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## LOST AND FOUND

With this issue, the JCGBA is inaugurating a new feature designed to highlight texts or images that, for a variety of reasons, have languished for some time in relative obscurity, but deserve to be rescued from the dustbin of history and brought to the attention of a wider audience. Readers are encouraged to submit suggestions concerning appropriate selections that might appear here, or to make comments on items that are reprinted.

The following article, which was originally published in 1870 in *The American Naturalist* (Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 129-148), is a vivid and sympathetic though seldom cited first-hand account of some of the Nisenan and Konkow peoples of the lower Sacramento Valley. Although it reflects some of the inherent biases characteristic of the period during which it was written, it nonetheless contains valuable ethnographic data that are still of considerable interest today. Except for slight changes in formatting and spelling, the article is reprinted verbatim. Bancroft, in his *California Pioneer Register*, states that Edward Chever lived in California from 1849 to 1854; his brother Henry was one of the founders of Yuba City.

### THE INDIANS OF CALIFORNIA<sup>1</sup>

Edward E. Chever

The name "Digger," which Fremont gave to the Indians that he found on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada, a people who obtained a precarious subsistence in winter by digging through the snow for roots, and searching the rocks for lizards, and who had neither villages or numerical force, has been applied by the readers of Fremont's work to all the Indians of California.<sup>2</sup>

The name was really applicable to those whom he first met with, but not to the Indians living on the other side of the mountains, who spoke a different language and were more provident than those living on the great plains east of the Rocky Mountains. The latter have been much more destructive to the whites in battle, having procured, at an early date, firearms from Indian traders. The gold excitement, however, settled California so rapidly that the Indians were in a hopeless minority after the first immigration crossed the continent, and excepting where their villages were

attacked they had no wish to fight, for they had no surplus population to lose.

That these same Indians were not wanting in courage or spirit I have had repeated proofs.

They would attack the sturgeon when under water and drag him to the shore with their limbs bleeding from the sharp spikes. I have also seen Indians bearing the scars of conflicts with grizzly bears, and the frequent instances of white men scarred with wounds made by their arrows, shows that they contended courageously with the early settlers.

The Indians of California, in 1849, were the more interesting to the ethnologist from the manner in which that country had been settled. The Jesuits, it is true, had been in Lower California for many years, and had established mission schools there, and a few Europeans had a short time before made scattered settlements in the Sacramento Valley, but the whole country was so remote from our frontiers, and enclosed by the intervening barriers of the Rocky Mountains and the snows of the Sierra Nevada Range, that it had been but little changed since its discovery by the whites. Many Indian tribes were living in as perfect a state of nature as the elk, deer or antelope, which furnished them with food. A headdress of feathers with a scanty coat of paint on his face was the full dress of a brave, while a fringe made of grass, or fine strips of bark, from the waist to the knee, was the costume of the girls or women. The Indians had but little beard naturally, and excepting in a few cases where old men had grown careless of appearances the hairs were pulled out; sometimes a pair of muscle [sic] shells were used as tweezers, although I have seen a squaw dip her fingers in ashes and pull out her husband's beard, and draw tears at the same time from his eyes. Both sexes wore ornaments in the ear, but not rings. The children had their ears bored when quite young and small sticks inserted; these were exchanged from time to time for larger sticks, until a bone ornament, made from one of the larger bones of a pelican's wing carved in rude style, and decorated at the end with crimson feathers, could be worn permanently. This bone was about five or six inches long and larger in size than my little finger. The back hair of the men was fastened up in a net, and this was

made fast by a pin of hard wood pushed through both hair and net, the large end of the pin being ornamented with crimson feathers, obtained from the head of a species of woodpecker, and sometimes also with the tail feathers of an eagle. The women used no nets for their hair, nor wore feathers as ornaments, excepting in the end of the bones used by both sexes for the ears, which I have already described. The children were naturally frank and the girls gentle and confiding, not much more so, perhaps, than young grizzlies, but then I doubt whether the cub's mother threatens to give it to a white man, if it proves disobedient, and a white *man* was the *Bugbear* used to frighten papooses into good behavior. They were allowed much freedom, however, in seeking amusement or instruction; the girls acting as nurses to the younger children, and taking them off in the woods or to the river where they bathed, and the babies allowed to crawl in the water before they could walk on land. An Indian could no more remember when he learned to swim than when he first stood on his feet. When the children were disposed to be good natured the girls petted them as kindly as our children tend dolls, but if they were cross, in spite of their caresses, they threw cold water in their faces until their tempers cooled. The girls fully equaled the boys in swimming or diving, and also used the paddle with skill, sometimes even beating the boys in their canoe or foot races. The boys, however, soon took to their bows and arrows, wandering off to hunt, and the girls learned at home the art of weaving baskets and making bread of acorns. Familiar with the points of the compass from infancy, they use their knowledge on all occasions; even in play, if a ball or an arrow is being searched for, the one who saw it fall will guide the seeker thus, "to the east," "a little north," "now three steps northwest," and so on. In the darkest night I have known an Indian go directly to a spring of water from a new camp by following the directions of a companion, who had been there previously, given perhaps as follows: "three hundred steps east and twenty steps north." This early training in woodcraft gives that consummate skill and confidence which is rarely acquired by those who learn it later in life. In tracking game they know the "signs," as our hunters call them, of the various animals and birds as well as they know the kind of game that made them, and experience teaches them when the animals moved

away. In tracking white men they cannot make mistakes. The white man's foot is deformed, made so by the shape of his boots or shoes, and even when he is barefooted his toes are turned inwards. The Indian's foot, never having been compressed, has the toes naturally formed and straight as our fingers are, and he can even use them to hold arrows when he is making them. When he walks therefore, each toe leaves its impress on the dust or sand, the imprint of the little toe being as straight, perfect and distinct as that of the largest. In summer the Indians are fond of traveling from place to place as fish or game, sunny nooks, or shady glens offer their attractions in turn, and this *living* in different places accounts in part, for the intimate knowledge they possess of localities and also of trails leading from one section to another.

