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THE CATAWBA INDIANS

OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

BY

H. LEWIS SCAIFE,

INSTRUCTOR OF ENGLISH, TRINITY HALL, LOUISVILLE, KY.

PHILADELPHIA :  
OFFICE OF INDIAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION,  
1305 ARCH STREET.  
1896.



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1305 ARCH STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

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## HISTORY AND CONDITION

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### INTRODUCTORY.

On the banks of the Catawba River, in York County, South Carolina, the survivors of the once powerful Catawba Nation still linger on ancestral ground. Though surrounded by influences which should be civilizing, they are no more fortunate than fellow tribes that were long ago driven to more primitive abodes. Perhaps the Catawba Indians are expected to voluntarily take advantage of opportunities within their reach, but is this not overestimating the capacity of an "inferior" people, when the Caucasian race itself must be spurred to self-improvement by compulsory education?

The Catawba Indians present a wonderful example of faithfulness and devotion to the American people, but history has never done them justice, nor has a full account of them appeared even in a newspaper or a magazine. Indeed, this people, which once made the woods of Carolina ring with the war-whoop as they went forth against the enemies of the early settlers, have been allowed to dwindle away unnoticed, until now the very fact of the existence of an Indian in South Carolina is, perhaps, not generally known, even in counties almost touching the Catawba Reservation. Recent historians of South Carolina fail to mention that descendants of the earliest known inhabitants of that State still reside within its borders, and school children are left in ignorance of this interesting fact. But the historians of America might well leave unnoticed the Catawba Indians, for, let the pen be handled ever so nicely, it would leave a blot on the pages of history. When the white man appeared, the savage glory of the Catawba Nation at once began to decline, the primeval forests were laid low, and the Indians were driven from the haunts they loved. The white man brought with him the Indian's death-warrant, and the work of extermination has now been well-nigh accomplished. Since South Carolina began to be settled

in 1682, the population of the Catawba Nation has been reduced more than 98 per cent. This tribe has bequeathed its name to the Catawba River; if they are allowed to become extinct, may the white man, at least, leave it unchanged to perpetuate a nation's memory; after the posterity of one of America's great aboriginal tribes has ceased, let the Catawba River bear the name of this ill-fated people to remind future generations of the white man that upon its banks, where factories will stand, another race, with no ambition for civilization, has fished and fought and passed away.

## HISTORY.

A recent publication of the Smithsonian Institution ("Siouan Tribes of the East," by James Mooney) asserts that the origin and meaning of the word Catawba are unknown. In 1881, the Bureau of Ethnology collected a vocabulary of 10,000 words from the tribe of Indians bearing this name, and, after critical examination by experts, their language was pronounced unmistakably of Siouan stock. The home of the Sioux family is believed to have been at one time in the upper Ohio valley, from whence one branch migrated east and the other west, and Mr. Mooney says that linguistic evidence indicates that the Eastern tribes reached the Atlantic slope long before the Western reached the plains.

The historian, Schoolcraft, in his "Indian Tribes of North America," gives the full text of a traditionary account of the Catawba Indians which he found in an old manuscript, preserved in the office of Secretary of State of South Carolina. This document claims that the Catawbas were originally a Canadian tribe that was driven from its home by the Connewango Indians and the French about the year 1650; after telling of temporary settlements of the tribe in Kentucky and Virginia, it finally brings them to the Catawba River (*Eswa Tavora*) in South Carolina, where they engage in a fierce battle with the Cherokees, each side losing about 1000 men. After the battle peace is declared, the Catawbas agreeing to settle on the northeast side of the river, while the Cherokees were to confine themselves to territory west of Broad River (called by the Indians *Eswa Huppeday*, or line river), the intervening country being neutral ground. Nation Ford, one mile north of the present reservation, is named as the scene of hostilities, and it is claimed that

the Indians heaped up a great pile of stones on the spot to commemorate the battle. However, Mr. Mooney, in his "Siouan Tribes of the East," discredits many of the details of this official paper, and he shows that the Catawbas, instead of being driven out of Canada in 1650, were found established near their present locality by Juan Pardo, a Spanish captain, who made an expedition into the interior of South Carolina from St. Helena in 1567; he also points out the probability of their having been the Gauchule mentioned by De Soto's chroniclers.

At any rate, when South Carolina first began to be settled, the Catawba Nation was one of the most powerful and warlike tribes in the South. By right of savage manhood they controlled large territories in the two Carolinas, and in their strength they could successfully hold their ground against such formidable invaders as the Iroquois; while from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico "women trembled at the name of *Hodenosanne*" and the bravest warriors dreaded this foe, the Catawbas were not afraid to make expeditions even into the Iroquois country. Lawson, who visited the tribe in 1701, speaks of them as a powerful nation, and he tells us that their villages were very thick; Adair states that one of their cleared fields extended seven miles, and a later writer says that at this time the tribe perhaps numbered 10,000 souls.

The customs and religious rites of the Catawbas were mostly like those of other Indians. Some of both of these, however, seem to have been more or less peculiar to themselves. Schoolcraft mentions that a branch of this tribe, which at one time lived near the mouth of Santee River, had a practice of binding the heads of their children so as to make their foreheads flat and their eyes protrude, which they claimed made them better hunters. It might be mentioned here, incidentally, that no trace of this practice or any of its hereditary effects can be found among them now. To darken their skin, they oiled their bodies and then exposed them to the sun. Like other tribes, the Catawbas practised the habit of plucking the beard. They used a comb set with rattlesnake teeth to scrape the affected part before applying medicine in cases of lameness, and scratching the shoulder of a stranger at parting was regarded by them as a very great compliment.

