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# THE TRIBES OF CALIFORNIA.

BY STEPHEN POWERS.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE KÁ-ROK.

On the Klamath there live three distinct tribes, called the Yú-rok, Ka'-rok, and Mo'-dok, which names are said to mean, respectively, "down the river", "up the river", and "head of the river". The first two are derived from *yú-ruk*, *yú-tuk*, meaning "down west", and *ká-ruk*, "up east"; but the third is doubtful. The habitat of the Karok extends from a certain cañon a few miles above Waitspek, along the Klamath, to the foot of Klamath Mountains, and a few miles up Salmon River. They have no recollection of any ancient migration to this region; on the contrary, they have legends of Creation, of the Flood, etc., which are fabled to have occurred on the Klamath.

The Karok are probably the finest tribe in California. Their stature is only a trifle under the American; they have well-sized bodies, erect and strongly knit together, of an almost feminine roundness and smoothness, the legs better developed than the arms; and when a Karok has the weapon to which he is accustomed—a sharp stone gripped in the hand—he will face a white man and give him a handsome fight, though when armed only with a snickersnee or a revolver, in the use of which he does not feel confidence, he flees before him. The Klamath face is a little less broad than that on the Sacramento; in early manhood nearly as oval as the American; cheek-bones large and round-capped, but not too prominent; head brachycephalic;



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE PAT-WIN'.

On the middle and lower Sacramento, west side, there is one of the largest nations of the State, yet they have no common government, and not even a name for themselves. They have a common language, with little divergence of dialects for so great an area as it embraces, and substantially common customs, but so little community of feeling that the petty subdivisions have often been at the bitterest feud. For the sake of convenience, and as a nucleus of classification, I have taken a word which they all employ, *pat-win'*, signifying "man", or sometimes "person".

Antonio, chief of the Chen'-po-sel, a very intelligent and traveled Indian, gave me the following geographical statement, which I found to be correct so far as I went. In Long, Indian, Bear, and Cortina Valleys, all along the Sacramento from Jacinto to Suisun, inclusive, on Cache and Puta Creeks, and in Napa Valley as far up as Calistoga, the same language is spoken, which any Indian of this nation can understand. Strangely, too, the Patwin language laps over the Sacramento, reaching in a very narrow belt along the east side from a point a few miles below the mouth of Stony Creek down nearly to the mouth of Feather River. In the head of Napa Valley were the Wappo, and in Pope and Coyote Valleys there was spoken a language now nearly, if not quite, extinct.

The various tribes were distributed as follows: In Napa Valley the Napa; on the bay named after them the Su-i-sun', whose celebrated chief was Solano. In Lagoon Valley were the Ma-lak'-ka; on Ulatus Creek and about Vacaville the Ol-u-lá-to; on Puta Creek at the foot-hills the Li-wai'-to. (These last three names were given to me by a Spaniard and I could find no Indians living by whom to verify them, except that the aboriginal name of Puta Creek was Li-wai'.) On Lower Puta Creek they were called

by the Spaniards, on account of their gross licentiousness, Putos, and the stream Rio de los Putos. In Berryesa Valley were the To-pai'-di-sel; on upper, middle, and lower Cache Creek, respectively, the Ol'-po-sel, Chen'-po-sel, and Wi-lak-sel, which signify "upper tribe", "lower tribe", and "tribe on the plains". In Long Valley are the Lol'-sel or Lold'-la; *lol* denotes "Indian tobacco", and *sel* is a locative ending; hence the name means "Indian tobacco place", applied first to the valley, then to the people in it. At Knight's Landing are the Yo-det'-a-bi; in Cortina Valley the Wai'-ko-sel (north tribe); at Colusa the Ko-rú-si (corrupted to the present form), whose most celebrated chiefs were Sai'-ok and Hu-kai'-leh. On Stony Creek the Patwin intermarried with the Wintün and were called by the latter No-yú-ki (southern enemies).

