

MY MINING SPECULATION.

I BELIEVE the Lord has put me in the way of making a competency for my old age," said the dear old Doctor, as he seated himself in the armchair reserved for him at the cottage at North Beach.

"How?" I asked.

"I met a Texas man to-day, who told me of the discovery of an immensely rich silver mining district in Deep Spring Valley, Mono County, and he says he can get me in as one of the owners."

I laughingly made some remark expressive of incredulity. The honest and benignant face of the old Doctor showed that he was a little nettled.

"I have made full inquiry, and am sure this is no mere speculation. The stock will not be put upon the market, and will not be assessable. They propose to make me a trustee, and the owners, limited in number, will have entire control of the property. But I will not be hasty in the matter. I will make it a subject of prayer for twenty-four hours, and then if there be no adverse indications I will go on with it."

The next day I met the broad-faced Texan, and was impressed by him as the old Doctor had been.

It seemed a sure thing. An old prospector had been equipped and sent out by a few gentlemen, and he had found outcroppings of silver in a range of hills extending not less than three miles. Assays had been made of the ores, and they were found to be very rich. All the timber and water power of Deep Spring Valley had been taken up for the company under the general and local pre-emption and mining laws. It was a big thing.

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The beauty of the whole arrangement was that no "mining sharps" were to be let in; we were to manage it ourselves, and reap all the profits.

We went into it, the old Doctor and I, feeling deeply grateful to the broad-faced Texan who had so kindly given us the chance. I was made a trustee, and began to have a decidedly business feeling as such. At the meetings of "the board" my opinions were frequently called for, and were given with great gravity. The money was paid for the shares I had taken, and the precious evidences of ownership were carefully put in a place of safety. A mill was built near the richest of the claims, and the assays were good. There were delays, and more money was called for, and sent up. The assays were still good, and the reports from our superintendent were glowing. "The biggest thing in the history of California mining," he wrote; and when the secretary read his letter to the board, there was a happy expression on each face.

At this point I began to be troubled. It seemed, from reasonable ciphering, that I should soon be a millionaire. It made me feel solemn and anxious. I lay awake at night, praying that I might not be spoiled by my good fortune. The scriptures that speak of the deceitfulness of riches were called to mind, and I rejoiced with trembling. Many beneficent enterprises were planned, principally in the line of endowing colleges and paying church debts. (I had had an experience in this line.) There were further delays, and more money was called for. The ores were rebellious, and our "process" did not suit them. Fryborg and Deep Spring Valley were not the same. A new superintendent—one that understood rebellious ores—was employed at a higher salary. He reported that all was right, and that we might expect "big

news" in a few days, as he proposed to crush about seventy tons of the best rock "by a new and improved process."

The board held frequent meetings, and in view of the nearness of great results did not hesitate to meet the requisitions made for further outlays of money. They resolved to pursue a prudent but vigorous policy in developing the vast property when the mill should be fairly in operation.

All this time I felt an undercurrent of anxiety lest I might sustain spiritual loss by my sudden accession to great wealth, and continued to fortify myself with good resolutions.

As a matter of special caution, I sent for a parcel of the ore, and had a private assay made of it. The assay was good.

The new superintendent notified us that on a certain date we might look for a report of the result of the first great crushing and clean up of the seventy tons of rock. The day came. On Kearny Street I met one of the stockholders, a careful Presbyterian brother, who loved money. He had a solemn look, and was walking slowly, as if in deep thought. Lifting his eyes as we met, he saw me, and spoke: "*It is lead!*"

"What is lead?"

"Our silver mine in Deep Spring Valley."

Yes; from the seventy tons of rock we got eleven dollars in silver, and about fifty pounds of as good lead as was ever molded into bullets.

The board held a meeting the next evening. It was a solemn one. The fifty-pound bar of lead was placed in the midst, and was eyed reproachfully. I resigned my trusteeship, and they saw me not again. That was my first and last mining speculation. It failed somehow—but the assays were all very good.

DICK.

