

the country through which it has passed is literally depopulated, and converted into *one great grave-yard*. The Mandans, consisting of 1,600 souls, had been reduced by the 1st of October last, to thirty-one persons. The *Gros Ventres*, or Minetarees, a tribe about 1,000 strong, took the disease a month later than their neighbours, the Mandans. One-half had perished, and the disease was still raging. They, no doubt, shared the same fate with the Mandans. The Ricaras, who had recently joined the last-named tribes, and numbered about three thousand, were most of them out on a hunting excursion when the disease broke out among the Mandans, and consequently received it something later. One half of *them* had fallen, and the disease was raging with unabated fury, not more than one out of fifty recovering from it.

"Most of those that survived subsequently committed suicide, despairing, I suppose, at the loss of friends and the changes wrought by the disease in their persons—some by shooting, others by stabbing, and some by throwing themselves from the high precipices along the Missouri. The great band of Assiniboins, say 10,000 strong, and the Crees, numbering about 3,000, have been almost annihilated; and, notwithstanding all the precaution used by the gentlemen engaged in the trade in that remote region to prevent it, the disease had reached the Blackfeet of the Rocky Mountains; a band of 1,000 lodges had been swept off, and the disease was rapidly spreading among the different bands of that great tribe, numbering, *I think*, about 60,000 souls. I have no doubt but the predictions contained in my letter of the 27th ultimo, will be fully realized, and all the Indians on the Columbia river as far as the Pacific ocean, will share the fate of those before alluded to.

"This is a melancholy statement. We take from the red men their fertile lands, and give them in exchange rum and the small-pox—the two most abhorrent scourges of the human race. But so it must be. Civilization will run its course, and the evils it carries in its train must have their victims. We may grieve, but we cannot hinder it. That it was by the agency of white men the Indians received the disease, is shown by the following statement, from the St. Louis Commercial bulletin.

The circumstances under which the disease was introduced are these: In the latter part of April last, Messrs. Pratte, Chouteau, and Co. started their steamboat, the *St. Peters*, with supplies for their various trading posts on the Upper Missouri, and she was destined to Fort Union, about 2000 miles above St. Louis, having on board, at the same time, the annuity goods due from the Government to a number of tribes on that river. When the boat arrived at the Black Snake Hills, a trading post sixty miles above Fort Leavenworth, and about 500 miles above St. Louis, there was a mulatto man on board, who became affected with what was then supposed to be the measles, but by the time the boat reached the agency for Council Bluffs, where the annuities for several tribes were deliverable, it was ascertained to be a case of small pox, and, as a matter of course, had been communicated to others on board, though they had not yet experienced its effects.

The boat was then far advanced into the Indian country, had passed several tribes, with whom it was not practicable, under the circumstances, to prevent an intercourse, some of whom had no doubt taken the disease; and it must be obvious to every individual at all acquainted with the situation and wandering habits of all the Indians in that region, that no human efforts could have checked the progress of the disease, or prevent it from being communicated from the different bands, when once introduced among a single tribe.

It is, we apprehend, needless to observe, that all responsible precautions were used by the whites to prevent such a calamity. The agents of government were on board, and independent of humane motives, both