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PIONEERS OF PEMBINA.

THE "BOB RULYS" AND "BOB LONGS" OF RED RIVER.

The Hunters of 1859—Sioux and Chippeway War—Rapid Development of Northwest Minnesota—Canadians, Icelanders, Britons and Scandinavians.

[Special Correspondence.]

St. THOMAS, D. T., March 14.

In July, 1859, on the banks of Rum river, Minnesota, I first saw the Bois Brules of Red river on their annual march to St. Paul. The first train of the season contained 180 two-wheeled carts, each drawn by two little oxen, and piled high with the furs and skins of the previous winter's hunt. Here and there along the line were mounted hunters or agents, among them three white Britons and perhaps a dozen full-blooded Chippeways; but on each cart was perched a half-breed driver, generally of French-Indian blood, but often with a dash of Scotch or English. The cart was a study. From neck yoke to wheel and from king bolt to linch pin it was entirely of wood; wet of mornings by the dews, dried by the heat of the day and often soaked in the streams and marshes crossed, it was a model of artistic clumsiness. As the last few days' travel was made in haste and without oiling up, the approach of the train was announced for a mile or more in advance, as each wheel maintained a wailing, creaky crawly, creaky-craw—a "cry for grease" that set the strangers' teeth on edge.

The drivers of these carts were the Bois Brules or "Burnt Woods" of Pembina and Manitoba—one of the very few permanent classes created by the mixture of Caucasian and Indian. In fact, I believe these half-breeds and the brown Mestizos of Mexico are the only permanent types of mixed Indian blood. To those of French extraction the name Bois Brule was first applied in good humored raillery, and similarly they called their white neighbors Bois Blancs (White Woods). Now in the Canadian patois these phrases are pronounced bwah broolay and bwah blong—as nearly as one can present the sound in English letters. So our pioneers made a faint attempt at the French of it, and then called them Bob Ruly and Bob Long! There is a good deal of this ingenious mutilation in the west. Thus a certain southwestern stream was named by the Spaniards Rio de las Animas (River of Souls), which the French, coming after them, briefly translated Purgatory (Purgatory river); the Americans caught the French sound after a fashion, and call the stream the Picketwire!

The Sioux and Chippeways were still at war in 1859. Only a year before they had a battle in the very suburbs of Shakopee, and a vague report reached us in Wright county in July that a band of Chippeways had just been surprised and massacred not far northwest of St. Cloud. For many years the progress of the great Paha Goonsey, the red Napoleon of the northwest, kept the Sioux in awe; but he was dead, and the Chippeways' time had come to give ground. So the few who came with these trains took care to stay with their white and half-breed friends. All this region was but vaguely known to the Missourian of the south; though well read men knew, of course, that Selkirk, the Scotch nobleman, had established a colony here early in the century, and that a few of his people remained, though most had gone north after the survey proved them to be in the United States.

The Sioux war of 1862 caused a general forward movement up here, and as early as 1850 steamers made regular trips on Red river. Then came the Northern Pacific, which crossed this stream in September, 1872, and



SOD HOUSE.

the Manitoba branch was built on the east side. After the panic of 1873 things stood still a few years; then came the great Dakota rush, and now old Pembina county is so thickly settled that the original French Indian is lost in the ocean of pure white; and a very pure white this population is—a red or pink white, but most wonderfully diversified. No one can tell me which is the prevailing race; but at least six sources of Canadians are seen on the streets here: the tall, blonde Swede, the stout and plump Norwegian, the stout and round-bodied Englishman, the stocky Manitoba Booby and Scotch, the new Canadian and American. Of these the poorest in possession to be the oldest stock. The Scandinavians are fairly well to do, and the best homes and outfits are of the British and Americans.

The latitude is 48 degs. 38 min., so the sun is pretty low down at noon, and the mercury often goes 40 degs. below zero. The coldest ever reported here was 57 degs. below, and yet the people are not unhappy. There is plenty of fun here of its kind. It is fun to lie warm in blankets at midnight and hear an old house crack like ice on the lakes, and groan through all her timbers like a dumb creature in agony. It is fun to breakfast an hour before daylight and then watch through double windows, by the way! the coming sun casting a blood red light on the vast stretches of snow and ice. When the air is still and the sky clear, it is a real pleasure to walk about the town and note how ingeniously all the details of common life are adjusted to an unbroken winter; and when there is a blizzard, it is keen enjoyment to stand in the bright and cheerful room and hear the icy particles rattle the storm window (the outer pane) or watch the busy waifs elements as the snow goes flying by—not the damp snow of our middle latitudes, but a light and powdery substance like frozen flour.

