

MONOGRAPH OF THE DÈNÈ-DINDJIE
INDIANS.

I.

I call by the compound name of Dènè-Dindjié, a large family of red-skinned Americans, peopling the two slopes of the Rocky Mountains and the adjacent plains, between 54° north latitude and the Glacial Sea, from south to the north; Hudson's Bay and the Cascade Mountains, near the Pacific, from east to west.

Within this circumference, vast as it is, are not included the Sarcis of the Saskatchewan, who belong to the same family.

The Dènè-Dindjiés people, then, more than half the British North-West Territory, three-fourths of British Columbia and of the new American Territory of Alaska.

Samuel Hearn, the traveller, first mentioned the Dènè-Dindjiés, whom he called Northern Indians. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Franklin, Hales and Richardson, gave them the name of Tinvéh, as well as that of Chippewas and Athabaskans. The first French Canadians who explored the North-West Territories called them Montagnais-du-Nord, on account of the similarity of their mild and peaceable character to that of the Montagnais of the Saguenay; but the latter belong to the great Algic family.

The proper name of the Indian of whom we are now speaking is that of *man*, which is translated without indicating numbers, by the words *dènè*, *ienè*, *dane*, *dunè*, *adènè*, *adæna*, *dnainè*, *dindjié*, *dindjitch*, according to the tribes and dialects. These words, which are identical with the name of man in Lower Britany *dèn*, in Gaelic *dæna*, in Nabajo *tana*, in Tagal *taro*, and perhaps even in Maori *tangata*, signify that which is earth, land, terrestrial, with the particle *de*, that which is, and the root *nné*, *nni*, *nan*, *nun*, earth.

In uniting the word *dènè*, which be-

longs to the Chippewas, the most southern tribe, to that of *dindjié*, which is given to the *Loucheux*, the most northern tribe, I have included under one compound name, which I believe to be appropriate, the entire Northern red-skin nations of America, of which so little is yet known.

The Loucheux here spoken of are the Indians whom Sir Alexander Mackenzie named the Quarrelers, and whom Richardson believed he had designated by their real name when he called them *Kutchin*.* Neither of them consider themselves as belonging to the same great family as the *me* Montagnais, or Chippewas.

This last word, or rather *Tchipway-anawók*, is the name by which the Dènè-Dindjié are known to their neighbors to the south, the Crees and the Sauteurs. It signifies, according to Mgr. Taché, pointed skins, from *wayan*, skin and *ichipwa*, pointed; *wok* being the sign of the plural. This etymology is the more plausible, as the *Dindjié* still wear a tight jacket of reindeer or moose deer skin, furnished with a tail in front and behind, after the fashion of the Poncho worn by the Chilians. The Hare Indians have told me that such was also their dress before the fusion among their tribes produced by trade and re-

*The word Kutchin (not *Kutchin*) is improper, because it is a generic verbal noun signifying inhabitants, people, nation, persons. The Dindjiés do not confine it to themselves, but apply it to all men; whilst they restrict the title of *Dindjié* (man) to their nation or tribe alone.

It is the same with the words *ottiné*, *gottiné*, *sittané*, synonymous with *Kutchin*, but in more southern dialects. These are verbal substantives formed from the verb *ostti*, *ótti*, *gótti*, or *Kwittchin* (according to the dialects), which may be rendered literally by the English verb *to do*. By extension it is employed for dwelling, inhabiting; thus a Slave will say: *ájian ostti illé* (here I do not), meaning, I do not live here. A Hare Indian will say: *en'í sè gótti* (I steal me, he makes) to express: he led me to steal. Finally a Loucheux will translate the same phrase by *nidjien kwittchin krwa*, but these words have never been the proper names of the tribes which employ them.