

THE YUMAS INDIANS.



LOSE upon the banks of the Colorado river live a warlike tribe called the Yumas Indians, and more exquisite specimens of the human form divine were never turned into this breathing world by good dame Nature. They are tall, manly and muscular, and possess a native grace of manner peculiar to the superior tribes of the red man. They are athletic, and swift of foot, and as bold as tigers; are hardy. Their skin is of a dark copper color, but smooth and clear, and their countenances betoken great frankness and intelligence; but in this their good looks belie them; for, as a class, they are treacherous, deceitful, and great thieves. They are the most expert swimmers, passing one half their time in the rushing waters of the great Red River of the West, breasting the most violent current, and transporting heavy burdens from shore to shore. The experts are not men alone—the women are equally dexterous. The principal article of food with them is the Mesquit bean, which grows in great abundance near the banks of the Colorado and Gila rivers, and is eaten by them when ripe and in a raw state, and also dried and prepared as *atooe*, or gruel. The women, as in all Indian tribes, perform the work and collect the beans in huge wicker baskets holding a bushel and more, which they bear upon their heads. When a matron goes out to pick beans, she takes her papoose, claps it in the basket, and if it is necessary for her to cross the stream, approaches the bank, tosses the basket into the water and springs in after it. The baskets are coated with a resinous

substance and are impervious to the water. The swimmer then gives the basket a whirl before her, making it whirl around and fly before her with extraordinary velocity. They swim high out of water, and float like bladders. Their hatred to the Mexicans is intense, and they have frequently attacked emigrating parties. They are very fond of mule meat, horses, and “small deer,” and devour them when scarcely warmed through. The fish of the Colorado they also eat half cooked, tail and all.

They abominate their more civilized neighbors of the Gila, the Pimos and Maricopas, who are quite civilized, cultivate the soil and receive a yearly grant of clothing from the Mexican Government. They are under the command of a Captain-General, a native chief, *Calo Azul*, who has half a dozen wives and a military suit of clothes. The Maricopas and Pimos are the deadly foes of the Apaches and frequently make up war parties, penetrate the Apacheria and return laden with scalps. *Calo Azul*, a little more than a year ago, thought it proper to civilize the Yumas. He therefore took a war party and met the Yumas near the mouth of the Gila; determined not to be civilized, they turned to and whipped *Calo Azul*'s little party; whereupon that chief returned to the bosom of his wives and his cornfields with a vow never to attempt to civilize the Yumas again unless he had an invincible band of his warriors with him.

It is affirmed by scientific gentlemen, that the “pressure of the times,” if it could be used as a propelling power, would force a vessel across the Atlantic in twenty-four hours.