

AC901

A7

1909

no. 001

pxvx

opportunities were unrivalled; and they used them in a spirit of faithful inquiry, accumulating facts, and leaving theory to their successors." It is for this reason that the Jesuit Relations should be regarded as the groundwork of Indian archaeology, as far as Canada is concerned. They were written by men of absolute integrity, who have given us as much of the life history of the individual, the clan and the tribe, as came under their observation; or as they were able to obtain from the most trustworthy sources. They describe the Indian, as they found him, embowered in the seclusion of his native forests; surrounded by innumerable okies or manitous, both benevolent and malignant, to whom he appealed for aid in the hour of his need, or propitiated with sacrifices; venerating, with a sentiment akin to worship, such animal ancestors as happened to be the prototypes of his various clans; adhering to mythologies that agreed fairly well in essentials though somewhat loosely defined in matters of detail; believing, in his Nature-worship, in the soul or spirit of the lake, the river and the cataract; but without any vestige of belief in that personification of beneficence called "The Great Spirit" who was presented to him afterwards by the missionaries, as the archetype of mankind, and recommended to him as the Supreme Being whom he should worship.

That the Jesuit record has been dictated by a spirit of truthfulness, is apparent from its impartial treatment of Indian tradition and worship; for, while some writers have endeavored to interpret Indian mythology in such a manner as to make it conform to the bias of preconceived theories, these worthy apostles of the Cross have given us the simple truth without embellishments. Examples of this kind may be found in Ragueneau's Relation, of 1648, in which he refers to the Hurons as having received from their ancestors no knowledge of God; and in the denial of Allouez, in his Relation of 1667, that any such knowledge existed among the tribes of Lake Superior. It is not probable that these men would have failed to recognize any such belief had the case been otherwise. Thus, these subtle reasoners, and past-masters in theological disquisition, were unable to discover, in such manitous as Manabozho, or the Great White Hare of the Algonkins, or, in Rawen Niyoh, the great oki of the Huron-Iroquois, beings analogous to the white man's God.

Now, the writer is convinced that this field of archaeological inquiry should be entered, with the assistance of the "openesame" of the historical record; and that, by following up the clues, transmitted to us by the Jesuits and other contemporary writers, we should devote our attention to such portions of this field as are most likely to yield the best results, under careful and methodical cultivation.