DICK was a Californian. We made his acquaintance in Sonora about a month before Christmas, *Anno Domini* 1855. This is the way it happened:

At the request of a number of families, the lady who presided in the curious little parsonage near the church on the hillside had started a school for little girls. The public schools might do for the boys, but were too mixed for their sisters—so they thought. Boys could rough it—they were a rough set, anyhow—but the girls must be reared according to the traditions of the old times and the old homes. That was the view taken of the matter then, and from that day to this the average California girl has been superior to the average California boy. The boy gets his bias from the street; the girl, from her mother at home. The boy plunges into the life that surges around him; the girl only feels the touch of its waves as they break upon the embankments of home. The boy gets more of the father; the girl gets more of the mother. This may explain their relative superiority. The school for girls was started on condition that it should be free, the proposed teacher refusing all compensation. That part of the arrangement was a failure, for at the end of the first month every little girl brought a handful of money, and laid it on the teacher's desk. It must have been a concerted matter. That quiet, unselfish woman had suddenly become a money-maker in spite of herself. (Use was found for the coin

in the course of events.) The school was opened with a Psalm, a prayer, and a little song in which the sweet voices of the little Jewish, Spanish, German, Irish, and American maidens united heartily. Dear children! they are scattered now. Some of them have died, and some of them have met with what is worse than death. There was one bright Spanish girl, slender, graceful as a willow, with the fresh Castilian blood mantling her cheeks, her bright eyes beaming with mischief and affection. She was a beautiful child, and her winning ways made her a pet in the little school. But surrounded as the bright, beautiful girl was, Satan had a mortgage on her from her birth, and her fate was too dark and sad to be told in these pages. She inherited evil condition, and perhaps evil blood, and her evil life seemed to be inevitable. Poor child of sin, whose very beauty was thy curse, let the curtain fall upon thy fate and name; we leave thee in the hands of the pitying Christ, who hath said, "Where little is given little will be required." Little was given thee in the way of opportunity, for it was a mother's hand that bound thee with the chains of evil.

Among the children that came to that remarkable academy on the hill was little Mary Kinneth, a thin, delicate child, with mild blue eyes, flaxen hair, a peach complexion, and the blue veins on her temples that are so often the sign of delicacy of organization and the presage of early death. Mike Kinneth, her father, was a drinking Irishman, a good-hearted fellow when sober, but pugnacious and disposed to beat his wife when drunk. The poor woman came over to see me one day. She had been crying, and there was an ugly bruise on her cheek.

"Your Riverence will excuse me," she said,

courtesying, "but I wish you would come over and spake a word to me husband. Mike's a kind, good craythur except when he is dhrinkin', but then he is the very Satan himself."

"Did he give you that bruise on your face, Mrs. Kinneth?"

"Yis. He came home last night mad with the whisky, and was breakin' iverything in the house. I tried to stop him, an' thin he bate me—O! he never did that before! My heart is broke!" Here the poor woman broke down and cried, hiding her face in her apron. "Little Mary was asleep, an' she waked up frightened an' cryin' to see her father in such a way. Seein' the child seemed to sober him a little, an' he stumbled onto the bed, an' fell asleep. He was always kind to the child, dhrunk or sober. An' there is a good heart in him if he will only stay away from the dhrink."

"Would he let me talk to him?"

"Yis; we belong to the old Church, but there is no priest here now, an' the kindness yer lady has shown to little Mary has softened his heart to ye both. An' I think he feels a little sick and ashamed this mornin', an' he will listen to kind words now if iver."

I went to see Mike, and found him half sick and in a penitent mood. He called me "Father Fitzgerald," and treated me with the utmost politeness and deference. I talked to him about little Mary, and his warm Irish heart opened to me at once.

"She is a good child, your Riverence, and shame on the father that would hurt or disgrace her!" The tears stood in Mike's eyes as he spoke the words.

"All the trouble comes from the whisky. Why not give it up?"

"By the help of God I will!" said Mike, grasping my hand with energy.

And he did. I confess that the result of my visit exceeded my hopes. Mike kept away from the saloons, worked steadily, little Mary had no lack of new shoes and neat frocks, and the Kinneeth family were happy in a humble way. Mike always seemed glad to see me, and greeted me warmly.

One morning about the last of November there was a knock at the door of the little parsonage. Opening the door, there stood Mrs. Kinneeth with a turkey under her arm.

