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AN OLD-TIMER TALKS

Col. Laird Revives Reminiscences of Early Times Around About Pierre.

The Oahe Mission Dog Feast in Which Ben Ash Played a Prominent Part.

A Raucy Story That Early Settlers Remember and Like to Hear Repeated.

Col. S. M. Laird, of Pierre, is widely known as one of Pierre's characters, says the Sioux City Journal, and he is one in every way equal to Walter Scott's schoolmaster, who furnished such a fund of information and interesting reminiscences. Col. Laird was one of the early settlers there, and is an old Ohio man, having lived a good many years in President Garfield's town. He is the present United States commissioner and a member of the state board of regents. It was he who largely figured in Pierre's successful capital campaign in the Black Hills last fall. His experience has been a wide one. In conversation with a Journal correspondent Col. Laird tells the following incident, which is particularly appropriate at this time:

"During the time Ordway was governor of this territory there were practically only two parties in the country—the Ordway party and the Pettigrew party. The two factions asked few questions about a man's politics, whether he was a republican or a democrat, outside of which side he favored, and men were selected for candidates particularly for their running qualities—the man who could roll up the most votes.

"I remember one election it was extra close. I had charge of the Pettigrew forces, and we had made a canvass of the county, so that we knew just how many men we had to a man. The other side had done the same, and it was known that a few votes either way would decide the result.

"Up at Oahe mission Rev. Mr. Riggs, who had been working as a missionary among the Indians for years, had gathered around him some twenty families of them, who had become quite civilized, had taken land in severalty, and were therefore entitled to vote. Knowing this, our men decided that Rev. Mr. Riggs would make a good candidate for superintendent of schools, and besides he would be on our side anyway. We found out the Ordway crowd was getting ready to give these Indians a dog feast. As soon as I got word I sent a messenger to Rev. Mr. Riggs post haste to tell him what they were planning to do, and that if he would see the Indians were all right we would give them a dog feast any time it would be the most good. At this Riggs held up his hands in holy horror. 'No,' he said, 'you need not worry. I know these Indians too well and have worked with them too long to be fooled in any such way as this. You just leave it all to me, and I can guarantee you it will be all right.'

"So we left the matter with him. I might mention here that the Ordway forces were in charge of Ben Ash, Hughes' county's present democratic sheriff. It seems Ash understood the Indian character a little better than Riggs did, although in a rather different way. Ash had spent his whole life among them too, and besides is as shrewd as the next man you'll meet in a day's journey. Ash's mother was the first white woman in this country. They lived at Yankton. Ash was in the government employ, and used to make trips as scout all through this country as far as Fort Laramie when there wasn't a white man in it and not even a trail. So he had a good chance, which he improved well, to learn something of Indian character. On election day the Ordway men loaded up several wagons with provisions and started them up the other side of the river to about opposite the mission. Here they opened up a big pow-wow, to which all the Indians in that country were invited. It was not long before Riggs' Indians scented the feast from afar, jumped into their canoes, and all but two or three of them were among the affair's most active participants and best patrons. During the day the viands gave out, and there was a great scrambling to get more of them to keep the Indians from leaving, and to further guard against this they took and hid Riggs' Indians' canoes, so that they could not get back to vote.

"The feast cost them between \$300 and \$400, but they won the day. It was a shrewdly managed scheme, and resulted in our defeat by from three to five votes on every candidate except one or two. They knew the Indian nature better than Riggs did, who had been with them all his life.

"From that day to this I have rather lost confidence in all plans looking to the education and civilizing of the Indians. I have noticed that where any progress has been made there has been some white blood in almost every case."

Col. Laird also related something of the experience of this Rev. Mr. Riggs which has been truly wonderful. White Swan, who is the chief justice—the highest judicial officer of the Cheyenne nation—saved Rev. Mr. Riggs and his father's family in the Minnesota massacre, and

since that time his entire life has been devoted to these Indians. He came to where his mission is now in 1868, and has been there ever since. He has lived with the Indians, and knows their language and habits better than any of them do themselves. He has spent weeks and months with them on their hunts and in their camps to learn the meaning of their signs and gestures. As is generally known, the sign language is by far the most important part of the Indian language. Rev. Mr. Riggs was the author of the first complete translation of the bible into the Sioux language, and is probably the best posted man on Indians in the world today. He has gathered around him now a most prosperous settlement of Indians, and has certainly done a great work among them.

