

## CHAPTER XI.

## MACKINAW CITY. 6

THE Straits of Mackinaw, as we have seen, have been the theatre of interesting and exciting events from the earliest times down to the present. While the whole southern portion of the State was yet a wilderness which no white man had ever penetrated, Mackinaw was the home of the missionary, the trader, and the soldier, and the center of a valuable and fast increasing traffic with the Indians of the North-west.

And it was from Mackinaw, as a center, that colonization spread through the surrounding country. Detroit was settled in 1701, by Cadillac, who for several years had commanded at Mackinaw. The history of Wisconsin and Minnesota, as well as other Northwestern States, must begin with a notice of this point, because the earliest settlers of these States started out from Mackinaw, and the period is yet within the memory of many now living on this island when Chicago came to Mackinaw for supplies.

These are significant facts. The early Jesuits and traders fixed upon Mackinaw as a basis of their missionary and commercial operations, not by mere chance, but because of its natural advantages. Mackinaw is a historical centre because it is a geographical and commercial center. Nature alone has given it its advantages and made it what it has been in history. For a series of years, however, its natural advantages seemed to be overlooked, and the surging wave of population rolled across Southern Michigan and so on to the westward. Yet it has never been quite forgotten, and at the present time we believe it to be gradually rising into favor, owing to the fact that it is better known and better appreciated than ever before.