

A Gallant Fight in Fish Creek Valley.

One of the best fights yet recorded since the Indians on our northern border commenced hostilities, was that made near the confluence of Queen's river and Fish creek, last week. We give a somewhat extended and correct account of the expedition, as being highly creditable to all concerned, as being a remarkable triumph over terrible hardships incident to bad weather, and as being more interesting to our readers than any other matter with which the account might be replaced. The gallant officer who had charge of the campaign—the brave soldiers who sprang like electric sparks from the chrysalis state into which the ice was reducing them when the order 'forward' was given—the gallant citizens, who gave up the ease and comfort of town life to hunt the common enemy—and even the poor Putes, who attest their friendship by secretly guiding the white men to the enemy's camps—all earned our gratitude.

The Indians had become so daring and troublesome, of late, that communication between Dun Glen and Camp McDermit was unsafe. The Queen's river region was dangerous. [Is yet, for that matter.] Capt. G. D. Conrad, of Company B, Second Cal. Vol. Cavalry, determined on a raid against the marauders. The campaign having been planned and all preparations made, the command set out from Dun Glen on the morning of the 8th, headed for Queen's river. The force was composed as follows: Of Co. B, 35 men; citizens, 8; Putes, 12. We have been furnished by Mr. W. K. Parkinson, of the expedition, the particulars as they transpired—substantially as follows:

Night of the 8th, command camped at Metcalf's ranch on the Humboldt river; weather cold, and snow fell during the night.

Night of the 9th, camped at Willow Point Station, Paradise Valley. Remained there until the evening of the 10th, and made a night march over the mountains into Queen's river Valley, in order to enter the Valley unobserved; and camped at Cane Springs. Capt. Conrad, Thos. Ewing, and Sergeant Korblt, having gone ahead during the day and ascended a high Mountain Peak, commanding a view of the Valley of Queen's river, kept a sharp lookout for fires until 9 o'clock at night; and no fires appearing, the Captain correctly concluded that the Indians had left the valley—the weather being so very cold that fire was a necessity. During the night the command was joined by a detachment of 25 men from Company I, same regiment, commanded by Lieut. Duncan, accompanied by Dr. Snow, a citizen physician.

On the morning of the 11th, it having snowed during the night, and the morning being very cold and stormy, the snow blowing in clouds, the command was in motion as soon as it was light enough to see, marching towards Queen's river, 20 miles distant. Reached the river in the afternoon, and after much difficulty found a deep hole in the river that was not frozen solid, and cut through the ice and camped. The water was so full of sulphur and decayed matter that the horses would not drink it, and the men were compelled to melt the ice to get water with which to make coffee. That night Capt. Conrad, with four soldiers, Parkinson, Ewing, and Indians Sou and Bob, went on a scout; and after a cold and difficult ride of 7 miles in a westerly direction from the camp, they reached the summit of the range of mountains lying between Queen's river Valley and Fish creek Valley, from which point they had a view of Fish creek Valley for 30 miles. They discovered fires in a northwesterly direction, and on the further side of Fish creek Valley—as nearly as they could determine, about 12 miles from the base of the mountain on which they stood. Capt. Sou thought from the appearance of the fires that there were a great many warriors, and that the command would have a hard fight. The Captain took bearings and directions as well as could be done under the circumstances, and determined to make the attack at daylight on the following morning. The scouting party returned to camp, and the order was given for the command to be in the saddle at half-past 11 o'clock. The brave boys in blue received the announcement with joy. Then followed the bustle and preparation for battle: supper at 10 o'clock; horses fed; extra ammunition issued; pack train and wagons ordered to follow at daylight.

THE NIGHT MARCH.

Precisely at half-past 11 o'clock the order to march was given, and the entire command formed in line. Capt. Conrad gave the necessary orders, forbidding indiscriminate slaughter of women and children, and the command commenced the long, cold march of 20 miles. The night was dark and stormy. Having to cross Fish creek, and there being many hot springs along that stream, making it miry in the coldest weather, an early start was necessary, in order to make some allowance for delay if any occurred. Weather intensely cold. Not a word spoken. No sound but the dull tramp of the horses through the snow. Marched without hindrance until 3 o'clock a. m., when column halted and was ordered to dismount. Supposed to be as near the Indians as we dare approach until daylight. No Indian fires to be seen. Cold increasing. Men actually freezing.

