

populous, surrounded by congenious peoples, and, therefore, more likely to keep aloof from foreign practices. If we look into the social system of those large tribes untouched by alien influences, what do we see? I do not hesitate a moment to affirm that all such institutions as are common to the Carriers and Coast Indians, by contradistinction from those upheld among all Indians as American aborigines, are absolutely unknown in the main body of the Déné nation. Through the works of Rev. E. Petitot and the letters of missionaries stationed among the Eastern Dénés, as well as through personal observation among the Sékanais (or Tse'kenne), who, sociologically speaking, are Eastern Dénés, I have come to the conclusion that their social system differs as much from that of our Carriers and Chikoh'tin as European differs from Chinese civilization.

In all the tribes of the Déné nation which have had no intercourse with Coast Indians, patriarchy takes the place of the matriarchy obtaining here, and the clans, with their totems¹ and the social peculiarities derived therefrom are unknown. So are the tribes' division into noble and common people, the right of the former, or any, to particular hunting grounds, the potlaches or distribution feasts, as observed here,² the burning of the dead, the protracted and systematic wooing of the young man before winning over his intended wife's parents, etc.

In view of these facts, is it probable, I would ask again, that a comparatively small tribe, characterized by a remarkable receptiveness and power of self-appropriation, would have originated a very elaborate social system totally unknown to the great mass of the nation to which it belongs, while to this day that same system is tenaciously clung to by alien peoples coterminous with it, and with it was formerly, in a commercial point of view, in the relations of vassal to suzerain? I am very much mistaken if there can be two answers to that question. Yet, as some may not feel satisfied with arguments of such general nature, I shall now enter, as it were, into the kernel of the subject, and endeavour to confirm my thesis by more detailed remarks, and by pointing out the originators, or, at least unconscious propagators, of the most prominent customs and institutions formerly in vogue among the Carriers and Chikoh'tin.

CARRIER SOCIOLOGY EXOTIC—PROVED BY FACTS.

First, as to the tribal division into noble and common people. Beyond the possibility of a doubt, it owes its existence to the intercourse of the Carriers with the Tsimshian tribes, especially the Kitikson.

Before I proceed further, I must be permitted a remark which I deem necessary in this connection. When, speaking of our aborigines, I call their headmen nobles or notables, I should not be understood as referring to any social class different from that whose

¹ Petitot (Monographie des Déné-Dindjé, p. xxiii.) speaks of the totems as being familiar to the Eastern Dénés; but these are *personal*, not *gental*, totems, and everybody knows that there is a very wide difference between the two. Personal totems are revealed in dreams to individuals, and as such were also known here independently of gental totems, with which they have nothing—save the name—in common.

² I am well aware that among the Eastern and intermediate Dénés it is not a rare occurrence to see successful hunters share with others the fruit of their expedition, which would otherwise soon get spoiled. But here, again, I need not remark that such patriarchal repasts totally differ from the ceremonial banquets formerly in vogue west of the Rockies. Cf. "The Western Dénés," p. 147 et seq.