

THE YANAS

As a preface to the few myths of the Yanas which have survived, I beg to offer the following words touching this ill-fated people :

Previous to August, 1864, the Yanas numbered about three thousand, as I have been informed on the sound authority of reliable white men. Taking the names and population of villages given me by surviving Indians, I should say that this estimate is not too large.

During the second half of August, 1864, the Yanas were massacred, with the exception of a small remnant.

The Indians of California, and especially those of Sacramento Valley, were among the most harmless of human beings. Instead of being dangerous to settlers, they worked for them in return for fair wages. The Yanas were distinguished beyond others for readiness to earn money. White men occupied in tilling land knew their value, and employed them every season in haymaking and harvesting.

At the present day the Wintus, and the few Yanas that are left, go down the valley and labor during the season in hop-fields and vineyards.

Why were the Yanas killed ?

The answer is as follows: Certain Indians lived, or rather lurked, around Mill Creek, in wild places somewhat east of Tehama and north of Chico. These Mill Creek Indians were fugitives; outlaws from various tribes, among others from the Yanas. To injure the latter, they went to the Yana country about the middle of August, 1864, and killed two white women, Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Jones. Four children also were left for dead by them, but the children recovered. After the murders the Mill Creeks returned home unnoticed, carrying various plundered articles with them.

Two parties of white men were formed at once to avenge the women and four children. Without trying in any way to learn who the guilty were, they fell upon the Yanas immediately, sparing neither sex nor age. They had resolved to exterminate the whole

nation. The following few details will show the character of their work : —

At Millville, twelve miles east of Redding, white men seized two Yana girls and a man. These they shot about fifty yards from the village hotel. At another place they came to the house of a white woman who had a Yana girl, seven or eight years of age. They seized this child, in spite of the woman, and shot her through the head. "We must kill them, big and little," said the leader; "nits will be lice."

A few miles north of Millville lived a Yana girl named Eliza, industrious and much liked by those who knew her. She was working for a farmer at the time. The party stopped before this house, and three of the men entered it. "Eliza, come out," said one of them; "we are going to kill you." She begged for her life. To the spokesman, who had worked for her employer some time before, she said: "Don't kill me; when you were here I cooked for you, I washed for you, I was kind to you; I never asked pay of you; don't kill me now."

Her prayers were vain. They took Eliza, with her aunt and uncle, a short distance from the house and shot the three. My informant counted eleven bullets in Eliza's breast.

After this murder the party took a drink and started; but the leader, in killing Eliza, said, "I don't think that little squaw is dead yet." So he turned back and smashed in her skull with his musket. The man who counted the bullet holes in her bosom, himself a white man, saw her after the skull was broken. He knew the girl well, and gave me these details.

Another party went to a farm on Little Cow Creek where they found three Yana men threshing hayseed in a barn. The farmer was not at home. They killed the three Indians, and went to the house. The three wives of the men killed in the barn were there and began to scream. The farmer's wife hurried out with a quilt, threw it around the three women, and stood in front of them, holding the ends of the quilt. "If you kill them you will kill me," said she, facing the party. The woman was undaunted, and, as it happened, was big with child. To kill, or attempt to kill, under those conditions, would be a deed too ghastly for even such