

Reports of the
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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No. 55

ORIGINAL ACCOUNTS OF THE LONE WOMAN OF SAN NICOLAS ISLAND

Edited by Robert F. Heizer and Albert B. Elsasser

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ABSTRACT

Significant manuscripts and published articles pertaining to the story of an Indian woman who allegedly spent eighteen years of her life alone on San Nicolas Island, off the southern coast of California, are reprinted. Citations to a number of important secondary sources are given, together with editorial comment.

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

Fanciful accounts of individuals shipwrecked or deserted on small islands or otherwise leading solitary lives in inaccessible parts of the world are frequent enough to allow the statement that they hold a significant place in modern English and American adventure and travel literature. When we encounter relatively intimate details of living in otherwise well-documented stories of this type, we are no doubt dealing with a proper and perhaps necessary ingredient of one type of romantic fiction. On some occasions these details may be the concern of ethnographers or archaeologists, and for this reason the account or series of accounts that refer to an Indian woman who is said to have spent eighteen years on an island¹ off the coast of southern California seems to be of interest to an uncommonly wide audience. The accounts for the most part have been long out of print, and the present editors have decided to reprint them under one cover. Our chief reason for making them available is to provide the material for the general public. We have in the past ten years received scores of requests for information on the San Nicolas Island woman.

Continued interest one hundred years after the event suggests the viability of what may be called the "solitary life" motif in literature. It will be recalled that the story of Robinson Crusoe was first published in 1719. Its popularity as a romance has not appreciably lessened since that date. The curious experience of Alexander Selkirk on Juan Fernandez

1. San Nicolas Island is about 65 miles from the nearest point on the mainland, at longitude 119° 30' west, latitude 33° 15' north. Note that this spelling of "Nicolas" has been adopted throughout the paper, even though it frequently appears as "Nicholas" in the original printings.

Island has supposedly formed the foundation of Defoe's story. Other stories or legends with approximately the same motif are no doubt numerous, but a few early representative examples nevertheless are cited below.

J. Ross Browne (1867, p. 153) quotes from the narrative of William Dampier, the English navigator and buccaneer, concerning a "Musquito" Indian who preceded Selkirk on Juan Fernandez Island and was alone for three years. He was left with a knife and gun, the latter of which he utilized for manufacturing "harpoons, lances, hooks, and a long knife."

John Laing (1815, p. 119) mentions the abandonment on Spitzbergen in 1743 of four persons; three of these survived until 1749, having exhausted "all the ingenious contrivances related of Robinson Crusoe." So far as we know, this arctic marooning has not been used as the scene for a novel.

Of the same genre, but not exactly like the instances mentioned above, is the reference to a boy of eleven or twelve years who was found "wild" in France in 1799. The boy lived until 1828 without having learned to speak, hence was presumed to be an idiot (Hervé, 1911, pp. 383-398, 441-454). This is one of a large number of cases of "feral" children in which sociologists and anthropologists have been interested (see, e.g., Zingg, 1940).

Variations of the California narratives, both primary and secondary, which are brought together in print here are not very great, although there were some unexplainable lapses on the part of at least one author (Dall, 1874) who set down the years of solitude as forty rather than eighteen and the locale as San Miguel rather than San Nicolas Island. There are several other minor differences concerning dates and number of years involved, and in one case (Phelps [ms.], in the logbook of the Alert) a version of the historical background is presented that differs from that of most of the other writers. The Phelps account (Document 1d, below) differs from that of Nidever (Document 1B; see also Document 2E, Taylor, 1860) on the reduction in numbers and removal of the Nicoleño population. It was written in the logbook of the Alert in 1841 that four or five years since (i.e. 1836 or 1837) four survivors were taken off the island and that one of the women "was [away] to the mountains" and thus abandoned. Nidever, in his recollections in 1878, states that he got his information about the event from a friend (Sparks).² Whether we should credit the logbook or Nidever, who prefaces his remarks about the removal by saying, "of the exact manner in which she was left I do not

2. A hunter; for his California activities see Ogden (1941).

now remember, but am under the impression that Sparks told me that it happened in this way," we cannot be sure, but we incline to believe Phelps' story. Furthermore, Phelps' account credits Captain Robbins rather than Sparks with the 1835 (or 1836 or 1837) removal of all but the one San Nicolas survivor. What is clear is only that there is a good deal of confusion about the removal of the Nicoleño from their island.

The presence of Kodiak Indians on San Nicolas Island is attested in many of the accounts, but again there is confusion about when they were there and the circumstances of their removal. While the Phelps' manuscript states that the Kodiaks arrived in 1825 and subsequently were killed by the Indians, Taylor's newspaper article (Document 2E) recounts that in 1811 one Captain Whittemore left the Kodiaks on the island. These Kodiaks were said to have killed almost all of the native San Nicolas islanders, but were removed by Captain Whittemore in the same year (1811). Incidentally, Thompson and West's History of Santa Barbara County (1883) corroborates Taylor's account of the dates of the Kodiak sojourn³ but agrees with Phelps in the statement (*ibid.*, p. 255): "In 1836 Captain Isaac Williams,⁴ late Collector of the port of San Pedro, visited San Nicolas and removed all the natives except one who was left in the mountains" (underlining added). The romantic version that the woman leaped from the boat as it was departing to get her child who had been forgotten does not sound very probable.

We have selected here what are thought to be all of the primary (i.e. first hand) accounts about the removal of the lone woman from San Nicolas Island. Four of these are reprinted (prefixed with the designations 1A,

3. Apparently Taylor (1860), the Thompson and West (1883) writer, and Tenney (1907) based their claims on the same article from an earlier newspaper, possibly the Santa Barbara Gazette.

4. Note that now we have three mariners alleged to have removed the Indians ca. 1836: Capt. Robbins, Sparks, and Capt. Williams. Bowers (1892) reports that, "The vessel was chartered by Lewis F. Burton and Isaac J. Sparks of Santa Barbara, and was commanded by Charles Hubbard. The crew with two or three exceptions were Kanakas. An American known as Bill Williams accompanied the vessel. They sailed to the island about the First of August, 1835." It is possible that most of the persons who are said to have effected the removal in the 1830's did actually take part in one connection or another--some of the confusion enters through categorical statements that this or that person removed the Indians.

1B, 1C, and 1D). Following these are five additional descriptions (designated 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, and 2E) which for one reason or another are deemed to be the most important of the early and immediately secondary material pertaining to the lone woman. Two of them, for example, are variant narratives compiled by persons who allegedly spoke with Nidever. The Hardacre sketch (Document 2A) in this category is considered important because, besides its delightful style, it is one of the earliest to put on record the few words of the lone woman's dialect.⁵

In addition to the reprinted accounts are several minor references which in one sense or another may be classed as primary but do not, in our opinion, merit republication. Harrington (1928, pp. 59, 60), for example, in his report of the archaeology of the Burton Mound in Santa Barbara, gives a short outline of the life of Captain Nidever in connection with the latter's ownership of property which included the mound. Further, Harrington presents an excerpt of a letter written in 1923 by Miss Hinchman, the daughter of one of Nidever's successors as owners of the Burton Mound property. This letter is of interest because it mentions (erroneously) yet another locality, Anacapa Island, as the place where the Indian woman was marooned. Reverend Stephen Bowers (1892) was acquainted with Nidever and was interested in the Indians of the Santa Barbara region. His story of the lone woman is sketchy but merits our attention because it mentions that Captain Nidever's statements were preserved by the Fathers in the archives of the Santa Barbara Mission, and that he (Bowers) had "secured a translation of their record of this event by a competent Spanish scholar." Father Engelhardt, however, wrote (1923, pp. 449-452) that even though Nidever's reputation for veracity appeared to be above suspicion, "We should declare the whole story a myth for the reason that, after a close examination of the Baptismal Registers at the Mission and at the Parish Church of Santa Barbara, we failed to discover any entry recording the woman's Baptism in either the Mission or the Parish Church. Likewise, there is no record of her burial in the Mission Cemetery.... We found no such account among the numerous papers in the Mission Archives nor anywhere else." So far as we can determine the translation said to have been secured by Bowers has not come to light.

5. Again there is considerable confusion on the meaning ascribed to the four words. The authoritative identification of these is by Kroeber (1907, p. 153).

Printed accounts of the old woman of San Nicolas which are based upon earlier published materials are classed by us as secondary accounts. Most of these are straightforward descriptions of the matter, and it is important only to note that their authority rests upon the limited number of records which were made at or shortly after 1853 from the testimony of persons directly involved in the affair. In the category of secondary documents we cite: Dall (1874--previously mentioned as untrustworthy), Gibbons (1893), Yates (1896), Rust (1897) Eisen (1904), Tenney (1907), Holder (1910), Englehardt (1923), and Norris (1960).

Kroeber (1907, p. 153) identifies the four words of the Nicoleño dialect which were recorded from the old woman as Shoshonean, but could not tell, on the basis of such scanty data, whether the Nicoleño dialect was similar to Gabrielino or Luiseño.

Of the old woman's possessions we have specific information only on a twined basket used for holding water (Heizer, 1960). Her possessions are discussed in some detail in an article on the archaeology of San Nicolas Island by Meighan and Eberhardt (1953).

ACCOUNTS TAKEN FROM MSS AND PUBLISHED SOURCES

Document 1A: Narrative of a Seafaring Life on the Coast of California, by Carl Dittman, 1878.

I forgot to mention that in the fall of 1852 I made a trip to the San Nicolas island.

The same day we arrived Nidever and I with two indians of our crew went ashore to see where the otter lay. At the lower end we discovered quite a school of them. Two days after we again landed about the middle of the island and followed along the bank to its head.

We kept a sharp lookout for signs of the indian woman, the fathers at the mission having requested us to search for her. Within about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the head of the island we struck a wide low sandy flat that extended from one side of the island to the other. Here among some bushes or small trees called by the Californians Malva Real, placed in a crotch or fork of one of the trees we found a basket woven of grass, oblong in shape, 3 ft. long, $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. wide and about 14 in. deep and covered with a piece of seal

skin. Its contents we found were a dress or gown made of the skin of the shag, several skins of the same kind cut in a square shape, bone needles and knives, fish-hooks made of the abalone shell, and a rope made of sinews, about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter and fully 25 ft. long. This sinew rope was twisted as evenly as the best rope I have ever seen. I think that it was used in snaring seals, by making a noose and spreading it on the rocks near the beach where the seals were accustomed to sleep.

The things were all nicely laid together in the basket when we found them, and after examining them I was disposed to replace them and return the basket to the place we had found it. Nidever, however, thought that it would be better to leave the things strewn about on the ground, so that on our next visit to this place we might be sure she was still alive and on the island if they were found replaced in the basket. Accordingly we left them scattered about. We returned to the vessel intending to make further search as soon as we could find time, but the next two or three days were taken up in hunting otter, and the fourth day a strong wind sprang up that soon increased to a gale.

We remained nearly 6 or 7 days in hopes that the blow would stop, but at the end of that time there being no signs of it going down and the swell becoming so heavy we did not deem it safe to remain longer. Accordingly we ran across to the San Miguel Island, where we found a better harbor than even that of Santa Barbara. In approaching San Miguel, Nidever became somewhat excited and very nearly ran us on a reef.

From San Miguel we returned to Santa Barbara where I remained the following winter, Nidever going back to the San Miguel island which he had stocked.

We returned from our trip to Turtle Bay the latter part of June 1853 and a few days after refitted for a hunt among the Islands and especially to hunt around the San Nicolas, as at this season we were not likely to be driven away by a storm, as on our previous trip. Then, too, there were a large number of otter around this Island there having been no hunters there for several years, and we wished to secure them before others should go there. We went first to San Miguel, and thence to San Nicolas, where we arrived early in the afternoon. We came to anchor on the N.E. side about the middle of the Island. As soon as we came to anchor Nidever and I went on shore for the purpose of seeing where the otter lay and also to pick out a site for our camp as we intended to make a long stay and would move on shore the next day. We took two of our indians with us and left

them in charge of the boat, while Nidever and I proceeded towards the head of the island.

On the way we saw several dogs that looked very much like a coyote excepting in color which was black and white; they were quite wild and ran away as soon as we came in sight. Arrived at the head of the Island Nidever said that he was tired and sat down to rest.

I continued along near the shore however, rounded the point at the head of the Island and went a long distance down on the other side. Not far from the head I found footprints leading from the beach up over the bank and thence up on to the ridge above. I followed them until they disappeared in a kind of moss with which the ground was covered, a short distance above the bank. As it was growing late I returned to where I had left Nidever and reported what I had seen. He said at first that they might be the tracks of one of our indians but he afterwards admitted that it was impossible for them to have got ahead of us, and I too was sure that the footprints were too small for those of a man.

Nidever however was not very sanguine about finding her as he had come to the conclusion that the dogs had eaten her and was very doubtful if even her bones could be found. He decided however to make a thorough examination of the upper end of the Island especially the high ridge which lay between the low sandy floor and the head of the Island. Accordingly after breakfast the next day, we took all of our men excepting the cook and proceeded to the low sandy flat aforementioned. Here I took them, 3 indians and an Irishman, and stretched them in a line across this end of the flat, we passed across to the other side leaving Nidever to follow along near the shore to the head of the Island over the same course he and I had taken the evening before. We reached the other side of the Island without finding a trace of the woman. I sent the men back with instructions to search thoroughly along both borders of the flat and especially to visit the bushes where we had found the basket on our previous visit to the Island. I did not return with them but went up that side of the Island until I struck the footprints I had discovered the day before.

