

INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY.

As no children of this tribe have, as yet, been induced to remain even for a few consecutive weeks at school, it is impossible to report at present on this head. I have, however, succeeded in inducing two boys to return with me to our Shingwauk Home (1,500 miles distant from their reserve), and it will be very interesting to see in the course of a year what progress they make, in comparison with boys from other tribes. The Blackfeet have all the appearance of being an intelligent people; and I saw two boys at the mission who were evidently beginning to understand intelligently the use of the letters of the alphabet, for they had several times suggested to Mr. Tims alterations in his mode of spelling Blackfoot words; one of them, I found, had in his possession a list of Blackfoot and English words, evidently trying to teach himself the English language. Like all other Indian tribes, they learn very quickly to write a good hand, and many of the children show a taste for drawing.

THE LANGUAGE.

I entirely endorse Mr. Hale's view that the Blackfeet language is a branch of the *Algonkin stock*, having a near affinity to that spoken by the Ojibways and Crees; the grammatical construction is almost precisely the same, and a good many of the words are similar. The Sioux language, spoken by some 2,000 Indians in the North-West Territory, is an entirely distinct language, both in structure and vocabulary, but the other languages south of the Saskatchewan Valley, viz. Cree, Blackfoot, Saulteaux, and Ojibway, are clearly all of one common stock. Following are a few words in the three principal tongues which bear some resemblance to one another:—

	Ojibway	Cree	Blackfoot
Man	inini	iyiniw	nin'au
woman	ikwe	iskwew	akew
name	ijinikásowin	ijihikasowin	inikásim
my daughter	nidánis	nitánis	nitána
wood or tree	mitik	mistik	mistis
I	nistoa, -ni	niya, -ni	nin, -ni
thou	kistoa, -ki	kiya, -ki	kin, -ki
yes	A	A	A
my leg	nikad	niskat	nokatsi
kettle	akik	askik	iska

But it is in the grammatical construction of the three languages that the resemblance is the most marked. I shall notice eleven points in order:—

1. *The distinction between animate and inanimate plurals.*

In Ojibway animate nouns make their plurals in *g, ig, og*; inanimate in *an, un*.
 In Cree " " " *ok, ak* " " *a*
 In Blackfoot " " " *ax, ix, ox*; " " *in esto, isto*.

In all three languages an animate noun must be followed by an animate verb, and *vice versâ*.

2. In all three languages a distinction is observed between the *first person plural exclusive* and the *first person plural inclusive*. Thus:—

	Ojibway	Cree	Blackfoot
Our house (excl.)	niwigiwáminan	niwaskáhiganinan	nokoanan
" (incl.)	kiwigiwáminan	kiwaskáhiganinau	kokoanan