

THE LAST OF THE UMPQUAS.

BY GEN. JOSEPH LANE.

In 1849, while Governor and ex-officio Superintendent of Indian Affairs, I made a trip through the Umpqua valley for the purpose of seeing the various tribes of the Umpquas, to find out their numbers, and disposition and capacity for war, arms and implements, and if possible their temper and feelings towards the whites, who would very soon begin to make settlements in their beautiful valley; and to make known to them that they must not in any way interfere with, or attempt to hurt or harm American citizens in passing or re-passing through or settling in the Umpqua valley. One other object I had in view and very much at heart; that was to find and bring to justice one of the Umpqua Indians, who had in a most treacherous and wilful manner murdered one of the immigrants of 1846, a Mr. Newton, who, with his wife, separated from all others of the party, had camped within a mile and a half of where the city of Roseburg now stands. Mrs. Newton was not disturbed but left entirely alone in a savage country for a time, but before many days was found and cared for, and brought to the settlements by a party of that immigration. I had the pleasure in '49 of an acquaintance with Mrs. Newton, and found her to be an estimable lady. Subsequently she was married to Mr. Powers, now of Astoria.

I searched faithfully and diligently for the murderer, but could get no information from the Indians as to where he could be found; they seemed to know nothing of or about the bad Indian and I had to give up the search and return without him. This I did very reluctantly.

My conclusions about the Umpquas were that they were not a warlike or dangerous people, that we need not expect much, if any, trouble from them. Well, we did not until '55 and '56, when a general war was begun by all the Indians north and south of the Columbia river, the Umpquas joining in and doing much harm. At that time I was in Washington City; however, Col. James K. Kelley, Col. James W. Nesmith, Col. Lamerick, Ross Miller, James D. Burnett, and other gallant spirits, did brave and good service, and made many "good Indians" by killing

them in battle. Govs. Curry and I. I. Stevens acted with much energy and good sense, and succeeded admirably, notwithstanding the opposition of the commander of the department. In 1856, the war was brought to a successful termination, peace was concluded with all the tribes, and the Umpquas were taken to the Grand Ronde reservation.

Now commences a brief history of my experience with the last of the Umpquas that made trouble in this valley. Soon after my re-election to Congress in the year 1857, I mounted my horse and with my rifle on my shoulder set out for a hunt on the spurs of the Cascade range of mountains. My wife accompanied me on her riding pony. We stopped at the house of Thomas Ledgerwood, who had married our widowed daughter-in-law, Mrs. Jane Lane. This house was ten miles east of Roseburg, then the outside settlement in this direction. In a day or two I killed some four fine bucks, and was about to start out for more game, when word came that a party of Indians, supposed to be Umpquas, had shot and killed two fine American mares, then worth \$250 each, belonging to Mr. Gillmore, an old man and very worthy citizen. I hurried off to see the dead animals, and to satisfy myself whether or not they had been killed by Indians. On close examination I found mockasin tracks, some twigs broken and dropped in a way that satisfied me that the mischief had been perpetrated by Indians. This was the first evidence that I had of any Indians being in the valley; but directly we learned of other outrages: houses west of the South Umpqua had been robbed and burned, horses and cattle had been killed and one man shot and wounded, and yet the Indians had not been seen at that time. Many men had farms, but no wife or family: the Indians all the time on the watch, would rob and fire the houses while the owner was absent at work or looking after his cattle, or engaged at other out door employment, and in that way had done, and were doing, a great harm to our people. I at once determined to hunt out these Indians, if it took all summer. We readily made up a party, consisting of David Gilmore, son of the old gentleman whose mares had been killed, Tom Ledgerwood,

Jesse Barker, Capt. Wm. Martin and myself, all woodsmen, and who knew how to track an Indian or buck or other animal, and set out on the track, which we found was not easily followed. In a day or two we found that they had crossed the South Umpqua and were heading west, evidently aiming for the coast range of mountains. The hills and mountains we found covered with dense forest, and in fact all the country was covered with brush and heavy foliage. We had lost the trail, and to find the Indians was about as difficult apparently as finding a needle in a haystack. I very soon discovered that some of the party had work at home that could not be neglected, consequently I proposed that we return to the settlements, and I would make a new start. There were at that time a small band of Klamath Indians living on the North Umpqua, who had never taken part in any war against our people. Their chief was known by the name of Samson, a strong and very active Indian. My party were disbanded, but I did not go home, but went to Samson's village, told him my business, and agreed to give him and two of his best warriors two dollars each per day during the time that we would be engaged hunting out the bad Indians; and without delay we set out. Now my party consisted of Capt. Martin, John Fitzhugh, Gilmore, Jack Burnett and the three Klamaths. After two camps, and on the third day of our search, Samson found signs, stopped and said, "we will find them on this creek"—a branch of the Coquille river. The track was followed on with great care by Samson, his two warriors, and Gilmore and Burnett, all swift on foot. Before dark they came on them in camp; our party, however, were discovered, and the enemy broke for the dense brush. Samson and his two warriors dropped their guns, and with their tomahawks in hand darted into the brush at almost lightning speed, and directly returned with two prisoners—one was an active middle-aged man, the other a young squaw—the balance succeeded in making their escape, closely pursued by our young men. They proved to be Umpquas, a party of seven men and two squaws, who had stolen away from the reservation and returned to their old hunting grounds for the avowed purpose of de