

rence. Thus the notion of death as an inevitable end never arises at all ; the notion of death as due to natural causes seems quite untenable. When a savage dies, the first question that arises is " Who has killed him ? " If he is slain in war, or devoured by a tiger, or ripped up by an elephant, or drowned by a stream in spate, or murdered by a tribesman, the cause is obvious. If none of these, then the death is usually set down to witchcraft.

Furthermore, the mere fact of death is much less certain among primitive or savage men than in civilised communities. We know as a rule with almost absolute certainty whether at a given moment a sick or wounded man is dead or living. Nevertheless, even among ourselves, cases of doubt not infrequently occur. At times we hesitate whether a man or woman is dead or has fainted. If the heart continues to beat, we consider them still living; if not the slightest flutter of the pulse can be perceived, we consider them dead. Even our advanced medical science, however, is often perplexed in very obscure cases of catalepsy; and mistakes have occurred from time to time, resulting in occasional premature burials. The discrimination of true from apparent death is not always easy. Vesalius, the eminent anatomist, opened a supposed corpse in which the heart was seen to be still beating; and the Abbé Prévost, who had been struck by apoplexy, was regarded as dead, but recovered consciousness once more under the surgeon's scalpel. Naturally, among savages, such cases of doubt are far more likely to occur than among civilised people; or rather, to put it as the savage would think of it, there is often no knowing when a person who is lying stiff and lifeless may happen to get up again and resume his usual activity. The savage is accustomed to seeing his fellows stunned or rendered unconscious by blows, wounds, and other accidents, inflicted either by the enemy, by wild beasts, by natural agencies, or by the wrath of his tribesmen; and he never knows how soon the effect of such accidents may pass away, and the man may recover