

*The Indian difficulties*.—Considerable excitement is manifest in several of the mining districts, in consequence of the recent Indian outrages, to be reported in our next, and while we, in common with a community, deplore these unhappy events, and feel truly and justly indignant at the perfidy and barbarity exhibited, there are yet motives, the best of motives, based upon the soundest philanthropy, as we shall prove, that have induced us to reserve for ourself space for a few words upon the subject of our Indian difficulties.

Seven of our most worthy and inoffensive citizens have been suddenly murdered—treacherously and brutally murdered, by a party of Indians belonging to a degraded, ignorant and depraved tribe; murdered, too, without apparant cause, by a people whose well-known thievish propensities have upon more than one previous occasion brought their backs to the lash. Of course our countrymen are greatly exasperated against their Indian neighbors, and in the absence of *all* law, civil and military, to procure retributive justice, nothing remains but to hunt down the offenders and deal with them as common law or usage directs. In this coolly-drawn and correct determination it is, perhaps, unnecessary to say they were sustained by every intelligent and sober minded man in the mining region. But how are the perpetrators of the outrages to be apprehended? Their own people will not deliver them over to justice. The whites daily become more incensed, and the Indian Agent of this Department to whom an appeal is made, declares himself powerless, through the negligence of our government in furnishing means for exercising the functions of his office. It is now that the cry of *extermination* is raised—a thirst for indiscriminate

slaughter rages, and men, women and children, old and young, vicious and well-disposed, of the Indian race, wherever met with, are to be straightway shot down or knocked on the head, their villages plundered and burned and the frightened fugitives forced deeper in to the mountains, to starve—or to steal and plunder as shall henceforth appear.

In all this we have but a display of natural passions, says one; blood for blood, exclaims another; 'human nature,' says a *Stapleton*—but let us perfect the picture; let us make apparant with its lights, its shades—in a word, let us hear another story of our Indian difficulties.

It is not long since an Indian rancheria near Bear Creek was pounced upon by a small party of whites, and twenty-five of the unsuspecting inmates, of both sexes, taken and cruelly murdered. Why was this? It was because numerous thefts had been committed by Indians in that vicinity, and it was necessary to make an "example." But traced to cause more remote, a murder had been committed last fall by Indians in that neighborhood. (though still anterior to this, a fact scarcely worth mentioning however, several Indians had been killed by whites coming through from Oregon.) In connection with the above we hear that a man residing near the mouth of Feather River imperilled his life, in endeavoring to preserve that of a valuable Indian boy attached to the rancheria of his grounds. The reason assigned for the act, was that he had been suspected of crime, and "must be a great scoundrel." Three Indians were shortly afterwards hung, in justification of which act we are sorry to say we know nothing.

From these instances facts of this kind

...and these instances — facts fresh in mind,  
for we have not sought after argument — it

may be readily believed the Indians have wreaked vengeance for deeds of blood, the bloody and cruel murders recently committed on the American River. And having witnessed the shedding of blood of either race, it now rests with our countrymen to determine whether security for life or property can hereafter exist among the Gold washers of the mountains in which these events have transpired. To talk of *extermination*, is to reckon without the host, for all who are intimate with the Indian character, and acquainted with the mountainous country inhabited by these tribes, can attest the extravagance of this idea. If, as is insisted upon by many, they are to be destroyed wherever met with, they will seek refuge in the mountain fastnesses, from which their frequent descents upon small parties of miners, for purposes of plunder and revenge, will be more to be dreaded than their continual presence and intercourse with our people. They will cut off the wanderer from his camp, and attack the camps by night, destroy and drive off animals, and in short create more mischief and become a source of greater annoyance to the miner than if their despicable arts were practiced in our midst and under the eye of the Law. What we most desire to impress upon the minds of our countrymen, however, is a more humane and christianized course of action. It does not become us, enlightened Americans of the nineteenth century, to sally forth against a weak and ignorant people, burn their villages, butcher women and children and return at night with our saddo horns *loaded with scalps!* Let us ferret out the perpetrators of crime, by ingenuous endeavours, as will suggest themselves to intelligent active minds, and thereupon visit the

severest penalty the Law affords. Let it be borne in mind we do not render ourselves a whit more secure from Indian depredation by *indiscriminate slaughter*, than by pursuing a humane method of treatment. A check upon the vicious inclinations of the worst, will arise with the rapid growth of society, and gradually they will recede before the advances of the white man, as is destined the Indian race in general. Thus shall a degraded and worthless people vanish from the face of the land; it is in vain to attempt their extermination by other means—let us not think of it.

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