

and imprudently plunge into the coldest water, whilst in the highest state of fever, and often die before they have the power to get out.

Some have attributed the unexampled fatality of this disease amongst the Indians to the fact of their living entirely on animal food; but so important a subject for investigation I must leave for sounder judgments than mine to decide. They are a people whose constitutions and habits of life enable them most certainly to meet most of its ills with less dread, and with decidedly greater success, than they are met in civilized communities; and I would not dare to decide that their simple meat diet was the cause of their fatal exposure to one frightful disease, when I am decidedly of opinion that it has been the cause of their exemption and protection from another, almost equally destructive, and, like the former, of civilized introduction.

During the season of the ravages of the Asiatic cholera which swept over the greater part of the western country, and the Indian frontier, I was a traveller through those regions, and was able to witness its effects; and I learned from what I saw, as well as from what I have heard in other parts since that time, that it travelled to and over the frontiers, carrying dismay and death amongst the tribes on the borders in many cases, so far as they had adopted the civilized modes of life, with its dissipation, using vegetable food and salt; but wherever it came to the tribes living exclusively on meat, and that without the use of salt, its progress was suddenly stopped. I mention this as a subject which I looked upon as important to science, and therefore one on which I made many careful enquiries; and so far as I have learned along that part of the frontier over which I have since passed, I have to my satisfaction ascertained that such became the utmost limits of this fatal disease in its travel to the West, unless where it might have followed some of the routes of the Fur Traders, who, of course, have introduced the modes of civilized life.

From the Trader who was present at the destruction of the Mandans I had many most wonderful incidents of this dreadful scene, but I dread to recite them. Amongst them, however, there is one that I must briefly describe, relative to the death of that noble gentleman of whom I have already said so much, and to whom I became so much attached, *Mah-to-toh-pa*, or "the Four Bears." This fine fellow sat in his wigwam and watched every one of his family die about him, his wives and his little children, after he had recovered from the disease himself; when he walked out, around the village, and wept over the final destruction of his tribe; his braves and warriors, whose sinewy arms alone he could depend on for a continuance of their existence, all laid low; when he came back to his lodge, where he covered his whole family in a pile, with a number of robes, and wrapping another around himself, went out upon a hill at a little distance, where he laid several days, despite all the solicitations of the Traders, resolved to starve himself to death. He remained there till the sixth day, when he had just strength enough to creep back to the village, when he entered the horrid gloom of his own wigwam, and laying his body along-side of the group of his family, drew his robe over him and died on the ninth day of his fatal abstinence.

So have perished the friendly and hospitable Mandans, from the best accounts I could get; and although it may be possible that some few individuals may yet be remaining, I think it is not probable; and one thing is certain, even if such be the case, that, as a nation, the Mandans are extinct, having no longer an existence.

There is yet a melancholy part of the tale to be told, relating to the ravages of this frightful disease in that country on the same occasion, as it spread to other contiguous tribes, to the Minstarees, the Knisteneux, the Blackfeet, the Chayennes and Crows; amongst whom 25,000 perished in the course of four or five months, which most appalling facts I got from Major Piicher, now Superintendent of Indian affairs at St. Louis, from Mr. McKenzie, and others.

It may be naturally asked here, by the reader, whether the Government of the United States have taken any measures to prevent the ravages of this fatal disease amongst these exposed tribes; to which I answer, that repeated efforts have been made, and so far generally, as the tribes have ever had the disease, (or, at all events, within the recollections of those who are now living in the tribes,) the Government agents have succeeded in introducing vaccination as a protection; but amongst those tribes in their wild state, and where they have not suffered with the disease, very little success has been met with in the attempt to protect them, on account of their superstitions, which have generally resisted all attempts to introduce vaccination. Whilst I was on the Upper Missouri, several surgeons were sent into the country with the Indian agents, where I several times saw the attempts made without success. They have perfect confidence in the skill of their own physicians, until the disease has made one slaughter in their tribe, and then, having seen white men amongst them protected by it, they are disposed to receive it, before