

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA,
July 28, 1851.

DEAR SIR: I wrote you last from Camp Belt, on King's river, under date of 14th of May, enclosing a copy of a treaty concluded at that place between myself, as commissioner on the part of the government, and twelve tribes of Indians, which I hope you have received.

Since that time I have effected three other treaties, copies of which I should have forwarded to you from Los Angeles, but was prevented by severe indisposition, which lasted until after the departure of the mail steamer; and having determined to return through the Indian country to this place, I have deferred writing to you until my arrival here, which was this morning; and I now hasten to give you a brief account of my "actings and doings," from the date of my last letter to you to the date of my return to this place.

Immediately after concluding the treaty on King's river, I despatched runners to the tribes north of Kern river, desiring them to meet me on the Cahwia river, at a place designated, some thirty or forty miles distant from our camp on King's river. As soon as provisions arrived from Stockton (distant about one hundred and eighty miles) for the troops, we moved on to the place appointed on the Cahwia river. On my arrival there I found delegations had already arrived on the ground from some five or six tribes, and others were expected. I was somewhat surprised, from the fact that I had previously learned from the Indians at King's river that there were only three tribes north of Kern river, from the mountains to the lakes, untreated with. Whether this information resulted from their ignorance, or disposition to deceive, I cannot tell; but, at all events, by the 28th of May delegates from seven tribes, numbering from twelve to fifteen hundred persons, had assembled. Learning that there were yet other tribes north of Kern river, but that they were unwilling to come to the Cahwia to treat, but would meet me at some other point more convenient to them, I immediately commenced negotiating a treaty with the seven tribes represented. I found them ready and willing to treat. Having committed many depredations upon the lives and property of the whites, and dreading the consequences of their hostile conduct, I found them, with the exception of the "Ko-ya-te" tribe, willing to treat upon almost any terms. The "Ko-ya-tes" being a large tribe, and the chief—"Pedro"—a cunning, shrewd, and vicious Indian, I had some trouble in getting him to consent to leave the country in which he lived and remove to the country which I propose giving to them, (the same designated in the treaty, a copy of which I herewith enclose to you); though, after

much "talk" and counselling together, he finally agreed to the terms proposed, and on the 30th May the treaty was formally signed, &c.

The country given up by these tribes, or some of them, embraces some of the best lands in California, being a portion of what is known in this part of the State as the "Four Creek" country. The country given to them is generally inferior, but has a sufficiency of good soil, water, &c., to answer all their purposes for all time to come.

After agreeing upon the terms of the treaty, but before it had been drawn up and signed, I despatched runners to the other tribes north of Kern river, and desired them to meet me on Paint creek, at a point designated, some forty-five miles south from our camp on the Cahwia. By forced marches we reached the place designated on the evening of the 1st of June. I found the chiefs, captains, and principal men of four tribes, with many of their people, already on the ground. Those tribes number about two thousand; one portion of them living near Buena Vista lake, and the others on the headwaters of Tule river and Paint creek. Those living near the lakes have the reputation (to use the language of the country) of being "good Indians," having always been friendly to "the Americans," though, like the other tribes in the San Joaquin and Tulare valleys, uncompromising enemies to Spaniards and Mexicans or Californians.

I found them very willing to treat, after having explained to them the principles upon which we proposed treating with the Indians in California. I found them more intelligent, more athletic, and better qualified for either peace or war, than any Indians I had seen in California. They were a terror to the Spaniards, being greatly their superiors in war. They have great influence over the neighboring tribes, and, until very recently, have been at war with the Cahwia and other tribes inhabiting the "Four Creek" country. On the 3d of June I concluded a treaty with them, which was formally signed, &c., a copy of which I herewith enclose to you.

Having treated with all the tribes between the Sierra Nevada and the "coast range" north of Kern river, and learning that there were several tribes near the terminus of the Tulare valley and south of Kern river, I immediately despatched runners to them, requesting them to meet me at the Texon (Tahone) Pass, about seventy-five miles distant from Paint creek. I reached the pass at the southern extremity of the Tulare valley on the night of the 6th; on the 7th the chiefs and captains of eleven tribes or bands, with the most of their people, came in, and on the 10th I concluded a treaty with them, which was formally signed, &c., a copy of which I also enclose herewith to you. This treaty embraced the last of the tribes in the San Joaquin and Tulare valleys from the Stanislaus river north to Los Angeles south, including the whole country from the top of the Sierra Nevada to the coast, embracing a district of country from four to five hundred miles in length, and from one hundred and fifty to two hundred in width.

