

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE MISSION INDIANS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

THE old laws of the Kingdom of the Indies are interesting reading, especially those portions of them relating to Indians. A certain fine and chivalrous quality of honor toward the helpless, and tenderness toward the dependent, runs all through their quaint and cumbrous paragraphs.

It is not until one studies these laws, in connection with the history of the confusions and revolutions of the secularization period, and of the American conquest of California, that it becomes possible to understand how the California Mission Indians could have been left so absolutely unprotected, as they were, in the matter of ownership of the lands they had cultivated for sixty years.

"We command," said the Spanish king, "that the sale, grant, and composition of lands be executed with such attention that the Indians be left in possession of the full amount of lands belonging to them, either singly or in communities, together with their rivers and waters; and the lands which they shall have drained or otherwise improved, whereby they may by their own industry have rendered them fertile, are reserved, in the first place, and can in no case be sold or aliened. And the judges who have been sent thither shall specify what Indians they may have found on the land, and what lands they shall have left in possession of each of the elders of tribes, caciques, governors, or communities."

Grazing estates for cattle are ordered to be located "apart from the fields and villages of the Indians." The king's command is that no such estates shall be granted "in any parts or place where any damage can accrue to the Indians." Every grant of land must be made "without prejudice to the Indians"; and "such as may have been granted to their prejudice and injury" must be "restored to whomever they by right shall belong."

"In order to avoid the inconveniences and damages resulting from the sale or gift to Spaniards of tracts of land to the prejudice of Indians, upon the suspicious testimony of witnesses," the king orders that all sales and gifts are to be made before the attorneys of the royal audiencias, and "always with an eye to the benefit of the Indians"; and "the king's solicitors are to be protectors of the Indians and plead for them." "After distributing to

the Indians what they may justly want to cultivate, sow, and raise cattle, confirming to them what they now hold, and granting what they may want besides, all the remaining land may be reserved to us," says the old decree, "clear of any incumbrance, for the purpose of being given as rewards, or disposed of according to our pleasure."

In those days everything in New Spain was thus ordered by royal decrees. Nobody had grants of land in the sense in which we use the word. When the friars wished to reward an industrious and capable Indian, and test his capacity to take care of himself and family, by giving him a little farm of his own, all they had to do, or did, was to mark off the portion of land, put the Indian on it and tell him it was his. There would appear to have been little more formality than this in the establishing of the Indian pueblos which were formed in the beginning of the secularization period. Governor Figueroa, in an address in 1834, speaks of three of these, San Juan Capistrano, San Dieguito, and Las Flores, says that they are flourishing, and that the comparison between the condition of these Indians and that of the Spanish townsmen in the same region is altogether in favor of the Indians.

On November 16, 1835, eighty-one "desafiliados"—as the ex-neophytes of missions were called—of the San Luis Rey mission settled themselves in the San Pasqual valley, which was an appanage of that mission. These Indian communities appear to have had no documents to show their right, either as communities or individuals, to the land on which they had settled. At any rate, they had nothing which amounted to a protection, or stood in the way of settlers who coveted their lands. It is years since the last trace of the pueblos Las Flores and San Dieguito disappeared, and the San Pasqual valley is entirely taken up by white settlers, chiefly on preëmption claims. San Juan Capistrano is the only one of the four where are to be found any Indians' homes. If those who had banded themselves together, and had been set off into pueblos, had no recognizable or defensible title, how much more helpless and defenceless were individuals, or small communities without any such semblance of pueblo organization!

Most of the original Mexican grants included tracts of land on which Indians were living, sometimes large villages of them. In many of these grants, in accordance with the old Spanish law or custom, was incorporated a clause protecting the Indians. They were to be left undisturbed in their homes: the portion of the grant occupied by them did not belong to the grantee in any such sense as to entitle him to eject them. The land on which they were living, and the land they were cultivating at the time of the grant, belonged to them as long as they pleased to occupy it. In many of the grants, the boundaries of the Indians' reserved portion of the property were carefully marked off; and the instances were rare in which Mexican grantees disturbed or in any way interfered with Indians living on their estates. There was no reason why they should. There was plenty of land and to spare, and it was simply a convenience and an advantage to have the skilled and docile Indian laborer on the ground.

But when the easy-going, generous improvident Mexican needed or desired to sell his grant, and the sharp American was on hand to buy it, then was brought to light the helplessness of the Indians' position. What cared the sharp American for that sentimental clause, "without injury to the Indians"? Not a farthing. Why should he? His government, before him, had decided that all the lands belonging to the old missions, excepting the small portions technically held as church property, and therefore "out of commerce," were government lands. None of the Indians living on those lands at the time of the American possession were held to have any right—not even "color of right"—to them. That they and their ancestors had been cultivating them for three-quarters of a century made no difference. Americans wishing to preëempt claims on any of these so-called government lands did not regard the presence, on them, of Indian families or communities as any more of a barrier than the presence of so many coyotes or foxes. They would not hesitate to certify to the Land Office that such lands were "unoccupied." Still less, then, need the purchaser of tracts covered by old Mexican grants hold himself bound to regard the poor cumberers of the ground, who, having no legal right whatever, had been all their years living on the tolerance of a silly, good-hearted Mexican proprietor. The American wanted every rod of his land, every drop of water on it; his schemes were boundless; his greed insatiable; he had no use for Indians. His plan did not embrace them and could not enlarge itself to take them in. They must go. This

is, in brief, the summing up of the way in which has come about the present pitiable state of the California Mission Indians.

In 1852, a report in regard to these Indians was made to the Interior Department by the Hon. B. D. Wilson, of Los Angeles. It is an admirable paper, clear and exhaustive. Mr. Wilson was an old Californian, had known the Indians well, and had been eye-witness to much of the cruelty and injustice done them. He says: "In the fall of the missions, accomplished by private cupidity and political ambition, philanthropy laments the failure of one of the grandest experiments ever made for the elevation of this unfortunate race." He estimates that there were at that time in the counties of Tulare, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and San Diego, over fifteen thousand Indians who had been connected with the missions in those counties. They were classified as the Tulareños, Cahuillas, San Luisenos, and Diegueños, the latter two being practically one nation, speaking one language, and being more generally Christianized than the others. They furnished, Mr. Wilson says, "the majority of the laborers, mechanics, and servants of San Diego and Los Angeles counties." They all spoke the Spanish language, and a not inconsiderable number could read and write it. They had built all the houses in the country, had taught the whites how to make brick, mud mortar, how to use asphalt on roofs; they understood irrigation, were good herders, reapers, etc. They were paid only half the wages paid to whites; and being immoderate gamblers, often gambled away on Saturday night and Sunday all they had earned in the week. At that time in Los Angeles nearly every other house in town was a grog-shop for Indians. In the San Pasqual valley there were twenty white vagabonds, all rum-sellers, squatted at one time around the Indian pueblo. The Los Angeles ayuntamiento had passed an edict declaring that "all Indians without masters"—significant phrase—must live outside the town limits; also, that all Indians who could not show papers from the *alcalde* of the pueblo in which they lived should be treated as "horse thieves and enemies."

