

Several expeditions, numbering respectively from fifteen to thirty men, although fitted out with an express view to take summary vengeance upon these despoilers of human life and property, had completely failed in their object; and even at the time when the troops under my command took the field, so bold had the Indians become, that they were extending their exploits, rapine, and murder --even into the immediate neighborhood of the camp of the regular troops-- from whom, they appeared to entertain not the slightest apprehension of arrest or punishment. Knowing these facts, and having succeeded in collecting together as brave and effective a company of officers and men as any country could produce, most of them experienced mountaineers and Indian hunters, I entered at once upon the duty, heretofore found so very difficult, of penetrating to the very haunts of the savages, with a view to conquer, and if possible, rid the country forever of their presence.

The command was divided into three detachments, under charge, respectively, of Capt. Byrnes and Lieutenants Bailey and Shull. These separate detachments were directed to approach and enter the Indian country at different points. The plan of moving upon, and attacking, the rancheries of the Indians at night, I had learned by experience, was the best and only one calculated to be attended with happy results. Notwithstanding the great hazard of this mode of warfare, it was willingly and cheerfully acquiesced in by officers and men, who at once entered upon the duty assigned them -- penetrating into every river valley, creek, canon, and gulch; clambering rugged mountain sides; threading their way amid interminable forests of timber; wading through marshes; over swollen streams; encountering snows; surmounting jagged rocks - - in fact, exposing themselves to all kinds of danger and fatigue, with a courage of endurance which cannot be too highly approved and commended.

It seems almost incredible that a body of ninety men, operating in different detachments, over so wide a space of broken and difficult country, could accomplish so much as those under my command have done, in so short a time. As fast as a particular locality was cleared of Indians, a detachment was left for a limited period, instructed to scout continually, with the view of discovering and preventing any attempt at return. In every instance the object designed by this precautionary measure was effectually secured. From time to time small parties of Indians were captured, until the southern portion of the country operated in contained not a warrior to offer resistance. The intermediate section was next visited, and the Indians occupying it, after several severe skirmishes, compelled to flee for safety to the country occupied by the Pitt River and Hat Creek Indians, with whom they were intimately connected, and where they doubtless felt themselves secure from further pursuit. In the meantime Callahan, McElroy, Wells, and others, had been murdered by them.

The Pitt River and Hat Creek country was regarded by the Indians as impregnable. There was a fastness here from which those who defended it had never been driven. Many attempts at dislodgment were made by bands of citizen soldiers and the regular troops. None of these proved successful. At, or

near, this point I succeeded, after seven or eight days of hard scouting, in capturing two Indians. My intention being to obtain an interview with the principal chief, make known to him the object of the expedition, (which was not to kill if the Indians would surrender,) to propose the terms of such surrender, and, if possible, ascertain the motive which actuated him and his people in their hostile proceedings. The desired interview was had, and resulted favorably to my expectations. The principal chief promised, with his whole tribe, to meet me the next day and proceed at once to one of the reservations. The consequences of a failure to comply with his promise were fully represented to him, notwithstanding which his pledge was broken.

Two nights afterward I attacked the Indian stronghold with forty men, completely routing those who defended it, killing several of their number and taking others prisoners; those who escaped were pursued. A number of engagements subsequently occurred with them, in which a great number were killed and captured.

After a vigorous pursuit of five weeks this chief sent in eight of his tribe, who said they had fought long enough, and that they desired to become reconciled to, and accept, the terms proposed to them. They came in to the number of four hundred and fifty, and were received in a spirit of kindness. To revert to all the different skirmishes and scouts which took place would occupy too much space for my present purpose. Although justice to the gallant volunteers might seem to demand that this data should be given; suffice it to say, that the enemy were routed from every position, whether taken to elude their pursuers or for the purpose of defense, and were finally compelled unconditionally to surrender. Out of the whole number of Indians fought about two hundred warriors were killed, and twelve hundred taken prisoners. No children were killed, and but one woman, during the whole campaign. As an evidence of the intrepid bravery of these Indians I would state that on one occasion some fifteen or twenty of their warriors ensconced themselves in an almost inaccessible canon among rocks, and dared an equal number of my command to fight them. The challenge was at once accepted, and the engagement commenced. It continued for upwards of an hour, by which time all of the enemy were killed, excepting one, who effected his escape. Not a man of the volunteers was killed, and but two wounded. During this fight, as in all the others, an interpreter was present, who called upon the Indians to surrender, with the understanding that they were to be kindly dealt with; but they refused to accept the conditions proffered.

It gives me pleasure to be able to report to your Excellency that this war has been brought to a successful termination. The tribes of Indians engaged in it, whose frequent acts of violence and atrocity had rendered them a terror to the region of country over which they roamed, are completely vanquished and subdued.

A permanent peace I hope has been secured, a peace which was conquered and which has for its tenure a much more enduring and reliable basis than the mere forms of treaty stipulations, too often misunderstood by the wily savages, and when understood, as frequently violated to suit their own designs and convenience.