ELECTRICITY IN LAW.

Points About Inventions That Have Opened New Fields of Litigation.

One of the effects of the rapid introduction of electrical inventions during the last quarter of a century has been to open up entirely new fields of litigation for the lawyer and new questions for the bench. This in a general way is true of every new creation of industrial property, but with electricity many of the problems to be solved are quite novel, and a judge has often to go wide of practice or precedent before he can determine the legal principle proper to apply in the case before him.

Thus, for instance, in Pennsylvania the question has been adjudicated upon whether a local electric light company was a manufacturing concern. The court says it is not, and yet all that it does is to make current for sale.

A similar point is that raised as to the durability of electric current. The law officers of the treasury say it is intangible, and therefore pays no duty; yet it can be measured to the minutest fraction. The Western Union company has had many a fight as to whether pole lines had any right on the public highway, and Massachusetts say they have, as transporting message is part of the work of intercourse, for which roads are laid out and maintained.

The American Bell Telephone company for years spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in defending the abstract doctrine that telephonic speech can only be transmitted by an undulatory current, that a make and break current would not do it, and that other devices are simply a juggle to get around Bell's patent. In electric lighting millions of investments have hung on a "filament," and on the exact meaning that the courts might attach to the word.

Among late legal fights is one that probably the United States supreme court will have to settle—namely, whether the telephone companies or the electric railway companies have a right to use the earth as a "return" circuit. The telephone people claim that the leakage from the railway throws their service out of gear and renders the instruments useless. The railway people reply that their telephonic friends have a remedy in metallic circuits, and that no one electrical interest anyhow can "own the earth." Already this dispute has cropped up in nearly a score of states, and the increasing number and magnitude of the electric roads renders it more and more important. In the meantime, the telephone companies as far as possible are putting their metallic circuits in, with a marked improvement in the service.

New questions thus crop up every day. In the use, for example, of the alternative currents now becoming so common not a little has depended on the patentability of the principle of transforming the current, and on whether a "step up" was equivalent to a "step down"—in other words, whether raising the voltage and decreasing the amperage was a simple and inevitable converse to decreasing the volts and raising the amperes. Another point around which legal controversy has gathered is the fine one as to where "low" potential ends and "high" potential begins.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

An Ointment for Neuralgia.

If there is any one in Macon who had little faith in hoodoos and charms a few weeks ago that person was Chief Kenan. But at last all unbelievers are brought around, and it appears this was the case with the doubtful chief. Some days ago he was suffering considerably with neuralgia. After trying every remedy under the sun he at last came upon a friend who had a recipe which he was not caring particularly to reveal to the chief, but seeing the official in deep trouble he finally consented to apply the remedy. Securing a spool of black silk thread, he cut off several bits. One he tied around the neck of the chief, another down the back, and connecting the one from the neck with that around the waist, and a fourth down his breast, connecting in the same way the two bands. This completed the outfit.

When the operation was finished the chief, with an incredulous smile, asked what came next. "Oh, you will talk differently in a few minutes," replied the friend, with a shake of the head. In a minute the official felt a strange sensation in the face, and within five minutes the pain had left him. To say that he was amazed would be putting it mildly. He has already given the cure to a dozen sufferers, and now he is at work solving the problem of how he was cured. As yet he has found no one who can give the cause for it.—Macon Telegraph.

May Be.

Watt—Wonder why they always call a locomotive she?

Potts—Maybe it is on account of the horrible noise it makes when it tries to whistle.—Indianapolis Journal.

Next Door.

When the woman of the house answered his ring he began: "Madam, I am sorry to disturb you, but I came here from Buffalo to find work at my occupation, and being unable to strike—"

"What is your occupation?" she demanded.

"I am a nurseryman."

"Then drop in next door."

"But, madam, I"—

"Next door, I say! They have seven children there, while we haven't any!"—Detroit Free Press.

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