

thing else of a very wonderful or sacred nature. Much diversity of opinion exists among observers of Indian character concerning the ideas which the savages attach to this term; and the subject deserves more consideration than it has yet received. The ideas of all the tribes within our borders have undoubtedly been greatly modified by intercourse with the whites; and, recognizing this fact, many claim that the Great Spirit, or, more properly, Great Mystery, is a deity of the modern Indian only. I have certainly heard some old and very conservative Minnetarees speak of Mahopa as if they meant thereby an influence or power above all other things, but not attaching to it any ideas of personality. It would now be perhaps impossible to make a just analysis of their original conceptions in this matter. But the Old Man Immortal has no vague existence in their minds.

If we use the term *worship* in its most extended sense, it may be said that, besides this being, they worship everything in nature. Not man alone, but the sun, the moon, the stars, all the lower animals, all trees and plants, rivers and lakes, many bowlders and other separated rocks, even some hills and buttes which stand alone—in short, everything not made by human hands, which has an independent being, or can be individualized, possesses a spirit, or, more properly, a *shade*. (See *idahi* in Dictionary.)

To these shades some respect or consideration is due, but not equally to all. For instance, the shade of the cottonwood, the greatest tree of the Upper Missouri Valley, is supposed to possess an intelligence which may, if properly approached, assist them in certain undertakings; but the shades of shrubs and grasses are of little importance. When the Missouri, in its spring-time freshets, cuts down its banks and sweeps some tall tree into its current, it is said that the spirit of the tree cries while the roots yet cling to the land and until the tree falls into the water. Formerly it was considered wrong to cut down one of these great trees, and, when large logs were needed, only such as were found fallen were used; and to-day some of the more credulous old men declare that many of the misfortunes of the people are the result of their modern disre-