

village, to gather all his people together, and to exhort them to provide that number of presents. No one is compelled to do so; but those who are willing bring publicly what they wish to contribute, and they seem to vie with one another in proportion as their wealth, and the desire for glory or for appearing [129] solicitous for the public weal, animate them on such occasions.

When the day designated for the ceremony had arrived, crowds flocked to it from all parts. The meeting was held outside our house.

In the evening, four Captains were deputed by the general council to come and speak to me; two were Christians, and two infidels. They presented themselves at the door. Here not a word is said, nor a thing done, except by presents; these are formalities that must be strictly observed, and without which no business can be considered as properly transacted.

The first present of those Captains was given in order that the door might be opened to them; a second present that they might be permitted to enter. We could have exacted as many presents as there were doors to be passed before reaching the place where I awaited them.

When they had entered, they commenced to speak to me by means of a present which they call "the wiping away of tears." "We wipe away thy tears by this gift," they said to me, "so that thy sight may be no longer dim when thou castest thine eyes on this country which has committed the murder." Then came the present [130] that they call "a beverage." "This," they said, "is to restore thy voice which thou hast lost, so that it may speak kindly."