



Summer Work for Grade 8 → 9 Learners

Academic Year: 2026- 2027

Dear Parents,

To support our learners' transition into Grade 9, we are assigning summer work based on the story *Little House on the Prairie*. This work will strengthen reading, comprehension, writing, and speaking skills.

Reading

Learners should read *Little House on the Prairie* carefully from their reading book part B pages **179–187**.

Comprehension

They must answer the comprehension questions below. Answers should be written neatly in one of their copybooks or on a clean sheet of paper.

- A. Why did Pa choose to build the family's house on the prairie?
- B. In what sense did Laura feel small when left without the wagon?
- C. What was Ma's injury while helping Pa, and how was she fortunate?
- D. What good news did Pa bring home from the creek?
- E. Describe Mr. Edwards' personality and behavior.
- F. How did Pa and Mr. Edwards finish the log house walls?
- G. What made the prairie night scene so touching?
- H. Why did Pa want to build a stable for Pet and Patty?
- I. What differences can you note between the wagon and the new log house?
- J. How did the family feel when they finally moved into the new house?

Writing (Essays)

Learners will write one **well-organized essay** (about 200 words). They can choose one of the following topics:

- A. The importance of resilience** — Explain how Pa and Ma overcame challenges while building the house, and how resilience helps people face difficulties in life.
- B. The value of cooperation** — Show how teamwork between Pa, Ma, and Mr. Edwards made the house possible, and discuss why cooperation is essential in communities.
- C. The beauty of nature** — Describe how the prairie's vastness and the nightingale's song inspired Laura, and reflect on how nature influences human emotions.

Speaking

Learners will prepare a short oral presentation (about one minute). They should choose one of the following three tasks:

- A. Describe a character** from the story.
- B. Explain a lesson** learned from the events.
- C. Imagine yourself as Laura** — What would you do if you were in her place on the prairie?

Purpose

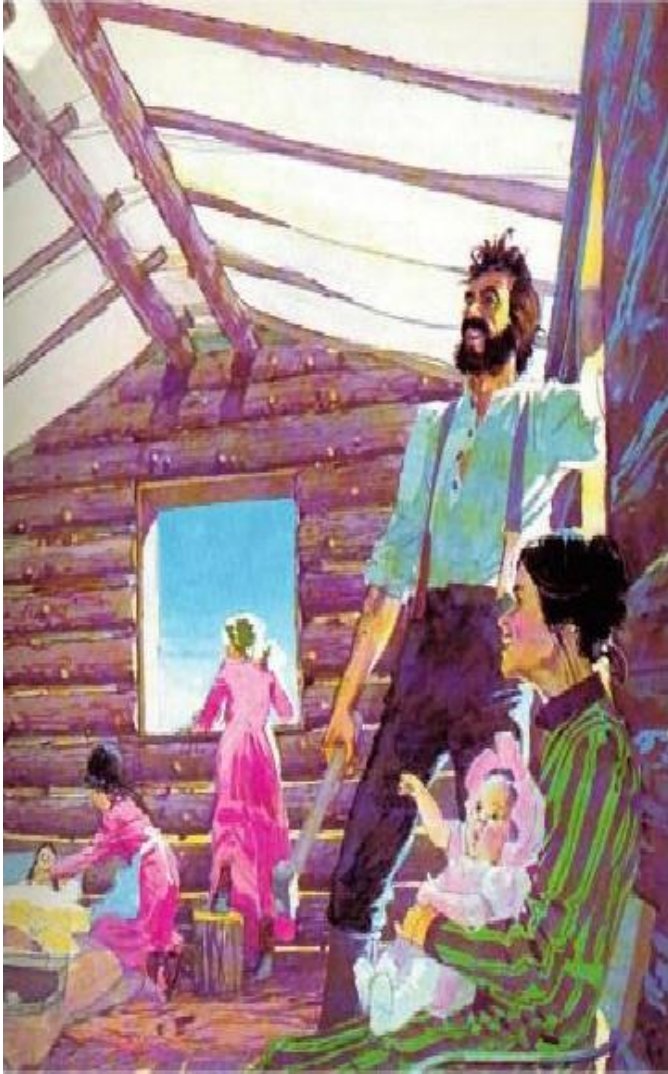
This summer work will:

- A. Reinforce comprehension and critical thinking.
- B. Encourage creativity in essay writing.
- C. Build confidence in speaking and presentation skills.

