

A PLEA FOR THE POOR "DIGGER" INDIAN.

(FROM THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN.)

"With the exception of the Patagonian, the Digger Indian ranks lowest in the scale of humanity".

Such is the opening sentence of an interesting paper on "the Digger Indian and his 'Cry'" by Ellen C. Weber, which appeared in the September [1898] number of the *American Archaeologist**. Now, on the point of joining issue with the fair essayist, I must confess that I know very little about the so-called "Digger", certainly not any more than is to be found in current ethnographical literature. I have not even had the good fortune of seeing what Mr. F. C. Porter wrote of him in a late number of the *Antiquarian*, nor the comments his remarks occasioned. But what I do know of several tribes belonging to the great Déné† family of the north, added to the facts which I glean in the very article from which I quote above, enables me confidently to challenge the appropriateness of its initial statement.

In the first place, I must be allowed to remark that, treating of such questions, we should never let our judgment be influenced by sentiment, nor set up the likes and dislikes of our own

* P. 230.

† For the benefit of such readers as have not seen my former writings, I may state that by Dene I mean that important aboriginal family mis-called Athapaskan by others.