

THE RELIGION OF
THE CHEROKEE INDIANS

BY

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INTRODUCTION

One evening I had an interview with the Very Reverend W. P. Paterson, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, concerning a subject for a thesis in working for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. After considerable discussion he suggested the theme, "The Religion of the American Indians". Two or three weeks later we had another interview relative to the same matter and it was decided it would be advisable to restrict the investigation to a study of one particular tribe, and since I lived at Tahlequah, Oklahoma, the capitol of the old Cherokee Nation, we concluded it would be prudent to deal with the subject: "The Religion of the Cherokee Indians".

The earliest writers among the Cherokees did not preserve complete records of the religious beliefs and customs of the tribe. They observed the natives were religious, but they did not see fit to conserve the details of their faith and practice. As a result the oldest chronicles are fragmentary. Material has been acquired from three sources: 1. The literature in the field of Cherokee lore; 2. A questionnaire was prepared, sent to ten eminent anthropologists, seeking information as to the Cherokees' Idea of God, their Idea of Sin, their Idea of Prayer, their Idea of Sacrifice, their Idea of Immortality, and their Idea of Salvation; 3. Having lived among the Cherokees for ten years, I made original researches by talking to their aged medicine men and by attending their festivals and ceremonies.

The late James Mooney, while working under the direction of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, D.C., so ingratiated himself into the confidence and good will of the Cherokee Shamans that they intrusted to him their Sacred Formulas (Seventh Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington) and Myths (Nineteenth Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington). These findings, along with knowledge from other inquiries, have been employed in interpreting the Beliefs of the Tribe.

The dissertation begins with a chapter entitled: "A General Statement Concerning the American Indians". It contains a discussion of the primary characteristics of the Red men, their culture, their warfare, their morality, and their religion. It constitutes a basis for a better understanding of a particular tribe--the Cherokees.

The second chapter is entitled: "A General Statement Concerning the Cherokee Indians". It embraces tribal his-

tory and prepares the way for the more specific study of their Religion.

The thesis, aside from the two chapters just mentioned, treats three main topics: 1. The Beliefs of the Cherokees, based upon their Sacred Formulas, Myths and Legends; 2. Their festivals and customs, based largely upon the records preserved in the manuscripts of John Howard Payne; 3. Their present day beliefs and rites, based upon my own researches and investigations.

I have endeavored to give an account of their faith and conduct--The Story of Their Religion. No attempt has been made to classify them as Animists, Totemists, and the like. It is doubtful if they can be classified, for one finds among them elements of Animism, Totemism, and so on. I prefer to leave it to the reader to classify them if they are to be classified.

The pictures included in these pages were taken by governmental officials and myself. They depict life as it now is among the Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma.

The spelling used in the thesis is in keeping with Webster's New International Dictionary.

The following abbreviations occur: R.B.A.E.W. (Report of Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington); A.B.C.F.M. (American Board of Congregational Foreign Missions); G.P.O. (Government Printing Office).

Chapter One

A General Statement Concerning the American Indians.

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According to the United States Census, 1910, there were living representatives of two hundred and eighty tribes in the United States, twenty-one in Alaska, forty-five among the Eskimos, probably one hundred and forty in the Dominion of Canada, besides the many tribes of Mexico, Central, and South America.¹ Generalizations can be made only along broad lines. "While an Indian is an Indian of a single racial type, whether in North, Central, or South America, yet each tribe has its marked peculiarities."² One finds both unity and diversity among the aboriginal Americans.

Brinton³ mentions three outstanding features of the natives of the New World: (1) their language; (2) their isolation; (3) their entire absence of herdsmen's life. First, let us consider their language. "Here the red race offers a striking phenomenon. There is no other trait that binds together its scattered clans, and brands them as members of one great family, so unmistakably as this of language. From the Frozen Ocean to the Land of Fire, with-

1. New International Encly., vol. 12, pp. 112, 113. At the discovery of America there were many more tribes. Statistics of the 1930 Census showing the number of Indian tribes now are not yet available. We know, however, the tribes are decreasing in number.

2. Thomas Moffett, The Am. Indian on the New Trail, p. 16.

3. The Myths of the New World, pp. 6, 7, 20, 21, 1868.

out a single exception, the native dialects, though varying infinitely in words, are marked by a peculiarity in construction which is found nowhere else on the globe, and which is so foreign to the genius of our tongue that it is no easy matter to explain it. It is called by philologists the polysynthetic construction. What it is will best appear from comparison. Every grammatical sentence conveys one leading idea with its modifications and relations. Now a Chinese would express these latter by unconnected syllables, the precise bearing of which could only be guessed by their position; a Greek or a German would use independent words, indicating their relations by terminations meaningless in themselves; an Englishman gains the same ends chiefly by the use of particles and by position. Very different from all these is the spirit of the polysynthetic language. It seeks to unite in the most intimate manner all relations and modifications with the leading idea, to merge one in the other by altering the forms of the words themselves and welding them together, to express the whole in one word, and to banish any conception except as it arises in relation to others."¹

In treating the uniqueness of their speech Mr. A. H. Keane² expresses it in this way: "From all other forms of speech they differ not merely in their general phonetic,

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1. Daniel G. Brinton, The Myths of the New World, pp. 6-7, 1868.
 2. Hastings Encly. Rel. & Ethics, vol. 1, p. 377.

lexical, and structural features: they differ in their morphology, which is neither agglutinating, inflecting nor isolating, like those of the Old World, but holophrastic or polysynthetic, with a tendency to fuse all of the elements of the sentence in a single word, often of prodigious length."

The holophrastic or polysynthetic quality is everywhere present in America regardless of the culture of the tribe.¹ Between fifty-five and sixty language stocks have been found in North America, and not one of them has been traced to a foreign origin. There were one thousand dialects among these stocks. The Athapaskan stock alone has fifty-three known dialects. The language of the American Indians is their own, showing no signs signifying modification due to alien influence. The various tongues spoken by the several tribes are unlike, and yet in some details they are similar. Some of the vocabularies are rich, containing thousands of words. The tribes are classified more according to their language than to their physical attributes. Boas² states, in substance, this language is better adapted to "lively description than to abstract thinking." As a rule the Indian is not an abstract thinker--"his abstract terms always appear in close connection with concrete thought."

1. Ibid., p. 377.

2. Handbook of American Indians, Part 1, pp. 757-758.

Among the Eskimo tribes there is a difference in the language of the men and women which really amounts to a difference in pronunciation. Among the Sioux the men and women use different imperatives and declarative articles. In other tribes men and women employ different vocabularies.¹ "In incantations and in formal speeches of the priests and shamans a peculiar vocabulary is sometimes used, containing archaic and symbolic terms."²

Second, let us consider their isolation. The problem of their isolation involves also the problem of their origin. The subject of the origin of the tribes has long been one of conjecture and debate, and is still obscure and uncertain. Efforts have been made repeatedly, unattended with success, to trace their origin to the Lost Tribes of Israel, the Phoenicians, the Greeks, the Chinese, the Egyptians, the Welsh and various others. More recently Dr. A. Hrdlicka, the famous explorer, suggests it is possible they came from Siberia, or near that section of the earth. "There exist today over large parts of Siberia, and in Mongolia, Tibet, and other regions in that part of the world, numerous remains which now form constituent parts of the more modern tribes, or nations, of a more ancient population, which was physically identical with, and in all probability gave rise

1. Franz Boas, Handbook of Am. Indians, Part 1, p. 759.
2. Ibid., p. 759.

to the American Indians."¹ Brinton intimates it is little less than futile to try to find a solution to this problem.

The tribes were cut off from the rest of the human race. We read from the pen of one who has made a careful study of the situation: "Direct contact or importation might, for instance, be shown by the survival of some language traceable to an Eastern source; or some old building, obviously constructed of Egyptian, Chinese, or other foreign models; or any inscription on such buildings as might be interpreted by the aid of some Asiatic or European script; or some sailing craft like the Greek trireme, the Chinese junk, the Malay Prau or even the Polynesian outrigger; or some economic plants as wheat, barley, rice, silk, iron; or domestic animals such as the ox, goat, sheep, pig; or poultry; things which, not being indigenous might supply an argument at least for later intercourse. But nothing of all this has ever been found; and the list might be prolonged indefinitely without discovering any cultural links between the two hemispheres beyond such as may be traced to the Stone Ages, or to the common psychic unity of mankind."² The aborigines of this continent appear to have worked out their own destiny. The late Major J. W. Powell, Bureau of American

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1. Quoted by Thos. Moffett, The Am. Inds. on the New Trail, p. 4.
 2. Keane, Hastings Encly. Regl. & Ethics, vol. 1, p. 376.

Ethnology, concluded the industrial arts of America were born in America, that the forms of government, the social and religious institutions of America were developed in America.¹ Mr. F. S. Dellenbaugh is of the opinion the American natives were isolated for so long a time from the rest of the world they were "welded into an ethnic unity, which was unimpressed by outside influences until modern times."² He thinks the continent was peopled in pre-glacial times. Hrdlicka and Brinton dissent from this view, believing the continent was uninhabited until the post-glacial days.³ Goddard⁴ writes: "It is difficult to estimate the antiquity of man's settlement in America."

The drift of opinion now seems to favor an Asiatic origin for the American Indians, according to Mr. Lewis Spence. "The majority of American official anthropologists--though markedly disinclined to pronounce conclusively on a question so bewildering--now seem disposed to accept the theory of an Asiatic affinity for the Red Man. But it is not disputed that in the course of ages immigrants from other sources may have landed on American soil. According to the more conservative view, America furnishes no tangible evidence of an antiquity so great as to support the theory of an independent origin for the Red race, nor has it so far afforded satisfac-

1. Ibid., p. 375.

2. Dellenbaugh, The Am. Indians of Yesterday, p. 458, 1901.

3. Encly. Brit., vol. 4, p. 702.

4. American Anthropologist, vol. xxix, 1927.

tory evidence of human arrivals on its shores in remote geologic times. All American aboriginal culture, indeed, is now classed by trustworthy authorities as Neolithic, and the protagonists of its old Stone Age origins are in a rather discredited minority."¹ In the same paper Mr. Spence avers a study of the racial and cultural phenomena, viewed apart from geological considerations, does not indicate a great antiquity for man in America. "Everything points, then, to the conclusion that in all probability America was first peopled by way of the Bering Strait at an epoch not less than seven thousand and not more than twenty thousand years ago."²

As touching somewhat the other side of the question Mr. Spence has this to say: "Evidence in support of the gradual development of the American race in complete isolation is adduced by many well-equipped scholars, who point to the distinctive character of American agriculture, with its cultivation of plants peculiar to the soil--tobacco, maize, manioc, and others--to the absence of draught and milk-giving animals, to the fact that the wheel and other mechanical devices were unknown in America, in support of their theory. But to maintain a thesis so confined in the face of well-founded proofs for the penetration of America by alien influ-

1. Lewis Spence, The Quarterly Review, pp. 299-300, April, 1925.

2. Ibid., p. 301.

ences seems as unscientific as to adopt the opposite view and to refer the origin of American culture in its entirety to a handful of castaways. Moderately employed both theories are capable of acceptance, but it is impossible to entertain either, when pushed to extremes, with seriousness. This is as much as to say that America, although it underwent no intentional or specific colonization in pre-Columbian times by races or adventurers equipped for settlement, was as all the evidence seems to show, reached by bands or units of seafarers carried thither by the ever-ready agency of the trade winds, who brought with them the knowledge, and perhaps artifacts, of a distant and alien culture, which only partially affected and modified that of the older settlers from Northeastern Asia."¹

According to George Bancroft,² an American historian, Comparative Anatomy, Comparative Philology and a Comparative Study of Customs are unable to establish a definite connection between the Indians and the outside world. Saussaye³ adheres to the belief there is no convincing proof of any connection between the tribes and the other races.

That the native Americans were isolated for a considerable period of time from the rest of mankind no one will seriously deny. When it comes to estimating the length of

1. Ibid., p. 316.

2. History of the United States, vol. 11, pp. 130-131.

3. The Red Skins, p. 269.

this isolation one finds little agreement. I have tried to state both views: one is that they were left entirely alone to work out independently their own destiny unrelated to other races and uninfluenced by them; the other is that they came in contact with other races and were influenced by them, receiving something of their civilization from them. Perhaps it is wise to avoid the extremes and hold to the view they were possibly influenced in a more or less degree by adventurers from other lands to these shores.

The Red race is generally regarded as a unity, as one of the great divisions of the human family, going back most likely to Asiatic origin.

Third, let us consider their entire absence of herdsmen's life. In the whole continent one does not find a single example of a pastoral tribe. It is the one race of mankind universally ignorant of the pastoral state.¹ No animal was raised for its milk, in fact, the use of milk seems to have been unknown. Very few animals were used for food and no animals were employed to transport persons. "The Indians were essentially a hunting race."² With these people hunting and fishing were serious pursuits. The comfort and happiness of the household depended upon them. Consequently they made a study of the habits of animals. Except along the coast

1. Geo. Bancroft, Hist. of U. S., vol. 11, p. 134.

2. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 21.



Arlie Reese, age 75.

Collection of some
of the oldest full-
blood Cherokees of
the Nation.



Writer Hagner, age 84.



John Wolfe, age 78.



Nancy Bearpa, lives on
Dry Creek, 12 miles from Stilwell, age 87.



Winnie Sixkiller, age 87.

fishing was of secondary importance.¹ The Indian gave his time to hunting, fishing and making war. He could not be called a stockman, or hardly a farmer for he domesticated only a few animals and cultivated only a small number of crops.²

Another student of this phase of Indian life makes known his view which is slightly at variance with what has just been noted. "Many persons seem to think that the Indian was a perpetual rover, always hunting, fishing, and making war,--with no settled villages. This is a great mistake: most tribes knew and practiced some agriculture. Most of them had settled villages wherein they spent much of their time. Sad indeed would it have been for the early settlers of New England, if their Indian neighbors had not had supplies of food stored away - the result of their industry in the fields."³ The natives in Peru, Yucatan, Honduras and Mexico engaged in agriculture more than other tribes, all of them raised some crops such as maize, beans, squashes, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, tobacco, gourds and to some extent sunflowers.

The Culture of the American Indians.

The tribes were slow to make changes for conservatism was a cherished quality with them. They were strongly

1. Frederick Starr, American Indians, pp. 50-51.
2. Brinton, Myths of the New World, pp. 20-23.
3. Frederick Starr, American Indians, p. 4, 1898.

attached to hereditary customs and manners.¹ The ways of the parents became in the course of time the ways of the children. Innovations and changes were deemed dangerous and irreverent.²

The aboriginal Americans were not demons, heartless savages, just a race of warriors looking for battle. Their homes and social institutions revealed the habits of humanity. Some writers have described them as vicious and cruel, yet they invented no instrument for religious or political persecution.³ "It has been too much our custom to look at all the Indians as savages, while in fact, there is much concerning them that is noble and even worthy of being imitated by a white brother."⁴ Many of the Indians have good minds. "In cubical brain capacity and in structural development of the skull he ranks high, holding a place lower than the Caucasian, but higher than the Negro."⁵ The same writer is of the opinion the American Indians constituted the highest type of benighted man, and presented to civilization its finest raw material for developing into a better product. The mental qualities of the Red men are illustrated by their language, by their ability to repeat from memory without mistake long ceremonies, by their arts, home life, political and religious institutions. They were

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1. Bancroft, Hist. of U. S., vol. 11, p. 127.
 2. W. R. L. Smith, The Story of the Cherokees, p. 20.
 3. Bancroft, Hist. of the U. S., vol. 11, p. 126.
 4. Geo. E. Foster, Sequoyah, The American Cadmus, pp. III-IV.
 5. Moffett, The American Ind. on the New Trail, p. 10.

simple in life, eating what they hunted and raised, and living much of their time out-of doors.

Opinion is divided as to the presence of polygamy. Bancroft¹ says it was permitted, though it was not common, among the northern tribes. Another authority² thinks it was quite common for the reason the tribes needed many soldiers. Marriage amounted to a buying proposition. For a time the husband often lived with his wife's people surrendering his gain to them. Children generally strengthened the family ties. The men did no domestic work. In fact they disliked habitual labor. They worked not by reason of choice, but out of necessity. They did the hunting and fishing, made the hatchets and boats, and conducted the religious ceremonies. The women cultivated the crops, prepared and dried meats, dressed the skins, cooked food, carried water, beat the maize, and looked after the children. The men did their work; the women did their work. In the division of duties the women felt no sense of servility and inferiority.³ This part of their life has been grossly misunderstood.⁴ As it was no burden to them, and as soldiers were in demand, the squaws bore many children.⁵ The unwritten law gave the children to the mother. The squaws were the rulers of the

1. Bancroft, Hist. of U.S., vol. II, p. 103.

2. Frances Densmore, The Am. Inds. & Their Music, pp. 17-18.

3. W. R. L. Smith, The Story of the Cherokees, p. 202.

4. Densmore, The Am. Inds. & Their Music, p. 13.

5. Bancroft, Hist. of U. S., vol. II, p. 103.

lodge, they handled the purse--if the husband received money he turned it over to his wife.¹ The squaws never trusted their children to hireling nurses.² The children knew little home discipline. They were rarely ever corrected and seldom punished. The Red man was imitative rather than inventive by nature.³ While they had no books they were not without education for the children were trained in the habits of their parents. They were taught to read the book of nature, and with its pages they were familiar.⁴ The pursuits of life were divided among the Indians. Children who exhibited special skill in the making of the implements were used for that purpose.⁵ The children were nursed in story and song which set forth the brave deeds of their ancestors and the noted exploits of their chiefs.⁶

When found by white men the natives of this continent lived in tepees, lodges, wigwams and cliffs. In the center of the tepee was a fire in cold weather to drive out the chill. It was ventilated at the top. Tuberculosis is said to have been unknown among them until they began to live in cabins like white people. The place of honor in the tepee belonged to the chief. Each member of the family was allotted a certain space. Frequently the decorations of the

1. Dixon, *The Vanishing Race*, pp. 29-31.

2. Bancroft, *Hist. of U. S.*, vol. II, p. 104.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

4. Dixon, *The Vanishing Race*, pp. 16-18, 1925.

5. Bancroft, *Hist. of U. S.*, vol. II, p. 111.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

outside of the tepee told the story of the warriors within. Most of their homes were temporary.¹ Some of them, like the cliff-dwellings, were permanent. They made their beds of skins. The leading families possessed some property and even had servants.²

They dressed in skins, blankets, and moccasins, although several of the tribes lived almost naked except on special occasions. Both men and women painted their bodies. They employed such gay colors as blue, scarlet, and green. Black was also used. The robe of a warrior often displayed a picture of his deeds. The women wore ornaments such as beads, shells and rings. The chiefs decorated themselves with the feathers of eagles and hawks. The men in general embellished themselves with the plumage of birds, the scalps of men, the rattles of snakes, and the claws of bears.³

Only one meal was served per day. It was customary for the men to eat first. The table was nothing else than the ground covered with skins. The meal was composed of meat and vegetables, what they hunted and raised.⁴

Each village governed itself. The type of government in vogue everywhere looked at from the point of view of the people was a democracy; looked at from the point of view of

1. Warden, United States of Amer., vol. 3, pp. 572-573.

2. Densmore, The Am. Inds. and Their Music, p. 8.

3. Warden, United States of Amer., vol. 3, pp. 570-572.

4. See W. R. L. Smith, The Story of the Cherokees, p. 25.

the chief it was a monarchy.¹ The natives were liberty loving, preferred to be unshackled and unhampered, yet they were not lacking in tribal loyalty. At the best the tribes were only loosely organized.² The chiefs were of two kinds, political and military. The chieftaincy is said to have been hereditary in some tribes, but not in others. The Indian rulers did not correspond favorably to European kings and emperors.³ The chief had no crown, no palace, no sceptre, no guard, no outward symbols of authority. He was followed rather than obeyed. All of the soldiers were volunteers, so the strength of the army depended upon the leadership of the chief.⁴ The affairs of the tribe or nation were transacted in council meetings which were dignified assemblies where the decorum was unbroken by uproars.⁵ Among the natives there was always room for any one to achieve high rank.

The Peruvians had a kind of writing called quipu which consisted of strings of different sizes, colors, lengths, and textures variously knotted and twisted with one another fastened to a base cord about the thickness of the finger. With this system records, events, and statistics were preserved. News thus sent had to have a verbal interpreter.

1. Bancroft, Hist. of U. S., vol. 11, p. 110. Timberlake, in Memoirs, p. 93, calls their government a mixed aristocracy and democracy. War Chiefs were chosen according to merit.

2. W. R. L. Smith, Story of the Cherokees, p. 202.

3. Densmore, The Am. Inds. and Their Music, p. 9.

4. Bancroft, Hist. of U. S., vol. 11, p. 111.

5. Ibid., p. 111.

To prevent confusion the quipu on different subjects were put away in separate storehouses. These combinations of knots and strings and colors had ideograph value.¹

The tribes in the North Atlantic region used wampum, in some respects analogous to quipu. This wampum was made of bits of wood hung on strings and woven into belts and bands, the shades, shapes, sizes, and combinations hinting at their significance. The lighter shades were harbingers of peace - the darker shades had to do with war. Beads took the place of bits of wood in the wampum due to European influence.²

Sequoyah, the son of a Dutch peddler or trader, named George Gist, and a full-blood Cherokee woman, invented the Cherokee alphabet about 1821. His father disappeared before he (Sequoyah) was born. His mother spoke no English. Sequoyah was a remarkable observer, for by observation he learned white men "talked" on paper. He understood something of the utility of it. He found eighty-six sounds were contained in the Cherokee language. He constructed a character for each sound, thus making a syllabary of eighty-six characters. Some of the characters were English letters, some were Greek letters, and some were original. The English letters as English letters meant nothing to him. It was likewise with the Greek letters. Before he died,

1. Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, pp. 14-15.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

about the middle of the nineteenth century, seven million pages of good literature had been distributed among his tribesmen.¹

The American Indians esteemed singing a serious matter. They sang to get results. Singing was helpful in treating the sick, securing success in war, love, the chase, and in most all of life. Music was prominent in their ceremonies. Music was first used among them in what is described as "calling upon the Spirit for help" and "summoning Supernatural aid."² The singers received their songs in dreams or bought them from their owners. Some of the singers knew as many as three or four hundred songs and have been known to sing sixty or seventy at a sitting. The first songs were thought to have had magic power. They had war songs, family songs, love songs, and many others. The old time native lovers are said not to have used songs. They trusted far more to silence than white people.³ As instruments the Indians had wind instruments as the flute and whistles, and percussion instruments as drums and rattles.

The American aborigines were fond of sports. Their games required strength, skill, and keen observation. They played no games necessitating deliberation and thought like chess or checkers. Their games tended to develop

1. Geo. E. Foster, Sequoyah, The American Cadmus, 1885, is the best book dealing with the life of Sequoyah, or, as he is called, George Guess.

2. Densmore, The Am. Inds. and Their Music, pp. 62-63.

3. Ibid., p. 84.

patience and self-control. The children had their games like all other children. With the men and women play-ball was the most popular game, sometimes as many as five hundred taking part in it. Gambling was common among them. A warrior would bet on his skill in war or peace. Most all of the Indians danced. Some of the dances were for men, some for women, some for both. Some of the dances were religious in nature, some were to entertain.¹ In writing about the play-ball W. R. L. Smith² states: "The players prayed to the bat and the flying squirrel for help, these being the symbols of quick and dexterous movement. The player ate no rabbit meat before the game lest it infect him with timidity." The game required courage and endurance as well as skill.

All of the tribes were noted for their hospitality. Courtesy and generosity marked the reception of the white man in the New World. "The character generally attributed to the Indian is that of a savage, but this blemish came upon him through contact with white man. Their ingenuous and trustful nature quickly degenerated as they were enslaved, betrayed, and slain. Advantage was taken of their ignorance and kindness. Then came on a race of warriors unparalleled in ferocity and barbarism. The inexorable march of civilization regardless of ethics swept on until we heard the Indians' war cry and failed to see the diviner grace of

1. Ibid., pp. 4, 36.

2. The Story of the Cherokees, p. 26.

friendship. The Indian returned with interest every injury and hardship, every bitter assault and aggression. He paid in full all accounts in the court of pitiless revenge. These shadows obliterate our thought of him as courtier and hospitable host."¹ Most all of the early travelers on the American continent write about the hospitality of the natives. Bartram² relates how he was treated hospitably by the Indians, and among them the Cherokees. He describes them as a happy people, simple and plain, sincere in friendship, undefiled, unmodified by artificial refinements!

The Warfare of the American Indians.

War was the avenue to fame and glory among the tribes of the continent. They recognized two kinds of warfare: defensive warfare, fighting for the protection of family, village, tribe, or country; and aggressive warfare, expeditions to seek revenge and to get spoils. Their aim in warfare was to destroy. Apparently they did not recognize noncombatants, for they killed women and children, because they strengthened the armies of their foes. Joseph K. Dixon³ contends there were no "general or long-continued wars among the Indians" before the coming of white men. "There was no motive for war. Quarrels ensued when predatory tribes sought to filch women or horses. Strife was

1. Joseph K. Dixon, *The Vanishing Race*, pp. 35-36.
2. *Travels in North America*, pp. 348-349, 1793.
3. *The Vanishing Race*, p. 23.

engendered because of the distribution of buffaloes, but these disturbances could not be dignified by the name of war. The country was large and the tribes were widely separated. Their war implements were of the crudest sort." They used clubs, spears, hatchets or tomahawks, javelins, and bows and arrows. Occasionally they shot poisoned arrows. They had shields to protect their bodies from arrows, spears, and javelins. They generally scalped those they slew. Why this was done is not definitely known, but it may have been a part of the initiation in dedicating a body to the God of War. Young men who were ambitious to be soldiers disciplined themselves to endure privations and hardships. When preparing to join a war party they abstained from all personal indulgences. Most of the Indian wars were with white people and largely the result of territory taken by the whites. They were tremendously handicapped in their battles with the whites. At first they fought them without the aid of guns, knives, or powder. Their only means of communication was the smoke of the signal fire and scouts. They had no arsenals. For three hundred years with probably no more than three hundred thousand soldiers they were worthy foes for the armies of civilization. Some of their leaders as Red Cloud, Sitting-Bull, Chief Joseph, Looking-Glass, Rain-in-the-Face, American Horse, Spotted Tail and many others possessed marked military ability. One of their chief weapons was that of oratory in the Council Lodge. "Here

without any written or established code of laws, without the power of the press or the support of public opinion, absolutely exiled from all communication with civilized resources, unaided and alone their orators presented the affairs of the moment to the assembled tribe swaying the minds and wills of their fellows into concerted and heroic action."¹ These orators believed in their cause, they loved their homes and kindred, and with the help of oratory they halted the advance of their enemies.²

Equality did not exist among the Indian warriors. As might be expected one finds ranks and grades among them. Advancement was gained by personal achievement. "Before a man could count his war honors, wear their appropriate insignia, or assume the grade or rank to which they entitled him, he had to be given the right to do so publicly and generally in connection with more or less elaborate religious ceremonies, conducted by societies or by tribal officials."³ With some of the tribes defensive warfare honors were considered higher than aggressive warfare laurels.

The war chief did not get his position by birth, but by merit. Anyone could be a war chief who could get volunteers to follow him. War expeditions were made by a small

1. Dixon, *The Vanishing Race*, pp. 25-26. Here one finds a fair treatment of the subject of Indian warfare.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

3. Alice C. Fletcher, *Handbook Am. Indians*, vol. 11, p. 914.

number of men, rarely exceeding forty, and might be as small as six or seven. Many times they fell upon their foes during the hours of sleep. To go back to the village with a scalp was to be honored.¹

In defensive warfare the warriors met their enemies beyond the limits of the village. In a hurried fashion the women dug pits or piled up breastworks of earth for the protection of their children from the flying arrows. The women did not often take part in the fighting. Whatever fighting they did was at close range with clubs or hatchets. It was very uncommon for them to go on war parties on equal terms with the men. If they went along their business was to serve the men.²

It was customary for a war party to take along some sacred object, and the outcome of the trip was believed to rest with this emblem. Among the Kiowas it was a ceremonial lance. Dreams often influenced the movements of a war party. Several cases are on record where due to dreams war parties have disbanded and returned home. Preceding the departure of a war party religious rites were observed. "Among the Pueblos these rites were in charge of a war priesthood; in all tribes the rites were more or less directly under the men to whom were confided the keeping of the rituals and the direction of ceremonies related to war. In general, a

1. Bancroft, Hist. of the U. S., vol. 11, p. 114.

2. Fletcher, Handbook Am. Inds., p. 915.

man had to prepare for the office of leader by fasting and continence, and as upon him rested the responsibility of the failure or success of the party, he must be careful to observe all rites by which he could personally appeal to the supernatural."¹ Among the Cherokees attention was given to religious ceremonies before going to war. These rites were designed to inspire fortitude under suffering rather than to instill courage for battle. They did not overlook the admonition of dreams and omens. "They sang the songs of war, and imposed upon themselves the most rigid fasts and mortifying ablutions, at all seasons of the year, in order to obtain a favourable omen for their departure."² Each warrior went forth under the protection of a guardian spirit.³

The Indian soldiers were fearless. Most of the time they were assured of victory before they proceeded to battle. They gave careful attention to details. On the trail all footprints were obliterated. The enemy never saw the smoke of a fire or smelled the burning of green boughs. At different seasons of the year they painted themselves in keeping with the colors of the times. This was a display of war talent.⁴

The men were subject to the war chief. They were not

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1. Fletcher, Handbook of Am. Inds., p. 914.
 2. Thos. Nuttall, Travels in Arkansas Territory, p. 134.
 3. Foster, Sequoyah, The American Cadmus, p. 30.
 4. Dixon, The Vanishing Race, p. 27.

required to keep close together, the fighting being more or less independent. The leader left every warrior to himself in taking honors, each was free to take all he could get.

The treatment of prisoners varied. Adoption was in practice among nearly all tribes, especially in the disposal of women and children. "Although the life of a captive was generally regarded as a forfeit, yet among many tribes there were ways by which either a captive could save his own life or be saved by members of the tribe."¹

The spirit of the Indian warfare is well illustrated in a war song which reveals their yearning for revenge, their purpose to keep alive the memory of the injury, and to excite the tribe against its foes.

"On that day when our heroes lay low, lay low,
On that day when our heroes lay low;
I fought by their side, and thought ere I died,
Just vengeance to take of the foe, the foe,
Just vengeance to take of the foe.

On that day when our Chieftains lay dead, lay dead,
On that day when our Chieftains lay dead;
I fought hand to hand, at the head of my band,
And here on my breast have I bled, have I bled,
And here on my breast have I bled.

Our Chiefs shall return no more, no more,
Our Chiefs shall return no more;
And their brothers in war, who can't show scar for scar,
Like women their fates shall deplore, deplore,
Like women their fates shall deplore.

1. Fletcher, Handbook of Am. Inds., p. 914.

Five winters in hunting we'll spend, we'll spend,
Five winters in hunting we'll spend;
Then our youth grown to men, to the war lead again,
And our days like our fathers, we'll end, we'll end,
And our days like our fathers we'll end."¹

The Religion of the American Indians.

The American Indian believed in and depended upon the Supernatural. "He is deeply spiritual and devout in the expression of his instincts of natural religion. At every turn he exercises faith in the unseen influences, good and evil, which surround him. The idea of the Great Spirit, as the white man designates the Indian's deity, is rather the belief in the existence of a magic power, or mystery, which influences human life and can be influenced by man. This power is everywhere and in everything, the mountains and plains, the sun and the stars, the lightning and rain, the river and trees, a cliff or a stone. In a proper sense the Red man may be called a worshipper of nature, not in a materialistic sense, however."²

One does not find any real uniformity in the tribal ideas about deities and spirits or the manner in which they are worshipped. Many of them believed in what is called zoo-

1. Quoted by Foster, Sequoyah, The American Cadmus, p. 61. The song was secured by a Mr. Johnson, who lived among Indians for many years, and was given to Thos. L. McKinney, then Secretary of War for the United States.

2. Moffett, The Am. Inds. on the New Trail, p. 22.

theism, that is, they deified certain animals as the bear, wolf, and deer. "On the Ohio, Marmet questioned a medicine man, who venerated the Buffalo as his manitou. He confessed he did not worship the buffalo, but the invisible spirit which is the type of all buffaloes."¹ Dellenbaugh² writes: "Savage races worship animal gods and natural objects personified as animals....as in the case of thunder and lightning, generally attributed by the Amerinds to the mysterious 'thunder bird.'" On the same subject Keane gives his opinion: "In their creation myths the aborigines themselves are sprung from animals: three, say the Mohegans, a bear, a deer, and a wolf; one, say the Delawares, the 'Great Hare', called the 'Grandfather of the Indians'. Their personal and totemic gods were everywhere conceived to be in the form of animals, and to these various acts of homage were made, thus leading up to the universal zootheism common to most Amerinds."³ In 1616, before contact with white men, a chief of the Algonquins told Captain Argoll they had only "five gods in all; our chief God appears often to us in the form of a mighty great hare; the other four have no visible shape, but are indeed the four winds, which keep the four corners of the earth."⁴ Students of the religion of the American natives often mention the four deities of the cardinal

1. Bancroft, Hist. of the U. S., Vol. 11, p. 434.

2. The North Americans of Yesterday, p. 393, 1901.

3. Keane, Hastings Encly. Regl. & Ethics, Vol. 1, p. 384.

4. W. Strachey, Historie of Travaile into Virginia, p. 98.

points, or the four deities of the four winds, or the four invisible powers, who are the rulers of the weather and the seasons. Along with these four a fifth is sometimes noted, described as one "who is above", greater than the others, and which is identified by Brinton¹ with the God of Light, of whom the sun and the moon are the material emblems.

The conception of an overruling deity, the so-called Great Spirit, is erroneous. The Indians believed in a multitude of Spirits dwelling in animate and inanimate objects. They did not ascribe moral good to them. The spirits were the source of their good or bad fortune whether on the war trail, the hunting path, the pursuit of a wife, or the ball-play. Their chief business was to propitiate their gods. They lived in constant fear of these spirits.² There was no claim of a Supreme Deity among the Pueblos, Cheyennes, Poncas, and allied groups.³ The Wakonda of the Dakotas was not a Supreme Being. W. J. McGee⁴ says Wakonda was without personality, a kind of vague essence, power, or subtle force like the mana of the Polynesians. This Wakonda makes its home in certain objects, and they become efficacious for good or evil. Kiehtan, the chief god of the Algonquins, who dwells in the upperworld towards the setting sun whither go

1. The Lenape and Their Legends, p. 651, 1885.

2. Handbook of Am. Indians, Part 11, p. 284.

3. G. A. Dorsey, Field College Museum Pub., Chicago, 1905.

4. 15th R. B. A. E. W., p. 182, 1897.

all souls after death, stood at the head of their pantheon. Kiehtan was not an omnipotent Deity.¹ "While certain Indian tribes, notably those of our eastern States, believed in a supreme being and an Indian paradise which from their point of view could best be described as a happy hunting ground, yet these beliefs were by no means universal and were not typical of all Indian religions."² Other tribes worshipped numerous spirits and deities both good and bad. Still other tribes worshipped the sun and planets and other objects as rivers, mountains, and trees which were the abiding places of spirits.³ To these may be added the testimony of another writer. "Like the ancients of the Old World, many of the American nations believed in many gods, some good, some a mixture of good and evil, and some almost wholly bad. With only a few tribes there was an approximation to monotheism, though with many tribes there was a supreme god among the gods. It is quite difficult to distinguish always between gods and spirits, though in general the spirits were subservient to the gods and acted as messengers or agents for them."⁴ In Mexico, Tonacatecutli, is represented as the true god of the Aztecs. Offerings are not made to him for he does not need them. We do not have monotheism here.⁵ After examining

1. E. Winslow, Good Newes from New England, 1624.

2. Verrill, The Am. Indian, p. 73.

3. Ibid., p. 74.

4. Lindquist, The Red Man in the U. S., p. 47.

5. Seler, Aubin Tonalamatl, p. 391.

the information on the subject we are forced to the conclusion of Brinton,¹ which follows: "Of monotheism either as displayed in the one personal definite God of the Semitic races, or in the dim pantheistic sense of the Brahmins, there is not a single instance on the American continent."

The American Indians were not guilty of idolatry. "I do not know of a single tribe which is truly idolatrous."² Verrill states: "As a rule, the so-called idols of the Indians are merely symbolic and are designed to represent deities or spirits in concrete form. Some of the Indians believe that deities and friendly spirits are invisible but are capable of entering and taking possession of their material likeness, and hence, by making images of the spirits as they are imagined, the Indians regard the 'idols' as sacred and tenanted by deities."³ It is a spirit within the "idol" that is worshipped and not the handiwork of man.

"In other cases the image is merely a visible reminder or material representation of a god or spirit, and offerings and prayers bestowed upon it are made to the spirit and not to the image. In fact, they occupy the same place in the Indians' religion as do crosses, sacred pictures, and images

1. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 52.

2. Verrill, The Am. Indian, p. 84.

3. Ibid., p. 84. Images are used sometimes as proxies to keep watch in the place, for example, of medicine men. Such images serve as guards against evil spirits. If they prove to be inefficient they are thrown away, and others take their place.

of Christ and the saints of the Christian religion. It is just as erroneous to speak of Indians worshipping their effigies as it would be to speak of Christians worshipping the cross or a picture or statue of Jesus."¹

All of the tribes believed in some kind of a future life. Some thought the spirits of the dead roamed the earth giving assistance to relatives and friends. This does not insinuate they were ancestor worshippers. "No tribe worshipped its prophets, or deified its heroes; no Indian adored his fellow-man or paid homage to the dead."² Some of them believed in reincarnation. Some of the spirits are believed to have taken up their abode in certain animals, and these animals were regarded as sacred.³ The Indians did not distinguish between the natural and the supernatural world, except that life hereafter for noble tribesmen would be attended with good fortune under conditions free from disease and failure, whereas the future of unworthy tribesmen would be troubled with defeat and misfortune. To the Indian mind the natural and the supernatural worlds were two parts of one world, so the present life and the future life are two parts of one life. The future existence was thought of as an extension of the present life. In cloud-land the soul lives on in material comfort and prosperity.

1. Ibid., p. 84.

2. Bancroft, Hist. of U. S., Vol. 11, p. 435.

3. Verrill, The American Indian, pp. 74-75.

There they follow the pursuits common to this life. Their burial customs bear out this for they buried with them what they would need in cloudland. The idea of eternal punishment must have been unknown to them. "The American Indian seems not to have evolved the idea of hell and future punishment."¹ Certainly the notion of hell as found in Christian theology was foreign to their minds. Some of them believed the souls of bad Indians would wander or drift without any abiding place. Mooney² thinks their belief in the future life did not influence their conduct in this life.

The Ethics of the American Indians.

The various tribes were not without ethics as it was once thought. Certain standards of conduct prevailed in every tribe. "It is difficult for a person knowing only one code of morals or manners to appreciate the customs of another who has been reared in the knowledge of a different code; hence it has been common for such a one to conclude that the other has no manners or no morals. Every community has rules adapted to its mode of life and surroundings, and such rules may be found more rigorously observed and demanding greater self-denial among savages than among civilized men."³ Wilson D. Wallis states the problem of primitive

1, Handbook of Am. Inds., Part 11, p. 284.

2. Ibid., p. 284.

3. Chamberlain, Clark University, and Washington Matthews, U. S. Army, in Bulletin 30, B. A. E. W., part 1, p. 441.

ethics is not in the nature of good or evil, but what this people or that people have called good or evil and have socially sanctioned or socially disapproved.¹ He further affirms that among primitive people individual responsibility is not a generally recognized principle.² The Omaha Indians have rigid regulations concerning sending war parties against another tribe. "Only after the performance of certain ceremonies connected with specific medicine-bundles, can a man undertake aggressive warfare with the sanction of the tribe. Disaster usually results from disregard of this rule."³

Social ethics existed among the American tribes. To a certain extent public opinion was recognized. Most of the Indians wished the approval of others. The moral life of the native was not influenced by a belief in hell or heaven, as with a white man. The faith of the Indian was in good luck or in bad luck, and sometimes he associated imaginary punishments with various offenses. The agents of such punishments might be objects of animate nature.⁴

Runners in search of game and scouts looking for enemies were admonished to make accurate reports. The Omahas told their people falsehoods never went unpunished. "The

1. Wilson D. Wallis, *An Introduction to Anthropology*, p. 303. This book was published in 1926.

2. In the village of Kachari responsibility is vested in one group. Among certain tribes of West Africa responsibility is rooted in the family. Individual responsibility is not thoroughly recognized in Australia. In case of murder, as a rule, the offender is punished.

3. Wilson D. Wallis, *An Introduction to Anthropology*, p. 310.

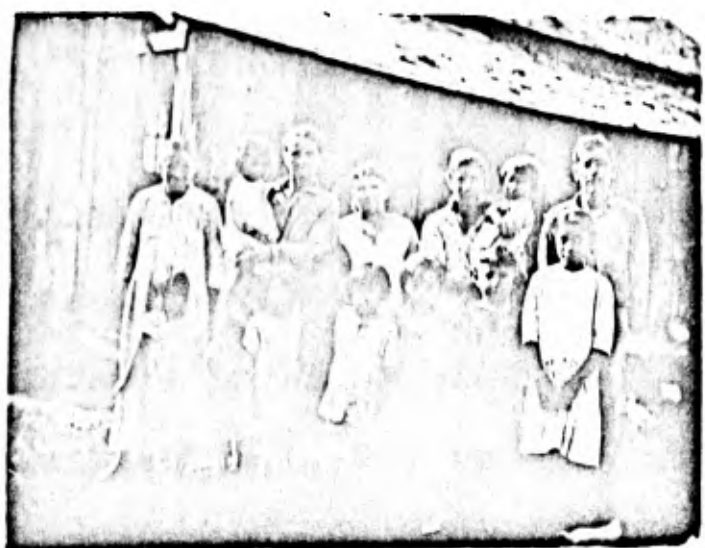
4. Bulletin 30, B. A. E. W., part 1, p. 441.

man would be struck by lightning, bitten by a snake, injured on the foot by some sharp object, or killed by the enemy,"¹ if he misrepresented the facts. A warrior was told not to claim more laurels than were due him, otherwise, he was not allowed to wear the badge of honor. Some of the tribes punished liars by burning their tents with the sanction of the tribe. Many instances are on record where promises have been kept by Indians even at the risk of death. The young were taught to be honest. This honesty was not flawless, for it might not extend beyond the tribe, however, in not a few cases it embraced other tribes that were friendly. In war pillage was deemed legitimate. They thought it was not wrong to steal horses from their enemies. When a family left their dwelling to go elsewhere on a journey, as among the Zuni, the door was closed, sealed with clay, and it remained inviolate. When leaving the village the Nez Perces put a pole across the door of their lodge and nothing was molested. Petty stealing was uncommon.

With the Teton Dakotas wife stealing was a recognized sport, but it was not practiced upon the members of the same war party or war society. "One does not meddle with the wife of a fellow-member."² The same writer states when candidates are about to join the Kit-Fox-Society, of the

1. Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, The Omaha, B. A. E. W.

2. Wallis, An Introduction to Anthropology, p. 311.



Home of Henry Watt, near Chance,
Oklahoma.



Nancy Hummingbird, and her
grandchildren, 3 miles North-
west of Stilwell, Oklahoma.



Cherry Tree Church, full-blood Cherokee
Indians, four and one-half miles South
of Stilwell, Oklahoma.



Fort Still School, five
miles South of Stilwell,
Oklahoma.

Oglala division of the Teton Dakotas, instructions are given which are replete with moral injunctions, having particular reference to their conduct towards fellow-members of the organization.¹ The candidates are advised to be brave before both friends and foes, to assist the needy (except among foes), not to steal from members, and to cheerfully comply with the rules of the hunt and camp.²

The various tribes punish adultery. Sometimes the Apaches punish an erring woman by cutting off her nose. Some tribes went so far as to mete out death. A Navajo myth relates the misfortunes which first came to the Hopi, and next to the Navajo, because of their cruel treatment of two twin boys, one lame and the other blind. In return for this harshness the boys sent various pests, among them worms, which destroyed the corn of the Navajos.³

Virtually all tribes observed the rights of hospitality. At times some of them even extended hospitality to their foes.

For the most part the young respected the family claims and cared for the old. If life was hard, and food scarce, and the aged a burden unable to do anything for themselves, endangering the welfare of the tribe, sometimes they were abandoned or put to death in the interest of the life of the

1. Wallis, *An Introduction to Anthropology*, pp. 311-312.

2. Clark Wissler, *The Teton Dakota*, AM.XI, 1912.

3. Wallis, *An Introduction to Anthropology*, p. 319.

tribe. In such cases the aged acquiesced, as they desired the tribe to survive.

The Indians, believing witches and wizards brought sickness and death to the community, punished them with death for the protection of society. Had they better understood the cause of disease their ethics would have been on a higher plane.

"Truth, honesty, and safeguarding of human life were everywhere recognized as essential to the peace and prosperity of a tribe, and social customs endorsed their observance; the community could not otherwise keep together, much less hold its own against enemies, for except where tribes were allies, or bound by some friendly tie, they were mutual enemies. An unaccredited stranger was always presumably an enemy."¹

Proverbs of an ethical nature were few among the natives. Wallis² has collected the following from the area of the Omahas and Plains Indians: "Stolen food never satisfies hunger"; "All persons dislike a borrower"; "No one mourns the thriftless"; "The path of the lazy leads to disgrace"; "A man must make his own arrows".

"As a general thing the religion of the Indian, as with all primitive religions, had little to do with his

1. Wallis, Ibid., p. 442.

2. Ibid., pp. 323-324.

ethics. There was, of course, more or less of a blending. To the Indian, religion was a system by which he could acknowledge the powers of the unseen and propitiate them. It meant that by strict conformity to religious ceremonies he might obtain the necessary guarantees of his bodily and spiritual welfare. Religion and magic were but faintly separated in his consciousness. Ethics was another matter, and while presumably the gods might reward the just, it was certain that a man who lived justly with his neighbor, told the truth and lived hospitably, got along better with his neighbor. This meant that peace reigned in the community and not bloodshed. Morality was, therefore, a social expedient and it was certainly an economic expedient. Peaceful men might work together in the production of flints, ornaments, peltries, canoes and other articles of trade."¹

Along the same line is another statement touching the relation between their religion and ethics. "Only in so far as man in his religious relations to the outer world endeavors to follow certain rules of conduct, in order to avoid evil effect, is a relation between primitive religion and ethics established."²

"Roger Williams, himself living the simple life of the Indian, gives us a vivid glimpse of the Indian's ethics when

1. Lindquist, The Red Man in the U. S., p. 53.

2. Bulletin #7, Office of Indian Affairs, Dept. of Interior, Washington.

he exclaims:

'If Nature's sons both wild and tame
Humane and courteous be,
How ill becomes the sons of God
To want Humanity!'"¹

Religion entered into every phase of the life of the American aborigines and his moral life is no exception to the rule.

1. Lindquist, The Red Man in the U. S., p. 53.

Chapter Two

A General Statement Concerning the Cherokee Indians.

Chapter Two

A General Statement Concerning the Cherokee Indians.

The Cherokee Indians, of remote Iroquoian affinity,¹ constituted the largest and most important native tribe of the eastern United States, living, when first visited by the Spanish, French, and English in the entire mountain region of the southern Alleghenies, including western North Carolina, western South Carolina, southwestern Virginia, eastern Tennessee, northern Georgia, and northeastern Alabama, a territory comprising an area of some forty thousand square miles, and claiming the country even to the Ohio river. The Cherokees² probably originated in the North because the archaeological, linguistic, and traditional evidence points in that direction.³ When first visited by De Soto in 1540 they were in possession of their southern lands. Echota, located on the south bank of the Little Tennessee, was widely regarded as the capital of the Nation. The frontiers of their country had no fixed boundaries, and on every side they were contested with rival claimants. Their principal settlements were near the headwaters of the Hiwassee, Savannah and

1. Benj. S. Barton, *New Views on the Tribes and Nations of America*, p. xiv, Philadelphia, 1797; Albert Gallatin, *Synopsis of Indian Tribes*, Trans. American Antiquarian Society, II, p. 91, Cambridge, 1836; J. M. B. Hewitt, *The Cherokee, An Iroquoian Language*, 1887, Washington, MS. in archives Bureau Am. Eth.

2. Many of the older writers treating the Cherokee Tribe used the word Cherokee as present day writers use the word Cherokees. When the term is plural I use it as Cherokees rather than as Cherokee. This is in keeping with the prevailing custom among the tribesmen themselves.

3. *Handbook of American Indians*, Pt. I, p. 246. See also Brinton, *Wallum Olum*, p. 231, Philadelphia, 1885.

Tuskasegee rivers, and along the Little Tennessee to its union with the main stream. They were devoted to their high-land estate. "The sun and stars rose and set benignly on the grandly picturesque region, and the smoke of the villages ascended as incense of Thanksgiving. Virgil sang of that illustrious home, founded on the Tiber by conquered refugees from Troy, but who shall adequately celebrate the splendors of that Cherokee home built on the bright rivers of the southern mountains?"¹

A number of students and travelers have called attention to the charm of the Cherokee territory. "Their whole country was the most beautiful and romantic in the known world. Their springs of delicious water gushed out of every hill and mountainside. Their lovely rivers meandered, now slowly and gently, through the most fertile valleys, and then, with the precipitancy and fleetness of the winds, rushed over cataracts and through mountain gaps. The forests were full of game, the rivers abounded with fish, the vales teemed with their various productions and the mountains with fruit, while the pure atmosphere consummated the happiness of the blest Cherokees."²

Bancroft³ has described the land of the Cherokees in the following language: "The Cherokees occupied the most pic-

1. W. R. L. Smith, The Story of the Cherokees, p. 19, 1928.
2. Albert J. Pickett, Hist. of Alabama, p. 141, 1851.
3. Hist. of the U. S., Vol. 2, pp. 95-96.

turesque and salubrious region east of the Mississippi. Their homes were encircled by blue hills rising beyond hills, of which the lofty peaks would kindle with the early light, and overshadowing ridges envelop the valleys like a mass of clouds. There the rocky cliffs, rising in naked grandeur, defy the lightning, and mock the loudest peals of the thunder-storm; there the gentle slopes are covered with magnolias and flowering forest trees, decorated with roving climbers, and ring with the perpetual note of the whip-poor-will; there wholesome water gushes profusely from the earth in transparent springs; snow-white cascades glitter on the hillsides; and the rivers, shallow but pleasant to the eye, rush through the narrow vales, which the abundant strawberry crimsons, and coppices of rhododendron and flaming azalea adorn. At the fall of the leaf, the fruit of the hickory and the chestnut is thickly strown on the ground. The fertile soil teems with luxuriant herbage, on which the roebuck fattens; the vivifying breeze is laden with fragrance; the daybreak is ever welcomed by the shrill cries of the social nighthawk and the liquid carols of the mocking-bird. Through this lovely region were scattered the villages of the Cherokee, nearly fifty in number, each consisting of but a few cabins, erected where the bend in the mountain stream offered at once a defense and a strip of alluvial soil for culture. Their towns were always by the side of some creek or river, and they loved their native land; above all, they

loved its rivers, the Keowee, the Tugeloo, the Flint, and the beautiful branches of the Tennessee. Running waters, inviting to the bath, tempting to the angler, alluring wild fowl, were necessary to their paradise."

The celebrated botanist, Asa Gray, said he found a larger variety of trees in the journey of a day in the Great Smoky Mountains than are native to all of Europe. He placed the number at one hundred and thirty-six. He found forest shrubs and species of flowers amounting to one hundred and seventy-four.¹

The Name Cherokee.

