

spoken of by writers of fiction, are an actual reality in the imaginations of Crees and Ojibways, as well as of other north-western tribes. A plain Cree on the Qu'appelle gravely informed one of my men that he had been dead once, and visited the spirit world. His narrative was to the following effect:—"I was sick, and fell asleep. I awoke on the bank of a deep river, whose waters were flowing swiftly and black from a great mist on the south to a great mist on the north. Many other Indians sat on the banks of the river, gazing on its waters, and on the gloomy shore which lay wrapped in mist on the other side. Time after time the mist before us would roll away and reveal the mouth of another great river pouring its flood into the one on whose banks I was sitting. The country to the south of this river was bright and glorious, to the north dark and gloomy. On the one side was the happy hunting grounds, on the other the hunting grounds of the bad Indians. Time after time my companions tried to cross the swift stream before us, in order to reach the happy hunting grounds; some arrived in safety, others reached the north bank, and disappeared in the mist which overhung the bad country. I tried at last, but the current was too strong for me, the recollection of bad deeds prevented me from stemming the current, and I was swept on to the north shore of the opposite river. I scrambled up the bank, and spent many moons in hunting in that dreary land; always on the point of starving, or of being hurt by enemies, or wet and cold and miserable. At length I came upon a river like the one I had crossed, with mists and a great stream opposite, breaking clouds revealing happy hunting grounds on one side, and a more gloomy and terrible country on the other side. Other Indians were there before me, looking at the river and trying to cross; many succeeded, a few were swept to the bad country, these were very wicked Indians. I tried to cross. I knew I had been a good Indian in this dreary hunting ground. I took courage, and swam strong against the stream. I reached the happy hunting grounds; all my sorrow disappeared as I climbed to the top of the bank and saw before me Indians numerous as grass leaves, buffalo on the distant plains thick as rain drops in summer, a cloudless sky above, and a warm, fresh, scented, happy breeze blowing in my face. I sank to sleep, and woke alone in my tent in these prairies again."

Whatever faith the Indian medicine men possess in the efficacy of their charms, it is certain that they entertain great respect for the