KENNETH E. KIDD

Canadians of Long Ago

CHIEF INDIAN GROUPS BEFORE THE COMING OF THE WHITE MAN.


KIMO
ALGONKIN
IROQUOIS

KENNETH E. KIDD

Curator of Ethnology
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

Canadians of Long Ago

the story of the Canadian Indian

ILLUSTRATED BY SYLVIA HAHN

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PREFACE

The recent orientation of Canadian school curricula in the direction of *social studies* has brought sharply into focus the great lack of teaching material in this field. This little book has been designed to meet this need insofar as Canadian Indians are concerned. It attempts to describe the various Indian types in the Dominion, and to present the modes of life followed by the principal Indian groups across Canada as they existed just previous to the coming of the Europeans, outlining briefly the food habits, clothes, habitations and social customs. Since only the most important characteristics could be mentioned in such an elementary text, much has had to be omitted; the most notable omission, perhaps, being that several groups have not been discussed at all, such as the people of the Cordillera region and the Mackenzie River Valley. Since they partake in many respects of the surrounding cultures, the omission should not be considered as complete. As for the Eskimo, they have not been mentioned for the reason that their culture is so highly specialised that it deserves a separate treatment.

It is hoped that the book will prove suitable for supplementary reading in the intermediate grades and at the same time provide teachers with abundant material for classroom discussion. It has been based, for the most part, upon talks delivered at various times to school groups in the galleries of the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology.

The author wishes to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Miss Sylvia Hahn for her very attractive sketches which illustrate this book; they were made chiefly from specimens in the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology. He also wishes to thank Mr. Bernard McEvoy, and Miss K. Doody, both of Longmans, Green and Company, for their help and very patient assistance in seeing the book through the press.

KENNETH E. KIDD

September, 1951

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First Arrivals

Cartier meets the Indians

When Jacques Cartier first landed in Canada, he met red-skinned folk who spoke a language he did not understand. Two years later, when he got as far as Quebec, he met more of these people. His next voyage took him as far as Montreal. Again he met the red-skinned people. Like other men of his time, Cartier believed he was near India. And like them, he called these strange folk "Indians".

We know now that Cartier was a long, long way from India. But the name for the natives has stuck, and we still call them Indians.

All the explorers who followed Cartier in Canada met Indians wherever they went. They noticed that all of them had reddish skin, straight black hair and dark eyes.

How the Indians came to Canada

Perhaps the explorers thought that the Indian people had always lived here. Or perhaps they never troubled to think about the matter at all. But today people are interested in the question.

We should like to know three things about the Indians. We should like to know if they have always lived in Canada. If they have not always lived here, we should like to know where they came from. And we should like to know how long they have been here.

These are not easy questions to answer. In fact, many different answers have been given, and only a few can be correct. But nowadays, men pretty well agree on most points. So we shall try to give the answers here which are most widely acceptable, and which seem to be the best.

The Ice Age

Let us try to answer the first question, "Have the Indians always lived in Canada?" The men who have studied this matter tell us that the Indians have not always inhabited this country. Indeed, twenty thousand years ago, no human beings could have lived here. At that time all, or nearly all, of Canada was covered with ice called a glacier. In some places the ice was a mile thick.

The glacier did not cover much more of North America than what is now Canada. Most of the United States and all of Mexico and Central America were free of ice, and looked very much as they do now. They were covered with trees, flowers and grass. But in addition to many of the animals that inhabit those countries today, there were then some that are unknown

now. There were mammoths, giant sloths, and extinct kinds of horses and camels. Men, too, could very easily have lived in those regions. But as far as we know, there were no people anywhere in the New World. We call this the time of the "Ice Age".

The Place where the Indians entered

If the Indians were not here during the Ice Age, then they must have come since. And they must have come from some other part of the world.

Let us look at a map of the world on a globe. We turn the globe so that we are looking at the Western Hemisphere, with North America above, and South America below. Great oceans surround these continents on all sides. No one without large boats could possibly have crossed these oceans to America.

There are three places, however, where the distances between the Americas and the other continents are not so great. One of these is between Brazil in South America and Africa; another is between Iceland and Labrador. The third is between Siberia and Alaska.

It is possible that a few boatloads of people may have crossed occasionally at all of these points. Some perhaps were blown across by storms. But their numbers must always have been small.

By far the easiest route is that between Siberia and Alaska. If you look carefully at this region, you will

see a long chain of islands, called the Aleutian Islands, which stretches across Bering Sea, almost from the one continent to the other. The islands very much resemble stepping-stones. They are small, but they are very close together. Even in a small canoe, it would not be difficult to paddle from one to the other until one had crossed from Asia to America.

It is almost certain that the ancestors of our Indians came into this country by that route which not only is the shortest, but is also the easiest. No organized trek would be needed. A family, two or three families, or a whole tribe could come at any time. The way was open for many thousands of years. Many thousands of people must have crossed. In fact, there may have been an almost constant stream of people entering America by this back door at Alaska.

The Time when the Indians arrived

"When did men first travel this route?" you ask. That would be a very difficult question to answer. Probably men ventured out to cross Bering Sea long before the Ice Age had ended. But it was only when the glacier had melted enough to leave some dry land where grass and other plants could grow, that men could come and stay. Until that happened, there would be no food.

The glacier had melted enough to leave an open

space from Alaska to the Great Central Plains about fifteen to twenty thousand years ago. Except for this open land along the west side of the Rocky Mountains, all of Canada was still covered with ice.

But people from Asia could enter Alaska, go down the coast, paddle up the Mackenzie River, and then tramp down this prairie country to the western part of what is now the United States. Here they would find abundant food, and the many strange animals we mentioned a little while ago, such as the mammoths, sloths and camels.

The appearance of the Indians is still another reason for thinking they came from Asia. They resemble many Asiatic tribes in the colour of their skin, and hair and eyes. We call the yellow-skinned people of Asia *Mongolians.* The Indians are really a branch of the Mongolian race. They are more like them than any other people. We may take this as another proof that the ancestors of the Indians crossed over from Asia in ancient times.

How we learn about the People of these ancient Times

We can learn about people of long ago by digging in their old campsites. Every year, men search for these. When they dig they find bones, tools, and other belongings. They often find out what food the people ate, by examining the bones of animals found in their

camps. If they find the bones of deer, bears, and foxes, they may be sure the people ate these animals, and tossed their bones away. Or, if they find two stones which fit like a mortar and pestle, they have proof that the people used them for grinding. They are best suited for grinding seeds, so the evidence is that these people used them for grinding seeds into meal for food.

There might also be such stone tools as arrow or dart points, knives and scrapers. If the people made pottery dishes, these are almost sure to be found. In very dry climates, even such things as wooden arrow shafts, wooden bowls, and woven cloth are often found.

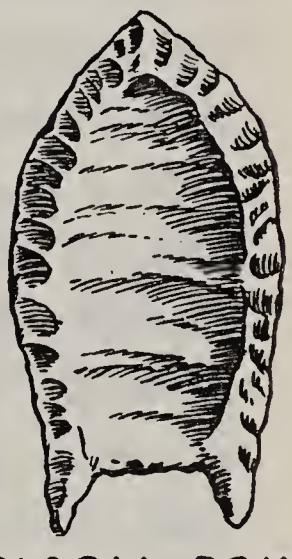
Digging up such ancient things is called "archaeology". Archaeology teaches us how people lived long ago. One who digs for such information is called an "archaeologist".

The "Folsom" people

Let us go now with an archaeologist to one of the camps of these first Indians. They lived in the Great Central Plains, in what is now the United States. But perhaps we should look at our globe again and see just where they were. Their largest camps were in the present State of New Mexico, at a place called Folsom, which may not be marked on all maps. If you find the State of New Mexico, and remember the place was called Folsom, that will be enough.

Fifteen thousand years ago, the spot was on the shores of a small lake. Now all is dry for miles around, and the ancient camp is covered deep with soil.

By careful digging and much hard work, part of the camp was uncovered. Lying around the shores of the old lake were pieces of bone. The archaeologist learned that these bones belonged to animals which no longer live, or as we say, are "extinct". One kind which is more abundant than any other belonged to an extinct buffalo or "bison". These are so abundant that it seems certain the Folsom people practically lived on them. This is made even more certain, for arrow points are often found stuck fast into the bones.



FOLSOM POINT

All of these arrow points at Folsom, the archaeologist tells us, are of one sort. They are made of stone, of course. But they are all fashioned in one special way. No matter where one might find them, one could never mistake them. They are usually about two and one half inches long, and perhaps three quarters of an inch wide. They are indeed shaped much like a slender leaf. The sides are very carefully chipped. The most unusual part, however, is that there is a shallow groove or channel running the length of each face. This makes them look slender and fragile.

The fact that these points were shot into the bones of the extinct bison makes it plain that the Folsom people were living at the same time as the bison. That helps us to decide how long ago it is since the people themselves lived. We have already explained that this was between fifteen and twenty thousand years ago.

We have learned very little more about the Folsom people than this. None of their bones has been found, so we do not know what they looked like. Neither has anything been discovered about their houses, nor their clothes.

Now and then, the Folsom type of arrow-point is found in other parts of the United States and Canada. A good many have been found in Alberta and Saskatchewan. This makes it seem likely that ten or twenty thousand years ago the Folsom people were living in those provinces too.

Other Ancient Indian People

There were other ancient people. They lived in different parts of North America. One such tribe lived in Canada about fifteen thousand years ago. One of their camps was found not very long ago. It was on the north shore of Lake Huron, in Ontario, not far from Manitoulin Island. When these ancient Indians lived there, the glacier was quite close. Perhaps it was not more than fifteen miles or so to the north. For this reason, the climate must have been cold and damp.

Only the stone tools of these people remain. There were no bones, no camp fires, no houses. All of these things have either decayed or been washed away by the rains. The stone tools are all that is left to tell us they once lived there.

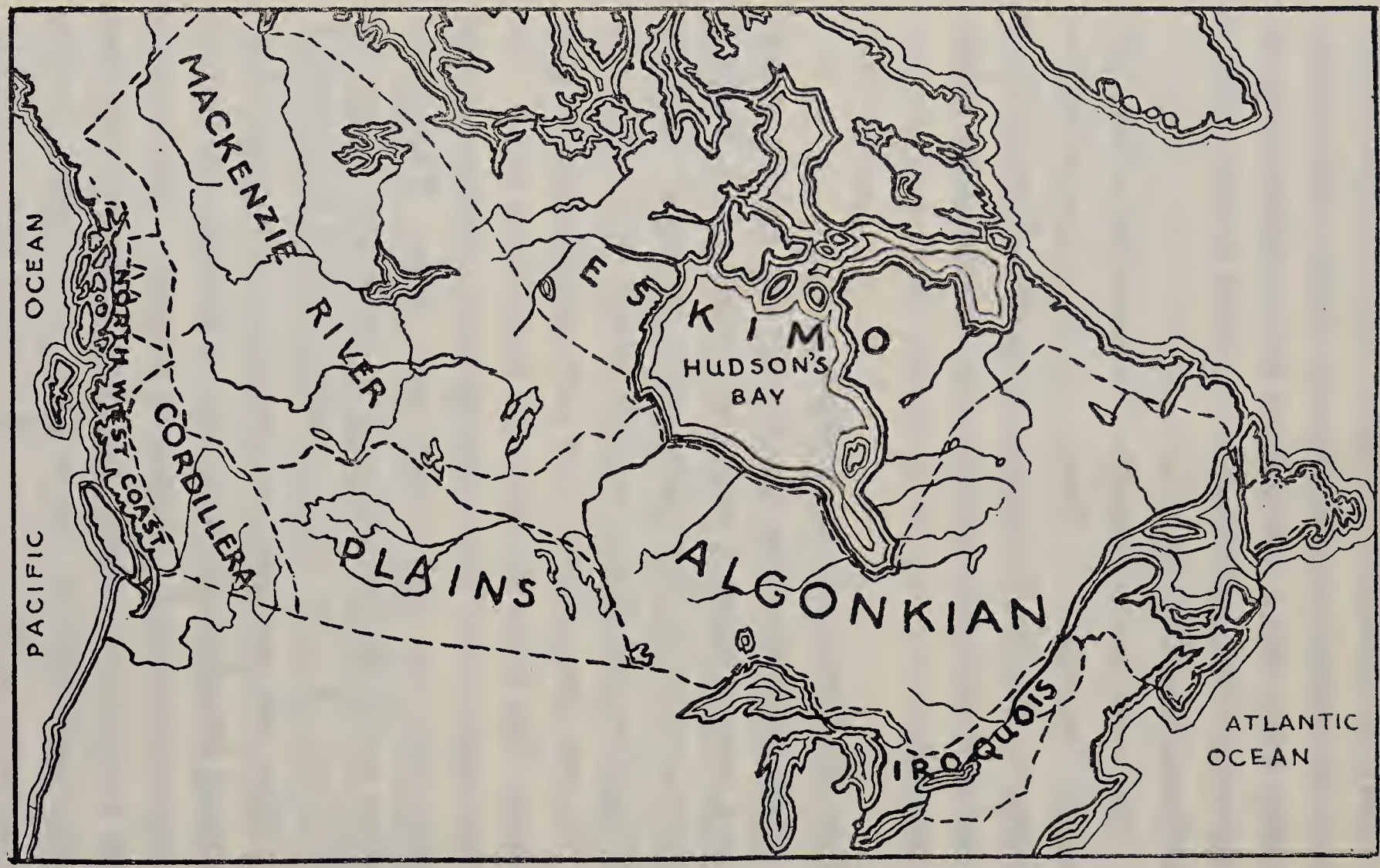
The tools are all made of a beautiful white rock, called "quartzite". There are no arrowpoints, or scrapers, like the Folsom people used. Instead, there are large tools like knives, and perhaps some which were axes.

How the Continent was peopled

Perhaps when these people and the Folsom people lived, most of North America was uninhabited. Perhaps there were only a few small groups of people, or tribes, living here and there, far apart from each other.

No one knows how or why they spread out into other places. But little by little, the population grew. The land began to be filled with people. Perhaps the old tribes split up into several new tribes. These new tribes would likely wander off to settle new places. In this way, all parts of the country would be occupied.

Then, too, we must suppose that more people kept coming into America from Asia. Probably new settlers came every year for thousands of years. There might not be many at a time. But those who came together might settle side by side to form a new tribe. As the land began to fill up, new tribes might have to wander



CHIEF GROUPS OF INDIANS AND THE ESKIMO IN CANADA

farther and farther before finding a place they could call their own. In this way the land would all be settled.

Canadian Indians at the Time of Discovery

When the white men arrived they found that every part of Canada was inhabited. In the far north, the Eskimo lived. South of them, the Indian country began. There were many, many tribes of Indians. Some tribes roamed freely over vast areas of land; others were crowded into little patches of sea-coast. Some tribes were large and powerful; but others were small and not very strong.

Some tribes lived by hunting; others by fishing. Some were well-to-do; and others had to work very hard to get enough to eat and to keep them warm. Each tribe had its own style of dress; and its own strange customs. Besides, there were many different languages and dialects.

At present, no one knows exactly how all these differences came about. We only know that there *are* these differences. But little by little, the archæologist and the students of Indian languages are finding out more and more about the history of these people. Some day the whole story may be known.

In the following pages, the customs of some of these Canadians of long ago are described. Since there is not space enough to describe them all, only the more

important ones can be explained. These include the Indians of the Northwest Coast, the Indians of the Plains, and the two main types of the Eastern Indians. The Indians of the Rocky Mountains have been left out. But in many ways their customs were like those of the people of the Northwest Coast, and in others, like those of the Plains. The Indians of the Mackenzie River country have been left out too. Their life was very like that of the Algonkians of the East, for both were hunters. To save space, we have described only one, the Algonkians.

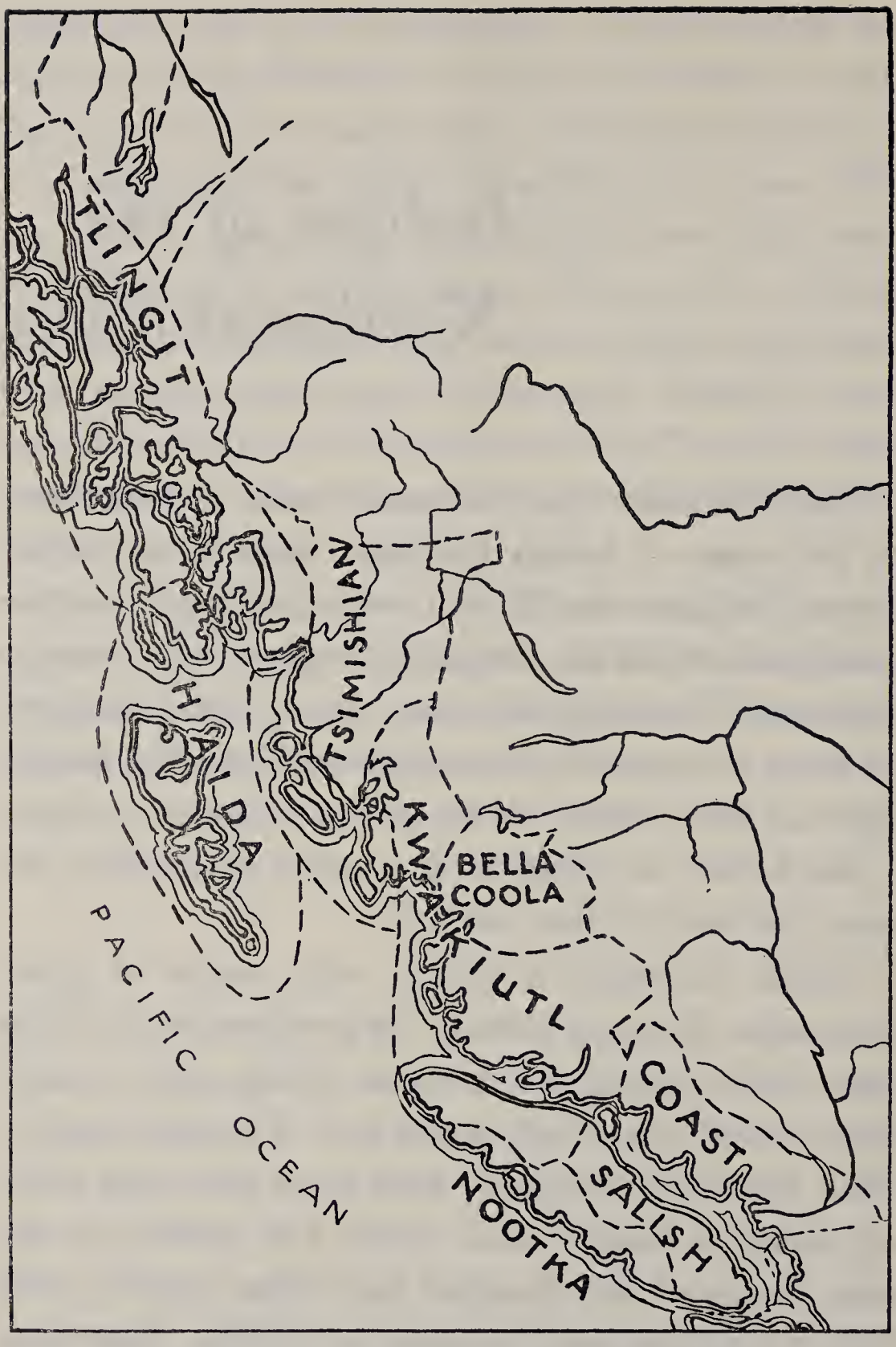
There is no doubt that the Eskimo and Indians are members of the same race. But their customs are almost totally different, and so are their languages. To describe Eskimo life would need a separate book.

Indians of the Northwest Coast

When Canada was discovered, more Indians lived on the coast of British Columbia than in any other area of the same size. In fact, some people believe that nearly half of all the Canadian Indians lived there at that time. Certainly there were many tribes scattered all along the coast, from south of the Canadian border right up into Alaska. Many of the tribes were large.

But before we describe the people themselves, we must first look at their country.

British Columbia is ridged with ranges of great mountains. In many parts of the province other ranges come down almost to the coast, leaving only a small strip of land where people can live. The coast itself is often rocky and irregular, with great bays and inlets all along its length. Such inlets add greatly to the total length of the shoreline and often provide good harbours and sheltered locations for villages. Numerous streams come down from the mountain ranges. In the



TRIBES OF THE NORTHWEST COAST

spring, these become raging torrents, but at other seasons are navigable for short distances.

Offshore there are innumerable islands, some large, some small. The most important of these are Vancouver Island, at the south end of the province, and the Queen Charlotte Islands, about half way up the coast. Various tribes lived on Vancouver Island, while a single tribe, called the Haida, inhabited the Queen Charlotte group.

The ocean in earlier days, even more than at present, teemed with life. The Indians hunted chiefly the large sea mammals—porpoises, sea lions, sea otter and even whales. They caught fish in the ocean too, but most of the fishing was done in the rivers. In the spring, when the salmon came upstream to lay their eggs the Indians caught them in various ways. Another fish, which they called eulachon was much liked also, and caught in vast numbers. Cod, halibut, smelt, herring, crabs, oysters and clams added to their diet and were highly prized.

Food animals were abundant too. Elk, deer and mountain goat were common, and moose were found along the northern streams. Beaver, wolves, foxes, bears and other animals were plentiful. But the Indians much preferred the sea mammals and fish.

The land was densely covered with forest everywhere. The trees grew tall and stately. Chief among

them were the Douglas fir, spruce, cedar and hemlock. A few oak and other deciduous trees grew close to the sea, but they were not very important. Beneath the great evergreens among the ferns there was a dense tangle of blueberry, huckleberry, salmon berry and thimbleberry bushes.

The Indians lived in the narrow strip of beach between the ocean and the forest. There they built their houses and lived their lives. They seldom ventured into the forest, partly because it was so difficult to push one's way through the underbrush, partly because they preferred the ocean. When they did go into the forest they followed along the banks of the streams and then only to fish.

But on the ocean they felt perfectly at home. They were really a sea-going people. Their houses looked out across the sea; and the people looked to the sea as their home rather than to the land. These Indians got their food mostly from the sea or from the streams; they built great canoes for ocean travel, and they spent a great deal of their time upon the water.

To them the forest was important because it provided them with all their building materials, and with material for making clothing, canoes, and household articles.

Houses of the Indians

Everywhere along the northwest coast, the Indians

built their houses of wood. For this they used the cedar tree. Since they had no tools capable of chopping down such large trees as grow there they often made use of fallen ones. These were cut into sections of the right length by placing fires on them at the proper places. The fires were kept under control so

HOUSES OF THE NORTHWEST COAST INDIANS

that they could burn through the logs only where required. The sections of log were then brought to the place where the house was to be built and were set up for posts. One tribe built houses from twenty to fifty or sixty feet square. In such a house two posts fifteen or twenty feet long and two feet in diameter were set up six feet apart, with smaller posts at the sides. These carried the roof, which was gabled. Additional posts at each end supported roof beams which ran the length of the house. When the framework had been completed the walls were added. They were made of cedar planks, placed horizontally along the front and sides, overlapped to turn the water, and lashed in place with cedar withes or thongs. A second covering of planks was added so as to cover the cracks in the first.

How planks were made

Since the Indians had no metal tools the making of planks was a difficult task. If the tree was already on the ground, a log of the desired length was cut off by burning. This log was then split with stone wedges driven into the ends with stone hammers. In this way several planks could be made from a single log. When the planks had been split off, they were worked with adzes to make them of the right thickness. Such roughly smoothed planks were usually adequate for walls. But if the worker wanted to use his plank to make a box,

or some other fine object, he might smooth it further by polishing it with grit.

Making a box

If a plank was to be used to make a box, it was first polished very smooth. Then three grooves were cut across one surface, at the proper places and in the proper directions. The plank was placed on the ground, where little ditches had been dug to correspond to the grooves, and covered with grass and hot stones. Water poured on the hot stones caused much steam to rise and soften the wood. When the wood was steamed sufficiently, it was taken out of this "bath" and bent along the grooves. If these had been properly cut the plank now was bent to a square. The ends were either pegged with wooden pegs, or holes were bored and spruce roots run through them to hold the box together. A top and bottom were added by the same means.