One finds considerable disagreement as to the origin and significance of the word Cherokee. It may be a corruption of Tsa'lagi or Tsa'ragi, the name by which they frequently call themselves, and which may be traced to the Choctaw word, Chiluk-ki, signifying a cave or a pit, hence they are thought of as "cave people", in allusion to the many caves in their rugged country. The name given them by the Iroquois was Oyata'ge'ronon, as Hewitt has pointed out, and it means "inhabitants of the cave country", for they resided in a region where caves were numerous, where "rock shelters" have been found containing evidence of former occupancy. Gatschet states their Catawba name, Manteron, connotes "coming out of the ground", which is

1. Henry Timberlake, Memoirs, p. 70.

essentially the same idea.¹ Parker interprets the word, Cherokee, to mean "upland fields."²

They sometimes call themselves Yun'wiya or Ani'-Yun-wiya, that is, "real people" or "principal people." No doubt this is the result of tribal egotism. On ceremonial occasions they often refer to themselves as Ani'Kitu'hwagi, a word which properly denotes Indians as distinguished from people of other races, but they employ it in a restricted sense so as to include only members of the Cherokee tribe. This word also means "people of Kituhwa",³ having in mind one of the most important of their early towns on the Tuskasegee river. The Delawares and connected tribes called them "Kittuwa" from the settlement just mentioned. Among the Cherokees now living in Oklahoma this name has been adopted by a society of fullblood tribesmen who have pledged themselves to resist all the advances of white civilization among their people.³

Adair attempted to connect the word Cherokee with Atsila, meaning fire. Mooney⁴ thinks Adair failed to understand the derivation of the term. Emmet Starr⁵ explains it in this way: "The name Cherokee has its origin in two

1. See J. J. Mooney, Bureau Am. Eth., 19th Report, part I, p. 15.

2. Thos. V. Parker, Cherokee Indians, p. 3, 1907.

3. The word is variously spelled by different authors.

4. 19th Report, B. A. E. W., Part I, pp. 15-16.

5. Early History of the Cherokees, p. 7, 1917. Starr was a part blood Cherokee.

Cherokee words; a-che-la, meaning fire, and ah-gi, he takes. The expression has its emanation in the belief that at the creation, the Great Spirit gave to this tribe a sacred fire, with the admonition that they were to keep it perpetually burning, and that on this fire the Ku-ta-ni or priests were to offer sacrifice."

Mooney claims the word Cherokee has no meaning in the Cherokee language and that it looks to be of foreign origin.¹ "It first appears as Chalaque in the Portuguese narrative of De Soto's expedition, published originally in 1557, while we find Cheraqui in a French document of 1699, and Cherokee as English from as early, at least, as 1708."² The name has an authentic history of more than three hundred and ninety years. The infancy of a word, like infancy in biography, is often regarded as unimportant and lost in obscurity.

The Cherokee Dialects.

The language of the Cherokees has three principal dialects: (1) Elati, Eastern or Lower, which was spoken originally upon the water of Tugaloo and Keowee, the fountain-heads of the Savannah river, in South Carolina, and the adjacent territory of Georgia. The outstanding feature of this dialect was the rolling of the r sound. It takes the place of the l of the other dialects. The people who spoke this dialect lived

1. Mooney, 19th Report, B. A. E. W., pp. 15-16.

2. Ibid., Same reference.

on the frontiers bordering the white settlements of the Carolinas, so this region was the first to feel the influence of the wars from 1760 to 1776, and by the close of the Revolutionary struggle they had been driven from their homes and were scattered as refugees among the western towns of the tribe. The result was they gradually lost their distinct dialect, and it is now extinct.

(2) The Middle or Kituwa dialect was spoken on the streams feeding the Tuskasegee. It is now the prevailing dialect of the Eastern Cherokees. It is used in the very heart of the old Cherokee country. In some of its phonetic forms it is not unlike the Lower dialect, though it resembles the Western dialect in having the l sound. The Lower Cherokees moved from place to place, subsisting mostly on hunting and fishing. Those who spoke the Middle dialect depended for a livelihood on the fruits of the soil. They were friendly with the whites.

(3) A'tali, Western, Mountain or Upper dialect was spoken in most of the upper part of Georgia, and the extreme western portion of North Carolina drained by the Hiwasee and Cheowa rivers. "It is the softest and most musical of all the dialects of this musical language, having a frequent liquid l and eliding many of the harsher consonants found in the other forms."¹ This dialect is employed exclusively in the tribal literature. Those who spoke it followed the

1. . Mooney, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part 1, pp. 16-17.

pursuits of civilized men.¹ It is the dialect of most of the Oklahoma Cherokees. These divisions have no social or political significance.

Founding the Nation.

According to an old tradition the Cherokee Nation was founded by seven brothers, who came originally from the east, but this was so long ago all traces of the time of their coming have disappeared. In keeping with the demands of the unwritten law of the tribe their names have been handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth on the part of the women until the beginning of written records, which was early in the second quarter of the 19th century. Mrs. Narcissa Owen² gives the names of the brothers as follows: Long Hair (Arni Kilawhi), Blind Savannah, The Painter (Arni Waut), The Deer, The Wolf, The Acorn, and The Holly.

It is said that for a long long time the brothers lived together in peace and harmony. As their descendants increased, as their children and grandchildren grew to be men and women, new interests of various kinds engendered conflicts that were unexpected and undesirable. Each mother pursued the

1. Thos. V. Parker, Cherokee Indians, p. 12.

2. Mrs. Narcissa Owen, Memoirs, p. 11, 1907. Mrs. Owen was a daughter of Thomas Chisholm, a friend of Thos. Jefferson. She lived among the Cherokees all her life, being a part Cherokee herself. She learned old traditions and myths from old women; she learned from observation; and she learned from reading books many things about her people. She was acquainted with much Cherokee lore, a part of which she put into her Memoirs. She was the mother of former U. S. Senator, Robert L. Owen, of Oklahoma.

policy of zealously, rather than wisely, championing the cause of her own offspring. This set a rough current moving in the hitherto placid stream of love. In order to meet the new situation the seven brothers concluded the prudent thing to do was to separate, each family living to itself. A council was held where laws were made for the separate government of their families.

From time immemorial the Cherokees have been divided into seven "families" or "houses" or "peoples". A tradition intimates that in distant past ages they first dwelt in six separate towns or communities, each settlement being named for some feature it had unlike the others. For example: here was a town where it was customary to catch and pet a young wolf, consequently it was called Wolf Town. In another location fawns were domesticated, hence it was called Deer Town. In a timbered section of the country, where birds were numerous, especially the nuthatch, was a settlement named Bird Town. One place was called Long Hair Town due to the fact that the men living there wore long hair. The warriors in one community were always painted and ready for war, so their vicinity was known as Paint Town. A sixth place was separated from the others by a swamp where the vegetation was heavy. In passing through it one could see only a short distance ahead, here we have Blind Savannah, or Blind Swamp Town. These towns were really what we would describe as neighborhoods. The people in the separate

communities in the course of time became known as Wolf Town people, Deer Town people, Bird Town people, and so on. Towns with similar names still exist on the Cherokee Reservation in North Carolina.

There is one more town or "town people" to account for. The name of the seventh "town people" is supposed to have originated after this fashion: "Long after the other 'peoples' had become separately known, and their customs had become firmly established, a war party of Cherokees found a baby lying under a holly bush. They did not know to what tribe she belonged. They took her back to the Cherokee nation, where she was adopted by a family. She grew to womanhood, married and became the mother of a large family. In order that her descent in the female line could be classified, it was necessary to create another 'people', and this was done by bestowing upon them the name of 'Holly people', and they were often referred to as the 'young people', on account of the name having been established later than the others."¹

The Seven Clans.

A majority of the early travelers and traders in the Cherokee country were English and Scotch, and seeing somewhat of an analogy between the "seven peoples" just described and the Scottish clans, they became known as the Wolf clan, the Deer clan, the Bird clan, and the like.

1. Emmet Starr, Early Hist. of the Cherokees, pp. 8-12.

The official names of the seven clans are: Ani'-Tsi'skwa (Bird), Ani'wa'ya (Wolf), Ani'Kawi (Deer), Ani'wa'di (Paint), Ani'Saha'ni, Ani'ga'tagewi, and Ani'-Gi-la'hi. The meaning of the last three names cannot be translated into English with certainty. At the present time the western Cherokees have the Wolf clan, Deer clan, Bird clan, Paint clan, as mentioned above, also what they call the Long Hair clan, the Bear clan, and the Ani'-Go-da-ga-wee clan. They have no English equivalent for this last Cherokee word. The Wolf clan is the largest and most important clan. The seven clans are often mentioned in the ritual prayers and attention is called to them in the printed laws of the tribe. Undoubtedly these seven clans have a connection with the "seven mother towns." The two traditions concerning the seven brothers and the origin of the seven towns may be two versions of the same thing. The seven mother towns were described by Cuming in 1730 as having each a chief, whose office was hereditary in the female line. Some evidence exists indicating in ancient days there were fourteen clans, and that these have been reduced by absorption or extinction to seven.¹

1. Bulletin 30, B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 247. Emmet Starr, Early Hist. of the Cherokees, pp. 8-9. A. A. Goldenweiser, says: "A clan may be defined as follows: it comprises individuals partly related by blood and partly conceived as so related; it is hereditary (a person is born into a clan); it is unilateral (the children belonging to the clan of the mother); it has a name. The definition of a gens is the same as that of a clan with the difference that the children follow the gens of the father." Early Civilization, p. 244. Iroquois and Delaware have 3 clans each; Winnebagoes have 12 clans; Algonquin Delaware 3 clans.

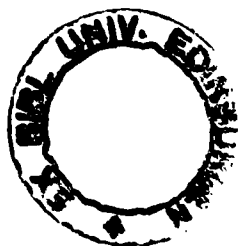
When the seven brothers decided to separate and live in different localities before leaving each other they made certain laws. The first one was a provision to meet annually at their old home. They determined the head of the clan should be Long Hair (Ar-Ni-Ki-law-hi), who, as arbiter at the yearly meeting, would settle such disputes as might arise. Each town was to be governed by its eldest or its best male member. If there was any doubt as to the inheritor of this office the mothers of the head men of the settlement selected the one deemed most worthy of the chieftaincy.

Children of the same clan were not allowed to marry.¹ To break this law was a crime punishable with death. The members of a clan were regarded as brothers and sisters. They thought marriages between members of the same clan would bring about terrible diseases. Children from such a union would be miserably handicapped. It was a means of spreading illness and misery among the tribesmen.

The descent to office was in the mother's side of the family. All clan names followed the mother's side. The influence and place of the mother in Indian life has been grossly underestimated and strangely misunderstood.

A murderer was punished with death, the penalty being

1. Chief John Ross first married Quatie, a full-blood Cherokee, of his own clan, Bird. This was in 1813. Had he done this twelve years earlier the deed would have carried a death penalty with it. His second marriage was to a white lady.



executed by the nearest of kin of the person slain, and in the same manner in which the murderer had committed his crime. Among the seven clans killing was interpreted as murder regardless of whether it was accidental or intentional. They did not recognize what is now termed manslaughter.¹

When the clans gathered for their annual meeting they took with them the bones of their dead, provided the death had not been within the last year, placed them in a mound, and covered them with dirt. This may have been the way mound building began among the Cherokees. Twenty-one miles southeast of Fort Gaines, Georgia, is a mound seventy feet high, six hundred feet in circumference, covered with trees estimated to be five hundred years old.² "A sixty-foot shaft exposed human bones five feet in depth, thoroughly decayed."³ These annual meetings were for the purpose of fostering good will, cultivating better understanding, providing instruction for the young, furnishing friendly intercourse, and laying in the sacred mounds the bones of the dead, "Those who have passed to other lands."⁴

The Personality of the Cherokees.

Different writers have studied the personality of the

1. The National Council in 1824 passed the Act of Oblivion between the seven clans. After Sept. 24, 1824, accidental killing was not considered murder, and anyone who accidentally killed another was set free.

2. Owen, Memoirs, pp. 12-13.

3. Dr. Woodruff, p. 151, 1847.

4. Owen, Memoirs, pp. 11-12.

Cherokees. Pickett¹ says: "The Cherokees were the mountaineers of 'aboriginal America and, like all other mountaineers, adored their country, held to and defended it with heroic devotion, a patriotic constancy and an unyielding tenacity, which cannot be too much admired or eulogized."

The botanist, William Bartram,² who traveled in their country in 1776, notes: "The Cherokees in their disposition and manners are grave and steady, dignified and circumspect in their deportment; rather slow and reserved in their conversation, yet frank, cheerful, and humane; tenacious of the liberties and natural rights of man; secret, deliberate and determined in their councils; honest, just and liberal, and always ready to sacrifice every pleasure and gratification, even their blood and life itself, to defend their territory and maintain their rights."

"The Indians are a proud race of people; but surely none of them have more reason to be proud than have the Cherokees."³ Race pride still obtains among them. In education and in readiness to learn new things the Cherokees have always taken the lead in their race.

Their Physical Characteristics.

Lieutenant Henry Timberlake was among the Cherokees as a representative of the government in the time of

1. Annals of Tennessee, p. 83.

2. Travels in North America, p. 483.

3. Seymour, Flora Warren, The Indians Today, p. 95.

Washington. He has described their physical characteristics in this way: "The males are larger and more robust than any other of our natives, while the women were tall, slender, erect and of delicate frame, with features of perfect symmetry. With cheerful countenance, they moved about with becoming grace and dignity. Their feet and hands were small and exquisitely shaped. The hair of the male was shaved, except a patch on the back of the head, which was ornamented with beads and feathers, or with a colored deer's tail. Their ears were slit and stretched to an enormous size, causing the person who had the cutting performed to undergo incredible pain. They slit but one ear at a time, because the patient had to lay on one side forty days for it to heal. As soon as he could bear the operation wire was wound around them to expand them and when they were entirely well, they were adorned with silver pendants and rings."¹

Bartram² observed the Cherokee men were fine in figure, with regular features, open countenance, "yet the forehead and brow so formed, as to strike you instantly with heroism and bravery; the eye though rather small, yet active and full of fire, the iris always black; and the nose commonly inclining to the aquiline." With one exception³ the men Bartram noticed were large in size. In complexion the

1. Timberlake, Memoirs, quoted from Starr's Early History of the Cherokees, p. 15.

2. Travels in North America, pp. 481-482.

3. Ibid., p. 482. Little Carpenter, or Atta-kulla-kulla, was small of stature, slender, frail in frame, but possessed superior abilities.

Cherokees, like other tribes of their race, are reddish brown, olive or copper color. Their black hair is long, lank, and coarse. They have wide faces, and high cheek-bones that are usually prominent. This description fits the Cherokees reasonably well and is a fair description of most Indians, but it is a mistake to think there are no differences between the tribes; there are many. "There are tribes of tall Indians and tribes of short ones; some that are almost white, and others that are nearly black. There are found among them all shades of brown, some of which are reddish, others yellowish. There are tribes where the eyes appear as oblique or slanting as in the Chinese, and others where they are as straight as among ourselves. Some tribes have heads that are long and narrow; the heads of others are relatively short and wide."¹

Christian Priber.

Christian Priber is reported to have started Christian missions among the Cherokees.² He seems to have been more of a politician than a missionary. The Cherokees enjoyed a pure democracy as a form of government rather loosely organized. Priber, said to have been a Jesuit missionary, and certainly a French agent,³ learned their language, adopted their mode of dress, and won their confidence to such an extent⁴ that

1. Frederick Starr, American Indians, pp. 1-2, 1898.

2. Handbook of American Indians, p. 246. This is disputed by Foster, Story of the Cherokee Bible, pp. 1-4.

3. Mooney, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 15.

4. Rachel Caroline Eaton, John Ross and the Cherokees, p. 17, 1914. See also James Adair, History of American Indians, pp. 240, 243.

he was able to induce them to set up a form of government to secure political unity modeled after the French Monarchy, with A'ganstata (Oconostota), the principal medicine man as emperor, and himself as the emperor's secretary. The capital was located at the Great Tellico, in Tennessee. Priber carried on an official correspondence with the South Carolina government until it was feared he would win the whole tribe over to the French side. Five years after the inauguration of his work he was seized by certain English traders, taken as a prisoner to Frederica, in Georgia, where he died while under confinement.¹

The Revolutionary War.

They consummated their first allegiance with the English in 1730 in one of the mother towns. It was brought about by the skillful work of Alexander Cuming, a man who had traveled extensively among the southern tribes. How he did it, or what methods he employed, is a matter of misty history. Any way they declared themselves dutiful subjects of King George.² In this treaty they agreed to trade with no one but England, only Englishmen were allowed to build forts, construct cabins or plant corn among them.³ For all of these concessions they carried home a generous supply of paint, a few pounds of

1. Mooney, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part 1, pp. 15, 36-37.

2. Foster, Story of the Cherokee Bible, pp. 11-12.

3. A. Hewat, Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Colonies of South Carolina and Georgia, Vol. II, pp. 3, 9, 11.

worthless beads, and other articles without value. Flattery and courteous treatment blinded them to the weakness of their bargain.¹ However, it was not considered dishonest to cheat the Indians.² During the Revolutionary War they espoused the English cause, as did their northern kinsmen, the Iroquois. Following the years of battle they made the Treaty of Hopewell, in 1775, with the American Government, exchanged prisoners, pledged their friendship and peace, and "at once took up the road to civilization."³ They quickly reached a high stage of prosperity and advancement, due largely, to the helpful influence of missionaries and the presence among them of mixed-bloods, descendants of former Scotch and English traders. About the time of the war parties of Cherokees went down the Tennessee river where settlements were established at Chickamauga and other points near the Tennessee and Alabama line. Soon after 1800 missionary and educational work made progress among them. They adopted a regular civilized form of government in 1820. Seven years later they formulated a constitution under the name of the "Cherokee Nation." Meantime large numbers of the more conservative Cherokees, being unfriendly to the stipulations of the Treaty of Hopewell, and being dissatisfied with the continued en-

1. Eaton, John Ross and the Cherokees, p. 13.

2. Ibid., p. 13.

3. New International Encly., Vol. V, p. 147.

encroachment of the whites,¹ had crossed the Mississippi river, and built new homes in what is now Arkansas. Removal west on a large scale was suggested by President Thomas Jefferson in 1803. In 1821, Sequoyah, a mixed-blood, after years of thoughtful labor, invented the Cherokee alphabet, which presently lifted his tribe to the rank of a literary people.

The Removal West.

Just about the time they were at the summit of their prosperity gold was discovered in Georgia, near the present Dahlonega, within the borders of the Cherokee Nation, with the immediate result strong pressure was exerted to compel them to go west beyond the Mississippi river. A large majority of the Cherokees, under the able leadership of Chief John Ross,² did all they could to retain their tribal homes, but in the course of time were forced to yield to the inevitable. The Ridge Party³ saw it was impossible for them to remain where they were, consequently they advocated

1. Parker, The Cherokee Indians, pp. 11-12. The whites were not to intrude on the Indian lands. "Whether through ignorance, carelessness or greed, there was a constant intrusion on Indian land. The tide of migration was coming from the north and east and was sweeping toward the southwest. Hence the endeavor to procure treaties of settlement and cession." Parker, pp. 11-12.

2. John Ross was 7/8 Scotch, the son of Daniel Ross, and a mixed-blood Cherokee woman. He belonged to the Bird clan. He was the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation from 1827 to 1866.

3. Major Ridge, his son John, and Elias Boudinot were the leaders of this party. The policy of Ross committed the tribe to the horrors of a forcible removal, for he considered only justice, not expediency. Along with friends and neighbors, some 2000, the Ridges and Boudinots voluntarily came west in 1837.

removal under the most favorable terms obtainable. The State of Georgia demanded that they go, and go without unnecessary delay. Unjust laws were enacted which discriminated against them. The finding of gold was one cause for this policy. The fact the Cherokees helped the British during the Revolutionary War added to their unpopularity with the Georgians and may be assigned as a second reason for insisting on their removal. While the United States Supreme Court in a decision upheld the autonomy of the Cherokee Nation, nevertheless, the State of Georgia extended her laws over their country, and President Andrew Jackson did not interfere in their behalf.¹ "Despite the repeated and energetic protests of more than nine-tenths of the Cherokee Nation, a treaty was negotiated with a small faction² which bound the tribe to remove within three years beyond the Mississippi whither a small portion of them had moved some years before. The Cherokees repudiated this instrument,³ and in 1838 they were removed by military force, several thousands dying on the march or from hardships incident to the removal."⁴

General Winfield Scott had charge of the removal. On

1. One is not to attribute ill will, unfair attitude, or unreasoning obstinacy to Pres. Jackson. He was faced with a serious situation and tried to do what would cause the least internal disturbance. For a further discussion of this subject see Smith, The Story of the Cherokees, p. 145.

2. The Ridge Party mentioned on the preceding page.

3. The Treaty was made at New Echota, December 29, 1835. They sold their lands for \$5,000,000.00 and agreed to go west to a country set apart for them, what is now northeastern Oklahoma.

4. New International Encly., Vol. V, pp. 146-147.

May 10th, 1838, he issued a proclamation with the explicit injunction every Cherokee man, woman and child must be in movement to the west within a month. To safeguard against possible uprisings they had been disarmed previously by General Wool. Troops were distributed in all sections of the country. Thirteen stockade forts were used as assembling places. The Cherokees reached the west in March, 1839, after a journey of six months or more, having suffered a loss of almost one-fourth of their number.

The National Government was reestablished at Tahlequah, Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, with a Principal Chief, a Senate, House of Representatives, and courts. Schools, including primary schools, a Seminary for Boys, and a Seminary for Girls,¹ were established and supported by the nation. Other institutions, as an orphanage and an asylum, were built. A Newspaper, The Cherokee Phoenix, originally published in the East, was continued at Tahlequah. Later the name was changed to the Cherokee Advocate. It was a National paper, sponsoring National policies, and the editor was elected by the National Council.

"A part of the Arkansas Cherokee had previously gone

1. The two Seminaries, located near Tahlequah, in scholastic standing were about the same as our present High Schools. The Seminary for Boys burned about twenty years ago and was not rebuilt. The Seminary for girls burned about forty years ago and was rebuilt in Tahlequah. After statehood it was purchased by the state and changed into the Northeastern State Teachers College. It is now the oldest institution of higher learning in Oklahoma.

down into Texas where they had obtained a grant of land in the eastern part of the state from the Mexican Government. The later Texan revolutionists refused to recognize their rights, and in spite of the efforts of General Sam Houston, who defended the Indian claim, a conflict was precipitated, resulting, in 1839, in the killing of the Cherokee chief, Bowl, with a large number of his men, by the Texan troops, and the expulsion of the Cherokee from Texas."¹

Eastern Cherokees.

Among those who would not submit to moving was an old Indian known as Charley. Officers were conducting him, together with his three sons, his brother, and their families to one of the meeting places. The unkind manner in which they treated his wife embittered him and made him desperate. He persuaded his comrades to join him in a dash for liberty. The movement was so daring and unexpected the officers in charge were not ready to cope with it, so the Indians made their escape to the mountains where they subsisted on roots and wild berries while officers sought them. Hundreds of others, heartened by the example of Charley and his companions, dashed away to the hills and caves. General Scott found it virtually impossible to capture them. He proposed to leave the fugitives alone if they would surrender

1. Starr, Early History of the Cherokees, p. 180, reports the Texas Cherokees numbered 100 warriors and 200 women and children.

Charley. "On hearing the proposition, Charley voluntarily came in with his sons and brother, offering himself as a sacrifice for his people."¹ Charley, two of his boys, and his brother were shot to death. The Eastern Band of Cherokees now living principally on the Qualla Reservation² in Swain and Jackson counties, also in scattered settlements in Graham and Cherokee counties, in western North Carolina, arose from these fugitives, more than a thousand in number. Subsequent developments show it would have been better for the fugitives and their descendants, had they gone west with their tribesmen. They have not shared in the progress and good fortunes of the Oklahoma Cherokees. As wards of the government they "are relatively unprogressive, and practically regarded by their western kinsmen as uninteresting strangers."³ After the general removal they were left lonely and helpless, impoverished and unorganized. In 1881 the Western Cherokees invited them to come to the Cherokee Nation and be received on equal terms with other members of the tribe. Less than two hundred took advantage of the opportunity. They are likely to stay in the lands of their fathers. They live, as a rule, in one-room log cabins, windowless, hidden here and there in the valleys and on the

1. Smith, The Story of the Cherokees, p. 167.

2. The Qualla Reservation comprises 63,000 acres; 20,000 are tillable, 30,000 fit for grazing, and the rest in mountain timber land.

3. Smith, The Story of the Cherokees, p. 224.

remote mountain sides. These cabins are equipped with open hearths, and such modern furniture as beds, tables, chairs, kerosene lamps, and occasionally a sewing machine. These Indians live on a plain diet as corn bread, hominy, corn soup, beans, a little wild game and fish caught in nearby streams. They dress very much as white people except for the use of moccasins now and then. Most of the women wear turbans made of bandana handkerchiefs. Some do not wear shoes during the winter season. They do a small amount of work in basketry, pottery, and the making of beads.¹ They engage in play-ball and various dances as forms of amusement. The religious significance of the basketry, pottery, the colors of the beads, the ball-play and dances has been forgotten. Very few, if any, of them hold to their ancestral faith.²

A century ago it was thought no white man would ever care to live west of the Mississippi river. Since this western country contained an abundance of game and fish, it was thought to be an ideal home for the Indians. The United States government gave to the Cherokees, along with other

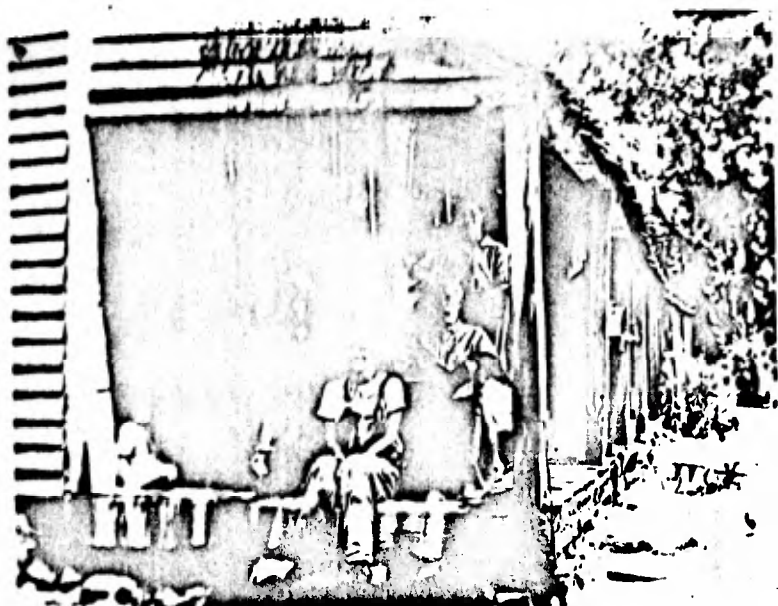
1. I was on the Qualla Reservation in July, 1930, at Cherokee, North Carolina. I saw examples of their basketry, pottery and their beads, and made careful inquiry about their religious significance to learn this is a thing of the past. Various colors are used in these arts, even the colors mean nothing now.

2. When I was on the Reservation, July, 1930, Chief Owl and Will French, both well qualified to speak on the subject, told me there were no old altars among them, they have no annual religious gathering now. The Eastern Cherokees are mostly Baptists, with a few Methodists. The old faith seems to be gone.

tribes, land in what is now eastern Oklahoma, and it was to be theirs for ever to rule as they pleased. White men were to be kept out.¹

White men in the Indian Territory were denominated "intruders". In rather large numbers they found their way into the Indian country, some getting in by permission of the chiefs, some were related to the tribes, some married Indian women, some were adopted by the tribe, and some were just plain "intruders". Their presence led to confusion and misunderstanding. For the most part they lived on land not occupied by Indians but land belonging to the Indians. The laws were so framed the Indians had no authority over them except to drive them out. The Dawes Commission, created by the United States government in November, 1893, was brought into being to handle this problem, along with others, pertaining to Indian life. The coming of the Commission was opposed by the more conservative Cherokees, although as in other cases, they were forced to submit. The Commission, beginning its work in 1894, discovered about 300,000 whites, 54,000 of whom were part Indian, among the tribesmen. The land had always been held in common as tribal property. The Commission enrolled the Indians and the land was divided severally, in other words, each individual received an allotment of land.

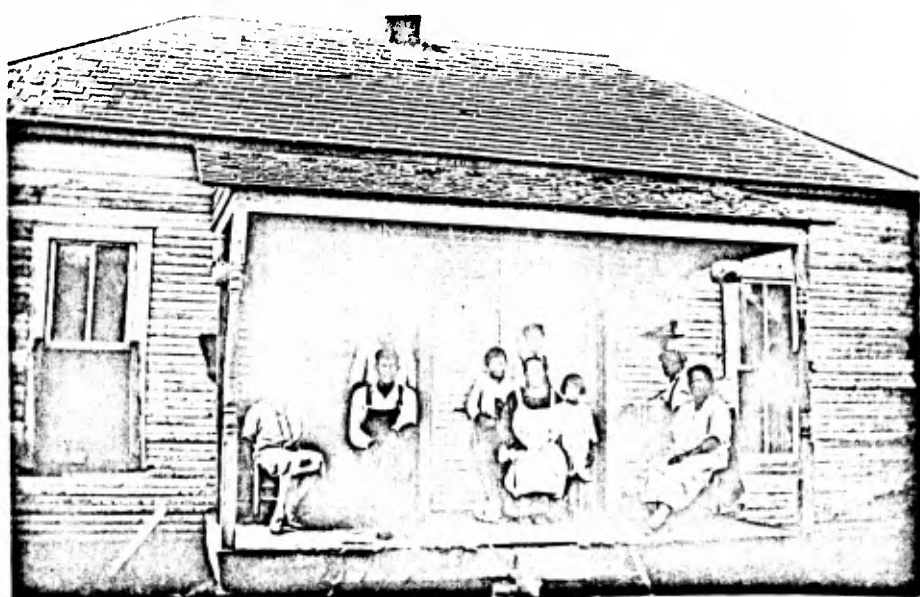
1. Seymour, Flora Warren, The Indians Today, p. 79, 1926.



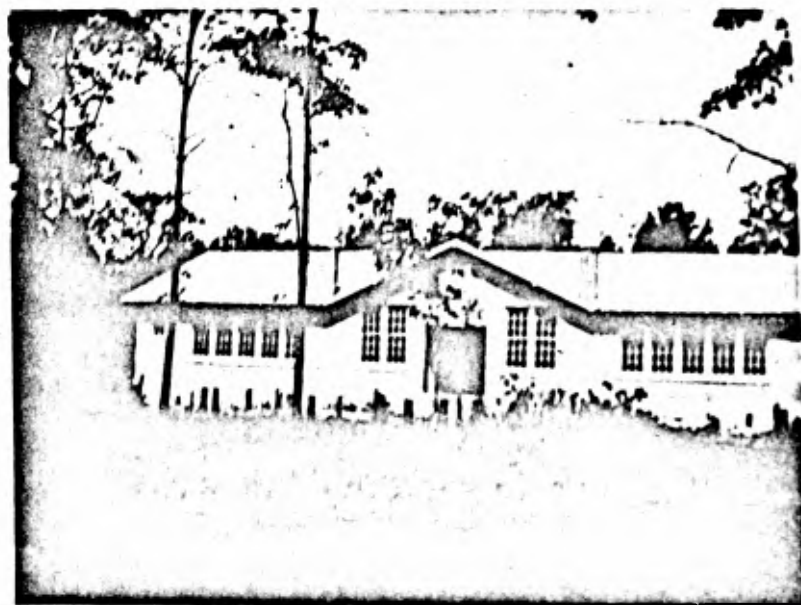
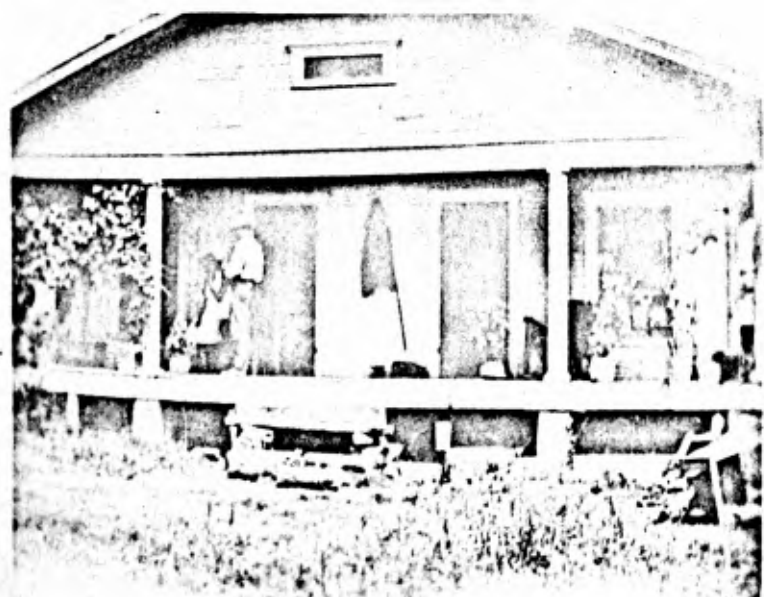
Home of John M. Sanders, showing one of the first houses built after the Civil War, located one-half mile South of Wauhatchie, Oklahoma.



Home of Joe Feather, showing himself and family, located six miles South of Stilwell, Oklahoma.



Home of Mary Beamer, located near Woody's, Oklahoma.



A model school, said to be the best in Adair County, is built of brick and supplied with water from a cave near its location.

The Civil War.

The outbreak of the Civil War brought division among the Cherokees as the removal had done. One party favored secession; the other party, composed mainly of the Ross element, befriended the cause of the Union. They were called "Pin Indians" from the badges they wore. The sentiment was about equally divided, possibly more soldiers enlisting on the side of the South than with the Union fighters. Many of the Cherokees were slave holders, the Indian agent¹ at the time gave his allegiance to the South, and the Confederate armies were near, so as might be expected under the circumstances, as a tribe they entered the War on the side of the South, although they furnished large contingents of men to both governments. Chief John Ross undertook the difficult task of trying to maintain a position of neutrality. His attitude did not bring him popularity either with the North or the South, with the United States or the Cherokee Nation. The tribe was without an official leader. While he claimed to be loyal to the Union, he was first of all a Cherokee. Before the War was ended, together with some of his relatives and friends, he took refuge in the city of Philadelphia, leaving his tribesmen to their fate. They endured intense suffering due to a scarcity of food and army supplies; their country was overrun by both armies, and much of their property was destroyed. In 1866 or

1. McCullough.

1867 a treaty of peace was made with them whereby they freed their negro slaves, admitted them, unwillingly, to the full rights of citizenship, and again the tribe enjoyed the protection of the government of the United States.

The Last Days.

In the years 1867 and 1870 the Delawares and Shawnees, numbering together 1,750, were admitted from Kansas, and incorporated with the Cherokee Nation. With the Miamis, Ottawas, Wyandottes, and others they were granted land in the north-east corner of the Cherokee holdings. Later valuable lead and zinc mines were developed there and many of these Indians became immensely wealthy.

The United States government induced the Cherokees in 1892 to sell their Western Territorial Extension, known as the "Cherokee Outlet", a vast region of 6,000,000 acres for \$8,600,000.00 or about \$1.43 per acre.¹ On one division of this area the Osage Indians were given homes. With the passing of the years oil was found on this territory. The Osages became the wealthiest of the Indians. With the loss of their gold in Georgia, and the loss of their oil and lead and zinc in Oklahoma, the Cherokees remained the poorest of the Civilized Tribes.² Their poverty may have aided their growth in citizenship. Not being able to live on royalties

1. \$1.00 is equal to about 4 shillings.

2. The five Civilized Tribes are: Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, and Seminole.

from oil and mineral they found it necessary to engage in the trades and professions and some of them have become prominent in State and National affairs.¹

"In 1889 the Cherokee Commission was created for the purpose of abolishing the tribal governments and opening the territories to white settlement, with the result that after fifteen years of negotiation an agreement was made by which the government of the Cherokee Nation came to a final end March 3, 1906; the Indian lands were divided, and the Cherokee Indians, native and adopted, became citizens of the United States."²

"So for every reason it seemed best to bring this country, which was inside the United States and yet outside of it, under the same rules that existed for other parts of the land. After many discussions, in 1907, the State of Oklahoma was admitted to the Union. There had been long disputes as to whether Oklahoma and the Indian Territory should come in as two separate States or should be joined together as a single State. It was finally decided to unite them and the name of Oklahoma was given to the new State."³

By 1914 the affairs of the Cherokee Nation were settled.

1. Robert L. Owen, former U. S. Senator from Oklahoma, Houston B. Teehee, Registry of U. S. Treasury, Wilson Adm., and Rep. W. W. Hastings.

2. Handbook of Am. Indians, Part 1, p. 247.

3. Seymour, The Indians Today, p. 92. The Western part of the present State of Oklahoma was called Oklahoma Territory; the eastern part was called the Indian Territory. In Statehood these two territories were united.

Forty thousand Cherokees received land. Other tribal property was divided among them. Much of the Cherokee land is still restricted.¹

Missions.

Aside from the efforts of Priber and the Federal Government no attempt was made to civilize and convert the Cherokees before the end of the eighteenth century. During the same period they were morally perverted by the liquor of the white man which was nothing less than a blight and a curse to them.

The Moravians established the first mission station among them in 1801. It really grew out of the ambition of the Cherokees to educate their children rather than to embrace the new religion.²

The Presbyterians established a mission at Maryville, Tennessee, in 1804. The American Board of Foreign Missions founded the famous Baptist school at Brainard Mission in 1817. Up until 1818 there were few converts to the Christian religion. The numbers increased later.³

Revival of Old Customs.

At the present time an effort is being made by a certain group of Cherokees to build up their old faith and to preserve

1. Restricted land is free from taxes and the owner can not dispose of it without the consent of the U. S. government.

2. Eaton, John Ross and the Cherokees, p. 18.

3. Moffett, The Am. Inds. on the New Trail, p. 157, 1922. The figures quoted are for 1922.

their old rites. This movement is sponsored by the Nighthawks or Keetoowahs. They have monthly meetings at five different council grounds. The Keetoowah organization has more than one thousand members made up of full-bloods who embrace the old religion as they understand it. To the uninitiated bystander what they do may not appear significant, but to the Indians themselves it is keeping the faith of their fathers.¹ "The present conditions are not properly a back-set but a reappearance. The simple truth is, it takes more to convert an Indian than we have imagined. Disappointment follows in the Indian mission work. Christianity seems generally accepted, heathen ceremonies are suspended, the medicine-man falls into the background, and a new era is established. Then some of the converts are found calling in the conjurers for the sick, pagan orgies begin again, and church-members join in their dances, and 'throw away' their property. The wife of an aged Indian pastor was sick and in pain, and she compelled her husband to go out of doors with his gun to shoot the ghosts that were troubling her."²

A recent survey shows 600 unevangelized Cherokees in the East and about 2,000 in the West. These are full-blood Indians.³ The medicine men are active. On the Qualla

1. Eaton, John Ross and the Cherokees, pp. 18-19.

2. Moffett, The Am. Inds. on the New Trail, p. 157, 1922.
The figures quoted are for 1922.

3. Ibid., p. 158.

Reservation they deal mostly with medicine, while in Oklahoma they are the religious prophets with the medicine work a matter of secondary importance.¹

Population.

"The Cherokee are probably as numerous now as at any period in their history. With the exception of an estimate in 1730, which placed them at about 20,000, most of those up to a recent period gave them 12,000 or 14,000, and in 1758 they were computed at only 7,500. The majority of the earlier estimates are probably too low, as the Cherokee occupied so extensive a territory that only a part of them came in contact with the whites."² Governor Johnson estimated them in 1708 at 60 villages.³ At the time of the removal they numbered 16,542. The Civil War again checked their growth. In 1885 they had 19,000. In 1902 there were reported officially 28,016 persons of Cherokee blood. Living among them at that time were 3,000 adopted freedmen, 2,000 adopted whites, and about 1,700 adopted Delawares and Shawnees and other tribes. The number is now 45,238.⁴

1. These conclusions have been reached as a result of conversation with Chief Owl and Will French who live on the Qualla Reservation, Cherokee, N. C., and Chief Sam Smith, Vian, Oklahoma, and John Smith, Gore, Oklahoma.

2. Handbook Am. Indians, Part 1, p. 247.

3. Gov. Johnson's Report on Rivers, pp. 93, 94, 103, 1874.

4. United States Census. 1930.

.Chapter Three

The Beliefs of the Cherokee Indians

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The Beliefs of the Cherokee Indians.

Uninformed travelers have asserted the American Indians had no religion except the strange customs and practices of the medicine men. Joutel¹ after being in the country of the southwest Indians concluded: "As to the knowledge of God it did not seem to us that they had any definite notion about it. True, we found upon our route some who, as far as we could judge believed that there was something exalted, which is above all; but they have neither temples, nor ceremonies, nor prayers, marking a divine worship. That they have no religion, can be said of all whom we saw." Apparently this man was thinking in terms of his own religion, and certainly they did not have a religion like his, but to resolve that they had none, shows hasty judgment or faulty observation, as later studies have revealed. Another man who went to the communities of some of the American natives made this statement: "The Northern nations recognize no divinity from motives of religion."² Le Jeune³ also affirms: "There is among them very little superstition; they think only of living and of revenge; they are not attached to the worship of any divinity." Careful investigations made by men equipped for the task, and the accounts of thoughtful missionaries and prudent travelers

1. Quoted from Bancroft, Hist. of the U.S., Vol. II, p. 433.
2. Ibid., p. 433.
3. Ibid., p. 434.

in early times, reach the determination the American aborigines are essentially religious beings. Almost every act of these people is influenced and controlled by their religious beliefs.

The American Indians were sure some powerful genius had created the world; that unknown divinities had formed the vault above them, and the earth on which they lived. The Red man, unaccustomed to generalization, obtained no conception of an absolute substance, of self-existent being, but saw a divinity in every power. Wherever there was being, motion, or action, there to him was a spirit; and, in a special manner, wherever there appeared singular excellence among beasts or birds, or in the creation, there to him was the presence of a divinity. When he feels his pulse throb or his heart beat, he knows that is a spirit."¹ He believes a god dwells in the flint to make the kindling, cheering fire; a god lives in the moon, the sun, the firmament; a god in the east reddens the morning sky; a household spirit consecrates his wigwam; "spirits climb upon the forehead, to weigh down the eyelids in sleep. Not the heavenly bodies only, the sky is filled with spirits that minister to man. To the savage, divinity, broken, as it were, into an infinite number of fragments, fills all place and all being."² No one contends now that the Indians were without religion. Their religion was

1. Ibid., p. 434.

2. Ibid., p. 434.

different from the religion of the white people, but to them it was religion, and served their needs.

In a general way Mooney¹ makes this splendid contribution to the subject under consideration: "It matters not that we may call this superstition. The difference is only relative. The religion of today has developed from the cruder superstitions of yesterday, and Christianity itself is but an out-growth and enlargement of the beliefs and ceremonies which have been preserved by the Indian in their more ancient form. When we are willing to admit the Indian has a religion which he holds sacred, even though it be different from our own, we can then admire the consistency of the theory, the particularity of the ceremonial and the beauty of the expression. So far from being a jumble of crudities, there is a wonderful completeness about the whole system which is not surpassed even by the ceremonial religions of the East." This does not mean they formulated a statement of their beliefs, or constructed a system of theology. The truth is they had much more religion than they had theology. Some of their beliefs defy rational explanation or comprehension. They had numerous beliefs but no organized and orderly arranged statement of their beliefs, at least, so far as white people have been able to learn.

1. 7th R. B. A. E. W., p. 319.

Their Idea of God.

Undoubtedly the Cherokees were polytheists.¹ Like other tribes, and like primitive peoples as a whole, the Cherokees felt the presence of superhuman or supernatural agencies or powers all about them, not exactly of their kind, and yet not entirely different from them, whose aid, protection and guidance they sought, and who, as they willed, could help or harm them. "In every heart was an altar to an Unknown God."² To the Cherokees all manifestations of the unseen world amounted to the supernatural. "In the vast stillness of the Cherokee hills the human spirit was groping for the invisible reality. It was not a philosophical quest. Such an exercise of faculty was beyond the Indians' childlike mentality. It was simply the pathos of dumb inarticulate longing for the true and the good. Absurdly and grotesque enough did the Cherokee conceive the Divine. Just as all other peoples in early stages of development had grossly caricatured it, so did he. After his own way he was sincerely religious and his conduct was influenced by his fantastic beliefs. He was not a monotheist but a polytheist. If he had any notion of a great spirit it was utterly unclear and inadequate."³ Mooney⁴ is of the opinion they had no Great Spirit. "Yet faith in the Great

1. Mooney, Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees, 7th R. B. A. E. W., p. 319. See also Emmet Starr, Early Hist. of the Cherokees, p. 16; W. R. L. Smith, Story of the Cherokees, p. 31.
2. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 44.
3. W. R. L. Smith, Story of the Cherokees, p. 31.
4. 7th R. B. A. E. W., p. 319.

Spirit, when once presented, was promptly seized and appropriated, and so infused itself into the heart of remotest tribes that it came to be often considered as a portion of their original faith."¹ Mooney also asserts they had "no happy hunting ground, no heaven, no hell,"² consequently they were unafraid to meet death as the future had no terrors and calamities for them.

"The religion of the Cherokees, like that of most of our North American tribes, is zootheism or animal worship, with the survival of that earlier stage designated by Powell as hecastotheism, or the worship of all things tangible, and the beginning of a higher system in which the elements and the great powers of nature are deified. Their pantheon includes gods in heaven above, on the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, but of these the animal gods constitute by far the most numerous class, although the elemental gods are more important. Among the animal gods insects and fishes occupy a subordinate place, while quadrupeds, birds, and reptiles are invoked almost constantly."³ Their gods fall into different classes, so it is well for us to study them according to classes.⁴

1. Bancroft, Hist. of U. S., Vol. II, p. 434.

2. 7th R. B. A. E. W., p. 319.

3. Ibid., p. 340.

4. The classification here followed comes naturally from an examination of Sacred Formulas of Cherokees, 7th R. B. A. E. W.

Animal Gods.

Among the most important of these, and there are many of them, are Uktena (a mythical great horned serpent), the terrapin, the rattlesnake, and various species of the hawk, the rabbit, the squirrel and the dog, besides smaller birds and insects. The size of the animal has nothing to do with the importance of the god, in fact, it has been observed the small animals are more frequently invoked than the larger ones. The Spider plays a prominent part in matters of love and in destroying life, "his duty being to entangle the soul of his victim in the meshes of his web or to pluck it from the body of the doomed man and drag it away to the black coffin, the Darkening Land."¹

Long ago a legend existed among the Cherokees which told about a monster rattlesnake, the Prince of Rattlesnakes, who lived in the mountain ravines and passes, attended in court style by followers of his kind. In the place of a crown he wore on his head a large jewel possessing magic powers. Many of the braves had tried to seize this desirable jewel only to fall victims of the angry reptiles. At length one adventurer, more ingenious than the rest, dressed himself entirely in leather, which made him impervious to the attacks of the snakes, made his way to their abode, slew the monster, carried away the gem to his tribe where it was

1. Ibid., p. 340.

jealously guarded and viewed with profound veneration.¹ In all parts of the continent the Red men honored the rattlesnake.² In temperate climates it slept during the winter months only to appear every spring wearing a new and lovely coat. "Its cast-off skin was carefully collected by the savages and stored in the medicine bag as possessing remedial powers of high excellence. Itself thus immortal, they thought it could impart its vitality to them."³ Spence is of the belief the serpent was the god of fruitfulness.⁴

The rabbit-god often appears in folk tales as Manito Wabos, "and actually overcomes a demi-god and blows him to fragments, the pieces becoming the bits of flint or chert which were formed into the mountainous Cherokee country."⁵ The great Hare appears again and again in the Iroquois and the Algonkins under the names of Manibozho or Michabo. He assumes the form of a half-wizard, and at the same time a

1. This story was related to Timberlake about the middle of the 18th century. See his Memoirs, p. 48. Similar stories of a horned serpent are found among the Hurons, the Creeks, and the Algonkins. This snake had on his head a horn which would pierce any substance, even the hardest rock. To come into possession of a piece of it meant good fortune. The Hurons were a bit uncertain as to the exact haunts of the creature but said the Algonkins were in the habit of selling them small pieces of the horn. (See Myths of the North American Indians, Spence, p. 248.) The Iroquois believed in a great horned serpent rising out of a lake and preying upon the people until a hero-god destroyed it with a thunder bolt. (See Morgan, League of the Iroquois, Rochester, New York, p. 159, 1841.)

2. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 108.

3. Ibid., p. 111. See also Alexander Henry, Travels, p. 117.

4. Hastings Encly. of Regl. and Ethics, Vol. I, p. 503.

5. Ibid., p. 503.

half-numskull, in the late version of the myths "but as the patron and founder of the Algonquian meda-worship he is very different in character, being regarded as the creator of all things, the inventor of picture-writing, the father and guardian of the nation, and the ruler of the winds."¹ He is the culture and hunter hero, seeks his sleep in the autumn, makes his residence in the east, "and in the formulae of the meda-craft, when the winds are invoked to the medicine-lodge, the east is summoned in his name."² Some students of mythology believe there is more than a mere myth of a rabbit-god. "The east is prominent in primitive mythology as the source of the morning. The examination of the Algonquian root wab, the ground work of the name Wabos, proves that, although it has the meaning of 'rabbit', it also implies 'white', and that from it is derived the word for the east, the dawn, the light. Wabos, then, is no mere rabbit-god, but the god of light, of dawn, the dispeller of darkness, as is the Algonquian Michabo. The Iroquois have many Algonquian relationships, and this myth would appear to be one of them."³

The rabbit is thought of as a deceiver and trickster, often beaten by the ones he marks out for his victims. The flesh of the rabbit is not eaten by the ball players because the animal gets so confused and bewildered in running.⁴

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1. Hastings Encly. of Regl. and Ethics, Vol. 1, p. 504.
 2. Ibid., p. 504.
 3. Ibid., p. 504.
 4. 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 262.

The Beaver is invoked in behalf of children cutting teeth due to the ability of the animal to gnaw to pieces even the hardest and toughest of wood. When a child loses a milk tooth whether pulled or just drops out, the child runs around the cabin repeating four times "Dayi, skinta", which means, "Beaver, put a new tooth into my jaw" after which the old tooth is tossed upon the roof of the hut.¹

One is not to confuse the animistic gods with their common representatives that were encountered almost every day, for the animal gods are the primeval animals, the predecessors of the existing species, believed to have been much stronger, larger and more gifted than their successors of the present day. These animal gods now dwell in the upper world, "and exercise a protective supervision over their kind."² The actors, then, in these myths are the progenitors of the earthly animals. "The various animals are always consistently represented as acting in accordance with their well-known characteristics."³

In the old Cherokee mythology it was thought there was no essential difference between man and the animals. All creatures are supposed to have lived and worked together in peace and harmony until man in his selfishness disregarded the rights of the animals.

1. 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 266.

2. Emmet Starr, Early Hist. of the Cherokees, p. 17.

3. 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 262.

Inanimate Gods.

The inanimate gods in the Cherokee category are few in number, the principal one being the Stone, and to this deity the shaman prays while he is searching for any lost article. Before a shaman bleeds a patient he calls upon the Flint for help. He uses flint arrow-heads to cut the skin before the medicine is rubbed on. The Stone and the Flint are objects of veneration among numerous tribes. "Tohil, the god who gave the Kiche of Guatemala fire by shaking his sandals, is represented by flint stones, and they also possessed a myth which recounted how in the beginning of things such a Stone fell from heaven to earth and broke into 1600 pieces, from each of which sprang a god. These myths describe how the worship of flints and stones arose. They were emblems of the thunderbolts, the cause of fecundating rains."¹ They also addressed petitions to the storm, the frost and the clouds.

Plant gods are not influential among the Cherokees, however, infrequently they were conjured, the most important one being the ginseng. This deity is addressed in the Sacred Formulas as "Little Man", or "Great Man", but its rightful Cherokee name is "Mountain Climber". Ginseng, as a god, is believed to bring relief to various painful complaints. It is held in high esteem by the Ojibwas as of divine origin.² "Little Man" made his habitation in the thunder. Sometimes he was invoked in case of childbirth.

1. Hastings Encly. of Regl. and Ethics, Vol. I, p. 504.

2. Mooney, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 241, also p. 341.

Elemental Gods.

