

two centuries ago, from sixty to seventy thousand souls. Yet he gives as informants persons who had lived twenty years among them. Little reliance can be placed on the estimate—the ancient *Coueurs des Bois* were addicted to romancing, and the habit of perverting facts in reference to the more remote tribes they visited, by way of discouraging rivalry in their lucrative trade, must have clung to them when discussing those nearer home. Equally apochryphal, I cannot but suspect, must be the 20,000 warriors whom King Oppeccanough somewhat earlier, is related to have led against the settlers in Virginia. Yet these and other similar estimates, which it would be easy to multiply, if they fail to furnish a numerical basis for comparison, convey a general idea of populousness which, as compared with what is known to our times would justify anything that can be said as to the decline of the race. “There are abundant proofs,” says Catlin, “in the History of the country, to which I need not at this time more particularly refer, to show that the very numerous and respectable part of the human family, which occupied the different parts of North America, at the time of its first settlement by Anglo Americans, contained more than fourteen millions, who have been reduced since that time, and undoubtedly in consequence of that settlement, to something less than two millions.” (Catlin II., p. 238.) In the elaborate alphabetical enumeration of Indian tribes and Nations, upward of 400 in number, prefixed to Drake’s well-known Book of the Indians: 10th Edit., 1848.—we find the estimated numbers of a large proportion of them stated, but being of a great variety of dates, and the data probably of very variable authority, no general estimate can be based on it, without an analysis much more laborious, than the result is likely to be accurate.

In the course of a couple of summers spent a few years ago in the Hudson’s Bay territory, I took pains to arrive at an estimate of the actual numbers of Indians inhabiting that country, by enquiries among the resident traders, and by procuring whenever possible, a specific statement of the number of hunters frequenting each Post, the number of young unmarried men, and an estimate of their families. The two first were, no doubt, ascertained very correctly, as far as the enquiry went; the last does not admit of much doubt. With respect to the districts which I visited but from which I did not procure these data, it is not difficult to base a tolerable approximation on the information derived from observation and inquiry, and in respect to those which I did not visit, which however form but a small part of the territory, I am guided in the estimate by the facts that where there are no trading posts, there are no Indians, and that where there are trading posts, all the Indians of the district frequent them, habit having rendered the articles of European trade essential to their existence; consequently we may infer the number frequenting any given post, pretty nearly, when the scale of the establishment is known. There are, perhaps, a few exceptions to this remark in the district of Mackenzie’s River, where our intercourse with many tribes is of recent origin; but it is true almost everywhere else. Whenever a conjectural addition was made, by well-informed persons, on the spot, to the more precise numbers, it has been included in the following enumeration.

The British territory in relation to its native population, may be divided into four regions. *First*.—The region west of the Rocky Mountains, and north of the parallel of 49°. *Second*.—The region east of the Rocky Mountains, but north of the parallel of 55°; the whole of which is inhabited by tribes of a common origin, and grouped by Ethnologists under the generic designation of “Tinné.” *Third*.—The region from the parallel of 55° to 49°, occupied partly by tribes of what is called the Eythinyuwuk or Algonquin stock, and partly by tribes of an intrusive race kindred to the Iroquois or Five Nations. Lastly, —the British Colonies.

Beginning with the *Second* of these subdivisions, we have—
North of Latitude 55° :

| | Men. | Estimated Total. |
|---|------|------------------|
| (1.) Esquimaux— <i>Inu-it</i> not included- - - - | Unkn | wn. |
| (2.) Loucheux— <i>Kutchin</i> - - - - - | | |
| On the Youcon and Tributaries,-- | | |
| Richardson, Artez-Kutchi - - - | 100 | |
| “ p. 231. Tchue - - - - - | 100 | |
| “ On the Tathzey - - - - - | 230 | |
| “ authority of Kutchcha - - - - - | 90 | |
| “ Mr. Murray Zi-Unka - - - - - | 20 | |
| “ Tanna - - - - - | 100 | |
| “ 1850, Teytsè - - - - - | 100 | |
| “ Vanta - - - - - | 80 | |
| “ Neyetsè - - - - - | 40 | |
| | 860 | |
| On Peel’s River, 1844 - - - - - | 413 | 5000 |
| Fort Good Hope Mountain Indians - - - | 75 | 375 |
| “ Loucheux - - - - - | 15 | 75 |
| Francis Lake, 1847-8 - - - - - | 45 | 216 |
| Pelly Banks “ - - - - - | 73 | 368 |
| | | 6028 |
| (3.) Dogribs, Hares, Chipewyans, &c. <i>Tinné</i> . | | |
| Fort Good Hope, Lowland Indians - - - | 28 | 150 |
| “ Rapid Indians - - - - - | 11 | 55 |
| Fort Norman Da-ha-Diune, Dog-rib, Hare - | 140 | 600 |
| Fort Simpson—Hares - - - - - | 107 | |
| “ Do. Irregular - - - - - | 320 | |
| “ Dog-rib - - - - - | 10 | |
| “ Do. Irregular - - - - - | 50 | |
| “ Nahanies - - - - - | 2 | |
| “ Do. Irregular - - - - - | 4 | 2400 |
| Fort Liard*—Hay River Indians, (Hares) - | 20 | |
| “ Beaver or Chipewyan - - - - - | 30 | |
| “ Slaves or Hares - - - - - | 10 | |
| “ Thecamies - - - - - | 30 | |
| “ Nahanies - - - - - | 14 | 600 |
| Fort Resolution—Chipewyans - - - - - | 89 | 420 |
| “ Yellow Knife - - - - - | 51 | 260 |
| Big Island or Great Slave Lake Hares - - | 20 | 100 |
| Fort Chipewyan, Chipewyans - - - - - | 140 | 730 |
| Vermilion Beaver Indians - - - - - | 62 | 250 |
| Dunvegan Beaver Indians - - - - - | 87 | |
| “ Seccanies - - - - - | 4 | |
| Chipewyans - - - - - | 12 | 350 |
| Unenumerated Chipewyan Stations - - - | | |
| Churchill - - - - - | 100 | 400 |
| Ile a la Crosset - - - - - | 110 | 660 |
| Dogrib and Martin’s Lake Indians, said by Mr. Isbester, not to be decreasing in numbers - - - - - | 150 | 600 |
| | | 7575 |

*Franklin gave, in 1820, 685 hunters.
† Franklin rated them at 200 men and boys.

The foregoing enumeration, although it embraces a large extent of country, does not bring us into contact with the more numerous tribes, which are to be found only on the plains, where countless herds of Buffalo furnish ample means of subsistence. Without going into any nicety of classification, founded upon affinities of race, upon which subject Dr. Latham and Sir John Richardson, (Arctic Expedition,) have given much information the tribes are referred to here by the designations they commonly bear among the traders. Mr. Harriet, then, a gentleman who had passed his life among them, estimated the six or seven tribes going by the general name of Blackfeet, as mustering 1,600 to 1,700 tents, at 8 per tent, 13,200.

Mr. Rowand, one of the oldest resident traders, gives them thus:—Sir John Franklin’s estimate in 1820, is added—

| | Franklin, 1820. |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Blackfeet; proper - - - - - | 300 |
| Pe-a-gans - - - - - | 400 |