I followed the tracks up over the bank and from the print where they could no longer be seen continued to ascend the ridge. About half way up I found a small piece of drift wood which I concluded she must have dropped on her way from the beach with firewood. From where I found the piece of drift wood I could see three huts farther up the ridge and having gone up to them I found them constructed of whales' ribs and covered with brush although they were open all round and the high grass growing within them

showed that they could not have been occupied for some time. From this point I could look over the whole length and breadth of the ridge and the sand flat beyond where I could plainly see our men moving about.

I began to look about me and finally discovered at a distance on the N.E. side of the ridge and about halfway to its top, a small black object that from where I stood looked like a crow seated on a bush. I thought I saw it move, and so went towards it. I soon discovered that it was the Indian woman. She was seated within an inclosure similiar to those already described [see Nidever's account] so that until quite near her I could see only her head and shoulders. I approached her cautiously and was enabled to get within a few yards of her unobserved as she had her face turned from the direction in which I had come. While I was still some distance away two dogs, probably the same we had seen the day before began to growl whereupon she gave a yell and they went away; but she did not turn around. From this point I could plainly see our men searching about on the sandy flat, and I signaled to them by placing my hat on the ramrod of my gun and raising and lowering it until I succeeded in attracting their attention, when I made signs for them to come. The old woman saw them also, as every few minutes she would look towards the flat, shading her eyes from the sun with her hand and talking rapidly to herself. While the men were coming towards me I had an opportunity of observing the old woman and her surroundings. She was seated cross legged on the ground and was engaged in separating the blubber from a piece of seal skin which was lying across one knee and held by one hand. In the other hand she grasped a rude knife, a piece of iron hoop thrust into a rough piece of wood for a handle and held so that the back of the hand was turned down, scraping and cutting from, instead of towards her. Just outside of the inclosure there was a high pile of ashes and bones showing that she had lived in this place some time. Baskets of grass and vessels of the same material made in the shape of a flagon and lined with asphaltum, used to hold water, were scattered about. On a sinew rope stretched between two poles, several feet above the ground were hanging pieces of seal blubber, while near her was the head of a seal from which the brains, already putrid were running. Her covering consisted of a single garment of the shag's skin, the feathers out and pointing downward, in shape resembling a loose gown. It was sleeveless, low in the neck and was girded at the waist with a sinew rope. When she stood up, as I afterwards observed, it extended nearly to the ankles. She had no covering on her head; her hair which was thickly matted and bleached and a reddish brown, hung down to her shoulders.

As soon as the men came near enough I made signs for them to spread out and approach her in a circle, lest she should attempt to escape. While

they were still some distance away, but sufficiently near to prevent her escape, I stepped around in front of her, but instead of seeing her startled and alarmed, I was surprised to have her bow and smile, as though it was a delight to see me and my visit an everyday occurrence. She began a rapid talking and gesticulating, all of which was wholly unintelligible to me. As fast as the men approached her she also bowed, smiled and talked to them. They all sat down in a circle around her while I made signals to Nidever who was in sight to come to us. After some delay he came up and we sat down with the men. Taking some roots from two bags or sacks made of grass she placed them in the coals and as soon as they were roasted she passed them around making motions for us to eat. One of the roots was what is commonly called carcomite among the Californians; the other I do not know the name of. The indians among our men tried to talk with the old woman but did not succeed in making themselves understood, neither could they comprehend her language. Nidever asked the indians if they thought the old woman could be taken by force if necessary. They replied that there would be no difficulty. Hearing this I told Nidever I did not think that there would be any necessity of using force, and that if she could be made to understand what was wanted that she would willingly go with us. Patting her on the shoulders to attract her attention I went through the motions of packing her things into the baskets, placing this on my back and walking off in the direction of the beach, and then said vamos the sph. for let us go. The motions she no doubt understood, but the word vamos seemed to be more intelligible, as upon hearing it her face brightened up and she set to work with alacrity to get ready. She filled her baskets and in the larger one she placed the seal's head after replacing the putrid brains and tearing from it bits of adhering flesh. This basket she raised to her back and secured with straps passing over her shoulders and under her arms. She took other articles in her hands and started off towards the beach with a load that seemed heavy enough for a mule. Two of our indians went ahead of her while Nidever and I brought up the rear to guard against any attempt at escape, although no such precaution was necessary. Upon reaching the beach we stopped at a spring that forms a little pool of water under a sort of mound of rocks and situated but a few yards from the beach. One of the peculiarities of this spring was its surface, which is at all times ruffled with a cool breeze which seems to be continually playing over the pool. I noticed it on this occasion and at several times afterwards. The water was invariably clear and cool. Its source I should judge must have been high up in the ridge. Around this spring were several poles erected and on there we hung the things we had brought from the old woman's place, for each one of us had our hands full, and made motions for the old woman to do the same. We hung the things up very carefully and the old woman followed our example, without, to all appearances, the least reluctance. In the cracks and fissures of the rocks

that formed the mound we found thrust numbers of bones which we afterwards came to the conclusion had been placed there by the old woman, to furnish her with food in time of need. I afterwards noticed that she always saved the bones contained in her food, placing them in her baskets, to be taken out at intervals and sucked until they were cleaned of every particle of meat. She also saved the scraps of food that were left and ate them when she felt hungry. She ate very little at a time but took food several times during the day.

From this spring we proceeded along the beach or rather on top of the bank until we arrived at a path that lead down to another spring on the beach. The men who were still ahead continued along the bank but the old woman went down the path to the spring. We saw she intended to wash herself, and so withdrew and waited until she returned when we continued along the bank to the boat. We made motions for her to get into the boat, which she did without any hesitation, and crawled forward to the bow and there knelt down, holding on to the sides with her hands. Arrived on board, she crept up to the galley or store which was on deck, and made signs that it was warm there. We had dinner as soon as we got on board and gave the old woman some of our food. She ate heartily and with an apparent relish and our food at this and in fact at all times seemed to agree with her. That afternoon I busied myself in making a petticoat or skirt for her out of ticking, and this with a mans shirt, a black necktie and an old cape and cloak that Nidever gave her completed the dress she afterward wore while with us on the Island. The following day we went on shore and put up a tent or shelter near the beach at a point already selected. Nearby we made a species of hut for the old woman who seemed perfectly contented with us making no attempt to leave us, although the opportunity was not wanting. Here we remained about a month. The old woman remained in camp with the cook, one of the Mission indians, the rest of us being away after otter the greater part of each day. The old woman's chief occupation was working on her baskets of which she had several not yet completed, wandering about on the Island, or bringing wood and water. She was always anxious to help when she saw an opportunity of making herself useful. She was always cheerful and always talking and laughing. She took readily to our food and only on one occasion showed any disposition to return to her former food. I killed an otter from shore one morning and after hauling it ashore and skinning it were about to throw the carcass in to the water to prevent it becoming offensive near camp. It had been dragged down to the edge of the water and was about being thrown in when the old woman came running to where it lay, talking and gesticulating excitedly, caught the otter by the flipper and hauled it back to where it had been skinned. Then she made signs to us that that was aninexcusable waste of meat.

To humor her we let it remain where she had dragged it until it began to smell so strong that it was found necessary to remove the carcass. This time she made no objections, but on the contrary made signs that we should take it away, at the same time, to show her disgust she held her nose and made us understand that that meat was bad and then pointing to ours and smacking her lips that she liked that better. The otter was a female and was with young, which she would have given birth to in a few days. We took the young one and after skinning it carefully, stuffed the skin and gave it to the old woman. She at once hung it by a string to the roof of her hut, and lying on her back under it would amuse herself for hours at a time by swinging it backwards and forwards. About a month later having secured something over 80 otter skins, and the otter having scattered we started on our return. We had barely left the Island when a gale sprang up so violent that several times we thought we should have to return to the Island. Late in the afternoon however we arrived in safty under the lee of the Santa Cruz island and the next morning early reached Santa Barbara. When the gale sprang up after leaving the Island the old woman made signs to us that she was going to stop the wind. Accordingly she got down on her knees and remained so for some time apparently engaged in prayer, and facing in the direction of the wind. This she repeated several times during the day until the storm abated late in the afternoon, when turning to us she made signs that her prayers had been answered. On approaching the beach at Santa Barbara she saw, evidently for the first time, an ox cart, and a man on horse back. At first sight of them her delight was unbounded. She laughed and danced, and continued to point at them and talk about them as long as they were in sight.

From the beach we took her to Nidever's house where she remained until her death which took place about seven weeks from the time she landed.

The fathers at the Mission sent for indians from different points in hopes of finding some one among them who could converse with her but as far as I could learn were unsuccessful. The same day she arrived and for weeks afterwards the house was crowded with people that had come to get a sight of her and her things which we had also brought from the Island. She often sang and danced for them; putting on her dress of bird skins. Visitors made her presents of trinkets and sometimes of money but she placed no value on one or the other unless it be the pleasure she felt in dividing them among the children of Nidever's family. Several proposals were made us by parties to take her to San Francisco on exhibition, but we rejected them all, having become to much attached to her to consent to such an arrangement. Nidever's family took good care of the old woman but I think

they allowed her to eat freely of fruit and vegetables. About a month after we brought her ashore Nidever and I went up to San Francisco and while away the old woman died.

Her things were given to Father Gonzalez, who I understood sent them to Rome.

Since the last date I have continued to live in Santa Barbara.

The foregoing statement was dictated by me to Mr. E. F. Murray, and having been carefully read to me, I certify that it is correct.

Document 1B: George Nidever; The Life and Adventures of a Pioneer of California Since 1834.¹

Sparks was accompanied by Burton and a hunter by name of Dye. They returned about Sept., I think, having made a very poor hunt owing to their failure to agree among themselves. They got, I believe, only 25 skins when they should have secured 200 at least, as the otter were plenty, the N. W. Indians not having been there for some years. The N. W. Indians did hunt along that coast afterward and killed a great many otter. In the following Oct. [of 1836] after the return from the Leeward, as Lower Cal. was called, Sparks went over to San Nicolas Island. Others accompanied Sparks and among them Williams, of the Chino ranch in Los Angeles Co., and who was with me in the Mts.; he, with Col. Bean, having shown the white feather in our first engagement with the Indians, on the Ark. River. They removed the Indians, some 17 or 18 men, women and children, from this Island to San Pedro, and thence to Los Angeles and San Gabriel. I have heard from Sparks an account of the affair but do not remember the details distinctly. Some one in Los Angeles authorized the removal of these Indians, the last of the inhabitants of San Nicolas, but with what object I do not know, and cannot remember if I have ever heard. I am sure Williams had an interest in the matter, as he afterwards took one of the Indian women to live with. Having got the Indians together on the Island, they took them to the beach and put them on board the schooner. They took them direct to San Pedro, having however left one Indian woman on the Island. Of the exact manner in which she was left I do not now remember, but am

1. Reprinted in Ellison (1937, pp. 37-39, 77-89).

under the impression that Sparks told me that it happened in this way. Having got all of the Indians down on the beach, one of the women wanted to go back to their rancheria for her child that had been left behind, which she was allowed to do. While she was absent, a strong wind sprang up and, fearing for the safety of the schooner should they wait longer, they put off from shore and ran before the wind. Arriving safely at San Pedro, the Indians were landed, from whence they proceeded to Los Angeles, where a portion of them remained; the rest being taken to San Gabriel. One of the Indians, however, a large powerful man, was left at San Pedro. He lived on the beach among the hunters, where I saw him several times. I think he was one of the most muscular men, white or Indian, I ever saw. He was but a little above the medium height, heavy set and full and broad shoulders and chest. He was partly foolish, from a fracture of the skull received in a fight with the N. W. Indians, but he was perfectly harmless and invariably good humored.² He was always willing to work, cheerfully performing the most fatiguing tasks, oftentimes without being solicited. If a boat was to be hauled ashore he would frequently rush into the water, catch hold of the boat and run it high and dry on the beach, a feat that usually required from 3 to 4 ordinary men to perform. I also saw him take under his arm and bring a considerable distance to the shore a spotted seal that had been shot from shore. This seal would weigh not less than 300 to 400 lbs., besides being very awkward to handle. It would have required 3 men at least to bring it ashore. I never heard what became of him. The schooner "Peor es Nada" was ordered to report at Monterey immediately to take a cargo of timber to S. F. and thus no time was given them to return to the Island for this woman, although I think it was the intention of the same party to go back as soon as possible.

The "Peor es Nada" sailed for San Francisco with timber and was cap-sized or foundered off the Golden Gate, her crew being saved. It was afterwards reported that, having drifted to sea, she was picked up by the Russians, but nothing definite was ever known.

Throughout the entire length of the coast it was known that an Indian woman had been left on the Island of San Nicolas, but no attempt was ever made to rescue her or to learn her fate, and as years passed on, all agreed that she must have perished. For many years after the loss of the "Peor es Nada," the only craft on the coast were small boats to which the long

2. This man is identifiable as the person referred to by Phelps as "Black Hawk."

distance and rough sea of the outer rim of the Channel would render a trip extremely dangerous.

Eighteen years elapsed before anything further was done to ascertain her fate, when in 1853 she was found alive and brought to Santa Barbara.

After my return from the Islands, I met a Negro, an otter hunter, who had been here some time, having deserted from the "Pilgrim," a trading vessel from Boston; his proper name was Allen Light (he was very dark skinned) but he was always called "Black Steward." He was quite intelligent, well behaved and mannerly, and a good hunter. With him I made a hunt up the coast as far as Point Concepcion. We each had a boat and one Kanak. Made a very short trip and got 21 otter skins.