Building a Canoe

Canoes were made from the trunks of cedar trees. If the trunk was not already the proper length the Indians made it so by burning away the part which was unnecessary. The remaining piece was then worked into shape, inside and out, with adzes. Very often this job was made a little easier by burning away some of the wood from the inside, or at least charring it. The charred wood could be adzed away more quickly than

the fresh wood. When the log was worked to the proper thickness, the Indians softened it by steaming it. When it was in this condition, they spread the centre part and put in the thwarts.

Wooden dishes

Wooden dishes of many kinds were made in a similar way, by adzing out the hollow and shaping the sides.

MAKING A CONTAINER FOR FISH OIL S. HAHN

The outsides were often carved and painted or decorated with pieces of sea shell. Such wooden dishes are still used.

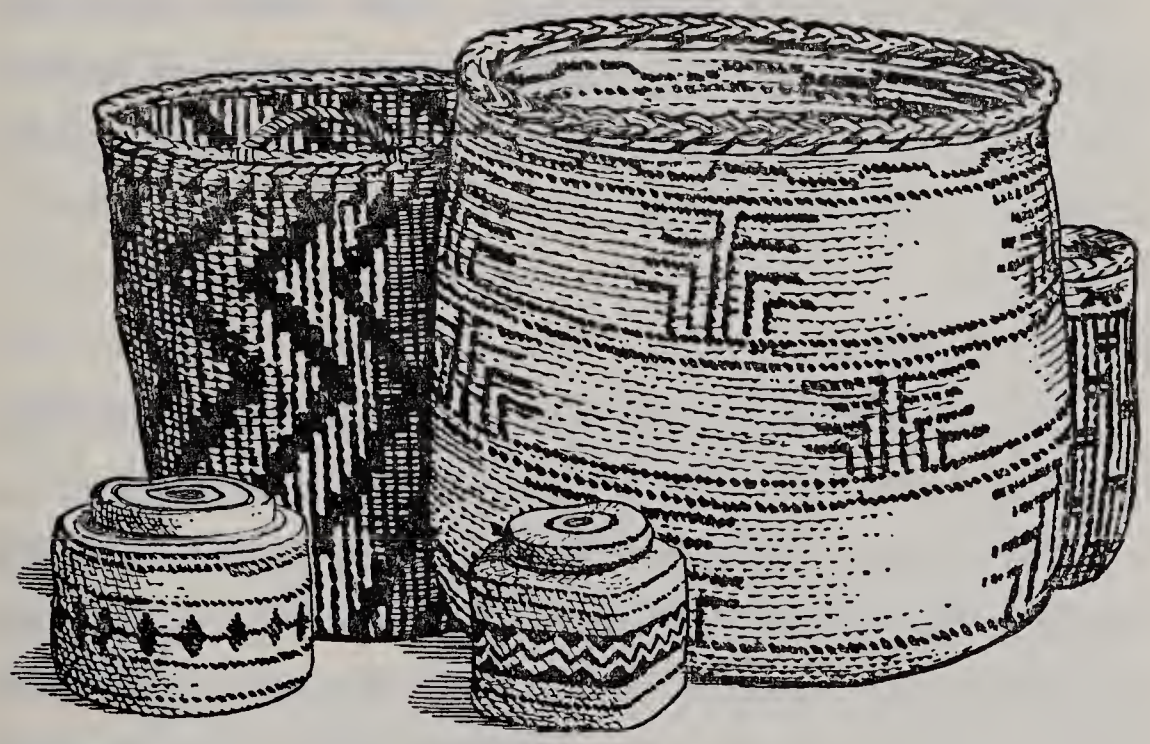
Mats, nets and baskets

Almost everywhere along the northwest coast the Indians made mats, nets and baskets, and certain tribes wove blankets. Nets were usually made of nettle fibre and used for fishing. Mats were generally made by

plaiting the inner bark of the cedars. To do this, the inner bark was stripped off the tree trunk and then split into strips of even width with a special tool. Often the strips were dyed red, yellow, or black, but of course they could also be used just as they were, without dyeing. Different patterns could be worked out by plaiting the coloured strips in different ways.

In some parts of the country the Indians wove mats on a sort of loom. Whether they were plaited or woven the mats were usually quite attractive. They were used as floor coverings, as seats, and often to divide sections of a room. They were sometimes hung in doorways to help keep out the draft.

Beautiful baskets were made everywhere. There were very fine ornamental ones, usually made of a kind



BASKETS OF THE WEST COAST INDIANS

of grass; medium coarse ones, and very coarse ones. The last two kinds were generally made out of spruce roots. The roots were dug up and the outer part, which looks like bark, stripped off. The part which remained was the part used in weaving. The baskets were made in various ways, the most common being what is called the "twine weave". Baskets might be made round, square, or even flat like a shopping-bag. Some were large, like boxes with detachable lids. The grass used in making baskets was either bleached or dyed. As a result the weavers could work patterns into their baskets by using different colours (such as white, red, or purple). The latter colour was obtained by steeping the grass in a mixture of water and crushed huckleberries. Yellow was made by boiling with hemlock bark.

Baskets with an open mesh were often used for gathering clams. The closely woven ones of spruce root were used for boiling food, and the larger baskets served for storing things.

Making clothes

Most of the clothes which the northwest coast Indians wore were made of spruce roots. This may seem to us a very strange material from which to make one's clothes. But when we learn that these Indians wore garments only to shed the rain, it does not appear so absurd. Most of the time the Indians went entirely

naked. They needed clothes only in the rainy season and cedar bark served them very well at that time.

Large, conical hats were woven in much the same way as the tightly woven cooking baskets. They were made of spruce root and often had designs woven into them. Capes and skirts were worn and these were made in much the same way as the mats. In fact, they were often very much like mats which could be thrown around one's shoulders, or tied around one's waist.

The Kwakiutl Indians, living on the mainland opposite Vancouver Island, wove cedar bark blankets on a loom. They often wove borders with mountain goat wool.

In the far north, a branch of the Tlingit tribe, called the Chilkat Indians, wove blankets from a mixture of mountain goat wool and cedar bark. These were beautiful and were famous all up and down the coast. They often sold for very high prices. The Chilkat usually wove their blankets in three colours, yellow, black and green, and had certain patterns which they always used. The men drew the patterns on boards and the women wove them into the blankets

In the south of British Columbia the Salish people used the wool of a little white dog in place of mountain goat wool. Their weaving methods were also slightly different. Sometimes they combined feathers with the wool to give a little variety.

These beautiful blankets, made by the Salish, the Chilkat and the Kwakiutl, were not used for everyday wear, but were kept for dances and other important occasions.

Dress

The Indians of the northwest coast did not need very much clothing because the climate was mild. Besides, they did not travel by land and for that reason almost never wore anything on their feet or legs.

The men usually wore nothing at all. In the rainy time, they did wrap a square mat around their shoulders, and they wore a hat like the ones we described a few pages back. But they very seldom made clothes of animal skin because the skin would not be comfortable in such damp weather. Besides the rain cape or square mat worn in rainy weather, men often put ornaments in their ears and in their noses. To make these, they used wood or bone, or even feathers.

Girls and women had one garment—a skirt made of shredded cedar bark, which reached the knees. This was nearly always worn. And most of the time they also wore an upper garment which reached from the shoulders to the waist and was held in by a belt. It was also made of cedar bark. They liked gay nose-rings and earrings, and anklets and bracelets. Some of these were made of the shell of the abalone—a large sea shell.

Many of these Indians tattooed themselves. They worked designs into their skins which looked very like the ones put on boxes, canoes, food dishes and other articles. To do the tattooing, all that was necessary was to prick the skin with a sharp needle of bone and rub in soot. When the little wound healed, the soot was sealed in under the skin, leaving the design to show through in a bluish colour.

The very strange custom of flattening the head was popular with some tribes. The Kwakiutl liked their children's heads to grow into a sort of sugar-loaf shape. The people preferred heads which sloped in a straight line from the eyes to a peak at the back. To make the skulls grow into these odd shapes, the children's heads were tied to boards until they had taken on the form. Then the board was removed. The children did not seem to suffer, nor did the strange custom affect their intelligence at all.

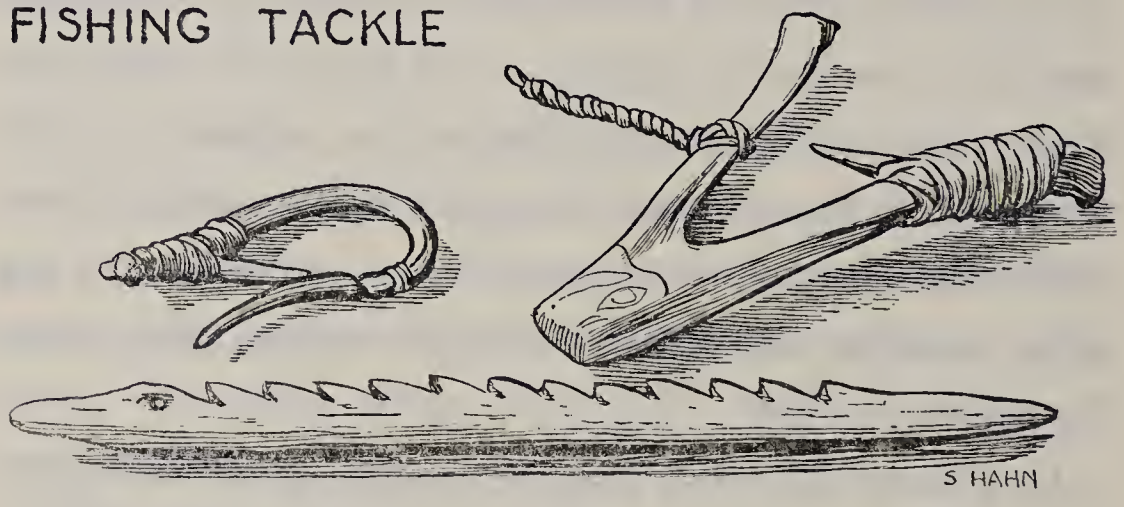
Men wore their hair long, or caught up on the top of the head. In some tribes, the women braided their hair into two braids, one of which hung over each shoulder.

In rainy weather, people often painted themselves with grease paint. To make this, oil was mixed with some colour such as red ochre, and spread on the skin. One of the favourite mixtures was oil and fine sparkling sand, or mica, which must have given the Indians a very strange appearance indeed.

How the Indians got their food

The Indians of the northwest coast got most of their living from the rivers of their country and from the ocean. A few berries and a few land animals like bears and deer were killed and eaten now and then. But for the most part they depended upon the great sea animals, like sea lions, seals and porpoises for their food, as well as upon the great quantities of fish which inhabited the ocean and all the rivers. Halibut, cod, herring and eulachon were everywhere abundant, and in the spring the salmon came up the streams to lay

FISHING TACKLE



their eggs. It was so easy, in fact, to get food that three or four months' work usually provided enough to last a year. Famines were unknown.

Seals might be killed with clubs when they were basking on the shore or rocks. But this was difficult to do because seals usually sleep with one eye open, so to speak. Instead, two men took a canoe to sea to find

them. One man steered while the other wielded the harpoon. After the seal was harpooned, the men kept driving him under water until he drowned, for a seal, unlike a fish, must have air to breathe.

The Indians killed porpoises in much the same way except that after being harpooned, a long lance was driven through its body.

One or two Indian tribes even killed whales. The Nootka was one such tribe. Whaling was extremely dangerous. Men who tried it had to be very skilful and sure of themselves. A whale could easily wreck their best canoe with one flip of his tail. A canoe for whaling usually held eight men. The whale was harpooned with a harpoon point made from a sharpened shell, or from a piece of copper fastened to a wooden shaft about ten feet long, The line was often made of sinew. Attached to it was a number of floats which were filled with air. After the whale had been harpooned—and many harpoons were thrust into him—he tried to dive. But the floats made this hard to do, and after a while he became tired. He was then killed with lances. After being towed to shore the body was cut up and divided amongst the villagers. Of course the killing of a whale was an important event for everyone. It meant an abundance of food for several weeks.

Fish thrived not only in the rivers but in the sea as well. Halibut, cod, herring and eulachon are all

SALMON FISHING

sea fish. They live part of the time in the ocean but swim up the rivers to lay their eggs and die. The sea fish were important to all the coastal Indians. To one tribe, one kind would be most important; to another, a different kind. The Haida for instance, living on the Queen Charlotte Islands, laid great store by the halibut. The Haida caught the halibut with large hooks, very cleverly made.

Some fish were caught with hook and line; others were speared. The eulachon which was so abundant in places that they formed great schools in the water, were often caught with a sort of rake. This was a stick to which sharp pieces of bone were attached along

SALMON FISHING

the side. When the stick was slashed back and forth through the water the eulachon were caught on the sharp points. Each time it was used several fish were almost sure to be caught. The rake was used also in catching herring.

Fishing in the rivers for salmon formed one of the most important sports of the northwest coast Indians' life. It was for many of them the great harvest season, when enough food could be gathered to last for the rest of the year. Some Indians built permanent house frames near the best places for fishing. Each spring they brought up planks from their villages, and put them on these frames. They lived in these houses

while the fishing season lasted. At the end of the season, they carried the planks back to their villages, leaving just the frames. The planks were then put back on the permanent houses, from which they had been taken.

The best fishing places were usually owned by the chiefs or nobles of the tribe or village nearby. In theory, the owner of the site owned all the salmon which were caught there, but he always shared them with the people.

There were many ways of salmon fishing, just as there were many ways of taking other fish. Men often trolled for them from canoes, and were always sure of catching some that way. But very often they speared them. When this was the method to be used, a platform was built out over some place where the salmon came together. The men stood on the platform and speared from it.

Nets were often used to catch salmon too. Sometimes baskets were built and placed in the streams in such a way that the salmon could get into them but could not get out. In still other cases, dams were built across the streams and traps constructed below. The fish had to enter the traps before trying to leap the dam, which was too high for them, and so they were caught.

Clams were gathered in certain places. The women dug them out of the sand with a stick. Then, if they wanted to eat them right away, they cooked them by

steaming them in a box. If they wanted to keep them, they took the clams out of the shells, strung them on sticks, and dried or smoked them.

The fish were treated in much the same way. Not all that were caught could be used at once, so the rest were usually dried and stored away. Most of the salmon were cut into slices, hung on drying-racks and smoked over the fire.

The different classes of people who made up the tribe

Among the northwest coast Indians the most important people were the chiefs. Next to the chiefs, the nobles were greatly respected. Most of the people were just ordinary folk. We should call them commoners. The humblest class was made up of slaves.

All great chieftains were wealthy and belonged to ancient families. They were known far and wide because of their generosity. They lived in large houses, had many slaves, and owned many canoes, blankets, hats, boxes and other precious things. Most of them claimed to be descended from famous ancestors.

The nobles were like the great chieftains, but not quite so wealthy, nor so famous. A wealthy noble could sometimes become a chieftain by marrying the daughter of one, or even by buying the right to the title. But this did not happen often. It was very dif-

ficult to change one's position. If one was born a noble, one usually died a noble; and so with the commoners.

Most of the people were born poor, and they remained that way all their lives. If one were very thrifty, and managed to accumulate some wealth, he might buy more titles or privileges. Even if he did, the rest of the people remembered this, and so did not honour him.

Slaves were those unhappy people who had been captured from some enemy tribe in a raid. Their new masters brought them back with them, where they were complete strangers. In their new home, they had no rights whatever, and could be sold, or killed, as their owner wished.

When a child was born, he was born of course into his family. The family was made up of his father, mother and brothers and sisters, if there were any. We, too, are born into our families, in just the same way. But the northwest coast Indian child also became a member of a "clan" when he was born. He became a member either of his mother's clan or of his father's clan.

The mother's clan included his mother, her relatives and many other people who believed they were related to her. In many cases, the reason for believing they were related was that they all considered themselves to be descended from the same ancestors. And the same was true of the father's clan.

But a child could not belong to both his father's and his mother's clans. Besides, it was not for him to say which one he would join. That was already decided by the rules of the tribe.

But the child, when he was born, also became a member of a tribe. There were many tribes on the northwest coast. Those who lived farthest north were called the Tlingit; south of them were the Tsimshian. Opposite to them, on the Queen Charlotte Islands, dwelt the Haida. Farther south, were numerous tribes with difficult names such as the Kwakiutl, the Cowichan and the Nootka. The people of each tribe spoke a language of their own. A tribe as a whole possessed a certain amount of country where they lived and had certain customs which set it apart from its neighbours. A child born into the Haida, for example, learned to speak the Haida language and to live like other Haida. There was really not much more to it than that. He was not conscious of being a member of the tribe; he took it for granted. And so did the other tribesmen.

Marriage

When a boy or girl grew up, the parents thought of finding a mate. Among most tribes, a mate had to be found outside of the clan to which the boy or girl belonged. And marriage usually took place between people of equal rank. For instance, it was not con-

sidered correct for a young nobleman to marry a poor girl. He should marry a noblewoman who was as wealthy as he. If possible, he should marry a girl who belonged to a wealthier family or one which had greater ancestors than his own. In this way, he raised his own standing.

The bridegroom's family always made presents to the bride's family. But they usually returned presents of even greater value. Then, some time later, the girl's father often made a present of goods and houses to her husband. In this way, the older man was sure that his own houses would be kept in the family and passed on to his grandchildren. For they were very proud of their wealth and their position.

The great feasts or potlatches

When a daughter came of age, her father gave a great feast in her honour. To the feast, he invited many guests. Some of these guests were his relatives. But many of them were men from other tribes, who were not related.

HORN SPOONS

There were many feasts of this sort. They were held at the coming of age of a daughter; at the marriage of a child; at the time when a house was built; and when a totem pole was set up. The host saved up for months or years to be able to provide a proper feast. If he was a great chief, his people (really his relatives) helped him. They contributed whatever they could. All sorts of possessions were gathered—canoes, blankets, fish oil, clothes and other useful things.

When the feast was given, the guests were placed in proper order according to their rank. Usually they were seated inside the chief's huge house. Then long speeches were made by the host and his guests. The aim was to see who could claim the greatest honour. Toward the end of the feast, the host began to give away the property he had collected. He gave the choicest and most valuable things to his greatest rival. Usually this was a man who was also very wealthy and had great honours. The guest had to accept the gifts and take them away with him. Sometimes, too, just to show how very wealthy he was, a host would destroy his goods in front of the people. For instance, he might burn some valuable canoes; or kill some slaves. In this way, he tried to show that he could afford these great losses.

The real purpose of these feasts, then, was to add to the fame of the host by giving away valuable things.

A TOTEM POLE

For this reason they are called "giving-away feasts". Another word which is often used instead is "potlatch". A potlatch is a giving-away feast.

Now we can easily see how a chief and all his people would have to work hard and save for years. In this way only could he store up enough goods to give a fine feast. He must be sure that he had more to give away than anyone else.

If, later, he had to accept more goods from one of his rivals than he had been able to give him, he would be very ashamed. He would then be disgraced in the eyes of all his people. In order to wipe out the disgrace, he might have to go to war and kill his rival.

Totem poles

A giving-away feast was always held when a totem pole was put up. Perhaps everyone knows what a totem pole is. Most of the Indians on the northwest coast made them a century ago, though they do not do so any more. Totem poles were made by cutting down a tree of the right size and carving on the front of it the shapes of birds, bears, seals, frogs and similar creatures. Strange as it may seem to us, the Indians believed that such creatures were their

ancestors. Of course, only certain ones were thought to be ancestors of any particular family. For that reason, only a few of them appeared on a totem pole, while others might belong on other totem poles. If a frog were shown, it was likely to be a particular frog, one to which a story belonged. Or if a bear were shown, it was not just any bear, but some particular bear; perhaps one who had changed from a human being. And each of these creatures had to be an ancestor to the man who put up the totem pole.

Totem poles were very like our coats-of-arms. They made it plain to the world what famous ancestors the owners could claim. They published for all to see the greatness of their owners.

Since the cutting down and carving of a totem pole required much skill, it had to be done by an artist. The more renowned the artist, the more the owner had to pay. And of course the larger the pole, and the more carvings, the more he had to pay too. So only a wealthy man could have them made, and the wealthier the man, the more splendid the pole which he ordered. In this way, one could tell by looking at the poles in front of an Indian village where the wealthiest men lived.

Besides, the people who were most nobly born usually were the wealthiest. So the totem poles indicated the rank of the people as well as their wealth.

The carvings on the totem poles were, as we have said, done by skilled artists. In making such carvings, the men worked chiefly with adzes and chisels. When the figures were all carved, they were painted in various colours. The finished pole was a majestic piece of work, sometimes as much as eighty feet high, with several creatures carved on it and painted in bright colours.

Decorations

The carvings on the totem poles were very similar in many ways to the decorations on boxes, canoes, food dishes and horn spoons, but of course much larger. In all of them the art work showed various creatures seen in nature, and told about in the myths of the people. There were the Raven, the Eagle, the Beaver, the Killer Whale, the Frog and many others.

To our way of thinking, an Eagle and a Raven do not look much alike. But in the carvings of the north-west coast people, one has to look closely to tell them apart. Perhaps only the curve of the beak shows which is meant. These details might not be noticed by us. But an Indian looking at the carving would look for them first, so that he could identify the creature.

The artists who carved on flat surfaces had a custom which seems very strange to us. Instead of trying to show only as much of an animal as they could see, they

attempted to show it all. They believed it was unjust to show only part. So if they were painting a Killer Whale on a box, they imagined the animal had been split down the centre from head to tail, and spread out flat. Half of the whale was then painted on the left and the other half on the right. In that way, all of the animal was shown, and no injustice was done.

But since the shape of half a whale does not fill the space on a square box front, vacant spaces were left.

CARVING ON THE FRONT OF A BOX

The Indian artist disliked empty spaces. So he used various parts of the same whale to fill them in. For instance, the flippers might be moved to fill the space in a corner. Or, if necessary, the eyes might be repeated in unusual places. The side of the whale looked empty; this was a place where "spare parts" could be drawn in. When the painting was finished, it did not look very

much like the original to us. But to the Indians, no doubt, it appeared exactly as it was. In painting designs on boxes, or in weaving them into hats, or into blankets or baskets, they were shown in this way.

The carving or painting was unlike ours in another way. If we were to try to show a whale, we should likely try to show the eyes just as they appeared to us. And so with all the other parts. But the Indian did not do this. He had a certain way of drawing an eye. Whether it was a whale's, a man's, or an eagle's, it would be drawn the same way. We call this style a "convention". The eye, for instance, was a conventionalized eye. Each part of the creature was conventionalized in this manner. We may ask, then, how could we tell the picture of a whale from the picture of an eagle? In some cases, this might be difficult to do. But in most cases, there were details which revealed what creature was meant. For instance, the conventionalized flippers in the drawing of a whale would serve to identify it from all other creatures

Whether the Indian artist were carving the animal in wood, bone or stone, or painting it on a house front, or even weaving it into a blanket or a hat, he pictured it in the same way.

Almost everything which the Indian used, he made as beautiful as he could. He decorated his house with pictures painted on the outside, over or beside the door-

way. The corner posts, and the door posts of the house he often carved with the figures of his ancestors. He set up a totem pole in front of his house if he could afford it. His canoe was beautifully carved and painted. His wooden dishes were carved, and often inlaid with bits of sea shell. His spoons were made of wood, or more often of mountain goat's horn, and the handles were carved to look like tiny totem poles. Blankets were woven of mountain goat wool and upon them the pictures of animals were marked. Hats, baskets, mats all were beautifully made, all beautifully decorated. Perhaps nowhere else in Canada did the Indians make their everyday tools and utensils so carefully and so beautifully.

