

couples live together under the same roof and without partitions in the house.

Should I have to sketch rapidly our Dénés' moral features, I think I could, by ignoring some necessary exceptions, give them credit for relative morality, great honesty, intense fondness of their offspring and a general gentleness of disposition, not excluding, however, occasional freaks of irascibility. But to qualify these lines and give their true portrait, I should immediately add that they are prone to lying, addicted to gambling¹, naturally selfish, cowardly, and at times very lazy, especially the stronger sex.

Besides were I required to particularize in two words the ethnic peculiarities of each tribe, I would state that the Chilhōtins are the most violent and manly of the whole group; the Carriers, the proudest and most accessible to progressive ideas; the Sékanais, the most superstitious and naive. As for the Nah'anés, though speaking a language different from, but allied to, that of the Sékanais, they are considered by our Carriers so closely similar to the latter in their physical and moral characteristics, as to receive in common with them the name of Lhtaten (Inhabitants of Beaver dams,) by allusion to their chief occupation, trapping and hunting.

IV.

With the view of having the family and tribal organization obtaining among the Western Dénés properly understood, I must refer at once to the clans or gentes into which, like the Iroquis and most of the American Aborigines, nearly all of them are divided. These to the number of five, form a kind of very strict relationship, to which, to the present time, they have held very tenaciously. Each of these clans has one or several particular heraldic emblems or totems, the toad, grouse, crow, beaver, salmon, etc.; the image of which formerly received special consideration. This organisation outsteps the village limits, and members of the same clan are to be found in localities very wide apart. But however remote their respective places, they still claim mutual kinship.

Now, from time immemorial, a fundamental law in their social constitution has been for individuals of the same clan never to inter-

¹This of course, must be understood of those who are still out of the reach of missionary influence.