

CAMP AT DURKEE'S FERRY, ON THE KLAMATH,
Near the junction of the Trinity, October 3, 1851.

SIR: My last despatch to your department was from camp on Eel river under date of 12th ult., and a postscript thereto acknowledged the receipt of your favors of 25th and 27th of June. I have now to report that on the 24th ult. I left Union, at the head of Humboldt bay, and the first day made twelve miles on the trail across the mountains in the direction of the Klamath. On the 29th we arrived here, and have been using every exertion, both by the use of white and Indian guides and runners, to induce the various tribes living on these rivers to come in.

Generally the Indians in this quarter are a bold, fearless, independent race; have had but little intercourse with whites, and no idea whatever of having any *superiors*. Unfortunately, in some of the frays and difficulties which have occurred on this frontier during the last summer, the whites have dealt treacherously with the Indians; invited them to their camps, with promises of friendship, and in some instances protection, and then fired upon them, killing some and wounding others. The *Wech-pecks*, at the junction of the rivers where our camp is, had three rancheriae burnt last spring by a party of packers, and make it a *sine qua non* that I shall pay them therefor, and also for a young chief and a squaw who were shot. As a few dozen of chopping-axes and files will settle the first, and a few pairs of blankets and pounds of beads the second, I have promised them compensation, and they have agreed that the other tribes above and below may come in and unite in a treaty, to settle all disputes and misunderstandings. Unfortunately, there are but few white men in the country who understand the Indian language; and several of those, though apprized of my visit, and of the importance of their services, have gone to the mines in pursuit of private gains. I have secured, however, the assistance of a Mr. W. S. Thompson, from Trinidad, and Mr. C. W. Durkee, (a cousin of the member of Congress from Wisconsin,) who owns the ferry here, and will be able to communicate with the Indians, *if we can only get them in*. To-day our prospects are improving, and I hope in two or three days to be able to advise you either of my success or failure. The weather is cloudy, and almost every day or night more or less rain. This admonishes us of the approach of the dreaded *rainy season*, and of the importance of getting as speedily as possible out of these mountains. My plan still is to proceed on up the Klamath to Scott's river, and from thence into the Sacramento valley, and I hope Major Wessells, with his men, will remain and accompany myself and party; but his dragoons are poorly accommodated for a winter campaign, and he may conclude it his duty to return with them by the nearest route to Benicia. In this event I shall venture up the Klamath alone, relying upon my own party, some eighteen or twenty in all, for protection.

From this point up we shall enter and travel in the mining district, which, though less populous than it was before these Indian difficulties, has nevertheless some parties at work on almost every bar. If the weather should change suddenly, and make travelling difficult and dangerous, I will encamp my party, leave my secretary or commissary in charge of what goods, provisions, &c., I may have left, and endeavor

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to make my own way back to San Francisco, by means of an Indian canoe down the Klamath, which river enters the ocean some forty miles north of Trinidad, and twelve miles above the celebrated Gold Bluff.

I am, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

REDICK McKEE.

CHARLES E. MIX, Esq.,

Acting Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington City.

P. S.—I regret to see it stated in a New York paper just received, that the “Hon. Luke Lea, Indian Commissioner,” was recently killed by an accident near Fort Leavenworth, while out on official duty.

Although I have not had the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Mr. Lea, I had formed a high opinion of his ability and integrity as a public officer. Until differently advised, I shall therefore address my letters to *C. E. Mix, esq., Acting Commissioner.*

R. McKEE.
