Trinidad Correspondence.

Travels and Adventures in the Coast Mines.

SHASTA VALLEY, Cal., May 26, 1851.

MESSRS EDITORS:—I wrote to you a few days ago from Salmon Creek, giving a slight description of the mines on that creek, and the state of the roads and the number of days travel from Trinidad. Since then I have reached the mines in this valley, and am no doubt at this moment sitting on a "pile" yet to be made by somebody. The whole plains are covered gold, but at present the water is so scarce here that few persons are making more than $8 per day. These mines are entirely different from any I have seen in any other part of the country, the gold sometimes being found in great abundance on the surface and at other times deep in the ground. I have seen two parties at work in the same place, both doing very well indeed, one scraping the top first off, while the other was from 20 to 30 feet below him. All the hills and flats in the vicinity of these mines are of a light brown or dark red color and have the appearance of having been burnt. They are all covered with small pieces of quartz rock which also seem to have been burned or melted The red rock is sometimes found within a few inches of the surface and in others a number of feet below. Nearly all the miners at work here while there was plenty of water had been doing well, many of them taking out as high as $60 per day. Oregon has been supplying these mines with flour, bacon, fresh butter, fresh eggs, beef, etc., ever since their discovery, with the exception of a few things which have been brought from Trinidad and Redding's Springs. There is a fine wagon road all the way from Oregon city, and hundreds of teams, horses and cattle had been brought into the valley, and families were setting here which really gave it an air of civilization. I rode out about 15 miles in different directions and found a great many gulches, being worked to good advantage, with not less than one hundred on any of them. The population of this valley I should judge to be about 2000. It is about 36 miles long, and an average width of 6½ miles. Mount Shasta, the highest mountain in Upper California stands at the head of it, and to-day is completely covered with snow. This mountain is 15,000 feet high, and the base of it is nearly round, the peak of it is far above the clouds and cannot be seen at the present moment.

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The Oregon men claim this valley as belonging to Oregon, and I was told that Gen. Lane had informed them that an election precint would be opened here for the purpose of receiving the votes of the citizens when the election for Delegate to Congress would come off.

Provisions are very reasonable here. Flour sells at 50 cents per lb.; pork 50 cts.; fresh beef 25 cts; fresh butter $1; fresh eggs $3 per doz., and small matters at a small advance over first cost.

Coarse clothing, boots and shoes are very much needed and are in great demand; mining utensils, hardware, etc, are scarce and will command good prices for some time to come. On the road I met a great many persons who had been to work in these mines bound back to Salmon Creek on account of the scarcity of water. They all spoke in the highest terms of the richness of them, but they said they intended to go back in the fall when water would be more plenty and try them again.

I was much mistaken in my last letter in regard to the number of men now at work on Salmon Creek. From what I have since seen there is not less than 1500 men at present on this Creek, and with the number we met on the round bound back there, it will far exceed this estimate.

We were led to believe before we left Salmon Creek, that it was dangerous for so small a party (six in number) to travel through this part of the country, on account of the hostility of the Indians, but so far, we have not seen but six Indians on the whole route, and all those were friendly or seemed to be so. They sold salmon to us, ferried us across the rivers in canoes and gave us all the information we wanted in regard to the roads, etc. We found their information generally very correct and that they were to be relied upon provided they were kept in their places, and no temptation placed in their way to induce them to steal.

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There are two towns in Shasta Valley, one called the upper town and the other the lower town. They are about a quarter of a mile apart and each of them contains about 100 tents, and about 10 or 12 log huts. They were obliged to divide the population of the valley in this way on account of the scarcity of water in the summer season, the whole supply being from a small creek, which runs down from the mountains, and the most water is found in it just where they have built upon.

The citizens of the valley were quite excited this evening on account of the news of the death of a young gentleman named Converse, formerly from New Orleans. La. who was killed by an Indian on the Klamath River. It appears that Mr. Conruse and a Mr. Haines started for Scott's River on a prospecting tour down to Klamath and when they got to an Indian ranch they wished to cross the river and called out to an Indian who was there with his canoe to take them over. The Indian brought his canoe to the edge of the bank, when Mr. Converse who had a gun with him laid it down for the purpose of taking a drink of water. The Indian immediately seized the gun fired at and killed Mr. Converse on the spot.—Mr. Haines who it appears was unarmed became frightened at this, started to run but fell in the river near the rapids and was carried down the stream and drowned in his endeavors to make the other side. It was also reported that a young man named David Dilley, while on his way from Oregon city to this place was killed by the Rogue River Indians. Mr. Dilley was about 22 years of age, his native place was Illinois.

A call for two hundred volunteers was going the rounds this evening, it had about 40 names to it.

The Indians on Rogue's River are said to be very numerous and well armed with guns, &c., and are very hostile towards the whites. It was expected that the company would be made up during the evening and that they would be ready to start for the river the following day.

We intend leaving this place in the morning and expect to reach the diggings on Scott's River by to morrow night. There are two roads, one through the valley which is about three miles longer than the one over the mountains. The distance is about 25 miles by the shortest route.

T. J. R:

SCOTT'S RIVER BAR, May 30 1851.

