

flimsy raft of small logs, or by a rude boat hurriedly extemporised out of a couple of cart wheels covered with an ox hide. The oxen and horses are made to swim the rivers. The prairie life of the Half-breed eminently fits him for this work, and seldom or never is he at his wits' end to surmount a difficulty when on the plains. The long trip to Winnipeg, and the weary return home, consume the greater part of the summer. When home is reached, the freighter delivers his goods to the various consignees, and then prepares for the long winter, during which he allows himself a good rest, and quietly makes his arrangements for another trip next season. Generally speaking the Half-breed will pick up some knowledge of any trade, but he seldom becomes a proficient in it. Having, for his own necessities, to adapt himself to all circumstances, he must be very often his own carpenter and house builder, and saddler, and tinker, and so forth, the result being that he becomes "Jack of all trades, and master of none." Many Half-breeds call themselves "tradesmen," without having served one year's apprenticeship. Such are handy-men who have merely "picked up" a very elementary knowledge of their calling. The work which such men turn out, compared with that of trained white artisans, clearly tells its own story, and requires little comment.

With respect to character, the Half-breed race has its own marked defects as well as its good points. Most of these peculiarities are traceable to the Indian origin of the race. The defects most likely first to attract the attention of the observer are laziness and improvidence, which in the individuals of every race usually go hand in hand. This laziness or inaptitude for fixed regular work, has already been sufficiently noticed. It may, however, be added that this factor in the native character will always brand it as inferior to the European and keep the Half-breed far behind the white. Improvidence must also exert a restraining influence on the progress of the race. The Half-breed, like the Indian, seems to take as his motto for practical life, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." So long as he has anything to eat in the house, he betrays no anxiety as to replenishing his larder, and seldom does he exert himself to procure a fresh supply, until he has come down to the last bunch of dried meat, or his last pound of tea. The natives also exhibit their lack of forethought in their "farming." For instance, in the autumn of 1877, the farmers of Prince Albert mowed large quantities of wild hay which could be had for the cutting and drawing. It happened that the winter of 1877-78 was one of the mildest ever experienced in the North-West, and many of the horses and cattle found grazing in the open country. This, of course, economized the store of hay, of which there remained a considerable surplus in the spring; and the farmers regretfully thought of the labor wasted in the cutting and carting of that surplus. Such a mistake should not occur again. The next autumn, although the

supply of hay was almost exhaustless, only a minimum quantity was secured, but unfortunately the winter proved a most severe one, and not only was there a hay famine in the spring, but many animals died from exposure and starvation. In fact so denuded was the country of hay, that many farmers, for lack of provender, could not till their usual number of acres. The farmers who suffered least from this deficiency were Canadians or "old-countrymen." With all their improvidence, the natives are usually close and calculating in their business transactions, and they seldom confer a favor or bestow a gift without expecting more than its equivalent in return. The popular notion of the vast generosity of Indian or Half-breed is taken, not so much from life, as from the imagination of poets and of writers of dime novels. The native lives generally in a state of chronic debt. Whenever he undertakes any work, and before commencing it, he usually asks for "provisions," *i. e.* a supply of necessities on account of the pay he is to receive. This wretched custom had its origin, no doubt, in the necessary practice of the Hudson's Bay Company of advancing an outfit to their regular hunters and freighters, which outfit was to be accounted for when their accounts were balanced. One result of this is that the native workman not infrequently overdraws his account, and then fails to complete his engagement. What with laziness and improvidence, two-thirds of the natives are heavily in debt, and chiefly to the Hudson's Bay Co. In fairness to the Company it should be stated that it deals very leniently with its debtors. Another weakness of the Half-breed is a propensity for strong drink. This is a failing common to him and his Indian ancestry. Drunkenness used to be a very prevalent evil in the Red River country, but fortunately the North-West Territories are almost wholly free from it, owing to the stringency of the liquor laws. It is a penal offence to import any intoxicant into the Territories, save under special permit from the Lieutenant-Governor, and that in exceedingly small quantities. To the credit of many a native drunkard be it said, that he has voluntarily exiled himself from the Red River to the Saskatchewan, in order to rid himself of his temptations. Not a few such have reformed and become respectable settlers.

Jealousy and suspicion are also factors which react from the beauty of the Half-breed character. The Half-breed is cunning, careful, observant, and if he keeps his thoughts to himself, it is not because they are inactive. He is, also, too ready to take offence, although he may not say much at the time; and it requires a considerable insight into the native character to enable a stranger to avoid giving offence. The natives of the North-West Territories have a peculiar suspicion and jealousy of Canadians, as distinguished from Europeans. They have an idea that the Canadian Government usurped its authority over the country without consulting the inhabitants, and they see with chagrin that Canadians are steadily