From the earliest times the Catawbas have been kindly disposed toward the white settler. They fought for him in the French and Indian War; they helped him to secure his inde-

pendence from Great Britain ; and more than once they marched under the Colonial flag against their own race. It is true that during the Yamasi War the Spaniards incited them to join the other Indian forces to crush the English settlers ; but from this single instance of hostility the Colonists must have suffered little at their hands, for no deeds of violence attributed directly to them are recorded. The Catawbias made ample reparation for their conduct on this occasion, and it was the first and last time that they ever revolted against the Carolinians.

In 1711, Colonel Barnwell, of South Carolina, was sent with a small force against the Tuscarora Indians who had broken up the settlement of New Bern which had been made in North Carolina a few years before by Baron de Graffenried. More than one hundred Catawba warriors accompanied Colonel Barnwell, and in prosecuting the expedition several of them were killed.

At the beginning of the French and Indian War, Governor Dinwiddie, of Virginia, appealed to the Catawba Nation for aid. The Catawbias promptly agreed to join the Colonial forces, but they were restrained from doing so by Governor Glenn, of South Carolina, who, having at heart their future welfare, reminded them that peace was their policy, as their ranks had already been thinned by war and that terrible scourge, small-pox, which was brought to America at an early date by the whites.

Soon, however, General Washington, then colonel in the British army, discovered that the French were attempting to alienate the affections of the Southern Indians, and he made repeated efforts to bring the Catawbias into his service. Washington complained to Governor Dinwiddie of "the magistrates in the back parts of Carolina, who were so regardless of the common cause as to allow 50 Catawbias to return, when they had proceeded near seventy miles on the march, for want of provisions and a conductor to entice them along." For this he was severely criticised by Governor Dinwiddie, who accused him of unmannerly conduct. Eventually the Catawbias went to the assistance of the Colonial army, and for an account of the services they rendered the reader is referred to General Washington's correspondence.

In one of his letters Washington stated : "Unless we have Indians to oppose Indians, we can expect but small success." In another, from Fort Loudoun, he wrote to John Robinson, Speaker of the House of Burgesses, of Virginia : "Bullen, a Catawba warrior, has been proposing a plan to Captain Gist to

bring in the Creek and Chickasaw Indians. If such a scheme could be effected by the time we march to Fort Duquesne, it would be a glorious undertaking and worthy of the man."

In 1757, when a large party of Cherokees who had been serving in the British army against the French in the West, and in the conquest of Fort Duquesne, were returning home through Virginia, some of the young warriors took possession of a number of horses belonging to the whites. The latter retaliated by killing several of the Indians who had so lately fought in their defense. This unwarranted conduct on the part of the whites incensed the whole Cherokee Nation, and to further arouse the Indians' spirit of revenge, the garrison at Fort George butchered to a man twenty Cherokee hostages when they resisted being manacled. A serious Indian war was thus precipitated.

Once more in the time of sorest need the Catawba Nation came to the rescue and offered their services to the Governor of South Carolina. The Catawbas joined the forces under Colonel James Grant, who immediately marched his army into the Cherokee country. The battle of Etchoe, which followed, is thus referred to in Simm's "History of South Carolina:"—"The auxiliary Indians of the army were brave experts, who answered the yells of the Cherokees in their own style, and met them with like stratagem; and the result was the victory of the Carolinians, after one of the fiercest battles with the red men on the records of America."

It is claimed that the first white man to permanently settle in the Catawba country was one Thomas Spratt, an Irishman, whose descendants still live in that section. When the Catawbas learned that Spratt was in the neighborhood, they went to him and asked him his business and where he was going; offering to give him their protection and all the land he wanted, they persuaded him to locate among them. It is said that on one occasion Spratt went to Charlotte, N. C., about twenty miles away, where he got on a spree and was put in jail. As soon as the Catawbas heard of his misfortune, they marched in a body to the town, broke down the doors, and carried the prisoner home in triumph. Spratt fought through the Revolution and died at an old age in 1807.

Every nation venerates the memory of some great hero, and among the Catawbas this personage is King Haiglar, their most noted chief. The Catawbas might well be proud of Haiglar, and, though a monarch of a savage tribe, his character presents

traits which must be admired by those who live in the higher conditions of life. The following story, which is no doubt true, well illustrates the character of the man :—

“Once a Frenchman, who was a great fiddler, was traveling through the country. The Indians were charmed and looked in wonder at the box from which the mysterious music came. One of them was so infatuated that he lay in ambush and murdered the poor musician to get possession of the fiddle. The news spread and the whites appealed to Spratt for protection. He went to King Haiglar and laid the case before him. The King promised that justice should be done, and blew a piercing blast on his hunting-horn. Soon the Indians began collecting from every quarter, while the King stood alert with his rifle resting in the hollow of his arm. At length the guilty Indian appeared, carrying a dead deer upon his back. Without a word of warning, King Haiglar raised his rifle and shot him through the heart. Thus was the poor musician's death avenged, and *this is the only record of a white man ever having been murdered by a Catawba.*”

Another remarkable incident in Haiglar's life is the fact that he was probably the first person to present a temperance petition in the Carolinas. The following petition to Chief Justice Henley, dated 26 May, 1756, has recently been found in the State archives of North Carolina :—

“I desire a stop may be put to the selling of strong liquors by the white people to my people, especially near the Indians. If the white people make strong drink, let them sell it to one another or drink it in their own families. This will avoid a great deal of mischief, which otherwise will happen from my people getting drunk and quarreling with the white people.”