The deities that may be classified as elemental gods are the sun, moon, fire, water, and earth. They are the most important of their gods. The Cherokees endowed the bodies of nature with mind very much like themselves, capable of emotion, volition and passion. Smith is authority for the statement the Cherokees thought the sun, moon and stars were great animals moving along the sky.¹ The sun is called Une' lanuhi, that is, "The Apportioner", and is worshipped chiefly by the ball players. "The Indian sits in a tabernacle of the mighty forest or on the heights of some deserted and wind-swept mesa, beats his tomtom or drones song upon song, prays to the great Mystery, pleads with the fires of the sun to give him strength and life and health, and calls the sun the father. The whispering winds tell his tale to the clouds."² The sun is feminine. The moon is masculine. They are brother and sister among the Greenland Eskimo tribes. This is true in most Indian mythology.³ The moon is also connected with the ball-play on the authority of Charles Hicks, a mixed-blood chief.⁴ Indians and Aryans alike, having observed how these great luminaries divide and measure the day and night, summer and winter, with never varying regularity, have given to each a name which

1. W. R. L. Smith, The Story of the Cherokees, p. 32.

2. Dixon, The Vanishing Race, p. 11, 1925.

3. German, Der Mond, Die Sonne.

4. Haywood, Natural and Abor. Hist. of Tennessee, p. 285.

should indicate these characteristics, thus showing how the human mind constantly moves on along the same general channels. Missionaries have naturally, but incorrectly, assumed this Apportioner of all things to be the suppositional "Great Spirit" of the Cherokees, and hence the word is used in the Bible translation as synonymous with God. In ordinary conversation and in the lesser myths the sun is called "Nu inta."

A man who has been working among the Cherokees recently, and who is considered one of the best authorities on the subject, states in substance, the Supreme Deity of the Cherokees is closely associated with the Fire. The Sun and the Fire are practically identical. "The name for God, Une''lanu'hi, does not mean Creator, as those who translated the Bible and the Testament thought, but literally means: 'The Apportioner', the sun, and is often addressed as grand parent. The moon, who is the sun's brother, is often addressed as grand father, and is still the object of a cult. It does not seem quite clear now whether the Sun was a real Supreme Deity; but everything tends to prove that originally it was."¹ No account of the creation myths of the Cherokees mentions a real Creator; the creative action, writes the authority quoted above, "is simply ascribed to an anonymous group referred to as 'they'."²

1. Frans M. Olbrechts, in a MSS which he prepared for me and which is in my possession. He has been working among the Cherokees and the Six Nations for a number of years, especially in the field of Medicine. He has collected several Sacred Formulas to add to the fine collection made by Mooney. In fact, Olbrechts has been completing a task which Mooney left incomplete when he died.

2. Ibid.

"The Apportioner" gave to the Cherokees the four seasons and is the traditional bestower of the 'divine fire', of their ancestors. This deity according to certain full-blood Cherokees¹ is not so much a Creator as he is a God of Providence, one who sends light, provides food, gives health and other such blessings.

Hunters invoked the backing of Fire or the Fire in their undertakings. It is claimed fire worshippers do not actually worship the Fire, but hold it sacred as the dwelling place of some powerful deity. Fire is exceedingly mysterious in the eyes of primitive men. They considered it as one of the essentials of life. There is a close connection between the fire and the sun, both give heat and light, both are esteemed sacred, and both are estimated as the abodes of spirits. The result is the sun worship and fire worship are often combined.² Among the Cherokees they are believed by some students to be separate. "The separate worship of the sun and fire is remarkable, as among the majority of American races what appears on the surface to be sun worship is usually found, upon clear examination, to be attributable to the worship of fire. That this cannot be the case of the Cherokees is plain, as they differentiate between the two, and this discrimination rather sharply separates their worship from the religious practice

1. Will French and Chief Owl, Cherokee Reservation, Cherokee N. C., and Chief Sam Smith, Vian, Okla., and John Smith, Gore, Oklahoma.

2. Verrill, The American Indian, p. 76.

of most other North American tribes."¹ As has been noted² previously the Cherokees believed they had received sacred fire as a special gift of the Great Spirit with the good counsel they were to keep it perpetually burning. This tribe, along with other southern tribes, thought that an everlasting fire burned beneath some of the mounds of their country. It is said the Natchez built their mounds with a view of maintaining a perpetual fire.³

Ranking second among the Cherokee gods is "Long Man" or "Long Person", the representative of water, or river, and no important ceremony is complete without making adjurations to him, as an intercessory spirit, whether the rite had to do with love, medicine, hunting or ball-play. The Cherokees believed there were friendly spirits who lived in the water, and fishermen prayed to them for help in the catch.⁴ They also believed a race of cannibal spirits lived in the water, remaining most of the time at the bottom of deep rivers, and living on human flesh, especially that of children.⁵ An endeavor was made to appease such unfriendly beings.

The wind is another one of their elemental gods. The Creek Indians addressed their supreme deity as Esaugetuh Emisssee, the Master of Breath, which was no doubt at first nothing more than a title. The Cherokees, who lived neighbors

1. Hastings Encly. Regl. & Ethics, Vol.I, p. 504. (Spence)
2. On pp. 44 and 45 of this paper.
3. Handbook of American Indians, See also Dixon in Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. XVII. part 3, 1905.
4. Mooney, Myths of the Cherokees, 19th B. A. E. W., part I, p. 334.
5. Ibid., p. 349-350.

to the Creeks, similarly called the wind by a name or title, Oonna-Oonawleh Unggi, meaning the Eldest of the Winds. In the course of the years this led to the identification of the divine with the natural phenomena of meteorology. The original Choctaw word for deity was Hushtali, that is, the Storm Wind.¹ The Indians were always losing the idea in the symbol which it represented.² "Mixchuatl, the cloud serpent, chief divinity of several tribes of ancient Mexico, is to this day the correct term in their language for the tropical Whirlwind, and the natives of Panama worshipped the same phenomenon under the name Tuyra."³ The simplest and commonest indication in Peru of the worship of the collective deities was to kiss the air.⁴ A number of writers have commented generously on the prominence so often accorded the winds in mythology. "None have traced it to its true source. The facts of meteorology have been thought all sufficient for a solution. As if a man did or ever could draw the idea of God from nature!"⁵ The same authority thinks the reason for regarding the wind as a deity is due to "the identity of the wind with breath, of breath with life, of life with soul, of soul with God."⁶ The evidence of the language confirms this

1. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 51.

2. Ibid., p. 51.

3. Tuyra: Ovideo, Rel. de la Prov. de Cueba, p. 141, ed. Ternaux-Compans.

4. Divinities: Garcia, Origen de los Indios, lib., 4 chap., p. 22.

5. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 52.

6. Ibid., p. 52.

conclusion.

The Cherokees frequently refer to the earth as mother-earth, the giver of food, the sustainer of life, the source and destiny of their bodies, the provider of streams and places to dwell, in short, the one on whom all things seem to depend. In their feasts at the present time the Keetoowah Cherokees make an offering of a piece of bread, or a bite of meat, to mother-earth with a plea for continued help and care before they eat anything themselves.¹

Personal or Anthropomorphic Gods.

Several deities among the Cherokees are classified as personal or anthropomorphic gods. The most important of these and the one most frequently petitioned is a being addressed as "Asgaya Gigagei", which means "Red Man". He is a representative of the east.² Mooney describes him as follows: "He is one of the greatest of gods, being repeatedly called upon in formulas of all kinds, and is hardly subordinate to the Fire, the Water, or the Sun. His identity is as yet uncertain, but he seems to be intimately connected with the Thunder family."³ In a curious marginal note in one of the Gahuni⁴ formulas, it is stated that when the patient

1. One may see this at any of the 5 Keetoowah Council grounds in Oklahoma.

2. The name may come from a root word which means the rising moon. Starr, Early Hist. of the Cherokees, p. 17.

3. Peruvians believe thunderbolts to be the children of the Thunder-God. Twins are regarded as sacred to lightning, thinking them emblematic of the lightning and thunder-twins, Apocatequil and Piguerao, Spence, p. 504.

4. 7th R. B. A. E. W., p. 350.

is a woman the doctor must pray to the Red Man, but when treating a man he must pray to the Red Woman, so that this person seems to have dual sex characteristics."¹ Dr. Olbrechts² regards the thunder as an important Deity, and along with Thunder the "Little Thunderers." This god is described as being red in color, and since the Cherokees were originally a mountainous people, the belief finds favor that He was a Thunder god. The thunder-god of the Peruvians is delineated as red in color, as dwelling far up in the clouds upon the mountain heights. Without doubt the hue of the god has reference to the lightning. The rain-gods of the Mayas were called "The Red Ones". Spence³ attributes this to the fact they emanated from the clouds. The Mexican god of rain, "Tlaloc", made use of a feather shield that was partly red. In the symbolism of the Cherokees red is the color of the east whence comes the sun.⁴

Another god, enormous in proportions, the patron saint of the hunters, is invoked in the hunting songs and prayers as "Tsu'l'kalu", or "Slanting Eyes". His habitation is in the great mountain of the Blue Ridge range in northwest Virginia. He owns all the game. It is possible he is a deer-god. The Nicaraguans worshipped such a deity, and made an

1. Ibid., p. 341.

2. MSS. in my possession in the form of a questionnaire.

3. Hastings Encly. Regl. & Ethics, Vol. I, p. 504.

4. Ibid., p. 504.

offering to him consisting of clotted blood in a napkin.¹

Occasionally the "Little Men", who are likely the two "Thunder Boys", are petitioned. Below is a Sacred Formula in which they are invoked to treat what is called "Black Yellowness", which appears to be an acute form of biliousness, caused the Indians say by revengeful animals, particularly the terrapin, and its kinsman, the turtle.

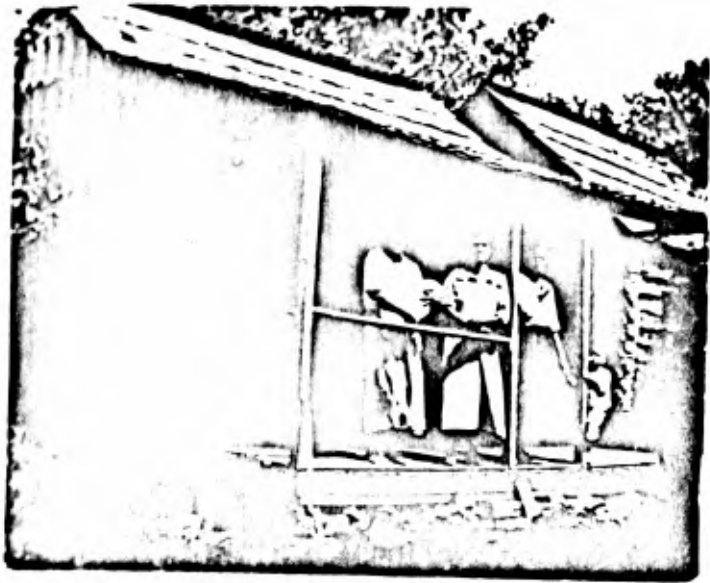
"Yuha'ahi, Yuha'ahi, Yuha'ahi, Yuha'ahi,
Yuha'ahi, Yuha'ahi, Yuha'ahi, Yu!"

"Listen! In the great lake the intruder reposes. Quickly he has risen up there. Swiftly he has come and stealthily put himself (under the sick man).

"Listen! Ha! Now you two have drawn near to hearken, there in the Sun Land you repose, O Little Men, O great Anida' wehi! The intruder has risen up there in the great lake. Quickly you two have lifted up the intruder. His paths have laid themselves down toward the direction whence he came. Let him never look back (toward us). When he stops to rest at the four gaps you will drive him roughly along. Now he has plunged into the great lake from whence he came. There he is compelled to remain, never to look back. Ha! there let him rest. (Yu!)."¹

At the beginning is a song the words of which have no meaning. They are sung in a low plaintive tone, ending with an abrupt Yu! In this prayer the "intruder" is interpreted

1. Mooney, 7th R. B. A. E. W., p. 365.



Home of Jennie Johnson, 5 miles South of Stilwell, Oklahoma, Adair County.



Home of Sallie Bearpaw, 12 miles Southwest of Stilwell, Oklahoma.



Home of Samuel Bird, one and one-half miles Northwest of Moodys, Oklahoma, Cherokee County.



Home of Johnson Locust, 5 miles North of Hulbert, Oklahoma, Cherokee County.



Home of Wolf Pettitt, 2 miles Southwest of Tunch, Oklahoma.



Home of Joback Christie, 1 miles Northwest of Stilwell, Oklahoma.

to be some amphibious animal, as the turtle, the snake, or the terrapin, whose home is in the great lake, located toward the setting sun, and he has come to the sick man secretly, creeping under his bed as a reptile might slip under a pillow or blanket.

The medicine man calls on the two "Little Men" to drive out the disease. Evidently, then, the "Little Men" are powerful beings or spirits, possibly the sons of Kanati.¹ They report instantly when summoned by the shaman, "pull out the intruder from the body of the patient, turn his face toward the sunset, and begin to drive him on by threats and blows to the great lake from whence he came. On the road there are four gaps in the mountains, at each of which the disease spirit halts to rest, but is continually forced onward by his two pursuers, who finally drive him into the lake, where he is compelled to remain, without being permitted even to look back again."²

Other Spirits.

The Cherokees believed spirits dwelled in everything such as trees, animals, water, stones, clouds, stars, insects and the heavenly bodies. They were ever in the presence of these gods and spirits, ever in need of their aid in the numberless exigencies of life. These deities were called upon

1. Kana'ti is called "The Lucky Hunter". He owned the game. See 19th R. B. A. E. W., pp. 242-249, 262, 264, 280, 431-435, 464.

2. 7th R. B. A. E. W., p. 366.

to work mischief, cause disease, as well as to work favors, operate cures and send prosperity.

Verrill writes: "As a rule, the Indian believes in one all-powerful or supreme and wholly kindly and beneficent deity or spirit. Often he is thought to reside in the sky, the sun, or in some lofty and inaccessible mountain or some mysterious lake. Often, too, he is believed to possess a wife and family, and among several Central American tribes, the sun is regarded as the chief deity's home, the moon as his wife's home, and the stars and the planets as the homes of the deities' progeny."¹ Aside from this one powerful or supreme deity the Indians believed in many other gods, especially is this true of the Cherokees. They worshipped almost every tangible object or the god supposed to live in that object. Their pantheon was as extensive as that of ancient Rome.² After an examination of the information on the subject it seems plain the Cherokees did not believe in one overruling god or spirit but in a multitude of gods and spirits residing in animate and inanimate objects, and the aim of their prayers and supplications was to please these deities and to secure needed blessings. To them the gods were sources of good and evil in every phase of life. They were sincere and earnest in their religion. With them religion was a serious matter.³

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1. The American Indian, p. 74.
 2. Starr, Early Hist. of the Cherokees, p. 17.
 3. Geo. Wharton James, What the White Race May Learn from the Indians, p. 260, 1907.

"The Worship of the Cherokees is therefore a pantheism, but it is a pantheism in which the animal-gods are paramount."¹ Another student² of Cherokee lore concludes the pantheism of this tribe dimly approaches that of Spinoza. A leading American ethnologist³ has expressed his views in this way: "The better one understands their religion, the clearer it becomes that they were pantheists. Within the Universe, which was their God, that is, within their pantheism, was a pantheon of mythological personages who after all were nothing but the same class of beings as ourselves, plants, animals, rocks, and other bits of the universe. But all these entities are within the universe." While Brinton⁴ does not take this viewpoint, nevertheless, he contends there are only two examples of the worship of an immaterial God established on the American continent, and these are found where one would expect to discover them, in the most civilized nations, the Quichuas of Peru and the Nahuas of Tezcucó.

Indian hunters frequently make songs, prayers and excuses to the animals they intend to slay. "But the Cherokee is nothing if not consistent in the choice of the gods he selects to invoke on special occasions."⁵ Here are some examples of his consistency: Suppose the illness is believed

1. Spence, Hastings Encly. Reg. & Eth., Vol. I, p. 505.

2. Smith, The Story of the Cherokees, p. 32.

3. John P. Harrington, Bureau Am. Ethnology, Quotation taken from Questionnaire MSS. in my possession.

4. Myths of the New World, p. 55-56.

5. Spence, Hastings Encly. Rel. & Eth., Vol. I, p. 504.

to have been caused by a fish. The fish-hawk, the heron, or some other bird which lives upon fish is implored to capture the evil-doer and devour it, in order that relief may come to the sufferer. Suppose it is thought small birds are tormenting the vitals of the patient or otherwise influencing his imagination, then the sparrow-hawk is called upon to scatter them. When the rabbit is adjudged the author of the evil, no one other than the rabbit-hawk is called upon to kill him. In case even a small portion of the disease still remains in the patient, the assistance of the whirlwind is requested by the officiating shaman, who pleads with it to remove the remnant to the distant hills, and there intersperse it, so that it shall be impossible for it to be restored.¹

The hunter prays repeatedly to the reed from which he makes his arrows; to the mysterious fire which furnishes him omens; to the master of the game, Tsu'l'kalu, and at last invokes in song the very animals he plans to kill. The lover, being conscious of his weakness and the frailty of his charms, seeks the aid of the Spider in holding securely the affections of his promised one, or in his zeal he may pray to the Moon for encouragement who watches him in the dance. It was a common practice for a man starting out on a dangerous journey or expedition to pray to the Clouds to envelop him in such a way as to shield him from his foes. The Indian braves when on

1. Mooney, 7th R. B. A. E. W., pp. 341-342.

the war-path requisitioned the help of the Red War-Club before starting on the road to battle.

The gods of the Cherokees were not homeless. Each good spirit and each evil spirit has its dwelling place appropriate to its position in the general scheme of things. The Rabbit has his habitation in the broomsage on the side of a hill; the Terrapin lives out in the west in a mammoth pond; the Fish finds his abode under the branches of a tree in the bend of a river; the Whirlwind sojourns in the tops of the leafy trees. Great spirits live in the heavenly bodies. The gods have homes everywhere in the world of the Cherokees. "Each diseased animal, when driven away from its prey by some more powerful animal, endeavors to find shelter in his accustomed haunt."¹ The progenitors of the present animals live in the upper world above the arch of the firmament.

The upper regions in every religion are supposed to be the abode of the God or gods. "What is higher is always the stronger and nobler; a superior is one who is better than we are, and therefore a chieftain in Algonkin is called oghee-ma, the higher one. There is, moreover, a naif and spontaneous instinct which leads man in his ecstasies of joy, and in his paroxysms of fear or pain, to lift his hands and eyes to the overhanging firmament. There the sun and bright stars sojourn, emblems of glory and stability. Its azure

1. Ibid., p. 342.

vault has a mysterious attraction which invites the eye to gaze longer and longer into its infinite depths. Its color brings thoughts of serenity, peace, sunshine, and warmth. Even the rudest hunting tribes felt these sentiments, and as a metaphor in their speeches, and as a paint expressive of friendly design, blue was in wide use among them."¹ Thus the idea of God is ever linked to the heavens. Originally the Latin Deus, the Greek Zeus, the Sanscrit Dyaus, and the Chinese Tien all meant the sky above.

The Cherokees believed in their gods and worshipped them. The warrior dreamed of victory only with the help of his guardian spirit. The hunter seeking game faced the rising sun, asked his aid, and when the evening was come he neglected not to offer him sacrifice. The mother of Sequoyah taught him to honor the good god before whom he bowed as he faced the east, that this deity would be with him in his undertakings, protect him, give him food, and all the pleasurable things of life.²

Their Idea of the Devil.

Jacob Grimm³ expresses the conviction resulting from his studies with these words: "The idea of the Devil is foreign to all primitive religions." The American aborigines were not fam-

1. Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, pp. 46-47. See also Goethe, *Farbenlehre*, secs. 780, 781; Loskiel, *Geschichte der Mission der Evang. Brueder*, p. 63.

2. Foster, *Sequoyah, The American Cadmus*, pp. 32-33.

3. Quoted from Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 59.

iliar with the dualism resulting from a belief in both good and bad deities. They did not picture to themselves one deity with his legions of angels ministering to his will, and an evil deity with his swarm of fiends doing his bidding, and with man as the recipient of their blows and boons.¹ Even in the light of this knowledge Professor Muller² proceeds to classify the gods as good and bad. Father Rogel³ began his work as a missionary among the tribes bordering the Savannah River in 1570. He plainly told them the god or deity they were in the habit of worshipping was nothing less than a demon, one who sent evil into the world, and one who dearly loved evil, therefore, the thing for them to do was to forsake him and hate him. To this unwise counsel the natives rightly objected, stating, quite emphatically their deity was no wicked being, but that he was the power who blessed them with all good things, so in disappointment they departed from the missionary.

Winslow⁴ states the Indians adore a power called Kiehtan, "Who as farre as we can conceive, is the Devill." His name was Hobbamock or Hobbamoqui. The statement is often quoted as indicating belief in the Devil. Hobbamock in the Algonkin language means "great", and it may designate the great manito.⁵ Hobbamoqui is the deity who cured diseases, assisted

1. Ibid., p. 59.

2. Geschichte der Amerikanischen Urreligionen, p. 403.

This is a voluminous work.

3. Alcazar, Chrono-historia de la Prov. de Toledo, Dec. iii, ano viii, chap. iv; Madrid, 1710.

4. Good Newes from New England, 1624.

5. Du Ponceau, Langues de l'Amerique du Nord., p. 309.

in the chase, also he appears as the protector in matters of dreams even according to Winslow. Dr. Jarvis elucidates it thus: he is "the oke or tutelary deity which each Indian worships."¹

It often turns out that what has been regarded as the evil divinity of a nation, to whom they make prayers and bring offerings to the neglect of a better one, is in fact the most powerful god they recognize.² Here is an illustration: the Pampas tribes of Buenos Ayres, worshipped Juripari, reported to be their wicked deity, but in reality this deity is "the only name in their language for spiritual existence in general; and Aka-Kanet, sometimes mentioned as the father of evil in the mythology of the Araucanians, is the benign power appealed to by the priests, who is enthroned in the Pleiades, who sends fruits and flowers to the earth, and is addressed as 'grandfather'".³ Relative to this point Professor Muller⁴ remarked: "The dualism is not very striking among these tribes". Of the Caribs he says: "The dualism of gods is anything but rigidly observed. The good gods do more evil than good. Fear is the ruling sentiment."⁵ The evidence to support dualism among the American Indians is rather

1. Discourses on the Religion of Indian Tribes of North America, p. 252, in the Trans. N. Y. Hist. Soc.

2. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 61.

3. Ibid., p. 61; also Muller, Amer. Urreligionen, pp. 265, 272, 274.

4. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 61, footnote 2.

5. Ibid., p. 61, footnote 2.

weak. The historian Prescott¹ reported the Cupay of the Peruvians to be the "shadowy embodiment of evil", but he turns out to be their god of the dead.

Brinton² asserts the missionaries of the Jesuit order rarely distinguished between good and evil divinities when discussing the religion of the northern tribes. After having worked among the Algonkins and Iroquois the Moravian Brethren voice their united testimony that "the idea of a devil, a prince of darkness, they first received in later times through the Europeans." The Cherokees do not know anything about the Devil. One³ who knew their beliefs somewhat thoroughly makes this declaration: "The Cherokees know nothing of the Evil One and his domains, except what they have learned from white men." Contrary to this opinion Foster⁴ tells us the mother of Sequoyah taught her son that a 'bad god', enemy of the Red race, dwelt toward the setting sun, and that from him came all misfortunes, disasters, and privations which beset the life of their tribe. The Cherokee Indians who still cling to the faith of their fathers believe now in some kind of an evil being who harms them. It did not take the Indians long after

1. Conquest of Peru, Vol. I, Chap. 3. Alger, The Doc. of the Future Life, p. 71, says Prescott trusts Spanish Chroniclers too much. He puts hell in the center of the earth and paradise in the blue dome above.

2. Myths of the New World, p. 61.

3. Whipple, Report in Ind. Tribes, p. 35, Washington, 1855, Pacific R. R. Docs.

4. Foster, Sequoyah, The American Cadmus, p. 33.

coming into contact with white people to catch the idea of a good spirit and an evil spirit working against each other, and to engraft the notion on their old traditions. Most likely this had been the case with the Cherokees. Some claim there is really no word in the Cherokee language meaning Devil.¹ To the Chippewa tribe the term Great Spirit gives as much the idea of a bad spirit as a good spirit for they are unaware of a distinction until it is explained to them. The Rev. G. H. Pond² writes: "I have never been able to discover from the Dakotas themselves the least degree of evidence that they divide the gods into classes of good and evil, and am persuaded that those persons who represent them as doing so, do it inconsiderately, and because it is so natural to subscribe to a long cherished popular opinion."

In support of a dualism among the tribes of this continent a venerable myth of the Iroquois is sometimes quoted. One version of it is: At the commencement of things there were two brothers, named Enigorio and Enigohahetgea, which mean, when literally translated, Good Mind and Bad Mind, (or the Beautiful Spirit and the Ugly Spirit).³ The mission of Good Mind was to travel about from community to community furnishing them with fertile fields, abundant crops, cool streams,

1. I have talked to many well-informed Cherokees who have told me this.

2. Schoolcraft, Indian Tribes, Vol. I, p. 359; also Vol. IV, p. 642.

3. Dictionnaire Francais Onontague, edite par Jean Marie Shea, New York, 1859.

plenty of fish, woodlands and wild game, whereas the work of Bad Mind was maliciously to follow his brother leaving deserts, thorns, weeds and rapids in his trail. In the course of time Good Mind became exasperated, turned angrily on his brother, crushed him deep into the earth. Bad Mind disappeared out of sight, but he did not pass into oblivion, for in the lightless regions of the underworld he continues to live where he receives souls of the dead and is the author of all evil.¹ Another version of the same legend was given by Father Brebeuf, a missionary to the Hurons in 1636, some two hundred years earlier than the previous version. In the latter story the tone of the legend changes so that the moral dualism vanishes. "The names Good Mind and Bad Mind do not appear; it is the struggle of Ioskeha, the White One, with his brother Tawiscora, the Dark One, and we at once perceive that Christian influence in the course of two centuries had given the tale a meaning foreign to its original intent."²

Dualism is not an indigenous growth to the native religions. "The gods of the primitive man are beings of thoroughly human physiognomy, painted with colors furnished by intercourse with his fellows. These are his enemies or his friends, as he conciliates or insults them. No mere man, least of all a savage, is kind and benevolent in spite of

1. This version was given by a Tuscarora, Chief Cusio, 1825.

2. Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 63.

neglect and injury, nor is any man causelessly or carelessly malicious. Personal, family, or national feuds render some more inimical than others, but always from a desire to guard their own interests, never out of a delight in evil for its own sake. Thus the cruel gods of death, disease, and danger, were never of Satanic nature, while the kindest divinities were disposed to punish, and that severely, any neglect of their ceremonies. Moral dualism can only arise in minds when the ideas of good and evil are not synonymous with those of pleasure and pain, for the conception of a wholly good or a wholly evil nature requires the use of these terms in their higher, ethical sense. The various deities of the Indians, it may be safely said in conclusion, present no stronger antithesis in this respect than those of ancient Greece and Rome."¹ Most of the tribes, perhaps all of them, believed in divinities which did evil, but they were not considered devils.²

1. Ibid., p. 65.

2. Ha-ne-go-ate'geh, the Evil-Minded; according to a legend the Good Spirit and the Evil Spirit were brothers, born at the same birth, and both destined to endless life. The Evil Spirit had limited Creative power. The Great Spirit made man, all useful animals, and products; so the Evil Spirit created reptiles, monsters, noxious plants. One made everything good, the other made everything bad. Each rules an independent kingdom. The Good Spirit has no positive control over the Evil Spirit. Man was left free and has wrought out his own destiny. A Good life is a life of trust to the Good Spirit.

The Iroquois believed in inferior spirits both good and bad, assistants and subordinates. League of the Iroquois, Morgan, pp. 147-148.

The gods of the Cherokees punished their subjects, when they were careless and negligent, but they were not devils for they were not Satanic by nature.

Chapter Four

Their Idea of Origins.

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Reason is not content with the idea the universe always was as it now is. The Rootdiggers of California and the lowest specimens of mankind have been satisfied not to inquire as to their origin. "But no sooner does the mind begin to reflect, the intellect employ itself on higher themes than the needs of the body, than the law of causality exerts its power, and the man, out of such materials as he has at hand, manufactures for him a Theology of Things."¹ The materials ready for the use of the Red man were a simple primitive substance and a divinity to shape it, materials that are essential to every cosmogony.

More than thirty years ago, Mr. James Mooney, working in the interest of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, ingratiated himself into the reluctant confidence of two old men, Cherokee Indians, Swimmer and John Ax, and from them he secured a large stock of their tribal lore. Undoubtedly these myths originated in the genius of the medicine men, shamans, story-tellers, who delivered them in the full conviction of their truthfulness, and they reflect the ideas of the Cherokees concerning the beginning of things. These wonders were real to them. They did not stagger at any credulity. Some of them were designed to explain things in the

1. Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, pp. 193-194.

heavens and in the earth.¹

Origin of the Earth.

The earth on which man finds himself is a large island floating in an ocean of water. The blue vault above is made of solid rock. The earth is suspended from it by four cords fastened to the cardinal points. When the earth grows old and is worn out as the centuries slip by man will weaken and die and the four cords will break so that the earth will sink into the sea, and all will be water again. To begin with the world was flat and it was wet. Beneath the sky all was water. The animals were above the firmament clamouring for more room. They speculated among themselves as to what was below the water. At length, Dayunisi, known otherwise as the "Water Beetle", or the "Beaver's Grandchild", volunteered to go on a tour of exploration and ascertainment. He darted about rapidly here and there over the surface of the water finding no place to rest. Then the suggestion came to dive to the bottom of the water which he did immediately coming up with some mud. This bit of mud began to grow and spread in every direction until it became the island we call the

1. The Myths of the Cherokees are preserved in the 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I. Mr. Mooney secured information from others than Swimmer and Ax. Mr. Wofford, living among the western Cherokees, assisted him considerably.

See also: Creation Myths of Primitive Am., 1898, Chap. XI-XV, by Jeremiah Curtin. Alexander, Mythology of All Races, p. 61. Foster, Story of Cherokee Bible, p. 60.

earth.¹ At some later date it was fastened to the sky but no one knows who did this. With these primitive people land and water had a beginning but not matter.

From time to time different birds were sent out in search of dry ground and finding none were compelled to return to Galuneati, the sky. Then the great buzzard, the progenitor of all the buzzards, was commissioned to go forth looking for land. He flew down low over the earth, but the surface was too soft on which to live. When he reached what was afterwards the Cherokee country he was exceedingly weary from his continued traveling, and in flopping his wings touched the soft ground, and wherever he struck the plastic dirt valleys were formed, and when his wings were turned up the mountains were fashioned. The animals, who were looking on from above, became alarmed, and called the buzzard back for fear the surface of the entire earth might be rough. The Cherokee mountains remain to this day as evidence of his flight.

When the earth was sufficiently dry and solid the animals came down though it was still dark. So they arranged for the sun to be placed in a track to cross the island

1. According to the myth of the Iroquois when their female ancestor was kicked from the sky by her angry spouse, as yet there was no land to receive her, but it suddenly "bubbled up under her feet, and waxed bigger, so that ere long a whole country was perceptible." See Doc. Hist. of New York, IV, p. 130, (circ. 1650). Or it is stated the beaver, the otter and the muskrat, seeing her descent, hastened to dive and bring up sufficient mud to construct an island for her residence. See Rel. de la Nouv. France, 1636, p. 101.

daily from east to west, just above them. The sun being so near it proved to be too warm; one result was the Red Crawfish got his shell scorched a bright red, spoiling his flesh for food, for the Cherokees will not partake of it. The conjurers put the sun a handbreadth¹ higher, but it was still too near. They lifted it again and again until it was raised up seven handbreadths, to the highest place, to the "seventh height", just under the sky arch, where it was left. Every day the sun makes a journey under the arch. During the night it returns on the upper side of the arch to its starting place.

Under this world is another world. It is like the earth in that it has the same kind of animals, plants and people, but it is different in the matter of seasons and climate. The trails by which this world is reached are the streams flowing down from the mountains. The springs at their heads are the gateways through which it is entered, but in order to do this one must fast, and have the leadership of one of the underground people. They were sure the seasons were not the same because water in the springs is always warmer in winter and cooler in summer than the other air.

No one knows who made the first animals and plants.

1. Seven is a sacred number. The two sacred numbers of the Cherokees are four and seven. Handbreadth means an interval of space.

In the beginning they were admonished to stay awake for seven nights, like the young men do when they seek a vision or pray to their medicine.. They started out to do as they were advised. Most of them kept awake during the first night, but the second night some of them dropped off to sleep, and by the seventh night all of them were asleep except the owl, the panther, and one or two others. The ones who stayed awake were rewarded for their faithfulness by being endowed with the power to see in the dark as well as to go about in the dark, and the birds and animals having gone to sleep became their prey. Some of the trees remained awake as the pine, the cedar, the spruce, the holly and the laurel, and these were favored by being made into evergreens. To the ones who went to sleep it was said: "Because you have not endured to the end you shall lose your hair every winter."

Thus the creation myth of the Cherokees is a mass of fragments which students have endeavored to piece together. "No native cosmogonic myth yet recorded goes back to the first act of creation, but all start out with a world and living creatures already in existence, though not in their final form and condition."¹

There are other creation myths which have been collected

1. Mooney, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 430. See also pp. 239-240. The story of the evergreens is from Ta gwadihi. Wofford says man was created blind, stayed that way for some time.

from among the Cherokees principally by missionaries.¹ These are so colored with Christian thought as not to be of much value. Washburn, a Presbyterian missionary, who moved west with the "Western Cherokees" in 1820 in his "Reminiscences"² gives in substance a story learned from a medicine man of philosophical turn of mind, whose name was Ta-ka-e-tuh, which purports to explain the origin of the world. He says: "The earth was created next to the sun, moon, and stars; then man, then birds, then land animals, then fish and reptiles, and lastly vegetables and fruits, to be the food of man and beast. The period of time occupied in the creation was six days, or rather six nights, after which was a day of rest, which gave rise to the division of time into periods of seven days." There are echoes here of the creation story found in Genesis of the Bible. The creation myth as gathered from Swimmer, Ax and Wofford seems not to have been influenced by the Bible.

The Origin of Man.

The animals and the plants were formed before man. To begin with there were only two people, a brother and his sister, until he struck her with a fish and told her to multiply

1. Washburn and Buttrick. Buttrick lived with Cherokees from 1817 to 1847. He wrote "Antiquities", which has many myths much like the Bible.

2. Quoted from Emmet Starr, Early Hist. of the Cherokees, pp. 21-22. Buzzard: Same general story among Creeks; See W. O. Teegle, Myths of the Creeks, MS., 1887, copy B. A. E; and the Yuchis; see A. S. Gatschet, Some Mythic Stories of the Yuchi Indians, in Am. Anthro., vi, p. 281, 1893.

and she did. In seven days she gave birth to a child, and on each seventh day thereafter another child was born, and in this manner they increased until there was danger the earth soon would be too small to hold them all. Then a change came about to the end that afterwards a woman should have only one child in a year.¹ It is not explained how the brother and sister came to be.

Another account of the origin of man relates that in the beginning one man and one woman were made, and they were created red, thus the earliest people were of the Red race. The varieties of color among men are elucidated by saying they are due to the influence of climate, except that of the black race, which shade is a stigma on man for a crime, and all his descendants have been black.² The creative agent is not designated here. In this respect it is like the myth above.

The history of the creation is related by Big Pheasant, a well informed Cherokee. He received his tribal lore from his grandmother, who in turn received it from old men before they had any knowledge of white people. He said: "Beings from above came down and created the world and everything connected with it. They then called a council and created the man and gave him life."³ The creative action here is

1. John Ax says the pregnancy of the woman was due to the "Little Men".

2. Emmet Starr, Early Hist. of the Cherokees, p. 22.

3. Ibid., p. 23.

attributed to powers from above but they are not named.

The aborigines of this continent marveled at the mysterious workings of nature; they watched in awe the movements of the heavenly bodies; they viewed with wonder the beginning and unfolding of plant and animal life. They observed that out of the Earth rises life and to it life returns. They understood the Earth guards all germs and nourishes all life. With the native tribes man is earthborn.¹ The Indians often pointed out to early travelers and students some cavern or some mountain summit as the place from whence man issued, coming as an adult and armed, "from the womb of the All-mother Earth."² Paemotinck or Pemolnick, an Algonkin expression, is the oldest name among them for the Allegheny Mountains, and the meaning of this word is said to be "the origin of the Indians."³

The Creeks, Seminoles, Choctaws, Chicasaws and Natchez, neighbors of the Cherokees, locate the origin of their earliest ancestors in the Natchez country, in the valley of Big Black River, at a prominent artificial eminence.⁴ The legend was that in the center of this elevation was a cave where lived the Master of Breath. Here from the red clay around him he

1. Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 222. Myths and language favor the idea man was earth-born.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 224, in footnote. Both Lederer and John Bartram give it this meaning and they are competent authorities.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

made the first men. At that time waters covered the earth, so he raised a wall on which to dry the men. The soft mud hardened into plastic flesh and firm bone, the waters were banished to the channels, and living creatures were given the earth on which to live.¹

Similarly the Six Nations of the north looked to a certain place in a mountain near the falls of the Oswego River, New York State, as the locality where their forefathers first saw the light of day.² The Aztecs say they came from seven caverns situated north of Mexico.³

The Mandans and the Minnetarees on the Missouri River imagined under our world was another world inhabited by beings like our kind. The Mandans had the fantastic notion that a grapevine was the means of ascent and descent to this country. They say that an immoderately fat lady, anxious to get a glimpse of the earth, broke the vine by her weight, and since then communication has been cut off.⁴

There are many tales among the numerous native tribes concerning this underworld. A natural outgrowth of this tenet is the Red race appears to be earth-born.⁵

1. See: Romans, Hist. of Florida, pp. 58, 71; Adair, Hist. of No. Amer. Indians, p. 195; Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, ii, p. 235; Major Heart, Trans. of the Am. Philos. Soc. iii, p. 216. (first series).

2. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 227.

3. Ibid., p. 227.

4. Ibid., p. 229.

5. Ibid., p. 229.

Man is of the dust; he is a son of the soil, yet at the same time he is a son of the gods, a product of the great creative powers. The Athapascan tribes, the Kruai, Kolushes and Atnai, living west of the Rocky Mountains, claim descent from the raven, "who in the beginning of things seized the elements and brought the world from the abyss of the primitive ocean."¹

Such tribes as the Dogribs, the Chipewyans, the Hare Indians, natives of the Aleutian Isles and others believed they sprang from a dog.²

In this connection we are to bear in mind the Dog was the fixed symbol of the Water Goddess. The Bird is the fixed symbol of the Wind. Consequently man is the product of primal creative powers.³

Hasty writers without thorough investigation have often said the Indian tribes claim literal descent from different wild beasts. No doubt, in other cases, as well as in the instances cited, careful examination will show the writers to be in error, and this error rests on a "misapprehension arising from the habit of the natives of adopting as their totem or clan-mark the figure and name of some animal, or else, in an ignorance of the animal symbols employed with such marked

1. Ibid., p. 229.

2. See: Richardson, Arctic Expedition, pp. 239, 247; Klemm, Culturgeschichte der Menschheit, ii, p. 316.

3. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 229.

preference by the Red race to express abstract ideas. In some cases, doubtless, the natives themselves came, in time, to confound the symbol with the idea, by that familiar process of personification and subsequent debasement exemplified in the history of every religion; but I do not believe that a single example could be found where an Indian tribe had a tradition whose real purport was that man came by natural process of descent from an ancestor, a brute."¹

I have talked to a number of well informed Cherokees on this subject and all have denied that their ancestors believed they came from some animal. While they have such clans as the Wolf clan, the Bird clan, the Bear clan, and the Deer clan, this does not mean these different clans claim literal descent from these living creatures.²

The Origin of Fire.

In the beginning of things when the earth was first made, there was no fire, and it was cold, until the Thunders, known also as Ani'-Hyun'tikwala'ski, who lived in the sky, sent their lightning and put fire into the base of a hollow sycamore tree which grew some distance away on an island. Smoke curled from the top of the tree, consequently the animals knew

1. Ibid., p. 232.

2. See pp. 49-52 of this paper.

One Peruvian Cosmogony says a boneless son, Con, of the sun and the moon created the world and man with his supernatural powers. See: Wilson D. Wallis, An Intro. to Anthropology, p. 229..

it was there, but on account of the water they could not get to it, therefore they held a council to determine what to do. This was a long, long time ago.

Various animals offered to go after the fire, in fact every one that could swim or fly. The raven¹ volunteered to go, and since he was big and strong, they decided to send him first feeling sure he could get the fire. He flew across the water high above its surface, alighting at last on the top of the sycamore tree, but while he was trying to make up his mind just what to do, the heat from the fire scorched his feathers black which so frightened him he departed without the fire. Then the tiny Screech-Owl, Wa'huhu, offered to go. He reached the island in safety, but while peering down into the hollow tree a current of hot air puffed up into his face almost burning out his eyes. With considerable difficulty he found his way home, but many days passed before he was able to see well, and his eyes are still red. Next the Hooting Owl, U'guhu', and the Horned Owl, Tskili, attempted the venture. By the time they flew to the tree the fire was burning so fiercely that it nearly blinded them. The ashes carried

1. Among the Tlingit and Haida tribes of the northwest coast the favorite stories were associated with the raven, whom they called yetl. One cannot always tell whether yetl was man or bird or something else for he could take on many different forms. Usually he was the friend of the Indians. It was yetl, the raven, also known as Nekilstlas, who provided these good things for them. See Frederick Starr, *American Indians*, pp. 189-190.

Sacs and Fox tribes kindled fire for the dead to supply light or heat to the soul on its long journey, p. 98.

up by the wind made white rings about their eyes. They returned without the fire.

This was quite enough for the birds. No more of them cared to take the risk involved in the enterprise. The little Uksu'hi snake, the black racer, announced he would go through the water and strive to bring home the fire. He swam across to the island, crawled through the grass to the burning tree, and went inside the tree by means of a small hole near the ground. It did not take him long to discover the heat and the smoke were too much for him, as it had been for the birds, and after dodging around blindly over the warm coals until his body was almost burning, by good fortune he found the hole in the tree and got out, however, his black body tells the story of his experience, and ever since he has been darting about and doubling around leaving the impression he is seeking to escape from hazardous quarters. Like the others he made a failure. When he returned the great blacksnake, Gule'gi, the Climber, declared he would go for the fire. After swimming to the island and moving over the grass to the tree, he climbed up the outside of the tree, (such is still the habit of blacksnakes), but when he put his head over the top of the tree into the hole the hot smoke choked him and he had the ill luck to fall into the tree and before he could get out his skin was as black as the Uksu'hi.

After all of these failures the animals thought it was

time to hold another council for they still had no fire and the world remained cold. This time the birds, the snakes, and the quadrupeds all made excuses for not going, for they were afraid to be near the burning sycamore. Finally, Kanane'-ski Amai'yehi, the Water Spider, said she would go for the fire. This is the water spider with the red stripes on her body and the downy black hair, not the one resembling a mosquito. She has the ability to dive through the water or to run along on top of it, so she had no trouble getting to the island, but the real problem was how to bring back the fire. She said: "I'll manage that". She took from her body a thread which she made into a tusti bowl, fastening the bowl to her back. With this accomplished she crossed over to the island, made her way through the grass to where the tree was still burning. What she did was to put one little coal of fire into her bowl, and swim back across the water with it. Since then we have had fire, and the Water Spider has seen fit to keep her tusti bowl.¹

Another myth dealing with the origin of fire says it came

1. Mooney, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, pp. 241, 242. What I have written is the substance of the original myth as it was secured from Swimmer and John Ax. In the Wahnenuhi version, the opossum and the buzzard were first in the attempt to get fire, the opossum lost the hair on his tail and the buzzard lost the feathers around his head and neck. In still another version, the Dragon-fly helps the Spider by going along behind and pushing the tusti bowl. In the Creek myth, according to the Tuggle MS., the Rabbit secured the fire by the employment of stratagem; taking a cap trimmed with sticks of rosin and touching the fire, while pretending to bend low in the dance. In the Jicarilla myth, the fox steals the fire. See Frank Russell, Myths of Jicarilla Apaches, Journal Am. Folk Lore, October 1898.

from heaven as the gift of deity while the Cherokees were in a wilderness. When they came to this continent somehow the fire was left behind, yet in a miraculous manner it was brought over to them, and they kept it until their enemies surprised them and destroyed the house in which it was preserved. After this happened they were obliged to make new fire for sacred purposes by rubbing two pieces of wood together.¹

"When their enemies destroyed the house in which this holy fire was kept, it was said that the fire settled down into the earth, where it still lives, though unknown to the people. The place where they lost this holy fire is somewhere in one of the Carolinas."²

"This new fire, made by friction, like the original holy fire, must not be used for any common purpose (except when made especially to supply the nation with new fire). No torch must be lighted by it, nor a coal taken from it for common use. After the sacrifice was burned and the ceremonies ended for which the fire was made, it was delivered to someone to keep."³

Foster⁴ says the Cherokees affirmed fire was believed to be an intermediate spirit, nearest the sun. Immediately after

1. Narrator probably was Shield Eater: See Emmet Starr, *Early Hist. of the Cherokees*, pp. 35-36.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

4. Foster, *Sequoyah, The American Cadmus*, pp. 241, 242.

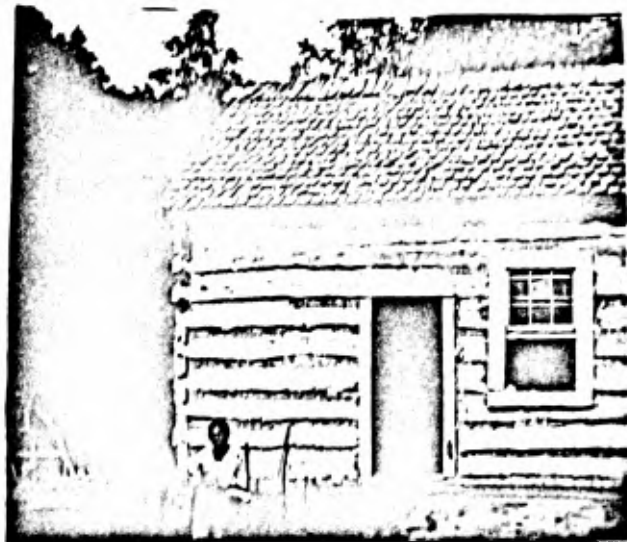
a child was born fire was waved over it. The guardianship of fire was entreated for children. The hunters waved their moccasins over the fire for defense against serpents. Fire is often spoken of as an active and intelligent being. Some of the Cherokees represent fire as having been born or brought with them to the earth. Others say that they sent for it to the man of fire who lived across immense waters, and a spider got it for them, bringing the mystic coal on its web, but unfortunately foes captured it, and it was lost; however, a small portion remains in the earth from which new fires are kindled.

Fire was the shield against cold. "It gives man light in darkness and warmth in winter; it shows him his friends and warns him of his foes; the flames point toward heaven and the smoke makes the clouds. Around it social life begins. For his home and his hearth the savage has but one word, and what of tender emotion his breast can feel, is linked to the circle that gathers around his fire. The council fire, the camp fire, and the war fire, are so many epochs in his history. By its aid many arts become possible, and it is a civilizer in more ways than one. In the figurative language of the Red race, it is constantly used as 'an emblem of peace, happiness, and abundance'.¹ To extinguish an enemy's fire is to slay him; to light a visitor's fire is to bid him welcome."²

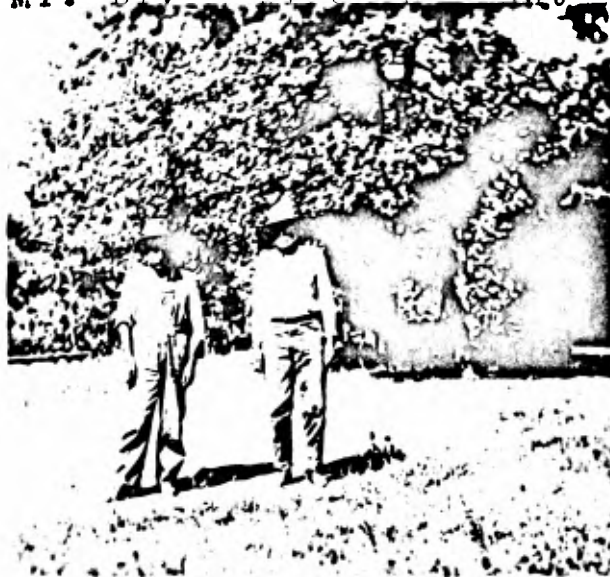
1. Harr. of the Captivity of John Tanner, p. 362.
2. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 140.



An Indian ball game being played at the Redbird Smith stomp-ground, six miles East of Gore, Oklahoma.



Home of Phillip Dry, consisting of only one room, poorly furnished, located 5 miles North-east from Mulbert, Oklahoma. Mr. Dry's wife in front yard.



Jessie Pigeon and nephew, standing near their fire, at the stomp-ground, near Sugar Mountain, Cherokee County, Oklahoma.



Group of full-blood Cherokee Indians, members of the Night Hawk Society, who constitute their council.



Group of Cherokee Indians, members of the Night Hawk Society, who are recognized as medicine men, taken at Redbird Smith stomp-ground, near Gore, Oklahoma.

Indians used fire for the giving of signals. Generally a place visible from a long distance was selected. Upon it a little fire was kindled which gave a dense smoke. The signal often depended upon the number of fires built side by side. For example: When the Pima Indians returned from a war expedition against the Apaches, they furnished smoke signals if they were successful. The smoke of a single fire meant victory. A number of smaller fires kindled in line with it indicated the number of scalps taken. Many times messages were given by puffs of smoke.¹

The Origin of the Milky Way.

A number of men in the south who had a mill where corn was pounded into meal discovered on several mornings some of the meal had been taken during the night. By looking around for evidence they noticed dog tracks, so they watched the next night, and it was not long after the darkness fell when a dog came and started to eat the meal. Immediately they were beating him with whips. He went away howling to his home in the north, and as he ran some of the meal dropped from his mouth, which left a white trail behind him, thus making the Milky Way. Even in late years the Cherokees call it "where the dog ran."²

In another story³ one observes a slight difference. It

1. Frederick Starr, p. 59.

2. Mooney, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 257; also Smith, Story of the Cherokees, pp. 34-35.

3. Hagar, Cherokee MS., B. A. E. W.

is said there were two hunters, one living in the north, looking for big game; the other residing in the south, searching for small game. The former hunter seeing the wife of the other hunter pounding corn seized her and carried her across the sky to his northern home. After the dog ate what meal was left he followed the pair, the meal falling from his mouth as he made his leaps, forming the Milky Way.

With the Kiowa, Cheyenne and other tribes of the plains the Milky Way is a dusty track along which the Horse and the Buffalo once ran a race across the sky.¹

The Blackfoot tribe regard the Milky Way as a bridge connecting heaven and earth.² Many of the tribes thought the Milky Way was the path of souls which leads to the home of the dead. Not long ago chief Sam Smith³ told me he believed the Milky Way is made up of souls or ghosts going home to the other world. Stories similar to these here given are common to most tribes.

The Origin of the Pleiades and the Pine.

Ages and ages ago when the universe was in its infancy, there were seven boys who spent practically all of their time down by the town house playing the gatayu'sti game, rolling along the ground a stone wheel and sliding after it a curved

1. 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 443.

2. Frederick Starr, American Indians, p. 38.

3. Lives at Vian, Oklahoma.

stick, to strike it.¹ The repeated scolding on the part of their mothers did not reform them. One day the mothers brought in some gatayu'sti stones and boiled them with corn in a vessel for their dinner. Presently the boys came home hungry for something to eat. Their mothers dipped out some of the stones and said, "Since you like the gatayu'sti better than the cornfield, take the stones now for your dinner." The boys feeling offended left their homes in anger, saying as they went, "As our mothers treat us this way, let us go where we shall never trouble them any more." They began a dance around the town house, (some say it was a Feather dance),² and they moved round and round the town house all the time invoking the help of the spirits. Finally, their mothers being alarmed at their absence, went to look for them. They saw their sons dancing around the town house and as they stood watching them, their feet began to leave the ground, and with every circle around the building they rose higher and higher in the air. The mothers rushed forward in an effort to rescue their children but it was then too late, for by this time they were above the town house, all but one, whose mother with the aid of a pole pulled him down, but unfortunately the descent

1. For the description of the gatayu'sti game, see note on page 434, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I.

