

THE HALF-BREEDS OF THE NORTH-WEST.

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I HAVE derived a large amount of instruction and amusement this afternoon from the perusal in your April number (A. D. 1888) of an article on "The Half-breeds of the North-west," by Rev. George Forneret, M. A., Rector of All Saints', Hamilton, and Rural Dean.

At Stanley we are situated in a rather remote part of the world, which accounts for the fact that we have only just received the above mentioned number of your valuable magazine. I was instructed, because though I have resided in Manitoba and the North-west Territories for some time (a good deal longer than two years) I learnt many things about Half breeds which I never knew before, and amused because, to a well regulated mind it always gives pleasure and amusement "to see ourselves as others see us." One of the subjects on which I received information was with regard to the physical inferiority of the Half-breed.

We have in our house here a Bell Organ weighing (in case) 390 lbs., this organ was carried over every portage between Cumberland House by one man (a Half-breed); and I can assure you that the portages, (one of them is over half a mile long) consisting as they do of alternating rock, and muskeg, are not pleasant exhibition grounds for feats of strength. Yet the average load at these portages, is from 200 to 350 lbs., and if you consider that these physically inferior men are at work rowing, portaging, towing the boat up rapids, and sometimes even carrying the York-boat bodily over steep rocks from 4 in the morning till 9 at night, for a trip which takes from 21 to 27 days, and come in fresh at the end of it, I think you will admit that they cannot be so very inferior.

On one occasion I was talking to the "boss" of a gravel pit, a man whom I knew well, and who had the same pious hatred and holy detestation of "breeds," which is a characteristic of many Canadians; and he told me that out of a crew of 150 men the *three best men* (bar one) were "breeds." There were about 25 "breeds" in the pit, and the rest were white men, so it was not a case of picked men. I myself have worked on several gangs in which both white men and Half-breeds were employed, and I can safely say that on the average, in endurance and push, the latter were fully equal to the former, and in many cases were far superior.

The rev. gentleman is fearfully down on bannock and pemmican. Of course it may be our depraved taste, depraved and vitiated by contact with "breeds," but I do not know *one* of the old hands in the country who does not prefer bannock as an article of diet to sponge bread, and as to the thin blue line, etc., etc., I have eaten bread in Canadian houses which had something a good deal more solid than a 'thin blue line in it.' You will also allow me to observe that the meat for pem-

mican is mixed with the fat *before* being baked. As to its "being quite eatable, stewed with onions, and with hunger as a relish," I leave it to any one who has *eaten pemmican* to decide as to the amount of hunger which is necessary to overcome the fears of the consequent digestive retribution, but I must confess that for my part I can enjoy a meal of pemmican as well as anything else I know. I never heard of the expedient of putting a stone in the bale of pemmican, and though one of the men to whom I appealed has been in the country 37 years, and is now a commissioned officer in the Hudson Bay Company, and though the other two have lived in it all their lives (they are white), they never heard of it either.

The rev. gentleman speaks of the hatred felt by the Halfbreeds for Canadians as distinguished from Europeans. Is it to be wondered at? A European as a rule treats a Half-breed as an equal and as a gentleman, a Canadian treats him only too frequently as if he were little better than a dog; this I know from what I have seen myself; the result is obvious. If the settlers from Canada would only try the effect of the *suaviter in modo* instead of the *fortiter in re* you would see less of the bad feeling against them which unfortunately exists.

[NOTE.—While inserting the above as containing interesting information, the Editor would remark that it is quite possible for two men to have different experiences of the same thing, especially if gathered from portions of territory widely distant from one another.]

THE IDOLATRIES OF INDIA.

From an article in "The Mission Field," March 1st, 1889; by Rev. G. A. PORZ, D. D., Teacher of Tamil and Telugu in the University of Oxford.

THE modes of worship which exist in India, the whole cultus of the Hindu or Brahminical systems, bear testimony to the fact that man needs some method of approach to God, such as the mediation of Christ supplies. The idolatries of India, bewilderingly manifold, surely bear witness to this. Our fellow-creatures there, like ourselves, desire that God should dwell among them, should take a visible form, and have something like a personal history. So they have imagined sundry manifestations of their divinities, who are supposed to dwell in blissful seats, with their wives, children, attendants and devotees. There is nothing in all these legends (save in a few where Christian influence is evident) which suggests a point of real analogy to the history of Christ; but they bear emphatic testimony to the felt necessity of some visible manifestation of God to man. Yet, though this instinctive sense of need was, in part at least, their origin, how terribly debasing are, on the whole, the idolatries of India! Innumerable are the objects of worship, generally acknowledged not to be really gods, but really taking the place of the