

## THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA INDIANS\*

## No. V. [The Yuka]

To the traveler arriving on the summit of the mountains, on his way eastward from Long Valley, Mendocino County, there is presented a magnificent panorama. The name Round Valley describes the noble domain he is in quest of; and there it lies beneath him, encompassed around on all sides with a coronal of blue, broad-based mountains, which are dappled green and golden with wild-oat pasturage and shredded forest; while the valley spreads broadly out, in its great circumference, an ocean of yellow grain and pasture-fields, islanded with stately groves of white-oak. Blunted indeed must have been the sensibilities of the pioneer Sam Kelsey, the trail-cutter, when, one mellow, lilac evening at nightfall, his eyes--probably the first of all Americans--gazed down from the summit upon this large round of meadow, and beheld all its broad sheet spangled with Indian camp-fires, even as the heaven was studded with stars, if he did not feel his soul kindle a little. Yes, here in the heart of California, he had stumbled upon a little Indian empire, all unknown and untroubled yet by the American. And yet the immediate occupants of this little cockaigne--the Yukas--strange to relate, are the worst of all the Pacific Indian race, save the Apaches alone.

It is singular what an intolerable deal of pother I had in finding this people. I heard about Yukas away over in Sacramento Valley; I heard of them again at Weaverville, on Hay Fork, on Mad River, on Van Dusen's Fork, and all along Eel River; and always the next tribe I was to find would be Yukas; and always when I discovered them, at last, they were not there. I began to be skeptical of their very existence, and smiled a superior, incredulous smile whenever I found any body so simple-minded as to make serious mention of Yukas. They seemed as mythical as the Fata Morgana, as phantasmagorical as Sinbad's great fish; but, unlike that monster, they would not remain in one place. Even when I found them, at last, in Round Valley, I was very dubious if they really were Yukas, so often had I gripped thin air in my investigating hand.

The reason for this is singular. The word yuka in the Wintoon language signifies "stranger," and hence secondarily "bad Indian" or "thief;" and it was applied by that people to almost all the Indians around them, just as the ancient Greeks called all the outside world "barbarians." There were anciently many mountain tribes contiguous to them who actually were "bad Indians," compared with the peaceful Wintoons; but the latter applied the epithet so indiscriminately, that the Whites, not troubling themselves to sift the matter, got very much confused on this subject; hence the infinite perplexity I had for weeks. As a matter of fact, there are several tribes whom both Americans and Indians call "Yukas;" but this tribe alone acknowledge them

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All about Red Bluff, in Cottonwood Creek Valley, and about Shasta City, whenever a depredation was committed in early times, it was a "Yuka" who did it; but alas to the simple-minded Wintoons generally smarted for it at the hands of the summary miners. These highly unphilosophical and double-seeing aboriginals described the "Yukas" to me as terrific fellows, truculent giants, living on the coast mountains, dwelling in caves and dens, horribly tattooed (which they are), and cannibals.

In Round Valley, then, live, not the Forty Thieves, but The Thieves--all thieves--305 of them, though they formerly numbered thousands. If they ever had any tribal name in their own language, they dropped it, and, in a spirit of braggadocio which well comports with their character, dubbed themselves as above.

23 And, indeed, they are well worthy of their christening, for they are thorough-paced rascals. So double-tongued and suspicious are they that I could not even procure their ten numerals. The Chief Clerk of the Reservation, F. A. Gibson, brought me two in succession, whom he counted the most intelligent, but they chose to consider me bent on some errand of sorcery, and lied to me with such consistency that they did not at any time, or by any accident, deviate into the truth. Not one of the numerals they gave me was correct, and I was obliged to learn them from an Indian of another tribe. Their language is like none other in the vicinity, but singularly it is closely related to that of the Ashochemies (Wappos), whose former habitat was in the mountains, from the Geysers down to the Calistoga Hot Springs. Hence there are two systems of language running parallel for more than a hundred miles--the Yuka dialects in the Coast Range, and the Pomo dialects along Russian River Valley; though the latter break across eastward at Ukiah, reaching to and surrounding Clear Lake. Neither the Pomos nor the WiTackees can understand the Yukas until they study their language two or three months. William Potter, who speaks several Pomo dialects, told me he could understand only a very few Yuka words. The WiTackees alone appear to value their friendship at all, notwithstanding they fought often and fiercely; and as the two tribes join territories a little way north of Round Valley, the intermarried a good deal, giving rise to a border progeny who are called Wi Tackee-Yukas.