It is fun to have an enduring interest than that, and the far more diverting produce in a very recent all the stoves; the Icelanders and Norwegians in coats of sheepskin, down or buffalo; the others in all sorts of costumes, and I, in interest, an occasional old Booby or Booby with a buck of ice in his beard in the case of weather, and his mustache standing out in great icicles. In the hotel the bar is usually in one corner of the main sitting room or cellar, and the first move of these old fellows, who come in where I am writing, is for four ounces of whisky or brandy. One would hardly dare say that the whisky is the best I have ever drunk. It is a whisky of the per-

formance, and I caught the subject grasps the well filled glass; the other dexterously whips aside the lip icicles; there is a croak of the elbow, allegretto, one turn and two motions; then one gulp, and the fiery liquor is shot into the red orifice like a scoop of coal into the furnace. There is a sort of sobbing gurgle, like the exhaust of a bath tub; the old fellow, without even a wink over his nose, turns to the hot stove, and soon his icicles are running down over his hairy collar and he is ready for a chat.

On the street and in the country are many novel sights; the sod houses, of which only the frame is of wood; the bob sleds and fur clad drivers; the Icelandic box sleds and



ICELANDER AND ONE OX SLED.

draught oxen, and the many queer methods of protection against cold. But spring will soon be here, and about the first of May all this plain will suddenly burst into a rich green; bush, branch and vine along the streams will spring all at once into giant life, and an almost tropical growth will follow almost Arctic cold with amazing suddenness.

J. H. BEADLE.

FAMOUS ART TREASURES.

An Afternoon at the Stewart Collection.

[Special Correspondence.]

NEW YORK, March 21.

Nothing sets certain portions of New York more agog than the display of a private citizen's collection of art treasures. It is a fountain filled with conversational beverage, which the ignorant and the learned alike ladle out without stint.

The mass of artistic and expensive things collected by the late Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Stewart has been exhibited in the American Art gallery for weeks, and every day a stream of people that almost reaches the size of a torrent pours through. They gaze, comment, criticize, wonder, sometimes sneer, sometimes praise and pass on. Others follow, doing the same. If one watches the procession a little while it becomes both ludicrous and pathetic. It is human life condensed within the limits of an art gallery. The pretenders, the true enjoyers, the strugglers, the aspirers—all are there.

The interest of the collection is enhanced by the owner's celebrity, his well known history, even the history of his grave. As one enters to the left are the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Stewart. If one did not know that the picture represented him one could not but be struck with the selfishness of the face. The eyes are too blue and cold to belong to a warm and kind nature. Yet the mouth is not unkind. It would be good to those he loved and cruel to those who were nothing to him.

Everybody pauses long before Rosa Bonheur's celebrated "Horse Fair." How inspiring it is, with its splendid white and dappled Percherons, led and ridden by tricky groomers in blue blouses, a black stallion rearing in the middle of the group, and much action in the crowd, an avenue of trees beyond and the dome of the "Invalids" in the distance. Twenty or more horses with attendants are in plain view, others are indicated, while ponies and colts are here and there. This is the original of this famous picture. It was first exhibited in the Salon of 1855, and brought to this country in 1857 by W. P. Wright, of Wheelbarrow. It represents a fifteen months' hard study by the artist at a good horse market on the boulevard de l'Hopital and of conscientious studio work. Rosa Bonheur's animals have a human intelligence. They speak to the beholder and tell tales of human longings and human sufferings. Yet this was not the picture which made Rosa Bonheur famous. Her "Oxen Plowing in the Nivernais" did that. It is in the Luxembourg. Yet the "Horse Fair" has become more celebrated.

Her brother, Augustine Bonheur, has one picture in the collection, "Cattle in the Fontainebleau Forest," which would be famous had he not had a famous sister.

Long haired critics pose before the mightiest works of art there displayed and point out faults. What is so easy, anyway, as to find fault! They may be threadbare artists starving in fireless rooms; nevertheless, they feel themselves perfectly competent to tell their successful brother and sister artists what they should have done. Well, that's human nature in every phase of life. We can all point a rod, or think we can, though we have never traveled it. Timid souls, who overrate their own ignorance, stare in adoring wonder at the self-satisfied critic with the sneer curling around under his Mexican mustache. They think him very learned.

The chattering young lady who has been abroad and seen things makes the round, leaving a trail of rattling gossip in the air. She is devoted to "style," and in her toilet puts the classic garments of the subjects on the canvas into limbo. She has picked up a little something about pictures with all her nonsense, and occasionally surprises everybody by saying something worth hearing. Very stout women are always at picture galleries in great numbers. They may often be found discussing the gold spoons up in the department where the small and large miscellaneous things are displayed. And what a treat to the fanciers of such things is this collection! Sevres porcelain, European bronzes, statuettes in Carrara marble, carved tables, exquisite cabinets, armchairs and bronze candleabra, clocks, jewel caskets, bric-a-brac (in plain English, break-a-back) of every design and every country, are displayed.

All these treasures must pass under the hammer and be scattered. Do not such things preach weighty sermons on getting and keeping? Let him get who has the power, and let him keep who can. Nobody can keep long, for the great scatterer, Death, sees to it that he shall not.

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