

to commerce, and from commerce to tittle tattle; and when he sent round his bill on a salver men had subsided into—what some one has called the most severe test of friendship—silence. Two dainty old senators alone retained the floor.

"We have not met for some time, sir."

"Six years, I believe."

"Well! well! Six years! You are my senior I should say."

"Yes, a little. How much do you think?"

"A year or two, perhaps."

"Ah! How old are you?"

"How old are you, sir?"

"What do you think?"

"Can't say, I'm sure. I am seventy-two."

"And I, sir, am your senior by thirteen years. I shall be eighty-five next week."

From which I derived two lessons: that after one passes the Rubicon of, say, seventy, one is as apt to boast of one's age as once he did of his youth; and that clearly one is never too old to do more than *mend*.

But the men began stuffing their vagrant belongings into one huge overcoat, and the women theirs into innumerable tiny satchels, which meant we were nearing the Capital, with its clusters of pretty red brick houses, crowned by Parliament Hill.

Former experience must teach one to be alert in securing apartments for the session, as, naturally, first come is best served. Most "old-timers" retain their rooms from season to season. On the whole, for a place of its size and very fitful requirements, Ottawa is well supplied, not only with good hotels, but with an abundance of private reserve force for the more domesticated, waited upon by young damsels so charming that one may be excused for being reminded of a pun writhed under by a friend in England who, impressed by the bewitchments of the young hostess as he enquired for apartments, was emboldened to ask if she was to let with them, and received the withering reply that she was to be *let alone*.

By two o'clock on the 31st January crowded streets and waving bunting indicated the coming event. Literal streams were pouring up Parliament Hill. Senators, with their wives and lady friends, were being conducted to chairs reserved for them on the floor of the Senate. The officers most to be conciliated by those who have no higher friend at court is the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, who controls with the full severity of his gold braid the exigencies of the supply and demand for seats. Senators occupy the row of chairs which encircles the chamber, those nearest the throne on the right being reserved for the ladies of the Government House, and on the left for the wives of Cabinet Ministers. Wives and married daughters of Senators, with possibly an extremely select friend, take the second row; and a double row of benches behind is occupied by unmarried daughters of Senators, wives and daughters of Commoners, and ladies from Ottawa or a distance, for which limited accommodation a stranger has always precedence over a resident. A few extra chairs are placed within the bar for the mayor, the clergy and distinguished gentlemen; but otherwise no gentlemen are admitted to the floor of the Senate Chamber, and our fathers and brothers must steal in with the Commoners when their presence is requested, or decorate a pillar in the upper gallery. Evening dress is "by order" on the floor; although there is an opportunity for afternoon dress in a gallery at one end, and the remaining galleries are clothed *ad libitum*. I cannot but record my firm conviction that when the people of Canada wake up to a sense of their duty and indicate, as well as deepen, their interest in their country by their presence at the ceremonies which possess a national importance, we should soon settle for ourselves, on the happiest possible basis, the integral and living Independence of which we are capable, not only in the future, but in the actual present.

Lady Macdonald was resplendent in pompadour coiffure and Canadian Pacific diamonds; Lady Caron shone in white brocade; the handsome wife of the youthful Minister of Marine and Fisheries smiled through crushed strawberry; and the kindly, unassuming, but dignified face of Lady Tupper was conspicuous by its absence. A little before three o'clock Lady Stanley, accompanied by the Honourable Ladies of Her Household, quietly passed in by a private entrance and completed the galaxy of feminine beauty. Though holding no official rank in the ceremonies of the day, as the highest lady in the land, Her Excellency is expected and welcomed as the crowning feature in the assemblage. With a charm of dignity perfectly free from haughtiness, her countenance literally beamed with maternal pride as her young son took his position among the other soldiers around the dais.

The external enthusiasm was by no means so subdued, and received, no doubt, an intensification from the interest associated with the first appearance of Lord Stanley in his new function as Governor-General. The Governor-General's Foot Guard made the Guard of Honour, wearing, for the first time, their gorgeous new uniform in scarlet and gold. With characteristic promptness, the booming of guns and the national anthem announced the arrival of the Queen's representative, who, in his four-in-hand State equipage, was literally sending a dust of snow up into the air. Proceeding immediately to the Senate Chamber, accompanied by his Staff in the overwhelming brilliancy of their decorations, His Excellency passed up through the assemblage, all standing in his honour, and took his seat on the throne, with a calm dignity quite worthy of the Empire in whose crown the Dominion forms so important a jewel. With a request that the audience be seated, the formalities commenced. The Gentleman Usher of the

Black Rod, with a succession of the deepest bows, was despatched for the Commons, and, returning, was followed by a helter-skelter more suggestive of the play-ground than of our legislative halls. Raising his official hat to the Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate, and again to the Honourable Gentlemen of the Commons, His Excellency pronounced the Speech from the Throne first in deliberate English, and then in distinct and fluent French which must have won even the heart of the fastidious Sir Adolphe. The document was then handed to the Speaker of the Senate, and with another succession of deep obeisances to the Speaker of the Commons, who, returning the salute, received it in white-gloved hands. The ceremony, magnificent and impressive, is nevertheless a short one. In the space of thirty minutes the Governor had come, pronounced and departed, leaving the assembled *élite* to linger over it in prolonged greetings.