On Sunday nights, the squares and streets of Los Angeles were often to be seen full of Indians lying about helpless in every stage of intoxication. They were picked up by scores, unconscious, carried to jail, locked up, and early Monday morning hired out to the highest bidders at the jail gates. Horrible outrages were committed on Indian women and children. In some instances, the Indians armed to avenge these and were themselves killed.



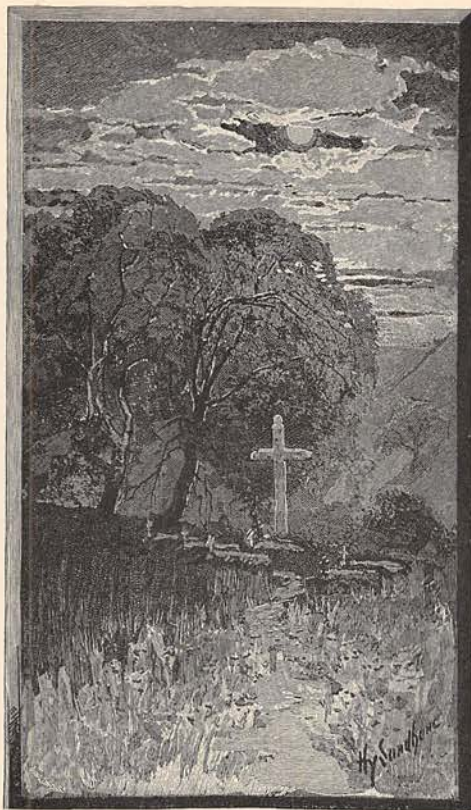
OLD MISSION INDIAN, AND ADOBE RUINS OF MISSIONS. SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO.

These are a few out of hundreds of similar items to be gathered from the newspaper records of the time. Conditions such as these could have but one outcome. Twenty years later, when another special report on the condition of the California Mission Indians was asked for by the Government, not over five thousand Indians remained to be reported on. Vice and cruelty had reaped large harvests each year. Many of the rich valleys which at the time of Mr. Wilson's report had been under cultivation by Indians were now filled by white settlers, the Indians all gone, no one could tell where. In some instances, whole villages of them had been driven off at once by fraudulently procured and fraudulently enforced claims. One of the most heart-rending of these cases was that of the Temecula Indians.

The Temecula valley lies in the north-east corner of San Diego County. It is watered by two streams and has a good soil. The Southern California Railroad now crosses it. It was an appanage of the San Luis Rey

Mission, and the two hundred Indians who were living there were the children and grandchildren of San Luis Rey neophytes. The greater part of the valley was under cultivation. They had cattle, horses, sheep. In 1865, a "special agent" of the United States Government held a grand Indian convention there. Eighteen villages were represented, and the numbers of inhabitants, stock, vineyards, orchards were reported. The Indians were greatly elated at this evidence of the Government's good intentions toward them. They set up a tall liberty-pole, and bringing forth a United States flag, which they had kept carefully hidden away ever since the beginning of the civil war, they flung it out to the winds in token of their loyalty. "It is astonishing," says one of the San Diego newspapers of the day, "that these Indians have behaved so well, considering the pernicious teachings they have had from the secessionists in our midst."

There was already anxiety in the minds of the Temecula Indians as to their title to their lands. All that was in existence to show that



NEW GRAVE-YARD AT RINCON.

they had any, was the protecting clause in an old Mexican grant. To be sure, the man was still alive who had assisted in marking off the boundaries of their part of this original Temecula grant; but his testimony could establish nothing beyond the letter of the clause as it stood. They earnestly implored the agent to lay the case before the Interior Department. Whether he did or not I do not know, but this is the sequel: On April 15, 1869, an action was brought in the District Court in San Francisco, by five men, against "Andrew Johnson, Thaddeus Stevens, Horace Greeley, and one thousand Indians and other parties whose names are unknown." It was "a bill to quit title," an "action to recover possession of certain real estate bounded thus and thus." It included the Temecula valley. It was based on grants made by Governor Micheltorena in 1844. The defendants cited were to appear in court within twenty days.

The Indians appealed to the Catholic bishop to help them. He wrote to one of the judges an imploring letter, saying, "Can you not do something to save these poor Indians from being driven out?" But the scheme

had been too skillfully plotted. There was no way — or, at any rate, no way was found — of protecting the Indians. The day came when a sheriff, bringing a posse of men and a warrant which could not be legally resisted, arrived to eject the Indian families from their houses and drive them out of the valley. The Indians' first impulse was as determined as it could have been if they had been white, to resist the outrage. But, on being reasoned with by friends, who sadly and with shame explained to them that, by thus resisting, they would simply make it the duty of the sheriff to eject them by force, and, if necessary, shoot down any who opposed the executing of his warrant, they submitted. But they refused to lift hand to the moving. They sat down, men and women, on the ground, and looked on, some wailing and weeping, some dogged and silent, while the sheriff and his men took out of the neat little adobe houses their small stores of furniture, clothes, and food, and piled them on wagons to be carried — where? — anywhere the exiles chose, so long as they did not chance to choose a piece of any white man's land.

A Mexican woman is now living in that Temecula valley who told me the story of this moving. The facts I had learned before from records of one sort and another. But standing on the spot, looking at the ruins of

the priest, when he came, to say mass in; and a rude wooden cross to consecrate their new grave-yard on a stony hill-side. They put their huts on barren knolls here and there, where nothing could grow. On the tillable land