2. The Feather dance, or as it is often called the Eagle dance is an old favorite. It is the same as the Calumet dance among the northern tribes. The Feather dance was used in a Pow-wow near Okmulgee, Oklahoma, Creek Nation, August 19-23, 1930. So it is still a favorite dance.

was made with such force against the ground that he sank into it, and the earth covered over the place where he was.

The six boys rose higher and higher in circles until they reached the sky where we behold them as the Pleiades.¹ The Cherokee people continue to call them Ani'tsutsa, that is, "The Boys". For many days the people grieved about them, but the mother whose son was covered by the earth came every morning and evening to weep over the spot until the ground was damp with her tears. At length a little green plant appeared there. Day by day it grew until it became the tall tree we know as the Pine. So the Pine is of the same nature of the stars and holds in itself the same bright light.²

The northern kinsmen of the Cherokees have a similar myth. It is given by Mrs. Erminnie Smith³ and reads as follows: Seven little Indian boys were once accustomed to bring at evening their corn and beans to a little mound, upon the top of which, after their feast, the sweetest of their singers would sit and sing for his mates who danced around the mound. On one occasion they resolved on a more sumptuous feast, and

1. "The Cherokees paid a kind of veneration to the morning star, and also to the seven stars, with which they have connected a variety of legends, all of which no doubt, are allegorical, although their significance is now unknown." Squier, Serpent Symbol, p. 69. He may have drawn from the Payne MS.

2. Mooney, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, pp. 258-259. Smith, Story of the Cherokees, pp. 35-36. Swimmer, Suyeta and Ta'gwadihi knew the myth.

3. Myths of the Algonquians, 2nd R. B. A. E. W., p. 80.

each was to contribute towards a savory soup. But the parents refused them the needed supplies, and they met for a feastless dance. Their heads and hearts grew lighter as they flew around the mound, until suddenly the whole company whirled off into the air. The inconsolable parents called in vain for them to return, but it was too late. Higher and higher they arose, whirling around their singer, until, transformed into bright stars, they took their places in the firmament, where, as the Pleiades, they are dancing still, the brightness of the singer having been dimmed, however, on account of his desire to return to the earth.

The Origin of Strawberries.

After the first man was given a mate, for a time they were happy; later they began to quarrel, until the woman left her husband, going off towards the Sun land in the east. Behind her followed the man sad at heart. She moved steadily forward without looking back. The great Apportioner, the Sun, felt sympathetic for the man, and inquired if he was still angry with his wife, to which he replied in the negative, whereupon he was asked if he would like to have her back, and this time he answered in the affirmative.

The Sun caused a patch of rich huckleberries to grow up along the path just in front of her, but she paid no attention to them. Then blackberries and other fruits were used to beset her way but without success. Finally she was tempted

to stop where some new strawberries appeared. As she picked some of them she happened to look back to the west, and somehow realized she was unable to advance. She sat down for a while, but the longer she sat the less inclined she was to leave her husband, so finally, she picked some of the best berries and started along the path to give them to him. It was not long before they met; he greeted her kindly, and they returned home together.¹

The Origin of Disease and Medicine.

One of the most interesting of the Cherokee myths has to do with the origin of disease which was followed by the institution of curative medicine. In the early days, we are informed by the wise men of the tribe, plants and animals as well as human beings were blessed with the gift of speech, and they all lived together as friends in peace and harmony until the people multiplied so rapidly that their settlements spread over the whole world, crowding other living creatures into the forests and desert places, with the consequence the ancient friendship between them was severed. The breach in the amity was broadened still more by the invention of destructive weapons on the part of Man which he used to slaughter

1. Mooney, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 259. Myth related by Ta'gwadihi; says all fruits mentioned created at that time; added "so some good came from the quarrel anyhow". Ibid., p. 443.

the larger animals, fishes and birds for their flesh, skins or feathers, while the small animals and creatures such as frogs and worms and insects were trampled under foot, due to carelessness for them or contempt for them. In the interest of self-preservation something had to be done. At first the animals were more surprised than offended, but in time they became angry, and resolved upon measures for retaliation.

The Bear tribe met in council¹ in their town house under Kuwa'hi Mountain, or "Mulberry Place",² and the old White Bear was selected as the presiding officer. Each bear in turn voiced complaints against Man for his treatment of them and their friends, relating how he had slain recklessly members of their group, eaten their flesh, and used their skins for blankets and rugs. They decided they were justified in beginning war at once against Man. The question naturally arose as to the weapons to be used in this warfare. Some of the Bears thought they should use bows and arrows, the same kind of weapons employed by Man to kill them. One of the Bears asked, "And what are they made of?" Someone replied: "The bow is made of wood, and the string of our entrails." They decided to make a bow and some arrows to see if they could

1. For an explanation of the Cherokees idea of animal organization with councils and town houses see 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 445, also pp. 261-266; Heckewelder, Indian Nations, p. 254, 1876.

2. Mulberry Place is one of the high peaks of the Great Smoky Mountains on the dividing line between Swain County, N. C., and Sevier County, Tennessee.

handle them accurately and skillfully. While one of the Bears secured a piece of locust wood for the bow one of the others sacrificed himself to provide a piece of his entrails for the bowstring. When the weapon was tested as to its utility it was discovered the long claws of the animal spoiled the accuracy of the shot, which was exceedingly annoying. To overcome this difficulty it was suggested the long claws might be trimmed, which, when it was tried, resulted in the arrow hitting its mark. But at this point the old White Bear wisely interposed an objection, saying in substance, that without their claws they would be unable to climb trees and secure food. Here are his words: "One of us has already died to furnish the bowstring, and if we now cut off our claws, we must all starve together. It is better to trust to the teeth and claws that nature gave us, for it is plain Man's weapons were not intended for us."

The next animals to assemble in general council were the Deer, who were directed by their intelligent chief, the Little Deer. After some discussion during which the policy of Man was condemned, it was deemed prudent to send rheumatism to every hunter who killed one of their number unless he was careful to seek their pardon for the offense. Full notice of this decision was dispatched to the nearest settlement of Indians along with the instructions as to what to do in case it became necessary to kill a deer. Whenever a deer is killed by a hunter, the Little Deer, who is immune to

injury and moves as swiftly as the breezes, appears at the bloody spot immediately, bends over the slain deer, and asks the spirit of the Deer if it has heard the invocation of the hunter for forgiveness. All is well if the reply be "yes", for the Little Deer departs satisfied; but if the answer be "no", he tracks the hunter to his cabin, enters it invisibly, and inflicts the hunter with rheumatism, making him a helpless cripple the rest of his life. If the hunters have the proper regard for their health they will not neglect to ask the pardon of the Deer for killing it. Some hunters who are ignorant of the right formula for pardon, may endeavor to turn the Little Deer aside by building a fire behind them in the trail.

A joint council was held by the Fishes and the Reptiles to consider their claims against Man. They decided to punish Man by haunting him with dreadful dreams of dangerous serpents twining around him and hissing their foul breath in his face, or to cause them to dream of eating raw fish or decayed fish, with the outcome the appetite would fail, sickness come on which would reach its climax in death.¹

At last the Birds and Insects, together with the smaller creatures, met in council to discuss their self-preservation. The Grubworm was the head of the assembly. The

1. Dreams of snakes and fish were common among the Cherokees. The services of Shamans in demand to cure them. See: Spence, Myths of the North American Indians, p. 250.

consensus of opinion declared Man guilty of oppressing them. The Frog spoke: "We must do something to check the increase of the race, or people will become so numerous that we shall be crowded from off the earth. See how they have kicked me about because I'm ugly, as they say, until my back is covered with sores." Then he pointed to the spots on his back. The Bird was equally as bitter in his condemnation of Man "because he burns my feet off", having reference to the position of the body of the bird when it is barbecued by the hunters. Others spoke similarly. Only one creature had a good word to say for Man. He was the Ground-Squirrel, who was so small Man seldom bothered him, but the other animals were infuriated at his attitude, clawing his back furiously, and leaving stripes which show to this day.¹

In their deliberations they settled upon the scheme of devising and naming diseases with which to torment and inflict the human race, halting their progress and ultimately leading to their complete destruction. When the diseases had completed their work no human beings would still survive.

The Plants were friendly to Man, and on hearing about

1. In a Creek myth the stripes on the back of the Ground Squirrel are due to the scratches of a bear at a council called to determine the proper division of day and night. The same idea is expressed by the Iroquois. See: Mrs. Erminnie Smith, *Myths of the Iroquois*, p. 80, 2nd R. B. A. E. W.; also Teit, *Thompson River Traditions*, p. 61, where information is found regarding a similar myth among the Thompson River Indians of British Columbia.

the diseases, planned to defeat the terrible design of the animals, by each tree, herb, shrub, even the grasses and the mosses, agreeing to furnish a cure for some one of the diseases. In this way, say the Cherokees,¹ disease and curative medicine come to be. Each plant and weed had a useful purpose if it could be discovered. When the Indian doctor, or shaman, is undecided as to what plant to use in treating a certain disease, the spirit of the plant suggests the proper cure to him.²

These myths I have given, and others of a similar nature, indicate the gods had to do with the beginning of things. Nothing happened by mere accident. The work of the animal gods predominate, as one would expect. Some of the shamans were able thinkers. "Do not these clumsy and abortive guesses at the deep truths of existence mean man's kinship to the divine? Does it not mean that all men are natively and incurably

1. This myth was related first by Swimmer, then later by John Ax (east) and Wofford (west). The practice of medicine is based on it.

2. Mooney, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, pp. 250-252; Smith, The Story of the Cherokees, pp. 37-38; Spence, Myths of N. A. Indians, pp. 249-251.

The cause of disease among the most of the Indian tribes, as among most primitive people in general, is attributed largely to animal spirits, ghosts or witchcraft. Shamans are implored frequently to banish the malevolent spirit, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 435.

The cause of disease among the Creeks is explained by the Tuggle MS. as follows: "All disease is caused by the winds, which are born in the air and then descend to the earth". This myth likely applies to only a few diseases, for in the same MS. we read: "Once upon a time the beasts, birds, and reptiles held a council to devise means to destroy the enemy, Man."

religious? Admitting this by no means ignores the abysmal difference between a religious nature and a religious character. The first is given, the second is achieved."¹

1. Smith, The Story of the Cherokees, p. 40.

Chapter Five

Some of Their Doctrines.

Chapter Five

Their Idea of Sin.

Harrington¹ states the Cherokees had no word for sin. "Sin was simply badness, craziness. They seldom thought of a man as being especially responsible for this condition. The idea of sin scarcely entered their minds."² Sin is mentioned in only one of the Cherokee myths and it gives an account of the beginning of sin or evil. It is related that a man and a woman reared a large family of children in comfort and plenty with very little difficulty in providing food for them. Every morning the father went forth to secure something for the family table and without delay would return with the flesh of some animal or fowl. At the same time the mother with equal ease brought ears of corn from a secret place, shelled it, and pounded it into meal for bread.

As the children grew up they talked about the comparative ease with which their parents provided food, and like other children, they were curious to know how it was done. Consequently they made plans to watch their parents from points of concealment. The next morning they tried their scheme. The ones who followed their father learned he went into the woods, turned up a large stone, and they discovered

1. J. P. Harrington, Bureau of Am. Ethnology, MS. in my possession in the form of a questionnaire.

2. Ibid. See also H. G. Wells, Outline of History, p. 746, where he asserts the Aztecs were haunted with the idea of sin and the need for bloody propitiations.

that in a huge cave the animals and fowls were kept, such as the father had frequently brought for food. He summoned a deer which obeyed, then closed the door, and returned home not suspecting what his sons had done.

Now that the old man was out of sight, the boys rejoicing that they had outwitted him, came from their hiding quarters saying in pride: "We will open the cave and bring home something too." Having removed the stone with exerted effort the animals and birds did not wait to be called this time, for they knew the boys were strangers to them, but darted and rushed out past the bewildered lads and disappeared in the forests. "There were animals of all kinds, large and small, buffalo, deer, elk, antelope, racoons, and squirrels; even catamounts and panthers, wolves and foxes, and many others, all fleeing together. At the same time birds of every kind were seen emerging from the opening, all in the same wild confusion as the quadrupeds - turkeys, geese, swans, ducks, quail, eagles, hawks, and owls."¹

The children who followed the mother noticed she entered a cabin they had not seen before and closed the door behind her. The inquisitive culprits peered through a small crack in the wall. They looked on as the woman placed a basket on the floor or ground, stood over it, jumped up and down a few times vigorously, when to their amazement they saw large ears of corn begin to fall into the basket. With

1. 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, p. 249.

the basket well filled she emerged from the cabin, closed its door, and made her way home. During the hour the meal was served all members of the family were silent. When they had finished eating the father let it be known he was aware of the actions of the boys. He declared: "I must die and you will have to provide for yourselves." Having made bows and arrows for them, he sent them forth to hunt the game they had turned loose. The father moved on to the other world. The mother also had some final words for the children before she was gone: "You have found out my secret and I can do nothing more for you. I must die and you must drag my body over the ground and the corn will come up from which you must make your own bread. You must save seed to plant every year."¹

Here the commencement of evil is attributed to the curious offspring of the first family. The blame is not placed on the gods, but on human creatures. It is followed with death. I asked a well known religious leader² among the Cherokees to give me their idea of sin. This is what he replied:

1. Mooney, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, pp. 248-249. Smith, Story of the Cherokees, p. 36; S. W. Ross, MS. in my possession in the form of a questionnaire.

Certain Indians assume disease is caused by sin, and sin is something that can be bodily removed by manipulation. "When the patient, for example, is in the proper frame of mind, they pass their hands over his body, gradually working the sinfulness to his extremities and then gathering it in their hands and 'throwing it away'". The pantomime is often quite clever and convincing. At times the proceedings may vary by passing a lighted candle along the limbs of the patient to burn away the sin. See: The Shake Religion of Puget Sound, T. T. Waterman, Smithsonian Report, 1922, pp. 499-507.

2. Jim Pickup, Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

"We believe sin destroys a man's life here; we believe sin destroys a man's home here; we believe sin destroys the happiness of this life; we believe sin is mischief, which we call danger."¹

Another authority² gives the origin of sin as follows: Two Superior Beings, a woman and a man, existed in the early days of the world. They had two sons, the only children on the earth. They were under the supervision of their mother, although she was unable to control them. As they increased in years, they began to watch the movements of their mother and wondered why she left them every day for a brief time. They speculated as to where she went. As they watched her more intently and thoughtfully they realized for the first time she repeatedly left them when their food was scarce and never returned without a supply. They decided nothing could keep them from discovering how and where she secured food for them. They followed her secretly through a dense forest to a mysterious log building, into which she entered, closing the door behind her. They peeped through holes and saw their mother engaging in motions entirely inexplicable to them, but the motions were followed by corn and beans dropping from underneath her arms and from her loins. Instead of being pleased and delighted they were terrified and fled.

1. MS. in my possession.

2. This legend is believed to represent a departure from what is considered their ancient and orthodox faith. John Howard Payne, MSS., Newberry Library, Chicago.

They could not understand the strange power of their mother. They settled upon the plan to slay her as an enchantress. She was able to penetrate the darkness of their plans and knew what they intended to do. She informed them she was aware they had plotted to take her life because they were incapable of comprehending her power; and she added, "Sons, your minds are bewildered and your sense is gone and your mother must be killed by her own sons. But I found food for you and I was your food and in killing your mother under the pretense of being evil, you yourselves will fill yourselves with evil. But your mother will remain a mother to you, even though you kill her; take heed, therefore, and treasure up her words."

She then told them while they would be held responsible for her death they could not destroy either her or her love for them; that she would remain alive, both in the skies and on earth; that in the skies she would resume the place she left when she first came to the earth, and there she would abide forever. She informed them as punishment for their wickedness in killing her they would have to earn their livelihood by hard work under warm suns. At stated times they were to drag her body over the ground, and she would come back to them in the form of corn, yet at the same time she would observe their actions from her invisible habitation in the skies, and know if they obeyed her instructions in cultivating the corn, weeding it, expressing their gratitude, and saying their prayers of which she provided them with the forms.

She said, "When you have discharged these duties and when you shall have sung these songs, you will at length see me fully grown. I shall lift my head proudly. You will look on me and be glad; and be sure that you are careful of me, for elsewhere you will find no milk whose source is inexhaustible like mine. And when you discover that my bosom is full of nourishment, and when my hand towers so high that no foot can step over my crest, waving towards the Heavens, then you are to set apart seven days and seven nights, and on the morning which shall follow, at the rising sun, you are to prepare me for a feast. And when the feast is ready, you are to make your invocations, first towards the east, and secondly towards the north, and thirdly towards the west, and fourthly towards the south; then you are to stand in the center of the four points and call to me above; for I shall be there and shall hear you if you call; and when I hear you, I will take fast hold upon your mind and bring it back to what it ought to be. As you increase, take heed that you observe these things; for I shall know if you observe them. But if you forget to think of me; and of these things which I enjoin if you should take no heed, but make use of me without remembering my words, I will fling among you the Desolator! I will do this, but you will not think whence comes the scourge-- It will be my work, and you will feel me when you cannot know me."

According to the story the sons committed the murder,

paid no attention to the instructions, and were soon without food. The father who had been following the chase, returned, discovered their crime, and was astonished as they endeavored to defend their deed for the reason they thought she was an enchantress, and "full of evil". He exclaimed, "In killing your mother, you have filled yourselves with evil. By your mother you lived; by your mother you continued to live. She could not be full of evil, when the only business of her life was to sustain her sons". In anger he left them, but realizing they were without anything to eat, and still loving them, presently he came back with venison, and gave them bows and arrows, advising them as to what particular birds they were to kill when he was away, at the same time, to stay within a certain territory. They murmured to him one day that they could find no birds in the place he had marked out for them. He reminded them to remember his counsel about their territory. "Now and then, for four successive days, he would return without game, but would not explain the cause; yet prepared mystical bitter drinks for them, saying, after they had taken those, the game would be plenty." The strangeness of these proceedings aroused their curiosity. Day after day they secretly observed their father, gradually going beyond their allotted space. Finally, they followed him as far as a mighty cave. They saw him roll a rock away from the mouth of it, and kill a deer as it jumped forth, and then close the door of the cave, throw the deer over his back and

walk homeward with it. They were in great delight in supposing they had outwitted their father and had found the source of his game. They felt their problem of securing food was completely solved. They went to the cave, rolled the stone back which covered its opening, and out jumped a fine deer, which one of them shot; and then leaped out another deer, which the other brother shot. Before they could put the rock back in place other animals darted out of the cave, faster and faster they came, filling the air with hideous noises. The surprised sons staggered and reeled about, fell into unconsciousness, and were helpless.

Their father heard the disorder, threw down his deer, and hurried back to his sons. Though their transgression had disappointed him, he could not forsake them in their distress, but gathered some medicine, herbs, to restore their senses. He was deeply disturbed by their course of conduct. After leaving them alone long enough for reflection, he summoned them to him one night, and remonstrated with them because they had murdered their mother, who was their nourisher, and because they had mistreated him. They sat in silence. They were surly in manner.

He said to them, "Sons, you have said in your hearts, we can even do without our father; and, beware! your father may leave you to yourselves." He discerned no transformation in their deportment. The next night he reproved them for having tampered with the ample means he had provided for

their support. He told them he had made up his mind to punish them for their waywardness by withdrawing from them. The sons doubted the earnestness of their father in what he had said. At the same time they were not friendly to the restraint he had placed about them. They desired more freedom. Since their father was an old man they concluded he could not see as clearly as they to hunt the game which was now scattered through the forest. They thought the supply would be abundant for all their needs. The hunting of it would preserve their health and keep them in good spirits. Light of heart they wandered all day without finding any game. When they returned home, tired and hungry, their father was not present. The next day passed with similar experience. "What is become of our father?" one of them inquired. "If we seek him diligently, we shall be sure to find him", said the other. They took up their bows and arrows and went in search of their father.

One of them remarked, "perhaps he is in this direction", and he shot an arrow eastward, but the arrow came back and stuck in the ground in front of him. Said the other, "perhaps he is in that direction", pointing northward, and he shot an arrow northward, but it returned, as the first one did. They exclaimed, "So he is not there!" Pointing to the west, they asked, "Is it thitherward that he is gone?" The shot arrow returned as from the east and north. Almost in despair they tried the south, only to have the arrow return

to them. "Alas! where can our father be?"

Dread and fear and wonder filled their minds. "Is it possible that he can be gone above?" As they looked straight upward they shot an arrow which did not return. "We have found our father", cried they, as they rejoiced together, "Joy! Joy! We have found our father!"

The sincerity of the sons reached the heart of the father; he took pity on them, and came down from the skies to them. As he talked to them he gave them much good counsel. He told them, as their mother did, they would have to work for their food, as a punishment for their wrongdoing. When he had ended instructing them, he said, "I must now rise up again and leave you; but, remember, when you are in want of game, the instruction I have given you; and if you should ever slight them, purify yourselves by the medicine I have told you of, and then strive afresh to do as I have taught. I return, now, to where your mother is, whom you have slain, and where we dwell together. Against both of us you have offended; but take heed of what we both have told you, and if you do so, whenever you are in need of succor, call on us, and you will find that the ingratitude of the sons to the parents, is forgotten in the love of the parents to their sons."¹

The present attitude of the Cherokees toward sin is

1. Payne MSS., pp. 43-52.

thus formulated by Dr. Olbrechts: "In our relation with God and the Spirits and our fellow-men, we must do as 'the old people' teach us. We must do what is right and shun what is wrong not from any desire of recompense or fear of punishment, but because we know we have to do what is right and to shun what is wrong."¹ The indications are then that they had some notion about wrongdoing.

/ Their Idea of the Flood.

Just before sunset a sacrifice, consisting of a piece of meat sprinkled with tobacco, would be offered by the priest. The altar was made of flat stones. The fire was no ordinary fire but was kindled in the following fashion: "The priest put a dry stick on the altar, with a round shallow hole in the upper side. In this hole, he put some of the weed called golden rod. He then took a stick two or three feet long, the lower end of which exactly fitted the hole, on the golden rod, he whirled swiftly round, till the golden rod caught fire in the socket. The wood used for sacrifice was blackjack and sycamore. This wood, however, must be free from worms and rot."² Such a fire was regarded as sacred.

In addition to the duties of speaking to the people, and offering sacrifices, the priests foretold events, or attempted to foretell them, and uttered warnings.³

1. MS. in my possession.
2. Payne MSS., pp. 10-11.
3. Ibid., p. 11.

"The world became full of people who were very wicked. They disregarded all good instruction, and would not listen to anything good that was said to them."¹ An angelic messenger was sent to a certain man telling him to go to a large town to warn the people of possible destruction unless they obeyed the gods. The man did as he was told, but the people did not pay any attention to him. The warning was repeated but with no effect. It was repeated the third time. Then the messenger told the man to build a house that would float, and with his family, and some of all kinds of animals, get in it.²

1. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

2. Tulsa Tribune, May, 1931.

"The southern United States had its great flood and its Noah long before it was the United States", Dr. John R. Swanson of the Smithsonian Institution discloses in an account of the legends and culture of the Choctaw Indians.

The Choctaws, the investigator writes, shared with other southern Indians the tradition that mankind was destroyed by water because of wickedness. Their legends relate of a forewarned prophet who did a Paul Revere throughout the villages of his nation, crying out the Indian equivalent of "the flood is coming". None heeded him. Then came a time to cause men fear, the Choctaw version continues, for the elements behaved badly and the wild animals stalked around with their tails between their legs.

Primary divine manifestations were followed by a clap of thunder and "what seemed to be light advancing from the north", but which was actually the gleam of waters rushing over the country. The Indian Noah bordered a raft made of sassafras logs and thus escaped when all others perished. After weeks "at sea" a blackbird hovered around the craft and he called to it for help but it flew away. Then came a blue-bird with red eyes which led him to an island where he fell asleep. When he awoke he found his roost covered with animals. Among them was his pilot, the blue-bird, which changed into a beautiful woman and became the mother of a new race.

The Choctaw conception of heaven, the legend reveals, was quite similar to that later taught them by Christian missionaries.

He did. The doors were closed and rain came.

Another version states that in remote ages of the distant past a man had a dog which for some reason began to go to the river every day and howl at the water. The man became impatient with the dog and scolded him. To his surprise the dog began to talk to him, saying: "Very soon there is going to be a great freshet and the water will come so high that everybody will be drowned; but if you will make a raft to get upon when the rain comes, you will be saved, but you must first throw me into the water."¹ Naturally the man did not believe the dog at first. The animal continued: "If you want a sign that I speak the truth, look at the back of my neck." When he looked he saw the skin was worn off the dog's neck so that the bones stuck out.

By this time the man was convinced that the dog was speaking the truth. Without delay he began the construction of a raft.² Soon after it was finished the rain began to

Every man, according to myths resurrected by Doctor Swanson, had two souls--a sort of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde arrangement. One soul dwelt outside the body and always followed it during life, being about identical with the shadow. The other was the "inside soul". The outside soul was left behind after death and wandered restlessly about its former abode, howling for its "master", and was believed to assume the shape of a fox or an owl.

1. A prophet by the name of Wassi, according to Foster, Story of the Cherokee Bible, p. 9, warned the Cherokees of the coming Deluge.

2. The Choctaws have a legend reading thus: There was total darkness over the whole earth for many days. The Choctaw mystery men, or doctors, watched for land day after day, and were just about despairing of seeing it, being very unhappy, when they discovered a light in the North which proved

fall. With plenty of provisions the man, together with his family, and certain animals, boarded the raft. It rained for days and days; the water rose higher and higher, drowning all the people and animals. When the rain stopped the water subsided until it was safe to leave the raft.¹

to be mountains of water subsiding, after having destroyed all, except a few families who had escaped it by means of a strong raft. Catlin, North American Indians, Vol. 2, p. 127, says he received his tradition from Peter Pinchlin, an intelligent and influential man of the tribe. In the Cherokee story and the Pima story as given by Foster, Story of the Cherokee Bible, pp. 9-11, the escape was in a large canoe.

1. In the ancient land of the Cherokees, Union County, Georgia, is a beautiful mountain called the "Enchanted", known as the Ararat of the Cherokees. It is in the midst of a most charming country. The surrounding hills are carpeted with grass, ornamented with flowers, gemmed with trees. It has the appearance of an enchanted region. This mountain is a spur of the Blue Ridge and it gets its name from the large number of tracks or impressions of the feet and hands of various animals in the rocks, which appear above its surface. A writer in 1834 says: "The number visible or defined is one hundred and thirty-six, some of them quite natural and perfect, and others rather rude imitations, and most of them from the effects of time have become more or less obliterated. They comprise human feet from those four inches in length, to those of great warriors, which measure seventeen and a half inches in length and seven and three quarters in breadth across the toes. What is a little curious, all of the human feet are natural except this, those of one man have six toes, proving him to have been a descendant of Titon. There are twenty-six of these impressions, all bare save one, which has the appearance of having worn moccasins. A fine turned hand, rather delicate, occupied a place near the great warrior, was probably the impression of his wife's hand, who no doubt accompanied her husband in all his excursions, sharing his toils and soothing his cares away. Many horse tracks are to be seen. One seems to have been shod; some are very small, and one measures twelve inches and a half by nine and a half. This the Cherokee say was the footprint of the great war horse, which their chieftain rode. The tracks of a great many turkeys, turtles, terrapins, and a large bear's paw, a snake's tail, and the footprints of two deer are to be

Of all the people living only this one family survived the disaster. One day they were astonished by a noise of shouting and dancing on the other side of the ridge. The man made his way to the summit of the incline and looked over to see what was on the other side. Everything was still. He noticed where there were large piles of human bones along the valley where the people were destroyed. Then he was persuaded the noise they had heard was the shouting and dancing of the ghosts.¹

seen." The traditions having to do with these impressions, as one would expect, vary. One of them reports the world was once deluged with water, and men and all animated life were destroyed, except just enough to replenish the earth. Before the flood the Great Spirit had commanded them to embark in a big canoe, which after many experiences and long sailing was drawn to this place by a bevy of swans, where it rested and when the people and the animals left the canoe they left the impressions as they passed over the rock, which had been softened by reason of the long submersion. See Foster, *Story of the Cherokee Bible*, pp. 9-11; also Foster, *Sequoyah, The American Cadmus*, pp. 82-84.

The Santa Rosa is the Ararat of the southern Pimas. One of the Pimas prophets was warned by an eagle of the coming flood and was advised to prepare for it. The warning came three times, then suddenly the wind arose, the rain fell in torrents, accompanied by terrific lightning and thundering, the darkness covered the whole world. The Pimas all perished except "So Ho", a chief, a brave and good Indian, who was saved by the intervention of the Great Spirit. In a canoe surrounded by his family and animals he weathered the storm and the canoe at last rested on Santa Rosa mountain. Foster, *The Cherokee Bible*, p. 9.

1. Mooney, 19th R. B. A. E. W., Part I, pp. 261, 444-455; Smith, *The Story of the Cherokees*, pp. 36-37.

This myth was given by Schoolcraft in his notes on the Iroquois, p. 358, as having been obtained from the Cherokee chief, Stand Watie, in 1846. Mooney got it in substance from James Wofford, Indian Territory, 1890, who in turn received it from his grandmother nearly eighty years before. It is mentioned by Haywood, *Natural and Aboriginal History of Ten-*



Susie Frog, Cherokee Roll
No. 19057, resides four miles
south of Stilwell, Oklahoma.



Sut Beanstick, and his wife,
who live six miles south of
Stilwell.



Johnson Sixkiller, 7 miles
Northwest of Stilwell, Okla-
homa.



Sister of Johnson Sixkiller.



Emma Hummingbird, now Spade,
paralytic, lives 8 miles North of
Stilwell.

In this myth it is not specifically stated what power or powers sent the Flood. It is associated with the strange actions of a dog, and one is to keep in mind the dog was a recognized symbol of the Water Goddess. Perhaps one is to understand, then, this personage brought about the Deluge. A careful reading of the myth discloses no motive for what happened. Had the idea of sin been prominent among them it very likely would have appeared here.

Their Idea of Prayer.

Wherever one goes one finds praying people. Prayer is an expression of desire. This desire to communicate with the unseen powers was always present with the Red men. Prayer was not so much a means of cultivating the friendship of supernatural beings and seeking to do their will, as it was practiced by the American Indians, including the Cherokees, as it was a means of securing the help these people needed.¹

nessee, p. 261. The versions as given by Buttrick and Washburn are virtually the Bible stories. Washburn says the Indians account for the Flood as a natural phenomenon due to a tilting of the earth, see his *Reminiscences*, pp. 196-197. The Hagar MS., *Stellar Legends of the Cherokees*, states a star fell from heaven becoming a man and warning the people of the impending danger. Such a myth has been found among every people of every age. Brinton says it was common to the Athapascan, Algonkin, Iroquois, Cherokees, Chickasaws, Caddo, Natchez, Apache, Dakota, Navaho, Mandan, Pueblo, Aztec, Mixtec, and many others. See: Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, pp. 198-212. In one of the Creek versions the warning was given by wolves; another by cranes. See: Bouton's *Bible Myths and Folklore*. Other references concerning the Deluge are: Richardson, *Arctic Expedition*, p. 239; Dumont, *Mems. hist. sur la Louisiane*, I, p. 163.

1. Other means of securing the help of the gods include

They prayed to get results.¹ The reader may ask: "Whose desire is expressed in these primitive prayers? Is it the desire of the individual or the desire of the community?" Individual desires need not be contrary to the desires of the community. As a rule, men in the early stages of civilization pray for selfish advantage. It is well to study some of the prayers of the different tribes.

Here is the prayer of an Osage addressed to Wahkonda, the Master of Breath: "Wahkonda, pity me, I am very poor; give me what I need; give me success against mine enemies, that I may avenge the death of my friends. May I be able to take scalps, to take horses."² This prayer consists in petitions for things needed. It seems to lack a sense of ethics.

Here is the prayer of an Algonkin chief addressed to the Great Spirit when a party of tribesmen started across Lake Superior in frail bark canoes: "You have made this lake; and you have made us, your children; you can now cause that the water shall remain smooth while we pass over it in

ritualistic performance with strength to coerce the unseen powers and the purchase of help by means of gifts in the form of sacrifice and offerings. Frequently the coercing ritualistic performance and the sacrifice are accompanied by prayers. Even prayer may assume a ritualistic form, and thus attain coercive power. Such a prayer is described as an incantation. See: Bulletin 30, Bureau Am. Eth., pp. 303-304.

1. Jim Pickup, MS. in my possession. He says they pray for bread and get bread.

2. Tylor, Primitive Culture, II, p. 365.

safety."¹ This is a social prayer made in behalf of the group. The previous prayer just noted is individual or personal in nature. The second prayer is for safety of the crowd. The first prayer is for the success of the individual. Both prayers are calls for help.

The element of gratitude entered into some of the prayers of the American aborigines. Lindquist states, for example, the prayers of the Iroquois were really thank offerings. During the mid-winter ceremony they had a prayer which continued for three days and in it they mentioned with gratitude every blessing that they could remember. The following is an excerpt from such a prayer: "We are grateful for all that has been given us. Continue to bestow these favors and withdraw them not; thy children live by thy bounty; and without it we cannot live. Continue to listen and inhale this sweet incense as we speak to thee; forget us not, for we are here by thy power begotten, and without thy power we shall despair."²

The various tribes prayed for victory in war. Here is a prayer from a war song of a Delaware:

"O Great Spirit there above,

Have pity on my children

And my wife!

Prevent that they shall mourn for me!

1. Narr. of the Captivity of John Tanner, James, p. 46.

2. The Red Man in the United States, Lindquist, p. 50.

Let me succeed in this undertaking,
That I may slay my enemy
And bring home the tokens of victory
To my dear family and my friends
That we may rejoice together . . .
Have pity on me and protect my life,
And I will bring thee an offering."¹

In these prayers I have quoted there was no word requesting pardon from wrongdoing, no confession of sin was made. The prayers were personal and social, for self and the community, seeking protection, giving thanks, asking for victory. They prayed for their desires.

Many times I have listened to the Cherokee leaders pray when they conduct their periodical services at their council grounds. Trustworthy interpreters have translated these prayers for me. They have prayed for protection, for food, for good crops, for victory. They give thanks for blessings received and ask for continued help. In the prayers spoken at the present time there is something of confession for they often attribute misfortune to their unfaithfulness to their ancient religion. Miss Alice Robertson² tells about hearing a medicine man praying for healing when she was just a little girl. The Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees are in the nature

1. Tylor, Primitive Culture, II, p. 366.

2. MS. in my possession. This was more than 70 years ago.

of prayers. Shorey Ross¹ asserts they used certain formulas in addressing the higher powers, and these formulas have to do with their general affairs. To make their prayers effective they had to say the right thing in the right way. One authority says: "They prayed to many beings in the world, but rarely or never to the universe. These words sought to coerce the person addressed to do something, usually, what it was supposed to be his routine to do anyway."²

Mooney³ records this prayer as one used by a medicine man in treating a case of rheumatism: "Yu! O Red Woman, you have caused it. You have put the intruder under him. Ha! now you have come from the Sun Land. You have brought the small red seats, with your feet resting upon them. Ha! now they have swiftly moved away from you. Let the relief come at once. Relief is accomplished. Let it not be for one night alone." This is a Cherokee prayer for healing. The disease was cured by a proper recital of this formula.

Let us study a Cherokee prayer for catching a large fish: "Listen! Now you settlements have drawn near to hearken. Where you have gathered in the foam you are moving about as one. You Blue Cat and the others, I have come to offer you freely the white food. Let the paths from every

1. MS. in my possession. Ross is a Cherokee.

2. J. P. Harrington, MS. in my possession.

3. 7th R. B. A. E. W., pp. 349-351. Red Woman, rather than Red Man, is invoked here, and this is an exception to the general rule. The Red Man is one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful, god of the Cherokees. The patient in this case is a man. The god is the cause of the disease instead of the revengeful spirit of some slain animal.

direction recognize each other. Our spittle shall be in agreement. Let them (your and my spittle) be together as we go about. They (the fish) have become a prey and there shall be no loneliness. Your spittle has become agreeable. I am called Swimmer. Yu!"¹ This prayer is like the one above in that to become efficacious it must be accurately recited.

A prayer or formula often used for the separation of lovers is the following: "Yu! On high you repose, O Blue Hawk, there at the far distant lake. The blue tobacco has come to be your recompense. Now you have arisen at once and come down. You have alighted midway between them where they are standing. You have spoiled their souls immediately. They have at once become separated.

"I am a white man; I stand at the sunrise. The good sperm shall never allow any feeling of loneliness. This white woman is of the Paint (iyustic) clan; she is called (iyusti) Wayi. We shall instantly turn her soul over. We shall turn it over as we go toward the Sun Land. I am a white man. Here where I stand it (her soul) has attached itself to (literally, 'come against') mine. Let her eyes in her sockets be forever watching (for me). There is no loneliness where my body is."²

1. 7th R. B. A. E.W., pp. 374-375. The fisherman chews a small piece of Yugwilu and spits it on his bait and hook and recites the prayer as he baits the hook. A big fish is supposed to be caught at once.

2. Mooney, 7th R. B. A. E. W., pp. 381-382. The color blue suggests trouble. To spoil their souls is to change their attitude towards each other.

This prayer or formula is used if a jealous rival desires to separate two lovers or even husband and wife.

These prayers are enough to show the Cherokees used prayer as a means of gaining benefits. They thought of prayer in a practical way. They prayed for the things they needed. They planned what they wished to do, then called upon the gods to help them. Their gods were their helpers. They do not praise the fine qualities of the gods. Their prayers are not eulogies for the unseen powers. They prayed for temporal and tangible things, for success in hunting, fishing, medicine, love, war, the ball-play; they asked for abundant harvests, for length of days, for revenge, for guidance; they gave thanks for favors received.

Their Idea of Sacrifice.

Sacrifice is found in all religions from the most primitive to the most highly developed. "Everywhere among the Red men, even among the roving tribes of the north, they had some kind of sacrifice and of prayer."¹ Men in the early stages of civilization sought to propitiate the unknown powers, to avert their displeasure, and to win their favor. Sacrifice has been described as a part of the outward rite of prayer. Jevons² thinks of sacrifice as intended to bring the community into the presence of deity and of prayer as designed to

1. Bancroft, Hist. of the U. S., Vol. II, p. 435. .

2. An Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion.

bring men into fellowship with deity. This is hardly true of the Red men for they did not endeavor to walk and talk with the gods. Sacrifice is undoubtedly a survival of a sacrificial meal where deity and the worshipper dined together. A boy who was just entering manhood had a sacrificial meal with his guardian spirit. The American Indians, so far as I have been able to learn, did not offer sacrifice for the expiation of sin or with a confession of transgressions, as was customary with the ancient Hebrews, but they made sacrifice to satisfy the hunger of the gods and to be assured of their help. With the aid of sacrifice they hoped to secure many blessings, numerous heirs, abundant success, continued happiness and a victorious entrance into paradise. They offered sacrifices to get results. It was good religious business. Mistakes in the ceremonies were dangerous, hence there arose priests to carry out the rites unblemished. Any place might be used as an altar for they did not have temples.

Sacrifices were made regularly at seed time and harvest. Other occasions for sacrifice included all crises, the time of birth, death, marriages, when the seasons changed and in time of war. At the harvest period thank offerings were presented. Sacrifice was related both to the past and to the future. Most of the tribes thought of the past with thanksgiving and anticipated the future with hopefulness. However, the primary motive in sacrifice, as in prayer, was

not gratitude so much as it was desire, that is, a means of getting what they wanted. Ross¹ is of the opinion sacrifice was pleasing to the higher powers in the understanding of the Cherokees. He states: "It seems that the sacrifice was used only on the great and eventful occasions when a ceremonial was being conducted by the priest or priests of the ancient religion."

Harrington² believes the Cherokee idea of sacrifice was to appease and to please. "Something had to be given, that is, the pray-ers damaged themselves that the addressed might damage themselves in return." When a bear is killed the hunter often kneels beside it, builds a little ceremonial fire, burns a small amount of tobacco on it, and speaks to the spirit of the bear, seeking to curb its anger at having been slain. "O brother bear, do not be angry. I needed your skin and your flesh, for I must have clothing and meat to eat. The Great Spirit has made both of us, but he has made man more cunning. I have not slain you for malice or for mere sport, but for meat, so do not be angry. I should not have been angry had you slain me. Come and accept the sacrifice. See I cast aside the arrow that killed you, watch it burn. See I give you these beads and this knife; accept them as my gift to you and invoke no harm to me."³ In this prayer and

1. MS. in my possession in the form of a questionnaire.

2. Ibid.

3. Lindquist, The Red Man in the U. S., p. 51.

sacrifice immortality is attributed to the bear, and by implication to all creatures. The speaker thought of himself as having no higher destiny than his brother, the bear. Here the sacrifice was to please and appease.

Brinton writes: "All history, it has been said, shows men living under an irritated god, and seeking to appease him by sacrifice of blood; the essence of all religion it has been added, lies in that of which sacrifice is the symbol, namely, in the offering up of self, in the rendering up of our will to the will of God."¹ He goes ahead to state when sacrifice is not made a token of gratitude it cannot be thus explained, but it becomes a substitution of our will for the will of deity. They regard the deity as being angry because of a neglect of his dues. If something is not done he will avenge the neglect. Since punishment is what he desires, if we punish ourselves he will be satisfied. So in sacrifice the Cherokees did not seek to learn the will of their gods, they tried to use them for tribal and individual purposes. When a gift was made to deity, it was thought deity would repay it. In sacrifice the offering accompanies the application for help. It cannot be reduced merely to a bribe.² It is a way of complimenting and pleasing the gods. An Indian who had a dead son, with his family gathered about

1. Myths of the New World, p. 180.

2. W. P. Paterson, The Nature of Religion, p. 394.

him, in a moving voice prayed: "O Manitou, thou art angry with me; turn thine anger from me, and spare the rest of my children."¹ This brief prayer, like sacrifice is intended to win favor of the gods.

Lindquist finds the sacrifice of animals and human beings uncommon north of Mexico. "Human sacrifice did exist among the Pawnee in special ceremonial cases, and captives in other tribes were often sacrificed in the rite of torture to the god of war or to the sun."² Human sacrifice was common among the Aztecs, but nothing analogous to it is found in other sections of the North American continent. "The sacrifice was generally in the nature of a gift to the spirits that especially affected human welfare. Beautiful beads, amulets, ornaments, feather articles and embroideries in porcupine quills, were frequently offered to the spirits of the springs, the fishing places, the corn fields or in the woods where flocks of game birds had been killed."³ The Cherokees offered as sacrifices tobacco, fruits, beads, ornaments, amulets, bread and sometimes the flesh of animals. During the World War when the Indian braves were sent to the trenches, the Oklahoma Cherokees, holding to the religion of their fathers, gathered at their five council grounds and offered sacrifices to the Great Spirit. Bread was given to mother earth in recognition of

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1. Bancroft, Hist. of the U. S., Vol. II, p. 435.
 2. The Red Man in the U. S., p. 50.
 3. Ibid., pp. 50-51.

her nourishing powers. White chickens were burned on the altars in seeking the protection of the Great Spirit for the soldiers and in giving them victory. In sacrifice the Cherokees intended to appease and please their gods; they sacrificed to get results, things that, in the main are tangible and temporal.

Chapter Six

Some of Their Doctrines (Continued)

Chapter Six

Their Idea of the Future Life.

"To the naturalist immortality is a foolish dream, to the agnostic an unjustified human craving, to the simple Christian belief, and to the transcendentalist a confident hope, but to the Indian it is as positive an assurance as is life."¹ During the first half of the eighteenth century the missionary Charlevoix wrote many excellent things about the natives of America. Later authors often quoted him. His most frequently quoted words are: "The belief the best established among our Americans is that of the immortality of the soul".² Sixty years ago Brinton³ wrote, after he had studied widely and made careful investigations, that he knew of only one small clan, the Lower Pend d'Oreilles, of Oregon, where the idea of a future life did not exist. "This people had no burial ceremonies, no notion of a life hereafter, no word for soul, spiritual existence, or vital principle. They thought that when they died, that was the last of them."⁴ Belief in a future life was well established among the Cherokees.⁵

1. James, What the White Race May Learn from the Indians, p. 259.

2. Journal Historique, p. 351, Paris, 1740.

3. Myths of the New World, p. 234.

4. Ibid., p. 234.

5. Olbrechts, MS. in my possession; Harrington, MS. in my possession; Nuttall, Travels in the Ark. Territory, p. 195; Foster, Story of the Cherokee Bible, pp. 28-29; Foster, Sequoyah, The American Cadmus, pp. 30-33; Spence, Hastings Encly., Vol. I, pp. 376-382; Timberlake, Memoirs, and many other writers.

As a whole the American Indians entertained a positive, clear hope of a hereafter. It was no vague, feeble notion such as prevailed among the Hebrews, Greeks and Romans. Wilson¹ wrote: "A native African would as soon doubt his present as his future state of being." The same thing could be said aptly of the American tribes.

One may inquire whence the wide belief in a future life. Tylor² holds the idea grows out of dreams. The living dream of visiting distant scenes. Accounts of visits of the dead to the living and of the living to the dead are numerous among the American aborigines.³ What often begins as the work of the imagination later assumes the form of reality in their thinking. Here is a story of a young brave who lost his betrothed and determined to follow her to the land of souls: "Far south, beyond the regions of ice and snow, he came to a lodge standing before the entrance to white blue plains. Leaving his body there, he embarked in a white canoe to cross a lake. He saw souls of wicked Indians sinking into the lake; but the good gained an elysium shore, where all was warmth, beauty, ease, and eternal youth, and where the air was food. The Master of Breath sent him back, but promised that he might at death return and stay."⁴ Some people think a longing to see departed ones may have given

1. Western Africa, Chapter XII.

2. Primitive Culture, II, ii.

3. Bancroft, Hist. of the U. S., Vol. II, pp. 441-442.

4. Alger, The Doc. of the Future Life, p. 75; Schoolcraft, The Indian in His Wigwam, p. 79.

rise to the belief in immortality. The basis of this belief, writes Jevons,¹ is to be found in a desire for a continuation of life. It has been attributed to a tradition having been spread far and wide over the earth. In answer to this suggestion Clarke² affirms it did not come from such a tradition, but that the belief in a future existence sprang up independently in all parts of the world. We are not able to explain why such a tenet was accepted by the American Indians in general and the Cherokee tribe in particular, however, we must recognize that it existed. This appears from at least three points of view: (1) a study of the language; (2) a study of the mortuary customs; (3) a survey of opinion of the subject.

First, let us make a brief study of the terms corresponding to the word soul in the Cherokee and some of the other tribal tongues. "We call the soul a ghost, or spirit, and often a shade. In these words the breath and the shadows are the sensuous perceptions transferred to represent the immaterial object of our thought."³ As regards the Cherokee language the word for soul is *adanats*, and when it leaves the body it becomes an *aski'na*, that is, a ghost. The word for ghosts is *aniski'na*. The ghosts are contin-

1. An Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion.

2. Ten Great Religions, p. 319.

3. Brinton, Myths of the New World, pp. 52, 235, explains why these words are used.

ually lonesome and desirous that their living friends and relatives should join them, therefore they continually try to make them sick so that they will die and join them.¹ The Cherokees, then, think of the departed soul as a ghost, and a ghost continues to live.

Some of the New England tribes called the soul chemung, the shadow; in the Mohawk tongue it is atonritz, the soul, from atonrian, to breathe; with the Quiche it is natub, and among the Eskimos it is tarnak, and these two terms contain the ideas of both a shadow and breath.² One could not assert these terms convey the idea of strict immateriality. "The soul was to them the invisible man, material as ever, but lost to the appreciation of the senses."³

The belief prevailed among the Algonkins and the Iroquois that man has two souls. One writer describes the notion in this fashion: "One soul is of a vegetative character, which gives bodily life, and remains with the corpse after death, until it is called to enter another body; another of more ethereal texture, which in life can depart from the body in sleep or trance, and wander over the world, and at death, goes directly to the land of Spirits."⁴ The Sioux

1. Olbrechts, MS. in my possession.

2. Other examples: Oviedo, Hist. de Nicaragua, p. 36; Buschmann, Ueber die aztekischen Ortsnamen, p. 765.

3. Brinton, Myths of the New World, pp. 235-236.

4. Ibid., p. 236; for a more detailed discussion along the line see: Rel. de la Nouv. France, in 1636, p. 104; Keating's Narrative, I, pp. 223, 410.

thought the body had three souls: one at death went to a cold place; one to a warm, comfortable place; the third remained with the body.¹ Some of the Dakotas were of the opinion man had four souls with four destinies: one watched the body after death; one wandered about the world; one lingered around the village; and the fourth went to the land of ghosts or spirits. I have found no evidence among the Cherokees of a belief in more than one soul. Cherokees² with whom I have talked know nothing about it. The investigations made by the Bureau of American Ethnology and the books written by travelers and traders furnish no testimony on the subject so far as I have discovered. My conviction is they believed in only one soul. If they thought otherwise it was not prominent enough to attract attention.

Second, let us make a brief study of their burial rites. The Cherokees believed the emancipated spirit had the same wants as on earth. The future life is conceived to be a continuation of the present life under conditions where there will be ample opportunity for the perfection of human abilities and instincts.³ Sequoyah died in the hope of living in another world which has been described as follows: It is

1. French Historical Collections Louisiana, III, p. 26; Mrs. Eastman, Legends of the Sioux, p. 219.

2. On this subject I have conversed with well informed Cherokees as: Shorey Ross, Tahlequah, Oklahoma; Chief Sam Smith, Vian, Oklahoma; John Smith, Gore, Oklahoma; Will French, Cherokee, North Carolina. M. H. Thornton, Muskogee, Oklahoma, a mixed Cherokee, told me his step-grandfather was a full-blood Cherokee, knew well their lore and traditions, but never mentioned a Cherokee as having more than one soul.

3. Lindquist, The Red Man in the U. S., pp. 53-54.

"a mighty forest decked with foliage of the softest shade, and carpeted with velvet leaves and silken needles of majestic pines; verdant groves wafting sweet perfumes on gentle airs; a shady woods, where warbling birds in golden plumage carolled wondrous melody, where for his silvered arrow, herds of stately deer and buffalo idly waited on a thousand ambushed plains, and where monster fish sported for him alone in silvery brooks, which rippled over pebbly beds of gold. And somewhere in this happy hunting ground, he thought to find the wigwams of those who had gone before, and with them to live on forever, never growing old, but in this new world to develop constantly new capacities."¹ Other tribes hold to similar beliefs.²

1. Foster, Sequoyah, The American Cadmus, pp. 164-165.

2. Catlin, North American Indians, Vol. II, pp. 127-128, describes the future home of the Indians in general: "Our people all believe that the spirit lives in a future state--that it has a great distance to travel after death towards the West--that it has to cross a dreadful deep and rapid stream, which is hemmed in on both sides by high and rugged hills--over this stream, from hill to hill, there lies a long and slippery pine log, with the bark peeled off, over which the dead have to pass to the delightful hunting grounds. On the other side of the stream are six persons of the good-hunting-grounds, with rocks in their hands, which they throw at them all when they are on the middle of the log. The good walk on safely, to the good-hunting-grounds, where there is one continual day--where the trees are always green--where the sky has no clouds--where there are continual fine and cooling breezes--where there is one continual scene of feasting, dancing and rejoicing--where there is no pain or trouble, and people never grow old, but forever live young and enjoy the youthful pleasures."

The same author gives us a picture of the fate of the unfaithful Indians: "The wicked see the stones coming, and try to dodge, by which they fall from the log, and go down

The Cherokees expect to live in the ghost country, their future home, very much as they do here. They look forward to hunting, fishing, dancing and holding councils. One's manner of life on earth has nothing to do with entrance to the ghost country, nevertheless, they think the good will have a better time, that is, they will have better luck hunting and fishing than the bad who will be more or less miserable due to ill luck in hunting and fishing.¹ Notions as to the nature of the future life vary with different tribes.² Since the next life is a continuation of this one, with similar wants and needs, these the living sought to satisfy. For the most part the Cherokees buried their dead in the ground.³ Clothing, utensils

thousands of feet to the water, which is dashing over the rocks, and is stinking with dead fish, and animals, where they are carried round and brought continually back to the same place in whirlpools--where the trees are all dead, and the waters are full of toads and lizards, and snakes--where the dead are always hungry, and have nothing to eat--are always sick, and never die--where the sun never shines, and where the wicked are continually climbing up by thousands on the sides of a high rock from which they can overlook the beautiful country of the good hunting grounds, the place of the happy, but never can reach it." The picture here presented is akin to the idea of life in a place where ill luck attends all one does.

