

CHAPTER VII.

THE HUPÁ.

Fig. 6 Hoopa Valley, on the Lower Trinity, is the home of this tribe. Next after the Karok they are the finest race in all that region, and they even excel them in their statecraft, and in the singular influence, or perhaps brute force, which they exercise over the vicinal tribes. They are the Romans of Northern California in their valor and their wide-reaching dominions; they are the French in the extended diffusion of their language.

They hold in a state of semi-vassalage (I speak always of aboriginal acts) most of the tribes around them, except their two powerful neighbors on the Klamath, exacting from them annual tribute in the shape of peltry and shell-money, and they compel all their tributaries to this day, to the number of about a half-dozen, to speak Hupá in communication with them. Although they originally occupied only about twenty miles of the Lower Trinity, their authority was eventually acknowledged about sixty miles along that stream, on South Fork, on New River, on Redwood Creek, on a good portion of Mad River and Van Dusen's Fork; and there is good reason to believe that their name was scarcely less dreaded on Lower Eel River, if they did not actually saddle the tribes of that valley with their idiom.

Although most of their petty tributaries had their own tongues originally, so vigorously were they put to school in the language of their masters that most of their vocabularies were sapped and reduced to bald categories of names. They had the dry bones of substantives, but the flesh and blood of verbs were sucked out of them by the Hupá. A Mr. White, a pioneer well acquainted with the Chi-mal'-a-kwe, who once had an entirely distinct tongue, told me that before they became extinct they scarcely employed a verb which was not Hupá. In the Hupá reservation, in the summer of 1871, the Hupá constituted not much more than a half of the occupants,

yet the Hupâ was not only the French of the reservation, the idiom of diplomacy and of intercourse between tribes, but it was also in general use within each rancheria. I tried in vain to get the numerals of certain obscure remnants of tribes; they persisted in giving me the Hupâ, and in fact they seemed to know no other.

They remind one somewhat of the Mussulmans, who are forbidden by the Koran to learn any foreign tongue except Arabic. As the Sultans for four centuries had no interpreters save the versatile Greeks of the Phanariotic quarter of Constantinople, so among the tribes surrounding the Hupâ I found many Indians speaking three, four, five, or more languages, always including Hupâ, and generally English. Yet I do not think this was due to any particular intellectual superiority or brilliance on the part of the Hupâ, so much as to their physical force.

Notwithstanding the Hupâ were so powerful in their foreign relations, they were divided into many clans or towns, and these were often arrayed in deadly hostility. These clans were named as follows: Hos'-ler, Mi-til'-ti, Tish-tan'-a-tan, Wang'-kat, Chail'-kut-kai-tuh, Mis'-kut, Chan-ta-kó-da, Hún-sa-tung, Wis'-so-man-chuh, Mis-ke-toí-i-tok, Hass-lin'-tung. The Hupâ owned the Trinity from its mouth up to Burnt Ranch, which is a little above the mouth of New River; but that part of it between the mouth of South Fork and Burnt Ranch they occupied only in summer. It is a region rich in acorns and manzanita-berries, and they allowed the Chim-a-rí-ko to gather these products from it after they had helped themselves. Here too on this quasi-neutral ground, they met the latter tribe in summer for barter, and for the annual collection of tribute.

They were not involved in so many wars with the Americans as were some of the brave but foolhardy tribes farther up the river. One reason was that the Americans did not prosecute mining on the Lower Trinity to the same extent that they did on New River and the Middle and Upper Trinity; hence the salmon-fishing of the Hupâ was not so much interrupted by muddy water—a fruitful source of trouble in early days—nor did they themselves come so much in contact with the miners as did those tribes farther up the river.

Their primitive dress, implements, and houses were almost precisely *Fig. 7*