

Shasta Courier, Volume 3, Number 24, 19 August 1854 — A Sabln tnucßß **u-s «lincurre4 ibrousb lb** Nirrrn .\« vartn. [ARTICLE]

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A Subterranean Pass discovered through the Sierra Nevada.

We take the following from the *Mariposa Chronicle* of the 5th inst. It may all be true, but it sounds as if somebody was romancing:—

We publish the annexed extract from a letter received a few days since, written by an old friend, whose explorations in different parts of California have greatly assisted in developing her immense resources. Should this subterranean pass prove as practicable for a railroad route as our correspondent anticipates, the whole subject will receive an impetus scarcely dreamed of by the most ardent imagination:

* * * Having heard Maj. S— speak of a very large and long cave that was somewhere near the head of the Yo-Semity Valley, and as the mammoth caves at Marble Springs, formed in the immense marble ledge that traverses the gold region of California, are more or less connected by fissures, it occurred to me that there might be a subterranean pass through the Sierra. The hostility of the Indians prevented my acting upon the idea at the time, but it was not forgotten, and as soon as the beneficent influences of Lieut. B—'s administration of Indian affairs had extended to that region, stimulated by a desire to render my name as illustrious as some of our distinguished California travellers, and at the same benefit my country, after amply providing for the undertaking, I commenced my exploration.

I had observed while out against the Indians in 1851, that some Indians we were pursuing disappeared at or near a certain point at the head of the valley, and although we examined every rock and bush in the vicinity, we were unable to obtain any clue to their hiding place. On our return from the expedition, the cave was mentioned to me incidentally, and I at once concluded that it was the secret haunt of the

Indians. I accordingly directed my attention to this point. After having searched for three days without the slightest prospect of success attending our efforts, I resolved to adopt another plan; but accident, or fortune, accomplished what no plan could have done. Clambering among the mill-dewed and mossy rocks at the base of the lofty cliff, I had become so dusty that it became necessary for me to bathe. The idea of taking a shower bath struck my fancy, and I at once repaired to the fall, which exceeds in height that of the celebrated fall of the Himalaya; ordinarily, one cannot approach nearer than one hundred yards of the falling body of water, owing to the spray or mist that hovers over and around the "cauldron;" but at this time there was a strong breeze blowing up the valley, sweeping aside the mist that had hitherto prevented my nearer approach. I was about divesting myself of my garments, when a gust of wind, stronger than any that had preceded it, exposed to my astonished and joyful sight the long-sought cave. My ablutions were forgotten; I hurried back to my party, and made known the wonderful and fortunate discovery.

The rest of the day was devoted to the preparation of torches; and on the following morning after a hasty breakfast, we commenced our exploration of the cave.

We had no difficulty in entering it, although we were thoroughly drenched by the sheet of water, back of which, protected by shelving rocks, was an open space, leading to the cave. I have not language to describe the feeling of awe with which I was struck upon entering the portals of this grand and glowing structure, made by no mortal hands. All that I had read of in my boyish romance, all that a vivid and erratic imagination had conceived of a subterranean world was tame and commonplace compared with this sublimely stupendous work of nature. But to proceed: With lighted torches we cautiously commenced our march, admiring the giant stalactites that reflected in magnified rays the light from our torches. We had proceeded but a short distance, when we observed what appeared to be a trail, worn in the rock. We

at once decided to follow it. We had followed it but a short distance, when, passing through a bed of dust, we discovered Indian tracks recently formed. We at first were startled at this discovery, but after a little reflection, we decided that in such a place tracks would remain apparently fresh for years—and then, after our fears had subsided, we were encouraged with the idea that the tracks would facilitate our exploration. We were correct in our supposition, for had we not followed the trail made by the Indians, we would have been left in more than Egyptian darkness. But I anticipate—accordingly we followed on, cheered by the hope of soon again emerging into the light of day. Of one thing we were assured—that there was an inlet as well as an outlet, for a strong current of air was meeting us, and our torches burned bright and rapidly—too rapidly, for our stock of fat pine was diminishing very fast. I thought of sending Mike back for a fresh supply, when turning a sharp angle of the passage, we met face to face two tall and manly looking Indians. Language cannot express the astonishment and rage that were depicted on their countenances upon beholding us, and had it been in their power, we would have been doomed to inevitable destruction. But after a while I ascertained that one of them spoke a little Spanish, and with some difficulty I made them understand that we had been directed through the mysterious passage by the Great Spirit. They then told me in broken Spanish, that we were scarcely half way through the pass—that a little further on was an immense chasm, but that it was bridged by logs—which we found petrified—and that there were other passages which led into lakes and rivers, but without any known outlet. They said that this pass was only known to their tribe and ourselves: it had been mentioned to Major S——, but had never been shown to him; that they were the great medicine men of their tribe, and were returning from a visit to the white tribe at the eastern end of the pass.—They then gave us some of their torches, bid us good bye, and departed. We congratulated each other on our good fortune, and continued our march in high spirits. We found the chasm a yawning abyss, into which had been thrown many victims of savage cruelty, for at the bot-

many remains of savage life. At the bottom, by the aid of a torch thrown down, we discovered the bones of many human frames. We found nothing more to obstruct our passage except a few massive boulders, which we however passed, and on the morning of the fourth day we entered the village of the white Indians.

VIRTUOUS WOMEN.—It has been well said, that the virtuous woman is an angel in dry goods and glory. She makes sunshine, blue sky, and happiness, wherever she goes. Her path is one of delicious roses, perfume and beauty. She is a sweet poem, written in rare curls, choice calico, and good principles.

SHAKESPEARE SLIGHTLY ALTERED

He never said a word ;
But, with a look of the deepest melancholy,
He sat, like Patience on an ottoman,
Waiting for his wife putting her bonnet on.

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