

among them, as we have already noticed, that the left eyes of their chiefs, after death, become stars.

This notion is far from being destitute of poetical beauty; and perhaps, indeed, exhibits the common mythological doctrine of the glittering host of heaven being merely an assemblage of the departed heroes of earth, in as ingenious a version as it ever has received. It would be easy to collect many proofs of the extensive diffusion of this ancient faith, traces of which are to be found in the primitive astronomy of every people. The classical reader will at once recollect, among many others of a similar kind, the stories of Castor and Pollux, and of Berenice's tresses, the latter of which has been so elegantly imitated by Pope, in telling us of the fate of the vanished lock of Belinda:—

“But trust the muse—she saw it upward rise,  
Though marked by none but quick poetic eyes;  
(So Rome's great founder to the heavens withdrew,  
To Proculus alone confessed to view);  
A sudden star it shot through liquid air,  
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.”

The New Zealanders conceive, also, that what we call a shooting star is ominous of the approaching dissolution of any one of their great chiefs who may be unwell when it is seen. Like the vulgar among ourselves, too, they have their man in the moon; who, they say, is one of their countrymen named Rona, who was taken