

## THE CALIFORNIA INDIANS\*

## No. XIII -- The Patweens

On the middle and lower Sacramento, west side, there is one of the largest nations of the State; yet its members have no common government, not even a name for themselves. They have a common language, with little divergence of dialects for so great an area as it embraces, and substantially common customs; but so little community of feeling that the petty subdivisions have often been at the bitterest feud. For the sake of convenience and as a nucleus of classification, I have taken a word which they all employ --patween, signifying "Indian," or, in some dialects, more properly "person."

Antonio, chief of the Chenposels -- a very intelligent and well-traveled Indian -- gave me the following geographical statement, which I found correct, so far as I went: In Long, Indian, Bear, and Cortina valleys, all along the Sacramento, from Jacinto to Suisun inclusive, on Cache and Puta creeks, and in Napa Valley, the same language is spoken, which any Indian of this nation can understand throughout. Strangely, too, the Patween language laps over the Sacramento, reaching in a very narrow belt along the east side, from a point a few miles below the mouth of Stony Creek, down nearly to the mouth of Feather River. In the head of Napa Valley, from Calistoga Hot Springs to the Geysers, inclusive, are the Ashochemies (Wappos), a separate tribe; and in Pope and Coyote valleys was spoken still another language.

The various tribes were distributed as follows: On the bay named after them, the Suisuns, whose celebrated chief was Solano. In Lagoon Valley were the Malaccas; on Ulatus Creek and about Vacaville, the Olulatos; on Puta Creek, the Lewytos. (These last three names were given to me by a Spaniard, and I could find no Indians living by whom to verify them, further than that the aboriginal name of Puta Creek was Lewy.) Napa Valley was named for its aboriginal inhabitants. On lower Puta Creek the Indians were called by the Spaniards, on account of their licentiousness, Putos, and the stream, Rio de los Putos. On upper, middle, and lower Cache Creek respectively are the Olposels, Chenposels, and Weelacksels (all three names accented on the first syllable), which signify "upper tribe," "lower tribe," and "tribe on the plains." In Long Valley, just east of Clear Lake, are the Lolsels or Loldlas. Lol denotes "Indian tobacco," and sel is a locative ending; hence the name means "wild-tobacco place," applied first to the valley, then to the people in it. At Knight's Landing are the Yodetables; in Cortina Valley, the Wicosels (north tribe). At Colusa are the Corusies (corrupted to the present form), whose most celebrated chiefs were Sioc and Hookileh. At Jacinto was a little tribe whose name I do not know, and on Stony Creek the Patweens intermarried with the Wintoons, and were called by the latter Noyukies.

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If all the vast plains from Stony Creek to Suisun had been inhabited by Indians, the population would have been very great; but for several more or less obvious reasons they were not. In winter there was too much water on them; in summer none at all, and the aborigines had no means of procuring an artificial supply. More than that, there was no wood; and the portions overflowed in the rainy season breed millions of accursed gnats in the early summer which render human life a burden and a weariness. Hence they were compelled to live beside the water-courses, except during limited periods in the winter, when they established hunting-camps out on the plains. Nor could they even dwell beside the Sacramento, save on those low bluffs, as at Colusa, where the tule swamps do not approach the river. At a point about four miles below Colusa there are indications, in the shape of circular excavations, that they once had somewhat substantial dwellings far from water; yet these may have been only permanent hunting-camps. They also had temporary camps in winter along the edge of the tule swamps, for the purpose of hunting wild fowl.

But along the streams the population was dense. General Bidwell states that, in 1849, the village of the Corusies contained at least 1,000 inhabitants. In Spring Valley, on the Estes Rancho, a cellar was lately dug, which revealed a layer of bones six or eight feet below the surface, lying so thick that they formed a white stratum all round the sides of the cellar. At Vacaville great numbers of bones have been discovered in various excavations. Senor Pina, who was in the country ten years before the discovery of gold, states that on Puta Creek the Indians lived in multitudes. They had an almost boundless extent of plains whereon to hunt game and gather grass-seed; before the streams were muddied, salmon swarmed there by myriads; and the broad tule swamps in winter were noisy with quacking and screaming water-fowl.

