

I should add, however, that the murderer of Solomon Davis was discovered many years afterward in the shape of a peddler, who betrayed himself in a drunken frolic, and who was convicted and hanged, to the satisfaction of the good people of the county.

SOLDIERING IN OREGON.

"SERGEANT JONES, Third Regiment U. S. Artillery," sends us a huge bundle of manuscript, with sundry rough sketches, from the "Camp at the Mouth of Rogue River, Oregon." It is a portion of his daily journal, written in camp on the top of a bread-box instead of a table; the sketches, which are any thing but artistic productions, having been made with the stump of a pencil about an inch and a quarter long, as the Sergeant tells us.

These rough jottings give us an idea of the life of our soldiers in Oregon, more accurate, probably, than we could gain from more pretending sources; and we must introduce the Sergeant to our readers.

"Uncle Sam makes a few soldiers go a great ways," he writes, in a desponding mood. This is true in more senses than one. Company B. had just returned to California from a scout up the Columbia River, a thousand miles and more to the north, where they had tramped over snowy mountains and forded icy rivers; and now, before they had done limping, orders came that they must set off for the Gila River, almost a thousand miles to the south, "across a desert plain where it is so hot that one can make the mercury in the thermometer *fall* by breathing upon the bulb."

Uncle Sam made these soldiers, at all events, "go a great way."

Just then Indian hostilities broke out on Rogue River, and Company B., with several other companies, among which was the "Third Artillery," were ordered to proceed thither at once. "That dreadful Rogue River country," exclaims the Sergeant, "away up in Oregon, among bleak forests and wild mountains and wily savages. I wish we had gone to the Gila instead."

In due time the troops, some hundreds in number, were packed away, as thickly as books on a library shelf, on board a little steamer, which was to land detachments of them at various posts from San Francisco to Puget's Sound. The Sergeant jots down a wish that it may not rain for a few days, as most of the men must sleep on deck.

The Third Artillery is dropped at Crescent City, a half-moon of shanties drawn up on the shore, with the eternal surf of the broad Pacific beating forever in front, and dense forests darkling in the rear. Six months before it had been a busy place. Long trains of mules set out thence for the diggings, some ten or twelve days' journey among the mountains. Then arose the quarrels with the Indians. Smith's Valley, the home of a coast tribe, was "taken up" by the settlers, who stole the squaws and

ordered the men to betake themselves forthwith to other quarters. But there was no place to which the poor fellows could go. The Coast Indians are fish-eaters, and can not get a living by hunting among the mountains; besides, the mountain Indians kill them wherever they catch them. If they were to be killed, it might as well be in one place as another. So they took to threatening the whites, and slaughtering their cattle. The settlers retaliated by killing the greater portion of the tribe; and the miserable survivors came in and surrendered themselves to the soldiers, in order to save their lives—for a while at least. In the mean time the business of mining was ruined, the prosperity of Crescent City was destroyed, and the traders migrated to other quarters.

The Indians, naked and without weapons, were encamped on a rock near the city, where they received rations from the Government. The soldiers remained at Crescent City for a few days, in order to drill the fresh recruits. One day, while practicing with the howitzer, a shell burst in front of the Indian camp, and a fragment fell plump among a group of the savages, who were squatted on the ground, engaged in their gambling game, played with bits of stick. They thought that their last hour had come. It was affecting to see how hopelessly they crowded around the officer who had them in charge, crying, "We thought you told us you wouldn't kill us." They could hardly be persuaded that they were not to be massacred on the spot.

A detachment of the troops were soon on their march for Rogue River. A portion of the way lay through a forest of huge red-wood trees. "No one," says the Sergeant, "who has not seen them can form any idea of these wonderful forests. The ground is covered with great dripping green ferns upon which no sun has ever shone. Gray, mouldering columns fifty, sixty, seventy feet in circumference, tower up, choking the space above and around. The eye follows these columns for hundreds of feet aloft. Then they divide into great branches, and these again into hundreds and thousands of lesser limbs, upon the extremities of which grow millions of minute needle-like leaves—the only green thing in all the structure. I measured some of these trunks, and found them five-and-twenty feet in diameter, twelve feet above the ground. I counted the rings in a small tree, four feet in diameter, and found about one hundred and eighty; so that these giants must have been growing more than a thousand years."

