

labourer of course is welcome, and sure, if he is sober, to do well; but England has now not many good labourers to spare, and the St. George's Society at Winnipeg complains that very improper subjects, even half witted people, have been sent out. The back of the society has been broken by the burden of immigrant destitution and helplessness laid upon it. The scheme of bringing out the distressed Irish and planting them in shanties on sections of land seems to have been happily abandoned. These poor people are not farmers; they raise a patch of potatoes and a patch of oats; they have never seen machinery, hardly handled a plough. They are highly clannish and gregarious, wanting in self-reliance, and unaccustomed to a severe climate. They would not in the least know what to do with a farm; and in the long, lonely winter they would despond, decamp and join their brethren in the American cities. A Northern and Protestant Irishman is a farmer indeed, but he is a Teuton. Of the French-Canadian settlements only St. Pierre is a success. The French-Canadian, though he lives on the land, is perhaps like his Irish kinsmen fitter for the factory or for working in gangs than for the farm. Icelanders and Mennonites do well in their way, the Mennonites in a rather barbarous and uncleanly way, but these are mere dribbles in the population. Germans are excellent, but they go to the United States. Canadian or American, therefore, these communities are likely to be. So far the Canadian element greatly preponderates over the American. But there is no real line of any kind between the North-West and the States. Canadians swarm in Dakota; and all along the frontier the two populations not only are in the closest intercourse, but are actually one. To U. E. Loyalists and Anti-Continentalists who expect the Canadian Pacific Railway to set an everlasting gulf of division between the two sections of the English-speaking race on this Continent, the fact may not be welcome, but if the Manitobans tell the truth, it cannot be gainsayed.

The old French-speaking race is evidently destined to succumb, perhaps in course of time to disappear; it is kindly and amiable, but cannot hold its own against its more vigorous and pushing rivals. The Indian is manifestly doomed. There he sits in the sun gazing listlessly at the railway train and ungallantly holding an old parasol over his own head, while his squaw at his side has no protection. Perhaps if the thought half formed on his vacant face could take shape and find words he might ask this snorting and puffing civilization towards what goal it is so restlessly driving, and whether after all, if the materialist is right and the present state is all, there is not something to be said for a life with few wants, with no restraints and without care.

Assuredly not all of us are fitted by nature to be pioneers. In those shanties which, forced back from the line of the railway by the unhappy "mile reservation," appear at intervals in the distance, the struggle must at first be grim, and life during the winter must be dreary as well as severe. Husband and wife, as partners in pioneering, must be knit together by a bond very unlike Miss Anthony's "marriage copartnership," or the philosophic and terminable union which was the ideal of Mr. Mile. The homage of the heart is due to the fortitude which battles with such hardships and to the affection which sustains it. In the dwelling of the pioneer is enacted our noblest history; nor are the sepulchres of kings more venerable or more touching than the settler's solitary grave. It is not surprising to hear that farmers show a tendency to come into the towns for the winter. They may indulge it, though at some expense, if they only raise wheat, but they could not leave their stock; and the general opinion is, as was said before, that it is mixed farming which pays.

Pioneering has been made harder to these settlers by the policy which has strung them out in a line of nine hundred miles along a single railway, instead of encouraging, as much as possible, close settlement. Freights have thus been greatly raised, both on the grain which the settlers export, and on all their imported articles of consumption. They have also themselves, it is generally admitted, taken up too much land, and thereby aggravated the dispersion and its attendant evils. A generation apparently must grow up without schooling; for it is impossible to send the children several miles, in the winter, to school. The danger is the greater since the public school system, however indispensable, has inevitably weakened if not destroyed the parental sense of duty in the matter of education.