The winter festivals

Masks too were carved and decorated. Almost all the tribes of the Northwest Coast used masks in certain ceremonies. These ceremonies were usually held in the winter months, because then the people had little else to

WOODEN MASKS

do. Every tribe or village had one or more "secret societies". The members of a secret society believed they were under the protection of some powerful guardian. This belief bound them together. For a time in the winter, the members took control of the village and put on a ceremony or dance in it. This might last for as long as one month. The dance was a sort of play or drama. In it the story of the society was told, and the guardian spirits were presented. They were, of course, just the members of the society, dressed up in wooden masks. The people who watched the show often believed these were the guardian spirits themselves.

The masks were often works of art. They were always made of wood, but were carved, painted and decorated in various ways. They were made in the form of heads of different kinds, such as the heads of eagles, ravens, beaver, wolves or seals. Many of them had movable eyes, ears or chins, which were controlled from the inside by strings. It is little wonder that the people should consider the people wearing such life-like masks to be spirit-creatures.

Beliefs of the people

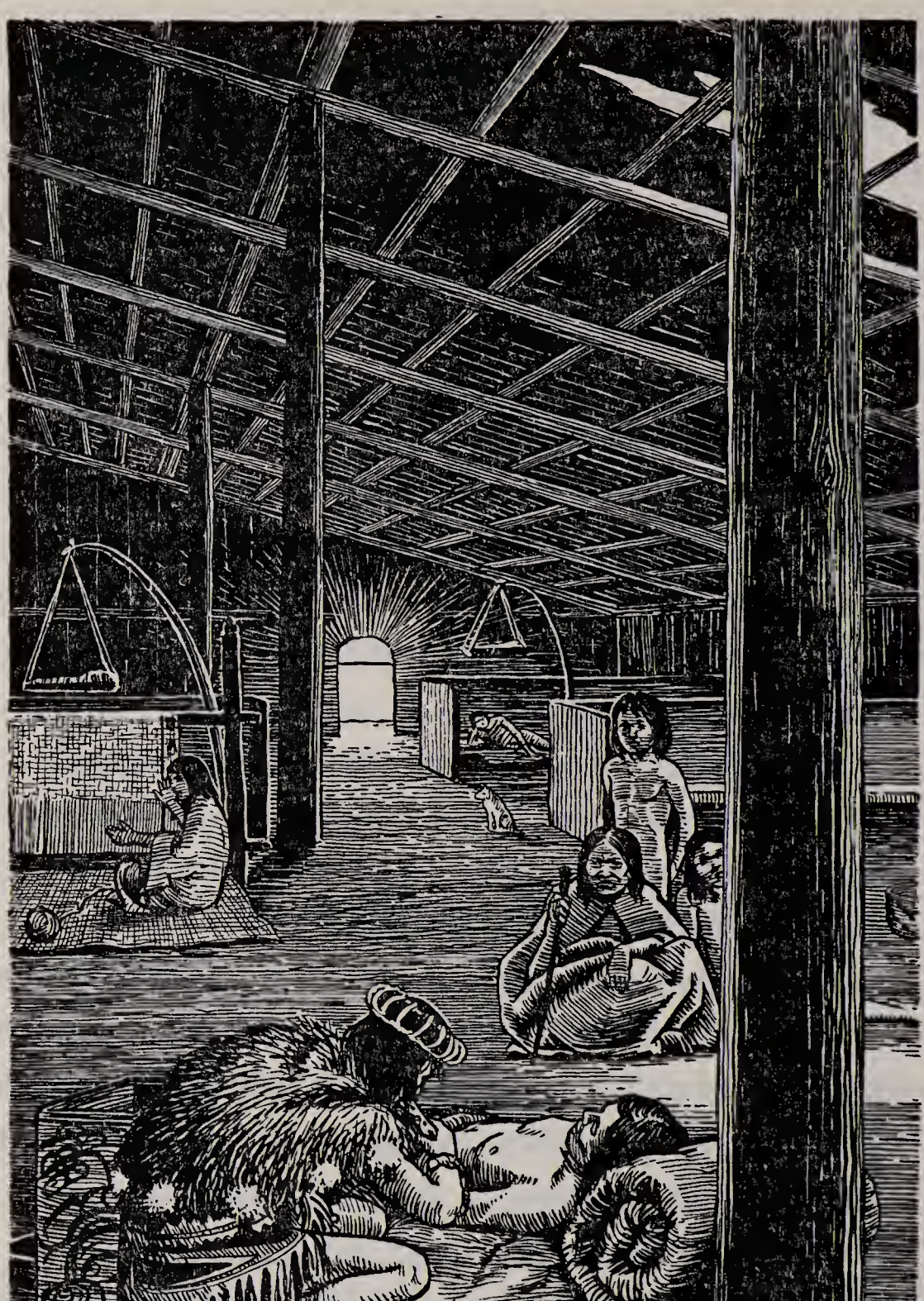
The beliefs of the people varied a good deal from tribe to tribe. Most of them did not think of a supreme creator, as did the Haida. Amongst most of the tribes

animals were believed to have great powers. The deer was swift, the bear strong. Eagles were strong too. All the animals of one kind had a house somewhere, where they lived. The killer whales lived in a great house on the bottom of the sea. The mountain goats lived in their house on top of a high mountain. The animals were really human but could change their forms at will. They only changed into animal form when human beings were near. There were other gods besides the animals too. For instance, the Haida believed there was a powerful god who lived beneath their home on the Queen Charlotte Islands. When he moved about he caused the earthquakes. There was also the Thunder-bird, who, when he was angry, caused the thunder.

When a person died it was thought that he went to another world. The other world was very much like life here, only not quite so pleasant.

Like all other tribes in America, the northwest coast people had medicine-men or "shamans". The shaman was supposed to have special powers which were given to him by the people of the spirit world. He might claim one, two, or three of these spirits as his helpers. His specialty was the curing of the sick.

The Indians believed that sickness was caused by some object getting inside the body. Various things might cause this to happen. But only a shaman could cure the sick man. This he did by first putting on the



A CURING CEREMONY

mask which represented his spirit helper. Then he took a tube of straw or bone. One end of this he put against the sore spot on the patient's body. The other he took in his mouth. By sucking through the tube he said he was able to pull out the object which was causing the sickness. Usually he got a large fee for this service. Besides he was much feared and respected. He could cause illness as well as cure it. Usually, too, he wore a different sort of clothes from the rest of the people. When he died he was buried in a grave box or coffin which was specially marked. The powers he possessed lingered near the grave for a long time after the burial.

The northwest coast people never buried their dead in the ground until the white men came. They thought the idea frightful. Instead, dead bodies were either cremated, or placed in boxes. Sometimes the boxes were placed in trees; sometimes on the tops of poles specially set up for them. Certain tribes used canoes to receive the dead; these were drawn up on stones and raised on posts to keep them off the ground.

Bear Mother

A Legend of the Haida Indians

Indians did not consider themselves the greatest creatures in the world, for while they knew they surpassed the animals in some ways, they knew that in others they were less gifted. Bears are much stronger than men; deer much swifter. Birds can fly in the air, and fish can swim far better than any man. The Indians admired the animals and other creatures, and believed that they too had spirits. But the greatest of all the animal spirits was the Grizzly Bear.

The Haida Indians told the following story to explain how men learned to hunt the grizzlies successfully.

Three young women went out on the mountain-side to gather huckleberries. Two of them sang, as was usual, to warn the bears that they were there and to keep away. But the third girl, whose name was Peesunt, only chatted and laughed while she picked the wild fruit.

The bears heard her and asked themselves why she talked, as if she were making fun of them. "Perhaps

she is laughing at us", they thought. So they spied on her while she worked, and when she had finished they followed her down the trail.

On the way down, Peesunt slipped and fell. The pack strap which held her basket of berries, broke and she had to stop to repair it. Her companions waited awhile for her, but soon wearied and went on. She finally fixed it and continued on her way alone.

As she walked she heard voices in the bushes. Suddenly two young men, who seemed to be brothers, stepped out, and walked down the path toward her. They spoke to her and said, "Sister, you are in trouble, with nobody to look after you. Come with us and we will carry your berries for you".

She accepted their help and went with them.

She noticed, after awhile, that they were wearing bear robes. But they all continued on their way, and after dark they came to a large house near a rockslide, which they entered. Inside, there were several people, all dressed in bear robes, and sitting around a small fire. Peesunt and her two guides sat down with them to get warm.

The white mouse called Tseets by the Haida came to Peesunt and pulled at her robe, and said:

"The bears have taken you to their den. From now on you will be one of them".

Then Peesunt noticed that her own robe had long

grey hair like a bear's. She had indeed been rescued by the Grizzly Bear people and was becoming like them.

Shortly afterward, Peesunt married the nephew of the Grizzly Bear chief. This gave her a high standing among the spirit bears of the mountain side. When her twin sons were born, they were half human and half bear. They too had high rank.

Peesunt's brother began to search for her when she did not return from gathering berries. She saw them one day, as she stood on the side of the mountain. To let them know where she was, she squeezed a handful of snow into a ball and let it roll down the path toward them. The brothers looked up and saw her. Then, climbing up the mountain-side, they came to the house of the bears and killed Peesunt's husband.

But before he died, the Spirit Bear taught his wife two sacred songs, which he said her brothers should sing over his body to bring good luck in hunting.

Peesunt, her brothers and her two children then returned to her people, safe at last. The children behaved like bears part of the time, and guided their uncles to the dens of bears on the mountain-side. Without their help, and without the help of the sacred hunting song, the hunters would not have had any luck. The brothers taught their song to other Haida hunters, and the twins helped them to hunt. For this reason, the Haida hold Bear Mother, as Peesunt came to be known,

in great honour. Bear Mother has made them as strong as the bears themselves.

* * * * * *

The legend of Bear Mother is illustrated on one of the great wooden totem poles in the Royal Ontario Museum, in Toronto. You will find a sketch of this totem pole on page 36.

The Indians of the Plains

When most people think of Indians, they think of the Indians of the plains. They may not always know the name of the individual tribes, but they know a little about their dress. They know they wore beautiful skin clothes, moccasins, and feather headdresses.

The Tribes of the Plains

These people were divided into several tribes. The Blackfeet lived in Alberta, and hunted up to the Rocky Mountains, and as far north as Edmonton. The Piegan and Blood tribes were very much like the Blackfeet, spoke the same language and were their friends. The Sarcee were also friends of the Blackfeet; they lived near the Rocky Mountains too. Further east were the Assiniboine Indians. The Plains Cree lived in Manitoba.

The Language

The language of the Sarcee was like that of their neighbours to the north, but unlike the rest of the Plains tribes. The Blackfeet, Blood and Piegan spoke

languages very like the Plains Cree. The Assiniboine language was just a branch or dialect of the language of the Sioux Indians who lived to the south in the present States of North and South Dakota. There were really, then, several quite different languages spoken by the tribes of the plains.

There was nothing to keep these tribes friendly. The Blackfeet, Blood, Piegan and Sarcee were the only ones

TRIBES OF THE PLAINS

who did not fight among themselves. Wars often broke out between these people and the Assiniboine, and between other Plains tribes farther south. The Cree to the north were nearly always at war too with the Blackfeet. The wars were usually caused by Indians stealing horses, or hunting on the ground of a neighbour.

Appearance

The Indians of the Plains were unlike the Indians of the Pacific Coast, except that they all had dark eyes and black hair. The Plains Indians were very tall, while the Coastal Indians were short. The Blackfeet were often six feet tall, and so were the Assiniboines. The women were usually a few inches shorter. Most of the plains people were fine looking. They had long narrow faces, sharp eyes, and a stern appearance.

BLACKFOOT MOCCASINS WITH QUILL WORK

Clothes

Their clothes added to the dignity of their appearance. Whether the costume were simple or not, it always showed off their strong and athletic bodies well.

Everyone wore moccasins. Moccasins were necessary to protect them when they walked on the sharp grass

of the prairie, or on the gritty soil. They made them out of the skin of buffalo, deer or antelope.

For everyday wear, the men wore a skin flap called a breech-cloth between the legs, and fastened on a string round the waist. In cold weather, they also wrapped the skin of a buffalo round their shoulders. One early traveller said he saw some Indians who had travelled thirty miles wearing only this clothing, when the temperature was 30° below zero. These "buffalo robes" were simply the skins of the animals, with the hair still on, but dressed in the special way the Indians treated skins. We might say they were "tanned", although that is not quite right. On the hairless side, simple pictures were painted, showing men, animals and battle scenes. The paints were brightly coloured earth, or the juice of berries.

Women's Dress

The everyday dress of the women and girls was a robe or cloak, also made of the skin of a buffalo, deer or antelope. They liked antelope skin best because it was light and soft. But buffalo skins were easier to get, so most people had to be satisfied with them.

The cloak reached almost to the ground. At the shoulders it looked a little like a cape, for the sleeves were left open. If one placed it flat on the ground, it looked like a large T, with a hole at the top for the

FIRE BAG

head to go through. It is easy to see how simply it was cut. Most cloaks had a deep fringe around the bottom. The fringe was made by cutting the bottom of the dress into narrow strips.

Women and girls also wore moccasins. The shapes were a little different from men's moccasins.

Sometimes women ornamented their cloaks by sewing on porcupine quills. The quills were first dyed in the juice of some berries or roots; then cut to the right length. The quillwork was usually put on across the shoulders at the front and back, and around the bottom of the dress. The quills were always worked into pretty patterns of squares, circles, straight lines or stars. We call patterns of this sort "geometric patterns" because they are like the shapes of figures used in geometry. Quills were never worked into the shapes of flowers, birds or animals.

Sometimes women made headbands which they decorated in this way too. And of course moccasins were often decorated with porcupine quills, both for men and for women.

After the white men came, the Indians gave up using quills for decoration, because it was cheaper and easier to buy glass beads from the traders than to gather quills. Besides, the glass beads were easier to work with. So, for at least the last two hundred years, most of the decoration on clothing has been done in beads and not in quills. But the Indian women have continued to use the beads to make almost exactly the same designs as they used to do with the quills in times past. So, if we were to look at an Indian's dress made during the past century, we would see the same designs we would have seen three or four hundred years ago, and at a distance the appearance would be much the same. Of course, at close range, we would see the difference of material, and some difference in colour, for beads are more brightly coloured than the quillwork used to be.

When men dressed for the great ceremonies, they wore beautiful clothes. Besides their heavily decorated moccasins and breech-cloths they wore leggings. These were made of deerskin, like the breech-cloths. Each legging looked like a separate pant leg, and had to be held up by tying a string at the top to the waist girdle, which also supported the breech-cloth. A wealthy or important man's leggings would have a strip of quill or beadwork down the outside, or a strip of hair or fringe. His jacket was made from the skins of two

deer or antelope, and was T-shaped with a hole for his head to go through. It usually had rather well-shaped sleeves, unlike the women's dress which had no sleeves. It was ornamented in one of several different ways. Usually it had strips or circles of quill-work or beadwork sewn down the front or on the back. It might also be painted with simple designs, like circles. These were supposed to give it magical power to protect the wearer.

The man's headdress was really his crowning glory. But only men who had distinguished themselves in war or in council were permitted to wear the fancy ones. Almost everyone of us has seen pictures of these. They are headbands or circlets, made of eagle or hawk feathers, and sometimes trimmed with bits of rabbit fur, or eagle down. Another kind sat on the head and fell down the back in a long streamer, sometimes reaching the ground. Among certain tribes at least, men were only permitted to wear feathers when they had earned their right to do so—usually for some brave deed in war. A man could only wear one feather for one deed, so that a long headdress of feathers showed that the owner was a very brave man.

Poor men and common men had to limit themselves to simple dress, such as moccasins and breech-cloth and buffalo robe. Some men never owned anything more than this.

Boys dressed very much like the men. Girls dressed like their mothers and older sisters, except that when they were very young they wore less.

Making Clothes

The women had the job of making the skins into clothes. After the skins were taken from the animals, the women scraped them either with stone or bone tools to remove all the sinews. Then, if they meant to sew the skins later into fine garments, they had to remove the hair from them. To do this, they usually first put the hides in water, using a small pond for the purpose. They left the hide in this for a week or more. This soaking helped to loosen the hair. The women then stretched the skin on the ground, and pegged it down with wooden or bone pegs. With scrapers like the ones used before, they next scraped off the hair. This was very hard, slow work indeed and the job of cleaning one hide might take a couple of days of toil.

When the hair was off, the Indian women rubbed the hide with a mixture of fat and the brains of such animals as deer. They rubbed the mixture in very well with their hands until the skin was soft. Sometimes they would do this several times.

Usually they smoked the hide, to give it the beautiful golden colour they liked so well. This also helped to

make it useful in wet weather, for skins which have been smoked may get wet in the rain, but if they are rubbed between the hands when they have dried, they will become soft again. Unsmoked skins, if they get wet, stay hard, and cannot be worn again. To smoke a hide, the women stretched it for a day over a slow-burning fire made of rotten wood.

When the skin had been properly smoked, the Indian women had to rub it to make it soft. They did this by working in pairs; each woman took an end of the skin, and between them they drew it back and forth across a small log for an hour or so. When it had been made soft enough, it was ready for making up into garments.

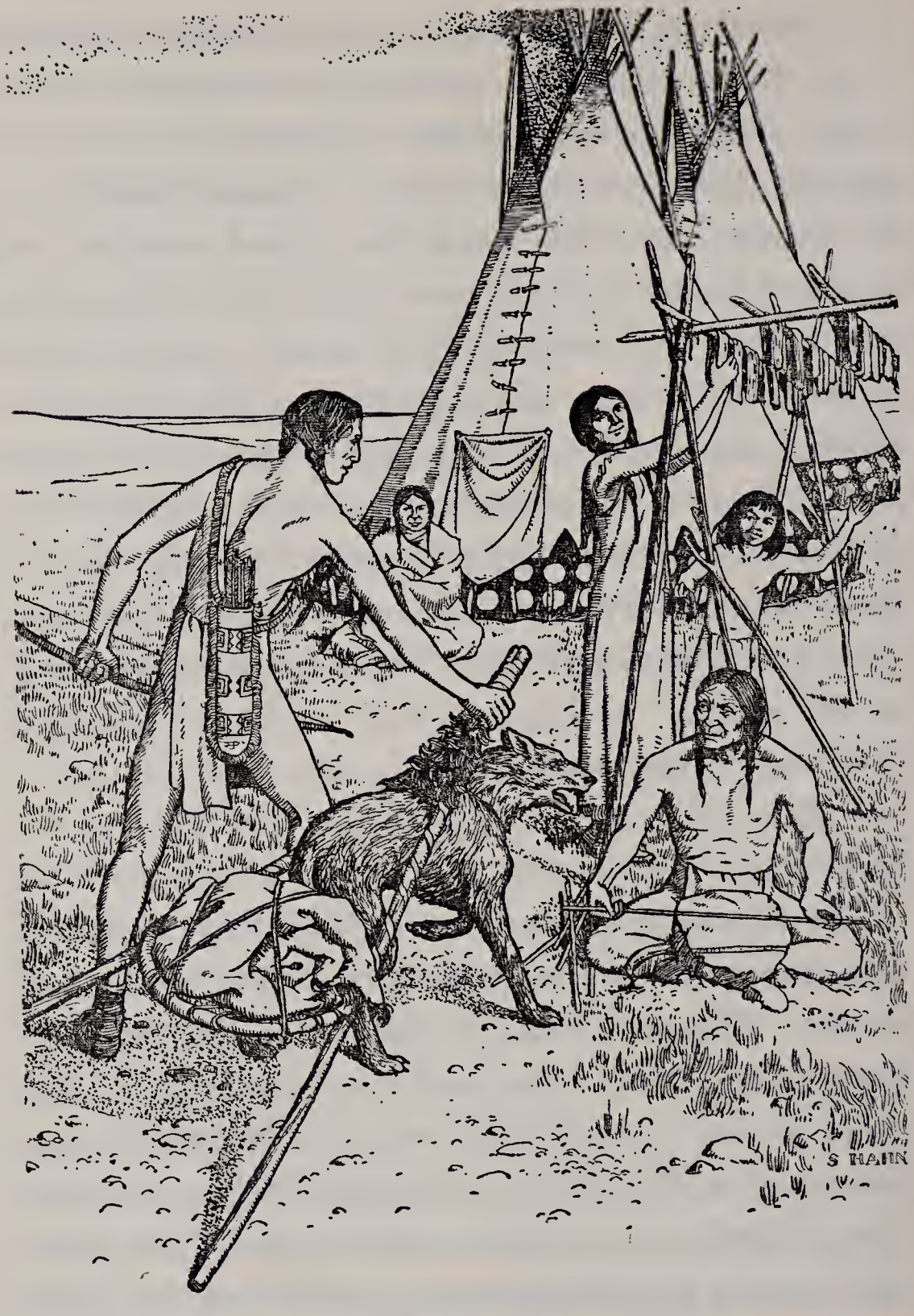
To make most garments, it was necessary to cut the skins and this had to be done with stone tools or knives. Often the knives looked like large arrow-points with one sharp edge. Usually it took two deerskins to make one man's jacket, and one deerskin to make one legging. The women had nothing better for sewing than a needle or awl made of bone. For thread, they used slender pieces of sinew, which they got from a large muscle or tendon running the length of the backbone in animals, usually from the deer or the buffalo. Sinew thread was very strong, and could be got as coarse or as fine as the seamstress desired.

The stitching which the Plains Indian women did—

and indeed all Indians who used these simple methods —was wonderfully neat and fine. It must have been a heavy task for one woman to prepare all the hides and do all the sewing necessary to clothe herself and her family. And like our clothes, theirs wore out too and had to be replaced now and then. A garment which was worn a great deal would not last more than a year at best, and usually much less. When we think of the simple tools with which they had to work, and their fine workmanship, we must admire these Indian craftswomen. Moreover, they usually went to great pains to decorate their costumes with quillwork (and later with beadwork). There was almost no limit to the amount of labour which could go into such purely decorative work.

Houses

The houses in which these Indians lived had to be sewn together, for they, like the clothes, were made of skin. They are usually called "tipis" (tepee). As many as 30 buffalo hides were needed to make a single tipi. We can imagine how much work was necessary to prepare all those hides, and to sew them all together. Very often, several women would help in the job, so that it could be finished sooner, just the way our grandmothers held "quilting bees" when they had to make quilts.



PLAINS INDIAN CAMP SCENE

When the tipi cover was sewn together, the women stretched it over the poles to make the lodge or tipi. Four poles tied together at the top, with the bottoms spread widely apart, made the framework. More poles were added to this, and finally the skin cover was put on. The cover was pegged down with wooden pegs. The little oval opening or doorway was covered with a flap. It usually faced either south or east. The free edges of the cover were pinned together. Such flaps created an opening at the top through which the smoke and stale air could escape. Fresh air entered from the bottom of the tipi. And to keep any draft from striking the people inside the lodge and so making them uncomfortable, a sort of curtain was hung around the inside. This was also made of buffalo skins.

Although the tipi belonged to the woman who made it, her husband sometimes painted pictures on the outside of it. He used paint made from coloured earth and the juices of plants. The pictures he painted usually showed some scenes from his own life, like a battle, a horse-stealing raid, or a long journey to a distant land. The pictures drawn by the men always showed the natural shapes of things. Thus, they contained figures of men, horses and buffalo, bows and arrows and clubs. They were simple pictures, rather rudely drawn, but they were life-like and they meant a great deal to the artist. Besides, people who looked

at them usually understood what they meant. This caused them to honour the man who lived in the tipi for the brave deeds he had done or for the experience he had been through.

If it were cold weather, a fire might be made near the centre of the floor. Around this the Indians sat during the evenings, chatting about the day's happenings, or telling the old stories and legends of their people. We can imagine how eagerly the boys and girls must have listened to these wonderful tales, and tried to learn them themselves, so that some day they could repeat them to their own children. Then, after the stories had been told, the Indians went to sleep, each in his own place on the floor, and usually with his feet toward the fire.

