

attachment to particular localities existing in their minds, though they have a strong bias towards their mode of life. The latter sentiment does not retain nearly so strong a hold on their dispositions as it does on most savage nations. Wedded to ancient manners and customs by much more slender ties than exist in the generality of Indian tribes, they easily fall into the habits of Europeans, and, in cases of servants engaged from among them by the Hudson's Bay Company, willingly abandon the charms of freedom and the chase for the more regular comforts and daily avocations of civilized life. I judge from this that if these tribes were properly instructed and located in a more favorable climate, they would become tolerable husbandmen, and without acquiring the ferocity of their congeners, the Navajoes, soon surpass them in agricultural skill and herdsmanhip.

## 2.—THE LOUCHEUX INDIANS.—*Hardisty.*

The physical characteristics of the Loucheux nation are, with few exceptions, the same as those of the other aborigines of North America. The skin is commonly of a sallow brown tint, in some cases what might be called a yellowish white; the hair is long, black, and lank; the beard scanty, with rare exceptions. They have black deep-set eyes, receding foreheads, high cheek bones, high, aquiline noses and large mouths with tumid lips. The eyes are of a dark hazel color, often approaching to black, frequently small and oblique, though I have noticed particular individuals with very large eyes, while in others the eyes were remarkably small and these invariably oblique.

The Loucheux language is a dialect of the Chepewyan, which it more closely resembles than the intervening dialects of the Hare Indians and Slaves, although a very slight intercourse enables the latter also to understand the former sufficiently for the ordinary purposes of traffic. The Loucheux proper is spoken by the Indians of Peel's river, thence traversing the mountains westward down Rat river, the Tuk-kuth, (Rat Indians,) and Van-tah-koo-chin, it extends to the Tran-jik-koo-chin, Na-tsik-koo-chin, and Koo-cha-koo-chin of the Youcon. All the tribes inhabiting the valley of the Youcon understand one another; a slight difference of accent being all that is perceptible in their respective dialects. The first material change occurs among the "Gens de Fou" or Hun-koo-chin, (river people.) These make use of a great many words in common with the "Gens de Bois," who again understand the language of the "Mauvais Monde" of Francis lake, which is the common language of the Mauvais Monde of Fort Halkett, the Thikanies, the Ah-bah-to-din-ne (mountain Indians) and Nahau-nies of Forts Liard and Simpson.

The Loucheux, though sunk in barbarism, are rather more intelligent than the other tribes composing the great Chepewyan nation, owing no doubt to their intellectual faculties being more frequently brought into active play in their traffic and intercourse with other tribes. They are essentially a commercial people, and live by barter, supplying their wants by exchanging their beads, which form the circulating medium, for the peltries of the neighboring tribes, to whom they go on periodical trading visits. They hunt no furs, but are, nevertheless, good hunters, and invariably well supplied with provisions, unless when some very unfavorable circumstances may have occurred to prevent success in the chase. They are great talkers and very fond of displaying their eloquence. They are always making public harangues, and in the figurative language they use, their speeches are not ineloquent nor void of sense. Their delivery is good, but the effect is spoiled by their gradually raising their voices to such a high pitch as to be compelled to stop before they come to the end of their speech from sheer want of breath. After a minute or two they begin again in a lower key, and gradually raising their voices as they proceed and get excited; they finally close their harangues with a most infernal screech, which is particularly disagreeable to a white man's ears.