

panthers, &c., who will constantly bite and tear their flesh, and thus torment them for ever and ever. These are all the ideas the Indians have of a future state, and they can conceive of no greater degree of felicity as the reward of good and evil.

DISEASES.

The diseases most common amongst the Aborigines of America before the landing of Europeans, were few in comparison to the number of wasting diseases that are now rapidly thinning their numbers and debilitating their constitutions. There is a saying among our people, that in the days of our forefathers they were so exempt from sickness, that as the cedar tree which has stood the storms of many ages, shews the first symptoms of decay by dying at the top branches, so the aged Indian, sinking under the weight of many winters, betokens by his grey hairs and furrowed cheeks, that life is now declining.

The diseases most common to the Indians were consumption, pleurisy, cough, worms, and dysentery.

The measles, small-pox, hooping-cough, and other contagious disorders, were unknown to the Indians before the landing of the whiteman. But now they are subject to all these maladies, and suffer much from them, not knowing their nature; and being much exposed to the storms and winds, they take colds which increase the virulence of the complaint, and thus hurry thousands off the stage of life.

POWOWS OR MEDICINE-MEN.

Each tribe has its medicine-men and women, who are consulted and employed in all times of sickness. These powows are persons who have distinguished themselves by performing extraordinary cures either by the application of roots and herbs, or by incantations.

When an Indian wishes to be initiated into the order of a powow, in the first place he pays a large fee to the *faculty*; he is then taken into the woods, where he is taught the names and virtues of the various useful plants; after this he is instructed how to chaunt the medicine-song, and how to pray, which prayer is a vain repetition offered up to the Master of Life, or munedoo whom the afflicted imagine they have offended. The powows are held in high

reverence by their deluded brethren, not so much on account of their knowledge of medicine, as of the supposed magical power they possess, for they practice witchcraft, an account of which I shall give hereafter. It is to their interest to make these credulous people believe that they can at pleasure hold intercourse with the munedoos who are ever ready to give them the information they require.

I am acquainted with a noted medicine man (a chief) residing at the West, who by art and cunning has gained the fear of all the Indians who know him, so much so, that the other chiefs never undertake any thing of importance without consulting him; if he approves it is well, if not, the object is abandoned. This chief is quite like a patriarch among his people, and may be considered a rich pagan Indian, as he possesses many horses which run wild on the plains, and are only caught as he wishes to sell or use them.

It is said that he has obtained most of his possessions by his powowisms on the sick, and curing those who are bewitched. The powows are generally well paid for their performances, either by a gun, kettle, blanket, coat, or a gallon or two of whiskey; when the latter article is demanded and paid, the performance of the powow is sure to be crowned by a drunken frolic, in which the doctor joins with his companions for a whole night, singing, yelling, and beating a drum, much to the annoyance of the afflicted person whose sufferings are aggravated and death hastened by this cruel treatment.

WITCHCRAFT.

As the Powows always unite witchcraft with the application of their medicines, I shall now give a short account of this curious art.

Witches and Wizards are persons supposed to possess the agency of familiar spirits, from whom they receive power to inflict diseases on their enemies, prevent the good luck of the hunter, and the success of the warrior.

At their will and pleasure they are supposed to fly invisibly from one place to another, turn themselves into bears, wolves, foxes, owls, bats, and snakes, which feats they pretend to accomplish by putting on the skins of these animals, at the same time crying and howling in imitation of the creature they wish to represent.