The Commons immediately returned to their quarters, and entered at once upon their continuous duties.

A State Dinner at Government House took place in the evening.

Mr. Speaker Allan and Mrs. Allan have taken up their official residence in the wing of the Senate, and Mr. Speaker Ouimet and Madame Ouimet in that of the Commons.

The Speech, the Programme for the Session, and the developments of political life which go to build up Canadian biography, demand future attention.

RAMBLER.

WINTER.

I COME from the caverns of wind and snow,
From the moan of the Arctic Sea,
From the realm of Death, where the tyrant's breath
Hath shackled the wave on the lea;
Where the barque entrapp'd in the billow's swerve,
By the ice pack's pitiless main,
Cries out in despair
To the voiceless air,
And groans like a harvest wain;
Where lost spirits wail through the tatter'd sail,
And sob, through the frozen shroud.

I cover the stretches of prairie ouse,
With a cope of embroideries rare,
And the riveled grass I deck, as I pass,
With bright gems, like a maiden's hair;
I gather the leaves with a cruel sweep,
The fruit of a year that's sped,
I ring with a yell,
Their funeral knell,—
They are dead! Your hopes are dead!
By mountain and shore, they will thrill no more,
To touch of sunshine and cloud.

Through the silent churchyard, beneath the pines,
O'er the brow of the sandy hill,
Where the cross on the spire is pointing higher,
I linger, they sleep so still:
How little they reck of the seasons change,
Or care if I pause or pass,
Or tumble the snow
Round the symbol's glow,
Or hiss through the rustling grass:—
They sleep! It is well! They can hear no knell,
Though I ring it long and loud.

Barriefield, Ont., Jan., 1889.

—K. L. JONES.

A MANITOBA PIONEER.

CRUNCH! crunch! crunch! The monotonous, heavy tramp of Jack Armstrong's oxen rings out sharp and clear on the biting cold night. Nothing but hard, piled-up snow, as far as one can see across the limitless sweep of the vast prairie over which they are slowly moving. The owner, cased from head to foot in fur and buckskin, tramps with scarcely a less monotonous sound on the trail by the side of his team, his dog "Tiger," his faithful and only companion, trotting patiently at his heels. We will join them and see how we like our first experience of life on a Manitoba prairie with the thermometer down between the forties and fifties.

"Buck! Bright! get up, you old lazy-bones!" The oxen are expected to make a spurt at this, but owing to the rapid speed (?) at which they were progressing before it is hard to distinguish any difference in the pace. Silence reigns again—a silence (like the darkness in Egypt) that can be felt. Absolutely no sound beyond the tread of the cattle, which becomes painfully distinct, and seems only to intensify the cold, sharp stillness. Overhead, the clearest and most brilliant of skies, without the faintest or tiniest cloud to dim the bright shining of its silver crescent and its myriads of flaming points, gives the electric, intense atmosphere of which only Manitoba can boast. The long, unbroken horizon line, even in the night, shows dark and white against the glittering sky. On! on! tramping mechanically on, over the indented line of trail leading, it seems, to nothing but to still wider snowy plains. No trees—not even scrub; no hills—not even a rise; nothing, absolutely nothing but the broken trail to show that the planet Earth is inhabited by any other beings. The lonely stillness, the aloofness from any human contact, is an experience and must sober the least earnest character and emphasize the mysterious, individual, responsible, "apart" life that each human being lives. The trail alone shows that at some time somebody must have come from somewhere and must have gone somewhere. Jack's oxen keep

