

## SCIENCE:

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## THE KLAMATH NATION.

## I.—THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE.

"THE Klamath Indians of South-Western Oregon" is the second title of the recently published work, by Albert Samuel Gatschet, which forms, according to its leading title, Vol. II. of "Contributions to North American Ethnology," one of the several series of works issued by the "United States Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region, J. W. Powell in Charge." The term "volume," however, is in this case to be understood in a special sense. The work really appears in two substantial tomes in quarto, comprising over seven hundred pages each, and distinguished as Parts I. and II. The too brief "table of contents" informs us that Part I. contains the writer's "letter of transmittal," and an "ethnographic sketch," with "texts," and "grammar;" while Part II. is entirely occupied by the "Dictionary—Klamath-English, and English-Klamath." This curt statement gives but a slight idea of the importance of the work as a contribution of the first order to ethnological science.

The Klamath River rises in the southern interior of Oregon, at a distance of about three hundred miles from the Pacific. First traversing an extensive morass, known as Klamath Marsh, it passes through Upper Klamath Lake, a charmingly picturesque sheet, some twenty-five miles long by five or six miles in breadth; then receiving a tributary from the Lower Klamath Lake, it crosses the State boundary into California, and, after a winding course of two or three hundred miles, falls into the ocean near the north-eastern angle of that State. Several tribes of different lineage and languages dwell, or formerly dwelt, along this stream, and have borne indiscriminately from the river's name (the origin and meaning of which are uncertain) the appellation of Klamath Indians. But this designation is more usually restricted to the people who possess the upper waters of the river and the great Klamath Lake, and who, as is the case with many other Indian tribes, have no special distinguishing name for themselves except that of "man,"—in their language, *Maklaks*. Another name which has been given to them is *Lutuami*, meaning Lake Indians, which is in no way distinctive. The author has therefore judiciously de-

ecided to retain the usual appellation, "the Klamath Indians," adding the description "of South-western Oregon," to distinguish them from the Californian Klamaths. As these, however, have their proper tribal names of Shasti, Karok, Hupa, and Yurok or Alikwa, it is likely that the designation of Klamath will in time be wholly restricted to the Oregon nation bearing this name.

The title of "nation" is one which, as the author suggests in his "letter of transmittal" to Major Powell, may properly be conferred upon this remarkable people. Their claim to this title does not reside in their numbers, which at present hardly reach nine hundred souls, nor in their territory, though this, even in their diminished reservation, covers fifteen hundred square miles. But they have the distinction, like the Basques of south-western Europe, of composing a separate "stock," possessing a language, a mythology, and a social system peculiar to themselves. Such a stock, inhabiting a compact territory, and having (as the Klamaths had till lately) their own government, may justly claim to be considered a nationality. The claim, however, is in America not so notable as it would be deemed in Europe, where distinct linguistic stocks are so few. Mr. Gatschet gives a list of twenty-two of these stocks, radically distinct in grammar and vocabulary, which have been found in Oregon and California alone. If to these we add the stocks of Washington State and of British Columbia, the number of such aboriginal nations found along the Pacific coast of North America will not be less than twenty-eight, nearly equalling the total number of stocks in Asia and Europe combined. There is reason to believe that a careful study of the immensely varied languages, physical and moral traits, mythologies, and social systems of these twenty-eight primitive nationalities would greatly modify and in some respects transform the sciences of ethnology and linguistics. There have been many partial and fragmentary attempts at such a study, some of them possessing much value. But that of Mr. Gatschet is undoubtedly the fullest and most minutely accurate that has thus far been made of any single stock.

The Klamath country is a region of mountains, lakes, and upland plains, stretching eastwardly into the interior from the lofty "Cascade Range," and elevated from four to seven thousand feet above the level of the sea. The author was naturally reminded of his native Switzerland by the grandeur of the scenery in the western portion of the reservation, "where the towering ridge of the Cascade Mountains and the shining mirrors of the lakes at their feet confront the visitor, surprised to see in both a reproduction of Alpine landscapes in the extreme west of America." It might be added that in the people themselves we recognize the well-known traits of mountaineers, as we trace them from the Scottish Highlands to Montenegro, and from the Caucasus to the Pamir,—the intense local attachment, the spirit of independence, the desperate bravery in the defence of their homes, the frugality, and the strong conservatism.

The Klamath people are divided into two septs, the Klamath Lake tribe, who call themselves Eukshikni ("of the lake") and the Modocs, who twenty years ago acquired a dismal notoriety by the "tragedy of the Lava Beds,"—an event, or series of events, which aroused horror at the time, but in which, according to the judgment of the best-informed historians, including Mr. Gatschet, they were more sinned against than sinning. An eminently fair-minded historical writer, Mr. J. P. Dunn (author of "The Massacres of the Mountains"), in his account of the Modoc outbreak, gives a pithy and graphic description of this sept, in terms which,