In the event of exposure to a severe storm when out hunting, or on a journey, the Indian does not risk his life by exhausting his strength. He selects the best shelter near him while he is comparatively fresh, and with bark or boughs, or under an overhanging rock, seeks protection from the wind. A hole sunk in the ground, and a small fire kept burning by an armful of sticks, will keep him warm till he can resume his journey. The Indians use great skill in their selection of fuel, and also in the disposition of the sticks in burning. They say of the white man "big fool, make heap fire and smoke, stand far off, look at him burn, while freeze." The Indian rejects green or wet wood and puts a few dry sticks together, with the ends towards a center. This gives a free circulation of air between the brands, with but little smoke, and a large proportion of heat for the size of the fire. Their winter quarters [Fig. 1] are dry and warm, but are rarely free from smoke, which the Indians do not seem to regard as an inconvenience. The outside is covered with earth and at least a half of the hut is below the surface of the ground. The inside shows strong posts supporting an arched roof made of poles, bound with grapevines, and these covered with reeds and coarse grass secured by cords. A small hole in the roof serves as a chimney, and a low door, usually on the south side, is kept open excepting in stormy weather. A raised platform of poles and reeds holds the skins and blankets used for bedding. These blankets, made from geese feathers woven so as to bring the feathers overlapping each other, are ingeniously made, and are a protection from wet or cold. When the Indians leave their houses a

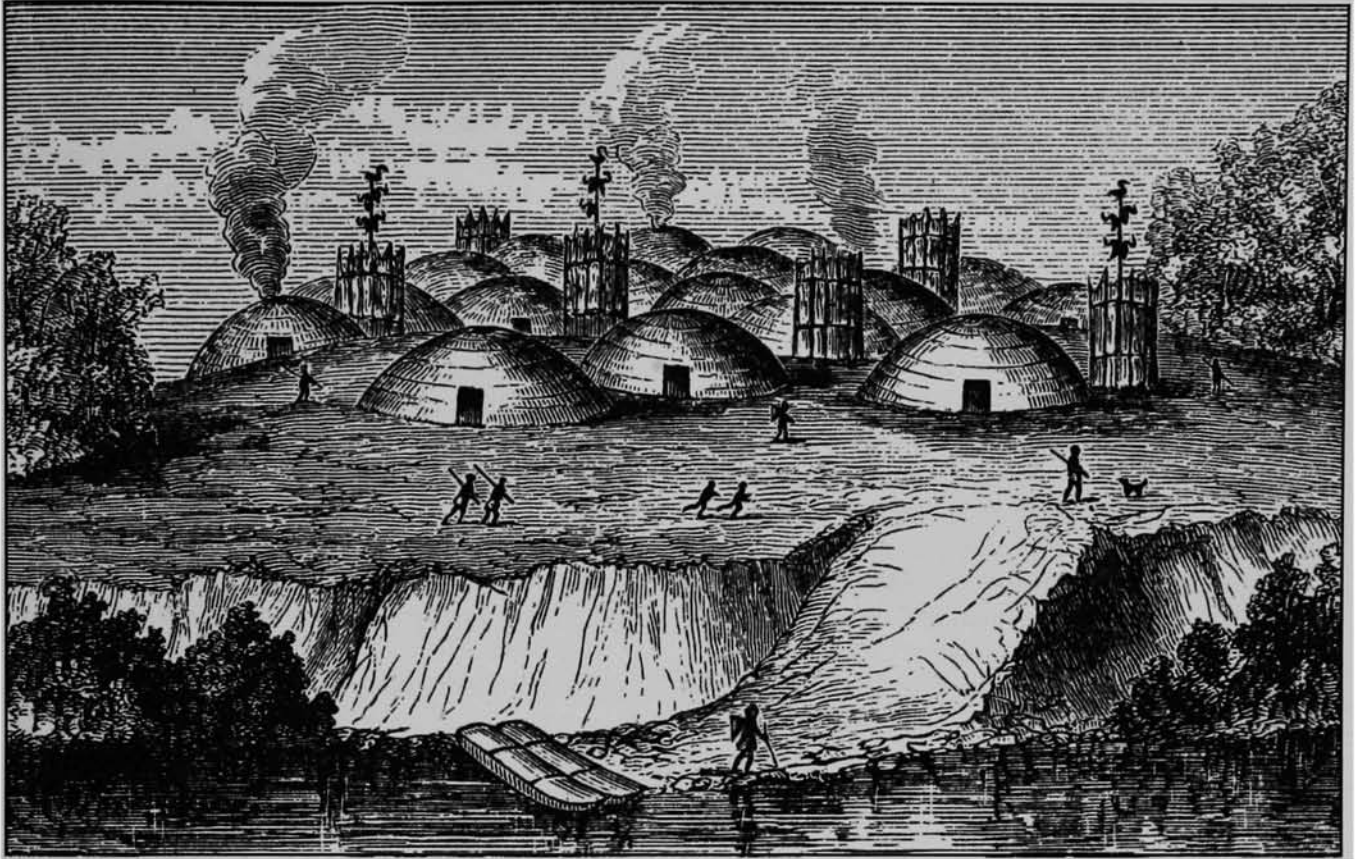


Figure 1. Indian Village. [Note: The grain cribs are scattered about among the huts, and the poles planted in some of them support the decoys used by the Indians in shooting geese. —Eds.]