1. Olbrechts, MS. in my possession.

2. To the tribes following the chase the other world is a place of ideal hunting. Among the agricultural tribes they think of it in terms of abundant crops. To some of the tribes it is a land of many streams. The Eskimos expect to go where the sun never sets, where it is warm and pleasant. The Peruvians believe in two future worlds, one below the earth for the wicked, and one above it for the good. The natives of Mexico dress their dead in their best garments, put a passport in their hand, and entomb their valuables with them. The Jews had no dogma about immortality but believed it. Clarke, Ten Great Religions, II, p. 334. In due time came the diversity of fates. Tylor, Primitive Culture, p. 85. Cowards do not enjoy the happy hunting grounds.

3. Some tribes interred their dead in the ground; some

of war and the chase, furs, blankets and other belongings, also food and drink were buried with their dead leaving the impression they would be of service to them on the way to the ghost country and in that new home. The Cherokees still bury articles of many kinds with the dead. Certain undertakers¹ have told me about their experiences in burying full-blood Indians, how they have seen such things as ornaments, hats, spurs, pipes, pieces of pottery, moccasins, blankets and a diversity of gifts buried with the dead. These articles may be placed in the casket or they may be in the grave above the casket. Three years ago I conducted the funeral of a white man² near Eldon, Oklahoma, who had been cared for during his last illness by full-blood Cherokees, and whose plain box coffin was made by them. A white man³ took me to the cemetery where the service was held. When I was ready to read a Scripture Lesson I noticed a cigar on the top of the casket. I knew Mr. McClendon, who stood near by, had some cigars in his coat pocket. My first thought was that the cigar had dropped from his pocket and that I should hand it to him, but this I hesitated to do for he was as near it as I was and could secure it himself. Then I knew we were

placed them in trees or on raised platforms; some built rather elaborate tombs; others buried them in the house where they died; some burned the house and the body together. Verrill, *The American Indians*, p. 89. The Cherokees at times buried above the ground, but their custom was as described above.

1. W. E. Reed, Stillwell and Tahlequah, Oklahoma, Carl Haglund, Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

2. A man named Klontz.

3. Mr. J. E. McClendon, Tahlequah and Eldon, Oklahoma.

in the presence of many full-blood Indians where unusual things might happen, so I left it where it was. When the coffin was placed in the tomb and covered with dirt the cigar had not been removed. As we left the graveyard I asked Mr. McClendon about the cigar. He told me that the dead man had been fond of smoking and that one of his Indian friends had put it there. To have taken it away would have resulted in bad luck. Seemingly the Indian expected the cigar to bring pleasure to his white friend on his way to the other world. Among the relatives present were the widow, Mrs. Klontz, and a son whose home was in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Since his mother would be left alone in the old home the son urged her to return to Muskogee with him. The Indians tried to influence her not to leave her dwelling place for four days believing if she did the spirit of the deceased would wander.

It is not uncommon for the Cherokees and other tribes¹ to put a light by the grave to make clear the way for the soul on its journey to the ghost country. Mr. Jack Brown, a mixed Cherokee and a man who has been an educational leader among his tribesmen for twenty years, has told me that when he was a lad he used to see the old Indians hang a lantern on the outside of the house where one of their number had died. The purpose of the light was to aid the soul in find-

1. The Algonkins, Iroquois, the Indians of Mexico, and a great many others.

ing the other world. An Indian myth pictures the ghosts of departed ones returning from the land of the hereafter, called Ponemah, and singing this song to Hiawatha:

"Do not lay such heavy burdens
On the graves of those you bury,
Not such weights of furs and wampum,
Not such weights of pots and kettles;
For the spirits faint beneath them.
Only give them food to carry
Only give them fire to light them.
Four days is the spirit's journey
To the land of ghosts and shadows,
Four its lonely night encampments.
Therefore when the dead are buried,
Let a fire as night approaches
Four times on the grave be kindled,
That the soul upon its journey
May not grope about in darkness.¹

Late in February, 1930, I attended the funeral of Mrs. Dreadfulwater. The burial place was on a mound. After the body had been lowered in the grave and dirt had been shoveled in to a depth of six or eight inches, certain articles were deposited in the grave with her, these articles consisted principally of gifts she had received at the Christmas season,

1. Longfellow, The Song of Hiawatha.

and the trimmings of the artificial flowers which covered the casket during the funeral service. A week previously her new born child had died. Those who buried the baby put in the tiny coffin all of the trimmings of the burial dress. I made special inquiry of the woman's father¹ and various other full-blood Indians² as to why this was done. The information gained, while a bit indefinite and confusing, in the main led to this, that it came from an old custom not to leave any articles of the deceased around the house, cabin, or wigwam to repeatedly bring them to mind. Timberlake,³ late in the eighteenth century, observed in their burial nothing of the dead was to be kept. He also notes they buried with them the articles they thought the dead would need. The Osages have a similar custom that is still in use. No doubt originally the idea involved in this practice was not so much to forget the deceased, as it was to carefully provide for them on their journey to the other world and to contribute to their comfort in paradise.

Some of the Indians grieved much when death claimed one of their number, even for weeks and months, and dressed in the deepest mourning. Others thought the dead were better off than the living so they made merry with dances, feasts and music. Some of the tribes did not have any mourning.⁴

1. Mr. Gourd, Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

2. Walter Justus and James Pickup, who conducted the funeral, and Mrs. Coon, all of Tahlequah.

3. Memoirs.

4. Verrill, The American Indian, p. 80.

Most of the tribes did not view death as a terrible disaster.¹ The Cherokees believed disease and death were not natural but attributable to the evil influence of animal spirits, ghosts or witches.² "In ancient times the Cherokees had no conception of anyone dying a natural death. They universally ascribed the death of those who perished by disease to the intervention or agency of evil spirits and witches and conjurers who had connection with Shina (anisgi'na) or evil spirits . . . a person dying by disease and charging his death to have been procured by means of witchcraft or spirits, by any other person, consigns that person to inevitable death. They profess to believe that their conjurations have no effect upon white men."³ Yet Foster,⁴ who was well acquainted with the views and practices of the Cherokees describes Sequoyah as facing death unafraid, as looking for no punishment, only rewards. Brinton⁵ was of the notion the Indians in general had a horror of death. Another student⁶ of Indian life holds to an opposite opinion, believing the aborigines face death with calmness, equanimity and serenity. They bravely await death as Socrates waited for and took the hemlock. Many of the tribes-

1. Ibid., p. 81.

2. 7th R. B. A. E. W., p. 322.

3. John Haywood, Natural and Aboriginal History of Eastern Tennessee, pp. 267-268, 1823.

4. Sequoyah, The American Cadmus, p. 164.

5. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 238.

6. James, What the White Race May Learn from the Indians, p. 260.

men were superstitious about dead bodies.¹ Thus competent opinion is here divided. The burial rites and customs here mentioned indicate the Cherokees believed in a future life.

The following was taken from the Tulsa World, March 30, 1931.² "The spirit of Bacon Rind, Osage Indian leader, was sped to its fathers at a curious joining of primitive and Christian rites here today.

"On a barren, rocky hilltop, the body of the rugged old man was buried at noon, when the perpendicular rays of the sun opened a passage into the Great Beyond for his soul.

"As a Catholic priest intoned the service for the dead, paid mourners raised their voices in lamentation and spoke messages warning of pitfalls and giving instructions for his spirit to heed on its last journey.

"Fully 5,000 persons, Indians and whites, followed the body up a winding one-way trail between stones to the Indian burial ground on the hill.

"The procession left the church of which Bacon Rind was a communicant after a Catholic funeral service. Traditional rites of the once barbarous Osages preceded and followed the church ritual.

"At sunrise, one of the old men of the tribes painted the face of the chieftain as he lay in state in the bronze casket at his modern residence in the Indian village on the

1. Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 238.

2. Bacon Rind was buried at Pawhuska, Oklahoma.

outskirts of Pawhuska. Stripes of blue and yellow marked his forehead and cheeks. The otterskin cap which Bacon Rind habitually wore was on his head and beaded trousers and leather jacket clothed his body.

"The men and women of his tribe and many white guests partook of a feast after services at the grave. Roasted meats and fruits and vegetables filled long tables in the yard of the home.

"At the graveside the voices of the priest and his assistants were drowned by the weird singsong of the mourners. Following an Osage custom, a chief mourner and several assistants were employed. They remained beside the body from the time of death until the funeral was over.

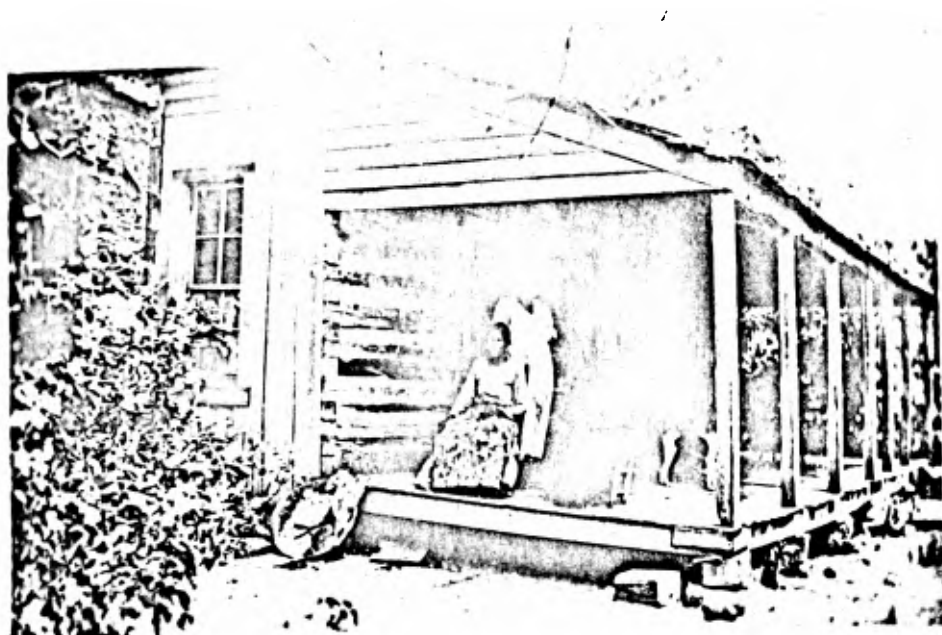
"While the crowd filed past the open casket at the grave, the Indians raised their open hands toward the sun. It was a last gesture of farewell to Bacon Rind, the Osage Orator and counsellor.

"Death came to the aged man at dawn Monday in his 79th year. For more than a quarter century he had been the acknowledged spokesman of the Osages, the wealthiest Indian tribe, although he never was made official chief of the nation.

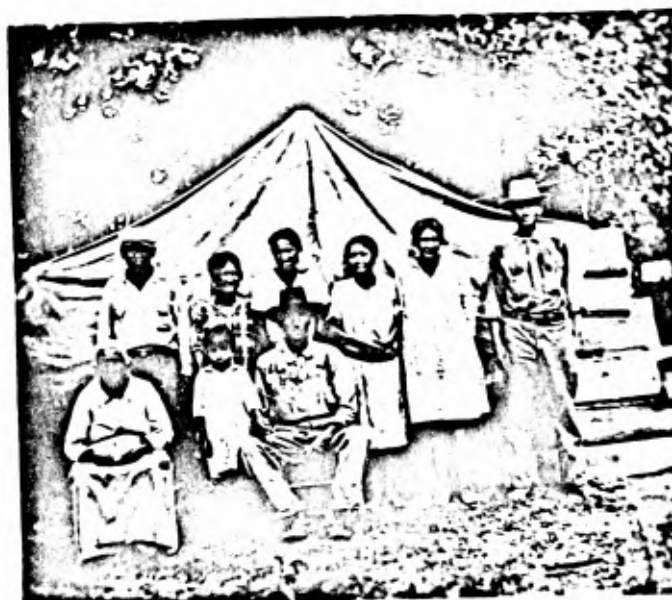
"Lookout, an erect and imposing figure, is chief of the Osages and participated in the services today. Although Bacon Rind never learned to speak English fluently, he was a notable orator in his native tongue. An old resident of the Osage hill country spoke today of being thrilled by his oratory,



Home of James Christie, located in
Asair County.



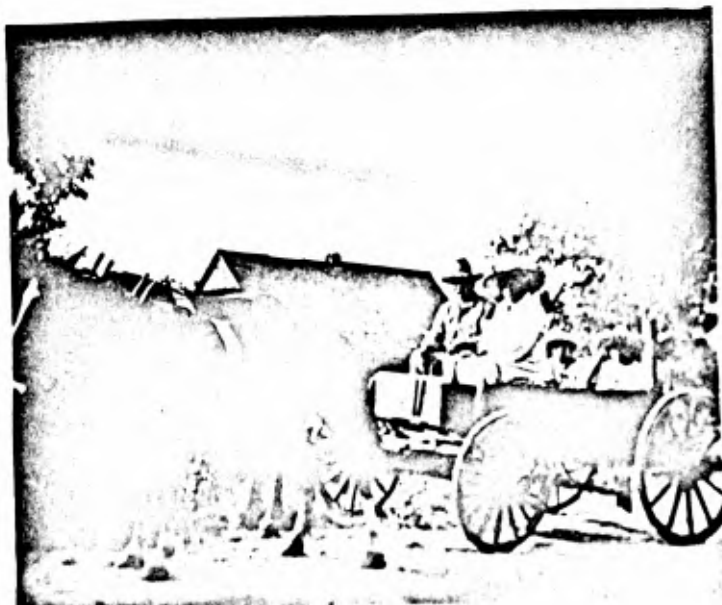
Home of Hollie Fields, sister, and niece,
located twelve miles North and East of
Tahlequah, on State Highway No. 10.



Camp of Lizzie Sunday, being
used as a home, while a
house is under construction.



Home of Fannie Dew, showing herself, chil-
dren and grandchildren; Fannie is a very
progressive Indian woman, having furnished
two soldiers, who went across in the world's
war and acquitted themselves to the cause.



George Pheasant and family
leaving his home for Stil-
well, Oklahoma.

although unable to understand his words."

He made many trips to Washington to speak for his people who were made wealthy by oil after many years of poverty in the rocky hills that comprise the Osage reservation.

It has been said the idea of a resurrection was entirely unknown and impossible to the American Indian.¹ To this Brinton vigorously replies it was "one of their most deeply-rooted and wide-spread convictions, especially among the tribes of the Eastern United States. It was indissolubly connected with their highest theories of a future life, their burial ceremonies and their modes of expression."²

Along the same line the Moravian Brethren furnish a clear idea of it: "That they hold the soul to be immortal, and perhaps think the body will rise again, they give not unclearly to understand when they say, 'We Indians shall not for ever die; even the grains of corn we plant under the earth, grow up and become living things.' They conceive that when the soul has been a while with God, it can, if it chooses, return to earth and be born again."³

In general the American Indians thought that in the course of time the spirit would return to the original bones, reclothe them with flesh and man would again join his tribe. For this reason most of the tribes carefully preserved the

1. Alger, Hist. of the Doc. of a Future Life, p. 72.

2. Myths of the New World, p. 254.

3. Loskiel, Ges. der Miss. der evang. Bruder, p. 49.

bones of their dead.¹ Almost every nation east of the Mississippi River would collect the bones of deceased tribesmen every eight or ten years and put them in common sepulchres. The custom was practiced in other localities.² As I have already pointed out the Cherokees cared for the bones of their dead and put them in mounds as if they expected the soul to return and regarb them with flesh. The Cherokees with whom I have talked on this subject do not accept the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Chief Sam Smith³ has told me they believe in a future life and always have. I asked him what he thought about such a life. To him he said it was life in a beautiful place where there is happiness, where the trials and misfortunes common to life in this world are unknown. He told me he had never known an Indian who did not expect to continue to live after his days in the flesh are ended. The Cherokees will not give up their hope of a future existence, their prospect of a wonderful hereafter.⁴

"By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews,

1. Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 255.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 257. See: Bruyas, *Rad. Verborum Iroqueeorum*; Buschmann, *Athapask. Sprachstamm*, pp. 182-188; Garcilaso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries des Incas*, lib., iii, Chap.7.

3. Lives at Vian, Oklahoma.

4. The following was taken from the Tulsa World, Nov. 23, 1931. "Twenty head of horses, 2,500 yards of calico, the cloth preferred by Indians to all other, a lot of blankets and other articles were given away to members of the Ponca Indian tribe today at noon by the Miller brothers of the 101 ranch, during

the obsequies, held by the Poncas in memory of the late Col. Joe C. Miller, who was an adopted member of the tribe.

"Colonel Miller died about a month ago, the result of monoxide gas poisoning. He left a provision in his will that \$1,000 be given the Poncas for their mourning ceremonies following his death, knowing they would want to go through the tribal ceremonies for him as for other deceased members of the tribe.

"One thousand Indians were assembled at noon on the white house lawn, including Poncas, Otoes, Tonkawas, Kaws, Pawnees, Osages and Cheyennes. Only the Poncas received presents from the Miller family, the other Indians joining them as mourners and at the feast, which the Millers had prepared and served on the lawn. Talks, telling of the many good qualities of their friend, Col. Joe Miller, were made by John Bull, and Horse Chief Eagle, tribal chief. George L. Miller made a presentation talk, telling them of the desires of his brother that the Indians be permitted to hold such a give-away and mourning ceremonies in his memory. His talk was interpreted to the Indians by George Primeaux, full blood Ponca.

"To White Deer, custodian of the tribe, George L. Miller presented a framed picture of Col. Joe Miller and White Deer will hang this in his lodge. He showed the picture to all the assembled Indians and as they looked upon it the squaws wept piteously. Some of the squaws continued to mourn, chanting praises of their departed friend. One aged squaw, Julia Little Standing Buffalo, sang her "Brave" song, reciting the death of her son in the World War. Several of the squaws, led by the aged Lizzie Giveswater, mourned loudly, their voices carrying over the entire crowd.

"John Bull was announcer and called the aged Indian men, to whom horses were given. These were the older men who had grown up here with Colonel Miller. The horses were presented personally by George Miller, and Joe Miller, Jr., the two sons of Col. Miller.

"It is the belief of the Indians that in giving away the effects of the departed member, the grief of the family is relieved to a great extent and this custom is followed always after the death of any tribal member. Col. Joe Miller was known among the Indians as "Walking Above", his tribal name. The Indians explained that Colonel Miller holds them in memory and that in giving them the horses and other articles following his death he has completed his part as an Indian.

"The clothing that Col. Joe Miller had worn, was given to the older men of the tribe, who had been his closest associates among the Indians. This was in keeping also with the tribal custom.

"During his lifetime, Colonel Miller always attended the funeral ceremonies of the Poncas, particularly the older members, and saw to it that they lacked nothing in the way of food and provisions to make their mourning ceremonies complete. On one occasion Colonel Miller, at the dying request of an

Investment for the chase arrayed,
The hunter still the deer pursues,
The hunter and the deer a shade."

Third, let us make a brief survey of competent opinion on the belief of the Cherokees concerning the future life. People who have studied and traveled and traded among the Cherokees are all agreed they thought a new life awaited them in another world. At death all members of the tribe go to the ghost country.¹ All of the tribes point to the sun as the land of happy souls, the scene of the next life. "Its perennial glory, its comfortable warmth, its daily analogy to the life of man, marked its abode as the pleasantest spot in the universe."² The villages of the deceased were located where the sun lives. The home of the sun was the heaven of the Red man. The road leading to it was the Milky Way.³

Harrington states on the subject under consideration: "They believed that all the bits of the universe existed eternally, that the person persisted forever after death, with an eternal existence of mixed joy and suffering the same as we know here."⁴ The lines of Pope in his Essay on Man are to the point here.

aged chief, saw to it that the chief's favorite horse was killed and laid upon his grave, so that the departed would have a mount in the 'happy hunting ground.'"

1. Olbrechts, MS. in my possession.

2. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 243. See Schoolcraft, Part II, p. 135.

3. Ibid., p. 244.

4. MS. in my possession.

"Lo! the poor Indian whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds and hears him in the wind-
His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the Solar Walk or Milky Way;
Yet simple nature to his faith hath given,
Behind the cloud-topped hill, an humbler heaven,
Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
Or happiest island in the watery waste.
To be, contents his natural desire;
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire,
But thinks admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company."

The conviction of Shorey Ross¹ is that the Cherokees believed the soul lived on forever. Miss Alice Robertson, whose people were missionaries among the Cherokees for many years, writes: "They believed the body died but the spirit lived. I have seen their care for the spirit in providing food or clothing buried with them for their journey to the unknown spirit land."²

In 1824 a missionary³ interviewed an aged chief who was older than Sequoyah, and asked him about the belief in a future life. He replied that when he was young he was told that when he died he would go to another country where

1. MS. in my possession.

2. Ibid.

3. Working for the A. B. C. F. M. I do not have the name of this missionary.

there were many people, where there were numerous towns and villages, "but we never talk much about those things."¹

Mooney contends the Cherokees had no heaven, no hell, no happy hunting ground.² One is not to interpret these words to mean they had no idea of a future life. Certainly they did not believe in the heaven and hell of the white people, but they did believe in a paradise suitable to their way of living. This Mooney does not deny for he says: "The spirit world to them is only a shadowy counterpart of this world."³

The great Sequoyah died in the faith his mother taught him, believing there was for him a happy hunting ground.⁴ Nuttall,⁵ Timberlake,⁶ and many others could be cited to support the idea that the Cherokees confidently looked forward to another life. This belief had little or no influence on their daily conduct.

On one occasion Esau Hajo, a Creek Chief, and speaker for his tribe, was asked if the Red people as a race believed in a future state of rewards and punishment. His reply could be classed as typically representing their point of view: "We have an opinion that those who have behaved well are taken under the care of Esaugetuh Emisssee, and assisted; and that those who have behaved ill are left to shift for themselves;

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1. Foster, Sequoyah, The American Cadmus, Footnote, p. 33.
 2. 7th R. B. A. E. W., p. 319.
 3. Ibid., p. 319.
 4. Foster, Sequoyah, The American Cadmus, pp. 30-33.
 5. Travels into Ark. Territory, p. 132.
 6. Memoirs.

and that there is no other punishment."¹ The different fates of different Indians were regarded as due more to the manner of death and the correctness and punctuality of the funeral rites than to anything else.²

Clarke³ makes this very strong statement: "I would sooner believe that every animal down to the smallest insect has an immortal soul, fitted to ascend higher and higher, through innumerable bodies, than that God will destroy the human mind and the human heart."

The same writer concludes: "All then, finally, resolves itself into this: Faith in immortality is inseparably connected with faith in God, and the higher we go up, the nobler our faith becomes the more we are sure of immortal life. The highest being who ever lived on earth was the surest of all. To him death was nothing, only a transient sleep."⁴

Thus I have established the Cherokees believed in a future life from the standpoint of language, from a study of their burial rites, and from a survey of the most competent authority on the subject.

Their Idea of Salvation.

"Since they believed that the dead all attain a con-

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1. Hawkins, Sketch of the Creek Country, p. 80.
 2. Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 243.
 3. Ten Great Religions, II, p. 340.
 4. Ibid., p. 341.

dition which was uniform, which properness or craziness in this life did not effect, they had no absolute idea of salvation and no word for it. If a person walked long on the path of this life, it was pleasant, but if he died young it was assumed to be pleasant also."¹

While they had no idea of salvation in the Christian sense, and perhaps not in the generally accepted technical sense, nevertheless, they had a theory of salvation, however inadequate it was, otherwise their religion served no purpose and had no special end, and this conclusion is not plausible. The truth of the matter is, if they had no idea of salvation, they had no religion. For our purpose here we may regard salvation as that in which religion consists. Now let us inquire what the chief ends of religion are.

Dr. W. P. Paterson, in his excellent book, "The Nature of Religion,"² discusses with marked insight, the three primary ends of religion. First, he mentions the Mundane Theory, where religion essentially consists in deliverance from calamities and disasters, and where physical and social benefits are sought. Second, he handles the Fugitive Theory of Salvation, which means a deliverance from self, from the law of nature, where such blessedness is desired as is discovered in Brahmanism and Buddhism. Third, he explains the Plenary Theory,

1. John P. Harrington, MS. in my possession.
2. Chapter 6, pp. 189-227.

where spiritual benefits are craved, such as are found in the Monotheistic faiths.

The blessings sought in religion have been classified as follows: (1) Material and temporal benefits, including physical blessings like health and length of days, and social blessings such as wealth, power, honor, kindred and friends; (2) intellectual and aesthetic benefits, embracing emotional blessings as peace of mind, blessedness, and joyousness; (3) spiritual benefits, including truth, beauty and goodness; (4) and religious benefits, such as God and the gift of grace.¹

Like other tribes of their race, the Cherokees did not think of religion as consisting in intellectual and aesthetic favors, but rather as being made up of material and temporal benefits, social and physical blessings, health, success in war, the chase, and plentiful harvests. These are the things they expected their religion to furnish them. These are the things they desired from their gods. They made no confession of wrongdoing. To them sin was nothing more than misfortune, disaster and calamity. Salvation was success, well-being, prosperity. Salvation was a deliverance, but not a deliverance from sin or self, instead it was a deliverance from bad luck. They did not look for much from their gods in the way of spiritual blessings. What they desired was help in distress,

1. Ibid., p. 193. For a full instructive analysis of the higher values, see Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, Chapter 2, 1918.

victory in battle, triumph in the chase or ball-play, freedom from illness, and bounty in harvests, that is, they expected their gods to bring them prosperity. They enlisted the aid of their deities in all of their undertakings. They were largely concerned about the present, leaving without dread, the future to care for itself. Some missionaries once asked a well informed Red Man about his belief in heaven and he replied: "We raise not our thoughts to your heaven; we desire only the paradise of our ancestors."¹ Their religion was to safeguard and advance their worldly and material prosperity. They desired ease, leisure, comfort, and an ample supply of natural wants. This was enough to render life here and hereafter delightful for them.

We have learned the nature of the religion of the Cherokees, or that in which their religion essentially consists. Now the question arises as to how these benefits are secured, or the way of salvation. They know what they desire. How are they to get what they desire? Dr. Paterson² points out four ways of salvation, namely, (1) the Way of Coercion or Force; (2) the Way of Ingratiation or Pleasing the Gods; (3) the Way of Obedience or Surrender; (4) and the Way of Faith or Belief. To think in terms of the Cherokees they asked, "What shall we do to be saved? What shall we do to secure the benefits we desire? What shall we render to the

1. Bancroft, Hist. of the U. S., Vol. II, p. 444, 1876.
2. The Nature of Religion, Chap. XI, pp. 382-426, 1925.

gods for their favors?"

How did the Cherokees seek the blessings of prosperity? They looked for salvation by way of coercion and ingratiation. At no time do we find them seeking to know and to do the will of the gods. "The infant confidently makes demands for the supply of its wants, which as a rule are promptly and liberally complied with; and its first theory doubtless is that its puny will controls the order of things in which it finds itself alive."¹ The child seeks to gain its wants by force. Likewise, to begin with, the Cherokees as a primitive people, endeavored to get their wants by force. Certain rites and ceremonies were performed to compel certain results on the part of the gods. They brought pressure to bear on the supernatural powers. The shamans were believed to have power over the gods. They assisted individuals in controlling their gods and in getting what they wanted. Their wisdom of things unseen was for the good of people.² Guardian spirits were thought to watch over individuals, families and clans. Great faith was placed in the protection which might be expected from them. "Not only the averting of ill will or disfavor of the spirits, but the making of them subservient to his needs is the effort of the Indian."³ What Moffett here applies to the American Indians in general is applicable to

1. Ibid., p. 387.

2. See North American Indians, by Frederick Starr, pp. 84-85.

3. Moffett, American Indians on the New Trail, p. 24.

the Cherokees as a tribe.

The Cherokees undoubtedly sought the benefits they desired by way of ingratiating as well as by force, though this method is less pronounced among them. Some of their rites and ceremonies were designed to please the gods. They sang, they danced, they prayed, they offered sacrifice, not for the purpose of securing heavenly bliss or to bring about the forgiveness of sins, but to obtain temporal and material favors, and possibly, ultimately, to secure life in paradise. One writer¹ on this subject declares, in reference to the American Indians, "all his actions are regulated by the desire to retain the good will" of the powers friendly to him, and to control those that are hostile. The good will of these friendly powers was retained by a strict observance of a variety of proscriptions known as taboo, by means of acquiring a guardian spirit, by prayer, by the use of charms, by offerings, and by sacrifices. So the Cherokees endeavored to please their gods to a certain extent at least. They sought salvation, that is, prosperity and good fortune, by force and ingratiating. They worked out their salvation notwithstanding the opinion of Bancroft:² "No red man was so proud as to believe the gates of paradise opened to him due to his own good deeds." He maintains they thought of salvation

1. B. A. E. Washington Bulletin, #30; also Bulletin #7, Indian Religion, p. 3.

2. Hist. of the U. S., Vol. II, p. 445, 1876.

as a gift. The fact is they sang and prayed and danced and fought and worked for their salvation.

Chapter Seven

Customs and Practices of the Cherokees..

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Customs and Practices of the Cherokees.

At a very early date the Cherokees appear to have begun to develop changes in their system of faith and worship. During the passing years the divergences have been gradual, but none the less real, from the ancient beliefs and rites. Like any other people, experience brought about growth in the religious life and thinking.

From one of the best authorities¹ the following is considered the essence of their early faith and worship. As far back as their history extends, it seems to have been the belief of the Cherokees that certain Beings came down from above, and formed the world. They thought these Beings had

1. John Howard Payne, 1791-1852, author, actor, traveler, and diplomat. He was born in the state of New York. He attended Union College. For several years he lived in England and on the continent, going abroad in 1813, and returning to America in 1832. He is widely known as the author of "Home, Sweet Home", which appeared in his opera, "Clari", or "The Maid of Milan". Soon after his return from Europe he became interested in the Cherokee Indians, traveled in their country, lived for some time in the hut of Chief John Ross, and espoused their cause against the Government (this was just prior to the Removal west) in memorials and magazine articles, and made a collection of their myths and traditions. These writings are in the Newberry Library, Chicago, known as the Edward E. Ayer Collection. They are in manuscript form and cannot be removed from the Library. Working together with Miss Lucy Ann Babcock, Librarian, Northeastern Teachers College, Tahlequah, we had the entire first volume of the manuscript photostated for us. The photostats are in the local library, 170 in number. This part of the manuscript, (there are several other volumes) deals with the customs and festivals of the Cherokees. This is our best source of information on the subject under consideration. Payne went to Tunis, Africa, 1842, as Consul, and died at his post in 1852.

always existed together. They are called "Beings" because "the Cherokee word describing them, implies, according to the peculiar genius of the original language, not only more than one, but more than two."¹ One section of the nation described them in general terms. In another section of the nation, especially among the more aged, at least, three different words were used to describe them. The words have been obsolete for more than one hundred years. The best informed old men remembered them, according to John Howard Payne, as first, "U-ha-lo-te-qa, that is, Head of all Power, or, literally, Great beyond expression; second, A-ta-no-ti, that is, United, or, literally, the Place of Uniting; allusive to the spot where vows of perpetual friendship are made; -- and, third, Usqo-hu-la, signifying, as nearly as can be ascertained, the bowels, just below the breast; and supposed to be here employed synonymously with the same word in our language, when applied to affection, or the mind."²

The Cherokees affirmed these Beings would ever remain unchanged. The belief was that they had made all things, that they knew all things, that they governed all things, and that they were everywhere present. Whomsoever they called died, and in whatever way they saw fit. All prayers were addressed to them. They were the judges of the Cherokees

1. Ibid., p. 3.

2. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

and all Indians. They were believed to send messengers on missions to this world.

These three Beings were regarded or "understood to be the same with One Mysterious Being,"¹ thought of by the ancients both as a Deity and as a King, who appeared sometimes as a man, sometimes as a God. He was both spiritual and material, both unseen, and seen. They did not speak his name except on certain solemn occasions. He gave the Cherokees a sacred hymn which selected ones of them might sing at times.²

Here we have some traditions which are supposed to represent the early and orthodox faith of the Cherokees as handed down by adherents of that faith and collected by John Howard Payne.

As Mr. Payne traveled through the Cherokee country these stories were given to him by different persons in different places and at different times. No one knew what any other person had given him. He assimilated the several detached fragments together. As we read these stories and traditions we can observe the influence of a knowledge of the Bible upon them, else the similarity of belief among Cherokees and Christians is nothing less than astounding.

The three Beings living above took seven days in do-

1. Ibid., p. 4.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

ing the vast work of creation. The world was created in the autumn while the fruit was all ripe. Man was made of red earth, so the first people were red, or real people, as their name Yu-wi-ya, indicated.¹ Some of the ancient Cherokees thought infants were born without souls, and that when the first air entered their lungs, they became living souls. The same Beings who made man also made woman. At first serpents were not poison. No roots of any kind contained poison. "Man would have lived forever, but the sun, passing over, perceived that the earth was not large enough to support all, in immortality, that would be born. Poison was injected in the tooth of the snake, in the root of the wild parsnip and elsewhere; and one of the first family was soon bitten by a snake and died. All possible means were used to bring him to life, but in vain. Being overcome in this first instance, the whole race was doomed, not only to the death of the body, but to eternal misery."²

Soon after the creation people were directed to construct places for worship on lofty elevations, where they could offer sacrifice, and assemble for other public ceremonies. They were told not to despise or laugh at the blind or deformed or others physically handicapped, but to be kind to them, also to be considerate of strangers. The many creatures of the earth were to be treated kindly.

1. Ibid., p. 7.

2. Ibid., p. 8.

On certain days they were instructed to meet together for worship of a public character. They congregated in the morning. Silence prevailed until the priest began to talk. He was called U-ku-wi-u-hi. No one indulged in whispering or speaking while the priest was talking. He talked most of the day.¹ He urged the people to obedience in keeping the will of the gods, and warned them that they could not hide from the eyes of deity. They could be seen any place. It was foolish to think they could hide in order to break the law. They were not to engage in vain, idle conversation. Children were admonished to be thoughtful of their parents and to be industrious.²

The people were told if they would live as he advised them, at death, they would go to the home of the gods, where they would enjoy pleasant days without darkness. Willful disobedience carried with it punishment in a lake of fire. Across this lake was a pole. At either end of the pole was a black dog. Being impelled forward people would try to walk across the log. When they were about the middle of it the black dog would roll it and plunge them beneath in the body of fire. A few would be allowed to cross the log, but on the other side was a house of fire into which they were forced and from which there was no exit. At death the good and the bad were separated.

1. Even today in the course of a ceremony a priest will talk for hours. During one ceremony, 1931, I heard Eli Punkin speaking several times, using altogether hours of time.

2. Christian influence seems evident in these words.

In the days of the Rev. D. S. Buttrick,¹ a missionary among the Cherokees, claims were made that they were a Chosen People who had been promised a certain land, blessed with fertility and a wide variety of crops and fruits, for their home. On their way to this land they were led by their prophet and priest, Wasi.² At first they were given commandments orally, and these were handed down orally, and were finally lost. New commandments of a similar content were given them on stone.³ Their leader was able to read and interpret them to the people. On their journey to the promised country⁴ they had to cross four rivers or four waters.⁵ It required just one year to make the journey although several years were spent in a wilderness on the way.⁶

The Cherokees had two great kings. The greater of these two kings lived before the Flood.⁷ Very little is known about him. The other of their renowned kings lived after they had

1. Payne quotes a number of the stories and traditions collected by Buttrick. They appear to be mixed with Bible stories. This might be expected for it was not easy to collect their legends and traditions uninfluenced by the beliefs of white men because a friendship had to be formed and their confidence gained before they would divulge their secrets, and by this time having come in contact with new ideas, their original legends and stories were colored by them, and became a mixture.

2. This seems to be their word for Moses, or for a man who fits into the character of Moses, and did a similar work. Payne MSS., p. 20.

3. Ye-ho-waah gave the commandments. Payne MSS., p. 20.

4. It is not stated where they were when the journey was begun to their future home.

5. John Howard Payne, MSS., p. 25.

6. Ibid., p. 25.

7. Ibid., p. 14.

reached their own land. He taught the people many things including instruction in the virtue of all kinds of roots and herbs, trees and shrubs, and how to administer them as medicines. He also taught them all the charms and verses and formulas which they used in giving the medicine. At that time the Indians as a rule were wise. This king also formed two kinds of little spirits called A-ni-ha-we-hi. "One kind was evil and killed people by poison, (witchcraft), and made them crazy; but the other kind would cure the poison; and this king taught the people what to do to obtain their assistance in relieving persons poisoned (bewitched). They were to rub their patients where most affected, with the end of the fore finger."¹

To begin with there were twelve tribes of Indians, but in the course of time, one of the tribes violated their holy law, by intermarrying in an unlawful manner, and as a result they determined to reduce the number of tribes to seven.²

While they were in the wilderness they received sacred fire, but did not take it with them to their new home, yet afterwards obtained it and kept it until a little less than two hundred years ago. It was in their Council House at Tu-gu-la. While engaged in war with white men the Council House was burned. Some of the Indians thought the fire was

1. Ibid., p. 27.

2. Ibid., p. 28.

extinguished; but others supposed it was still burning in the ground where it was.¹

"The Raven, an old Cherokee supposed to be considerably over a hundred years old, said that when a small boy, he used to hear the old men predict the destruction of the world, after four generations, in the following manner: The Supreme Being would cause a storm to arise out of the east, which would rain pitch till everything was covered with it; showers of fire following, everything would be set in a blaze and the whole world consumed."²

Departures from the Original Faith.

Attention is now given to some departures from what is considered their ancient and orthodox faith. Variations in the Cherokee system of belief and practice appeared long ago, however, they had to do more with the object of worship than with their ceremonies. No case has been placed on record where adoration was paid to images. In fact it has been asserted they would have deemed an idolator nothing less than a fool.³

It was believed by some of them that a number of Beings were employed in creating all things. The first object to be created was the sun. The original plan was that people would be immortal. To this condition the sun took exception saying there would not be room enough for so many people, and

1. Ibid., p. 29.

2. Ibid., p. 29.

3. Ibid., p. 30.

that it would be a better scheme for people to die. With the passing of time, one day when the sun was not present, his daughter was bitten by a snake and died. After returning and learning what had happened the sun admitted people should live always. Then he told the people to take two boxes and go to the place where the spirit of his daughter was, and return it to her body, admonishing them not to open the box till they came to her body. But like other people, they were extremely curious, and just before they arrived at the body with the spirit, they decided to peep into the box, and close it very quickly. Just as soon as they lifted the lid of the box the spirit escaped, with the result that people¹ must die.

Ages ago it was thought that a number of Beings, some say more than two, others say three, came from their abode above and made the world. At first they attempted to make man and woman out of two rocks. After fashioning them they attempted to make them live, meanwhile another Being came and spoiled their work. Then they made the first man and woman out of red clay, so they were made mortal. If they had been successful in making them out of rocks they would have been immortal. The mortality of people is also ascribed to a serpent having bitten a member of the first family. No efforts were spared to restore life but they all failed. So mortality became the common lot of all people. These Beings have created

1. Ibid., p. 30-31.

the world and man, the sun and moon, constituting the sun and moon as gods, with control over things, and with the task assigned to them to complete the work of creation, they retired to their habitation above, and gave no more attention to the universe. It required seven days to do their work. Nothing is known of their home above.¹

A slight variation from the story just told is that the Supreme Beings worked for seven days in creating the sun and moon and earth, then returned to their sky home, doing nothing but resting, leaving the Sun and the Moon to finish the job and rule and manage the world. They had no more concern about the things and objects of creation. In this connection prayers may be offered to the Sun and the Moon when they are really addressed to the Supreme Creator. Opinions differ as to which was supreme, the Sun or the Moon. At times the Sun was regarded as a male; the Moon as a female. At other times, the contrary was true, the Sun was invoked as a female deity, and the Moon as a male deity. Both are addressed as Creator.² In their devotions the Cherokees generally considered the Sun as superior to the Moon, and appealed to him to give efficacy to herbs and roots sought for medicine. The Moon was believed

1. Ibid., pp. 30-31.

2. Ibid., pp. 33-34. In case of drought prayer was addressed to the Moon and the Moon was urged to hang beads around the neck of his wife, the Sun, darken his face that clouds come from the mountains and bring rain. The Sun was implored to grant long and blissful life.

to have caused sickness, so they looked for help from that source, too. Special homage was paid to every New Moon, calling on him to care for them during his reign.

The Cherokees had several inferior deities who were under the power and influence of the Sun and the Moon; they were made by them, were subject to their will, and were used in their service. Duties were assigned to each one of these deities.¹

Of all the agents, appointed by the Sun and the Moon, to look after the needs of people, the most alert and by far the most efficient, was Fire. Many needs and favors were asked of Fire. Here was a recognized Benefactor. Offerings accompanied requests to Fire for assistance. Fire was the nearest intermediate Being to the Sun. Smoke was conceived to be a messenger of Fire to carry petitions on high. Quite frequently, a child soon after birth, was waved over fire, with the entreaty that Fire be kind to the child and protect the child from danger. It was common for hunters to wave their leggings and moccasins over fire to insure protection from snakes and reptiles in general. For some reason young chickens were sometimes put in a basket and waved over fire.

Some of the old Cherokees thought that fire came direct from above. Some of them believed it to be an intelligent

1. Ibid., p. 33.

being, having the form of man, living in a region beyond the wide waters, the original home of their ancestors. A tradition prevailed that a portion of it was conveyed from the old home by a spider, wrapped in her web. It was preserved in their Council House, or in a hole beneath it, until the edifice was captured by enemies and destroyed, and the fire was lost. A few held to the opinion it had gone down into the ground. Since then new fire is made for festival and ceremonial occasions.¹

The Supreme Being, according to a number of the older Cherokees, who manages the affairs of the universe, supposed in this case to be Ye-ho-waah, whose home is in the middle of the sky, exactly overhead, "in the beginning directed certain lines to points upon the earth, which white men express by the words North, South, East, and West. To each of these respective points, he sent newly created beings of a different color."² Blue Man was placed in the North. In the territory of the setting sun, Black Man was located, called Ewe-kah-waisk-hee, the Fearless. White Man, the man of peace and purity, was sent to the South. The original man of all men was Red Man, who was placed in the East, which was thought to signify the sun. Those four beings reside on high as the assistants or vice-regents of the Great Su-

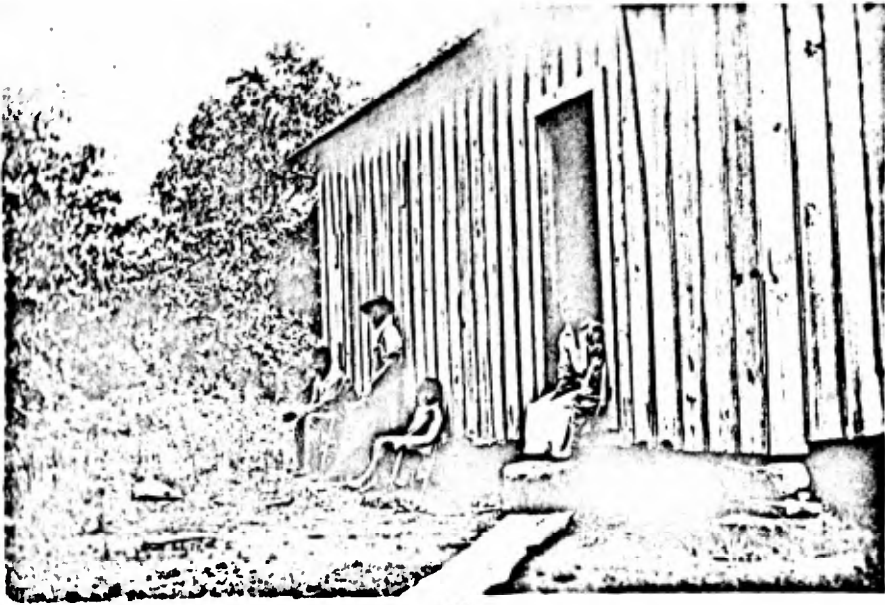
1. Ibid., p. 35.

2. Ibid., pp. 36-37.

preme. They mediate between him and mankind. As his agents they have power over the world. Supplications are made to each of them. In all matters touching on goodness the White Man was invoked. But over all these four Beings reigns the Creator Supreme. He lives above in the center of the four points. He sees them and us, knows what we think and do and plan. After the Cherokees invoked the Man of the North, the Man of the West, the Man of the South, and the Man of the East, they turned their faces to the Creator Supreme, as the Lord and Head of all. He received their most fervent prayers.¹

The following prayer was obtained by Mr. Payne, after much difficulty from one of their most intelligent and aged men. The man made use of it himself. In translating it into English it has been necessary to paraphrase certain parts of it. The suppliant at sunrise ascended some high mountain and there began to pray: "Hoyannah to Thee, Oh Almighty One! - Hear my prayer; the prayer of him who is of the acorn (by another interpreted holly) clan! - I have purified my feet from the dust of the earth on which I am a dweller, until they are white enough to bear me to the high places, even above the tree tops, where I may commune with thee undisturbed by aught which can interrupt my attention;

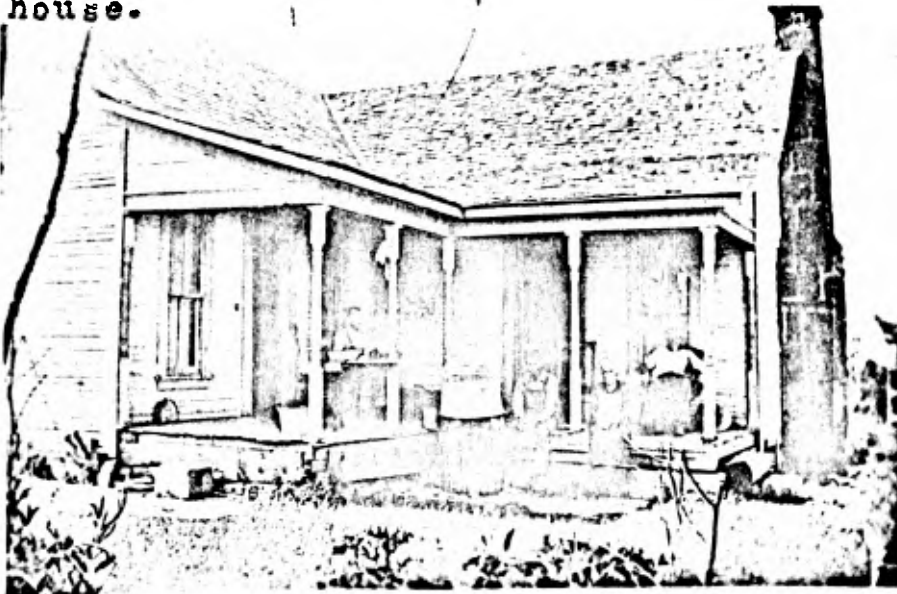
1. Ibid., pp. 37-38.



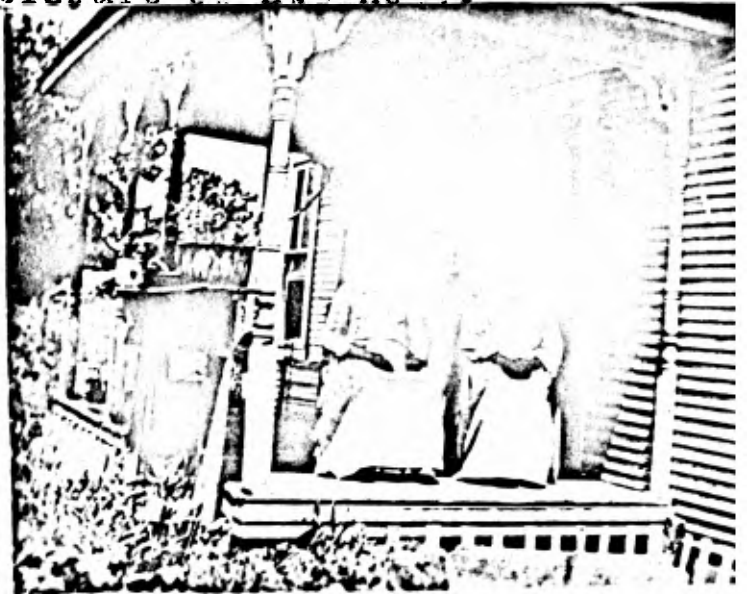
Home of Wind Cochran; Wind has sold his entire allotment, is now making his home with a daughter, who owns the land upon which is located the above house.



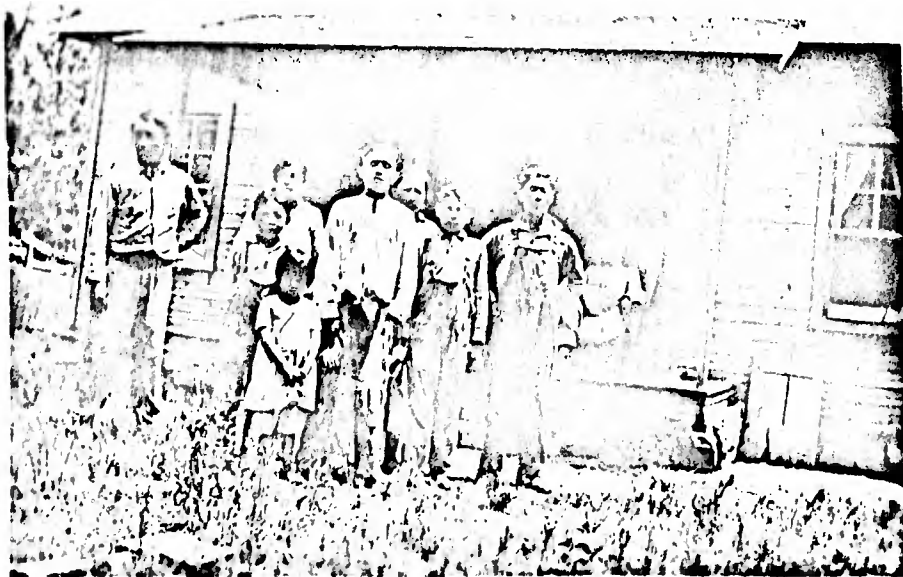
Home of Albert Spade showing his blind father, aunt, and children. Albert is not very progressive as shown by the picture of his home.



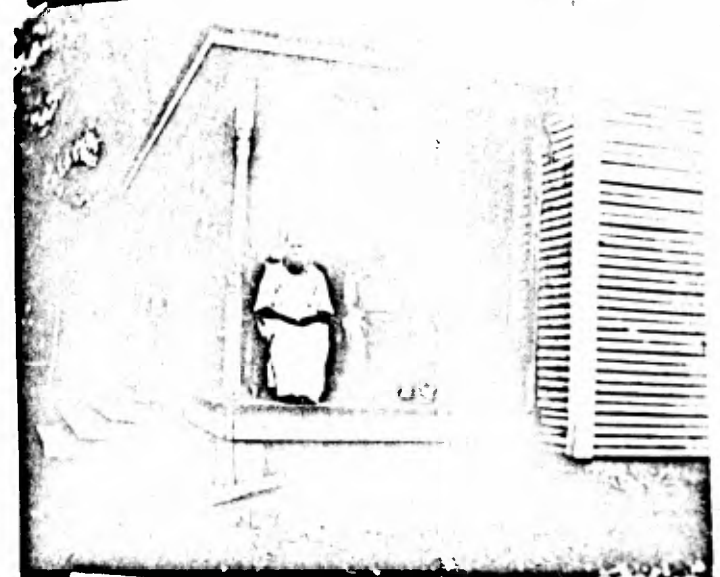
Home of Thompson Downing, full blood Cherokee, which was built from royalties derived from his allotment; Thompson is very old, and unable to work, he is shown in his easy chair on the porch.



Home of Nellie David, full blood Cherokee No. 17371, 75 years of age, who lives alone six miles North of Hulbert, Oklahoma.



Home of Joe Crittenden, a very progressive full blood Indian, who lives five miles North of Hulbert, Oklahoma.



