most tender love and sympathy which only added to my pain.

She served us lunch while Mr. Johnsen went back over to find out if my folks had come home, but he came back with the same news, that there was no one in the house. I was shown to a room and a bed, which, at the moment I liked better than anything else. When I had put Tulla to bed and prayed with her, I threw myself down on the bed while I sobbed aloud. I was completely exhausted and so tired and disappointed.

In the morning before I got up, Mr. Johnsen had been to the house again and found out that it was sold, and all the furniture stored, while Father and my youngest sister had moved out in the country to my oldest sister's home, which also would be my home for a time now.

My dear oldest sister had died recently and left behind two little ones. My other (next to the oldest) sister had moved to the west coast. They had waited two weeks and believed I would come, but could not wait any longer. These were deep disappointments, one after the other. I had so looked forward to seeing them all again, particularly my oldest sister, who I had not seen in many years and whom I especially loved.

My husband came on Saturday to my great joy and relief. He was the one who was this journey's goal, and with him it was better to converse than with anyone else. We would now share all sorrows and losses with each other. Tulla was so happy to see Papa again. But every time our son's name was mentioned, a pain pierced our hearts and we wished he were with us.

It was sad to come into my sister's home, where everything reminded us of a mother's loving hand, which now was resting from its duties forever. For awhile I was mother for these two motherless little ones.

After a month in Mandan, God gave me another son, whom I gave the name of the first one. I always have believed he was sent in his place. He has been and still is our pride and joy. He recently got married.

Tulla is married and has three sons now. She has always kept her childhood love for her Father and Mother, and still is as tender and good as when we shared sorrows and joys on the journey to this country. We understand each other as well now as we did then.

(Dates of journey - September 24, 1902 - November 18, 1902)

56 days from departure in Trondheim, Norway until arrival in Mandan, North Dakota