It is difficult to distinguish these two races externally, except by the tattooing. Both of them tattoo wavy lines in blue all over the face, including the nose; but the Yukas make the lines straight down the face, while the Wi Tackees slant them backward and upward.

24 The Yukas are notable for disproportionately large heads, mounted like great cannon-balls on smallish bodies, with protuberant abdomens. Their eyes are rather undersized, but keen and restless, and, from the execrable smudge in which they live, they are often swollen and horribly protruding. Their noses are stout and short, the nostrils something more oval and expanded than the American, but less than the Chinese; and they have heavy shocks of stiff, black, bristly hair, cut short, and hence bushy-looking. Like all California Indians, they are variously colored, without any perceptible law, from yellowish-buff to brown or black. They are a tigerish, truculent, sullen, thievish, revengeful, and every way bad, but brave race.

The original population of Round Valley has been variously estimated--from 5,000 all the way to 20,000. William Potter places it at the latter figure, but this is manifestly too great. I am told that Sam Kelsey, the discoverer, reckoned it at 10,000. But let us take the lowest estimate, and we shall even then have one inhabitant to every four acres in the valley, or 160 Indians to the square mile. This figure is startling at first sight; but when we recollect that anciently Round Valley was one vast oat-field, and was occupied by Indians who had usufructuary possession of ten times its area of nut-bearing forest on the surrounding mountains, besides a stream that swarmed with salmon, we need not be surprised. Round Valley thus affords us a means of making a close conjecture of the ancient population of California. Of course, the wide plains of the interior could not maintain a population so dense as this isolated valley, with its immense borders of acorn-bearing forest; but, considering the quantity of wild-oats formerly produced there, it would not be extravagant to estimate their capacity at one-third as great as that of Round Valley. The natural oat-bearing area of the State may be safely set down at 25,000 square miles, which, at the rate of fifty Indians to the square mile, would have sustained 1,250,000 inhabitants. In speaking of the Klamath River Indians, in a former paper, it was computed that the salmon-streams alone, with the nuts, roots, and game along their banks--not counting in any wild-oat lands--would have supported a population of 270,000. Added together, these sums aggregate 1,520,000 souls; which figure, no doubt, comes near the aboriginal population of California before any European colonies were planted within it.

The Yukas construct dome-shaped sweat-houses, with only a shallow depth of earth scooped out for the floor, though the structure is commodious, capable of containing fifty people. It is thatched with straw, and rendered air-tight with a heavy layer of earth. The common wigwam is conical, smaller than the sweat-house, constructed of poles and bark, and thatched in winter. Most of the northern peoples, especially on the Klamath, make their cabins of stout puncheons, not intended to be burned down every autumn, but permanent, leaving interstices between the pieces, and employing very little or no thatch, while their well-sized cellars assist in protecting them from the smoke, and so they have neat, clean eyes; but, coming as far south as Round Valley, they must have thatch, and are too shiftless to excavate cellars--hence ophthalmia and blindness prevail to a disgusting extent.

It is in the sweat-house that the candidates for the degree of M. D. pass their competitive examination, more terrible than the contention of Doctor Cherubino and Doctor Serafino in "The Great School of Salern." It consists simply of a dance, protracted day and night, without cessation, until they all fall utterly exhausted, except one, who is then entitled to practice the healing art. From physicians thus qualified, one could hardly expect treatment equal to that of Abernethy, even when he was fuddled. For instance, one method of procedure is as follows: The patient is placed on the ground, stark naked, face upward, and two medicines take their stations at his feet one directly behind the other. Striking up a hoarse, crooning chant, they commence hopping up and down the afflicted individual, with their legs astride of him, advancing by infinitesimal jumps all the way up to his head, then backward to his feet. They keep close together, and hop in unison, while the invalid lies there like a turtle and blinks at the sun.

There is an anniversary dance observed by the Yukas, called the Green-corn Dance, though this manifestly dates only from the period when the Spaniards taught them to cultivate maize. It is a joyous occasion, but, as usual, is not made a pretext for feasting. The performers are of both sexes; the men being dressed with a breech-cloth and a mantle of the black tail-feathers of eagles, buzzards, hawks, or owls, reaching from the arm-pits down to the thighs, but not encumbering the arms; while the squaws wear their finest skin-robos, strings of shells, etc., and hold gay-colored handkerchiefs in their hands. The men hop to the music of a chant, a chorister keeping time with a forked stick; but the squaws, standing behind their partners, simply sway themselves backward and forward, and swing their handkerchiefs in a lackadaisical manner.

