

hibited great readiness to embrace Christianity. It is not difficult to foresee what must be their fate, should their land be occupied by white intruders, and themselves exposed to the baneful influence of the rival traders of the Hudson Bay and American Fur Companies.

The Indians of the western territory appear to have suffered to an awful extent, from a cause in which white men have probably been implicated, though in this instance no degree of criminality may possibly attach to them. Various accounts have been received of the extraordinary fatality of an epidemic small-pox of unusual severity, which has spread through many of the tribes. The following letter will give some idea of the extent of the calamity.

*Extract of a Letter from Major Pilcher, dated St. Louis, Feb. 27, 1838.*

SIR, Having received authentic information from the remote region of the Upper Missouri, of a highly important character, I deem it my duty to communicate it to you without delay, though not entirely applicable to my own agency, having, as I conceive it does, a bearing upon Mr. Harris's letter of the 11th ult. It appears that the effects of the small-pox among most of the Indian tribes of the Upper Missouri surpasses all former scourges, and that the country through which it has passed is literally depopulated, and converted into one great grave-yard. The Mandans, consisting of sixteen hundred souls, had been reduced, by the 1st of October last, to thirty-one persons. The Gros Ventres, or Minetarees, a tribe about one thousand 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 somewhat 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 who survived subsequently committed suicide, despairing, I suppose, at the loss of their 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 Assiniboinas, say ten thousand strong, and the Crees, numbering about three thousand, have been almost annihilated; and notwithstanding all the precaution used by the gentlemen engaged in the trade of that remote region to prevent it, the disease had reached the Blackfoot tribe of Indians of the Rocky Mountains; a band of one thousand Lodges had been swept off, and the disease was rapidly spreading among the different bands of that great tribe, numbering, I think, about sixty thousand souls. I have no doubt but the predictions contained in my letter of the 27th ult. will be fully realized, and all the Indians of the Columbia river, as far as the Pacific Ocean, will share the fate of those before alluded to.

*The Friend.*

These sketches of the situation of the North American Indians would be incomplete without a brief notice of the war which is now being carried on between the United States and the SEMINOLE IN-