

The letter bears date—

“Mackinac, August 6, 1823.

“SIR:—At this term of the court, there have been several trials and much more business than could have been expected. An Indian was indicted for the murder of another Indian; he was tried and acquitted. On the trial, a question arose as to the admissibility of evidence. When the act was committed, there were three or four Indians only present, and not a single white person. I was at a loss, on the rules laid down, whether these Indians could be admitted as witnesses; from the situation of the country, you will at once see that it is a question of considerable importance. One of the witnesses (a woman) stated that she believed there was a Great Spirit—that there were places appointed for those who conducted well, and for those who conducted badly—that the eye of the Great Spirit was continually upon her, and that, if she told a lie about the murder, before the court, she would, after death, be sent to the *bad* place, and there punished for it. Under a solemn injunction to tell the truth, I permitted her to make her statement to the jury, at the same time instructing them to place such dependence only on it as it might seem to merit. All of the others would not say whether they believed in *anything*. They appeared to be very stupid. One of them said he was a pretty old man, and if any of his friends who had died had come to life again, he rather thought he should have *seen them*, but he never heard anything about them after they were once dead and buried. These witnesses were all rejected.”

Several years after, (in 1828,) they appear to have been troubled in Wisconsin to get a sheriff to hang an Indian, after he had been regularly convicted of murder, as will appear by the following copy of a letter to Gen. Cass, then at Washington, from the Hon. James Witherell, then acting Governor of Michigan:

“Detroit, Nov. 4th, 1828.

“DEAR SIR:—Some time after you left here, I received, by the hand of Major Rowland, the record of conviction and