

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SOURCES OF THE MISSISSIPPI BECOME OPEN TO THE
ENTERPRISE OF THE FUR TRADE, 1792.

John Baptiste Cadotte—His early career as an Indian trader—He organizes a large trading expedition to explore the sources of the Mississippi—He winters on Leaf River and is attacked by the Dakotas—Peace effected and he visits the camp of his enemies to trade—Treachery of the Dakotas—A division of Cadotte's party winter at Prairie Portage, on Red River, and another at Pembina—Trouble with the Dakotas at Prairie Portage—Return of the Expedition by way of Rainy Lake and Pigeon River—Arrival at Grand Portage—Northwest Fur Company proceed to occupy the Upper Mississippi country—They locate a depot at Fond du Lac—They build stockaded posts at Sandy Lake and at Leech Lake—Occupation of Red Lake by the Ojibways dated from this Expedition—Death of Negro Tom.

THE great Basin covered with innumerable lakes and streams, from which the Mississippi, flowing into the Gulf of Mexico, and Red River, flowing into Hudson's Bay, take their rise, was first fully opened to the enterprise of the old northwestern fur traders, by John Baptiste Cadotte, a son of the Mons. Cadotte, who is so often mentioned in the earliest era of the white man's intercourse with the Ojibways, and who figures so prominently in the simple but truthful narrative of Alexander Henry.

John Baptiste Cadotte¹ received a college education at Montreal. He was among the first individuals whose European, or white blood, became intermixed with the blood of the Ojibways. On leaving college, he became possessed of forty thousand francs which had been bequeathed to him by his father, and with this sum as a capital, he immediately launched into the northwestern

¹ A record of the Cadotte family from parish and other records is given in another article in this volume.—E. D. N.