

when the complement, or thing made, is not expressed, but is understood to be inanimate; and, finally, *Apistotokiw*, the word in question, is employed when the unexpressed object is supposed to be animate. The world, therefore, as first created, was, in the view of the Blackfoot cosmologist, an animated existence.

But while these beliefs are all purely Algonkin, the chief religious ceremony of the Blackfoot tribes is certainly of foreign origin. This is the famous 'sun-dance,' to which they, like the Dakota tribes and some of the western Crees, are fanatically devoted. That this ceremony is not properly Algonkin is clearly shown by the fact that among the tribes of that stock, with the sole exception of the Blackfeet and a few of the western Crees, it is unknown. Neither the Ojibways of the lakes nor any of the numerous tribes east of the Mississippi had in their worship a trace of this extraordinary rite. The late esteemed missionary among the Dakotas, the Rev. Stephen R. Riggs (author of the 'Dakota Grammar and Dictionary') says of this ceremony: 'The highest form of sacrifice is *self-immolation*. It exists in the "sun-dance," and in what is called "vision-seeking." Some, passing a knife under the muscles of the breast and arms, attach cords thereto, which are fastened at the other end to the top of a tall pole, raised for the purpose; and thus they hang suspended only by those cords, without food or drink, for two, three, or four days, gazing upon vacancy, their minds intently fixed upon the object in which they wish to be assisted by the deity, and waiting for a vision from above. Others, making incisions in the back, have attached, by hair-ropes, one or more buffalo-heads, so that every time the body moves in the dance a jerk is given to the buffalo-heads behind. This rite exists at present among the western bands of the Dakotas in the greatest degree of barbarity. After making the cuttings in the arms, breast, or back, wooden setons—sticks about the size of a lead-pencil—are inserted, and the ropes are attached to them. Then, swinging on the ropes, they pull until the setons are pulled out with the flesh and tendons; or, if hung with the buffalo-heads, the pulling-out is done in the dance by the jerking motion, keeping time with the music, while the head and body, in an attitude of supplication, face the sun, and the eye is unflinchingly fixed upon it.'

My correspondent, the Rev. Mr. McLean, sends me a minute and graphic account of this ceremony as he witnessed it, in June last, on one of the Blackfoot Reserves, when most of the Kena, or Blood Indians, were present as actors or spectators. His narrative is too long for insertion here in full, but the concluding portion will show the resolute constancy with which this sacrifice of self-immolation is performed—some new features being added, which are not found in the brief account of Mr. Riggs, though they may possibly belong also to the Dakota ceremony.

'This year several persons, young and old, who had made vows during times of sickness or danger, had a finger cut off by the first joint, as an offering to the sun; and others had the operation of cutting their breasts and backs. The old woman who cut the fingers off held the suppliant's hand up to the sun, and prayed; then placed it upon a pole on the ground, laid a knife on the finger, and with a blow from a deer's-horn scraper severed the member. The severed piece was taken up, held toward the sun, and the prayer made; when it was dropped into a bag containing similar members. This ceremony was gone through by each in turn. After this was done each carried an offering, and,