

is due the honor of having been the first who reached the waters of the Mississippi. \* \* \* We give a short sketch of the life of a man too little known, although he occupied an important place in the early history of Canada."

"I will admit," says M. Garneau, "that this traveler ascended the Fox River to its source, that he crossed the high lands separating that river from the Wisconsin, and that he descended the latter to within three days' distance of the Mississippi. But that does not mean that he discovered or that he saw that river." Mr. Shea must have reached the same conclusion since he gives to Joliet and Marquette the honor of having discovered the Mississippi (pp. lxxviii and lxxx), and cites the words of P. Vimont, "If he had journeyed (*navigué*) three days," etc.

Mr. Shea remarks, nevertheless, that Nicolet was the first to reach, not the Mississippi, but the *waters* of the Mississippi. Having sailed upon the Wisconsin, a tributary of the Great River, Nicolet was able to say that he had seen the waters of the Mississippi, as an inhabitant of the banks of the river Niagara may say that he sees the waters of the St. Lawrence. Such at least is the sense which I attach to the words of the American writer.

Did Nicolet occupy a sufficiently important place in the early history of Canada that his name should not be forgotten by us?

If we search the annals of New England we shall find there, preciousely preserved, the history of men regarded as remarkable, because they first dared to advance fifty or sixty leagues from the sea-coast. With us the name is hardly known of a Frenchman of Canada, who in the first years of the colony, had already penetrated very far into the unknown regions of the West.

Nicolet did not amuse himself, like the English, in groping around the European settlements; embarking upon a frail bark canoe, he ascended the rapids of the Ottawa, penetrated, by means of the small rivers, lakes and portages, as far as Lake Huron, which he crossed, and visited a part of the Lake of Illinois—now Michigan—of Green Bay, where he was environed by restless and unknown tribes; he