

THE YANAS

As a preface to the few myths of the Yanas which have survived, I beg to offer the following words touching this ill-fated people :

Previous to August, 1864, the Yanas numbered about three thousand, as I have been informed on the sound authority of reliable white men. Taking the names and population of villages given me by surviving Indians, I should say that this estimate is not too large.

During the second half of August, 1864, the Yanas were massacred, with the exception of a small remnant.

The Indians of California, and especially those of Sacramento Valley, were among the most harmless of human beings. Instead of being dangerous to settlers, they worked for them in return for fair wages. The Yanas were distinguished beyond others for readiness to earn money. White men occupied in tilling land knew their value, and employed them every season in haymaking and harvesting.

At the present day the Wintus, and the few Yanas that are left, go down the valley and labor during the season in hop-fields and vineyards.

Why were the Yanas killed ?

The answer is as follows: Certain Indians lived, or rather lurked, around Mill Creek, in wild places somewhat east of Tehama and north of Chico. These Mill Creek Indians were fugitives ; outlaws from various tribes, among others from the Yanas. To injure the latter, they went to the Yana country about the middle of August, 1864, and killed two white women, Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Jones. Four children also were left for dead by them, but the children recovered. After the murders the Mill Creeks returned home unnoticed, carrying various plundered articles with them.

Two parties of white men were formed at once to avenge the women and four children. Without trying in any way to learn who the guilty were, they fell upon the Yanas immediately, sparing neither sex nor age. They had resolved to exterminate the whole