

In every leaf, in every stone, in every shrub, there is a spirit. It may be said of them, as Cotton Mather said of the Massachusetts Indians, in his *Life of Eliot*: "All the religion they have amounts to thus much: they believe that there are many gods, who made and own the several nations of the world. They believe that every remarkable creature has a peculiar god within or about it; there is with them a sun god or a moon god and the like; and they cannot conceive but that the fire must be a kind of god, inasmuch as a spark of it will soon produce very strange effects. They believe that when any good or ill happens to them, there is the favor or anger of a god expressed in it."

The Dahkotahs have greater and minor deities, and they are supposed to multiply as men and animals, and the superior to have power to exterminate the inferior.

The Jupiter Maximus of the Dahkotahs is styled Oanktayhee. As the ancient Hebrews avoided speaking the name of Jehovah, so they dislike to speak the name of this deity, but call him "Taku-wakan," or "That which is supernatural." This mighty god manifests himself as a large ox. His eyes are as large as the moon. He can haul in his horns and tail, or he can lengthen them, as he pleases. From him proceed invisible influences. In his extremities reside mighty powers.

He is said to have created the earth. Assembling in grand conclave all of the aquatic tribes, he ordered them to bring up dirt from beneath the water, and proclaimed death to the disobedient. The beaver and others forfeited their lives. At last the muskrat went beneath the waters, and, after a long time, appeared at the surface nearly exhausted, with some dirt. From this,