

the "natives" of Red River. The necessity of this condition will be seen more fully shortly.

FARM STOCK.

The facilities for raising stock are very remarkable on the prairies about the settlement. Pasture of very rich description and hay *ad libitum* in the fall would almost compel the supposition that Red River would swarm with the domesticated animals. This, however, is not the case. There are now in the Red River settlements 2799 horses, 2726 oxen, 3883 cattle, 2644 calves, 4674 pigs, and 2429 sheep. With the exception of sheep, all the other domesticated animals show a slight increase in their numbers since the census of 1849. But in 1856 there were 667 fewer sheep than in 1849, and 1130 less than in 1843. How can we account for this extraordinary diminution in so valuable an animal. Wool is comparatively worthless at Red River, blankets and clothes being supplied by the Company. There exist no manufactories even of the simplest kind that can compete with the Company. Encouragement for this kind of home industry is not offered. The same applies to hides and leather, to tallow and soap, and to numberless other articles which might be manufactured there, but which are imported from England. I will read to you an extract from two letters I have just received from two clergymen at Red River, one being the Bishop of Rupert's Land, the other, the Rev. Mr. Black, Presbyterian Minister.

His Lordship says, "After all, our grand want is division of Labour. We have no separate trades; all are engaged in every thing—farmers and carpenters at the same time, and so on. We want one skilful in tanning, for the hides of the animals are wasted at present. We want one to instruct them in making soap, to save the importation of this bulky and necessary article from Britain."

The Rev. Mr. Black says, "As to suggestions of an industrial kind I am not a very competent person to make such. There is one thing, however, which I do think of great consequence, especially in view of an increased population, and that is to afford facilities for domestic manufactures. The climate requires large quantities of heavy woollen goods, and these might just as well be manufactured here as imported from England. You saw what a splendid country it is for sheep pasture, and were there means of making wool into cloths, blankets, &c., great attention would be given to the rearing of sheep. Great quantities of such goods are also required for the fur trade, and it would be an advantage to have them manufactured here. Among the emigrants coming up to take possession of the land, it would be a great advantage were there somebody to establish machinery for carding, fulling, and dyeing—perhaps spinning and weaving also."

Who would think of bringing soap from England, through Hudson's Bay, over 700 miles of barren, rocky country, to a country where tallow and ashes are thrown away, where salt exists on the spot in great abundance, and rosin could be produced without difficulty from the Winnipeg? Why, it will be asked, have simple machinery and instructed workman not being introduced to work up the wool which is so easily produced in a country where it is so much wanted? The answer is clear in this as in all other cases. A settled industrious life is incompatible with the pursuits of a hunter. A hunter's home is the prairie or the woods, and he can never afford to remain long in one spot. The necessities of the fur trade require pemmican and buffalo meat as well as the skins of the fur-bearing animals. And the buffalo require grazing grounds. To convert the brave and daring half-breed hunters into quiet agriculturists, or contented artisans might lay the foundation of a great province; but it would endanger a most lucrative monopoly, and therefore it cannot be wondered that those who enjoy that monopoly should have endeavored to maintain the settlement at Red River as the entrepot or station of a hunting establishment on the grandest scale, to which their employees might repair during the seasons when their services were not required in the field.

The machinery of Red River is represented by 15 windmills, 9 watermills, 8 thrashing machines, 2 reaping and 6 winnowing machines, and one carding mill. As means of locomotion they possess 2045 carts, 522 canoes, and 55 freighters' boats, capable of carrying 3 or 4 tons.

In all that relates to religion and education they are well provided for. The churches are 9 in number, and some of them very imposing stone buildings—5 Church of England, 3 Roman Catholic, and one Presbyterian—besides those belonging to outlying districts. Of schools there are 17, some of them well supplied with competent masters. Of so-called merchant's shops, or petty trader's shops, there are 53; in other words, there are 53 persons who import goods and carry on a small trade, purchasing furs for goods.