branch is left in the door to show that no one is at home. The California Indians were more provident than most of the aborigines of this country. Large, round, upright cribs, made of poles and reeds, perhaps eight or nine feet high, contained their supplies of acorns. These cribs were neatly made and had a floor of loose reeds to keep the acorns from contact with the ground; they were estimated to hold two years supply of breadstuff, and were filled when acorns were abundant to provide for a short crop if the next year should prove unfruitful. The whole tribe, men, women and children, worked together in gathering acorns in the fall for these public granaries. The hunting and fishing were done wholly by men, and some of the fishing was done at night when the women were sleeping at home. Much of the drudgery came to the women and seemingly with their consent. They said that a hunter needed a keen eye, a firm hand and a fleet foot; if he became stiff from hard work or lost his skill, his wife must suffer with him in his

misfortunes, and it was best for each to do what each could do best.

The position of honor among the Indians is the recognition of excellence in some quality or acquirement. This induces every young man to improve himself by every opportunity offered, so that he may become the first in usefulness and be called on to meet chiefs in council. When the customs of the Indians are learned the charge of indolence, as often made against them, does not seem wholly merited. One of the early settlers in New York asked a chief why he did not work and lay up money. The chief replied that he wanted one good reason given him why he should make a slave of himself all of his life to make his children lazy for the whole of theirs. The labor performed is often great and exhaustive and must be shared by many. As no one gains any advantage over his fellows, excepting as he may prove himself more useful to them by the exercise of superior skill, he has less inducement to work alone,

as a public servant. The Indian again has a desire to have game abundant, and to have the trees preserved for his acorns and fuel. It would seem folly to kill game faster than needed for food from year to year, and cutting down the oak that brought him acorns, would be killing the goose that laid the golden egg. An Indian to be judged fairly must be regarded as an Indian. Custom with them, as with civilized people, is law, and many of their customs have probably been transmitted, with but little change, from remote ages. There is every reason to believe that the Indians were very numerous in California at some former time. Deserted mounds, showing the sites of former villages, are seen along the banks of the rivers, and a few tribes, speaking dialects of their own and yet living separately as nations, only consist of a dozen families each. One of these removed to a large tribe while I lived near them and remained as a part of the more powerful tribe for a year or more; but they became discontented or homesick, and returned to the village containing the dust of their ancestors. Here they kept up the traditions of their fathers, and related tales of former glory, and prayed to the Great Spirit for success and for abundant blessings. It is worth our time perhaps to consider, while speaking of the mounds that indicate the sites of villages, how much of the elevation is due to natural deposits, and whether it may not in many cases be entirely so.

The streets in the city of Chicago have risen from eight to ten feet above the old level during the past twenty-five years from the soil obtained from cellars, ashes, sweepings, etc. Even the villages (so called) of prairie dogs are made higher by their occupation. The ground used as a permanent home by human beings is constantly receiving additions from the wood used as fuel, bones of animals, shells of various kinds, and even the bodies of the California Indians were buried near their houses, with their baskets and implements used in hunting and housekeeping. I am aware that elsewhere mounds seem to have been heaped up by another race of people, but the highest that I have met with in California I think were owing to the gradual accumulations from centuries of occupation.

The traditions of the Indians are so fanciful, when they get beyond the history known to the living, that they differ but little from printed fictions.

Their religion is probably little changed from that of an earlier age. A Good Spirit is invoked to provide food and give prosperity, and evil spirits are to be propitiated. The oldest chief prays at certain seasons, morning and evening, outside of the council lodge, and sings in a monotone a few sentences only. This is not in words taken from their language, but is supposed to be intelligible to the Great Spirit. When special prayers are made for success in fishing or hunting, the request is made in plain Indian. Although he prays constantly for success, he uses wonderful craft and skill to ensure it. The antelope could not be approached in the short, dry grass on the plains even by crawling, but the Indian whitens the sides of his body with clay, and puts a perfect decoy antelope's head on top of his own.<sup>3</sup> With a short stick in his left hand to give length to the pretended foreleg, and carrying his bow and arrows in his right, he pretends to feed contentedly on the grass until the antelope approaches sufficiently near for him to kneel and shoot. The hunter, when standing or walking, supports himself on the short stick held in the left hand, like an animal standing on three legs [Fig. 2]. I found by adopting this decoy head, and wearing knit clothing, that the antelope would come to me readily if I would remain in one place and hold the head near the ground, as if feeding. It was more difficult to walk far in this way, and the antelopes would come to me at times when if I had attempted to go to them, they would have become alarmed.

To illustrate the ease with which an Indian can provide food for himself, I saw one come to the bank of Feather River one afternoon and start a fire. Turning over the sod and searching under the logs and stones he found some grubs. Pulling up some light dry reeds of the last year's growth he plucked a few hairs from his own head and tied the grubs to the bottom of the reeds, surrounding the bait with a circle of loops. These reeds were now stuck lightly in the mud and shallow water near the edge of the river, and he squatted and watched the tops of his reeds. Not a sound now broke the quiet of the place; the Indian was as motionless as the trees that shaded him. Presently one of the reeds trembled at the top and the Indian quietly placed his thumb and finger on the reed and with a light toss a fish was thrown on the grass. The reed was put back, another reed shook and two

