



MENNONITE HOUSES.

arms. In the course of time they became divided into several branches, more or less strict in their views. One of these divisions arose at the time when buttons were first introduced into general use. The stricter Mennonites regarded them as a worldly innovation, and, adhering to the use of hooks and eyes, were called "Hookers," in distinction from the more lax brethren, who were called "Buttoners." The first Mennonites came to this country among the Dutch settlers of New York; there was a Mennonite church built near Philadelphia in 1683, and the present number of the sect in the United States is estimated at 60,000. The Russian Mennonites are more recent immigrants. They were originally inhabitants of West Prussia, and emigrated to Russia in the latter part of the eighteenth century, having obtained a promise from the Emperor Paul that they should not be called upon for military service. This promise was revoked by the present Emperor, and they were informed that they must prepare for army duty in 1881, or else leave the country. Large numbers of them decided to come to America. Kansas and Minnesota have received considerable colonies, and about 7000 have come to Manitoba, where the government has reserved 500,000 acres for their settlements.

It was a beautiful morning when we set out on a "prairie yacht," behind a pair of quick-stepping horses, to visit the Mennonite Reserve. Our road lay along the north bank of the Pembina River, skirting the edge of the timber, and occasion-

ally cutting across a point of woods which ran out into the open prairie. We passed many thrifty-looking farms, where the men were still working at the remnant of the harvest. At Smuggler's Point there was a log tavern, and we stopped for a little dinner. The landlord was a frontiersman who had tried life in many territories. We asked him whether the Mennonites were good settlers, and how he liked them.

"Well," he said, "they're quiet enough; and some on 'em lives pretty white; but they ain't no good to the country. They live on black bread and melons, and raise their own tobacco; and when a crowd on 'em comes in here to drink, each man steps up and drinks, and *pays for his own liquor*."

Such conduct as this, of course, is subversive of the very first principle of American society, which recognizes "treating" as the true medium of friendly intercourse.

A few miles farther on we found the farm village of Blumenort. It is not the largest of the villages on this reserve, but it will serve as a type of the rest. The high-road was simply a well-worn wagon track over the bare plain. An irregular line of a dozen low thatched houses on each side of the road and a steam saw-mill made up the village. The farms radiate from this centre. Every man cultivates his own land, and the four-and-twenty families have the advantage of living close together, and making common front against the hardship and loneliness of frontier life. Each village has its head-man, or *Schutz*—its school-mas-