

bowls, for the use of herself and husband. The men seat themselves on the north side and the women occupy the south. The priest's position is at the west, facing the altar, with the vow-maker or host sitting at his right hand. All being now ready, the host's wives serve out to the assembled guests, who sometimes number more than a score, a feast consisting of beef tongues chopped in small pieces and stewed with service berries, or some other fruit according to the season or to the supply on hand. When each individual's portion of food is placed before him, the priest,—whom we shall also refer to as the ritualist,—with his fingers takes from his own dish a small piece of meat which he holds high in front of him while he prays aloud to the Sun, asking the deity to take pity on the people who have assembled to do him homage, to grant the requests that would be made of him, to favour all present with good health, to cause them to become possessed of many horses, to long continue the peaceful relations existing between Indians and white men, and to grant old age to himself, the host, and others present. At the conclusion of the prayer he lowers the bit of meat close to the ground in front of where he sits, and after saying some such words as "Here Earth Person I give this to you that the grass may grow and that there may be a continuation of all blessings which come from our mother the Earth," he pushes the piece of meat into the dirt at his feet.

Each guest now extracts a particle of food from his or her dish, and, uttering a shorter prayer than that used by the director of ceremonies, sacrifices to the Earth in the same manner by depositing it in the ground. The prayers of the guests being made simultaneously, and each one praying after his own fashion, considerable confusion of voices is the result, but an observer is able to note the peculiarities of the different orisons. Some of the less eloquent supplicants, being literally men of few words, merely mutter a single sentence containing words which signify old age, many horses, good health, and joyfulness, at which they forthwith sacrifice to the Earth deity, as described. All having thus said grace the food is disposed of in short order.

The feast being concluded, the ritualist, using the forked firestick, extracts a red coal from the fire and deposits it on the ground between the altar and the fireplace. Chanting one of the wordless sacred songs, he grasps the right wrist of the host and guides his hand to take a pinch of the sweet grass and drop it upon the coal of fire, from which an aromatic smoke soon arises and pervades the lodge. Then follow a number of songs in which signs are made referring to the instructions given by the Sun to the mythical Scarface.