

AUTUMN DAYS.

THE robin's note again ;
 The soft green of the year's spring-time
 Blended with gold ; the scarlet stain
 Of summer's richer colourings
 On foliage seen ; and over all
 The sunbeams from the same sun fall.
 Thus, in the year's maturer life,
 Are carried days of May ;
 And painted with the summer's glow
 The leaves about our way.

A misty greyness fills and veils the skies,
 Like unshed tears in brightest eyes,
 And 'gainst the shore Ontario's waves do sigh,
 Hushing my heart with their soft lullaby.
 And yet there is a glory in the air,
 A halo falling softly everywhere.

Ontario, with a sullen roar,
 Throws her mad waves against the shore ;
 The clouds pour down their tears,
 The winds bring gusts of sobbing rain,
 The trees bend down as if in pain,
 The leaves die of their fears.
 The flowers, ah, me ! still sweet in death,
 They yield in faith their perfumed breath.

Burlington.

A. LAURENCE THOMSON.

LOUIS LLOYD'S LETTERS.

THE little rift of inconsistency must come in somewhere, so that despite funereal streets, deserted tramways and cold dinners, Sunday is the most noisy day at the Winnipeg railway station. Everybody going east prefers starting on Sunday evening, and even around the western-bound train before nine a.m. the quantity of broadcloth and fine linen displayed by the good people who have come to bid their friends adieu will, in two hours, do the centre aisle credit. This is only a part of the consistent inconsistency of the whole. All cities are alike, I suppose, only all cities are not as frank and fresh-hearted as Winnipeg. There lies the difference and the charm.

Notwithstanding the maternal argument that "they was babies too, so they needn't shun the car as if the children had the plague," existence anywhere else except on the platform during our journey from Winnipeg to Moosomin was made unbearable by a contingent of infants. I never could understand why the small child and its guardian were not relegated to some nursery car. The orange and biscuit make havoc of the beautiful blue plush seats, and incautious little feet climb with disastrous effect over valise and shawls. But the worst has not come till the big-eyed travelling infant has conceived in its innocent brain the unhappy idea of staring at you. Then sleeping, writing or eating is as unquestionably an impossibility as painting outside under the riveted gaze of a cow. However, I feel perfectly confident that once the C.P.R.'s attention has been drawn to this state of affairs no effort will be spared to satisfy a very positive want, for with so particularly obliging a company *poser une question c'est la résoudre*.

Until you are cast adrift on the prairies, away from even the villages and the solitary homesteads here and there that look as if they had lost their way, you can never realize how glorious a legacy of sky we own. After all it is the only possession men may hold in common, the only one free from price, free from confiscation, that laughs at monopoly, and merely demands for its most exquisite enjoyment breadth of vision and an honest soul ! Blessed thought ! rain will not sodden the crops of stars, nor will the cold freeze them. Here they are with us always, even unto the end of the last ill-gotten allowance from home. Better than pecuniary aid, better than his oxen or his acres is the freehold of sky we give the immigrant.

Beyond Brandon, past miles of prairie, and where the lonely little stations and houses make one cry for very sympathy, past an indefinite number of Ogilvie's monster grain elevators, we found Moosomin. It was quite dark when they dumped us down at a nondescript station, enlivened by the rough-booted, gruff-voiced sensation hunters of the district. They were, however, very circumspect sensation hunters, and in any case the red coat of a mounted policeman here and there was reassuring enough. I don't know whether it is lack of enterprise, or merely the supposition that the house he represents has more chance of success if its votary doesn't try to outshriek every other hotel crier, but out west the nonchalance of the hotel employé proves most calming. You may go off shouldering your own valise, unaccompanied by the anathemas of the porter population, or, should time be no object, you may await Peter's good pleasure. As for any priority among Moosomin inns, the inhabitants will all tell you—"They're just most one's as good as the other." We put up at "the other," a frame house of respectable but unpretending appearance, an unvarnished edifice, with its name printed in black and white right across the front, like an address on a wooden case. Garth Grafton had been very earnest and very enthusiastic about spending some days at a North-West farm ; I don't know whether her enthusiasm cooled, but after our sojourn in "the other" the scheme was no more mentioned between us.

What with "a bit o' moon risin' over Ogilvie's No. 22," and a bobbing

lantern, we managed to stumble up from the station to the hotel. There were no loungers about the front door, which was on the latch. We entered, and found ourselves in a hall of the dimensions of a passage in the Catacombs, flanked by steps that shot up hurriedly to the next flat. Between the entrance and these opened the dining room, a rough-and-ready, white-plastered chamber, boasting several fly-blown "prize" coloured prints and a superfluity of cruet-stands. The space in our private apartments not occupied by the bed and washstand is scarcely worth mentioning. But for all this we were not unhappy—you never need be if your digestion will permit you to look upon everything in the light of "an experience."