In default of words, the Sergeant tries a sketch of one of these trees. The huge trunk occupies the whole breadth of the sheet of paper, and by it, as a sort of measure, is a horseman, depicted on as small a scale as his blunt pencil will permit. "It won't do," he writes under the picture, by way of note—"the tree doesn't look big enough." The trail through this forest was a bed of soft mud,

winding around the trees, through which the men plodded wearily, each loaded with rations for three days.

At length they came to a river which must be forded. When the thick woolen trowsers of the soldiers become saturated with water, they are so heavy as to interfere with the marching. So the Captain ordered every man to strip off his lower garments, keeping his coat on. Clothing, rations, and ammunition were then hoisted upon their shoulders to be out of the way of the water, which was waist-deep, running with great velocity, and as cold as ice. The Captain and another officer stationed themselves in the deepest part, so as to help any one who might be swept from his feet. In plunged the bare-legged troops, and with infinite plashing and oh-oh-ing buffeted their way across. A couple of the "little uns" lost their footing, and disappeared for a moment under the water; but were fished up by the officers. Only four men had their ammunition wet.

After a while they struck the coast, and marched along it, over cheerless bluffs and naked sand-hills. Near a small creek they found a spot where settlers had "located." The burnt rafters of the huts, the pigs and poultry running wild, and a new-made grave, told the story of the little settlement, and of its destruction by the savages. At another place, two graves were pointed out near a picket. Here a couple of squaws were buried. They had approached the post to talk with the whites, who, thinking they might be spies, had shot them on the spot. There is a fearful account in barbarity open between the settlers and the savages. Who can tell on which side the balance lies?

On the banks of the River Chetkoe the soldiers found the ruins of a hut. It had belonged to an adventurer who had established a ferry across the river. The Indians ferried people across at a lower price than he demanded. He maltreated them, and hence arose the troubles in this region. Here the troops happened to find a *caché* of potatoes and cabbages that had belonged to the late ferryman. "This was a God-send to us poor soldiers," says the Sergeant, "for Uncle Sam doesn't furnish them with any thing of the sort better than rice and tough old beans. Every man was busy at the *caché* in a moment, eager to lay in a stock of 'praties' for supper. The ferryman's fence, which made capital fuel, suffered some—and so did we, for it began to rain, and kept it up all night."

Hereabouts an express met them, urging the Colonel to hurry on to a point twenty-five miles distant, where fighting was going on. Twenty-five volunteers had fortified themselves on a sand-bank, where they were surrounded by the Indians. Off went the soldiers, up hills and down precipices. One of the mules slipped going up a steep ascent, and in his struggles to regain his feet, kicked a nugget of pure gold out of the hill-side. It was picked up by the

man who happened to be next behind the long-eared quadruped. It weighed two and a half ounces.

They kept a sharp look-out for Indians—a little too sharp, as one fellow found to his cost. He saw something—or thought he did—and gave the alarm—"Indians!"

"Charge—double quick!" shouted the Colonel, and the soldiers dashed into the woods. But not an Indian was there, much to the wrath of the officer.

"Where's the man that cried Indians?" he exclaimed. "Send him here. So you are the fellow that saw Indians when there were none! How dare you give a false alarm? I'll give you Indians next time you play such a trick!—Move on!"

