

(3.)

69

or some authorised persons.

4<sup>th</sup> Against murder. 5<sup>th</sup> against stealing.

6<sup>th</sup> Against renting Land & introducing white people without a special written permission of the Legislative Council. Penalty. Expulsion of the whites so introduced as intruders and a fine of \$500 on the aggressor and one hundred stripes on the naked back.

7<sup>th</sup> Giving inalienable title to Lands-improved the homing ac. to the citizens, with power to sell or transfer them among each other, but not to citizens of the adjoining states.

8<sup>th</sup> Regulating Taxes & defining the duties of Collectors.

9<sup>th</sup> Prohibiting the sale of any more Lands to the United States except it be done by & with the concurrence of the National Committee & Council or a Delegation authorised by them. Penalty Disgrace & Death.

10<sup>th</sup> A law to protect the Orphan & widows property to the father's or husband's property after death.



11<sup>th</sup> Regulating the Salary of the two heads, Chiefs, Priests, Judges, and pay of the members of the National Council & their chiefs during actual service and officers of the Nation generally.

12<sup>th</sup> Regulating the Judicial Courts of the Nation & defining their powers.

13<sup>th</sup> Defining the powers of the Chiefs and that only to be exercised in a body in their Legislative capacity at the times appointed by law and in the recess to be on a level with private citizens.

The above laws are written and are well understood, respected & enforced. It is needless to say that all the people are well satisfied with their Government Laws and it is a universal desire, with us to secure these blessings as an inheritance to Posterity. The laws of our Nation, from time immemorial recognize a separate property in the wife and husband, and this principle is universally cherished among the less informed class and in fact in every grade of intelligence, if they are so disposed.



70

the law seems to the Ladies, the control  
of their own property. Rules and regulations  
in the transfer of property, in the absence of writ-  
ten laws on this subject are adopted from the  
adjoining states and are respected in our  
county. Property descends from parents, equally  
to the children, if none, to the next blood relatives  
on either side, but if a will is made it is re-  
spected to the fullest extent and every person  
possessed of property is entitled to dispose of  
it in this way.

Superstition is the portion of all uncivil-  
ized nations and Idolatry is only engendered  
in the brain of rudeness. The Cherokees in their  
most savage state never worshipped the work-  
of their own hands, neither the elements of water  
or fire, nor any one or portion of the splendid lights  
that adorn Heavens canopy above. They had  
a rational belief of a great first cause or spirit  
as the author of all good and in a bad spirit  
as the author of all evil. These they conceived  
were at variance and waged perpetual war  
and supposed the good spirit as superior to the  
bad one. These immortal beings had on both



side,  
Numerous intelligent beings of analogous dispositions to their chieftains. They had a heaven which consisted of a visible world to those only who had passed from death to immortality. It was adorned with all the beauties, which a savage imagination could conceive. An open forest, yet various, giving <sup>light and</sup> shade and fruit of every kind. Sweet smelling flowers of various hues, exquisite to the eye. Game of all kinds in great abundance, enough of feasts and plenty of dances; and to crown the whole, the most cheerful, <sup>lucky</sup> ~~charming~~, beautiful women, prepared and adorned by the great Spirit for every individual Indian who by wisdom, hospitality and Bravery was introduced to this happy and immortal region. The bad place or Hell was the reverse of this & was situated in the vicinity of the <sup>good</sup> ~~bad~~ place, where the wretched, compelled to live in hunger, hostility and darkness, could hear the rejoicings of those in the blissful state without the possibility of reaching its shores. Witches, Wizards, were in existence and pretended to possess supernatural powers and to have intercourse with the infernal



(4)

71

infernal Spirits and were supposed capable of transforming themselves into the shape of beasts of the forest and fowls of the air, and take their nocturnal excursions in pursuit of human victims, particularly those suffering from disease which compelled the unfortunate friends of the invalids to employ witch doctors to protect them. They were the dread of the Land, & many a time have I trembled at the croaking of a Frog, the hoating of an Owl, or guttural hoarseness of the Raven in the night in my young days.

After the people ~~to~~ <sup>became</sup> more courageous the poor old Ditchers experienced a sad reverse of fortune.

They were often hatched or tomahawked by ~~by~~ on suspicion by the enraged friends of the dead, particularly in unexpected cases of death, ~~at~~ occasioned by indisposition of short duration. The severity of Revenge fell most principally on the grey hairs of aged persons of both sexes and on children who were supposed to inherit much power of noted parents who had retired from the stage of life long since ago.

To stop this evil it was necessary to pass a law considering all slaughters of this kind in the light of



of murder  
which has effected the desired remedy. There  
are yet among us who pretend to possess powers  
of milder character, such as making rain, allay-  
ing storms or high winds, playing with thunder  
and foretelling future events, with many other  
insignificant pretences not worth mentioning.  
They are monuments of folly & ridicule in the eyes  
of intelligent Indians and are only listened to  
in few dark spots of gross ignorance in the Na-  
tion.

