

It was well that, toward the end of the council, Our Father Superior, taking occasion to reply, now to one, now to another of these Councilors upon unimportant questions about the Sky, the Sun, and the Stars, fell imperceptibly upon the points of our faith, and powerfully affected these minds, otherwise rather indifferent, by the contemplation of the eternal fires.

The other assembly opened about eight o'clock in the evening. This council was composed of three Nations, namely, of that one called the Bear,—our first hosts, who comprise, in all, fourteen villages, large and small; they occupied one side of the cabin, and we were placed in the middle of the same side. Opposite were the two other Nations, each numbering four very populous villages. It was here that they were to deal with the affair of the black robes, who were everywhere believed to be [16] the cause of all the misfortunes of the country. They all yielded the dignity of President to a certain old blind man, one of the most commendable of our village, and the oldest of the company, respected among his people for the reputation he had acquired as a man of intelligence and executive ability. Here is an account of it, nearly as all occurred.

The foremost of the Captains puts in the mouth, as it were, of Ontitarac (the blind President) the terms he should use in opening the council. Then this old man, in a trembling, yet tolerably strong voice, saluted these Nations in general, and each of the Chiefs in particular, rejoicing with them that they had auspiciously assembled to deliberate upon a matter which was the most important in the country. Then he exhorted all those present to proceed seriously upon this occasion, when their preservation was at stake;