

it; yet O-mig'-a-loon, the most influential man at Nu-wu'k, the same who headed the party against Commander Pullen, at Point Berens, after informing us that a lad of eighteen had deceived us, and got food by telling a false tale of distress, would not for some time repeat his statement in the presence of the youth.

Invisible spirits (*sing.* turn'-gak; *plural,* turn'-gain,) people the earth, the air, and the sea; and to them they apply similar notions of equality, attributing to none superior power, nor have they even a special name for any that we could learn. These turn'-gain are very numerous, some good, some bad; they are sometimes seen, and then unusually resemble the upper half of a man, but are likewise of every conceivable form. Their belief in ghosts seemed proved by the circumstance that two young girls who left the ship in the twilight of a short winter's day, turned back in breathless haste on seeing a sledge set up on end near the path to the village. They told the story of themselves next day, saying they were frightened, having mistaken the sledge, which was not there in the daytime when they had passed, for a turn'-gak. They are concerned in the production of all the evils of life, and whatever seems inexplicable is said to be caused by one of them. One causes a bad wind to blow, so that the ice becomes unsafe; another packs the ice so close on the surface of the sea that the whales are smothered; and a third strikes a man dead in the open air, without leaving any mark on his body; or a fourth draws him by the feet into the bowels of the earth. These are evil genii; and the good ones are little better, as they are very liable to get offended and turn their backs on suffering humanity, leaving it at the mercy of the worse disposed. Their dances and ceremonies are all intended to please, to cajole, or to frighten these spirits. The most curious ceremony that came under observation was performed at the village in the course of the last winter, when food had become very scarce in consequence of the ice continuing very close from a long continuance of north-westerly winds. On the sea beach, close to one of the dance-houses, a small space was cleared, and a fire of wood made, round which the men formed a ring and chanted for some time, without dancing or the usual accompaniment of the tambourine. One of the old men then stepped towards the fire, and in a coaxing voice tried to persuade the evil genius, from whose baleful influence the people were suffering, to come under the fire to warm himself. When he was supposed to have arrived, a vessel of water, to which each man present had contributed, was thrown upon the fire by the old man, and immediately a number of arrows sped from the bows of the others into the earth where the fire had been, in the full belief that no turn'-gak would stop at a place where he received such bad treatment, but would depart to some other region, from which, on being detected, he would be driven away in a similar manner. To render the effect still greater, three guns were fired in different directions, to alarm the spirits of the air, and make them change the wind. For the same object they several times requested the ship's guns, eighteen-pounders, to be fired against the wind.

When our poor friend O-mis-yu-a'-a-run, commonly called the water-chief, from having accused us of stealing the water from the village, was carried away with two others on the ice to near Cape Lisburn, in the beginning of the winter, his wife had a thin thong of seal-skin stretched in four or five turns round the walls of the ig-lu, and anxiously watched it night and day until she heard of her husband's fate. They believe that so long as the person watched for is alive and moves about, his turn'-gak causes the cord to vibrate, and when at length it hangs slack and vibrates no longer, he is supposed to be dead. Having heard something of the hourly observations of the movements of a magnet suspended by a thread in the observatory, the old dame sent Erk-sin'-ra to see if its movements had any connexion with her husband's case.

Thunder is a rare occurrence at Point Barrow, but not altogether unknown to its inhabitants, and they say the sound of it is caused by a man spirit, who dwells with his family in a tent far away to the north. This Esquimaux representative of Jupiter Tonans is an ill-natured fellow who sleeps most of his time; and when he wakes up he calls to his children to go out and make thunder and lightning by shaking inflated seal-skins and waving torches, which they do with great glee until he goes to sleep again.

They do not entertain any clear idea of a future state of existence, nor can they apparently imagine that a person altogether dies. Although death is a subject they dislike to talk of, we have heard the sentiments of several upon this, and the nature of the soul. About the last they differ a good deal, but they