Above all, King Haiglar was great in the affections of his people, and at his death no man could have been more sincerely mourned. The story of his assassination is thus told in Mill's “Statistics of South Carolina : ”—

“In the year 1762, seven Shawnese Indians penetrated into the province and waylaid the road from the Waxhaws towards the old Catawba town on Twelve Mile Creek. King Haiglar was then returning home from the Waxhaws, attended by a servant, and was there shot and scalped by them ; six balls penetrated his body. His servant escaped and gave notice ; but they were pursued without success.”

About the year 1764, a treaty between the Catawba Indians and the Province of South Carolina was made and signed at Augusta, Ga. This was probably the first treaty regarding their lands that the Catawbias made with the white people, and by the terms of it 144,000 acres of land on the Catawba River were confirmed to the tribe.

About the beginning of the Revolutionary War, the tribe suf-

ferred from a severe epidemic of small-pox. Probably in imitation of a treatment formerly applied by the whites, the Catawbas, as soon as attacked by the disease, exposed their bodies to a very high temperature in a kind of oven and then jumped into the river. From its virulent type and their malpractice in treating it, hundreds of them are said to have fallen victims of the plague, and for a long time the woods were offensive with their dead bodies, which became the prey of dogs, wolves, and vultures.

During the Revolution, the Catawbas rendered valuable assistance to the Colonists. A company, consisting of 100 warriors of the tribe, under the command of Colonel Thompson, took part in the defense of Fort Moultrie; and besides being in a number of other battles, they were particularly useful throughout the war as guides, scouts, and runners. When Colonel Williamson marched against the hostile Cherokees, whom British emissaries had incited to commence a series of brutal massacres upon the frontiers of Carolina, a large number of Catawba warriors joined him, and in this campaign several of them were killed. Toward the close of the war, the entire tribe, except the members who were in active service in the American army, were compelled by the British to seek refuge in Virginia, where they remained until after the battle of Guilford Court House, in which some of the tribe took part.

In 1782, deputies from the Catawba Nation appealed to Congress to secure to the tribe certain tracts of land, so that it could not be "intruded into by force, nor alienated even with their own consent." Whereupon Congress passed the following resolution:—

*Resolved*, That it be recommended to the Legislature of the State of South Carolina to take such measures for the satisfaction and security of the said tribe as the said Legislature shall, in their wisdom, think fit." (See "Laws of the Colonial and State Governments Relating to Indians and Indian Affairs," from 1633 to 1831 inclusive, published by Thompson and Homans, of Washington, D. C., in 1832. Also see Brevard's "Digest of the Laws of South Carolina," Vol I., Title 96, Indians.)

In 1791, General Washington had a conference with the Catawbas in what is now Lancaster County, S. C.; and in his diary, under date of 27th May of that year, he wrote: "At Mr. Crawford's, I was met by some of the chiefs of the Catawba Nation, who seemed under apprehension that some attempts were being made, or would be made, to deprive them of a part of the 40,000

acres which was secured to them by Treaty, and which was bounded by this Road."

During the next fifty years, several writers allude to the tribe: Finlay's "American Topography," published in 1793, states that though the Catawbas still retained their former courage, their numbers had greatly declined, and the author attributes the cause to the whites encouraging their thirst for intoxicants; Ramsay's "History of South Carolina," published in 1809, tells us that of the 28 tribes of Indians inhabiting South Carolina when it began to be settled, all except the Catawbas had disappeared, and that these were so generally addicted to habits of indolence and intoxication, they were fast sinking into insignificance; in 1826, Mill's "Statistics of South Carolina" gave a more detailed account of the tribe, and it is from this authority that the following passage is taken:—

"There are no other settlements, as villages, in the Yorkville district, except the Indian settlements on the Catawba River. These Indians have two towns; the most important is called Newtown, situated immediately on the river; the other is on the opposite side and is called Turkey Head. The Indian lands occupy an extent of country on both sides of the river equal to 180 square miles, or 115,200 acres. The most of this has been disposed of by them to the whites, in leases for ninety-nine years, renewable. The rent of each plantation (about 300 acres) is from \$10 to \$20 per annum. The annual income from this source must be at least \$5000, which, if prudently managed, would soon place the Indians in a state of comfort; for the whole number of families does not exceed 30, or about 110 individuals. These wretched Indians, though they live in the midst of an industrious people and in an improved state of society, will be Indians still. They often dun for their rent before it is due, and the \$10 or \$20 received are spent in a debauch; poverty, beggary, and misery then follow for a year. Their lands are rich, but they will not work; they receive large sums as rent, but they cannot save money. What a state of degradation is this for a whole people to be in, all the result of neglect of duty on our part as guardians of their welfare."

Some of the early Acts of the Legislature of South Carolina mention the Catawba Indians, but these mostly refer to the purchase of skins and matters of insignificance. However, in 1839, after the subject had been before the House of Representatives for twelve years, Governor Noble was authorized to appoint a Commission to enter into negotiation with the tribe to cede their lands to the State, which up to this time the Catawbas were unwilling to do.

