

that Castro was far and that I was near. And I judged it expedient to take such precautionary measures as in my forward movement would leave no enemy behind to destroy the strength of my position by cutting off my supply in cattle and break communication with the incoming emigrants.

Accordingly, early in the morning I moved quietly out of camp with the greater number of men, taking the right or western bank of the Sacramento.

In describing the lower division of this river I have already mentioned the many *rancherías* towards the head of its valley. Some of the largest were scattered along the right bank of the river, where fish and the abundant acorn-bearing trees made a preferred ground. These numbered more men than the smaller *rancherías* which lay farther out in the valley and among the hills.

My movement was unexpected, and riding rapidly up the river we reached without discovery the first rancheria among the hostiles. The scouts who had been sent forward reported the Indians with feathers on their heads, and faces painted black, their war color; and in the midst of their war ceremonies.

Intending to surprise and scatter them we rode directly upon them, and at this place several Indians were killed in the dispersion. In the panic made by our sudden charge the Indians jumped into and swam the river, a few escaping into shelter on our side of the river.

With scarcely a halt we rode on towards the other *rancherías*, but the news of our attack apparently reached these as soon as ourselves, for the Indians were escaping from their villages as we rode in among them. Before the close of the day nearly all the *rancherías* had been visited and the Indians dispersed; as we rode down the hill which commanded a view of the river-plain, on which stood the farthest village that we reached, we could see the Indians in commotion, some running off from the river and others jumping into it. When we reached the rancheria the water was dotted with the heads of the Indians swimming across. We had surprised them assembled in the height of their war ceremonies.

This put an end to the intended attack upon the whites. The Indians of the California Valley had their fixed places of habitation where they lived. The tribes on one river were rarely friendly to those on another. They knew that I came from the mountains, so that they could not take refuge there. That if I should drive them into the upper valley they would encounter hostile tribes, who would destroy them. So that with the return to their villages the dread of another visitation would keep them on their good behavior.

This was a rude but necessary measure to prevent injury to the whites. And it had the effect which I intended.

While encamped at the Buttes I received by the hand of Neal the following letter from Captain Montgomery:

U. S. SHIP PORTSMOUTH,
BAY OF SAN FRANCISCO, June 3, 1846.

SIR : On the 31st ulto., the day previous to my sailing from Monterey, a courier from Lieut. Gillespie to the U. S. Consul arrived bringing the only definite intelligence of your movements and position since my arrival at that port on the 22d of April last. The instructions under which I am now serving and which may detain me until late in the fall, or longer, upon this coast, have relation specifically to the objects of affording protection to the persons and property of citizens of the United States, and of maintaining a watchful care over the general interests of our country. Without reference in any manner to the enterprise in which you are so actively engaged, the nature and subject of which, except so far as I may have been rightly informed by paragraph casually met with in public prints, I am totally ignorant.

I beg leave, however (availing myself of the return of the messenger), to assure you, sir, of the interest I feel in the successful prosecution and issue of the public interests committed to your direction, and without desiring information further than you may deem necessary to enable me to aid and facilitate your operations, to express my sincere desire and readiness to serve you in any manner consistent with other duties.

Permit me to say, sir, that if you should find it convenient to visit the U. S. Ship *Portsmouth* during her stay in this port, that I, with the officers of the ship, will be most happy to see you.

I shall remain here probably three weeks unless unforeseen circumstances require an earlier movement, and my present intention is to return to Monterey.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

JNO. B. MONTGOMERY,

Commander U. S. N.

To Capt. J. C. Frémont, Upper California.

On the 8th of June I broke up camp at the Buttes and moved down the valley to my old encampment on the American Fork, which I reached on the 12th. The range here was broad, extending towards the hills; the feed for the animals excellent and abundant; and the position was near the Fort, which naturally became the base of operations.

On the 13th I went with a small party to "Sutter's Landing," which