

that occur among them from time to time, supply this deficiency by making for themselves a local memory by means of words which they attach to these belts, of which each one refers to some particular affair or some circumstance, which it represents while it exists.

“ They are so much consecrated to this use that, besides the name *Gaïonni*, which is their name for the kind of belts most used, they bestow that of *Garihona*, which means a transaction; that of *Gaouenda*, voice or word, and of *Gaianderenfera*, which means grandeur or nobility; because all the affairs dignified by these belts are the endowment and province of the *agoianders* or nobles. It is they who furnish them; and it is among them that they are redivided when presents are made to the village and when replies to the belts of their ambassadors are sent.

“ The *agoianders* and the ancients have, besides this, the custom of looking over them often together, and of dividing among themselves the care of noting certain ones, which are particularly assigned to them; so that in this way they do not forget anything.”

“ Their wampum would soon be exhausted if it did not circulate; but in almost all affairs, either within or without, the law requires a reply, word for word, that is to say, for one belt one must give another, to be of about the same value, observing, however, a slight difference in the number of beads, which must be proportioned to the rank of the persons or nations with which they treat.

“ They do not believe that any transaction can be concluded without these belts. Whatever proposition is made to them, or reply given them, by word of mouth alone, the affair falls through they say, and they let it fall through very effectually as though there had been no question about it. Europeans, little informed or little concerned about their usages, have slightly inconvenienced them on this point in retaining their belts without giving them a similar response. To avoid the inconvenience which might arise from this they acquired the style of giving only a small quantity, excusing themselves on the plea that their wampum was exhausted; and they supplied the rest with packages of deer-skin, in return for which they were given trinkets of small value, so that transactions between Europeans and them have become a sort of trade.

“ Although all the savage nations of America make various kinds of ornaments of shells, I believe that it is only those of North America who employ them in transactions. I cannot even affirm that all of these do.”¹

Loskiel² also gives a good account, which is as follows: “ Four or six strings joined in one breadth, and fastened to each other with fine thread, make a *belt of wampum*, being about three or four inches wide, and three feet long, containing, perhaps, four, eight, or twelve fathom of wampum, in proportion to its required length and breadth. This is determined by the importance of the subject which these belts are intended either to explain or confirm, or by the dignity of the persons to whom they are to be delivered. Everything of moment transacted at solemn councils, either between the Indians themselves or with Europeans, is ratified and made valid by strings and belts of wampum. Formerly they used to give sanction to their treaties by delivering the wing of some large bird; and this custom still prevails among the more western nations, in transacting business with the Delawares. But the Delawares themselves, the Iroquois, and the nations in league with them, are now sufficiently provided with

¹Lafitau: *Mœurs des Sauvages Américains*, 1724, Tome II., pp. 502-503 and 506-507; *apud* Holmes, p. 240, *et seq.*

²Missions of the United Brethren, Book I., p. 26.