The following extracts are taken from the Report of Commissioners, which was made at the next session of the Legislature:—

"The Catawbas have leased out every foot of land they held in their bound-



ary, the propriety and expediency of which we need not inquire. Some remonstrated against it, while others (with the Indians) contended they had a right so to do, and for the last few years they have been wandering through the country, forming kind of camps, without any homes, houses, or fixed residence, and destitute of any species of property save dogs and a few worthless horses, and they now seem desirous of having a tract of land on which they can again settle and build little houses, according to the number of families, and procure some cattle, hogs, and poultry, which they were once in the habit of owning, and your Commissioners are of opinion \$5000 would purchase a tract of land sufficient for their accommodation in any place they may wish, and in a mountainous, barren, thinly populated region might procure a considerable bounds, which might suit them best, and would recommend that their land should be secured in such a way that they should not have it in their power to again lease, sell, or parcel it out except it might become the desire of the tribe to remove to some distant place. Your Commissioners would, with due deference, state, in behalf of the Catawba Indians, that probably they are entitled to some favor from the State or, at least, to its sympathy and kindness. Their chief (General Kegg) remarked that when they were a strong nation and the State weak they came to her support, and now when the State was strong and the Catawbas weak she ought to assist them.

“One of your Commissioners stated from his own knowledge and recollection that during the Revolution they left the State, he thinks for about eighteen months, or at least removed their women and children to a place of greater safety, by which move they lost their stock and poultry and all such articles as they could not take with them, while in the meantime a number of their warriors were in active service in the American cause—several of them were in the battles of Guilford, Hanging Rock, and Eutaw; were in several scrimmages with the Tories, and were particularly useful, as guides, scouts, and runners, and never were known to be in a British or Tory camp. They have now lived in the midst of a dense population for more than half a century, and your Commissioners all concur in testimony that they never have known or heard a dishonest charge made against a Catawba or their meddling with anything that did not belong to them, and have always been harmless, peaceable, and friendly, but (as is perhaps characteristic of Indians generally) they are indolent and improvident and seem to have little idea of laying up for their future wants, and your Commissioners believe that if they would have agreed to have paid them in hand for each one to have used as he chose, they might have effected a treaty for one-third or even one-fourth the amount. From a once populous tribe they dwindled down to 12 men, 36 women, and 40 young ones,—boys, girls, and children; in all 88, nine of whom are counted with a family of Pamunkey Indians and it is believed will not be removed.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“It is not easy to ascertain with accuracy the amount of annual rents their lands have heretofore yielded. If the original survey is correct, their boundary contains 225 sections, which, at ten dollars each, would produce \$2250. Some of the lands have been leased at a much higher rate and some not so high, but the foregoing is as near the amount as we have the means of ascertaining, and their income has been rather a nominal one, having in a great many instances

been badly paid in articles at high prices, that often answered them but little purpose. It is believed that one-third the amount judiciously managed might have been made to do them more good. Your Commissioners are of opinion that there are between 500 and 600 families now living on lands under lease from the Catawba Indians, and from 600 to 800 voters, and the lands have been divided and subdivided into various small tracts, of which transactions no regular record has ever been kept; it is a matter of wonder that the lessees have not got into more difficulty and litigation."

The following treaty, which was submitted by the Commissioners, was ratified by an Act of the Legislature passed during the session of 1840:—

"TREATY.

"A treaty entered into at the Nation Ford, Catawba, between the Chiefs and Headmen of the Catawba Indians of the one part and the Commissioners appointed under a resolution of the Legislature, passed December, 1839, and acting under Commissions from his Excellency Patrick Noble, Esq., Governor of the State of South Carolina, of the other part:

"ARTICLE FIRST.—The Chiefs and Headmen of the Catawba Indians, for themselves and the entire nation, hereby agree to cede, sell, transfer, and convey to the State of South Carolina, all their right, title, and interest to their Boundary of Land lying on both sides of the Catawba River, situated in the Districts of York and Lancaster, and which are represented in a plat of survey of fifteen miles square; made by Samuel Wiley and dated the twenty-second day of February, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-four, and now on file in the Office of Secretary of State.

"ARTICLE SECOND.—The Commissioners on their part engage in behalf of the State to furnish the Catawba Indians with a tract of land of the value of \$5000.00; 300 acres of which is to be good arable lands fit for cultivation, to be purchased in Haywood County, North Carolina, or in some other mountainous or thinly populated region, where the said Indians may desire, and if no such tract can be procured to their satisfaction, they shall be entitled to receive the foregoing amount in cash from the State.

"ARTICLE THIRD.—The Commissioners further engage that the State shall pay the said Catawba Indians \$2500.00 at or immediately after the time of their removal, and \$1500.00 each year thereafter, for the space of nine years. In witness whereof the contracting parties have hereunto set their hands and affixed their seals, this thirteenth day of March, Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and forty, and in the sixty-fourth year of American Independence.

(Signed) JOHN SPRINGS [L. S.],	(Signed) JAMES KEGG, Gen. [L. S.] His X mark,
(Signed) D. HUTCHISON [L. S.],	(Signed) DAVID HARRIS, Col. [L. S.] His X mark,
(Signed) E. AVERY [L. S.],	(Signed) JOHN JOE, Major [L. S.] His X mark,
(Signed) B. L. MASSEY [L. S.],	(Signed) WM. GEORGE, Capt. [L. S.] His X mark,
(Signed) ALLEN MORROW [L. S.],	(Signed) PHILIP KEGG, Lieut. [L. S.] His X mark,
J. D. P. CURRENCE for SAM SCOTT, SAML. SCOTT, Col. [L. S.] His X mark,	
H. T. MASSEY for ALLEN HARRIS, ALLEN HARRIS, Lieut. [L. S.]	

Witness of those two signatures."

Recorded 21st December, 1843.

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE, COLUMBIA, S. C., Jan. 25, 1896.

I, D. H. Tompkins, Secretary of State, certify the foregoing to be a true copy of a treaty made with the Catawba Indians, and recorded in this office in Vol. II of Miscellaneous Records, page 234.

Witness my hand to the great seal of State.

