

No. 98.

TEJON MILITARY RESERVE,

*February 8, 1854.*

SIR: Being about to return to San Francisco on official business, I have the honor to report progress at this place. Since my last, I have completed our wheat-field, and the whole two thousand acres is now covered with the coming crop, and presents a beautiful prospect of the plenty which will reward our labor, when we shall have gathered its grain. I am now planting barley, of which I shall sow five hundred acres; after which, a hundred and fifty acres of corn will complete the heavy part of my work for this season.

This, you will remember, is exclusive of the separate portion which I plant for each tribe, and which, I informed you, is to be placed at their entire disposal, while the large crops I have mentioned will be served out in regular and sufficient rations.

It is impossible to do justice to the docility and energy which these poor people possess. They work not only without murmur or complaint, but with the most cheerful alacrity; and as the fruits of their labor begin to show themselves in the immense field, now covered with its verdant promise of future plenty, they look at it in amazement, and with delight.

You must perceive in the fact that I have punished a few lazy ones with proper but not severe correction, a proof of the discipline which is here maintained by a moral force which is exerted over their minds by the majority, and that this influence could and would never have been exerted but for the confidence they feel in what I have told them, that all this work is to benefit themselves, and not the government. This, then, is the first great point gained, viz: An established confidence in their own minds that the government really desires their good, and not to exterminate them, as malicious and reckless white men have informed them.

If this had not been done, you will perceive it would be impossible for me to control, with the dozen white employés I have here, some twenty-five hundred Indians. So perfect is the discipline, that not even one of them ever leaves his work for a single day without permission, or returns without reporting his arrival.

You must not suppose I have merely brought the ploughs here, and

the grain and all the stores which my returns show, and given them to the Indians, telling them to go to work. On the contrary, I have toiled from an hour before daylight until dark with the few hired white men I have employed, and showed them how to manage the instruments put into their hands. It has been a labor of excessive toil, only compensated by the aptitude of the scholars, and cheered by the most pre-eminent success. I have endeavored to transplant here a system and regularity, acquired by eighteen years' experience in the strict school of naval discipline; and I have not been unsuccessful, as the result shows. My Indians are divided into different working parties. Those who plough and harrow, seventy-five in number, go to the field, after harnessing, in regular order; those who ditch have their work laid out—each one so much, according to the nature of the soil; and so on through every department of work which happens at the time to be necessary. Their dinner meals are cooked and eaten in the field; breakfast and supper at the village. Their tasks are never made laborious, so that an hour before sundown their work is always finished.

I have clothed them coarsely, but comfortably, and on Sunday (work having ceased on Saturday at noon) they seem as happy as it is possible to conceive. To that day I have encouraged them to look as one of pleasure, and for this purpose have instituted among them our own games, in which I have requested and encouraged my white employes to take part; so that on every Sunday we have sometimes two or three hundred playing at bandy and ball with those who during the week are their overseers and instructors in manual labor.

In fact, so happy are my people, that that which I never thought possible has come to pass, and my feelings for this poor race, which at first were merely those of compassion, are rapidly changing into a deep interest in their welfare, and in many instances to a personal attachment.

I have no military force here, and require none; my door has neither been locked nor barred night or day, and yet my feeling of security is as great as though I were surrounded by an armed guard.

Among other labors executed here, I have by a ditch six feet in width by eight in depth, and running for a distance of nine miles, connected two streams and thrown them completely around the immense field in which I have sown my grain, putting the certainty of my crops beyond peradventure, by giving me the power to irrigate the entire field with comparatively little labor.

On the first of next May I shall further elaborate my system, by choosing six among the chiefs most intelligent, and forming them, with myself to preside, into a council to decide upon certain laws for our interior government, and also on what shall be done with our surplus produce, which must be very great. This council will meet on the first of every month to discuss matters of interest to our reserve, to look constantly to our future welfare and prospects, as well as to fix appropriate punishments and settle whatever may need arrangement among us. Thus, by degrees, I hope to raise these people to believe that God has not created them to live and die as the wolves and beasts of their mountains. Already some faint and indistinct notion that such may be the case appears to have struck their sight; but as

yet it is vague and distant, like the first uncertain glimpse of a distant light-house. Constantly, they say to me, "We have been asleep a long time. We are just beginning to awake, but our eyes are not yet wide open."

The extending influence of this policy is already felt. But a few days since, the chief who controls almost the entire race of valley Indians, and hitherto considered as beyond reclaiming, visited me with some fifty of his tribe. He came to stay a day; he remained a fortnight. When he left me he said, "I came here to laugh at your work, and to take back some of my people who were with you. I go away with peace in my heart; and if not another Indian of the valley comes, I will make my home with you. In two months I shall return with my people." Should this promise be kept, he will bring with him not less than five thousand Indians; and these, sir, will have been removed without force and without expense, and, above all, without entailing on our government the bitter disgrace of punishing Indians because they do not willingly abandon the homes of their childhood and the graves of their sires.

Their ingenuity is carried into every branch of manufacture. I have seen one of them, a lame boy, carefully unravel a piece of worsted saddle-girth, and in three months after, with instruments made by his own hands, produce the garters I enclose you. They were intended as a present to myself, and to be used to tie the leather leggins necessary here to protect the limbs in riding through a thorny undergrowth in hunting game. Much as I value them, I cheerfully resign the gift to you, as a proof of what they are capable. I have watched this boy day after day with patient toil improving his imperfect implements, and working until he has produced that which I send you. It may be considered by the department a small matter, but with me it has enlarged significance; and I repeat that such ingenuity, (for this is but one instance in many I could mention,) and such constancy in labor, deserve and should receive the fostering care of a government which possesses in its treasury so many unappropriated millions.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. F. BEALE,

*Superintendent Indian Affairs.*

Hon. G. W. MANYPENNY,

*Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.*

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