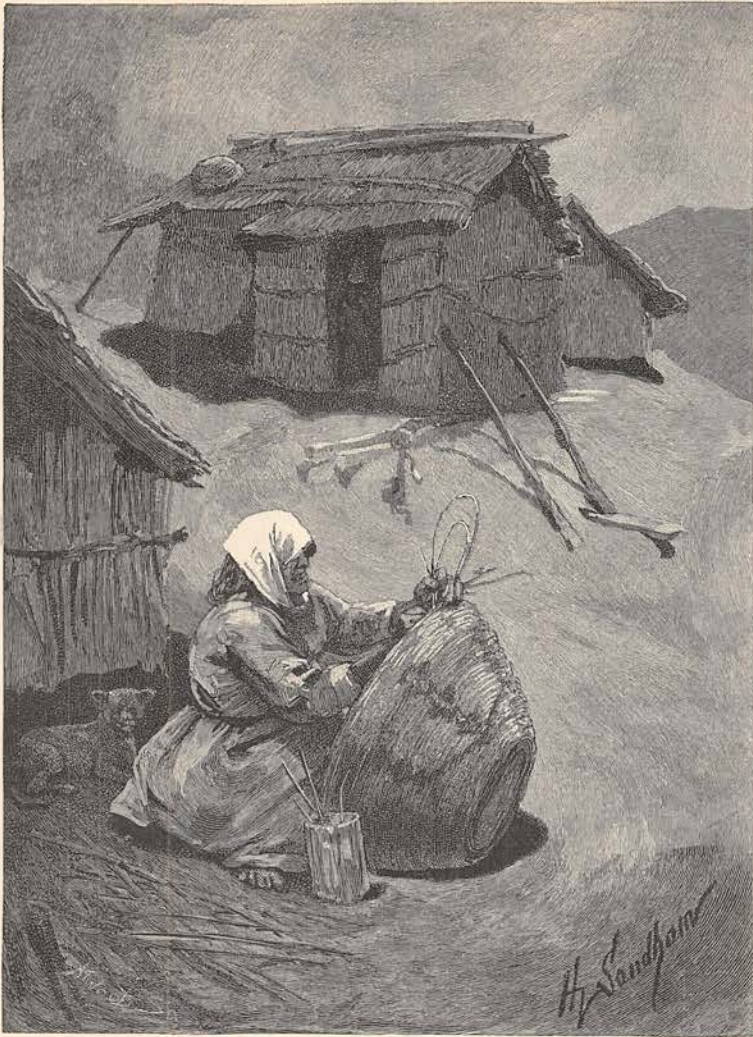
INDIAN CARTS AND HOUSES. RINCON MISSION.

the little adobe houses, and the walled grave-yard full of graves, and hearing this woman tell how she kept her doors and windows shut, and could not bear to look out while the deed was being done, I realized forcibly how different a thing is history seen from history written and read.

It took three days to move them. Procession after procession, with cries and tears, walked slowly behind the wagons carrying their household goods. They took the tule roofs off the little houses, and carried them along. They could be used again. Some of these Indians, wishing to stay as near as possible to their old home, settled in a small valley, only three miles and a half away to the south. It was a dreary, hot little valley, bare, with low, rocky buttes cropping out on either side, and with scanty growths of bushes; there was not a drop of water in it. Here the exiles went to work again; built their huts of reeds and straw; set up a booth of boughs for

they planted wheat or barley or orchards—some patches not ten feet square, the largest not over three or four acres. They hollowed out the base of one of the rocky buttes, sunk a well there, and found water.

I think none of us who saw this little refugee village will ever forget it. The whole place was a series of pictures: and knowing its history, we found in each low roof and paling the dignity of heroic achievement. Near many of the huts stood great round baskets woven of twigs, reaching half way up to the eaves, and looking like huge birds' nests. These were their granaries, holding acorns and wheat. Women with red pottery jars on their heads, and on their backs, were going to and from the well; old men were creeping about, bent over, carrying loads of fagots that would have seemed heavy for a donkey; aged women sitting on the ground were diligently plaiting baskets, too busy, or too old, to give more than a passing look at us. A group of women was



OLD SQUAW WEAVING BASKETS.

at work washing wool in great stone bowls, probably hundreds of years old. The interiors of some of the houses were exquisitely neat and orderly, with touching attempts at adornment,—pretty baskets and shelves hanging on the walls, and over the beds canopies of bright calico. On some of the beds, the sheets and pillow-cases were trimmed with wide hand-wrought lace made by the Indian women themselves. This is one of their arts which date back to the mission days. Some of the lace is beautiful and fine and of patterns like the old church laces. It was pitiful to see the poor creatures in almost every one of the hovels bringing out a yard or two of their lace to sell, and there was hardly a house which had not the lace-maker's frame hanging on the

wall with an unfinished piece of lace stretched in it. The making of this lace requires much time and patience. It is done by first drawing out all the lengthwise threads of a piece of fine linen or cotton; then the threads which are left are sewed over and over into an endless variety of intricate patterns. Sometimes the whole design is done in solid button-hole stitch, or solid figures are filled in on an open network made of the threads.

The baskets were finely woven, of good shapes, and excellent decorative patterns in brown and black on yellow or white.

Every face, except those of the very young, was sad beyond description. They were stamped indelibly by generations of suffering, immovable distrust also underlying the sor-



PACKING WATER UP THE MOUNTAIN.

row. It was hard to make them smile. To all our expressions of good-will and interest they seemed indifferent, and received in silence the money we paid them for baskets and lace.

The word Temecula is an Indian word, signifying grief or mourning. It seems to have had a strangely prophetic fitness for the valley to which it was given.

While I am writing these lines, the news comes, that, by an executive order of the President, the little valley in which these Indians took refuge has been set apart for them as a reservation. No doubt they know how much executive orders creating Indian reservations

are worth. There have been several such made and revoked in California within their memories. The San Pasqual valley was at one time set apart by executive order as a reservation for Indians. This was in 1870. There were then living in the valley between two and three hundred Indians; some of them had been members of the original pueblo established there in 1835.

The comments of the California newspapers on this executive order are amusing, or would be if they did not record such tragedy. It was followed by an outburst of virtuous indignation all along the coast. One paper said:



INDIAN INTERIOR. RINCON.

"The iniquity of this scheme is made manifest when we state the fact that the Indians of that part of the State are Mission Indians who are settled in villages and engaged in farming like the white settlers." * * *

"It would be gross injustice to the Indians themselves as well as to the white settlers in San Pasqual." * * *

"These Indians are as fixed in their habitations as the whites, and have fruit-trees, buildings, and other valuable improvements to make them contented and comfortable. Until within the past two or three years they raised more fruit than the white settlers of the southern counties. There is belonging to an Indian family there a fig-tree that is the largest in the State, covering a space sixty paces in diameter." * * *

"A remonstrance signed by over five hundred citizens and indorsed by every office-holder in the county has gone on to Washington against this swindle." * * *

"This act on the part of the Government is no better than highway robbery, and the persons engaged in it are too base to be called men. There is not a person in either of these valleys that will not be ruined pecuniarily if these orders are enforced."

Looking through files of newspapers of that time, I found only one that had the moral courage to uphold the measure. That paper said:

"Most of the inhabitants are now Indians who desire to be protected in their ancient possessions, and the Government is about to give them that protection, after a long delay."

One editor, having nearly exhausted the resources of invective and false statement, actually had the hardihood to say that Indians could not be induced to live on this reservation because "there are no acorn-

bearing trees there, and the acorns furnish their principal food."

The congressmen and their clients were successful. The order was revoked. In less than four years, the San Pasqual Indians are heard from again. A justice of the peace, in the San Pasqual valley, writes to the district attorney to know if anything can be done to protect these Indians.

"Last year," he says, "the heart of this rancheria (village) was filed on and pre-empted. The settlers are beginning to plow up the land. The Los Angeles land office has informed the Indians that, not being citizens, they cannot retain any claim. It seems very hard," says the judge, "aside from the danger of difficulties likely to arise from it."

