

An Ioway Village

“Comment messieurs? But yes, certainment! We will arrive at the Ioway village this afternoon. Me, Antoine Roubideux, bourgeois of these bateaux, engage that it will be so. See, there it is now. Voila! Just around the bend of the Riviere Des Moines. That beegest lodge, that is chez mon belle pere — where my fathaire-in-law leeves. No-heart-of-fear, they call heem.”

Already the little flotilla of log and bark canoes from the northern country is grounding on the beach. Wolfish dogs set up a clamor of howling, for, wolf-like, they bark little or not at all. Children, naked as the day they were born, run screaming to hide, or peep furtively from points of vantage. Men and women, clad largely in dresses of tanned deer-skin, with here and there a glint of color, lent by the trade strouds, broadcloth, or calico, and here and there a painted buffalo-robe, throng the beach to crowd and stare pleasantly at the newcomers. A fine-looking woman, dressed wholly in trade materials, comes running down with many exclamations of delight. To her dress and hands cling a brood of pretty half-breed children, and a new baby, fastened to a cradle-board, is on her back. It is Mrs. Roubideux, wife of our erstwhile genial guide, and she is surely accompanied by the promise that her hus-

band's name will not die out in Ioway annals for many a generation.

And now a new commotion arises! A tall, elegantly dressed man, wearing a stately war-bonnet, surrounded by a guard of splendidly-built, half-naked men, upon whose shaven heads is left a standing narrow roach of hair from which rises an ornament of dyed deer hair and turkey bristles, reminiscent of the horse-hair plume of a Roman helmet, breaks through the crowd. The people fall back to give the newcomer room, for it is the famous chief, No-heart-of-fear, himself, with his Indian police, or band of trained warriors. To these men he now assigns the duty of guarding the traders' canoes and holding back the crowd, a task that is quickly and good-naturedly performed. And now, while Antoine's engagés are carrying the goods to the chief's lodge on their backs, and there stowing away the coarse "pony-trader" beads, calicoes, strouds, cheap weapons, silk ornaments, kegs of powder, and, alas, "eau de vie", let me turn the tables and stare at our Ioway friends, who have been staring at us long enough now, surely.

A tall, dark, heavy-set people, we find them, good-natured, and more than ordinarily intelligent, although the bone-strewn condition of the ground, and the garbage reek from the village, both combine to tell us that they are a less cleanly people than the neighboring Algonkian Sauk. Antoine has told us already that his Ioway relatives speak a dialect of

the Siouan tongue, and that he who can converse in it has the key to the minds of the Oto, Missouri, and Winnebago tribes as well. We are struck, after having heard the soft Algonkian of the Sauk and Foxes, by the guttural quality of the Ioway, its oft repeated and sometimes rolling *r*, not heard in Algonkian at all, and the frequent nasal grunts that signify, "what you will", says Roubideux, with a shrug.

The dress of the people is both tasteful and elegant. On their feet are moccasins with separate soles of stiff leather like the prairie tribes, but otherwise resembling those of the woods Indians in general appearance. The ornamentation on the insteps of these is either floral or angular designs in bead or quillwork, and the dandies and such warriors, who have had time to don their "brave" clothes, have large ankle flaps attached to their shoes, heavily adorned with solid bead or quill embroidery in scroll or flower motives.

Most of the men wear tight deerskin leggings, deeply fringed, and some have scroll or floral embroidery on the flap. The warriors go in for a dangling pendant at the knee, while the fringe of their leggings is made of dark locks of hair taken from the scalps of slain enemies. Only a few are thus distinguished, however, and these men also wear a curious ornament on the back of their belts, the bustle, or "crow", a raven skin, entire, as the badge of their prominence and authority, for these

be chosen men, selected to govern the camp because of their tried and proven valor.

Ornamental breech cloths of leather or broadcloth are worn by all the men. A few have elegant and graceful shirts of white tanned doe or antelope skin, in plains Indian style, but most are naked above the waist, and a close observer may see here and there the delicate blue lines that are the tattooed honor marks awarded the brave and generous by their clans. Yes, even the wives and daughters of brave men and of chiefs wear tattooing on the backs of their hands or on their foreheads — a diamond, a heart, a circular dot, a five-pointed star, to proclaim to the world their social station — for the Ioway are great sticklers for social rank.

Here and there among the throng we glimpse a brawny chest that supports a huge and beautiful necklace of grizzly-bear claws and otter fur, with a trailer of otter skin down the back. There are not many of these striking ornaments, for these are the badges of chiefs and warriors. To obtain one, one must slay his own bears, “and messieurs, eet is more hard than kill a man, hein?” shrugs Roubideux.

The head-dresses of the men are various. Some simply wear their own hair roached, with a small thin braid, the scalp-lock, at the crown, and the bare gleaming skull rubbed with vermilion. The small boys wear their hair roached also, but with a different cut for each clan, according to an ancient custom. A very few wear an eagle feather war-bonnet of true

prairie style, but most have fillets of otter fur, often the entire skin, wrapped around the head, with dangling tail adorned with beads, and bead rosettes abound on the fur circlets themselves.

The women are as well dressed as the men. Their moccasins are the same. Their leggings, which are fringeless, reach only to the knee, and two distinct types of dresses may be seen — one, a one-piece kimono-like gown, of softest doeskin, in plains style, the other, and older, of forest type. This is a two-piece dress, composed of a square piece of deerskin or broadcloth, lapped about the waist and falling midway below the knee. It is left open at one side, and the sides and lower border are ornamented with quillwork, beads, or silk or leather appliqué. Some of the women wear a short calico, or even a silk, waist of some solid bright color, covered with silver brooches; others, mainly old crones, are naked above the belt, like the majority of the men. Both sexes have an abundance of well-dressed buffalo-robes, often with the flesh side, which they wear turned outward, beautifully garnished with quills or painted with some warrior's daring exploits. The women braid their hair in two plaits, one over each shoulder, in plains fashion, or let it hang loosely down their backs, well aware of its beauty.

