

their food or beverage, which they throw into the fire. This is the *benedicite* that they teach their children.

The most remarkable of all the curiosities to be seen in these woods, in the direction of Nemiskou, is a cave of white marble, which looks as if a workman had carved and polished it. The aperture is easy of access, and lights up the interior. The vault corresponds, by its brilliancy, to its supports. In one corner is a slab of the same substance, but somewhat rough, which projects, forming a kind of table as if to serve as an altar. Consequently the savages think that it is a house of prayer and council, wherein the Spirits assemble. Therefore all do not take the liberty of entering it; but the jugglers who are, as it were, their Priests, go there in passing to consult their oracles.

Not that I would venture to say that there are clever sorcerers among the Mistassins, or among the other Montagnais; for, at best, they are but clumsy charlatans. At least, as far as I have been able to study them, it is by their imaginary spells that they greatly desire to make themselves respected and dreaded. Even with the aid of their 30 different kinds of jugglery, all these sorcerers seldom succeed in making good their pretensions. Unfortunately, it is sufficient that they should tell the truth once, by accident, to be always believed in future—often, without believing themselves. For I have seen some who passed among them for masters, who candidly admitted to me that their art was but a falsehood; and that it was not true that they had ever seen either the devil or *Atchéne*,—that is to say, any of those headless and handless phantoms, etc.⁵ They said that it was solely with the object of