About this time a bill, introduced in Congress, to provide homes for the Mission Indians on the reservation plan, was reported unfavorably upon by a Senate committee, on the ground that all the Mission Indians were really American citizens. The year following the chief of the Pala Indians, being brought to the county clerk's office to register as a voter, was refused on the ground that, being an Indian, he was not a citizen. In 1850, a small band of Indians living in San Diego County were taxed to the amount of six hundred dollars, which they paid, the sheriff said, "without a murmur." The next year they refused. The sheriff wrote to the dis-

trict attorney, who replied that the tax must be paid. The Indians said they had no money. They had only bows, arrows, wigwams, and a few cattle. Finally, they were compelled to drive in enough of their cattle to pay the tax.

said he, 'if I had not done it, somebody else would, for all agree that the Indian has no right to public lands.'"

This sketch of the history of the San Pasqual and Temecula bands of Indians is a



WOVEN GRANARIES.

One of the San Diego newspapers spoke of the transaction as "a small business to undertake to collect taxes from a parcel of naked Indians."

The year before these events happened a special agent, John G. Ames, had been sent out by the Government to investigate and report upon the condition of the Mission Indians. He had assured them "of the sincere desire of the Government to secure their rights and promote their interests, and of its intention to do whatever might be found practicable in this direction." He told them he had been "sent out by the Government to hear their story, to examine carefully into their condition, and to recommend such measures as seemed under the circumstances most desirable."

Mr. Ames found in the San Pasqual valley a white man who had just built for himself a good house, and claimed to have preëmpted the greater part of the Indians' village. He "had actually paid the price of the land to the register of the land office of the district, and was daily expecting the patent from Washington. He owned that it was hard to wrest from these well-disposed and industrious creatures the homes they had built up. 'But,

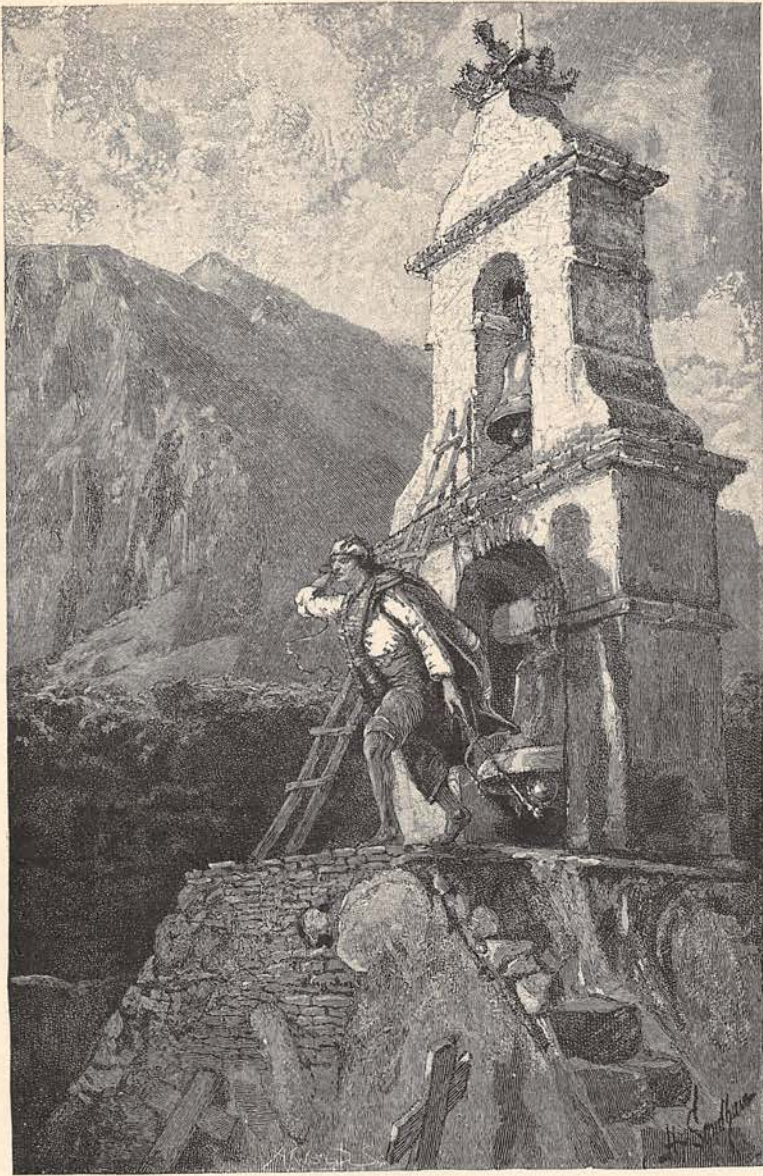
fair showing of what, with little variation, has been the fate of the Mission Indians all through Southern California. The combination of cruelty and unprincipled greed on the part of the American settlers, with culpable ignorance, indifference, and neglect on the part of the Government at Washington, has resulted in an aggregate of monstrous injustice, which no one can fully realize without studying the facts on the ground. In the winter of 1882, I visited this San Pasqual valley. I drove over from San Diego with the Catholic priest, who goes there three or four Sundays in a year, to hold service in a little adobe chapel built by the Indians in the days of their prosperity. This beautiful valley is from one to three miles wide, and perhaps twelve long. It is walled by high-rolling, soft-contoured hills, which are now one continuous wheat-field. There are, in sight of the chapel, a dozen or so adobe houses, many of which were built by the Indians; in all of them except one are now living the robber whites, who have driven the Indians out; only one Indian still remains in the valley. He earns a meager living for himself and family by doing day's work for the farmers who have taken his



INDIAN WOMAN.

land. The rest of the Indians are hidden away in the canyons and rifts of the near hills; wherever they can find a bit of ground to keep a horse or two and raise a little grain. They have sought the most inaccessible spots, reached often by miles of difficult trail. They have fled into secret lairs like hunted wild beasts. The Catholic priest of San Diego is much beloved by them. He has been their friend for many years. When he goes to hold service, they gather from their various hiding-places and refuges; sometimes, on a special fête day, over two hundred come. But on the day I was there, the priest being a young man who was a stranger to them, only a few were present. It was a pitiful sight. The dilapidated adobe building, empty and comfortless; the ragged poverty-stricken creatures, kneeling on the

bare ground—a few Mexicans, with some gaudiness of attire, setting off the Indians' poverty still more. In front of the chapel, on a rough cross-beam supported by two forked posts, set awry in the ground, swung a bell bearing the date of 1770. It was one of the bells of the old San Diego Mission. Standing bareheaded, the priest rang it long and loud: he rang it several times, before the leisurely groups that were plainly to be seen in doorways or on road-sides bestirred themselves to make any haste to come. After the service, I had a long talk, through an interpreter, with an aged Indian, the oldest now living in the county. He is said to be considerably over a hundred, and his looks corroborate the statement. He is almost blind, and has snow-white hair, and a strange voice, a kind of shrill whisper. He says he recollects the re-



THE CALL TO SUNRISE MASS, PALA.

building of the San Diego Mission; though he was a very little boy then, he helped to carry the mud mortar. This was one hundred and three years ago. Instances of much greater longevity than this, however, are not uncommon among the California Indians. I asked if he had a good time in the mission. "Yes, yes," he said, turning his sightless eyes up to the sky; "much good time," "plenty to eat," "*atole*," "*pozzole*," "meat"; now "no meat"; "all the time to beg, beg"; "all the time hungry." His wife, who is older than he, is still living, though "her hair is not so

white." She was ill, and was with relatives far away in the mountains; he lifted his hand and pointed in the direction of the place. "Much sick, much sick; she will never walk any more," he said, with deep feeling in his voice.

