

Nevertheless, prudent ethnographers must often doubt accounts of such, for this reason, that the savage who declares that the dead live no more, may merely mean to say that they are dead. When the East African is asked what becomes of his buried ancestors, the "old people," he can reply that "they are ended," yet at the same time he fully admits that "their ghosts survive." In an account of the religious ideas of the Zulus, taken down from a native, it is explicitly stated that Unkulunkulu, the Old-Old-One, said that people "were to die and never rise again," and that he allowed them "to die and rise no more." Knowing so thoroughly as we now do the theology of the Zulus, whose ghosts not only survive in the under-world, but are the very deities of the living, we can put the proper sense to these expressions. But without such information, we might have mistaken them for denials of the soul's existence after death. This objection may even apply to one of the most formal denials of a future life ever placed on record among an uncultured race, a poem of the Dinka tribe of the White Nile, concerning Dendid the Creator:

"On the day when Dendid made all things,

He made the sun ;

And the sun comes forth, goes down, and comes again :

He made the moon ;

And the moon comes forth, goes down, and comes again :

He made the stars ;

And the stars come forth, go down, and come again :

He made man ;

And the man comes forth, goes down into the ground, and comes no more."

It is to be remarked, however, that the close neighbors of these Dinka, the Bari, believe that the dead do return to live again on earth, and the question arises whether it is the doctrine of bodily resurrection, or the doctrine of the surviving ghost-soul, that the Dinka poem denies. The missionary, Kaufmann, says that the Dinka do not believe the immortality of the soul, that they think it but a breath, and with death all is over; Brun-Rollet's contrary authority goes to prove that they do believe in another life; both leave it an open question whether they recognize the existence of surviving ghosts. The case is, like various others of the same kind, incomplete.

Looking at the religion of the lower races as a whole, we shall at least not be ill-advised in taking as one of its general and principal elements the doctrine of the soul's future life. But here it is needful to explain, to limit, and to reserve, lest modern theological ideas should lead us to misconstrue more primitive beliefs. In such enquiries the phrase "immortality of the soul" is to be avoided as misleading. It is doubtful how far the lower psychology entertains at all an absolute conception of immortality, for past and future fade soon into utter vagueness as the savage mind quits the present to explore them, the measure of months and years breaks down even within the narrow span of human life, and the survivor's thought of the soul of the departed dwindles and disappears with the personal memory that kept it alive.

(To be continued.)