We arrived here last evening and were hospitably received by Maj. Rowe and R Atherton Esq., two old friends. They informed us that their diggings had turned very rich and that more gold had been taken out of this bar than any other mining district in California. The gold on this vein is very large but it requires a great deal of labor to obtain it. The bed rock is from three to thirty feet below the surface of the ground, and stones and rocks of tremendous size have to be lifted and hauled up before the bed rock can be reached, as a general thing the gold is found lying on this rock. I was shown a solid piece of gold in the possession of Mr. Pierce which was taken out by himself and his partner Mr Brown. It was an oblong piece and had but one slight speck of quartz in it. It weighed 13½ pounds averdupois. Mr. Brown sold his share of it to Mr. Price for $1600 in fine gold. I saw another piece taken out this afternoon by a man named John C. Wright from Fanny Co. mines. It had a great deal of quartz rock in it, was quite flat and weighed 7½ pounds averdupois. This piece was found on a very shallow bar about three feet from the surface.

Scott's Valley is a very pretty little valley, covered with fine grass and flowers of every variety. It is about 15 miles long, and about 3 miles wide. Scott river runs through it; it is not a very large stream, but like all the mountain streams in this part of the country, it is very rapid.

There is a fine growth of timber encircling this valley and the soil is as rich as any I have seen in California.

There is a ranch in the centre of the valley, where the animals belonging to the miners on Scott's river are herded. It is kept by a man named Brown; plenty of fresh beef and new milk always to be obtained here. A company of 80 men returned here this evening from the Klamath; they had been out in pursuit of the Indians who killed Mr. Converse. They killed one Indian, one squaw and two children, and burnt all the rancherias they could find within 12 miles of the diggings. The Indians had all fled, with the exception of those mentioned above, and as the white men commenced attacking the ranchos before daylight, it was impossible to distinguish a man from a woman.

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The Indian who killed Mr. Converse was not captured. The citizens of this bar have offered $1000 reward for his head.

The road from Trinidad to this place is not the best in the world, although it came harder to us because we did not confine ourselves to the trail. We struck out a straight road, sometimes going over mountains covered with snow, and at others through beautiful vallies filled with flowers of every variety. The distance from Trinidad by the route we came is about 150 miles, although we could shorten it now about 50 miles.

We shall leave here in a day or two for Trinidad, via the Klamath River, and intend "prospecting" the bars on it all the way down,

T. J. R.

SMITH'S RIVER, OREGON, June 8, 1851.

We arrived here on the 4th inst., from Scott's River Bar via the Klamath River. We were on our way down to Trinidad to follow the Klamath River down as far as Capt. Tompkin's ferry, about 35 miles from its mouth, where we accidentally discovered a creek emptying into the Klamath and a good trail running along side the banks of it. We followed the trail for about 5 miles, when we overtook a party of 39 men with 50 packed mules and horses bound up the creek. They were under the command of a Mr. Kardy, and had just come across the Siscreto mountains near Rogues River. They had an Indian guide with them whom they had picked up on a ranch near the Klamath River, who informed them that there was a party of men digging on a river or creek about three days travel from where they then were, and that if they wished it, he would show them where the place was. The party agreed to pay him well for it, and provided to protect him on the way and send him back with a safe escort whenever he wished to return to his ranch. He seemed to be quite an intelligent Indian, spoke a few words of English and said that he understood the language of the various tribes on the Klamath River, and also the language of the Rogue River tribe. Capt. Hardy's party finally agreed to take him and were on their way to this place when we overtook them. After leaving the creek, which we called Indian Creek, we travelled a short distance over a very rocky and broken country with a gradual ascent. This finally brought us to a very high mountain which we commenced ascending about the middle of the day; it took us about 3 hours steady travelling to reach the summit of this mountain which was partly covered with snow and large rocks. We had a fine view of the surrounding country from the top of this mountain. We saw several rivers and creeks running in different directions; the hills and mountains adjacent were covered with snow, while below us was a beautiful valley apparently 10 miles distant, covered with a coat of grass as green as an emerald. We also saw the ocean in the distance with a thick cloud of fog hanging over it. We remained on the summit for a few moments to enjoy the beauty of the scene, which was truly magnificent. We commenced descend-

which was truly magnificent. We commenced descending the mountain about 2 P. M., and towards dark we encamped on a small plateau covered with beautiful grass and a growth of small oak timber, where we encamped for the night. There is a small creek, which we named Evan's Creek, running along the edge of this spot, which empties into Smith's River. We travelled along the banks of this creek for about two miles through a forest of small oak trees and thick brush, when the valley which we had seen from the top of the mountain, broke full upon our view. This is one of the finest valleys that I have ever seen. It is about 20 miles long, with an average width of one mile. It was completely covered with beautiful grass and flowers of every variety, and completely shut in by a belt of fine timber. The snow capped mountains in the distance contrasted with the color of the ground beneath us, reminded us of the lines of our poetical friend Theo. Wright Titus, Esq., in his description of the scenery in the vicinity of Terra del Fuego:

"——'tis strange to see
The grass so near de snow."

