

# OUR FOREST CHILDREN,

PUBLISHED IN THE INTEREST OF INDIAN EDUCATION AND CIVILIZATION.

VOL. III, No. 4.]

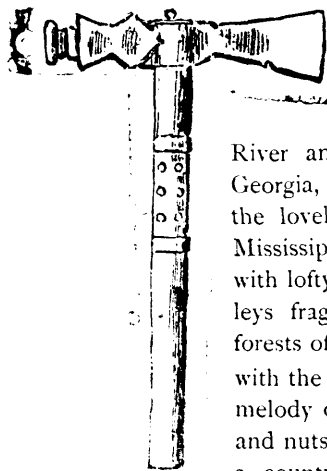
SHINGWAUK HOME, JULY, 1889.

[NEW SERIES, NO. 2.

## Indian Tribes—Paper No. 2.

### THE CHEROKEE INDIANS.

By Rev. E. F. Wilson.



THE Cherokees were the Eastern mountaineers of America. Their country lay along the Tennessee River and in the highlands of Georgia, Carolina and Alabama, the loveliest region east of the Mississippi. Beautiful and grand, with lofty mountains and rich valleys fragrant with flowers, and forests of magnolia and pine filled with the singing of birds and the melody of streams, rich in fruits and nuts and wild grains; it was a country worth loving, worth fighting, worth dying for, as thousands of its lovers have fought and have died, white men as well as red, within the last hundred years."

So says Helen Jackson, in her interesting book,—“A Century of Dishonor.” And further on in the book, the same author tells us how devotedly attached were these Cherokee Indians to their ancient patrimony. “Never did mountaineers cling more desperately to their homes than did these Cherokees. The State of Georgia put the whole nation in duress, but still they chose to stay. Year by year high-handed oppressions increased and multiplied; military law reigned everywhere; Cherokee lands were surveyed and put up to be drawn for by lottery; missionaries were arrested and sent to prison for preaching to Cherokees; Cherokees were sentenced to death by Georgia juries, and hung by Georgia executioners. Appeal after appeal to the President and to Congress for protection produced only reiterated confessions of the Government’s inability to protect them—reiterated proposals to them to accept a price for their country and move away. Nevertheless they clung to it. A few hundreds went, but the body of the nation still protested and entreated. There is

nothing in history more touching than the cries of this people to the Government of the United States to fulfil its promises to them.”

The above extracts give a very vivid idea of the long, sad warfare which this great and remarkably intelligent people have been forced into waging with the Arglo-Saxon race ever since they began to dispute their right of territory. It has been a long series of struggles, of the weak against the strong; and as might be expected, the weak have had to give way before the strong. The beautiful mountains and valleys of Georgia are all now in the hands of the white man; the Cherokees, gradually but steadily driven westward, are now settled to the number of 22,000 in the Indian territory; and only a small, straggling remnant is left behind in the old home among the mountain fastnesses.

The Cherokee Indians are a branch of the extensive and widely distributed Iroquoian stock. They are related to the Six-nation Indians of Canada, the Mohawks, the Cayugas, the Senecas, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Tuscaroras, also to the Iroquois of St. Regis, the Caughnawagas, the Hurons, the Wyandottes. They call themselves “Tsa-ra-ghee.”

The history of this people has been an eventful one. Their first treaty made with the whites was in the year 1721, when boundaries were defined and an agent appointed to superintend their affairs. From that time onward the white people have been gradually encroaching upon them and driving them from their ancient possessions. Ten treaties were made with them while under British rule, and thirty-seven treaties have been made with them since the establishment of American Independence. In the year 1791, the first steps were taken by the American Government to induce them to farm, and thirty years later they were reported as having made great progress in agricultural pursuits, raising corn and cattle sufficient for their needs. They had also schools and missionaries among them, and in the year 1827, assembled the first regularly organized convention of the Cherokee nation with a Principal Chief at its head, an executive council of three members, and a council of delegates elected from eight districts. All went smoothly and well until 1830, when the people of