plodding on with a steady persistence that augurs well for their knowledge of a destination, so we will return from our Crusoe-like dream and jump on to the sleighs with Jack and Tiger and get a lift, until the warning of cold toes sends us back to our monotonous jog again. Short, sharp barks, and a most unearthly wail, succeeded by a multitude of howls and human-like shrieks, ring out through the quiet air, making Tiger look appealingly up to his master, as if to say, "May I go?" "Quiet, Tiger! Down lie! Here they come!" And out of the surrounding whiteness appear two grizzled wolves, trotting along the trail quite calmly and unconcernedly. They come up within a few yards of the oxen, and seeing the dog (poor Tiger quivering with excitement and a desire for conquest) stop, and with more subdued barks they reluctantly turn off and are soon disappearing over the hard snow. "Tiger, old fellow, we're getting frozen; aren't we?" says Jack. He pulls off his buffalo mitts and vigorously rubs his cheeks and nose until they tingle again, and he has to put on the mitt, fearing the hands may share the same fate as the face. "Ah, Tiger! this is a cold country; but, Eureka! here we are!" Displaying an astonishing activity, Buck and Bright break into a sort of jog-trot and in a few moments with a sharp swing, they turn off the main track and into a bytrail that evidently leads to their stable. "Nearly home, old fellow! We couldn't stand it much longer, could we, Tiger?" They soon arrive at the log stable, and in a few moments Jack has Buck and Bright inside and out of harness. He throws them down a big armful of hay and rushes off to a queer little low log shanty not far off the stable. This is Jack's "home"—it looks incredible, but we will follow him and see how a bachelor pioneer in the West really lives through the winter. Opening the outer door (such a thing as a key is an unknown and unnecessary implement), Jack steps into a narrow passage filled with—I will try to describe it, as I examined it afterwards—a heterogeneous mass of everything imaginable. Trunks, boxes, bags, hats, clothes hung on nails, old harness, bits of broken machinery and farm implements, bags of flour, bags of grain, big chunks of frozen meat, groceries, a frying pan, pots, plates, tins, old boots, stacks of books and newspapers piled up on a shelf, broken chairs. . . . Words fail! . . .

While we have been stopping shivering here for a few moments (it seems far colder inside than out) Jack, in the next room, has lighted a lamp, and is busy over a big stove, putting a match to a fire that he had left ready laid in the morning when he started "to town." He soon has a big blaze roaring up the stove-pipe, and, shutting up the door, he takes off his huge buffalo coat, bear-skin cap, and big moccasins, and shows himself—a type of fine, wholesome manhood anywhere, but particularly a type of "the right man in the right place," on the prairies of Manitoba. Big and muscular, with a determined mouth and strong chin; the rather hard lower part of the face relieved by clear eyes full of kindness and sympathy, and broad, white forehead. He sets about getting supper in a very *chef-like* manner. He fetches in the frying-pan and frozen pork. Sawing off a chop, he proceeds to put it on the fire. He then opens a trap door in the floor and goes down into the cellar, reappearing with bread (made for him by a kind neighbour), butter, and a jug of syrup, which he places on the table with a cup and saucer, etc., taken from a little cupboard in the corner of the room. Now his chop is done, and while Jack is eating his supper we will glance round the room. By this time it has got quite warm and looks really neat and cosy. Tiger, tired with his run, lies in front of the stove, his eyes fixed upon his master, who now and then throws him a bit of bread. A cat (she must have had a very cold time of it all day!) lies curled up on a corner of the bed, which is of a very rough pattern, but is gaily covered with a red quilt. A couple of chairs, a table, a box or two, a low shelf, decorated with a wash-bowl and a pail of water, a few strings across the roof, upon which hang the "weekly wash," seem to comprise the whole of the furniture, except the decoration of the walls, which is quite a study. Three sides of the room are logs filled in with mortar and whitewashed. These are covered with snowshoes, guns, rifles, revolvers, bridles, bits, stirrups, spurs, strings of newspapers, dressed skins of all kinds, from the rich golden brown of the fox to the tiny white ermine, with its black-tipped tail. The remaining side of the wall (the partition between the two apartments) is of new white lumber, and upon this Jack seems to have lavished all his artistic material talent. Groups of water-colour sketches, painted by his sisters (and others probably—not sisters), little bits of engravings from magazines, etc., that have taken his fancy, coloured *Graphic* pictures, and in the centre a large group of photographs, "my people, you know." The centre portrait is a picture of a bright, happy looking girl, and later on, when Jack has "washed up," fed his dog and cat, been out "to supper up" his oxen, and sits down to smoke his lonely pipe and read his mail (brought from town), we see him carefully take out of his pocket-book another photograph of the same face, and we conclude that our pioneer will not always be one of the solitary bachelors of Manitoba, and come home at night to a frozen out shanty. Let us hope that both Jack and the sweet looking girl will help to make Manitoba what she has every reason to believe she will become, i.e., the most prosperous (if coldest) Province in the Dominion of Canada. AMY BROWNING.

A CORRESPONDENT of the London *Times* writes that he has found 69 different species of wild flowers in bloom during last December. The unusual openness of the season has been attended with like results in some parts of this country. The correspondent writes from Hardingham, near Norfolk.