

when there was nearly three feet of snow,—apparently as cheerful, nevertheless, as if they had won. The most remarkable thing I notice in regard to this matter is the disposition they bring to it. There are some who fast several days before playing: the evening before, they all meet together in a Cabin, and make a feast to find out what will be the result of the game. The one chosen to hold the dish takes the stones, and puts them promiscuously into a dish, and covers it, so as to prevent any one from putting his hand into it. That done, they sing; the song over, the dish is uncovered, and the plum-stones are found all white or all black. On this point, I asked a Savage if those against whom they were to play did not do the same on their side, and if they might not find the plum-stones in the same condition. He said they did; “And yet,” said I to him, “all can not win;” to that he knew not what to answer. He informed me besides of two remarkable things: in the first place, that they choose, to handle the dish, some one who had dreamed that he would win, or who had a charm; moreover, those who have a charm do not conceal it, and [132] carry it everywhere with them: we have, they tell me, one of these in our Village, who rubs the plum-stones with a certain ointment and hardly ever fails to win. Secondly, that in making the attempt some of the plum-stones disappear, and are found some time after in the dish with the others.

Among all these fooleries, I dare not speak of the infamies and uncleanness which the Devil makes to slip into them, causing them to see in a dream that they can only be healed by wallowing in all sorts of filth. May he who has saved us by the blood of the