When Sparks returned from the Lower Coast, he and the Black Steward and I agreed to hunt together and were taken over to Santa Rosa by the "Peor es Nada" immediately after the Indians were taken off San Nicolas.

In April of 1852 I went over to the Islands with my sch[oone]r. accompanied by a foreigner by name Tom Jefferies, who is still living here, and 2 Indians, for sea gulls' eggs. These eggs were in great demand at that time. We went direct to the San Nicolas and having arrived early in the day, Jefferies, one of the Indians, and I landed and travelled along the beach towards the upper end of the Island some 6 or 7 miles. At a short distance from the beach, about 200 yds., we discovered the footprints of a human being, probably of a woman as they were quite small. They had evidently been made during the previous rainy season as they were well defined and sunk quite deep into the soil then soft, but now dry and hard. At a distance of a few hundred yds. back from the beach and about 2 miles apart, we found 3 small circular enclosures, made of sage brush. Their thin walls [were] perhaps 5 feet high, and the whole enclosure 6 feet in diameter, and with a small narrow opening on one side. We examined them carefully, but found nothing that would indicate their having been occupied for a long time as the grass was growing within them. They all occupied slight rises of ground. Outside the huts, however, we found signs of the place having been visited not many months before. Around each hut and a short distance from it were several stakes or poles, usually from 4 to 6, some 7 or 8 feet high, which were standing upright in the ground, and pieces of seal blubber stuck on the top of each. The blubber was already dry, but I do not think it could have been there more than 3 or 4 mos. We had come on shore early in the morning and having found these signs of the existence of some person on the Island, we intended searching further, but a N. Wester sprang up about 10 A.M. so that we were obliged to hasten back to the vessel.

We had seen enough to convince us of the existence of some human being on this Island who in all probability must be the Indian woman of whom Sparks had so often spoken. The gale that had suddenly sprung [up] increased in violence until we feared it would carry us out to sea. Our anchor began dragging and we were obliged to improvise one by filling a large sack with stones. We were lying on the S. side of the Island, and were in a measure protected from the wind, but still it blew very strong even there, and the swell was very great.

The gale continued for about 8 days, at the end of which time we ran over to the Santa Barbara Island, but had no better success in finding eggs than at the San Nicolas. Here also we found several sch[oone]rs. at anchor that had come with the same object as we. We remained here but one night and then returned direct to Santa Barbara, our trip having been entirely profitless. Soon after I made a trip to Santa Cruz for lumber. The following winter I fitted out for another trip to the Sn. Nicolas Island. On our former visit I had seen plenty of otter, and besides I knew that they must be abundant as they had not been hunted for years. This time Charley Brown [Dittman] was with me. Upon my return from my first trip I told several persons that we had seen footprints etc., on the Island, and Father González of the Mission, having heard of it, requested me to make all possible search for her. Arriving at the Island, Charley and I, with two Indians went ashore. We landed near the lower end of the Island and, as I and Jefferies had done, we proceeded along the beach towards the head of the Island, leaving our Indians in charge of the boat.

At the head of the Island I sat down to rest and Charley went around the point and some distance down the other side. When he returned he told me that he had seen fresh foot prints leading from the beach up to the high ridge which forms the head of the Island. He had followed them from the beach up over the high bank but beyond this they disappeared, the ground being covered with a species of moss. At one place he saw where she had apparently sat down to rest, and a small piece of drift wood lying near which had no doubt fallen from a bundle of wood she was carrying from the beach for her fire. I was at first inclined to think that our Indians had wandered off and [that] it was their footprints he had seen, but a moment's reflection showed me that it was impossible. On our way up we had also seen 7 or 8 wild dogs about [as] large [as] a coyote, and resembling one in appearance, except that they were of a black and white color. They ran away as soon as they saw us so that we could not get within range of them. I was afraid these dogs had eaten the woman as we had found nothing of her. In coming up along the beach we passed a low sandy stretch about a half mile wide that extends across the Island some distance below

its head. Here we found some high bushes, called by the natives malva real, and in the crotch of one of these a basket made of grass and covered with a piece of seal skin. Taking it down and uncovering it we found it to contain several skins of the shag, cut square, a long sinew rope as neatly and evenly twisted as any common rope, some bone needles, &c. These I proposed carefully replacing, but upon a second thought scattered them about and threw the basket on the ground. Charley protested against this proceeding, but he was satisfied when I explained to him that, if they were replaced in the basket by our next visit, we might be sure the woman was alive. We returned on board in the afternoon and the next day continued on [our] search without finding anything more. We then began hunting otter which we found very thick. The 3rd or 4th day, however, a South Easter sprang up and after 6 or 7 days, finding that it still continued and the sea becoming very rough, we ran over to San Miguel where we found a good harbor. Here we laid [lay] until the gale was over when we returned to Santa Barbara. We remained on shore during the rest of the winter.

In May of 1853 I fitted out my sch[oone]r. for a trip to Turtle Bay to prospect for gold. Mr. Forbush of this place had been told by Capt. Barney, an old whaler, that there was gold quartz thereabouts, and being convinced that there was something to be made, persuaded me to make the trip. Beside[s] us two there were Charley Brown, Tom Jefferies, and 4 Mission Indians. We found a very few small pieces of quartz with the least sprinkling of gold but nothing more so we gave it up, returning to Santa Barbara in July, having killed some 15 or 20 otters on our way back.

Ten days after our return I again fitted out for a thorough hunt among the Islands, and principally around the San Nicolas. Charley Brown accompanied me as hunter, and an Irishman whom we called Colorado from his florid complexion, with three Mission Indians manned our boats, while a fourth Mission Indian acted as cook. We reached the San Nicolas early in the day and at once went ashore for the purpose of selecting a camping place as we intended to make a stay of at least two or three months. We landed about the middle of the Island on the N. W. side, and went up towards the head of the Island. A high rocky bank ran along the edge of the water, its base for the most part being washed by the sea. A few short stretches of sandy beach occurred here and there but they were not always accessible from the bank. About $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the head of the Island we found a good spring of water just above the edge of the beach, and in the wet soil surrounding it more footprints that must have been made but a short time before. As it was already late and we were some 6 or 7 miles from the sch[oone]r. we were obliged to return without further search,

determining however to make a thorough exploration of the Island on the following day.

Accordingly, the next morning early, as soon as we had breakfast, all hands but the cook went on shore, at the same place where we had landed the day before. Having on our previous visits seen most of the latest signs near the head of the Island, and, besides, there being but few springs in the middle and lower portion of the Island, we decided to search first from about the middle up towards the head. The four men struck across the low sandy stretch before mentioned, and found the basket and its contents carefully replaced in the crotch of the bush in which we had first discovered it. Charley and I struck up towards the head of the Island. Reaching the place where he had seen the footprints the day before, he followed up the ridge. Near its top he found several huts made of whale's ribs and covered with brush, although it was so long since they had been occupied that they were open on all sides and grass was quite high within. Looking about in all directions from this point, he discovered at a distance, along the ridge, a small black object about the size of a crow which appeared to be in motion. Advancing cautiously towards it he soon discovered it to be the Indian woman, her head and shoulders, only, visible above one of the small inclosures resembling those we had before discovered. He approached as near as he dared and then, raising his hat on his ramrod, signalled to the men who were then recrossing the low sandy stretch, and were plainly visible from this point.

They saw the signals, and came towards him. In the mean time, the old woman was busily employed in stripping the blubber from a piece of seal skin which she held across one knee, using in the operation a rude knife made from a piece of iron hoop stuck into a piece of rough wood for a handle. She kept up a continual jabbering to herself and every few moments would stop and look in the direction of our men, whom she had evidently been watching, her hand placed over her eyes to shade them from the sun.

Upon his first approach there were some dogs near, which began to growl. These the old woman sent away with a yell but without looking in the direction of Charley. The men having come up, they quietly surrounded her to prevent any attempt at escape.

This being done, Charley stepped around in front of her when, instead of showing any alarm, she smiled and bowed, chattering away to them in a language wholly unintelligible to all of them, even to the Indians. They seated themselves around her, after having made signs to me to come up. I at first did not care to go to where they were as I supposed that they had

simply discovered something that excited their curiosity and I would hear about it when they should come down. They continued to make signs to me to come there, however, so I went up and found them seated around the old woman. She smiled and bowed to me also, and having taken a seat she took some roots of two different kinds, one called corcomites and the name of the other I do not know, and placed them in the fire which was burning within the inclosure. As soon as they were roasted she invited us all to eat some. The site of the inclosure or hut where we found her was on the N.W. side and near the top of the ridge that forms the upper end of the Island. It was not far from the best springs of water, near to the best point for fish and seal, and it commanded a good view of the greater portion of the Island. Just outside the inclosure or wind break, as I should call it, was a large pile of ashes and another of bones, showing that this had been her abode for a long time. Nearby were several stakes with blubber on them, as we had seen around the others (inclosures). There was blubber also hanging on a sinew rope, similar to the one already described, which was stretched between two stakes. Near the inclosure were several baskets, some in process of construction, also two bottle-shaped vessels for holding water; these, as well as the baskets, being woven, and of some species of grass very common on the Island. There were also several other articles, as fishhooks made of bone, and needles of the same material, lines or cords of sinews for fishing and the larger rope of sinews she no doubt used for snaring seals on the rocks where they came to sleep. The old woman was of medium height, but rather thick. She must have been about 50 yrs. old, but she was still strong and active. Her face was pleasing, as she was continually smiling. Her teeth were entire but worn to the gums, the effect, no doubt, of eating the dried seal blubber. Her head, which had evidently been for years without any protection, was covered with thick matted hair, that was once black, no doubt, but now it had become of a dull brown color. Her clothing consisted of but a single garment of the skins of the shag, made in the form of a gown. It fitted close at the neck, had no sleeves, was girded at the waist with a sinew cord, and reached nearly to the feet. She had another dress of the same material and make in one of the baskets. These were sewed with sinews, the needles used being of bone. This place was undoubtedly where she usually lived, but in the rainy season she lived in a cave nearby. Having been requested by the Fathers at the Mission of Santa Barbara to bring her off in case we found her, I asked the Indians if they thought she could be taken by force if necessary. They thought she could. Charley Brown was of the opinion that no force would be necessary in taking her. I thereupon made signs to her to go with us but she stared at me seemingly without comprehending what was wanted. Charley then placed his hand on her shoulder to call her attention and then went through the motions of putting her things in baskets and then

these on his back, at the conclusion of which he said vamoose. This she understood without any difficulty, for she at once began putting her things into her baskets. Her basket filled, she put it on her back and followed the Indians towards the beach while we walked behind; each of us carrying some of her things. Seal meat, some of it stinking, and a seal's head from which putrefied brains were running, was all carefully put into the basket. We soon arrived at a spring of water where we stopped and on some stakes which we found standing near we hung the things we were carrying, fixing them on the stakes in such a manner as to lead her to believe we took very great care of them. Near this spring there were several rocks, in the cracks of which were large numbers of fish and other bones, carefully placed. We then proceeded to the beach, where a spring issues from a shelving rock, just below the bank. The old woman stopped here to wash, the men having gone on ahead, and Charley and I remained on the bank above. This being finished, we proceeded to the boat and went on board the sch[oone]r. When we put her into the boat, she crept forward to the bow where she knelt, holding firmly on to either side of the boat. As soon as we got on board, she crept along side of the stove which was on deck. Dinner was ready and was at once served. The cook gave the old woman some pork and hard tack, which she seemed to relish, and in fact she took readily to all of our food, it always agreeing with her. Charley Brown at once set to work and made her a petticoat of ticking, [with] which, with [and] a man's cotton shirt and a black neck tie, he completed her dress, and she seemed to be very proud of it. Seeing Charley at work on her petticoat, she made signs that she wanted to sew. Accordingly, she was given a needle and thread, but Charley was obliged to thread it for her as her eyes seemed weak.

I had given her an old cloak or cape that was almost in ribbons and she sewed up all the rents and holes. Her manner of sewing was peculiar. Placing her work across her knee she thrust the needle through the cloth with the right hand and pulled the thread tought [taut] with the left. The next day we went ashore and camped, about the middle of the Island, close to the beach. We made a temporary shelter by spreading a sail over two oars driven into the side of the bank. A similar shelter was made for her of brush.

We remained here hunting about a month, when we brought her on shore with us. While on the Island with us, she busied herself in going for wood and water, about a quarter of a mile distance, and [in] working on her baskets. She brought water and wood of her own accord, and water in the vessels before mentioned.

Of the several baskets she was working [on], not one of them was completed,

although she would work first on one, then on the other. One day Charley shot a she otter off shore. It was brought to land for the purpose of skinning [it]. Inside of her was a young otter, within a few days of being born. The carcass was being hauled down to the water, as was customary after taking off the skin, when the old woman vigorously protested against such a waste of meat. Seizing one of the flippers she drew it back on land, where it lay until the stench obliged us to throw it in the water. By this time, however, she had come to the conclusion that our food was better than this, and she so expressed herself in her own rude way by signs. She was very fond of sugar, and in fact anything sweet, and showed her fondness for it by smacking her lips. She had evidently known hunger as she sedulously saved every scrap of food and bones, and the latter she would take out from time to time, suck them over and over, and then put them away again.