When they reached the volunteers, they found that they had had an unpleasant time of it. They had been shut up in a sort of pen, only two or three logs high, and these were stuck full of arrows and bullets. One man lay dead inside. The Indians had stolen all their horses, and kept up a constant firing from behind a row of sand-hills, fifty yards off. One cunning fellow annoyed them much. He would lift his hat over the ridge, and when he had drawn the fire of the whites, would spring up and discharge his piece. At last his trick was found out; one of the volunteers reserved his fire, while the others blazed away as usual at the hat. No sooner did the top of the Indian's head appear than a bullet from the unerring rifle "took the top of it clean off; next mornin' we saw the blood and har on the spot," said one of the volunteers. They thought they had picked off six or eight of the besiegers.

As they approached Rogue River, they now and then got a shot at a red-skin. At the mouth of the river they came upon the ruins of the huts and flumes which the miners had deserted. They had been attacked by surprise a month before, and those who had escaped crossed the river and built a mud fort, where they had held out against the savages. All around lay the proofs of attack: mangled and putrefying bodies, half devoured by crows and gulls. Some had been tied fast, and their throats had been cut; the heads of others had been crushed in by blows from hatchets; the bodies of others were riddled with bullets.

As the soldiers approached the deserted huts, they saw a few Indians running out, and making off for the woods, after having set fire to the buildings. They were about to pitch their camp, when the fog lifted from the river, and they saw a body of whites on the opposite bank. One of these swam across on a plank, and told the Colonel that it would be dangerous to encamp there, for the adjacent woods were full of Indians, who would be able to pick them off at pleasure. So they moved down to the beach and encamped on the bare shore.

The Sergeant happened to be peering at the distant woods through a spy-glass, when he caught a glimpse of a couple of dark visages,

half a mile off, rising from the bushes, and evidently on the look-out for something in the neighborhood of the camp. They remained as immovable as though cast in bronze, little dreaming that the whites had a "medicine" which brought them in full view. What they were looking at was soon apparent. There was an old miners' ditch running down from the hills to the neighborhood of the camp. This made a capital covered way, and a gang of the Indians had crept down in the hope of picking off a straggler or two, and their friends up in the bush were watching the execution of this plan. One of the whites had strayed off toward the ditch, when three or four simultaneous shots came near finishing him.

"Indians! Indians! Turn out, double quick time!" was the cry, and a party started for the ditch.

"Almost all our men were raw recruits," says the Sergeant, who, being a veteran himself, feels no little contempt for recruits and volunteers; "and when the bullets began to whistle about our head they would *dodge*. But dodging or no dodging, the Captain *cussed* us forward, and we ran at full speed for the ditch. But the Indians ran faster than we could, and got off."

"How the ugly, naked red divils run," said a Hibernian soldier to his comrade, as they made their way back to camp.

"An' did ye see that old sinner jump up as high as ever he could, an' make faces at us?"

"Yes, an' I got a pop at him, an' give him something to jump up for."

Night fell, and the only sound was the hollow beating of the surf upon the shore. The sentinels lay crouched under the bushes or in shallow pits dug in the sand. The mist fell coldly, and the Sergeant had given his blanket an extra fold, and was half thinking half dreaming of a bright fireside and loving faces far away—for peaceful visions will now and then flit before the memory and fancy of the sternest old veteran—when a shot, and another, and another, was heard from the direction of the line of sentries. In a moment one man and then another staggered forward and fell to the ground.

All rushed to arms, expecting an attack; but none came. The fallen men were brought in. The first proved to be the corporal of the guard. He had been making the round of the sentries, one of whom—a raw recruit, as the Sergeant is careful to mention—mistaking him for an Indian, had fired upon him, and given a mortal wound. The other fallen man was one of the sentinels, who had rushed toward the camp as soon as he heard the firing, and had tumbled down in sheer affright.

"So much," comments Sergeant Jones, "for sending recruits fresh from an emigrant ship, to fight Indians in the woods. This is the third corporal of the guard whom I have known shot by green sentinels."

The next day, after burying the corporal, the soldiers managed to rig up an old flat-boat, and

crossed the river to the mud fort where the settlers had taken refuge.