In common with all the California Indians, the Yukas entertain a vague belief in a Supreme Being, who passes among different tribes by the name of Great Man or Old Man; though he seems to be always weaker than the various evil spirits. But, with the exception of the Klamath Indians and the Hoopas, who belong rather to the Oregon Indians--apparently a different race--this conception of a Divinity is so weak, so shadowy, and so entirely devoid of positive and active qualities, that it seems to be an exotic thing, as it were, an engraftment upon their aboriginal beliefs, and it leads me to suspect that a great majority of the California Indians proper are indebted to the early Jesuits for their few notions of a Creator and Preserver. Certain it is that it is inaccurate to speak of them--as many persons do--as believing in a "Great Spirit," like the Algonquin race; for the Indians of this State, though full of ingenious and cunning fables, are greatly lacking in elevated, spiritual conceptions, and seek always to personify and materialize. Hence it is that they constantly speak, in their simple way, of the "Big Man" or the Old Man." What imagination they possess is not at all of the Hindoo type--introspective, theological, sublime, but eminently like the Chinese--wonderfully shrewd, sly, running on a low level, fetishistic, prone to invest brute beasts with human and divine attributes. Among the Klamath Indians and the Hoopas this Great Man is full of tangible and robust qualities; he created the world and all its inhabitants; he alone can avert earthquakes, calamitous landslides, floods, etc., and to him they sacrifice. But among all the Indians south of them; whoever one is closely questioned, he points upward and refers to a being named as above; but this being takes no part in their affairs, and never did; created nothing, upholds nothing, has no hold on their fears or their offerings, is honored with not a single act of worship, and seems to have no function whatever, except to rule over them as a vague, indefinite "good Chief" in the Hereafter. In short, there are a hundred signs which mark this being as so much waste matter in their credo, a foreign acquisition, an unassimilated thing, a civilized scion grafted on a savage stock, and therefore, though not absolutely lifeless, yet producing no fruit. From the outrageous character of the Yukas, White Men know less about their beliefs on these matters than is known of almost any other tribe.

Most California Indians are conspicuously lenient to their children, never punishing them on any occasion; but the Yukas are often brutal and cruel to their women and children, especially to the women. Thievery is a virtue with them, as it was with the ancient Spartans, provided the thief is deft enough not to get caught. Quarrelsome, choleric, vengeful, they are frequently involved in murderous feuds among themselves,

and were seldom off the war-path in former times, the pacific and facile Pomos being their constant victims.

A veteran woodman related to me a small circumstance which illustrates the remarkable memory of these savages. One time he had occasion to perform some long labor in a certain wood where water was exceedingly scarce, and where he was grievously tormented with thirst. He remembered to have seen a little spring somewhere in that vicinity, and he considered it worth his while, under the circumstances, to search for it two whole days, but without success; when there chanced to come along a Yuka squaw, to whom he made mention of the matter. Although she had not been near that place for six years, and probably never had seen the spring but once, like himself, yet, without a moment's hesitation or uncertainty, she conducted him straight to the spot. In this country, so arid through long summer months, probably there is no other thing of which the Indians have better recollections than of the locations of springs.

#### THE YUKA DEVIL.

On the Reservation there once lived an Indian who was so thoroughly bad in every respect that he was generally known by the sobriquet of The Yuka Devil. He committed all the seven deadly sins and a good many more, if not every day of his life, at least as often as he could. One time he wandered off a considerable way from the Reserve, accompanied by two of his tribal brethren, and they fell upon and wantonly murdered three squaws, without any known provocation whatever. They were pursued by a detachment of the garrison, overtaken, captured, carried back, manacled hand and foot, and consigned to the guard-house. In some inexplicable manner, The Devil contrived to break his fetters asunder, and then he tied them on again with twine in such fashion, that, when the turnkey came along on a tour of inspection, he perceived nothing amiss. Being taken out for some purpose or other soon afterward, he seized the opportunity to wrench off his manacles and escape. But he was speedily overtaken again, and brought down with a bullet, which wounded him slightly, taken back to the guard-house, heavily ironed, and cast into a dungeon. Here he feigned death. For four days he never swallowed a crumb of nutriment, tasted no water, breathed no breath that could be discovered, and lay with every muscle relaxed like a corpse. To all human perception, he was dead, except that his body did not become rigid or cold. At last a vessel of water was placed on a table hard by, information of that fact was casully imparted to him in his native speech, all the attendants withdrew, the dungeon relapsed into silence, and he was secretly watched. After a long time, when profound stillness prevailed, and when the watchers had begun to believe he was in a trance, at least, he cautiously lifted up his head, gazed stealthily all around him, scrutinized every cranny and crevice of light, then softly crawled on all-fours to the table, taking care not to clank his chains the while, took down the pitcher, and drank deep and long. They rushed in upon him, but upon the instant--so fatuous was the obstinacy of the savage--he dropped as if he had been shot, and again simulated death. But he was now informed that his play was quite too shallow for any further purposes, and as soon as the gallows could be put in order, the executioners entered and told him plainly that the preparations were fully completed for his taking-off. He made no sign.

