

1665.

Claude
Allouez.

Father Claude Allouez, accordingly, offered to follow these savages. His offer was accepted;¹ and it was well that he had prepared himself for any event. He could scarcely have met worse treatment at the hands of his conductors had he been their slave; those who had received him into their canoe, one day even left him on the shore. But they were punished on the spot. Scarcely had they re-embarked, when their canoe capsized and all were drowned. The servant of God would have reckoned as naught all this ill treatment, could he have succeeded in opening the eyes of these heathen to their ridiculous superstitions; but he soon perceived that he had to deal with a perverse nation, whose hardness of heart naught could soften.

Supersti-
tions of the
Ottawas.

A barrel of powder, which they had brought from Quebec, having one day caught fire, several were wounded. In default of human remedies, they had recourse to the sun. The medicine-men assembled, and got up a kind of festival, which began by chants, accompanied by much extravagant action: one would have deemed them a troop of madmen. And this scene, which inspired an indescribable horror, lasted quite a long time. At last, ten or twelve of the more considerable among them sat in a circle around a little fire; they uttered loud cries, and constantly looked up to the sun, to which they seemed to offer the flame or smoke of the fire. At last the oldest of the party rose, and, turning towards that luminary, conjured it with a loud voice to restore health to the sick.²

It was all in vain. The sun healed no one. Then the missionary, unable to tolerate this impiety, accosted the boldest of the party, and spoke to him so plainly, that one of the sick was struck by his words, and at once invoked the God of the Christians, recognizing Him as the only

¹ He set out from Three Rivers Aug. 7, 1665 (Le Mercier, Journal), or rather August 8: Relation de la N. F., 1667, p. 4. No tidings were received from him for two years (Rel., 1666, p. 3), and he at last returned Aug. 4, 1667: Le Mercier, Journal.

² Relation de la N. F., 1667, p. 7.