

appointment, but, unfortunately, having been just converted to Christianity, had burnt his drum, like Prospero, and now begged hard to be excused from reverting to forbidden practices. Mr. Castren, though armed with Government recommendations, was too good a Christian to use influence for such a purpose as enforcing a relapse into superstitious rites, and the convert was not unwilling to expound the secrets of his former calling. Of the two main divisions of the science, medicine and soothsaying, the former is most prevalent with the Finn, the latter with the Samoyede. The Tabide is a mere interpreter of the oracles of the Tabetsios, the spirits with whom he puts himself in communication. The process is not, like that of the Akkala professors, mesmeric, but one of active drumming, noise, and gesticulation. The man who conducts it must bring youth and physical energy to the task. The Tabetsio laughs at age and decrepitude. With obstinate Tabetsios the magician, like the priests of Baal, must puncture and slash himself with sharp weapons. The latter practice is less common than it was in the good old times of sorcery; but our author relates that, shortly before his arrival, a Tabide in the process of incantation had insisted on being shot at with a musket, and, after standing two shots from Samoyede bystanders without injury, had been killed on the spot by a third fired by a Russian. Russian authorities were employed in an investigation into this tragical occurrence when Mr. Castren left Shumshi. The office of Tabide, as in Finland, is hereditary. "Magus nascitur non fit" is the general rule; but to this it seems there are exceptions. A drum, a circle, and a costume, are the principal paraphernalia. In the case of a missing reindeer the circle is made of deer-horns; in that of a human being it is made of human hair.

The religious belief of the unconverted Samoyede is as usual founded on celestial and atmospheric phenomena. Their Num or God is lord of the sun, the stars, &c.; the rainbow is his mantle, the thunder his voice. Any idea of him as a moral governor which may have been observed among them, Mr. Castren considers as having been infused by Christian missionaries. Without any distinct belief in future reward or punishment, or even in any future state of existence, the Samoyede firmly believes in retribution for crime in this life, that murder will be punished by violent death, robbery by losses of reindeer, &c., and this to a degree which is said to act as a practical preventive