

Several of our people have informed me that they have seen and heard witches in the shape of these animals, especially the bear and the fox. They say that when a witch in the shape of a bear is being chased, all at once she will run round a tree or a hill, so as to be lost sight of for a time by her pursuers, and then, instead of seeing a bear, they behold an old woman walking quietly along, or digging up roots, looking as innocent as a lamb.

The fox witches are known by the flame of fire which proceeds out of their mouths every time they bark.

The way in which they are made is either by direct communication from the familiar spirit itself during the days of their fasting, or they are instructed by those skilled in the art.

The method they take to bewitch those who have offended them is thus :—The necromancer in the first place provides himself with a little wooden image, representing an Indian, and a bow and arrow ; then setting this figure up at a short distance before him, he will name it after the person he wishes to injure. He then takes the bow and arrow and shoots at the image, and wherever the arrow strikes, at that instant they say the person is seized with a violent pain in the same part.

I have been informed that formerly when any notorious necromancer was suspected of having bewitched any one, they were often condemned by the councils of the different tribes to execution—but this was always done with great caution, lest the conjuror should get the advantage over them, and thus bewitch the whole assembly.

THEIR MEDICINES.

In describing the medicines used by the North American Indians, I am led to wonder and admire the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty in supplying them with such an abundant variety of remedies, every way suitable for the diseases common to their country and climate.

Our forests abound with medicinal plants, so that the powow who has obtained a knowledge of the virtue of roots and herbs, is never at a loss during the summer season for a supply, when he lays up a store for winter's use.

I have no doubt but our woods, plains, and marshes, could furnish a specific for every dis-

ease, if the virtues of the plants were better known ; for even with the limited knowledge the powows possess they are enabled to perform wonderful cures. I have known instances where persons who have been given over by the English doctors were completely restored to health by the simple administration of Indian medicines, and many of the white people who have great confidence in their beneficial effects will travel many miles to place themselves under the care of an Indian doctor.

Many of the healing plants are held in religious veneration, so much so, that even the *Muhshkemood* or *Medicine bag*, is considered to possess supernatural power to injure any who may dare to examine its sacred contents ; so afraid are the Indians of it, that it might lie for days and months in the wigwam without being touched.

The powows are very careful to instil this feeling of dread and veneration for the bag and its contents, that they may the more easily work upon the credulity of their subjects.

1st. *The Hunter's Medicine.* This is held in great esteem by all hunters ; it is made of different sorts of roots which he takes with him on his hunting excursion, a little of which he puts in his gun that it may take effect the first shot. He will also place a small portion of it in the first deer or bear's track he meets with, supposing that if the animals be two or three day's journey off they will come in sight of it in a short time, the charm possessing the power to shorten the journey from two or three days to two or three hours. To render the medicine more efficient, he will frequently sing the hunter's song, and I have known many a hunter sit up all night beating his *tawagun*, and then at day-light take his gun and go in quest of the game. This is generally done when an Indian imagines he has displeased the God of the game by not paying him that reverence which secures his success in the chase. The first animal he takes, he then devotes to the God of the game, making a feast, and offering part in sacrifice, by which he thinks to appease his wrath.

2d. *The Warrior's Medicine.* This consists of roots and herbs, and is highly esteemed by the Indians, who never fail to take it with them when they go out to war, believing that the possession of this medicine renders their bodies