If all the immense plains from Stony Creek to Suisun had been occupied the population would have been very great; but for several more or less obvious reasons they were not. In winter there was too much water on them, in summer none at all, and the aborigines had no means of procuring an artificial supply. Besides there was no wood on them, and the overflowed portions in early summer breed millions of accursed gnats, which render human life a burden and a weariness. Hence they were compelled to live beside water-courses, except during certain limited periods in the winter, when they established hunting-camps out on the plains. Nor could they even dwell beside the Sacramento, save on those few low bluffs, as at Colusa, where the tule swamp does not approach the river. At a point about four miles south of Colusa there are indications in the shape of circular excavations that they once had somewhat substantial dwellings far from water; yet these may have been only permanent hunting-camps. They also had temporary camps in winter along the edge of the tule swamp for the purpose of snaring wild-fowl.

But along the streams the population was dense. General Bidwell states that, in 1849, the village of the Korusi contained at least one thousand inhabitants. In Spring Valley, on the Estes Ranch, a cellar was lately dug which revealed a layer of bones six or eight feet below the surface, lying so thick that they formed a white stratum all around the side of the cellar. At Vacaville great numbers of bones have been discovered in

various excavations. Señor Piña, who was in the country ten years before the gold discovery, states that on Puta Creek the Indians lived in multitudes. They had an almost boundless extent of plains whereon to hunt game and gather grass-seed; before the streams were muddied they swarmed with untold myriads of salmon; and the broad tule swamps in winter were noisy with the quacking and screaming flocks.

In addition to the modes of gathering and preparing food heretofore described the Patwin had some different processes. On the plains they gathered the seed of a plant called yellow-blossom (*Ranunculus californicus*), crushed it into flour with stones, then put it into baskets with coals of fire and agitated it until it was cooked and burned pot-black, when they made it into pinole. The Korusi and probably others had an ingenious way of capturing wild ducks. They set decoy-ducks, carved and colored very life-like, and when the living birds approached they rose from concealment and scared them in such a manner that they flew into nets stretched above the water. The Suisun fashioned clumsy rafts of tule with which they cruised about in pursuit of water-fowl. When wild clover came into blossom they frequently ate it so greedily as to become distressfully inflated with gas, (a condition which when superinduced in his cattle by the same cause the farmer calls "hooven"). A decoction of soaproot was administered for one remedy, and careful squaw-mothers kept a quantity of it on hand against any indiscretion on the part of their children. But a more frequent treatment was to lay the sufferer on his back, grease his belly, and let a friend tread it. A gentler way was to knead it. The Spaniards affirm that the Solano plains were well covered with wild oats as early as 1838, but the Patwin did not make very extensive use of it then. Wild sunflower and different kinds of grass were pulled or cut on the plains, thrashed out on smooth ground, winnowed in the wind, the seed beaten up and made into a kind of panada. Along the Sacramento they gathered many blackberries in the season.

On the plains all adult males, and children up to ten or twelve, went perfectly naked, while the women wore only a narrow slip of deer-skin around the waist. In the mountains where it was somewhat cooler, the women made for themselves short petticoats from the inner bark of the



Figure 21.—Earth-lodges of the Sacramento Valley.

cottonwood. In making a wigwam they excavated about two feet, banked up the earth enough to keep out the water, and threw the remainder on the roof dome-shaped. In a lodge thus covered a mere handful of sprigs would heat the air agreeably all day. In the mountains where wood was more abundant they frequently put on no roofing of earth. It has been thought by some that they used wood in the mountains in order to make a sharper roof as a precaution against the weight of snow, and in the Sierra this consideration had its weight also, but the real explanation is that they simply used the material which lay nearest to hand.

With the Lolsel a bride often remains in her father's house and her husband comes to live with her, whereupon half the purchase-money is returned to him. Thus there will be two or three families in one lodge. They are very clannish, especially the mountain tribes, and family influence is all-potent. That and wealth create the chief, with such limited power as he possesses. The chief of the Lolsel was and is Klai'-ty, but his brother at one time became more powerful than he through his family alliances, created an insurrection, involved the tribe in civil war, and expelled nearly half of it with Klaity to the head of Clear Lake. They remained there several years, but when the Americans arrived they intervened and secured a reconciliation. A man who is wealthy sometimes purchases "relatives" in order to augment his family influence; and one who has none at all does the same to secure himself protection.