Then, half dragging, half carrying the miserable wretch, they conducted him forth to the scaffold. All limp and flaccid and nerveless as he is, they lift him upon the platform; but still he makes not the least motion, and exhibits no consciousness of all these stern and grim preparations. He is supported in an upright position between two soldiers, hanging a lifeless burden on their shoulders; his head is lifted up from his breast, where it droops in heavy helplessness; the new-bought rope, cold, and hard, and prickly, is coiled about his neck, and the huge knot properly adjusted at the side; the merciful cap, which shuts off these heart-sickening preparations from the eyes of the faint and shuddering criminal, is dispensed with; and everything is in perfect readiness. The solemn stillness befitting the awful spectacle about to be enacted, falls upon the few spectators; the fatal signal is given; the drop swiftly descends; the supporting soldiers sink with it, as if about to vanish into the earth and hide their eyes from the tragedy; with a dead, dull thud the tightened rope wrenches the savage from their up-bearing shoulders into pitiless mid-air; and The Yuka Devil, hanging there without a twitch or a shiver, quickly passes from simulated to unequivocal and unmistakable death.

(27) In connection with the Yukas, I will give some statistics, to show how much a Reserved Indian is worth in annual dollars and cents. In 1871, the inmates of Round Valley Reservation had in crop 850 acres, besides a matter of thirty acres cultivated for themselves, and produced the following yields: wheat, 6,476 bushels; oats, 920; barley, 3,684; potatoes, 550; turnips, 250; corn, 1,736; hay, 350 tons. At the ordinary market rates of that year, these productions were worth \$18,803. Add to this the yearly increase on 700 cattle and 400 swine--say \$10,000-- which makes the total year's product \$28,803. I was at some pains to get accurate statistics of the year's expenses of the Reservation for everything, including the merchandise, medical and clothing supplies furnished to the Indians, but not including the pay and rations of the garrison (about a company). This expense account was \$20,751.11. Deducting this from the entire product of the Reservation industries, we have the sum of \$8,051.89. Dividing this sum by 793, the whole number of Indians, we have \$10.15 clear money as the amount which every Indian, old or young, made above the expenses of keeping him a year. Had it not been for the generous yield of acorns and salmon in the contiguous forests and streams, and the noble domain of native pasturage, nourishing their great herds without money and without price-- and that to the exclusion of dozens of substantial citizens, who could have lived on these margins which the Reserve cattle overlapped--the Government would have been out of pocket, which it probably was anyhow, since we did not reckon the cost of the garrison. And all this accomplished nothing, and less than nothing, of benefit to the savages. Whatever of protection the California Reservations may once have afforded them against the indiscriminating rapacity of the earlier gold-seekers, or vice versa, they have latterly become mere lazarettos, pest-houses, which are finishing well the work that was initiated twenty years ago with bayonet and bullet. When the California Indians were once thoroughly subjugated, they were aware of that fact, and after that nothing whatever was required but the presence of a few detachments here and there, with permission to the Indians to gather acorns and spear salmon where they would. The infinitely happier and wholesomer condition of the savages on the Klamath is sufficient proof of these assertions, for the Indians are like wild wood-birds: they can take care of themselves a mighty deal better than White Men can take care of them. You may

fasten your linnet in a gilded cage, tuck it away never so tenderly in a nest of cotton-wool, and cram it with sugar and things, and it will die all the more certainly.

In the Reservation estimates, about one in every six is counted an able-bodied Indian, but they have a great deal of trouble in rallying them out afield at all. They are as cunning as the plantation Negroes in "shamming Abraham," and it is wonderful what a number of afflictions an Indian has in crop-time. He has a face-ache on occasion, or an eye-ache, or he has swallowed a frog, or he has cracks between his toes. In a pinch of work they sometimes call out the squaws, and one of them generally gets through as much in one day as a brave does in a fortnight or a month. The squaws carried to the granary on their backs the entire corn-crop--1,736 bushels--in three days, each squaw averaging about six bushels per day.

