

## INTRODUCTION.

WHEN a school of Ethnologists, who include in their number the illustrious name of Agassiz, dispute the truth of revelation, maintaining that the African, American, and other races sprang from different "centres of creation," any arguments that can overthrow so dangerous a theory are entitled to great consideration, no matter how trivial or absurd may be the subject to which they refer. It is hardly necessary to premise that, if the view of the American Ethnologists is correct—that certain branches of the human family were created in the countries which they now inhabit,—there can be no similarity in the customs and superstitions of *all nations*, excepting in those which the common wants, impulses, or perceptions of men would necessarily suggest to them in all countries, and at all times.

Any very marked identity in this particular is a difficulty in the way of Professor Agassiz and his friends. But the difficulty becomes greater, if the identity exists in the observance of a custom, that is of a nature so trivial or absurd, as not to be likely to be suggested by nature to all men in all countries; and the argument against their view becomes irresistible, when we find a large number of superstitions and customs common to all men, identical in their meaning and mode of observance; and still more when there is a marked resemblance in the very time when these customs are observed, especially when the range of the custom extends from far north of the Equator to the most southerly portions of the world, and is found encircling the globe, existing in all latitudes and in every climate.

It is needless to say, that if such customs exist, and cannot be supposed to have been borrowed, we are inevitably driven to the conclusion that they were *inherited*, and, if inherited, it must have been from a common origin.

My attention has consequently been devoted, during the past nine years, to the existence of certain popular customs and superstitions, the