"Christmas will soon be coming, an' I've brought ye a turkey for your kindness to little Mary an' your good talk to Mike. He has not touched a dhrop since the blissed day ye spake to him. Will ye take the turkey, and my thanks wid it?"

The turkey was politely and smilingly accepted, and Mrs. Kinneeth went away looking mightily pleased.

I extemporized a little coop for our turkey. Having but little mechanical ingenuity, it was a difficult job, but it resulted more satisfactorily than did my attempt to make a door for the miniature kitchen attached to the parsonage. My object was to nail some cross pieces on some plain boards, hang it on hinges, and fasten it on the inside by a leather strap attached to a nail. The model in my mind was, as the reader sees, of the most simple and primitive pattern. I spent all my leisure time for a week at work on that door. I spoiled the lumber, I blistered my hands, I broke several dollars' worth of carpenter's tools, for which I had to pay, and—then I hired a man to make that door! This was my last effort in that line of things, ex-

cepting the turkey coop, which was the very last. It lasted four days, at the end of which time it just gave way all over, and caved in. Fortunately, it was no longer needed. Our turkey would not leave us. The parsonage fare suited him, and he stayed and throve and made friends.

We named him Dick. He is the hero of this sketch. Dick was intelligent, sociable, and had a good appetite. He would eat anything, from a crust of bread to the pieces of candy that the schoolgirls would give him as they passed. He became as gentle as a dog, and would answer to his name. He had the freedom of the town, and went where he pleased, returning at meal times, and at night to roost on the western end of the kitchen roof. He would eat from our hands, looking at us with a sort of human expression in his shiny eyes. If he were a hundred yards away, all we had to do was to go to the door and call out, "Dick! Dick!" once or twice, and here he would come, stretching his long legs, and saying, "Oot, oot, oot" (is that the way to spell it?). He got to like going about with me. He would go with me to the post office, to the market, and sometimes he would accompany me in a pastoral visit. Dick was well-known and popular. Even the bad boys of the town did not throw stones at him. His ruling passion was the love of eating. He ate between meals. He ate all that was offered to him. Dick was a pampered turkey, and made the most of his good luck and popularity. He was never in low spirits, and never disturbed, except when a dog came about him. He disliked dogs, and seemed to distrust them.

The days rolled by, and Dick was fat and happy. It was the day before Christmas. We had asked two bachelors to take Christmas dinner with us,

having room and chairs for just two more persons. (One of our four chairs was called a stool. It had a bottom and three legs, one of which was a little shaky, and no back.) There was a constraint upon us both all day. I knew what was the matter, but said nothing. About four o'clock in the afternoon Dick's mistress sat down by me, and, after a pause, remarked: "Do you know that to-morrow is Christmas Day?"

"Yes, I know it." Another pause. I had nothing to say just then.

"Well, if—if—if anything is to be done about that turkey, it is time it were done."

"Do you mean Dick?"

"Yes," with a little quiver in her voice.

"I understand you—you mean to kill him—poor Dick! the only pet we ever had."

She broke right down at this, and began to cry.

"What is the matter here?" said our kind, energetic neighbor, Mrs. T——, who came in to pay us one of her informal visits. She was from Philadelphia, and, though a gifted woman, with a wide range of reading and observation of human life, was not a sentimentalist. She laughed at the weeping mistress of the parsonage, and, going to the back door, she called out: "Dick! Dick!"

Dick, who was taking the air high up on the hillside, came at the call, making long strides, and sounding his "Oot, oot, oot," which was the formula by which he expressed all his emotions, varying only the tone.

Dick, as he stood with outstretched neck and a look of expectation in his honest eyes, was scooped up by our neighbor, and carried off down the hill in the most summary manner.

In about an hour Dick was brought back. He was dressed. He was also stuffed.

"THE GRAIN KING."

SO they called him—the "Grain King." Kingly he was in presence and in spirit. Like Saul, he stood head and shoulders higher than other men. His stature was seven feet and his girth to match. His name was often heard in the marts of trade and on the lips of the poor and friendless. What power there was in his head and face!—a massive head that bulged at the points where the phrenologists locate brain force and benevolence, a face whose strong lines were softened by that indefinable touch from within which marks some men as the special almoners of the Heavenly Father's bounty to his needy children. He made money by the million, and spent it like a prince as he was—a prince by right of royalty of soul.