THE HALF-BREED HUNTERS OF RED RIVER.

About the 15th of June the professed hunters start for their summer hunt of the buffalo. There are now two distinct bands of buffalo hunters, one being those of Red River, the other of the White Horse Plain on the Assiniboine. Formerly these bands were united, but owing to a difference which sprang up between them, they now maintain a separate organization and proceed to different hunting grounds. The Red River hunters go to the Coteau de Missouri and Yellowstone. The White Horse Plain settlers generally hunt between the branches of the Saskatchewan and also over the same grounds as their Red River brethren.

The improvidence of many of the half-breeds is remarkable. During the winter before last, those of the White Horse Plain camped out on the distant prairies and killed thousands upon thousands of buffalo in wanton revelry, taking only their skins and tongues, little caring that the reckless destruction of these animals must probably exercise a very important change for the worse in their condition.

As the buffalo diminish and go farther away towards the Rocky Mountains, the half-breeds are compelled to travel much greater distances in search of them, and consume more time in the hunt; it necessarily follows that they have less time to devote to farming, and many of them can be regarded in no other light than men slowly subjecting themselves to a process of degradation by which they approach nearer and nearer to Indian habits and character, relinquishing the civilized, but to them unrequited, pursuit of agriculture, for the wild excitement and precarious independence of a hunter's life.

The fascination of a camp on the high prairies, compared with the hitherto almost hopeless monotony of the farms of Red River, can easily be understood by those who have tasted the careless freedom of prairie life. I was often told that the half-breeds are always sighing for the hunting season when in the settlements, and form but a feeble attachment to a settled home, which, to the great majority, can never offer, it is said, under present circumstances, a comfortable living, and much less a reasonable maintenance, or the consciousness of possessing a free and manly spirit, with rational aspirations and hopes.

But few simple aids are required at Red River to ameliorate and vastly improve the condition of the more improvident and careless half-breeds. They frequently bring in a large quantity of buffalo meat or robes to the trading posts, and receive a large sum of money in exchange, or, if they insist upon it, a certain quantity of rum. The money is spent at once in simple necessities, dress and ornaments. The establishment of a Savings Bank would have an excellent effect, and doubtless become the source of much permanent good, with other objects in view than those incident to the exclusive prosecution of the fur trade.

The following information, concerning the buffalo hunter, in the field, was given me by Mr. Flett, who resides on the Assiniboine River, and at whose house I was very hospitably entertained:—

The start is made from the settlement, about the 15th of June, for the summer hunt, and the hunters remain on the prairie till the 20th of August or 1st September. One division (the White Horse Plain) goes by the Assiniboine River to the Rapids, crossing, and then proceeds in a south-westerly direction. The other, or Red River, division pass on to Pembina and then also proceed in a southerly direction. The two divisions sometimes meet, but not intentionally. In Mr. Flett's division in 1849 there were, according to a census taken near the Chief's Mountain, not far from the Shayenne River, Dacotah Territory, six hundred and three carts; seven hundred half-breeds; two hundred Indians; six hundred horses; two hundred oxen; four hundred dogs, and one cat. After the start from the settlement had been well made, and all stragglers or tardy hunters were thought to have arrived, a great council was held and a president elected. A number of captains were nominated by the president and people jointly. The captains then proceeded to appoint their own policemen, the number assigned to each not exceeding ten. Their duties is to see that the laws of the hunt are strictly carried out. In 1849, if a man ran a buffalo without permission before the general hunt began, his saddle and bridle were cut to pieces for the first offence. For the second offence of the same description his clothes were cut off his back. At the present day these punishments are changed to a fine of 20s. for the first offence. No gun is permitted to be fired when in the buffalo country before the "race" begins.

A priest sometimes goes with the hunt, and mass is then celebrated in the open prairie. At night the carts are placed in the form of a circle, with the horses and cattle inside the ring, and it is the duty of the captains and their policemen to see that it is rightly