In addition to the modes of gathering and preparing food heretofore described, the Patweens had some different processes. On the plains they gathered the seed of a plant called "yellow-blossom" (probably Ranunculus Californicus), crushed it into flour with stones, then put it into baskets with coals of fire, and agitated it until the chaff was all burned out and the flour scorched, then made it into pinole or bread as black as charcoal. The seed of the wild sunflower, alfilerilla, clover, and bunch-grass was treated much in the same manner. The Corusies, and probably others, had an ingenious way of capturing wild fowl. They set decoy-ducks, carved and painted very life-like, and when the living birds approached, they rose from concealment and scared them in such a manner that they flew into nets stretched above the water. The Suisuns fashioned clumsy rafts of tule, with which they cruised about in pursuit of waterfowl. When wild clover came into blossom they frequently ate it so greedily as to become distressingly inflated with gas (a condition which, when superinduced in cattle by the same cause, the farmer calls "hooven"), and amusing scenes ensued. One remedy was a decoction of soap-root administered internally, and judicious squaw-mothers generally kept a quantity of it ready brewed for any indiscretion on the part of their children. The most frequent treatment, however, was to lay the sufferer on his back, grease his belly, and let a friend tread it. A gentler way was to

knead him. The Spaniards assert that the Solano plains were well covered with wild oats as early as 1838, but the Indians did not make extensive use of them then. It was only later that they came to understand their value. Along the Sacramento lowlands they gathered many blackberries.

On the plains the adult males and all children up to ten or twelve -- or about the age of puberty -- went naked, while the women wore only a narrow slip of deer-skin around the waist. In the mountains, where it was somewhat cooler, the women made for themselves short petticoats from the inner bark of the cotton-wood. In making a wigwam, they excavated about two feet, banked up the earth outside enough to keep out the water, and threw the remainder on the roof. In a lodge thus covered, a mere handful of sprigs would heat the air agreeably all day. In the mountains, where wood was more plenty, they frequently put on no covering of earth. Some have thought that the mountain lodges were made more sharply conical to sustain the weight of snow in winter. In the Sierra this consideration might have had its influence, but hardly in the Coast Range. The simplest explanation is, that the Indians used that material which was nearest to hand.

Among the Lolsels, the bride frequently remains in her father's house, and the husband comes to live with her, whereupon half of the purchase-money is returned to him. It is often the case that two or three families live in one wigwam. They are very clannish, especially the mountain tribes, and family influence is all-potent. That and wealth create the chief with such limited power as he possesses. For instance, among the Lolsels the chief was Clitey, but his brother at one time became more powerful than he through his family alliances, created an insurrection, involved the tribe in civil war, and expelled Clitey and his adherents -- nearly half the tribe -- from Long Valley to the head of Clear Lake. They remained there several years, but when the Americans arrived they intervened and procured a reconciliation. A man who is wealthy sometimes purchases "relatives," in order to augment his family influence; and one who has none at all does the same to secure himself protection. This clannishness begets conspiracies, feuds, and secret assassinations. The members of a powerful family among the Corusies have been known to assemble in secret sessions, during which they appeared to determine on the death of some one who was considered dangerous, for immediately afterward he was shadowed and soon disappeared. The Lolsels and Chenposels were noted for the savage vendettas that prevailed among them, and which have been prosecuted even to this day.

No scalps were taken from the slain in battle, but the victors often decapitated the most beautiful maiden they had captured, and one held up the bloody head in his hand for his comrades to shoot at, to taunt and exasperate the vanquished. Men who had quarreled about a woman or any other matter, if they did not get satisfaction in vociferous cursing, would fight a duel with bows and arrows.

These Indians undoubtedly committed infanticide before the arrival of the

Americans, but less frequently than now. When a Corusie woman died, leaving an infant very young, the relatives shook it to death in a skin or blanket. They did this even with a half-breed child. Occasionally a squaw destroyed her babe when she was deserted by her husband and had no relatives. The sentiment is universal among the California Indians that it is the father who must support the children, and this sentiment justifies the act here mentioned. The maternal instinct was generally as strong in the savage bosom as with a civilized woman. In Long Valley a squaw who was about to give birth to an infant was so strongly threatened by its American father that she consented to destroy it. But the neighbors interfered, collected a sum of money and a quantity of supplies, and presented them to her on condition that she should preserve its life, to which she gladly consented. Afterward they bought the child of her for \$10, and it lived with one of the purchasers eighteen years. When he was quite young, the boy stole a pair of shoes from his guardian, and the latter tried in vain to make him confess the theft. He then told him the Great Spirit would write on a piece of paper and tell him how wicked this boy was. He held a piece of white paper close to the fire (he had written on it with skimmed milk), and in a few seconds there appeared words on it. The boy was greatly terrified, confessed the theft, and after that grew up to be an ornament to his race.