A CIRCUS, WHERE ALL PERFORM.—ADMISSION FREE—ZING.

their respective positions, and advanced—with intervals of three quarters of a mile between columns, until near the Indians, when each column was ordered into line, and

THE FIGHT

commenced in all its fury. The Indian encampments were on the western side of Fish creek Valley, about 60 miles west of Paradise Valley—the mountains of the west forming a half-circle around the camps, about 3½ miles distant. The Indians had the advantage of the ground. The field fought over was about 2 miles square, and a large portion of it was covered with tules, and tall rye grass, and very much cut up with gullies and ravines; and bore also a great quantity of Spanish broom. The Indians could not have selected a field better adapted to their style of warfare. The Indians discovered the three columns coming dashing down on them when about a mile distant, and then they could be distinctly seen preparing for battle: dividing off into squads of from 4 to 6, and selecting their places for combat where it would be most difficult to maneuver cavalry. Each warrior had from 50 to 75 poisoned arrows, giving each squad from 250 to 350 shots. The moment before the battle commenced, owing to the extreme cold a dense cloud of frost commenced flying, so thick that a horseman could not be distinctly seen over 100 yards. This gave the Indians a great advantage, as it compelled the soldiers to fight at short range, so that the bow and arrow could be used; and it also increased the chances of escape for the Indians. Had the frost commenced flying earlier, no doubt many of them would have escaped. The plan of battle was such that the right and left columns flanked the Indians, and soon surrounded them. They fought with desperation. In no instance did a warrior lay down his arms till he laid down his life. They arranged their arrows between their fingers in such a manner that they could shoot them very rapidly, and charged with as much bravery as any soldiers in the world. The excitement was intense. Soldiers, citizens, and the savages, charging and yelling; each straining all his powers to destroy the other; the wild, ringing war-whoop; the rapid firing of 80 disciplined men; the thunder of a cavalry charge; all, together, created a scene that beggars description. Capt. Conrad seemed everywhere in the fight—now leading his men in a charge, now fighting single-handed; and no peril did he not share with his men—never asking them to go where he would not lead. Lieut. Duncan behaved nobly, and is a brave and gallant soldier. Sergeant Korblt led his column into the action in the most gallant manner, striking the enemy the first blow, and continuing to fight nobly throughout the battle.

Dr. Snow, a citizen physician accompanying the detachment from Company I, will be long remembered and loved by the gallant men who fought that day. He rode over all parts of the field during the battle, attending to the wounded soldiers where they fell, applying the antidotes necessary to destroy the deadly effect produced by poisoned arrows—which if not attended to at once must prove fatal. An old man, whose head is white with the frost of many Winters, but whose heart is as warm and his energies as vigorous as those of a youth, he braved the perils of frost and battle to alleviate the suffering of his fellow men. May God protect him, is the soldier's prayer. Many heroic deeds were performed. Each individual was a hero, and none but faced death like veterans.

The battle continued in full force for two and a half hours, when the conflict was reduced to two points, at which several warriors had selected deep, short gullies, and were making what they knew to be their last fight. In one of these places the Captain of the Band, Capt. John, a large, powerful Indian, apparently about 35 years of age, having one man with him, was defending himself with skill; and knowing that he must die, he determined to sell his life dearly. He was a warrior of renown, having been a leader from the commencement of hostilities. He had killed Col. McDermit and a soldier by the name of Rafferty—last year. Capt. John and his comrade had each a bow and quiver, and Capt. John was using the identical rifle with which he killed McDermit. After a great deal of sharp shooting, Capt. Rapley succeeded in shooting him through the head, and Capt. John was dead.

