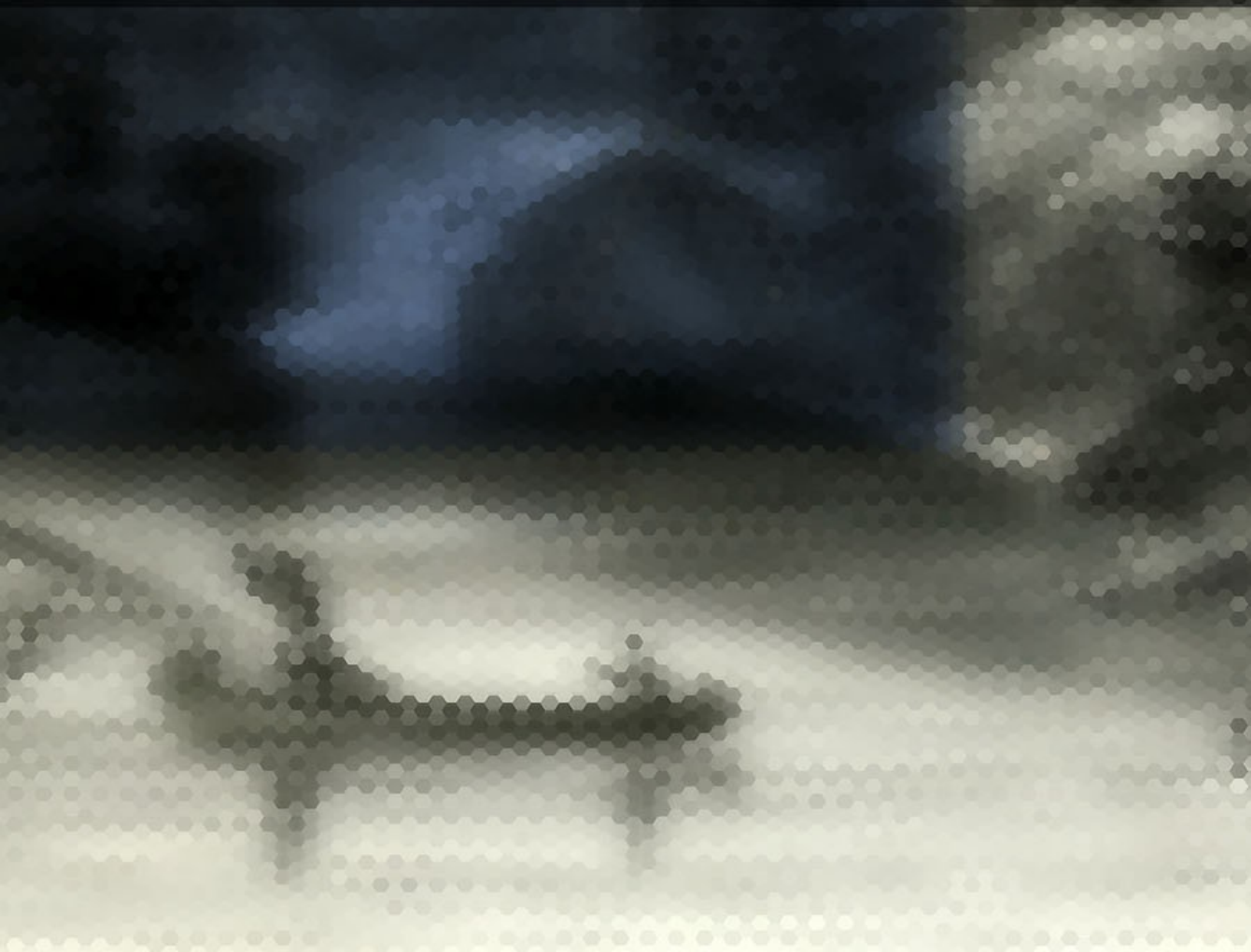
HENRY SCHOOLCRAFT

THE EXPEDITION THROUGH THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI TO ITASCA LAKE



Henry Schoolcraft

The Expedition through the Upper Mississippi to Itasca Lake

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TO GEN. HUGH BRADY,
OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

Sir:

In prefixing your name to this volume, I am reminded that, while indulging the gratification of personal friendship, I am addressing a soldier, who early entered the field of western warfare under the veteran Wayne; and who, for a period of upwards of forty years, during the changing circumstances of war and of peace, has ever been found faithfully, bravely, and honorably serving his country.

With sentiments of respect,

HENRY ROWE SCHOOLCRAFT.

PREFACE.

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The circumstances under which the present expedition was undertaken, are indicated in the following extracts from the letters of instruction.

"*Detroit, Aug.* 9, 1830.

"Sir: I have been directed by the War Department to request you to proceed into the Chippewa country, to endeavor to put an end to the hostilities between the Chippewas and Sioux. The general route must be left to your discretion. Whether it will be necessary for you to go beyond Fond du Lac, you can best determine on your arrival there. From the limited means applicable to this object, I am apprehensive that your journey cannot be extended beyond that place. But in that event, it will be necessary to summon some of the principal Mississippi Chiefs to meet you, as without their concurrence no durable pacification can be effected.

