

the greater part boast of deriving their origin from Heaven, which they found on the following fable, which passes among them for a truth.

They recognize as head of their Nation a certain woman whom they call *Ataentsic*, who fell among them, they say, from Heaven.<sup>11</sup> For they think the Heavens existed a long time before this wonder; but they cannot tell you when or how its great bodies were drawn from the abysses of nothing. They suppose, even, that above the arches of the Sky there was and still is a land like ours, with woods, lakes, rivers and fields, and Peoples who inhabit them. They do not agree as to the manner in which this so fortunate descent occurred. [87] Some say that one day, as she was working in her field, she perceived a Bear; her dog began to pursue it and she herself afterwards. The Bear, seeing himself closely pressed, and seeking only to escape the teeth of the dog, fell by accident into a hole; the dog followed him. *Aataentsic*, having approached this precipice, finding that neither the Bear nor the dog were any longer to be seen, moved by despair, threw herself into it also. Nevertheless, her fall happened to be more favorable than she had supposed; for she fell down into the waters without being hurt, although she was with child,—after which, the waters having dried up little by little, the earth appeared and became habitable.

Others attribute this fall to another cause, which seems to have some relation to the case of Adam, but falsehood makes up the greater part of it. They say that the husband of *Aataentsic*, being very sick, dreamed that it was necessary to cut down a certain tree from which those who abode in Heaven obtained their food; and that, as soon as he ate of the fruit,