

The Great Déné Race.

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(Continuation).

Chapter III.

The Southern Dénés.

The Great Scission in the Déné Family.

Although a few of their tribes eventually adopted a semi-sedentary mode of life, the Dénés form an essentially nomadic race. Not only do they now delight in roaming over the boundless wastes and through the unending forests of the north, and enjoy the sensation of being lords of all they survey, but it did actually come to pass that areas which, desolate as they are, should have possessed a much larger population finally proved too small for their restless spirit and insatiable ambition. Their roving propensities did not allow them to stay long in their northern domains. Or indeed it may be that the very barrenness of their original home in America, or rather the inclemency of its climate, prompted them to seek more pleasant hunting grounds.

This is a very interesting ethnological problem, and, as I have elsewhere written¹⁾, it is likely that the man is still unborn who will satisfactorily solve it. How is it that a large portion of the Déné race detached itself from the parent stock and migrated south? When did this exodus occur? What was the route followed by the adventurous bands? We can only answer by a series of hypotheses, more or less plausible as they are based on more or less significant facts.

¹⁾ "Notes on the Western Dénés". Trans. Can. Inst., vol. IV, p. 12.