

ments,—now to warn them that they should begin to wash their bodies, now that they should grease them, now that they should adorn themselves with one ornament, and again with another. In short, you would have said there was a fire in the village, and that everything was about to be consumed. The final announcement was made to urge all the people to be there, and to enter before the arrival of those who were to dance, before whom came a Captain [132] who, bearing the rest of the desires of the patient, made his announcement in the form that we have just mentioned; there followed, a little distance behind, the company of dancers, men and women, at whose head marched two masters of ceremonies, singing, and holding the Tortoise, on which they did not cease to play. This Tortoise is not a real Tortoise, but only the shell and skin so arranged as to make a sort of drum; having thrown certain pebbles into this, they make from it an instrument like that which children in France use to play with. There is a mysterious something, I know not what, in this semblance of a Tortoise, to which these peoples attribute their origin. We shall know in time what there is to it.

These masters of ceremony now place themselves at the head of the patient, who is in the middle of the cabin, and now move apart, one remaining at her head, the other going to her feet. All the others who dance form a sort of flock, and incessantly wheel round and round the patient as long as the masters of the ceremony sing and play on the tortoise. It did not seem as if they could use more care, or more [133] mystery, or that there could be more earnest attention than each one gave to playing well his