

Indian Tribes—Paper No. 16.

THE CHEYENNE INDIANS.

By Rev. E. F. Wilson.

THE Cheyennes are warriors of a very determined type; some of the bloodiest of frontier warfare has been carried on by the Americans against this tribe. The men are of above the average stature, few of them being less than six feet in height. As a tribe, they are the richest in horses of any Indians on the continent, a single chief having sometimes owned as many as a hundred animals. Formerly wild horses roamed their prairies, and these they used to catch and sell to the Sioux, Mandans, and other tribes, as well as to the fur traders.

The name Cheyenne (spelt also Shyenne, Shienne, Chayenne) means "wounded people." How they received such an appellation is not known. They call themselves *Zi-zis-tas*.

They belong to the great Algonkin stock; their nearest relations among the other tribes being the Gros Ventres and the Blackfeet, and their more distant connections the Ojebways, Crees, Pottawatamis, Kickapoos, Micmacs, Mohicans, &c.

When first known, they were living on the Cheyenne River, a branch of the Red River of the North, but they were driven west of the Mississippi by their enemies, the Sioux; and about the close of the last century, still further west across the Missouri, where they were found by those enterprising travellers, Lewis and Clarke, in 1803. At the time of the first treaty made by this tribe, with the United States, the Cheyennes were said to number 3,250 souls. So long as the white people did not encroach upon their domains, they were inclined to be friendly with them; but immigrants began pressing westward in great numbers; in the year 1859 it was estimated that over 60,000 incoming settlers crossed the plains occupied by these Indians. Then the trouble commenced. A foolish mail-carrier fired on two innocent young warriors, who came riding up to beg tobacco; the Indians returned the fire; troops then were called out; the Cheyennes became exasperated, killed two men and a child, and took a woman captive. Emigrant trains after this were in constant danger of attack; and the Cheyennes were regarded as hostiles, and shot down wherever found. For three or four years a costly and bloody war was carried on against them. The men, proud, arrogant, and believing themselves to be superior in strength to their white aggressors, refused to yield either to per-

suasion or force. If worsted in one engagement, they quickly rallied their braves and prepared for another. The United States Government wanted to move them all to Indian Territory, and there settle them on reserves and make them farm; but to this they were one and all resolutely opposed. A number of them, who had been seized in Dakota, and were held as prisoners of war at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, declared that they would never be taken alive to Indian Territory; and they broke up the iron stones in the camp, and made themselves weapons with which to defend themselves. The commanding officer, thinking to tame their savage nature, ordered them to be starved and to be kept without fuel (although midwinter, and the glass below zero) for several days. At the end of two days he said that the women and children might come out and be fed; but not a woman would move. On the night of the fourth day, driven to desperation, they broke prison, overpowered the guards, and fled. They were overtaken in a deep ravine and mercilessly shot down. Only fifty women and children and seven men were left of this band, and they were sent to prison at Fort Leavenworth. A black page on American history was the Sand Creek massacre; it took place in November, 1864, at a time when the Cheyenne Indians and the white settlers were sworn foes. Governor Evans, of Colorado, had sent out a circular, inviting all Indians who were friendly to the American Government to come to Fort Lyon for protection, while war was going on against the hostiles. A band of Cheyennes availed themselves of the invitation, and went into the Fort, believing that they would be safe. After a time an order came for them to be removed to Sand Creek, forty miles from the Fort, but they were still guaranteed perfect safety. But the American Colonel intended their destruction. Just at daybreak, Nov. 27th, he fell upon their camp with his troops and massacred them without mercy. Their chief, White Antelope, who had always been friendly to the Americans, seeing what was happening, ran out towards the soldiers, crying in English, "Stop! stop!" When he saw that nothing could be done, he folded his arms and waited till he was shot down. Women and children were killed and scalped by the brutal soldiers. One little child, three years old, was toddling along through the sand, perfectly naked, trying to follow the Indians, who had taken to flight, when a soldier, seeing him, jumped from his horse, took deliberate aim and fired. He missed his mark. A comrade then dismounted, fired at the poor little creature; and he missed, too. Then