

I now revert to the statement quoted at the beginning of this article. "With the exception of the Patagonian, the Digger Indian ranks lowest in the scale of humanity". Who should rank lowest in the scale of humanity but he who is nearest to the brute? Now civilization is the gauge of the distance covered in the road that leads away from the brute. Therefore the above assertion is tantamount to saying that the Digger is the second least civilized of human creatures. But what is civilization? I open the Standard Dictionary, and I see that it is "a condition of human communities characterized by political and social organization and order, advancement in knowledge, refinement, and the arts and progress in general". From the same source I learn also that, according to Guizot, "civilization is an improved condition of man resulting from the establishment of social order in place of the individual independence and lawlessness of the savage and barbarous life". Now since the peoples that are the least civilized stand "lowest in the scale of humanity, I feel quite certain that the Digger Indians occupy therein a place much higher than that assigned them by the lady to whose statement I venture to take exception. They are indubitably more civilized than some of the Déné tribes which I have made my life study. I need, to prove this, but the very terms of her own article, depreciative as they are.

As regards political and social organization, which is the main criterion of civilization, Ellen C. Weber states that she once attended the mourning for a "Digger" chief, and she adds that, owing to the rank of the deceased, Indians had gathered from all points, and that, contrary to custom, even the men joined in the direful chorus of lamentations. From this I deduce two important facts: first, the so-called Diggers have chiefs, and, secondly, those chiefs are granted more consideration than simple commoners.

Now what do we see among the Sékanais Indians, a tribe of Dénés whose habitat lies mainly on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, in northern British Columbia? Among them there is not the slightest vestige of a social organization; they have no chiefs, no headmen of any sort; they recognize absolutely no authority on earth but their own individual whims.