Sometimes a single family would camp for a while by itself, so that there would be just one tipi. This was often the case in winter. But more often, there would be several tipis, maybe several dozen, pitched in a single camp.

The Buffalo Hunt

Usually when camps like this were set up, the Indians hunted the buffalo. We have mentioned this great animal several times in this chapter and we must say something more about it because it was so important to the Indians. The buffalo was a large animal the

size of a cow, and very much like one, except that it had a great hump at the shoulders and a very large head. There were tremendous herds of them roaming the prairies in ancient times. Even as late as 1800 A.D. there were so many that one of the white traders said he watched a herd crossing the Pembina river (near Winnipeg). He watched them for three days and as far as he could see, there were buffalo crossing the river. This, of course, happened only during the spring when the buffalo were moving northward to fresh pastures. But it does give us a good idea of the vast numbers of these great animals.

Most of the time, the buffalo grazed in small herds, and not in the huge ones we have just described. Ordinary herds might contain anywhere from twenty or thirty to four or five thousand animals. These were the herds the Plains Indians usually hunted. There were very special and very strict rules as to how the hunting should be done. This was because the buffalo was so extremely important to the Indian. It supplied him with food, clothing and shelter. The Indians' entire existence depended upon the buffalo. He could not afford to have the herds frightened away by careless hunters.

The buffalo nearly always pastured in herds. It was not often found alone. For this reason it was best for a group of men to hunt together.

One old way to hunt buffalo was as follows. The

Indian hunter got himself a wolf skin, with the head still on. He put this on his back and tied the head of the wolf skin over his own head. Taking his bow and arrows with him, he then went where the buffalo were. Getting down on his hands and knees, he then crept up upon them, very slowly. He took care to be on the windward side of them, so that the animals would not get his scent.

The buffalo are stupid but inquisitive animals. Seeing the wolf-like creature crawling in their pasture grounds, some of them would be sure to come up close to get a better look. Still creeping on his hands and knees, the hunter waited his chance. When the buffalo was in the right position, the hunter took aim with his bow and arrow and shot him. Men who hunted in this way had to be very good marksmen and very brave because there was great danger. The hunter who missed his aim might easily be attacked and killed by the big beasts. Sometimes even before he aimed, the buffalo would charge and he would have to be ready to defend himself quickly. So it was an exciting and dangerous way to hunt indeed.

If he killed an animal this way, and there was no horse to carry the carcase back to camp, the Indian hunter might have to make several trips and carry it himself.

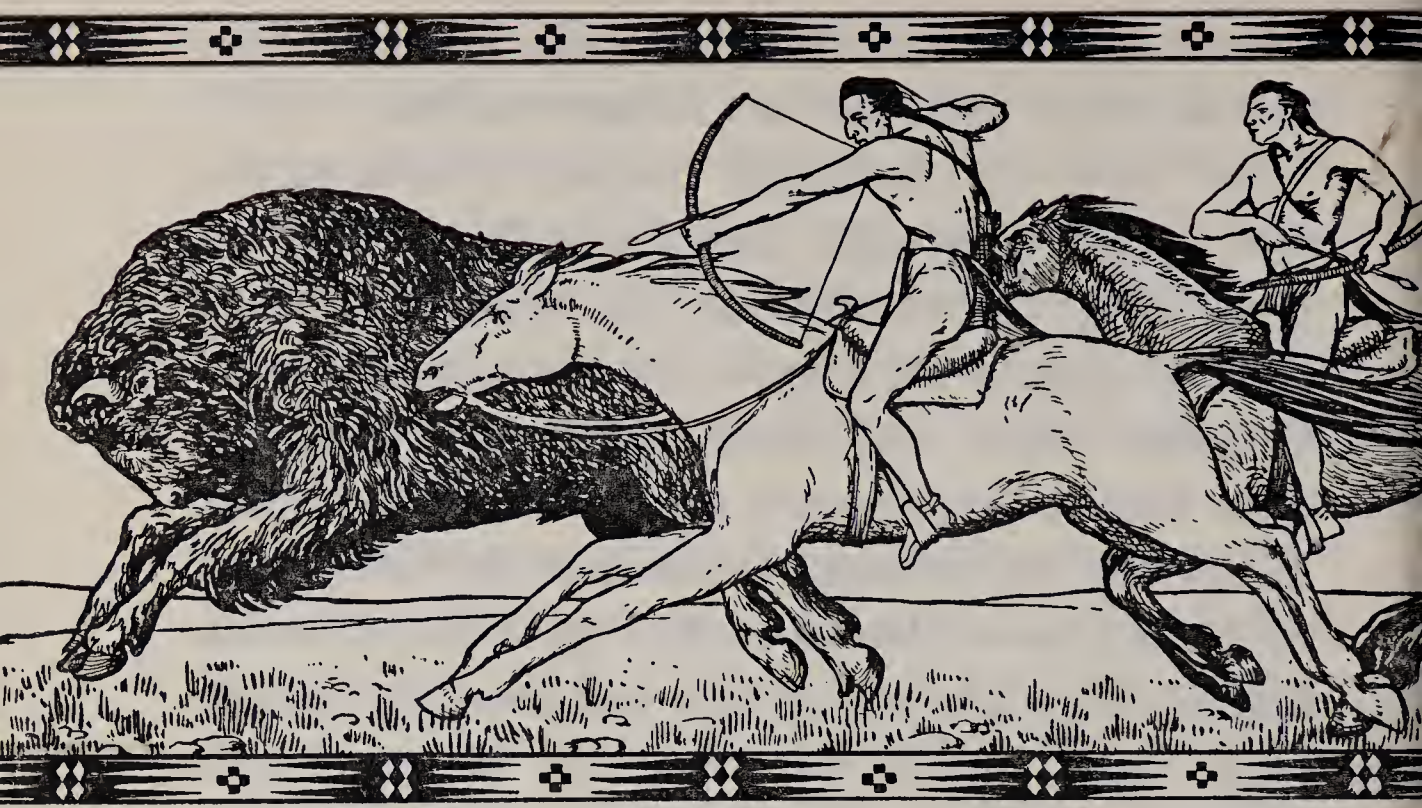
This was how the Indians hunted buffalo in ancient

times long before the white men came to them. They had no horses then, and had to hunt on foot.

But when the Spaniards reached Mexico in the year 1519, they brought horses with them. In a few years, many Indian tribes had got horses from them. Little by little, all the tribes on the Plains, including our Canadian tribes, had horses. One tribe would get them from a neighbouring tribe until all had them. In this way, for instance, the Blackfeet had horses long before they saw a white man. By 1750 all the Canadian Indians on the plains had them and knew how to ride them. Most Indians rode bareback, but some used saddles.

Once the Indians had horses, they learned a much easier and safer way of hunting buffalo than the one we have just learned about. It now became more important than ever for men to work together at the job.

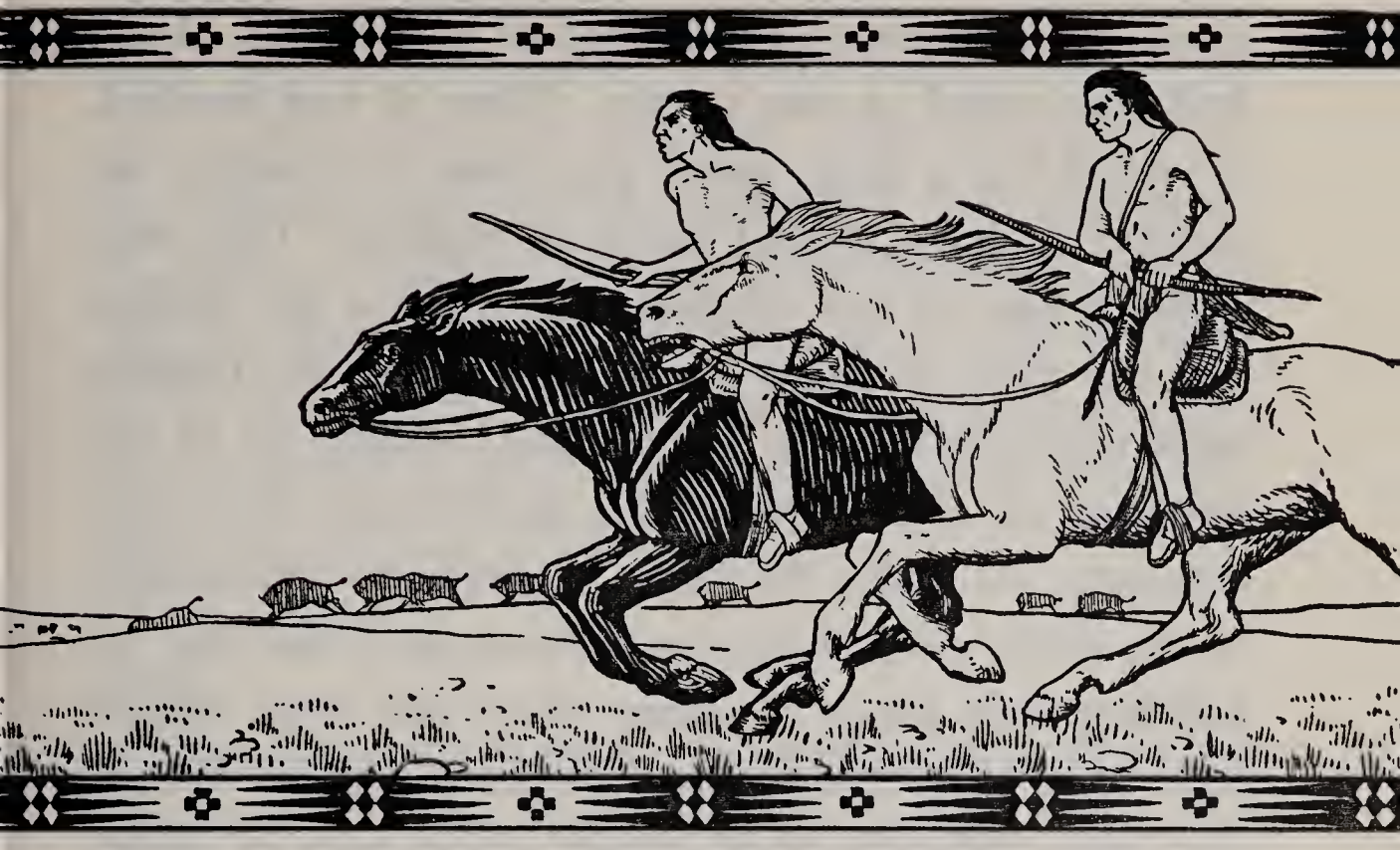
Scouts, usually on horseback, kept watch for a herd of buffalo. When they found one which seemed to be about the right size and in a good place, the scouts rode quickly to camp and told the leaders or chiefs. Usually the chiefs called together all the men who were able to hunt, and talked the matter over. If it was decided to hunt this particular herd, leaders were appointed, and every man was told what part he would have to play. Each had to do what the leaders had decided upon.



SPRING BUFFALO HUNT OF THE BLACKFOOT INDIANS

Riders were sent out to get on the opposite side of the herd to that in which they were to be driven. Let us say that the Indians have decided to drive the buffalo to the north. Then the riders would get on the south side of the herd, keeping far enough away so that the animals would not scent them. If this happened the buffalo would take fright and run off. The riders then began to press in on the herd, and gradually get it to move northward. They had to be careful to keep it from scattering, or taking another direction. They did this by riding alongside it, just as modern cowboys herd cattle on the range.

It was a favourite method to drive the poor animals



faster and faster. Sometimes when the Indians had succeeded in making the whole herd run very fast, they drove them all over a cliff. The buffalo is a very stupid animal, and does just what the one ahead does. If the first one jumps over the cliff, the rest will follow. Of course, the first ones could not do anything else because there were so many pushing from behind. And being heavy animals with rather weak legs, even a little fall usually injures them. If they fell over a cliff, most would break their legs or their necks. When this happened, the Indians shot the injured ones with bows and arrows.

This was the simplest way of hunting buffalo. In another method, the Indians built a sort of corral and

drove the animals into it instead of over a cliff. They built the corral of tree trunks. When it was finished, it looked like a large round pen from the outside, big enough to hold several hundred buffalo. The most difficult part of this method was to drive the buffalo into the trap. If there was enough wood, the Indians built fences to make a sort of lane, leading up to the entrance of the corral. The farther out from the entrance, the wider the lane. If there was not enough wood, or no wood at all, the Indians made the lane by building little heaps of stones where the fence should have been. Sometimes, when the hunt was on, women and boys and girls stood behind these piles of stones with blankets. When the buffalo came thundering into the arms of the lane, the Indian boys and girls and women began to shout and wave their blankets, which frightened the buffalo even more, and made them run faster and faster into the corral.

Once inside the corral, the buffalo stopped running. But being confused and excited, they just tramped around and around inside. They very seldom tried to break through the sides, although they could easily have done so.

The Indians closed the entrance and shot the animals one by one. When they had killed them all, they went into the corral and skinned the ones they wanted. The best skins were selected and taken back to camp to be

made into clothes or into tipi covers. Sometimes so many buffalo were killed that the Indians could only take a small amount of the meat. When this happened, they usually took only the tongue, for they considered this to be the choicest morsel. They put whatever meat they wanted into some of the skins, loaded these on to the backs of the horses, and brought them back to camp. There, the meat was eaten and the best skins made into clothes or tipi covers.

Food

Once the meat reached the camp, the women took charge of it. They cooked some of it right away, and stored the rest away for the future.

If they wanted to eat some of it immediately, the women cut off big chunks and put them into a kettle to boil. The kettle itself will seem a very strange one. Usually it was the stomach of a buffalo, for this is very strong and does not leak. They could not put it over a fire, of course, but by putting water into it, and then dropping hot stones into the water, it is possible to boil meat in it. This is not an easy way to prepare a meal, but it was the best the women could do. They had no bark to make dishes, and seldom made them of clay. So they had to use the best they had and put up with all the trouble. In nearly every camp, a little stewing-meat was usually at hand, ready to be eaten during the

daytime. The Indians had only one regular meal, and it came late in the afternoon.

If there was more meat than could be used, the Indian women saved it against the time when food might be scarce. This they did as follows. With a stone knife, each woman cut up her share of the meat into thin strips looking like rashers of bacon. She hung these strips on a wooden rack to dry. If the weather was warm and dry, as it so often is on the Plains, she could hang it outside. But if the weather were too wet, or too cold, she would set up her rack inside the tipi. If necessary, she would build a fire below it.

In a few days, the thin strips would be dry and brittle. Then the woman took the strips down from the rack and put them into a large wooden bowl. She pounded the strips with a stone hammer or pounder until they broke up into a powder. This took a great deal of work and time, and must have made the woman very tired indeed. Even doing just a little would be tiresome. But they had to do great quantities. Enough to last several months had to be on hand in case there were no buffalo to hunt.

The pounded meat was put into containers made of rawhide. They are usually called by the name of "parfleche", which was a word for them used by the French-Canadian voyageurs. These "parfleches" were very much like square boxes, except that when they

were empty they could be folded flat. Generally, there were large designs made up of squares, or triangles, or some other such shape, painted on the outside in bright colours. The dry, pounded meat was put into the boxes and sealed over with melted fat. This kept the air from it and kept it fresh and eatable for a year or more.

Such dry and pounded meat was called "pemmican" by the fur traders. It is excellent food, though a little goes a long way. About one handful of pemmican, boiled in water is enough food for a man for one day. So it is ideal for people who have to move about a good deal. They can carry a bag of it with them and still have enough to feed a family for several weeks, without fear of starvation. The flesh of a buffalo cow weighing about 900 pounds makes only a small bag of pemmican, but contains just as much food value as the fresh meat.

The Indians, like ourselves, got very tired of eating the same thing every day and at every meal. So, to make a little variety, they often mixed with the pemmican dried chokecherries and saskatoon berries. They then called the food by another name, but it was still really a sort of pemmican.

Though buffalo meat was the main food of all Plains Indians, there were other animals that could be killed and eaten. For instance, there were many deer and

antelope. These were much more difficult to hunt, but the Indians were glad to eat them for a change, when they could. Bears, too, were common in those days, and their flesh was greatly liked by the Indians. Hunting bears was the most dangerous thing a man could do, especially hunting grizzly bears. For this reason it was usually done by several men in a group.

There were many birds and small animals which the Indians could and did eat, when times were really hard. But they never, at any time, would eat such things as frogs, snakes, or even fish. The fact that they would not eat fish at all is one point in which they are so very different from the Northwest Coast Indians. And unlike the people of the Eastern Woodlands, they did not grow any food. They depended chiefly upon the buffalo.

Tribal Rules

There were very strict rules about hunting, which had to be obeyed. This was important because life itself depended on hunting. If the rules were broken, the people might starve to death. These rules were pretty well understood all over the Plains, and no special laws had to be made to make people obey them. If the rules were broken, punishment was sure to follow. For instance, there was a rule that no one might hunt without permission. If a man went out to hunt alone,

he might frighten away a whole herd of buffalo. If it did not return again for many months, the people might starve. The first two times a man did this, he was warned. If he went a third time, his tipi would be cut into strips and destroyed while he was away, his dogs killed, and all his belongings destroyed. He would not dare to go again, for if he did, he himself would be killed. This may seem to be a harsh and severe rule. But if we remember how important it was that it be kept, and that the man was given plenty of warning, it seems fair enough. No man should act so selfishly as to put the lives of his fellows in danger.

There were groups in most Plains tribes which acted as police to see that the rules of hunting were kept. These groups were called "societies", and there were usually several of them in each tribe; the Sarsi had five, and the Blackfeet more. They were known by such odd names as "Crazy Dogs".

The "societies" were made up mostly of men, although women could sometimes belong too. A young man would be invited to join the lowest grade of "society" in his tribe. To do this, the man had to buy his place, and also the regalia which went with it, such as the proper clothes, or clubs. Most men advanced from the lowest grade to those above it in rank, but they usually spent about four years in each. In this way, most men of a certain age belonged to a certain

society, although all societies contained a few old men, probably ones who could not afford to go any farther, or who did not wish to do so.

These societies, of course, had other functions besides enforcing the hunting rules, though that was their most important one. They gave a chance for energetic men to distinguish themselves and so become famous for leadership and service. Besides, the members of the societies had a pleasant time together in their dances and other ceremonies.

Government

There was no "government" amongst any of the Plains tribes. Plains Indians were extremely fond of their freedom, going where they wished and doing very much as they pleased. But we have already seen how even they, free as they were, still had to have certain rules for hunting. Otherwise some of them might have starved to death. So it came about that all of these tribes had men who led them. We need not call it "government", for it was hardly that. Indeed, the people willingly followed a man who had shown that he was able to lead them wisely. If a man were an especially good hunter, he might be chosen as a leader. Or a good warrior, or a wise councillor might be chosen. Usually a leader had all of these qualities. But besides all this, he must not be thought to be

selfish or mean. He must show his generosity by always helping the poor or unfortunate members of his tribe, and he must always put the good of the people ahead of his own comfort and pleasure.

For these reasons, the tribal leaders were usually very able and wise men. They were so generous that they were poorer than many less important people in the tribe. Being wealthy did not in itself mean that a man could be a leader; one had also to be helpful, generous and kind, as well as wise.

A man remained a leader just as long as he was useful. If another man, wiser and more generous, came along, he would likely replace the first man. There was no election; the new man would simply be listened to and his advice taken. There was, it is true, a sort of council, but it was just a group of these leaders who talked over public matters.

Guardian Spirits

Almost all Plains Indians had "guardian spirits", whose advice they sought in times of danger. To obtain a guardian spirit, each man, when still quite young, went off by himself for several days or a week. During this time he ate no food. He thought about his future, and prayed for help. Sooner or later, he believed that he had had a vision, in which a spirit came to him and offered to be his guardian and helper. This spirit was

usually an animal or bird, like a hawk, a weasel, an eagle or some other creature which was wise or powerful. As soon as the man had the vision, he returned to his camp, and there he explained to the people what had happened to him.

Then, if he had dreamed of seeing a hawk, he got the body of a hawk, and put it into a pouch of skin. This he always carried with him afterwards, wrapped very carefully in skins. He called this his "medicine". It became his guardian spirit. Whenever he was in trouble, he told his guardian spirit about it, and followed whatever advice he received from it. No one else was ever allowed to touch, or even to see, his medicine. To do so would cause it to lose all its ability to help him or its "power".

Medicine Bundles

There were always men in every tribe who were renowned because of their powerful "medicine bundles". In fact, an individual "medicine bundle" might get such a great reputation that it was passed on from one owner to another. Thus it sometimes happened that in every tribe there were several "medicine bundles" which were older than any man living. They had become famous for their power, and had been kept by some one after the first owner had died.

Another kind was called the "medicine pipe bundle".

Each "medicine pipe bundle" contained a tobacco pipe. It was used on rare occasions. Each of these pipes had a stone bowl and a long wooden stem. Besides, they were often decorated with feathers and carvings. They were kept wrapped up in skins of animals, and only unwrapped once in a long time. No woman was allowed to see them, or even to come near them.

Once a year, and sometimes not that often, the owner unwrapped the bundle and took out the pipe. He filled it with tobacco, lit it, and took four puffs.

MEDICINE PIPE

Then he passed it to all his guests, who sat in a large circle around the fire in his lodge. Each of them took four puffs before passing it on to the next man.

Ceremonies like this took place at councils of war. These were always very dignified and serious affairs. Anyone who smoked the pipe at a time like this by doing so pledged himself to join with the owner of the pipe in some undertaking. Chiefs who wanted to go to war usually asked members of their tribe to join them by giving them the pipe to smoke. All the men who smoked the pipe were then pledged to stand by

him and help him. It was a terrible disgrace to go back on a promise made in this way.

Men who owned medicine bundles or pipe bundles often paid large prices for them. Since the Indians did not have money they used other things to pay for what they bought. A man might have to give several horses to get a medicine pipe.

When a man bought a bundle, he also had to buy the right to sing a large number of songs which went with it. He had to learn all these songs so that he could sing them as he unwrapped the bundle. It might take several years to learn all the songs, because there were so many of them. The Indians believed it was very, very important that the singer should sing the songs correctly. They said that if he made a mistake, the "medicine" would lose its "power", and not be any good. The songs were really charms to help the medicine do its work. This is why the owner was so careful not to make a mistake in singing the songs. It was much harder than learning the multiplication table!

The Sun Dance

One of the biggest ceremonies of the Plains Indians was the Sun Dance. Every Plains tribe had it in one form or another. It was indeed a very beautiful and impressive affair. Everyone in the tribe, if at all possible,

PLAINS INDIAN DRESSED FOR THE SUN DANCE

was sure to be present, and stayed the entire week or more during which it lasted.

This is how the Sun Dances were always started. Some one in the tribe became ill. The sick person's mother, or some other woman, prayed to the Sun to cure him, and promised that if he did, she would perform a Sun Dance in his honour within a year. If the sick person recovered, the woman never failed to keep her promise to the Sun. At the proper time, she sent invitations to the Dance. This always took place at the same time each year it was held. Most tribes held it in early summer, usually about the end of June or early in July.

At the appointed time and place, the entire tribe came together. They usually chose a level spot not too far from a river. Here the people flocked, bringing with them their dogs, their children and the tipis. Those who owned any, brought their beautiful painted tipis, called "medicine tipis". The entire tribe pitched their lodges in a great circle. If there were too many lodges to be got into one circle, then they made another circle outside the first. Within the circle, the members of each band camped together, so that everyone knew where everyone else should be. In this way, order was kept and confusion avoided.

In the centre of the circle, the men built a huge lodge, called the Sun Dance Lodge. The main feature

about it was a great pole which stood at the very centre of it. The lodge which was built around this pole varied in shape from tribe to tribe, but most were round. It was generally covered by branches of trees with the leaves still on. In the shelter of the Sun Dance Lodge the great ceremonies actually took place.

The purpose of the ceremonies was to give thanks to the Sun for having cured the sick person. Great numbers of songs were sung, and dances were performed, and most of these were begun by the woman who had promised the Dance to the Sun. During certain parts of the ceremony it was necessary to fast; at such times the people who took part could not even drink water.