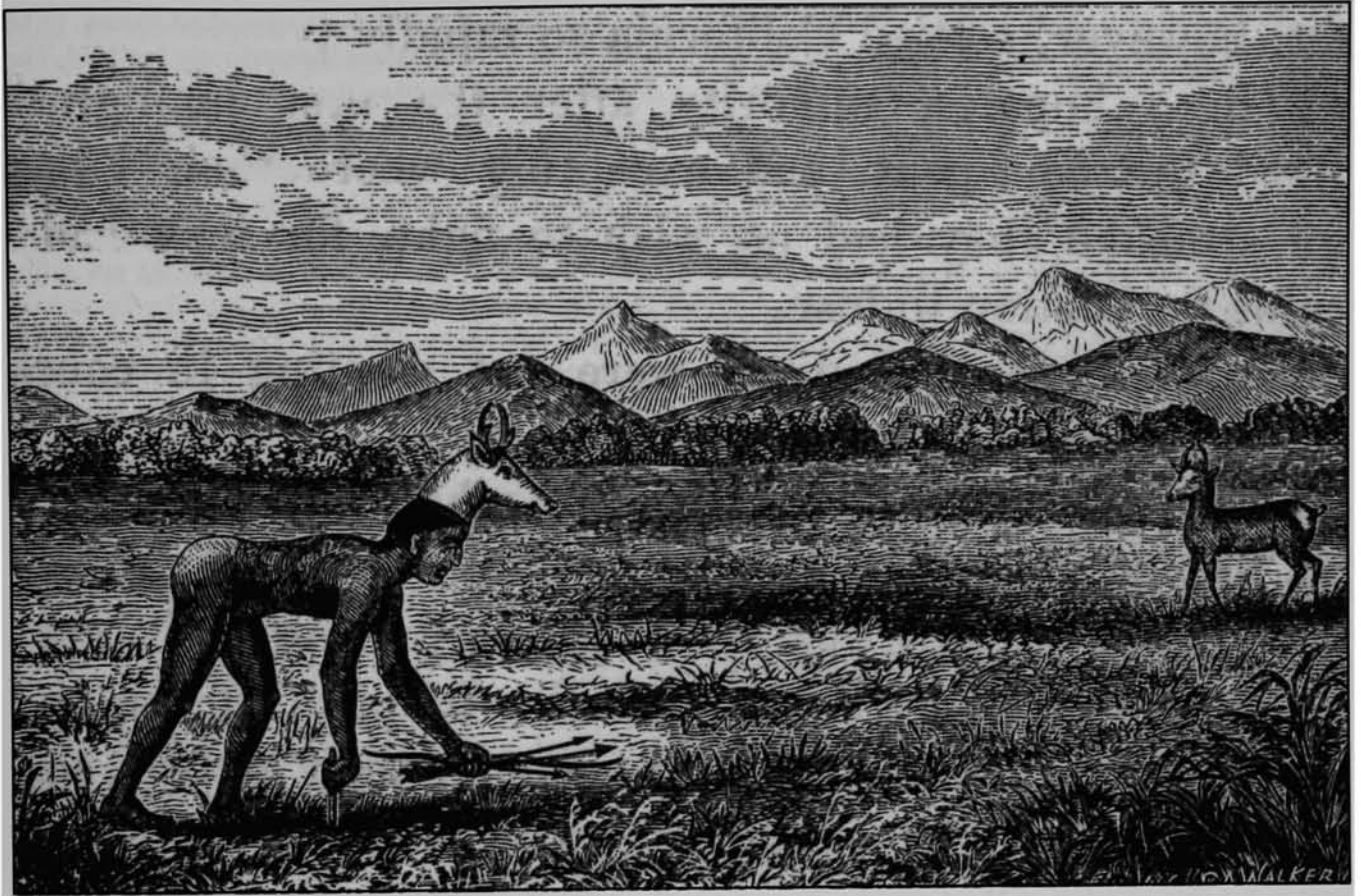


Figure 2. Indian Stalking an Antelope.

fish were thrown out; then still another and the fellow was soon cooking his dinner.

The spearing of salmon by torch-light, is very exciting. It is done on moonless nights and usually in parties of three to each canoe. One Indian guides the boat, a boy kneels in front with a blazing torch held near the surface of the water, while the one with the spear watches for the flash of the salmon as he darts toward the light. The spear is a loose point of bone with a hole through the centre, and one end fitted in a socket at the end of a light strong pole, and secured to the staff by a cord through the center of the bone. When a fish is struck the bone is drawn out from its socket and left in the fish, making what sailors call a "toggle," the cord holding it in spite of its struggles. When the Indian is about to spear the salmon, you see him to advantage, and he gives his orders full of earnestness. "Hoddom! Hoddom! Pue-ne! Pue-ne! Hon-de! Hip-pe-ne! Mip! Mip! Wedem-pou!" as the

struggling fish is drawn to the canoe. These words translated are: There, there! East, east! Lower! Higher! Hold, hold! The last word is an exclamation of surprise.

No Christian has stronger faith that his Father will provide for his wants, than these Indians had that the Great Spirit would send the salmon into their nets, or the grasshoppers to vary their bill of fare. Although grasshoppers are regarded with dread by the white settlers in some sections, the Indians go out to meet them rejoicing. They pile up the dry bunch grass for a center and then forming a wide circle, and swinging branches of trees, they advance driving the swarms of grasshoppers, until they take refuge under the pile of bunch grass. The grass at every point is set on fire simultaneously, and burns like gunpowder. When the smoke has rolled away the roasted grasshoppers are picked up by the basket full.

The division of fish and game was made generally by a chief, who counted out as many portions as there were families to eat. If no objection was made to the size of any portion, one of the number turned his back and called out some name as each lot was pointed out by the chief, the Indians removing their share as fast as called for. No complaint was made if some were sharers who had not been workers, and hospitality to those entering their lodges was universal.