The Standard of Religion is advancing  
with a steady march in different Parts of the Na-  
tion and the Gospel is preached in & organised  
churches at the missionary stations, by Presbyterians,  
Baptists, Moravians and Methodists, each of  
whom have a respectable number of Indian  
Christians of exemplary character attached to  
them. The Sabbath is known by all the tribes  
and many observe it with respect and attend  
meetings of Religious worship. Religion has  
a powerful effect on the Indians, whenever it is  
professed by them. There is no vice of any kind  
which it does not expel. Drunkenness & habits  
of idleness, fall before it, and I know of  
no individuals who were a public nuisance



72

Misance, <sup>who</sup> have become unprofitable & good citizens.

We have no law regulating marriage and Polygamy is still allowed to native Christians. This last vestige of our ignorance, however, is not respected by our people & increase of intelligence and morality is fast consuming it. An attempt was made to discountenance Polygamy by law but failed, not from its popularity but by a feeling of delicacy - to a number of our old chiefs who had married under older customs. Time will effect the desired change, and it is worthy of mention even now in the absence of law & unrequited, the better class of our females prefer to be united in marriage attended by the solemnities of the Christian mode.

In regard to love of revenge, the Indians have been represented in the grossest of colors. I never could have the audacity to ascribe inconsistency to any portion of God's creation. The various nations of the Earth were created for noble purposes, endued with sensibility to feel their own wrongs & sympathize for another's woe. Education alone makes distinction, in the refinement of the heart. Savages of the human race are not like the beasts.



of the forest, which even trained to live contented in the yard, retain in full vigor an instinct of indiscriminate cruelty.

Intemperance like Love, is found in the Halls of the great and in the wigwam of the Indian. With this difference, "Indians consider it as harmful to drink, but the whites do, and drink notwithstanding". Nations cannot be civilized, unless they renounce every inducement, that tends to their deterioration. As a whole, I cannot call the Cherokees a civilized people, and perhaps in this respect it would baffle our expectation, if we were to look for it in any Nation on the face of the Earth.

But then I am far from acknowledging that we are a Nation of Drunkards. Our young men are too fond of their own popularity among the other sex to yield to it. Among our old chiefs, are many that dance in frolic & sing over the whiskey-bottle. But then and on the decline in number and in fame, confidence will always be placed in chiefs, whose faults are under no such control. Four years ago our highest chiefs, were seen drunk near the council fire, but now not one would be so lost to shame as thus to appear & be expelled from his seat. In our country, females aspire to gain



to gain sober men for husbandry and mankind,  
must yield to the tender sex. Woman civilizes  
man, or makes him barbarous at her pleasure.

If Ladies gaze us universally, the smiles of  
approbation in our extravagances, <sup>would</sup> ~~would~~ be  
extravagant, if in murder, we <sup>would</sup> ~~would~~ delight to kill  
if in cruelty, we <sup>would</sup> ~~would~~ be cruel.

There are about thirteen Schools <sup>in the Nation,</sup> and may con-  
tain about two hundred and fifty Students  
and are ~~entirely~~ entirely supported by humane  
Societies in different parts of the United States.  
The Nation itself has not as yet actively engaged  
in aiding education, but have ~~been~~ making  
preparations to lend a hand in this laudable  
work. Twelve miles square of Land is reserved  
in a Treaty with J. C. Calhoun in 1819, who was  
then Secretary of War, in which the President is  
authorised to sell the Land & invest ~~the proceeds~~  
to draw interest & apply it for the education of  
Cherokee youth as he shall think best. This  
tract has not been sold, owing as I have under-  
stood to the unfavorable condition of the market  
at this time. A law has been passed for establish-



establishing a National Academy of a high-  
order at our seat of Government, where it is  
intended, the youth who have deservedly gone  
thru' their studies in the common schools to  
finish their Education. It is in contempla-  
tion to obtain an able Gentleman from the  
North to preside over it as President, but  
the assistants & Trustees of the School will  
be native Cherokees. The edifice will be of  
brick forty feet square well furnished with nat-  
l clerks for the Students. Besides this, many  
of our youth are educated in the adjoining  
States at the expense of their friends. Two  
young Ladies have recently finished their  
studies in the Salem Academy in North Carolina.  
Their cultivation and appearance is such, that  
~~they~~ will bear the test of comparison with those of  
any day in the United States. Their father has  
purchased a costly Piano for their use. I am  
acquainted with others who are preparing for an  
admission in that excellent Institution. I sup-  
pose, that there are one third of our people, who  
are able to read & write in the English Language.



