

"Lo, the Poor Indian!"

One of the most infamous practices known to modern times has been carried on for several months past against the aborigines of California. It has been the custom of certain disreputable persons to steal away young Indian boys and girls, and carry them off and sell them to white folks for whatever they could get. In order to do this, they are obliged in many cases to kill the parents: for, low as they are in the scale of humanity, they have that instinctive love of their offspring which prompts them to defend them at the sacrifice of their own lives.

In the counties of Solano, Sonoma and Napa, there are a good many Indians, more especially in the neighborhood of Russian River. There is also a class more degraded than the Indians, low down in the scale as the latter are. They are not Americans, nor Europeans: they are Mexicans, or *greasers*, and their practice is to go among the Indians, and, if necessary, kill off the old ones and seize the callow brood, and spirit it away to where the genteel white people live, and sell out to those who will pay best for them. The Indians are kept in perfect dread of these kidnappers, and whenever a white man approaches, the timid young ones run away and hide in the grass and bushes, while the old ones form in a line with their bows and arrows to save them from being snatched away. It is common for them to ride in among the Indians, and while some of them throw javalots over the heads of the parents and drag them away, sometimes killing them and sometimes leaving them half dead, others seize on the boys and girls and spirit them away. The kidnappers pay no more attention to the shrieks and lamentations of the parent Indians than does the hunter when he carries off the young of the wild beasts. They kill them with the same unscrupulousness. Besides taking away the young ones, they compel those

and while some of them throw lariats over the heads of the parents and drag them away, sometimes killing them and sometimes leaving them half dead, others seize on the boys and girls and spirit them away. The kidnappers pay no more attention to the shrieks and lamentations of the parent Indians than does the hunter when he carries off the young of the wild beasts. They kill them with the same unscrupulousness. Besides taking away the young ones, they compel those who are too old to sell to do their labor. During the period of the last harvest, they collected a large number of them, and compelled them to labor, tying them together and putting them under the charge of other Indians, whom they paid for their services.

These infamous practices have been carried on to some extent for a long time, and we fear, with the knowledge and consent of many white people in the vicinity. The latter do not object to the purchase of a young Indian, though they would hesitate about stealing them away, especially if it was necessary to kill the old ones in order to do it. We are informed that the authorities in those counties where these practices are most notorious are very remiss in their duty, and wink at many things that come under their observation, which ought to consign their perpetrators to the State Prison or the gallows. It is not only hard to get testimony necessary to convict, but some of the officials are said to exhibit a willingness to see the unholy practice continued.

The Indian Agent, Col. Henley, has been at work, with the assistance of Major M'Daniel, for months trying to break up the infamous trade, and has had persons constantly employed to ferret out facts and testimony. Of this we were advised several weeks ago, and for fear lest any publication of the knowledge we possessed might defeat his plans, we forbore making any comment at that time. He has already succeeded in getting one of the wretches convicted and put into the State Prison, and some half dozen others under indictment. He thinks he has secured all the

we forbore making any comment at that time. He has already succeeded in getting one of the wretches convicted and sentenced to the State Prison, and some half dozen others are under indictment. He thinks he has the evidence that will convict the whole of them. The persons who have been engaged in this wicked work are now very much alarmed in that neighborhood where it has been carried on most extensively, and Col. Henley thinks that it will not be ventured on again there. But in other parts of the State it is practised to a great extent, and the parties who are engaged in it are probably unaware of the penalty to which they are liable and likely to suffer. We are told that in the northern part of the State, that even American citizens are so lost to all sense of humanity and justice as to hunt down the poor Indians and rob them of their offspring. It is a State Prison offence, and we trust that those engaged in it may suffer the full penalty of the law.

The present law, bearing on offences of this kind, is very defective, and it is incumbent on the Legislature to pass another more stringent and comprehensive. It should be a State Prison crime not only to steal away the Indian children, but also to buy them or sell them. Provision has been made for the binding out of Indian children whenever they are found having no parents to look after them. In such cases it is a favor to them for humane people to take them and bring them up, but the idea of killing the old ones for the sake of stealing the young is horrible to contemplate. Humanity demands that such practices should be stopped; the good name of the State demands it, and we trust the Legislature will not adjourn without passing a law that will effectually check it.