

sive use: the Catawba, the Cherokee and that which he assumed to include in a common origin, both the Muskogee and the Choctaw.\* But besides those, six well ascertained languages of smaller tribes, including those of the Uchees and the Natchez, appear to demand separate recognition. Their region differs essentially from those over which the Algonquin and Iroquois war-parties ranged at will. It is broken up by broad river channels, and intersected by impenetrable swamps; and has thus afforded refuge for the remnants of conquered tribes, and for the preservation of distinct languages among small bands of refugees.

When the Ohio valley was first explored it was uninhabited; and in the latter part of the seventeenth century the whole region extending from Lake Erie to the Tennessee river was an unpeopled desert. But the Cherokees were in the occupation of their territory when first visited by De Soto in 1540; and they are described by Bertram in 1773, with their great council house, capable of accommodating several hundreds, erected on the summit of one of the large mounds, in their town of Cowe, on the Tanase river, in Florida. But Bertram adds: "This mound on which the rotunda stands, is of a much earlier date than the building, and perhaps was raised for another purpose. The Cherokees themselves are as ignorant as we are, by what people, or for what purpose, these artificial hills were raised."† It would, indeed, no more occur to those wanderers into the deserted regions of the Mound-builders to inquire into the origin of their mounds, than into that of the Alleghany mountains.

If then it is probable that we thus recover some clue to the identity of the vanished race of the Ohio valley: the very designation of the river is a memorial of their supplanters. The Ohio is an Iroquois name given to the river of the Alleghans by that indomitable race of savage warriors who effectually counteracted the plans of France, under her greatest monarchs, for the settlement of the new world. Their historian, the late Hon. L. H. Morgan, remarks of the Iroquois: "They achieved for themselves a more remarkable civil organisation, and acquired a higher degree of influence, than any other race of Indian lineage except those of Mexico and Peru. In the drama of European colonization, they stood, for nearly two centuries, with an unshaken front, against the devastations of war, the blighting influence of foreign intercourse, and the still more fatal encroachments of a restless and advancing border population. Under their federal system, the Iroquois flourished in independence, and capable of self-protection, long after the New England and Virginia races had surrendered their jurisdictions, and fallen into the condition of dependent nations; and they now stand forth upon the canvas of Indian history, prominent alike for the wisdom of their civil institutions, their sagacity in the administration of the league, and their courage in its defence."‡ But to characterise the elements of combined action among the Six Nation Indians as wise civil institutions; or to use such terms as league and federal system in the sense in which they are employed by the historian of the Iroquois: is to suggest associations that are illusory. With all the romance attached to the League of the Hodenosaunee, they were to the last mere savages. When the treaty which initiated the great league was entered into by its two oldest members, the Mohawks and the Oneidas, the

\* *Archæologia Americana*, vol. ii.

† Bertram's *Travels through N. and S. Carolina, Georgia, &c.*, 1791, p. 367.

‡ *The League of the Iroquois*, p. 2.