Parents are very easy-going with their children, and never systematically punish them. They teach them to swim when a week old by holding them on their hands in the water. I have seen a father coddle and teeter his baby in a fit of the mulligrubs for an hour with the greatest patience; then carry him down to the river, laughing good-naturedly; gently dip the little, brown, smooth-skinned nugget in the waves all over, and then lay him on the moist, warm sand. The treatment was no less effectual than harmless, for it stopped the perverse, persistent squalling at once.

The Patweens present the traditional California Indian physique, and I had good opportunities among them to make studies of it. There is a broadly ovoid face, in youth almost round, and in old age assuming nearly the outlines of a bow-kite. The forehead is low, disproportionately wide, thickly covered with stiff, bristly hair at the corners, and often having a sharp point of hair growing down in the middle toward the nose; not retreating, but keeping well up toward a perpendicular with the chin, and frequently having the arch over the eye so strongly developed as to be a sharp ridge. The ciliary hairs sparse, very seldom spanning across the nose. Beard and mustache very thin, often almost totally wanting, and carefully plucked out. The head small, often found to be startlingly small when the fingers are thrust into the shock of coarse hair enveloping it. It is so depressed that the diameter between the temples, judging by the eye, is as great as that from base to crown, if not greater. This gives the forehead its great width. Small as the skull actually is, when a widow has worn tar in mourning, and then shaved her poll to remove it, the hair, growing out straight and stiff for two or three inches, gives her the appearance of having an enormous head. The eyes well-sized in youth, often large and lustrous, but at a great age becoming smoke-burnt and reduced to mere points, or else swollen, bleared, and

disgusting. No incurvation of the eye-slit, as in the east-Asian races. Probably there is no feature so characteristic in this race as the nose. So slightly is it developed at the root and so broad at the nostrils, that it outlines upon the face a nearly equilateral triangle. Perfectly straight like the Grecian, it is yet so depressed at the root that it seems to issue from the face on a level with the pupils of the eyes. Owing to the great lateral development of the nares, their longer axes frequently incline so much as to form nearly one and the same continuous line. In this case the outer axial line of the nose is generally foreshortened, so that the eye of the beholder is directed into the openings of the nostrils -- a repulsive spectacle. The color varies from a dull brassy or brassy-bronze to hazel, brown, and almost jet-black. In young women the breasts are full and round, but after they have borne children they hang far down, flabby and hideous. This may be partly accounted for from the fact that they wear no dresses to assist in staying them up. In walking, the Indian throws more weight on the toes than an American, which is probably due to his stealthy, cat-like habits. There is a tendency to walk pigeon-toed, especially when barefoot, but it is by no means universal. As to the body, the most noticeable feature is the excessive obesity of youth, and the total, almost unaccountable, collapse in advancing years. This is attributable in part to the watery and insubstantial nature of their food, into which so little grain or flesh enters; and it is this phenomenal shrinkage which causes them to become so hideously wrinkled and repulsive. I have seen nonagenarians who, it seemed to me, would scarcely weigh sixty pounds. Their frames are small, although the skull is exceptionally thick; their hands and feet might well be the envy of a belle, being so small as to seem out of all proportion to the gross bodies seen in youth, and coming to their proper relative size only when age has stripped off the puffy mass of fat. It is due to the smallness of the frame that the inevitable collapse is so utter and astonishing. An aged squaw of the Sacramento, with her hair closely cropped; the wrinkles actually gathered in folds on her face, and smutched, together with the hair, with a coating of tar; her face so little and weazen, and her blinking pin-head eyes, is probably the most odious-looking of all human beings. On the other hand, take a Patween girl of the mountains, at first climacteric when she is just gliding out of the uncomfortable obesity of youth, her complexion a soft creamy hazel, her wide eyes dreamy and idle, and she presents not an unattractive picture of vacuous, facile, and voluptuous beauty. California herself is a type of her children; at one time in the year one of the most gorgeous lands the sun looks down upon; at another, the most shrunken and withered.

