

The Indians, from their simple mode of life and abundant exercise, were not exposed to many diseases which are known to civilized men. But some of their maladies were extremely fatal. Their uncertain life, sometimes exposed to starvation; and at other times their excesses, undermined their constitution, and sowed the seeds of disease. Consumption, pleurisy, asthma, and paralysis, the result of the fatigues and hardships of the chase, also carried off great numbers of them; and at times, epidemics of an unknown and mysterious nature swept them off by thousands. For three or four years previous to the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers a deadly pestilence raged along the sea-board from Penobscot to Narraganset Bay. Some tribes were nearly destroyed. The Massachusetts were reduced from three thousand to three hundred fighting men; and miles of coast which had been populous, were left without a single inhabitant. What the disease was which then swept over the land can of course never be ascertained. Another terrible visitation of the same nature in 1694, swept over Maine and New Brunswick. At Pentagoet great numbers died of it, and it swept off the Chief of the river St. John, and vast numbers of others. At Medoctie alone, over a hundred persons died, and so great was the terror caused by it that they deserted that village entirely, and did not settle there again for many years.

The symptoms, as described by an eye witness, were, that a person seemingly in perfect health would commence bleeding at the mouth and nose, turn blue in spots, and die in two or three hours.* Strange to say, it was at its worst during the winter. No such plague appears to have visited Acadie since that time, yet unlike all other races they rather diminish than increase in numbers. Nor is it difficult to ascertain the cause. All over America, whether the white man is a friend or an enemy, the red man fades before him. Peace is not less fatal than war to the savage: in the latter, he is shot down with an unsparing hand; in the former, he is demoralized and degraded by vicious customs; exposed to temptations he has no power to resist, which enervate his frame, and end in misery and death. Every tree which is felled in the forest reduces the area of the hunting grounds which he inherited from his fathers, and on which his existence depends. Every mill

* The symptoms of the plague which prevails in Egypt are somewhat similar. The most fatal symptom is violent bleeding at the nose, and those thus taken are never known to recover.—*Baker's Albert N'Yanza*, p. 333.