

After forty days of travel I entered the river of the Illinois, and, after voyaging fifty leagues, I came to their first Village, which had three hundred cabins, all of them with four or five fires. One fire is always for two families. They have eleven Villages belonging to their Tribe. On the day after my arrival, I was invited by the principal Chief to a grand repast, which he was giving to the most important men of the Tribe. He had ordered several dogs to be killed; such a feast is considered among the Savages a magnificent feast; therefore it is called "the feast of the Captains." The ceremonies that are observed are the same among all these Tribes. It is usual at this sort of feast for the Savages to deliberate upon their most important affairs,—as, for instance, when there is question either of undertaking war against their neighbors, or of terminating it by propositions of peace.

When all the guests had arrived they took their places all about the cabin, seating themselves either on the bare ground or on the mats. Then the Chief arose and began his address. I confess to you that I admired his flow of language, the justness and force of the arguments that he presented, the eloquent turn he gave to them, and the choice and nicety of the expressions with which he adorned his speech. I fully believe that, if I had written down what this Savage said to us, offhand and without preparation, you would readily acknowledge that the most able Europeans could scarcely, after much thought and study, compose an address that would be more forcible and better arranged.

When the speech was finished, two Savages, who performed the duty of stewards, distributed dishes