"Your object will be to impress upon them, the necessity of terminating their hostilities with the Sioux. And the considerations connected with the subject are so familiar to you, that I need not dwell upon them. You are perfectly acquainted with their useless and harrowing contests, and the miseries these have inflicted, and yet threaten to inflict upon them. But it will be well to state to them the result of the recent council at Prairie du Chien, that they may know what has been done by the other Indians, and that the Sioux, now freed from the pressure in other quarters, can direct their whole force against them.

"In addition to the other considerations you may urge, I enclose a speech to be delivered to them, which you will please to accompany with a proper belt. I think it will be

best for them to send a message to the Sioux without delay, stating their determination to refrain from hostilities in conformity with the wish of their great father the President, and their adhesion to the treaty of Prairie du Chien. This message should be sent while you are with them, and I recommend that one from you be likewise sent to the Sioux, explanatory of the matter.

"You will proceed to the execution of this duty without delay, if the season be not too far advanced when you receive this letter. But I am apprehensive it will not reach you in season. Should it be so, you will please send a message to the chiefs stating your intention to visit them next summer, and recommending them to sit still until you can see them. It may have the effect of keeping them quiet. If, however, you cannot proceed this fall, it is probable that circumstances may require some change in these instructions before the next season, and your arrangements must therefore depend upon such as may be hereafter given."

"Very respectfully, &c.

LEW. CASS."

"Department of War,
Office of Indian Affairs, 25*th April*, 1831.

"Sir: Since writing the letter to you of the 5th instant, Gov. Cass has arrived here, and submitted to the Secretary of War his views, as to the propriety of directing you to proceed into Lake Superior and the Mississippi country, &c. These views have been approved, and I am accordingly directed to instruct you to proceed as soon as your arrangements can be made for the purpose, on the proposed expedition. The objects to be accomplished are so

well known, and have also been so fully explained in the letter of Gov. Cass to you of the 9th of August last, that it is deemed unnecessary to give you any further instructions on the subject.

"Orders will be issued through the proper department, to the Commanding Officer at the Sault Ste. Marie for a detachment of the troops, to form a part of the proposed expedition.

"Very respectfully, &c.

SAMUEL S. HAMILTON."

"Department of War,
Office of Indian Affairs, May 3*rd*, 1832.

"Sir: Your letter of Feb. 13th has been received, and its general views are approved. The Secretary of War deems it important that you should proceed to the country upon the heads of the Mississippi, and visit as many of the Indians in that, and the intermediate region, as circumstances will permit.

"Reports have reached the department, from various quarters, that the Indians upon our frontiers are in an unquiet state, and that there is a prospect of extensive hostilities among themselves. It is no less the dictate of humanity, than of policy, to repress this feeling, and to establish permanent peace among these tribes. It is also important to inspect the condition of the trade in that remote country, and the conduct of the traders. To ascertain whether the regulations and the laws are complied with, and to suggest such alterations as may be required. And finally to inquire into the numbers, standing, disposition and prospects of the Indians, and to report all the statistical facts you can procure and which will be useful to the

government in its operations, or to the community in the investigation of these subjects.

“In addition to these objects, you will direct your attention to the vaccination of the Indians. An act for that purpose, has passed Congress, and you are authorised to take a surgeon with you. Vaccine matter prepared and put up by the Surgeon General is herewith transmitted to you, and you will, upon your whole route, explain to the Indians the advantages of vaccination, and endeavor to persuade them to submit to the process. You will keep and report an account of the number, ages, sex, tribe, and local situation of the Indians who may be vaccinated, and also of the prevalence, from time to time, of the small pox among them, and of its effects as far as these can be ascertained.

“Very respectfully, &c.

ELBERT HERRING.”

In the execution of these orders, the summer season of two years was devoted. All the bands of the Chippewa nation, located north of the mouth of the Wisconsin, and some bands of the Sioux were visited. Councils were held with them at various points, for the objects above specified, and no opportunity was omitted to acquire statistical and other information suited to aid in the formation of correct opinions respecting their condition, and the policy to be pursued respecting them.

The portion of country situated between the bands of Lake Superior and the Mississippi, south of St. Anthony’s falls, occupied the summer of 1831. The area extending thence north, to the source of the Mississippi, and the Hauteur des Terres, forming the elevation separating its waters, from the streams received by Hudson’s bay, constituted the object of the expedition of 1832. So much of

this area, as lies north of a latitude line passing through Cass lake, and west of about its parallel of longitude, comprehends the principal topic of description in the following work. And it is thus distinguished, from other portions of the western country, brought into discussion, in my two previous volumes of travels.

HENRY R. SCHOOLCRAFT.

Detroit, October 10, 1833.

NARRATIVE OF AN EXPEDITION THROUGH THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI, TO ITASCA LAKE.

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CHAPTER I.

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Introductory observations on the sources of the Mississippi.—Pike's expedition in 1805, for exploring its course, and ascertaining its origin.—The expedition of Gov. Cass, directed to the same objects, in 1820.—Its extent, termination, and results.—Renewed efforts to ascend to its source, by the author, in 1831.—Diverted to the unexplored country lying in the area between Lake Superior and the Upper Mississippi, south of St. Anthony's Falls.—Summary of the route.—The St. Croix and Chippewa Rivers.—Massacre of the Monomonees at Prairie du Chien, in 1831.—Mine country.—Return to the Straits of St. Mary.

