

we notice that on his return from France (in 1633-34) he availed himself of the knowledge gained twenty years before, and sent Jean Nicolet to the discovery of the region to-day called Wisconsin. Nicolet reported to him the existence of a great river, the Mississippi, flowing from beyond the country which he himself had travelled. This must have convinced him that the continent extended south-westwardly from the lakes. Unfortunately, he did not live to see the fact established. The charts of Champlain show only the details gathered up to 1627, so that outlines of the great lakes hardly appear upon them.

In this enquiry we must omit the operations of the English colonists, whose field was then confined to the sea-coast, and who did not seek to penetrate into the interior. We shall therefore only follow the French explorers, in our examination of the development of geographical knowledge respecting the north of this continent.

After the death of Champlain, the Government does not seem to have concerned itself about the new territories. To the Jesuit missionaries belongs the honor of having been conversant with the country of the great lakes from 1635 to 1670. It would take a volume to tell of this curious epoch. I will make mention *en passant* of two men who, from 1645 to 1660, advanced to the Missouri and knew the Sioux country. These were Médard Chouard des Groseillers and Pierre-Esprit de Radisson, his brother-in-law, both settled in Lower Canada. The dream which Champlain had entertained in 1613, and even earlier, of penetrating to Hudson's Bay, Chouard afterwards sought for twenty years to realize. He made acquaintance with the tribes who trafficked with those parts, and for a time believed it possible to establish communications between Lake Superior (Jesuit mission) and the Kilistinons Indians. Being disappointed by the indifference of the Governors, he fell back upon the enterprising spirit of the traders on the shores of the St. Lawrence, and urged them to form a company which should monopolize the trade of the "Bay of the North." Unsuccessful in this quarter, on account of the small number of the Canadians (2,000 souls at that time) he ventured to offer his services to England, and was the actual founder of that famous Hudson's Bay Company (1645 and 1666), which ceased not to prosper during two centuries, until it became a power in the State.

Geographical knowledge, in the year 1670, extended therefore from Newfoundland to the mouth of the Saguenay, from there to James' Bay, and thence to the north shore of Lake Superior. We must also take into account what Chouard and the missionaries had done in the direction

of the Sioux country (Missouri) and bear in mind the exploration by Nicolet of Green Bay and the river Wisconsin, discoveries reaching the very heart of America. The native nations of these vast territories had not been slow to establish trade relations with the St. Lawrence. Henceforth French genius was to dominate this portion of the New World. To advance further, men were now required who comprehended the westward march of civilization. Upon this path the missionaries and their interpreters had entered. It was not enough for the little Quebec colony to have inspired the founding of Three Rivers and Montreal; it had now to push up the courses of the waters, to surmount the heights of land northward and westward and to spread itself into the unknown regions.

Nothing in the history of discovery can excel in boldness and sagacity the conceptions that our fathers brought to bear upon this peaceful invasion, which should give them possession of the lands of the setting sun.

To secure the alliance of the Indian tribes was an indispensable condition. The New England colonies, were commencing to negotiate with the peoples towards the lakes. The interest of France was to incline to her side the influence of such of the Indian nations as, for the ends of commerce or war, were able to secure for her the domination over nearly all the continent. In this view, in 1670, there was at Sault Ste. Marie a solemn ceremony—the possession-taking of all the country about the lakes. Many personages assisted at this ceremonial, of whom Nicholas Perrot seems to stand in the front rank. He it was who drew to the side of France the nations on whose friendship depended the right of way to the unknown country. If our flag—the flag, at that time, of France in America—floated for a century (1670-1760) without opposition over the greater part of this continent, it is to the energy and enterprise of a few humble traders of his stripe that we owe it.

Hardly had the great lakes come to be rightly designated French, when Joliet and Marquette descended the Mississippi, "adding at one stroke to the map of the world those vast regions, the future granary of the human race." (L. H. Fréchet.) Louisiana was revealed to the eyes of the Canadians, as Canada had, a century before, been found by the French. Only, this time, the march of civilization was much more rapid.

New times had dawned. The seat of geographic science was no longer Paris but Quebec—that is, at the very gates of the zone to be studied. With us henceforth, in Canada itself, must be the starting point. Our fathers needed no spur to stimulate their efforts; they