

On the strength of this testimony, Parkman (" Jesuits in North America," p. 166.) wrote: " As early as 1639, Nicolet ascended the Green Bay of Michigan, and crossed the waters of the Mississippi."

The word Mississippi, meaning great waters, was ambiguous—and though really denoting a river, might well be taken for a sea.

Thus thirty-four years—more than a generation—were at once added to the age of Wisconsin.

" Badgers " now boasted that European feet had trod their soil and floated on their waters within nine years after the founding of Boston, which claims to be of all other cities most ancient, as well as honorable.

It has just come to light that they had better reason than they knew of for a greater boast than this. In the lowest deep a lower deep still opens. Father Le Jeune, it will be noticed, writing in 1640 regarding the explorations of M. Nicolet, gives no date. That that voyageur had then just returned was a natural inference of Shea, Parkman and others, who thought his tidings too good not to be trumpeted through the world as if by telegraph.

But they were all mistaken. Nicolet's expedition to the Wisconsin river is now proved to have been in the year 1634. But how is this new antiquity proved? How are five years added at a stroke to the historic era of Wisconsin?

A record has been detected in Canadian archives, by Benjamin Sulte, of Ottawa, that Nicolet started from Three Rivers on a western voyage in July, 1634, and returned the year following. But it is natural to ask, " May not this adventurer have made later voyages, even as he had made others before?"

Sulte's answer is, " By no means. The voyage of 1634-5 was his last. In 1635 Nicolet became interpreter and fur-factor for the French Company—called the ' Hundred Associates.' Their accounts and other papers show