

as they did it in performance of inflexible regulations; but any affront of an individual in his private capacity, is sure to be revenged sooner or later, and the avenger is always known, as it would not be any satisfaction to him if he could not enjoy the credit of it. An instance came under my observation. It is usual for the trader to take to his post as many guns as there are good hunters, who will probably pay for them. These are generally at first distributed to those for whom he may particularly intend them, before he commences giving out other articles. One year, in distributing the guns, my interpreter overlooked a good hunter, while some other not so good a hunter got the gun. This mortified the good hunter, and that night he killed the horse of every man who had received a gun, and it was known the next morning who had done it, and what was the cause. It is common to revenge an insult or injury by killing the offender's horse or dog, and there are in this way, a great many horses killed every year among the Sioux. And they not only revenge insults or injuries among themselves, but, as the late Col. Robert Dickson, in conversation with me on the subject, expressed it, "*they revenge upon their enemies the acts of the Almighty;*" for when a chief or man of distinction dies, they commence singing the war song, and raise a war party to revenge his death upon their natural enemies, as well as to appease the troubled manes of the departed.

It is a prevalent opinion among persons not acquainted with Indian customs and polity, that they, like white people, have a king or great chief over all; but such, so far as I am acquainted, is not the case with any Indians in the North West or South West. The government of their tribes or bands is patriarchal. The chiefs, as with politicians who obtain office, are the greatest slaves among them. They get the honor without independence, not being able to do any act of their own will, without first looking to see if it will be popular. If a chief buys a good gun, and one of his young men takes a fancy to it, and expresses a wish for it, it is given to him; if not, probably the chief's horse would pay the forfeit. These bands are generally thus originated: When a