We kindly ask for your support in ensuring that your child completes the tasks with care and attention.

**Warm regards,
English Department**

Little House on the Prairie



This is the story of how, about a century ago, Laura and her family left their home in the Woods Of Wisconsin, U.S.A. for a new life out West in Indian country. Laura and her parents, her sister May and Baby Carrie, and their bulldog Jack, set off in a covered wagon. Along the way they exchange their horses for two small mustangs, Pet and Patty. They travel into wild and lonely country where there are no shops, no houses and few other settlers. In the following selection, the writer describes how her father builds their new home in the middle of the open prairie.

Laura and Mary were up next morning earlier than the sun, they ate their breakfast of cornmeal mush with praline-hen gravy, and hurried to help Ma wash the dishes, Pa was loading everything else into the wagon and hitching up Pet and Patty

When the sun rose, they were driving on across the prairie. There was no road now. Pet and Patty waded through the grasses, and the wagon left behind it only the tracks of its wheels,

Before noon, Pa said, "I Vhoa!" The wagon stopped.

"Here we are, Caroline!" he said, "Right here we'll build our house."

Laura and Mary scrambled over the feed-box and dropped to the ground in a hurry. All around them there was nothing but grassy prairie spreading to the edge of the sky.

Quite near them, to the north, the creek bottoms lay below the prairie. Some dark green tree-tops showed, and beyond them bits of the Of earthen bluffs held up the prairie's grasses. Far away to the east, a broken line of different greens lay on the prairie, and Pa said that was the river.

"That's the Verdigris River," he said, pointing it out to Ma.

Right away, he and Ma began to unload the wagon. They took out everything and piled it on the ground. Then, they took off the wagon cover and put it over the pile. Then they took even the wagon-box off, while Laura and Mary and Jack watched

The wagon had been home for a long time. Now there is nothing left of it but the four wheels and the part* that connected them. Pet and Patty were still hitched to the tongue. Pa took a bucket and his axe, and sitting on this skeleton wagon, he drove away. He drove right down into the prairie out of sight.

"Where's Pa going?" Laura asked, and Ma said, "He's going to get a load of logs from the creek bottoms."

It was strange and frightening to be left without the wagon on the High Prairie. The land and the sky seemed too large, and Laura felt small. She tried to hide and be still in the tall grass, like a little prairie chicken, but she didn't. She helped Ma, while Mary sat on the grass and minded Baby Carrie.

First Laura and Ma made the beds, under the wagon-cover tent. Then Ma arranged the boxes and bundles, while Laura pulled all the grass from a space in front of the tent. That made a bare place for the fire. They couldn't start the fire until Pa brought wood.

There was nothing more to do, so Laura explored a little. She did not go far from the tent. But she found a queer little kind of tunnel in the grass. You'd never notice it if you looked across

the waving grass tops. But there it was - a narrow, straight, hard path down between the grass stems. It went out into the endless prairie.

Laura went along it a little way, she went slowly, and more slowly; and then she stood still and tilt queer, so she turned around and came back quickly. When she looked over her shoulder there wasn't anything there. But she hurried,

When Pa came riding back on a load OP logs, Laura told him about that path. He said he hadn't seen it yesterday. "It's some old trail," he said.

Thul night by the fire Laura asked again when she would see a papoose, but Pa didn't know. He said you never saw Indians unless they wanted you to see them. He had seen Indians when he was a boy in New York State: but Laura never had. She knew they were wild men with red skins, and their hatchets were called tomahawks.

Pa knew all about wild animals, so he must know about wild men, too. Laura thought he would show her a papoose some days just as he had shown her fawns, and little bears, and wolves.

For days Pa hauled logs. He made two piles of them, one for the house and one for the stable. There began to be a road where he drove back and forth to the creek bottoms. And at night on their picket-lines Pet and Patty ate the grass, till it was short and stubby all around the log-piles, Pa began the house first. He paced off the size of it on the then with his spade he dug a shallow little hollow along two sides of that space. Into these hollows he rolled two of the biggest logs. They were sound, strong because they must hold up the house. They were called sills.

