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The Rising Sun

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The Rising Sun

It is a glorious day, the seventeenth of June, 1673. Louis Jolliet and Father Marquette glide in their bark canoe out of the Wisconsin River on to the broad Mississippi. They are the first white men to see the land of Ioway.—The Editor.

“Here we are”, exclaims Father Marquette, “on this so renowned River”. . . Seven days drop by, and seven nights: seven days at the paddle (in the sun); seven nights with the owl (beneath a moon); seven days and nights of the unknown; when, lo! the eighth day and with it a consummation. If Iowa will not contrive for itself an entrance upon the stage, Jolliet and Marquette will contrive one for it. They will prompt the action.

Before them lies a path with the print of a human foot. They are startled, writes Parkman, by a sight often so fearful in the waste and the wilderness — the print of a human foot. They take the path and come upon a river. It is the Iowa (Lower or Cedar-Iowa) with a village (that of the Peouarea) on the bank. They shout aloud. Out from the cabins pour “wild men”. Four aged ones advance bearing tobacco pipes. Measuredly and in silence advance the men. “Who are you?” hails Father Marquette. “We are Illinois”,

they answer and invite the strangers to follow them. At the door of a cabin stands an aged one. Standing erect, and stark naked, with his hands extended and lifted toward the sun as if to protect himself from its rays, he exclaims, "How beautiful the sun is, O frenchman, when thou comest to visit us!" Braves and warriors fill the cabin. They "devour" the strangers "with their eyes". The pipe is passed.

Jolliet and Marquette proceed to a second village of the Peouarea. Again the pipe is passed. "We are journeying", says the Father, "peacefully to visit the nations dwelling on the River as far as the Sea". The Indians dance the Calumet — the Peace Dance

Ni-na ha-ni, ni-na ha-ni, ni-na ha-ni, na-ni, on-go

It is the end of June, about three o'clock in the afternoon, notes the Father, when "we take leave of our Illinois. . . . We embark in the sight of all the people".

Iowa — so evasive, so wary of the footlights — has come forward, has it not, nevermore quite to efface itself?