(Signed) D. H. TOMPKINS, *Secretary of State.*

The State, instead of procuring for the tribe a reservation in "Haywood County, North Carolina, or in some other mountainous or thinly populated region," reserved for them 800 acres of the lands they had surrendered, and for a number of years has given them an annual pension of \$800.00.

Soon after the treaty was made, the Catawbas became dissatisfied, and a number of them left the State; some of them sought a home among the Cherokees in North Carolina, but finding that their old enemies had not yet forgiven them for opposing them in their wars with the whites, they soon returned.

Shortly after they had given up their lands, a full report in regard to the tribe was made to the Legislature by C. G. Memminger; this paper gives the name and age of each Catawba then on the reservation, and a copy of it is now preserved in the State House at Columbia.

Governor Noble's successors, Governors Richardson and Hammond, referred to the Catawbas in their Messages to the Legislature, and the former said: "We must find a home for this homeless people."

The following is an extract from the annual report of the Bureau of Ethnology (1883-84):—

"By the terms of an Act of Congress, approved July 29, 1848, an appropriation of \$5000.00 was made to defray the expenses of removing the Catawba Indians from Carolina to the country west of the Mississippi River, provided their assent should be obtained, and also conditioned upon success in securing a home for them among some congenial tribe in that region without cost to the Government.

"Their territorial possessions have been curtailed to a tract of some fifteen miles square on the Catawba River, on the northern border of South Carolina, and the whites of the surrounding regions were generally desirous of seeing them removed from the State.

"In pursuance, therefore, of the provision of the Act of 1848, an effort was made by the authorities of the United States to find a home for them west of the Mississippi River. Correspondence was opened with the Cherokee authorities on the subject during the summer of that year, but the Cherokees being unwilling to devote any portion of their domain to the use and occupation of any other tribe without being fully compensated therefor, the subject was dropped."

At a later period, a party of Catawbas removed to the Choctaw Nation in Indian Territory and settled near Scullyville, but they are now said to be extinct; about twelve years ago, a few of the tribe became converts to Mormon missionaries in South Carolina and went with them to Salt Lake City, Utah.

In 1894, the Smithsonian Institution published the fullest account of the Catawbas extant in the monograph, "Siouan Tribes of the East," which has already been referred to and largely used in this sketch; the author, Mr. Mooney, being of the highest authority in matters pertaining to the tribe, the following extract is taken from his works as a summary:—

"The following figures show the steady decline of the tribe from the first authentic reports to the present time. At the first settlement of South Carolina (about 1682) they numbered about 1500 warriors, equivalent perhaps to 6000 souls (Adair, 5). In 1701 they were 'a very large nation, containing many thousand people' (Lawson, 11). In 1728 they had but little more than 400 warriors, equivalent perhaps to 1600 souls (Byrd, 22). In 1738 they suffered from the small-pox, and in 1743, even after they had incorporated a number of smaller tribes, the whole body consisted of less than 400 warriors. At that time this mixed nation consisted of the remnants of more than twenty different tribes, each still retaining its own dialect. Others included with them were the Wateree, who had a separate village, the Eno, Cheraw or Sara, Chowan (?), Congaree, Notchee, Yamasi, Coosa, etc. (Adair, 6). In 1759 the small-pox again appeared among them and destroyed a great many. In 1761 they had left about 300 warriors, say 1200 total, 'brave fellows as any on the continent of America, and our firm friends' (Description of South Carolina, London, 1761). In 1775 they had little more than 100 warriors, about 400 souls; but Adair says that small-pox and intemperance had contributed more than war to their decrease (Adair, 7). They were further reduced by small-pox about the beginning of the Revolution, in consequence of which they took the advice of their white friends and invited the Cheraw still living in the settlements to move up and join them (Gregg, 4). This increased their number, and in 1780 they had 150 warriors and a total population of 490 (Mass., 1). About 1784 they had left only 60 or 70 warriors, or about 250 souls, and of these warriors it was said, 'such they are as would excite the derision and contempt of the more western savages' (Smyth, 1). In 1787 they were the only tribe in South Carolina still retaining an organization (Gregg). In 1822 they were reported to number about 450 souls (Morse, 1), which is certainly a mistake, as in 1826 a historian of the State says they had only about 30 warriors and 110 total population (Mills, 4). In 1881 Gatschet found about 85 persons on the reservation on the western bank of Catawba River, about three miles north of Catawba Junction, in York County, South Carolina, with about 35 more working on farms across the line in North Carolina, a total of about 120. Those on the reservation were much mixed with white blood, and only about two dozen retained their language. The best authority then among them on all that concerned the tribe and language was an old man

called Billy George. They received a small annual payment from the State in return for the lands they had surrendered, but were poor and miserable. For several years they have been without a chief. In 1889 there were only about 50 individuals remaining on the reservation, but of this small remnant the women still retain their old reputation as expert potters. They were under the supervision of an agent appointed by the State."

