

## Page 36 - Father Maillard at a Micmac Feast, 1758 ISSUE : Issue 16 Published by Ronald Caplan on 1977/6/1

After this, he sits down, and somebody younger, and of course of less note, for they pay great respect to age, gets up, and makes a summary recapitulation of what the first speaker has said; commending his manner of singing the praises of the mas? ter of the feast's ancestors: to which he observes, there is nothing to be added; but that he has, however, left him one part of the talk to be accomplished, which is, not to pass over in silence the feast to which he and the rest of his brethren are invited; neither to omit the merit and praises of him who has given the entertain? ment. Then guitting his place, and advanc? ing in cadence, he takes the master of the treat by the hand, saying, "All the praises my tongue is about to utter, have thee for their object. All the steps I am going to take, as I dance lengthwise and breadthwise in thy cabin, are to prove to thee the gaiety of my heart, and my gratitude. Cour? age I my friends, keep time with motions and voice, to my song and dance." With this he begins, and proceeds in his Netchkawet, that is, advancing with his body straight erect, in measured steps, with his arms a-kimbo. Then he delivers his words, singing and trembling with his whole body, looking before and on each side of him with a steady countenance, sometimes moving with a slow grave pace, then.again with a quick and brisk one. Ibe syllables he ar tinctly are, Ywhann yol hal yol hal and he looks full at th demand their chorus he pronounces with singing and dancing word Heh! fetched u ticulates the most dis- ah, Owanna, Haywanna. when he makes a pause e company, as much as to to the word Hehl which great emphasis. As he is they often repeat the p from the depth of their throat; and when he makes his pause, they cry aloud in chorus, Hehl After this prelude, the person who had sung and danced recovers his breath and spirits a little, and begins his harangue in praise of the maker of the feast. He flatters him greatly, in attributing to him a thousand good qualities he never had, and appeals to all the compajiy for the truth of what he says, who are sure not to contradict him, being in the same circumstance as himself of being treated, and answer him by the word Hehl which is as much as to say. Yes, or Surely. Then he takes them all by the hand, and begins his dance again: and some? times this first dance is carried to a pitch of madness. At the end of it he kisses his hand, by way of salute to all the com? pany; after which he goes quietly to his place again. Then another gets up to acquit himself of the same duty, and so do suc? cessively all the others in the cabin, to the very last man inclusively. This ceremony of thanksgiving being over by men, the girls and women come in, with the oldest at the head of them, who car? ries in her left hand a great piece of birch-bark of the hardest, upon which she strikes as it were a drum; and to that dull sound which the bark returns, they all dance, spinning round on their heels, guivering, with one hand lifted, the other down: other notes they have none, but a guttural loud aspiration of the word Hehl Hehl Hehl as often as the old female sa- vage strikes her bark-drum. As soon as she ceases striking, they set up a general cry, expressed by Yahl Then, if their dance is approved, they begin it again; and when weariness obliges the old woman to with? draw, she pronounces her thanksgiving in Rt. 19, near Inverness / Inverness 1/2 mile off Cabot Trail Neil's



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