

**A TRANSCRIPTION OF “THE NATCHEZ”, AN ANONYMOUS MANUSCRIPT
WRITTEN IN NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI IN THE 1840s**

Transcribed and Introduced by L. E. Leigh

INTRODUCTION

“In the hand of an unknown author, this is a history of the Natchez Indians written at Natchez in 1840.” – American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia

Such is the description of THE NATCHEZ, one of the manuscript holdings in the Library of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. A copy of the handwritten original was acquired and transcribed for the purpose of identifying the author. To date, however, attempts by this researcher to identify this 19th century Natchezian have been unsuccessful. By making the transcription available to the public, it is hoped his identification will be forthcoming, either through further research or as a result of someone coming forward, a descendant perhaps, with information concerning him.

As an aide to future researchers, the following summary of this researcher’s findings and observations is presented:

1. The manuscript, as indicated in the postscript on page 136, is an unfinished work; a rough draft that was never put in final form due to the death of the author. This may account for the author’s anonymity. He (the author is identified as male in the postscript) may have intentionally left his name off the draft, but fully intended to append it to the final version. It seems more likely, however, it was the writer’s wish to remain anonymous, since the writer of the posthumous postscript chose not to identify him.
2. According to the APS, the original consists of sixteen unbound signatures of eight pages each. Judging from the copy, there appears to be thirteen pages missing; however, this is not the case. There is simply no text on the missing pages and they were not copied. The page numbers are written in pencil and were probably in place prior to the addition of text.
3. The original was acquired by the APS in 1976 from William H. Allen, a Philadelphia bookseller. When contacted, William H. Allen personnel could not say how the document was acquired, stating that many acquisitions consist of bulk purchases through estate sales or auctions; making it difficult or impossible to trace individual items. It is possible they have related items, such as the author’s source works, in their

- possession. It is equally possible the manuscript arrived in Philadelphia quite separate from any of his other possessions.
4. On page 65, there appears to be a change in handwriting style, which continues to the end. These pages may have been transcribed from an earlier draft by the same person responsible for the postscript on page 136.
 5. The postscript ends with the line: "Natchez, Nov. 1840". This line, clearly written, seems to establish the time and place of completion. Unfortunately, the year 1840 was written in error, since there is an indisputable reference on page 47 of a past event occurring in the year 1842. In fact, on page 24 we find the date, "Jan 10th 1848". It is possible, at least in the absence of additional evidence, the postscript writer intended to write 1848 for a final date, but, for whatever reason, the final "8" looks like a "0".
 6. In writing of the Natchez Indians, the author borrows heavily from the 18th century historians, Du Pratz and Charlevoix, particularly the former. He also claims to have used "traditional" sources derived from "the living veterans of the olden times", although it is difficult to pinpoint this information, as it relates to the Natchez Indians, in the text. In the case of Du Pratz' History of Louisiana, this had to be either the 1763 or 1774 British edition, since this work was not published in America until 1941. This may explain, in part, the author's use of the long-'s', or medial 's', in place of the short 's' in many of the Du Pratz excerpts, as this was the style used in the older English versions. Curiously, this same convention is used in other portions of the work; portions undoubtedly in the author's own words. This may suggest the author was elderly at the time of his death, at least for his day and time, since usage of the long-s was more common in the 18th than in the 19th century.
 7. The primary theme of the work is two-fold: First, that the Natchez Indians were descendants of the Toltecs of Mexico, a theme similar to that first proposed by Du Pratz after a lengthy interview with the guardian of the Natchez Temple. Secondly, that by virtue of their lineage, and perhaps by divine providence as well, the Natchez possessed traits superior to other peoples, particularly the Europeans who victimized and oppressed them. While it is beyond the scope of the present study to elaborate on these themes, it is clear our anonymous author fervently, even passionately, believed in them.
 8. That he was a devoutly religious man is evident from the numerous scriptural quotes and other references of a religious or spiritual nature in the body of his work. One of these involves the story of a missionary (pages 104-106) who passed through the Natchez region at a time when the "settlement" was "then but sparingly populated". This is a probable reference to the first American settlement, which was established in 1798 after Spain relinquished control of the territory north of the 31st parallel and east of the Mississippi River. The