Then Pa chose two more strong, big logs, and he rolled these logs on to the ends of sills, so that they made a hollow square. Now with his axe he cut a wide, deep notch near each end of these logs. He cut these notches out of the top of the log, but with his eye he measured the sills, and he cut the notches so that they would fit around half of the sill.

When the notches were cut; he rolled the log over. And the notches fitted down over the sill. That finished the foundation of the house. It was one log high. The Sills were half buried in the ground, and the logs on their ends fitted snugly to the ground, At the corners, where they

crossed, the notches let them fit together so that they were no thicker than one log. And the two ends stuck out beyond the notches.

Next day Pa began the walls. From each side he rolled up a log, and he notched its ends SO that it fitted down over the end logs. Then he rolled up logs from the ends, and notched them so that they fitted down over the side logs. Now the whole house was two logs high.

The logs fitted solidly together at the corners. But no log is ever perfectly straight, and all logs are bigger at one end than at the other end, so wracks were left between them all along the walls. But that did not matter, because Pa would chink these cracks.

All by himself, he built the house three logs high. Then Ma helped him. Pa lifted one end Of the log on to the wall, then Ma held it While he lifted the other end. He Stood up on the wall to cut the notches, and Ma helped roll and hold the log while he settled it where it should be to make the corner perfectly square.

so, log by log, they built the walls higher, till they Were pretty high, and Laura couldn't get over them anymore. She was tired of watching Pa and Ma build the house, and she went into the tall grass, exploring. Suddenly She heard Pa Shout, "Let go! get out from under!"

The big, heavy log was sliding. Pa was trying to hold up Ills end of it, to keep it from falling on Ma, He couldn't. It crashed down. Laura saw Ma huddled on the ground,

She got to Ma almost as quickly as Pa did. Pa knelt down and called Ma in a dreadful voice, and Ma gasped, "I'm all light,"

The log Was on her foot. Pa lifted the log and Ma pulled het foot from under it. Pa felt her to see if any bones were broken.

"Move your arms," he said. "Is your back hurt? Can you tum your head?" Ma moved her arms and turned her head.

"Thank God," Pa sad He helped Ma to sit up. She said again, "I'm all right, Charles. It's just my foot"

Quickly Pa took off her shoe and stocked. He felt her foot all over, moving the ankle and the toe. "Does it hurt much?" he asked.

Ma's face was grey and her mouth was a light line. "Not much," she said.
bones broken," he said "It's only a bad sprain.

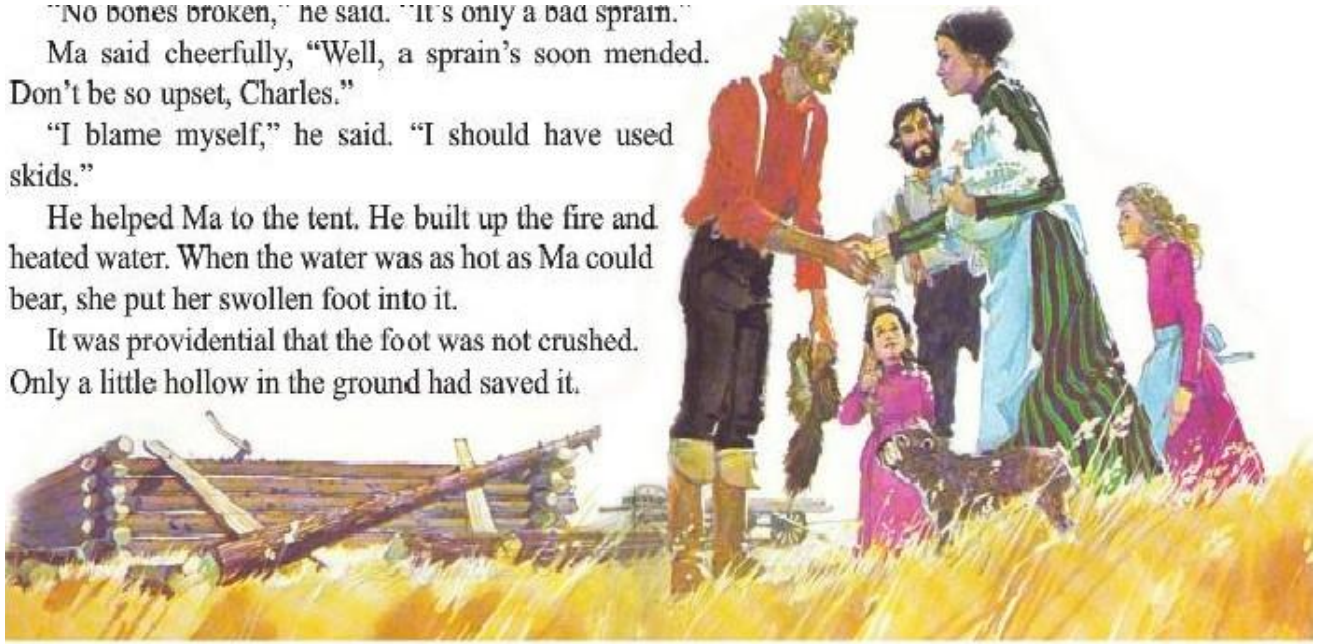
"No bones broken," he said. "It's only a bad sprain."