"A queer place it was, and queer people they were in it," says the Sergeant, who was among the first to enter. The children were playing outside, glad of a chance to get out after their month's confinement. There were rough buckskin-clad miners and mule-drivers, thick-lipped flabby squaws, delicate-looking American women, and dirty, noisy children, and a general mixture of all the mongrel and nondescript races of the mines, crowded together in the little fort.

Entering the best looking cabin, he found it full almost to suffocation. The people had evidently got accustomed to close quarters. Some were smoking, some sleeping; one was frying pork over the fire. A pretty young woman in one corner was putting the finishing touches to her toilet. The white women, who had kept the squaws at a respectable distance, in a separate hut, were full of what they had suffered, and eager to tell all the news. There had been a succession of fighting and parleying. At one time a party of fourteen, who had gone out to dig potatoes, fell into an ambush, and had lost six of their number. A boat from Port Orford, which had attempted to bring provisions to the fort, had swamped in the surf, and six of the crew were drowned. Among the prisoners who had been taken by the Indians, was a Mrs. Geysel and her three daughters—her husband and three sons were killed. They had succeeded in inducing the Indians to give up Mrs. Geysel and her children, though they were loth to part with the eldest, as one of the chiefs wished to keep her as his wife.

Mrs. Geysel was there, a stout buxom woman, with a strong German accent and pronunciation. She and the others—three or four talking at a time—commenced telling what had happened.

"Dey give us blenty to eat, and blenty of hard work to do," said Mrs. G. "Dey kills ever so many cattle—sometimes two, dree in von day."

"Yes, *our* cattle every one of 'em; and a nice time the rascals had of it, too," chimed in another.

"An' they did'n't want to let Mrs. Geysel go," said a third; "an' they would'n't a-let her darter there off any way, if it had'n't a-been for Charley Brown an' his squaw."

"Charley an' his squaw went right out among 'em; an' the chiefs came up an' shook hands with Charley."

"Yes, an' Charley's squaw had to go out more'n once," broke in another good dame.

"She's a real good squaw, she is," certified a tall raw-boned dame, "a sort of a she-General Jackson in looks"—so the Sergeant describes her—who had seen much of life in the diggings, and hated squaws in general most devoutly. "Yes, *she's* a real good squaw, if there ever was one; an' Miss Geysel would a-had to stay with the Indians if it had'n't a-been for her."

"They c'enamost had a fight about it; an'

old Josh—he's one of the chiefs—like to got killed 'cause he wanted to let her go, an' the others didn't."

"We had to give 'em ever so much for her—more'n twenty blankets, and lots o' provisions an' clothes."

"Yes, an' a'ter all, they would have that handsome head-dress."

"They would have that," said the pretty young woman, who had by this time arranged her attire to her satisfaction. "'Twas a beautiful head-dress, with ever so many feathers and ribbons. One of the chiefs took a likin' to it, and wanted to wear it himself."

So the poor women gossiped, as though they had not been for a month shut up, in peril of their lives, in a little mud fort, with hundreds of wild Indians prowling around eager to get a shot at them. There was an aristocracy here as well as elsewhere. The white women were awfully severe upon the five poor squaws who had come to the fort with their mining protectors, who were contemptuously styled "squaw-men."

The General Jackson-looking Amazon, who had dropped a word in favor of Charley Brown's squaw, was especially severe upon the poor Indian women; and took an early opportunity to tell the Sergeant that she hoped they "were a-goin' to kill all the squaws and copper-colored young ones." She was hugely disgusted when she was informed that no such measure was in contemplation; and in Lady Macbeth style offered to do the bloody work with her own hands, "if they dass'n't."

Before long a little schooner from Port Orford came down, and the Colonel proposed to send all the women and children up by her. The squaws were to be sent to their tribe, who had "come in," and all were to go on a "reservation." Then came a storm. The women wouldn't go in the schooner if the squaws went—the good-for-nothing hussies. The Colonel said the squaws should go at any rate; and if the white women did not choose to go with them, they might stay at the fort.