American geography may be said to have had three important problems to solve, in modern times. The first and second of these, related to the source of the Missouri, and to the course and termination of the Columbia. Both, were substantially resolved by the expedition of Lewis and Clark, under the administration of Mr. Jefferson. It is to be borne in mind, however, that but one of the three forks, up to which the Missouri was traced, has been explored, that its two northwestern branches have not been ascended, and that, consequently, we do not actually know, which of its primary tributaries is the longest, or brings down the greatest volume of water.

The true source of the Mississippi, which forms the third topic of inquiry, was brought into discussion at the same period. And immediately after the acquisition of Louisiana, the American government sent an officer, with a suitable body of men, to determine it. Lieut. Pike, who was selected

for this service (who, nine years afterwards lost his life as a general in the service, at the taking of York) did not, however, set out early enough in the season (1805) to accomplish the object. After the selection and purchase of the site, on which the fort near the Falls of St. Anthony, is now situated, he encountered delays in ascending the rapids characteristic of that part of the Mississippi. Winter overtook him before reaching the junction of the De Corbeau. He prepared for its severities by erecting a block house, for the security of his provisions and men. He then proceeded with a small detachment, on snow shoes to Sandy Lake, and Leech Lake; two points of central influence, which were then occupied by the North West Fur Company. As the partners of this company consisted of foreigners, and their operations were continued after the legal transfer of the country to the American government, Lieut. Pike would have been justified in making a seizure of the valuable furs then in their possession. He did not, however, adopt this course, and exhibited a magnanimity in relation to it, which is in accordance with his subsequent acts of disinterested intrepidity. He collected the geographical data, which are embodied in his published map and journal, and returned from his wintry station, on the opening of navigation in the spring.

No further effort was made to explore the sources of the Mississippi, for several years. In 1820, Gov. Cass, then administering the government of Michigan Territory and exercising jurisdiction over Indian affairs, obtained the sanction of the general government to visit the region. He left Detroit, with a party of thirty-eight men, including the gentlemen composing his suit, during the latter part of May. He was supplied for a journey of four months. After traversing the coasts of Lake Huron, and visiting Michilimackinac, he proceeded north-westward, by ascending the primitive summit at the Falls of St. Mary, went through the extended and picturesque basin of Lake

Superior, and first struck the waters of the Upper Mississippi at Sandy Lake. To this point he was accompanied by the military escort, and by the train of larger canoes employed to transport stores and baggage. But the fatigues which the men had undergone in crossing portages, added to the low state of the water, induced him to form a permanent encampment at this place. And he proceeded with a select party, in canoes to explore the Mississippi.

It was the middle of July when the expedition reached Sandy Lake, and the difficulty of subsisting so large a party in so remote a position, with the constant claims of suffering and hungry tribes, who presented themselves at every point, began to be severely felt. The exploring party, which was now organized, went out, under a sense of these circumstances, and with a feeling of the responsibility pressing upon the claims of the expedition in other quarters, which limited the time applicable to the ascent. They entered the Mississippi on the 17th of the month, and found a strong current, with alluvial banks, and a vegetation indicative of a fertile soil. For the distance of about one hundred and fifty miles, above this point, the party found no diminution in the average strength of the current, which was frequently accelerated by rapids. The latter then assumed a more formidable aspect for ten or a dozen miles, at the end of which they were terminated by the falls of Peckágama. At this cataract, the river, which below has its course through alluvial banks, densely wooded, is compressed between rocks of granulated quartz, over which it rushes with a velocity, which would seem to threaten destruction to any species of craft that should attempt the descent. It became necessary, at this point, to transport the canoes and baggage from two to three hundred yards over land.

On reaching the Peckágama summit, the channel of the Mississippi was found to flow more directly from the west, with a comparatively sluggish current. But the most distinctive trait of this part of the river was found to consist

of a series of extensive savannahs, through which the river displays itself in the most elaborate windings. The junction of the Leech Lake branch takes place at this plateau, at the computed distance of fifty-five miles above the falls. After passing this point, the course of the river is again, generally, from the north-west, about forty-five miles to Lake Winnipec, a handsome body of clear water, estimated to be ten miles broad. The course of the ascent is then west, for about fifty miles, at which distance the river is found expanded into a more considerable lake, presenting an area of limpid water of, perhaps, 120 square miles. This sheet, which has subsequently been found to be the largest expansion of the Mississippi, is since denominated Cass Lake. It was the highest point reached. The party entered it on the 21st of July. The question of pursuing the stream further, was then submitted by Gov. Cass, to the gentlemen composing his party. Anxious as all were to see the actual source of so celebrated a stream, their wishes were controlled by circumstances. Inconveniences had been felt from leaving the supplies at so considerable a distance below, and as the waters were found to be low, and the preparations inadequate for a journey of indefinite extent, a decisive opinion was expressed in favor of a return from this point. This decision was immediately carried into effect.