And now let us turn to the village to examine the lodges and their furniture.

The settlement has a different appearance from the villages of the Sioux or Sauk, for the greater

number of buildings of which it is composed are of a peculiar type more common among the Pawnee, or the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara of the Upper Missouri, but found also among the Omaha, Ponca, Oto, and Missouri, kindred of the Ioway. They are large round earth-covered lodges, fifty to sixty feet in diameter and twenty feet high. They face the east, and the entrance is a covered passageway, made in the same manner as the houses and commonly used as storage place for firewood.

Inside the earth lodges it is dark and cool. In the center of the one which Antoine Roubideux has pointed out to us as the residence of his father-in-law, and which we feel less hesitancy about entering although the hospitable Ioways would welcome our presence uninvited anywhere, we find a fireplace directly under the center of the room, so that the smoke can more easily ascend to the smoke-hole overhead. A bench, made of willows, encircles the lodge from either side of the door. It is five or six feet wide, and is shut off at intervals by hangings or curtains of buffalo hide. Behind these curtains are the bunks or sleeping apartments of the inmates.

An old woman is busy fumbling under the bench over at one side. Removing a cover of bark she exposes a deep barrel-shaped hole, lined with bark slabs, in which are stored the dry corn, squashes, and meat which she is about to cook in an earthen kettle for our entertainment. There are other cache pits of this nature close to the fireplace, we observe.

Having taken out what she needs, the old woman replaces the cover, and proceeds to pound up some corn in a log mortar which, unlike the mortars of the Sauk or the Dakota, is furnished with a spiked or pointed base, which is firmly fixed in the ground. Her pestle is a long, dumb-bell shaped, wooden club, narrow at the middle, but swollen at the ends. Not far away, near several globular earthen vessels of native make, is a round discoidal-shaped stone lying on another, similar in appearance. These stones are likewise used to crack corn and to pulverize dried herbs for medicines.

About the lodge we see, stored where they will not be in the way, round and oval bowls carved by burning and scraping from the knots of trees, and broad-bowled spoons with carved handles, made of wood or occasionally of jet-black buffalo horn. Soft square woven bags, fashioned from string twisted from the inner bark of the basswood and bearing designs interwoven with buffalo-hair yarn, are common, and others, of the fibre of nettles or Indian hemp, lie or hang about in profusion. There are also some pouches of buffalo hide and gaily painted oblong trunks of the same material, the latter mainly used to hold the garments and ceremonial paraphernalia of the family.

Hanging in the rear of the lodge are various age- and smoke-blackened oval bundles and packages, some wrapped in tanned deerskin, others in panther-hide, and some in mats, woven of reeds,

similar to, but smaller than, those which are scattered over the bench that circles the wall. These bundles, Antoine tells us, are "Grand Medecin"; those with hide covers and with war-clubs and flutes and rattles of gourd tied to the outside being collections of charms carried to bring success in war, while the mat-covered objects contain the clan tattooing outfits, or the paraphernalia of the society of Buffalo Doctors used to heal the sick and wounded. The buffalo bundles hold rattles of deer dewclaws, buffalo tails, felted buffalo hair, and packets of medicines. The tattooing bundles merely contain needles, stamps, pigments, and herbs. Some cylindrical cases of buffalo hide, each about four feet long, attract our notice, and these, we learn, are the sacred clan pipes, of which there are seven or more in the tribe. These are the most ancient and sacred possessions of the Ioway that have been handed down from father to son in the family of the chief of each clan from time immemorial. They are used to make peace between clansmen of the same clan or tribe, and even between other tribes, and are also brought forth to stem pestilence by prayer and invocation, or when a member of the clan is to be publicly tattooed. The bowls of these treasured pipes were carved with stone tools when the world was young, and the stems are gorgeously ornamented with dyed porcupine quills.

As we go out of the lodge we see other sacred bundles and even round shields of buffalo hide hang-

ing on posts or tripods in the rear of the lodges, exposed to the revivifying rays of the sun.

Besides the earth lodges we note some large square buildings with willow and clay walls — wattle-and-daub — and sod roofs, and some oval wigwams of bark and mats, like the winter lodges of the Sauk and Fox. “When these Ioways pass out on the prairie pour le chasse des bouefs”, volunteers Antoine, “then messieurs may see ze tipis of buffalo hide as well.”

“Messieurs, you will laugh. Oui, c’est pour rire! When I tell you that these sauvages have social ranks, how you say? Royalty, that is the chiefs, and la noblesse — the nobles — that is the warriors, and then the common people, like in my country and court of Europe. A warrior may marry a chief’s daughter, but a poor man, nevaire! And the chief of the tribe, ah, they select the chief of the Bear Clan for winter, and the chief of the Buffalo Clan for spring and summer.

“Messieurs, I might spend the rest of the summer to tell you about my Ioway relatives. . . . Maybe, if messieurs come again, in ze wintaire time he might be induce to tell the legends of his tribe, for that you will have to wait, for c’est tres droll, but these sauvages will not tell those story in warm weather.

“Allons, messieurs! Vite! How you say — ah — queeck!”

ALANSON SKINNER