

THE PIONEERS.

IN all western States, indeed everywhere, are to be found men who delight in sport. Gunning and fishing with them is a passion. If sufficiently wealthy, then they will yearly take a trip to the far west, or to some lake where they can freely indulge in their favorite pastime. If poor, however, then they are obliged to take such sport as their neighborhood affords. A poor man who idles away his time by following a pursuit which in a civilized and thickly settled country must ever be without remuneration, soon finds himself distanced by his more energetic, industrious neighbors. Civilization crowds him and he looks westward longingly. He well knows there is yet plenty of elbow room and there "the streams are filled with fishes and the woods with game," and the old song, "My trusty rifle on my arm, the prairies I shall roam," becomes his daily companion.

Soon after this there is a sale. The farm wagon is covered and converted into a prairie schooner. He loads in a few household goods. His horses are hitched. The cow is tied behind, the family is snugly stowed inside. He mounts, cracks his whip and "Here we go, westward ho!"

Now follows a journey, unequalled, perhaps in any country. It is spring. Heavy rains have made the roads bottomless. The atmosphere is damp, chilly, changeable and uncomfortable. Food for beasts is scarce and badly preserved. The wheels often sink into the soft mud and the wagon must often be unloaded to be extricated. The horses soon show unmistakable signs of fatigue and exposure. The cow soon becomes a mere bundle of bones and refuses to give milk. Our traveler is soon disgusted. His food is badly cooked. His clothes are damp and dirty, and when he turns in at night to seek his damp bed, and is there met by his shivering wife and sick children, he curses the country, and his resolution to find a better grows stronger each day.

Slowly he moves onward. Days change into weeks, weeks into months; June follows May, and is in turn followed by July, and when the hot days of August overtake him he has reached the broad boundless prairies of the west. The heat becomes unbearable as he slowly plods onward. The horses are tired, his family is sick and weary. The cow can go no further, and he himself has lost all energy and feels tired to death. He halts at a prairie stream. The shores are lined with wood land, in whose cooling shade rest elk and deer. In the depth of the clear cool water are seen shoals of fishes. "Wife," says our traveler, "we must rest. Let us rest here; this is a pleasant place." The horses are turned out. The cow is untied. The woods supply him with fuel and game and the stream with fishes. In a few days the horses commence to look better, the cow recommences to give milk, the pioneer himself is rested. His children play around him. Oh, how nice this all seems. "Wife," he says, "this is a nice country. Let us remain here. Let us take this claim. Let us build a house and pass the remainder of our lives in peace and plenty."

A log house is soon built. Hay for winter use soon stored. There is plenty of leisure, plenty of game, plenty of fish, abundance of everything the heart could desire. No trouble, no care. This is the land, (Iowa.) Here let us rest, (Alabama.)

A passing trapper partakes of his hospitality, and in return instructs him to make deerskin clothes. The trapper remains. They hunt, they fish, they trap, and by the evening fire many a tale of border life and Indian warfare is recounted. The trapper makes several trips to the nearest settlement. Letters to the old home are dispatched and the news from the great outside world is brought back. Fall turns into winter, winter into spring and still our family and their friend remain in the little hut by the side of the river in the protection and shade of the big cottonwoods. Here they live peaceful and happy, far removed from the ambitions, cares and troubles of the busy outside world. They share their joys and sorrows, form a closer friendship, a firmer love. They worship

God in a simple and pure manner, and thank Him daily for this, their new prairie home.

Let us return. Back in his old home they do not miss our friend. He is soon forgotten. But a day comes when his name is in every one's mouth. They all speak of his luck and the fine country he has discovered. The village paper publishes some of his most enthusiastic letters, giving a glowing description of his new home. A colony is organized. A string of prairie schooners loaded with men, women, children, fowls, pigs, dogs, furniture and utensils, soon leave the place. A herd of cattle follows the movers, and after many weary weeks of travel they are welcomed—welcomed in their new home. The land is staked out. Each man selects his quarter. Houses are built. A grist and saw mill is erected on the river bank. Stores, shops and houses are soon grouped around the log cabin. The town is named. The county is organized. A church, school house and court house are built and the hammer of the carpenter and anvil of the blacksmith now wake the echoes of the once silent woods. A stage route is established, and the fame of the new station soon reaches the outside world and resounds throughout the length and breadth of the land. Here and there it reaches the ear of some young man starting in life, or some mechanic or laborer who is tired of being slave; some farmer whose farm is insufficient to support his family. "Yes," they say, "let us try. We'll take a claim and get us a home of our own." On they come. One, two, three, ten, twenty, a hundred, a thousand. One farm after another is staked out. One quarter after another is taken. The settlement now rapidly enlarges. What was a pioneer farm becomes a settlement; the settlement a county. Other towns are built, other counties organized and in the short space of fifteen or twenty years the country is sufficiently peopled to claim admittance as a State.

Industry and energy soon change the face of the landscape. A prosperous settlement soon attracts the attention of eastern monopolists, and soon the puffing, screaming steamhorse plows its way through what was a short time ago an ocean of grass and yellow flowers.

Our old pioneer has remained in the land of his dreams. His farm has been changed into a town; the town has grown into a city, and the land has become valuable. He has remained poor. Public spirited, he has helped every one. He has freely contributed to every public enterprise. Has signed every note, every bond, until he has lost his all. He is poor, but respected. His name is known by every one and is enrolled among the great ones in history. His likeness is sold in the stores and forms the premium of the local papers. He lives to a good old age, and when he dies the community mourn his loss. He has been a father to them all. He has given his all for their welfare, and in return his name is chiseled into the face of immortality. H.

PUSH-I-TO,

OR THE OLD MAN OF THE CREEK.

HE was once young and full of hope; was born and grew to manhood in one of the beautiful valleys of Western Pennsylvania. He had just finished his course in the famous Rush Medical College in Philadelphia, and returned home to practice his chosen profession, when the Angel of Death spread his wings over the household of "The One" he loved as a child, a girl, and a woman, and claimed her as his own.

His Ange was dead. For weeks after the death of his promised wife his great strong mind tottered on the verge of insanity, but his fine physical organization triumphed, and he seemed himself again. His friends, anxious for his good, procured him a surgeon's commission in the regular army. He quickly joined his regiment at St. Louis, and was attached to the command of Lieutenant Pike; was with him on his expedition up the Mississippi in 1805. And subsequently was with Lieutenant Pike on his exploration to the Southwest, and was made prisoner with the command by the Mexicans, at or near Santa Fe, and marched on foot as pris-

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.