Devil’s Lake regions made a treaty with the Yankton and Sisseton Sioux, and a short term of peace resulted. During the deliberations at this treaty, the Crees learned of the existence of the isolated Sioux band and the locality of its camp. When the peace period closed, some Crees gave the information to their Chippewa relatives, and the latter, from about Red Lake, soon raised a war party and marched upon the hidden Sioux. A total surprise was made, and after a brave but unavailing defense, the ten lodges, and all their inmates, were totally destroyed. The embankment or breastwork of earth which once surrounded the little Sioux village was plain to be seen in 1852. Warren received his information of this affair from Wa-non-je-quon, then chief of Red Lake, whose father helped destroy the Sioux.

From the hiding place and secret occupation of the Sioux on the little river, the Chippewas afterward called it Ke-moja-ke Se-be, or Secret Place River; but the French traders and coureurs pronounced Kemoj a-ke as Ke mod a-ke, which means stealing. Then the stream began to be called Stealing River and Thief River, and by the later name it is laid down on Nicollet’s map of 1842, and is still so called.

THE INDIANS BATTLING FOR THE COUNTRY.

About 1808 (as near as can be conjectured) a band of Sioux defeated a larger band of Chippewas down on Long Prairie River, in Todd County. The Sioux were Sissetons and Wahpetons, from western Minnesota and eastern South Dakota, and had come over to hunt on their former rich game preserve. The Chippewas were on the way to attack the Sioux on Rice River. The fight lasted all day and was very fierce and bloody. At the close only seven unhurt Sioux were left, but they were enough to drive back the Chippewas, because they had guns, furnished them by the Hudson’s Bay Company’s traders on the Red River. The Chippewas also had some guns, but each party used bows and arrows in addition to their firearms. The Chippewas captured 36 horses (or ponies), but could not learn to manage them, and, after many of them had been crippled by kicks and falls, they finally slaughtered every pony and devoured them. Old Hole-in-the-Day, then a young man, and his elder brother, Strong Ground, were among the leaders of the Chippewas in this battle.

SIOUX DEFEATED AT PEMBINA.

The same day on which the battle at Long Prairie was fought a large Sioux war party of Sissetons, Wahpetons, and Yanktons attacked the Chippewa villages near Pembina, whose chief was Little Clam. They were defeated with considerable loss and chased back up the Red River. (Warren, p. 354.) As a result of their defeat on this and other occasions in the same period, the Sioux were forced to retreat to the westward of the Red and Mississippi Rivers and south of the Shyenne. Then, for an indefinitely long period, in order to control the beaver dams and the buffalo preserves of the Red River, there was war between the Chippewas and the Sioux, from the Selkirk Settlement to Big Stone Lake and the headwaters of the Minnesota. The Assiniboines and Crees were allies of the Sioux in this war. It was during the early years when they made the short peace with the Sioux referred to, and upon its termination when they betrayed to the Chippewas the existence and site of the little Sioux band on Thief River.

TREACHERY AND TREATIES.

The year after the battle on the Long Prairie River, or about 1819, the Sioux along the whole line of the eastern frontiers became tired of fighting the Chippewas in open field and sought to defeat them by secret action involving the foulest treachery, even from the Indian point of view, which considers everything fair in war. They made an extraordinary and apparently sincere attempt to enter into a general and permanent peace with the Chippewas. Chah-pah (or the Beaver), head chief of the Yankton, or Yanktonnais Sioux, who were then about Lake Traverse, had a Chippewa woman for one of his wives. He put her on a good horse, gave her his peace pipe, and bade