From the best information that could be obtained, the Mississippi was represented to have its origin in a lake called *La Biche*, supposed to be sixty miles distant, in a north-west direction. Upon this estimate, the length of the river was computed to be 3038 miles, and by a series of approximate estimates, its altitude placed at 1330 feet above the Atlantic. Numerous rapids and lakes were, however, stated to exist in this remote part of the stream, and a degree of vagueness and uncertainty exhibited in relation to it, which evinced, that the traders, who were relied on for information, either, had seldom frequented it,

or preserved an indefinite recollection of its geographical features.

Such was the state of public information on this point in 1820. A veil of obscurity was still cast about the actual source of the Mississippi, which there was no further attempt to remove for ten or eleven years. In 1830, the writer of these sheets was directed to proceed into the Chippewa country, north-west of Lake Superior, in the execution of duties connected with Indian affairs. But the instructions were received so late in the season, that their execution became impracticable until the next year. In the mean time, means for more extensive observation were provided, a physician and botanist engaged, and a small detachment of troops, under the command of a subaltern, ordered to form a part of the expedition.

This expedition numbering twenty-seven persons, exclusive of guides and Indian auxiliaries, employed on the portages, left St. Mary's at the foot of Lake Superior, late in June 1831. After entering, and coursing around the shores of Lake Superior to Lapointe, it was found, from every representation, that the low state of the water on the Upper Mississippi, would render it difficult, if not impracticable, to reach the bands at its sources, during the drought of summer. Public reasons were, at the same time, urgent for visiting the interior bands, located between the group of islands at the head of Lake Superior, and the Mississippi—where a useless and harassing conflict was kept up between the Sioux and Chippewa nations.

The expedition returned eight miles on its track, and entered the mouth of Mushkigo, or Mauvais river of Lake Superior. This stream, which carries down the waters of an extensive slope of highlands, is embarrassed with permanent rafts of flood wood, and with numerous rapids, presenting an arduous ascent. The axe, the canoe-pole, and the carrying-strap, were alternately employed in the ascent, and they were employed under the influence of the

midsummer’s heat, and the annoyance of the hordes of smaller insects, who are on the wing, in this secluded valley, during the greater part of the twenty-four hours. This stream was ascended one hundred and four miles, to the portage. The goods and canoes were then carried 8¾ miles, across highlands, to a lake called Kaginógumoc, or the Longwater; and thence by four separate portages, and three intervening lakes, to the Namakágon river. The latter was descended one hundred and sixty-one miles, to its junction with the St. Croix, of which it is the right fork, and the channel of the latter pursued to Yellow River. From this point, where a public council was convened, the expedition re-ascended the Namakágon to the portage into *lac Courtorielle*, or Ottawa Lake. This portage consists of a carrying place of three miles and a lake, then another carrying place of 750 yards and a lake, from the latter of which there is a navigable outlet into the Ottawa for canoes.

Ottawa Lake is a sheet of water about twelve miles long, having an outlet into the Chippewa river of the Upper Mississippi. In order, however, to visit certain hostile bands, a portage was made from this outlet (after following it down about half a day’s journey,) of 3½ miles, into lac Chetac, the principal source of Red Cedar river. The latter was then pursued, through four principal expansions, called Wigwas, Warpool, Red Cedar and Rice Lakes, to its falls. A short portage over horizontal sand-rock, interrupts the navigation, after which there is a series of rapids, extending about 24 miles. Deep and strong water was then found to its junction with the Chippewa river, which it enters at the estimated distance of 40 miles from the confluence of the latter with the Mississippi, (on its eastern bank.)

The entire line of country travelled by this interior route was 643 miles. The Mushkigo, the St. Croix, and the Chippewa, were the rivers, which by their common origin and interlocking on the summit lands, afforded this communication. Many bands of Indians were visited in their

fastnesses, where they had hitherto supposed themselves out of the reach of observation. Councils were held at various points, and presents distributed. And the pauses afforded by these assemblages, and by the necessary delays of overland transportation, furnished opportunities for preserving notes on the manner of living, among those bands, and their population, traditions and resources, as well as the geographical features and the natural history of the country. On entering the Mississippi, the truth of the information, derived on Lake Superior, respecting its depressed state, was verified. Extensive portions of its outer channel and bars, were found exposed and dry. The party encamped on a sand bar formed by the junction of the Chippewa, which is usually several feet under water.

From the mouth of the Chippewa, the expedition descended the Mississippi to Galena, in Illinois. While at Prairie du Chien, the murder of twenty-six Monomonee men, women, and children, by a war party of the Sacs and Foxes, which had transpired a few days previous, was the subject of exciting interest. It was narrated with all its atrocious circumstances. A flag waved over the common grave of the slain, and several of the wounded Monomonees, who had escaped the massacre, were examined and conversed with. This affray unparalleled for its boldness and turpitude, having occurred in the village of Prairie du Chien, in the hearing of its inhabitants, and in sight of the fort, was made the subject of demand by the government for the surrendry of the murderers, and produced the concentration of troops on that frontier, which eventuated in the Indian war of 1832. Some excitement was also felt at Galena, and its vicinity, in consequence of the menacing attitude which the Sacs and Foxes had recently assumed, in the vicinity of Rock Island, and a general mistrust felt of their sincerity in the treaty concluded with the United States a short time previous.

