

THE KLAMATH INDIANS OF SOUTHWESTERN OREGON.

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ETHNOGRAPHIC SKETCH OF THE PEOPLE.

INTRODUCTION.

The Klamath people of North American Indians, the subject of this descriptive sketch, have inhabited from time immemorial a country upon the eastern slope of the Cascade Range, in the southwestern part of the territory now forming the State of Oregon. That territory is surrounded by mountain ridges and by elevations of moderate height, and watered by streams, lakes, marshes, and pond-sources issuing from the volcanic sands covering the soil. The secluded position of these Indians within their mountain fastnesses has at all times sheltered them against the inroads of alien tribes, but it has also withheld from them some of the benefits which only a lively intercourse and trade with other tribes are able to confer. The climate of that upland country is rough and well known for its sudden changes of temperature, which in many places render it unfavorable to agriculture. But the soil is productive in edible roots, bulbs, berries, and timber, the limpid waters are full of fish and fowl, and game was plentiful before the white man's rifle made havoc with it. Thus the country was capable of supplying a considerable number of Indians with food, and they never manifested a desire to migrate or "be removed to a better country."

The topography of these highlands, which contain the headwaters of the Klamath River of California, will be discussed at length after a mention of the scanty literature existing upon this comparatively little explored tract of land.