The Indians hunt for one kind of game only at a time, and each kind when they can be taken most advantageously. When I saw every kind of game represented together at the Indian encampment in Bierstadt's celebrated painting of the Yosemite, I knew the camp had been introduced for effect, from this evident ignorance of, or disregard for the habits of Indians.

The Indian bow [Fig. 3] is made of the tough mountain cedar, with a thick back of sinew. A string of sinew also enables him to draw an arrow nearly to its head before it is sent humming through the air. The arrows are of two kinds, those with a head of hard, pointed wood for common use and those [Fig. 3b] reserved for extreme cases of attack or defense, having points of agate or obsidian, which are carefully kept in the skin of a fox, wild cat or otter. The stone arrowheads [Fig. 4] are made with great care, and the materials from which they are made are often brought from long distances. Obsidian and agate are probably selected not so much for beauty of coloring as for their close grain, which admits of more careful shaping. They use a tool with its working edge shaped like the side of a glazier's diamond. The arrowhead is held in the left hand, while the nick in the side of the tool is used as a nipper to chip off small fragments. An Indian usually has a pouch of treasures consisting

of unfinished arrowheads or unworked stones, to be slowly wrought out when industriously inclined. The feathers are so placed on the arrow as to give it a spiral motion in its flight, proving that the idea of sending a missile with rotary motion is older than the rifling of our guns.

It would consume too much space to describe all their implements, and many of them do not differ materially from those that were used by Indians in this section; among them were awls of bone, thread of deer sinews, and cord which they used for their nets, bird traps, and blankets;—this cord was spun from the inner fiber of a species of milk-weed. Their cooking utensils were made from the roots of a coarse

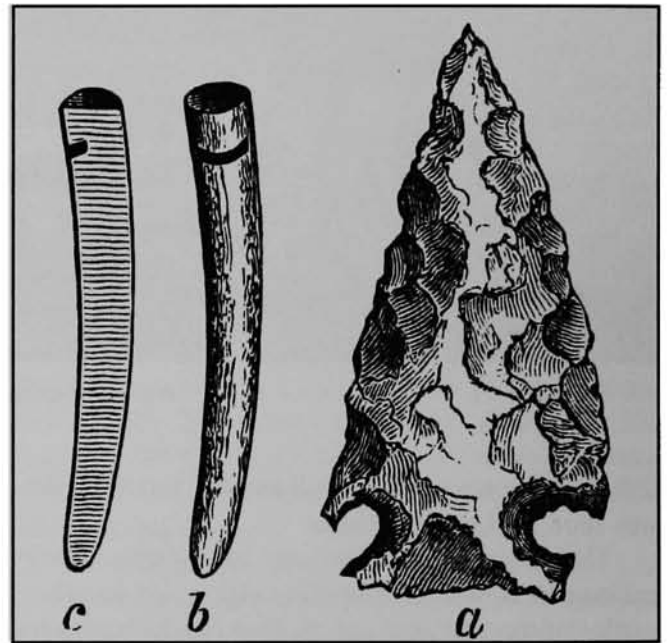


Figure 4. a, Arrow-head of obsidian, from the Museum of the Peabody Academy; b, Instrument for chipping the obsidian; c, Section of the same.

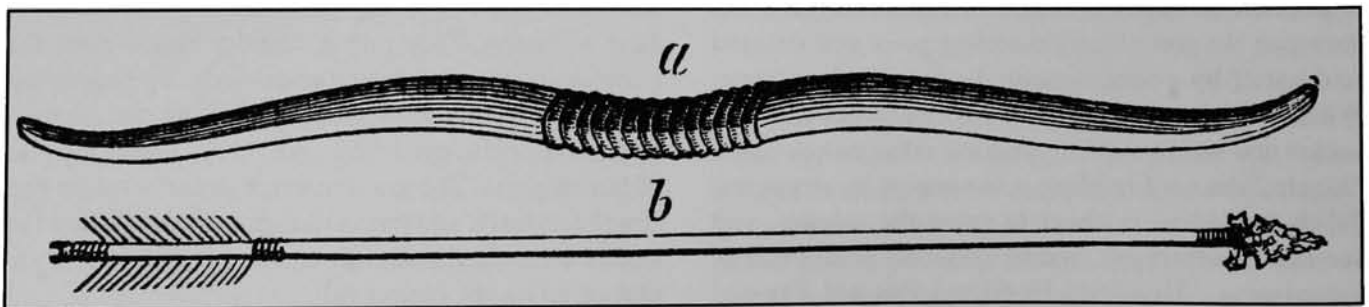


Figure 3. a, The bow unstrung, from the Musuem of the Peabody Academy; b, Arrow with head of obsidian, from the same.

grass. These roots grow near the surface of the ground, and in sandy soil can be pulled up in long pieces. The pulpy outside skin is removed and the inside is a woody fiber, extremely tough when green, and durable when made into articles for daily use. The Indian women split these roots into thin strips, keep them in water when they are making baskets, and take them out one at a time, as needed. The water basket is first started from a center at the bottom, and is added to stitch by stitch, without a skeleton frame to indicate the intended size [Fig. 5]. A loose strip of grass root is added constantly as a new layer to the last rim, and this is sewed on with another strip of the same fiber to the finished work beneath, a bone awl being used to bore holes through the basket portion. The last rim or complete edge of a basket has a larger filling,

