

Hunting, or fishing, was the occupation of these Arabs of the American wilderness, fighting their continual pastime. Hence, permanent dwelling-places were not usual, except among the Hurons and Iroquois, and their life was one of ceaseless wandering. Their religion was always of a peculiarly mixed and doubtful quality. Champlain has left on record the statement that the Mic-macs of Acadie had neither devotional ideas nor superstitious ceremonies. Other tribes upon the St. Lawrence assured him that each man had his own god whom he worshipped in secret silence. They seem, however, to have usually worshipped something, whether the spirit of good, the spirit of evil, the spirit of storm, the god of war, the spirit of the mountains, or a spirit of the waters.

They peopled all the surrounding air with friendly or hostile spirits and created amongst themselves those powerful manipulators of superstition—the medicine men—to control the demons of storm and famine and disease and death which a vivid imagination had called into existence. To these priests of a peculiar and varied faith they also confined the care of the sick and there is little doubt that experience and necessity had evolved many a simple yet effective remedy by the time the white man appeared on the scene. Great faith was placed in dreams, and oratory was almost as important a factor in success as bravery. The orations that have come down to us are in many cases models of conciseness, brevity and forcefulness, not unmingled at times with a touch of pathos. In morals the Indian was far superior to most other savage races. He had one wife and, though she was expected to do most of the work and to bear a full share in hardship and suffering, he did not wantonly ill-treat her and was usually faithful to her as she was to him. With the appearance of the white settlers this latter condition unfortunately changed, though, in all the wars which followed, the captured white woman was safe from anything worse than the scalping-knife. Nor, in