

without much ceremony, they will mention to the patient four or five things which they tell him his soul desires,—that is to say that he must try to find them, if he would recover his health. In this, the Jugglers [104] are full of trickery and wickedness; for, if they see that a patient is not likely to recover, they will say that his soul has a desire for something that they think he can never procure; consequently, when the man dies, his death is attributed to that desire which could not be gratified.

But, when they see that the patient is a person of note, they usually do not fail to play their last stake, and to give a medical prescription that will arouse the entire public to activity. They will say that the sick person's soul has fifteen or sixteen desires,—some of which will be for very expensive and valuable objects; others for the most diverting dances in the country, for feasts, for ballets, and for all sorts of pastimes.

When the prescription is given, the Captains of the village hold a council, as in a matter of public importance, and deliberate whether they will exert themselves for the patient. And, if there be a number of sick who are persons of note, it is impossible to conceive the ambition and intrigue displayed by their relatives and friends to obtain the preference for them, because the [105] public cannot pay those honors to all.

When the Captains have decided in favor of one of these, they send a deputation to the sick man to learn from his lips what his desires are. The patient knows very well how to play his part on those occasions, for, though very often the illnesses are very slight,—or are, in truth, but illnesses of ambition, of vanity,