

The Me-shaum is a parcel or bundle in which are recorded by knots in strings, stones &c. and also by hieroglyphical figures the names and wars of their gods in ancient times; and their religious belief also or revelation which they suppose was at first delivered to their ancestors by We-sah-kah their tutelary god.¹

We-sah-kah is regarded in their mythology as the creator of the new world after it had been destroyed by a flood. The Me-shaum is held in high veneration; none are permitted to open or inspect it, except the one having the particular charge of it. It is opened only in case of invocations to the Great Spirit, in which dogs are often slain and offered in sacrifice.²

Ordinances of the Me-shaum.

To fast every morning in the winter season.

To fast ten days in order to obtain signal revenge upon an enemy.

To invoke and sacrifice every time a man has killed a bear or some choice game.

That a woman shall not come into the lodge at certain seasons (during her monthly courses) nor eat anything cooked at the same fire in the lodge.³

To give away property to the poor for the good of departed relatives to the land of Shades.

It teaches that the Great Spirit gave them the wild beasts for their sustenance; and requires them to be forgiving towards those belonging to their own family or nation if they have received any injury, but that revenge must be taken upon an enemy. These are some of the most important things required by the Me-shaum. It was formerly considered so sacred, that it was hung upon the limbs of a tree outside of the lodge lest it should be polluted by an unclean wo-

¹ We-sah-kah is very probably Noah.

² The dog feast is one of the most sacred feasts — no Indian not belonging to the Me-shaum, or white person can witness it.

³ This superstitious custom has been observed by Indians from time immemorial and the only reason they give for it is "their ancestors did so."