The college folk at Santa Rosa had put on me the duty of raising some money for its urgent need of a scientific apparatus.

I went to the "Grain King" and briefly stated the object of my call.

"How much do you want me to give?" he asked with businesslike quickness.

Disclaiming any wish to do so unusual a thing as to dictate or suggest the precise amount of a donation of this sort, I nevertheless in a good-natured way ventured to name a modest sum that would satisfy me.

"No, no," he replied kindly; "that is not my share; you must get the best, and keep up with

the times. Take this with my good wishes," handing me as he spoke a check for just four times the sum I had named. That was the "Grain King."

During our Civil War—may its passions be buried and may we never have another!—he sent by way of Nassau a monthly gift of five hundred dollars to the poor of his native city, Charleston, S. C. That was the "Grain King."

He was the grain king of the Pacific Coast. The wheat market, it was said, moved up or down at his nod. His warehouses held millions of bushels at a time, his ships dotted all the seas sailed by modern commerce. If he abused his power, and bulled and beared the grain market after the manner of the business kings of our times, I never heard of it. The temptation to do so must have been strong. That would not have been the "Grain King," as I saw him and as he is idealized in my thought.

By a sudden turn of trade he lost some millions of dollars one day, and was thereafter a grain king dethroned. But not soon will fade from the memory of Californians the stately and kindly image of Isaac Friedlander, the "Grain King" of San Francisco.

He was a Jew. Would it be irreverent or in bad taste to say that he was a prince of the house of David?

THE DIGGERS.

THE Digger Indian holds a low place in the scale of humanity. He is not intelligent, he is not handsome, he is not very brave. He stands near the foot of his class, and I fear he is not likely to go up any higher. It is more likely that the places that know him now will soon know him no more, for the reason that he seems readier to adopt the bad white man's whisky and diseases than the good white man's morals and religion. Ethnologically he has given rise to much conflicting speculation, with which I will not trouble the gentle reader. He has been in California a long time, and he does not know that he was ever anywhere else. His pedigree does not trouble him; he is more concerned about getting something to eat. It is not because he is an agriculturist that he is called a Digger, but because he grabbles for wild roots and has a general fondness for dirt. I said he was not handsome, and when we consider his rusty, dark-brown color, his heavy features, fishy black eyes, coarse, black hair, and clumsy gait, nobody will dispute the statement. But one Digger is uglier than another, and an old squaw caps the climax.

The first Digger I ever saw was the best-looking. He had learned a little English, and loafed around the mining camps, picking up a meal where he could get it. He called himself "Captain Charley," and, like a true native American, was proud of his title. If it was self-assumed, he was

still following the precedent set by a vast host of captains, majors, colonels, and generals, who never wore a uniform or hurt anybody. He made his appearance at the little parsonage on the hillside in Sonora one day, and, thrusting his bare head into the door, he said, "Me Cappin Charley," tapping his chest complacently as he spoke.

Returning his salutation, I waited for him to speak again.

"You got grub—*coche carne?*" he asked, mixing his Spanish and English.

Some food was given him, which he snatched rather eagerly, and began to eat at once. It was evident that Capt. Charley had not breakfasted that morning. He was a hungry Indian, and when he got through his meal there was no reserve of rations in the unique repository of dishes and food which has been mentioned heretofore in these "Sketches." Peering about the premises, Capt. Charley made a discovery. The modest little parsonage stood on a steep incline, the upper side resting on the red, gravelly earth, while the lower side was raised three or four feet from the ground. The vacant space underneath had been used by our several bachelor predecessors as a receptacle for cast-off clothing. Malone, Lockley, and Evans had thus disposed of their discarded apparel, and Drury Bond, and one or two other miners, had also added to the treasures that caught the eye of the inquisitive Digger. It was a museum of sartorial curiosities—seedy and ripped broadcloth coats, vests, and pants, flannel mining shirts of gay colors and of different degrees of wear and tear, linen shirts that looked like battle flags that had been through the war, and old shoes and boots of all sorts, from the high rubber waterproofs used by miners to the ragged slippers that had adorned the

feet of the lonely single parsons whose names are written above.

