

marry. So it is that endogamy is looked upon with horror among them. Indeed, I think I am warranted in affirming that marriage with a consanguine, unless a very close one, was preferred to matrimonial union with a co-clansman. As it is, agnation and consanguinity in the direct or collateral line on the paternal side were considered powerful barriers to sexual relations, males and females descended from the same stock being always regarded as brothers and sisters. But at what particular point the offspring of a common or collateral<sup>1</sup> branch would be deemed sufficiently distant to admit of matrimonial union is more than I can say, none among the natives themselves being able to satisfactorily solve that question. All I can say is that as long as the common ancestors of two individuals were remembered, the latter were easily dissuaded from contracting marriage together, even to the fourth and perhaps the fifth degree of consanguinity, especially if in the direct line. I do not mean to say that there never were tacitly allowed deviations from this law, nor absolutely any intermarriage in the same clan. But the repugnance which such unions inspired only goes to show that in this case, as in others, the exception confirms or proves the rule.

Such was not the case, however, with consanguinity in collateral lines by the mother's side, cousins of that class, even as near as the first degree, being by a time honored custom, almost bound to intermarry. And here it is as well to state at once that, in common with nearly all the primitive people, mother-right is the supreme law regulating succession among nearly all of the Western Dénés, and I may add that here<sup>2</sup> it admits of no exception whatever. On the other hand, another ordinance of their social code forbids titles as well as landed property to pass by heredity into a different clan. Therefore children of a notable among them belonging to their mother's clan, could never inherit from their father. But if the latter had nephews by a sister, one of them was *de jure* his successor, this nephew belonging through his mother to his uncle's clan. Now, by way of compensation, and to permit the notable's children who could not otherwise inherit from him, to enjoy at least, as much as was lawful of their father's succession, one of his daughters would be united in marriage with her inheriting maternal first cousin.

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<sup>1</sup> On the father's side.

<sup>2</sup> At Stuart's Lake.—*Ch. S. Cm.*