

Among the Nations of the Missouri are some who seem to be specially disposed to receive the Gospel: as, for instance, the Panismahas.⁵⁵ One of the Gentlemen of whom I have just spoken wrote one day to a Frenchman who traded among the Savages, and asked him in his letter to baptize dying children. When the chief of the village perceived the letter, he said to the Frenchman: "What is the news?" "There is none," replied the latter. "How," retorted the Savage, "because our color is red, can we not know the news?" "It is the black Chief," replied the Frenchman, "who writes, recommending me to baptize dying children, in order to send them to the great Spirit." The Savage chief, thoroughly satisfied, said to him: "Be not anxious; I myself undertake to notify thee whenever a child is in danger of death." He gathered his people together and said to them: "What think ye of this black Chief?" (for that is the name which they give to the Missionaries.) "We have never seen him; we have never done him any good; he dwells far from us, beyond the sun. And yet he thinks of our village; he desires to do good to us; and, when our children die, he wishes to send them to the great Spirit. This black Chief must be very good."

Some traders who came from his village have mentioned to me instances which prove that, savage as he is, he none the less possesses intelligence and good sense. At the death of his predecessor all the suffrages of his Nation were in his favor. At first, he excused himself from accepting the position of Chief; but at last, on being compelled to acquiesce, he said to them: "You desire then that I should be