

REFLECTIONS.

On the south side of the River Platte is a bold bluff which overlooks all the neighboring prominences. It is said to have been much frequented by the Indians as a place of observation, and at the summit a daughter of Jutan, a once noted chief, is said to have been buried. But whether it was this eminence or one far distant is uncertain.

The view from the top, on a clear day in summer, is beautiful, and it almost causes the beholder to forget that the scenery of our state is in general monotonous. As he looks toward the north, he sees below him that truly magnificent, yet useless river, the Platte, pursuing its tortuous course toward the Missouri. The channel is dotted with frequent islands, densely wooded, and these stand out in bold relief against the barren sand bars.

Closely bordering either side of the stream is a chain of bluffs which trend in each direction as far as the eye can reach. The rounded knolls are sparsely dotted with scrubby oak trees, reminding one of a neglected apple orchard in the older states. The deep ravines that intersect the bluffs are marked by lines of brush-wood, and on the declivities one may often see a projecting ledge of rock.

As one looks away from the river, the prominences are seen to be less sharply defined, and they fade away into that gently undulating sea of prairie which is so characteristic of the Great West. One may gaze for a long distance up the river and see the bluffs begin to recede from the stream, and at length fade away in the mellow haze of the western sky.

The river is useless because no steamboat is seen on its shallow waters. The rugged bluffs have repelled the settler to more favored localities, and since the river scenery has been little marred by his labors, it well befits the solitude of the stream itself.

A rich train of thought is suggested to

the one who would take a retrospective look as he gazes upon the yet almost primeval landscape before him. What would be revealed if Time, to whom centuries are but days, would choose to disclose the history which these hills have witnessed? Twenty years ago, those distant prairies were unbroken by the fields which now so thickly dot them. Here and there, along the river and its tributaries, might have been seen the log cabins of the pioneers and their irregularly shaped fields.

Another step backward in the past, and the settler had not yet appeared, though the Mormons had begun to migrate to their distant home in the vast, and then almost unknown, region of the Rocky Mountains. Their long caravans emphasized the resemblance which the western half of our country bears to the Orient. As if to make the analogy more complete, bands of Indians, similes of the nomadic Bedouins, sometimes appeared, either to waylay some caravan, attack a hostile tribe, or to hunt the buffalo and the antelope.

We look a little further into the past. The pale face had not yet appeared to dispute possession with the Indian, but otherwise the picture is quite unchanged. Our retrospect has even yet extended but a short distance back. We might almost limit it to the opening of the present century. We are not yet satisfied; in fact, our curiosity is but just aroused. Questions like these suggest themselves: how long has the Indian occupied this land? has his condition never been higher than that in which he was found by the white man? was this vast region a solitude before the Christian Era, when the Mediterranean lands were as populous as now?

We may propose other questions, but a satisfactory solution of them is not always possible. However, it seems unnatural to suppose that the New World, as we call it, has not been peopled for a long time. Whether our race is indigenous to the Western Continent, as some maintain, whether it originated from the one