The "squaw-men" were also unwilling to give up their dark favorites, and to suffer them to go back to their tribe. Foremost among these was Charley Brown. "His squaw was a good one—every body said so; she was, besides, the mother of his child, and before she should go on the reserve, he'd marry her off-hand. If he wouldn't he'd be—" We omit the clincher which honest Charley put to his determination, trusting that the Recording Angel performed for his expletive the same kindly service which he did for Uncle Toby's oath. Charley meant what he said, and did actually marry the woman. We must let the Sergeant describe the wedding:

"The five squaws were brought down to the camp. Three of them were young, and not bad-looking, and had learned to dress in frocks. Two were old and ugly, with blue tattooing around their mouths. One of them—Charley's

squaw—had a child in her arms. These seemed sad at the prospect of being sent away; but the younger ones squatted down before the Colonel's tent, chattering and sewing, as though they didn't care whether they staid or went.

"Charley now made his appearance, accompanied by the guide, who happened also to be a member of the Oregon Legislature, and a justice of the peace. The pair held a short consultation with the Colonel; and then the woman was called forward, and there, on the banks of the Rogue River, by the shore of the great Pacific, with a circle of rough-looking miners standing around, the marriage ceremony was performed. Charley promised to have her, and her only, for his lawful wedded wife, and then translated the words of the ceremony for the benefit of his dusky tattooed bride. She grunted out some rough Indian gutturals in reply, and the knot was tied. There was no kissing the bride, and no wedding feast. Some of the by-standers were inclined to make light of the ceremony; but Charley, growling out an oath or two, dandled his baby, and looked defiance at the mockers and starers. I could not help thinking that his determination to cling to the poor brown woman for better or worse, while the prospect before them was all 'worse' and no 'better,' showed that there was some honest manhood in the rough fellow."

So says Sergeant Jones, and so say we.

After Charley's marriage, another hard-looking fellow stepped forward, looking terribly frightened, and was in like manner wedded to the other old woman. But the men to whom the three younger squaws pertained, declared, with more oaths than the occasion demanded, that they "wouldn't marry 'em any how."

But there was fighting as well as marrying to be done. One day the Colonel determined to send an expedition some ten or a dozen miles up the river, to destroy "Mackanootenay's Town." Some hard fighting was anticipated, and the party was a strong one.

"Climbing up these hills," says the Sergeant, "with blankets, overcoats, muskets, ammunition, and two days' rations strapped on our backs, made some of the new hands swear as well as sweat." In course of time they came within view of the Indian village, hid away in a quiet and peaceful nook. Steep hills and thick jungle shut it in on three sides, the fourth being covered by the river, sixty yards broad, running with a rapid current. Thirteen huts stood in a row near the river. They were not the slight lodges of the nomadic tribes of the prairie, but were excavations six or eight feet deep, and eighteen or twenty feet broad, lined with boards and skins, and covered with clap-boards and thatching. The coast Indians do not wander from their own valley, for there is no unoccupied room, and if a tribe does not confine its fishing to its own home, a fight is the consequence. A few horses were quietly grazing on the green; but the village was deserted by its human inhabitants, though the embers still

smouldering in some of the huts showed that their occupants had but just left. A band of the Indians were seen on the opposite side of the river, watching the proceedings of the soldiers. Their suspense was of short duration. Orders were given to shoot the horses, and set fire to the huts; and in a moment all were in flames, the light thatch blazing up like paper. The sight of their burning homes decided the course of the Indians, and they began to cross the river, some distance up-stream, and advanced toward the troops. Then ensued a fight, which we must permit the Sergeant to tell in his own way:

"Lieutenant D., face your company about, double quick, through the timber to the rear of the blankets! (We had left our packs behind when we rushed into the village.) 'Captain J., face your company to the left, double quick, Sir, for the timbered ridge. Advance-guard, forward!' shouted the Captain, making for the mound and ridge which covered the village. The Indians were pouring down upon us. From rock, tree, and mountain-spur rang their war-whoops and cracked their rifles. As we ran, the advance-guard, with which I was, met the guard who had been left behind with the packs. The Indians had come down upon them, and they didn't like to stay. We turned the fugitives back with us, and drove out the Indians who had taken possession of the mound. Lieutenant D. had reached the packs just in the nick of time to save them, drove off the Indians there, and helped us to 'give fits' to those who ran from the mound. Captain J. had a harder road to travel; he had to run two hundred and fifty yards up-hill, over bare ground, and the Indians got to his station before he did; but we helped him drive them out. Luckily these Coast Indians are bad shots, and though the balls flew about us, and cups, canteens, and clothes suffered some, we had but one man tumbled over, and he made no fuss.

"When we had driven the Indians from this ridge, there was another mound which they still held. We turned this, and attacked them in front; and then the red scoundrels—(see how I abuse them for defending their village!)—ran down to the river, jumped into their canoes, and paddled off. Our position commanded the crossing, and we made out to kill three as they were crossing, besides the five that they left on our side of the river. Very likely we killed some on the opposite side, for we fired into the groups over there. One old woman kept up a terrible screeching. The guides said it was because we had killed her baby.

"When all was over, we gathered up our packs, and commenced our march back to camp. Tired and hungry were we, for we had fought an hour and a half, after marching for six hours over the roughest road I ever saw—and I have seen some rough roads in my time.

"When the excitement of the fight was over, the men began to give out. One fellow fell behind, and the sergeant stopping to help him, re-

ceived a horrid wound from the woods. Broken-down man jumped up and ran for dear life. We had all to stop in the rain, and rest for a couple of hours. Then we mounted the wounded sergeant on a mule, with a man behind to hold him on. The poor fellow groaned in agony, and begged to be left behind to die. So fearful were his cries that the man with him on the mule grew nervous, and couldn't hold him on. Then we stopped in the dark and made a litter, and lugged the sergeant over the logs and through the bushes. His head soon got under the bar of the litter, and we had to stop again. The Captain then took the wounded man upon his mule, and so carried him, in spite of cries, entreaties, and fainting fits. Once going up a mountain the saddle slipped, and all came to the ground. It was a terrible night march—men every moment getting lost in the darkness. We made two and a half miles in five hours.

"Next morning we managed to get to our camp. The wounded are getting well; and soon we shall have another turn with the Indians. It has rained nearly all the time, and we are about as dirty and tired a set as ever dug on a canal.

"I can't help thinking," concludes the Sergeant, "that if a few adventurers will go so far ahead of all civilization, and scatter themselves through the labyrinths of these mountain fastnesses, where the elk, the grizzly bear, and the Indians have retired to make their last stand against gold-hunting, bear-shooting, and Indian-killing white men, that these said white men have no right to expect Government to send soldiers to war against such an awful country, and such well-wronged Indians. I wish Uncle Sam would end the war by putting all the gold-hunters on a reservation, and paying them roundly to stay there, leaving this God-forsaken country to the Indians. As for the economy of paying the gold-hunters to stay away, our one company costs the country 800 dollars a day. You may reckon up what the whole thirty-two companies now on the coast will cost at the end of the year—when this miserable Oregon War will hardly have begun! No one who has not traveled there can imagine the wilderness of mountains, jungles, and forests that covers all the country for hundreds of miles between the valleys of the Sacramento and the Willamette and the Pacific coast. Frémont had to go around it. There are no roads, and only here and there trails have been cut, where mining parties have found themselves near streams leading to the coast. They have spent months in cutting a track just wide enough for pack-mules. The names of some of the places will indicate the character of the country. There are 'Devil's Gulch, and 'Devil's Staircase,' and 'Jump-off-Joe,' and other break-neck designations. Ah, well; we poor soldiers have no votes, and must go where honor calls."

Such is a single glance at "Soldiering in Oregon," as it seems to Sergeant Jones, on the spot.