At Galena, the exploring party separated, part returning in canoes up the Wisconsin, and part crossing the mine

country, over the branches of the Pekatolika, and by the way of the Blue Mounds, to fort Winnebago. From this point, Fox River was descended to Green Bay, and the route of the lake coast pursued northward to the straits, and to the Sault of St. Mary.

A narrative of this expedition, embracing its principal incidents, and observations on the productions of the country, is in preparation for publication by one of the gentlemen of the party. In the mean time, the official report transmitted to Government, and submitted to Congress by the War Department, together with remarks in a series of letters on the mine country, are subjoined in the appendix to this volume.

CHAPTER II.

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Farther observations on the exploration of the Upper Mississippi, and the discovery of its source.—An expedition authorised by the United States government, in 1832.—Its organization, objects, and route.—Leaves St. Mary, and proceeds through Lake Superior.—Sketch of this lake.—Notice of the murder of Brunet, by an Indian, in 1831.—Mission at Lapointe, or Chagoimegon.—The importance of this point in Indian history.—Mongozid, Wahbojeeg.—Meet Ozawindib, at the Brule.—Route to Sandy Lake, on the Upper Mississippi.—Portages on the St. Louis.—The Savanne portage.—Sandy Lake.—Assassination of Mr. Kay.

Early in 1832, the plan of visiting the source of the Mississippi, was resumed. And a memoir for its execution, accompanied by estimates, forwarded to the Department of War, which received the sanction of the Hon. L. Cass, then placed at the head of that department. An expedition was accordingly organized, consisting of thirty persons, including an officer of the army, detached, with ten men, for topographical duty, a surgeon and geologist, an interpreter of the language, and a missionary to the north-western Indians, who was invited to accompany the exploring party. This expedition was based on a renewal of the effort to effect a permanent peace with the two principal Indian nations, who inhabit that region, and whose continued feuds, not only weaken and harass each other, but embarrass the trade, interrupt the execution of the intercourse laws, and involve the lives and property of the

frontier inhabitants. Additional weight was given to these considerations, by the unquiet state of the Indians on the Upper Mississippi, which broke out in open hostility during the year. These reasons were connected with the supervision of the trade, the acquisition of statistical facts, and the carrying into effect an act of Congress of that year, for extending the benefits of vaccination to the Indian tribes. To which end it was enjoined “to proceed to the country on the heads of the Mississippi, and to visit as many Indians in that, and the intermediate region, as circumstances would permit.”

This expedition, to the account of which the present volume is devoted, left St. Mary’s on the 7th of June, 1832. As the route through Lake Superior, and thence north-west, on the waters of the Upper Mississippi, to Cass Lake, has been described in a “Narrative Journal of Travels in the North-west,” of 1820, heretofore published by the author, no details of the geography of the country then passed over and described, or of the ordinary incidents of a journey through this portion of the country, will be given. A brief sketch, however, of the general route, will serve to refresh the memory of readers whose attention has been before called to the subject, and cannot but prove acceptable to all, who feel an interest in the development of its natural features and character.

The village of the Sault of St. Mary’s is situated on the communication which connects Lake Huron with Lake Superior, fifteen miles below the foot of the latter. A strong and continued rapid, over shelving sand rock, interrupts the navigation for vessels. The water has been computed to sink its level, twenty two feet ten inches, at this place. A portage exceeding half a mile, enables boats to proceed beyond. The river above has a brisk current, which is imperceptibly lost on entering between the two prominent capes, which form the opening into Lake Superior.

This lake, which is called Igomi, Chigomi, and Gitchigomi, by the Indians, as the term is more or less abbreviated, is remarkable for its extent, its depth, and the purity of its waters. It lies in a basin of trap rocks, with alternations of the granite and sand stone series. No variety of calcareous rock is present,[1] and its waters are consequently free from impregnations from this source. As it is the largest and the purest of the series of lakes it is also the highest in position; its altitude being computed at 640 feet above the Atlantic. Its banks are diversified with mural precipices, with extensive deposits of marine sand, and with beds of mixed detritus. Its immediate margin is loaded with primitive boulders and pebble-stones, alternating with shores of yellow and of iron sand. Several bold mountains of primitive construction, stand near the central parts of its south shores, which are in striking contrast with the ruin-like, walled masses, of horizontal structure, which characterize other parts. Among the detritus of its shores are still occasionally found masses of native copper, which are now referred to the trap formation.

