

they were in the habit of making offerings to departed or unseen spirits. Their system of theology was a structure founded on superstition, for the Indians were the most superstitious of men. They placed implicit faith in the incantations of jugglers; they believed in invisible spirits, some good and some bad, who dwelt in the winds and in the water. But, as courage in war and skill in the chase were their standards of virtue, their religious views had little influence on their moral conduct. Their paradise was merely a place of sensual enjoyment, where hunger and fatigue were unknown. There was nothing ennobling or exalted in their system of theology,—nothing which appealed to the higher nature of man.*

Their funeral ceremonies were of a touching character. When the head of the family died, there was great weeping and sorrowing for three or four days. The faces of the friends were besmeared with soot, which was the common symbol of grief. At the proper time, a funeral oration was pronounced, in which the genealogy of the deceased was recited, and the great and good actions of his life, his dinners and feasts, his adventures in war and in the chase were recounted. On the third day, a feast was held as a recognition of the great satisfaction which the deceased was supposed to feel, at rejoining his ancestors. After this, the women made a garment or winding sheet of birch bark, in which he was wrapped and put away on a sort of scaffold for a twelve month, to dry. At the end of this time, the body was buried in a grave, in which the relations at the same time threw bows and arrows, snow shoes, darts, robes, axes, pots, moccasins and skins. Denys states that he has seen furs to the value of a thousand francs thrown in, which no man dared to touch. Once he had a grave on the Gulf shore opened, and he shewed the savages that the skins were rotten and the copper pot all covered with verdigris. They only

* To illustrate the views which they entertained in regard to objects of devotion, I may mention a circumstance related by Denys. At the time Latour had his fort at St. John, a singular tree, about the thickness of a barrel, was from time to time visible in the falls: it floated upright, and sometimes was not seen for several days. This was considered a proper object of worship by the Indians. They called it Manitou, and made offerings of beaver skins to it which they fixed on it by means of arrow heads. Denys states that he has seen it, and that Latour allowed ten of his men to try to drag it out by means of a rope, which they attached to it, but were unable to move it. No doubt the ingenious Latour had anchored the tree there himself, and history is silent in regard to who gathered the beaver skins from the Manitou.