## CONDITION.

Scarcely more than one hundred years ago the hoofprints of the buffalo became scarce in South Carolina, and it would, perhaps, have been well for the Catawba Indian had he followed him to the distant West ; for the exterminating greed of the white man has almost driven him, too, from the boundless regions in which he used to roam, cruel legislation has allowed his lands to be sold and his money squandered, and, after all, he is in not much better condition morally, socially, or financially than when he was a savage in the woods, with God-given ability to live with less struggle than he has to-day. Many a red man fell at the crack of the pioneer's rifle ; the rest fled inward as though retreating before some angry waters, which slowly began to surround them and threatened to break over their heads. With no avenues of escape, the Catawbas have been driven in and corralled, not unlike the buffalo before them, and whose fate our boasted civilization may yet force them to share. The 225 square miles of land, which was confirmed to the tribe as a reservation in 1764, has been curtailed until now they are huddled together on the meagre allowance of only 800 acres ! It remains to be seen if they will be still further crowded and encroached upon until they give up in despair and pass out over the plowed fields, whose furrows the white man has nearly run to the Indian's very door. Will he, who was formerly one of the largest freeholders on the continent, be compelled to forsake his now humble home and go out in search of the proverbial six feet of earth, wherein to lay his bones ? Will he be forced to the extreme to which one of the most prominent chiefs in Indian Territory was recently driven ? When some one asked this Indian (Chief of the Wichitas), who recently committed suicide, why he wanted to die, he replied : "Too much white man ; Indian no chance ; white take Indian's land, then kill Indian—I kill myself."

After making a tour of the Indian reservations in the West a few years ago, the Hon. Theodore Roosevelt, recently Civil Service Commissioner, wrote :—

“ The one thing to be impressed upon the average Indian is that he is not being wronged now, and that he has done just as much wrong as he has received in the past, and that he ought not to look back on that at all, and that above all things he must work, just as a white man does. One of the most pernicious things that can be done is to pet too much the Indians that make good progress, and this is the thing that Eastern sentimentalists are very apt to do.”

Mr. Roosevelt probably knows as much about the true Indian character as any man in America, and this observation is, no doubt, well founded. But as far as the Catawba Indians are concerned it does not apply, and no unbiased person, after carefully examining the case, will say that the Catawbas have “ done just as much wrong as they have received in the past ; ” indeed, the Catawbas present an exception to Indian character, for, when oppressed by the whites, with whom they had made “ eternal peace,” they have quietly submitted to injustice, and though they have been literally robbed of large tracts of land, they have never even grumbled—when the Indians on the plains are troublesome, troops are sent to hunt them down and kill them—are those Indians rewarded whose conduct, in the face of outrage, has remained exemplary? The history of the Catawba Nation answers—No !

The Catawba Indians have never been “ petted ; ” they always have been and still are mistreated and neglected. As to their condition, the writer knows whereof he speaks, as he has often visited the tribe and has had ample opportunity to study their condition.

## RESERVATION.

The reservation of the Catawba Indians was at one time in the remotest backwoods of South Carolina, but within the last twenty years the signs of civilization have been rapidly creeping toward it. Since the South began to draw Northern capital a few years ago, the development of this section of Carolina has been phenomenal. The nearest town of consequence to the reservation is Rock Hill, nine miles distant. Fifteen years ago there were scarcely half a dozen farm houses in the town—today, Rock Hill is an important city with a number of cotton factories and a population of about ten thousand. However, the peaceful stillness of the forests on the reservation is yet undisturbed, and here the woodman’s axe has left the Indians a noon-day shade.

I first visited the reservation in the spring of 1893. I set out

from Rock Hill early in the morning and went on horseback that I might more easily make a tour of the grounds. The limit of the Indian land is about one mile from the principal highway through that section. Mistaking the road, it happened that I entered the reservation from the southwest corner. Here the trees and undergrowth were so thick that it was with much difficulty I made my way, until I found a path along the banks of a small stream. Following the path for half a mile or more, the woods came to an end, and here I had an excellent view of the Catawba River, about three hundred yards beyond.\* Looking up the river I saw a long strip of bottom-land of uniform width between it and the edge of a high bluff upon which I was standing—the scenery on all sides was strikingly wild and picturesque.

Turning my horse diagonally into the woods on my left, I started in search of the Indians, none of whom I had so far seen. After going about one hundred yards, I saw through the trees a small clearing—not more than fifty feet square—and in the midst of it was an old weather-boarded one-room hut, which appeared to be on the verge of falling. Going around to the door, I saw a very old Indian woman all alone and sitting on the floor with a book in her hands. The greeting I received was neither cool nor cordial, but, after hitching my horse, I entered the house. It was truly a peculiar-looking abode for a human being. It appeared more like a corn-crib, for all around the room was a kind of loft, upon which was stored apparently six or eight bushels of unshucked corn. The furniture on the lower floor consisted of a plain, dirty-looking bed, several rickety chairs, and an old-fashioned spinning-wheel. The woman proved to be the widow of Chief Harris, who had died a few years before, and the book she had was a Bible, which, however, she could not intelligently read.

It was nearly a quarter of a mile to the next house; this one consisted of two rooms, and, although simply constructed, it appeared new and comfortable. Several Indian men were lounging near the house, talking. They were dressed in seedy clothes, which had probably been bought at a bargain from some farmer in the neighborhood. Several women were in the house, one of whom was preparing dinner at an open fire-place; the others were chatting and watching a dirty little Indian baby that

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\* Catawba wine is so-called because it was first made from the wild grapes found on the banks of this stream.

was crawling on the floor. From what I saw, I presumed the dinner consisted entirely of corn-bread and fried bacon. Here I was also received in an indifferent manner, and when I left the apparently contented group, my departure seemed to interest them no more than did my arrival.

Following a well-defined path through the woods, I came to an inviting spring, and here I stopped to lunch. While there, an Indian boy and his little sister came with their buckets to get water. I could not draw them into conversation until I offered them some lunch, after which the children directed me as to where I should go next, and I ended my tour at the house of Uncle Billy George, who has the universal good-will, not only of the Indians, but of the white people in the neighboring country. Here, as at some of the other houses, I was received very kindly.

