

The Ingle Nook.

SOME RAMBLING NOTES ON OTTAWA.

(Continued.)

I have not dwelt upon the interior of the "House"—the big businesslike "Commons," the more sumptuous Senate Chamber, to whose gallery we climbed once in a crush threatening life and limb, and savoring no little of rowdyism, to get a glimpse at the gay dresses on the "Floor" below, and the miles of red tape necessary, so it appeared, for the opening of the session. The splendor of it—to two simple country girls—the great men in scarlet and gold braid, the judges of the Supreme Court in their gowns, the cardinals in their purple (since it was Lent), the ladies, row upon row of them in decollete gowns and diamonds. And yet, and yet, how it made one think of old Tommy Carlyle's grim irony in regard to the universal worship of clothes, and glitter, and things that really do not count. How many of these seemingly great folk, we wondered, were anything better, after all, than "forked straddling animals with bandy legs." Strip many of them of their accoutrement and what were they? And yet there were others who needed no accoutrement to invest them with dignity. There were grand old parliamentary war horses, judges who had climbed upward by sheer force of ability, women with sweet and motherly faces. We—Helene and I—did not know much of politics, like numbers of other people who, unlike us, vote, but we admired Laurier immensely. His dignity, his aristocratic bearing, his absolute freedom from ostentation of any kind, the wonder of his personality, marked him, we thought, as a leader of men, and we were proud of him for Canada's sake.

I have not time to speak at length of the maze of corridors, lined with life-size paintings of the Speakers and other dignitaries of the House; nor of the Library, most beautiful if not the most inspiring room in the buildings; nor of the funny little wine-cellar, now, alas, guiltless of wine, for members can no longer "indulge" in the basement of the Commons. We were not shown the cellars of the Senate, but a small bird whispered that similar restrictions do not obtain there, and that the means of intercommunication below are not superfluous.

In attending various debates during the session there were many surprises. We in our vernal freshness had imagined the members who legislate for our land all setting up as in church, listening—or, at least, appearing to listen—which in some cases does not upset the simile—and visibly burdened with the responsibility of conducting the affairs of so vast a Dominion. To see them lounging, writing letters, chatting affably, or buried behind the pages of a newspaper while a brother from "somewhere" delivered himself of a carefully-prepared speech, with all the oratorical effect he could muster, was distinctly relaxing, not to say diverting. Usually our sympathies were with the speaker, beating the air into foam there with, apparently, so little appreciation; but doubtless in time we should have got case-hardened.

It is only fair to say, though, that in times of real issue, or when one of the "lions" have the floor (and, be it remarked, unless the lion has something worth while on his mind he is seldom likely to appear), the lassitude and inattention disappear in short order. An awakening thrill goes through the House; the members sit up, alert and expectant; not only the long-suffering Hansard reporter is now at work—the press gallery also scribbles for dear life—and things are done generally. . . . Ah, these are moments in which you feel that the lotoseaters' philosophy is not good:

"Why should we toil, who are the roof and crown of things?"

Rather "Why should we not toil, who are the roof and crown of things?"—we

in our own way, these legislators in theirs. For do not these stirring speeches represent toil, as true and necessary as turning the furrow and sowing the seed?—the toil of thought and judgment, the experience of an active life transmitted into words perhaps pregnant for the country's weal. At least it is to be hoped that this is so. . . . There are probably some drones in the House, but there are also legislators of whom Canada may well be proud.

(To be continued.)

CURRENT CATSUP.

Juanita, Middlesex Co., Ont., asks for a recipe for currant catsup. To 5 lbs. currants allow 3 lbs. sugar, 1 tablespoon cinnamon, 1 tablespoon cloves, 1 tablespoon allspice, 1 teaspoon black pepper, 1 teaspoon salt, ½ pint vinegar. Level spoonfuls must, of course, be used in every case. Mash the currants and rub them through a sieve, add the other ingredients and boil twenty minutes. Bottle as you would tomato catsup.

OUR SCRAP BAG.

Have you ever tried broom covers for cleaning painted floors, walls, ceilings, etc.? If not, you don't know what a convenience you have missed. The best kind is made as follows: Cut a piece of flannelette 26 inches long and twice the width of the broom. Sew together, leaving both ends open. Make a 3-inch hem at each end, and insert a drawing string above each hem. Put over the broom, draw both strings tight, and use for wiping any extensive surface that needs dusting. This bag may be changed end for end when necessary, and so is better than the sewed across kind closed at one end. By using a broom bag every day a painted floor may be kept in good condition with very little trouble, and will only require washing once in every week or two.

Jack's Wife has just been in to see me—she is one of the very few Chatterers whom I have the good fortune to meet sometimes—and, as usual, she had been interested enough in the Nook to bring a suggestion. She says that she finds no working apron better than one cut after the fashion of those which every butcher wears. They are easy to make, easy to iron, and have no fulness anywhere to "get into things."

Appropos of sunbonnets, you can make a fine one of the common tea matting and silesia or muslin. Cut the matting to form the front brim which goes over the face; make a gathered back of the silesia and sew on it; then put on strings and a little ruching of the silesia to conceal where the matting and silesia meet, also to go all around the front of the matting as a little finish. These bonnets possess the advantage of never having to be starched, as the matting is always stiff and in place.

While visiting the other day I picked up three scraps which seemed well worth passing on.

(1) Instead of heavy white quilts, so hard to wash, the little lady at whose house I was simply used white sheets with spreads of dotted Swiss muslin over them on her beds. The spreads were edged all round with a frill of the Swiss, not too full, and there were pillow shams to match, the whole forming a bed finish as dainty as one could wish. Such spreads should, of course, be removed before the bed is occupied, to prevent crumpling.

(2) Instead of buying rugs—expensive if at all pretty, as you know, no matter how small—she had hit upon another expedient, viz.: She had bought a strip of two-toned green carpet, cut it in the required lengths, stitched some bands of heavy cloth underneath at the ends to keep them from curling, then put green fringe also along the ends, not the sides. The effect in her green-toned rooms was very good.

(3) This same little housewife informed me that if you put a spoonful or so of water along with the yolks of eggs you are beating for omelette, the frothing process will be greatly hastened.

Will each reader of the Ingle Nook kindly send me an item for our scrap bag? Each must have something useful to contribute, and a postal card may be quite large enough to contain the hint. In this way we can help one another very materially with but little trouble.



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