

THE SENTINEL.

SATURDAY, -- -- -- MAY 3, 1873.

H. KELLY,.....EDITOR.

The Modoc Muddle.

It is not strange that whenever the peace of any part of the country is disturbed by a sudden resort to arms that the most false and ridiculous stories of the cause of the difficulty are the first in circulation; first in print; first to be noticed, and first believed by a majority of the public. This fact can be readily accounted for upon the principle that in every disturbance there are leaders who feel and know that they are criminally responsible in inciting it, and this feeling makes them over-anxious to cover up their crimes. Hence they lose no time in misrepresenting the facts, that the eyes of the public may be blinded; that the wrath of an injured and indignant people may be turned from them and cast upon others. It's the old story of "stop, thief," repeated by every new transgressor. It's the murderer busying himself early in the morning following the bloody deed, looking for tracks that lead from his victim toward his neighbor's house. The man that saw the stranger prowling around the premises the day before turns out to be the identical thief who robbed the house. So it has been with the Modoc outbreak. Those who knew they persuaded the Indians to stay off the reservation and resist the authority of the Government were the first to see the reporters; were the first to cry "Credit Mobilier." Their names were first in print. They placed themselves in a position where they could first be interviewed. Being conscious of crime, they were eager to charge it upon others. Their lying reports were scattered from one end of the Union to the other, and the public mind prejudiced and biased thereby, before the innocent thought of writing a word or stopping to consider the cause of the trouble. They were fortunate in finding one of their own ilk, who has since proven himself to be a thief, to do their dirty work, and upon his arrest they were vigilant in procuring another of the same stripe, that not only their crimes, but their lies as well, might be covered up.

And now, when they feel that they have been cornered upon every side, and know that they have signally failed to screen their guilt, they complete the long list of falsehoods by dropping the present and going back in the past twenty years to find a cause for the present difficulty in the actions of Ben. Wright and his men. This is their last death struggle.

They had hoped that they would be able by false representations to get a reservation established on Hot Creek and Cottonwood, and preserve the lives of their pets for speculative purposes, but their "honorable Jack" had lived too long on the blood of the emigrants and settlers to resist the temptation to kill whenever a fair opportunity offered. It is not the killing of Gen. Canby and Dr. Thomas that these falsifiers object to, but it's the thwarting their plans in carrying out their speculative schemes. For if murder is what they object to, they had quite enough of that to find fault with Jack and his band in the killing of the innocent and unprotected settlers on Lost river. The wretches that petted and praised "Jack and his band of braves," as they were pleased to call them before the massacre of Canby and Thomas, would do the same thing today if they could "but stay public indignation.

The correspondent of the San Francisco Chronicle very unwittingly let the secret out, just before the massacre of Canby and Thomas, when he suggested that "the Government could easily afford to buy out the ranchmen on Hot creek and give the Indians a reservation near their old home." This scheme was plotted and planned and made known to the correspondent, that he might prepare the public mind through the press for its endorsement. These falsifiers well knew that if they could get the press of California to endorse the scheme their victory would be won, because they had already silenced the influence of Oregon at Washington, by heaping slander mountain high upon her citizens.

But by the tragic act of the savage their hopes have been blasted; their dark and treacherous schemes brought to an unprofitable end, and themselves convicted before God and man of criminally aiding the wild savage in

taking the lives of their fellow citizens. From the savage we had nothing to expect, but from them we had hoped for better things. But, alas! they have shown themselves to be unworthy the society of all decent men by an act of unparalleled betrayal of their own race. Despised as they feel themselves to be, they cringe with fear that Jack may yet be taken alive and turn State's evidence. But they need not have any fears. Their crimes can never be made more glaring to every sensible mind than they are at present. They have the stamp of guilt upon them, that time and repentance alone can erase.

Read.

We are permitted to publish the following letter from Gen. Ross to the editor of the Oregon Herald, which will explain itself:

JACKSONVILLE, Ogn., May 1, 1873. Editor Herald:—I observe two articles in the Bulletin of the 29th ult., charging gross mismanagement upon the Quartermaster's Department of the Oregon Militia, in their late expedition against the Modocs, and coupling the name of Quincy A. Brooks with the matter. Permit me to say, as a matter of justice, that all the supplies referred to were purchased by Major Wm. A. Owen, one of my Aids, then Acting Quartermaster and Commissary of my Brigade, and that Mr. Brooks had nothing to do with the purchases whatever.