Of a body of water so irregular in its shape and imperfectly defined, it may be vague to speak of its superficial area, but this may be assumed to cover 30,000 square miles. It embraces numerous islands, the largest of which are Grand, Royal, and Magdalen islands. It has several noble harbors, bays and inlets, and receives numerous rivers. It abounds with fish, the most noted of which are white-fish, sturgeon, and salmon-trout. But by far the most valuable product of its present commerce, is its furs and peltries. The Indian population of its immediate shores, is not great. Exclusive of bands located on the heads of its rivers, it does not exceed 1006 souls, to which may be added 436 for the American side of the St. Mary’s river. Their trade is conducted by 15 clerks, licensed by the Indian department, employing 70 boatmen, interpreters and

runners. Recently a mission has been established on Magdalen Island (*La Pointe* of the traders,) by the American Board of Foreign Missions, and the gospel began to be preached to the natives. The estimated population which, in a comprehensive view, should be added for the south shores, extending to the borders of the Winnebago and Monomonee lands, and running west, to the Sioux line, is, for the northern curve of Green Bay, 210; heads of the Monomonee and Wisconsin rivers, 342; the Chippewa river and its tributaries, 1376; the St. Croix and its tributaries, 895; Grand Portage, and Rainy Lake, 476; to which latter may perhaps be added, 249, making, with the former estimates, 5000 souls.

In travelling through this lake, in boats or canoes, the shores are followed round. The distance from Point Iroquois to the entrance of the St. Louis river of Fond du Lac, is estimated at 490 miles, exclusive of the journey around the peninsula of Keweena, which is ninety miles more. The general course is nearly due west, in consequence of which, the climate is deemed to be decidedly more favorable to agriculture at its head than at its outlet. Traders, who course round the peninsula in boats, take, on an average, twenty-six days in the voyage. Fifteen were employed on the present expedition. Indians were met at various points, and wherever it was practicable, they were vaccinated. The surgeon employed on that service reported 699 vaccinations on the voyage through the lake, and experienced no difficulty in getting them to submit to the process.

At the mouth of the Ontonagon, where the party arrived on the 19th of June, a band of Indians was encamped on its way out, from Ottawa lake. Mozojeed, their chief, confirmed a report of the murder of an *engagé*, or under clerk, named Brunet, by a Chippewa, named Waba Annimikee, or the White Thunder. He said that he had concurred with the traders in apprehending the Indian, and bringing him out to

be delivered up to the Indian agent. But that he had effected his escape on the Mauvais Portage. He promised to exert himself to re-apprehend him, the following year. And he rigidly performed his promise. In July, 1833, the White Thunder was delivered by Mozojeed and his followers, to the civil authorities. He was tried for the murder at the U. S. circuit court holden at Michilimackinac, in that month. Counsel being assigned to defend him, every advantage was secured to him that the laws provide. His own confessions were proved, to substantiate the murder, and on these he was convicted.

He made no defence whatever on the trial, silently submitting to the determinations of his counsel. When judgment had been pronounced, he arose, and, through an interpreter, stated to the judge the reasons which had actuated him. He observed, that after aiding Brunet, on a certain occasion, in carrying his goods to the banks of a river, he had taken a canoe bound there, (being his *own* canoe) to cross the stream. For this Brunet threatened him, and *shook a tomahawk over his head*. On another occasion, having sold Brunet a shaved deer-skin, he asked him (as is customary after getting payment) for tobacco; but he replied abusively, that he did not give tobacco to *such scaly dogs*. Not long afterwards, being engaged in playing at the Indian game of bowl, Brunet took him by the hair, *on the crown of his head*, and shook him. Finally, on the morning of the day of the murder, Brunet had struck him on the chin, with violence. This, together with the other indignities, took place in the presence of the Indians, in whose eyes he was, consequently, disgraced. In the afternoon of that day, Brunet went back from the lake on which they were encamped, into the forest to procure some birch bark for making flambeaux for fishing. The White Thunder secretly followed him. He observed him tie up a roll of bark, put it across his shoulders, and commence his return. He soon crossed a log which lay in his path. The Indian quickly

followed him, mounting the same log, and, from this elevation, raised his gun and deliberately shot him in the back. He fell dead.

At *La Pointe*, the party were introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Hall, missionaries, who, with Mr. Ayer, had proceeded to this place, in 1831, to establish a mission among the Chippewas. Mrs. Hall had presented to her husband a daughter during their residence, which is believed to be the first child of white parents, both by father and mother, ever born within the precincts of this lake. The mission had encountered no unforeseen obstacles in its first efforts. It has since been enlarged in its means and the number of its laborers, and promises to exert a happy influence in the region.

It is interesting to observe the dawning of the gospel at a spot, which has been long noted as the scene of Indian trade, and the rallying point of Indian war parties. It is at this place, the Chegoimegon of early writers, that tradition places the ancient council fire of the Chippewa nation. And here resided the presiding chief, called Mudjikiwis, or Waishki, who exercised the sovereign power over a rude confederation of local tribes, whose dissolution, or separation into independent fragments, may be traced to the right of each chieftain of declaring a negative to any decision, and silently withdrawing his aid, for the time being. Personal influence and authority may be supposed to have counteracted this defect, while the tribe was small, as tradition represents it to have been when it first migrated from *the east*, to this lake; but its increase and spread over the adjacent country, would naturally destroy so feeble a tie of political power, and must soon have left each local band as it now remains, independent and sovereign in its acts. Yet the voice of tradition refers to this era of the reign of the Mudjikiwis as one of comparative splendor. Although republican in all that is left of their institutions, the succession of the Mudjikiwis is said to have been hereditary among the Chippewas, and the descendants of this