During the afternoon, the Indians were continually coming and going at the shop connected with the inn where we had stopped, some four miles from the valley. The keeper of the shop and inn said he always trusted them. They were "good pay." "Give them their time and they'll always pay, and if they die

their relations will pay the last cent." Some of them he would "trust any time as high as twenty dollars." When I asked him how they earned their money, he seemed to have no very distinct idea. Some of them had a little stock; they might now and then sell a horse or a cow, he said; they hired as laborers whenever they could get a chance, working at sheep-shearing in the spring and autumn, and at grape-picking in the vintage season. A few of them had a little wheat to sell; sometimes they paid him in wheat. There were not nearly so many of them, however, as there had been when he first opened his shop; not half so many, he thought. Where had they gone? He shrugged his shoulders. "Who knows?" he said.

The most wretched of all the Mission Indians now, however, are not these who have been thus driven into hill fastnesses and waterless valleys to wrest a living where white men would starve. There is in their fate the climax of misery, but not of degradation. The latter cannot be reached in the wilderness. It takes the neighborhood of the white man to accomplish it. On the outskirts of the town of San Diego are to be seen, here and there, huddled groups of what, at a distance, might be taken for piles of refuse and brush, old blankets, old patches of sail-cloth, old calico, dead pine boughs, and sticks all heaped together in shapeless mounds; hollow, one perceives on coming nearer them, and high enough for human beings to creep under. These are the homes of Indians. I have seen the poorest huts of the most poverty-stricken wilds in Italy, Bavaria, Norway, and New Mexico, but never have I seen anything, in shape of shelter for human creatures, so loathsome as the kennels in which some of the San Diego Indians are living. Most of these Indians are miserable worthless beggars, drunkards of course, and worse. Even for its own sake, it would seem that the town would devise some scheme of help and redemption for such outcasts. There is a school in San Diego for the Indian children; it is supported in part by the Government, in part by charity; but work must be practically thrown away on children that are to spend eighteen hours out of the twenty-four surrounded by such filth and vice.

Coming from the study of the records of the old mission times, with the picture fresh and vivid of the tranquil industry and comfort of the Indians' lives in the mission establishments, one gazes with double grief on such a spectacle as this. Some of these Indian hovels are within a short distance of the beach where the friars first landed, in 1769, and began their work. No doubt, Father

Junipero and Father Crespi, arm in arm, in ardent converse, full of glowing anticipation of the grand future results of their labors, walked again and again, up and down, on the very spot where these miserable wretches are living to-day. One cannot fancy Father Junipero's fiery soul, to whatever far sphere it may have been translated, looking down on this ruin without pangs of indignation.

There are still left in the mountain ranges of South California a few Indian villages which will probably, for some time to come, preserve their independent existence. Some of them number as many as two or three hundred inhabitants. Each has its chief, or, as he is now called, "captain." They have their own system of government of the villages; it is autocratic, but in the main it works well. In one of these villages, that of the Cahuillas, situated in the San Jacinto range, is a school whose teacher is paid by the United States Government. She is a widow with one little daughter. She has built for herself a room adjoining the school-house. In this she lives, alone with her child, in the heart of the Indian village; there is not a white person within ten miles. She says that the village is as well-ordered, quiet, and peaceable as it is possible for a village to be, and she feels far safer, surrounded by these three hundred Cahuillas, than she would feel in most of the California towns. The Cahuillas (pronounced Kaweeyahs) were one of the fiercest and most powerful of the tribes. The name signifies "master," or "powerful nation." A great number of the neophytes of the San Gabriel Mission were from this tribe; but a large proportion of them were never attached to any mission.

Their last great chief, Juan Antonio, died twenty years ago. At the time of the Mexican war, he received the title of General from General Kearny, and never afterward appeared in the villages of the whites without some fragmentary attempts at military uniform. He must have been a grand character, with all his barbarism. He ruled his band like an emperor, and never rode abroad without an escort of from twenty to thirty men. When he stopped, one of his Indians ran forward, bent down, took off his spurs, then, kneeling on all-fours, made of his back a stool, on which Juan stepped in dismounting and mounting. In 1850, an Indian of this tribe, having murdered another Indian, was taken prisoner by the civil authorities, and carried to Jurupa to be tried. Before the proceedings had begun, Juan, with a big following of armed Indians, dashed up to the court-house, strode in alone, and demanded that the prisoner be surrendered to him.

"I come not here as a child," he said. "I wish to punish my people my own way. If they deserve hanging, I will hang them. If a white man deserves hanging, let the white man hang him. I am done."

The prisoner was given up. The Indians strapped him on a horse, and rode back to their village, where, in an open grave, the body of the murdered man had been laid. Into this grave, on the top of the corpse of his victim, Juan Antonio, with his own hands, flung the murderer alive, and ordered the grave instantly filled up with earth.

There are said to have been other instances of his dealings with offenders nearly as summary and severe as this. He is described as looking like an old African lion, shaggy and fierce; but he was always cordial and affectionate in his relations with the whites. He died in 1863, of small-pox, in a terrible epidemic which carried off thousands of Indians.

This Cahuilla village is in a small valley, high up in the San Jacinto range. The Indians are very poor, but they are industrious and hard-working. The men raise stock, and go out in bands as sheep-shearers and harvesters. The women make baskets, lace, and from the fiber of the yucca plant, beautiful and durable mats, called "cocas," which are much sought after by California ranchmen as saddle-mats. The yucca fibers are soaked and beaten like flax; some are dyed brown, some bleached white, and the two woven together in a great variety of patterns.

In the San Jacinto valley, some thirty miles south of these Cahuillas, is another Indian village called Saboba. These Indians have occupied and cultivated this ground since the days of the missions. They have good adobe houses, many acres of wheat-fields, little peach and apricot orchards, irrigating ditches, and some fences. In one of the houses, I found a neatly laid wooden floor, a sewing-machine, and the walls covered with pictures cut from illustrated newspapers which had been given to them by the school teacher. There is a Government school here, numbering from twenty to thirty; the children read as well as average white children of their age, and in manners and in apparent interest in their studies, were far above the average of children in the public schools.