Though Moosomin's many frame houses give it a sketchy, skeleton appearance, don't for an instant imagine the supply of *hautes nouveautés* in its shop windows yields in anyway to that of Eastern emporiums. And as for competition, why, one gentleman whom we interviewed was despair visible over the superior position and stock of his rival. This rival's shop does Moosomin credit. It is a "general store," if you like, but a "general store" à la Macy, with the advantage of having a decidedly "long-established" look. Glancing about superficially, the announcement which everybody makes concerning the town's rapid commercial progress savours of irony. A solitary spurred and booted policeman strides loftily across the street, carrying under his arm—no, not any budget of despatches, but a home-made loaf ; and shopkeepers smoke the pipe of peace with the same equanimity at noon that they do at eventide. However, this only proves, I think, the superior business capacity of the Moosomin fair one, who doubtless makes all her purchases before nine a.m. Then, again, you will remember the imperative necessity the merchants feel, down East, to appeal to their neighbours "round the corner" before any and every transaction is not experienced in this prohibition country.

As long as we have our prairies, we need never grudge the Frenchman his gardens or the Englishman his parks. It was perfectly intoxicating to drive across that glorious rolling country, in a keen wind, behind two hot-blooded bronchos, across the soft, multicoloured ground, through the long grass, up and over the farm-dotted bluffs, and away and away under an immeasurable canopy of swirling clouds. We could see whole cities outlined against the sky—towers and minarets in oriental profusion and delicate splendour—pine-cities they were, yet the illusion was complete. I should have been content to forget everything, everything but the free, wild, passionate, deep-toned earth and heaven ; to drink long draughts of the air that tasted like strange wine, till every vein throbbed again with a newly-found freedom. The object we had in view, however, was of quite a different nature. If noisome weeds could shoot up suddenly from a heather wilderness, it would give you an idea of how some of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts' East-end Londoners appear, planted on our prairies. Fancy effete cockneyism with its hand guiding a Western plough ! Fancy a breath from *Seven Dials* blown through your flower garden ! But of course all the twenty families that were quartered upon us four years ago have not proved equally misplaced. So far, twelve have been successful farmers—successful, that is, for East-end Londoners. You will remember that the Baroness gave each family £50 to start with, and the North-West Land Company supplied the other £50. Practical men taught these people their work and the names of their implements, and then the quondam denizen of Whitechapel began life anew on one hundred and sixty acres of Government ground, with one ox and, naturally, a rapidly growing family.

The first Londoner whom we visited had long enjoyed the reputation of being "a character." He abandoned this rôle for farming ; I regretted the change. Mr. — came out to meet us with a lively countenance, begging that we should walk in. I am sorry now an over-delicate sensitiveness with regard to our olfactory nerves prompted a refusal, for from what Mr. — called forth from the house the interior must have been unique. Mrs. — appeared, smiling over an infant of very tender days. The Messrs. and Misses — stood a slyly, grinning, preposterously dirty, ragged crowd.

Well, yes, their father liked it well enough out 'ere ; but it *was* hawful hard at first. "Ye see," continued Mr. —, "me and me neighbour 'ad only one ox apiece, and by this we'd lose every other day, like. Ye cahnt work one ox alone, so I'd 'ave to go down and 'elp me neighbour, and 'eed 'ave to come up and 'elp me. Now, of course, each 'ave got two oxen, so it's a good bit easier. Then, there's them sod sheds for the 'ens, as snug as ye please." I don't know whether you have ever remarked it, but the English in general, and the pauper English in particular, judge every corner of agricultural land from its adaptability or inadaptability to a crop of small children. Mr. — thought far less about his one hundred and sixty acres, and the fifty already under cultivation, than he did of the superiority of prairie air over East-end exhalations for the Misses —'s complexions.

"Hit's a good sight better bringin' hup chilren 'ere than in London, but we *do* lack a school for 'em. Ye see hit's four miles into Moosomin, and in winter time hit's *impossible* to send 'em there. Now, me and me neighbour's got quite enough to fill a school—just ourselves. However, I've applied for one."

The old British habit of "applying for it" has not left Mr. —, you see. A thrifty German would supply his own wants ten times over in the time an Englishman spends awaiting an answer to his eternal applications.

Mr. —'s reasons for liking Canada better than England were frank, if unpromising.

"First, there ha'nt no neighbour near enough to come hover to me to say, 'Your chil's been throwin' a stone through my front window, Mr. —.' Then there ha'nt no School Board, and there ha'nt no landlord comin' swoopin' down on Monday mornin'."