

THE AURORA.

Monthly Magazine, printed and published at the
Rupert's Land Industrial School, as a Monthly
Record of our Work, and of Indian
Education and Progress.

TERMS: - 25 CENTS A YEAR.

EDITOR:

THE PRINCIPAL, Middle Church, Man., to whom all
communications and remittances should be
addressed.

VOL. I. NOVEMBER, 1894. No. 23

CANADIAN INDIANS.

By Rev. Dr. Maclean.

THE SARCEES.

The Sarcees are a branch of the Beaver or Castor tribe of Indians of the great Athapascan stock, which extends over the north of British America in scattered bands, through Oregon and California into Northern Mexico, and includes the Umpuans, Apaches, and other tribes. At some period beyond the recollection of the oldest members of the Sarcee tribe, it came under the protection of the Blackfoot confederacy, and was united with it. The Beaver Indians still live in the district of Athabasca, where are found the Chippewyan, Slave, Dog Rib, and other Indian tribes.

SARCEE ISOLATION.

Only in the traditions of the people can we learn anything of this strange isolation of the Sarcees from their kindred in the far northern country. Tradition says that in the distant past a young Beaver chief shot his arrow through a dog of one of his fellow braves, who was deeply enraged and vowed vengeance. His friends rallied to his assistance, and eighty men fell dead as the result of the quarrel. Great was the sorrow in the camp and a temporary truce was arranged, but sixty people who were friends of the chief who had killed the dog agreed to separate from the tribe and seek a home in another part of the land. They journeyed southward by the shores of the Lesser Slave Lake until they reached the plains and valleys of the Great Saskatchewan.

LOST FOR A HUNDRED YEARS.

More than a century passed by, and no tidings were ever received from this exiled band. A young Beaver Indian accompanied a white fur hunter southward, and on their journey they camped at one of the forts in the valley of the Saskatchewan, where strange Indians were seen loitering about the palisades. There were members of the great Blackfoot confederacy. Among them were some braves who spoke a language different from the Blackfoot tongue, and as the Beaver Indian listened he recognized his own language, for in these men he found the descendants of the long lost band of the Beaver tribe. These are the Sarcee Indians of the present day.

CENSUS OF THE TRIBE.

In the summer of 1880, when the writer reached Fort Macleod, he found the Sarcee Indians

camped upon the Ok along with
some Blackfoot and B where they
were being supplied w the Gov-
ernment—the buffalo ha ains and
gone south to the plain of the
Missouri and Yellowstone majority
of the Bloods and Blackfee ntana
hunting the buffalo, and did te in
the fall of that year. Some of ren
attended the day school taught by
wife, along with Bloods, Blacktee y
children. It was then estimated t
numbered about seven hundred,
Government agent thought that th
more than three or four hundred.

HOW THEY HAVE DWINDLED AW

Sir John Franklin's estimate in 1820
there were 150 lodges, with an average
persons to each lodge, or a total of 1,200 pe
Rowand, an old trader, in 1843 counted fort
lodges, or 350 persons. Sir George Sim
reckoned fifty lodges and 350 persons in the v
1841. An old friend of the writer, who has liv
for 50 years in the country, told him that during
the year of the small-pox he had counted at the
Maria's River not less than 100 "dead lodges," in
which there was an average of ten bodies. It is,
therefore, difficult to make a correct estimate of
this tribe with such conflicting testimony, but
there is no doubt that the population must have
been quite numerous, lessened at times through
the depopulating ravages of war. They were said
to be "the oldest of all the tribes that inhabit the
plains," and those who have come in contact with
them in these later years can add to this
testimony, that they are the most saucy, inde-
pendent and impudent tribe of Indians that dwell
in northwestern Canada. They have ever been
friends and allies of the Blackfeet, and enemies of
the Crees. At times they have protected solitary
Crees against the evil intentions of the Piegans
and Blackfeet.

APPEARANCE OF THE SARCEES.

The Sarcees are of medium height, very few tall
men being among them; the women, especially,
being small. During the old buffalo days they
exhibited their pride in beautiful dresses and fine
buffalo skin lodges, but the departure of the buffalo
reduced them to poverty, the lodges were used for
moccasins, and many of their horses were sold to
obtain food and clothing. The traders and the
"old timers" in the country were ever suspicious
of these people, believing them to be deceitful, and
consequently were ever on their guard again t
treachery. Like the other plain tribes, they we e
good hunters, delighting in hunting the buffalo,
and when they had secured an abundance of foo
spending their days and nights feasting and
gambling.

THEIR ANCIENT HISTORY.

Alexander Henry's journal says of the peoplet
"The Sarcees are a distinct nation, and have an
entirely different language from any other nation
of the plains, and very difficult to acquire from the
many guttural sounds it contains. Their land was
formerly on the north side of the Saskatchewan,
but they have now removed to the south side, and
dwell commonly on the southward of the Beaver
hills, near the Slave Indians (Blackfoot con-
federacy), with whom they are at peace. They
have the name of being a brave and warlike