One of the colony schemes, so common now in California, has been formed for the opening up and settling of the San Jacinto valley. This Indian village will be in the colony's way. In fact, the colony must have its lands and its water. It is only a question of a very little time, the driving out of these Saboba families as the Temeculas

and San Pasquales were driven — by force, just as truly as if at the point of the bayonet.

In one of the beautiful canyons opening on this valley is the home of Victoriano, an aged chief of the band. He is living with his daughter and grandchildren, in a comfortable adobe house at the head of the canyon. The vineyard and peach-orchard, which his father planted there, are in good bearing. His grandson, Jesus, a young man twenty years old, in the summer of 1881 plowed up and planted twenty acres of wheat. The boy also studied so faithfully in school that year — his first year at school — that he learned to read well in the "Fourth Reader"; this, in spite of his being absent six weeks in both spring and autumn with the sheep-shearing band. A letter of his, written at my request to the Secretary of the Interior, in behalf of his people, is touching in its simple dignity.

SAN JACINTO, CAL., May 29, 1882.

MR. TELLER.

DEAR SIR: At the request of my friends, I write you in regard to the land of my people.

More than one hundred years ago, my great grandfather, who was chief of his tribe, settled with his people in the San Jacinto valley. The people have always been peaceful, never caring for war, and have welcomed Americans into the valley.

Some years ago a grant of land was given to the Estudillos by the Mexican Government. The first survey did not take in any of the land claimed by the Indians; but four years ago a new survey was made taking in all the little farms, the stream of water, and the village. Upon this survey the U. S. Government gave a patent. It seems hard for us to be driven from our homes that we love as much as other people do theirs, and this danger is at our doors now, for the grant is being divided and the village and land will be assigned to some of the present owners of the grant.

And now, dear sir, after this statement of facts, I, for my people (I ask nothing for myself), appeal to you for help.

Cannot you find some way to right this great wrong done to a quiet and industrious people?

Hoping that we may have justice done us, I am

Respectfully yours,

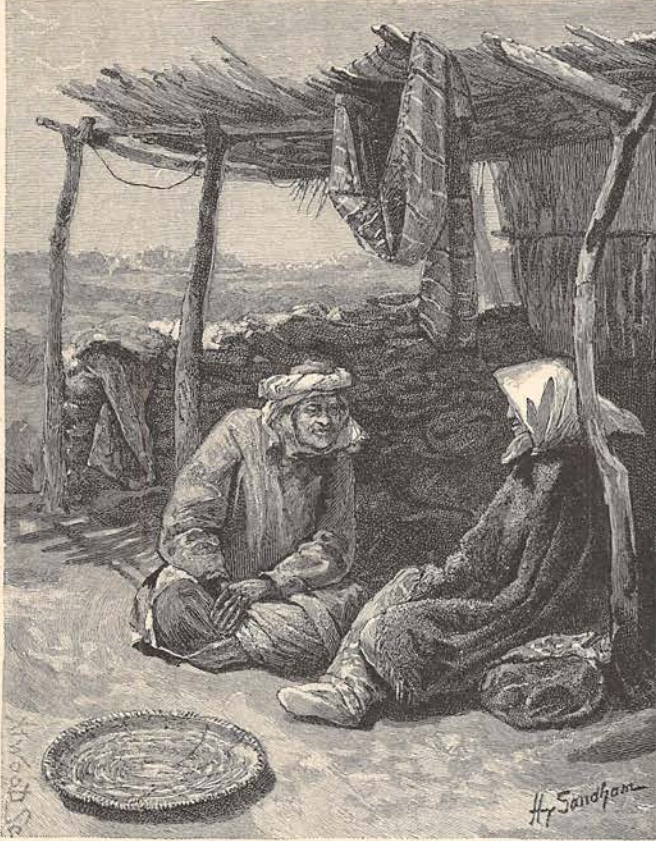
JOSÉ JESUS CASTILLO.

He was at first unwilling to write it, fearing he should be supposed to be begging for himself, rather than for his people. His father was a Mexican, and he has hoped that on that account their family would be exempt from the fate of the village when the colony comes into the valley. But it is not probable that, in a country where water is gold, a stream of water, such as runs by Victoriano's door, will be left long in the possession of any Indian family, whatever may be its relations to rich Mexican proprietors in the neighborhood. Jesus's mother is a tall, superbly formed woman, with a clear skin; hazel nut-brown eyes that thrill one with their limpid brightness; a nose straight and strong, and a mouth like an Egyptian priestess.

She is past forty, but she is strikingly handsome still, and one does not wonder at hearing the tragedy of her early youth; when, for years, she believed herself the wife of Jesus's father, lived in his house as a wife,

and the San Pasqual bands were ejected, and with far more show of legal right.

In the vicinity of the San Juan Capistrano Mission are living a few families of Indians, some of them the former neophytes of the



LAURA, SAID TO BE 102 YEARS OF AGE. BENJAMINA, 117 YEARS.

worked as a wife, and bore him his children. Her heart broke when she was sent adrift, a sadder than Hagar, with her half-disowned offspring. Money and lands did not heal the wound. Her face is dark with the sting of it to-day. When I asked her to sell me the lace-trimmed pillow-case and sheet from her bed, her cheeks flushed at first, and she looked away haughtily before replying. But, after a moment, she consented. They needed the money. She knows well that days of trouble are in store for them.

Since the writing of this paper, news has come that the long-expected blow has fallen on this Indian village. The colony scheme has been completed; the valley has been divided up; the land on which the village of Saboba stands is now the property of a San Bernardino merchant. Any day he chooses, he can eject these Indians as the Temecula

mission. An old woman there, named Carmen, is a splendid specimen of the best longevity which her race and the California air can produce. We found her in bed, where she spends most of her time, — not lying, but sitting cross-legged, looking brisk and energetic, and always busy making lace. Nobody makes finer lace than hers. Yet she laughed when we asked if she could see to do such fine work without spectacles.

"Where could I get spectacles?" she said, her eyes twinkling. Then she stretched out her hand for the spectacles of our old Mexican friend who had asked her this question for us; took them, turned them over curiously, tried to look through them, shook her head and handed them back to him with a shrug and a smile. She was twenty years older than he, but her strong young eyes could not see through his glasses. He recol-

lected her well, fifty years before, an active, handsome woman, taking care of the sacristy, washing the priests' laces, mending vestments, and filling various offices of trust in the mission. A sailor from a French vessel lying in the harbor wished to marry her; but the friars would not give their consent, because the man was a drunkard and dishonest. Carmen was well disposed to him, and much flattered by his love-making. He used to write letters to her, which she brought to this Mexican boy to read. It was a droll sight to see her face, as he, now white-haired, and looking fully as old as she, reminded her of that time and of those letters, tapping her jocosely on her cheek, and saying some things I am sure he did not quite literally translate to us. She fairly colored, buried her face in her hands for a second, then laughed till she shook, and answered in voluble Spanish, of which also I suspect we did not get a full translation. She was the happiest Indian we saw; indeed, the only one who seemed really gay of heart or even content.