This clannishness begets conspiracies, feuds, and secret assassinations. The members of a powerful Korusi family have been known to assemble in secret session, during which they appeared to determine on the death of some person who was considered dangerous, for immediately afterward that individual was shadowed and soon disappeared. The Lolsel and Chenposel are noted for the savage family vendettas which prevailed between them, some of which have been kept alive to this day.

In war the Patwin employed bows and arrows and flint-pointed spears, and often fought in open ground with much bravery. No scalps were taken from the slain, but the victors often decapitated the most beautiful maiden they had captured, and one held up the bloody head in his hand for his companions to shoot at to taunt and exasperate the vanquished. Men who



had a quarrel about a woman or any other matter sometimes fought a duel with bows and arrows at long distances.

When a Korusi woman died, leaving an infant very young, the friends shook it to death in a skin or blanket. This was done even with a half-breed child. Occasionally a squaw destroyed her own babe when she was deserted by her husband and had no relations, for the sentiment that the men are bound to support the women—that is to furnish the supplies—is stronger even than among us, especially in these days of endless discussion of “woman’s sphere”. No American woman would be upheld in destroying her child because it had no supporter but herself, but the Indians uphold it always. In Long Valley a woman who was about to give birth to a child was so strongly threatened by its American father that she consented to make away with it; but the neighbors interfered, collected a sum of money and a quantity of supplies, and presented them to her on the condition that she should preserve its life—a condition to which she gladly assented. Afterward the child was bought of her for \$10, and lived with one of its purchasers eighteen years.

Parents are very easy-going with their children, and never systematically punish them, though they sometimes strike them in momentary anger. On the Sacramento they teach them to swim when a few weeks old by holding them on their hands in the water. I have seen a father coddle and teeter his baby in an attack of crossness for an hour with the greatest patience, then carry him down to the river, laughing good-naturedly, gently dip the little brown smooth-skinned nugget in the waves clear under, and then lay him on the moist, warm sand. The treatment was no less effectual than harmless, for it stopped the perverse, persistent squalling at once.

The Patwin presents as good an illustration as any of the traditional Digger Indian physique, and it will be well to describe it somewhat minutely. There is a broadly ovoid face, in youth almost round, and in old age assuming nearly the outlines of a bow-kite. The forehead is low, but disproportionately wide, thickly covered with stiff, bristly hair on the corners, and often having a sharp point of hair growing down in the middle toward the nose; not retreating, but keeping well up toward a perpendicular with the chin, and frequently having the arch over the eye so strongly

developed as to be a sharp ridge; the ciliary hairs sparse, never spanning across over the nose; beard and mustache very thin, almost totally lacking, and carefully plucked out; the head small and brachycephalic, often found to be startlingly small when the fingers are thrust into the coarse shock of hair enveloping it; but the skull phenomenally thick. So depressed is it that the diameter from temple to temple, judging by the eye, is equal to that from base to crown, if not greater. This gives the forehead its great width. Small as the cranium actually is, when a widow has worn tar in mourning, and then shaved her poll to remove it, the hair, growing out straight and stiff for two or three inches, gives her the appearance of having an enormous head. In youth the eyes are well-sized, often large and lustrous, but at a great age they became smoke-burnt and reduced to mere points, or else swollen, bleared, and disgusting. Probably there is no feature in this race so characteristic as the nose. So slightly is it developed at the root, and so broad at the nostrils that it outlines a nearly equilateral triangle upon the face. Perfectly straight like the Grecian, it is yet so depressed at the root that it seems to issue from the face on a level with the pupils of the eye. Owing to the great lateral development of the nares, their longer axes frequently incline so much as to form nearly one continuous line. In this case the outer axial line of the nose is foreshortened, so that the eye of the beholder is directed into the opening of the nostrils, a repulsive spectacle. The color varies from a brassy and a hazel almost to a jet black. In young women the breasts are full and round, but after they have borne children they hang far down, so far that a woman when traveling will suckle her babe over her shoulder. This may be partly due to the fact that they wear no dresses to assist in staying them up. Their frames are small, and the hands and feet might well be the envy of the Caucasian belle, being so delicate that in youth they seem out of all proportion to the body, and it is only when age has stripped off the gross mass of fat that they return to their normal relation of size. In walking the Indian throws more weight on the toes than an American, which is probably due in part to his stealthy, cat-like habits. There is a tendency to walk pigeon-toed, especially when barefoot, but it is by no means universal. As to the body, the most notable feature is the excessive obesity of youth, and the total, almost unaccounta-

