

care that we ourselves have taken of the sick, and the remedies that we give them, which effect the cure of most sick persons, have ruined the credit and reputation of the charlatans and have forced them to go to settle elsewhere.

However there are among them some who are not so completely brutish; sometimes we can talk with them, and try to disabuse them of the senseless confidence that they have in their *Manitous*; but it is not usual to succeed in this. A conversation that one of our Fathers had with one of these Charlatans will make you understand how far their infatuation goes in this respect; and what must be the condescension of a Missionary to bring himself even to refute such extravagant opinions as these with which they are possessed.

The French had come to establish a fort on the river *Ouabache*; they asked for a Missionary, and Father Mermet was sent to them. This Father believed that he ought also to labor for the conversion of the *Mascoutens*, who had set up a Village on the borders of the same river: this is a Tribe of Savages who understand the Illinois language, but who because of the extreme attachment which they have for the superstitions of their Charlatans, were not very much inclined to listen to the instructions of the Missionary.

The course that Father Mermet took was to perplex, in the presence of this people, one of these Charlatans, who worshiped the ox as his great *Manitou*. After having insensibly led him so far as to avow that it was not the ox which he adored, but an ox *Manitou* which was under the earth, which animated all oxen, and which restored life to his sick