A few rods from the old mission church of San Gabriel, in a hut made of bundles of the tule reeds lashed to sycamore poles, as the San Gabriel Indians made them a hundred years ago, live two old Indian women, Laura and Benjamina. Laura is one hundred and two years old, Benjamina one hundred and seventeen. The record of their baptisms is still to be seen in the church books; so there can be no dispute as to their age. It seems not at all incredible, however. If I had been told that Benjamina was a three-thousand-year-old Nile mummy, resuscitated by some mysterious process, I should not have demurred much at the tale. The first time I saw them, the two were crouching over a fire on the ground, under a sort of booth porch, in front of their hovel. Laura was making a feint of grinding acorn meal in a stone bowl; Benjamina was raking the ashes, with her claw-like old fingers, for hot coals to start the fire afresh; her skin was like an elephant's, shriveled, black, hanging in folds and welts on her neck and breast and bony arms; it was not like anything human; her shrunken eyes, bright as beads, peered out from under thickets of coarse grizzled gray hair. Laura wore a white cloth band around her head, tied on with a strip of scarlet flannel; above that, a tattered black shawl, which gave her the look of an aged imp. Old baskets, old pots, old pans, old stone mortars and pestles, broken tiles and bricks, rags, straw, boxes, legless chairs,—in short, all conceivable rubbish,—were strewn about or piled up in the place, making the weirdest of backgrounds for the aged crones' figures. In-



DOVE-COTE, RINCON MISSION.

side the hut were two bedsteads and a few boxes, baskets, and nets; and drying grapes and peppers hung on the walls. A few feet away was another hut, only a trifle better than this; four generations were living in the two. Benjamina's step-daughter, aged eighty, was a fine creature. With a white band straight around her forehead close to the eyebrows and a gay plaid handkerchief thrown on above it, falling squarely each side of her face, she looked like an old Bedouin sheik.

Our Mexican friend remembered Laura as she was fifty years ago. She was then, even at fifty-two, celebrated as one of the swiftest runners and best ball-players in all the San Gabriel games. She was a singer, too, in the choir. Coaxing her up on her feet, patting her shoulders, entreating and caressing her as one

would a child, he succeeded in persuading her to chant for us the Lord's Prayer and part of the litanies, as she had been wont to do it in the old days. It was a grotesque and incredible sight. The more she stirred and sang and lifted her arms, the less alive she looked. We asked the step-daughter if they were happy and wished to live. Laughing, she repeated the question to them. "Oh, yes, we wish to live forever," they replied. They were greatly terrified, the daughter said, when the railway cars first ran through San Gabriel. They thought it was the devil bringing fire to burn up the world. Their chief's solace is tobacco. To beg it, Benjamina will creep about in the village by the hour, bent double over her staff, tottering at every step. They sit for the most part silent, motionless, on the ground; their knees drawn up, their hands clasped over them, their heads sunk on their breasts. In my drives in the San Gabriel valley, I often saw them sitting thus; as if they were dead. The sight had an indescribable fascination. It seemed that to be able to penetrate into the recesses of their thoughts would be to lay hold upon secrets as old as the earth.

One of the most beautiful appanages of the San Luis Rey Mission, in the time of its prosperity, was the Pala valley. It lies about twenty-five miles east of San Luis, among broken spurs of the coast range, watered by the San Luis River and also by its own little stream, the Pala Creek. It was always a favorite home of the Indians; and at the time of the secularization, over a thousand of them used to gather at the weekly mass in its chapel. Now, on the occasional visits of the San Juan Capistrano priest, to hold service there, the dilapidated little church is not half filled, and the numbers are growing smaller each year. The buildings are all in decay; the stone steps leading to the belfry have crumbled; the walls of the little grave-yard are broken in many places, the paling and the graves are thrown down. On the day we were there, a memorial service for the dead was going on in the chapel: a great square altar was draped with black, decorated with silver lace and ghastly funereal emblems; candles were burning; a row of kneeling black-shawled women were holding lighted candles in their hands; two old Indians were chanting a Latin mass from a tattered missal bound in rawhide; the whole place was full of chilly gloom, in sharp contrast to the bright valley outside, with its sunlight and silence. This mass was for the soul of an old Indian woman named Margarita, sister of Manuelito, a somewhat famous chief of several bands of the San Luiseños. Her home was at the Potrero, a mountain meadow, or pasture, as

the word signifies, about ten miles from Pala, high up the mountain-side, and reached by an almost impassable road. This farm, or "saeter" it would be called in Norway, was given to Margarita by the friars, and by some exceptional good fortune she had a title, which, it is said, can be maintained by her heirs. In 1871, in a revolt of some of Manuelito's bands, Margarita was hung up by her wrists till she was near dying, but was cut down at the last minute and saved.

One of her daughters speaks a little English, and finding that we had visited Pala solely on account of our interest in the Indians, she asked us to come up to the Potrero and pass the night. She said timidly that they had plenty of beds, and would do all that they knew how to do to make us comfortable. One might be in many a dear-priced hotel less comfortably lodged and served than we were by these hospitable Indians in their mud house, floored with earth. In my bedroom were three beds, all neatly made, with lace-trimmed sheets and pillow-cases and patchwork coverlids. One small square window, with a wooden shutter was the only aperture for air, and there was no furniture except one chair and a half-dozen trunks. The Indians, like the Norwegian peasants, keep their clothes and various properties all neatly packed away in boxes or trunks. As I fell asleep, I wondered if in the morning I should see Indian heads on the pillows opposite me; the whole place was swarming with men, women, and babies, and it seemed impossible for them to spare so many beds; but, no, when I waked, there were the beds still undisturbed; a soft-eyed Indian girl was on her knees rummaging in one of the trunks; seeing me awake, she murmured a few words in Indian, which conveyed her apology as well as if I had understood them. From the very bottom of the trunk she drew out a gilt-edged china mug, darted out of the room, and came back bringing it filled with fresh water. As she set it in the chair, in which she had already put a tin pan of water and a clean coarse towel, she smiled, and made a sign that it was for my teeth. There was a thoughtfulness and delicacy in the attention which lifted it far beyond the level of its literal value. The gilt-edged mug was her most precious possession; and, in remembering water for the teeth, she had provided me with the last superfluity in the way of white man's comfort of which she could think.

