

way from Athabasca to the Pacific. It was not, however, till 1805 that the first port was established by the then existing North-west Company. In 1835 I estimated the population at about five thousand. A census taken in 1839 fell considerably short of that estimate; but the difference can be accounted for, to a great extent, by the unavoidable omission of many families, and the difficulty inseparable from the attempt to number simultaneously a sparse population, occupying so large a country. Believing still my estimate to have been near the truth, I subjoin the official return, which, correct as far as it goes, will exhibit the relative proportions of the sexes, and also, by comparison of the rising generation, show that, notwithstanding the humane care extended towards the natives by the agents of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the absence of liquor and other deleterious merchandise as a depopulating cause, a rapid decrease is in progress.

Men	897
Women	688
Sons	578
Daughters	462
Total	2625

For much of the character of the Carriers, I may refer to the excellent account by Sir Alex. McKenzie of the Chipewyans, prefixed to the narrative of his travels; premising merely that the former have perhaps degenerated in many points from what I assume to be the parent stock\*. Altogether the Carriers may be set down as a peaceful race, well disposed towards their white traders; yet, while peaceful, subject to violent though transitory outbursts of passion. They have so far assimilated with the neighboring coast tribes, as to have adopted their practice of burning the dead; and one branch, the Nátatins of Nata-punkat or Babine Lake, who are in frequent communication with the Chimseyans imitate them in the insertion

\*I may here remark that I differ from Sir Alexander's assumption that the emigration of the Chipewyans has been from west to east, for reasons to which I shall probably refer incidentally as I proceed.

of the wooden lip. The former practice, once general among the Ta-cully, has during the last twenty years, gradually been falling into disuse. It was our object to discountenance it, not from any objection to the custom itself, but because great cruelties were frequently exercised at these suttees, where the survivor of a married pair was expected to submit to a good scorching voluntarily, and usually did so, if not voluntarily, by compulsion as the alternative. Thus some tortures were inflicted, especially in the case of females, who being the weaker, always fared the worse. The ashes were afterwards borne by the survivor for some times several years; until a grand feast to the manes having been publicly celebrated, the last relics were finally inurned, placed on a high post in a conspicuous part of the village, and the term of mourning was considered over. Under the reformed system, the tortures are omitted; the cares before bestowed in ornamenting the urn (or rather wooden box,) are now appropriated to the decoration of the grave: the other portions of the ceremony remain unchanged.\*

The Ta-cully, like their Chipewyan relations, are expert in the preparation of the snare, and other devices for capturing game and fish. Their weir for catching salmon exhibits much ingenuity, and merits a description which I shall probably subjoin in an appendix. Many other of their devices, indeed, might be considered equally worthy of notice, but the dread of extending these notes over too great a space, warns me to abstain.

The Shewhaphmuch (Atnahs of McKenzie, as before explained,) who compose a large branch of the Sacliss family, occupy the banks of Thompson's River; and along Frazer's River from the Rapid village, twenty miles below Alexandria to the confluence of these two streams. Thence to near the Falls, as before noted, the tribe bears the name of Nicute-much\*. On the other hand, approaching the Columbia, it

\*Corrupted by the Canadian voyagers into "Coutcanx," or Knives; by which designation they are now generally known among them.