

and out by the side-doors at Halifax and St. John. These are conditions that make for extreme boldness, but not for extravagant boastings.

The maples tell when it is time to finish, and all work in hand is regulated by their warning signal. Some jobs can be put through before winter; others must be laid aside ready to jump forward without a lost minute in spring. Thus, from Quebec to Calgary a note of drive—not hustle, but drive and finish up—hummed like the steam-threshers on the still, autumn air.

Hunters and sportsmen were coming in from the North; prospectors with them, their faces full of mystery, their pockets full of samples, like prospectors the world over. They had already been wearing wolf and coon skin coats. In the great cities which work the year round, carriage-shops exhibited one or two seductive nickel-plated sledges, as a hint; for the sleigh is "the chariot at hand here of Love." In the country the farmhouses were stacking up their wood-piles within reach of the kitchen door, and taking down the fly-screens. (One leaves these on, as a rule, till the double windows are brought up from the cellar, and one has to hunt all over the house for missing screws.) Sometimes one saw a few flashing lengths of new stovepipe in a backyard, and pitied the owner. There is no humour in the old, bitter-true stovepipe jests of the comic papers.

But the railways—the wonderful railways—told the winter's tale most emphatically. The thirty-ton coal cars were moving over three thousand miles of track. They grunted and lurched against each other in the switch-yards, or thumped past stately at midnight on their way to provident housekeepers of the prairie towns. It was not a clear way either; for the bacon, the lard, the apples, the butter, and the cheese, in beautiful white wood barrels, were rolling eastwards toward the steamers before the wheat should descend on them. That is the fifth act of the great Year-Play for which the stage must be cleared. On scores of congested sidings lay huge girders, rolled beams, limbs, and boxes of