

THE CHEROKEES:

The General Council of the Cherokee Nation assembled recently at Chattooga, instead of the usual place of meeting, New Echota. This arrangement was made for "the following reasons in part," as stated by John Ross, the Principal Chief, in the annexed paragraphs, which we copy from his *Message to the said General Council*, viz:

"1. Because it is clearly demonstrated that the cruel treatment which our citizens have experienced from persons acting under the usurped authority of Georgia has originated from the extraordinary course of policy which the present administration of the General Government has adopted and exercised towards us—

"2. Because the proper authorities of this nation are menaced by Georgia with an ignominious punishment in the event of their meeting in General Council at New Echota—

"3. It was apprehended that an attempt on the part of the Georgia troops to arrest the members of the General Council, at the point of the bayonet, amidst so great a concourse of our citizens as would in all probability have attended at that place, such a scene would have occurred as ought ever to be deprecated; and it being the ardent desire of this nation that the peace and friendship which has so happily existed with the United States, almost half a century, should be forever continued inviolate, you have therefore considered it more prudent to avoid a conflict with the Georgia troops on this occasion;—and let it be distinctly understood that for ~~the~~ other reasons only have been induced, at this time, to meet you in General Council at Chattooga, instead of New Echota?"

The Message complains, that after the President of the United States had promised the Cherokees protection of their soil, and had stationed troops within their territorial limits for the purpose, as was supposed, of removing and excluding intruders, these troops were employed in preventing the Cherokees from working gold mines, belonging to their nation, and were at length withdrawn from the Indian territory. It denounces the application of the laws of Georgia to the Cherokees as repugnant to the treaties and laws of the United States, and as attempted "for the express object of perplexing and distressing them by intolerable oppression, that they may be forced to surrender their lands for her benefit." We subjoin another extract from the Message as a specimen of the style and topics of complaint.

"Georgia has surveyed our country into districts—she has placed numerous intruders upon our soil, and in time of profound peace has levied troops, and still continues to keep them in service. These troops without civil precepts have arrested our citizens at the point of the bayonet, marched them over the country with chains around their necks, and without trials have imprisoned them in a jail at their military station! Missionaries of the Cross, who, under the approbation of the authorities of the General Government were sent hither by the benevolence of religious associations, to instruct the Cherokees in the precepts of the Gospel and the arts of civilization, and who have met a welcome reception in this nation, and were successfully prosecuting the objects of their laudable and peaceful mission, have also been cruelly torn from their families and ministerial charge, and similarly treated! Two of these worthy and inoffensive men, who had been delivered over to the civil authority of Georgia, under the charge merely of residing in this Nation, and refusing to comply with a law of that state which goes to infringe upon the rights and liberties guaranteed to every free citizen under the constitution of the United States, have been sentenced by Judge Clayton to the penitentiary of Georgia, there to endure hard labor for the term of four years."

Reference is next made by the "Principal Chief" to the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States on the application in behalf of the Cherokees for an injunction against Georgia, and it is stated—"there can be no doubt that a majority of the judges of the Supreme Court hold the law of Georgia extending jurisdiction within our limits to be unconstitutional." The decision of Judge Clayton, in the Supreme Court of Georgia, in favor of the right of the Cherokees to dig for gold within their territory, and the opposition of Gov. Gilmer to the practical operation of that decision, are next spoken of.—Then, the mode of paying the annuity from the United States government to the Cherokees, by distributing it among individuals, instead of placing it in the hand of the public treasurer, and the employment of agents to persuade them to remove individually or in small companies, are warmly denounced. It is insisted that no evil can result to Georgia or the United States, from the continuance of the Cherokees, as a separate and independent nation, within the territorial limits of the state of Georgia. On this topic the Message says—

"A weak defenceless community as we are, forming an alliance with, and placed under the protection of, and residing in the heart of so powerful a Nation as the United States, and having surrendered a portion of our sovereignty as a security for our protection, and our intercourse being confined exclusively with our protector, must necessarily pro-

duce that identity of interest and bond of friendship so natural to the ties of such an alliance. Something has also been said on the score of the public defence. It is true our population at present is small, but it is increasing as rapidly as could be expected. And have not the Cherokees at all times been ready to meet the common foe of the United States? Did they not sufficiently prove to the world their disposition on this subject during the last war? Did they not meet and fight the enemy as became warriors? Let the gallant commander, who now administers the affairs of the United States Government, answer. Situated, therefore, as we are, under the fostering care and protection of a magnanimous Government, there is every reason to cherish the hope that, under the auspices of a kind and generous administration, time would soon put to shame and lull to silence all the sophistry and unnatural clamour so boisterously paraded against our peaceful continuance upon the land of our fathers. By suitable encouragement and proper culture, the arts and sciences would soon flourish in every section of our nation, and the happy period be hastened when an incorporation into the great family of the American Republic would be greeted by every patriot, and posterity hail the event with grateful rejoicings. May such ever be the views and the prospects to guide us in our efforts to secure for our posterity the incalculable advantages and enjoyments, rights, and liberties, guaranteed by treaties in our present location. On the other hand, by a removal West of the Mississippi, under the policy of the present administration of the General Government, to a barren and inhospitable region, we can flatter ourselves with no other prospect than the degradation, dispersion, and ultimate extinction of our race."

The Message concludes with a reference to the necessity of making "arrangements for raising a fund to meet the exigencies of the Government"—to the importance of "providing for the determination of questions of controversy between citizens"—to the value and utility of the public press—to the expediency "of appointing a delegation to represent the nation before the government of the United States during the approaching session of Congress"—and to the condition of the crops of this year and the last.