

1609. prostrate on the ground. He cried out ; he worked himself up ; he seemed beside himself ; and the perspiration Impostures of jugglers. streamed from every part of his body.

The cabin, too, sometimes shook ; and those present never doubted but that this movement was caused by the presence of the spirit. They took great care to call the attention of Mr. de Champlain to this pretended wonder ; but he had seen the medicine-man shake the poles, and laughed at them. They told him, one day, that he was going to see fire come out of the top of the cabin ; but he looked in vain : the fire did not appear. It would perhaps have appeared, had Mr. de Champlain been less attentive ; for these impostors usually take precautions to provide themselves with all needed to light a fire. The language employed in these invocations has nothing in common with any Indian language, and consists probably only in uncouth sounds, produced on the spot by an excited imagination, and which these charlatans had succeeded in passing off as a divine language. They take different tones : sometimes they swell their voice ; then counterfeit a shrill, tiny voice, like that of our puppets : and this is supposed to be the spirit addressing them.¹

For the most part, just the contrary of what they predict occurs ; but they lose none of their credit on that account, and always find some means of escape to save their honor. It is ever the case, that men so ingenious in deceiving others are surprisingly easy to be themselves deceived on points where it is most important for them to avoid being misled. They are not only never on their guard against illusion, but seem to rush headlong into it. Antiquity, learned and wise, plunged on this point into the same and grosser extravagances than our Indians. The knowledge of the true God, and the incontestable principles of a divine religion, did not shield the chosen people, the depositaries of Truth. It was neither savages

¹ Champlain, *Voyages* (ed. 1613), p. 221.