

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACKFOOT
INDIANS.

BY REV. JOHN MACLEAN, M.A., PH.D.

(Read 19th November, 1892.)

The Blackfoot Confederacy is named by the three tribes comprising it, Sâketûpîks, *the People of the Plains*, and Netsepoye, *the People that Speak the Same Language*. It is the custom amongst the mounted police and settlers in Alberta, where the three tribes are located, to speak of the Confederacy as simply the Blackfeet, and to name each gens after the chief of the gens. The natives follow their own customs, calling each gens by its own distinctive name, recognizing the fact that the chiefs may be removed by death and other causes, which would change the names; but by following their own native method, the names of the gentes are always retained. The Blood Indians are called *Kaina*, a name not definitely understood, but from all I could gather from the old men in the camps, it is derived from *Aikaie*, *an old robe*, and the application of this name to the tribe means that the people at one period in their history wore old robes, which were well-nigh useless, and it was at that time and because of that circumstance that they were thus named. This tribe is also named *Aapaitûpi*, Blood people, and *Sûmûkegtûqkûnema*, and *Sûmûkena*, which mean that these people had large knives with which they fought.

The Piegan tribe is named in the Blackfoot tongue *Pikûnî*, singular *Pikûnikwan*, which is derived from *Apikûni*, meaning a half-dressed hide of the buffalo. The Indians say that there was a period in the history of the Confederacy when the Piegans were compelled through poverty to dress themselves in buffalo robes, which were badly tanned and almost worthless as an article of clothing.

The Blackfoot tribe is called *Siksikauo*, meaning Blackfeet. The singular number has always the personal termination *kwan*, thus *Siksî-kaikwân* = a Blackfoot Indian. It is a compound word made from the combination of *Siksînûm*, Black, and *Oqkûts*, his foot. We have the adjectival particle *Siksî*, the noun particles *kai* and *kaw*, and the personal termination *kwan*, which completes the word. There are two meanings given to this name, that is, as to its origin. The Indians have told me