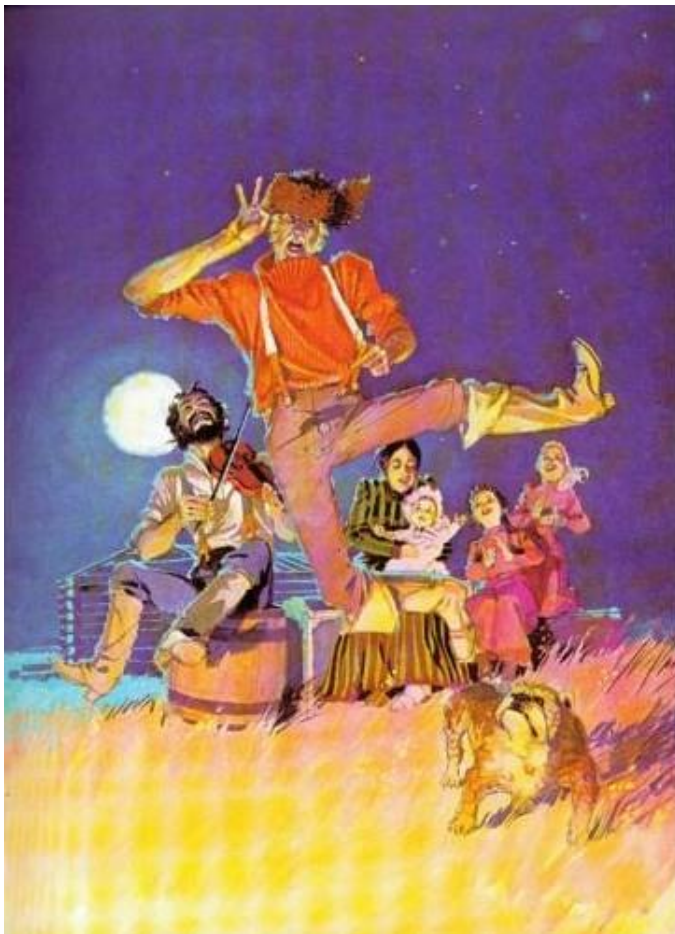
Ma said cheerfully, "Well, a sprain's soon mended. Don't be so upset, Charles."

"I blame myself," he said. "I should have used skids."

He helped Ma to the tent. He built up the fire and heated water. When the water was as hot as Ma could bear, she put her swollen foot into it.

It was providential that the foot was not crushed. Only a little hollow in the ground had saved it.





Pa kept pouring more hot water into the tub in which Ma's foot was soaking. Her foot was red from the heat, and the puffed ankle began to turn purple. Ma took her foot out of the water and bound strips of rag tightly round and round the ankle. "I can manage," she said.

She could not get her shoe on. But she tied more rags around her foot, and she hobbled on it. She got supper as usual, only a little more slowly. But Pa said she could not help to build the house until her ankle was well.

He hewed out skids. These were long, flat slabs. One end rested on the ground, and the

other end rested on the log wall. He was not going to lift any more logs; he and Ma would roll them up these skids.

