

JEAN DE BRÉBEUF
[Cure by Lacrosse]¹

1636

The *aoutaerohi* is a remedy for only one particular kind of disease, which they also call *aoutaerohi*. This term comes from the name of a little demon as large as the fist, which they say is in the body of the sick person, especially in the part that pains him. They find out that they are sick with

¹Brackets indicate that the three titles in this section of Chapter 3 were inserted by the editor.

JR 10:182-87, Jean de Brébeuf, *Relation of 1636*.

this disease by means of a dream, or by the intervention of some sorcerer. One day I went to visit a woman who thought herself sick of *aoutaerohi*, and when I assigned another cause for her illness and laughed at her *aoutaerohi*, she called out to this demon, *aoutaerohi hechrio Kihenkhon*: "*aoutaerohi*, I pray you that this man may know who you are and that you will make him feel the ills that you make me suffer." To drive away this demon, they make feasts accompanied with songs, which very few of them know how to sing properly. . . .

There are as many as twelve kinds of dances that constitute the many sovereign remedies for sickness. Only a dream or else the *Arendiowane*, or sorcerer, can determine whether this or that is the proper remedy for a given disease.

Of three types of games that are popular among these peoples—lacrosse, dish, and straw—the first two, they say, are wonderful for the health. Is this not worthy of compassion? Imagine a poor sick person, fevered of body and almost dying, and some miserable sorcerer prescribes, as a cooling remedy, a game of lacrosse! Or perhaps the patient himself has dreamed that he must die unless the whole country plays lacrosse for his health. Then, no matter how insignificant the person may be, you will see a fine field where village contends against village for lacrosse supremacy, with wagers of beaver robes and beaded necklaces spurring them on.

Sometimes, also, one of these shamans will say that the whole country is sick, and he calls for a game of lacrosse to heal it. No more needs to be said; word quickly spreads, and all the captains of every village order that all the young men do their duty in this respect; otherwise some great misfortune will befall the whole country. The game of dish is also greatly valued for medical purposes, especially if the patient has dreamed of it. . . .