Society might be found in the staff of a large farm, which would be a hamlet in itself; while the quarters of the staff might be substantial dwellings in place of shanties too frail, one would think, to keep out frost and wind. These would be special advantages on the side of the system of large farms in the North-West, in addition to its economical advantage as the mode, apparently, of producing most with the least labour. Will this or the old system prevail? The question is one of two-fold interest, because economical changes on a large scale always bring social changes with

them. If there is anywhere a field favourable to the system of large farms it must surely be the Prairie region of the North-West, where the power of machinery can be brought most fully into play, and seems necessary, together with a command of plenty of hands, to get in the harvest before the end of the short summer. This momentous issue is being tried at the Bell Farm, with fifty thousand acres, forty binders, and fields of wheat fifteen hundred acres in extent under an organizer and manager whom all pronounce first-rate. Yet, in spite of these advantages and appliances, commercial success seems doubtful, and meanwhile the great Dalrymple farm in Dakota has been broken up. It is to be inferred then, that nothing will make farming pay but the unstinted toil and self-denying frugality of the freeholder and his family, tilling and subsisting upon their own farms? If this proves to be the case, our respect for the farmer will be increased.

What will be the great market for these harvests? The question is interesting in a political as well as in a commercial point of view. It is always assumed, and the Canadian Pacific Railway is being constructed on the assumption, that the great market must be England. But England, full of wealth as she still is, has apparently passed her commercial zenith: her purchasing power is not likely to increase; and notwithstanding the wretchedness of the Ryot's implements, and, what is less easily rectified, his indebted and depressed condition, the supply of wheat from India can hardly fail henceforth to be large. On this continent, though the area of wheat land increases, the yield per acre decreases, while the number of mouths to be fed multiplies with immense rapidity. Perhaps after all it may be the destiny of the North-West to supply wheat to its own continent, and its commercial connection may prove to be not with a land on the other side of the Atlantic, but with the lands adjoining it on the south, to the markets of which, as a purchaser, it must certainly resort.

An Agnostic might be disconcerted by seeing that the religious sentiment has come with the settler to the North-West in force apparently undiminished, and is manifested (though provisionally perhaps) under the old forms. In Winnipeg the churches are, for a city of yesterday, numerous and costly; in that of St. John, the Anglican service is most beautifully performed. Intolerance however has been left behind. The University of Manitoba is a federation of three religious colleges, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian, such as we are trying to bring about in Ontario, and the Roman Catholic prelate takes part with the Protestant prelate in the examinations. Perhaps these plains may hereafter be the scene of a union of the churches. As the race moves westward, not only do Old World tradition and convention lose their force, but the speculative dogmas which divide the sections of Christendom from each other, and which are the offspring of theological schools, sink with everything else that is impractical into insignificance, while practical morality becomes all in all.

Many questions about the future crowd upon the mind as the eye ranges over the destined home of a teeming population. What, for example, will be the effect of living on a boundless plain, and never seeing a hill or dale, on the æsthetic character of the people? Perhaps after all not great. The Swiss are not made poetic or romantic by their mountains, and a community which reads has Alps in literature, and draws from other sources of poetry and romance. But there would be no end to speculations of this kind.

A land of magnificent promise is the North-West; and its promise might by this time have been in larger measure fulfilled if it had enjoyed free railway development, free access to its natural markets and the control of its own lands. Without the means of transport the most fertile soil can be of no more value than so much sand or sea. The natural mode of development was by the extension of roads from the south, carrying with them population in a tolerably compact body. As grain cannot be hauled more than twenty-five miles at the most, the Canadian Pacific opens up only a belt of fifty miles, and, as was said before, it has strung out the population in a manner which must, besides other disadvantages, entail great loss in freight, however considerate in fixing its rates the Syndicate may be. The main object of the Government in resolving on the construction of the line, as in resolving on the construction of the Intercolonial, was political and military, not commercial; it was the establishment of an internal line of communication between the scattered Provinces of the Dominion and of an Imperial War port on the Pacific. So little were commercial considerations taken into account that the line had not even been surveyed before the Government committed itself to the undertaking. A political and military object may be more important or more pressing than a commercial object, and therefore entitled to preference; but the two are not identical, nor are the means suited to the accomplishment of the first likely to be equally well suited to the accomplishment of the second; they certainly are not in the present case. The Mountain section of the line is of no special use to the Prairie region, the inhabitants of which will not be