The tribes included in the last treaty are mostly small bands, mere remnants of tribes once large and powerful; but what with the draughts made upon them by the Spanish missions, (several of which are located just across the mountains within their immediate vicinity) for laborers, and the almost exterminating wars that from time to time have been

carried on among themselves, together with the ravages of diseases *intentionally* spread among them by the Spaniards, who feared them, they have in some instances been almost annihilated. The Uras, once among the most powerful tribes in the valley, have been by such means reduced to a mere handful, and do not now number more than twenty persons; and among the Texons I met with an "*old man*," the last of his tribe, at one time a large and powerful tribe, but war and pestilence had done their work, and he alone was left to prove that such a tribe had once existed.

After concluding the last-mentioned treaty, I started for Los Angeles, distant about one hundred miles. At that place I hoped to receive through Colonel McKee, the disbursing agent, the *means* necessary to enable me to prosecute my mission south to the Colorado river and to the southern boundary of the State, but in this I was disappointed. On reaching Los Angeles, on the 16th June, I received a letter from Colonel McKee, informing me that he had sent to me three small packages of goods which I had ordered, but informing me that he had no money. This information placed me in rather an unpleasant situation. When I separated with Colonel McKee on the San Joaquin river, about the 1st of May, he informed me that he could not furnish me with any funds, but that on his return to San Francisco he would send me some at King's river, about the middle of May. I received from him two hundred and thirty-one dollars, (\$231) which he informed me he had charged to my private or salary account. By the time I reached Los Angeles I had exhausted, in the way of presents to the Indians, all the goods (except a few blankets) with which I had been supplied. Finding myself without goods for presents to the Indians, without money—having not only exhausted the \$231, but, in addition, what little I had of my own private means, besides some that I borrowed on my own individual responsibility—and having pushed our credit as far as I deemed it prudent, I determined to discharge the escort that had accompanied me through to that place, and either return to San Francisco, or proceed down the coast with an escort of citizens, who kindly proposed to accompany me to the Indian villages in the vicinity. Another reason influenced me to dispense with the military escort at that place. I learned from persons well acquainted with the country through which I would have to travel to reach the Colorado, that at this season of the year it would be impossible to march a body of troops (foot) across the great sandy desert, over which we would have to travel to reach the Colorado, the distance across the desert being over one hundred miles, without one drop of water, or one blade of grass, or vegetation of any kind. Accordingly, on the 17th day of June I addressed a note to Captain E. D. Keyes, who had command of the escort, dispensing with the further services of his command; a copy of which, together with his reply, I herewith enclose.

Having determined on visiting some tribes of Indians living some fifty or sixty miles from Los Angeles, (between whom and a party of *lawless* white men a fight had recently taken place, in which some dozen of the latter had been killed) and try to effect treaties with them, I despatched runners to them, desiring them to meet me at a point named on a given day; but before the time for my departure to the

place designated, and before I had recovered from my illness, news reached me that an outbreak among the Indians in the Tulare valley, with whom I had treated, was threatened, and would in all probability take place. Under the circumstances, I concluded it would be better for the country, and more in accordance with the duties of my mission, to return, and if possible secure what had been done, and prevent the outbreak of a large body of Indians, who had but recently been engaged in open hostilities with the whites, than to prosecute a treaty with a few tribes who for years had been entirely at peace with the whites, with the exception of the recent affair of which I have spoken, and to which they were influenced by some of the citizens themselves, and for the doing of which they were sustained by the better portion of the community.

Although barely able to travel, I employed seven men, well armed and mounted, and with them and my interpreter and secretary, on the 30th of June I started for the Tulare valley. On reaching the valley I learned from the Indians that some lawless white men and Sonorians had visited their "rancheria," or village, and offered some violence to one of their "headmen," but were deterred from doing him any serious injury by the timely arrival of a party of *gentlemen*, who happened to be travelling through the country at the time. This affair had produced some little distrust on the part of these Indians.

I remained a day or two with them, called in the neighboring chiefs, held a talk with them, made them some presents, and left them *well* satisfied. I then proceeded to visit the most of the tribes at those villages in the Tulare and San Joaquin valleys. I found some distrust on the part of a few tribes; but after talking with them and making a few presents, they professed to be well satisfied; and I am *convinced*, that if the whites will not molest them, and the government will in good faith carry out the treaties that have been made with them, they will in good faith comply with the stipulation on their part. But much is to be feared from the conduct of reckless and vicious white men, too many of whom are to be found travelling over the country in bands or parties, murdering and robbing those who happen to be so unfortunate as to fall into their power; in truth, sir, I feel less fear of danger, in travelling through the country, from Indians, than from *white* men.