Some of the following statements, as to the condition of the tribe, are reproduced from an article published in the *Charleston News and Courier* last summer :—

I found about 80 Indians on the reservation, all told ; of this number less than a dozen were of pure Indian blood, the remainder being half-breeds or more nearly white. They do not mix blood with the negroes, for whom they entertain the strongest antipathy, and it is said that a negro cannot be induced to go on the Indians' land.

The houses on the reservation were generally small and rudely constructed ; most of the dwellings consisted of log huts, widely scattered over the long, high bluff which overlooks the river. These cabins remind one of the typical negro home in the farming regions of the South. The reservation has some good timber on it, which, however, is being used by the Indians for kindling purposes—the principal trees are pine and oak. The land is well adapted to cattle raising, but during all my visits the only stock I saw on the place was a cow and two mules. A few members of the tribe worked parts of the arable land, but little attention is paid by the Indians to the profitable corn crops which might be raised on their fine bottom-lands. It is safe to say that the condition of the Catawbias, generally, is a little below the standard of the average Southern negro.

The Catawba Indians bear an anomalous relation to the State of South Carolina ; if they are wards of the State, it has proved a bad and faithless guardian for them. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs at Washington says that they are citizens of South Carolina, but they are not taxed and they do not vote.



The Catawbas have no form of tribal government, although they elect a chief every four years ; this official is now "Bob Harris," whose term of office expires in November. It is remarkable how near these people come to being an ideal nation, in the sense that they need no laws—they are quiet and peaceable, and bloodshed on the reservation is almost a thing unheard of. The tribe is directly amenable to the laws of South Carolina, but it is a notable fact that they have never given the authorities of the State any trouble. The only recorded tragedy that has occurred among them for a hundred years took place in 1881, when one of the Indians was stabbed to death by two white men. A brother of the dead Indian, who had witnessed the killing, testified in court that the white men were the aggressors ; but the latter, after a trial which lasted for three days, were acquitted.

When the Catawbas work, which is very seldom, the chief occupation, especially of the women, is the manufacture of pottery, earthenware, and pipes. These articles are made in a primitive way, which, like the taste for making them, is probably instinctive. They make graceful pitchers, flower-jars, vases, and various kinds of toys and ornaments. Their wares generally have a soft yellowish appearance, especially their tall flower-vases, which are not too mean to be touched by the brush of an artist. Their pipes, after having been burned, are jet black ; they are of all shapes and sizes, and are usually of fantastic design, sometimes in the form of squirrels, turtles, birds, pots, shoes, and other familiar objects. To give these articles an historic interest, the clay they use is taken from the Waxhaw Swamps, where a battle during the Revolution was fought between Colonel Buford, of the American army, and Tarleton, of the British. It was in this battle that the British commander received the name of "Bloody Tarleton," for allowing the American prisoners to be butchered after they had surrendered. The Indians carry their wares to Rock Hill, where they barter them for old clothes or anything that is offered for them. In the course of a few years these souvenirs will be appreciated by collectors, for all the full-blood Catawbas will soon be dead. Had these people a competent person to dispose of these wares for them at their real value, their chosen work could be made a lucrative industry among them.

For many years the Catawba Indians retained the ancient rites and customs of the tribe, but gradually these have become adapted to their changed condition and surroundings ; the energy

formerly displayed in savage pursuits has given place to indolence. The old men say in a tone of pathos: "Our people are getting out of the old ways and the young folks take no interest in what our fathers used to do." Thus the old order has changed, until now but a few of the tribe still retain the air of the typical Indian. Some of these have never learned the English language, but when they are gone the musical tongue of the Catawbias will be stilled forever; and with this generation will, perhaps, pass away traditions and conceptions which have traveled down from tongue to ear through the centuries. The old Indians will talk of their boyhood days and of how their fathers went on the war-path against the Cherokees, but when questioned as to the mounds in the surrounding country, the reply of "Hiawatha" may be read in their faces:—

"On the grave-posts of our fathers  
Are no signs, no figures painted;  
Who are in those graves we know not,  
Only know they are our fathers."

The oldest Indian on the reservation is "Uncle Billy George," who bears in the Catawba language the name of *Corrichee*. He is the only living Indian among those who signed the present treaty between his tribe and the State of South Carolina. He says that he signed it "as a witness or somehow that way." The old man recently remarked to a visitor that sometimes he could not sleep for thinking about his people. Uncle Billy is a fragment of the old times and is one of those links which connect us with other days. Here is a sketch of his life in his own words:—

"I was born in York County on Cowan's plantation, above Ebenezer. I am about ninety years old. My people would go out from the reservation to work a year or two—that's when I was born. I came to the reservation when only a boy. I remember my father. He's dead now, and was buried in Union County, North Carolina. He was like the old Indians—talked Indian better than English. Our people talked differently then from now. They ought to keep up the language the Lord gave them. The language they speak now is changed a great deal. I was ten or twelve years old when my father died. I have heard him talk about the Revolutionary War. Some of his people were in it. He was not himself. My father was fifty or sixty when he died.

"The foreign Indians used to come here and fight with the old Indians. The last fight was close to Rock Hill, and we went upon them and killed them out—that was before I was born. My father was in it. He said that the foreign Indians slipped in and killed some of our people, and when we saw them we went upon them and killed them.

"When the Revolutionary War was over, George Washington gave us 15 square miles of land. We have been cheated out of it.

"I was living during the War of 1812—was only a boy; I heard talk of the fighting when it was going on.

"I was not in the late war; other Indians were, though; a good many went, about 20.

"I have married twice and have five children in all. We can't have but one wife, and that aint right." [Influence of Mormon teachings.]