But Ma's ankle was not well yet. When she unwrapped it in the evenings, to soak it in hot water, it was all purple and black and green and yellow. The house must wait.

Then one came merrily whistling up the creek toad. They had not expected him home from hunting so soon. As soon as he saw them, he shouted, 'Good news!'

They had a neighbor, only two miles away on the other side of the creek, Pa had met him in the woods. They were going to trade work and that would make it easier for everyone.

"He's a bachelor," said Pa, "and he says he can get along without a house better than you and the girls can. So, he's going to help me first. Then as soon as he gets his logs ready, I'll go over and help him."

They need not wait any longer for the house, and Ma need not do any more work on it.

"How do you like that, Caroline?" Pa asked, joyfully; and Ma said, "That's good, Charles, I'm glad."

Early next morning Mr. Edwards came. He was clean and tall and brown. He bowed to Ma and called her "Ma'am" politely, but he told Laura that he was a wild-cat from Tennessee. He wore tall boots and a ragged jumper, and a coon-skin cap, and he could spit tobacco juice farther than Laura had imagined that anyone could spit tobacco juice. He could hit anything he spat at, too, Laura tried and tried, but she could never spit so far or so well as Mr. Edwards could.

He Was a fast worker. In one day, he and Pa built those walls as high as Pa wanted them. They joked and sang as they worked, and their axes made the Chips fly. On top of the walls they set up a skeleton roof of slender poles. Then in the south wall they cut a tall hole for a door, and in the west wall they cut square holes for windows.

Laura couldn't wait to see the inside of the house. As soon as the tall hole was cut, she ran inside. Everything was striped there. Stripes of sunshine came through the cracks in the west wall, and stripes of shadow came down from the poles overhead. The stripes of shade and sunshine were all across Laura's hands and her arms and her bare feet. And through the cracks between the logs she could see stripes of prairie. The sweet smell of the prairie mixed with the sweet smell of cut wood.

Then, as Pa cut away the logs to make the window hole in the west wall, chunks of sunshine came in. When he finished, a big block of sunshine lay on the ground inside the house.

Around the door hole and the window holes, Pa and Mr. Edwards nailed thin slabs against the cut ends of the logs. And the house was finished, all but the roof. The walls were solid and the house was large, much larger than the tent. It was a nice house.

Mr. Edwards said he would go home now, but Pa and Ma said he must stay to supper, Ma had cooked an especially good supper because they had company,

There was stewed jack rabbit with white flour dumplings and plenty of gravy. There was a steaming hot, thick cornbread flavored with bacon fat, There was molasses to eat on the cornbread, but because this was company supper, they did not sweeten their coffee with molasses, Ma brought out the little paper sack of pale brown store sugar,

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Mr. Edwards said he surely did appreciate that supper,

Then Pa brought out his fiddle.

Mr. Edwards stretched out on the ground to listen. But first Pa played for Laura and Mary. He played their very favorite song, and he sang it. Laura liked it best of all because Pa's voice went down deep, deep, deeper in that song. "Oh, I am a Gipsy King!

I come and go as I please!

I pull my old nightcap down,

And take the world at my *ease*."

Then his voice went deep, deep down, deeper than the very oldest bullfrog's.

I am KING!"

They all laughed. Laura could hardly stop laughing. 'Oh, sing it again, Pa! Sing it again!" she cried, before she remembered that children must be seen and not heard. Then wax quiet.

Pa went on playing, and everything began to dance. Mr. Edwards rose up on one elbow, then he sat up. then he jumped up and he danced. He danced like a jumping-jack in the moonlight, while Pa's fiddle kept on rollicking and his foot kept tapping the ground, and Laure's hands and Mary's hands were clapping together and their feet were patting, too.

"You're the fiddliest fool that ever I see!" Mr. Edwards shouted admiringly to Pa. He didn't stop dancing. Pa didn't stop waving. He played "Money Musk" and "Arkansans Travellers" 'Trish Washerwoman," and the "Devil 's Hornpipe."

Baby Carrie couldn't sleep in all that music. She sat up in Ma's lap, looking ai Mr. Edwards with round eyes, and clapping her little hands and laughing.

Even the firelight danced, and all around its edge the shadows were dancing. Only the new house stood still and quiet in the dark, till the big moon rose and shone on its grey walls and the yellow chips around it.