missionary is described as “one of the pioneers of that denomination whose doings of good are seen by every eye which looks upon that monument of their zeal their daring enterprise.” On page 105, he writes: “Scarce a century has elapsed since its (the denomination’s) introduction into America...”. Neither the missionary nor the denomination is named, but this last excerpt suggests the author was writing of Methodism, which arrived in America in the mid-18th Century; the last major Protestant denomination to do so. If this was the case, the missionary may have been the itinerant preacher Tobias Gibson, who first visited the region as early as 1799. Our author, then, may have been a Methodist, although this is far from certain. That he claimed to have witnessed the arrival of this roving evangelist is yet another indication of the author’s advanced age at the time of his death.

9. He may have been a teacher by profession, perhaps of history. On pages 13 and 14, he writes: “about the year 1826...we were strolling after school hours on the Bluff...”, implying that in 1826, 22 years before his death (assuming he died in 1848) he was either a student or a teacher. If a student, then he was no older than 39 or 40 when he died, a conclusion inconsistent with circumstantial evidence supporting a more advanced age. Also, he devotes almost all of page 133 to a harangue on the evils of corporeal punishment practiced by the “knights of the birch”, or school masters. Either he had vivid and painful memories of being the frequent object of such attention in his youth, or he more recently witnessed such behavior on a day to day basis as a fellow “squire of the schoolroom”.
10. Befitting the times in which he lived, our author was something of a romantic, being as inclined to quote poetry as he was scripture. It is likely the “Natchez” poems included in the work were of his own composition. There is a veiled reference on pages 100 and 101 to a lost love, or close relation, who may have died young: “Born to bud, to blossom, and to die, she fled with the sweet spring time, from joys surrounding her in life – all that life alone can know to the better land where joy supremely reigns.”
11. He may have been a native of Natchez, being “reared in its midst, and have loved it from a child...” (page 19). He makes varied references to “wild jaunts” in his youth through the countryside along St. Catherine Creek, Second Creek, and the Ellis Cliffs area. On page 27, he writes of the return from one of these “jaunts”. While describing the beauty of the Second Creek valley, he writes: “ ...when returning from some wild jaunt through the forest which crown the Cliffs far to the right or from the wild demiswamp from hunt or angling.” If he was traveling through the valley on his homeward journey, as is implied, and the bluffs at Ellis Cliffs were to his right, he had to have been traveling south, thus indicating he lived south of the city of Natchez, at least in his younger days.

12. His love of Natchez no doubt contributed to the author's intense interest in the archeology and history of the region. He apparently devoted much time and effort examining the Indian mounds in the Natchez vicinity, but it is equally apparent he was not alone in this pursuit. On page 112, and again on page 117, there is reference to a "scientific gentleman of our city" who shared our author's enthusiasm for Natchez archeology. Initially, it was thought this "scientific gentleman" was the archeologist M. W. Dickeson of Philadelphia, who was active in the Natchez area in the early to mid 1840s. That the manuscript first came to light in Philadelphia played no small part in this conviction. Dickeson, however, was not "of this city" but merely visiting it. The author of THE NATCHEZ undoubtedly knew of him and his work and may have accompanied him on some of his excavations, since it is known that Dickeson depended on the assistance of the local inhabitants. A much more likely candidate for the author's associate was the geologist and naturalist, Benjamin L. C. Wailes. In Wailes' biography, A Gentleman of the Old Natchez Region, by Charles S. Sydnor (Duke Univ. Press, 1938), Wailes is described as being active in the "collection of Indian traditions and the examination of Indian mounds". As a result, he amassed an extensive collection of artifacts, which he made available to the general public.
13. In addition to being in poor health (page 47), perhaps due to old age, the author may have fallen on hard times, financially, in his later years. On page 81, he writes of his inability to acquire needed source material for his work: "The want of necessary means to procure other works, which these disastrous times have placed beyond our reach leaves us without the aid of those researches made by others more capable in all respects than ourselves."

