

different gods, his sneezing was not to be considered of any consequence."

Hence we find that in all ages and in all countries, 1st., a sneeze is supposed to be an omen of impending evil to the person who sneezes, or to an undertaking which he may at the time be commencing,—and 2ndly, that an invocation of the Deity, is a preservation from the danger which a person incurs by sneezing.

Struck by these remarkable identities in the observance of so irrational a custom, I felt convinced that it must have taken its rise in some religious fears and superstitions of primitive man, the common parent of those by whom it has been so long preserved.

On looking at those nations that present the most primitive type, we find a strange uniformity of belief.

The North American Indians, the natives of the Indian Archipelago, as well as the Polynesians, believed, not only in the existence of some supreme and beneficent power, but also in the existence of inferior spiritual beings, or little gods, strongly resembling the Fairies of Northern Europe. They also believed that all nature had a soul as well as man, and that the soul is peculiarly liable to the agency of spiritual beings. Thus the "Medicine Man" of the North American races is always a necromancer. His patient is not affected by natural, but by supernatural causes, only to be removed by counter-charms. The "Medicine Man" works himself into a singular state, sometimes ending in convulsions; he then becomes inspired, and proceeds, with certain ceremonies, *to bring back* the patient's *soul*, or to expel the evil spirit.

The same belief and practice are observable among the savages of Borneo, and of Central Africa. Among these simple and primitive races, there is a belief that man has a double form, the one corporeal, and the other spiritual, and that even in life the spirit or soul and the body are not necessarily united, but that sickness or evil spirits may deprive the body of its spiritual companion.*

* The belief among the Jews, as to idiots or insane persons being "possessed of evil spirits," may be connected with these ideas. It is remarkable that sickness and death are, in the Arctic regions, in Australia, and in Central Africa, attributed by the natives to the influence of spirits, who have been employed by enemies to injure them. Thus among the Arctic Laponenx, whenever a person dies, his relatives kill some one belonging to a neighboring tribe. In Australia exactly the same thing occurs, the natives fancying that some one has by supernatural means stolen the "kidney fat" of the deceased. They accordingly knock on the head a native of another tribe, and take from him his kidney fat, while he is still alive.

See Sir John Richardson's "Arctic Expedition in search of Sir John Franklin, ch. 12." See also Report on the Aborigines, by the Committee of the Legislative Council of Victoria—Session 1858-9.

The belief in Scotland and in Equatorial Africa, is found to be almost precisely identical respecting there being *ghosts even of the living*, who are exceedingly troublesome and pugnacious, and can be sometimes killed by a silver bullet, or great skill.