Home of Eli Bat, showing himself and wife on their porch, neither of whom speak English, but are very progressive full-blood Indians, the wife being a neat housekeeper.

for, there, minds encounter no obstruction from the things of the world, but can look straight at thee, and behold thee clearly. Shake not from thee our minds, Oh, Almighty One! ours of the Seven Clans of the Red Clay. Thou hast already driven off from him who now supplicates before thy throne, the power of the evil bewilderer of slumbering hearts; and, in so doing, for mine thou hast shown love. Continue that guardian love, Oh, Almighty One! and suffer not my heart to fall away from its devotedness to thee."¹

In the foregoing there may be something of Sun Worship, as was previously suggested, but if so, with changes; in the present case, for example, the general welfare of human affairs is still supervised by a Supreme Intelligence, which is not the situation in the earlier form. "The other Beings who share with the Redman, (the sun) in the government of the earth, are somewhat difficult to explain."² During this period, however, it was discovered that practically all of the conjurers made their own myths or modified and elaborated the existing myths to suit themselves. So it comes about the four beings just addressed as men, are at other times, invoked as four dogs, the great black dog of the west, and so on.³

1. Ibid., pp. 38-39.

2. Ibid., p. 39.

3. Ibid., p. 39.

One of the older myths, which seems to have escaped being tampered with, at least very much, states that a female is held in special favor, and is sometimes identified with Indian Corn. Most all of the All Night Dances were related to her. The same thing is true of some of the rites of the Green Corn Festival.¹ A female is designated "The Woman of the East" who is mentioned with considerable reverence.

Thunder was adored. Perhaps it would be better to say thunders rather than thunder because there were several of them, dwelling in various parts of the universe, each one with a definite work to perform. A pious Cherokee, after fasting for seven nights, and ascending an extremely high mountain, while it was thundering, claimed he was fortunate to see the Beings, whence all the thunders proceeded.²

The Cherokees thought of the Morning Star in terms of veneration, not in the sense of love, but in the sense of fear. A long time ago a heartless conjurer was guilty of employing witchcraft to take life. The Indians, being greatly alarmed, united to destroy him. By some means he found out their plans, assembled his dazzling instruments of mischief together, and flew upwards a certain distance, where he hesitated for a moment, and appeared as a star. Then he became stationary in the sky. It is his business to assist

1. Ibid., p. 40. A legend will be given of her later.

2. Ibid., p. 40.

people who murder others by witchcraft. In fact he does the work for them.¹

What we call the Seven Stars the Cherokees revered, however, no prayers were addressed to this object. According to legend it came from a family of eight brothers who stole into the Town Council House and beat in merriment the drum used in connection with solemn occasions. A number of the elders reproved them. They took offense at being thus advised, grabbed the drum, and went upwards with it, sounded it in wicked defiance as they went higher and higher. In the course of the heavenward travel one of the boys changed his direction and came down so hard that his head stuck deep in the ground. He was transformed into a cedar tree. The cedar tree has the strange proclivity, whenever it is cut or bruised, it bleeds like a human being. The other seven brothers ascended higher to a place that suited them where they became the Seven Stars.²

The Cherokees had a group or class of celestial objects designated by the general term ancients. They differed in color, figure, importance, and office. They were supposed to be located in various parts of the sky. Invo-

1. Ibid., pp. 40-41.

2. Ibid., p. 41. This story may be an allegory in the opinion of Mr. Payne. No satisfactory explanation has been made of it.

cations were made to them. It is barely possible this is a form of ancestor worship.¹

Homage was paid to certain creeping things and birds, "but only as mediators, never as objects of direct power and worship."² They believed in numerous superhuman existences, as a rule, not considered of a religious nature.³

The Shamans.

The mediators between the world of spirits and the world of human beings may be divided into two classes: (1) the shamans, whose authority depended solely on their individual ability; and (2) the priests, who acted in some measure for the tribe or nation, or at least for some society.

"Shaman is explained variously as a Persian word meaning 'pagan', or, with more likelihood, as the Tungus equivalent for 'medicine-man', and was originally applied to the medicine-men or exorcists in Siberian tribes, from which it was extended to similar individuals among the Indian tribes of America."⁴

Among some tribes, as the Haida and Tlingit, shamans virtually had charge of all the religious functions, includ-

1. Ibid., p. 42. These ancients may have been distinguished persons whom after that the people deified.

2. Ibid., p. 42.

3. Ibid., p. 42. These are classed with their fairy superstitions and demonology and will receive further notice later.

4. Handbook American Indians, B. A. E., Bul. 30, p. 522.

ing, as usual, that of physician, and at times, a shaman united the civil with the religious power of being a house or town chief also.¹ Some writers make a distinction between the priests and the shamans or medicine men. Generally speaking the calling of the priest was national or tribal, not individual as in case of the medicine man or shaman. The duty of the priest, where considerable ritual was used, made him the leader in the ceremonies and the keeper of the sacred myths. He was not so much of a mediator between men and spirits. The functions of the priest and the shaman might be combined among the Eskimos. The two terms are used so interchangeably (especially when applied to Eastern tribes) that it is often hard to know which is the proper one.² Spence writes: "The native American priesthood, whether known as medicine-men, shamans, or wizards, were in most tribes a caste apart, exercising not only the priestly function, but those of physician and prophet, as well. The name 'medicine-man', therefore, is scarcely a misnomer."³ The shamans were skilled in dealing with occult forces and thus exercised almost unlimited sway over the rank and file of the tribe.

In a sense each Indian was a priest for himself. The gifts to the deities were made by the chiefs, or by any one

1. Ibid., p. 522.

2. Ibid., p. 523.

3. Myths of the North American Indians, p. 135.

of the tribe for himself. The right of offering sacrifices was not reserved to a class. Any one could do it for himself, whether the sacrifice consisted in obligations or acts of self-denial. "But the Red man had a consciousness of man's superiority to the powers of nature, and sorcerers sprung up in every part of the wilderness. They were prophets whose prayers would be heard. 'There are no others', said the Virginian Whitaker, 'but such as our English witches'; and as their agency was most active in healing disease, they are now commonly called medicine-men."¹

The medicine men were self-appointed. In some of the tribes the priesthood was a hereditary office; in others it was attained through natural fitness or revelation in dreams.

Priesthood.

Occasionally, among the uncultivated tribes, some family or totem claimed a monopoly on the priesthood. "Thus, among the Nez Percés of Oregon, it was transmitted in one family from father to son and daughter, but always with the proviso that the children at the proper age reported dreams of a satisfactory character."² The Algonkins and Shawnees alone confined it to one totem, but it is noteworthy that the ablest of their prophets, Elskataway, brother of Tecumseh, was not a member of this tribe. "From the most remote times,

1. Geo. Bancroft, Hist. of the U. S., Vol. II, pp. 438-439.

2. See Brinton, Myths of the New World, p. 281; also Schoolcraft, Indian Tribes, Vol. IV, p. 652.

the Cherokees have had one family set apart for the priestly office. This was when first known to the whites that of the Nicotani, but its members, puffed up with pride and insolence, abused their birthright so shamefully, and prostituted it so flagrantly to their own advantage, that with savage justice they were massacred to the last man. Another was appointed to their place who to this day officiates in all religious rites. They have, however, the superstition, possibly borrowed from the Europeans, that the seventh son is a natural-born prophet, with the gift of healing by touch."¹ Spence states: "With the Cherokees for example, the seventh son of a family was usually marked out as a suitable person for the priesthood."² As a rule the priests isolated themselves from the tribe and did not share largely in the general life of the tribe.³

1. See Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 282; also Dr. MacGowan, *American History Magazine*, X, p. 139; Whipple, *Report on the Indian Tribes*, p. 35.

Adair states that the Choctaws, former neighbor of the Cherokees, permitted the office of high priest, or Great Beloved Man, to stay in one family, passing from father to eldest son. The piaches of the Carib tribes very generally transmitted their rank and position to their children. See Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 282. In some heredity played little part in determining who should be shamans among Maidu; in other parts of the country, especially the northeast, children of shamans took up the work of shamans on penalty of death. See *Handbook Am. Inds.*, p. 523.

2. *Myths of the North American Indians*, p. 136.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 136. Spence, quoting from Bartram, *Travels in North Carolina*, describes the younger priests of the Creeks as being in white robes, and carrying on their heads or arms a great owl skin stuffed very ingeniously as an insignia of divination and wisdom. "These bachelors are also distinguishable from the other people by their taciturnity, grave and

Training Boys for the Priesthood.

Boys were selected and educated for the priesthood.

"Not only in case of a birth expected in a family where the priesthood was hereditary, but in others where it had been predetermined by the parents that an expected child, if male, should be devoted to any sacred office; it appears that a priest was always forewarned, so as to receive the infant on its coming into the world. If a son, the first thing administered by the priest was a consecrating drink."¹ Because the child was unable to fast for himself, the parents were required to fast for him, and during the first seven days of the life of the child the parents ate nothing but a certain root, and that no more than once in twenty-four hours, and then a little after sunset. Much special solicitude was bestowed upon such a child. When the mother approached her menstruation period, she was regarded as disqualified to touch holy things, so the child was put in the keeping of his grandmother, or some other elderly matron in order that

solemn countenance, dignified step, and singing to themselves songs or hymns in a low, sweet voice as they stroll about the towns." To add to the feeling of awe which they inspired among the laymen of the tribe, the priests conversed with one another in a secret tongue. Thus the magical formulae of some of the Algonkin priests were not in the ordinary language, but in a dialect of their own invention. The Cherokees, Choctaws, and Zuni employed similar esoteric dialects, all of which are now known to be merely modifications of their several tribal languages fortified with obsolete words, or else were borrowings from the idioms of other tribes.

1. Payne MSS., p. 63.

his purity might be guarded. A child being trained for the priesthood was not allowed to wander and drift about like other children, nor was he permitted to visit or eat with neighbors lest he come in contact with pollution. Aside from parental oversight, the priest, to whom the son was committed at birth, was ever mindful of his welfare. This watchful care increased with the passing years. The priest found it necessary to devote many days of fasting and nights of heedfulness to impress upon the boy's mind the importance of the various duties to which he was destined. Certain prohibitions were placed upon the food of boys being trained for the sacred offices.¹

In most cases the consecration of boys to religious duties did not take place until they were nine or ten years of age. "Those set apart when infants, were carried through the same course with the others during some stage of their discipleship."²

The priest to whom the boy had been committed, would lead him, at the rising of the sun, up some mountain to its peak, administer a drink supposed to have a purifying effect, and tell the boy to fix his eyes upon the sun and keep them so fixed until the light faded away in the west. At no time during the entire day was he allowed to turn his gaze from

1. Ibid., p. 64. Child being trained for Chief Speaker in the War (Ska-li-le-ski) was not allowed to eat frogs, or the tongue of any wild beast.

2. Ibid., p. 65.

the sun. Having looked at the sun all day he was regarded as made ready to perform the duties of his office thereafter, but, if at any time, his eyes turned from looking at the sun, all previous labors were lost.¹

"During the first day's probation and the succeeding night, the instructing priest remained with the pupil and both fasted rigidly and the night was passed in walking and giving and receiving knowledge upon high and holy themes."²

The next morning the priest directed the boy to some more secluded part of the mountain where he did not run the risk of being seen by females and instructed him in the secrets and uses of the Divining Crystal.³ He was taught prayers and words for ceremonies. He was enlightened as to when and how to employ the Divining Crystal. He fasted for seven days, eating nothing for the first thirty-six hours. After sunset on the second day he was suffered to chew a certain root, then fasted for twenty-four more hours, and thereafter chewing the root only once in twenty-four hours. On the seventh day and night the fast was broken, as was the vigil. On the morning of the eighth day the priest consulted the Divining Crystal to learn how long the boy would officiate in the office for which he had been trained.⁴

1. Ibid., p. 65.

2. Ibid., p. 65.

3. The next section will explain uses and meaning of the Divining Crystal.

4. Ibid., p. 65.

The Crystal was placed in such a position as to reflect the light of the sun. If the new officer was to be blessed with a long ministry, an aged man with gray hair and white beard would appear in the Crystal. Following this the boy was taken to a stream, told to stand in the water, facing the east, while the priest remained on the bank, facing the east, and prayed. The boy was required to submerge himself seven times in the water in succession, first with his face to the east, then with his face to the north, next with his face to the west, and so on. The priest led him to a house where sacrifice was offered for him. A fire, thought of as holy, was kindled, and over it were held the tongue of a deer and a little mush. When he was intended to serve among warriors, "if the meat popped, casting a piece or two towards the boy, he would be slain by enemies; but if the meat, in popping, was cast from him, his career would be generally victorious. When the destination was for the civil, and not the military, priesthood, or for the office of a boiler of the sacred herbs, or for any other of the various orders, the appearances of the sacrifice and the inferences from them, would differ accordingly."¹

A priest could not have more than seven boys under his tutelage at one time. The holy guide made occasional visits to his pupil. On such occasions a day and night would be

1. Ibid., p. 67.

devoted to fasting and watching and teaching. When the old priest believed death was coming near, he would call all his pupils together and repeat all his instructions to them, select one of the number as his successor, and to him the old priest would entrust his Divining Crystal. Quite frequently the talisman was given at this time, but as a rule not until after the priest was dead.¹

Only to such persons as these boys were the secrets and mysteries of the Cherokees disclosed by the priests. Careless handling of their tribal lore meant death both to the revealer and the one receiving the revelation. This made it very difficult, indeed, for white people to learn their secrets. Besides, the matter was complicated due to the fact some of the white people viewed such forms of faith with more or less contempt, consequently the priests kept their knowledge within the tribe.²

Powers and Duties of Medicine Men.

The medicine men professed an insight into the laws of nature, and power over those laws; "but belief was free; there was no monopoly of science; no close priesthood. He who could inspire confidence might come forward as a medicine man. The savage puts his faith in auguries; he casts lots, and believes nature will be obedient to the decision; he puts his trust in

1. Ibid., p. 68.

2. Ibid., p. 68.

the sagacity of the sorcerer, who comes forth from a heated, pent-up-lodge, and, with all the convulsions of enthusiasm, utters a confused medley of sounds as oracles."¹

The medicine men boast of their power over nature and the elements; they call water from above, and beneath, and around; they can forestall a drought, or bring rain, or guide the lightning; it is within their province to give good fortune to the arrow; they pronounce spells which give success to the chase; they exercise influence over fish that dwell in the lakes and haunt the streams; by their incantations they can win the heart of women; they give vigilance to the warrior, and power to walk over the earth and through the sky victoriously; they put to flight evil spirits. They are the masters of life and disease. These are some of the claims made by the medicine men. "If some innate desire has failed to be gratified, life can be saved only by the discovery and gratification of that secret longing of the soul; and the medicine man reveals the momentous secret. Were he to assert that the manitou orders the sick man to wallow naked in the snow, or to scorch himself with fire, he would do it. But let not the wisdom of civilization wholly deride the savage; the same superstition long lingered in the cities and palaces of Europe; and, in the century after the Huron missions began, the English moralist, Johnson, was carried, in his infancy, to the British Sovereign,

1. Bancroft, Hist. of the U. S., Vol. II, p. 439.

to be cured of scrofula by the great medicine of her touch."¹

The shamans were necessarily people who were versed in medicine and diseases. They do not depend on the use of medicine for success in treating diseases, but they rely more on the virtues of incantation, sorceries and charms. Their business is to contend with the numerous ills of the flesh, the problems of the chase, the lodge, and the battlefield, or Indian life in general. Medicine men were regarded as favored men, that is, men inspired by the gods, able and qualified to understand and interpret the mysterious and the wonderful.

"In every tribe there were, and in some tribes still are, a number of men, and perhaps a number of women, who were regarded as the possessors of supernatural powers that enable them to recognize, antagonize, or cure disease; and there were others who were better acquainted with the actual remedies than the average. These two classes were the 'physicians'. They were oftentimes distinguished in designation and differed in influence over the people as well as in responsibilities. Among the Dakota one was called wakan witshasha, 'mystery man', the other pejihuta witshasha, 'grass root man'; among the Navaho one is khathali, 'singer', 'chanter'; the other izeelini, 'maker of medicines'; among the Apache one is taiyin, 'wonderful', the other simply ize, 'medicine'".²

1. Ibid., pp. 439-440.

2. Handbook of American Indians, B. A. E.; Part I, Bulletin 30, pp. 837-838. We find two classes of shamans among the

It was generally believed the medicine man obtained from deities, usually by dreams, sometimes before birth, powers of recognizing and removing the mysterious causes of disease. He was 'given' appropriate prayers or songs, and became possessed of one or more powerful fetishes. "He announced or exhibited these attributes, and after convincing his tribesmen that he possessed the proper requirements, was accepted as a healer. In some tribes he was called to treat all diseases, in others his functions were specialized, and his treatment was regarded as efficacious in only a certain line of affections. He was feared as well as respected. In numerous instances the medicine

Nootka: The Uctak-u, or 'workers' cured sickness caused by an enemy or when it entered the shape of an insect, and the Kokoatsmaah, or 'soul-workers', especially employed to recover wandering souls to their bodies. There were two sorts of shamans among the Songish of Southern end of Vancouver id. First, those who had spiritual intercourse with the gods and second, the sioua, generally a woman, who received her knowledge from another sioua. Their spiritual function was to appease the hostile powers, to whom they spoke a sacred language. Women bearing children solicited her help. See Handbook Amer. Inds., Part II, p. 522. The Hupa of California have two classes of shamans: First, the dancing shamans who determine the cause of disease and the course of treatment for recovery; and second, the other shamans who after locating the trouble, remove it by sucking. Among the Delawares the shamans were healers and dreamers. Ibid., p. 523. The functions of some shamans who communicated with the spirits and ghosts of the dead. All shamans were dreamers but not all curative. See Ibid., p. 523. Bartram states that in Creek towns, besides junior priests, they had high priests. Persons of standing and influence in the state, participated in military affairs. They would foretell rain or drought and pretend to bring rain at pleasure, cure diseases, and exercise witchcraft, invoke or expel evil spirits, and even assume the part of directing thunder and lightning.

man combined the functions of a shaman or priest with those of a healer, and thus exercised a great influence among the people. All priests were believed to possess some healing powers. Among the most populous tribes the medicine men of this class were associated in guilds or societies, and on special occasions performed great healing or 'life (vitality) giving' ceremonies, which abounded in songs, prayers, ritual, and drama, and extended over a period of a few hours to nine days."¹

The medicine men interpret what the Dakotas call Wakan, that is, anything they cannot understand. Whatever is wonderful, mysterious, strange, supernatural, or superhuman, is Wakan. The gods impart Wakan qualities to the shamans.² "The abilities and powers of the gods combined, are the abilities and powers of the medicine-men."³ The medicine men came into this strange, wonderful power by communion with the gods. In this connection dreams and visions were prominent. From fellowship with the gods they learned the sacrificial rites, the chants, and the sacred dances.⁴ This power of Wakan was used to interpret the wonders and mysteries of nature and life--natural phenomena, disease, and to help in the pursuits of life.

The medicine is accorded a conspicuous place in the

1. Ibid., p. 838.

2. See Schoolcraft, Vol. IV, pp. 641-645.

3. Ibid., p. 646.

4. Ibid., pp. 647-649.

lodge. No one lies down or sits down on the side of the tepee where the medicine of the family has been placed. When they pass it on entering or leaving the lodge they do not fail to bow. The medicine for the ordinary Indian family is hung over the entrance of the doorway or suspended on a pole, and it may consist of a wolf skin or a dark blanket rolled in oblong fashion containing the sacred tokens of the family.¹

The medicine men or shamans of the tribe are employed against disease and the cure of sickness. Elaborate ceremonies are often used. Moffett² states the shaman is both the Indian doctor and the priest, and as such, an object of both fear and reverence, sometimes a self-conscious impostor.

"The shaman uses every art to mystify and impress his patients and the relatives who fee him for his services. Every means is used to work himself and his attendants up into a state of excitement by the dance, the chant continuing through many hours, accompanied by the drum and rattle."³ They use incantations, weird ceremonies, simple herbs, and sweat-baths. In treating a disease the shaman inquires into the symptoms, dreams, and transgressions of tabus of the patient and then gives his opinion, which is mostly mythical, of the ailment. He prays and talks and sings, (very like-

1. The American Indians on the New Trail, p. 25.

2. Ibid., p. 25.

3. Ibid., p. 25.

ly using a rattle to accompany the singing), and waves his hands in peculiar fashion over the affected parts and finally places his mouth over the painful spot and sucks hard to extract the immediate principle of the illness. By a slight-of-hand performance, the cause is produced frequently in the form of a thorn, pebble, hair, or other object which he throws away or destroys. Thus he has accomplished an important part of the cure. Then he is likely to administer a mysterious powder or other tangible "medicine". In departing he may leave the patient a protecting fetish. Of course the methods were not just alike among all the tribes. The shaman sought to exercise as much influence, mentally, as possible over the patient. If the treatment failed the shaman often suggested the reason for this was some witch or wizard, and if the offending one was named, his or her life might be endangered. If a medicine man lost several patients successively, he might be suspected of having lost his supernatural power, and turned to a sorcerer, the penalty of which was death. As a rule the shamans were shrewd and experienced men. Some of them were noble characters, worthy of respect. Others were charlatans to a greater or less degree. Many are now losing their prestige.¹

1. Medi-women are often used at childbirth. They are comparable to the old-fashioned midwives. They have no organization and are not well paid. They have less responsibility than the men. They depend upon common sense and experience.

Moffett has this to say: "The mysteries of the secret orders and their rituals are employed in the expression of the religion of the tribe or clan as a social organization. A dramatic representation of a myth or article of faith is given. Masks are used for impersonating supernatural beings or animals. Any review of the native religion would be imperfect that failed to reckon prominently with the medicine-men."¹ The medicine man, though less influential than formerly, still holds an important place in Indian life, not so much as a religious prophet, but as one capable of diagnosing diseases and prescribing means to thwart baneful influences and the work of evil spirits which cause illness and misfortune.²

The shamans were jealous of the ability of the white physicians. Not uncommonly they resented their presence among the Cherokees.³ They attributed harmful effect to the medicine of white men. "The belief of the Cherokees and

1. Moffett, The Amer. Inds. on the New Trail, p. 25.

2. The following was taken from the Tulsa World, January 26, 1931: "Ponca Indians offered thanks tonight for the medicine man's wizardry, invoked to aid Col. Zack Miller, their beloved white brother.

Suffering a relapse in an extended illness that threatened to keep him from the Kay county district court where he was to resist a foreclosure suit against his 101 ranch, Miller acceded to the Indians' plea that he allow Jim Williams, tribal medicine man, to 'remove the curse'. Today he was able to go to court and was granted permission to file an amended answer in the foreclosure case brought by a life insurance company on loans of \$180,000. Hearings were postponed until Feb. 11.

Miller, an adopted member of the Poncas, wants to withhold from foreclosure the quarter section of land on which the ranch 'White House', his home stands."

3. Spence, Encly. Rel. and Ethics, Vol. I, p. 505.

their ritual are in that stage of religious evolution known as Orenda, or Magic, in which the medico-religious practice of the shamans takes the place of the actual ritual. The chief necessity for religion, in fact, is found in the existence of disease, and the principle office of religion is its eradication. Disease and death the Cherokees believe to be unnatural, and due to the evil influence of animal spirits, ghosts, and witches. The shaman's office is the invocation of the benign influence to avert or to remove disease, or misfortune, or to bring down evil upon the heads of any persons whom those who employ them desire to harm."¹

As I have previously intimated the work and influence of the medicine men are waning. They are very much aware of the gradual change that is coming. A majority of the Indians espouse the cause of progress under the new industrial and social conditions. The contact of Indian boys and girls, young men and women, with education, together with a knowledge of hygiene, physiology, anatomy and the like tend to make the incantations and the superstitions and rites of the shamans appear futile and even ludicrous. Some years ago a Carlyle graduate returned to the Navajo reservation and secured employment at Fort Defiance. His younger sister was stricken with a severe illness. The medicine men were summoned, and the

1. Ibid., p. 505.

elaborate and noisy ceremonies of the Navajo begun. The distracted brother, remonstrated, finally prevailed, knowing the folly and danger of the proceedings, in having his sister put under the care of the government's educated physician and trained nurse at the agency. With the advantages and comforts of the hospital she recovered.¹ The medicine men are still used among some of the full-blood Cherokees. I was told by Sam Smith² of a case where the white doctors failed, saying nothing could be done to cure the patient, and when a medicine men took charge the patient recovered. Near the city of Tahlequah,³ Oklahoma, is a Government Training School for orphan Indian boys and girls. The superintendent⁴ told me of instances where the children preferred the medicine man to a white physician.

The Cherokees make much use of words as charms and of sacred numbers. Their sacred numbers are four and seven. Frederick Starr⁵ tells about asking an old medicine man to treat his lame arm. He sent for four kinds of leaves, fresh and young, and one other kind that was to be dry and dead. "The dead leaves had little thorns along the edge. The old man pounded up the four kinds in warm water. He then scratched

1. Moffett, The Amer. Inds. on the New Trail, pp. 147-148.

2. Lives at Vian, Oklahoma, member of Keetoowahs.

3. Capitol of Old Cherokee Nation.

4. Jack Brown. Shamans are never used in the school.

5. North American Indians, pp. 84-85.

the arm with the other, nearly drawing blood. The arm was rubbed with the bruised leaves. The medicine man then blew upon the arm seven times. He went through this operation of rubbing and blowing four times, thus combining the numbers four and seven. He repeated charms all the time he rubbed."

The shaman does business as an individual. "His knowledge and power over spirits is individual and for individuals. Among some tribes we find not single medicine men, but great secret societies which have learned spirit wisdom to use for the benefit of the society, or for the good of the whole tribe."¹ Such secret societies are well-known among the tribes of the southwest. They work to cure diseases for the individual, also for the entire tribe. "Among the Moki Pueblos, the societies of the Snake and the Antelope carry on the snake dance, that the people may have rain for their fields."²

The shamans receive a recompense for their services. Their pay was called ugislati, perhaps from tsiqiu, meaning 'I take' or 'I eat'. In the early days the pay took the form of a pair of moccasins or a deer skin, but after the coming of manufactured goods, it might be a piece of cloth, a garment, or a handkerchief. "These things were not really regarded as pay but as gifts, for they were presented with the idea that they were essential to the completion of a

1. Frederick Starr, North American Indians, p. 85.

2. Ibid., p. 85.

perfect cure. So far as their explanation can be understood, the cloth is said by them to be regarded as an offering to the spirit which has brought about the disease, to effect the ransom of the afflicted person, or to protect the hand of the shaman while he engaged in extracting the disease from the body of the patient. They further believe that the evil influence of the spirit enters into the cloth, which must be sold or given away by the shaman, else when the amount of cloth he has collected reaches the height of his head, he will die. No evil results, however, are supposed to accrue to the purchaser, but no member of the shaman's family may accept these goods unless he gives them something in exchange. However, if the reward takes the form of comestibles, the shaman may consume them without fear, so long as they are partaken of along with the other members of the family."¹ Since the shaman makes no stipulated charge for his services the rewards are supposed to be given freely. In case he does something other than purely medical practice, fixed wages exist for his work. If the shaman at first made a wrong diagnosis, and it was necessary to make another diagnosis and prescribe a new treatment, a separate gift is expected for each diagnosis.

A part of the shamanistic etiquette was that a husband could not send for the shaman to come to see his wife, nor could she for him. The one who sends for the shaman must be

1. Spence, Encly. Regl. and Ethics, Vol. I, p. 505.

a blood relative of the patient. "A case is recorded where a woman complained that her husband was very sick and required the treatment of a shaman, but said that his family neglected the matter, and that she dare not take the initiative."¹

The Divining Crystal.

In order that we may be prepared for a study of the various festivals of the Cherokees, it is deemed advisable to precede it with some particulars regarding a kind of talisman which was used on all solemn occasions, "and for which no title more significant occurs to us than that of the Divining Chrystal".²

The Cherokee priest considered the Divining Crystal as the one essential part of his equipment, and while it was not always a part of his dress, it was indispensable to his vocation. The Cherokee name for it was Ooh-bing-sah-tah.³ It means "sight that passes through, as through a glass. Sight, simply is I-ka-ka-ti; but Ooh-bing-sah-tah is more significant, and implies both a light piercing quite through what it falls upon, and light conveying through the substances of which it is composed, instruction to the observer. So sacred was the stone, that it was death for anyone who had not been sanctified and initiated for the purpose, to touch

1. Ibid., p. 505.

2. Payne MSS., p. 54. Mr. Payne spells crystal as chrystal. This accounts for the two ways it is spelled in this paper.

3. The first syllable is pronounced like the ho in the word who.

it."¹ Sometimes the priest would wear it suspended about his waist but concealed from the sight of men, except in connection with the Cementation Festival, as we shall observe later, and as it had to do with the Great Warrior.²

Fastened to a string the Great Warrior wore it around his neck, carefully covered with a weasel skin. In case he was slain in battle, it was the aim of his soldiers to grab it from his bosom and guard it with devotion. It was the object of his foes to get it from his body and crush it between two stones. All the others who carried the Divining Crystal kept to themselves where it was hidden on their person. When not borne about on the person of the priest, the talisman was laid away in an ark or holy box or securely wrapped in seven deers' skins.³

Accounts have been preserved of five different sizes of this talisman. Its shape was that of a hexagon. It was composed of crystalline quartz, but some people believe "this was only a substitute for diamond, which in the earlier times, is said to have been its material. How the supposed magical properties were imparted to it, is not explained. We only know that each priest was possessed of one and that all sizes were consulted with equal confidence

1. Ibid., p. 55.
2. Ibid., p. 56.
3. Ibid., p. 56.

and held in equal honor."¹

The largest of the crystals was employed relative to things pertaining to war.²

Crystals next in size were used by civil priests to find out "whether sickness was to be apprehended either by an individual, or family, or a town".³ When used for this purpose, it was preceded by a sacrifice, and the stone was placed upon seven folded deers' skins, or on a post covered with the skin of a fawn, or in the crevice of a house, in such a manner as to catch the first rays of the morning sun. "In case of a favorable omen, there would appear in the chrystal a bright unclouded blaze; but if the omen proved inauspicious, the stone would look smoky and blue and as many would die as appeared on the right side of it."⁴ People in groups, on certain occasions consulted the crystal for the same purpose. They did this at the time of the first autumnal moon, when the ancient Cherokees began their civil year.

Following this time, before the sun was up in the morning, the priest of each town would assemble all of the men, women, and children of the community in one building, seat them facing the east, open a crack in the wall in that side of the structure, and so place the Divining Crystal there,

1. Ibid., pp. 56-57.

2. Its use will be described later.

3. Ibid., p. 57.

4. Ibid., p. 57.

as to catch the beams of the climbing sun. Withdrawing some four feet from the Crystal, with his eyes fixed on it, and his face towards the sun, he would offer an appropriate prayer. "As he would pray, it was asserted the Chrystal became brighter and brighter, till a brightness as dazzling as that from a mirror with the glare of midday full upon it, would first strike the under side of the roof, and then moving back and forth and then descending lower and lower, it would at length glance towards the people as they sat - over such as were to die before the return of another quarterly new moon, the light would pass without the least illumination of their persons. Credible witnesses of this superstition aver they have actually known instances wherein this brightness has failed to rest on those it passed among, who have all died before the termination of the following three months."¹

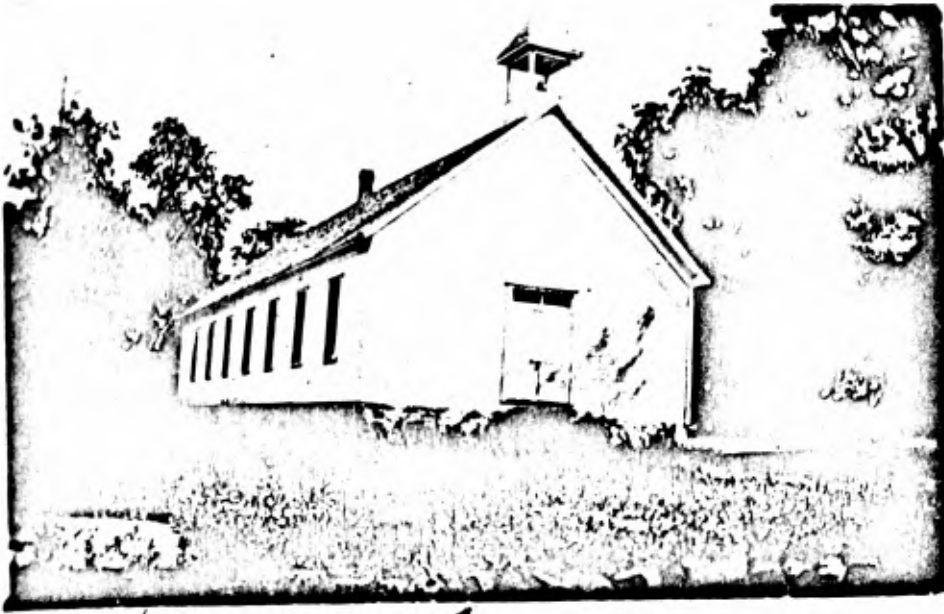
The priest did not touch the Crystal; he simply stood near-by and said his prayers.

The Crystal employed in finding stolen goods or lost things was smaller than either of the stones mentioned. The priest would place the talisman between him and the sun, pray for instruction, then would see the lost object or the stolen goods together with the thief.²

Still lesser in size was the stone used in reference to

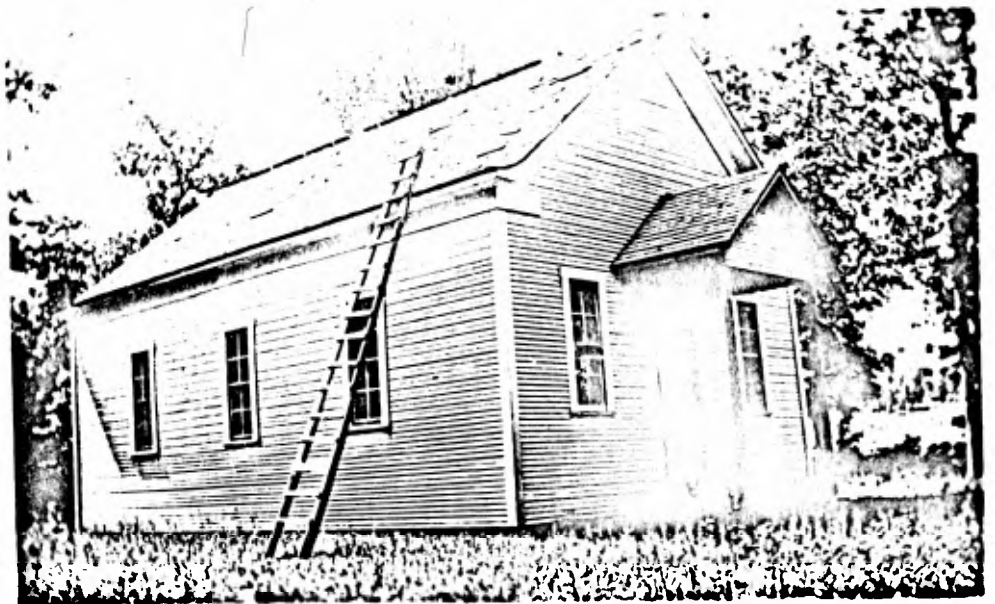
1. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

2. Ibid., p. 59.



Rocky Word Indian Baptist Church, located fifteen miles North from Tablequah, Cherokee County, Oklahoma.

Peavine Indian Church located six miles North from Stilwell, Oklahoma, in Adair County.



Peavine Public School located six miles North from Stilwell, Oklahoma in Adair County in an Indian Community.

Echota Indian Church, located eight miles West from Stilwell, Oklahoma, Adair County.



hunting. The priest would offer prayer and then place this Divining Crystal so the morning sunlight would fall on it. In case a buck was to be killed it would be seen in the stone; if a doe, just a tinge of blood became visible; but if nothing would be killed there would be no change. Sometimes it would be used during the actual chase. In this event it would be fastened to a stool placed near the river bank, and "covered with seven folded deers' skins; and success was inferred from the appearance in it of a multitude of deers' horns; or failure, from that of a few or none."¹

Of the five crystals the smallest was used to ascertain longevity of life. If the inquirer was to be favored with length of years, a person would be observed in it with long white beard and gray hair.

Thus the talisman was called upon to answer many interrogations. Besides the ones mentioned, one other at least, is worthy of description - this was when men were jealous of their wives. Generally the jealous one first made a private investigation seeking information without even disclosing his uneasiness to the priest.

The private investigation was made as follows: The jealous husband took two white beads, and painted one of them black; the white bead being a symbol of innocence, and the black one standing for guilt. To tell of innocence the white

1. Ibid., p. 60.

bead was put between the thumb and finger of his right hand. The black bead was put between the thumb and finger of his left hand to indicate guilt. Then both hands were placed on the ground. "Has (such a man) of (such a clan"), (naming both) "dishonored me?" he would ask, "at the same time uplifting his hands as loftily as possible over his head. So long as both beads remained unmoved, he continued the questions from man to man and clan to clan until the entire seven clans were exhausted. But if the black bead vacillated between his left thumb and finger, at the mention of any particular clan, he was certain of his wife's guilt, and watched until he personally detected with whom,"¹

At other times, however, the help of the priest was sought at once.

When application was made to the priest on such occasions, he would arrange his crystal and pray for information. The crystal did not change in the event of innocence, but in case of guilt, two persons would be found in it. Next the priest would take some flies, previously killed for the purpose and state the evil which would befall the woman, if guilty. He said that, if when he opened his hand, one of the flies came to life again, it would fly immediately to her, settle on her body, gnaw its way within, and with bitter suffering in seven days she would feel it piercing into her heart, and she would

1. Ibid., pp. 60-61.

die. Invariably she would die on the seventh day. It is not made known if the fly received any assistance from either the husband or the priest.

The priest prized his talisman very highly - when he realized death was approaching he would bequeath it to his favorite disciple; or if he had no one to whom he wished to give it, he would totter to the woods; and when he discovered a tree in the side of which some bird had made a hole, he would bury the crystal there and stop up the opening to prevent its discovery. "He did this because, if the stone were found lying about after his decease with no properly authenticated person commissioned to take charge of it, it would be the death of every inmate without exception, who might chance to be there under the roof of his late abode."¹

1. Ibid., p. 61.

Chapter Eight

Major Festivals.

Chapter Eight

Festivals of the Cherokees.

In early times it appears the Cherokees observed a regular series of religious fasts and festivals, which, as the years passed, became confused and were gradually broken up, until only fragments remained one hundred years ago, when records were made concerning them.¹ These old fasts and festivals have long since entirely disappeared.

The ancient festivals were divided into Greater Festivals, six in number; and Minor Festivals, six in number. Each one of the several festivals had significant peculiarities. They were observed in the National Heptagon. Members of the seven clans were summoned there through the seven Counsellors who had charge of the ceremonies. At this metropolis all lodges were open to visitors and hospitality was gratuitous. The Minor Festivals were held at every New Moon, and especially at the beginning of each quarter of the year. In addition to these Greater and Minor Festivals, other festivals are mentioned infrequently, the most extraordinary of which was celebrated every seven years.² Regular sacrifice was offered every seventh day.

The Greater Festivals, which now claim our attention,

1. These records were made by John Howard Payne during the third decade of the 19th century. At that time what part of the original festivals remained had to do with the Green Corn Dance.

2. Ibid., p. 70.

were observed in the following order:

First, the Festival of the First New Moon of Spring, which was held at the season when the grass began to grow.

Second, Sah-looh, stuknee, Keeh-steh-steeh, a kind of preliminary festival, or New Corn (maize) Feast, which was kept at the time the young corn first became fit to taste.

Third, Tung-nah-kaw-hoongh-ni, Mature Green Corn (maize) Feast, which came forty or fifty days after the former festival, when the corn was ripe.

Fourth, Nung-tah-tay-quah, Great New Moon Feast, which took place on the appearance of the first autumnal New Moon.

Fifth, Ah-tawh-hung-nah, Cementation or Propitiation, Festival, which occurred about ten days after the Great New Moon Feast.

Sixth, Eelah-wah-tah-lay-kee, the Festival of the Exulting, or Bounding Bush, which was the latest of the Greater Festivals.¹

1. Ibid., p. 71. The Iroquois are related to the Cherokees. The worship of the Iroquois consisted in the observance of periodical festivals, six in number, held at stated seasons of the year, as suggested by nature, such as planting time, the growing season, and harvesting. These festivals have been handed down from age to age, remaining essentially as they were centuries ago, according to the best authority (Morgan) on the subject. They were in charge of priests elected to serve during good behavior. They designated the times for the festivals, arranged for and conducted the rites. Both men and women served as priests. They served without reward. The women had charge of the feasts. The festivals were as follows:

First, the Maple Festival, generally called the Maple Dance, with the primary idea of showing gratitude to the

The Greater Festivals.

First, the Festival of the First New Moon of Spring. The seven Counsellors had a meeting at the National Heptagon before the first Spring New Moon. "They appointed certain Honorable Women to perform what is termed the Friendship Dance. The Dance being ended the prime Counsellor reckoned the night from the last New Moon. They also consulted the Divining Chrystal, or 'Word of Wasi', to determine when the first New Moon would appear. They then despatched their messengers through the nation to announce it. They also directed the hunters in its metropolitan town to provide the meat which would be required for the occasion. They were to

Maple itself for yielding its sweet waters, but also to thank the Great Spirit for the gift of the Maple. It lasted for only one day. It was held in the Spring when the sap began to flow. Some days before the festival began the people assembled for confession of sins and made preparation for the Council. This act preceded all festivals. The Maple Festival was observed in various villages, apart from the Council fire. There was a feast in connection with the festival. It concluded with a dance.

Second, the Planting Festival, celebrated at the coming of the planting season. It lasted for one day and was much like the Maple Dance in observance. Its object was two-fold: 1. To give thanks to the Great Spirit for the return of the planting season; 2. To invoke His blessing on the seed for an abundant harvest. The Indians had no sabbath, no sacred writings, so the festivals were held at the manifestations of divine goodness. Nature arranged the period of worship by showing conspicuous evidences of love and care. The priest, called "Keeper of the Faith", led the way. Prayer was made to the Great Spirit and tobacco was burned as a sacrifice for His benediction. The festival concluded with a dance.

Third, the Berry Festival, held when the first fruit, berries, ripened. They were blessed with strawberries. Here was a sign of providential care. They expressed thanksgiving

kill deer, turkeys, or any other creatures permitted for food; and to reserve and bring forward the provision at the appointed day. One buck they must dress whole; that is, the skin and entrails and feet must be removed from the body, but neither the head nor liver nor lights nor heart. The skin they must

for the fruits of the earth. They prayed and feasted and danced. It concluded with a feast of strawberries.

Fourth, the Green Corn Festival, held when the green corn was fit for use. It continued for four days, with the rites of each day different, but each day concluded with a feast. It was the season of plenty. Corn was a staple article of food. According to legend corn is supposed to have come from the bosom of the Mother of the Great Spirit after her burial. There were dances and religious exercises each day. Addresses of thanksgiving were made; it concluded with a feast.

Fifth, the Harvest Festival, held at the gathering of the fruits. It lasted for four days. Its aim was to give thanks to corn, beans and squashes, and to the spirits concerned with these plants. The festival was in recognition of the gratitude of the tribe for the return of the harvest. Religious ceremonies were observed during the day and the people danced at night. The Iroquois had numerous dances. The night hours passed unheeded.

Sixth, the New Year Jubilee, came in mid-winter, perhaps about the middle of February. It continued for seven days. This festival revealed most every feature of their religion. On the fifth day, after having confessed their sins, they sacrificed a "White Dog". They wished to enter the New Year with all things right. On the first day two priests visited each house in the village. On this day the dog was decorated with paint and gifts of the pious. Then he was hanged till the fifth day, when he was taken down and burned. The second day the people called on each other in social visits. On the third and fourth small dancing parties visited each house, using the Fish dance, Feather dance, Trotting dance, and other dances. Gayety and amusement prevailed in every house. There were no feasts on the first four days. The burning of the dog upon the altar of wood near the Council House on the first day had no connection with the sins of the people, according to Morgan. The spirit of the dog was sent up as a messenger to the Great Spirit "to announce their continued fidelity to his service, and

dress white; together with a doe and fawn skin."¹ Besides these preliminary arrangements the seven Counsellors appointed seven men to order the feast, and seven women to manage and do the cooking.

The population, on the evening when the New Moon was to appear, came together from every quarter. The appointed hunters brought in the meat and put it in the storehouse located on the west side of the National Heptagon. The presiding priest was told where the dressed buck was placed, and he delegated his right hand man to move it to the selected depository. The hunters delivered the skins, dressed white, of the buck, the doe, and the fawn. Tribesmen who had been away from their homes on hunting trips, either alone or with their families, joined in the ceremonies before returning to their lodges. They added the meat and skins they had taken to the stock in the storehouse. Further contributions of food were given by the other inhabitants. Very few of the people came empty handed. The supplies were abundant both for the festival and its priest.

The right hand man of the priest had repaired the altar in the center of the National Heptagon. It was constructed

also to convey to him their united thanks for the blessings of the year." The last two days were devoted to feasts and dances, generally of a religious character. See: Morgan, The League of the Iroquois, pp. 177-214.

1. Ibid., p. 72.

of earth and made conical in shape. Around the top a circle was marked out to receive the sacrificial fire. The inner bark, taken from the east side of seven different kinds of trees,¹ used on such occasions, was laid on the altar ready to be burned. The first part of the first night of their coming together was devoted to the Friendship Dance by the women; all had the privilege of sleeping during the second half of the night.

The Festival really began the following morning, when the whole population, at an early hour, assembled in the National Heptagon.

"The three white-dressed buck and doe and fawn skins, were now taken by the priest's right hand man, and spread near the altar fire, towards which he turned the head-part. He then took the fresh blood of a fowl, or some other creature; and with a little weed, sprinkled it on the buck skin, in a line from the nose to the tail. He then placed the Ooh-lung-sah-tah, or, Divining Chrystal, on the blood. He also dropped flowers of wild or old tobacco, gathered the year preceding, on the buck skin.

"Soon after sunrise, the priest's order went forth for the entire multitude to repair to the river, on the bank of which a table had been previously provided for the use of the

1. Payne MSS., p. 73. The seven kinds of trees were: white and black and water oak, blackjack, basswood, chestnut, and white pine. These trees had to be free from blemishes and worms.

priest and seats arranged for the people. None must either look behind upon the way, nor to the right or left. The right hand man followed with the deerskins folded and the priest brought up the rear. On arriving, all might gaze around as usual. The skins were deposited on the table. The people were seated by the priest in a row fronting the water. Meanwhile, the right hand man produced a great number of sticks, about six inches long. At the distance of stick's length, carefully measured from the water's edge, which he first touched with one end of each stick, he stuck them one by one in the sand, leaving short intervals between each, till the entire collection stretched out to a line parallel with that of the multitude as it sat along the bank in silence. All were directed to keep strict watch upon whatever came opposite to them out of the water and upon all its actions. If bugs, if worms, or certain reptiles crawled up from near the water's edge and fought, the person opposite was to die or be grievously distressed. If nothing appeared, all would go well."¹

At the direction of the priest, when this ceremony was over, the people with their clothes on, plunged into the water. Facing the east, all dipped completely under seven times. Children too small to dip themselves, were immersed in the water by their mothers.

1. Ibid., pp. 74-75.

The priest, who had remained upon the bank of the stream, meanwhile unrolled the skins and displayed the Divining Crystal on the table. Medicinal roots were also placed on the table. The people emerging from the water, one by one, in the order of their age, approached the table, and walked around it four times, stopped, wet the fore-finger of the right hand with the tongue, and put it down on the side of the Divining Crystal; "next, putting it to the top of the forehead, drew it down over the nose, lips and chin, to the pit of the stomach; and then, taking a piece of root from the table, departed, not looking behind, nor to the right or left. In this manner all the men and then all the women, proceeded, according to age, till all had found their way to houses in the town, where they changed their wet clothes for such as were clean and dry."¹

The common people were followed in these rites by the rulers, nobility and priests.

All fasted during this day. Infants were not permitted to have any nourishment until after the noon hour; adults delayed until night before taking food.

A little while before sunset a second assembly was held in the National Heptagon.

During the day fire was kept burning on the altar. The white-dressed skins placed near it in the morning had been

1. Ibid., p. 76.

removed. The priest and his right hand man now went to their positions west of the fire. They faced the east. Behind them and around them in a semi-circle stood the seven Prime Counsellors. An offering of old (wild) tobacco was made by the priest. The burning of the tobacco produced a peculiar odor. The priest having cut off the tongue of the buck that was brought in whole, cast it into the fire. Those standing around while it was burning watched it closely because everything that happened to it was thought to be significant of life or death.

After this sacrifice was finished, the buck dressed whole, was cooked and kept by itself. A kind of corn meal mush was made to eat with it. The two things must be eaten without any other foods. The meat was so distributed as to give each person present, if possible, a taste of it. All of it had to be consumed then, as they were not allowed to preserve any of it till the next day. Other meat cooked for the occasion could be kept over as usual. No eating was permitted until after the distribution of the buck dressed whole, which was the evening sacrifice.¹

The adults stayed awake during the night. The women engaged in the Friendship Dance. Infants were suffered to sleep.

The next morning the Festival came to an end and the

1. Ibid., pp. 77-78.

people were at liberty to return to their homes.¹

"In the course of this Festival, a ceremony which Indians of the present day call scratching, was administered freely. It consists of long gashes cut up and down the limbs with flints or fish bones. The medicine root distributed at the river bank, was also liberally chewed; and the juice rubbed by the people upon themselves and their children. Some of the root, however, was retained for similar uses at every intervening New Moon, until that of autumn."²

When the Festival was over, the three skins, that of the buck, the doe, and the fawn, together with the hides of other animals slain for this Feast, became the property of the priest. Moreover, he was also entitled to a generous supply of all the provisions contributed by the hunters and others who attended the ceremonies. Whatever remained, if anything, reverted to the ones bestowing it.

The seven Prime Counsellors, not long after this Festival ended, called a meeting and designated a time for a sacred Night Dance, which was to take place on the seventh day from the day of their conference. New fire was made by seven men selected for that purpose. Messengers announced the coming events.

The evening of the sixth day witnessed a large assem-

1. Ibid., p. 78.

2. Ibid., p. 78.

blage of the people at the National Heptagon. Many of them spent the night in a religious dance.

The men appointed to kindle the new fire began their duties early in the morning on the seventh day; one of them was designated the chief fire-maker; the other six were his assistants. "A hearth was carefully cleansed and prepared. A hole being made in a block of wood, there was a small quantity of dry golden-rod dropped into it; and then a stick, the end of which just fitted the opening, was whirled rapidly till the weed caught fire. The fire was now kindled on the hearth; and thence taken to every house, by the woman who waited around for the purpose."¹

In their homes the old fire was extinguished, and the hearths made ready for the new fire which was lighted throughout the whole country. After the new fire was kindled, a sacrifice was offered in each home, and this sacrifice was from the flesh of the first animal killed for food by any member of the household, following the building of the new fire.²

Second, the second Great Festival being Sah-looh, stuknee, Keeh-steh-steeh, also called the Preliminary, or New Green Corn (Maize) Feast, was kept when the young corn first became fit to taste. By way of introducing it certain

1. Ibid., p. 79.

2. Ibid., pp. 79-80.

preparations were made:

Some one,¹ through his seven Prime Counsellors, instructed the people throughout the country as to when to plant the corn in order to secure a simultaneous growth. Just as soon as the young corn was fit to taste a messenger was sent far and wide to convene the entire nation. Before returning the messenger gathered several ears of corn, one from a field of each of the seven clans, which he delivered to the seven Prime Counsellors. Hunters of the metropolitan town were sent into the forest for six days of hunting. Meanwhile at the National Heptagon a fast of six days was observed.

"The Chief Hunter of the party that was sent to the wilderness, on shooting down the first buck, steps towards the body and without touching it in any other place, cuts a small piece from the right side of the end of the tongue, wraps it in old leaves of the past year, and puts it up carefully. On the evening of the sixth day the people assemble at the National Heptagon. Every family brings some of each sort of such fruits of the season, as are eatable when green, ready cooked for use. These are deposited in the storehouse near the west side of the National Heptagon.

1. This person is not named. Where the name should appear is left blank. Evidently Mr. Payne was not able to identify him. He seems to have been a priest. See Payne MSS., p. 80.

Hither, also, the hunters bring the produce of their chase, barbecued for eating; delivering it with the tongue of the first buck, and all the skins, to the _____ who must not taste the meat until after the sacrifice of the tongue. The sixth night is observed by all as a vigil. None but infants are allowed to close their eyes. Part of the night is employed in a religious dance, the movements of which are silent and solemn."¹

These preparations having been made the Festival began on the seventh day. The seven Prime Counsellors delivered the seven ears of corn to the person in charge. During the first day the people were required to abstain from all levity and all labor.

