

his ordinary vitality. As a rule, he keeps and tends the bodies of his friends as long as any chance remains of their ultimate recovery, and often (as we shall see in the sequel) much longer.

Again, in order to understand this attitude of early man towards his wounded, his stricken, and his dead, we must glance aside for a moment at the primitive psychology. Very early indeed in the history of the human mind, I believe, some vague adumbration of the notion of a soul began to pervade humanity. We now know that consciousness is a function of the brain; that it is intermitted during sleep, when the brain rests, and also during times of grave derangement of the nervous or circulatory systems, as when we faint or assume the comatose condition, or are stunned by a blow, or fall into catalepsy or epilepsy. We also know that consciousness ceases altogether at death, when the brain no longer functions; and that the possibility of its further continuance is absolutely cut off by the fact of decomposition. But these truths, still imperfectly understood or rashly rejected by many among ourselves, were wholly unknown to early men. They had to frame for themselves as best they could some vague working hypothesis of the human mind, from data which suggested themselves in the ordinary course of life; and the hypothesis which they framed was more or less roughly that of the soul or spirit, still implicitly accepted by a large majority of the human species.

According to this hypothesis every man consists of two halves or parts, one material or bodily, the other immaterial or spiritual. The first half, called the body, is visible and tangible; the second half, called the soul, dwells within it, and is more or less invisible or shadowy. It is to a large extent identified with the breath; and like the breath it is often believed to quit the body at death, and even to go off in a free form and live its own life elsewhere. As this supposed independence of the soul from the body lies at the very basis of all ghosts and gods, and therefore