

[Cal. Star's Sonoma Correspondence.]

SONOMA, CALIFORNIA, Feb. 15, 1848.

MR. EDITOR:—Man is said to be a reason-
ing animal, (brutes are too though in a less
degree,) but yet, how few conform their faith
in all things to its teachings. It is, however,
a redeeming fault, when philanthropy clouds
the vision and turns us aside from the path
of truth and right. Far better this than have
it obscured, or its warning voice unheeded, by
wild fanaticism and the base passions that pol-
lute the hearts of men.

With these sentiments I meet "Humanitas"
again, in all the kind feeling his name and
character calls for, to discuss further the na-
ture of man, particularly, that portion more
immediately the subject matter of our discourse
—the Indians of our country.

In my last was asserted the peculiar unfit-
ness of Americans—with rare exceptions—to
have any intercourse with, or any control over
Indians. Indeed, from the start, the policy of
our Government in dealing with them has
been altogether erroneous. Unless with some
few tribes, no treaty ought ever to have been
made with them for lands, removals, or other-
wise. The great fault has been in ranking

them too high in the scale of humanity, in considering them to be fully responsible beings, and capable of appreciating civilized rules of law, right, &c. As well had a nation undertake to make a treaty with boys of ten years of age, and allow them all the rights and privileges of manhood, as to act thus towards Indians. The old Spanish and the Mexican doctrine respecting these aborigines is the correct one; though I am far from upholding the murderous and brutal treatment they have received from so many of the citizens and agents of these governments; so inhuman and barbarous on the first settlement of America, as to require the promulgation of a bull by the Pope, declaring the natives of the West Indies and adjacent coast of the continent, to be human beings, subject to be treated with humanity, and capable of being Christianized—which last the church went about, by sending forth a vast number of missionary priests, to enlighten them in this faith. The policy of Britain, though like ours, incorrect, has usually succeeded better in conducting their intercourse with savages than any other nation of Christendom. This has been mainly owing to the character of her agents sent to deal with them; being men of experience, and having great discretionary power lodged in their hands; this last being used, in many instances, in order to carry out a policy of their own, and contrary to that of their government, being, in fact, that of the Spanish; in which course they have generally been less thwarted and opposed by their citizens, who have come in contact with the Indians, than is the case with the Americans. 'Tis thus the Hudson's Bay Company, and other English traders and officers act, and, as stated in my last article, with full success; but being divested of that sanguinous character belonging to too many of the "pompous and audacious" Castillian race, the natives have been uniformly treated in a humane and protecting manner.

Our nation is forever boasting of its overflowing philanthropy, and parental care and regard for the red man. This sentiment no doubt fully actuates the government and people at large; but yet what good can we see it has done the poor Indian, when we come to read his history, and trace out the effects of our policy. Besides, what credit does the Indian himself give us for these generous feelings towards him, and how stands our character abroad on this question?—injured man.

To those who seek for facts and would know the true condition of these Tropic Islanders prior to the desolating advent of the white man, I would advise them to read the classic, graphic, and truthful works of a Melville—to visit with him the peaceful, innocent, contented, and joyous little valley of Typee, inhabited by "Pagan cannibals," and then turn their gaze upon their immoral, filthy and degenerate, civilized and Christianized brethren of the Hawaiian and other islands of the Pacific. If Humanitas has any surplus sympathy to expend upon the Indians, let him study their history here, where he will find ample occasion to draw it all forth, and subjects more interesting and better worthy his notice than the semi-brutes in our midst.

Yours,

PACIFIC.

ings towards him, and now stands our character abroad on this question?—perjured, tyrannical, and mean—rivaling even the Spanish; and nearly all arising from our ignorance of Indian character, and the unwise mode of treating them. The Indians have frequently, and with too much truth I am sorry to say, thrown in our teeth the farsical treaties we make with them. They say to us: 'You acknowledge our right to our lands and homes, but wishing a portion for your increasing people, are anxious to purchase from us. We are at first, perhaps, all opposed to any sale; but by and by, by threatening, bribing, and making drunk a portion of our chiefs, these sign their assent to the transfer. The document, though still illegal, and unbinding on the tribe, is good sufficient for your purposes, the balance, though still unwilling, knowing full well the penalty of longer refusal—trespass upon our soil, to have it taken forcibly from us, and we degraded slaves and outcasts among you whites, or else war and death.'

And war and death has marked our connection with the Indians from the start, down to the present time, more than half of which I hesitate not to say, might have been averted by pursuing a contrary action towards them. Instead of this humbugging mockery of a treaty, with a body of men incapable of understanding such, or unwilling to make them, had we ever told the Indians 'We wish the land you are on, here is the price we pay for it, and yonder is the new home we have selected for you, which, we wish you to be at by such a time; we should have got all we now have, saved the lives of numbers of our citizens, preserved the respect and even love of the Indians, obtained credit for a more humane, honorable, and high-minded character abroad and felt more quiet in our own consciences on the subject of their treatment.

But now for some of the romance which Humanitas tries to throw around the wild son of nature, and I admit there is a romance of reality and comparative innocence connected with a portion of them whilst still existing in their primitive state, uncontaminated by contact with the white race; and uncursed and damned, temporarily and eternally by the teachings of Christian Missionaries. The wild roving and independent Cheyennes and Sioux of the Rocky Mountains and Missouri plains, are the finest race of Indians I have ever met with, possessing more generous and redeeming traits, and fewer vices than any others of the kind, simply from having had less knowledge and intercourse with the whites. Mountaineers told me that the Blackfeet stood higher in their estimation, though mortal enemies, than any tribe through all this section, and will

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proportion as the structure of a Government gives force to Public Opinion; it is essential that Public Opinion should be Enlighte

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STAR. OPINION IN ENGLAND RELATIVE TO THE