In the National Heptagon the altar of earth had been repaired. The bark from the east side of seven particular trees had been placed on it. The seven fire makers kindled the fire for the sacrifice.

Just before sunset the person in charge took seven kernels, one from each of the seven ears of corn, and put them between the thumb and finger of one hand; and the end of the buck's tongue similarly in the other hand. He lifted them on high, speaking at the same time an ancient prayer regarded as very sacred and never to be altered or

1. Ibid., p. 81. Here again there is a blank. The unnamed person seems to have been a priest, the one in general charge of the Festival.

forgotten. He expressed gratitude for the growth of the crops. He asked that the corn and meat so blend together as food that the health of the nation throughout the year be insured. He prayed that the all Beneficent would continue his bounty to them to the end of their days.

The one in charge put the meat and corn on the fire, then sprinkled over them some leaves of old tobacco. His seven Counsellors and his right hand man,¹ closely watched the burning of the meat. They thought in case it burned quickly and popped off tiny bits in a certain direction, they would have nothing to fear; "but if the smoke settles over the altar, in a bluish cloud, and fragments of the meat dart westward, the year will prove sickly."²

After the sacrifice was finished the people, at the direction of the right hand man, brought forward their provisions, and arranged them for the meal. The signal for eating to begin was given by the right hand man. All of the people were eating the new food at the same time except the one in charge, his right hand man, and the seven Counsellors, who were not allowed to eat until after sunset; "nor, until they have remained seven days longer at the National Heptagon, may they indulge in any but the old provisions of the year preceding. The seven days over, the entire multitude again assembled at the National Heptagon."³

1. I use this term as Mr. Payne used it. Others might use it as: Right-hand-man.

2. Ibid., p. 83.

3. Ibid., pp. 83-84.

At this time the one in charge and the others gathered together in a general feast upon the new fruits. The second of the Festivals of the earliest times thus comes to an end.

Third, the third of the Great Festivals in regular succession was called Tung-nah-kaw-hoongh-ni, Ripe, or Mature Green Corn (maize) Feast. It was celebrated when the corn was ripe or mature which was about forty or fifty days after the New Green Corn Festival. The following preparations were made:

The person in charge, having learned through his seven Prime Counsellors, the state of the corn, appointed a Religious Dance, and during the Dance the time of the Festival was set, which came after the Dance some twenty days. As in connection with other Festivals the hunters were sent for game; the customary officers were appointed and told to get ready for their several duties. For this particular Feast some special directions were given which were adhered to with precision. Originally these mandates were enjoined by the Being who Dwells on High. An arbor of green boughs was constructed in the sacred square of the National Heptagon. A beautiful shade tree, with bushy head and wide spreading branches, was stationed in the ground. It was surrounded by a large booth under which seats were placed. The next day after the Dance, notice was given by a messenger that the time of the Festival was fixed. They believed the Being who Dwells on High had ordained that all should attend.

The hunters and people gathered on the evening before the Festival was to begin, bringing contributions of supplies, as in the last Festival. All things being ready, every man equipped himself with a green bough, and the next morning the Festival began.¹

"It was one of unmeasured exultation. It was like the Harvest Home of the British, when, Leigh Hunt has said, his ancestors used to burst into an enthusiasm of joy. 'They crowned the sheaves with flowers, they shouted, they danced, they invited each other, they met to feast.' Only men were entitled to perform the festal dance peculiar to this commemoration; and when in the morning all met in the sacred square, each bore his green bush in his right hand over his head. As the leader struck the music, and commenced the movement, all followed, with every expression of rapture at enjoying the emblem of green shades prepared for the virtuous in the fields on high. They went, leaping and exulting and singing as they ran."² The impression made was that disorder prevailed, but they acted in keeping with primitive customs, and were guided by a leader who piloted the entire party seven times during each dance around the tree and beneath the shady branches.

1. Ibid., pp. 84-85.

2. Ibid., pp. 85-86. Eee-ta-jungh-stah seems to have been a dignitary who received special honor in connection with this Festival. Perhaps he was a priest, although his identity is not definite.

"Some say that the Eee-ta-jungh-stah united with this Festival; not, however, with the crowd. He was elevated on a platform, sustained by men. He wore a red cap, a white robe, leggings and moccasins; and his arms were covered with otter skins."¹

The Feast continued for four days. When evening came each person placed his green bough in a safe place. The next morning they returned them to the sacred square. While the women had no part in the special dance connected with this Festival, and were not allowed in the sacred square during its performance, nevertheless, after the boughs had been put away at sunset, they were privileged to mingle with the men in the strictly social dances; the wives followed their husbands, and the unmarried ladies followed their brothers, or the young men of their own clan.

More than any other this Festival has outlived the others. In a confused form it was the Green Corn Dance still popular at the time the Cherokees were moved west. The form here described was preceded by a more ancient ceremony the particulars of which have been lost. The earlier Festival seems to have been called a Festival of Green Shades which was more exclusive and distinct in its characteristics.²

1. Ibid., p. 86.

2. Ibid., p. 87.

Fourth, this Festival was called Nung-tah-tay-quah, or Great New Moon Festival. It was observed at the coming of the first New Moon of autumn and was preceded by the following preparations:

The seven Prime Counsellors of the leader were required to determine when the first New Moon of autumn would appear. As we calculate time it was near the end of September or early in October. Most likely it was identical with our October New Moon. The Cherokees believed the earth was created at this season, as has been noted elsewhere, and this New Moon was the beginning of the New Year. Therefore, it is described as the Great Moon, and by it other New Moon Feasts were regulated. The Counsellors watched the waning moon as they counted the nights from the preceding moon. When cloudy weather interfered with their observations they appealed to the Divining Crystal which did not fail them. The day of the Festival being set, the metropolitan hunters were sent to the woods to hunt for six days. Seven men were appointed to arrange the tables and seats. Seven honorable women were designated to look after the food and serving. During the day before the New Moon was to appear at night, the hunters brought in the meat, barbecued, and deposited it in the storehouse west of the National Heptagon. The tongue of the first buck killed, having been removed and wrapped in old leaves, was given to the priest, who received the skins of seven deer also. On this night the entire nation gathered. Each

family brought samples, seven or more, of every sort of produce they had raised. These provisions were presented to the priest for his personal use. In addition, each family contributed food to the general feast. Only infants were allowed to sleep during the night. The women devoted several of the hours to dancing. The Festival proper began the next day.

Before the sun came up, at the direction of the leader, the people went to the river bank where the priest prayed, arranged them in a line facing the water, with sticks fixed in front of them near the water. They watched to see what would approach in the direction of the sticks from the water.¹ The leader gave a signal and all the common people plunged into the water, with their clothes on and dipped themselves and their children seven times.² On the bank the priest had arranged a table containing medicinal roots and the Divining Crystal. "In passing, as the bathers left the water, each held the palm of the hand toward the stone. Those who could see themselves standing erect in it, would live till the first Spring New Moon next ensuing; those who appeared lying down, would die before then. Such went aside by themselves. But all took with them from the table, some of the medicinal roots, as narrated among the other parts common to this and to the occasion just quoted."³ The people then

1. What took place has been described in connection with the Spring New Moon Festival. See pp. 234-242 this paper.
2. See Spring New Moon Festival, pp. 234-242 this paper.
3. Payne MSS., pp. 89-90.

went to the various homes of the town where they put on dry clothing and returned to the National Heptagon.

The higher classes observed the same ceremonies after the common people had finished.

The food, having been cooked prior to the gathering, was spread for the meal about nine o'clock. Before the priest was allowed to eat, the tongue of the first deer killed had to be sacrificed. The leaves with which it was wrapped were burned too. As at other feasts the leaders ate after the multitudes were served.

Those who, according to omen, were to die before the Spring New Moon Festival, fasted all day. When evening was come each one gave the leader a deerskin or a piece of new cloth. Again they were led to the river. On a table the priest spread a covering and placed the Divining Crystal there, and sought knowledge concerning the life of the donor. "The subject of his prayer, then holding the palm of his hand toward the Chrystal, looked into it. If he were to live, he saw himself erect and his colour unchanged; if not, his form either appeared for an instant and vanished, or was seen reclining and his complexion changed to blue. In this event, a decision was deferred to the ensuing New Moon in four weeks; when, if the unpropitious signs continued, he must surely die ere long. If, on the contrary, he appeared erect and as usual, he was ordered to plunge seven times in the river,

with his face toward the east."¹

Most of this night was devoted to a religious dance by the men. Only children were permitted to sleep. The next morning the Festival being over, the people went home.²

Fifth: The Ah-tawh-hung-nah, that is, Cementation, or Propitiation Festival, was celebrated about ten days after the Great New Moon Festival. The preliminary arrangements, more elaborate than observed heretofore, were as follows:

A day or two after the close of the Great New Moon Festival the seven Prime Counsellors assembled for the purpose of setting the time for the Ah-tawh-hung-nah Festival and to select the necessary officers to take part in its functions. This Cementation Festival was marked with peculiar devotional and spiritual insight and pious uplift. Special adoration was given to the fountain of all their blessings. The Festival continued for four days. It was during these solemn rites the mystical hymn, Yowah Hymn, was chanted. It was consecrated with intense earnestness to the great Ye-ho-waah.

The title of the Festival connotes a covenant of everlasting brotherhood. It is supposed to have grown out of the friendship of young men for each other. This friendship they plighted publicly, at a designated place and time,

1. Ibid., p. 91.

2. Ibid., pp. 88-91.

by silently interchanging garments, piece by piece, until each was fully clad in the dress of the other. Thereafter they regarded themselves as one and inseparable. "This alliance embraces whatever is employed in peace, reconciliation, friendship, brotherly affection, and much more than either or all. When two of them were thus uniting, it was said of them Ah-nah-tawh-hanah-kah, - They are about to make friendship, and the union itself was called Ah-tawh-hoongh-nah, - friends made; whence the festival now under review takes its title. It has been conjectured to signify that state which unites the creature on earth with the Creator who Dwells Above."¹

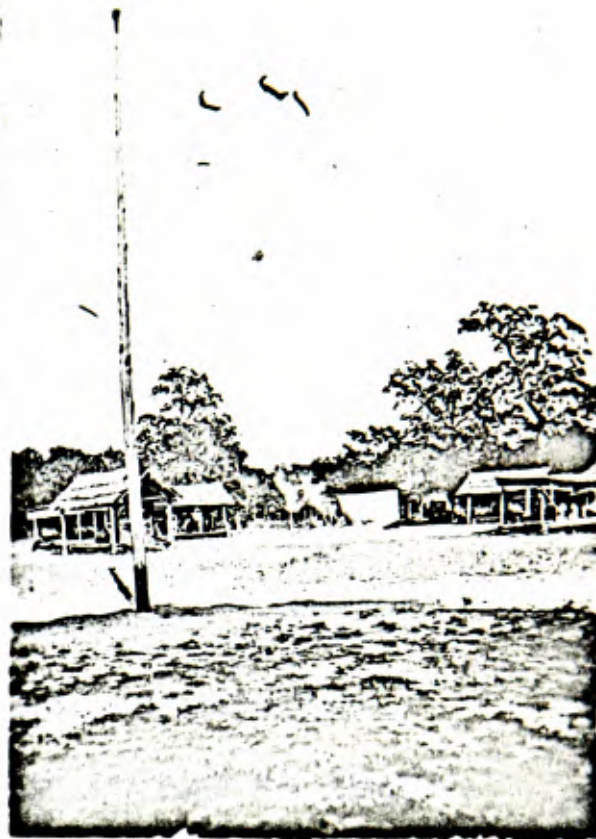
The dignity and nature of this Festival may be better understood by taking notice of the office of the great High Priest, called Oonah-wheeh-sayh-munghee. This word for High Priest means "One Who Renews His Heart and Body." His work was to cleanse from all pollution. He did not fail to officiate at the Ah-tawh-hung-h-nah Festival. Another name for the great High Priest was Oole-Stool-eeh, "One Who Has His Head Covered," because he wore his cap or bonnet while directing the rites included in his duties.² Other priests concealed their "Word of Wasi", or "Light", but his was worn openly, wrapped in a skin, and suspended to his bosom by a string fastened around his neck. The Great High Priest, as

1. Ibid., p. 93.

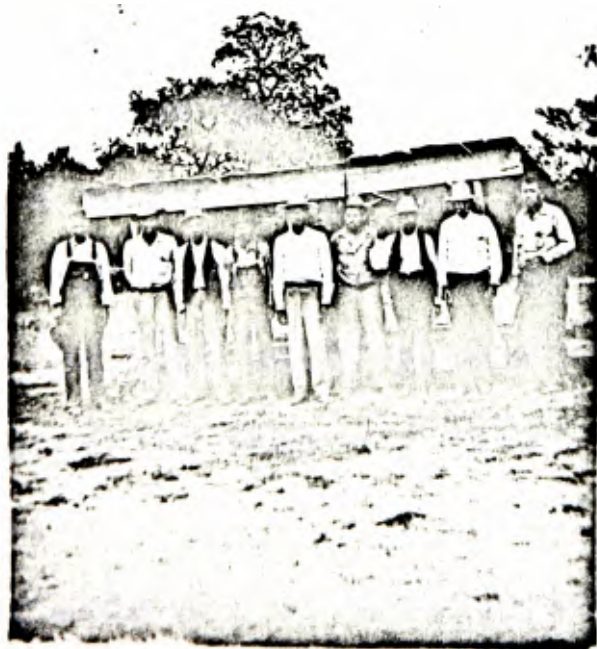
2. Ibid., p. 94.

might be anticipated, was the pre-eminent teacher in all matters concerned with religious duties. At regular intervals he visited the different towns of the nation to instruct the people in religion.

About one hundred years ago there was another name for the Ah-tawh-hungh-nah Festival, that is, the Physic Dance. Then still other names and titles of similar acceptance were applied to it. The word in the vernacular for Physic Dance, Nungh-wah-tee, was said to embrace both spiritual and bodily healing. It was a time of conciliation, healing, purifying and renewal. The articles, such as cedar boughs and mistletoe, used in purification, as in exorcising a home, were called Nungh-wah-tee. "The identity of the word Physic with conciliation, as here adopted, or even with expiation, is rendered still more apparent by the fact that the Cherokees regarded those diseases which required physic as generally sent from above to punish some offense among the people. To this belief we may trace the almost exclusive employment in more recent times to what are now called conjurers, or medicine men, in curing diseases. The Indian Doctors in our day universally profess to effect their object by the aid of incantations; and those who have lost all other traces of the ancient ceremonies, and retain no idea of their original signification; no knowledge of the early priesthood, nor of the dignity of the primeval Ah-tawh-hungh-nah, adhere, nevertheless adhere, though ignorantly and by mere traditional



Illinois Council Ground- Showing Altar
Place for Ball-Play



Members of Council Illinois
Council Ground- Gore, Okla.



A Fire Chief

prescription, to the peculiarly mystical part it involved in the rites referring to expiation."¹

After some discussion the seven Prime Counsellors sent messengers to notify all the towns when the Propitiation Festival would be held. The people were directed to come together on the evening of the sixth day. Seven women were designated to lead the dance and musicians were commissioned to assist them. Seven women, (perhaps wives of the seven Prime Counsellors) one from each clan, were summoned to help and fast. Next, seven men were enjoined to cleanse the National Heptagon and with rods to exorcise all the buildings within reach. Seven hunters were selected to secure game. Seven men were deputed to obtain seven different articles for purification. Attendants were appointed for these several officers. The maker of the holy fire, who had six assistants, was ordered to have new fire by the morning of the seventh day. The chanter of the Yowah Hymn, who was a priest, was called Yo-wah-teekah-naw-ghistee. An attendant was assigned to him whose duty it was to dress and undress him for his official performances. In case the chanter had died since the last meeting, the seven Prime Counsellors elected another to take his place, who served during the rest of his life.

Having made all of the appointments the seven Prime

1. Ibid., pp. 94-95.

Counsellors retired. The next morning fasting began. Those who shared in it comprised the Great High Priest, his right hand man, the seven Prime Counsellors, the seven women (one from each clan), the chanter, and their assistants. For six days preceding the festival they took food only once in twenty-four hours, then only light foods, and in small portions. They ate after dark. Meanwhile the hunters were out in quest of game, observing such ceremonies relative to their activities as are described in the New Green Corn Festival. Simultaneously with the fasting and hunting seven men sought seven articles for purification. For this purpose the following evergreens were used: White pine, hemlock, mistletoe, cedar, heartleaf, evergreen brier, and ginseng root. It is believed, in the course of time, it became impossible to procure all of these evergreens, so substitutes were used. Bark from the mountain birch, sprigs from a shrub birch of the mountains, spruce pine, roots from willows and swamp dogwood such as grow on the banks of streams, the bark of A-ta-sv-ki, or perfume wood, and a third variety of mountain birch could take the place of the evergreens.¹ "These were fastened into a cone basket, expressly fashioned for the purpose; -- and on the evening of the sixth day stored in the treasure house a few steps west of the National Heptagon. About the same time, the produce of the hunt was also deposited there. The people,

1. Ibid., p.97.

too, now gathered from all parts of the nation, about the entrance of the National Heptagon. During the fore part of the night, the women danced, while four musicians, each in his turn, sang for them. After this, all retired to sleep; and on the morning of the seventh day, the Fifth Great Festival, the Ah-tawh-hungh-nah, the propitiation, or Cementation Festival, began."¹

When the proper time came, which was before daybreak on the morning of the seventh day, the fire maker and his assistants started the new fire after the fashion described in the ceremony between the First and Second Festivals. Seven different kinds of wood were employed in kindling the fire and in keeping it burning, namely: Locust, blackjack, sycamore, post oak, redbud, plum, and red oak. This wood was taken from the lower branches, dry limbs, on the east side of trees.

About the same time the fire makers began their duties, the seven exorcists or cleansers began their work. They wrapped scarfs about their heads so as to form hoods. These hoods were decorated with a plume of the under side of a deer's tail, the white hair being exposed. They swept out the National Heptagon, removed the old ashes, and repaired the altar. "The three white ottomans, and the upright wide planks backing them, as well as the ottomans; the bench by the altar, sustaining the seven dipping gourds; and the

1. Ibid., pp. 97-98.

sacred purifying caldrons, were all newly whitened; as, last of all, were the seven joists which linked them together. For this particular occasion, the white ottomans were covered with dressed buckskins, whitened with clay; buckskins similarly prepared were spread before them on the ground; and seven raw deers' skins brought in by the hunters, and draperies on poles, hung overhead as a canopy."¹

All of this was accomplished before the sun appeared. The exorcists or cleansers took the new fire, kindled by the fire makers, and put it upon the altar. The sacred caldron was set in its accustomed place. They walked round the fire four times, occasionally exclaiming "you, you", then they would shout a whoop. They took the seven white dipping gourds, went to the stream where they were filled, returned to the altar, walked round the fire, emptied the water in the caldron, and placed the gourds back on the white bench. A message was delivered to the great High Priest that the caldron was made ready.

The great High Priest, with his right hand man, proceeded to the storehouse located west of the National Heptagon. The right hand man secured the cone basket, in which had been placed the seven articles for purification, and followed by the great High Priest, walked towards the entrance of the National Heptagon. When they came near to

1. Ibid., p. 99.

the entrance the great High Priest bade him to stop. In a low voice the spiritual leader uttered a secret prayer. He walked on, entered the National Heptagon, and stopped again for prayer that the people might be cleansed from all impurities and pollutions of the preceding year. Coming to the altar the great High Priest cast old tobacco on the fire and waved the wing of a white Heron four times over the caldron moving the steam in every direction. Again he prayed to himself. Both walked round the fire again as more tobacco was burned, and once more the white wing was waved and a prayer was offered as before. Four times this was repeated at the order of the great High Priest, the right hand man moved the sacred basket containing the articles for purification four times over the caldron, and slowly set it in the caldron. Another time they both walked round the fire. With this white wing the steam was waved in different directions. Both of them retired to the sacred seats. From the moment the basket was deposited in the caldron it was watched day and night by some of the seven Prime Counsellors. This being over the seven exorcists renewed the fire on the altar.

At this point it may be well to remember that at the dawn of the first day all fires throughout the nation were extinguished. Every hearth was cleansed, the brands and ashes taken away. New fire was supplied from the National Heptagon. Those who lived in the distant parts of the nation

took some of the new fire with them when the ceremonies were finished. No food was eaten on the first day until after dark. Some of the first meat cooked by the new fire was offered as a sacrifice.

"The altar fire being renewed by the seven cleansers, or exorcisers, their seven deputed attendants appeared, each with a white rod of sycamore, and called them. They went forward. To each his attendant gave a rod. The leader of the seven raised the note ayh, (long); to which the other six responded wah (a as in part). The leader then sang eh-eeh (as e long) seven times and resumed his former note ayh; to which the others responded wah! pronounced quickly. The leader then went out of the National Heptagon, followed by the others."¹

All of this happened in the early morning just before and after sunrise.

Following the departure of the exorcists or cleansers, the attendant of the Yo-wah-teekahnaw-ghistee, from the middle of the National Heptagon, called to him by name, and invested him with his robes of white, put in his hand a whitened gourd filled with small stones (then called the rattling gourd), or gave him a shell similarly arranged and fastened on a stick. The attendant resumed his seat. While receiving the white raiment the Yo-wah-teekahnaw-ghistee faced the

1. Ibid., p. 102.

east. For a moment after receiving the rattling gourd he faced the east. He shook the gourd and struck the note you, and paced slowly round the fire, then went to the portal of the National Heptagon, where, changing the note to eeh (long e), he went out.

At this time the seven cleansers, or exorcists, and the chanter of the Yowah Hymn, are outside of the National Heptagon, simultaneously performing their respective functions.

Now we are to observe the activities of the seven exorcists. All of them walked around the National Heptagon, singing as they walked. When they came to the storehouse on the west, they lashed the eaves of it with their rods. The leader, followed by the others in single file, passed on to another house, singing as they moved but stopped when they came near the house. Thus they continued from one house to another until all houses in the metropolitan town had been cleansed, after which they returned to the National Heptagon, passed around it as before, paused at the treasure house, struck the eaves again, singing as they went, and re-entered the National Heptagon. Their rods were restored to the Holy Place and were not touched until the next day. After this the exorcists went to the storehouse, secured some of the meat put there by the hunters, and distributed it among the people to be cooked for an evening meal.¹

1. "The lustrations here practiced are precisely anal-

The Yo-wah-teekahnaw-ghistee, or chanter, continued to sound the note eeh (long e), which he was singing as he left the gate of the National Heptagon, until he had climbed upon the roof of this structure. During this time he did not get his breath. Now he was ready to begin singing the mystical hymn.

Seven verses made up the hymn. Each verse consisted of one line, repeated four times, and chanted distinctly. The seven verses were chanted in seven tunes. The seven lines, or verses, thus chanted, were as follows:

I. Hi yo wa ya ka ni.

II. Hi te hu yu ya ka ni.

III. Hi wa ta ki ya ka ni.

IV. Hi hi wa sa si ya ka ni.

V. Hi a ni tu si ya ka ni.

VI. Hi yo wa hi ye yo ya ka ni.

VII. Hi a ni he ho ya ka ni.

When the chanter had finished each verse, the gourd

agous to those of the ancient Peruvians, and were performed at about the same season of the year, that is: In the month of September. The Peruvian Festival was called Citu, and was held on the first day of the moon after the autumnal equinox. The persons delegated to act as purifiers are armed with lances, and passed through all the streets of the city, and were supposed to drive all malignity and evil before them. After purifying the town, they went through the same ceremonies in the vicinity for the distance of several leagues, and finally planted their lances in the ground, as a kind of Cordon Sanitain, faith in which it was supposed disease or evil would not dare to enter." See LeVega and McCulloh - p. 394, E. G. S.

held in his hand was rattled, and he struck the note i, as long e sounds in English.

After the entire hymn was chanted, on starting to descend, he again struck the same note, as before, which he continued to hum without drawing his breath, till he returned to the place in the National Heptagon where he had been enrobed. He cried out, "I am heard", and to this the assembly replied, "wawh!" (the a was given a long sound). At this time his attendant approached, removed his white robe, deposited it beside the holy column, and the two men returned to their seats.

The seven cleansers, or exorcisers, returned from distributing the food. From the bench they took the seven white gourds, (these were not the same gourds used in pouring water in the caldron) dipped them into the caldron and turned to the people. Each cleanser handed his gourd to the head man of his own clan, who drank from it, and handed it on, till all drank from it. Some of the contents they rubbed on their breasts. The children followed the example of the older people. The tasting and rubbing might be repeated several times during the day. Following the first taking of this purifying drink, infants, but not adults, might eat a little food.

The day had now reached the noon hour, and the Yowah Hymn was chanted a second time.

About two hours before sunset, at the direction of the

right hand man of the priest, the people again congregated on the bank of the stream. The priest prayed and told them to bathe. The men went up the stream, while the women and children went down the stream. All faced the east and dipped themselves entirely under. Then turning to the west they plunged under again. Facing east and west they dipped themselves seven times. They were obeying the Being who Dwells Above in performing this ceremony. Some of the people entered the water wearing their old clothes, and while in, let them float away; thus removing all impurities with them. New clothes were ready for them when they came out of the water. Others did not change their clothes till after the bathing. When they returned to the National Heptagon all were newly clad.

Silence prevailed as the priest prepared for offering the sacrifice. He stood on the west side of the altar, facing the east, his right hand man standing next to him, the seven Prime Counsellors arranged in a semi-circle behind them, and prayed, then put the deer's tongue on some coals. Old tobacco was sprinkled over the sacrifice. The officials watched the tongue carefully, for the number of times it popped indicated the number of deaths that would happen during the year. When there was to be much sickness the smoke of the sacrifice formed a bluish cloud over the fire, and seemed to linger, otherwise it would disappear immediately. The priest then took seven deers' skins, folded them, placed them

on a bench, set his Divining Crystal on them, and prayed. In case the talisman exhibited an unclouded blaze, the people would enjoy good health; if not, it would appear smoky; and the victims of death would be seen in it.

A little before sunset the Yowah Hymn was chanted for the third time.

It was now time for the people to take nourishment. The Great Speaker called for the meat, which had been distributed in the earlier part of the day. It had been cooked on the new fires. The fleshy parts and the bones had been cooked separately. Bread made of new corn, mush, hominy, potatoes, beans, and other vegetables, all ready to eat, were brought and arranged in order. After the priest prayed the people began eating.

The officials, including the seven Prime Counsellors, the seven women who had fasted with them, the priest and his right hand man, and the chanter did not touch food till late at night. They ate only once each day during the four days of the festival.

On the night of the first day of this Festival, the people engaged in a religious dance till midnight. "Such as desired might then retire to rest. But, according to some, the whole night was kept as a vigil, and devoted by the women to a religious dance."¹

1. Payne MSS., p. 110.

The ceremony of cleansing the houses was repeated on the second day. Meat was again distributed to be cooked for the evening meal. "The Yowah Hymn was not sung; and the people, generally, ate as they pleased, excepting the seventeen persons just enumerated, who still continued their fast. A little before sunset, the victuals were called for, and eaten as on the day before."¹

The third day was observed like the second day.

The rites of the fourth day resembled those of the first day. The Yowah Hymn was sung three times: In the morning, at noon, and before sundown. Food was distributed for cooking. All fasted and bathed as on the first day. The sacrifice was offered and the Divining Crystal consulted. Eating was observed as on the first day.

"Thus the Oole-stool-eeh, his right hand man, the seven Counsellors, and the seven women, fasted ten days successively, eating only once in twenty-four hours; and the Yo-wah-teekahnaw-ghistee, who chanted the Yowah Hymn, fasted in the same manner four days; and all the people, men, women and children, fasted two days; on which two days even infants fasted till noon. Everyone, also, except infants, spent two whole nights, namely, the first and fourth, in entire wakefulness. All put off their soiled garments, either in the water, or before entering it, or immediately on coming out, and

1. Ibid., p. 110.

clothed themselves in clean apparel. Everyone, also, on two different occasions, plunged entirely, making fourteen times in all.

"On the fourth night, all were required to keep continually awake. Neither might any eat, except lightly at supper. The women passed the night in a religious dance."¹

Sacrifice was offered on the morning of the fifth day. The priest removed the cleansing articles from the caldron, let them dry, wrapped them in a buckskin and exclaimed, "Now I return home". The people answered with "wawh!" Accompanied by his right hand man, he walked towards the east, deposited the articles in some dry place, and departed. Soon the chanter of the Yowah Hymn stood up and said, "Now I speak." The people responded "wawh!" Next the seven Prime Counsellors stood up, one by one, each one speaking, and each one being answered, "wawh!" They disappeared. After waiting briefly, the people arose, and went up to their homes in silence. Order and dignity marked this breaking up of the gathering.

The Cherokees went home believing they were free from all pollution. In fact they considered themselves purer after this Festival, than at any other time.²

1. Ibid., p. 111.

2. Ibid. pp. 91-112.

Sixth: The last of the series of annual great Festivals was called the Eelah-wah-tah-lay-kee, or the Festival of Exulting, or Bounding Bush. Little is known of the arrangements made for the keeping of this Festival further than the time set for it which was during the first moon of autumn.

The ceremonies were as follows: A man who had been selected for the purpose, appeared with a box. He sang as he paced slowly around. A piece of tobacco was placed in the box by each person present and he went away.

"Two men and two women, alternately, then moved along abreast. The two forward men, in their right hands, bore something like a hoop, with two sticks through it, crossing each other at right angles in the center. On the ends of the sticks, white feathers were fastened. Two men in the middle and two in the rear, also carried hoops and sticks, while all the rest held in their right hands green boughs of white pine."¹

The dance closed at midnight on the first three nights. The green boughs were carefully placed among the consecrated things. For the rest of the night the people were at liberty to do as they pleased.

A joyful feast was served after dark, on the fourth night, and all ate together. At midnight, the time when the dancing had ceased during the three previous nights, the

1. Ibid., p. 113.

man with the box who had disappeared, returned, "carrying it round the circle, and singing

U hu ni tu tu

A ni hu le ya,

four times; while each person took from the box a piece of the tobacco; and then, each plucking off some of the pine leaves from the boughs borne by all the couples but four, and crushing them in the hand, they put them with the tobacco."¹ This being over, they stood in a circle round the altar fire, each approached it, reached forth his or her hand as if to throw in the leaves and tobacco, at the same time singing "you, you," then stepped back, as if hesitating to sacrifice the leaves and tobacco; till, as they again went near the fire, they put both in the fire together, and the dance came to an end.²

1. Ibid., pp. 113-114.

2. Ibid., 112-114.

Chapter Nine

Festivals (Continued)

Minor Festivals - Occasional Festivals -
Modifications of Festivals.

Chapter Nine

The Minor Festivals.

There were six of the regular Minor Festivals in ancient times. They have been discontinued for many decades. The Minor Festivals were celebrated at every new moon, but with greater devotion and emphasis at the beginning of each quarter of the year. Sacrifice was offered each seventh day.

"The original New Moon Festivals are supposed to have resembled the primitive form of that of the Nung-tah-tay-quah, or Great New Moon of Autumn; though probably with omissions, and of course, much condensed. It is the prevailing impression that they were held at the respective towns, and before the local priests; though some believe that there was a time when they were celebrated nationally."¹

In general characteristics the quarterly New Moon Festival was much like the monthly feasts, though it was more elaborate. When the people came to it they always brought some of the medicinal root which they had secured from the table by the side of the stream, at the Great New Moon of Autumn Festival, as described in connection with that celebration. The sacred caldron was near the altar and into it the root was placed. During the time it was being prepared,

1. Payne MSS., pp. 114-115. We have no records more than one hundred years old of these regular Minor Festivals.

the officiating priest chanted a long hymn. After the drink was ready for use, it was dipped out with a small consecrated gourd, and given to each person in attendance, who simply tasted it, and then drank some water. The priest chanted another hymn after which the people were ordered to bathe, as at the Great New Moon of Autumn Festival. They dipped themselves rapidly seven times. This rite being done, they were dismissed and returned to their homes.¹

Traditions relative to the sacrifice offered every seventh day are vague and indefinite. "We only learn of it, from some that, anciently, at a certain part of the year, all fasted every seventh day; little children till noon; then, all bathed."² Others are of the opinion that Ye-ho-waah directed the people to rest from all work on the seventh day. They were to hold their hands entirely still, placing them on their knees, with the palms upward, in an attitude of adoration. For them to labor on the seventh day resulted in their death or in the death of some of their children. On that day they were not permitted to talk about common things. Their thoughts and conversation were of the Being who Dwells on High.³

1. Ibid., pp. 114-115. Detailed information concerning these regular Minor Festivals is not available. One may safely conclude they were much like the Greater Festivals, perhaps shorter and observed in the local towns rather than at the National Heptagon.

2. Ibid., pp. 115-116.

3. Ibid., p. 116. Their regard for the seventh day or every seventh day seems to show the influence of the work of Christian missions.

Primitive Occasional Festivals.

From ancient times, in every case of public anxiety or misfortune, religious assemblies were convened. It is claimed the primitive Cherokees attributed all sufferings and mortal diseases in particular, "to the displeasure of the Being Who Dwells Above,--against whose wrath nothing could prevail but the Ah-tawh-hung-nah, Propitiation, or Cementation, Festival; hence, in all such exigencies, it was originally resorted to for that purpose; and the elders say, by express command of their Creator."¹

The occasional Festival which occurred every seven years did not resemble the others. It was called the Ookah dance, due to the fact it was instituted for the Ookah as a means of giving expression to his personal gratitude and reverence to the Creator. It was a feast of rejoicing instead of sacrifice. It was held about the time of the commencement of the New Year, near the end of Summer, every seventh year. The people of all ages gathered at the National Heptagon to keep the Festival. It was a kind of Jubilee.

Preparations were made for it as follows: The exact time of the Jubilee having been determined, messengers were sent throughout the country to notify the people. The seven

1. Ibid., p. 116.

Counsellors dispatched seven hunters from the Metropolitan town to devote seven days to securing meat for the Festival. On the seventh night the seven hunters returned with the meat and distributed it among the people. It was to be cooked for public use. On the seventh evening the people assembled at the National Heptagon. Men were appointed to direct and order the banquet; women were designated to supervise the cooking; a very aged and highly esteemed woman called A-ke-yv-gu-stu, was to warm the water for bathing the Ookah; two men were picked out to bathe him; one man was to look after the Ookah's clothing; one was to fan him; one was to lead the music and sing for him; one was to arrange his seats; and, still others were to minister to his wants. Midway between the Ookah's abode and the National Heptagon, a structure was raised for him. "It consisted of a tall throne with a canopy and footstool, all carefully whitened for the occasion. A similar structure was set up in the sacred square, around which a broad circle was marked out and swept clean and kept under a careful guard and no unconsecrated step allowed to enter it."¹

The Jubilee began on the morning of the eighth day.

The priests, preceded by the seven Prime Counsellors, formed a procession and marched to the house of the Ookah,

1. We are not told who the Ookah was, but he was a dignitary of influence--possibly the High Priest.

singing as they walked. When they arrived the honored matron was in attendance with the warm water. One priest, who had been appointed for the purpose, approached the Ookah, removed his clothes, two others bathed him from head to feet. The one who had undressed him came forward with his official robe of yellow and clothed him. The priest who had been designated his official carrier came near, turned his back, and the Ookah, embracing his neck, climbed upon his back; his fanner and musician were by his side; and while preceded by half of the priests and followed by the other half, he was borne to the canopied white throne. As they marched all were singing but his bearer. The Ookah was placed on the throne for a brief rest; then the music and the march were resumed. When they reached the sacred square he was again enthroned, where he remained all night in state, attended by the seven Prime Counsellors, his right hand man, his bearer, and his speaker. They kept silent vigil while the people in general danced in the National Heptagon.

The second morning the Ookah was lifted from his throne and carried to a guarded circle, put upon his feet, and then he began his dance. "It was a slow step. He kept always within the circle, looking both right and left as he passed, and bowing to every spectator, each one of whom returned the bow. A little before him, on his left, was his U-lo-tee, (fanner), in readiness to fan him, if required; and also, at his left, by his side, his Kv-nv-wi-

sti-ski, or musician. His right hand man, his Ti-nv-li-no-he-ski, or seven Prime Counsellors, his Ti-kv-no-tsu-li-ski, or Speaker, and the other priests, all followed in single file, imitating his step. After dancing around once, the Ookah was taken to his seat. His eleven immediate attendants kept near him, but all the other priests stood at some distance. No woman was allowed in the square; nor even to approach the square where the Ookah danced."¹

Not very long after the noon hour the master of the feast arranged the food in order. The speaker directed the people to eat. All began at the same time except the Ookah and his immediate attendants who fasted till near sunset. Provisions reserved for them, were brought to them, at the appointed hour, by the speaker. The banquet being finished, the Ookah, before dark, was carried back to his home. The garb of yellow was removed and common clothes put on again.

The same ceremonies were repeated each day of the Jubilee--which continued for four days--with the difference the preliminary bathing was not repeated.

After the dance on the fourth day the Ookah was consecrated anew by his right hand man, and re-invested with his priestly and regal authority. During this ceremony he wore his yellow robe, as at his first consecration. At other times, when attending to his ordinary official functions, he wore the

1. Ibid., pp. 119-120.

white dress.

This ceremony brought the Septennial Festival to an end.¹

Concluding Remarks.

Both the annual and occasional Festivals of the ancient Cherokees have been reviewed. A few general observations applicable to all alike, remained to be noted.

The National Heptagon, the Sacred Square, and other places where religious ceremonies were held, might be entered only by the Red race, and only such of them as were fitted for such privileges by the fulfillment of certain duties. However, if a person under criminal prosecution could find his way unobserved into the consecrated spots during any of the fasts of purification, or manage to put himself within the Oookah's view, that person would go free.

To touch any person or anything not consecrated during a religious festival was forbidden and regarded as an offense against sobriety.

Another custom observed on most, if not all, of these occasions was the gashing of the limbs of young men and boys who presented themselves for this purpose. Sharp flints were used by aged priests to do this. The ceremony took place outside of the sacred wall. If anyone flinched the cuts were made deeper.

"It has been universally remarked that nothing could

1. Ibid., pp. 116-121. The pages here indicated describe the entire jubilee.

be more urbane than the bearing of the Cherokees at these festivals. There was no loftiness, no sourness, no affectation; they were considerate to all; and if, by chance, conversation took a cast they thought objectionable, even the highest among the priests gave no reproachful check, but simply and mildly remarked, 'Yah, tee, quawh!' - 'That will do', or 'That is enough'; and never without effect."¹

The Ancient Festivals Modified.

The ancient festivals were celebrated, so opinion holds, by the nation as a whole and at the religious metropolis. Cases of sickness might bring exceptions to the rule in that they were allowed to observe the rites in their own houses and towns. This privilege gradually led to the old Feasts being modified and mixed with one another. In this process some of them lost their marks of identity.

The order of the festivals followed here is the same as the one already given. Attention will be directed to the Six Major Festivals and then to the occasional celebrations.

First, The Festival of the First New Moon of Spring. There is no record where permission was granted by the National Council to hold it locally, but it was done and with the permission of the town leaders. Families who could not

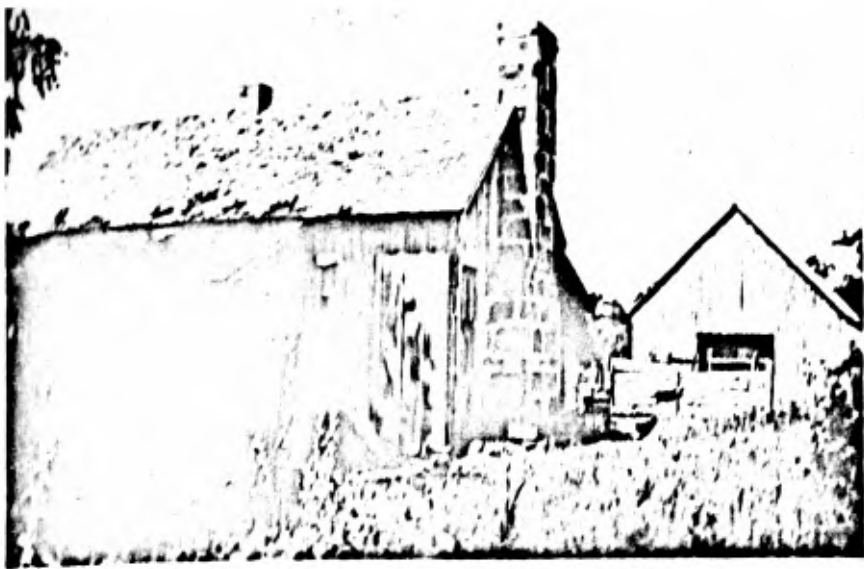
1. Ibid., pp. 122-123.

go to the metropolis, and who knew the ceremony, were allowed to keep it in their private lodges.

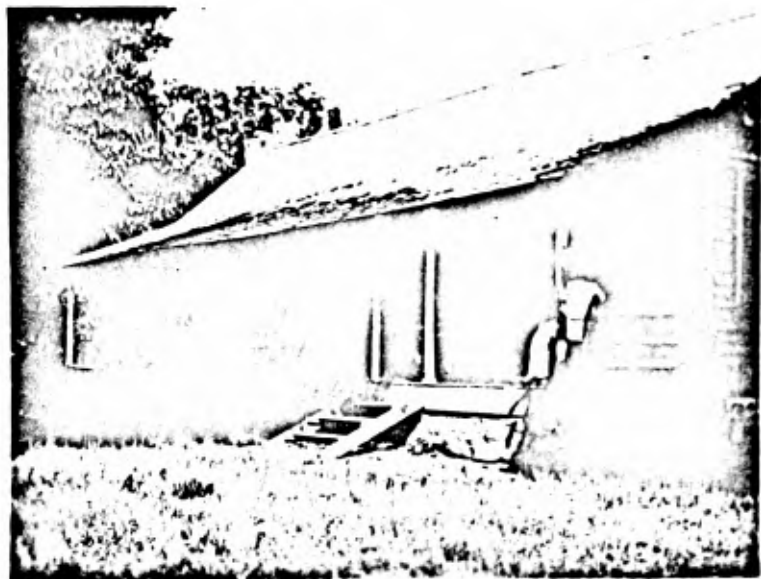
The master of the house officiated. A buckskin dressed white was spread by the fire. Fowls and other animals were killed for meat for the family. He took some of the blood and traced a fresh streak from head to tail of the buckskin. The members of the household went to a stream and plunged seven times, removed their old clothes and put on new dry ones. No food was eaten during the day. At night, mush and meat having been cooked, nourishment was taken. If all the meat was not consumed, what was left could be sent to the neighbors, if any near, otherwise given to some animal or burned. None of it, on any grounds, was kept until the next morning. Persons regarded as unclean might share in the feast by being served alone.

Second, both the Sah-looh-stu-knee, Keeh-steh-steeh, New or Green Corn Festival, and the Tun-pra-nah-kaw-hoongh-ni, or Ripe Green Corn Feast, second and third of the primitive Festivals, were expressly permitted in local towns.

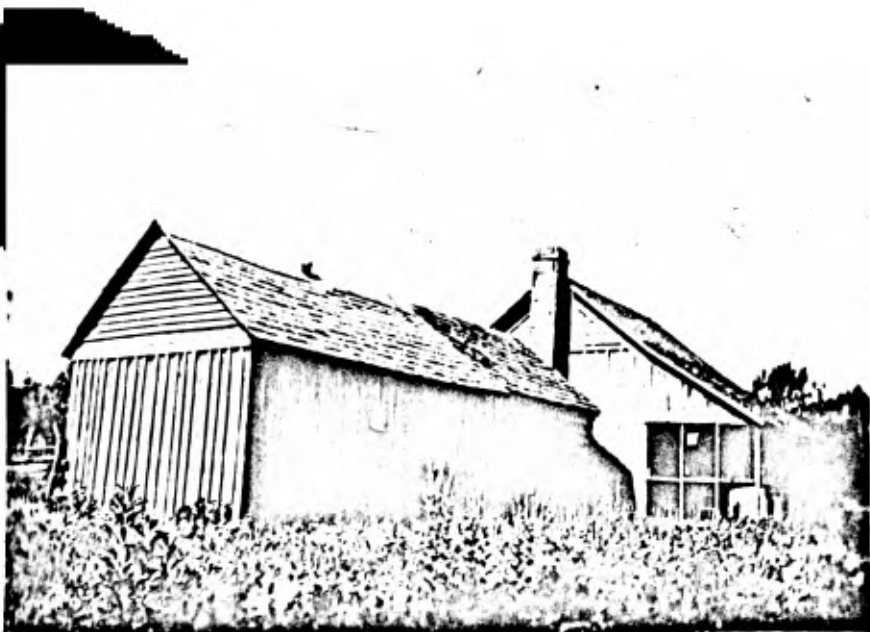
"In the accounts given of the National Councils, mention will be found of the manner in which intelligence of their proceedings was transmitted at the close of each session to the various towns throughout the nation. It appears that each town had an A-tsi-nu-sti, or messenger, in attendance, who received from the Ti-ki-no-tsu-li-ski, or Speaker, a stick of about six inches long, with a string of white beads wound



Home of Daniel Smith, 7 miles West of Stilwell, Oklahoma



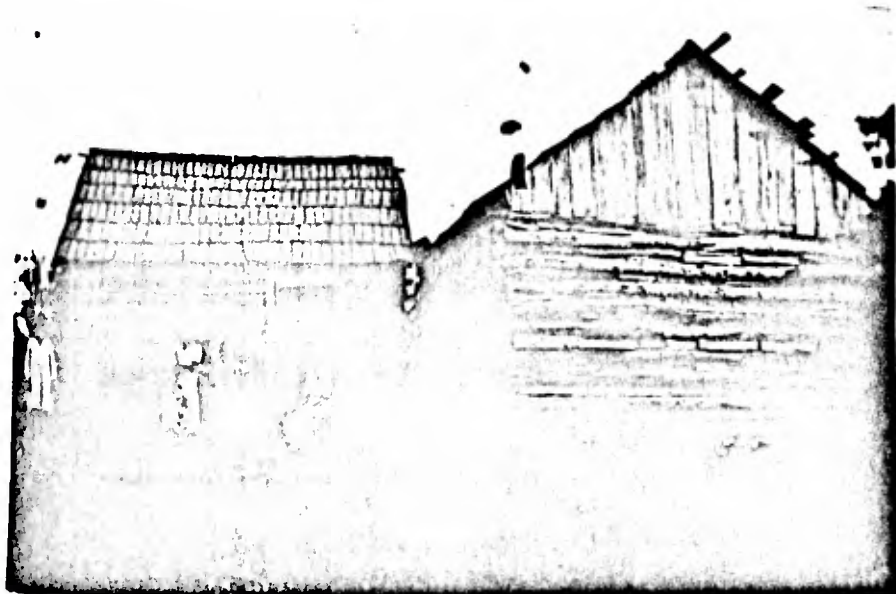
Old home of the Smiths', 7 miles West of Stilwell, Oklahoma.



Home of Tom White, 3 miles West of Stilwell, Oklahoma.



Home of William Isroot, 6 miles Northwest of Stilwell, Oklahoma.



Home of John Bean, 3 miles North of Hulbert, Oklahoma.



closely around it from end to end; and some tobacco; which last was given to the head man of the town to smoke, while, with the rest of the inhabitants, duly convened for the purpose, they listened to the report of their A-tsi-mu-sti, or messenger."¹ Very likely the beads were emblems of authority because the messenger exercised the right to grant permission for the local celebration of either or of both of these Green Corn Festivals.

The messenger proclaimed the day on which, according to the Supreme Council, the Festival was held. He selected some persons in a particular town to have general charge. When this was done and the beads removed from the stick, wound around a staff, and as he went out he called aloud, "A-tsi-mu-sti" - when the messenger-elect arose, "singing

Hi-ta-ka-ni

Hi-ta-ka-ni, etc.

and went to his predecessor, took staff, and, exclaiming 'Na-ski-go-ni-ku-li-sta', 'so let it be'; all the people shouted 'Wawh', then the newly elected A-tsi-mu-sti, or messenger, began the necessary arrangements."²

Two town functionaries, called the Alituna and the Hilota, were instructed to send out hunters and appoint the Preliminary dance. The town messenger either did this or appointed seven counsellors who did it.

1. Ibid., pp. 125-126.

2. Ibid., pp. 126-127.

Prior to the beginning of the Ah-tawh-hung-nah, the Propitiation or Cementation Festival, the Seven Counsellors and their wives, one from each clan, fasted for seven days. The hunters were sent out as in the New Green Corn Feast, and the one of Propitiation, or Cementation. The evening of the sixth day was devoted to a religious dance.

The Festival began on the morning of the seventh day when all the people bathed. The forms here observed compared favorably with those after the second singing of the Yowah Hymn at the Cementation Festival. They prayed for cleansing from all impurities of the preceding year.

Following this the people assembled at the town council house, where the priest took his place, facing the east. His attendants were near him in a semi-circle. Sacrifice was offered and inferences made from it, like the one observed a little before night on the first day of the New Green Corn Festival.

The priest put his Divining Crystal in an opening on the east side of the town council house and the seven Counsellors observed it as before. They believed the appearances in the crystal always confirmed the omens of the sacrifice. The number of persons to die indicated by the sacrifice were seen dead in the crystal. The same thing was true relative to the Cementation Festival.

Next, the priest gave the seven Counsellors a decoction or cleansing drink made of a plant called Ku-lo-na.

They passed it on to the members of their respective clans. All drank of it and rubbed it on their bowels and breasts. Parents gave it to their children and rubbed it on them. Green corn had been roasted and all ate of it. No green fruit could be eaten until after the sacrifice.

The barbecued meat was distributed among the families of the town. The fleshy parts were boiled. The bony parts were boiled with the corn cut from the cob, similar to the cooking at the Cementation Festival. Just before sunset the Town Speaker called for the food which was brought to the town council house near where it was spread for the meal. All ate at the same time. The order to eat was given by the right hand man of the priest.

When the meal was ended, the priest offered sacrifice as in the morning, and the seven Counsellors tossed small pieces of meat in all directions, to share it with the spirits.

Again all of them were ordered to the river where they plunged seven times, as in the morning, with the deviation they did not change their clothing. They returned to the town council house where the night was spent as a vigil. Only children were allowed to sleep. The women devoted their time to a religious dance. The musician had a drum.¹ As he sang he struck the drum with a stick. The first verse of the hymn was as follows:

1. It was made of an earthen jar with a skin stretched tightly over it.

Ha ni yo
Hoo wa ni
Hi ya ni
Hi ya ni no
Hoo wa ni ni.¹

According to some, on the night of the second day, the priests called the people together a little after dark for prayer. They were prostrate as he prayed. After this they were allowed to sleep.

At the beginning of the third day each of the seven Counsellors called the members of his own clan to pray. Any one attempting to mingle with a clan other than his own was regarded as a fool. While the priest prayed the people faced the east. Spittle was rubbed upon their breast, face, and head. Then all went to the stream where they washed their hands and face. After drinking some of the water, they returned. From the altar the priest took some of the white ashes (made from the sacrifice of the previous day) on the palm of his hand and rubbed it on his face, breast, and forehead. Others were told to do the same thing. After offering sacrifice and having prayer, most of the day was given to a religious dance.

"At daybreak on the fourth day, all arose, turned towards the east, raised the right hand as high as the head,

1. Ibid., p. 130.

with the palm towards the east, while the priest prayed, holding his hand in the same position. Just as the sun arose, he ordered all to the stream. All plunged seven times, first towards the east, then towards the north, then towards the west, then towards the south, then towards the east again, and so on. The men plunged first; the women and children after. In plunging the hands must be held in such a position as to make the fingers' ends touch the breast. The place and bounds for bathing were fixed by the priest."¹

This form of the Green Corn Festival seems mixed with the Cementation Festival. The prayer for cleansing was similar to that of the Cementation Festival. Another evidence of mixture is that the people considered themselves purer after this Festival than at any other time during the year. Knowledge of the existence of the Cementation Festival was lost - so it is believed the ceremonies of the two Festivals became confounded at a remote time. Some of the rites had lost their significance.²

Another method, more modern, of keeping the Green Corn Festival, by the several towns, was more careful in preserving the original features, and was as follows:

When the messenger returned from the National Council with permission to hold the Festival, seven Counsellors were selected by him; the time was determined and people notified.