When we took her from her hut, she was very careful to place the seal's head in the basket although it was almost rotten. The young otter was skinned and stuffed, making a plaything for the old woman. She hung it by a string from the roof of her shelter and for hours at a time would amuse herself like a child in making it swing back and forth, striking it with her hand to keep it in motion. One day, while out hunting, I came across her lining one of the vessels she used for holding water. She had built a fire and had several small stones about the size of a walnut heating in it. Taking one of the vessels, which was in shape and size very like a demijohn, excepting that the neck and mouth were much longer, she dropped a few pieces of asphaltum within it, and as soon as the stones were well heated they were dropped in on top of the asphaltum. They soon melted it, when, resting the bottom of the vessel on the ground, she gave it a rotary motion with both hands until its interior was completely covered with asphaltum. These vessels hold water well, and if kept full may be placed with safety in a hot sun. When we left the Island for Santa Barbara, we were caught in such a violent gale that we were several times on the point of turning back, but we finally got under the lee of Sta. Cruz Island, which afforded us some shelter until late in the day when the wind went down. As soon as it began to blow, the old woman conveyed to us by signs her intention to stop the wind. She then knelt and prayed, facing the quarter from which the wind blew [sic], and continued to pray at intervals during the day until the gale was over. Then she looked at us and smiled as much as to say, "You see how I have succeeded in stopping the wind." From Santa Cruz we ran over to Santa Barbara, arriving there early the next day. Upon nearing the shore an ox-cart came in sight when the old woman's delight was unbounded. She clapped her hands and danced, pointing the while at the cart and oxen. On landing I found my sons at the beach awaiting my arrival, one of them being on horseback.

Her delight at the sight of the horse was even greater than that manifested at the sight of the ox-cart. As soon as she got out of the boat, she went up to it and began examining it, pointing at this part, then that, and talking and laughing to herself. Finally she pointed at the horse and placing two fingers of her right hand astride the fore finger of her left, she imitated the motion of a horse. The news was not long in spreading, of the arrival of the old woman, and we had barely reached my house with her when half of the town came down to see her.

For months after, she and her things, as her dress, baskets, needle, &c., were visited by everybody in the town and for miles around outside of it.

The old woman was always in good humor and sang and danced, to the great delight of the children and even older ones. She often visited the town and seldom returned without some present. The vessels that touched here usually brought passengers who, hearing of her, came to my house. The Capt. of the "Fremont", one of these vessels, offered to take her to San Francisco and exhibit her, giving me one half of what he could make. Capt. Trussel of this place offered me \$1000 for her for the same purpose. We had all become somewhat attached to her, however, and consequently refused to listen to these proposals.

The same day [that] we arrived here, the Fathers from the Mission came down to see her. They continued to visit her, and also sent for Indians from different parts of this section, and speaking different Indian tongues, in hopes of finding some one who could converse with her. Several came, each representing a different dialect, but none of them could understand her or make themselves understood. She was continually talking and frequently made use of the pickininy, in referring to her child. She also used mañana. She expressed a great many ideas by signs, so plainly that we readily understood them. By signs she told us that she did not find her child, that she wandered about for days without tasting any food or drink, sometimes sleeping but little, until her clothes were torn, and her feet and legs bleeding.

After a time she forgot her child and sang and danced. She also told that she was very sick at one time; that she had seen vessels passing two [to] and fro but none came to take her off; that she saw us on the Island before we found her.

Her dresses, bone needles and other curiosities were taken possession of by Father González, with my consent, and sent to Rome. About

5 weeks after she was brought over, she was taken sick from eating too much fruit and 7 weeks from the day of her arrival died. The Fathers of the Mission baptised her sub conditione and named her Juana Maria. I left here for San Francisco just before she died, having first made her a rough coffin. My wife can tell you better about her after I brought her ashore.

Document 1C: The Indian Woman of San Nicolas Island, Anonymous [A], 1853.

The wild Indian woman who was found on the island of San Nicolas, about 70 miles from the coast, west of Santa Barbara, is now at the latter place and is looked upon as a curiosity. It is stated that she has been some 18 to 20 years alone on the island. She existed on shell fish and the fat of the seal, and dressed in the skins and feathers of wild ducks, which she sewed together with the sinews of the seal. She cannot speak any known language, is good-looking and about middle age. She seems to be contented in her new home among the good people of Santa Barbara.

Document 1D: Logbook of the Alert, by William D. Phelps, 1841.

Entry for May 29, 1841: At Foster's there is an old Indian and as he is the last of his race, is an object of interest. He was one of a tribe that formerly inhabited the Islands which form one side of the canal of Santa Barbara, all of which give evidence of having once been populated. In 1825 the Island of San Nicolas was the only one that had become depopulated (how they became so is not known). At this time there were on San Nicolas about 30 men and 23 women. During that year a party of Russians and Kodiacks from the Russian settlements on the N-W of about 25 men were left on these islands to hunt otter,¹ and after having many quarrels with the Indians of San Nicolas respecting the women, the Russians at length killed all the men with the exception of this old fellow

1. Ogden (1941) mentions the brig Baikal owned by the Russian American Company, Sitka, which was off the southern California coast in 1825. The ship is known to have had twenty baidarkas (skin boats), presumably belonging to native hunters who were usually from Kodiak Island. (Eds.)

who was badly wounded, having his head split open and a number of charges of buck shot fired into him. He however managed to escape. The Russians then became possessed of the women and lived with them about a year. When having an opportunity to gratify the revenge, which may sleep in an Indian but never die, they destroyed every one of the Russians and the Kodiacks in their sleep. About 4 or 5 years since there were but three women and (Black Hawk as my boys have named him) the Indian above mentioned left, and Capt. Robbins² (from whom I have the account) calling there with his vessel persuaded two of the females to go to San Pedro, the other was away to the mountains and it is said is sometimes seen by the hunters who still visit the island - but is too wild to be approached. Black Hawk seems to be nonecompas [sic] and the wounds on his head are the probable cause.

Document 2A: Eighteen Years Alone; A Tale of the Pacific, by Emma Hardacre, 1880.

Of the group commonly called the Santa Barbara Islands, so near the mainland that on the map they seem mere crumbs of the Pacific coast, little is known even by Californians. Scarcely an American but has read of the tropical islands where the mythical Robinson Crusoe was wrecked, yet few persons know that over the desolate steeps of a nearer island of the same vast sea hang the mystery, the horror and the pathos of a story of a captive woman; a story, if it could be fully told, more thrilling than that of Crusoe, inasmuch as one is fiction, the other fact; one, the supposed exploits of a hardy man, the other, the real desolation of a suffering woman; one the tale of a mariner whom the waters flung against his will into a summer-land, the other, of one who voluntarily breasted the waves, and fought death, in response to the highest love of which the human heart is capable.

The Santa Barbara Islands, on one of which this strange romance was enacted, lie to the southward of Santa Barbara channel, the nearest of the group being about twenty-five miles distant from the main-land. The names of the islands are Anacapa, Santa Rosa, San Miguel, Santa Cruz, Santa

2. Thomas M. Robbins is identified by Ogden (1941) as first officer of the schooner Rover 1823-1824, and as captain of the brig Waverly 1827-1828. Both of these vessels were engaged at times in the California sea otter trade between 1786 and 1848. (Eds.)

Catalina, San Clemente, Santa Barbara, San Nicolas. They are now uninhabited, and have been so for years. The islands nearer the coast are used for sheep-grazing; a sail-boat carries over the shearers and brings back the wool. The more distant are known to trappers as fine beds of otter and seal. The sea-lions and sea-elephants in the Centennial Exposition, New York Aquarium and Cincinnati Zoological Gardens were lassoed off the outlying islands of the Santa Barbara group. Boats visit the beaches for abalones, the meat of which is dried and shipped to China for food, while the shells (Haliotis splendens, Haliotis rufescens and Haliotis cracherodii), sold at an average price of fifty dollars per ton at the San Francisco wharf, are bought by dealers in marine shells, cut into jewelry to be sold to tourists, or shipped to Europe to be manufactured into buttons and other pearl ornaments. Excepting the occasional camps of shearers, seal-hunters and abalone-packers, the islands are totally deserted.

Yet, wild and desolate as they now are, Cabrillo says that in the fifteenth century they were densely peopled by a superior race, and that the main-land was dotted by villages. The children of the islanders are described by early navigators as being "white, with light hair and ruddy cheeks," and the women as having "fine forms, beautiful eyes and a modest demeanor." The men wore loose cloaks, the women dressed in petticoats and capes of seal-skin, heavily fringed and handsomely ornamented. The more industrious and wealthy embroidered their garments with pearl and small pink shells. Necklaces of sparkling stones and carven ivory were worn by the higher caste, and earrings of iris-hued abalone were not uncommon. They cooked their food in soapstone vessels, or in water heated by dropping hot stones into water-tight baskets. Bancroft, in his "Native Races," mentions, among articles of their manufacture, needles, awls, and fish-hooks of bone or shell; water-tight baskets, ollas of stone, and canoes, deep and long, with both stem and stern equally elevated above the water. Fletcher wrote of the coast when he visited it with Sir Francis Drake in 1579.

In the year 1542, Cabrillo landed at what is now known as San Miguel, and christened it Ysla de Posesión. He died on the island in 1543, and is buried in its sands.

Going back still further in our search, we find that before the Spanish fleet, Sir Francis Drake or Cabrillo ever visited the coast, the villages thereon were thrifty and populous, and the isles of the sea swarming cities of the period.

Of San Nicolas, on which the scenes of this wild romance are laid, very little has been known until a recent date. It is the outermost of the group, distant seventy miles from the coast, and thirty miles away from its nearest neighbor. It is thought to have been at one time the abode of a people differing in manners, habits and mode of life from the inhabitants both of the mainland and the neighboring islands. Mons. De Cessac, a gentleman engaged in collecting archaeological specimens for the French government, says that the relics found by him on San Nicolas are more elaborate in form and finish, and show a superiority of workmanship. This testimony tends to confirm the story of the early voyagers concerning the cultivation and remarkable taste of the handsome dwellers in Gha-las-hat, centuries ago. Mons. De Cessac has found also upon San Nicolas articles of warfare and domestic use, evidently belonging to a northern tribe, similar to those picked up by him on the borders of Alaska. Hence, he infers that the place was at one time the dwelling of north country tribes.

Corroborating Mons. De Cessac's opinion, search through ancient manuscripts has brought to light the fact that, many years ago, a ship belonging to Pope and Boardman, of Boston, and commanded by one Captain Whitmore, brought down from Sitka a lot of Kodiaks for the purpose of otter-hunting on San Nicolas Island. They were left upon the island, and years of feud resulted in a massacre, in which every grown male islander was killed by the powerful and well-armed Kodiaks. The women were taken by the victors, lived with them as wives and bore children to the murderers of their husbands and fathers. The fact is recorded that the inhabitants of San Nicolas faded away strangely and rapidly, so that in 1830, less than two score men, women and children remained of the once dense population.

Meantime, Franciscan zealots poured from the south of Europe into America, and under lead of Father Junipero Serra found their way up the coast, building churches beside the sea, planting gardens of olive and palm, making aqueducts and altars, founding a kingdom of temporal and spiritual splendor, which leaves to Protestant America the names of saints set indelibly on every stream, headland and island along the southern slope of the Pacific. It was the dawn of a temporary civilization, imposing and wonderful, a civilization whose ruins are most artistic and fascinating.

The missionaries pressed the Indians into service. They set them to tilling the soil, herding the flocks and quarrying the rock. The coast Indians having been put to labor, the thrifty padres turned their gaze to

the islands in the offing, and brought to the main-land the people from Santa Rosa, San Miguel, Santa Cruz and Santa Catalina. The more distant island of San Nicolas was left a while to repose in its heathen darkness. How affairs progressed during that time on the island we have no account. At this day the queen isle of Gha-las-hat lies bare and silent as a tomb amidst the sea.

In this deserted spot, for eighteen years, a human being lived alone. Here she was found at last by fishermen who are living, and whose affidavits, properly witnessed, stamp as true every detail of the remarkable incident.

In the year 1835, Isaac Sparks and Lewis L. Burton, Americans, chartered a schooner of twenty tons burthen, for otter-hunting on the lower California coast. The vessel was owned by a rich Spaniard of Monterey, and was commanded by Captain Charley Hubbard. The schooner bore the name Peor es Nada, and she started out of Santa Barbara harbor, on a fine April morning, followed by the eyes of the entire population. In those times, the sight of a sailing vessel was not an every-day occurrence. It drew the men to the beach, the women to the casements, and attracted the friars from their usual meditative gaze on ground or book. For hours previous to the departure of the schooner, the curving stretch of sand had been alive with racing horsemen and lazy pedestrians, exchanging in Spanish words of praise concerning their visitor.

After a successful cruise, the Peor es Nada came, three months later, into the more southerly harbor of San Pedro, unloaded her pelts, and immediately, under direction of Captain Williams, collector of the port, set sail for San Nicolas to bring the islanders to the main-land, in accordance with the will of the church fathers. Before they reached their destination a sudden gale came up, rising almost to the severity of a tempest. The winds--which by the Santa Ynez mountains are deflected from the valleys of the southern coast--struck with full force upon the upper end of San Nicolas, lashing the shoal waters into fury, and shooting the spray in volleys through the picturesque carvings of the low cliffs. The landing was effected with difficulty. The wind increased in violence. The weather became so boisterous as to endanger the safety of the vessel. No time was wasted. The islanders, some twenty in number, were hurried into the boats and all speed was made to reach the schooner.

