

Digger Indians

One of Col. Henley's Sub-Indian Agents, says the Union, has recently made a report concerning the tribes of Indians in the northern portion of this State, which contains much interesting statistical information. An abstract of the same is published in the Times and Transcript. The district embraced in the report composed of the counties of Yuba, Nevada, Sierra and Placer. Not having received the Times and Transcript, we copy from the Union. The census of nine tribes is given, with the following as the aggregate:

Total number of Indians in 1849, 10,070;
at the present, 3,860. Total males, 1,930;
females, 1,930.

Some of these Indians are comfortably clad, while others suffer greatly from exposure and the inclemency of winter weather. Their chief articles of food are acorns, lizards, snails, ~~snails~~, and such other animals and articles as can be procured when the gnawings of hunger are felt the severest. — A great portion of the Indians are opposed to removal, and resist every overture made to them by the charitably disposed officers of the General Government — preferring to roam at freedom, with a precarious subsistence, over the hills and through the forests of their early attachment, to the adoption of the manners and customs of the white man, whom they feel to be infinitely removed above them in native and cultivated superiority.

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The chief cause of the decimation of these Indians is said to be the small pox. Whole tribes have been swept away by it. The report goes on to say:

Sometimes a miner will permit them to take a pan of dirt from his claim from which they get some gold. They scrape up the dirt about the end of the sluice boxes which sometimes pays them very well. On the rivers they obtain gold by scraping out the crevices that have been abandoned by the whites. The mining is done almost exclusively by the squaws. I have known a company of four or five squaws to obtain as much as \$8 in one day. With this they purchase flour and beef and most generally of the worst that there is in the market. Meats that cannot be sold to others are sold to them. The men are very indolent, spending their time mostly laying about camp. Formerly they exercised more in search of game. Now there is no game. Since the settlement by the whites the deer, which were in the greatest abundance around their camps, have been entirely driven off or killed. They have generally gathered a good quantity of toadstools, a sort of mushroom, upon which they feed and seem to be very fond. They first steam them by covering them in heated dirt, then roast them, bruise them up in small pieces and make a sort of cake of them. They eat the Buck-eye berry. Of these they seem to be very fond after they are roasted.

They are very fond of wheat and prefer it to flour. They prepare it by boiling it to mush, when it is considered a great luxury. Everything is cooked in their baskets. Their ingenuity manifested in the manufacture of their baskets clearly indicates their ability to learn without difficulty to manu-

facture all the articles of clothing necessary to make them comfortable. I have no doubt, judging from the articles about their camps, that if wool could be furnished them they would learn in twelve months to weave it into cloth with but little instruction. I make these suggestions for your consideration, believing that you will conclude with me that in a few years they may be made to clothe as well as feed themselves. There is great industry manifested by the squaws—they are always engaged at something—they do all the work of every kind.

The tribes have physicians in whom they place implicit confidence; they give no medicines, but "starve" the disease. They invariably burn their dead. They manifest great grief and anguish during the process of burning. When the corpse has been reduced to ashes, they collect it, and mixing part of it with pitch, obtained from the pine—the female relatives of the deceased, after cutting their hair short, smear it over their face, head, neck and shoulders, and wear it as a badge of mourning until it wears off, which it will do in about six months. The balance of the ashes are then buried. At this time in many of the camps one-half of the squaws are in mourning, in consequence of the death of relatives. There are few barbarous tribes of mankind that approach so near civilization on the subject of marriage. Polygamy is not considered illegal, but seldom practised among them. They universally respect the marital rights of each other. Infidelity to their marital vows on the part of the wife is punishable with death. For the last year they have in some camps permitted this crime to go unpunished—when committed with whites. Acts of adultery are becoming much more frequent than formerly. In the county of Sierra, during the last fall, a wife who committed adultery with a white man was summarily executed by her husband, by shooting her with his arrows. In the camps about Nevada, ~~the~~ Grass Valley and ~~the~~ the same

marily executed by her husband; by shooting her with his arrows. In the camps about Nevada, Yankee Jim's, Grass Valley and Auburn, lewdness among the young squaws is becoming very common; in some instances they have suffered much with diseases contracted by such habits.

These Indians are generally comfortably clad. They obtain the clothing that has been thrown away by the whites, or purchase injured clothing at reduced prices, with the gold they pan out in the mines.— Some of the young squaws are in the habit of dressing neatly. They have been known

to make dresses for the women after having purchased the materials in the stores.

The great difficulty experienced in removing these tribes is owing to the fact that they are employed as servants to whites.

One man has had 120,000 pounds of potatoes housed by them this season. The squaws only take from their employers.

The Indians are sometimes permitted by merchants to contract debts, and one near Rose's Bar had been charged with \$4,000 worth of goods since '49. The principal opposition to go on to the Reservation comes from Nevada county. The report concludes as follows:

In the counties of Sierra and Yuba, almost a unanimous disposition exists among the people to assist you in carrying out your designs, and I am persuaded that if Mr. Storms, or some other influential man, were to go among them, some members of those tribes high up on the Yuba would go with him to the Reservation, and be of great assistance in effecting a removal of the other tribes in the spring. The success of the Superintendent's effort to induce them to remove depends much upon the representation of Captain Wiemah and John, (now in the Reservation,) when they return to the tribes again. Several influential Indians have promised me to visit them on their return, to ascertain if the representations they have heard of the country are correct. If they report favorably, I think a large majority of the Indians in Nevada county can be induced to leave for the "Henley House," as they term the Reservation, not otherwise. The industry and energy manifested by Mr. Storms to induce them to remove that he has carried there, is worthy of the highest commendation.—

WEDNESDAY

DO. COUNTY, CAL., JANUARY 18,

Indian Agents,

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Mr. Latham's
In the House of Reps
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