

Of the three great groups of American aborigines, which, according to Mr. A. H. Keane's classification, belong almost exclusively to Canada—the Tinné, Dené-Dindjie, Athabascan, or Chipewyan, the Esquimaux, or Inuit, and the Columbian races—a good deal of valuable information has been collected by Dr. Scouler, Mr. H. Hale, Father Petitot, Dr. Franz Boas, Dr. G. M. Dawson, Dr. Boyd Dawkins, Mr. Dall, and other recent writers. Dr. Boas divides the Vancouver and mainland coast tribes into four chief groups: the West Vancouver, the Tsimpshian, the Selish and the Kwakwiootl.<sup>1</sup> On this last important division of the Columbian family, Dr. Dawson has contributed a paper to this Section.

Among these far western tribes, we find the use of dance and song, for ceremonial purposes, as firmly established as among the Indians of the east and south. Dr. Dawson describes no less than six distinct kinds of dance as in existence among the Haidas alone. These dances are, for the most part, accompanied by characteristic songs.<sup>2</sup>

Among the traditions and folklore of these people, Dr. Dawson gives a strange creation myth, in which the origin of man, animals, fire, water, etc., is accounted for.<sup>3</sup> Curiously this myth corresponds with what he had been told on the same subject by some of the Tinné tribes of the northern interior of British Columbia. This is not surprising, if Father Petitot's view as to the far-reaching extent of those myths be correct. The monographs of the zealous missionary and philologist on both the Dené-Dindjie and the Esquimaux-Tchiglit, were translated by Mr. Douglas Brymner, chief of the Archives Department, and printed in the *Dominion Monthly* for 1878. They form a valuable addition to our library of native American folklore. Some specimens of the dirges of the Dené-Dindjie may serve to illustrate their poetic capabilities. A man who had lost his brother sang, weeping:—

“ My younger brother, the celestial reindeer  
Allures but to deceive thee!  
My younger brother, return to earth ! ”

A brother, lamenting the loss of a sister, sang:—

“ In the river whose course the great isle turns,  
My sister has, unknown to me, drunk of the little wave, alas!  
My little sister who condemned the little net, alas ! ”

In carrying the corpse of a hunter around the tents in a hasty course, they affected disorder and a pretended flight, sounding a rattle and singing at the same time:—

“ In the upper earth thou huntest thy lakes for the white deer,  
Piercest the antelopes with thy darts; thy parents ask thee:  
Why art thou come to this earth to hunt the elk  
Which has caused thy death ? ”

But, if they celebrate the death of an enemy, they vary the funeral theme:—

“ The fogs of the Glacial Sea descend on the waters;  
The great sea groans over his fate, alas!  
For the enemy of the Flat country will never return thither safe and sound.”

<sup>1</sup> Science, March 25, 1887.

<sup>2</sup> Geol. Survey of Can., Report of Progress, 1878-79, pp. 127B, 128B, 129B.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 149B.