ble collapse with advancing years. The watery and unsubstantial nature of their food doubtless has something to do with this; and it is this phenomenal shrinkage which causes them to become so hideously wrinkled and repulsive. I have seen nonagenarians who it seemed to me would scarcely weigh fifty pounds. An aged squaw of the Sacramento, with her hair close cropped, the wrinkles actually gathered in folds on the face, and smutched with blotches of tar, the face so little and weasened, and the blinking, pinched eyes, is probably the most odious-looking of human beings. On the other hand, take a Patwin girl of the mountains, at that climacteric when she is just gliding out of the uncomfortable obesity of youth, her complexion a soft, creamy hazel, her wide eyes dreamy and idle, and she presents a not unattractive type of vacuous, facile, and voluptuous beauty.

Klaity, the chief of the Lolsel, was turning white in spots. The process had been going forward slowly for several years—he was probably over eighty years old—not by any sloughing off, but by an imperceptible change from black to a soft, delicate white. The old captain appeared to be rather proud of the change than otherwise, hoping eventually to become a white man. When asked by the interpreter where he expected to go after death, he replied that he did not know, but he was going to follow the Americans wherever they went.

From the above descriptions, it will be guessed that the Patwin rank among the lowest of the race. Antonio told me that his people who could not speak English had no name or conception whatever of a Supreme Being, and never mentioned the subject, and that they never spoke of religion, a future state, or anything of the kind. But this must be taken *cum grano salis*. The Lolsel speak of a divinity whom they call Kem'-mi Sál-to (the white man of the clouds), but this is too manifestly a modern invention made to please their patron, Hanson.

Neither have they any ceremony that can be called worship. They have dances or merrymakings (*pó-noh*) in celebration of a good harvest of acorns or a plentiful catch of fish. The Patwin have a ceremony of raising the dead, and another of raising the devil, but both are employed for sordid purposes. The former was in early times used merely to keep the women in subjection, but now merely to extort from them the gains of the prostitution to which they are forced by their own husbands and brothers!

In the ceremony of raising the dead there is first a noisy powwow in the assembly-hall, and then a number of muffled forms appear, before whom the women pass in procession in the darkness, with fear and trembling and weeping, and deposit gifts in their hands. Thus their rascally and indolent masters get possession of their base earnings without using coercion.

In raising the devil there is a still greater ado. About the time of harvest it would appear that the Old Scratch had determined to get them all. They go out and kindle fires on all the hills about at night; they whoop, halloo, and circle around as if driving in game; finally they chase him in and tree him, then fling down shell-money underneath the tree to hire him to take himself off. Sometimes he makes for the assembly-house, fantastically dressed, and with harlequin nimbleness capers about it awhile, then bows his head low and shoots into the entrance backward. He is now intrenched in the stronghold of their power, and literally the devil is to pay. Presently they pluck up courage to follow him in, and for awhile there prevails the silence of the grave, when a pin could be heard to drop. Then they fling down money before him, and dart out with amazing agility. After a proper length of time he steals out by some obscure trap-door, strips off his diabolical toggery, and reappears as a human being. The only object of this gratuitous and egregious foolery appears to be to assist them in maintaining their influence over the squaws.

A widow wears tar on her head and face as long as she is in mourning; sometimes two or three years, sometimes as many weeks. When she removes it, it is understood she wishes to remarry; but if an Indian makes advances to her before its removal, she considers herself insulted, and weeps.