In connection with the above, I will present some extracts from an article entitled "The Chinese and Japanese: A Comparison of their Physical Types," by Ed. Madier de Montjoie, published in the Revue Scientifique de la France et de l'Etranger, of January 10th, 1874, and translated for the New York Medical Record, of March 16th. I will simply premise that a great portion of the foregoing description was written many months before this article was published:

"Finally, I will add that in China, to a moderate extent, and particularly in Japan, there are brown complexions so copper-

colored as to approach almost the color of oxide of iron, or of red ochre, and which remind me of the Indians whom I have seen in North America. In China we find, by way of exception, although frequently, heads of such an exaggerated ovoid shape that, were it not for the height of the nose, they would remind us of the Aztecs... In adding that in the great mass of Redskins the root of the nose is scarcely developed, and that although in Japan and China the absence of the prominence of the nose, as far as to the inferior half, is the universal rule, it seemed to me that in Japan this rule is a little less universal in this sense, that we sometimes find a slight prominence of the nose on a level with the iris, especially in the individuals of light complexion... Redskins have, like the Chinese and Japanese, well-rounded, almost feminine forms, combined with the greatest athletic development. They have, like the Chinese, the pectoral muscles very little developed; the muscles of the arm less powerful than those of the leg. Their nose, much more bony, more curved than that of a very large majority of the Chinese, differs less from that of many Japanese; the contour in every respect more ovoid... I have said that among all individuals of the yellow race the pectoral muscles are little developed. I beg you to remember that these muscles pass around, under the arm, upon the back. These muscles sustain the breast of the female, and maintain it in its place. It is the weakness of these muscles and their small development which seems to me to explain the admirable roundness of the mammae among all the yellow oriental women, and its frightful flabbiness as soon as they are old. At these two periods of life, the bosoms of the women of the yellow race are very beautiful, and afterward extremely ugly. The same is true of the women of the Redskins... Finally, permit me, in conclusion, to explain myself in a familiar manner. My formula is the result of long experience, and because it is not scientific many not find favor: An individual who can wear bow-glasses easily does not belong to the pure yellow race."

In this article, M. de Montjoie is led into some capital errors from the fact that, whatever portion of North America he visited, he appears to have seen only the copper-colored aborigines, and no California Indians, who are by no means copper-colored, but brown or yellow. Having also seen only the haughty, aquiline beaks of the Algonquin races, and not the straight noses of California, he appears to lay undue stress upon the exceptional cases in Japan where the nose developed prominence in the inferior half. Aside from these few points where M. de Montjoie goes out of his way to catch at casual resemblances between the orientals, especially the Japanese, and

the Redskins (whom he took to be alone representative of America), the article is extremely interesting and valuable for the unmistakable analogies which it points out between the Chinese and the Californians.

In Long Valley I saw a phenomenon in physiology. Clitey, the chief, eighty years old, perhaps, was turning white in spots. The process had been going forward slowly for several years, not by any sloughing off, but by an imperceptible change from black to a soft, delicate white. The old captain appeared to be rather proud of the change than otherwise, hoping eventually to become a White man. When asked by the interpreter, J. F. Hanson, where he expected to go after death, he replied that he did not know, but he intended to follow the Americans wherever they went.