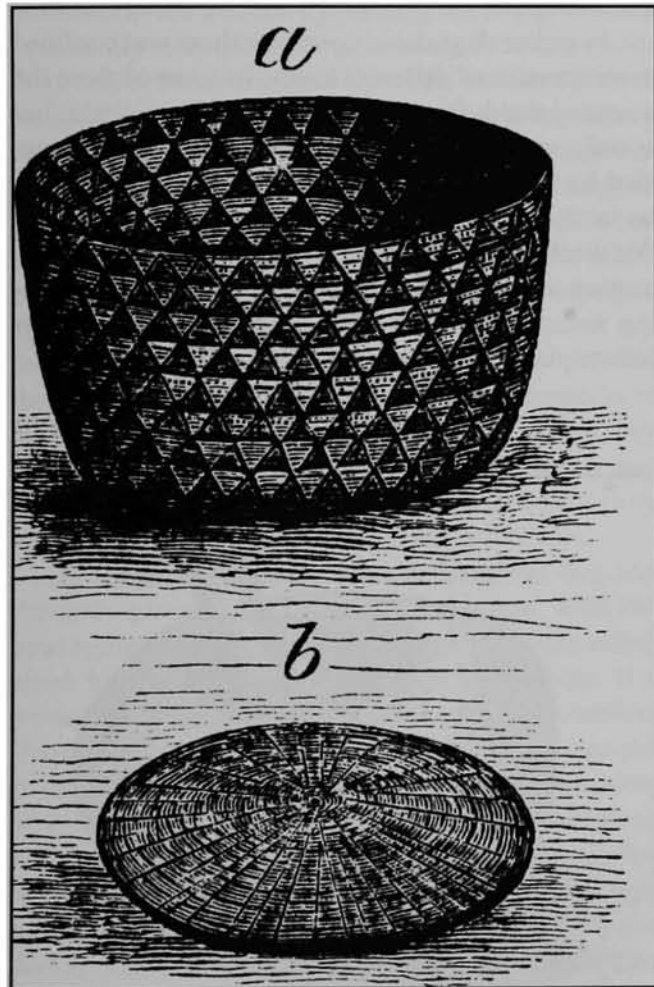


Figure 5. a, Cooking or water basket; b, Flat mat used as a plate or tray, and this also shows how the bottoms of the baskets are formed [Note: The radiating lines in this figure are incorrect].

consisting of several strips of split grass roots, or sometimes a willow stick is used. The larger baskets are ornamented with figures woven in of a darker color; the girls sometimes add beads and feathers for smaller baskets [Fig. 6]. The conical baskets used for carrying burdens is woven instead of being sewed together, and is of looser texture and lighter in weight [Fig. 7]. They are quite durable, however, and are used to carry wood, acorns, or household goods on a journey. The water baskets were also durable and would hold hot water.<sup>4</sup> Water was made to boil in them by dropping in stones previously heated. The women skillfully used two sticks in handling hot stones or coals as we would tongs. In bread making the women pounded the acorns between two stones, a hollowed one serving for a mortar [Fig. 8], until it was reduced to a powder as fine as our corn meal. They removed some of the bitterness of the meal by scraping hollows in the sand and leaching it, by causing water to percolate slowly through it. To prepare it for cooking the dough was wrapped in green leaves and these balls were covered with hot stones. It comes out dark colored and not appetizing, but it is nutritious and was eaten with gratitude by Fremont's men in 1844. Fish and meat were sometimes cooked in this way. A

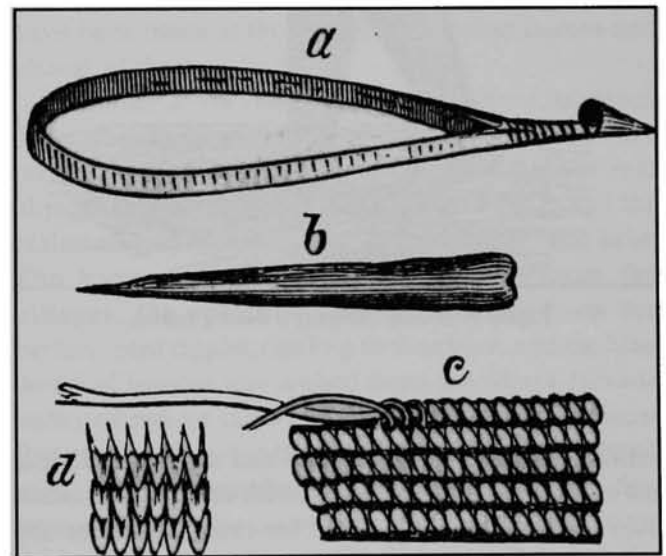


Figure 6. a, The yoke used to carry the conical basket; b, The awl used in sewing the basket; c, Fragment of basket from the Museum of the Peabody Academy, showing the character of the stitch used on the outside; d, Inside view of the same, showing that each stitch from above runs diagonally through the one below it of the last series, and is brought out between the threads on the outside.





Figure 7. Woman carrying a burden basket.

salmon rolled in grape leaves and surrounded with hot stones, the whole covered with dry earth or ashes over night and taken out hot for breakfast, does not need a hunter's appetite for its appreciation.

Marriage among the California Indians was similar to that of other tribes in other parts of the country. Presents of sufficient value were given by the man to the girl's parents, and the bride might be given away without her knowledge or consent. From

my own observation I know that the Indian uses the best of his judgment in making a selection, and desires neither family strife or misery in his lodge. Girls are married at thirteen or fourteen years of age, and no woman of marriageable age remains single long. Most of the Indians, who became personally well known to me, were very happy in their family relations, and the custom of dividing food equally among them, allowed no family to suffer from want.

When the whites first came into the country the Indians were virtuous and happy, and if whiskey had not demoralized them they would have retained much of their original independence and self-respect. They were naturally cheerful and attached to each other, and although polygamy was permitted I knew only one chief who had two wives. These seemed to agree, although Waketo said of his family that it had "too much tongue."

