

the buffalo ;" but remove him from the plains and put the man on his farm, and presto ! his activity vanishes, and he settles down to a lazy, laissez-aller existence, exerting himself by fits and starts, just sufficiently to keep body and soul together.

Slight allusion has already been made to the occupations followed by the Half-breeds before their emigration from the valley of the Red River. Their means of livelihood in the North-west are, with some slight modifications, much the same as in former times ; but in the present connection, deserve something more than a merely passing reference.

Agriculture probably furnishes employment to a greater number of Half-breeds than any other industry. A few of them have succeeded in becoming substantial farmers, but the great majority of them barely make a living. Up to two or three years ago many natives at Prince Albert carried on farming in a manner peculiar to themselves. In the spring they would sow a few bushels of grain and potatoes, and while awaiting the harvest, they would betake themselves to Winnipeg on a two months' visit to their friends, or spend a like period in hunting on the plains. When they returned home, they gleaned so much of their crops as the cattle had left. A few years of this style of farming convinced them that they must devote the whole of their time to their land, if they are to hope for any success. But even in the face of this experience, they do not, as a rule, take kindly to farming. It is too plodding and laborious for their tastes. They would much prefer to travel, or hunt on the plains during the farming season. Their laziness is clearly visible in their manner of carrying on a farm. A man has, let us suppose, a two hundred acre lot of prairie land. Now, instead of going systematically to work to "break" thirty or forty acres of this land every year, he is usually content to cultivate only twenty or thirty acres altogether each season, breaking, perhaps, eight or ten of new land. The result is that the unfortunate farmer raises barely enough to keep himself and family from want. However, even at this slow rate of breaking, the farmer might, in the course of a few years own a farm of respectable extent, but before he has prepared enough land to yield him a fair income, the probability is that he will sell out his interest and begin another farm elsewhere.

As may naturally be supposed, hunting employs not a few of the natives for a portion of the year at least. Some of the less civilized Half-breeds, perhaps the French especially, make the chase their chief pursuit. At certain seasons of the year they will organize themselves into parties and go out upon the plains to "run buffalo" for several months. If successful, they will secure abundant provision for the winter ; if unsuccessful, they return home impressed more than ever with the idea that the sooner they abandon the chase as a means of livelihood, and confine themselves to agriculture the better for themselves and for their children.

In connection with agriculture and the chase,

the two chief sources of food for the Half-breeds, mention must be made of "bannock" and "pemican." These have been the staff of life both for Half-breed and Indian, but they are slowly giving way before their civilized equivalents, bread and beef. If Dr. Johnson had been familiar with the first-named comestibles, he doubtless would have defined them as "Food for men in the Hudson Bay country, and for swine everywhere else."

"Bannock," in the North-West, is a mixture of flour, grease and water, nothing more, baked in cake form, sometimes in an oven, but usually by an open fire. A section of the cake frequently has a thin blue line, running through the centre of it, indicating insufficient baking or some other defect in its preparation. Natives profess to prefer this to sponge bread. "Pemican" is prepared as follows: The buffalo having been run and shot, the flesh is cut into thin slices and exposed to the air and the sun to dry ; after which it is further dried by an open fire. In this state it is called "dried meat," and is often consumed as such. To make pemican, the best of the dried meat is placed in a buffalo hide and pounded into small pieces. These are then put into a sack of buffalo skin, and drenched with the melted fat of the animal. The sack is tightly sewn up with sinew, and the pemican is fit for market. If carefully prepared, this article of diet will keep for years, hence its usefulness to travellers on the plain. Buffalo hairs and gravel not infrequently find their way into the sack through carelessness. The poor Indian manufacturer has also been known to introduce a good big stone into the midst of the package, not accidentally, but to give weight, the purchaser never being allowed to open it before buying, as it might spoil. Pemican is somewhat insipid, and in appearance not unlike frozen wood ashes. It is usually eaten without cooking, but sometimes it appears in a kind of stew with potatoes and onions, called by the natives "Rachaud." In the latter form it is quite eatable, with hunger as a relish, if one has no fear of digestive retribution. Pemican makes a capital curry. Owing to the rapid disappearance of the buffalo, it is becoming scarce and dear. For the same reason, hunting, as a means of subsistence, must soon be abandoned.

Half-breeds do much of the carrying trade of the North-West—freighting, as it is called. Up to the present time (1880) the great bulk of imports into the country has had to be carried in carts. It is true that the Hudson's Bay Company have two or three freight steamers on the Saskatchewan, but owing to the shallowness and swift current of the river, and the shortness of the open season, the boats can only make two or three trips each summer, and therefore can carry but a fraction of the aggregate imports. In a few years, however, the river will be made more easy of navigation, by which time, may we hope, the Canadian Pacific Railway will have been completed as far as the Sas-