In the Cherokee Language, there is a large majority who read & write in George Guss syllabic character. Mr. Guss is an Indian unacquainted with the English Language, but an untutored Philosopher, who has succeeded in a few months as it were to educate a Nation. In making his system he was ridiculed & discountenanced by his friends, who were considered competent to judge. He persevered however - and <sup>gained</sup> the attention of the ignorant to whom he explained his invention and succeeded to teach them. Among those unacquainted with the English it is very much esteemed. Portions of the bible are translated & read, & hymns are sung in that character. With the Cherokees of the Arkansas they correspond regularly by letter in Guss's character. It is in contemplation to establish a printing press, composed of the English & Cherokee types, at our seat of Government, & a weekly paper will be edited in both languages at the same place. For this object \$1500 - was appropriated by our Council last fall, & other regulations adopted to carry the object into effect. We have also a Society or



organised, called the Moral & Literary Society of the Cherokee Nation. Col. Walter S. Adair, a champion of fine Education is President of it. A library is attached to it.

Having given a view of the present state of civilization of the Cherokee Nation it may not be amiss, to relate the time and manner of its introduction. About the year 1795 missionaries were sent by the United Brethren to the Cherokees and established a station called Springplace in the centre of the Nation. At or about that time Col. Silas Dinsmore was appointed to the Agency of the Nation by Genl. Washington, who from the Indian testimony itself, labored indefatigably to induce the Indians to lead a domestic life, by distributing hoes & ploughs among the men and cotton-cards, spinning wheels & looms to the women. It appears when this change of Hunter life for a civilized one, was proposed by the Agent in Council, that the Chiefs unanimously laughed at him, for attempting to introduce what people's customs among Indians created.



75

(16)  
created to pursue the chase. Not discouraged -  
here he turned to individuals and succeeded  
to gain some to pay attention to his plan by  
way of experiment, which succeeded.

An anecdote is related of a Chief who was ap-  
posed to the views of the Agent. It was customary  
for the Indians to hunt at certain seasons  
and before this Chief started, came to the  
Agent and said, that he was going on a  
hunt & should be gone six moons and  
hoped during his absence, he would not men-  
tion to his family his new plan: that it would  
do for white people, but not for Indians.  
While this Chief was absent, the Agent prevailed  
on his wife & daughter to spin & weave cloth  
and it was <sup>done</sup> to that extent, as to be more valua-  
ble than the Chief's Hunt at his return.

When <sup>an</sup> disappointed he immediately came  
to the Agent & accused him for making  
his women better hunters and requested a  
plough which was given to him & from that  
time he became a farmer. In the mean time  
the Moravians opened a school for the Indians -  
cleared a farm, cultivated a Garden and planted  
an Orchard. The Venerable Mr. Gambold and  
his amiable wife were a visible monument of in-  
dustry, goodness & friendship to the Indians, and  
as far as it was in their power, they converted the



"the wil dunniss to bud & blossom as the rose."  
The boys and girls were taught the rudiments of Education and were occasionally required to labor in the Garden & in the Field. Here they were first taught to sing and pray to their Creator and here Gospel worship was first Established in our Nation. Now can I forget father & mother Gambold, who dispensed the clouds of ignorance that enshrouded me round and opened my eyes to behold the light of civilisation. My intellect expanded and took a wider range. My superstition vanished and I began to reason correctly.  
O "Curious to view the Kings of ancient days

"The mighty dead that live in unnumber'd ages?"  
I might indulge in sad review of the past and point to Nations once powerful, that as lords of creation, ~~were~~ roamed America's forests. The Sun of our glory is set and we are left the shadow of what was once a reality! Powerful in war & sage in peace, our Chiefs now sleep with their heroic deeds in the bosom of the Earth! It was not their destiny to be conqueat. Had they concentrated their Council fires, their empire might have stood, like a pyramid for ages yet unborn to admire. It was for strangers to effect this, and necessity now compels the last Remnant to look to it for protection. It is true -



we enjoy self Government, but we live in fear and  
 uncertainty foretells our fall. Strangers urge  
<sup>our removal</sup> to the west and there they say, we  
 can live happy. ~~We~~ Our National existence is  
 suspended on the faith and honor of the United  
 States alone. <sup>We are</sup> In the paw of a lion, convenience  
 may induce him to trust & with a faint strug-  
 gle, we may cease to be. But all Nations have  
 experienced change. Mutability is stamped on  
 everything that walks the Earth. Even now we  
 are forced by natural causes to a channel, that  
 will mingle the blood of our race with the white.  
 In the course of half a century, if Cherokee blood is  
 not destroyed, will run its course in the veins  
 of fair complexioned, who will read that their  
 ancestors under the stars of adversity and curses  
 of their enemies became a civilized Nation.

I am Sir,

Respectfully your  
 friend John Ridge.



Bridge

San Jose, California

1882

Chas. D. W.

Bridge

San Jose, California