In earlier days dancing among them was confined to ceremonies of different kinds. In some of these the women joined, forming themselves into a circle; but as only one step was used in a solemn way, accompanied by a half turning of the body, a stranger might be in doubt whether it was rejoicing or mourning. Within this circle the men danced with great activity, leaping across a fire burning in the center, and yelling and singing whilst the women continued their solemn dancing, singing a low monotonous chant.

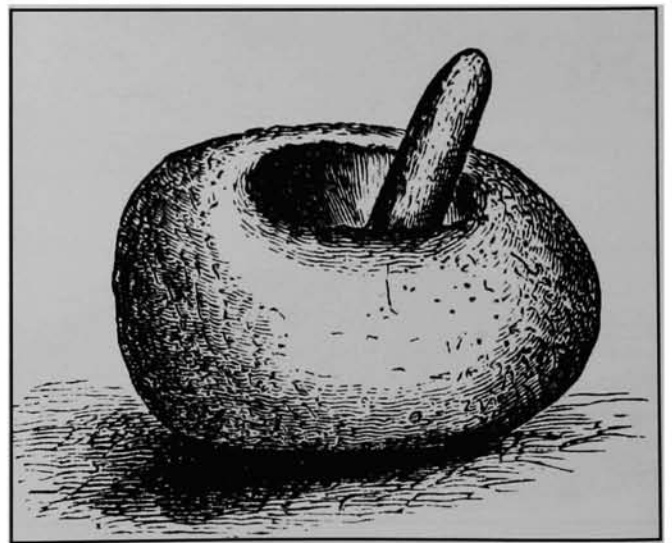


Figure 8. Stone mortar and pestle, from the Museum of the Peabody Academy.

Running of races was confined, after childhood, to the men, and endurance rather than speed sought for. A race was for three or five miles at least, and a good runner would follow a runaway horse or mule that had started off with greater speed, but in a few hours would return with the animal in his possession.

The Indians were inveterate gamblers, and parties from one tribe would visit another for several days at a time and play day and night. The game was a sort of an "odd and even," as played by white children, the parties guessing as to the number and position of the sticks used in the game. The playing was accompanied by singing, and beads were principally used for stakes.

In the treatment of diseases the Indians succeeded in a certain class of them, but failed altogether in others. The pain from a sprain or rheumatism would be drawn to the surface by burning the skin with fire. I can testify to a cure from this remedy. A severe sprain of an ankle, followed by two months use of crutches, resulted six months later in rheumatism in one of my feet. The assertion of a chief that fire would cure it in an Indian, but for a white man—and here he shrugged his shoulders as if words were unnecessary—induced me to try the experiment, and show him that white men could bear pain. I placed a live coal on the top of my instep, and before the burn was healed my rheumatism was gone. For headaches they pressed their hands on the head of the sufferer and sometimes cured it by gentle pressure. For other diseases they tried steam baths, especially for colds. When any internal disorder defied their treatment, they immediately begged medicine from the whites.

In burying the dead a circular hole was dug and the body placed in it, in a sitting posture, with the head resting on the knees. If a man his nets were rolled about him and his weapons placed by his side. If a woman her blanket enclosed her body, and a conical shaped basket, such as they carry burdens in, was put in the grave also, with the peak upwards. The widow of an Indian cut her hair short and covered her head with ashes, and in the mountains they used tar for that purpose. Every night for weeks, after their bereavement, the wails of these women were distracting. I do not know the exact time prescribed for mourning but I do not think it lasted more than six months.

The language of the California Indians is composed of guttural sounds, difficult to separate into words when spoken rapidly, and hard to pronounce or remember. The counting is done, as with all primitive people I have met, by decimals. Children in reckoning call off the fingers and toes of both hands and feet as twenty, when wishing to express a large number. In counting ten the following words are used: Weekum, Paynay, Sarpun, Tchuyum, Marctem, Suckanay, Penimbom, Penceum, Peleum, Marchocom. If eleven is to be expressed it is Marchocom Weekum, or Ten one; Marchocom Paynay, ten two, and so on to twenty which is Midequekum. The general term for man is Miadim, and for woman Killem, and for a child Collem. A boy is Miadim collem and a girl Killem collem. Although this seems to indicate a poverty of distinctive terms, yet when it is found that every animal, bird, insect and plant has its own name, it will be seen that there is no want of materials to supply a stranger with words for book making, if his tastes lead him in that direction.

After many years passed with these Indians, and having every opportunity to study their customs and character, I entertain pleasant recollections of their friendship which was never broken, and feel sadly when I realize that the improvements of the white men have been made at the sacrifice of Indian homes and almost of the race itself.

Feather River (Rio de Plumas), before its mines were washed for gold, was so clear that the shadows reflected on the surface seemed brighter than the real objects above. The river abounded in fish, as did the plains on either side in antelope, deer, elk, and bear. The happy laughter of children came from the villages, the splash of salmon, leaping from the surface, sent ripples circling to the shore, and the blue dome of heaven was arched from the Sierra Nevada with its fields of snow on the east, to the distant Coast Range that shut out the Pacific on the west. Grand oaks, with far spreading shade, clotted the plains that stretched for miles on either side, and in spring time the valley was brilliant with flowers. This was the possession and home of the Indians, whose ancestors had lived and hunted without patent or title obtained from deeds, long before the first sailor planted his flag on the sea-coast and claimed the country by right of discovery. It could not be expected that the Indian

would see his trees cut down and game destroyed, and the clear rivers turned into muddy streams, without regret. That they refrained from seeking satisfaction for what they regarded as intentional wrong is more surprising.

