

are innumerable *subordinate gods*, or spirits who have particular control over the affairs of this world; for instance, they believe there is one god who has the charge of the *game*, another presides over the *fish* and the *water*, another controls the *winds* and the *storms*, and another the *vegetable* world.

These imaginary gods become the objects of their invocations when they are so circumstanced as to require their blessing; for instance, if an Indian wishes for success in a hunting excursion, he will direct his offering and prayer to the god who presides over the deer, the bear, or the beaver, (a wonderful game-keeper he must be) that success may attend him; or if he intends to catch many fish, or have a prosperous voyage, he will sacrifice to the god of the waters. I have known an Indian kill a black dog, and throw it into the Lake, that he might meet with no disasters whilst on his voyage. In this way the poor dark Indian ignorantly worships gods that are no gods at all.

The sun, moon, and stars, are also adored as gods. At the rising of the sun the old chiefs and warriors chaunt their songs of praise to welcome his return, and at the going down of the same they thank him for the blessings of the light and heat during the day.

When a visible eclipse of the sun takes place, the Indians are thrown into the greatest alarm. They call it the *sun's dying*, and suppose that he actually dies; in order to assist in bringing him to life again, they stick coals of fire upon the points of their arrows, and shoot them up into the air, that by them the expiring sun may be reanimated and rekindled. The moon and stars are revered for the light they give by night, enabling them to travel in the absence of the sun. I well remember when I was a little boy being told by our aged people that I must never point my finger to the moon, for if I did she would consider it a great insult, and instantly bite it off.

Besides the superintending gods above mentioned, they hold in great veneration certain animals, which they conceive to possess supernatural power, such as the wolf, fox, owl, toad, and all venomous snakes; and even many of their own brethren are highly esteemed, by passing themselves off as *powows* or *conjurers*, and thus by their cunning art impose on the credulity of these deluded people. Any remarkable or terrific places become objects of supersti-

tious dread and veneration, from an idea that they are the abodes of gods; for instance, curious rocks, islands, mountains, caves, trees, falls, &c. Whenever they approach these, it is with the greatest solemnity, smoking a pipe, and leaving a little tobacco as an offering to the god of the hallowed spot. Falls are noted places for their tobacco offerings, as they think that the gods of the falls are very fond of this plant.

Near the Credit village, at the foot of a pointed hill, is a deep hole in the water, which is said to have been the abode of one of the water gods, where he was frequently heard to sing and beat his drum. When the white people began to frequent this place for the purpose of taking the salmon, this *munedoo* took his departure during a tremendous flood, caused by his power, and went down the river into Lake Ontario. In fact, every thing that strikes the dark, untutored mind of the Indian with awe and astonishment, becomes to him a subject of dread and adoration; no wonder then that *thunder* being far beyond his comprehension, is regarded as a most powerful god, and has given rise to many ridiculous stories. They consider the thunder to be a god in the shape of a large eagle that feeds on serpents, which it takes from under the earth, and the trunks of hollow trees. When a thunder-bolt strikes a tree or the ground, they fancy that the thunder has shot his fiery arrow at a serpent, and caught it away in the twinkling of an eye; some Indians pretend to affirm that they have seen the serpent taken up by the thunder into the clouds. They believe that the thunder has its abode on the top of a high mountain in the west, where it lays its eggs, and hatches its young like an eagle; and from whence it takes its flight into different parts of the earth in search of serpents.

In addition to their belief in the existence of these *general gods*, each *powow* or *conjurer* and *medicine-man* has his *personal* or *familiar gods*, which are of his own imagining; the method they take to obtain these is by fasting and watching.

The Indian youth, from the age of ten to manhood, are encouraged by their parents and the old people to fast, with the promise that if do, they will entertain them in the evening by the relation of one of their traditions or tales. Inspired with the hope of gaining favour with