

1662. lute souls, New France had already had the consolation of beholding most of the erring already return to the path of duty.

The fact which I am going to relate is so extraordinary, that I should not have hesitated to suppress it, or pass it lightly over, if the unanimous and constant testimony of a whole colony amid which it happened, and the prodigious effects which it caused, some of which still subsist, had not given it a notoriety which enables it to defy the most hardened skepticism. Not that I pretend to guarantee all the details which fill some Relations: people nowhere indulge in greater exaggeration than in well-authenticated wonders. I shall, therefore, confine myself to the surest memoirs, in which I remark nothing that is not confirmed by tradition, derived from several most irreproachable witnesses.

Surprising
phenomena
1663.

During the fall of 1662, a few days after the departure of the Bishop of Petræa, a number of fires, of various and quite eccentric shapes, were seen flying through the air. Over Quebec and Montreal there appeared one night a globe of fire, diffusing a great light,—with this difference, that at Montreal it seemed to detach itself from the moon, and was accompanied by a noise resembling a volley of artillery, and after traversing the air for about three leagues, it disappeared behind the mountain which gives name to the island; while at Quebec it merely passed without any thing special.¹

On the 7th of January, in the following year, an almost imperceptible vapor rose from the river, and when struck by the first rays of the sun, became transparent, so that it had sufficient substance to support two parhelions which appeared on either side of that orb, so that three apparent suns were seen at once on a line parallel with the horizon, apparently some fathoms apart, each with an iris whose momentarily varying hues sometimes resembled a

¹ Relation de la Nouvelle France, 1663, p. 2.