

kets were thus embellished and so made to pass current as real certificates of a choice brand of character for their wearers. Each horse depicted on the robe was notice that the owner and wearer had stolen such horse. Finally, after expressions of friendship and good will the expedition in charge of "The Fox" bade us adieu and briskly walked southward on their mission for getting horses away from their traditional enemies.

AUTUMNAL COLORS.

It is perhaps worth while to mention that, it being in the autumn of the year, all these Indians were carefully and deftly arrayed in autumn-colored costumes. Their blankets, head-gear and everything else were the color of dead and dried prairie grass. This disguise was for the purpose of making themselves as nearly indistinguishable as possible on the brown surface of the far-stretching plains. For then the weeds and grasses had all been bleached by the fall frosts. We were given an exhibition of the nearly perfect invisibility of "The Fox" by his taking a position near a badger hole around which a lot of tall weeds had grown upon the prairie, and really the almost exact similitude of coloring which he had cunningly reproduced in his raiment made him even at a short distance indistinguishable among the faded weeds and grasses by which he was surrounded.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

In due time we reached Fort Kearney and after a pleasant and most agreeable visit with Mr. Heth and his family, Colonel Alexander and Lieutenant Bush, I pushed alone for the Missouri river, by the North Platte route, bringing home with me two or three turkeys and a quarter of buffalo meat.

About the second evening, as I remember it, I arrived at the agency of the four bands of the Pawnees on the Loup fork of the Platte river, near where the village of Genoa in Nance county now stands. Judge Gillis of Pennsylvania was the U. S. government agent then in charge of that tribe, and Mr. Allis was his interpreter. There I experienced the satisfaction of going leisurely and observingly through the villages of the four bands of Pawnees, which there made their habitation. The names of the four confederate bands of Pawnee Indians were Grand Pawnees, Pawnee Loups, Pawnee Republicans and Pawnee Pappahs. At that time they all together numbered between four thousand and five thousand.

A PAWNEE BRAVE.

Distinguished among them for fearlessness and impetuous courage and constant success in war was an Indian who had been born with his left hand so shrunken and shriveled that it looked like the contracted claw of a bird. He was celebrated among all the tribes of the plains as "Crooked Hand, the Fighter." Hearing me express a wish

for making the acquaintance of this famous warrior and scalp accumulator Judge Gillis and Mr. Allis kindly volunteered to escort me to his domicile and formally introduce me. We took the trail which lay across Beaver Creek up into the village. This village was composed of very large, earthen, mound-like wigwams. From a distance they looked like a number of great kettles turned wrong side up on the prairie. Finally we came to the entrance of the abode of Crooked Hand. He was at home. I was presented to him by the interpreter, Mr. Allis. Through him, addressing the tawny hero who stood before me, I said:

"It has come to my ears that you are and always have been a very brave man in battle. Therefore I have made a long journey to see you and to shake the hand of a great warrior."

This seemed to suit his bellicose eminence and to appeal to his barbaric vanity. Consequently I continued, saying: "I hear that you have skillfully killed a great many Sioux and that you have kept the scalp of each warrior slain by you. If this be true, I wish you would show me these trophies of your courage and victories?"

Immediately Crooked Hand reached under a sort of rude settee and pulled out a very cheap traveling trunk, which was locked. Then taking a string from around his neck he found the key thereunto attached, inserted it in the lock, turned it, and with gloating satisfaction threw back the lid of the trunk. It is fair to state, that notwithstanding Mr. Crooked Hand's personal adornments in the way of paint, ear-rings and battle mementoes, he was evidently not a man of much personal property, for the trunk contained not one other portable thing except a string of thirteen scalps. This he lifted out with his right hand and held up before me as a connoisseur would exhibit a beautiful cameo—with intense satisfaction and self-praise expressed in his features.

SAVAGE TROPHIES.

The scalps were not large, averaging not much more in circumference than a silver dollar (before the crime of 1873). Each scalp was big enough to firmly and gracefully retain the scalplock which its original possessor had nourished. Each scalp was neatly lined with flaming red flannel and encircled by and stitched to a willow twig just as boys so stretch and preserve squirrel skins. Then there was a strong twine which ran through the center of each of the thirteen scalps leaving a space of something like three or four inches between each two.

After looking at these ghastly certificates of prowess in Indian warfare I said to their possessor: "Do you still like to go into fights with the Sioux?" He replied hesitatingly:

"Yes, I go into the fights with the Sioux but I stay only until I can kill one

man, get his scalp and get out of the battle."

Then I asked: "Why do you do this way now, and so act differently from the fighting plans of your earlier years when you remained to the end of the conflict?" Instantly he replied and gave me this aboriginal explanation:

THE DOCTRINE OF CHANCE.

"You see, my friend, I have only *one* life. To me death must come only once. But I have taken thirteen lives. And now when I go into battle there are thirteen chances of my being killed to one of my coming out of the fight alive."

This aboriginal application of the doctrine of chance is equally as reasonable as some of the propositions relating to chances found in "Hedges' Logic," which I studied in the regular college course. There is more excuse for a savage faith in chance than can be made for the superstitious belief in it which is held by some civilized people.

AN EARLIER EXPEDITION.

My last buffalo hunt was finished and its trophies and its choicest memories safely stored for exhibition or reminiscence at Arbor Lodge. More than thirty-seven years afterwards I am permitted this evening by your indulgence and consideration to attempt faintly to portray the country and its primitive condition at that time in that particular section of Nebraska which is now Franklin county.

But in concluding this discursive and desultory narrative I cannot refrain from referring to and briefly descanting on another and an earlier and a larger expedition into the valley of the Republican which set out from Mexico in the year 1540 under the command of Coronado.

CORONADO.

That explorer was undoubtedly the first white man to visit Nebraska. In his report to the Spanish government is a description of buffalo which for graphic minuteness and correctness has never been excelled. Thus it pictures them as they appeared to him and his followers more than three hundred and fifty years ago:

"These oxen are of the bigness and color of our bulls, but their horns are not so great. They have a great bunch upon their foreshoulders, and more hair upon their fore-part than on their hinder-part; and it is like wool. They have, as it were, a horse mane upon their back bone, and much hair, and very long from the knees downward. They have great tufts of hair hanging down their foreheads, and it seemeth they have beards, because of the great store of hair hanging down at their chins and throats. The males have very long tails, and a great knob or flock at the end, so that in some respects they resemble the lion, and in some other the camel. They push with their horns, they run, they overtake and kill a horse