"Me take um?" asked Capt. Charley, pointing to the treasure he had discovered.

Leave was given, and Capt. Charley lost no time in taking possession of the coveted goods. He chuckled to himself as one article after another was drawn forth from the pile, which seemed to be almost inexhaustible. When he had gotten all out and piled up together, it was a rare-looking sight.

"*Mucho bueno!*" exclaimed Capt. Charley, as he proceeded to array himself in a pair of trousers. Then a shirt, then a vest, and then a coat were put on. And then another, and another, and yet another suit were donned in the same order. He was fast becoming a "big Indian" indeed. We looked on and smiled, sympathizing with the evident delight of our visitor in his superabundant wardrobe. He was in full dress, and enjoyed it. But he made a failure at one point: his feet were too large, or were not the right shape, for white men's boots or shoes. He tried several pairs, but his huge flat foot would not enter them, and finally he threw down the last one tried by him with a Spanish exclamation not fit to be printed in these pages. That language is a musical one, but its oaths are very harsh in sound. A battered "stove-pipe" hat was found among the spoils turned over to Capt. Charley. Placing it on his head jauntily, he turned to us, saying, "*Adios!*" and went strutting down the street, the picture of gratified vanity. His appearance on Washington Street, the main thoroughfare of the place, thus gorgeously and abundantly arrayed, created a sensation. It was as good as a "show" to the jolly miners, always ready to be amused. Capt. Charley was known to

most of them, and they had a kindly feeling for the good-natured "fool Injun," as one of them called him in my hearing.

The next Digger I noticed was of the gentler (but in this case not lovelier) sex. She was an old squaw who was in mourning. The sign of her grief was the black *adobe* mud spread over her face. She sat all day motionless and speechless, gazing up into the sky. Her grief was caused by the death of a child, and her sorrowful look showed that she had a mother's heart. Poor, degraded creature! What were her thoughts as she sat there looking so pitifully up into the silent, far-off heavens? All the livelong day she gazed thus fixedly into the sky, taking no notice of the passers-by, neither speaking, eating, nor drinking. It was a custom of the tribe, but its peculiar significance is unknown to me.

It was a great night at an adjoining camp when the old chief died. It was made the occasion of a fearful orgy. Dry wood and brush were gathered into a huge pile, the body of the dead chief was placed upon it, and the mass set on fire. As the flames blazed upward with a roar, the Indians, several hundred in number, broke forth into wild wailings and howlings, the shrill soprano of the women rising high above the din, as they marched around the burning pyre. Fresh fuel was supplied from time to time, and all night long the flames lighted up the surrounding hills, which echoed with the shouts and howls of the savages. It was a touch of Pandemonium. At dawn there was nothing left of the dead chief but ashes. The mourners took up their line of march toward the Stanislaus River, the squaws bearing their papooses on their backs, the "bucks" leading the way.

The Digger believes in a future life, and in

future rewards and punishments. Good Indians and bad Indians are subjected to the same ordeal at death. Each one is rewarded according to his deeds.

The disembodied soul comes to a wide, turbid river, whose angry waters rush on to an unknown destination, roaring and foaming. From high banks on either side of the stream is stretched a pole, smooth and small, over which he is required to walk. Upon the result of this *post mortem* Blondinizing his fate depends. If he was in life a very good Indian, he goes over safely, and finds on the other side a paradise, where the skies are cloudless, the air balmy, the flowers brilliant in color and sweet in perfume, the springs many and cool, the deer plentiful and fat. In this fair clime there are no bad Indians, no briars, no snakes, no grizzly bears. Such is the paradise of good Diggers. The Indian who was in life a mixed character, not all good or bad, but made up of both, starts across the fateful river, gets on very well until he reaches about halfway over, when his head becomes dizzy, and he tumbles into the boiling flood below. He swims for his life. (Every Indian on earth can swim, and he does not forget the art in the world of spirits.) Buffeting the waters, he is carried swiftly down the rushing current, and at last makes the shore, to find a country which, like his former life, is a mixture of good and bad. Some days are fair, and others are rainy and chilly; flowers and brambles grow together; there are some springs of water, but they are few, and not all cool and sweet; the deer are few and shy and lean, and grizzly bears roam the hills and valleys. This is the Limbo of the moderately wicked Digger. The very bad Indian, placing his feet upon the attenuated bridge of doom, makes a few steps for-