The Sun Dance was the greatest and most colorful event in the entire year for the Plains Indians. It was in fact the only time when all members of the tribe came together in one place. For this reason, if for no other, it was important and made every member of the tribe look forward to it with feelings of patriotism and pride. Besides all this, it was one time when everyone dressed up in the best clothes he owned, danced, sang, and met all his relatives and friends.

Religion

We have already mentioned certain things about the religion of the Plains people. We have seen how

the men sought guardian spirits through fasting, dreams and visions. And we have referred in the Sun Dance to the importance of the Sun. The Sun was indeed regarded as a very powerful god who was usually kind to human beings. He was not the Creator of the World, however. A spirit called "Old Man" was thought to have created it, but he was otherwise of no very great importance, though he was much given to playing tricks on people. In addition to the Sun, there was a host of good and evil spirits, some very powerful, others less so.

Almost every living thing had a spirit, even the rivers, trees and stones. Most of these were not very important, but others, like the Hawk, or the Eagle, or the Wolf could be very important indeed. If one secured one of these strong spirits as a protector, he was well prepared to face the future. For this reason, men were very anxious to have powerful spirits for their guardians.

Death

When anyone died, he was dressed in his best clothes, and all his belongings were put around him. Then the body was taken out and set up on a high scaffold somewhere on the plains. If there was a tree nearby, the body would be placed on a plank and set up high in the branches. There was great mourning when a

relative or friend died, and wives and husbands continued to mourn for a year. They wore old clothes, and did not cut their hair. But as time went on, they forgot the past, and often married again.

The Plains Indians had no very clear idea about life after death. Perhaps they did not think much about it. Most of them believed that death was a change which ended life in this world, but started it again in another world. The life in the next world would not be very different from life in this one, except that it would be easier, and there would be more buffalo to hunt and eat.

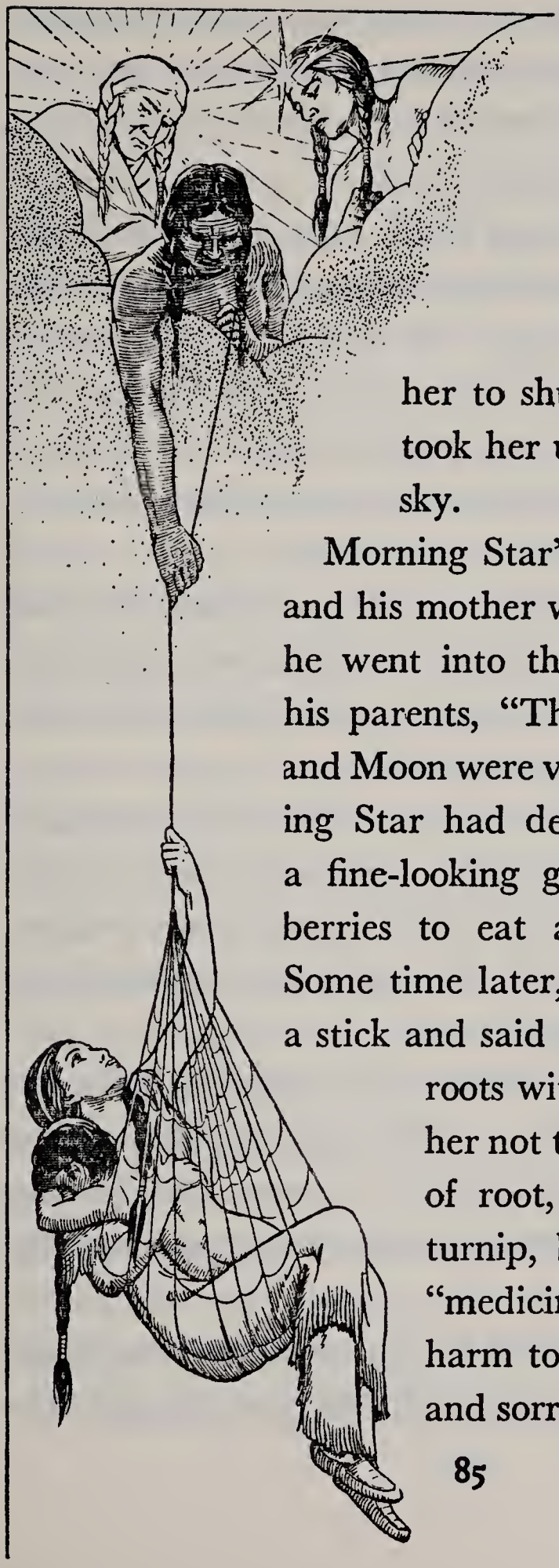
The Legend of the North Star

A Story of the Blackfoot Indians of the Plains

One summer night when it was very warm inside the lodges, two young Blackfoot girls went outside to sleep. They woke up early, and looking up at the sky, saw the Morning Star. One of them said to the other, "That is a very beautiful star. I should like him for my husband". But she soon forgot what she had said.

A few days later the two girls were out gathering firewood. They put the wood in bundles, and lifted these onto their backs with pack straps. But every time the girl who had admired the Morning Star tried to lift up her bundle, the strap broke. Her friend began to weary of helping her, and soon left her alone.

When the girl was alone, she tried again to lift the bundle. Each time she tried the strap broke. Very soon a handsome young man appeared. He spoke to her and said, "You said you would like to be my husband". The girl replied that she had never seen him before. "I am Morning Star", he told her. "One night you looked up to the sky, saw me, and said you would like to marry me. Now I have come for you."



The girl was pleased to hear him say this, and agreed to go with him. Morning Star placed an eagle plume in her hair, and told her to shut her eyes. Then he took her up to his home in the sky.

Morning Star's father was the Sun, and his mother was the Moon. When he went into their lodge, he said to his parents, "This is my wife". Sun and Moon were very happy that Morning Star had decided to marry such a fine-looking girl. Moon gave her berries to eat and water to drink. Some time later, Moon also gave her a stick and said she might go and dig roots with it. But she warned her not to touch a certain kind of root, which looked like a turnip, because it was strong "medicine". It would bring harm to her if she touched it and sorrow to them all.

Morning Star and his wife lived very happily together for several years. Their son was growing up and they were both proud and fond of him. His father was soon going to teach him how to hunt.

But one day, Morning Star's wife went out to dig roots again. She saw the big root, and wondered why she should not dig it up. She said to herself that no one would know if she did touch it. So she put her digging stick under it and pried it loose. As it was a big root, she did not need to dig up any others. Instead, she took this one home to her lodge.

When Morning Star saw the root, he asked her what she had seen when she dug it up. She said she looked down through the hole and saw the Earth, the trees and the lodges of her own people.

Morning Star was very sad. "Now," he said, "I cannot keep you any longer. You must take our son and return to your people. When you get back to them, do not let our son touch the earth for fourteen days, or greater misfortune will come".

Sun said to her, "I shall call a man to help you back to Earth". After a while, a man came with a strong spider web. He tied the woman and the boy to one end of it, and gently lowered them to the lodge of her own people.

As the woman reached the ground, some one in the camp recognized her and said, "Here is the girl who

never came back with the wood". Then all her friends came out to meet her, and her mother took her home.

Morning Star told his wife that since she had made one mistake, she would probably make another. He was afraid she would forget his warning and let their child touch the ground before the fourteen days were ended. So he advised her to paint the sign of the Morning Star on the back of her lodge. This would remind her of his warning.

The young woman watched their son carefully for thirteen days. She kept him on the bed and did not let him touch the ground. When she went out from the lodge, she asked her mother to watch him. But on the thirteenth day, when she was out, the boy crawled out of the bed and stepped on the ground. His grandmother picked him up and put him back. This seemed to make the child angry, for he pulled the covers up over himself.

When the boy's mother came home, she asked, "Where is my son?" "He covered himself up with the robe", said the grandmother. The young mother rushed to the bed and pulled back the cover. The boy was gone.

She looked up to the sky. There, in the hole from which she had dug the root, was a new star. Then she knew what had become of her son.

This is how the North Star came to be.

The Algonkians

Most of eastern Canada was covered with forest. For this reason it is often called the Eastern Woodlands. Two great groups of Indians dwelt in the Eastern Woodlands of Canada. In southern Ontario, there were the Iroquois. The Algonkian Indians held all the rest from northern Manitoba to the Atlantic Ocean. This chapter will tell about the customs of the Algonkians. The next one will tell about the customs of the Iroquois.

The Forest Home of the Algonkians

Most of the forest in the Algonkians' country was chiefly of spruce, fir, hemlock and balsam. Since such trees stay green all the year round, they are called evergreens. This forest also had a few trees which did not stay green all year but lose their leaves in the fall, like poplar and birch. But there were no maples, oaks, beeches nor elms, which only grow farther south.

The evergreens grow so densely that it is hard to push one's way through them. Such a forest stretched

from Manitoba to the Atlantic Ocean, and from James Bay to Lake Superior, Lake Huron and the St. Lawrence.

All the great region around Hudson's Bay is very rocky. There is usually just enough soil for the trees to grow and no more. There are many hundreds of lakes in it and rivers connecting the lakes. The same kind of country stretches across the northern part of Quebec to the Atlantic Ocean.

In northern Manitoba, the land is low and swampy. Such land is called muskeg. The tribe of Algonkians who dwelt in it was called the "Swampy Cree".

The land near the St. Lawrence River is less rocky. It also has fewer lakes and rivers. In other ways too it was an easier country to live in. Travel across it was easier. The trees did not grow as densely, though they were bigger. The same kind of country was to be found in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

These were the woodlands where the Algonkian Indians lived. We have seen that there were several kinds of woodland, stretching across vast distances. In most of this great country, the winters are long and cold. Much snow falls. The rivers freeze over early. Spring comes late, and the summers are shorter than farther south.

Wild Life

Most of the time there was plenty of wild life in

these forests. Even today, deer, rabbits, foxes and wolves are plentiful. Moose and elk are sometimes seen. Before the white men came, beaver were plentiful too, and many other small animals. Fish are still fairly abundant. But in those days, the streams were often filled with them. There were whitefish, sturgeon, trout and several other kinds.

The Algonkian Language

The Indian inhabitants of this immense country all spoke one language. It was called "Algonkian". So the people are usually called "Algonkian" Indians. No other Indian language in Canada was spoken over so great an area, nor by so many people.

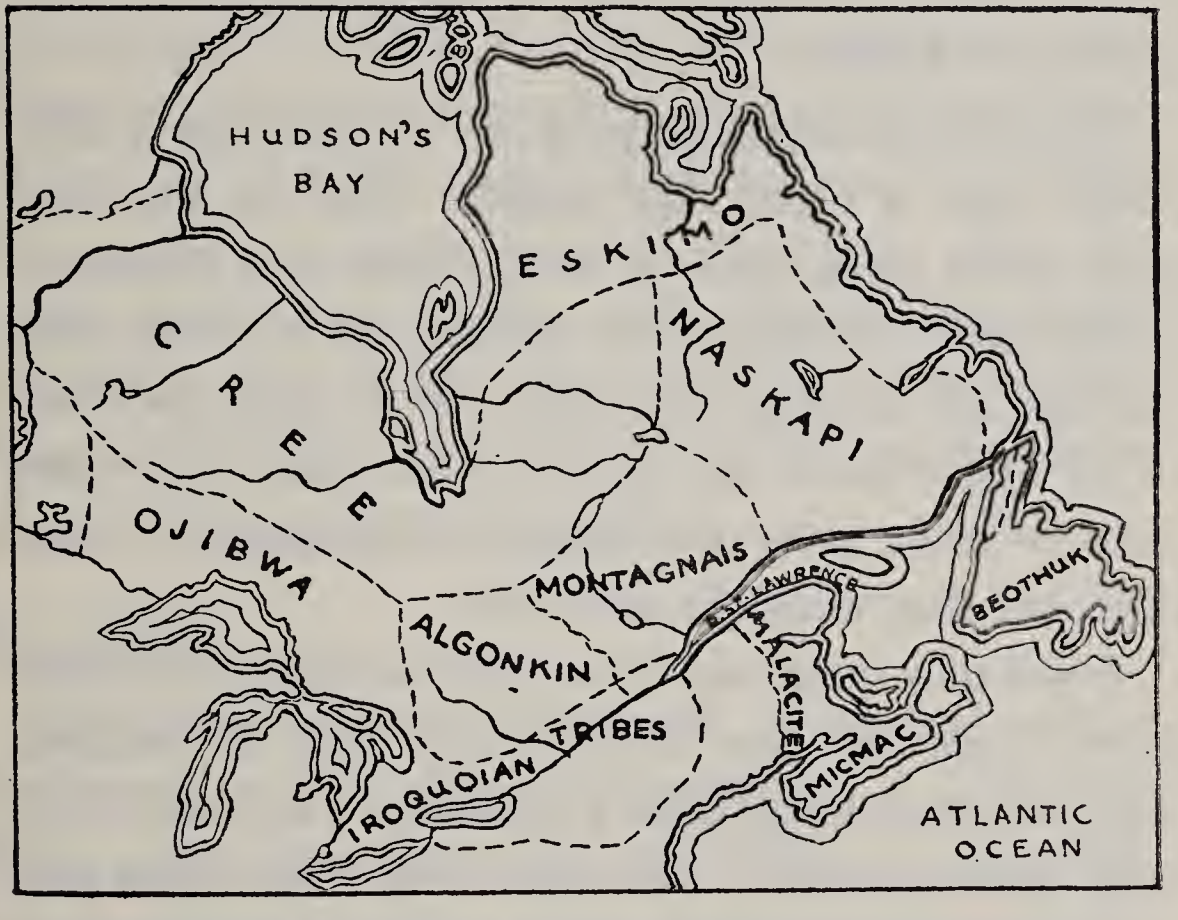
The Algonkian Tribes

These Algonkian Indians were divided into numerous small groups or "tribes". The names of many of these are well known to us today. Around the shores of Hudson's Bay there were the Crees. North of Lake Superior, lived the Saulteaux. A little farther east lived the Ojibwa, sometimes also called the Chippewa. The Ottawa and the Nipissing were also Ontario tribes.

In Quebec, the two main Algonkian tribes were the Montagnais (or Mountaineers) and the Naskapi. The Malacite lived in New Brunswick and the Micmac in Nova Scotia. A tribe which once lived in Newfound-

land is now extinct; it was called the Beothuk, and probably belonged to the Algonkian family. Several other, smaller tribes also spoke Algonkian, but have disappeared, like the Beothuk.

Each of these tribes had its own dialect. That is, its language was slightly different from that of its



ALGONKIAN TRIBES OF THE EASTERN WOODLANDS

neighbours. Yet they could still understand each other, with a little difficulty.

Appearance

In appearance the Algonkians were rather short and dark. Their faces were often broad. In these ways,

they were very unlike the Plains Indians. But they had the same straight, black hair and dark eyes as all other Indians. Though they were short, they were strong and sturdy. They resembled their southern neighbours, the Iroquois, in appearance more than their western ones.

Getting a Living

Most of the Algonkian peoples lived very much alike. They were a Stone Age people. That is, they had only stone tools, such as axes, chisels and hammers. They knew nothing about metals. As a result, they did not try to chop down trees nor to clear the land. They might cut down a tree or two with their stone axes to make poles for lodges, or something of that sort, but that would be about all.

Since they could not clear the land, they could not grow crops. But they could use the land for hunting, and the streams and lakes for fishing. The flesh of the wild game provided them with food. The skins provided them with clothes. From the birch tree they got bark to cover their lodges, and to make canoes, baskets, and dishes.

Property

Under such conditions, life was not easy. The people had to move from place to place, wherever there was

game. If they stayed too long in one place, the game would leave. So they could not have permanent homes. They must be always on the move. Perhaps a month would be about as long as they could stay in one place.

People who move about a great deal do not gather many possessions. They are too hard to move. So the Algonkians owned only the most necessary things. Even these had to be easy to carry. Clothing, dishes, and hunting equipment were all necessary and these were almost all the Indians possessed. The canoe was useful in moving the family and its belongings. Even the lodge could be taken down and carried in the canoe. In such a way of life, there could be no permanent homes, no villages, very little social life and no possessions which would break easily.

Population

The tribes were usually small. Some had only a thousand or two thousand members. A few were larger. At least one tribe, the Ojibwa, had nearly twenty thousand. But where hunting was poor, the population was usually small. It could never be more than the wild game would support.

Weapons and Hunting

Tools and weapons were the most important of all the Algonkians' possessions. For hunting they used bows

SPRING CARIBOU HUNT OF THE NASKAPI INDIANS

and arrows. The bows were made of wood. The points for the arrows were chipped from stone or shaped from pieces of bone. With them they killed deer, moose and bears. In certain parts of the country there were elk and caribou as well. Small animals like hares were often snared. To make the snares, willow bark was used. Spears were used to catch fish and harpoons for larger game. Many kinds of fish were caught. In the spring there were suckers, pike and pickerel; in the autumn, whitefish, sturgeon and trout were speared.

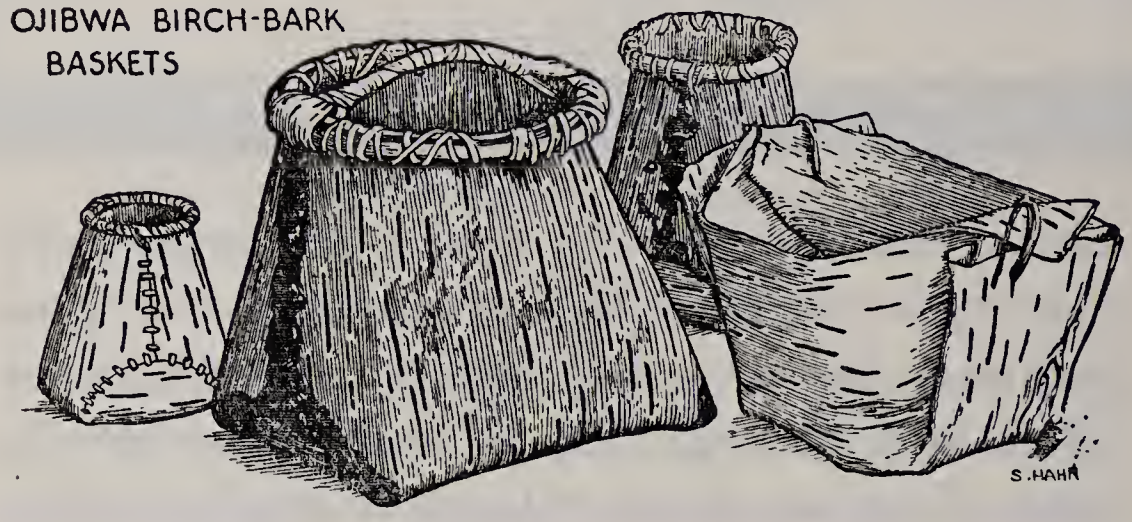
The country of the Naskapi was so vast and game so scarce, that hunters often had to travel for weeks. Caribou was more common in their country than

moose. The Ojibwa, who lived much farther west, were more fortunate. Their country had more game and more fish, as well as wild rice, and trees from which to make maple sugar. So life was easier for them. Even so, all the Algonkian peoples suffered occasionally from starvation.

The Ojibwa had learned how to tap maple trees and to make maple syrup and sugar. They most likely knew how to do this long before the white people came to them. Every spring they tapped the trees and made large quantities of the sweet food. For buckets, they used baskets made of birch bark and neatly sewn and made tight with pine pitch. The sap was boiled in these by dropping in hot stones. With such rude

methods, much dirt got into the sap. This formed scum on top of the boiling syrup. To get rid of this, the Indians made a net or scoop, by bending a twig into a circle. Into the circle, a fine mesh of cord was woven. This made a sort of round net on the end of the stick. By dipping this into the hot syrup, the Indians could remove all the scum.

When the syrup was boiled down, it was poured out into baskets. If maple sugar was to be made, the



OJIBWA BIRCH-BARK BASKETS

almost solid syrup was run into wooden molds to harden. Both the syrup and the sugar could be stored away for use at some later time.

Wild rice grows in marshy land in parts of the Ojibwa country. It grows wild and cannot be cultivated. When it is ripe, the Ojibwa paddle out into the rice marshes in their canoes. While one person paddles, another bends the heads of the rice plants over the canoe. With a stick the grain is knocked into the

bottom of the canoe. When the canoe has been filled, they take it home and store the rice in birch bark boxes. A good supply of wild rice would keep a family alive if game were scarce.

Clothing

The Algonkian Indians had to wear clothes most of the time. In the winter, it was much too cold to go

GATHERING WILD RICE

without them. They needed them less in the summer, and sometimes could go with very few. But usually, they were more comfortable if they had clothes on, for clothes protected them from mosquitoes and black flies.

The Montagnais and Naskapi have known the white man longer than almost any other tribes in Canada. For that reason, their clothes were less like the old

styles. The Cree and Ojibwa perhaps changed less than the others.

The skins of animals were all that these Indians had from which to make their clothes. They had to use whatever kind they could get, whether it was deer, moose, caribou or some other. Whatever kind they used, they had to clean them, scrape them and usually tan them. Then, the women had to sew them with bone awls and sinew thread.

Since the Montagnais people had plenty of moose in their country, they made most of their clothes of moose skin. From it they made moccasins, leggings, breech cloths and robes. The robes could be thrown easily around the shoulders. Besides, they often had jackets with sleeves which could be pinned on, or taken off.

The Naskapi used caribou skins for clothing, because caribou were more plentiful than moose in their land. And because that land was so bleak, they often cut their clothes to fit. We call such clothes "tailored" clothes. For many years, they wore moccasins, leggings and a long jacket. The jacket was very like some which the early French settlers used to wear. The Indians, of course, had copied it from them. But they often added a hood, which they could put on or take off according to the weather. These jackets usually were

NASKAPI INDIAN CAMP

decorated with a strip of painting down the front and along the edges.

Most of the other Algonkian peoples wore similar clothes. They had moccasins, leggings and breech cloths, as well as jackets. But the jackets were shorter than the Naskapi ones and did not have the painted decoration.

The Cree had a costume unlike any of the others. The winter in their country is long, very cold and often damp. For these reasons, they used a special kind of clothes at that time of year. They wore jackets of rabbit skin. Such jackets were snug and warm. No wind could blow through them. The Indians often put hoods on them, making them very much like our parkas.

To make one of these jackets, about three hundred rabbit skins were needed. The skins were cut up into thin strips, almost like shoe laces. These were then braided together. Rabbit skin blankets were made in exactly the same way. These garments were very good in this climate. But the hair came out easily and got in one's nose and eyes!

Lodges

We have already seen that since these Indians could stay only a few weeks in one place, they never built permanent houses. But even if they were only camping in one place for a short time, they needed a good,

warm lodge. Whatever kind of lodge they built, they wanted to be able to move it later on. For this reason, they made their lodges of light material which would not weight much. They had no animals which could carry their loads for them. They had to carry everything on their own backs, or in canoes.

They used two types of lodges. One type was like the Plains Indians' tipi. It was built of poles set up in a circle. The Naskapi covered theirs with caribou skins. Most other tribes covered theirs with large sheets of birch bark. Such dwellings were not very beautiful. But they could be made warm and comfortable.

The Ojibwas had another sort of lodge. It was called a wigwam. Instead of being cone-shaped, like the Naskapi lodge, it was dome shaped. It looked like a very large bowl turned upside down. To make it, saplings were bent over and tied down to form a framework. This was covered with large sheets of birch bark, held on with ropes. In certain parts of the country, the Ojibwa wove mats of rushes, and put these over the framework instead of the birchbark. The rush mats were lighter and lasted longer than the birchbark.

Sometimes the Cree used the wigwam, as well as the tipi. So we find both types of lodge in use among the Algonkian people.

