

embryotic stage of existence when the Carriers commenced looking to others than Coast Indians for models to copy from.

I have hinted at frequent intercourse between the inland and coast aborigines, and tried to expose some of its results. It may be well to explain its *raison d'être*. As has been pointed out elsewhere,¹ the Carriers of the old stock, though great imitators, were but poor workmen. So they periodically repaired in large numbers to the principal village of the Hwotso'tin—*Tséchal*—where they met important parties of natives who had come up all the way from the sea-coast, Tsimshian, Haida, occasionally Tlingit, desirous of trading with the inland tribes. Stone axes and other implements, dentalium and haliotis shells, copper ore and ornaments, wooden boxes made of cedar slabs, carved ceremonial paraphernalia, oulachon oil, etc., were generally the objects brought in by the maritime Indians and bartered away for the Carriers' dressed skins, fur blankets and pelts generally. Naturally, feasting, parading, speechifying and story-telling were inseparable from such large gatherings, and thus our Indians could not help witnessing, and afterwards trying to imitate, the practices of people who boasted of such skill and brought them such useful and precious goods. The legends narrated to them were, of course, reported with no lack of embellishments when back in their forest homes, and the source of such stories was soon forgotten. I never saw any such fairs, but my predecessor here witnessed one where fully two thousand Indians had congregated.

Passing from the general organization of the Carriers, we come to the style of their habitations, the constitution of their families and their mortuary practices. I think no better points could be chosen as illustrative of their wonderful power of observation and propensity for assimilation.

The Dénés, as a distinct nation, when socially unchanged by foreign influences, had, as may still be observed among some of their tribes, for habitations huts of coniferous branches, or, more generally, frame tents, or lodges covered with moose or caribou skins. Let us hear on this subject the Rev. E. Petitot, who for twenty years laboured and extensively travelled among almost all the eastern tribes:

"Peuple nomade de chasseurs, de trappeurs et de pêcheurs, les Déné-Dindjié habitent sous des tentes de peaux d'élan ou de renne, garnies de poil ou sans poil, coniques ou demi-sphériques. * * * Ces loges ou *boucanières* circulaires reposent sur des perches réunies en faisceau ou sur des cerceaux plantés en terre. Une ouverture ménagée au sommet laisse échapper la fumée d'un feu qu'on y entretient sans cesse. Certaines tribus plus apathiques ou plus endurcies à la rigueur du climat se contentent de cahutes en branches de sapin décorées pompeusement du titre de maisons proprement dites."²

Now, I suppose that every American sociologist is familiar with the large wooden lodges, with pole or log walls, gable and roof, accommodating several families common to the Tsimshian and Tlingit races. These he will find likewise among the Carriers and such Nah'ane as have come into immediate contact with the Tlingit, while the Chi'koh'tin adopted the "Kekule houses," *apizkhan*, or semi-subterranean huts, described by Dr. Boas and others,³ as the distinctive style of dwellings of the Shushwap, the Chi'koh'tin's

¹ The Western Dénés, p. 136.

² Monographie des Déné-Dindjié (prefixed to that author's polyglot dictionary), p. xxv.

³ Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada, p. 80 et seq.