

have hundreds of thousands of educated white people who believe in similar fallacies, this is not more unlikely in an Indian subjected to such influence.

In studying Smohalla we have to deal with the same curious mixture of honest conviction and cunning deception that runs through the history of priestcraft in all the ages. Like some other prophets before him, he seeks to convey the idea that he is in control of the elements and the heavenly bodies, and he has added greatly to his reputation by predicting several eclipses. This he was enabled to do by the help of an almanac and some little explanation from a party of surveyors. In this matter, however, he was soon made to realize that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. He could not get another almanac, and his astronomic prophecies came to an abrupt termination at the end of the first year. Concerning this, Major MacMurray says:

He showed me an almanac of a preceding year and asked me to readjust it for eclipses, as it did not work as it had formerly done. I explained that Washington (the Naval Observatory) made new ones every year, and that old ones could not be fixed up to date. He had probably obtained this one from the station agent at the railroad, now superseded by a new one, who had cut off Smohalla's supply of astronomical data. My inability to repair the 1882 almanac for use in prognosticating in 1884 cost me much of his respect as a wise man from the east. (*MacMurray MS.*)

Smohalla had also a blank book containing mysterious characters, some of which resembled letters of the alphabet, and which he said were records of events and prophecies. MacMurray was unable to decide whether they were mnemonic or were simply unmeaning marks intended to foster among his followers the impression of his superior wisdom. It is probable that they were genuine mnemonic symbols invented by himself for his own purposes, as such systems, devised and used by single individuals or families, and unintelligible to others, are by no means rare among those who may be called the literary men of our aboriginal tribes.

As their principal troubles arose out of the disputed title to their lands, Major MacMurray was asked by the Indians to explain the Indian homestead law and how white men divided land. This was carefully done with the aid of a checkerboard, and they were shown how the land was mapped out into equal squares arranged on straight lines so that every man could find his own. They were then urged by the officer to apply for homesteads and settle upon them so as to avoid further trouble with the new settlers who were pouring into the country. Smohalla replied that he knew all this, but he did not like the new law, as it was against nature. He then went on to expound in detail the Indian cosmogony. Said he:

I will tell you about it. Once the world was all water and God lived alone. He was lonesome, he had no place to put his foot, so he scratched the sand up from the bottom and made the land, and he made the rocks, and he made trees, and he made a man; and the man had wings and could go anywhere. The man was lonesome, and God made a woman. They ate fish from the water, and God made the deer and other animals, and he sent the man to hunt and told the woman to cook the meat and to