From the foregoing account it will be guessed that the Patweens rank among the lowest of the race. Antonio told me that his people who could not speak English had no name or conception whatever of a Supreme Being, and never mentioned the subject, and that they never spoke of religion, a future state, or anything of the kind. But this must be taken cum grano salis. The Lolsels speak of a divinity whom they call Kemmy Salto, which signifies literally, "The White Man of the Sky;" but this is too manifestly a modern invention, made to please their patron, Mr. Hanson. Neither is there any ceremony that can be called religious. They have dances or merry-makings (ponoh) in celebration of a good harvest of acorns or wild oats, or a plentiful catch of fish, accompanied with feasting, in which latter respect they, as well as all the Sacramento and Sierra tribes, differ from those of the Coast Range. The Coast Range nations, especially from Eel River northward, partake of only ordinary messes on these occasions, and have moral harrangues by the chiefs; but the eastern nations make feasting the prominent matter. There is a ceremony of raising the dead, and another one of raising the devil; but both are employed for sordid purposes, the farthest removed from religious feeling. When the dead are to be raised, there is first a noisy powwow in the sweathouse, and then a number of muffled forms appear, before whom the women pass in procession in the darkness, with fear, and trembling, and weeping, and deposit gifts in their hands. This ceremony was formerly observed merely to assist them in keeping the women in due subjection; but in these days it enables the men, without using coercion, to extort from their female relatives the infamous gains of that prostitution to which they have driven them. In raising the devil there is a still greater ado. About the time of harvest, they go out and kindle fires all on the hills around at night; they whoop, halloo, and circle together; as if driving in game to the valley; finally they chase the fiend up a tree, and throw shell-money underneath it to hire him to take himself off. Sometimes he makes for the sweathouse, fantastically dressed, and with harlequin nimbleness capers about it awhile, then bows his head low and shoots into the entrance backward. He has now got possession of their stronghold, and, literally speaking, the devil is to pay. Presently, they summon courage to follow him in, and for awhile there prevails the silence of the grave, when a pin could be heard to drop. Then they fling down money before him, and dart out with the greatest agility. After a proper length of time, he

steals out by a trap-door, strips off his diabolical toggery, and re-appears as a human being. The only object of this egregious foolery appears to be simply to assist them in maintaining their influence over the squaws.

A widow wears tar on her head as long as she is in mourning, sometimes two or three years, sometimes as many weeks. When she removes it, it is understood that she wishes to remarry; but if an Indian makes advances toward her before the removal, she considers herself insulted, and weeps.

The knowledge of medicine is a secret with the craft; to learn it a young disciple pays his teacher all that he possesses, and begins life without anything. But he quickly reimburses himself from his patients, charging them from \$10 to \$20 for a single dose. For a felon, a Corusie doctor split a live frog and bound one portion on the affected part, which cured the same. When a person is manifestly sick unto death, the Corusies sometimes wind ropes tightly around him to terminate his sufferings. They have the sweat-house heat and the cold plunge afterward, as usual. This, and sucking or scarification, and a few simples culled from the fields and forests, with divers incantations, constitute their materia medica.

A mixed usage prevails in disposing of the dead, but most are buried. Those living near Clear Lake are somewhat influenced by their western neighbors in favor of cremation, but on the plains burial was and is all but universal. The Corusies thrust the head between the knees, wrap the body with bark and skins, and bury it on its side in a round grave. Previous to interment, the body is laid in state outside of the sweat-house, and then each of the relatives in turn passes around it, wailing and mourning, and calling upon the deceased with many fond, endearing terms; then ascends the dome of the sweat-house, smites his breast, faces toward the setting sun, and waves the departed spirit a long, last farewell: for they believe it had gone to the Happy Western Land.

Of legends, there are not many to relate. It is a nation not very ingenious or fertile, though occasionally there is a clever head. An old chief in Napa Valley was once pestered with questions about the origin of things by some Americans of that description who appear to think the aborigines know more touching earthquakes, floods, volcanoes, and various telluric phenomena than our own scientists. Turning, he pointed to the mountains, and asked, "You see those mountains?" He was informed that they saw them. "Well, I'm not so old as they." Then he pointed to the foot-hills and asked, "You see those foothills?" Again, he was informed that they saw them. "Well," he added with simple gravity, "I'm older than they."

The Corusies hold that, in the beginning of all things, there was nothing but a great turtle cruising about in the limitless waters, but he dived down and brought up earth with which he created the world. The Lewytos related that there was once a great sea all over the Sacramento Valley, and an earthquake rent open the Golden Gate

and drained it. This earthquake destroyed all men but one, who mated with a crow and so re-peopled the world. The Chenposels account as follows for the origin of Clear Lake: Before anything was created, the old frog and the old badger lived alone together. The badger wanted a drink, and the frog gnawed into a tree, sucked out and swallowed the sap, and discharged it into a hollow place. He created other frogs to assist him, and together they finally made the lake. Then he created the little flat-white-fish, and it swam down Cache Creek and turned into the great salmon, pike, sturgeon, and whatever other mightly fishes there are in the waters. The Chenposels also relate this:

