

CHAPTER IX.

ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST FRENCH TRADING POSTS BUILT
ON LAKE SUPERIOR.

A post is built at Grand Portage by a company of French traders—Their inducements for its location—The French first open a communication with the tribes of the Ke-nis-te-no and Assine-boins—First communication of the northern division of the Ojibways with these allied tribes—They join the alliance—Tradition of the manner in which the Assine-boins became detached from their kindred Dakotas—They become close allies of the Ke-nis-te-no and Ojibways—A trading post is located at La Pointe—French work the copper mines on Lake Superior—Bloody tragedy enacted at this post in 1722—Which results in its evacuation.

A FEW years after the great convocation of northwestern tribes, and treaty with the French nation at Sault Ste. Marie, a company of French traders proceeded up the west coast of Lake Superior, and built a trading post or "fort" (as these establishments were termed in those days), on a beautiful bay situated on the lake shore a few miles above Kah-man-a-tig-wa-yah (or Pigeon River), and known as the "Grand Portage" or Ke-che-o-ne-gum-eng, from the fact that a portage of ten miles is here made to Pigeon River, to avoid the rapids which preclude navigation even for canoes, for many miles above the entry of this "bad winding stream."

This is probably the first permanent post erected by the white man in the region of country comprised within the present limits of Minnesota Territory. It was built, as near as I can judge from the information of the Indians and old traders, upwards of one hundred and fifty years ago.

The great quantity of beaver, existing at this period on all the streams emptying into Lake Superior, and especially throughout the country watered by Kah-man-a-tig-wa-yah