The knowledge of medicine is a secret with the craft; to learn it a young man pays his teacher all that he possesses, and begins life without anything left. But he soon reimburses himself from his patients, charging them often from \$10 to \$20 shell-money for a single dose. For a felon, a Korusi shaman split a live frog and bound one portion on the affected part, which cured the same. When a person is manifestly sick unto death, the Korusi sometimes wind ropes tight around him to terminate his sufferings.

A mixed practice prevails in disposing of the dead, but most are buried. Those living near Clear Lake are somewhat influenced by the example of their neighbors in favor of cremation, but on the plains burial was and is almost universal. The Korusi thrust the head between the knees, wrap up the body with bark and skins, and bury it on the side in a round grave. Previous to interment, the body is laid outside of the assembly-hall, and each of the relatives passes around it, wailing and mourning, and calling upon the dead with many fond, endearing terms, then ascends the assembly-hall, smites his breast, faces toward the setting sun, and with streaming eyes waves the departed spirit a last, long farewell, for they believe it has gone to the Happy Western Land. But the souls of the wicked return into coyotes.

Of legends, there are not many to relate. It is a nation not very ingenious, though occasionally there is a shrewd head. An old chief in Napa Valley was once bored by a number of that description of men who appear to think the Indians know more of earthquakes and the like than our own scientists. Pointing to the mountains, he asked, "You see them mountains?" He was informed that they saw them. "Well, me not so old as them." Then pointing to the foot-hills, he asked again, "You see them little mountains?" Again they replied in the affirmative. "Well, me older than them."

The Liwaito relate that there was once a great sea all over the Sacramento Valley, and an earthquake rent open the Golden Gate and drained it off. This earthquake destroyed all men but one, who mated with a crow, and thus re-peopled the world. The Korusi hold that in the beginning of all things there was nothing but the Old Turtle swimming about in a limitless ocean, but he dived down and brought up earth with which he created the world.

The Chenposel account as follows for the origin of Clear Lake: Before anything was created at all the Old Frog and the Old Badger lived alone together. The Badger wanted a drink and the Frog gnawed into a tree, sucked out and swallowed the sap and discharged it into a hollow place.

He created other little frogs to assist him and by their concentrated efforts they finally made the lake. Then he created the little flat whitefish, which voyaged down Cache Creek and turned into the great salmon, pike, sturgeon, and other fishes that swim in the Sacramento.

The Chenposel also tell this :

#### THE GREAT FIRE.

There was once a man who loved two women and wished to marry them. Now these two women were magpies (*atch'-atch*), but they loved him not and laughed his wooing to scorn. Then he fell into a rage and cursed these two women, and went far away to the north. There he set the world on fire, then made for himself a tule boat, wherein he escaped to the sea and was never heard of more. But the fire which he had kindled burned with a terrible burning. It ate its way south with frightful swiftness, licking up all things that are on earth—men, trees, rocks, animals, water, and even the ground itself. But the Old Coyote saw the burning and the smoke from his place far in the south, and he ran with all his might to put it out. He took two little boys in a sack and ran north like the wind. So fast did he run that he gave out just as he got to the fire and dropped the two little boys. But he took Indian sugar (honey-dew) in his mouth, chewed it up, spat it on the fire, and so put it out. Now the fire was out, but the coyote was mighty thirsty, and there was no water. Then he took Indian sugar again, chewed it up, dug a hole in the bottom of the creek, covered up the sugar in it, and it turned to water, and the earth had water again. But the two little boys cried because they were lonesome, for there was nobody left on earth. Then the coyote made a sweat-house, and split out a great number of little sticks, which he laid in the sweat-house over night. In the morning they were all turned to men and women, so the two little boys had company, and the earth was re-peopled.

It seems probable that this story relates to some great volcanic eruption, perhaps to that of which an account was given by Professor Le Conte in a paper read before the California Academy of Sciences in the spring of 1874.

## THE RE'-HO.

This was one name of the tribe in Pope Valley, derived from a chief. They were also called by the Patwin, Tu-lo-kai'-di-sel. They early became extinct. As far back as 1842 there were only three living. The Spaniards carried away a great portion of the tribe to the Sonoma Mission about the year 1838, and within a few weeks of their arrival hundreds perished of the small-pox. Nothing is preserved of their language, and almost nothing of their customs.