#### THE GREAT FIRE.

There was once a man who loved two women, and wished to marry them. Now, these two women were magpies (atcatch), but they loved him not, and laughed his wooing to scorn. Then he fell into a rage and cursed these two women who were magpies, and went far away to the north. There he set the world on fire; then made for himself a tule boat, wherein he escaped to the sea, and was never heard of more. But the fire which he had kindled burned with a great burning. It ate its way south with terrible swiftness, licking up all things that were on the earth -- men, trees, rocks, animals, water, and even the ground itself. But the old coyote saw the burning and the smoke of it from his place far in the south, and he ran with all his might to put it out. He took two little boys in a sack on his back, and ran north like the wind. So fast did he run that he gave out just as he got to the fire, and dropped the two little boys. But he took Indian sugar (honey-dew) in his mouth, chewed it up, spat it on the fire and so put it out. Now the fire was out, but the coyote was very thirsty, and there was no water. Then he took Indian sugar again, chewed it up, dug a hole in the ground in the bottom of the creek, spat the sugar into it, covered it up, and it turned into water, and the earth had water again. But the two little boys cried because they were lonesome, for there was nobody left on earth. Then the coyote made a sweat-house, and split out a great number of little sticks, which he laid in the sweat-house over night. In the morning they were all turned to men and women; so the two little boys had company, and the earth was re-peopled.

I deem it probable that this legend has reference to that ancient, vast eruption of lava from the north, recently described by Professor Le Conte, which spread over so great a portion of northern California. There is a Pit River legend much to the same effect.

The subject of shell-money possesses some interest, and as I have had opportunities of studying it most among the Neeshenams of Bear River, I shall speak of it as it is there seen. Their common white money is called hawock, and is made of the bivalve shell known as Pachydesma crassatelloides, found on the coast in southern California. It is now manufactured extensively by Americans with machinery,

and sold to the aborigines. But the latter, in making it for themselves, before they had iron impelments, used flint. It is cut into flat, round disks or buttons, varying in thickness according to the shell, and from a quarter-inch to an inch in width. These are strung on a string made from the inner fibre of the bark of a kind of milk-weed (Apocynum), and generally all the pieces on a string are of the same size and value. The largest pieces on a string are usually estimated at twenty-five cents, and the smallest at five cents, though different Indians place different values on them. They are subject to all the evils of a "fluctuating currency." Thus, a string containing 177 pieces was sold for \$7.00; but an Indian, knowing my desire to secure a specimen, charged me fifty cents for an inch button. The old Indians sometimes have several hundred dollars' worth of this shell-money laid by, on which they gamble. The younger or civilized ones, and Americans living in the vicinity of rancherias, while they do not esteem it at all for itself, often have it for use among the old Indians. Thus, I have known a White man buy a pony for \$15 gold, and sell it to an Indian for \$40 shell-money. By keeping this latter he could exchange it with Indians for gold or silver, in small quantities at a time, dollar for dollar. An Americanized Indian, although knowing he can buy nothing with it from the store, sometimes has the bulk of his wealth in this shape, to remove from himself the temptation to squander it all at once, as he would if it were gold. When he wants a little spending-money, he can exchange it at any time with an old Indian who has American money.

This may be considered their silver or common circulating medium, while that which answers to gold among us is made of the red-backed ear-shell (Haliotis rufescens), and is called uhlo. (Mr. R.E.C. Stearns, to whose kindness I am indebted for the identification of the shells, suggests that this word is corrupted from the Spanish aulon. This is possible, although the Indians accent the first syllable, and give it a sound somewhere between uh and the German ö). This money is in oblong pieces, varying from an inch to two inches in length and about one-third as wide, being cut out in such size as the curvature of the shell will permit. Two small holes are drilled near the end of each piece, and they are by these attached to a string, hanging edge to edge, and are worn on gala-days as a necklace. Being polished and brilliantly colored, they form an ornament very seductive to the savages' eyes. The larger pieces generally rate at \$1 each, and a string of ten -- the usual number -- at \$10. But they are too large for convenient use, and the Indians generally seek to exchange them for the less ornamental white buttons.