The Quartermaster General of the Oregon Militia is Jesse N. Barker, of Douglas county, and not Mr. Brooks, as stated in the Bulletin. Mr. Brooks is Assistant Quartermaster General, and, since the massacre of the Peace Commissioners, has purchased, on my requisition, a few articles for the troops now being sent into the Lake basin for the protection of the settlers. These are the only purchases he has made.

I have carefully read the charges of mismanagement published in the Bulletin, and pronounce them all false and malicious. JOHN E. ROSS, Brig. Gen. 1st Brigade Ogn. Militia.

Just Begun.

The public mind has just got prepared to carry on the war against the Modocs with success. The people of Oregon were united from the start upon a war policy, but then the fools and knaves must be heard in every other State in the Union in their clamor for peace. This clamor has at last subsided, after using up six months of valuable time and sacrificing thousands of noble lives. It all had united in representing a truthful account of the facts to the authorities at Washington of the outbreak of the Indians, there is scarcely a doubt but that the whole affair would have been over before this, and the life of many a brave soldier preserved. Much of the blood of this horrible affair must forever rest upon the heads of those who misrepresented the facts.

Another Massacre.

Another bloody result of the Peace Commission—forty-three men killed and wounded. The Modoc war news comes blacker and bloodier on each succeeding day. How much longer this state of affairs will last no one can tell, but it is to be hoped that we will have more cheering news before long. It is awful to think of so many brave men falling at the hands of a few despicable diggers without accomplishing anything. We pale when we read of the useless slaughter. Is there no way to avoid it? If there are not enough troops, let more be called out. Every precaution should be taken to prevent surprises. Officers should be careful how they send their men over these rocky dens of hell in open daylight.

False Charges.

We feel it our duty to say a few words in relation to the charges made in the Portland Bulletin on the 29th ult., against the Quartermaster's Department of the 1st Brigade Oregon Militia. As Mr. Brooks was not in the service, but only acting as clerk, at the time the grievances complained of occurred, of course it releases him from all responsibility. We are aware that the boys suffered for the want of clothing and food, and that great credit is due them for the manner in which they braved it through, but we believe with two-thirds of them that it was no fault of any officer in the Quartermaster's Department. It was owing to the bad condition of the road; that these supplies were not furnished in time.

The Modoc News.

RECONNOITERING FORCE OF 64 MEN ROUTED—43 KILLED, WOUNDED AND MISSING—FIVE OFFICERS KILLED.

We glean the following from the columns of the Yreka Journal: LAVA BED, April 24th.—Nothing new to report. Neither cavalry or Warm Spring Indians found any trails on their trips. The Warm Springs will probably scout this side to-morrow. There are only 11 Indians in the place where they fired on pack trains, near where Hovey was killed. McKy has discovered that Modocs are in their last retreat. He crawled upon them and discovered 40, including women, but did not deem it prudent then to attack. Expect to hear them attacked to-night.

The probability is the Modocs are badly demoralized, and a large number of their fighting warriors slain. A squaw says Schonchin and six others were killed on the first day's battle. Hooks Jim was shot through the side, and Bogus Charley through the calf of the leg. Meacham crossed the lake yesterday for Freer's Ranch, where Mrs. Meacham is awaiting him. 9 P. M.—It is now believed the Modocs have fled to a new place as none appeared to-day to get water. It is conjectured they may be in ambush in their caves. If so, we will know to-night.