Mr. Edwards said he must go. It was a long way back to his camp on the other side of the woods and the creek. He took his gun and said good night to Laura and Mary and Ma. He said u bachelor got mighty lonesome, and he surely had enjoyed this evening of home life.

"Play, Ingalls!" he said. 'Take me down the road!" So, while he went down the creek road and out of sight, Pa played, and Pa and Mr. Edwards and Laura sang with all their might.

"Old Dan Tucker was a fine Old man;
Ile washed his in the
Hg combed his hair with a wagon wheel, And
died of toothache in his heel

"Git out of the way for old Dan Tucker!
He I too late to get his supper!

Supper 's over and the dishes washed, Nothing
left but a piece of squash!

"Old Dan Tucker went to town,
Riding a mule, leading a town "

For over the prairie rang Pa's big voice and Laura's little one, and
faintly from the creek bottoms came a Mist whoop from Mr.
Edwads.

"Get out of the way for Old Dan Tucker!
He, too late to get his supper! '

When Pa's fiddle stopped, they could not hear Mr. Edwards
anymore. Only the wind rustled in the prairie grasses. The big,
yellow moon was sailing high overhead. The sky was so full of
light that not one star twinkled in it, and all the prairie was a
shadowy mellowness.

Then from the woods by the creek a nightingale began to sing.
Everything was silent, listening to the nightingale's song. The bird
sang on and on. The cool wind moved over the prairie and the song
was round and clear above the grass' whispering. The sky was like
a bowl of light overturned on the flat black land.

The song ended. No one moved or spoke. Laura and Mary were
quiet, Pa and Ma sat motionless. Only the wind stirred and the
grass sighed. Then Pa lifted the fiddle to his shoulder and slowly
touched the bow to the strings. A few notes fell like clear drops of
water into the stillness. A pause and Pa began to play the
nightingale's song. The nightingale answered him and began to
sing again. It was singing with Pa's fiddle.

When the strings were silent, the nightingale went on singing. The
bird and the fiddle were talking to each Other in the cool night
under the moon.

"The walls are up," Pa said to Ma in the morning. "We'd better move
in and get along as best as we can without a floor or other fixings.
I must build the stable as fast as I can, so Pet and Patty can be
inside walls, too. Last night I could hear wolves howling from
every direction.

Seemed like, and close, too."

"Well, you have your gun, so I'll not worry," said Ma.

"Yes, and there's Jack. But I'll feel easier in my mind when you and
the girls have good solid walls around you."

"Why do you suppose we haven't seen any Indians?" Ma
"Oh. I don't know," Pa replied, carelessly. "I've seen their
camping-places among the bluffs, They're away on a
hunting trip now, I guess."

uffs.

into

Then Ma called: 'Girls! The sun's up!' and Laura and Mary
scrambled out of bed and into their clothes.

ates.

"Eat your breakfast quickly," Ma was putting the last of the
rabbit stew on their tin plates,

and

near

"W& e moving into the house today, and all the chips must
be out."

So they ate quickly and hurried io carry all the chips out of
the house. They ran back and forth fast they could, gathering
their skirts full of chips and dumping them in a pile near

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the fire. But there were still chips on the ground inside the house when Ma began
to sweep it with her willow-bough broom.

Ma limped, though her sprained ankle was beginning to get well. But she soon
swept the earthen floor, and then Mary and Laura began to help her carry thaws
into the house.

Pa was on top of the walls, stretching the canvas wagon-top over the skeleton
roof of saplings. The canvas billowed in the wind, Pa's beard blew wildly and
his hair stood up from his head as if it were trying to pull itself out. He held
on to the canvas and fought it. Once it jerked „ so hard that Laura thought
he must let go or sail into the air like a bird. But he held tight to the wall with
his legs, and tight to the canvas with his hands, and he tied it down. there!"
he said to it. "Stay where you are and be

"Charles!" Ma said. She stood with her arms full of quilts and looked up at
him reprovingly.

„— and be good," Pa said to the canvas. "Why, Caroline, what did you think I was
going to say?"

"Oh, Charles!" Ma said. "You're calling !"

