

the woods and streams, haunt desert and lonely localities, and moan among the caches of the dead. To propitiate these spirits, offerings are made of some trifling and invariably very worthless article. This is hung upon a bush or tree, and among the tributes of this kind, which I have seen, may be mentioned strips of cotton, worn-out shoes, tattered robes, pieces of leather, and old belts, whose perfectly worthless character showed plainly that though these Indians have a sneaking, superstitious fear, it is not sufficiently strong to overcome the avarice that forms so predominant a trait in their character.

An inferior species of "totemism" obtains among them. Each hunter selects, as a species of familiar spirit, some animal, and invariably a carnivorous one. According to their custom, the man can then neither eat nor skin, and if avoidable, not even kill the object of his choice. The taking of the "totem" is not, so far as I am aware, the occasion of any religious ceremony, as is the case among some of the plain tribes. Pictures of various animals used in the olden day to be distributed among the natives by the traders, each individual receiving that of his totem. When a hunter had been unsuccessful he pulled this picture out of his medicine bag, laid it before him, and taking some tobacco from the same receptacle, paid adoration to the spirit by smoking and making it a speech. After this proceeding he returned with renewed ardor to the chase, and generally with success.

Fatalism appears to be deeply seated in their minds. They usually accept such luck as is sent them, if not without murmuring, at least apathetically, and make but few struggles to combat adverse circumstances.

There does not appear to be any regular order of priesthood. Any one who feels inclined to do so turns medicine man, but some are much more highly esteemed than others, as possessing greater skill in conjuring away sickness and foretelling future events. The articles by which they affect to perform many remarkable and mysterious operations are very commonplace and trifling; a flint, a piece of mica, a colored stone, or a bullet, being all equally efficacious mediums, through which to hold communication with their tutelary spirits. I have on several occasions, for amusement, tested the soothsaying powers of some of the most celebrated wizards, by requesting information as to the future arrival of boats or letters, and I can confidently state that if they guess correctly once in twenty times, it is as much as their supernatural powers are capable of effecting. As jugglers they hold a very inferior status, and do not approach, even in a remote degree, the really remarkable skill that many of the Algonquin tribes possess in this way: An idea of the powers of conjurors to kill Indians at a distance, simply by the force of their spells, was formerly common to all the race, and still exists with unabated strength among the Kutchin tribes of the Youcon river, who put great faith yet in their medicine men, and pay them liberally for their services in seasons of danger or sickness. Additional facts regarding these "doctors" will be noted hereafter, when I proceed to explain the medical theories and practice of the nation.

MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERISTICS.

Few of the moral faculties are possessed in any remarkable degree by the eastern Tinneh. They are tolerably honest, not bloodthirsty nor cruel; but this is, I suppose, the extent, as they are confirmed liars, far from being chaste, and have but very indistinct perceptions of doing to others as they would be done by. Some tribes are more noted for honesty than others; the Beavers and Chepewyans being at the top of the scale, the Slaves in the middle, and the Hares, Dogribs, and Yellow Knives at the bottom. The two first-named branches will compete in this respect with any European nation. No people in the world are more tenacious of what they possess themselves, or more willing to restore the property of others. On giving up what they may find to the owner, a demand for payment will sometimes be made. If the request be granted, well and good.