Both kinds of lodge were easy to make. The materials could be found everywhere. They could be taken down

quickly, and put up quickly. And, if one wanted to move them, from one camp to another, one could carry them easily. The lodge had only to be taken down, and the bark or mats rolled up. In this way they could be carried without trouble. It was not necessary to carry the poles, for new ones could always be got at the new camp site.

Travel

If an Algonkian family moved in the winter, they would have to walk. Usually the snow was very deep in their country in the winter. For this reason, they used snowshoes. Snowshoes made it possible, and even easy, to walk long distances over the snow. The best paths in winter were over the frozen rivers and lakes. But if the family had to walk in the woods along the trails, the snowshoes were even more important there.

Snowshoes were made in their spare time by the men, usually in the early spring. Good pieces of wood were chosen, and then cut and bent to the right shape. In the forest, the Indians preferred a short, broad snowshoe. This type is often called the bearpaw, because it looks a little like the paw of that animal. Snowshoes of this shape are easier to use in the woods than long, narrow ones. When the frame is completed, the netting is put on. This was made of the sinew of

ALGONKIAN INDIANS MAKING A BIRCH BARK CANOE

deer or moose. To make the netting properly required a great deal of skill.

Almost every tribe had its own form of snowshoe. Each was slightly different from all the rest.

If the Indian family moved in the spring, summer or fall, they would probably travel by canoe. Again, each tribe had one shape which it liked better than any other. But, generally speaking, all canoes were very much alike, and only an expert could tell one from another.

All the Algonkians made canoes of birch bark. The bark had to be removed in early summer, then cut and shaped. An experienced canoe maker, with the help of his wife, needed about two weeks to finish a canoe. After the bark was cut, the canoe maker bent it, and held it in place with stones. He next sewed up the seams carefully with "watap" or cedar root. He put in ribs and gunwhales of cedar. When all was done, he put pine pitch over the seams to keep them from leaking.

The birch bark canoe is a wonderful craft. No better one has ever been made for the country where it is to be used. The early explorers discovered this and began to use them themselves. Even today, one can travel more easily by canoe between many places in the great northern woodland, than in any other way. Only the airplane is better.

Here are some of the reasons why the canoe is so very useful. The materials for making it are easy to get. It can be built more quickly than any other boat. It is light and can be carried by one man. It is strong and can carry heavy loads. It can be used for shooting rapids, which are numerous, and which no other boat could pass. If it should get torn, a patch of birch bark, some cedar root and pitch will soon mend it. Besides all this, it will not crack or split if left in the sun for a day or so, and it will not waterlog.

The canoe made it possible for the Algonkians to move about from place to place quite easily. They could also travel far longer distances this way than on foot, and with much less trouble.

If no birch bark was to be had, the Indians sometimes made canoes out of spruce bark, elm bark or moose hide. Such canoes were not as good as birch bark ones, and were not often used.

In summer, the Algonkians travelled mostly by canoe. In winter, they travelled on snowshoes. These two wonderful inventions made it possible for them to move about in both seasons. Then, too, the rivers and lakes of their country could be travelled all the year round. In the summer, canoes passed lightly over them. In the winter, when they were frozen, the snowshoes of the Indian changed them into endless trails.

Art Work

We might think that where life was so hard, there would be no time to make beautiful things. Yet this is not the case. Even where life was hardest, the people liked to decorate their clothes and their tools. Where food was more plentiful, and life easier, there was more time for art.

The Naskapi, as we have said already, printed designs on their caribou jackets. The decoration was placed in a band along the edges. It was not painted on by hand, as we might suppose. A more difficult method was used. The pattern was first cut into a piece of bone or antler. This made what we call a "stamp". Paint was put on the stamp and then it was pressed onto the skin. The design of course was transferred in this way, from the stamp to the skin.

Many Algonkians used similar designs to those of the Naskapi. But they did not always stamp them on. Sometimes they painted them on by hand, or worked them in quills.

The Montagnais liked to decorate their birch bark baskets by painting simple patterns on them in a dark colour. At other times they made designs on them by first folding the material and biting it. They knew where the bites should be made in order to make a pleasing pattern when the bark was unfolded. (The

basket was not sewed until the designs had been completed in this way.)

Porcupine quills and birds' quills were often used to decorate baskets. They were usually dyed first. After being dyed, the quills were flattened. Next they were sorted according to colour. The skin or bark which was to be decorated was then pierced with a needle and the quill was put through the holes and fastened at the back. In a way, the result looks a little like beadwork. It was fine, and not at all like the coarse quill work so often seen nowadays. It was also much slower to do.

When the white men brought glass beads to these Indians, they quickly began to use them instead of quills just as the Plains Indians did. They are easier to work with, but produce a similar result. Besides, they were something new, and for that reason, the Indians liked them, just as we like new ideas.

Unfortunately, the Indians often gave up their old designs. In their place, they used designs copied from the white men's belongings. They liked the leaf and flower designs which they saw on the white men's things better than their own. In olden times they had only used designs made up of straight lines, with a few curved lines. Later they used flower and leaf patterns too.

Moose hair was used once in a while in place of

quills. The effect was very pleasing, and looked like embroidery. Moose hair was used also for making the beautiful roaches, or headdresses worn by the Cree. To make these, long moose hairs were dyed red, yellow, or blue, and fastened to a narrow strip of skin. When the skin strip was worn on top of a man's head, the moose hair stood up straight. This was very ornamental.

CREE MAN WITH ROACH HEAD-DRESS

The Ojibwa and a few other tribes did a little weaving. They wove mats of cattails, a type of bulrush, and also of cedar bark. They made carrying bags of basswood bark, nettle fibre and cedar bark. The only article of clothing which they wove was a long sash, but it was not common.

Weaving the cattail and rush mats was fairly simple. One needed only to tie the rushes to a pole so that they hung down from it, and then pass a cord around each one until all were securely tied.

To make the bags of cedar bark, or basswood fibre was a little more difficult. The cedar bark which is used grows below the rough outside bark. It has to be taken off the tree, and then cut into strips. Care

had to be taken to get the strips all the same width. They were then woven in much the same way as the rush mats. However, there were several patterns which could be worked into them, if one first dyed the strips in one or two colours.

Government

Among several Algonkian tribes, each family owned a part of the country. At least, they owned the right to hunt or fish in it. This ownership was handed down from one generation to the next, so that the family had a permanent hunting ground. In case of need, a family would usually let a neighbour hunt on the land, if he came and asked permission. Hunting without permission could lead to war.

As in many other tribes, the father was head of the family. What he said had to be done.

Most of the Algonkians lived in small groups. A group might have only one or two families in it, or it might have as many as several dozen families. Usually the total number of people in a group was small. Such groups are usually called "bands" by the white people.

The leader of the band was not chosen in any special way. A man became a leader simply by proving that he was a good hunter, that his advice was good, and by showing an interest in the welfare of his people. Another man might come along who was better, and

he would then become the band leader or "chief". Just as there was no chosen chief in the band, so there was no chief for the tribe as a whole. It is true that in times of danger the leaders of the bands might meet together in a sort of council. There they would talk over the matter and decide what to do. But there was no one whose word was final, or had to be obeyed. Only one tribe, the Ojibwa, had any organization which included all the bands. For a while at least, they joined up with some other tribes. Such a union of tribes is often called a "confederacy". In this case, the Ojibwas united with the Ottawa and the Pottawatomie (all Algonkians) to form the confederacy. They called it "The Council of the Three Fires".

Clans

Certain Algonkian peoples had clans, others did not. The clan, of course, is a group of people all of whom consider themselves to be related either through their fathers, or through their mothers, but not through both. Very often, too, they believed themselves to be descended from one ancestor. The ancestor did not need to be a human being; he might be a bear, a wolf, a deer, a snipe or some other creature. If they believed themselves descended from a bear, they often wore an emblem to show the fact, or tattooed it on their bodies.

The clan had no connection with the bands, for members of different bands often belonged to one clan.

In some cases, it was forbidden for members of the same clan to marry. In looking for a mate, a man must choose a woman from some other clan than his own.

Marriage

There was very little ceremony about marriage. The girl was often not even consulted. The husband was frequently chosen for her by her parents. The young man just came to live with the girl in her father's lodge. If he proved to be a good provider and a good hunter the marriage would probably last. Then the couple would go off by themselves and build their own lodge. On the other hand, if the man could not provide the girl with plenty of food and plenty of clothes he might have to leave her. They might then give her to some other man.

Childhood

When a baby was born a name was given to it. This was often an occasion for a feast and much fun. Amongst the Ojibwa some old relative, perhaps the baby's grandfather, took it in his arms and named it. He then called on the great powers in the heavens to bless it. The names were pretty, and usually taken

from some object seen round about. But names were not kept all one's life, as with us. Among some tribes, a boy changed his name when he became a man. Or he might change it after some brave deed in battle. There were many reasons for changing names.

Babies were carried on "cradle boards" for two or three years. These boards were beautifully carved, painted and decorated.

If the child were a girl her mother taught her how to do the tasks of the house as soon as she was old enough to learn them. If it were a boy, his father took him hunting and fishing, and taught him the lore of the tribe. In any case, children did not have very much to do, and were usually very well treated.

Old Age

As men and women grew older, they reached a time when they could no longer do strenuous things. The men could not go on hunting trips, and the women could not look after the lodges. Then the old men gave up hunting and contented themselves with doing small jobs. Canoes had to be made, as well as snowshoes, bows and arrows, arrow points, and many other useful and necessary things. Often an old man could make such things much better than a young man because he had had more experience. So the arrangement was a happy one all round. An elderly woman too could

make necessary articles. Many of them could sew clothes and make baskets, quillwork or beadwork.

But when people got past doing any kind of work, they were still taken care of by their friends. The only exception was among the western Algonkians, such as the Plains Cree. This tribe often left its old folks behind when they moved camp, because it was too much trouble to carry them. In many cases, the old people asked to be left behind because they knew it might be really dangerous to the others to have to take them along.

Death

When death came, the dead person was dressed in his best garments and buried. The Micmac wrapped them in birch bark rolls and buried them in a sitting position, along with their tools and weapons. These they would need in the next world. The Naskapi, however, put their dead on scaffolds or in trees. The Ojibwa buried them. All tribes put some food on the grave, and some even repeated this ceremony every year. This was to give the dead person food to eat. To take anything away from a grave was a very great crime.

Religion

None of the Algonkian tribes had any clear notion about gods or the next world. They did believe there

were such, but did not think much about them. The Ojibwa at least had some idea of a great god of the sky, who was supreme over all the rest. But all believed in a host of spirits. These spirits inhabited every rock and stream, every tree and every ravine. They were the ones who had to be pleased, so little gifts were left for them where the Indians believed they lived.

War

If a chief decided to go to war about some matter, it was usual for him to light a pipe of tobacco and pass it around to the others in the council. Whoever smoked the pipe made a solemn pledge to stand by the rest. It was considered a terrible disgrace to smoke the pipe and then not do what had been pledged in this way.

In case of war, those men who wished to take part followed their leader. They carried bows and arrows and a knobbed wooden club. A round shield made of rawhide was their only protection as a rule. The Montagnais, though, probably made armour out of wooden slats, like the Iroquois used.

As a rule, the Algonkians killed the men in war, but captured the women and children. These they took home and usually treated very kindly. In ancient times it is likely that very few people were killed in war between tribes. It was only after the white men

came that great slaughters took place. The old custom of scalping increased because white people offered rewards for scalps which the Indians might bring to them. Besides, after the white people came, the Indians had to take sides, and war became a very real problem. For many tribes, the struggle was one of life and death, and so the aim was to kill as many of the enemy as possible. In ancient times, disputes were usually settled between bands only and seldom involved more than a few hundred people at most.

How Nanabozo Brought Fire to the Indians

A Legend of the Algonkians

There was a time in the far distant past when the Indians did not have fire. They knew about it because they saw that trees which had been struck with lightning were burned by it. But they themselves did not know how to make it. They could not keep warm without it in the winter, and they could not cook their food.

This state of affairs worried the great magician, Nanabozo, the son of Mudjekeewis The West Wind and Wenonah. Nanabozo lived with the old grandmother Nokomis, and it disturbed him to see her shivering with cold in the winter and having to eat raw food. But he knew that the Mutche Manidos the guardians of the sacred fire were evil spirits and that it would be very dangerous to try to get it from them. Nokomis warned him not to try, but he felt he was

clever enough to succeed. He decided to make the attempt.

Nanabozo paddled his birch bark canoe as far to the east as he could go. There he hid it among some reeds, and went up onto the land. He saw afar off the wigwam where the guardian of the fire lived with his two daughters. He knew that all these people were fierce and that the girls were swift runners. If he was to succeed, he must be able to run faster than they; so he changed himself into a rabbit. First he jumped into the water and then hopped up to the wigwam where the sacred fire was kept.

When the two girls saw the poor, half-drowned rabbit, they felt sorry for him, and took him into the

wigwam beside the fire. They told him to sit there and his fur would soon be dry. He thanked them and sat quite still, while they went about their work in the lodge. After they had got used to his presence, and had stopped watching him, he hopped closer to the fire, so that he could grab one of the burning sticks from it. When the two girls were busy at the side of the wigwam farthest from the door, Nanabozo reached into the fire and took the stick he wanted. Quickly changing himself back into a strong young man, he dashed out the door and made for his canoe in the reeds.

The girls instantly saw what had happened and began to run after him. They called on their father for help, and shouted to Nanabozo that terrible punishment would come to him for his treachery and his theft. Nanabozo was really frightened because the girls were gaining on him. They had been chosen to guard the fire partly because they were such swift runners and there were few who could outstrip them.

In his anxiety, Nanabozo thought of a trick to hold them back until he reached his canoe. As the wind was in his face as he ran, he set fire to the dry grass along the path. It quickly caught, and soon was blazing so fiercely that the two girls could not run through it.

Nanabozo reached his canoe, set the burning stick in the bow and paddled as quickly as he could toward Nokomis's wigwam in the west. Nokomis was on the

shore to welcome him, happy to see him safe. Nanabozo gave her the gift of fire, which the Indians have had ever since.

Mighty magician that he was, Nanabozo always said that getting the fire from the Mutche Manidos was the most dangerous task he had ever undertaken.

The Iroquois

In Indian times, Southern Ontario was covered mostly with forests of hardwood trees. Maple, beech, oak, walnut and elm were abundant, although of course there were also great numbers of pine, hemlock and spruce as well. The trees grew much larger than they did in the north country, but not nearly so closely together. In fact, it is thought that much of the country was like a park, with just a few great trees here and there. The birch did not grow to the great size that it did in the northland. The trees which did grow, however, were much too big to be easily chopped down with stone axes.

The same kind of forest, or almost the same, covered the land close to the St. Lawrence river for a great distance beyond Lake Ontario.

The climate in all this more southern country was milder than in the land of the Algonkians. The summers were a little longer; the winters were a trifle shorter and not quite so cold. There was usually less snow too than in the north.

The land was not covered with rocks as was the land of the Algonkians. Instead, there was good rich soil in most places, with some stretches of sandy soil. Rivers and lakes, too, were much less numerous in the south than in the north. It is true that there were two wonderful chains of lakes in eastern Ontario, the Rideau Lakes and the Kawartha Lakes, but in the rest of the region there were very few. Most of the rivers were larger and ran for long distances, with few rapids or falls.

Besides all this, the Indians of southern Ontario were almost cut off from the peoples around them. If you will look at a map of the region, you will see that the Great Lakes make southern Ontario almost an island. On the west is Lake Huron, on the south Lake Erie and on the east Lake Ontario. All of these are immense bodies of water much too large to paddle across in a canoe. Only at certain points could the Indians of this region cross over to the other sides of the lakes. They could cross the St. Clair River and Detroit River into what is now Michigan. They could cross on the chain of islands from Essex County to Ohio. Or they could cross the Niagara River into New York State. At the eastern end of Lake Ontario, it was also easy to go South and East.

In a way, being cut off in this manner was an advantage. It protected the inhabitants from raids by

enemies. But in another way, it was a disadvantage. It made the exchange of ideas more difficult, and so tended to make progress harder.

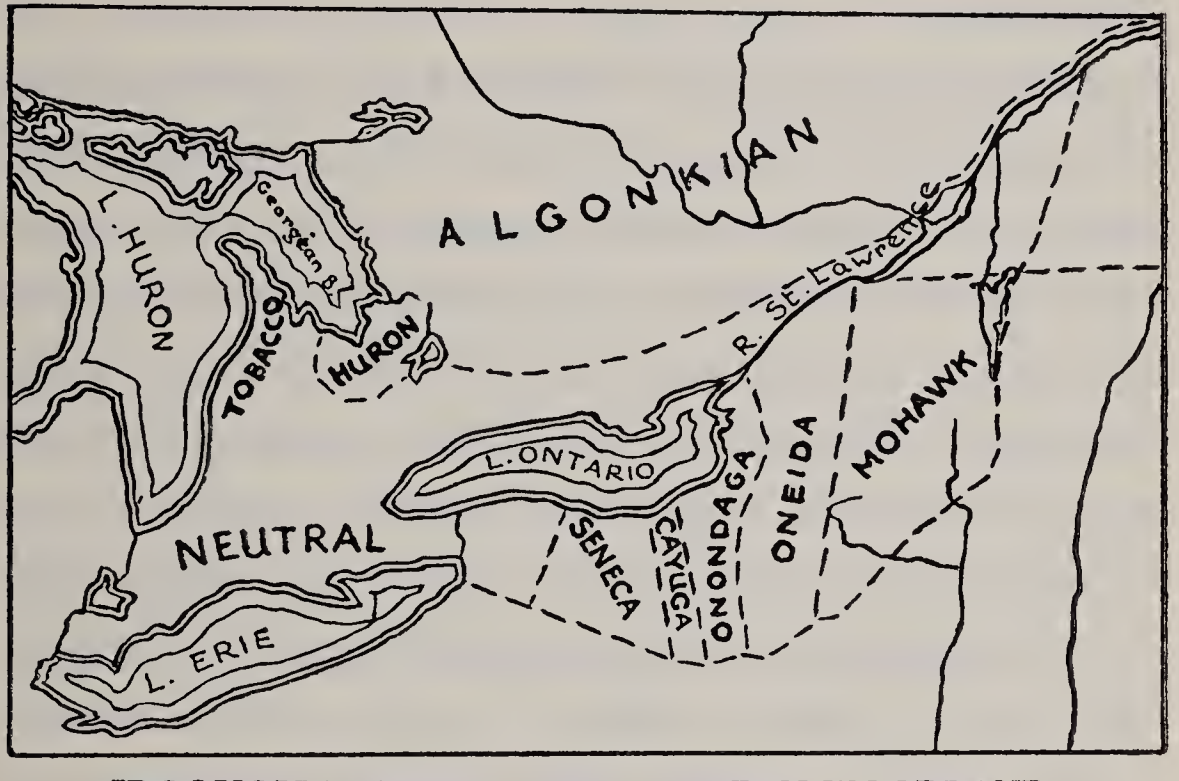
The Indian inhabitants of southern Ontario are called "Iroquois." That is not their own name for themselves, but was given them by some of their neighbours. Then the French explorers took it over and it has been used ever since by the white men in speaking of them. These Iroquois called themselves the Hodenosaunee or "the Men."

Iroquois were also living as far down the St. Lawrence as Stadacona when Cartier first arrived there in 1535. But before he returned on his next trip they had given up the place and were no longer to be seen there. When Champlain arrived in Canada in 1609, there were no Iroquois dwelling along the St. Lawrence at all. By that time it was entirely Algonkian country.

But Champlain, who was the first to explore it fully, found Iroquois Indians inhabiting the southern shore of Lake Huron, and also across Lake Ontario (in modern New York State). He soon realized that these people, like the Algonkians, were divided into numerous tribes.

In Ontario there were the Hurons, who lived in the northern part of Simcoe County, on the shores of Georgian Bay. A little to the west of them dwelt the Tobacco Nation. Far to the west, on the northern shores

of Lake Erie dwelt another large tribe, whom he called the Neutrals. Then, in what is now New York State, there were five tribes. Champlain probably never realized this but his successors did. Frontenac knew them well. They occupied the beautiful country from the Niagara river east to the Hudson river. A tribe called the Mohawks inhabited the Hudson river country.



IROQUOIS TRIBES OF THE EASTERN WOODLAND

Westward from them lived the Oneida, the Onondaga, the Cayuga and the Seneca. The Seneca, of course, were the westernmost and lived nearest the Niagara River. These five tribes were so well known, and so important, that they are often called "the Five Nations."

There were a few other Iroquois tribes, such as the Eries, who lived south of Lake Erie, but they do not

concern us here except one. These were the Tuscaroras. At one time the Tuscaroras lived a long way to the southeast. But after a severe defeat, they asked to be allowed to come and live with the Five Nations. The Five Nations agreed to this. From that time, this group was usually called the "Six Nations."

Language

All these people spoke dialects of one language, called "Iroquois." A Huron, for instance, probably could not speak the dialect of the Seneca, but he could understand it, and the Seneca could understand his. Indians were great travellers, and when there were so many languages, a traveller usually had to speak at least one other besides his own. As a matter of fact, it was common in most tribes for the men to be able to speak in two languages, and many spoke in three or more. This was not just an ability to speak another dialect; it often meant a totally different language from one's own.

Many women also could speak two languages. Men often took wives in a different tribe and of course the new wife would have to learn the language of her husband. It also happened that many men were captured in war and brought home to live amongst people who spoke an alien language. They would have to

learn the language of their captors. This happened very often amongst the Iroquois.

It is easy to see from these facts how these Indians came to be such good linguists.

Appearance

The Iroquois were much like the other Indians of the Eastern Woodlands in appearance. They were of medium height, and had the straight black hair and dark eyes which all Indians possessed. Their skin was probably a trifle lighter in colour than that of the people of the Northwest Coast and of the Plains, but still coppery. Their faces were often more round than long. But, just as among any other people, there was a great variety amongst individuals. Some were taller than others, some were very stout, and others very thin; some were handsome and some were not.

Character

The Iroquois are usually described in books as fierce and cruel. They were also said to be silent and without humour. Perhaps nothing could be further from the truth. When they were with people whom they did not know very well, they were quiet and did not betray their feelings. But amongst themselves, and with people whom they knew were their friends, they were talkative

and happy. Few people liked good jokes better, or enjoyed chatting and laughter more.

In olden times, like most other Indians, they were trained from their earliest years not to show their feelings before strangers. With long practice, they learned not to show signs of pain or suffering, and they put a high value on bravery.

They were observant and watchful. They could find their way through the forest by watching for small things which might guide them. They trained their eyes to see things we would miss, and their ears to hear sounds we might not notice. Even in their dealings with the white man, they quickly learned to act just as he acted. When eating in the house of a white man, they watched first to see how he ate, and then did likewise.

In everything he did, the Iroquois was alert, quick to learn and observant. In his home, he was fond of fun and gaiety, but amongst strangers he put on an air of great dignity. Above all he must not show fear or anger, and must always be master of his feelings.