On the Hoopa Reservation, Mrs. Ida Wells was giving the best endeavors of a noble Christian matron to the instruction of the children, in day-schools and Sunday-schools, wearying not through all the week. She had infinite difficulty in inducing the indifferent savages to come to the Sunday-school, and only succeeded at last in enticing them thither by the promise of a lickerish luncheon; but after the school had been in progress many months, still the ruling Indian passion was so strong that she dared not withdraw the post-Biblical dough-nuts. The religious instruction was wisely limited to the recital, in simple phrasing, of some old human story from the Bible; and such is the fondness of all fresh and healthy natures for narrative, that the children talked all the week among themselves of the matter that was rehearsed to them. Mrs. Wells played for them little melodies on a family organ, and the young savages equaled the Southern pickaninnies in "the gold old times" of the plantations, or in the more recent and lamentable epoch of "Shoo, fly," in the endless repetition with which they trolled these ditties over and over through the week, to the mighty weariness of the listeners.

In Hoopa there was a school-house of sufficient commodiousness, but at the Round Valley Reservation, for lack of the same, the youthful disciples were compelled to sit under the reat, overshadowing branches of the white-oaks, after the fashion of the Platonists long ago in the olive groves of Academus. But on a frosty and nipping morning, such as that when I was present, they preferred to sit sheer in the sun, for a California Indian has an Ethiopian fondness for caloric. Mrs. Gibson, wife of the agent--perfect type of that good and notable Methodist minister's wife who can fricassee the Sabbath fowl no whit less worthily than she leads in her husband's congregational choir, or performs the sweet and gentle minor ministrations of his wide-scattered flock--had them arrayed along on boards stretching from log to log, in old-time camp-meeting fashion; and she caused them to do a lesson, that I might listen. It was a highly picturesque regiment--I doff my apologetic hat to their excellent commander--like to that ever-remembered company of Jack Falstaff's, who possessed only a shirt and a half among them; though the little pudding-sack faces, so wise-looking with that premature gravity of the Indian, and those dark, shining eyes, were very pleasant to see. The captain of a company--Pitt River, Eel River, or what not--would sonorously spell the word "C-a-t," and they would all with one accord ejaculate "Cat." They would read, "The cow can run in the lot," pausing after each word for the others to

follow suit, which they did mechanically, though, I warrant, a great majority of them had not the remotest apprehension of the unrestricted potentiality of the female bovine quadruped's coursing with celerity in the inclosure.

Mrs. Gibson tried to induce some of her little pets, who were able to show better things than this mere parroting after the captain, to do a lesson alone; but they hung down their heads, screwed themselves about on the boards, and sucked their thumbs with a highly refreshing naturalness. One little, lively, beady-eyed shaver accomplished the following quite by himself, "h-a, haystack."

After seeing the facility with which many of these little fellows learned to print letters on a slate, or to write their names, I am surprised that the California Indians have no picture-writing and no ornamental carving. In such purely objective studies as these, Indian children not infrequently slip their heads into the noose quicker than White children. Like all Turanian races, they are more imitative than inventive.

The Shumeias lived on the extreme upper waters of Eel River, opposite Potter Valley, and were Yukas in every respect, except in name, being sometimes called Spanish Yukas, for the reason, that, living farther south than those in Round Valley, they adopted a number of Spanish words and usages. In the Pomo language, the word shumeia is said to signify "stranger," and, secondarily, "thief" or "enemy." Some writer has finely remarked that it is a good commentary on our civilization, that, in frontier parlance, "stranger" is synonymous with "friend." In the Indian tongues, however, it seems to be generally tantamount to "enemy." The Pomos regard this branch of the Yukas very much as the Wintoons do the main people, as is shown by the name given them. Both branches were ever on the war-path against their peaceful and domestic neighbors, and the brunt of their outrageous and wanton interruptions generally fell on the Potter Valley Pomos, because the mountains here interposed slighter obstacles to their passage. At the head of Potter Valley the water-shed is quite low, and the pass is easy, and could readily be traversed by heavy masses of civilized troops. On the summit of it, a rod or two from a never-failing spring, there is to this day a conspicuous cairn, which was heaped up by the Indians to mark the boundary; and if a member of either tribe was caught beyond it, he suffered death. When the Shumeias wished to challenge the Pomos to battle, they took three little sticks, cut notches around their ends and in the middle, tied them in a fagot, and deposited the same on this cairn. If the Pomos took up the gauntlet, they tied a string around the middle notches, and returned the fagot to its place. Then the heralds of both tribes met together on the neutral territory of the Tahtos--a little tribe living at the foot of the pass--and arranged the time and place for the battle, which took place accordingly. William Potter, the pioneer of Potter Valley, says they fought with conspicuous bravery, employing bows and arrows and spears at long range, and spears or casual clubs when they came to a square, stand-up fight in the open. They not infrequently charged upon each other in heavy, irregular masses, but not with "that terrible silence" wherewith Wellington's grenadiers used to go after the French.

