

Maria's River, in Montana, there stood fully one hundred lodges, and not one contained less than ten bodies. His estimate of dead Sarcees was 1,500.' This tribe, now numbering less than 500 souls, have their Reserve near Calgary. They are reputed to be less cleanly and moral than the proper Blackfeet tribes. In this respect their habits and character correspond with those of other Athabaskan tribes.

During the past five years, as is well known, a great change has taken place in the condition of the north-western tribes through the extermination of the buffalo. The transcontinental railways have brought into the interior great numbers of hunters, armed with the most destructive weapons, who have engaged in a constant and reckless slaughter of these animals, until it is now doubtful if any are left alive. The Blackfeet have been the greatest sufferers from this cause. The buffalo were their main dependence. The animals, which roamed the plains during the summer, were accustomed to resort to the sheltered and wooded valleys of the Blackfoot country during the winter; and thus the tribes were assured of a supply of food at all seasons. The skins furnished their clothing, their tents, and their couches. Suddenly, almost without warning, they found themselves stripped of nearly every necessary of life. The change was one of the greatest that could well befall a community. If the inhabitants of an English parish were suddenly transported to the centre of Australia, and set down there, utterly destitute, to make a living by some unknown methods of tropical agriculture, they would hardly be more helpless and bewildered than these unfortunate Indians found themselves. The Governments both of the United States and of Canada came to the rescue; but in the former country the urgency of the case was not at first fully understood, and much suffering ensued. The agent on the Blackfoot Reservation in Montana (Major Allen) states in his official report that when he entered upon his duties in April 1884 he found the Indians in a deplorable condition. The supplies of food which had been sent for them had proved insufficient, and before these could be renewed many died from actual starvation. Some stripped the bark from the saplings which grew along their creeks, and ate the inner portion to stifle the sense of hunger. On the Canadian side, fortunately, the emergency was better understood. Colonel McLeod, an able and vigilant officer, was in charge of the Mounted Police at that time, and through his forethought the necessary preparations were made. In 1879 and 1880 the buffalo disappeared from that region. Arrangements were at once made for settling the Indians on Reserves, and for supplying them with food and clothing, and teaching them to erect wooden houses and cultivate their lands. Daily rations of meat and flour were served out to them. Ploughs, cattle, and horses were furnished to them. Farm instructors were placed among them. The Indians displayed a remarkable readiness to adapt themselves to the new conditions. According to the reports of all the agents they have evinced a quickness to learn and a persevering industry which place them decidedly in advance of the other Indian tribes of that region. In 1882 more than 500,000 lbs. of potatoes were raised by the three Blackfoot tribes, besides considerable quantities of oats, barley, and turnips. The Piegiens had sold 1,000 dollars' worth of potatoes, and had a large supply on hand. 'The manner in which the Indians have worked,' writes the agent, 'is really astonishing, as is the interest they have taken, and are taking, in farming.' Axes and other tools were distributed among them,