

The Diggings -- Indian Difficulties.

Correspondence of the Sacramento Transcript
KENTUCKY BAR, Deer Creek
May 14th. 1850

Messrs. Editors: Having an opportunity of communicating. I hasten to seize it. When I left your city, I calculated that I should have written ere this but not having much to write at present I delayed it. On our journey here, nothing of moment occurred until we got to within thirty miles of Deer Creek crossing. Here we camped on the third night and witnessed what was to me, at least, a most novel mode of disposing of sick and dead. We found some four or five hundred Indians encamped in the centre of the valley. These kept up a most hideous noise all night--shouting, singing, crying, dancing, jumping, and various other noises and manoeuvres at the same time. many of the squaws were plastered over with some shining black stuff, after this fashion: the head was shaven and plastered over--a streak over the forehead, one down the nose and each side of the face, and another across the chin just below the lower lip. This ceremony, as far as I could understand from them, was intended to drive away the evil spirit, which was tormenting the sick, (a chief and five others) and the latter part was the lamentations for the dead, or more properly speaking, singing the praises of the dead, for their many virtues whilst living. These were sung whilst the body was consuming, it being their custom to burn the dead, and invariably to perform the ceremony at night. Much of the ceremony strongly reminded me of the Jewish lamentation for the dead, especially the singing and sackcloth and ashes. It is indeed true that they were not dressed in sackcloth, nor indeed, did they throw ashes upon their heads, but they squatted in the ashes, and were dressed in a peculiar fashion. The mourning women were peculiarly Jewish, yet much paganism has undoubtedly crept in, if indeed, they do obtain these funeral rites from that source. These Indians were particularly civil to us but did not like our approaching too closely, so that much which I should have liked to have examined more minutely, I was obliged to guess at. Certain it is, that these Indians are not idolaters, and that they believe in a future state of re-

These Indians are not idolators, and that they believe in a future state of reward and punishment. This is to us interesting to know. As far as I could understand them, the Good Spirit (Wosock) is either the sun or fire.

The mining operations upon this creek are not so good yet as they will be probably after the water falls, yet, still some keep at it, although hardly making expenses. There is gold here, and of good quality, yet it is hard to obtain, as the bar cannot be worked for the water, at present. But it is my opinion, that when the creek is dammed off and drained it will pay very handsome profits to the enterprising companies so engaged.

But the most wonderful part of my budget of news is to come. The Indians have again been murdering our white population. And this time, it has assumed a more than ordinary systematic appearance, and one in which to me appears to have been urged on by a certain class of whites. Certain it is, that heretofore, whenever any trouble has occurred between the miners and the Indians, the latter would fly for protection to this class. It is said, also, a general council of the different tribes has been convened, and a war of extermination determined upon. And what gives color to this report is, that small squads of the whites and solitary travellers, are now daily attacked. On Bear River, a man by the name of Hoyt, formerly belonging to Johnson's ranch, was murdered. And only last Thursday, the mill in Grass Valley, but four miles from us, was attacked and a man of the name of Holt murdered, his brother barely escaping with life, having sixteen or seventeen arrows shot into his body as he retreated, fighting them with rocks, the only weapons of defence he could obtain. It appears that they (the Indians) had at first approached him in a friendly manner, and even shook hands with him; they then passed into the mill, where they murdered his brother and another man, and set the building on fire; he then broke and run, with the Indians in full pursuit, but he succeeded in reaching a place of safety.

The same day, a man discovered an Indian who had robbed him, and chased him with a bowie knife into a store; the rest of the Indians begged to be allowed to punish him themselves; they then took him, tied him up, and flogged him severely. This satisfied him, and nothing further was done by him against the Indian.— Next day, a party of seventy-five whites went out to hunt up the Indians, when it was ascertained that the Indians had retreated towards the snow, having in their possession Hoyt's negro and cattle. Towards evening, they came up with the red skins, when a fight took place, which resulted in the whites being eleven killed.

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They then retreated with a few prisoners. Yesterday, they brought one of them down to Boger's tent, and sent for the wounded Holt, to see if he could recognise him as one of the murderers of his brother. I did not learn the result, but understood they shot him about sundown. There have been several other depredations in our neighborhood lately.

Mr. Gorham had a large mule shot by two Indians, in broad day-light; and at the same time they attempted to drive off his other mules and horses, but were frustrated by some whites who gave chase to them. This was done by two Indians who had been employed by Dr. Lewis immediately in our neighborhood. A black man was shot dead the other day, whilst driving his team: and only yesterday, another attempt was made on a teamster, with a double-barrelled shot gun, missing him, but wounding his oxen. Indeed, so bold have these "cursed varmints" become, that it is unsafe for a man to go a mile from camp, unless he is armed cap-a-pie, and even then, it is not too safe to go far. Besides all this, there is one more, who is known to be missing. Captain Ford went out prospecting the other day, and was expected home Friday or Saturday evening. He has not returned yet, and it is feared that he has fallen into the hands of the Indians.

Thus, you see, we are thrown upon our own resources. Some time since, a white man who had escaped from the Indians, after a chase of fifteen miles, applied to the authorities at the fort for assistance, but was laughed at, and help denied him, although his partner had been murdered, and he himself wounded with an arrow through the arm. If the United States will not protect us in the mines, can they blame us, if we take the matter in our own hands, and deal out such justice as seems to us best adapted to the exigencies of the case!

By-the-byre can you tell me what has become of the Indian Commissioners appointed for California, or whether they have arrived as yet? Their presence is much needed here, to make treaties with the Indians. If in the country, what have they done? You will hear from me soon again, if not killed or scalped. At present, I have only to subscribe myself

A DEER CREEK MINER.

P. S.—I understand this evening that Mr. McKinley, of Johnson's ranch, was chased by six Indians, and that he has shot one. And further, the United States troops have taken the field against the red skins. Three chiefs have been killed; two I have learned the names of, or at least the names the whites have given them: Luke and Warluke. Warluke was a chief who always planned the attacks, but rarely went out against the whites.

Daily Alta California

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