

rose in time, by his account, to the head-chieftainship of the tribe. He also married among them. He keeps count up to the ninth bride, but there the reader loses track of them.

The smallpox part of Rev. Mr. Allis' story is, however, quite curious. It is on record that the terrible epidemic of this disease which caused 1838 to be known as the great smallpox year was already under way in the year preceding; but as to Jim Beckwourth's having been instrumental in causing it, the evidence seems to be negative. This is the only mention of him in this connection with which I am acquainted.

There have been very many epidemics of different kinds among the western Indians. Captain Jonathan Carver, for instance, in 1766 passed through a village of the "Ottigaumies" in Wisconsin, which he found "deserted on account of an epidemical disorder that had lately raged among them and carried off more than one half of the inhabitants." What this may have been I do not know, but it was smallpox that nearly extinguished the Omaha Indians about a hundred years ago. Lieutenant Pike mentions this (calling them the Mahaws) and another writer sets 1802 as the date of the occurrence. In 1832 the Pawnees are said to have lost one half their number, and in 1838 the Mandans were almost entirely destroyed, both by smallpox. The Crows had it in 1851, according to Dr. Hale.

As to the Blackfeet, if Kit Carson's memory for dates can be relied on, they suffered from it in 1834, losing thousands of their number. But an early traveler (1839) says this of them: "In 1828 they stole a blanket from the American Fur Company's steamboat on the Yellowstone, which had belonged to a man who had died of the smallpox on the passage up the Missouri. The infected article being carried to their encampment, spread the dreadful infection among the whole tribe." He says further that the bones of 7,000 to 8,000 Blackfeet lay unburied along the Yellowstone, "even to this hour."

Now Beckwourth cannot possibly have introduced this disease among the Blackfeet in either 1828 or 1834 because he was through all that time a Crow and engaged in mortal war with the Blackfeet. It is curious, however, that he did make a journey from St. Louis to Fort Cass sometime in 1837, and from the circumstantial nature of his record of that part of his life it must have been on this journey, if ever, that Mr. Allis ran across him. But he was engaged in a life and death race, and had a promised reward of \$5,000 for accomplishing it in time. He says it took him 53 days, "as the traveling was bad." It is possible, though hardly likely, that he had smallpox on the road, recovered and completed his journey in that space of time. He mentions no particulars of that trip at all. In the summer of 1838

he crossed the plains from Independence and was prostrated by sunstroke near the Platte, but that was in July, so it will not do for Mr. Allis.

The only mention of smallpox in Beckwourth's own book is in an account of the Pawnees. "Some of the bands have been reduced to one-half by this fatal disease," he says, "in many instances introduced designedly among them by their civilized brethren."

This leads up to the most curious account of the disease that I have seen: that given by Charles Larpenteur of how it came among the Assinniboines, who were near neighbors of both the Crows and the Blackfeet. The steamboat St. Peter brought it in June, 1837.

"Immediately on the landing of the boat, we learned that smallpox was on board. Mr. J. Halsey had the disease, of which several of the hands had died; but it had subsided, and this was the only case on board. Our only apprehensions were that the disease might spread among the Indians, and prompt measures were adopted to prevent an epidemic. As we had no vaccine matter we decided to inoculate with the smallpox itself; and after the systems of those who were to be inoculated had been prepared according to Dr. Thomas' medical book, the operation was performed upon about 30 Indian squaws and a few white men. The smallpox matter should have been taken from a very healthy person; but unfortunately Mr. Halsey was not sound, and the operation proved fatal to most of our patients. About fifteen days afterward there was such a stench in the fort that it could be smelt at the distance of 300 yards. Some went crazy, and others were half eaten up by maggots before they died. The tribe was reduced more than one-half by next spring."

Among all the tribes, the mortality from the disease seems to have been made greater by the Indians attacked running into some stream of water, after steaming themselves in the vapor baths with which they are wont to treat all sicknesses. The same thing, by the way, is said to have happened among the nations of various wild countries, as the islands of the Pacific.

Mr. James P. Beckwourth seems, therefore, to be not guilty of the smallpox epidemic, whatever other misdeeds may rest upon his head.

A. T. RICHARDSON.  
Nebraska City, Neb., Aug. 10, 1900.

**ECKELS.** No man has a cleaner record, no man a clearer vision, no man is a more sincere patriot, than James H. Eckels. He tersely says:

"No issue set forth, no matter how cunningly devised and arranged, can be made paramount to the issue of Mr. Bryan himself. No man is fitted for the presidency who proclaims, in the midst of a demonstrated better condi-

tion of affairs, the reverse to be true in order to foment a discord which will gain to himself and party a political advantage. Mr. Bryan hardly appeals to the thoughtful citizen when upon one hand he is presented by the populists and on the other by Tammany. The joining hands with the one constitutes an offense against safety in governmental administration; the alliance with the other an offense against political decency."

#### SWAPPING.

Lincoln declared against swapping horses in the middle of a dangerous ford and now the question is whether the republic can be benefited by trading off an "Elephant" for a "Jackass" which has been spavined, foundered and has also the poll-evil, nervous prostration, the big head, and is wind-broken,—just at a time when endurance, steadiness of gait and a capacity for carrying things safely are requisites to national prosperity?

#### WEBFEET.

Fisher Ames said: "Monarchy is a merchantman which sails well, but will sometimes strike a rock and go to the bottom; whilst a republic is a raft, which would never sink, but then your feet are always in the water."

And the Bryanarchists would have had water all over the raft if they could command it for a brief period. The raft is victualled for a four years' cruise, and will float better with little wind than with a tempest. The raft needs a thinker more than it needs a talker and a compass more than a phonograph.

#### BOVINE PHOTOGRAPH.

Sunday morning, August 29th, 1900, Colonel William J. Bryan will be photographed milking his famous cow, "16 to 1". Clark of Montana, holds her by the horns and Croker, of the New York ice trust, keeps off the flies with a dust brush of liquid air frozen at a recent interview between himself and Dave Hill.

The picture is to be very realistic. It will show the colonel barefooted, a stone bruise on his left heel and only one galling and that fastened to the rear of his trousers with a husking pin. If plain people yearn for anything in plain demagoguery, plainer than "this paramount", they are irrational.

#### TANTA AND PARA.

The peerless leader with the matchless tongue said that the free coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen to one in unlimited bulk by the government of the United States was in 1896 "tantamount" to all other questions. "Tantamount" as thus used, by our peerless one, means equal, equivalent, equipollent to all other pub-