

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PILLAGERS.

Present number of the Pillager warriors—Their reputation for bravery—Severe fight with the Dakotas at Battle Lake, and great sacrifice of their warriors—Exploit of We-non-ga—Night attack on a camp of Dakotas at Chief's Mountain.

NOTWITHSTANDING the continual drain made in their ranks by their inveterate and exterminating war with the Dakotas, the large band of the Ojibways who lived on Leech Lake, and had become known by the name of Pillagers, continued gradually to increase in numbers, through accessions from the more eastern villages of their tribe. Their men capable of bearing arms (most of whom have actually seen service) number, at the present time,¹ about three hundred. They have ever borne the reputation of being the bravest and most warlike division of the Ojibways, from the fact of their ever having formed the vanguard of the tribe, and occupied the most dangerous ground in their westward advance and conquests. As a sample of their bravery and hardihood, we shall devote this chapter in giving an account of one of their numerous and bloody rencontres with the Dakotas, wherein they lost many of their bravest warriors.

About fifty-seven years ago, John Baptiste Cadotte (who has already been mentioned in previous chapters) arrived at Red Cedar, or Cass Lake, late in the fall, with a supply of goods, ammunition, and other necessaries, intending to pass the winter in trading with the Pillagers and northern Ojibways. The Pillagers, at their village on Leech Lake, were preparing to go on a grand war party against the Da-

¹ A. D. 1852.