

sion to see that deep down in the savage heart a Divine spark is still flickering, ready at any moment to be fanned into a living flame.

*Nat Worship.*—The real religion of the Kachins, as far as they have any, consists in Nat or demon worship. These Nats are now innumerable, and occupy almost every imaginable place above and below. Certain Nats rule the sky, the sun and the moon; others dwell upon earth and are found in every mountain-top, hill, streamlet, river, spring, or well; every field, wood, and even individual trees have their guardian Nats; every tribe, village, and family acknowledge some special Nat to whom they must pay honor. These Nats must not be confounded with Grecian nymphs, naiads, and satyrs, or with fairies or goblins of medieval Europe. Most of them have once been human beings or descend from the early half Nats who took such an active part in the first stages of the world. They are a constant terror to the people. They watch with jealous carefulness every occupied place, and are always ready for revenge if any trespasses are committed. If the usual sacrifices are withheld, if a vessel consecrated to the Nat service has been unduly touched, if any one out of mistake has stepped in the place set apart for the household Nats, punishment may at once overtake the transgressor. Even if a Nat without any known cause desires a new offering, some misfortune will at once befall the intended family or individual. Houses may be burned, fields devastated by wild animals, "bad luck" will attend every undertaking, and poverty will be the sure result of all. The most common form of punishment, however, is by diseases of different kinds. The Nats alone possess the remedies necessary in case of illness, but do not administer any when offended, unless properly propitiated. As soon as a person is taken ill, a Nat priest is at once sent for. The dwelling-place of the offended Nat is found and the desired sacrifice ascertained. This is done by a kind of divination. The greatness of the sacrifice depends upon the importance of the case. Ordinarily, for slight offenses, a little whisky, a few eggs, some dried fish and meat, or a few fowls will suffice. In more important cases, or if a great work or expedition is to be undertaken, pigs and cattle of any kind must be offered. When larger animals are sacrificed, the flesh is prepared and distributed among the inhabitants of the community where the sacrifice is made. As the Nat priest receives a part of the animal offered, the size of the sacrifice often depends on his personal desire of profit in the case at hand.

A few particulars regarding this Nat worship may be of special interest. A large number of Nat altars are always found outside of every Kachin house. They are usually made of bamboo, and are only used as receptacles for certain parts of the offering. The Nats are invoked to come down upon them and to accept the sacrifice made. A new altar must be built for every sacrifice, even if offerings are successively made to the same Nat. Inside the houses of chiefs and other prominent men a large altar of a different kind is often found, which is used as long as the