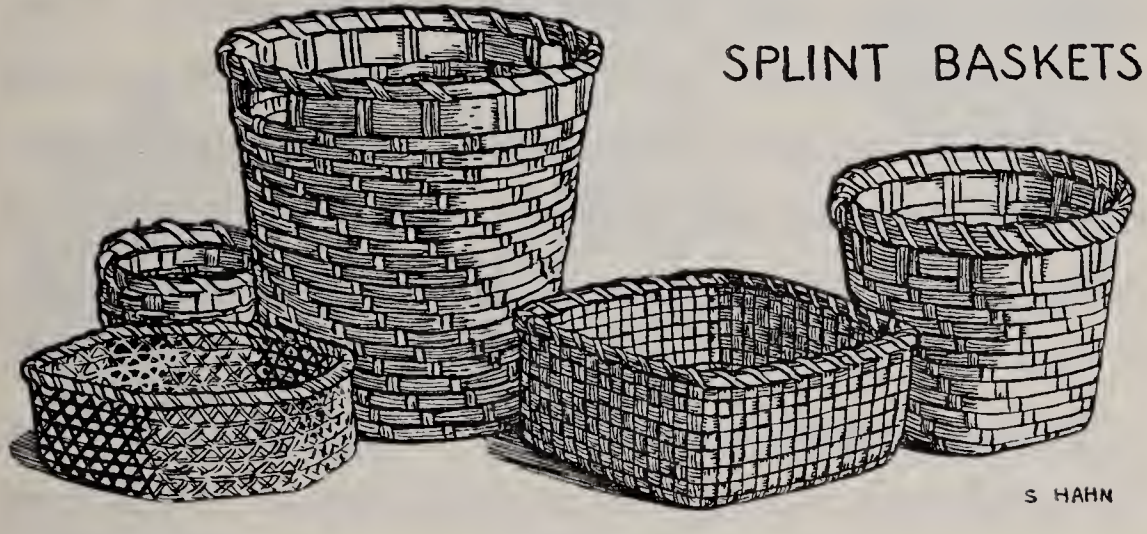
Population

The Iroquois were more numerous than their northern neighbours. Of course, it is hard to say how many there were before the white man came, for they did not keep any record. But the early missionaries esti-

mated that the Hurons had about thirty-six thousand when they first went to their country. The Neutrals perhaps had about half that number, while the Five Nations never had more than about ten thousand. The Tobacco Nation was quite small.

Livelihood

In the way the Iroquois made their living, they were unlike any other tribe in Canada. They depended to a very large extent on grain which they grew. The



grain was Indian corn or maize. Indian corn was the mainstay of their lives. In addition to it they also grew beans, squash and sunflowers, which they used for food. This gave them all the vegetables they wanted, but it did not supply them with meat. Hunters shot deer, beaver, rabbits and other game, and this helped to add variety to their meals.

The corn was grown in clearings near the villages.

The men made the clearings a year before the planting was to be done. As we have said before, the trees were much too large to be chopped down with stone axes. So the men, instead, cut the bark all round the base of each tree, which caused it to die. Then, when the trees in the plot were all dead and dry, the men set fire to them and burned them off. Only the stumps were left.

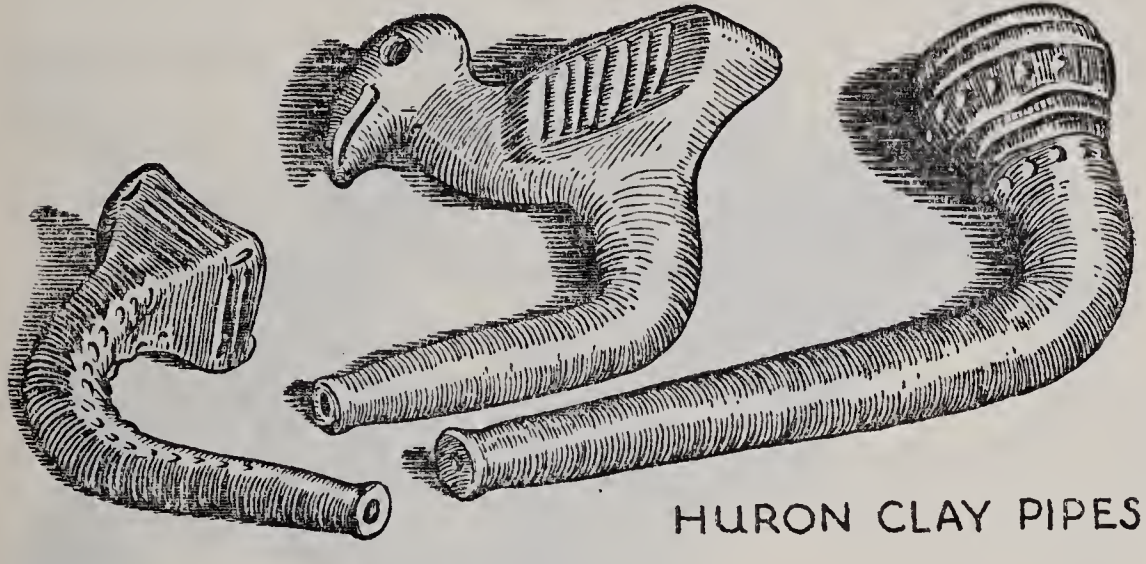
In the spring, the women went to the clearing and heaped up the soil into little hills. Into each hill they dropped a few seeds of corn, beans and squash. They called these plants "the Three Sisters" because they said they got on very well together, just as sisters should. The corn grew up tall, the beans twined round the corn stalks, and the squash vines spread out over the ground. In that way, all three plants lived in harmony together.

Sunflowers and tobacco were grown in separate plots. The sunflowers were grown for their seeds. When these were ripe they were boiled and the oil which came to the top was skimmed off. The Indians valued it highly, for it was the only oil they had. It made their stews richer, and food generally more enjoyable.

The tobacco was a wild variety, but not one which is native to the place where the Iroquois grew it. They used it for smoking, just as we do. But since it was always scarce they usually mixed it with red willow

bark. They smoked pipes of clay or stone, but did not use cigarettes or cigars.

The task of looking after the gardens was the job of the women. No man would consider it dignified to do such work. But the men did do the hunting. At least, they went out on the trails, shot the game and carried it home. From that point on the preparing of it for food was women's work. The hunter's wife had to skin the animal, cut it up, and cook it.



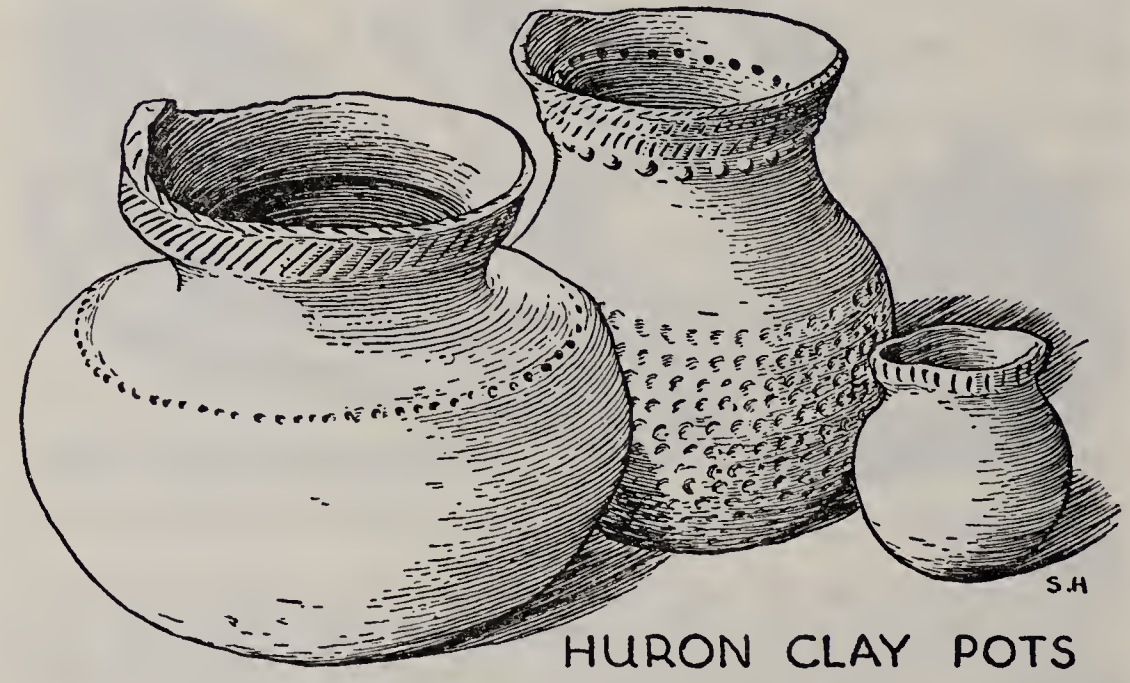
HURON CLAY PIPES

Cooking

In several ways the cooking of the Iroquois was different from that of other Indians in Canada. We have seen how many of them, in fact most, had to use baskets for cooking, and how they had to drop stones into these to boil the contents.

The Iroquois had a great advantage over all these peoples. They made pots out of clay and baked them in a fire until they were hard and strong. They could

then put such pots right over a fire and boil their food in them. The fire could neither burn nor melt the clay pot. The food inside could be boiled till it was well cooked, and there was no need to drop stones into it to heat the water. If a pot got broken another could easily be made. All that was needed was some suitable clay, a little time to fashion it, and a fire to bake it in. The pots usually were decorated with designs which were scratched into the clay while it was still wet.



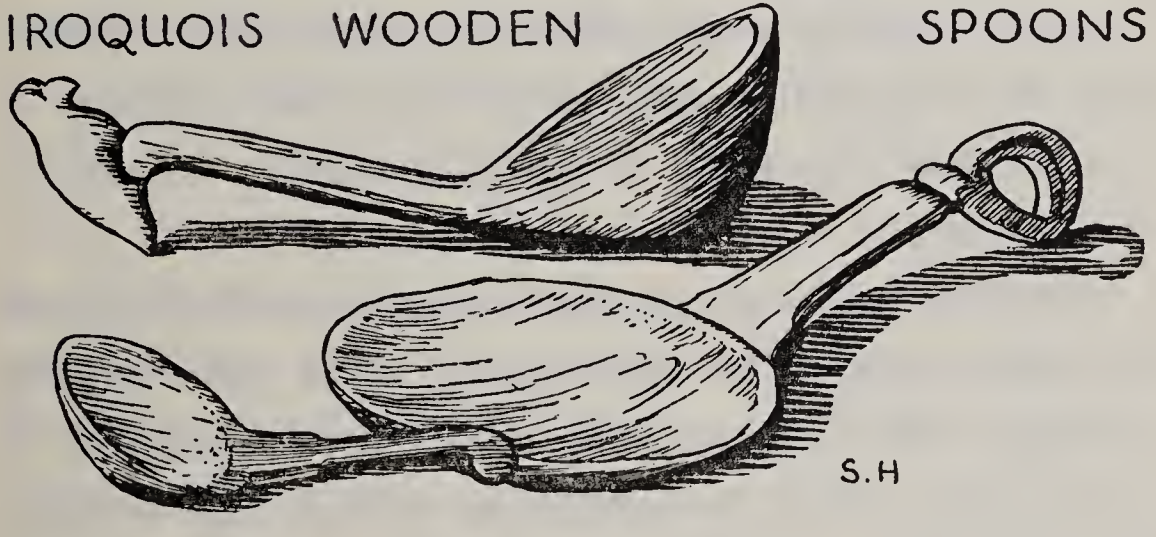
HURON CLAY POTS

From corn alone the Indians prepared about eighty different dishes. Corn could be eaten on the cob after roasting it in the fire. Or it could be boiled on the cob, as we do. When the corn was ripe, it could be taken off the cob, ground between two stones, and made into flour. From the flour the Indians made

several dishes, corn cake, corn pudding, and hominy. A dish called "succotash" was made by boiling cracked corn.

By mixing the corn with beans or squash, several different dishes could be prepared. In addition to these the Iroquois often mixed corn, beans or squash with their meats. They also gathered large quantities of wild fruit such as raspberries, blueberries, and chokecherries which they ate alone or mixed with other foods.

IROQUOIS WOODEN SPOONS



Certainly no Indian tribe in Canada had a greater variety of food. And none had more of it. Starvation was almost unknown. The Indians always had large supplies of corn on hand, even carrying some over from year to year.

To preserve the corn for drying, the Indians took it off the cob, and dried it on the fire till it was very hard. Then they buried the dried corn in large baskets

which they put into pits dug into the ground. In this way, it could be kept for a long time.

When warriors set out on the warpath they took a few pounds of this dried corn along in a little bag slung over their shoulders. A small handful of this boiled in water was enough to feed a man for a day.

Villages

Because they grew so much of their food the Iroquois lived in villages or towns. It was not necessary for them to move about in search of food, as the Plains Indians and the Algonkians had to do. On the contrary, it was necessary for them to stay in one place and attend to their crops.

When the white people first visited them the Iroquois had their villages on high ground away from streams or lakes. This was to make them harder to attack in case of war. The corn-field was within easy walking distance.

A small village might shelter two or three hundred people. A large one might have as many as two or three thousand. Amongst the Hurons, at any rate, such large villages were not uncommon.

The houses in which the people lived were built strongly, so as to stand for many years. They were large too. In shape they were long rectangles like long boxes. They were built with a framework of stout posts

stuck in the ground. Usually good-sized saplings were chosen for this. The bottoms were made fast in the soil and the tops bent over to form an arched roof. A hole was left lengthwise of the top of the roof to let out the smoke. At each end of the house was a door. The Iroquois used to say that one door should face the east, the other the west. In actual practice, the doors could face any direction although perhaps most did face east and west. The house frame was covered with large sheets of elm bark laid on like shingles, and fastened with cord made of basswood fibre.

As one walked from one end of the house to the other, one passed through a series of rooms. Each room was a small apartment. It was the same width as the house, and might be twelve or fourteen feet wide. There were bunks along the outside walls. On these the dwellers could sleep at night or sit in the daytime. There was also space overhead where corn, baskets, clothes and other belongings could be stored. The fire was built in the centre of the room, just below the smoke hole.

The house always belonged to an elderly woman. She occupied the first room beyond the door. The women in the rest of the house were usually her daughters. As each one of them married, the elderly mother gave her a room in the house. The husband would come to live with her there and they would

INSIDE AN IROQUOIS LONGHOUSE

raise their family. It happened once in a while that a niece might also come to live in the house. But always the women were related through the oldest "matron" or mother in the house. Consequently all the people in the house were related, and closely related too.

Since the old woman was the head of the house, her word was law in it. She owned the building, and she saw to it that everyone in it did as she wished, even the men.

The size of the house depended upon how many families lived in it. Some houses might contain only one or two families. Others might shelter eight or ten.

Just as the size of the houses varied, the size of the villages varied. Some were quite large, others small. If there were not much good land for raising corn nearby, the population of a village would not be large. But if the land round about were fertile and easy to cultivate, many people would want to live in the village nearest to it.

Why villages were moved

The Iroquois did not really cultivate their land. They did burn away the trees, and plant corn where they had been. And they did pull out the weeds and grass, so the corn could grow. But they did not dig the ground, nor plant it, for they had no horses or oxen to help them plough or cultivate.

If land is to go on growing good crops, it must be fertilized. We are not sure the Iroquois knew that this should be done. Even if they did, they did not fertilize it enough to make it possible to grow crops year after year. They could only grow corn on the same ground for ten or twelve years. After that length of time, the soil was too poor to grow a crop. Finally the Indians would have to move to a new spot. Here they would make a new clearing and build new houses. When this garden, in time, became useless, they would have to move on to another. For this reason, the Iroquois stayed ten or twelve years in one place, and then built a new village and made a new clearing somewhere else. Even if the land had continued to grow crops, the houses would have been in a bad state of repair at the end of ten years and would have required rebuilding.

Hunting

The men took the responsibility for hunting and fishing. They used bows and arrows of wood with points of stone or bone. The stone points were usually small triangles, very neatly made, and without notches on the sides. These were set into the end of the arrow-shaft, which had been split, and bound tight with sinew. The end of the shaft was feathered to make it spin when in flight. Some of the bone arrow-points

were similar to the stone ones in shape. Others were cone-shaped, and fitted on to the end of the shaft, perhaps with glue. For shooting birds the Iroquois used just a wooden arrow-shaft, which was larger at the head end. When this hit a bird it stunned it, but did not usually kill it.

For shooting small animals like squirrels, chipmunks and even birds, the Iroquois had "blow guns". These were not used by any other Indians in Canada, and by only five tribes in North America. A blow-gun is a hollow stick into which a sharp-ended wooden shaft is put. A little fluff or milkweed silk is fastened onto the near end of the shaft, so as to close the tube. Then, by blowing on one end of the gun, one can force the little wooden shaft out at the other end at great speed. It does not travel far, but it makes no noise. With this weapon the Indians could shoot down squirrels at close range, and almost never miss.

The Hurons, and perhaps most of the Iroquois, held "drives" each year. Before doing this they built fences very much like the ones used by the Plains Indians in killing buffalo. Then some men were stationed where the fences came close together at the small end of the trap. The rest of the hunters scattered through the woods in a great circle. They began to shout and sing. The deer and other animals inside the circle became

frightened. But their escape was cut off by the men, except in one direction—the direction of the fences. They followed the fences to the end while the hunters closed in on them. When the deer ran through the opening at the end the men stationed there shot them down. Such hunting by groups of men, and driving the game into a trap, is called a "drive". Usually a great many animals were killed in a drive. Enough game might be got in this way to last a village for several weeks or months.

Game became scarce amongst the Hurons because of the large population. But there were still great numbers of fish in the streams and in Lake Huron and Lake Simcoe. They caught great quantities of fish for food. We know this because fish bones are very common in the places where their villages stood. The Hurons caught fish in various ways. They used harpoons, nets and traps, as well as hook and line. The harpoons and the nets were perhaps most often used, and hook and line the least.

Travel

For fishing and for their trading trips, the Iroquois had to have canoes. But they did not have large enough birch trees to be able to make canoes from their bark. For this reason, they had to use the bark of elm,

MAKING A DUG-OUT CANOE IN AN IROQUOIS VILLAGE

chestnut or maple trees. This kind of bark is coarse and heavy. Canoes made from it do not compare with those made from birch bark. But the Iroquois peoples used them a good deal in spite of this drawback.

They also made canoes from logs. To do this, they cut the log to the right length by burning the ends, just as the British Columbia Indians did. Then they charred the inside and chopped out the charcoal. This was a slow job but it did give them a canoe. A dug-out has many disadvantages over a birch bark canoe. For instance, it is harder to make. It is heavy to carry over portages. It will split if left on the beach too long in the sun. And if it is damaged, it cannot be repaired. Being awkward to handle, it is unsafe in running rapids. Their canoes were not nearly so good as those of the Algonkians. They had to be satisfied with them.

It was less important for the Iroquois to use canoes than for the Algonkians. The Iroquois could walk through the forests if they wanted to travel. They did not have to travel by water. There were fine trails, which ran for hundreds of miles. These had been used by the Indians for centuries. Everyone knew them, just as we know highways.

In the summer, the Indians simply walked these trails in their moccasined feet. In the winter, if the snow was deep, they used snowshoes.

Clothing

The summers in the Iroquois country are very warm and the winters often cold and stormy. So like their northern neighbours, they had warm clothing. It is true that in the summer they might wear very little. A man's outfit for summer might be simply moccasins and a breech-cloth made of deerskin.

For winter wear, and for all dress-up affairs, men were completely covered. Leggings were made of fine deerskin. And a sort of long shirt of the same material was worn on the upper body. A fine sash was tied over one shoulder, across the chest and around the waist. A cap was made with two feathers. It was a little like a "skull-cap". The feathers were fixed on so as to stick out and upward at the back, and they would move if the breeze blew on them.

IROQUOIS MAN IN COSTUME OF EARLY COLONIAL PERIOD

The dress of the women was very much the same. Their moccasins were a little higher, and the shirt longer. In fact, the shirt was so long it became almost a dress. They did not wear a sash or a cap.

Children wore almost the same clothes as their parents. Very young children often went without clothing in the summer.

Their mothers carried the babies on cradle boards until they were about two years old. The cradle boards were gaily carved and painted. Sometimes there was a sort of fringe or "canopy" over the top to keep the sunlight off the baby's face. When the mother was busy, she set the baby and the cradle-board up against the house,

or a tree-trunk. Sometimes she fastened it to a branch of a tree, so the baby could swing gently in the breeze.

Huron men often wore their hair cut so that only a strip was left on top. Other Iroquois people wore it in several different styles.

Art Work

Iroquois women were busy people. They had their gardens to tend; they had to cook, to sew, and to look after their families. In fact, they had to do all the hard work around the village, except build the houses and clear the land.

Yet they found time to make many beautiful things. They cut out their dresses and sewed them up with sinew thread. Then they decorated them with quillwork. After the white man came, they used beads in place of quills. The quillwork was sometimes like the Algonkians'. Sometimes there was much more to it. Moccasins and leggings were decorated with quill or beadwork. A picture of some is on pages 141 and 142. The decoration is only along the edge of the leggings.

The sash which men sometimes wore was narrow. It was not made on a loom, but done entirely with the fingers. This is called "finger-weaving", and is very slow work.

Games

The Iroquois had many games. Some of these are not known to white people; but at least one is a popular sport with us.

The ones which are not well known to the white people are "snow snake" and the "peach stone game". The snow snake game was of course played in winter, where there was plenty of snow. The Iroquois who played it each brought a "snow snake" or several "snow

IROQUOIS GAME WITH BOWL AND PLUM STONES

snakes". These were sticks of hickory, five to seven feet long and about a quarter of an inch thick. At the head end they were nearly an inch across, but a little less at the tail end. The head was turned up a little and weighted with lead. To play the game, the Iroquois chose a place with deep, soft snow. They drew a small log through the snow to make a straight path for the snow snakes. Then, taking the snow snake

between the thumb and finger they threw it head first along the path. The snake which went the farthest won. The Iroquois usually played tribe against tribe. It required a great deal of skill and strength and the Iroquois found it very exciting indeed.

The "plum stone" game was played indoors, usually in the winter. For it there was a wooden bowl, made from a knot of a maple or birch tree. The bowl was about a foot across and three or four inches deep, and well polished. The game stones were plum or peach stones which had been cut down to about half their size. They were burnt on one side to blacken them. The Iroquois tossed the stones up and caught them in the bowl as they came down. The number of stones with the black side up was the score for that play. The game went on for a very long time, by repeating the throw and counting score. In the old times, the Iroquois wagered on the outcome of the game, and many gambled away all their possessions playing it.

The game which is so well known to the white people is lacrosse. But the Iroquois played lacrosse a very long time before the white man came to this country. Of course, they played it a little differently, but the main rules were the same. The field was much longer; it could be as much as a mile in length. At each end were goal posts, just as in our game. The Indians made a ball by stuffing a cover of deerskin with fur,

or sometimes even with stones. The lacrosse stick was very much like ours, being made of hickory and having a net. Only the net in the Indian's lacrosse stick was usually smaller than in the modern one.

The Iroquois played tribe against tribe. As many young men as wanted to join in could play; only the numbers on each side had to be the same. The players wore only breech cloths. The game was a rough-and-tumble one, and many players were hurt. The aim was to throw the ball through the goal-posts. But the betting was high on both sides and the spectators were deeply interested in the outcome.

The Family

As we have seen already, a family did not have a house to itself. Instead, several families shared one big house or lodge. There each family had one room to itself, and only one room.

In the family, the mother's word was more important than the father's. She could even send the father away if she wished. And, of course, the children had to do exactly as she said.

The mother usually taught the little girls the chores of the house, and how to tend the garden. The father took the boys on hunting and fishing trips with him. He also taught him many necessary things, such as how to make traps, fish nets, and bows and arrows.

Marriage

Amongst the Hurons, the young men usually selected the girls they wanted for a wife. They often arranged for some old and trusted friend to make the proposal to the girl's parents. If they were willing, they proposed a wedding feast. Guests were invited and there was dancing and feasting.

After the feast was over, the young couple moved into a new room in the lodge of the girl's mother. Amongst the Five Nations, it was the rule for the girl's mother to choose a husband for her. She spoke to the youth's mother about it, and if she were agreeable, they exchanged presents. From that time on, the youth and young woman were considered to be married. They took their place together in the house of the girl's mother, just as among the Hurons.

Clans

Every man had to belong to a clan. A child became a member of his mother's clan as soon as he was born. He remained a member of it all his life, for there was no way he could change unless he were captured by an enemy and taken away.

The numbers of clans in a tribe differed. Some tribes had only three clans. Others had as many as nine. Perhaps it happened that some clan dwindled to just a few people. Then they might join with another clan.

Or if a clan grew to be much too large, it might split into two smaller ones. This would account for the uneven numbers of clans in the tribes.

We have pointed out that each long house was owned by an old woman who shared it with her daughters. This old woman was really the head of the house, and the head of all her daughters' families. All the people who lived in her long house made up one "family group." Since she belonged to a certain clan, all her daughters belonged to the same one. And so did all their children.