LAVA BED, April 25th.—Nothing particularly new or stirring. Donald McKy and Warm Spring scouts were out last night locating Modoc position thoroughly. They have not yet returned, but will to-day. The report will probably decide regarding immediate movement of the army. We expect a forward move every day. The troops are in good spirits. Weather clear and cold, with high north winds. The advance will be made as soon as arrangements can be completed for making it safely. The ground must be understood, that the troops can be moved with accuracy and dispatch, when once in motion. The position last held, or now held by Modocs, is very strong, being a succession of immense ravines and chasms as formidable as those from which they were driven. The Warm Spring scouts are in sight, 7:30 A. M., just over the lava crest, half a mile from camp, streaming in as carelessly apparently as though there was not a Modoc in the country. It is a fine sight, their gay leathers dancing in the breeze, their rifles glistening in the sun, and their many colored costumes gliding in and out among the rocks and sagebrush. McKy is with them, and we shall soon learn the result of the scout, and whether the Modocs are waiting or have fled before our advance.

LATER.—We learn that they have discovered the Modocs about six miles south of their former stronghold, and a mile and a half from the position occupied for the last few days. It is easy to drive them from there. Gen. Gillem can drive them out of that place to-day or to-morrow, if it were best; but it is not. It would only be stirring up a hornet's nest without getting the horns. Preparations are being made to surround, if possible, the desperadoes, but I have not much faith that it can be achieved. The ground is a series of natural forts for an area of 80 miles in circumference, over which the Modocs can flee like deer when hard pressed, and like the ancient Parthians slay more of their enemies in retreat than in the advance. Force enough to surround them in this country can hardly be brought against them, if regulars alone are used. The whole effective force of regulars in Oregon and California falls short of 1,500, and 2,500 would be small force enough to surround and destroy this party, and they must be exterminated, in vindication of the outraged laws. It is perfectly impossible to form an adequate idea of the terrible nature of this country, unless one has been over it. You cannot see a skirmish line 100 yards away, unless mounted on a high rock. 10,000 men could be concealed in a small area and be passed by unnoticed. Water trails and smoke are the only guides to point the lurking places of the Modocs. Col. Mendenhall is expected here on Tuesday with 130 more men, who are much needed. I do not expect a battle before their arrival, for it will be the aim of the fight to corral the Modocs, if possible. Brevet Colonel James Biddle, late Captain in First Cavalry, promoted to be Major in the 6th Cavalry, leaves for San Francisco to-morrow. His troop is located in Kansas. Fox, of the N. Y. Herald, leaves with him for New York. The squaws fight like devils, load guns and are as dangerous as the bucks, and should share the same fate, though none have been killed outside of battle. Four are now fed and protected at this camp, taken since the fight was ended. They will not be harmed, though at first chance they will flee to the Modocs with arms and ammunition, if they get a chance to steal any, and in event of another fight they would return to our lines to do the same thing over again. Remember they are not white women, but fiends, guilty of murdering and torturing every wounded soldier who fell in their hands, and horribly mutilating the dead. Remember the fate of the soldier of the 21st Infantry, wounded and left on the field of battle on the 17th of January. The squaws tortured him in every conceivable way all night long, until death put an end to his sufferings in the morning. This they admitted to be so during the interval employed

in making peace efforts. Don't waste any sympathy on such fiends, for it will be impossible to expect a soldier to spare one of them on the field. Day before yesterday, in searching the lava beds, the body of the private of troop H., First Cavalry, wounded in the battle on Jan. 17th, was found buried under a pile of rocks. The body bore evidence of the tortures inflicted. It was scalped, fingers and toes cut off, and otherwise mutilated.

To-morrow morning a reconnoissance will be made under the command of Major Thomas. The force will consist of Batteries A and K, 4th Artillery, Major Thomas and Lieutenant Harris; Company E, 12th Infantry, Colonel Wright, and 10 Warm Spring Indian scouts, in all about 70 men. It is intended by this move to learn the nature of the ground and location of the Indians, a sort of a feeler of their position. To-day the soldiers fenced in a graveyard at the foot of the bluff, with a strong though rude lava wall, Gen. Gillem laying the corner-stone. At 8 A. M., on the 26th, the troops started, and all is well so far.

YREKA, April 29th.—A courier arrived this morning at 4 o'clock, bringing account of a fight with troops sent to make a reconnoissance at Sand Butte cave last Saturday. The troops had stopped to take lunch, when they were attacked, and suffered a loss of 18 killed and 16 wounded, while only four Indians are known to have been killed.