ward, stumbles, falls into the whirling waters below, and is swept downward with fearful velocity. At last, with desperate struggles, he half swims and is half washed ashore on the same side from which he started, to find a dreary land where the sun never shines, and the cold rains always pour down from the dark skies, where the water is brackish and foul, where no flowers ever bloom, where leagues may be traversed without seeing a deer, and grizzly bears abound. This is the hell of very bad Indians, and a very bad one it is. The worst Indians of all, at death, are transformed into grizzly bears.

The Digger has a good appetite, and he is not particular about his eating. He likes grasshoppers, clover, acorns, roots, and fish. The flesh of a dead mule, horse, cow, or hog does not come amiss to him—I mean the flesh of such as die natural deaths. He eats what he can get, and all he can get. In the grasshopper season he is fat and flourishing. In the suburbs of Sonora I came one day upon a lot of squaws who were engaged in catching grasshoppers. Stretched along in line, armed with thick branches of pine, they threshed the ground in front of them as they advanced, driving the grasshoppers before them in constantly increasing numbers, until the air was thick with the flying insects. Their course was directed to a deep gully, or gulch, into which they fell exhausted. It was astonishing to see with what dexterity the squaws would gather them up and thrust them into a sort of covered basket, made of willow twigs or tule grass, while the insects would be trying to escape, but would fall back unable to rise above the sides of the gulch in which they had been entrapped. The grasshoppers are dried, or cured, for winter use. A white man who had tried them

told me they were pleasant eating, having a flavor very similar to that of a good shrimp. (I was content to take his word for it.)

When Bishop Soule was in California, in 1853, he paid a visit to a Digger campoody (or village) in the Calaveras hills. He was profoundly interested, and expressed an ardent desire to be instrumental in the conversion of one of these poor kin. It was yet early in the morning when the Bishop and his party arrived, and the Diggers were not astir, save here and there a squaw, in primitive array, who slouched lazily toward a spring of water hard by. But soon the arrival of the visitors was made known, and the bucks, squaws, and papooses swarmed forth. They cast curious looks upon the whole party, but were specially struck with the majestic bearing of the Bishop, as were the passing crowds in London, who stopped in the streets to gaze with admiration upon the great American preacher. The Digger chief did not conceal his delight. After looking upon the Bishop fixedly for some moments, he went up to him, and, tapping first his own chest and then the Bishop's, he said: "Me big man; you big man!" It was his opinion that two great men had met, and that the occasion was a grand one. Moralizing to the contrary notwithstanding, greatness is not always lacking in self-consciousness.

"I would like to go into one of their wigwams, or huts, and see how they really live," said the Bishop.

"You had better drop that idea," said the guide, a white man who knew more about Digger Indians than was good for his reputation and morals, but who was a good-hearted fellow, always ready to do a friendly turn, and with plenty of time on his hands to do it. The genius born to live without

work will make his way by his wits, whether it be in the lobby at Washington City or as a hanger-on at a Digger camp.

The Bishop insisted on going inside the chief's wigwam, which was a conical structure of long tule grass, air-tight and weatherproof, with an aperture in front just large enough for a man's body in a crawling attitude. Sacrificing his dignity, the Bishop went down on all fours, and then a degree lower, and, following the chief, crawled in. The air was foul, the smells were strong, and the light was dim. The chief proceeded to tender to his distinguished guest the hospitalities of the establishment by offering to share his breakfast with him. The bill of fare was grasshoppers, with acorns as a side dish. The Bishop maintained his dignity as he squatted there in the dirt—his dignity was equal to any test. He declined the grasshoppers tendered him by the chief, pleading that he had already breakfasted, but watched with peculiar sensations the movements of his host, as handful after handful of the crisp and juicy *gryllus vulgaris* were crammed into his capacious mouth, and swallowed. What he saw and smelled, and the absence of fresh air, began to tell upon the Bishop—he became sick and pale, while a gentle perspiration, like unto that felt in the beginning of seasickness, beaded his noble forehead. With slow dignity, but marked emphasis, he spoke: "Brother Bristow, I propose that we retire."

