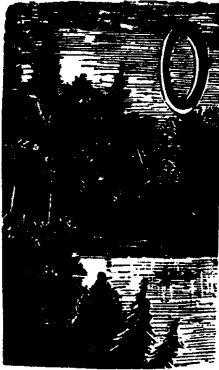


## Indian Tribes—Paper No. 9.

THE ASSINABOINE INDIANS.

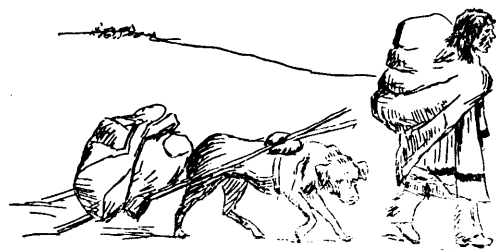
By Rev. E. F. Wilson.



ONE of the most extensive and widely distributed of the North American Indian Nations, in former days, was that generally known among white people as the *Sioux*. Their territory extended from the junction of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers in Arkansas, to the north-west part of Dakota Territory; and east and west they ranged from the State of Wyoming to Lake Michigan. In course of time the great Siouan stock, as it is now designated by ethnologists, became broken up into numerous tribes. Chief among these are the Dakotas (or Sioux proper,) numbering some 39,000; then come the Omahas, the Osages, Poncas, Iowas, Mandans, Winnebagoes, Crows, Kaws, Quapaws, Otoes, and Assinaboines. Of these tribes the nearest related to the Dakotas, or Sioux proper, would seem to be the Assinaboines. Exactly when the Assinaboines separated from the Sioux and became a distinct tribe, it were difficult to say. In language, habits, and general appearance, they resemble one another very closely. Catlin, speaking of these people so long ago as the year 1832, says of them:—"At what time, or in what manner, these two parts of a nation got strayed away from each other is a mystery." The Assinaboines now living in the Canadian North-west Territory, say that they came from the River Missouri, and that they used to roam all over the North-west to the Rocky mountains. They call themselves Tcaje ikidatabi. In Catlin's time, fifty years ago, this tribe was said to number about 8,000; but half of their number were destroyed by small-pox a few years later. At that time they were occupying the country from the mouth of the Yellowstone River to Lake Winnipeg, and were living in skin lodges or 'teepees,' like the Sioux.

The name Assinaboine was given to them by the Ojebways, and it means "stone boilers." The reason for their receiving such an appellation is thus described by Catlin: "There is a very curious custom among the Assinaboins, from which they have taken their name—a name given them by their neighbors, from a singular mode they have of boiling their meat, which is done in the following manner: When they kill meat a hole is dug in the ground about the size of a common pot, and

a piece of the raw hide of the animal, as taken from the back, is put over the hole, and then pressed down with the hands close around the sides, and filled with water. The meat to be boiled is then put in this hole or pot of water; and in a fire which is built near by, several large stones are heated to a red heat, which are successively dipped and held in the water until the meat is boiled; from which singular and peculiar custom they are called "stone boilers." In the Ojebway language *assin* means a stone, and *abwen* to make hot or cook. The Assinaboines made treaties with the United States after 1855, and up to July, 1880. They were forced to quit farming, and to locate on the Reservations in Northern Montana after 1875, by reason of the building of railroads, disappearance of game, and the incoming of settlers. Many of them crossed into Canada, and affiliated with the Crees. In June 1884, the Assinaboines at Fort Peck Agency, Montana, numbered 1,195, and at Fort Belknap Agency, Montana, 1000. In 1888 a careful census showed 830 at Fort Belknap, and 713 at Fort Peck—total 1543. In Canada there are 250 Assinaboines a few miles south of Indian Head in Assinaboia, and a few families, numbering 140 souls, at Moose Mountain, also in Assinaboia. In Alberta, near the foot of the Rocky Mountains, at a place called Morley, are some 600 Stoney, or Assinaboine Indians. In Saskatchewan, near Battleford, are 230, and at the Peace Hill Agency are 130. This would make the total number of Assinaboine Indians in Canada, 1350. It is scarcely necessary to say that the Canadian Province of Assinaboia, of which Regina is the capital, is called after this tribe.



ASSINABOINE SQUAW.

These people are described by Catlin as a fine and noble-looking race, bearing both in their looks and customs a striking resemblance to the Dakotas or Sioux, from whom, he says, they have undoubtedly sprung. The men, he continues, are tall, and graceful in their movements, and wear their pictured robes of the buffalo hide with great skill and pleasing effect. They are good hunters, and tolerably supplied with horses; and living