In the excitement and confusion of the final abandonment of their home, it was not known until they were on the ship that a child had been

left behind. The mother supposed it to have been carried aboard in the arms of an old sailor. She frantically implored the men to return. The captain replied that they must get to a place of safety; after the storm--tomorrow, perhaps--they could come back for the baby. Finding that they were going out to sea, the young mother became desperate, and, despite all efforts to detain her, jumped overboard and struck out through the kelpy waters for the shore. She was a widow, between twenty and thirty years of age, of medium height and fine form; her complexion was light, and her hair of a dark, rich brown. No attempt was made to rescue her, and in a moment she was lost in the seething waves. The ship, already under headway, staggered through the storm; the affrighted islanders huddled together on deck, and fear shut every other emotion for the time from their hearts.

After an adventurous voyage, the Peor es Nada eventually reached San Pedro, where the exiles were landed. Some of them were sent to Los Angelos, fifteen miles back from the coast; some were put to work in the neighboring mission of San Gabriel; two of the women were soon married to wealthy men of Los Angelos [sic].

It was the intention of Captain Hubbard to return to San Nicolas immediately to see if the woman or child were living. But the schooner had orders to come direct to Santa Barbara, to take George Nidiver and a party of otter-hunters to Santa Rosa Island; afterward, carry from Monterey a cargo of timber to San Francisco. The boat was in urgent demand along the coast, and these two trips were imperative before a second visit could be made to San Nicolas. Delaying their errand of humanity and justice a few weeks, they lost it forever; for on that very trip the Peor es Nada capsized at the entrance to the Golden Gate. The men were washed ashore in an almost exhausted condition, and the schooner drifted out to sea. It was reported long after, though without confirmation, to have been picked up by a Russian ship.

After the loss of the Monterey schooner, there was no craft of any kind larger than the canoes and fishing-boats on the lower coast. No one cared to attempt a passage of seventy miles to San Nicolas in an open boat, and after a time the excitement and interest faded out. Those who at first had been most solicitous that assistance should be sent, settled into the belief that the couple had perished during the days of waiting; the remainder of the community, never having believed that the woman had reached shore through the storm, were indifferent, supposing that the child had died soon after the tragic death of the mother.

Their uncertain fate lay heavy on the more tender-hearted of the Mission fathers; but it was not until 1850 that Father Gonzales found an emissary to search for the lost. Thomas Jeffries had come into possession of a small schooner, and was offered \$200 should he find and bring the woman or child to Santa Barbara alive. Fifteen years having passed since the abandonment of the island and no one having visited the spot during that time, the probability of the death of the parties was universally accepted, although no actual proof of death had been sought or found.

But when Thomas Jeffries's boat was seen, at the close of a balmy day of midwinter, coming up the bay without the signal he was to have displayed provided his search had been successful, the matter was settled. Groups of persons congregated on the sands. Some watched from shore the small craft fold her wings and settle to rest on the mirror-like water, others put off in canoes to meet the boatmen, and gossip concerning the trip. Jeffries had found no trace of living beings on the island, and whether the woman had been beaten to death in the surf, or died after gaining land, would probably never be known. The schooner was left idly rocking close to shore; sailors and landsmen strolled slowly up to the town. Night mantled the moaning waters, and the great deep was left in possession of another secret.

The return of Jeffries brought up afresh the incident which by some had been almost forgotten. For a few hours, little was talked of save the heroic young mother and her child in the sea-girt isle.

Time passed swiftly on, and in the dreamy full contentment of the land the dead woman of San Nicolas slipped from mind, and thought, and speech.

Tom Jeffries's visit to San Nicolas was the theme of more than one day's gossip. The island he described as seven or eight miles long, by three or four in width; the body of the land near six hundred feet above the beach, the plateau falling in steep gulches to the sea. There were quantities of small lark inland, but no other fowl, save sea-gulls, pelicans and shags. Numbers of red foxes were seen in the hills, and droves of curious wild dogs, tall and slender, with coarse, long hair and human eyes. On a flat, near the upper end of the island, and half hidden by sand dunes, he found the remains of a curious hut, made of whales' ribs planted in a circle, and so adjusted as to form the proper curve of a wigwam-shaped shelter. This he judged to have been formerly either the residence of the chief, or a place of worship where sacrifices were offered.

He had picked up several ollas, or vessels of stone, and one particularly handsome cup of clouded green serpentine. But of all the wonders of the island, the features on which Jeffries liked best to dwell were the fine beds of otter and seal in the vicinity of San Nicolas. So fabulous were his yarns, that the interest of the other hunters was aroused, and early the following year a boat was fitted out, and George Nidiver, accompanied by Thomas Jeffries and a crew of Indians, started on an otter hunt to the wonderful otter-beds seventy miles away.

A landing was effected near the southern end of the island, and, climbing the cliffs to see where the otter lay, they had a magnificent view of the islands to the north and east. On the south-west the Pacific rolled out its azure breadth, unspiced by shore, or raft, or spot of any kind. The island on which they stood seemed a quiet, calm, deserted spot, in the sunshine that then enfolded it. Butterflies hovered over the wild sage upon the knolls; soft breezes rocked lazily the scant grass about their feet; thickets of chaparral dotted the hills; cactus held out waxen trays, where, on burnished mats of thorns, reposed fringed yellow satin flowers; a trailing sand plant, with thick, doughy leaves, wafted from its pink clusters a most delicious odor--an odor that had in it the haunting sweetness of the arbutus and the freshness of the salt sea wind.

The otter-hunters did not linger long on the cliff, for on one side they found the rocks swarming with black seal, thousands of them mingling their sharp bark with the heavy roar of sea-lions. The otter were thick on the reefs, and a stranded whale lay in the edge of the crinkling surf.

The party remained six weeks in camp on the beach. Oars stuck upright in the sand, covered by canvas, composed their shelter; a spring was found midway up the cliff, so that during their stay no one had occasion to go inland or wander far from the otter-beds, which were on the side of the island where their tents were pitched. The seal is caught asleep on the rocks, lassoed or knocked in the head; incisions are made in the flippers, lower jaw, lip and tail, and about four minutes are required for a good workman to skin an ordinary seal. The hides are salted, and after a week or two, bundled and packed. The otter, most timid of the animals of the sea, is caught in nets spread upon swaying beds of sea-weed or is shot while lying with head buried in kelp to shut out the sound of a storm. It is very sensitive to noise, and so shy that it takes alarm at every unusual sight. The loose hide is taken from the body with one cut, turned wrong side out, stretched and dried.

Before the schooner left the vicinity of San Nicolas, a terrible storm

arose, lasting for eight days, carrying away a mast and dragging the anchor, so that another had to be improvised of a bag filled with stone. During the tempest, a sailor fancied he saw a human figure on the headland of the island. Through the washes of spray it seemed to be running up and down the edge of the plateau, beckoning and shouting. The captain was called, but the apparition had vanished. On the eighth day, the schooner was enabled to run over to San Miguel, and from there to Santa Barbara, where the sailor's story of the beckoning ghost of San Nicolas haunted for a long time the dreams of the superstitious on shore.

A second cruise of the otter-hunters failed to bring any additional news of the phantom of the sea. Everything on land was just as before; not a leaf had been disturbed, not a track was found.

In July, 1853, the otter-men made a third trip to San Nicolas, anchored off the northeast side, and established a camp on shore. The party consisted of Captain Nidiver, a fisherman named Carl Detman, who went among sailors by the sobriquet of Charlie Brown, an Irish cook and a crew of Mission Indians.

The evening after their arrival, Nidiver and Brown strolled several miles down the beach, enjoying their pipes and discussing plans for work. It was one of those limpid nights, such as California knows--a night when the stars shine large and warm from the low sky, when the moon burns with an amber blaze, and fragrance is in the air.

As the comrades were about to retrace their steps, Nidiver stopped, looked quickly about him, then stopped and closely examined something on the ground. In the weird moonlight, plainly outlined on the lonely shore, was the print of a slender, naked foot.

"The woman of San Nicolas! My God, she is living!"

He lifted his voice, and shouted in Spanish that friends were come to rescue her. Overcome by the conviction that the lost woman must have been near when he was in camp two years before--that it was not a creation of fancy, but a living being, they had seen in the storm--the captain ran to and fro, calling looking and swearing by turns. Hours were spent by the two men in search, but in vain.

The next day, Nidiver found a basket of rushes hanging in a tree. It contained bone needles, thread made of sinews, shell fish-hooks, ornaments, and a partially completed robe of birds' plumage, made of small

squares neatly matched and sewed together. Nidiver proposed replacing the things, but Brown scattered them about, saying that, if they were picked up, it would be proof that the owner had visited the spot. Inland they discovered several circular, roofless inclosures, made of woven brush. Near these shelters were poles, with dried meat hanging from elevated cross-pieces. The grass was growing in the pens, and nothing indicated their recent habitation. In fissures of perpendicular rocks near the springs were wedged dried fish and seals' blubber; but no sign of the near presence of the hermitess.

After several days, the men abandoned the chase. There was no doubt that some one had been on the island very lately. Either the woman, or the child grown to womanhood, had lived there, or, perhaps both mother and child had survived until recently. But they must have been dead months at least. The footprint was older than at first supposed. The robe had not been replaced in the tree. The captive perchance died of despair after they left her beckoning in the storm.

After that, the fishing went on for weeks, and they were about returning home, when Nidiver said he believed a person was hiding on the island. If she was living he was bound to find her. If dead, he would find her body if he had to scrape the island inch by inch. This provoked a laugh of derision. Of course the wild dogs had devoured her remains. But Nidiver was convinced that the woman was afraid; had concealed herself, possibly on the opposite side of the island, where the shore was precipitous, difficult of access, containing perhaps gulches and caves unknown to them. The men murmured at the delay, were incredulous as to the success of the raid, rebelled at the long tramps over a wild country.

The old captain was firm; suitable preparations were made, and the entire force of otter-men started on their final hunt for a ghost. Near the head of the island they came across the bone house Jeffries had described. Rushes were skillfully interlaced in the rib frame-work, an olla and old basket were near the door. It stood amidst untrampled weeds. After several days' march, a dangerous climb over slippery rocks brought Brown to a spot where there were fresh footprints. He followed them up the cliffs until they were lost in the thick moss that covered the ground. Walking further, he found a piece of drift-wood, from which he concluded the person had been to the beach for fire-wood, and dropped the faggot on her way home. From a high point on the ridge he saw the men moving about below. Then his eye caught a small object a long way off on the hills. It appeared like a crow at first glance, but it moved about in a singular

manner. Advancing toward it stealthily, he was dumbfounded to find that it was the head of a woman, barely visible above the low woven-brush sides of her roofless retreat in the bushes.

As Brown drew nearer, a pack of dogs reclining close to the woman growled; but without looking around the woman uttered a peculiar cry which silenced them, and they ran away to the hills. Brown halted within a few yards of her, and, himself unseen, watched every movement within the hut. Inside the inclosure was a mound of grass, woven baskets full of things, and a rude knife made of a piece of iron hoop, thrust into a wooden handle. A fire smouldered near, and a pile of bones lay in the ashes. The complexion of the woman was much fairer than the ordinary Indian, her personal appearance pleasing, features regular, her hair, thick and brown, falling about her shoulders in a tangled mat. From the time Brown arrived within hearing, she kept up a continual talking to herself. She was leaning forward, shading her eyes with her hand, watching the men crossing the flat below her dwelling. After looking at them with an anxiety impossible to be depicted, she crouched in terror, but immediately started up as if to run. The men on the flat had not seen her, and Brown, putting his hat on the ramrod of his gun, alternately lifted and lowered it to attract their attention, then by signs he intimated that the woman was found, and they should spread out so as to catch her if she tried to escape. Before the men reached the knoll, Brown stepped around in sight and spoke. She gave a frightened look into his face, ran a few steps, but, instantly controlling herself, stood still, and addressed him in an unknown tongue. She seemed to be between forty and fifty years of age, in fine physical condition, erect, with well-formed neck and arms and unwrinkled face. She was dressed in a tunic-shaped garment made of birds' plumage, low in the neck, sleeveless, and reaching to the ankle. The dress was similar to the one found in the tree. As the men came up, she greeted them each in the way she had met Brown, and with a simple dignity, not without its effect on both Indians and white men, made them welcome and set about preparing food for them from her scanty store. The meal consisted of roasted roots, called by Californians carcomites; but when was there a more touching hospitality?

Among the Indian crew, there were several dialects spoken, but none of the party were able to converse with their hostess, or understand a word she uttered, and they were forced to try and make her know by signs that she was expected to go with them. Brown went through the motion of packing her things in baskets, shouldering them, and walking toward the beach. She comprehended instantly, and made preparations to depart. Her effects were neatly placed in pack-baskets, one of which she swung

over her back, and, taking a burning stick from the fire, she started with a firm tread after the Indians to the shore. Beside the load the female Crusoe carried, Nidiver and Brown had their arms full. Upon reaching the boat, she entered without hesitation, going forward to the bow, kneeling and holding to either side. When the schooner was reached, she went aboard without any trouble, sat down near the stove in the cabin, and quietly watched the men in their work on board. To replace her feather dress, which he wished to preserve, Brown made her a petticoat of ticking; and with a man's cotton shirt and gay neckerchief, her semi-civilized dress was complete. While Brown was sewing she watched him closely, and laughed at his manner of using a needle. She showed him that her way was to puncture the cloth with her bone needle or awl, and then put the thread through the perforations. She signified that she wished to try a threaded needle, and Brown good-naturedly gave her sewing materials, but she could not thread the needle. Brown prepared it, and gave her an old cloak of Nidiver's to mend, and while she took her first lesson in sewing, she told her teacher on shipboard, by signs, portions of her life on the island.