The following almost incredible occurrence was narrated to me by a responsible citizen of Potter Valley, and corroborated by another, both of whose names could be given, if necessary:



## STORY OF BLOODY ROCK.

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After the Americans became so numerous in the land that the Indians began to perceive that they were destined to be their greatest foes, the Shumeias abandoned their ancient hostility to the Pomos, and sought to enlist them in a common crusade against the new-come and more formidable enemy. At one time a band of them passed the boundary-line in the defile and came down to the Pomos of Potter Valley; and, with presents, and many fair words, and promises of eternal friendship, and with speeches of flaming barbarian eloquence, and fierce denunciation of the bloody-minded intruders, who sacrificed every thing to their sordid hankering for gold, tried to kindle these "tame villatic fowl" to the pitch of battle. But the Pomos held their peace; and after the Shumeias were gone on their way, they hastened to the Americans and divulged the matter, telling them what the Shumeias were hoping and plotting. So the Americans resolved to nip the sprouting mischief in the bud; and fitted out a company of choice fighters, went over on Eel River, fell upon the Shumeias, and hunted them over mountains and through canons with sore destruction. The battle everywhere went against the savages, though they fought heroically--falling back from village to village, from gloomy gorge to gorge, disputing all the soil with their traditional valor, and sealing with ruddy drops of blood the possessory title--deeds to it they had received from Nature.

But, of course, they could not stand against the scientific weapons, the fierce and unresting energy, and the dauntless bravery of the Americans; and with sad and bitter hearts they saw themselves falling, one by one, by dozens, by scores, all their bravest dropping around them, fast going out of existence. The smoke of burning villages and forests blackened the sky at noonday, warping and rolling over the mountains; and at night the flames snapped their yellow tongues in the face of the moon; while the wails of dying women, and of helpless babes brained against a tree, burdened the air.

At last, a band of thirty or forty--that was as near the number as my informants could state--became separated from their comrades, and found themselves fiercely pursued. Hemmed in on one side, headed off on another, half-crazed by sleepless nights and days of terror, the flying savages did a thing which was little short of madness. They escaped up what is now known as Bloody Rock--an isolated boulder, standing grandly out scores of feet on the face of the mountain, and only accessible by a rugged, narrow cleft in the rear, which one man could defend against a nation. Once mounted upon the summit, the savages discovered they had committed a deplorable mistake, and must prepare for death, since the rifles in the hands of the Californians could knock them off in detail. A truce was proclaimed by the Americans, and a parley was called. Some one able to confer with the Indians advanced to the foot of the majestic rock, and told them they were wholly in the power of their pursuers, and that it was worse than useless to resist. He proffered them the choice of three alternatives: either to continue the fight, and be picked off one after another; or to continue the truce, and perish from hunger; or to lock hands and plunge down from the boulder. The Indians were not long in choosing; they did not falter, or cry out, or whimper. They resolved to die like men. After consulting but a little while, they replied that they would lock hands and leap down from the rock.

A little time was granted them wherein to make themselves ready. They advanced in a line to the brow of the mighty boulder, joined their hands together, then commenced chanting their death-song, and the hoarse, deathly rattle floated down far and faint to the ears of the waiting listeners. For the last time they were looking upon their beloved valley of Eel River, which lay far beneath them in the lilac distance; and upon those golden, oat-covered, and oak-dappled hills, where they had chased the deer in happy days forever gone. For the last time they beheld the sweet light of the sun--that sun which the California Indian loves so well--shine down on the beautiful world; and for the last time the wail of his hapless children ascended to the ear of the Great One in heaven. As they ceased, and the weird, unearthly tones of the dirge were heard no more, there fell upon the little band of Americans a breathless silence, for even the stout hearts of those hardy pioneers were appalled at the thing which was about to be done. The Indians hesitated only a moment. With one sharp cry of strong and grim human suffering, which rang out strangely and sadly wild over the echoing mountains, they leaped down to their death.