

DIFFICULTIES IN OREGON.

To the Editor of The N. Y. Tribune.

SIR: Will you permit me to occupy a small portion of your columns with a brief personal narrative of occurrences growing out of the Oregon war. I belong to the small minority in Oregon who believe with Generals Wool and Palmer, that the late war was unnecessary and cruel in the extreme, and that all the burning of property, the destruction of life and expenditure of public treasure, would have been saved if the civil authorities had administered equal justice instead of calling the people to arms. I have lived since the Fall of 1853 in Rogue River Valley, Southern Oregon, situated between the head waters of the Sacramento and the Willamette Valleys, and have had an opportunity of knowing much of the Indian tribes, both on the plains as well as on the Pacific Coast. Notwithstanding the heartrending statements of savage barbarity, which the Oregon papers have constantly spread before the public, it is a fact there are far more murdered Indians than Indian murders; and when the whole truth is known, I believe it will appear that Indians are less savage than some who assume to be civilized.

Often as I have looked upon these people, dwelling in small communities in the shady grove or along the limpid stream, beautifully supplied with fish and roots and berries for subsistence, and apparently happy in the relationship of family and friends, the conviction was forced upon me that they were living as much in harmony with the beautiful surroundings as their more toiling and anxious brethren of another race. I could not perceive wherein they were not equally with us endowed by their Creator with the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And after they were driven from their pleasant homes, and their domains usurped by invaders, I never saw anything in their condition or conduct but what aroused my deepest sympathy and commiseration. To have submitted to robbery and outrage of the gravest kind without resentment would be more than Christian; to have remained passive and indifferent would be less than Men.

I do not see under the circumstances how they could have done different or better than they have done, for practically they have only exclaimed with our own noble sires, "Give us liberty or give us death." And for this they have been denounced as not only savages, but as "vampires" and demons unfit to live, and the military force of two Territories has been drawn out to destroy them from the earth.

Under the deep conviction of duty, I never failed, from my arrival in to my departure from the valley, to declaim against the great wrong our people were doing. And, though many good citizens privately told me of similar convictions; yet I know of none in whom it was strong enough to prompt open expression. I write of this not with vain boast, but with the mingled feeling of deep regret and lively joy. Regret that so many of my neighbors and friends should cower in base subjection, to speculators and rowdies, and yield their constitutional right to freedom of speech. Joy, because my life is spared, contrary to my own expectation and the predictions of my friends and foes, who said I should fall by an assassin.

All the papers in the Territory were closed against me, yet they were unsparing in denunciation, and letters which I sent to the Post-Office for the California papers, were not allowed to pass, but were opened in Jacksonville, so that when I arrived in San Francisco not one had been published. At length a letter, or the substance of one which I had written, appeared among them in THE N. Y. TRIBUNE of April 5. This brought matters to a climax. Indignation meetings were got up and the writer denounced in the strongest language, and not a tongue dare move in his defense. Having been privately informed of what was intended, I fled in the darkness of night to Fort Lane, and was, by an escort of United States troops, conveyed beyond the scene of excitement. I arrived by the steamer Illinois last Saturday, and am pleased to find myself, though among strangers, in your city.

JOHN REESON.

New York, Sept. 30, 1858.