

CHAPTER XI.

TAKING OF MILLE LACS BY THE OJIBWAYS.

A description of Mille Lacs, and its advantages as a home for the Indian—It is occupied by the Dakotas in 1680—Traditions of the Ojibways detailing the manner in which they, in turn, finally obtained possession.

MILLE Lacs, the M' dé Wakan, or Spirit Lake of the Dakotas,¹ and the Missi-sag-i-egan or "the lake that spreads all over" of the Ojibways, is one of the largest and most beautiful sheets of water in Minnesota Territory.² It lies imbedded in deep forests, midway between the Mississippi and the head of Lake Superior. Its picturesque shores are skirted with immense groves of valuable sugar maple, and the soil on which they grow is not to be surpassed in richness by any section of country in the northwest.

The lake is nearly circular in form, though indented with deep bays, and the view over its waters broken here and there by bold points or promontories. It is about twenty miles across from shore to shore, and a person standing on its pebbly beach on a clear, calm day, can but just discern the blue outlines of the opposite side, especially as the country surrounding it is comparatively low and level. Its waters are clear and pure as the waters of Lake Superior, and fish of the finest species are found to abound

¹ Mille Lacs so called because it is the largest of the numerous lakes, Mille Lacs (Thousand Lakes) of this region. Upon Franquelin's Map of 1688, it is called Buade, the family name of Count Frontenac then governor of Canada, and Rum River its outlet is called Rivière des François (French River) or Sioux River. Upon Hennepin's Map Rivière des François is R. de St. Francis.—E. D. N.

² Written in A. D. 1852. Minnesota in 1858 was admitted as one of the United States of America.—E. D. N.