She had from time to time seen ships pass, but none came to take her off. She watched as long as she could see them, and after they were out of sight, she threw herself on the ground and cried, but after a time she walked over the island until she forgot about it and could smile again. She had also seen people on the beach several times. She was afraid and hid until they were gone, and then wept because she had not made herself known. She said that he had taken her by surprise and she could not run, and she was glad because he would take her to her people; her people had gone away with white men in a ship. Brown understood by her signs that at the time of the desertion of the island she had a nursing baby, which she represented by sucking her finger, and placing her arm in position of holding an infant at the breast; she waved her hand over the sea, to indicate that the ship sailed away, calling back "Mañana" (to-morrow); then she could not find her child, and wept until she was very ill, and lay prostrate for days, in a bed of plants resembling cabbage, and called by Californians "Sola Santa." She had nothing to eat but the leaves. When she revived somewhat, she crawled to a spring, and after a time, as her strength returned, she made fire by rapidly rubbing a pointed stick along the groove of a flat stick until a spark was struck. It was a difficult task, and she was careful not to let her fire go out; she took brands with her on her trips, and covered the home fire with ashes to preserve it.

She lived during her captivity on fish, seals' blubber, roots and

shell-fish; and the birds, whose skins she secured for clothing, were sea-birds, which she caught at night off their roosts in the seams of the crags. The bush inclosures she made for a screen from the winds, and as a protection while asleep from wild animals. She made frequent excursions over the island from her main dwelling, which was a large cave on the north end of San Nicolas. She kept dried meat at each camping-station; the food in the crevices by the springs was for the time when, from sickness or old age, she would only be able to crawl to the water and live on what she had there stored out of reach of the dogs.

That the woman had faith in a supreme power was evinced soon after the schooner set sail from the fishing-grounds. A gale overtook them, and the passenger made signs that she would stop the wind. With her face turned in the direction from which the storm came, she muttered words of prayer until the wind had abated, then turned with a beaming countenance and motioned that her petition had been answered. They anchored under the lee of Santa Cruz, where the woman was highly interested in seeing another island than her own. When they approached the shores of Santa Barbara, an ox-team passed along the beach. The stranger was completely bewildered. Captain Nidiver's son, who had been on the look-out for his father's sail, rode down to the landing on a handsome little bronco. The islander, who had just stepped ashore, was wild with delight. She touched the horse and examined the lad, talking rapidly, and if the sailors turned away, calling them to come back and look. Then she tried to represent the novel sight by putting two fingers of her right hand over the thumb of her left, moving them to imitate the horse walking.

Captain Nidiver conducted the woman to his home, and put her in charge of his Spanish wife. The news spreading, Father Gonzales, of Santa Barbara Mission, came to see her; many persons gathered from the ranches round about, and the house was crowded constantly. The brig Fremont came into port soon after, and the captain offered Nidiver the half of what he would make, if he would allow her to be exhibited in San Francisco. This offer was refused, and also another from a Captain Trussil. Mrs. Nidiver would not hear of the friendless creature being made a show for the curious.

The bereft mother evinced the greatest fondness for Mrs. Nidiver's children, caressing and playing with them by the hour, and telling the lady, by signs, that when she swam back to the shore her baby was gone, and she believed the dogs had eaten it. She went over, again and again, her grief at its loss; her frantic search for it, even after it had been

gone a long time; her dread of being alone, her hope, for years, of rescue, and at last the despair that in time became resignation.

The visitors sometimes gave her presents, which she put aside until the donors had departed, seeming to know by intuition that they would be offended if she refused to accept them, but as soon as the guests were gone she called the little children, and distributed her gifts among them, laughing if they were pleased, and happy in their joy.

A few days after her arrival, Father Antonio Jimeno sent for Indians from the missions of San Fernando and Santa Ynez, in hope of finding some one who could converse with the islander. At that time there were Indians living in Los Angeles county, belonging to the Pepimarios, who, it was said, had in former years communication with the San Nicolas Indians. But neither these, nor those from San Buena Ventura, or Santa Barbara, could understand her, or make themselves understood. In less than two decades after the little band had left San Nicolas, their whereabouts could not be discovered. They were a mere drop in the stream of serfs known by the general name of Mission Indians. Beyond a few words, nothing was ever known of her tongue. A hide she called to-co (to-kay'); a man, nache (nah'-chey); the sky, te-gua (tay'-gwah); the body, pinche (pin-oo-chey). She learned a few Spanish words: pan (bread), papas (potatoes), caballo (horse). Sometimes she called Captain Nidiver, in Spanish, tata (father), sometimes naña (mother).

The gentleness, modesty and tact of the untutored wild woman of the Pacific were so foreign to ideas of the savage nature, that some parties believed that she was not an Indian, but a person of distinction cast away by shipwreck, and adopted by the islanders before their removal from their home. Others were certain, from her evident refinement, that she had not been long alone, but had drifted to San Nicolas after the Indian woman perished in the surf, and had by mistake been taken for the original savage. The old sailors who rescued her affirm that she was an Indian, the same who jumped from the schooner to save her child. The representative of a lost tribe, she stands out from the Indians of the coast, the possessor of noble and distinctive traits; provident, cleanly, tasteful, amiable, imitative, considerate, and with a maternal devotion which civilization has never surpassed.

She was greatly disappointed when none of her kindred were found. She drooped under civilization; she missed the out-door life of her

island camp. After a few weeks she became too weak to walk; she was carried on to the porch every day in a chair. She dozed in the sunshine while the children played around her. She was patient and cheerful, looking eagerly into every new face for recognition, and sometimes singing softly to herself. Mrs. Nidiver hoped a return to her old diet would help her. She procured seals' meat, and roasted it in ashes. When the sick woman saw it, she patted her nurse's hands affectionately, but could not eat the food. She fell from her chair one morning, and remained insensible for hours. Seeing the approach of death, Mrs. Nidiver sent for a priest to baptize her protegé. At first he refused, not knowing but that she had been baptized previously, although the burden of proof was against it. At length, heeding the kind Catholic lady's distress, he consented to administer the rite, conditionally. As she was breathing her last, the sign of the cross was pressed on her cold brow, and the unknown and nameless creature was christened by Father Sanchez, in the beautiful Spanish "Juana Maria." In a walled cemetery, from whose portals gleam ghastly skull and cross-bones, close to the Santa Barbara Mission, under the shelter of the tower, is the neglected grave of a devoted mother, the heroine of San Nicolas.

The abandonment of San Nicolas occurred forty-six years ago. The survivor of eighteen years' solitary captivity arrived in Santa Barbara the 8th of September, 1853. Captain Nidiver's house, where the stranger died, stands in sight of the ocean, and can be pointed out by any school-boy in the town. Nidiver and his wife are living, and their son George follows the sea, as his father did before him. Carl Detman, or Charlie Brown, as he is called by old sailors, may be found any day where the retired boatmen congregate. Thomas Jeffries walks the streets in blouse, wide hat, and flowing gray hair. Dr. Brinkerhoff, who attended the woman of San Nicolas, is a well-known physician of the city. Father Gonzales died a few years ago, after a continuous residence of more than a quarter of a century in the Mission. For a long time he was partially-paralyzed, and was carried about in a chair. I remember him as a little dark man, with eyes that blazed unnaturally from sunken sockets, his appearance rendered more startling by a white turban bound around his head. He is buried under the floor of the old chapel. The rambling mansion on State street, known as the Park Hotel, may have sheltered tourists who read this account. It was the first brick house built in Santa Barbara and was the private residence of Isaac Sparks, the lessee of the sail-boat from which, in 1835, the woman jumped overboard. "Burton's Mound," a picturesque knoll, threaded by rows of olive trees, belongs to Lewis L. Burton, another lessee of the Peor es Nada. A lady in San Francisco has some of the islander's needles. Nidiver and Brown retain her curious

water-tight baskets. The Mission fathers sent her feather robes to Rome. They were made of the satiny plumage of the green cormorant, the feathers pointing downward, and so skillfully matched as to seem one continuous sheen of changeful luster.

The record of baptism is in the church register. Her grave will be pointed out to any one by the Franciscan brothers on the hill.

Document 2B: The Lost Woman. From Thompson and West's History of Santa Barbara County, 1883.

The subject is a favorite with romancers, and has been written up so much that the public is greatly misinformed, and a plain statement of the facts, without any attempt to weave it into a romantic form, will be the most acceptable. The story begins with the removal of a number of Indian women from the Island of San Nicolas, in 1836. According to the best authorities, the Island of San Nicolas, as well as the others, were once thickly populated; in fact, the large piles of shells, bones, and other refuse prove the fact without other evidence. According to Nidever and others who hunted around here as early as 1835, the Alaska Indians were in the habit of making periodic visits to the islands for otter and other skins. They were a savage race, and made fierce attacks against all who attempted otter hunting on any of the islands. They were supplied with fire-arms, and were dangerous foes even to the white man, and much more so to the natives who had only stone implements of warfare. In 1836 a company of these Indians who were left on the islands by a Russian vessel, chased Nidever and his party to their landing, and were only repelled by a sharp fire which killed several of their men. The chase was on the water in boats, and the contest was in trying to prevent them from landing at the only practicable place. According to the best authorities, a party of these Indians took possession of San Nicolas Island for the purpose of hunting otter, and finally took possession of the women, and slew every man and male child on the island, in the quarrel that ensued. When the Indians abandoned the island, after the hunt was over, they left the women to their fate. It was some years subsequent to this that the padres employed Sparks and the others to remove the survivors. Recent investigations in the remains on the islands place the former inhabitants among the Toltecs or Aztecs, and hence the white skin and pleasant manners of the wild woman. The following account is mostly compiled from notes furnished by Dr. Dimmick, of Santa Barbara:

Statement of John Nidever

I arrived on the coast in the year 1834, in the month of November. In the early part of the following year (1835), I came to Santa Barbara and engaged in otter hunting, which I have followed almost uninterruptedly until within a few years. At the beginning of 1835, Isaac J. Sparks and Luis T. Burton, Americans, also otter hunters, settled here, and chartered the schooner Peor es Nada (worse than nothing) for a trip to the Lower California coast. The schooner was commanded by Charles Hubbard, who was hired by the owner of the schooner, a Spaniard at Monterey. The crew placed in her by Sparks and Burton was, with two or three exceptions, composed of Kanakas. The Peor es Nada left Santa Barbara about the latter part of April, 1835. About three months after, she returned to San Pedro, and from there went directly to the island of San Nicolas for the purpose of taking off the Indians then living there. Sparks, who hunted with me for several years afterwards, told about removing the Indians, but I cannot now recollect who authorized or caused their removal. I remember distinctly, however, that a man by the name of Williams, a former acquaintance of mine in the Rocky Mountains, was an interested party, as he assisted in their removal. I am under the impression also that another man in Los Angeles took an active part in the affair. The circumstances of leaving the Indian woman alone upon the Island were, as near as I can recollect, from what Sparks told me, as follows:

Removal of the Indians

Having got all the Indians together on the beach ready for embarking, one of them made signs that her child had been left behind, whereupon she was allowed to go back and fetch it. She was gone some time, when a strong wind springing up, they did not dare to wait longer for her, fearing for the safety of the schooner.

The water, which is quite shoal about the island, becomes exceedingly rough in a storm, and there is no harbor of any kind that would afford shelter in a heavy gale. They ran before the wind, and reached San Pedro in safety. Here the Indians were put ashore, some being taken to Los Angeles, and some to the Mission of San Gabriel. It was the intention of the captain of the schooner to return for the woman who had been left on the island, as soon as possible. From San Pedro the Peor es Nada came direct to Santa Barbara, took Sparks and me over to the Santa Rosa Island, and then sailed for Monterey where she had been ordered, to take a cargo of lumber to San Francisco. At the entrance to the Golden Gate the Peor es Nada capsized, and her crew were washed ashore. It was afterwards reported that the schooner drifted out to sea, and was picked up by a Russian

vessel, though the report was never confirmed. There were now no craft of any kind larger than the Indian canoe, and the boats of the otter hunters left on the coast, and none cared to attempt the passage of the channel in an open boat. It was soon known throughout the coast that an Indian woman had been left on the island, but so far as I can learn, no attempt was ever made to rescue her. As years passed by, all thought she had perished.

Signs of Life on the Island

In 1851 I had occasion to visit the San Nicolas. I found signs that led me to believe that the woman had survived, or that a human being was living upon the island. I had with me a man named Tom Jeffries. He and I with one of the Indians landed near the lower end of the island and walked along the beach and on the bank close to the beach for a distance of five or six miles. Soon after starting out we found the foot-prints of a human being, that, in all probability, had been made during the previous rainy season. They were sunk quite deep in the ground, that was now quite dry and hard. They were distinctly defined, and from their size we concluded that they were those of a woman. We also discovered three small circular inclosures, about two hundred yards back from the beach, something like a mile apart and situated on slightly rising ground. They were circular in shape, six or seven feet in diameter, with walls, perhaps five or six feet high, made of brush. Near the huts or inclosures, there were stakes of drift-wood stuck in the ground, and suspended upon them, at a height of five or six feet, were pieces of dried blubber, which had the appearance of having been placed there within a month or two, as they were still in a good state of preservation. With these exceptions there was nothing about the inclosures, or, as I call them, wind-breaks, that indicated that they had been occupied for years. We had come ashore early in the morning, and after finding the foot-prints and wind-breaks, we intended to make further search, but before noon a strong wind sprang up, and we hastened back to the schooner. We were hardly on board when the wind increased to a gale and continued to blow for about eight days, so strong at times that we expected to be blown out to sea. We were on the south side of the island, or under its lee, and in a measure protected from the wind, but the sea was so rough that we found it almost impossible to remain at anchor. Once our anchor dragged and we were compelled to improvise a second one by filling a bag with stones. The eighth day the wind having gone down, we were enabled to leave the island.