The food which they gave us was a surprise; it was far better than we had found the night before in the house of an Austrian colonel's son, at Pala. Chicken, deliciously



MASS FOR THE DEAD, PALA.

cooked, with rice and chile; soda-biscuits delicately made; good milk and butter, all laid in orderly fashion, with a clean tablecloth, and clean, white stone china. When I said to our hostess that I regretted very much that they had given up their beds in my room, that they ought not to have done it, she answered me with a wave of her hand that "it was nothing; they hoped I had slept well; that they had plenty of other beds." The hospitable lie did not deceive me, for by examination I had convinced myself that the greater part of the family must have slept on the bare earth in the kitchen. They would not have taken pay for our lodging, except that they had just been forced to give so much for the mass for Margarita's soul, and it had been hard for them to raise the money. Twelve dollars the priest had charged for the mass; and in addition they had to pay for the candles, silver lace, black cloth, etc., nearly as much more. They had earnestly desired to have the mass said at the Potrero, but the priest would not come up there for less than twenty dollars, and that, Antonia said, with a sigh, they could not possibly pay. We left at six o'clock in the morning; Margarita's husband, the "capitan," riding off with us to see us safe on our way. When we had passed the worst gullies and bowlders, he whirled his horse, lifted his ragged old sombrero with the grace of a cavalier, smiled, wished us good-day and good luck, and was out of sight in a second, his little wild pony galloping up

the rough trail as if it were as smooth as a race-course.

Between the Potrero and Pala are two Indian villages, the Rincon and Pauma. The Rincon is at the head of the valley, snuggled up against the mountains, as its name signifies, in a "corner." Here were fences, irrigating ditches, fields of barley, wheat, hay, and peas; a little herd of horses and cows grazing, and several flocks of sheep. The men were all away sheep-shearing; the women were at work in the fields, some hoeing, some clearing out the irrigating ditches, and all the old women plaiting baskets. These Rincon Indians, we were told, had refused a school offered them by the Government; they said they would accept nothing at the hands of the Government until it gave them a title to their lands.

The most picturesque of all the Mission Indians' hiding-places which we saw was that on the Carmel River, a few miles from the San Carlos Mission. Except by help of a guide it cannot be found. A faint trail turning off from the road in the river-bottom leads down to the river's edge. You follow it into the river and across, supposing it a ford. On the opposite bank there is no trail, no sign of one. Whether it is that the Indians purposely always go ashore at different points of the bank, so as to leave no trail; or whether they so seldom go out, except on foot, that the trail has faded away, I do not know. But certainly, if we had had no guide, we



HOLY WATER FONT, PALA.

should have turned back, sure we were wrong. A few rods up from the river-bank, a stealthy narrow foot-path appeared; through willow copses, sunk in meadow grasses, across shingly bits of alder-walled beach it creeps, till it comes out in a lovely spot,—half basin, half rocky knoll,—where, tucked away in nooks and hollows are the little Indian houses, eight or ten of them, some of adobe, some of the tule reeds; small patches of corn, barley, potatoes, and hay; and each little front yard fenced in by palings, with roses, sweet-peas, poppies, and mignonette growing inside. In the first house we reached, a woman was living alone. She was so alarmed at the sight of us that she shook. There could not be a more pitiful comment on the state of perpetual distrust and alarm in which the poor creatures live, than this woman's face and behavior. We tried in vain to re-assure her; we bought all the lace she had to sell, chatted with her about it, and

asked her to show us how it was made. Even then she was so terrified, that although she willingly took down her lace frame to sew a few stitches, for us to see, her hands still trembled. In another house, we found an old woman evidently past eighty, without glasses, working button-holes in fine thread. Her daughter-in-law,—a beautiful half-breed, with a still more beautiful baby in her arms,—asked the old woman, for us, how old she was. She laughed merrily at the silly question. "She never thought about it," she said; "it was written down once in a book at the Mission, but the book was lost."

There was not a man in the village. They were all away at work, farming or fishing. This little handful of people are living on land to which they have no shadow of title, and from which they may be driven any day,—these Carmel Mission lands having been rented out, by their present owner, in great dairy

farms. The parish priest of Monterey told me much of the pitiable condition of these remnants of the San Carlos Indians. He can do little or nothing for them, though their condition makes his heart ache daily. In that half foreign English, which is always so much more eloquent a language than the English-speaking peoples use, he said: "They have their homes there only by the patience of the thief. It may be that the patience do not last to-morrow." The phrase is worth preserving: it embodies so much history—history of two races.

In Mr. Wilson's report are many eloquent and strong paragraphs, bearing on the question of the Indians' right to the lands they had under cultivation at the time of the secularization. He says:

"It is not natural rights I speak of, nor merely possessory rights, but rights acquired and contracts made—acquired and made when the laws of the Indies had force here, and never assailed by any laws or executive acts since, till 1834 and 1846; and impregnable to these. * * * No past maladministration of laws can be suffered to destroy their true intent, while the victims of the maladministration live to complain, and the rewards of wrong have not been consumed."

Of Mr. Wilson's report in 1852, of Mr. Ames's report in 1873, and of the various other reports called for by the Government from time to time, nothing came, except the occasional setting off of reservations by executive orders, which, if the lands reserved were worth anything, were speedily revoked at the

bidding of California politicians. There are still some reservations left, chiefly of desert and mountainous lands, which nobody wants, and on which the Indians could not live.

The last report made to the Indian Bureau by their present agent closes in the following words:

"The necessity of providing suitable lands for them in the form of one or more reservations has been pressed on the attention of the Department in my former reports; and I now, for the third and perhaps the last time, emphasize that necessity by saying that whether Government will immediately heed the pleas that have been made in behalf of these people or not, it must sooner or later deal with this question in a practical way or else see a population of over three thousand Indians become homeless wanderers in a desert region."

I have shown a few glimpses of the homes, of the industry, the patience, the long-suffering of the people who are in this immediate danger of being driven out from their last foot-holds of refuge, "homeless wanderers in a desert."

If the United States Government does not take steps to avert this danger, to give them lands and protect them in their rights, the chapter of the history of the Mission Indians will be the blackest one in the black record of our dealings with the Indian race.

It must be done speedily if at all, for there is only a small remnant left to be saved. These are in their present homes "only on the patience of the thief, and it may be that the patience do not last to-morrow."

H. H.

MUSIC IN NATURE.

FAR, far away, in fields of waving gold,
I hear the tassels' rustling symphonies,
While myriad insect orchestras unfold
Their rasping medleys in the apple-trees.

In seas of creamy clover, white and pink,
Hum tipping bees, all drowsy with perfume;
And, in the orchard, one wild bobolink
Breaks the repose of twilight's dreamy gloom.

The wind wakes solos in the somber pine,
Upon the hill-side desolate and lone;
And, in the wood, through labyrinths of vine,
Is heard the brooklet's lispings monotone—

Which mossy caverns, echoing, repeat;
While o'er my soul, in tender changes, flows—
Murmurous, melodious, and strangely sweet—
The subtle music no musician knows.

R. K. Munkittrick.