1. Ibid., pp. 131-132.

2. Ibid., pp. 132-133.

Seven men were appointed to hunt during six days previous to the feast, while the messenger, seven Counsellors, town priest, his right hand man, and the seven women (one from each clan) devoted their time to fasting at the town council house.

Hunters returned the morning of the seventh day. They gave the priest the tongue of a deer for the sacrifice - also the meat and skins - the meat having been barbecued was placed in the storehouse. The people of the town assembled; each family brought green fruit of each kind raised, prepared for eating. They put this fruit in the storehouse. Each family was given some of the barbecued meat and then they returned home.

When night came the barbecued meat, having not been tasted, was brought to the town council house, and restored to the storehouse. Then the priest offered sacrifice. The priest had a sacred room into which no one entered but himself and his right hand man. An altar was in the center of it. The right hand man prepared the altar and made the fire using various barks as at the Feast of the First New Moon of Spring. The sacrifice was offered and prayer made as at the New Green Corn Feast. The right hand man directed that food be brought forward. All ate at the same time, except the officials who had previously fasted. For seven days more they will eat only old food. Then all came together again and all ate together of the new fruit. This being over the seven Counsellors appointed the Mature, or

Ripe, Green Corn Feast.

"Old persons among the Cherokees do not remember that, for the last fifty years, any special order was either given or required for the separate celebration of the Green Corn Festival. On the contrary, towns would celebrate it independently, without reference either to each other, or to the principal town, still more limited celebrations probably date from the very earliest times." A form of them which is still recollected, is described as follows:¹

Where families found it impossible to attend either the National or Town Feasts, before they ate of their green fruits, they sent for the priest, who took some of the new corn in his hand, stood before the fire and prayed that it might be healthful to the family. Then he threw some of the corn held in his hand into the fire and gave each member of the family a grain of what was left. After they had rubbed their breasts with this they ate of the new fruits.

The Cherokees least influenced by civilization lived in North Carolina. From a physician who lived among them Mr. Payne² learned the rites then used in celebrating the Green Corn Festival. It was as follows:

The Green Corn Festival, the greatest of the annual Cherokee Festivals, was held after the corn had ripened. It

1. Ibid., p. 135.

2. Ibid., p. 135. Third decade of nineteenth century.

was observed in different parts of the nation throughout the main part of the months of autumn. Each place designated where it was held, was largely attended. The number of days devoted to it varied. It continued some places for three days; others four to seven. The first day was devoted to lingering near the town council house and immediate vicinity. At night they talked and danced.

The Festival proper began the second or third day. The chief of the town in which the celebration was conducted was the general leader of the first dance. He sang as he advanced into the level yard of the town council house and shook a small gourd with gravel in it. Presently several men joined him (no women were allowed in this dance). Some of the men had guns and pistols, some had clubs and branches of trees. Several times they marched around the yard and then crossed it in such a manner that all of it was traversed. The dancers having become numerous, manoeuvring in single file, with movements regular and simultaneous, often leave the impression of a vast water snake moving about on the placid surface of a lake or river. During this time at irregular intervals guns and pistols are fired. The noise subsides with yelling and shouting.¹

This dance continued most of the day. Time was taken out for refreshments, consisting mainly in bread and beans of the new crop. At night they engaged in a common dance.

1. Ibid., p. 137.

As the Festival came to a close there was much drinking - drunkenness. Most of the old men, on these or other similar occasions, appeared to be engaged in performance of a solemn duty--with the more youthful it was different. They assembled for a frolic and good time.¹

In the preceding account the two Green Corn Festivals seem to be blended; but in regard to the second of these, that is, the Mature Green Corn Feast, numbers of the natives stated to John Howard Payne that from the time the Cherokees became acquainted with firearms, they employed them in its celebration. As they fired in festive glee, the women and children would stop their ears and run.²

Here I have attempted to trace the gradual degeneration of this significant festival. One by one its distinguishing marks were lost. While kept up longer than any of the other Major Festivals, it almost ceased to exist one hundred years ago.³

Third, let us observe the changes which were made in the Great New Moon Festival, fourth in the series of Greater Festivals.

How permission was granted and conveyed for the local celebration of this Festival is not disclosed. Our informa-

1. Ibid., p. 138.
2. Ibid., p. 138.
3. Ibid., pp. 125-139.

tion is to the effect that at the first appearance of the Great New Moon of Autumn, the people of each village gathered at the lodge of the priest; or at the house of one more recently called the conjurer, who had two right hand men subject to his commands. The two right hand men designated seven men to hunt, and seven men and seven women to fast, seven days before the Festival. One of the right hand men appointed seven men to sing for the women. When the first took his place and began a chant, the dance started. "The leader of the women, with terrapin shells partly filled with pebbles strapped around the calf of her leg, and giving a measured tinkle as she went, was followed in a slow movement of mingled march and dance, by the others, single file, round a fire."¹ The music of the first singer continued for about forty-five minutes. He withdrew and the dancers rested until the next singer began a chant. This was kept up until the entire seven singers had performed their parts. When this was finished, all retired to rest.

"Before sunrise next morning, the priest gathered all the people,--men, women, and children,--into a convocation house, prepared expressly for the occasion. It may be proper here to explain, in order to prevent confusion, that, besides this extra structure which we call a convocation house, there was a house,--as already mentioned,--set apart exclusively for a sacrifice, into which no one might enter but the priest

1. Ibid., p. 140.

himself, and his right hand men. But to return to the convocation house, into which the people were all gathered before sunrise. The priest seated them in rows, with their faces towards the east. Opening a crack in the wall, on the eastern side, about a foot long, and setting his Ooh-lung-sah-tah, or Divining Chrystal, in it,--he prayed and consulted it as the oracle of life or death to every individual present, in the manner mentioned in our account of the various Divining Chrystals."¹ This being over the priest put away the Divining Crystal. The people went out of the convocation house, the women to their cooking, the men to their several duties in getting ready for the sacrifice. One of the right hand men kindled a fire on the altar of sacrifice as was done in connection with the First New Moon of Spring Festival. The other right hand man stayed with the women and children to see that their fasting was properly observed.

Then the priest appointed several men to arrange seats for the people along the bank of a near-by stream and to erect two stands, one at the river bank, the other at the convocation house, on which to spread his deerskins. In the course of these preparations he withdrew to a place of solitude to sing and pray. He returned in time to meet the people at noon.² They followed him to the convocation house where they stood facing the east. He led them in prayer but in words not

1. Ibid., pp. 140-141.

2. He determined the precise moment of noon by placing a stick perpendicularly in the ground and watching the shadow.

audible to them. The priest placed the skins of two deer, one a doe, the other a buck, upon the stand. The flesh side of the skin was turned up. A piece of cloth, given for the occasion, was folded and put on the skins. Seven strands of beads, one for each clan, were placed on the buckskin.¹ The women, having previously supplied themselves with beads, three on a string about six inches long, one red, one white, and one black, after wetting the beads with spittle, walked up in succession and put them on the doe skin.² Then the men put beads on the buckskin. The skins were folded with the hair on the outside. The two right hand men removed them. The people, without looking to the right or left, straightway went to the bank of the stream, where they looked only at the water. The two right hand men and the priest were the last to reach the stream.

The two right hand men unfolded the deer skins upon the stand. The piece of cloth was likewise unfolded. The three beaded strings were exposed to view. "These were then classed according to the age of their respective depositors: For example, - a cloth being on each skin, taking the buckskin first, the process began by setting on the cloth a string of beads to represent the oldest man. Then another for the next oldest, and so on. For the women, the same system was

1. Each strand was about six inches in length.
2. In case of infants, the mothers acted for them.

observed on the doe skin."¹

At this point the right hand men brought sticks, the people sitting along the bank, and set them in the sand between the people and the water. The people watched for omens of good or bad fortune.² The priest consulted omens coming from the three-beaded strings. He began with the string for the oldest man. From it he withdrew two beads, a white one for life, and a black one for death, and placed one between the thumb and forefinger of each hand. He lifted his hands high above his head and let them down slowly, praying all the while. If the white bead appeared to move more between his thumb and forefinger than the black bead, all would be well with the person to whom it belonged. If the black bead seemed to try to escape, death was not far removed from the owner. The beads of each person were consulted. When this was finished the priest tossed the beads into the water, summoning the people to follow them. They did so. They plunged seven times in the water, four times facing the east and three times facing the west. They had to dive entirely under. Even the children were submerged. When the people came out of the water they put on dry clothes. Meanwhile the priest put a root on the stand for each person and placed his Divining Crystal there in which he looked for omens. The

1. Ibid., p. 143.

2. What took place here is more fully described in our account of this Festival in its original form, see pp. 237-238, this paper.

people received medicinal roots after which they returned to the convocation house. The priest and his right hand men returned, bearing skins folded, to the house of sacrifice. All things being ready, the priest offered the deer's tongue as a sacrifice - on this he put a little mush. The tongue was sprinkled with wild tobacco. Then the priest disclosed the omens of the day. They were made known by the first right hand man to the people who tarried at the convocation house. In case any were to die, the number was announced, but the names withheld. If there were to be no deaths, all were assured they would attend the next meeting.

Just before sunset the women brought food which had been prepared during the day. All of the people ate except the priest who was alone in the house of sacrifice. After some time he put away the skins, cloth and beads, and joined the people, where food reserved for him was brought and given him. He did not eat until after sunset.

When it was getting dark the singers began to make music and the dancers began to dance. As the preceding night the dance continued until morning. Only infants were allowed to sleep during the night.

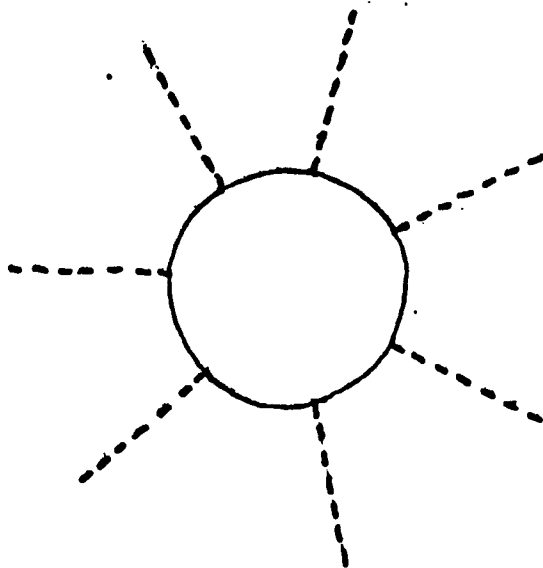
After daybreak all returned to their lodges, bearing with them the root they had received at the edge of the stream. Occasionally they chewed it and wetted their limbs and bodies with the juice. They tried to make it last until the

next New Moon of Spring.¹

Fourth, let us notice the variations that took place in the Ah-tawh-hung-nah, the Propitiation or Cementation Festival.

"These consisted of the disposition of the altar and the mode in which the fire was lighted, and of certain ceremonies of divination, all of which we proceed to notice."²

With seven different kinds of wood, curiously arranged, a circle was formed upon the altar. Seven strings of white beads, one for each clan, were placed there by a member of each clan, and pointed towards the wood in this fashion:³



Two of the fire makers secured two pieces of bass wood and some dry golden rod dust. The dust was put between the two sticks of wood which were rubbed together. They were passed to two other fire makers and from these to two others, all the time kept in motion, till the weed and then the wood began to burn. The fire on the altar was lighted with these

1. Payne, MSS., pp. 139-147 cover the entire Festival.

2. Ibid., p. 147.

3. Ibid., p. 147.

brands.

The more ancient form of divination was modified as follows: When the hunters returned they gave the skin of a buck, of a doe, and a fawn to the Oole-stool-eeh. These skins, with the heads facing the east, were spread west of the altar. The fleshy side was turned up. He then took a tiny bunch of weeds, or grass, and dipped it in the fresh blood of a deer or fowl and traced a streak of blood on the skins from the tail to the head. In the middle of the buck-skin, on the streak of blood, he set his Divining Crystal, besides seven strands of beads, one for each clan.

The Divining Crystal was closely watched. It would appear bluish and smoky if the season was to be sickly, otherwise it would give forth a dazzling brilliance.

Then the beads were consulted. As the priest held them in his right hand by their movements he observed what would be the fortunes or misfortunes of the different tribes.¹

Fifth, in reference to the last of the six Major Festivals, that of the Eelah-wah-tah-lay-kee, the Festival of the Exulting, or Bounding, Bush, "we only find that the man who formerly appeared at the beginning and on the fourth midnight, with a box, was omitted more recently; but the other forms were retained."²

1. Ibid., pp. 147-148.

2. Ibid., p. 149.

In ancient times it was observed during the latter part of the first Autumnal New Moon. Later it was celebrated at various seasons, according to the inclination and convenience of the people.¹

Occasional Festivals Changed.

In cases of public distress and general calamity among the Cherokees they resorted to the Ah-tawh-hung-nah at the injunction of the Great Supreme. In the earliest times it was used in reference to divers calamities, but enough of the original was retained to make the derivation obvious.

Mortal diseases and dire troubles were attributed to the Great Supreme. Justice was tempered with mercy in prescribing an atonement. Some of the aged Indians thought a direct command from Deity was something modern. "They believe that, as the decoction employed at the annual festival was regarded as a maker of purification; and that, as there was supposed to be a purifying and averting influence in all prayers and sacrifices and other characteristics of the occasion, the supposed efficacy of the festival naturally occurred to those who desired to turn aside judgments from on high; and so at last it was gradually brought into more frequent use than ancient custom warranted. Hence the later 'Physic Dance', the title whereof is so significant; and which festival,

1. Ibid., pp. 148-149.

though differing in many particulars from the ancient Ah-tawh-hung-nah, is incidently borrowed from it."¹

The Ah-tawh-hung-nah, under whatever modification it chanced to assume, formed the foundation of all the occasional deprecatory rites; although changed more or less when epidemics and contagious fevers prevailed; and more recently, when small-pox appeared; and yet to a larger degree, relative to cases claiming our attention subsequently.

These changes, while derived from the Ah-tawh-hung-nah, but mixed with various forms, seemingly were introduced by worshippers of the Sun or Moon, or brought in by impostors, at times called conjurers. Payne thinks the conjurers probably worshipped themselves rather than the Sun or Moon.² They aided their practices by occasional recurrence to the primitive orthodox ceremonies, though by this time³ their origin and significance had been lost.

The rites preparatory to the occasional Festivals were as follows: When some disease prevailed the people of a town assembled and requested the seven Counsellors of the Town Priest to take steps for stopping it. The Priest was given notice by one of their number. Then they chose a Yowah chanter, a servant to dress and undress him; seven women to

1. Ibid., pp. 150-151.

2. Ibid., p. 152. The Sun and Moon worshippers were called conjurers.

3. 100 years ago.

lead the sacred dance; seven men to hunt; one or two musicians and a priest to direct the ceremonies of the Festival, which would commence on the coming seventh day. Immediately the presiding priest set out in search of the roots and herbs needed for the occasion. They were seven in number.¹ "As each was gathered, a special prayer was required to be uttered over it, naming the purpose to which it was destined, and imploring that it might be empowered to effect that purpose."² Seven kinds of wood were brought and arranged in a circle, with seven kinds of beads pointing towards them. The wood might be kindled by rubbing the pieces together or lighted from a flint. A fire was made to boil the herbs. The people assembled in the town council house a little before sunset on the seventh day. They took their seats in silence. The Festival was considered as having begun.

The members of each clan sat together. The presiding priest and his right hand man were near the center on the west side of the house. The seven Counsellors and the Speaker were near them. The town council house faced the east and the door was always on the east side. Stillness continued throughout the fast.

As in the modified form of the Ah-tawh-hung-nah the hunters brought in the skins of three deer, a buck, a doe,

1. These have been mentioned in connection with the articles of purification used in the Ah-tawh-hung-nah Festival.

2. Ibid., p. 153.

and a fawn. The presiding priest folded them and placed them by the fire.

The white caldron, having been filled with spring water, was put on the fire. The herbs and roots were dropped into the water. A buzzard's wing was placed above the caldron. Facing the west, the presiding priest prayed to the setting sun. The seven Counsellors watched the caldron and fire night and day.

With the people seated, the musician took his stand, uplifting his voice, he struck a kind of drum, and the seven women selected for the sacred dance, came forward. In single file and with slow step they moved around the fire, followed by the other women and the girls; thus making large circles within circles. At the end of the first dance the Yowah chanter was called as at the Cementation Festival - then came the seven cleansers and exorcists. The chanter and cleansers proceeded as at the parent festival. When they returned the women resumed their dance, continuing it during the night.

At sunrise on the following day the presiding priest prayed as he faced the east. Then he gave some of the drink that had been boiling all night in the caldron to each of the seven Counsellors; after tasting it each Counsellor passed it to one of his own clan, who in turn passed it to others, till all were served. The musician and cleansers performed their duties as on the previous evening. The people fasted till sunset; "at the approach of which, the ceremonies of divination were practiced, with the buck, doe, and fawn skin, which are

enumerated in our description of the manner of employing them in the modified form of the Ah-tawh-hung-nah, with the addition that every individual went up to the Oolee-stool-eeh, or presiding priest, one by one, with a white bead each; and, wetting it with spittle, placed it on a skin; the men on the buckskin, the women on the doeskin, the children on that of the fawn. The Oolee-stool-eeh retained these that he might, in the event of anyone being taken sick, determine the result of the bead representing the sufferer."¹

The meat brought in by the hunters was now ready to serve. Tables were arranged in the sacred square on which it was placed, but it was not eaten until after the evening sacrifice. During the sacrifice the people withdrew from the town council house leaving the officials to watch the omens of the burnt offering.

Facing the west, the presiding priest placed the deer's tongue on the fire, sprinkled it with powdered tobacco, and prayed that he might know if the unwelcome pestilence would be arrested. It was necessary that this prayer and sacrifice be witnessed by the setting sun. "If sickness was to prevail, the smoke would gather in a bluish cloud and rest over the flame; if not, the flame would rise straight upward to the sky; and, also, if the sickness were not to be averted, the Ooh-lung-sah-tah, or Divining Chrystal, would assume a bluish tint, and the whole town would appear in it. Those who were to die would be distinguished by a peculiarly dark blue; the others would look

1. Ibid., p. 156.

bright. If health were to prevail, the Chrystal would grow more and more brilliant. The speaker made known the omens to the people seated at the table in the sacred square; and on its announcement, all were directed to commence their repast at the same instant."¹

With the exception that the dance closed at midnight, the second night was observed like the first. On the second day the rites were the same as the first day, with the difference the fast continued only half the day. The ceremonies were the same on each succeeding day till the seventh which was like the first. The presiding priest, on the morning of the eighth day, took the herbs from the caldron, put them on a buckskin, folded it, and followed by the officials and people, departed, keeping the ceremonies as at the ancient Cementation Festival.

Now a second modification of the Ah-tawh-hung-nah is to be noticed. This had to do with smallpox. "Forms will be found intermingled with this ceremonial, which would seem to prove that it was not introduced until the original Ah-tawh-hung-nah, had become materially corrupted by interpolations derived not only from the Sun and Moon or similar worship, but from superstitions yet more fantastic. Among them were certain imaginations regarding the source of the deprecated disease. It was personified, and as follows:

1. Ibid., pp. 157-158.

An invisible sprite was supposed to be its causer; or, as some say, a kind of Devil, called Ko-sv-kv-a-ski-ni, always disposed to evil, but kept confined by the Beings Above, and only set loose at their will to destroy. Others represent the tormentors in the plural, and that these devils or sprites were of a quiet disposition and easily persuaded to let people alone."¹ They were either male or female. The female was the color of a ripe chestnut burr and was covered with fine prickles. Wherever she touched anyone a red pimple came which was characteristic of the disease. The color of the male was thought to be that of the ripe pokeberry. His touch, preceded by that of the other, made the blackness which came to the pustules. These sprites were supposed to sleep only a very little and what sleeping they did was about midnight. This was the only hour of escape from them. The sprites prowled in the open public places. To avoid them the people were driven to bypaths. No one was allowed to say anything against them or to show any fear of them.

When the people of a community suspected the presence of these dreaded beings, a meeting was called and seven men, one from each clan, were selected to make the necessary precautions for protection against them. These seven clansmen elected a conjurer to officiate at the ceremonies. When notified of his selection he began to gather herbs of the

1. Ibid., p. 159.

seven kinds, as in connection with the fast against fevers, previously described. On the fourth day after this time he brought the herbs to the town council house. The ceremonies began on the evening of this day. In profound silence the people assembled at the town council house. New fire was lighted. The rites observed were the same as those at the fast against fevers. The officers and the positions they occupied were the same as at the fever fast. Stillness and solemnity reigned at the house of mourning. No one was permitted to sleep that night.

"As the sun rose next morning, the conjurer prayed to it, with his face towards the east. He then distributed drink from the caldron, as at the corresponding hour of the fever fast, described already."¹ The people in general did not eat anything till midday and the officials did not take food till almost sunset. As the hours passed few of the people left the town council house; and then only to secure necessary provisions. They left at hours when the smallpox sprites were thought to be inactive. All night the people were permitted to sleep. Spring water was the only thing they were allowed to drink.

Silence prevailed at the town council house during the second day of the celebration. With minor variations² the third, fourth, and fifth days were like the second. The

1. Ibid., p. 161.

2. The herb drink was taken freely when desired. On the fourth day the consecrated drink from the caldron was observed as on the first day.

rites for the sixth day were like those of the second day and third day, with the addition hunters were sent out for game. At night what they had killed was brought in and deposited in the storehouse. The tongue was prepared for sacrifice as on other similar occasions. When the seventh day came the conjurer prayed to the rising sun. "The consecrated drink was given out as on the first and fourth day, and all fasted till near sunset; when, the meat taken on the day previous having been cooked by the women and brought forward, and a long table prepared, the people were seated by it. The prayer to the setting sun; the sacrifice of the conjurer, the seven Counsellors and the speaker, by themselves within the town council house; the watching its omens on the fire; the proclamation of them to the people at the table; and the order to eat simultaneously; all then proceeded like that portion of the rites on the first evening of the fast for fevers. It was considered indispensable that the closing prayer and sacrifice on this occasion, should be intensified by the setting sun."¹

After eating, the people withdrew. Some of the fire kindled for the occasion was preserved by men appointed for that purpose. It could not be used in cooking; it might not be employed to light a torch; no coal was dropped where it might be extinguished. The keeper was obliged to care for it during his lifetime.

1. Ibid., pp. 162-163.



Tent of Chief Sam Smith
during monthly rites at
Illinois Council Ground



Illinois Council in
Session- Gore, Okla.



A Ball-Play Player



Nighthawk Chiefs

We have now come to the forms used, in other cases of public distress, such as prolonged droughts or destruction feared from storms. It appears these ceremonies were under the direction of conjurers. While evidently drawn from the orthodox festivals they differ from them more than the fast for the fever of the smallpox.

The ceremonies proceeded as follows: When the ground became dry and parched, the people would assemble in the town council house, and appoint persons to prepare a fast, or, as others explained it, they selected the right hand man of the conjurer to take charge of the arrangements. Seven hunters were sent out to hunt during seven days. Seven men, one from each clan, and seven women, one from each clan, were enjoined to fast seven days, prior to the assembling of the people. On the evening of the seventh day the hunters returned and the people gathered together.

A man was delegated to take the deer skins furnished by the hunters, and a piece of venison for sacrifice, to the conjurer, who was presiding, with a request that he would cause it to rain. This man stayed with the conjurer during the fast.

"The conjurer spread the deer skin on the ground, with the flesh side up. Sprinkling tobacco dust on the fire and praying, he sacrificed the meat. He then took a string of beads long enough to reach round a person's neck, and with seven swans' feathers attached; and he then carried it to

the creek. Placing a stone, the upper side of which was smooth, in the water's edge, so as to bring the smooth side even with the water's surface, he laid upon it the beads and swan's feather. He then prayed to the Creator, meaning the Moon, termed by him husband of the Sun, and afterwards prayed to the Sun. He next again prayed to the Creator, or Moon; and implored that he, the Creator, or Moon, would take those beads which were on the stone and put them around the neck of the Sun, so as to darken her face, that clouds might come from the mountains. He then shook a terrapin shell partly filled with pebbles. He afterwards prayed to the little men at the north, meaning the little thunders, to send clouds and rain; proceeding still more earnestly, to supplicate that they would send it to the very spot on which the deerskin was spread, and where, he was sacrificing the meat and tobacco. After this, he implored the greater man in the west, the Great Thunder, to come in all his strength and majesty, and bring forth clouds that showers might be abundant. If all the foregoing appeals proved ineffectual, he called upon the woman of the east. She had given an assurance that should the other powers disregard supplications in such emergencies, she would, if sought, be sure to answer them with rain in plenty, but always without thunder."¹

When these ceremonies were finished, the conjurer

1. Ibid., pp. 165-166.

would leave the creek for awhile, and it is reported when he returned he would find the creek had risen in his absence. This was a token of rain. He found it necessary to move the beads and the feathers from the stone to protect them from the rising water.

After the rain began, if there was a threat of a torrent, the conjurer offered old tobacco as a sacrifice to the woman in the east, beseeching her to stay the flood.

The individuals who were elected to fast did not leave the town council house until the rain began. Food was given them after they fasted for seven days.

"As soon as the rain began to fall, the whole town united in a solemn dance of thanksgiving, in honor of the being, or beings, who had been supposed to send the rain; whether the Moon, the little men at the North, or the little thunders; the Greater Man at the West, or the Great Thunder; or the woman in the East, to whom, (as protests an old man now living among the Cherokee) no appeal for rain was ever known to fail."¹

Woman of the East.

There is uncertainty as to the identity of this Woman of the East. The Cherokee traditions allude to her directly and indirectly with great deference. It is possible she is the first woman, the one destroyed by her sons, whose

1. Ibid., p. 167.

story has been related previously.¹ The following fancy may have her in mind. Some of the conjurers believed that the corn once died. A spirit or seed remained upon the earth. Whenever in trouble the corn bade the spirit or seed to look up to its mother above.

In case rain was desired these conjurers prayed for clouds to be sent. First they invoked the great mountains, the plains, then the otter, and, last of all, the corn above. They supposed that this corn above would supplicate the Creator² in their behalf. Clouds would be sent out of the mountains upon the corn below.

The prayers being finished they waded waist-deep into a stream. They sang to the mountains, the plains, the otter, the corn, and the moon. While singing they would throw water into the air with their hands. Then they would dive. Coming about the surface of the water they looked up the stream, for if rain was coming soon, they would see a snake swimming towards them in the water.

The people would assemble at the town council house when the weather was too cold. Seven men were designated to collect seven large bundles of sticks: One of peach, one of mulberry, one of plum, one of blackjack, one of locust, one of grapevine, and one of whortleberry. The conjurer

1. This paper, pp. 136-137.

2. Meaning the Moon.

kindled a fire of this wood on which he threw a terrapin shell full of tobacco, as a sacrifice to the Woman in the East, asking her to send warm weather. If she fulfills the petition, as, according to tradition, she always does, a dance is held in her honor.

The conjurer prayed to the great Red man in the north to send his cold and cool the air if the weather became too warm. At the same time spanish oak and ivy leaves were sacrificed in his honor.

In the event the conjurer wanted to know if high winds were rising, he would build a fire, not unlike that prepared for sacrifice, and dust a little old tobacco over it. If the smoke scattered in every direction, the wind would be destructive; but if it went straight up, there was nothing to fear.

"When the conjurer saw a storm gathering which threatened to blow down trees and hurt the corn, he would light his pipe, and going out into the open air, puff the tobacco smoke towards the cloud, praying the fire and smoke to turn away the storm."¹

Ookah Dance.

It seems the Septennial Festival, or Ookah Dance, was not modified. When they failed to keep it, it was disused

1. Payne MSS., pp. 169-170.

altogether. This was a long time ago.¹

1. Ibid., pp. 150-170. This section covers the modifications of the occasional festivals and ceremonies.

Chapter Ten

Present Day Keetoowah Ceremonies.

Chapter Ten

Present Day Keetoowah Ceremonies.

Most of the primitive rites and practices and customs of the Cherokees, with the passing of time, have been forgotten; however, among the members of this tribe now living in North-east Oklahoma is the Keetoowah organization, a religious and patriotic institution, composed mainly of full-blood Indians, and the members of this body endeavor to preserve the religion and virtues of their fathers and to conduct their ceremonies in keeping with their ancient traditions. The Keetoowahs have been out of sympathy with the general policies of the predominating mixed bloods and have ineffectively opposed the plans of the Federal Government to abolish their tribal institutions and allot tribal lands in severalty in preparation for Oklahoma statehood. At the time of the Civil War they were arrayed on the side of the Union. Their loyalty to this cause is to them a proud heritage. They are often described as the Nighthawk Keetoowahs.

The main meeting place, or the chief fire, of the Keetoowahs is known as the Illinois Council Ground, about six miles from Gore, Oklahoma. It is located on the east side of the Illinois river, remote from white settlements and convenient to the Indians who compose the group. It is a region of wooded hills and rugged valleys. Besides the principal meeting place there are four district

fires.¹ They are as follows: Sugar Mountain, not far from Wauhilla; Sequoyah, near Marble City; Goingsnake or Long Valley, near Chewey; and Salina, in the vicinity of Spring Creek. Meetings are held at each of these five fires on the first Saturday in each month from March to November. A Memorial Service is held July 19th of each year for Sequoyah, for the Keetoowah, or "Keetoowah Day" and Chief Red Bird Smith.² The annual religious and business meeting, of three days duration, when representatives of all the fires gather together, is held on the Illinois Council Ground on the second Monday of September.³ These meetings are orderly. The business and ceremonies are carried on with little or no confusion. Gambling is not allowed on the Council Ground. The presence of intoxicating drinks is forbidden.

According to the Keetoowah constitution, which has only recently been translated from the Cherokee into English,⁴ the first meeting was held at the Illinois Council Ground on April 28th, 1859.⁵ At that time plans were made concerning their annual meeting, and certain rules and regulations were

1. Eli Punkin, chief of the Goingsnake fire, told me July 19, 1931, when I attended a celebration there, that he believed in a short time there would be only one fire. Formerly there were twenty-two fires in the various parts of the Cherokee Nation.

2. Smith reorganized the Keetoowahs in 1914.

3. Attended in 1930-1931.

4. This was done at the suggestion of Miss Eula E. Fullerton, Associate Professor of History, Northeastern State Teachers College, Tahlequah, Oklahoma. The Cherokee constitution is in the museum of the said school.

5. The present leaders claim there was a much older organization back in the Eastern country.

formulated which are observed in their meetings today. For some reason, perhaps on account of the Civil War, or due to contacts with white civilization, the meetings were discontinued, and were not renewed until September, 1887. At this time seven clan sheds, or seats, were erected around the altar on which the fire burned. Chiefs were elected and a few meetings were conducted. Then there was another break, the reason for which is unknown, and in August, 1914, a Keetoowah meeting was held for seven days. Feasting was observed, and "after all night sitting of the seven clans around the fire the chief looked around to see how Keetoowah can get through living here, when he discovered conditions being so bad there was no place for Keetoowah to go. He produced a white pipe; they decided to worship God through their fire united under the seven laws; so it is evident that the Keetoowahs from the olden times have practiced this as it exists now. So we declare under the way our grandfathers had lived in the East peaceably, large families, when they went to the mountain of seven persons under seven clans fasting and praying all night. They prayed to God to give them revelation of the future destination of the Red people: On the seventh morn revelation came and were told there shall be Keetoowahs; no person shall take away from us, for God has spoken to us; God has made laws and had made Keetoowah at the head and we shall worship according to never surrender march-

ing on united wherever there is an Indian government."¹

The affairs of the Keetoowahs are governed by a set of officers, including a council consisting of a representative from each of the seven clans, medicine men from each clan, men to care for the fire, captains who have to do with the ceremonies, and a chief in charge of the meeting place. Each district fire has similar officers. At the present, Sam Smith, eldest son of Red Bird Smith, is the principal chief of all the fires. John Smith, another son of Red Bird Smith, is the interpreter and vice chief. Lincoln Towy, living near Tahlequah, Oklahoma, is the principal medicine man. The Keetoowah council attends to the general business of the organization.²

The members of the Keetoowah assembly may not be members of any other religious body, and similarly, no member of any other religious group may become a Keetoowah without first giving up his membership in the other organization. The constitution states: "If a member of Keetoowah shall join another society, the captain shall call upon him in a friendly way and ask him if he has done so, the Keetoowah society,

1. This quotation is taken from the Keetoowah constitution. The English is far from smooth. Those who translated the constitution from the Cherokee found it impossible to express the ideas adequately in English. At some later time a better translation may be made. To date we have only the one translation. Very few Indians, and most likely no white people, are capable of translating it.

2. Officers of Keetoowah: 1. Chief and Asst. Chief; 2. Seven Medicine men, one from each clan; 3. Seven council men, one from each clan; 4. Treas. of society; 5. Captains, to be designated in number by the Chiefs; 6. Three fire keepers; 7. Secretary.

for humanity's sake, shall endeavor to elevate him back and if he refuses, the chief shall call upon the council, and they in turn shall notify the secretary with a written notice to erase his name, and the secretary shall make out a written notice notifying the person that his name has been erased." The constitution forbids the members to join the political parties of the United States, but at the same time urges every member to exercise the right to suffrage as he thinks beneficial, "But it shall be understood that we shall not pass any laws or act in any way against the Constitution of the United States."¹

Anyone seeking membership in the Keetoowah organization must file notice or application of the same with the chief, who shall in turn present the name to the medicine men, and they shall consider the name around their clan fires. The election of a new member must be unanimous, however this is not final, because provision is made for the chief to consider all rejected applications and if he sees fit to refer them back to the medicine men, if, after thoughtful deliberation, he concludes an injustice had been done.

Reception of members into the Keetoowah body is somewhat formal. The applicant approaches the altar on which a fire is burning. In fact, the Indians refer to the fire rather than the altar. The officials take their respective positions about the fires. The principal chief is on the east, and

1. These two quotations from the Keetoowah constitution do not make good English all the time, but the intended meaning is discernible.

second chief is on the west, and the fire keepers are at the north and south. The members are on either side just back of the chiefs. The person to be initiated is first brought to the second chief, who accepts him, then he is taken to the keepers of the fire, and at last to the principal chief, who instructs him in the religion he is embracing. After this he is led seven times around the fire and is directed to his clan seat. The various members pass by and shake hands with the new member and thus welcome him to participation in the joys and benefits of their religion. The wife and the children of the new member are enrolled along with him. Only the Cherokee Indians are eligible, and only those who speak the Cherokee language may become officers. At the present time the organization has a membership numbering about one thousand.¹

The meaning of the word Keetoowah is said to be "the word of the Great Spirit." It assumes that all men are equal, and they assemble as equals, that no one group should arrogate authority over any other group, and that they should live in peace and harmony together. All of the prayers are made in the Cherokee language. The business is conducted in this language. The official interpreter may tell in English what has taken place or he may explain cer-

1. John Smith, already mentioned, gave me this information, in 1930.

tain things about the ceremonies that are conducted. Visitors are allowed to witness the rites provided they do not in any way interfere with the proceedings. The ceremonies are conducted in a serious and impressive manner.

The ceremonial ground at the Illinois district fire is a circle about one hundred and twenty-five feet in diameter, almost perfectly level, having been smoothed by the tramping and dancing of numerous feet for many, many years. The center of attraction is the altar of fire. The altar is made of the accumulated ashes of unnumbered fires during the past seventy years. It is circular in shape, is about ten feet across and two feet high. During the early part of the morning the fire keepers¹ build a fire on the altar by rubbing together two flint rocks and making the sparks ignite some punk. The fire is in the center of the altar where it is replenished from time to time with more wood. It is not permitted to go out any time during the meeting. Across the top of the altar are four pieces of wood, in fact, segments of logs, some three or four feet in length and one foot in diameter, extending from the fire to each of the four points of the compass, symbolizing equality of law to all men in all directions. Seven uninclosed sheds or houses² are spaced

1. Each town has three fire keepers. One is called the head chief, distinguished by the eagle feather worn in his hat. There are two assistants or guards. The chief fire keeper at Illinois town is Jess Locust. John Noisy and Paul Starr are his assistants.

2. At Long Valley fire clans' seats, without sheds, are provided.

evenly around the circle and facing the altar. They provide seats for the representatives of the seven clans who on certain occasions occupy them with punctilious regard for the seating arrangements prescribed.

The four oak logs, or as they are called, "The Four Sticks", constitute the great emblem of society. They represent the law of the Keetoowahs. Those who are not members, hearing this for the first time do not understand what it all means. So the chief explains: "The sticks point in all directions, to all corners of the world, as a symbol that all people are under the law. No exceptions are made to this general principle. They mean that the law should apply alike to all persons, regardless of what or where or who they are." Thus a single standard of law is advocated for all individuals irrespective of position or power.

The clan sheds or lodges, situated around the fire, are used by the different clans of the tribe in some of their ceremonies. They are much less used today than formerly due to the fact clan distinctions and divisions are gradually disappearing. In offering a sacrifice of tobacco I have seen the clansmen sit in their respective lodges. At the Chewey council fire they have no sheds, but plain seats, made of split logs, but arranged in the order of the lodges, and serving the same purpose.

Now I want to describe the main ceremony of the present day Keetoowahs. It is held in the form of a Memorial Rite

for Sequoyah, the late Chief Red Bird Smith, and the Keetoo-wah organization. It is an annual affair, observed on the anniversary of the birth of Chief Red Bird Smith, July 19th. The fire is started and the altar arranged as previously delineated. Just about the noon hour, when the sun was directly overhead, the town chief, Stoke Smith, went to the altar, faced the east, called those present to order, stating a sacrifice was about to be offered. Chief Sam Smith, standing at the altar, facing the east, delivered a speech of several minutes, in which he explained the proceedings immediately to follow. Among other things he said: "Burnt offering is an old custom. It has meaning. It asks the Great Spirit to guide the young generation into the ways of peace." When he finished, the shaggy fire chief, Jess Locust, appeared with a white chicken, which he had killed just outside of the council grounds by putting a sharp stick into its mouth and pushing the stick through the chicken's head. The head was folded under one wing as if it were asleep. The chief fire keeper selects the object to be sacrificed. It is customary now to use a white chicken, although something else might be used with equal propriety. Jess Locust stood on the west side of the altar and faced the east. He offered an invocation in Cherokee. The waiting crowd looked on in silence. They stood bareheaded and in devout attention. Locust then stepped upon the mound near the fire, and solemnly deposited the little sacrifice in the middle of the fire, covered it with burning

coals and wood, and stepped down as the odor of the burning feathers carried across the grounds. The ceremony was conducted with much reverence and devotion. One was inclined to think there was palliation in this method of appeal to the Great Spirit.

While the ceremony was going on four men stood around the fire, Chief John Smith in the east, Chief fire keeper Jess Locust in the west, and two others who acted as assistant fire keepers, Bunch Smith and John Noisy stood at the north and south respectively. Each one had something to say. The Chiefs were the first to speak. By prayer they consecrated the sacrifice to the Great Spirit. All four of the men prayed in Cherokee to the Great Spirit beseeching him to bless their people, especially their women and children, to give them provisions, to favor them with health, and to grant them happiness which means to make them a righteous people. Reference was made in their prayers concerning the weather, its dryness and intense heat, the burning up of crops, and they prayed for rain.¹ They attributed the dry weather to something wrong in the way they were living, and they asked for light as to right living so that the drought would stop. They petitioned for leadership to enable them to live in friendship with their neighbors and to hold in high esteem other people. They prayed that the white chicken might be

¹. This was July 19, 1930, in the midst of a prolonged drought.

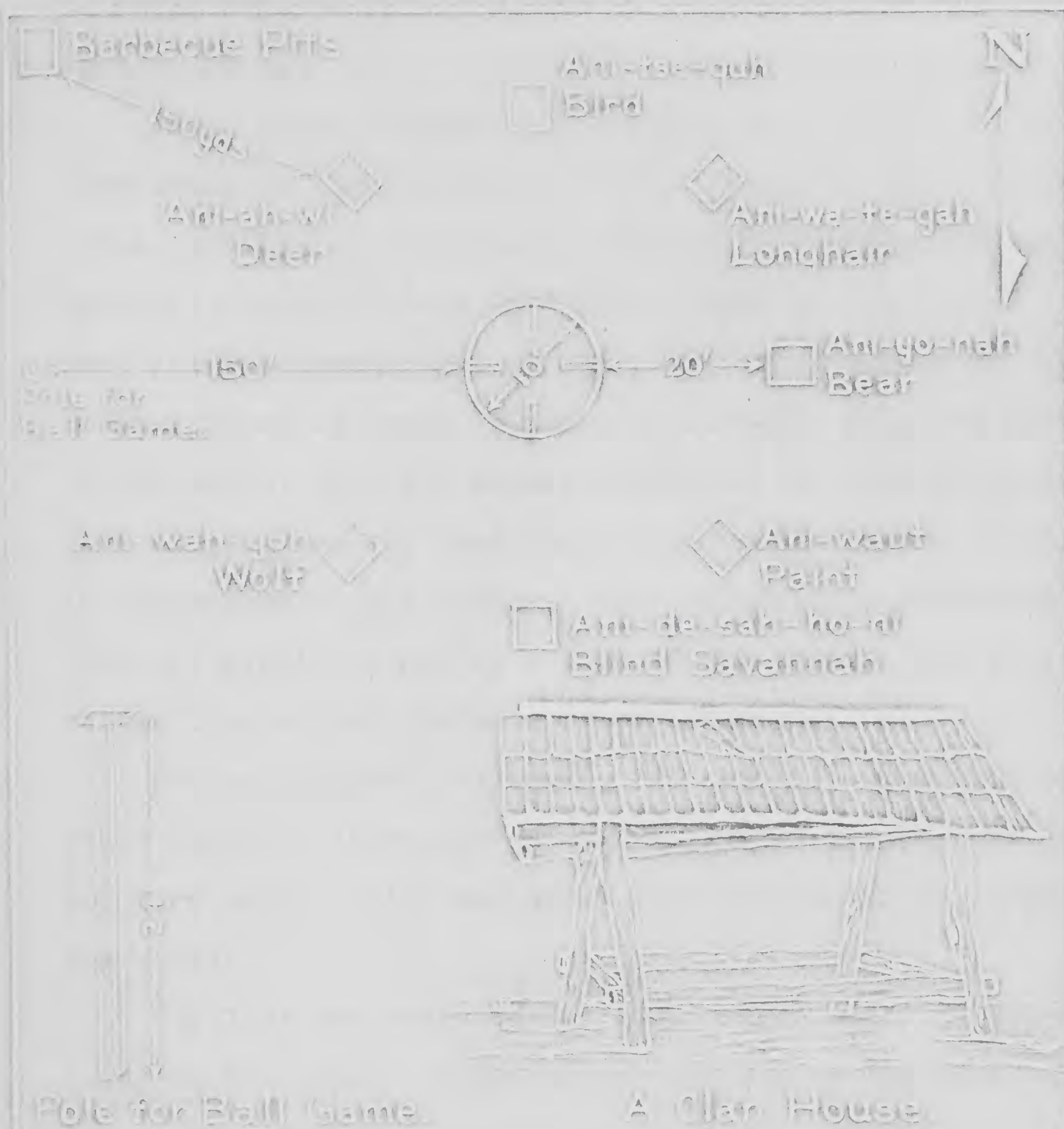
accepted as a pleasing sacrifice to the Great Spirit and bring the needed blessings, some of them temporal, some of them spiritual. Similar sacrifices were made at the other town fires.

The burning of the white chicken on the sacred fire was followed by a sacrifice or offering in the form of tobacco. This ceremony differed from the previous one in that each member took part including men, women, and children. The tobacco used had been "treated" by the medicine men. Just what this includes is a secret of the shamans. It is one of the things they do not see fit to explain. Even the identity of the medicine men is not openly made. They prefer a life of meditation and quietness. Each of the seven clans has a medicine man at each of the town fires. The principal function of the medicine man is that of religious adviser, however, at times, they perform a ministry of healing diseases. At the Illinois Council ground the chief of the medicine men is Lincoln Towy. The master of the tobacco ceremony was Tom Smith, a shaman. He had the tobacco in a small pouch or bag fastened about his waist, looking not unlike the apron of the carpenter. Smith took his position at the altar, facing the east. Then the clans in the following order, Wolf clan, Bear clan, Long Hair clan, Red Paint clan, Bird clan, Deer clan, and Awi-go-da-ga-wee clan, formed a line, passed by the medicine man, received some of the tobacco, cast it on the burning altar, and marched in a circle around the fire until all had taken part. The tobacco was offered to the Great Spirit to please him and to

bring personal help and favor to each Keetoowah.

When this ceremony was finished four speakers, three of them using the Cherokee language, the other using the English tongue, told about the origin and history of Keetoowah, traced the great achievement of the famous Sequoyah, and outlined the activities of Chief Red Bird Smith, and they made references to all dead friends who formerly belonged to this town fire. John Smith, the official interpreter, speaking in English, said in part, his words being paraphrased: "The Cherokees have seven clans. They have, or did have, in their ancient faith, seven gods, each of which had his own dwelling place. These several dwelling abodes were blessed with beauty and peace. Six of these gods had limited authority. They thought of one of them as being over all the others, he was more powerful than the others, and was called the Great Spirit. The others were smaller spirits. These were not so much rivals of the Great Spirit as they were his helpers. No definite date can be given as to the origin of Keetoowah. It came about in this fashion: The coming of white men among the Indians resulted in a loss of interest in their tribal faith. The leadership and influence of the medicine men began to wane. In his own mind the chief medicine man reached the conviction something had to be done. They could not go on in the same careless way. He was an old man, one who had lived much, and one who had received many visions. He decided to go to a high mountain to meditate and to wait for a vision from the

Great Spirit. With faltering steps he slowly made his way up the rising ground, being almost exhausted when he arrived at the summit. He was there alone waiting and listening. He was there fasting and praying. Far in the night he heard a noise in the distance, the noise of some one moving slowly and softly through the woods in his direction. The noise was more and more distinct. The steps came nearer. What he heard was another medicine man, who being profoundly concerned about the religious welfare of his people, was seeking supernatural light. It was not long before other steps were heard. Another of the medicine men came on a mission similar to the ones already there. Finally all seven of the medicine men were on the mountain to meditate and fast and pray and wait for a vision. Each one had come not knowing any one else would be there. Each one was seeking light. They stayed on the mountain for seven days and nights expecting a vision from the Great Spirit. On the seventh day the Great Spirit appeared to them, saying, 'You shall be Keetoowah', that is, you are to be the truth of the Great Spirit or the word of the Great Spirit, and you here receive the ancient faith of your fathers, and you are to preserve it and teach it to others. They believed the Great Spirit brought them together, that the truth or word which they had received, had been disclosed to them for a purpose. What they received was Keetoowah. The members of this organization propose to keep alive the old beliefs and customs of the Cherokee tribe,



A DIAGRAM OF THE
ILLINOIS COUNCIL GROUND
NEAR GORE, OKLAHOMA

to study Sequoyah's labors and to perpetuate his memory." This speech, as well as the others, was extemporaneously delivered.¹

About three o'clock in the afternoon a feast was served consisting of barbecued beef, barbecued pork, wheat bread, bean bread, hominy, and kemutche, a vegetable delicacy of the Indians. Visitors were invited to share the meal with them. They are hospitable as a people. Before eating, each Indian takes a piece of bread or meat, or formerly did, and throws it to the earth, that is, mother-earth, as one from whom comes all life and the one who sustains all life. The earth is regarded as the mother of all things. This offering is presented as a token of gratitude and as a sign of the rightful and proper recognition of the goodness of mother-earth.

Having finished the feast, most of the Keetoowahs deserted their white visitors and made a pilgrimage to the grave of Chief Red Bird Smith, which was about half a mile distance through the woods.

The last two hours before sunset were spent in a game known as ball-play. Both men and women play the game. The women play against the men. On the Cherokee reservation in North Carolina one town will play against another town, or one clan may contest another clan. They use a ball about the size

1. In a private conversation Smith told me the Indians believed in an evil spirit, limited in power, rather human in form, whose business it is to molest and irritate bad Indians with the discomforts of misfortune. The Keetoowahs had to do with putting a statue of Sequoyah in the Statuary Hall of Congress, Washington, D. C.

of a baseball but not so hard. The interior is made of wrapped corn or rags and is covered with a tough hide. The men use ball sticks, one in each hand, and with these they catch and throw the ball. The women use their hands to catch and throw the ball. Sometimes the men win and sometimes the women win. This involves a display of skill and an outlay of much energy. An official is appointed to referee the game. Something like forty or fifty feet from the altar a pole is erected probably thirty feet high. Upon the top of this pole is a fish, carved of wood, representing the buffalo fish, supposed to be king of fishes, or the King fish. The game is played around this pole. A line is drawn from the fire, or altar, to the pole. On one side the score of the women is kept and on the other side the score of the men is kept. When a score is made a mark is drawn with a sharp stick on the ground touching the line just mentioned. These marks are made a certain distance apart. After the marks reach from the pole to the fire, then each mark is crossed as other scores are made. The team whose scores reach the fire and back to the pole first wins the game. It counts seven points to hit the buffalo fish with the ball. To hit the pole above a certain point counts one point. This game is played for the pleasure of the Great Spirit as well as for the enjoyment of the players themselves. The game in some form is widely played among Indian tribes. In some of the Cherokee towns a carved ball is fastened on the top of the pole instead of a carved buffalo fish. The players show a fine brand of sports-

manship as they vie with each other for supremacy.

The evening and night were devoted to dancing. With the coming of darkness the fire was built up to make a cheerful light and the dancers gathered for the beginning of the fun. A leader was appointed who directed the first dance. He carried a kind of rattler in one of his hands and with this he made music or what might better be called rhythm. Some of the women wore shells on their legs, fastened below their knees. These shells, or rattlers as they are frequently called, are made of tortoise shells with little stones or shot inclosed. They furnish rhythm rather than music. The dancers also use a tom-tom, a sort of drum. The dancers follow the leader around the fire. They dance and sing as they go. The leader seemed to be talking to the fire at times. I made inquiry concerning what he was saying but could not learn much about it. I was told some of the expressions were from the Creek language and did not mean anything so far as the Cherokees are concerned. Then some of the expressions are in Cherokee, but are so old the meaning of them has been lost. Regardless of what they mean the dancers face the fire, emblematic of the endless light of the Great Spirit, and give it their attention. They leave the impression that their fathers might have been fire worshippers. The number of dancers increased as the hours went by until hundreds of voices, men, women, and children, rent the night air. As the happy dancers circled around the fire and gazed into the roaring flames they were lifted into an ecstasy of emotion.

No sound but the chanting of music and the tramping of feet broke the silence of the night until the leader threw up his hands and gave a sharp cry as a signal at which all movement stopped. But soon the dancing would be going again with a new leader. The dancing often continues all night. Sam Smith told me the dancing was not entertainment but a form of worship given to the Great Spirit. To the observer who does not understand the proceedings do not appear to be religious. With the Keetoowahs it is a religious ceremony. This dance is generally denominated the stomp dance.

When troops were called during the World War,¹ Red Bird Smith, chief of the Keetoowahs, called his people together and advised them to go back to their fires, pray to the Great Spirit, fast one day and night and dance all night and sing.² He counseled all eligible braves to serve in the war. He told those who could not go to the battlefields to pray for the success and safe return of those who went away. The medicine men were asked to prepare medicines for the soldiers to take with them so that the bullets would not harm them. The medicine men and the town chiefs did as they were told and held regular meetings monthly, at which burnt offerings were made to invoke the guardianship of the Great Spirit. When the war was over all the Keetoowah braves returned home

1. See page 158, this paper.

2. In their ceremonies the Keetoowahs sing only in connection with their dancing. The other rites are carried on without the aid of music.

safely.' Six sons of Chief Red Bird Smith served in the World War.

"Should you ask me, whence these stories,
Whence these legends and traditions,
With the odours of the feasts,
With the dew and damp of meadows,
With the curling smoke of wigwams,
With the rushing of great rivers,
With their frequent repetitions,
With their wild reverberations,
As of thunder in the mountains?

I should answer, I should tell you,
In the bird's-nest of the forest,
In the lodges of the beaver,
In the hoof-prints of the bison,
In the eyry of the eagle."¹

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