No doubt, many such inferences regarding the life and character of this unknown author could be drawn from a study of THE NATCHEZ. One obvious trait, which stands out from beginning to end, is his extreme modesty. In his work, he makes it clear he is neither writer nor historian. He makes no claim to scholarly achievements. It is likely his self-effacing manner and lack of pretentiousness contributed to his wish to remain anonymous. This fact notwithstanding, it is equally clear he wanted to share his work with others. With this last thought in mind, THE NATCHEZ, "with its unpruned enthusiasm, its uncorrected faults, its curious facts from many a legend and wild story gleaned", is once again submitted "to the indulgent criticism of an enlightened public".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks are extended to Ellen Pack for agreeing to publish this work at www.natchezbelle.org and to the American Philosophical Society for granting permission to do so. Any requests for copies of the original manuscript should be directed to the APS through Mr. Robert S. Cox, Manuscript Librarian at rscox@amphilsoc.org. All other inquiries may be directed to L. E. Leigh at edleigh@cableone.net.

NOTE

In transcribing THE NATCHEZ, the original syntax, spelling, and punctuation have been preserved wherever possible. The letter “f” has been substituted in place of the long-s where it appears in the text.

THE NATCHEZ

NO. 1

In attempting a hurried sketch of this interesting tribe, their manners customs, traditions and their melancholy fate we should at the outset state that it was with extreme difficulty we succeeded in procuring the information. The slight foundation upon which we found what we shall attempt to lay before you that information is derived from various sources written and traditional, portions of which have been gathered from time to time, for years past more for the purpose of gratifying curiosity and have indulged from earlier years in subjects abounding with romantic interest and melancholy incidents, more for this purpose than with the intention of ever laying it before the public, believing however that many others feel the same interest with ourselves we undertake with diffidence the task of gathering in ~~notes~~ mass, what to some may seem inconsiderate trifles not worth the thought time, or trouble we may bestow upon them. It is sufficient for us that it has been a source of pleasure reflection and food for fancy while

roaming with wild delight over the beautiful scenery of our country & amid which the noble 'Natchez' of old roamed free untamed & wild as our own thoughts. Should the recital give one ray of pleasure to another or awaken a thought of good and make more think better of their fellow men savage and rude though he be we shall be more than repaid "That pleasure meted to us we would to others mete"

The character of these people was more pacific than that of any other American tribe known at that early day they rarely make wars says Charlevoix place their glory in destroying their fellow creature but once excited to rage revenge by repeated provocation their resentment is appeased only by the severest chastisement of their foes. They never deemed it glorious to destroy the human species and **(page2)** for this reason waged any other than defensive wars Their civil policy partook of the refinement of a people in some degree adorned in civilization it exhibited penetration and wisdom and was calculated to render them happy They had kings or chiefs whom they denominated "Suns" invested with absolute power as likewise a kind of subordinate nobility and the usual distinction created by rank was well understood and practiced among them They were just Generous and humane and never failed to extend relief to the objects of distress and misery They were acquainted with the properties of numerous medical plants common the climate and the cures performed by them among the French appeared incredible They had an established Religion among themselves in many particulars rational and consistent as likewise a regular order of Priesthood They had a temple in which they worshiped the "sun" and where was preserved their Eternal Fire the symbol of their faith. And if their religion was occasionally stained with human sacrifices particularly on the death of one of their Suns or Chiefs one ought to be less surprised as many other nations of both hemispheres from some of which have sprung the proudest nation of our day admitted of the same practice unblessed with the rich advantages of literature and the blessings of that religion whose ways are ways of pleasantness whose paths are peace and whose mercies are so calculated to adore and dignify our nature elevating it from degradation and debasement to be as old in creations dawn a little lower than the Angels, deprived of all those harmonizing and ennobling influences guided alone by the dictates of nature or the dim and shadowing remembrances of some long forgotten dream of good A..n to their forefathers in olden times – their aberration in the eye of human reason must be as the less criminal We have thought that their religion, its rites and ceremonies were originally derived from a pure source for who can pretend to say **(page 3)** whence their ancestors sprung, or whether they were or not in some long previous day acquainted with the glimmerings of that light which is the way the life of Love doubtless obscured by the lapse of centuries, countless revolutions wanderings wars and a thousand other causes less violent but not the less liable to cast a shade over its faint beamings, -- this was their misfortune rather than their crime, intended by the giver of all good and perfect gifts for wise purpose beyond all humankind. The remarks are applicable to all the aboriginal tribes of America in every one of which a ray of light dim is seen some of less others of a

