

noticeable among these peoples, and lent to them such a striking influence over their religion, their traditions and even their history, was their similarity to blood. For in almost any case they saw in these appearances real living blood, which had fallen from heaven, or was changed by transubstantiation. In truth, some of these phenomena resemble blood to a deceiving extent, while others on the contrary suggest, even to the liveliest fancy, nothing analogous to it; but indeed a sharp observation was never characteristic of those wonder-loving people who are susceptible only of superficial impressions. Accordingly we read everywhere and at all times of nothing but *blood* on foods, of water changed into *blood*, of *blood-rain*, of *bloody* dew, and so forth. That mysterious nimbus which adheres, in the eyes of the people, to the blood as the seat of the soul, transferred itself immediately to these colors, and won for them a notoriety which few natural phenomena enjoy, and gave them at the same time a significance which can only be explained by the following consideration: That blood is indeed a unique essence, and that it is the abode of the soul, is a belief that reaches back to the earliest times. But if the Deity held it time to interfere in the course of natural events, and that, too, in such a mysterious way, then must this be taken as a proof that the government of the world is disturbed by cruel deeds or unnatural events. Thus the bloody phenomena appeared as signs of God's wrath, as omens of misfortune and punishment on account of past crimes, like to "the bloody shadow which coming evil casts before it." To this idea there naturally became attached the desire of appeasing the offended Deity by the annihilation of the guilty ones. Accordingly the persecution and even the execution of numberless victims were, until the latest times, the immediate consequence as often as such an appearance was anywhere observed. It may well be said that the history of the red, blood-simulating colors in the annals of mankind is written in blood.

Already in our oldest poem, the *Iliad*, we find passages which bear testimony to such views. When Jupiter is enraged at the