

than any other part of the American continent to the European nations which have had most influence on our national character and course. Three centuries ago, emigrants from France took up their abodes in the neighborhood of these Indians, and the descendants of the original colonists yet dwell in the villages founded by their forefathers. But the course of civilization has been westward to more propitious regions, and has left these natives behind. Few of them have been brought under the power of modern enlightenment, although, owing to the devoted exertions of Roman Catholic priests, some settlements have been made. It is difficult to see how much improvement can be made in their condition by means of agriculture unless they are removed to a climate less rigorous. It would be more easy to make fishermen than farmers of them.

The population of the Montaguais is 1,039, and they seem to be slightly on the increase. The Canadian commissioners say of them that, "where uncorrupted by intercourse with unprincipled traders, they were remarkable for their honesty; and even now it is but very seldom that they break their word or willfully violate engagements which they have entered into. There are but few half-breeds among them."

The Naskapees, who number 2,860, are of the same stock. They and the Mistassins are clothed in furs and deer-skins; their only weapons are the bow and arrow, and they depend wholly on the bow and drill for procuring fire.* Some Catholic missionaries labor among them with untiring zeal and fidelity, but two-thirds of them are yet wild pagans who worship Manitou supposed to inhabit the sun and moon. To these imaginary deities they devote part of every animal they slay. As with many tribes further south, the sacrifice of the white dog is annually offered.

Owing to the diminution of their game, and the injury done by white men to their fisheries, the privations of these Indians in winter are often quite as great as those of the Esquimaux within the Arctic circle, while their resources are less ample. The missionaries and others who have been among them relate fearful instances of the last extreme to which human beings can be driven for food.

Numerically considered, the aborigines of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, now included in the New Dominion, are unimportant in comparison with those of the region lately known as Canada. Altogether the Indians of Nova Scotia numbered 1,835 in 1868, when those of New Brunswick were 2,118. (See Appendix, Table A.) The government of the New Dominion has yet obtained only a limited amount of information concerning them.

It seems that no progress of importance has yet been made in prevailing with the Indians of the maritime provinces to form themselves into "communities similar to those which have long existed in Ontario and Quebec, where, occupying farms or village lots, they enjoy in settled and permanent habitations many of the comforts and advantages of civilization, combined with systematic and continuous education and the pastoral care of religious instructors."

A philanthropic effort is being made to rescue these Indians from their present unprogressive condition and bring them at least up to the standard of the more advanced communities of the same race in the more inland provinces, where agriculture is the main support of the families, although as yet it is not often managed with the usual skill and industry of white farmers. Those who are attempting to produce

* See report of the commissioners.

† See report of the Hon. William Spragge, Superintendent General of the Indian Branch, 1868.