greater degree of the latter the Nez Perces or Pierced Noses of the Rocky Mountains afford one extraordinary instance according to one account published by the most graceful American writers (Washington Irving) they exhibit in their religious ceremonies forms almost precisely similar to many of our own denominations of the present day, forms handed down by that uncertain medium oral tradition. The account of this interesting tribe richly worth the perusal. With our usual fondness of letting the free thought roam we have digressed the theme however is one of interest and well deserves the attention of an abler pen than ours. The Natchez were in the practice of human ~~funeral~~ sacrifices to an extent unknown on the continent of America excepting in Peru where the same rite was practiced exceeding only in the number of victims. Whenever the Male or Female Sun all their allouex or intimate attendants devoted themselves in death under the belief that their presence would be necessary to support the dignity of their Chief in another world. The wives and husbands of these Chiefs were likewise immolated for the same purpose and considered this the most desirable most honorable of all death. It was thought noble in the Roman client(?) to slay **(page 4)** himself with the sword that had taken his honored patron from the harassing cares and ills of life – The Romans were refined civilized and had more than reasons light beaming upon them but here the poor untutored savages prompted by the same feeling in multitudes gathered like the bright clouds of summers eve around their dying sun. The one was honored his name comes down on historys page glowing with immortal fame the others are condemned and called criminal. Not that we would for an instant excuse or palliate but we would that each should alike have the award of justice meted out to them. Charlevoi relates that at the death of one of the female Suns her husband not being noble was strangled according to custom by the hands of his own son. After which the two corpses being laid out at state were surrounded by the dead bodies their infants strangled by order of the eldest daughter of the deceased female Chief and who had now succeeded to her dignity fourteen other individuals were also prepared to die and accompanying the deceased to the Spirit Land.

On the day of internment as the procession advanced the fathers and Mothers of the Infants sacrificed preceding the bier the bodies being on the ground at different distances in order that they may be trampled on by the buriers of the dead.

The bodies of the Sun and husband arriving in the Temple where they are to be interred the fourteen victims now prepare themselves for death by swallowing pills of Tobacco and are then strangled by the relations of the deceased and their bodies cast into the common ground* and covered with earth. And among other singular customs of the Natchez, was that of **(page 5)** distorting the head by compression specimens of which we have seen – having examined different skulls taken from the mounds on Col Bingamans place Fatherland and others of the numerous mounds in the vicinity of Natchez – The form of the skull is

* The Brahmans of India give an intoxicating draught to the woman who is to be burned with the body of her deceased husband.

precisely similar with that of the Flat Heads of the far West – also to this day practising this custom of compression. Du Pratz gives a detailed account of the modus operandi but as it would be tedious and unnecessary we will not trouble you with it on the present occasion he closes his account however by stating that during the process the Child is confined to its cradle for a year during which time it is not placed upon its feet. Garciloro de La Vega informs us that during the invasion of Florida by De Soto the Spaniards met with a tribe whose heads was moulded in the same form “Their heads are incredibly long (high) observes the **(blank)** and pointed upwards owing to a custom of artificially compressing them from the period of birth until the Child attains the age of nine or ten years – months we presume he intended as that period would be sufficient to fasten the beauty to the pas-Cuss(?) infant for life – The people thus incidently mentioned by De Vega may have been the Natchez as there is no doubt of the fact of De Soto having visited them in his progress down the Mississippi – One of the subdivisions of the Choctaw tribe also pursued the same course with their Children. The skulls examined by us sloped from the lower extremity of the forehead back to the crown at an angle of about forty five degrees presenting a most singular appearance

Another Tribe known at that day as the Tulás* **(page 6)** which is said to have persued the same course and by a similar process. It is curious to observe that this name was also that of the Toltecan capitol of Anatruae(?) signifying a Place of Reeds the same name occurs in Texas and Guatemala indicating by their position the Toltecan imigration – the tribe now spoken of is mentioned by De Soto and De Vega as existing in Florida at the time of his visits whose boundaries at that period were indefinite and untraced nearly the whole of the present states of Mississippi Alabama part of Louisiana and the Floridas from this circumstance and the hints of writers contemporaneous with those refered to and are of opinion that the Tulás were one of the sub-divisions of the Natchez if not that tribe itself, which from all the light afforded us were decidedly of Toltecan origin for proof of which during the progress of our task we may take occasion to give a sketch of the customs manners rites etc. etc. which coincides in remarkable degree as to prove their origin the same.

