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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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INDIAN WEATHER-MAKING

Weather-making superstitions have always prevailed widely among the American Indians, and though a major portion of them relate to rain-making, several have to do with other elements of weather. The problem of dispelling fog, which has lately claimed so much attention on the part of white men, was tackled long ago by the redskins. J.O. Dorsey, writing of the Turtle subgens of the Omaha, says:

"In the time of a fog the men of this subgens drew the figure of a turtle on the ground with its face to the south. On the head, tail, middle of the back and each leg were placed small pieces of a red breech cloth, with some tobacco. This, they imagined, would make the fog disappear very soon."

The Dakota Indians at one time had a company of men who claimed the exclusive power and privilege of fighting thunder. When they wished to drive away an approaching thunderstorm, the men would take their bows and arrows, their magic drum, and a sort of whistle made of the wing bone of an eagle, and, thus armed, would run out and fire at the rising cloud, whooping, yelling, whistling and beating their drum to frighten it away. The practice is said to have been abandoned after one of the thunder fighters was struck dead by lightning.

Men of the Kanze gens of the Omaha were Wind people, and flapped their blankets to start a breeze.

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