They retired, and there is no record that Bishop Soule ever expressed the least desire to repeat his visit to the interior of a Digger Indian's abode.

The whites had many difficulties with the Diggers in the early days. In most cases I think the whites were chiefly to blame. It is very hard for the strong to be just to the weak. The weakest

creature, pressed hard, will strike back. White women and children were massacred in retaliation for outrages committed upon the ignorant Indians by white outlaws. Then there would be a sweeping destruction of Indians by the excited whites, who in those days made rather light of Indian shooting. The shooting of a "buck" was about the same thing, whether it was a male Digger or a deer.

"There is not much fight in a Digger unless he's got the dead wood on you, an' then he'll make it rough for you. But these Injuns are of no use, an' I'd about as soon shoot one of 'em as a coyote" (ki-o-te).

The speaker was a very red-faced, sandy-haired man, with bloodshot, blue eyes, whom I met on his return to the Humboldt country, after a visit to San Francisco.

"Did you ever shoot an Indian?" I asked.

"I first went up into the Eel River country in '46," he answered. "They give us a lot of trouble in them days. They would steal cattle, an' our boys would shoot. But we've never had much difficulty with 'em since the big fight we had with 'em in 1849. A good deal of devilment had been goin' on all roun', an' some had been killed on both sides. The Injuns killed two women on a ranch in the valley, an' then we sot in just to wipe 'em out. Their camp was in a bend of the river, near the head of the valley, with a deep slough on the right flank. There was about sixty of us, an' Dave — was our captain. He was a hard rider, a dead shot, an' not very tender-hearted. The boys sorter liked him, but kep' a sharp eye on him, knowin' he was so quick an' handy with a pistol. Our plan was to git to their camp an' fall on 'em at daybreak, but the sun was risin' just as we come

in sight of it. A dog barked, an' Dave sung out: 'Out with your pistols! pitch in, an' give 'em the hot lead!' In we galloped at full speed, an' as the Injuns come out to see what was up, we let 'em have it. We shot forty bucks; about a dozen got away by swimmin' the river."

"Were any of the women killed?"

"A few were knocked over. You can't be particular when you are in a hurry; an' a squaw, when her blood is up, will fight equal to a buck."

The fellow spoke with evident pride, feeling that he was detailing a heroic affair, having no idea that he had done anything wrong in merely killing "bucks." I noticed that this same man was very kind to an old lady who took the stage for Bloomfield—helping her into the vehicle, and looking after her baggage. When we parted, I did not care to take the hand that had held a pistol that morning when the Digger camp was "wiped out."

The scattered remnants of the Digger tribes were gathered into a reservation in Round Valley, Mendocino County, north of the Bay of San Francisco, and were there taught a mild form of agricultural life, and put under the care of government agents, contractors, and soldiers, with about the usual results. One agent, who was also a preacher, took several hundred of them into the Christian Church. They seemed to have mastered the leading facts of the gospel, and attained considerable proficiency in the singing of hymns. Altogether, the result of this effort at their conversion showed that they were human beings, and as such could be made recipients of the truth and grace of God, who is the Father of all the families of the earth. Their spiritual guide told me he had to make one compromise with them—they would dance. Extremes meet: the fashionable white

Christians of our gay capitals and the tawny Digger exhibit the same weakness for the fascinating exercise that cost John the Baptist his head.

There is one thing a Digger cannot bear, and that is the comforts and luxuries of civilized life. A number of my friends, who had taken Digger children to raise, found that as they approached maturity they fell into a decline and died, in most cases of some pulmonary affection. The only way to save them was to let them rough it, avoiding warm bedrooms and too much clothing.

The Digger seems to be doomed. Civilization kills him; and if he sticks to his savagery, he will go down before the bullets, whisky, and vices of his white fellow-sinners.