Second Visit

In the winter of 1852 I made a second trip to the island for otter,

having seen large numbers on my previous trip. On this trip I was accompanied by Charles Brown. We landed, as on our former visit, on the lower end of the island. We took two Indians ashore with us and left them in charge of the boat, while Brown and I walked along the beach, or on top of the bank when we could not get down to the beach, towards the head of the island. We went partly to see where the otter lay, and partly to see if we could find any signs of the Indian woman, as Father Gonzales, to whom we had reported the discoveries made on our former visit, assured us there was no longer any doubt of her being alive. We had decided to go to the head of the island, as, for various reasons, we concluded that if alive she would be most likely to be found there. The water is better and more abundant there, and it is a better place for both fish and seal. We visited the huts that Jeffries had discovered and found them and their surroundings unchanged, except that it seemed to me that the seal blubber which I had seen on my former visit, had been removed and fresh blubber hung in its place. In the neighborhood of the huts near the shore we saw seven or eight wild dogs. They were about the size and form of a coyote, of a black and white color. I have seen the same kind of dogs among the Northwest Indians. They were very wild and ran off as soon as they saw us. When within about a half a mile of the head of the island, we struck a low, sandy flat that extended from one side of the island to the other. Here we thought she must, in all probability, be living, as the ground both to the north and east of this flat was high and exposed to the wind. After searching around for some time and finding no signs of her, we were about to return, having concluded that the dogs must have eaten her, as not even her bones were to be found, when I discovered in the crotch of a bush or small tree a basket, and upon throwing off the piece of seal skin that covered it, we found within carefully laid together, a dress made of shag skins cut in square pieces, a rope made of sinew, and several smaller articles, such as abalone fish-hooks, bone needles, etc. After examining them Brown proposed replacing them and returning the basket to the tree where we found it, but I scattered them about on the ground, telling him that if upon our return we should find them replaced in the basket it would be positive proof of the woman's existence. As it was now quite late we returned to the schooner, intending to renew the search at the first opportunity, as the extreme head of the island was still unexplored by us. For the next few days, however, we were busy hunting otters, and about the fourth or fifth day a southeast wind began to blow, which soon increased to a gale. We waited about six or seven days for it to go down and then with some difficulty we ran over to the San Miguel Island.

Discovery of the Woman

I next fitted out for a hunt on the San Nicolas in July, 1853. My

crew consisted of Charles Brown, one Irishman and four Mission Indians. This time I went with the intention of making a thorough search for the missing woman. We arrived off the island in the early part of the day and anchored opposite the middle on the northeast side about 10 A.M. Brown and I went on shore to see where the otter lay and to select a suitable camping place. We left two of our Indians in charge of the boat. We then kept along near the shore without finding any signs of the Indian woman, until we reached the head of the island. Here I sat down to rest while Brown went around the head and down some distance on the other side. When he returned he told me he had seen fresh tracks of the Indian woman and had followed them from the beach up over the bank, but on the side of the ridge which formed the head of the island he had lost them, the ground being covered with moss. I was at first disposed to think that our men from the schooner had gone over there, but a moment's reflection convinced me that it would be impossible for them to get in advance of us, and, besides, Brown said the tracks were too small to have been made by either of our men. It was now getting late and we returned on board with the determination of making the next day a thorough exploration of the upper portion of the island. Accordingly, after breakfast the next morning we started with all of our men excepting the cook. Reaching the low, sandy flat, before mentioned, Brown and the four men stretched out in a line and crossed to the other side of the island, while I continued along near the shore, on the same side I had come, towards the head of the island. Brown and his men made no discoveries in passing over the island. He then sent the men back to search along the borders of the sandy flat, and among the bushes where the basket had been found. He went up towards the head on that side until he struck the track he had seen the night before. He followed it up again until it was lost in the moss, and then continued up the side of the ridge until he found a short piece of drift-wood. From this he concluded that she had been down to the beach for fire-wood, and had dropped this piece on her way up. From this point he saw further up the ridge three huts. Upon reaching them he found them made of whale ribs, covered with brush, although they were now open on all sides. The grass was quite high within them, showing that no one had occupied them for some time. He was now on one of the highest parts of the ridge, and he began to look about in all directions. The sandy flat was in plain sight and he could see most of the men. At last his eye caught sight of a small, black object a long distance off that seemed to be moving. It looked at first very much like a crow. Walking toward it he soon saw that it was the Indian woman. She was seated in an inclosure similar to those already described, so that her head and shoulders were barely visible above it. As he approached her two or three dogs, like those we had

seen before, that were close to her, began growling. Without looking in the direction of Brown, she gave a yell and the dogs disappeared. Brown had halted within a few yards of her, and at once began to signal to the men by placing a hat on the ramrod of his gun and raising and lowering it. He soon succeeded in attracting their attention and they came towards him. In the meantime Brown had an opportunity of observing the woman. She was seated cross-legged on some grass that covered the ground within the inclosure, and which no doubt served as a bed. Her only dress was a kind of gown, leaving her neck and shoulders bare, and long enough, when she stood up, to reach her ankles. It was made of shag skins cut in squares and sewed together, the feathers pointing downwards. Her head had no cover save a thick mass of matted hair of a yellowish-brown color, probably from exposure to sun and weather, and which looked as if it had rotted off. She was engaged in stripping the blubber from a piece of seal skin, which she held across one knee, using in the operation a rude knife made of a piece of iron hoop. Within the inclosure was a smouldering fire, and without a large pile of ashes and another of bones, which would indicate that this had been her abode for a long time. From the time Brown first arrived within hearing distance she kept up a continual talking to herself, occasionally shading her eyes with her hand and gazing steadily at the men who were seen walking around on the flat below. She was evidently much interested in their movements. As the men came near, Brown motioned them to spread out so as to prevent her escape if she was so disposed. Just before the men reached her camp, Brown, who had not yet been seen by her, came around in front.

Unexpected Welcome

To his great surprise she received him with much dignity and politeness, bowing and smiling with ease and self-possession. As fast as the men came up she greeted them in the same way. The men seated themselves on the ground around, the woman all the time talking, although not a word of hers could be understood, although our Indians spoke several dialects. From a sack or bag made of grass she took some roots, known among the Californians as the carcomites, and another root whose name I did not learn, and placed them in the fire. When they were roasted she offered them to us to eat. We found them very palatable, indeed. We were now desirous of taking her on board the schooner. We did not apprehend that she would attempt to escape, as she seemed much pleased with our company. We commenced making signs for her to go with us, but she seemed unable to comprehend them until we intimated that she must gather up all her food, when she set about the work with the greatest alacrity, and commenced putting them in a large basket, such as is in general use among the Indians

of this coast. She had considerable dried blubber of the seal and sea elephant. This was all carefully collected. There was also a seal's head, in such a decayed condition that the brains were oozing out. At her desire this was also taken along. She seemed desirous of preserving everything that would sustain life, thus indicating the sad experiences of her eighteen years of solitude. When all was ready she took a burning stick in one hand and left her camp. Each of us had a portion of her household goods in our hands or on our shoulders. She trotted merrily along, and led us to a spring of good water, which came out under a shelving rock near the beach. Here we found a store of bones in the clefts of the rocks. It would seem that in time of scarcity she would come here and suck the bones as long as any nutriment could be obtained from them. Here, also, were pieces of dried blubber hung on stakes, above the reach of the foxes and dogs which inhabited the island. We gained the woman's confidence by taking care to preserve all these articles. On the way to the schooner she led us past another spring, which she seemed to have used for bathing, as she stopped and washed her hands and face. This spring was not far from the landing. When we reached the boat we made motions for her to step in, which she did, kneeling down in the bow, holding to the sides with her hands. When we got on the vessel she sought the vicinity of the stove, keeping as near to it as possible, which act indicated more of her bitter experience on the island. We offered her some of our food, which she ate with relish; in fact, from this time she appeared to prefer our style of food to her own. Brown went to work that afternoon and made her a skirt or petticoat out of some bed-ticking, with which she was much pleased, continually calling our attention to it. This skirt, with a man's shirt and neck-tie, constituted her new wardrobe. While Brown was sewing she made signs that she wished to sew, and Brown gave her a needle and thread. She did not know how to put the thread through the eye. After this was done by one of us she knew how to use it. I gave her an old cloak or heavy cape, which was much torn and dilapidated. She very patiently sewed up all the rents, and made it quite serviceable in the cold, windy weather, which prevailed occasionally. In sewing she thrust the needle into the cloth with her right hand and pulled it through, drawing the thread tight with her left hand.

In the Hunters' Camp

The following day we moved on shore, and made a camp on a narrow piece of ground between the beach and the rocks, and made a shelter by leaning some poles against the rocks and covering them with sail cloth. We made a similar shelter for her at a short distance, covering it with brush. We remained on the island hunting otter about a month. During

this time she evinced no disposition to leave, but was generally talking, singing, and wandering about the island. She assisted in the camp work, bringing wood and water when it was needed. Her vessels for carrying water were quite unique. They were woven of grass, shaped somewhat like a demijohn, except they had wider mouths, and were lined with a thin coating of asphaltum. The process of lining them was rather ingenious. She put several pieces of the asphaltum, which is found in great quantity along the beach, in the bottom of the basket, and then on the top of them some hot pebbles. When the asphaltum was melted, by a quick, rotary motion, she would cover the inside of the basket with an even coating, after which the surplus, with the rocks, was thrown out. These baskets were water-tight, and would last a long time. She had several of these baskets in process of construction when we found her. She would work at one a few minutes, abandon it, and try another. I am not aware that she ever completed one when with us. When we killed otters we usually, after skinning them threw the bodies into the sea. One day we killed a large female which was with young. When about to cast it into the sea, as usual, she, in her mute way, protested. The young one, which was nearly grown and covered with fur, was taken out and the skin stuffed by one of the party and made to look quite natural. She took a great fancy to the young otter, and suspending it to a pole of her shelter would swing it backwards and forwards for hours, talking to it in a kind of sing-song tone. The carcass of the mother seal becoming putrid in a day, she made no objections to its removal.

Removal to Santa Barbara

After hunting successfully for about a month, we put everything on the schooner and sailed for Santa Barbara. Not long after sailing, a furious gale arose, which threatened to engulf the little vessel. She made signs that she could allay the wind, and kneeling down, facing the quarter from whence the wind blew, she commenced making incantations or prayers, which she continued for some time, and at intervals during the storm. When the wind abated, she pointed in triumph to the patch of clear sky, as much as to say, "See what I did!" We approached the shore early in the morning. It was evident that she had never seen it before, or any of the ordinary sights of a settlement. An ox-team, with a Spanish cart, passed on the sand. It is doubtful whether pleasure or wonder predominated in her mind. The yoke which tied the animals to each other and to the cart; the uncouth wheels, with their rotary motion, which she imitated with curious gestures, were inexpressibly wonderful, delightful, and ludicrous. She laughed, talked, and gesticulated all at once. After landing, a horseman, among others, came to the beach. This was a new creature, but she had the courage to examine it, touching horse and man in succession. She turned to her friends, for so may be considered her captors, and straddled the first two

fingers of her right hand over her left thumb, and imitating the galloping of a horse with her fingers, gave a shout of delight. She was taken to Nidever's house and cared for by his wife.

General Interest in the Woman

The story soon spread that the lost woman of the San Nicolas was found. The possibility of there being a woman living alone on a desert island in the ocean, with only wild animals for companions, had been discussed in many households, and with such warm-hearted people was a subject of intense interest. As the years had passed, and nothing was heard of her, the general conclusion was that she had perished, probably devoured by the wild dogs. The fathers of the mission had exerted themselves in the matter, and had offered a reward of \$200 for information that would lead to her recovery. When Nidever reported finding tracks on the island, and other evidences of life, Father Gonzales had confidently asserted she was alive, and the interest in the matter became intense.

Hundreds flocked to Nidever's house. Among others came Fathers Gonzales, Sanchez, and Jimeno. Though familiar with all the dialects of the coast, not a word of her language could they understand. Indians from Santa Ynez, Los Angeles, and other places were brought, with no better success; not one of them understood a word of her language. She soon became very expert in conversing by signs, however, and continued to tell portions of her story, so that but little uncertainty attended the narrative. She related that when she went back after her child she wandered a long time without finding it; that she concluded that the dogs had eaten the child, she lay down and cried a long time and became sick, could not eat anything, and got so weak that she could not walk; that she recovered so she could get around, and began to eat. She had often seen vessels on the sea but none of them ever came to take her away. She finally became reconciled to her fate, and commenced the routine of life which was to be varied only by hunger, thirst, cold, and fear of wild animals for near a score of years.

A Subject of Kindness

She was received with the utmost kindness. Almost every one made her a present of money, clothing, or trinkets, which, however, she would immediately give to her friends, or to the children who came to see her. In those days the Panama steamers used to touch at Santa Barbara, and all the passengers were desirous of seeing the lost woman. She would often put on her finest dress of feathers and go through some movements which the people termed dancing, though it had little resemblance to the graceful movements of a ball-room. She became very much attached to the family, which, however,

was mutual, for Mr. Nidever several times refused large sums which were offered him to have her exhibited to the public at San Francisco.