The Natchez satisfied with the persuit of happiness after their own peculiar manner and seldom taking part in the feuds of the nations surrounding them, living secluded having little communication with any save the Chetimacha too powerful to be subject to insult, their justice generosity and uniform practice of naturel self taught benevolence made them respected and esteemed by the tribes within their reach. Their example of refinement their practice of virtue and their life of harmless happiness unpretending and not assuming over the smaller tribes of their vicinity that domineering spirit which power usually engenders **(page 7)** lent a gentle influence to the tribes within the reach the reach of that example, and to it may be attributed the fact that among the traditions which have come down to us of those tribes we hear less of that love of blood plunder

* Another tribe and nearly similar we are informed was the Tu-lu-la signifying signifying Beautiful

rapine war and wild maraud which makes the history of the Creek's the Yem-nes-sees and the northern and western tribes **(end of page 7; page 8 blank or missing)**

(page 9)

Push-ma-ta-ha
Note to the Natchez

The leader of the Ball Play which we fably(?) sketched in a former number was James Push-ma-ta-ha son of the old warrior who died at Washington in 1824, a distinguished Chief of the Choctaws who served in the army with General Jackson through the Seminole war. He it was who in addressing the secretary of war during his visit to Washington introduced himself by observing, you have heard of me – I am Push-ma-ta-ha. During his last illness which occurred at Washington confident that his end was near he observed to his companion who with himself composed the Choctaw delegation 'I shall die but you will return to our brethern, as you go along the Paths you will see the Flowers, and hear the birds sing but Push-ma-ta-ha will see and hear them no more then you shall come to home they will ask you where is Push ma ta ha! And you will say to them he is no more They will hear ~~sounds~~ Tidings like the sound of the mighty oaks falling in the stillness of the woods!! How forcibly the expression of the fall of the great among men. We stood some months since during the long heats of summer in the depth of the vast wilderness, miles from any home of man, alone save one who was like ourselves impressed with the solemn grandure of the scene. The stillnefs of noon day when all nature seemed at rest a low mountain lifted its giant form far up against the heavens. A bright and beautiful stream flowed far beneath us so distant that its murmerings reached us not we were lost! No path to guide us and in that confusion which usually comes over the mind under such circumstances, we rested for a time surprised interested charmed with the magnificent view above **(page 10)** below and all around on either side, awed by the perfect sleep which seemed to rest on all things like the Trance spoken of by Beck in his toilsome wanderings after the gallant Ross in the arctic regions where says the daring traveller the scene looked as if nature had fallen into a trance for all was silent and motionless as death, such was the state of affairs with us when upon the still air came a sound as if the forest were rended a mighty oak had fallen within our view some half mile down the deep decent in its fall seeming to shake the hill on which we stood and rending abroad through the forest a sound which echoed through the woodland isles and fell back from crag and hill in long loud thunder tones dying away in the distance like the last faint note of a low breathed sigh the memory of one old Chiefs dying words came to us then as if but then spoken. This was not the only scene of interest to us during that days long wild ramble on the waters of the crystal Ouachita, but we commenced another tale and you reader may say as a friend sometimes does on such occasions give us one dose at a time

The old war Chief was one of the best Ball Players of his time and passionately fond of this sport on one occasion while at a distance from home leading a game a party of Creeks upon a predatory incursion into the country of the Choctaws plundered his house and burned it to the ground from that day until the last fight of the Seminole War he was one of that nations direst foes and bitter did they rue that deed done to Push ma ha ta

Attending a treaty at Majr Pitchbymis in 1823 the General for his gallantry on many a field and for him this still proud being at this time advan **(page 11)** advanced in years and at a distance from his home was presented with a horse on visiting the agency some short time subsequent he came as usual on foot his horse was inquired after by the donor, she is gone said the old general! You promised said the agent not to sell him. Yes replied he with the proud consciousness of one who had done no wrong I did promise not to sell him in the presence of yourself and numerous witnesses I made that promise - I have kept it, (but with great gravity of manner) I did not promise that I would not risk him at Ball Play! The truth was he and his gallant steed had thus parted

Jim the hero of the present sketch the leader of the exciting scene we enjoyed on the Bluff the only scene of the indian Ball Play we have ever witnessed was when we knew him a model of Indian manliness in form he had been well educated but the old man of the woods was too strong for him he could not be won by harsh or gentle means from his first love, the old ways in which from a child he had learned to walk.

