

and in order to ascertain the extent and meaning of those sacred teachings we must examine those portions of the various rites practised, and beliefs professed by the people, in connection with which Scarface is mentioned, as the founder or otherwise.

It must not be understood that were this task completed the whole story of the Blackfoot religion would be told. Although the above myth is responsible for some of the most prominent ceremonies and most deep seated beliefs, there are other rites and superstitions which occupy a large portion of the religious Blackfoot's time and thought and which plainly show that they are of different and distinct origin.

#### THE CEREMONY.

Sacrificial offerings are the immediate results of various circumstances. A man may lose his horses, and, having unsuccessfully resorted to every means of finding them, becomes alarmed at their continued absence, and while praying to the Sun for the return of his animals, promises to make a sacrifice. Sometimes he makes the sacrifice conditional upon the granting of the specific request,—in which case he awaits the issue of events,—but usually the promise is free of conditions and the ceremony is held without such delay. In the old days of almost constant warfare the sacrifice would commonly follow a prayer for success against the enemy, or be the result of a war expedition in which one of the party found himself in a critical situation and promised to make an offering if he escaped. Sickness, however, has been the most frequent cause of the practice in late years. It is an act of propitiation which may arise from almost any trouble with which the Indian has to contend. Although the Blackfoot Indians worship many gods, these offerings are made to the celestial deities alone, viz:—the Sun, his wife the Moon, and their son the Morning Star.

An Indian, having promised in a prayer, to make a gift to the Sun, and the time being convenient for the fulfilment of his vow, sends a message to one of the men called "atsimaps" or "prayerful," requesting him to conduct the ceremony, and stating what payment will be made, the consideration usually being a horse.

The tribal religious ceremonies of the Blackfoot are directed by men who have made a special study of matters sacred, but who, as such, are not members of a common society or organization of any kind.

Each of them, known to the writer, is simply an individual of an extremely religious temperament, gifted with a memory capable of retaining the countless sacred tunes which are almost as essential as prayers to the various rites, and who by close attention and practice has become proficient in ceremonial affairs.