



"LA ROCHE PERCEE."

turned out to be a party of Stoney Indians of the plains (Assiniboines) from the camp we had observed in the morning.

A little to the south of us were some wonderfully-formed rocks, among which the most remarkable was "La Roche Percee."

Dr. Hector in describing "The Pierced Rocks," when he saw them, says: "The manner in which the sandstones decompose gives rise to curious figures, which the Indians regard with superstitious dread. Hard concretions occur, which resist the action of the atmosphere for a much longer period than the softer portions, and they thus become isolated and perched in natural pillars, which are grouped as if they formed the ruins of ancient buildings. One of these pillars standing out from the side of the valley is perforated by a large hole, and is "La Roche Percee," from which the locality derives its name. The Indians never pass this stone without making some offering to the Manitou, (which to their minds it represents), such as rubbing vermilion on it, or depositing beads, tobacco, or the like in the crevices. It is also covered with rude designs carved with their knives on the soft surface of the stone."

Late in the month of August, 1892, the writer had the good fortune to visit "Les Roches Percees" region, which may now be reached by a branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway, though upwards of three hundred miles southwest of the city of Winnipeg. The weather was beautiful, and a delightful week was spent rambling up and down the winding valley of the Souris.

Great forces of nature have evidently been at work here, both in times remote and recent. The huge rock monuments

speak of an age when the glaciers which have left their great moraine, in the Missouri Coteau near by, crushed down with terrific force, and only a sentinel here and there such as "La Roche Percee" escaped, as the sandstones of a preceding age were being ground to powder.

Succeeding time saw the bed of the Souris, at places three miles wide, swept down by a rushing flood of waters, leaving at intervals in the valley, elevations such as "Sugar loaf hill," "Fig. 10?" with their layers of clay, sandstone, their limestone, and lignite coal in beautiful alternations.

A subsequent age beheld the valley and its hills dried as with a sirocco, and the exposed coal seams, set on fire by lightning or by accident since the coming of man upon the scene, burned the hills, and turning the clay into brick-colored fragments, gave the stones in the valley a bright red appearance. Evidences of fire are on every side.

Lastly, kindly nature to hide the deformity caused by these Titanic forces, has clothed the slopes of the valley with herbage, largely of the aster family, though occasionally on a gravelly or hard fireclay spot may be met the pretty but suggestive cactus. Close to the river winding through the valley, there may in long stretches be seen belts of trees, growing to a considerable height, and sheltering a tangled thickwood beneath them.

"Les Roches Percees," as approached from the west have an impressive appearance. To one thus coming down the Souris valley they rise up on the heights to the right and present a striking outline on the horizon. Around them is virgin prairie. Not even a settler's cabin is to be found within miles, though the approach of the railway down the valley will soon



"THE STONE INDIAN'S HEAD."