

denly destroyed, driving his Hurons to the Point St. Ignatius, the modern Mackilimackinack, or Mackinaw. It was there that the missionary spent the winter of 1672-3, and there, on the 8th December, the feast of the Virgin Immaculate, Louis Joliet entered his cabin with the welcome information that the father and himself were sent forward by Intendant Talon, under instructions received from France through the Count of Frontenac, to explore the great river that flowed into the Sea of Virginia, the Gulf of Mexico, or perhaps the Vermillion Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Marquette did not fail to notice the date of Joliet's arrival, and hence the name of Conception which he gave his discovery. During the remainder of the winter the two explorers gathered all the points they could obtain from the Indians, and made a map of the new land, with the rivers that flowed through it, the tribes and villages they would meet and see on their way, and the course of the great waterway itself.

When the snow and ice melted, and the tributary streams made navigable with the spring freshets, everything was ready for the voyage, the length of which, as the *Chronicle* tells us, neither of the travellers could foresee. The outfit was the traditional one still employed in our day of two birch-bark canoes, a supply of Indian corn or maize and dried meat. Five men were further engaged, and, after putting the expedition under the blessing of Heaven, the voyagers set out on the 17th May, 1673, "firmly resolved to do all and suffer all for so glorious an enterprise."

Their way is easily followed. They first skirted the shores of Lake Michigan and Green Bay, they went into Fox River, and followed it up to the water-shed dividing the lakes from the Mississippi. Crossing the water-shed they floated their canoes on the Wisconsin River, and sped down its swift waters for two hundred and ten miles—"seventy leagues"—until, on the 17th of June—one month from the day of departure—they shot into the channel of the Mississippi.