

INDIAN DIFFICULTIES.

The first disturbances with the aborigines nearly all occurred at or near Pence's ranch, and in the punishments inflicted upon the savages Mr. Pence always took an active part, serving as captain of several companies organized to protect the persons and property of the white settlers. From a very early period there were Indians at Chico, a number of them in the employ of General Bidwell; and Potter, on the Neal ranch, also had them working for him—but nothing serious is related of these.

On New Year's eve, in 1851, about a year after Mr. Pence had settled in Messila valley, a party of six or seven Indians came to stay all night at his ranch. Among them was a chief of the Concows, a villainous-looking fellow. To this proposition Mr. Pence objected, but being told by Mr. Bartee that if he extended his hospitality to the chief no harm could come to him, he consented and allowed them to remain. The gratitude of his visitors for the kind treatment they had received was so great that in the night they stole all of Mr. Pence's cattle. Early in the morning the theft was discovered before they had got very far, and Pence with a few friends pursued them. At the white men's approach the Indians fled. Mr. Pence succeeded in wounding the chief in the hip, but not so as to disable him. He escaped, and made many threats against Pence, promising to kill him when he got an opportunity. Both were on the watch for each other for some time. Finally, word was brought to Mr. Pence that the chief had been caught, and he went after him and brought him down from the mountains to the ranch, determined to place him where he would do no more harm. Some of the neighbors were in favor of leniency, but it being shown to the satisfaction of the crowd that this course would endanger Mr. Pence's life, a vote was taken on the question of hanging the Indian, and was carried in the affirmative. The verdict was immediately carried into execution, and the chief dangled gracefully from a tree yet standing near the Pentz post-office.

The next trouble in this locality was with the Tiger Indians, who came into the valley and stole cattle at what is known as Clark's ranch, in the year 1853. A company of seven men, with Mr. Pence as captain, was organized, and followed the robbers. In the company was Alexander Dick, now of Biggs. They followed the Indians for some time, but could not succeed in locating their whereabouts, until, at Pence's suggestion, they set a watch for one called Express Bill, who came out daily to the "double log-cabin" for salt. He was captured, and hung to a tree near the house. The party spent the night there, and as the morning dawned they journeyed on to Dogtown, where they made an effort to recruit their forces, but were refused any aid by the Dogtown people. They went on, and in a short time met an Indian. He said he was going to a small rancheria. He was killed, also, and left in the road. Proceeding on their course, they at last found the Indian camp, which contained about thirty warriors. It required considerable nerve to attack this band with only seven men, and more stratagem to perform it successfully, as the savages were in their stronghold, and ready to make a vigorous resistance. The little attacking force was divided, that the enemy might be attacked in flank and front at the same time. Pence and one of his men circled around the camp, and the fight commenced. The savages at that time were armed only with bows, and did but little execution, the only accident happening to the men being an arrow-wound in the neck of one. The fight lasted the remainder of the forenoon, each side shooting carefully from behind trees and bushes. In the afternoon reinforcements arrived, and the enemy was soon conquered. Twenty-five of the "red-skins" were killed in this fight.

During the fall of the same year, the Indians came out on the west branch of Feather river and killed ten Chinamen. Pence was again summoned, and chosen as the captain of a company of thirty whites and thirty Chinese. Pursuit was immediately instituted, and the hiding-place of the Indians was found