

ROUBIDEAU.

Can any reader of THE CONSERVATIVE, at St. Joseph or elsewhere, give the leading facts in the history of the family whose name appears above, and is met with frequently in books of western travel of fifty or sixty years ago? It is confusing to the reader to find himself confronted with mention of persons bearing the same name, yet who could not have been the same individuals; though it may easily be supposed that early travelers may have met many trappers and traders, especially of the Canadian French, who would be known only by their last names, and whose other titles would never come to their notice, nor perhaps ever be known by any save the bearers themselves and a few friends back in St. Louis. The same confusion exists in the case of other families that were prominent in the earliest period of the development of the West; as for instance the Bents and the Chouteaux.

In this instance, it is known that one Joseph Roubideau succeeded Francis DeRoin as agent of the American Fur Company at Bellevue about 1810; also that he and his sons had a trading post in 1834 and 1835 on the site of the present city of St. Joseph, where they ministered to the needs of the Iowa Indians and a band of the Sacs and Foxes. But the name occurs in many other connections, where it is impossible to guess from the context whether it is a question of Joseph or of his sons, or of some other. An "A." Roubideau is once mentioned.

We find in 1832 Kit Carson trapping with a "Mr. Robidoux" on Green river, and about 1839 repairing to a "Robidoux Fort"; in 1833 somebody of the same name appears to have maintained a trading post on the Missouri, within twenty miles or so of the mouth of the Platte. Fremont in 1844 found another (or the same one) on the Uintah river, whom he describes as a St. Louis trader; one also acted as guide and interpreter to General Kearney on his march to California in 1846, and was perhaps the same whom other travelers in the southwest in that year speak of falling in with. The name was also borne by a mountain pass in northern New Mexico, otherwise called Musca Pass.

Besides the spellings given above, the name occurs as Roubideux, Robideaux, Rubedouy and in several other forms.

Joseph and his predecessor at Bellevue, De Roin, both appear to have towns named for them, though disguised in both cases with the astonishing prefix "Saint."

A. T. R.

THE PRODIGAL.

THE CONSERVATIVE returns thanks to Houghton, Mifflin & Co. for an attractive copy of "The Prodigal" by Mary Hallock Foote. Mrs. Foote has given us the story of a young man, who, born in affluence, left his home in Australia

and, after trying adventures as a wanderer, reached San Francisco in the plight of a penniless tramp. After varied and humbling experiences the hero learned the value and dignity of work. He became self-supporting, gradually arose from the degradations of a sinful life, and grew strong physically and morally. His love for a good woman developed his best qualities into the manhood which stands as the noblest type of an Englishman. Like all of Mrs. Foote's stories, "The Prodigal" is vigorous in style. The plot and the characters are unusual and charm the reader into un-failing interest.

LETTER FROM COL. JOHN P. IRISH.

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 25, 1901.

PROF. SAMUEL BACON.

Nebraska City, Neb.

MY DEAR SIR:

Since my return home last fall I have striven in vain to find time to go to my ranch in the mountains and get a little recreation, but I have been so crowded that rest and time for decent attention to my correspondence have been impossible. I have devoted much time to my blind people. We have the shop open again and are recovering our trade in good style. The happiness of the blind people is very touching. They work faithfully and are able again to earn money for their clothing and personal comforts, while the more recent inmates are patiently learning the trade.

I have had a great task to make the public, and the officials concerned, comprehend that a blind man, if properly trained and qualified, is the best superintendent of such institutions. While hammering that into them I am confronted with a curious and vexatious confirmation of my view. There are in San Francisco and Oakland twelve broom shops, half of them white and half Chinese. These have combined and gone to the legislature with the complaint that Sanders is too expert for them to compete with, and demanding that the Home be permitted to sell brooms only to the state institutions. As this would give us work only one short month in the year, I won't have it, and so have had to go to Sacramento and fight this labor union proposition. I had to collect the commercial statistics of the broom trade here, and proved that 75 per cent of all the brooms used in the state are imported, therefore the output of the Home does not figure in competition with other shops.

I am about to start East, but before I go will write the governor of Nebraska a strong letter. I cannot describe the pleasure it gave me to meet you again, and to note the strength with which you salute your years. You have been a great inspiration to me in the efforts I have made to improve the condition of the blind, and for whatever good I may

do the credit belongs to you and my father.

You would enjoy a trip out here and would be a most welcome guest at my house and a most honored guest at the blind home, and the blind college at Berkeley also.

We all mourned with Morton in the untimely death of Carl. The older a man grows the more he lives in his children and grandchildren and part of him dies when they go.

My family beg to be presented most cordially to you and yours.

Very truly,

JOHN P. IRISH.

ETHICS IN THE BUSINESS WORLD.

The long-standing charge against great corporations is that they tend to destroy competition. A new charge brought against them is that they will destroy ethics in the business world. This is a serious matter, if it be true, as is alleged by some, that this is "a period of the highest business ethics the world has ever known." It is a matter of no consequence if, as others say, there is no ethics in the business world. If ethics be "the science of ideal humanity," then it is a science which is not cultivated in the business world of Chicago or other cities. There is a code of business morals, however, which is a higher one than that of any bygone day. Business men of all classes are more honest in their dealings with one another and with their customers than ever before.

The disheartening statement is made that "the situation is likely for a time to be dominated by huge corporations, in which the individual, with his ethics and his reputation and his character, is sunk out of sight and in which ethics as such will practically disappear." If ethics is business honesty and fair dealing as now practiced, then the banishment of ethics will be a deplorable event. It is certain, however, that the individual will not be "sunk out of sight" as the "huge corporations" emerge. He will be more conspicuous than he is now. Knowledge of him will not be confined to his city or state.

No corporate mask ever will hide the features of the men who run the great railroad systems and industrial enterprises. For the misdeeds of these "soulless corporations," not they but the well-known men who control them are held responsible by public opinion, and these men are quite as likely to be influenced by the public opinion of the whole country as are the men who manage small railroads and little factories by the public opinion of their respective localities.

The corporation does not drive into obscurity the individual, for the individual is the recognized motive power of the corporation. The larger his field of operations the more prominent he becomes and the more closely is he watched. That scrutiny is calculated to develop ethics in the men who are subjected to it.—Chicago Tribune.