Among those killed are Col. Wright, Major Thomas, Lieut. Howe and two other officers. Gen. Gillem's force proceeded to the cave, and were fighting when the courier left.

LATEST.—LAVA BED, April 28th.—Troops were ordered through the first lava bluff, about four miles from camp, to find a road to take the mortars in event of an attack on the Modocs, and it attacked were to fall back and not bring on an engagement. The troops were attacked on a small hill, about 300 yards this side of the large hill, where there was no cover except low, stunted sagebrush. They began signaling to the camp, as the soldiers say, to tell they had been attacked, when firing became so heavy they had to stop. The troops were surrounded on three sides. Battery A was ordered to support the right, and then it was that the command became demoralized, and every man for himself. The movements were seen from the signal station, but the wind blowing a gale, only a few guns could be heard, and smoke rarely seen. It seemed the troops had not a few pickets and were falling back in good order, and but little was thought of it in camp for awhile. But alas, such was not the case, as we learned from stragglers who came in frightened too much to tell an intelligible story. From them it was learned that the command was surrounded, and were or would all be slain, having been attacked by Indians, from 50 to 100 in number, pouring in a deadly fire on the land. Col. Mason and Major Green were signalled at once, who sent men, but darkness closed on the scene and we waited all night long for news of the fight. About daylight Noble came to Green's lines. The troops were taken unawares, ambuscaded, thrown into confusion and demoralized, offering but feeble resistance. They were in fact wild in the effort to prevent a rout and indiscriminate massacre. The officers exposed themselves too much in the vain effort, and it is probable most of them have lost their lives. We know that Major Thomas, Col. Wright, Lieut. Howe and Harris and Sergeant Romer are wounded, and report says killed. One man who escaped says Col. Wright with eight others got in a little hollow to avoid bullets, and the Indians were firing on them from all sides. The Indians even tried to kill them with stones, so close were they. It was a total rout, and probably the highest number of Indians engaged was 40, and those who had not become demoralized say from 25 to 30.

A dispatch from Col. Green states briefly that the surprise of the party under Major Thomas must have been more complete and terrible than anticipated. Major Thomas and Lieutenant Howe were killed, Lieutenant Harris severely and probably fatally wounded, and Lieutenant Cranston missing. The brave Col. Wright is also dead, as gallant a man as ever drew a sword, and who exposed himself to great danger in rallying his men. An Indian called out in English "say, you fellows who ain't killed or wounded had better go home; we don't want to kill you all." At first the attack seemed to be a feint by a few, just to keep them busy until the trap was set. The 14 Indians endeavoring to flank the troops had another object, for when the troops fell back to the bluffs behind them for refuge they found them occupied by Indians, who poured a murderous fire on that unsheltered glade. When attacked, the troops were all sitting down chatting. Batteries A and K, and Company E are now without a commissioned officer, the whole force being 59 men and 5 officers. Sergeant Thornhill from the scene of slaughter found a Modoc on the way and killed him. Warm Springs scalped the dead Indian, making 4 scalped.

Instead of the troops holding the ground and covering the bluffs as ordered, they broke and fled like frightened sheep, or a part of them did, and left their brave commanders to die almost alone. This threw the rest into confusion, and then it seems a panic seized them all. When the command fell back to the bluffs they expected to

find it held by their men, and found only Modocs.

APRIL 28th.—A long, cold night has passed, during which a blinding snow storm filled the air. A fire was kept burning to guide our troops in with the dead and wounded, but they did not get in until about 6 A. M. Part of the soldiers were buried on the battle field, being horribly mutilated.

The efforts to march a body of men in open daylight against an Indian stronghold gave the Indians every advantage in choosing their own ground to ambush, and none can deny that it was a bad move. We want men here who are used to fighting Indians, it being altogether different style from what regulars are accustomed to. We can drive them from stronghold to stronghold, but not whip them, and at the same time they use up the soldiers, with but little loss to themselves. Let us have volunteers, who can fight them in their own way, as the troops here cannot do it. The men and officers are brave enough, but they fight at great disadvantage. There is no doubt several of the men acted very badly, in escaping, but when they were attacked the Warm Springs were not in frost as scouts, and this seemed strange. The force in the fight was as follows: Company A, Fourth Artillery, 17 men; Company K, Fourth Artillery, 19 men; Company E, Twelfth Infantry, 23 men, with 5 officers, making 64 in all.