Tis strange that but few of the many effects thus made to make the red man worthy of his high endowments have succeeded we have known many many instances of all kind and gentle means being and yet we know not of one as having been entirely successful except when the Moral of Religion its practices and precepts formed the basis of their improvement the conclusion we have arrived at is that they must be first christianized and then civilization follows as it has in all other lands and in every nation which has up to this present day loved its humanizing sway **(page 12)**

Britain was the wild home of a rude race when first known to the Romans. A Gregory was passing one day through the market place of the Eternal City – the white skins, the flowing locks and beautiful countenances of three youths who were standing there for sale as slaves interested his sensibility. He enquired from whence they came from 'Britain' was the reply and they are known of the nation known as the angles and idolaters, what a pity said he that such a beauteous frontispiece should possess a mind so void of internal graces! His ear caught the reverbial coincidence of their name the benevolent wish for their imprisonment flashed upon his mind he expressed his own feelings and excited those of his auditors by remarking it suits them well, they have Angel faces and ought to be co-heir of the angels in heaven A pious philanthropy makes the

historian perhaps never from the human heart that in these sudden effusions of Gregory. Their provincial country leira in resembling the words le-Ira seemed in his mind to imply that they ought to be plucked from the wrath of God – And when told that their kings names was called Ella the consonancy(?) of its sound, with the idea that floating over his mind completed the impression of the whole scene Like the leaping forth of the living waters came at Moses voice from the Flinty Rock was the glowing exclamation of the good old man Hallelujah! The praise of the creating deity must be sung in those regions He interceded with the Pontiff and was denied the boon he asked for the good of the dark minded the poor the needy. Four short years passed and he became the Pontiff the nurtured seed planted in his bosom by sight of the Angle boys had grown to maturity and on the instant he sent forth to that dark land the messengers of **(page 13)** light with the glad tidings of great joy; like the wild race of the fair cross of Scotland her old symbol of war which flew fast and far over mountain dell and lake and river! Flew the symbol merry to men ‘Twas sunlight to the land of joys and fears. ‘Twas true life to the rude men whom Cesar had found clad in skins of beasts, and dwelling in trees and mud rocks, half human in appearance – all brute in mind The flame has spread for centauries and purer light flashes from her shrines, and the wide world every land and every sea tells the glory of the Angels their might and power, the wonderous work of the single thought germinating in the brain of the roman Priests

We won’t apologize for leaving Jim for a moment, the story we have told you is well attested it comes from truest history of the anglo Saxons, a work abounding in interesting facts written in beautiful style and calculated to aim upon the mind of any who wish to do themselves the pleasure of perusing it

We have seen the younger Push me ta ha dressed as a gentleman and he was capable of acting out the character but a day would intervene and he had returned to his ways of wildness he liked not to be cramped by fashion he wished to be free as the free wind of his native forest in thought word and dress; he would describe his feelings in very fluent speeches and his merry laugh with his index of freedom from all care and fondness for fun would sing out at the recital causing those to join in engagement of the joke who pitied the loss to himself and race of one so endowed with capacity of good to them and the honored tribes of the West The last time we saw Jim was about the year 1826 ‘twas a bright afternoon we were strolling after sch **(page 14)** school hours on the Bluff, a gallant steamer was about landing. The sound of martial music came from a band stationed on her deck the old familiar tones of one of our national airs stirred up the feelings we all know where and whenever those notes are heard in brilliant array with the starry emblem of the Free floating in the glad breeze above them, stood the Pioneer corpse of a distant fortress in the Far West on the waters of the Yellow Stone. Jim was near us the blood of the old General then in the spirit land bounded through his frame, each muscle swelled his brest heaved quick and fast and his fiery glance told a wish for foray wild. The mantle of the elder Push me ta ha was upon him and quick as the thought itself he was among

the band and of them a soldier like ~~the~~ his father and under the same banner a soldier of fortune he had no tie to bind him to any spot he went forth as did the as did the early adventurers of Spain and other lands of the older hemisphere to see scenes of excitement in the wild west where boundless space for more extended wanderings and wilder and more daring. To him more seducing adventures might be had for the seeking. We have an indistinct recollection of hearing of his death some few years after