We travelled on through the valley for some time, and passed several places where there had been Indian ranches, but we could see no Indians about, although we saw a great many signs which led us to believe that there must be a great many in the vicinity of the road we were travelling. In this particular we were not entirely mistaken, for a few miles further on, after crossing Evans's Creek, we found nine ranches, and about fifty Indians, of both sexes. Many of the men were armed with Government rifles and Hudson's Bay guns, pistols, &c, and the balance of them with bows and arrows. Those who had guns were parading up and down in front of their houses, with their guns on their shoulders, apparently much at home in the use of them. One or two of them seemed to be keeping guard when our party rode up and dismounted. We looked at one or two of their rifles, which were well loaded and capped, and every owner of a gun had his shot pouch and powder horn well filled.—There was one fellow who had a very handsome Mississippi rifle, which we tried to get hold of to examine, but he held on to it pretty tightly, and we could not get a fair look at it. It turned out afterwards that this gun, together with three mules, a lot of blankets, &c., had been stolen from a party of miners, who had passed that village but a few days before. When our party, consisting of six persons, arrived at this village, we found Capt. Hardy's party, (39 men,) examining the Indians' guns, and apparently trying to trade with them for skins, &c., for which the Indians demanded powder and shot, and which we were told, some of the whites very foolishly gave them in exchange for some deer skins. Our party held a consultation among ourselves, as to whether it would not be good policy to take the arms away from the Indians, but after consulting with a few men of Capt. Hardy's party, who expressed their dissatisfaction as to the course, we finally decided to let them keep them for the present, but if, on our return from the Klamath River, they should

finally decided to let them keep them for the present, but if, on our return from the Klamath River, they should show them, and act as saucily as they do this day, we intended to try and take their guns away from them. After remaining at the ranch a few minutes, we started off down the valley. We found that a large number of Indians from the village were following us; they had guns, bows and arrows, &c., and a few of them were on horseback. About fifteen miles from the ranch we saw a lot of wagons, &c., and a lot of men, apparently encamped. Just before reaching them, a half breed Indian rode out to us on horseback, and told the Indian guide of Capt. Hardy's party that he must go back with the Indians who had followed us from the village, or else they would all be shot. Shortly after this, three or four white men came charging out on us, with their rifles ready cocked and primed. At first we thought they were going to commence war on us immediately, but we found out after a while, that they were Captain J. B. Long, Commandant, and three privates of the Shasta Volunteers, which were raised to chastise the Rogue River Indians. They wanted to take the guns away from the Indians, but Captain Hardy's party objected to this; said they were friendly Indians, and that they would be responsible for any offences the Indians might commit during their stay in comp. After a long parley, the Indians were allowed to come into camp, on consideration that their guns should be taken away from them, and held by the whites until the next morning, when they were to be given back to the Indians, provided they would promise to return to the villages immediately thereafter. They finally consented to do so, and they were brought into camp, and placed under guard for the night. During the night we learned that one of the Indians who stole the rifle from the party of miners mentioned above, was in camp, and it was agreed among the white men that none of the guns should be given back to the Indians in the morning until the stolen rifle was returned. The Indian promised to go and get the rifle, and left the camp apparently for that purpose. He did not return again, and of course the rifle was not forthcoming. The guns, however, had been delivered to the Indians by Capt. Hardy's party. The next morning Major Pearsall, the owner of the rifle, together with Captain Long, of the Shasta volunteers, and two or three others, without arms, went over to the other side of the gulch, where the Indians were encamped, for the purpose of trying to get back the rifle. The Indians seeing that the white men had no guns with them, became very saucy, and, encouraged by the treatment of Captain Hardy's party towards them, whom they thought no doubt would protect them, began to shout and flourish their guns about, and finally seized hold of Capt. Long, and tried to get him off from the others, which was for the purpose of shooting him. The whites seeing this, crowded around Capt. Long, and a few of them went after their guns, so as to be prepared in case of an attack. On their return to where Captain Long and the Indians were, one of the white men discovered an Indian in the bushes, with his rifle cocked, taking deliberate aim at Capt. L. He informed Capt. L. of this, who immediately changed his position, and the Indian lowered his gun.

Capt. L. He informed Capt. L. of this, who immediately changed his position, and the Indian lowered his gun. A few minutes after this, another Indian sneaked off in the bushes, and fired his rifle, the ball passing over the heads of the white men standing in a crowd around Capt. Long. The rest of the Indians then retired. The whites then commenced firing, and the Indians kept backing out and firing from behind trees, pursued by the whites. Both parties kept up a running fire in this way, for about half an hour, until the whites found that it was impossible to catch the Indians, so they gave up the chase.—They found four dead Indians on their way back, and it is supposed several were wounded, but managed to get off before the others could reach them. None of the whites were hurt. There were about thirty Indians and ten white men engaged in this fight.

P S.—We have discovered good diggings on a creek emptying into this river, which yields on an average about fifty cents per pan. We have named the creek after the Hon. E. Gilbert, your *confrere*. Capt Long left here this morning with twenty-seven recruits for his company, on Rogue's River Ferry. T. J. R.