Uncle Billy George is nearly half a century older than his present wife. His youngest child, Lucy Jane, is now about eleven years old.

The old Indian's principal means of giving his family bread is obtained by selling pipes, and, occasionally, an old-fashioned locust bow, with feathered arrows. With one of these bows his feeble hand can still send an arrow across the Catawba River, or if shot vertically upward, until lost to sight.

The George family live in a little two-room cabin near the river. A large oak and a few fruit trees shade their door-steps; a wild rose bush near the chimney perfumes the air; the tall pines in the forest sigh. Here, in nature's abode, I last saw Uncle Billy George sitting in his cabin door with his arm around his little girl beside him, the breeze from the river playing alike with grizzled hair and raven locks. When the old man thus sits and peers listlessly into the forest, his dim eyes seem to brighten, for, in his dotage, he perhaps sees familiar forms gliding among the trees—they are invisible to other eyes, for they are shadows of a generation that has passed away. The bent form and infirm step of poor Uncle Billy George plainly show that he too will soon be with these shadows—we live to old age only to die at last.\*

The present condition of the tribe, morally, socially, and financially, is a disgrace to themselves, but it is more a disgrace to the State in which they live. On the streets of Rock Hill these miserable creatures may often be seen begging, and if they are befriended they ever after besiege their benefactor. When one of them finds a purchaser for his wares, he is like the bee—he returns and brings with him a swarm. I have often found a dozen or more of them, of both sexes, perched on the steps and veranda of my boarding-house, loaded down with wares, having waited half a day to intercept me on my return. To show the standard of honor among them, I refused to buy a certain jar

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\* Uncle Billy George has died since the above was written.

from one of the men ; I told him, however, that if he would find a pot made by the old Indians I would pay him handsomely for it. In a few days the fellow brought in the same vessel, with its bottom broken out, and otherwise disfigured ; it was covered with mud, and he claimed it to be a valuable relic just washed up by the river. However, there are several members of the tribe who are far from being deceitful and thievish, and among the few who bear good reputations are Bob Harris and Uncle Billy George.

It is said that the Catawbas are more or less addicted to the morphine habit, and they often beg for simple household medicines, which they take on account of the opiates they contain. They are not habitual drunkards because they are too poor to buy the whiskey. It is not an uncommon sight to see these poor creatures, and, frequently, the women, on the streets of Rock Hill late at night, starting on foot in a pouring rain for the reservation, nine miles away.

There is neither a church nor a school on the reservation—it is a shame that in a Christian country they never hear the Gospel preached. In our ardor for foreign missions let us not pass by and neglect the heathen in our midst.

Would the Catawba Indians receive more religious instruction if they were in a Pagan land? To compare the religious condition of the Western Indian to that of the Catawbas, the following extract from a report to the United States Civil Service Commission, made by the Hon. Theodore Roosevelt in 1893, is given :—

“ When I reached the Cheyenne River Agency the great Indian Episcopal Convocation was in session. The sight was exceedingly interesting and imposing, some 2000 Indians having gathered for the convocation. There were present a large number of native preachers and catechists, and very many lay delegates from the different tribes. Doubtless, many of the Indians came to the convocation with no particular religious feeling, a good deal as white men go to a county fair ; but with many the religious sentiment was evidently very strong, and I was greatly pleased at the intelligence and fine feeling shown by many, both among the laymen and among the preachers. The women’s meeting was also very interesting, and it was remarkable to see them contribute literally thousands of dollars for various missionary and church purposes.”

If the Christian people of South Carolina will not look after the spiritual welfare of the heathen at their very doors, may Providence put it into the hearts of these Christianized Indians in the West to send missionaries to the Catawba Indians who live almost in the sound of the church bells. If the Christian

people of South Carolina deny these Indians a helping hand, it will be inconsistent in them to sing the grand old missionary hymn, which now should be echoing in every land :—

“ Waft, waft, ye winds, His story,  
And you, ye waters, roll ;  
Till like a sea of glory,  
It spreads from pole to pole.”

## RESPONSIBILITY.

Perhaps, after the Catawbas have become extinct, some one might ask who was responsible. Let us not wait until then to place the responsibility where it belongs. If it is South Carolina's duty to cherish and guard with a fostering care the last vestige of her aboriginal inhabitants ; if she owes anything to her earliest benefactors ; if she owes anything to a disinterested people who have fought her battles—a people who were courted when they were strong, but are now scorned because they are weak ; if she owes anything to a people whose territory she has absorbed without due compensation ; if it is her duty to uplift degraded humanity within her borders : then *South Carolina* is responsible ; and if she does not soon do something for the Catawbas, her escutcheon will bear a stain which time cannot erase.

It is time for the people of South Carolina to compel their representatives in the State and General Government to do something for these much-wronged and down-trodden people.

On account of our neglect of duty toward the Indians this century has justly been termed a “ Century of Dishonor.” Since its beginning the appeals made in behalf of the Catawbas have all fallen on stony ground ; at its close will humanitarians still turn a deaf ear to their claims for more merciful treatment ?

Fifty years ago, William Crafts, the celebrated statesman, prepared the following petition to the Legislature of South Carolina for Peter Harris, a Catawba Indian. May this cry, coming as it does from the grave, awake in the American heart some sense of justice :—

“ I am one of the lingering survivors of an almost extinguished race. Our graves will soon be our only habitations. I am one of the few stalks which still remain in the field after the tempest of the Revolution is passed. I fought the British for your sake. The British have disappeared nor have I gained by their defeat. I pursued the deer for subsistence ; the deer are disappearing and

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