magistrate, who yet exist at Chegoimegon, evince a pride of ancestry which we should only look for, among feudal or despotic nations. The last person who may be said to have exercised this office was Mongazid, (or Mamongazida,) who was in high favor with the French. He is represented to have visited Quebec in the time of Montcalm, and to have been an actor in the final battle in which that distinguished commander fell. His son Wahbojeeg, or the White Fisher, succeeded him as the ruling chieftain of the band, and eminently distinguished himself as a war leader. He died in 1793, after having been greatly instrumental in driving his cousins-german, the Foxes, from the Chippewa country. The present chieftain, Chi Waishki, alias Pizhickee, or the Buffalo, is the representative of this line. He said to the Indian Agent, who, by direction of the commissioners at the treaty of Fond du Lac, in 1826, invested him with a silver medal, “What need I of this! It is known whence I am descended.”

But there is no space for these reminiscences. Many scattered parties of Chippewas were encountered east of this point, interspersed with the loaded boats of the traders, bringing out their annual returns. Some of the parties were bound to the British post of Penetanguishine, others, to St. Mary’s or Michilimackinac. Chi Waishki, the chief above alluded to, was met at Keweena, on his way to visit the Agency. He expressed his regret that the agent would not be there, evinced a strong interest in the object of the expedition, and presented a peace-pipe, as the evidence of his friendship. At the mouth of the river Brule, a small party of the Chippewas was encountered, from the sources of the Mississippi. It turned out to be the family of Ozawindib, one of the principal Chippewas, from Cass Lake. He was persuaded to return, and proved himself to be a trusty and experienced guide through the most remote and difficult parts of the route.

The expedition entered the mouth of the St. Louis river on the 23d of June. The ascent of this stream is attended

with separate portages of nine, and of three miles. There is, finally, a portage of six miles across a sandy tract, which separates the Lake Superior from the Mississippi waters, making 18 miles of land carriage. The other portions of the route consist of rapid water, much of which is shallow and interspersed with sharp rocks, requiring both strength and dexterity in the men to manage the canoes, and to repair them when injured. A part of the summit portage, immediately after quitting the Savanne river, consists of bog, the sod of which being cut through, it becomes necessary to wade in a pathway of mud and water, portions of which, are mid-thigh deep. The entire distance from Lake Superior to the Mississippi, estimating from water to water, is 150 miles. The expedition spent about ten days on this part of the route, and reached the trading house of Mr. Aitkin, on the banks of the Mississippi, on the 3rd of July. It remained there, until the evening of the 4th, giving Lieut. Allen, who was in command of the troops, an opportunity to fire a salute in honor of the day, to the no small gratification of the Indians, who, being apprized of the occasion, thronged the banks of the river to witness the ceremony.

Sandy Lake has been a post of importance in the fur trade from the earliest French times, being one of the central seats of Indian power on the Upper Mississippi. An assassination occurred here in 1785, which affords a striking illustration of the evils of using ardent spirits in the Indian country. Mr. Kay, the victim of Indian resentment on this occasion, was a gentleman of Montreal, who had come out with an adventure of Indian goods, into this region. After passing the winter on the waters of the Mississippi, he awaited the assembling of his clerks at this place, and employed himself in closing the spring business with the Indians, preparatory to his return to Michilimackinac. On the 2nd of May, he was informed of the near arrival of one of his clerks, and prepared to go and meet him. The sequel is

given in a translation of the words of an eye witness, whose manuscript account is before the author.[2]

“Mr. Kay said that he would himself go, although somewhat fatigued by the continual running of the Indians, the night previous. On parting he told me to draw some rum, of which he took a stout drink. And as he knew there was no rum at the post of Pine river, when he left Mr. Harris, he thought a dram would be pleasing to him also; for which reason he told me to fill one of the flagons of his liquor case, to take with him. And he gave me orders to give the Indians no drink during his absence, which was difficult, because they were already tipsey.

“The Indians had given me the name of The Writer, which they are accustomed to do to all whom they observe writing. As soon as Mr. Kay had gone, I did not want for visits, his *savagesse* remaining in the tent with me. A great many Indians came in; among the number was Katawabida and Mongozid, who said to me, “Writer, give us rum!” I told them that I could not—that I was not master. They tormented me a long time. Mongozid threw to me a pair of *metasses*, which he had got on credit, and had not paid for, (for he was a poor paymaster,) demanding rum for them. I told him, no! He then talked with Mr. Kay’s woman, who was tired of them, as well as myself. She begged me to give them a little, after which they went out of the tent.

“Within an hour after *Le Barrique Eau* arrived, and told me that Mr. Harris and Mr. Pinot had actually arrived at the fish-dam. The Indians, one and all, set up a shout of joy, and ran to the beach to receive them. They did not however, meet with a very good reception, the flagon Mr. Kay had taken with him having intoxicated the whole party. They debarked, and while Mr. Harris was getting his tent pitched, Mr. Kay entered mine and took a glass in my presence. Mr. Harris was quite noisy. To complete the scene, the ferocity of *Cul Blanc*[3] (an Indian unfriendly to Mr. K.) had returned. He

had persuaded *Le Cousin* to stab Mr. Kay, in the course of the winter, saying to him, that he had not courage enough himself to do it. The other gloried in being equal to the commission of a crime, which he had promised to perpetrate when they came together.

