

1672-3. Fire Nation.¹ How many proper names have originally no better foundation! The Kicapous are neighbors of the Mascoutins, and the two tribes have always apparently been united in interest.²

Reception of
the two
Missionaries
by the
Mascoutins.

Among the Mascoutins Fathers Allouez and Dablon met Tetinchoua with three thousand Miamis³ and they learned that fear of the Iroquois and of the Sioux had united all these Indians together. They were received with great marks of friendship, and announced Jesus Christ. But all the fruit of their preaching was that these savages, unable to conceive that men who spoke so well were merely ordinary mortals, applied to them as genii, to obtain the cure of the sick and other favors, which they usually ask of their gods.

They were invited one day to a feast, the preparation for which led them to suppose a war-feast. It was prepared in a very vast cabin, where a kind of trophy had been erected, loaded with bows, arrows, and a kind of battle-axe made of very hard stone. Eatables, consisting however only of Indian meal, had been added with tobacco, and the instruments used to rouse themselves to action, that is to say, the chichicoué and drum. As soon as the missionaries had taken their places, a great platter of Indian corn boiled in buffalo grease, was brought to them, and the master of the banquet, on presenting this dish to them, paid them a long compliment, the substance of which

¹ The Mascoutins were styled by the Hurons, Assista,eronon, which certainly means Fire Nation. The question is whether the Huron interpreters were deceived, and never discovered their error. The name is given by Sagard, *Histoire du Canada*, p. 201, Champlain edition, 1632, map: *Relation*, 1632, p. 14; 1640, pp. 35, 98; 1641, p. 59, etc. Dablon first in *Relation*, 1671, p. 45, treats this as an error, and says: that Maskoutench signifies a land cleared of trees, but as the word by the change

of a few letters will mean fire, the error arose. Baraga in his *Otchipwe Dictionary* gives Fire, ishkote: Prairie, mashkodé. For an essay on the tribe, see *History and Condition of the Indian Tribes*, iv., p. 244.

² The Mascoutins were probably at last confounded with the Kikapous.

³ The Miamis and Mascoutins together made up 3,000: *Relation de la Nouvelle France*, 1671, p. 45. Father Dablon does not name Tetinchoua.