

WHAT PIONEERING MEANS.*(Continued from page 7.)*

young fellow who would undoubtedly be still on the job of carving a farm out of the wilderness if the war had not upset his plans. Too late for publication in that number, he added a refrain which fits in now. The virile optimism of the stanza is tempered by the plaintive note of gentle irony in the concluding line:—

"Oh, Northern Land, my Northern Land,
Upon thy highest bluff I stand
And look away across the slough
Where ducks do sport in colored blue.
This is a glorious happy life
Away up here without a wife!"

I would refrain from touching the personal note in this sketch, but for the fact that from previous experience I suspect the preceding observations may be taken as more largely subjective than they really are. Our own experience in pioneering has not comprehended the whole gamut, even if we did trek two hundred and fifty miles beyond what was at that time the head of steel. We came to a settled district, and thus were spared some of the rigors that others have borne. True, we have at one time or another known what it was to shave with laundry soap and to journey to church behind a team of oxen, but even those things are past. I felt that for us the semi-pioneer stage passed when the last ox went the way of his kind. That is to say, we ate him, and very good eating he made, only that a choking sensation as of cannibalism was experienced whenever we thought of the staunch service he had so companionably rendered in bush, in field, on trail. We had one of the pleasantest teams of cattle that ever walked in chains, and I shall never think of them without a moist-eyed sense of gratitude. And now that they

have "given their bones to the ages," I cannot and would not forget that, as Will H. Ogilvie put it in "Trek Ozen," they gave their hearts to the drawing for the God that bade them draw.

We have a good outfit of horses now, a fair average of comparatively safe land well cleared and broken, good crops in the main and ample, if somewhat crude conveniences. The log buildings remain but they are very serviceable, and a modest prosperity is already experienced with prospects bright for the future.

In the foregoing paragraphs we have dealt prominently with the rugged side, the privations, frugality, hard work and jests of faith. It were a crime to minify these, for they are the cost which should be counted in advance. Those not prepared to pay the price had better look elsewhere.

This fact should be kept in mind in connection with schemes for soldier settlement. While public opinion will sanction all reasonable means of mitigating hardships for veterans who take up land, it will be found impracticable to make farming a bed of roses for them. There will be a proportion at least, whom it would be a crime to settle on the land at all.

There is another side, and to strong natures its appeal is at once a challenge and a lure. Beyond the doorstep of privation is the wide hall of opportunity. Prove up and be started in life—started in a wide, fresh field where success is limited only by capacity and grit.

The cost of discovery, the pride of conquest is the heritage of the agricultural pioneer who tries out these illimitable reaches of the North. As the soldier of the Allies battles with the forces of Prussian tyranny, so the soldier of the soil engages in combat with Nature to compel her to yield up her treasures

of productive fertility for man's use and pleasure. Only ours is a clean, wholesome, friendly, bloodless battle, a good-natured rivalry as of gladiators in sport. Who would not relish such a game?

For we are finding here more than a hundred miles north of the latitude of Edmonton and 2,500 feet above sea level, that we cannot only raise crops and live stock successfully but also small fruits, such as raspberries and strawberries, currants, vegetables in profusion, and ornamental shrubs like lilacs and spiræas. Perhaps even apples will bear. I have fifty young trees still living. Not only farms but attractive farm homes are possible in the North.

Thus point by point we are developing a successful agriculture in a vast new region that was once supposed fit for nothing but a fur-bearing wild. In the age-long bout with Nature we battle and struggle and win. League upon league we are rolling back the wilderness toward the pole, winning for democratic Canadian civilisation a glad good land of plenty. Is that not worth while?

The pure air, bracing climate and sweeping scope of these wide Northern plateaux put iron in the blood of man—not the iron of ferocity but the mettle of courage and nerve which makes of Canadian freemen unconquerable champions of liberty, honoured the world around.

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BONEHEAD.

"Gwan, niggah, you all ain't got no sense no how."

"Ain't got no sense? What's dis here haid for?"

"Dat thing? Dat ain't no haid, niggah; dat's jes er button on top er yo body ter keep yer backbone from unravelin'!"



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