She was estimated to be about fifty years old at the time she was recovered. As near as could be made out from her signs, she had, at the time of her being left on the island, two children, one of which was a nursing babe, the other some years older, though in the opinion of some, the elder child had died some time previous. She had a smooth face, though the skin on her body and limbs was much wrinkled. It was but a short time before her death that they succeeded in making her understand their desire to have some words of her own language. The following are about all that were learned of it: A hide she called "tocah;" man, "nache;" the sky, "toygwah;" the body, "puoo-chay."

Her Death

She was like a child in every respect, with no control over her appetite. She was excessively fond of fruit, which she would eat at all hazards. It produced a dysentery, which, in spite of careful nursing and attendance, terminated fatally in about four weeks. During her sickness it was thought that a diet of seal's meat, such as she had been accustomed to, would relieve her. Some was procured and roasted, but she shook her head and laughed, and rubbed her finger along her worn-out teeth, signifying that they were too old. She was buried by the fathers, and the most of her trinkets, including the best feather dress, taken to Rome.

The thoughtful reader will be apt to make a mental inquiry as to the secret of her having kept her heart warm through the long solitude, for that she had the warm love, gratitude, and affection of a child, none who knew her will deny. They will also ask why the other dress? Was it made and kept for eighteen years in readiness for the visit of the man who never came? The answer may possibly be found in the ever mysterious realms of woman's nature.

The story of the lost woman will be a subject of wonder and romance as long as history is read.

Document 2C: Narrative of a Woman Who Was Eighteen Years Alone Upon the Island of San Nicolas, Coast of California, by C. J. W. Russell, 1856.

Mr. Editor:- It is with pleasure that I have seen your efforts to rescue from oblivion, and perpetuate in your Magazine, the many wonderful things that relate to the early history of our State. During a residence of eight years upon this coast, in which time I have explored over eighteen hundred miles of it, I have been enabled to treasure up many things in my journal which may be of interest to your many readers; I shall take pleasure in occasionally giving you an extract from it, and as there is no time like the present, I will commence with the following:

Alexander Selkirk, the hero of Defoe's enchanting story of Robinson Crusoe, was only four years upon the desert island of Juan Fernandes. Could we but find an author at the present day, with Defoe's graphic imagination, we believe sufficient facts of the lonely exile of this woman for eighteen years, could be obtained to make one of the most thrilling and beautifully descriptive volumes ever published.

Those who are acquainted with the geography of this coast, will remember that about two hundred and fifty miles south of San Francisco, a chain of islands commences, called the Santa Barbara Islands. While stationed upon one of this group--the island of San Miguel--making tidal observations for the U. S. Government, I was visited by Mr. George Nediver, an old resident of California, who came over from the main land, on a hunting excursion, and encamped beside me, and from whom I obtained much valuable information concerning the early history of these islands, as well as the adjacent coast.

One evening, while seated beside our quiet camp-fire, placidly smoking our pipes, Mr. N. related to me the following remarkable history:

Twenty years ago, the whole of the Indian tribes inhabiting this group of islands were engaged in a fierce and exterminating war with each other, and to such an extent was this deadly hostility waged that already the population had very much diminished, and would, in all probability, before many years, become entirely extinct. To prevent this, and at the same time to ameliorate the condition of the Indians, the good Fathers of the Mission of Santa Barbara conceived the idea of removing them to the mainland, where they might be watched over, improved, and preserved, under their immediate superintendance.

For this purpose they visited the islands, in company with a few partially civilized Indians, and explained to them the advantages of removing to the Mission. They listened attentively to the proposal, and finally consented to go, on promises of protection from their natural enemies being given by the Fathers.

Accordingly a small vessel was sent to the different islands, and the various tribes were taken one by one, to the Mission of Santa Barbara. But while the last of the Indians were embarking, at the island of San Nicolas, and all were supposed to be on board, a child was missing, and its mother, in great distress was seeking everywhere, without success; each portion of the vessel was diligently searched; all the adjacent rocks were examined, but no child could be found. Almost frantic, the mother requested the Captain to wait while she went into the interior to search for her child, to which he reluctantly consented.

As night closed down in darkness, heavy masses of clouds rolled up from the horizon, and gave threatening evidence of a coming storm. All were anxious for the return of the woman and her child, before it broke upon them, but still they came not. The wind began to blow, harder and stronger; the storm was rapidly increasing, and as the groups of Indians on board strained their eyes, trying to discover, in the darkness, some object that resembled the returning woman and her child, yet saw them not, there were many sad hearts and anxious countenances that night, on their account.

The storm at last came on in all its fury, tossing their little vessel up and down like a feather, and compelled them at last, though reluctantly, to put to sea for safety, before any tidings of the absent ones could be received; and although the cargo of living freight reached Santa Barbara in safety, before the vessel could return for the woman, it was wrecked and entirely lost; and as no other could be obtained at that time, the poor woman had to remain upon the island, where she lived, alone for eighteen years; no doubt forgotten, or given up as long since dead.

After the discovery of gold, it was rumored that San Nicolas was inhabited, and this, no doubt, had its foundation in the fact that several hunters of the sea otter, had seen the print of human footsteps, and they endeavored to discover the whereabouts of the individuals, but could not; yet, as all the footprints were alike, they concluded that there could be only one person living upon it; and many attempts were made to find out who, and where this strange being was, but without avail, until one of California's oldest pioneers, Mr. Nediver--the gentleman who related to me the story, and who arrived in this country some twenty-five years ago, and still resides at Santa Barbara--went to look for her, and who, having spent many years as a hunter, and trapper in the Rocky Mountains, was as expert as an Indian, in following a trail, and consequently found but little difficulty in discovering the track, which he followed until he saw a singular object among the rocks upon the sea shore, near

the mouth of a ravine, upon its knees, engaged in skinning a seal. Upon approaching he found it to be a woman clad in a singular dress of feathers; and when she saw him, she jumped up, and with excessive joy ran towards him, and seemed almost beside herself with wild delight, at the sight, once more, of a human being.

In her hand she held a rude knife-blade, that she had made from a piece of old iron, probably obtained from the fragment of some wreck, and which she evidently valued beyond anything else in her possession.

She was unable to make herself understood, except by signs; in making which she showed a great amount of intelligence, and signified her willingness to accompany him to Santa Barbara. Here Father Gonzales, of the Mission, took the greatest pains to discover some of the Indians who had been taken from those islands, eighteen years before, but not one of them could be found, and what became of them is a mystery unto this day. Not one of the Indians within a circumference of many miles, could be found, who could understand her. So that she could communicate only by signs.

It appears from her narrative that, after leaving the vessel in search of her child, she wandered about for several hours, and when she found it, the wild dogs which infest the island, even to the present day, had killed, and nearly devoured it. We can better imagine the feelings of a mother at such a time, than describe them. When she returned to the spot where she had left the vessel, to tell of her sorrows, for the loss of her child, that too was gone, and was bearing away her kindred and friends from her sight.

Could she have realized, then, that for eighteen long years she must live alone in the world, without one kind word of comfort, one cheering look from a friendly eye, or one smile of recognition, it would have been too much for even her wild, but womanly nature to bear, and with her, as with us, it is well that we know not the future.

From day to day, she lived in hope, beguiling the weary hours in providing for her wants. With snares made of her hair she caught birds; and with the skins, properly prepared, she made her clothing; her needles were neatly made of bone, and cactus thorns; her thread was of sinews from the seal; in these and many other articles found in her possession she exhibited much of the native ingenuity she possessed.

Whether she still remembered her own language or not, will forever remain a mystery. She was very gentle, and kind, especially to children,

and nothing seemed to please her more than to be near them; and the poor woman would often shed tears, while attempting to describe, by signs, her own little one which had been killed and eaten by the wild dogs.

The sympathy felt for her welfare, caused the people to supply her, bountifully, with everything she needed; and, very imprudently, allowed her to eat almost anything she chose, and the result was, that in about six months after her escape from her lonely exile she sickened and died--having, undoubtedly, been killed with kindness.

At the conclusion of the old gentleman's tale, I was more than ever convinced of the truthfulness of the remark, that "Truth is stranger than fiction."

Document 2D: The Indian Woman of San Nicolas. Anonymous [B], 1857.

Our readers will remember that in the November number of the Magazine we were favored by Capt. C. J. W. Russell, with the narrative of a woman who was eighteen years alone, on the Island of San Nicolas. Since the publication of that sketch, Capt. R. has paid a visit to Santa Barbara, and by Mr. George Nedever, the gentleman who discovered her, was presented with a water-bottle made of grass, and a stone mortar, necklace and other things that were made by her during her long and solitary residence. The water-bottle explains its own use. The mortar was used for pounding the aulone, the Haliotis of naturalists, and which was one of the principal articles of food among the Indians, and by whom they were dried for winter use, and afterwards pounded in a mortar before eating.

At the present time there are no less than twelve schooners and sloops chartered by Chinamen; besides several hundred of Chinese laborers engaged in this business, as they are an important article of consumption to Chinamen in California, in addition to the vast quantities exported by them to their native land. In flavor these are said to be fully equal to the oyster, especially in soup, and could be introduced advantageously for our own use, and we would suggest to epicures here, to give this dish of "John's" a trial, for it may be possible that although we might not relish cooked rats, the aulone may be one of the greatest of delicacies to our own people.

(The aulone is the fish taken from the pearl oyster.)

The necklace made by this ingenious woman, was of slate, and although

rude, it was prized by her as a great ornament, even though no one was near to admire or praise her.

There is upon this island a good sized cave in which she took up her abode, and on the walls of which she had kept a rude record of all the vessels that had passed the island, and of all the most remarkable occurrences in her lonely history, such as seeing large quantities of seals, hailing of vessels in the distance, &c.

By her signs she represented herself as once being very sick, and had to crawl upon her hands and knees from the cave to some water. During her sickness at Mr. Nedever's, although she suffered much, she never complained, and made them understand that she should like to die, for then she should meet her child in the spirit land.

We append the following interesting extract from the Santa Barbara Gazette.

"All that was known of this remarkable woman, and all of her history while living upon this island, she was able to impart by signs and gestures (she had lost the knowledge of language), and the manner of her discovery and deliverance, her arrival here and death that soon followed, has before been published. While living she was an object of lively interest to some and curiosity to others.

"Speaking with a friend lately, an old and respectable resident of California, on this and kindred topics, we were enabled to trace the history of the Indians inhabiting this and other islands in our channel back to the year 1811. The account given of the war of extermination* against the Indians on this particular island is not uninteresting, and runs thus:

"In the year 1811, a ship[†] owned by Boardman & Pope, of Boston, commanded by Capt. Whittemore, trading on this coast, took from the port of Sitka, Russian America, about thirty Kodiak Indians, a part of a hardy tribe inhabiting the island of Kodiak, to the islands in the Santa Barbara

* The war referred to by Capt. Russell in the Cal. Mag. of Nov.

† The ship was captured the following year near the Sandwich Islands, by the British ship-of-war "Phoebe," and Capt. Whittemore was carried a prisoner of war to England. -- ED.

Channel, for the purpose of killing sea otter, which were then very numerous in the neighborhood of these islands. Capt. Whittemore, after landing the Kodiaks on the island, and placing in their hands fire-arms and the necessary implements of the chase, sailed away to the coast of Lower California, and South America.

"In the absence of the ship, a dispute arose between the Kodiaks and the natives of the islands, originating in the seizure of the females by the Kodiaks. The Kodiaks possessing more activity, endurance and knowledge of war, and possessing superior weapons, slaughtered the males without mercy, old and young. On the island of San Nicolas not a male, old or young, was spared. At the end of a year Capt. Whittemore returned to the islands, took the Kodiaks on board, and carried them back to Sitka.

"From this period little is known of the Indians remaining on these islands till the year 1836, when Capt. Isaac Williams, late Collector of the Port of San Pedro, visited this island in a small vessel, and took on board all the Indians remaining but one woman, who was left in the manner stated by Capt. Russell, in the California Magazine. The Indians of the islands were of the type of the coast Indians, and were no doubt a part of them."

Document 2E: A Report of the Indian Woman of San Nicolas Island, by A. S. Taylor, 1860.

In relation to the Indian woman found on the island of San Nicolas by Mr. Nidever, of Santa Barbara, in the Fall of 1853, the Gazette of that place, remarks that "she had lost all knowledge of her language and could only converse by signs and gestures." In the year 1811 a ship owned by Boardman and Pope of Boston, commanded by Capt. Whittemore, trading on this coast, took from Sitka some thirty Kodiak Indians to the islands of the Channel, for the purpose of killing sea-otter, and left them there till his return from the coasts of Lower California, &c. A dispute afterwards arose between the Kodiaks and the islanders, caused by the seizure of the women by the Kodiaks, who thereon slaughtered all the males, old and young on San Nicolas; a very few only escaped. Capt. Whittemore returned at the end of a year and carried his Kodiaks back to Russian America. Whittemore's vessel was afterwards (1812) captured by the British man-of-war Phoebe, near the Sandwich Islands, and he taken prisoner to England. It seems that the San Nicolas Indians, from being more distant, were not all taken off till 1836, that is the few (seven in number) left by the Kodiaks. The woman spoken of above made her escape from the party of 1836, and was not found till 1853, as mentioned above; she died a short while afterwards in Santa Barbara.

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