In all there were 17 killed, 17 wounded and 5 missing, the latter the same as dead, making 22 killed and 17 wounded, not including Surgeon Seuing, wounded in two places.

In one hole 13 dead and wounded were found, and 7 in another, and the whole affair was a rout caused by the detection of a few men, which in the start threw everything in disorder.

Yesterday, a courier from Mendenhall's command, at Burgotville, announced that the Modoc women and children were scattered among the Pit River Indians, which means war to the knife.

LATER.—Twenty killed or dead, six missing and seventeen wounded is the latest report, being a loss of 43 men out of 64, killed and wounded.

THE WARM SPRING INDIANS.—The Warm Spring Indians now engaged with the troops against the Modocs, says the Yreka Journal, are said to be all large men, many of them six feet tall and over. They obey their leader McKy and their sub chiefs implicitly. Their head chief is called Dumeta, who is at Umatilla, where the tribe altogether, when on the reservation, numbers 400. Donald McKy is 37 years of age, his father being a Scotchman, and his mother a Northern Indian woman. He has been raised and brought up altogether among the whites, wholly interested in their welfare, and knows every Indian trick in warfare. These Indians carry small flags to signal their positions, and they play all sorts of dodges to coax a Modoc out for a fair shot.

EXCITING INDIAN NEWS.—From present appearances it would seem that a general Indian war on this Coast is inevitable. Everywhere the Indians are defiant and saucy. The redskins, 1,400 in number, are fortifying at White Bluff, near Yakima, in Washington Territory, having left the reservation. The settlers in that section are very much alarmed. The Spokanes are roving about in bands of twenty and thirty, serving notices on the whites to leave and claiming the country as their own. Even the Nez Percés, always friendly heretofore, show signs of insubordination. So much for the Peace Commission farce.

HON. A. B. MEACHAM.—This gentleman, of Peace Commission fame, and who so narrowly escaped with his life at the time General Canby was killed, passed through town on Wednesday, en route home, his wife accompanying him. He was so disfigured by the wounds received from the Modocs as to be scarcely recognized by his acquaintances.

DEATH OF JUDGE THAYER.—Judge Thayer died at his residence in Corvallis on the 29th ult., having been prostrated for some time previous with typhoid fever. Judge Thayer was an old resident of Oregon, a lawyer of fine ability and universally respected. Peace to his ashes.

PITT RIVER INDIANS.—Word reached here last Sunday, by some one going to Scott Valley, who stopped at the Forest House without coming through town, that the Pitt River Indians had killed a man named Wagoner in Hot Spring Valley. We placed very little reliance on the rumor, but since the Modoc squaws and children, are among the Pitt Rivers, there may be some truth in the rumor. It seems evident that the squaws and children being sent there, looks like the Modocs retreating there when forced to do so. The lava country extends all the way down to Pitt River and Fall river, into Shasta county, and that section is very poorly prepared for Indian depredations.—Yreka Journal.

EXCITER.—Upon issuing our extra yesterday morning at 5 o'clock, giving the substance of the news concerning the total rout under Major Tomas, Col. Wright, Lieut. Howe and Lieut. Harris, considerable excitement was manifested, and the general impression prevails that volunteers will be necessary, such as understand Indian fighting. Such successes on the part of the Modocs only encourage other Indians to break out, and unless the Modocs are soon conquered, we may anticipate a general uprising of every Indian in the country about here, if not along the entire northern coast. We have contended from the start, that the easiest and best way to whip Indians was to employ volunteers, and our opinion is justified by recent events. Volunteers whipped the Modocs before when the military failed, and can do it again, if the government will call them out. Those who made fun of Gen. Wheaton's gun boats and his well laid plans to fight the Modocs in their lava Gibraltar, can now see that his head was right, and though whipped with a small force, and a dense fog preventing his use of the mortars, he made a gallant fight with his troops and volunteers.—Yreka Journal.

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