A clan was made up of a number of "family groups". The matrons of all these family groups were the most important people in the clan.

When a man married, he did not change his clan. But he did go to live with his wife's mother, who always belonged to a different clan from his own. And his children always belonged to his wife's clan, and never to his own.

All the clan members considered themselves to be related. They believed that they were all descended from one ancestor, and so were all his children. If the ancestor was a turtle, then they were turtles too. In this way the clan became known as the Turtle clan. Other clan names were Snipe, Bear, Wolf, Beaver, Deer, and Heron.

The tribe

The names of some of the tribes have already been given, such as the Hurons, the Neutrals and the Five Nations. The Five Nations was really a group or confederacy of five separate tribes. These were the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga and Seneca.

Since the Hurons were destroyed soon after the white man came, we do not know much about their government. We know much more about the Five Nations, so we shall describe their government.

Each tribe had a council of chiefs. The Iroquois chiefs have come to be known, not as "chiefs" but as "sachems". The council of chiefs or sachems met whenever there was any need for it. If war was to be declared, the council might meet to talk it over. Or if the village was to be moved, the council would have to discuss it. The tribal council managed all the business which had to do with the tribe only. It did not discuss anything which affected the League.

The council met in a long house which was just like other long houses in the village, only much bigger and had only one room. The men sat along the sides, and the women stood at one end. But only the men spoke in council. Women might speak, but they did so very seldom.

There was an official called a "speaker". It was his duty to open the meetings with a prayer of thanksgiv-

ing. Then he explained to the council, and to the visitors, what was to be talked over at the meeting. After he had spoken, anyone who wished might make a speech on the same subject, and explain his side of the matter. When the discussion was ended, the councillors voted. Their decision was usually accepted by everyone. But there was never any rush. Everything was done according to rule, and with great dignity.

If a councillor or sachem died the council met immediately. A long ceremony began which lasted several days. First, strings of black wampum were sent out to notify the people of the news. When they met, the council went into mourning. A set number of speeches was made, each with a special purpose. There was one speech which was meant to "open the ears"; another "to wipe away the tears", and so on.

The new chief was not elected. He was chosen from the same "family group" as the one whom he was replacing. The matrons of the family group first discussed the matter with other important women in it. When they had decided upon a man, the matrons called him in and told him. There were only a few men who could be chosen, because anyone who was selected must be old enough to be responsible, and a good, wise man.

The matron then went with this man to the council.

She explained to the council whom she had chosen and why. Then she called the man to her, and put a headdress of deer horns on his head. This little ceremony was called "raising up" a chief or sachem. The man was then a councillor. He took a new name, or rather the same name as the man who had just died. These names were passed on in this way, and became almost like titles.

If a sachem acted wisely and well in the council, he was much respected. But if he did not, the matron who had put him there might remove him. All she had to do was to go to the man and say that she was "taking away the horns". This meant that she was taking off the deer horns which were the sign of his position. Then she put them on another man, who then became the new councillor.

Even though women did not often speak in the council, and even though they had much hard work to do, they had a great influence. It really depended upon them who should sit in council, and every councillor had to watch and see that he did not displease them.

Not every matron had the right to name a sachem to the council. There would only be as many who had this right as there were councillors.

The number of councillors was not the same for all the tribes. But whatever the number, it always re-

mained the same. And when a man was "raised up" to be a sachem, he took the name which every man who had held that office had had.

The League of the Five Nations

The legends of the Iroquois say a great deal about a man whose name was Hiawatha. Hiawatha was a quiet, good man. He was greatly worried to see the various Iroquois tribes fighting among themselves. He knew that if only they could live at peace, they would be much better off. By fighting they killed each other and wasted their strength. If they lived at peace, they would be strong and happy.

Hiawatha tried to persuade the Mohawks, Onondagas, Oneidas, Cayugas and Senecas to listen to him. But they would not. He went unhappily away, and lived by himself for several years. While he was living there, he thought of a plan.

He returned to his people and began his preaching once more. Finally, he persuaded most of the chieftains that he was right. Only one man, Atotarho held out against him. Atotarho was the principal sachem of the Mohawks. If it were not for him, Hiawatha could have got these five nations to unite to form one league.

But Hiawatha had his plan. He promised to make Atotarho the principal chief in the new league. Atotarho finally agreed. Soon after, Hiawatha saw these five

tribes cease fighting among themselves. They had come together as the League of the Five Nations.

Not all the Iroquois tribes joined the League. They had various reasons for holding back. Perhaps they feared their old enemies. Perhaps some were jealous. At any rate, the Hurons refused, saying they lived too far away. The Neutrals, too, kept out of the League, and so did the Eries. This may have been one reason why there was so much warfare between all of these tribes and the League. The Indian believed if you are not with him, you must be against him. So, if the Hurons would not join the League, they must be enemies of the League.

The Iroquois Indians thought of the new League as a sort of huge longhouse. It extended from the Hudson river in the east to the Niagara river in the west. The Mohawks, living on the shores of the Hudson, therefore lived in the room at the east of the great longhouse, and guarded the eastern door. The Senecas lived in the western room, and guarded that door. Right in the centre were the Onondagas. So they became the guardians of the fire which warmed the house. They were called the Fire Keepers. The Oneidas were given a position corresponding to their location too.

There was a council for the entire league. It dealt only with war and treaties and with those matters

which concerned all the peoples in the League. If war was to be declared, it was the right of the League council to declare it. It was not the right of a tribal council to do so. Today, we should say that the League council looked after "foreign affairs", and left "home affairs" to the tribal council.

Each tribe sent a certain number of councillors or sachems to the League council. But the number was different for each tribe. The total number was forty-nine or fifty.

The sachem of the League council was chosen in just the same way as those for the tribal council, which was described before. He was like a tribal councillor in every way except that he held a more important office.

Warriors who had made great names for themselves were sometimes given places at the council meetings. The council might ask their opinion on some matters, but did not let them vote. They were called "Pine Tree Chiefs" to distinguish them from the sachems.

When there was business to be done, the sachems met in council in the capital town of the Onondagas. The Onondagas were the Fire-Keepers of the League and it was their duty to make the council house ready and to "light the fire". No business could be done until the fire was lit. Then the speaker made the opening prayer and speech and the meeting got under way.

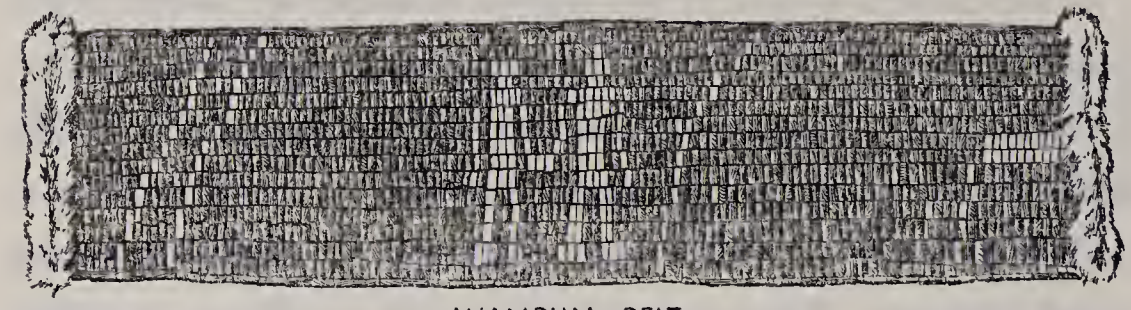
The records of the council were kept in a very unusual manner. The Iroquois had no system of writing. Yet they might need to know, for instance, what treaty had been made with some neighbouring Algonkian tribe fifty years before. No councillor who had seen the treaty made would likely still be alive, or would remember it if he were. So some system had to be worked out to take the place of men's memories. The Iroquois used shell beads.

These shell beads were called wampum. Each bead was about one-quarter of an inch long, and looked like a tiny tube. They were made from a large sea shell, and might be either white or purple.

With beads of these two colours, the Indians could work designs. They strung the beads together, or wove them, into long bands. These bands of shell beads are often called wampum "belts". White beads stood for peace, and peaceful things, purple beads for war and death. By weaving a belt mostly of white beads, the Iroquois could record some peaceful decision, such as a treaty. On it, they could work a design in purple to show what was meant. Thus, a zigzag line of purple meant the freedom to wander over someone's land. If it were a treaty belt with this design, the belt meant that some entire tribe had been given the right to cross or hunt on the land of one of the nations of the League. But the details had to be memorized by the

"Keeper of the Wampum" at the time the belt was made. And of course the belt had to be made as soon as the treaty was agreed upon in the council.

The "Keeper of the Wampum" was the man who really did keep the wampum. It was his job to keep it safe always. Whenever the council asked to see it, he had to show it to them. If the council asked to have the wampum "read", it was his job to show it to the council, and explain the meaning of the designs. The



WAMPUM BELT

Keeper of the Wampum had to be a member of the Cayuga tribe.

Wampum was often used in council meetings in other ways too. Men who spoke to the council used to place strings of wampum on a pole for all to see. This was to show that what they said was true and that they were willing to stand by it. Wampum was used in many such speeches. Men who came from other tribes to speak to the council, or ambassadors, were expected to make their pledges by putting up strings of wampum.

When the Five Nations declared war on another

tribe, they sent three ambassadors to give strings of purple wampum to their council first. And when a sachem of the Five Nations died, pieces of purple wampum were sent to all the other sachems to tell them the sad news; the purple wampum also called them to a meeting to mourn him and to "raise up" his successor.

We might go on describing the uses of wampum, but perhaps we have said enough to show how very important it was in council meetings. For the Iroquois, it more or less took the place of books.

Beliefs of the Iroquois

The Iroquois thought there were many, many spirits. These spirits lived in trees, stones, the rivers; in fact, in almost everything. Probably they did not think very much about a great God. He did not show himself to them, so they thought, but the lesser ones did. Therefore they paid more attention to the spirits which were everywhere round about.

One very interesting group of spirits was the "False Faces". The False Faces lived in the woods and seldom let themselves be seen. They had no bodies, no arms and no legs. But they had big, grinning faces, with long hair streaming out behind. Their leader had a particularly ugly face which he got in the following way.

IROQUOIS FALSE FACES OF WOOD AND CORN HUSK

Being a boastful spirit, he had told the Great Spirit that he was stronger than he. The Great Spirit asked him to prove it if this was so. The False Face said he would, and began at once to do so. He spoke to the

mountain and told it to come to him. The mountain came. Then the Great Spirit said the False Face was very strong. But he said: "If you are really stronger than I, you will stop the mountain before it reaches you." This the False Face tried to do, but could not. Instead, the mountain rushed up upon him, hit him in the face, and bent his nose. The False Face had to admit he was weaker than the Great Spirit. Also, his nose stayed crooked for ever. The Great Spirit told the False Face he must stay in the mountain in future. For this reason, this False Face was seldom seen abroad in the forests.

The other False Faces often wandered about in the forests. Men sometimes happened to see them. If a man saw a False Face, he immediately began to carve its likeness on a basswood tree. But before he finished it, he would go to his village and tell the people what he had seen. There was a group or "Society" in each village whose members had all seen False Faces. These were the people to whom he would tell his experience. They would decide whether he were telling the truth, and if so, they would let him join their "Society of the False Faces".

He then would return to the tree on which he began to carve the likeness. He would cut it off the tree and take it home. There he would complete the carving, and make it into a mask which he could wear on his

face. He would make it look just like the False Face he saw in the woods. He would paint the face red, put on long black hair, and fix on pieces of metal for eyes.

The man believed that his mask was then actually a living spirit, and that it could help him greatly. To keep it in good humour, he had to treat it respectfully, and every now and then rubbed it with sunflower oil. When it was not in use, he turned its face to the wall and hung a little pouchful of tobacco on the inside.

The False Faces, as we said, were always helpful to people. That is, if they were properly treated. In the spring, when there was often a good deal of sickness, the members of the False Face Society would call on their helpers to cure the illnesses. They all would meet in the council house, put on their false faces, and get walking-sticks. Then they would set out to visit the sick. False Faces were not supposed to be able to talk, so when they reached the door, they would make queer sounds and would rap with their sticks. The owner would let them in, and they would sit down, or walk around the fire, singing. Their host would set out some corn mush for them to eat. The False Faces would take some ashes out of the fire, and throw them on the sick person. This was supposed to cure them of their illness.

Then, having got something to eat, and helped to

cure the sick, the members of the Society would leave that house and go to the next. Everybody enjoyed himself and there was a good deal of fun and laughter.

The Corn Husk Mask Society

There was another set of spirits, called the Corn Husk Faces. They were very, very shy folk, who seldom spoke at all. They came in the spring only. They were really helpers to the Great Spirit; when they passed through the land of the Iroquois, they were on their way to help him plant his corn, far to the west. They just stopped long enough to warn the Iroquois that spring was coming and to get ready for planting time.

The Indians usually left a little corn mush for them to eat, when they expected them.

There was a group called the "Society of the Corn Husk Faces". Its members were all women, however, since these spirits were corn planters and the women were too. The women wove wonderful masks out of corn husks to look like the spirits themselves. The "Society of the Corn Husk Faces" was smaller and less important than the "False Face Society".

Shamans

There were shamans among the Iroquois just as there were among most other Indian tribes. But the Iroquois shamans got most of their power from their masks. If

a mask were a helpful servant of a shaman, he could cure many diseases and so become famous. In other ways, he worked his cures just like other Indian shamans—he blew upon the sore spot, sang songs and pretended to suck out the object which was causing the pain or the illness.

Dreams

Like the other Indians of Canada, the Iroquois believed that dreams were important. A young man often went off by himself and fasted till he had a vision or a dream. In the dream he saw what he was to do.

Dreams could be used for other purposes too. Sometimes the Indians tried the effect of dreams upon white people. For example, there is this story about an Iroquois who had a dream. He told his white friend that in a dream the friend had given him his fine jacket. Now an Indian always expects his dreams to come true, so this was a hint to the white man. The white man gave the Iroquois his jacket. A few days later the white man told the same Iroquois that he had had a dream. In it, he had dreamed that the Indian gave him a large amount of land. The Iroquois promised to give the white man the land, but said "I won't dream with you any more!"

Usually, though, dreams were a very serious matter.

Death and Burial

When death came, there was a time of mourning, for children were much loved by their parents, and parents were loved by their children.

The Five Nations usually dug a grave in the ground, and put the dead person into it without any belongings. The Hurons had a very different custom. The dead body was first put on a board set up in a tree. Or it might be placed on a scaffold on rocks, high enough above the ground to be safe from animals. A few bodies were even buried.

But about every ten years, all the dead bodies were collected and brought to one place by their relatives. A great pit was dug in a sandy spot and lined with beaver skins. The bones were brought to the pit wrapped in bundles, also in beaver skin, all the bones from one body being in one bundle. A scaffold was built around the pit. On it the bundles of bones were hung for a couple of days. In the meantime, the mourners held a feast nearby. They spread out the gifts which they had brought for the dead so that all could see them.

After the gifts had all been seen, the bundles were thrown into the pit. There was no special way in which they were placed. They were simply thrown in. Gifts of various kinds were thrown in too, such as beads, bits of beaver skins, stone pipes and other things which

they believed the spirits could use. The pit was then covered with sand and left.

The Next World

The Hurons never returned to the burial pit because they had no interest in it from then on. They believed that once the feast had been held, and the bones buried, the souls would go straight to the next world.

The "next world" was just a few miles to the west. But to get there, the souls had to cross a river on a log, pass a cross dog and several other dangerous things. Once they got to the next world, they found it very much like the one they had left, only perhaps a little more pleasant. Indeed, the souls did not stay in it always, but sometimes wandered back to their old homes. If they did come back, they would expect to find a little food prepared for them. For this reason, the Hurons usually left a bowl of food ready for the spirits in case they should come back. They would be very angry if they could not find it.

The Maize Maiden

A Legend of the Iroquois

Long before the time of Hiawatha, the village of Dyut-ti-hakton stood on the banks of the Genesee River. In a family of the Bear Clan, there were two brothers, named Black Lynx and Corn Tassel. Black Lynx was the hunter, while Corn Tassel, the younger brother, stayed at home and helped his mother in the fields.

Corn Tassel was sorrowful to see how cruel Black Lynx was to the animals he caught. But he could do nothing about it because Black Lynx was much older and stronger than he. When Corn Tassel tried to explain how he felt, Black Lynx tortured him too. Then he said, "Go back to the fields and straighten up the corn stalks which I have knocked down."

When Corn Tassel went to the fields he did as Black Lynx had told him to do. But there was one corn plant which was more beautiful than all the others, its leaves greener and its ears larger. Corn Tassel could not straighten it for it was broken, and red blood flowed out where the leaves were torn. He thought this must be the "queen" of the field. But in spite of the special care he gave it, the plant died.

At midsummer, the women met in the village square and began to cry. Corn Tassel listened, and learned that famine had come to the land. The chiefs of the villages met and debated why the corn would not grow. But they could not decide.

Corn Tassel went off by himself to think, and to pray to the Great One. He tried to encourage the people, but when he did, Black Lynx laughed at him. Black Lynx threw him into the fire, blaming him for causing the famine. Corn Tassel continued to fast and dreamed and prayed. Each day he grew thinner and paler.

One night he heard the sound of footsteps. They seemed to come from the clouds above. Then he saw a maiden bearing a basket of corn on her arm. Next day he told the villagers what he had seen and promised them that food would soon come. Black Lynx again laughed at him.

Another night when there was no moon, he saw the maiden again walking towards him on the bright path of the stars. She came down on a beam of light right to his feet. Together they walked to the corn field. Then she said to him, "I have come to your lodge with bread. Remove the covers of your corn barrels and they will be filled." In Indian language, this meant that she wished Corn Tassel to be her husband, for when a maiden gives food to a young man, it is a sign she is willing to marry him.

Corn Tassel ate the bread, thus pledging himself in marriage to the Corn Maiden, for that was who she was. Then the people looked in their barrels and found them full of corn. They ate and all gave thanks to the Great One—all but Black Lynx.

Black Lynx complained that there was no game. The Corn Maiden told him to go to the creek and cast his net into it. When he did this, Black Lynx drew out a netful of fish. He seized the largest and began to eat, throwing his corn bread into the fire as he did so.

The Corn Maiden was greatly hurt by this. But

Black Lynx only insulted her the more, saying there must be no men where she came from, since she had come to Dyut-ti-hak-ton for a husband.

The Corn Maiden ran to Corn Tassel and wept, saying that Black Lynx acted for his people. She could not be happy where there was strife, and knew she could not stay in Dyut-ti-hak-ton.

At the twilight hour, the villagers heard a strange sound, as if corn were being dipped out of barrels and thrown into the air. When morning came, the women found their barrels empty indeed. Soon there was famine again, and the Corn Maiden was nowhere to be found.

Black Lynx blamed Corn Tassel for the new misfortune of his people and everyone agreed with him. So Corn Tassel went off by himself at night. Soon he felt himself walking on air, and then he knew he was going in the direction of the Corn Maiden's village.

When he asked the way, the answer was always that the Corn Maiden lived on the largest mound in a field of many mounds. He sought the way for a long time. Then the wind guided him to the fields of mounds, where the corn grew tall and green. It was much finer than any corn he had ever seen before.

Corn Tassel walked up the path and found it led him straight to the largest mound. On the top of it was a fine white lodge, covered with vines. In front

sat the Corn Maiden, weaving a mat of corn husks. Corn Tassel spoke and said, "I have come for you. Will you come back with me, and send away the famine from my people?"

The Maiden replied that she would like Corn Tassel to stay with her. She said, "Your people burn my flesh and your brother cast me into the fire." Corn Tassel did not understand. She continued: "My flesh is the corn meal, my blood is the milk of the corn. When your brother hurt the corn plant, he hurt me."

After many years, when he had learned all about the corn plant, Corn Tassel returned to his people, and with him went the Corn Maiden.

The people welcomed them back to Dyut-ti-hak-ton. All but Black Lynx. He threatened his brother with his great club. Just then, the earth opened up and Black Lynx fell into the great crack. The Corn Maiden and her husband taught the people the cultivation of the corn plant, and there was no more famine. Since then, the Indians have always given thanks when the corn is ripe, at the Great Corn Festival.

The Indian Heritage in Our Modern World

We have seen how the Indians lived in Canada before the white men came. We have read about their houses, their food, their clothes and their ceremonies. We have learned that they were using stone, bone, shell and wooden tools, and that they knew nothing of iron, gold, or silver. These the white men brought with them when they came. The Indians soon discovered that iron made much better arrowpoints than stone, or bone, and that kettles of copper were better for cooking than their own birch bark dishes; they were even better than their clay pots. So in some ways the coming of the white men was a blessing.

In other ways, it brought disaster to the Indians. The white men brought new diseases, like smallpox and measles. These killed off thousands of Indians. From them sometimes whole tribes died within a few weeks. Besides this misfortune, the Indians often found

themselves at war with the white men, and many were killed in battle. The Indian bow and arrow were no match for the musket of the Frenchmen or the Englishmen. In many other ways, the coming of the white men brought changes. The Indians soon found that their lands were being taken from them. They saw the game was being killed or driven away. They could no longer live just by hunting or fishing.

The result was that the Indian population became smaller. There are now in all of Canada only about as many Indians as there used to be in British Columbia alone—about a hundred and forty thousand. Fortunately, after all the setbacks it has had, the Indian population is now increasing.

Some modern Indians live very much the way their ancestors lived before the days of Cartier and Champlain. The Naskapi, for instance, still live by hunting and fishing. Other Indians have had to change their mode of life. There are no buffalo now for the Indians of the Plains to hunt. And because the white men have come, the Indians of British Columbia can no longer live by fishing alone.

Where the old life has passed, modern Indians often live just like their white neighbours. Many are farmers and herdsmen, especially in Ontario and on the Plains. In British Columbia, many Indians now work in canneries. And all across Canada, young Indians are train-

ing to be doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers and other professional workers. In some places, Indians publish their own newspapers; in others, they manage their own stores, co-operatives, canneries and farms.

The old life is now almost gone. Yet we should not forget the gifts which the Indians have given us. First of all, they helped the explorers to learn to know Canada. They showed them canoe routes and trails. They gave them food and shelter. Without the help of the Indians, exploration would have been slower and much more difficult.

Then, too, some of the Indians' equipment proved very useful to explorers, trappers and settlers. The canoe, for instance, was most important. No other craft was so fine for getting about on the numerous lakes and rivers of the new country. It was helpful in transporting supplies inland, and in carrying furs to Montreal, Fort York and other collecting points. Snowshoes were another great help, especially in the winter. Of course, even today, we still use both snowshoes and canoes, but they are less important to us than to the early travellers.

Without pemmican the explorers would have had a difficult time. With it, they had an excellent, concentrated food which was clean, easy to carry, and very nutritious. It helped greatly to make exploration easier.

One of the gifts for which we shall always be grateful is maple sugar and maple syrup. The Indians of the Eastern Woodlands certainly learned how to make these wonderful foods long before the white men came. Today, we make them by almost the same methods which the Indians used. A still more important gift from the Indians was tobacco. For hundreds of years the Indians of the Eastern Woodlands and other parts of the New World had been smoking tobacco in stone or clay pipes, and from them the English and French learned how to use it.

But the most important gift of all was Indian corn, a native Indian plant. For many millions of people it provides food as well as material from which other things are made. It could not be taken away from us without great and serious results to our way of life. No other contribution from the Indians equals it in importance.

These things—canoes, snowshoes, pemmican, maple syrup and sugar, tobacco and corn—are but some of the gifts the Indians have left to us. These have now become so much a part of our lives that many of us do not even know where they came from. But they are truly Indian.

For these and for other gifts we have not mentioned we should be forever grateful. And we can appreciate that the Indians, through long centuries of experience,

learned to devise the best kind of equipment for the country in which they lived. These they have passed on to us.

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