The battle, with the exception of a few straggling shots, was over. The Indians had fought with a heroism that astonished everyone who witnessed it. They made no offer to surrender; uttered no sound but yells of defiance; and continued to fire their poisoned arrows until they were so weak that they could throw them but a few feet; and some when dying would shoot an arrow straight up in the air; in hope that the deadly missile would fall on the hated and victorious foe. At the close of the battle 35 dead Indians lay on the field with their bows and quivers still clutched in their hands. All were large, powerful men—a picked company of braves, prepared for battle. But 5 squaws were in the band, and they were acting in the capacity of pack train. Two of these were killed in battle by mistake; the other three were furnished with some provisions and left unmolested.

Scouting parties made the entire circuit of the field, and found that no living thing had escaped, as the snow was 3 inches deep and there were no tracks leading from the camp.

THE WOUNDED.

The following is a list of the wounded: Of detachment from Company I—Corporal Biswell, arrow wound in the head; private Allen, arrow wound in the leg; 2 others wounded, names

approach until daylight. No Indian fires to be seen. Cold increasing. Men actually freezing.

A CIRCUS, WHERE ALL PERFORM.—ADMISSION FREE-ZING.

Not daring to approach nearer the watchful enemy, for fear of alarming him before we could see to properly dispose of him; and the cold steadily gaining in its effect upon the men; it became painfully certain that something must be done, to keep human blood in condition for a boil—the time for which was so near at hand. The men made circles about the size of circus rings, and ran in them to keep warm. It was a curious scene, in the center of that snowy desert, a company of 80 men, on that terrible night, running around in circles as if running for their lives. All running—Captain, Piutes, and all; and this performance continued actively for 3 long hours. Even with this extraordinary effort to save themselves, over 20 men were frozen—their hands, feet or faces. Notwithstanding all they suffered, not a murmur of complaint was uttered by the soldiers. The horses huddled up close together, and were covered with a white mantle of frost; seeming frozen together.

DAYLIGHT.

Daylight came. The intense cold aroused the Indians early, and immediately after daylight fires arose about 5 miles west of the command—although it did not appear near so far. All was excitement in a moment. Capt. Conrad, cool and deliberate under all circumstances, ordered the men to carefully examine their fire arms, adjust and secure their saddles properly, and prepare for action. He then divided the command into three columns—Lieut. Duncan, Co. I, commanding right column, Sergeant Korble, Co. B, commanding the left, and Conrad the center. The column took

tracks leading from the camp.

THE WOUNDED.

The following is a list of the wounded:

Of detachment from Company I—Corporal Biswell, arrow wound in the head; private Allen, arrow wound in the leg; 2 others wounded, names not obtained. Four horses badly wounded; 2 slightly—among the number Lieut. Duncan's, severely wounded.

Of Company B—Private Duffield, wounded in the arm—rifle ball—severe; private Riley, arrow wound in the arm—severe; private Shutts, arrow wound in the shoulder—slight.

One friendly Indian [Jim Dunne], arrow wound in the back! Seven horses wounded—one died on the road and Sergeant Korble's horse left at Paradise Valley to die.

The Indian camps all destroyed, the wounded all cared for, the command marched for Fish creek, where water could be obtained, and camped—the trains having arrived there before them. On the night of the 12th snow fell, and the morning of the 13th was blustering and stormy. At daylight marched for Cane Springs. After the command had started, and as the last of the pack train was leaving camp, they saw an Indian coming on the trail from the direction of the battle field. They awaited his arrival, and he proved to be an Indian lad of about 15 years, who had determined to join the whites and was ready to be reconstructed. The Captain was summoned from the front, and with the aid of interpreters the boy made the following statement: He said that an old man, a young man and himself, were in the mountains the morning of the battle, and knew nothing of it until in the afternoon, when they came down to the camp. He said all the fighting men engaged in the battle were dead but 4, 3 of them being mortally wounded and the other shot through the legs. These 4 wounded men he found hid in the tules and rye grass. He says that there are no other Indians in those mountains at this time, except those that were with him the morning of the battle. Wounded all comfortably cared for and put in wagons, and the command reached Cane Springs on the night of the 13th. Willow Point Station, in Paradise Valley the night of the 14th, and Dun Glen in the afternoon of the 15th; having made the ride from Willow Point Station to Dun Glen, 47 miles, in 7 hours.