

*Letter from Col. Folsom to a Gentleman of
Mississippi.*

The gentleman to whom the following letter was addressed, at an interview with the president of the United States last fall, being about to pass through the Choctaw country, offered to be the bearer of communications to that nation. He accordingly received documents, in which the president told the Choctaws that they could not live in the near vicinity of the whites, strongly recommended to them a removal west of the Mississippi, assured them that there they should have a country which should be their own, and secured to them while "the grass should grow or the waters run." It was also stated that the president did not talk to them with a "forked tongue," but told them honestly that they must remove or become subject to the laws of Mississippi.

The gentleman to whom these documents were given, inclosed them in a letter of his own, and forwarded them to Col. Folsom; and offered to visit the Choctaws himself, and aid the chiefs in obtaining the consent of the people to a removal. The reply of Col. Folsom will show the feelings of his nation on these subjects.

To _____

Choctaw Nation, Dec. 14th, 1829.

Dear Sir,—Your letter of the 24th ult. was received on the second instant, while we were in council. Col. Garland, from the south district, and other leading men were present. The inclosed, the president's talk, was interpreted by me before the council.

You know, as a people, the Choctaws do not wish to move, to better their condition. You know the rapid improvement Choctaws have made, for these last few years, in the arts of industry and in civilized habits. And in every condition as a nation, their improvement cannot be disputed by yourself and other unprejudiced and candid minds. And greater part of our people have become to be herdsmen and farmers. This you know yourself. They raise corn, potatoes, pumpkins, beans, peas, and other kind of vegetables; and cotton for their own use and consumption. And they spin and weave, &c. They raise every kind of stock, such as horses, cattle, hogs, and poultry. This you know. And to say greater part of our people hunt—this is not the case. I will admit some of them still hunt. But at the same time they have plenty at home for their provision. And as to depending on hunting entirely for subsistence—this is not the case. You see the ignorant part of our people go among the whites at the cotton-picking time. There the whites like to have

them.* Well, some of *them* even they do well, and bring off their earnings. But again, many of that class of people, they get drunk among the whites by the cotton farmer, and kill one another. But here you will not look at the example of the vicious and ignorant part of our people for a sample of my nation. We can truly say as to soberness, we have it among us. This you know yourself.

Our great father Jackson tells you to tell us "he never speaks with forked tongue." This is all good. This is all what we Indians want. We want all the former treaty and engagement and those solemn treaties and talk should not get forked. If it did get forked here, where we have inherited this land from Jehovah, if it be the case, if we were to go to the west, when we get there, the talk can be forked again into its branches, and the water of its living truth, may fail and dry away, and poor Choctaws perish.

You say "if it is my wish, you would aid us in preparing the minds of the Indians for a moval."

I do hereby inform you, I have no wish to have my people remove to the west. I am entirely averse to it. I have no wish to bring calamity and destruction, nor will be an accessory to the downfall and deplorable destruction of my dear people. For if the Choctaw people remove at all, it will be against their will, interest, and happiness; and every thing dear to them will close from them. Never can be said, nor realized, that Choctaws be benefitted by their removal. But loss and sorrow forever to the Choctaw people; and great gain and much joy to the white, by our calamity.

I want you, when you come, to bring the treaties with you and explain, more particularly the treaty of Doak's Stand, Oct. 1820, and treaty of Washington, Jan. 1825.†

I am your friend and brother,

DAVID FOLSOM.

* Col. Leflore's district have past a law against the people of that district going among the whites, and it has had a happy effect and much good has been done to the people.

† The two last treaties made between the Choctaws and the United States. Some of the more important provisions of these treaties were inserted and remarked upon at p. 380, in the number of this work for December last. *Ed.*

THE
MISSIONARY HERALD.

VOL. XXVI.

MARCH, 1830.

No. 3.
