

The Northern Indians.

We have had several interesting interviews with a gentleman by the name of W. B. Watkins, who is so very well acquainted with the Indian tribes of our northern counties, that we believe the information he has communicated will be of general interest to California and our friends in the Atlantic States. Hence our selection of it as a leading subject for to-days reflection.

We believe that the general impression which has been conveyed by the most of descriptions of California Indians, is that they are the lowest expression of humanity that can be found on the earth—that they are constitutionally of the very weakest order of human beings; physically, morally and mentally. But the more we see and hear of these Indians, the better acquainted we become with their habits; especially in war, the less are we disposed to believe that they have had full justice done them. We cannot think them so degraded in the scale or organization as common rumor would make them, and at the same time we do not wonder that such descriptions of them should have been written; for it must be remembered that those who have been the subjects of description, have generally been the inoffensive, harmless and inactive few who cling to the valleys, and who are frequently seen watching with curious gaze the movements and ways of their pale-faced neighbors. The valley Indians, however, of California cannot be regarded as a proper criterion by which to judge the more numerous mountain tribes that are now giving our people an earnest of the troubles and injuries which they are destined ultimately to entail upon them.

There would be probably little difficulty to be apprehended from the valley Indians, if there were not more bold and warlike tribes to lead them into a collision with the whites. But with such fearless, brave, daring and cunning Indians as some of our northern tribes, there is much to be feared, not alone from their own warlike operations but from the influence

warlike operations, but from the influence they will probably exert over the more docile and friendly ones of the valleys.

From Mr. Watkins' account of several of these tribes, we suppose there are no Indians in the United States whose physical qualities and native shrewdness make them more powerful or cautious in war than these. Two of these tribes seem peculiarly to outvie the others in their war and thieving exploits. These are the Pitt River Indians, who range between Reading's Springs and Shasta Valley. This tribe is represented as being composed of most powerful athletic men, who seem to have inherited a spirit of warfare, and delight in nothing so much as the perilous incidents of daring thefts or bold fighting. They are represented as being fearless to a wonderful degree; so bold that they will dare the Americans to a general fight or single combat. To frighten them by demonstrations of danger is out of the question.— Killing their comrades by their sides only makes them more daringly bold and powerful in their movements. On the road between the points indicated for some 130 miles, these Indians oblige traders and miners to keep a constant watch, and even with this they cannot escape the most serious depredations upon their property, and frequently they are most vilely and mercilessly murdered. Their general system of warfare is to steal the animals of a company of packers at night, and the next morning, they conceal themselves in such a way as to murder the men separately while they go out in search of the animals stolen.

A hundred and fifty miles from the grounds of these Pitt River Indians, is another tribe nearly equal, not only in physical prowess, but in warlike spirit and malignant hatred of the whites. These are called the Rogue River Indians, and they have almost intercepted all communication with Oregon on the emigrant route. It is said that these Indians have joined the Pitts in their warfare against the whites.

Indians, and they have almost intercepted all communication with Oregon on the emigrant route. It is said that these Indians have joined the Pitts in their warfare against the whites. The Shasta and the Klamath Indians are little inferior in point of vigorous and athletic form, and both of these tribes have shown a great disposition to imitate the Pitts in their depredations upon the property and lives of the miners and packers. A treaty was made with the Shasta Indians by some of our citizens, headed by an Alcalde, but on the night of the same day the Shastas made an attack upon the treaty, making party on behalf of the authorities, supposing we presume, that they would not be found in a usual state of defence. These Indians have generally no means of warfare except their bows and arrows, but they are so active, so sly, and so bold, that they steal upon packers or miners unperceived, and sufficiently near to drive an arrow head into their bodies; and these arrow heads are of such a shape that they are seldom extracted with the body of the arrow, and being bulky, rough and irritating, they most always prove fatal.

Mr. Watkins says, that he has seen a number of such wounds, and does not think that these Indians poison their arrows at all. He has seen these Indians in large and small numbers; seen them when engaged in stealing operations, and in warfare, but never saw them headed or associated with white men, and he does not believe that they are lead on or furnished with implements of warfare by the whites. They seem to be Indians whose make, ambition and habits fit them naturally for the bold and thrilling adventures of plunder or war.

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