Pa came right down the comer of the house. The of the logs stuck out, and he
used them for a ladder. He ran his hand through his hair so that it stood up
even more wildly, and Ma burst out laughing. Then he hugged her, quilts and
all.

Then they looked at the house and Pa said, "How's that for a snug
house!" "I'll be thankful to get into it," said Ma.

There was no door and there were no windows There was no floor except the
ground and no roof except the canvas. But that house had good stout walls,

and it would stay where it was. It was not like the wagon, that every morning went on to some other place.

"We're going to do well here, Caroline," Pa said. "This is a great country. This is a country I'll be content to stay in the rest of my life." "Even when it's settled up?" Ma asked.

"Even when it's settled up. No matter how thick and close the neighbors get, this country will never feel crowded. Look at that sky!"

Laura knew what he meant. She liked this place, too. She liked the enormous sky and the winds, and the land that you couldn't see to the end of. Everything was so fresh and clean and big and splendid.

By dinner-time the house was in order. The beck was neatly made on the floor. The wagon seat and two ends of logs were brought in for chairs. Pa's gun lay on its pegs above the doorway. Boxes and bundles were neat against the walls. It was a pleasant house. A soft light came through the canyons roof, wind and sunshine came through the window holes, and every crack in the four walls glowed a little because the sun was overhead.

Only the campfire stayed where it had been. Pa said he would build a fireplace in [he house as soon as he could. He would hew it out of slabs to make a solid roof, too, before winter came. He would lay a puncheon floor and make beds and tables and chairs. But all that work must wait until he had helped Mr. Edwards and had built a stable for Pet and Patty.

"When that's all done." said Ma, "I want a clothes-line."

Pa laughed. "Yes, and I want a well."

After dinner he hitched Pet and Patty to the wagon, and he hauled a tubful of water from

the creek, so that Ma could do the washing. "You could wash clothes in the creek," he told her. "Indian women do."

"If we wanted to live like Indians, you could make a hole in the roof to let the smoke out, and we'd have the fire on the floor inside the house," said Ma. "Indians do." That afternoon she washed the clothes in the tub and spread them on the grass to dry.

After supper they sat for a while by the campfire- That night they would sleep in the house; they would never sleep beside a campfire again. Pa and Ma talked about the folks in Wisconsin, and Ma wished she could send them a letter. But Independence was forty miles away, and no letter could go until Pa made the long trip to the post office there.

Back in the Big Woods so far away, Grandpa and Grandma and the aunts and uncles and cousins did not know where Pa and Ma and Laura and Mary and Baby

Carrie were. And sitting there by the campfire, no one knew what might have happened in the Big Woods. There was no way to find out.

"Well, it's bedtime," Ma said. Baby Carrie was already asleep. Ma carried her into the house and undressed her, while Mary unbuttoned Laura's dress and petticoat waist down the back, and Pa hung a quilt over the door hole. The quilt would be better than no door. Then Pa went out to bring Pet and Patty close to the house. He called back, sonly, "Come out here, Caroline, and look at the moon."

Mary and Laura lay in their little bed on the ground inside the new house and watched the sky through the window hole to the exit_ The edge of the big, bright moon glittered at the bottom of the window space, and Laura sat up. She looked at the great moon, sailing silently higher in the clear sky.

Its light made silvery lines in all the cracks on that side of the house. The light poured through the window hole and made a square of soft radiance on the floor. It was so bright that Laura saw Ma plainly when she lifted the quilt at the door and came in.

Then Laura very quickly came down, before Ma saw her naughtily sitting up in bed. She heard Pet and Pally whinnying softly to Pa. Then the faint thuds of their feet came into her ear from the floor. Pet and Patty and Pa were coming towards the hOLLse, and Laura heard Pa singing:

"Sail on, silver noon!

Shed radiance o the Sky_""

His voice was like a part of the night and the moonlight and the stillness of the prairie. He came to the doorway, singing,

""

"By the pale, silver light of the moon —

Softly Ma said, "Hugh, Charles. You' Il wake up the children."

So, Pa came in without a sound. Jack rolled at his heels and lay down across the doorway. Now they were all inside the stout wall of their new home, and they were snug and safe. Drowsily Laura heard a long wolf-howl rising from far away on the prairie, but only a little shiver went up her backbone and she fell asleep.