In conclusion, upon this subject, I can assure you that all the Indians in the San Joaquin and Tulare valleys, who a few months since were at open war with the whites, are now entirely peaceable and quiet; and instead of robbing the "ranchos" of the citizens, and driving off and feeding upon their mules, horses and cattle, are now at work, many digging gold, with which they purchase clothing, food, &c., whilst others are employed in fishing, hunting, or gathering the roots, nuts, seeds, &c., on which to subsist.

With many of them a feeling of emulation and interest has been excited; and I have no hesitation in saying that, with proper care and attention, in a very few years they will be greatly in advance of the Indians of the Atlantic slope in wealth, civilization and intelligence.

I had some trouble in getting the "miners" and others, on my return through the different "Indian reserves," to leave the reserves, but succeeded in prevailing on the most of them to leave. Although it was a

primary object with us to withdraw the Indians from the "gold diggings," and from the best portions of the lands in the country, in which we have succeeded beyond our most sanguine hopes, yet evil-disposed and jealous-hearted men soon succeeded in making an impression upon the minds of the miners that the "Indian reserves" embraced the richest mines in the whole country. At once an excitement was gotten up, and hundreds flocked to the "reserves," expecting to find "rich diggings." Finding, however, that they were *deceived*, and that there were no mines within "the reserves" that "would pay," many left; and the few that remained to "prospect" further were, with a few exceptions, prevailed upon to leave; and the few who *obstinately* remain, I think will leave in a short time, as I am well satisfied that there are no "diggings" within the Indian territories that will pay the *white man* for his labor.

The treaties not having yet been ratified, and there being so small a number of government troops in the country, as to preclude the possibility of having a sufficient force stationed at the different points absolutely necessary to the proper execution of the terms of the treaties by both whites and Indians, we are compelled to pursue towards the whites at least a *temporizing* course. This I find the more necessary from the *peculiar* character of the population of this country.

Since reaching here, I learn from Colonel McKee, the disbursing agent, that he has no funds on hand, or, indeed, in prospective, to enable me at this time further to prosecute my mission in the way of treaty-making; that he has not been advised even of the means of realizing the \$25,000 appropriated by the last Congress, and that, were he able to do so, the whole amount would be required to meet the liabilities already incurred by us in the discharge of the trust confided to us.

I shall therefore, immediately after the arrival of the mail steamer from Panama, due here about the 1st of August, return to the San Joaquin, and by every means in my power try to maintain peace and quiet between the whites and Indians in the San Joaquin and Tulare valleys, until such time as I may be placed in funds or means to prosecute treaties with the Indian tribes in the extreme southern portion of the State and on the Colorado river.

I have now, sir, a request to make, which is respectfully to ask the permission of the department to visit my family in Kentucky during the next winter. I would not make this request if I believed that the interest of the high trust confided to me would, in the least, suffer from your compliance with it; but we may reasonably expect that the "*rainy season*" will commence about the 1st of November, (the usual time of its commencement,) after which time it is perfectly impossible to transact any out-door business of importance, and wholly impracticable to travel over any portion of the country before the middle of April or the 1st of May; hence I could render but little, if any, service in connexion with my mission in this country. Again: if you think it advisable, and would authorize me to do so, I could hire an escort of thirty or forty men to accompany me to the Colorado, and, if necessary, through to Texas or Missouri. On my way to the Colorado I could and would visit *all* the Indian tribes in southern California not yet treated with, (and there are many on the Colorado,) and if possible form treaties with them. From my knowledge of the expense attend-

S. Doc. 4.

127

ing the military escort that accompanied me on my late expedition through the San Joaquin and Tulare valleys to Los Angeles, I am *well satisfied* that, if my suggestion should be approved, I can save to the government, by employing such an escort instead of a regular military force, at least \$25,000. Such a force would move with more expedition, and require much less transportation and provisions, &c., than an escort of infantry troops—the only kind that would or could be furnished, in all probability, by the military commandant of this division, for such a service. However, sir, I only make the suggestion with a view to economize as far as possible; but, in view of all the circumstances connected with the discharge of the duties of my mission, I would again most respectfully ask that, by some order or otherwise, I be permitted to visit my family, whom I hastily left on the receipt of instructions accompanying my appointment. I hope, sir, you will pardon me for having pressed this matter upon your kind consideration.

In compliance with your instructions I will, at as early a day as practicable, prepare my report as commissioner, and forward it together with the original treaties entered into between myself and the various Indian tribes with whom I have treated.

With sentiments of the highest regard, I am, sir, your obedient servant, respectfully,

G. W. BARBOUR.

Hon. LUKE LEA, *Commissioner*.

I would be pleased to hear from you on the subject of my return at your earliest convenience.

G. W. B.
