

the treasures in our Historical Society. Thanks to his pioneering and his pencil, we first pass from conjectural cartography regarding Wisconsin, Illinois, and the Mississippi to a positive style of the art as being founded on actual observation.

JANUARY 8, 1881.

French Foot-Prints in Northwestern Wisconsin

It is well known that the French early penetrated into the territory which is now Wisconsin. From that quarter came the best beaver brought down by Indians to Canadian trading-posts, and it was natural for traders to fix themselves as near as possible to the sources of that fur which they coveted most. With this view some of them, as Des Groselliers, appear to have traversed the region between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi before the year 1660. The same district was almost as long ago the scene of *missionary* labor. Missions were tried around Quebec, but soon given up in despair, owing to the nomadic habits of the aborigines there. They were at once transferred to Lake Simcoe, a little east of Lake Huron, when it was discovered that the tribes there were, during much of the year, sedentary in permanent dwellings. One Father was saying mass in that distant recess of the West in 1615, five years before the Plymouth Pilgrims landed; and the mission grew and thrived till 1649, when it was broken up by the New York Iroquois, who burned all its buildings, slaying or scattering priests and converts.

The fugitives in great part fled to Mackinaw, and some of them into Lake Superior, and towards its western extremity, settling at La Pointe, and the Apostles' Islands. But shepherds follow their sheep, and so the Jesuits did not forget their converts. They were soon upon their track, and thus entered Wisconsin from the north. The first of them was René Ménard, in 1660.

There is reason to think that French *fun lovers* were on Wisconsin soil as soon as any fur-traders, or ghostly Fathers. Even in the second year after Champlain had founded Quebec, one of this class, actuated by pure love of frolic and adventure—went