"The Cul Blanc was sitting, with many others, on a hillock, before the fire, smoking, directly before Mr. Kay's tent. Le Cousin got up and went towards the tent, at the entrance of which he met Mr. Kay. Mr. Kay's bed was placed across, opposite the pole supporting the tail-piece of his tent. The barrel of rum was behind the bed, in the bottom of the tent. Mr. Kay saw him coming, as he was going to take a seat beside me on the bed. At this moment Le Cousin entered. He tendered his hand, and asked for rum. Mr. Kay, who did not like the man, answered, "No! You do not pay your credits! You shall have none! Go out, immediately!" With this, he took him by the arm, and conducted him out of the tent. On turning round to re-enter, the Indian, who was armed with a knife, which he had concealed under a *mantelet de calmande*, gave him a stab in the back of the neck. He then retired towards the camp fire, which was surrounded by a great many Indians and our men. I got up immediately, hearing the scream of his wife, whom I perceived in front of me. "Have you been stabbed?" I inquired of Mr. Kay. "Yes!" he replied, "but he shall pay for it." So saying he put his hand in the mess-basket and drew out a large, pointed table knife, with which he sallied furiously from the tent, without my being able to stop him. The Indians seeing the knife in his hand, asked the cause of it. He said that Le Cousin had stabbed him, and that he was in search of him to kill him. But Le Cousin had taken refuge in his own lodge which was near our camp. Mr. Kay went towards the lodge. We ran after him to prevent some fatal accident. The tumult was, by this time, very great. Great numbers were collected from all sides, and all, both French and Indians, bereft of their reason, for it was in the midst of

a general carouse. In a moment, every one seized his arms, and there was a motley display of knives, guns, axes, cudgels, war-clubs, lances, &c. I found myself greatly at a non-plus, for I had not before witnessed such a scene. I saw so many preparations that I judged we should have a serious time.

“Mr. Kay pursued Le Cousin, but before he could reach him, the passage to his lodge was blocked up by the crowd. Le Cousin’s mother asked him what he wanted. “Englishman!” said she, “do you come to kill me?” She made her way among the crowd, armed with a small knife, and reached the spot where Mr. Kay was standing, without any one’s observing the knife, for she came in an humble attitude imploring Mr. Kay for the life of her son. In a moment, Mr. Kay cried out, in a loud voice, “I am killed,” and he fell. We entered, and found that she had struck him in the side, making an incision of more than three inches. We now took him to his tent, bathed in his blood. We laid him on his bed, which in a moment, was soaking with his blood.

“At this moment his friend *Le Petit Mort*, (Jeebyains) who had been tipsey and gone to sleep, started up. He ran to Mr. Kay’s tent, where the first object he saw, was his friend pale and quivering. He went and embraced him amidst a flood of tears, saying, “My friend, you are dead, but I survive to revenge you.” In contemplating a calico night-gown which Mr. Kay had on when he was wounded, and which was all bloody, he could no longer restrain his anger. He took up the knife which Mr. Kay had, at the time he was wounded, and which had been brought back by his wife, who was present. He sallied out of the tent to seek revenge, not of Le Cousin, —who was the instrument, but not the author of the murder —but of Cul Blanc, who was sitting before the fire, smoking his pipe. He seized him by the scalp-lock, drew his body back with one hand, exclaiming, “Die, thou dog!” with the

other hand, he plunged a knife into his breast, Cul Blanc begging all the while for mercy.

“This scene of carnage put a stop to the drinking. The women spilled out all the rum, of which there was still no small quantity in the different lodges. The stab Cul Blanc had received did not prove mortal, notwithstanding the ghastliness of the wound, the knife having passed out through the flesh without penetrating any vital part. But the blood issued copiously and disfigured his wife, who carried him off, trailing his blood through the camp.

“This tragedy being finished, Le Petit Mort re-entered the tent. He told his wife, who followed him, to go and search for certain roots, which he chewed and formed into a cataplasm for the wound, after having applied his mouth to it, and sucked out the extravasated blood, an operation that caused Mr. Kay great pain. He enjoyed a little ease during the remainder of the night and following day. Le Petit Mort passed the night opposite to his bed. The next day he took off the compress, and replaced it by another, after having once more sucked out the blood and cleaned the wound. The patient became so exhausted by this dressing, that for the space of half an hour he lost all recollection. When he regained his senses he felt easier, and asked for the Bras Casse, (the chief of the band,) who had not yet heard what had happened, for the Indians had been occupied in drinking, and he had been getting ready to depart, having only delayed a little, to give some game to the Frenchmen. He came to the field of these atrocities, entered Mr. Kay’s tent, and gave him his hand, saying, “My friend, your misfortune has given me much pain. If I had been here, it would not have taken place. One thing, however, consoles me. It is, that I had not gone off; you may depend on my best efforts to restore you.” Mr. Kay accepted his offer, having confidence in him, and in his skill in the medical art, in which he was very expert. He resolved to take him along with him on his route to Mackinac, to take care of him.