A white woman told me one day of her spirit in driving an Indian from her tent, by getting out her husband's pistol and ordering him to "vamoose." The Indian's story was heard in this particular case, and never having seen a white woman before he was astonished at her hostile intentions, and indignant at having been threatened when he intended no wrong. He added that he knew now "why so few of the white men in California were married."

The Indians are philosophical by nature and accept either death or suffering, when regarded as inevitable, with composure. On one occasion, when talking with a chief, and slapping mosquitoes with considerable energy, killing them when I could, the Indian remained cool and serene, quietly brushing the little torments from his limbs, and observing my impatience, said, "what good comes of killing a few, the air is full of them." When the first steamboat passed the Indian villages I watched the Indians to see what effect it would produce, but to my disappointment it did not excite them or elicit any expression of wonder. Even the steam whistle failed to move them; they did not understand it and would not exhibit surprise. Two years later a brig sailed up the river and the Indians were full of excitement. The size of the sails and the strength of the ropes came within their comprehension, filling them with wonder. The task of gathering fiber enough to weave so much cloth, and such ropes, made the white man a wonderful worker in their estimation.

It has been customary to attribute certain general qualities to whole tribes of Indians, and this has been done to those of whom I have written. I can only say that no two Indians of my acquaintance were alike, and their mode of life would naturally develop individuality of character.

The charges of lying and stealing, as urged against them, have some foundation in fact, although the Indian might make some such defense as our soldiers made to the accusation of theft of honey and chickens while marching through the South during our late war. They did not steal, they *took* what they wanted and expected to live on the enemy. No Indian can steal

from his tribe, however, without losing his character, and their desire to have position in the tribe makes both men and women as careful of their reputations as those in civilized life. Indians and white men cannot live side by side happily, nor without fighting till the white man is acknowledged master. The Indian is cat-like, attached to localities, and kills only such game as he needs for food; he is stealthy by nature, and patiently waits his opportunity to strike. The white man is migratory and carries his attachments to strange lands, making his home where his ambition or nature attracts him, and is destructive alike to game or forests. The Indian, if he becomes an obstacle, is classed with wild animals, and is hunted to the death; this antagonism becomes mutual and is perhaps as natural as the antipathies of cats and dogs.

The early settlement of New England was attended by the horrors of Indian warfare, and this struggle is the same today as then, but farther west on the plains of Colorado and Arizona. The Indians of California are now fed on government rations, and instead of elk and antelope the land is grazed by herds and flocks of domestic animals owned by the white men, and enumerated and taxed as one of the largest items of wealth in a rich state. The present policy of the government of removing Indians from disputed lands, and settling them upon reservations, is perhaps the best thing that can be done, but much of the management of Indians in the past has been a shameful record of fraud, by the agents of our government who represented the public money-bag, and of outrages committed on emigrants by the Indians.

Many of the Indian agents, in their greed for gain, supplied hostile tribes with rifles, ammunition and whiskey in exchange for furs and even property captured from the white settlers. Whisky that may only make a fool of the white man converts an Indian into a fiend, and when drunk he may kill friend or foe. The individual settler, exposed to attack, regards the Indians as brutal and dangerous, and loses faith in his government if it rewards with presents the wretch who has murdered his companions, and may at any time attack him by surprise and butcher his wife and children.

Our government is now powerful enough to warrant the exercise of authority and mercy. It is folly to purchase peace of such a people by paying them tribute, as the Indians themselves seek to propitiate

evil spirits by gifts of beads; and it cannot be right to make "Black Kettle" a present of a Colt's revolver, after he has already used his knife on more white victims than any brave of his tribe.

The Indians whom I have particularly described in this paper, have been shown to possess the virtues of generosity and hospitality without the least knowledge of Christianity, and it is a mortifying fact that the early explorers in this country generally found welcome and hospitality among the Indians before the white traders had corrupted them. Now it is difficult to find a tribe that a white man cares to visit unless with the balance of power on his side. Indian cunning even has not proved equal to the duplicity of the white man. You may have heard of the Indian who offered his beaver skins for sale to a trader in olden times in one of our Puritan villages, when the trader was on his way to church. The trader would not purchase then, but in a whisper stated a price. When the church was dismissed the Indian followed the trader home and demanded payment for his skins, but was forced to accept a less price than was first named. The Indian took the money but told an acquaintance that he had discovered the use of the big meeting at the church,—"it was to lower the price of beaver skins."

As a white man I take the side of the pioneer in defense of his family, but I wish the Indians could have been spared much of the degradation brought upon them by bad white men that must eventually end in complete subjection, or extermination.

### NOTES

1. Read before the Essex Institute, February 21, 1870. An abstract will be found in the "Bulletin of the Essex Institute" and a vocabulary of such familiar words as Mr. Chever was able to recall. It is but justice to our author to state that his familiarity with the language of the tribes, during five years of personal intercourse, has given him a rare opportunity of forming a correct judgment of what these Indians really were before they were demoralized by contact with the whites, and that he has confined himself to such statements as he remembered clearly and knew to be correct. Eds.

2. The Indian tribes of the section I am describing, called themselves respectively, Sesum, Hocktem, Yubum, Holipi, Willem, Tankum, and inhabited the valley of

northern California, between the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range.

3. This is the real skin of an antelope's head with artificial horns made from tule covered with a paste composed of the bulb of the soapweed pounded with charcoal; the eyes are made of the skin stripped from the back of a woodpecker, with the purple black feathers attached.

4. A shallow basket of their work, which has been in the Museum collection for years, now holds cold water as perfectly as when it was made. Eds.



