

along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, between the Missouri and the Saskatchewan. This region was the favourite resort of the buffalo, whose vast herds afforded the Indians their principal means of subsistence. In the year 1836 a terrible visitation of the small-pox swept off two-thirds of the people, and five years later they were supposed to count not more than fifteen hundred tents, or about ten thousand souls. Their enemies were then recovering their spirits, and retaliating upon the weakened tribes the ravages which they had formerly committed.

In 1855 the United States Government humanely interfered to bring about a complete cessation of hostilities between the Blackfoot tribes and the other Indians. The Commissioners appointed for the purpose summoned the hostile tribes together, and framed a treaty for them, accompanying the act by a large distribution of presents. This judicious proceeding proved effectual. Dr. F. V. Hayden in his account of the Indian Tribes of the Missouri Valley (published in the 'Transactions of the American Philosophical Society for 1862'), states that from the period of this treaty the Blackfoot tribes had become more and more peaceful in their habits, and were considered, when he wrote, the best disposed Indians in the North-west. He remarks that their earlier reputation for ferocity was doubtless derived from their enemies, who always gave them ample cause for attacking them. He adds: 'From my own experience among them, and from information derived from intelligent men who have spent the greater portion of their lives with them, I am convinced that they are among the most peaceable and honourable Indians in the West; and in an intellectual and moral point of view they take the highest rank among the wild tribes of the plains.'

This favourable opinion of Dr. Hayden, it may be added, is entirely in accordance with the testimony of the Indian agents and other officials of the Canadian North-west, who place the Blackfeet decidedly above the surrounding tribes in point of intelligence and honesty. At the present time, while constantly harassed on their reserves by the incursions of thievish Crees and other Indians, who rob them of their horses, they forbear to retaliate, and honourably abide by the terms of their treaty, which binds them to leave the redress of such grievances to the Dominion authorities. It has seemed proper to dwell upon this point, as the marked differences of character among the Indian tribes has been too little regarded. As a question of science and a matter of public policy, these differences deserve a careful study. The good disposition manifested by the Blackfoot tribes during the recent disturbances has displayed their natural character, and has been a fact of the utmost value to the welfare of the new settlements.

Since the general peace was established by the American Government the numbers of the Blackfeet have apparently been on the increase. Dr. Hayden reports the three proper Blackfeet tribes as numbering in 1855 about 7,000 souls. The present population of the three Canadian Reserves is computed at about 6,000, divided as follows: Blackfeet proper, 2,400; Bloods, 2,800; Piegiens, 800. On the American Reservation there are stated to be about 2,300, mostly Piegiens. This would make the total population of the three tribes exceed 8,000 souls. The adopted tribe, the Sarcees, have greatly diminished in numbers through the ravages of the small-pox. In 1870 this disease raged among them with great virulence. They were then residing on the American side, in Montana. Mr. McLean writes: 'An eye-witness told me that at the

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