(pages 15,16 blank)

THE NATCHEZ

NO. 3

(page 17) Of all the Indians known to the french the Natchez were most servicable, they received them on their first entrance into the country with that hospitality which mark the noble mind gave them lands leaving the selection of them to the French themselves for said the Grand Sun the world is wide enough for the Natchez and their friend the French they should walk peacibly in the same paths generosity of purpose and highest magnanimity marked all their intercourse with the French they fed them with the fruits of their labour supplied them with their domestic fowls in abundance aided them in the chase and laboured with them in the erection of their buildings. Iberville visited them first about A.D. 1700 he was delighted with the country and charmed with its inhabitants he remained for some time with them cultivating their friendship and exploring the country with the view to the settlement of a colony he was the esteemed of the sun and other chiefs or lesser suns and obtained from them the site for a town and fort, the spot on which the City of Natchez now stands Familiar as was Iberville with the indians from the coast of Florida to the extreme extent of the French dominion throughout the continent to the Natchez he gives the pa... as being more advanced in civilization and those ruder refinements which mark the advancement of a nation gradually emerging from the shades of barbarish he characterizes them as noble generous brave inclined to to the pursuits of peace but by the same qualities rendered more terrible in war. The first French settlement was made in 1716 at Natchez **(page 18)** Fort Rosalie a remnant of whose earthen bastions still remains – was built and several store houses & dwellings erected – settlers at various times planted themselves among the Indians and all were alike received with open arms a large party whom the Government sent out to colonize this district, and were scattered through the surrounding country mostly on St Catharines and in that vicinity, some few of them penetrated the country as far north as Yazoo and then settled and erecting for their deffence a fort which was destroyed in 1723 by the

Chickasaws. The gay volatile character of the French colonists contrasted as it has to the last degree with the morose dignity of the Indian nevertheless ever here as it in every instance when they came in contact with the wild man of the forest upon his esteem that plasticity which the French possess to a degree beyond any nation known assimilated their habits to those of the savage & the simple artlessness which now characterizes the french of Acadia those on the banks of the Arkansas and in the remote settlements of Louisiana growing out of kind feelings the offspring of hearts not too hardy pressed by care made them soon boon companions of the Natchez. For years they dwelt thus pursuing in friendship the thousand pleasures which the genial clime scattered profuse around their paths – the noble forests of the land pristine beauty clothed the hill top and sloping and shadowy dell “the rich glory of earth” in verdant bower shaded the sweet streams and the dim woodland aisles with the rich drapery of varied vine templed then in the sweet springtime to forest sport. The sylvan sports of old dreamed of when the spirit of the **(page 19)** good were made fawns and water spirits and nymphs and maids and water gods. We wonder not that the amiable Chateaubriand chosed for the scene of his beautiful romance the lovely land of the Natchez for to those who have an eye for beauty countless scenes are there o’er all the land where beauty of every varied shade may be found we were reared in its midst and have loved it from a child and oh the rich gushings of thought, though our words can tell not amid which we have revelled have been to us bequest richer than those wealth could bestow the dreams of gladness which have lived with us amid those scenes and awakened now by a thousand sweet recolections

A look or tone of musics seraph strain(?)
Awaken those scenes of joy – those dreams again

To wander as we have done amid the wild forest scenery, roam along the banks of the St. Catharine or upon the crystal waters of second Creek where the magnificent magnolia and the tall oaks stretch their leafy canopy over the bright stream and shaded nook sequestered dell is seen stand upon the paths of the highlands and gaze on all the glory round, look from our own Bluffs at morn at noon or dying eve or when the lustered heavens of the glad summer times, queenly night gleams with the brightnefs of diamond beauty that light like the beauty of a dark eyed woman go with us when the Sun Waters comes laden with the snowy treasure from the dark arctic that zone where Natures trance chills all summer; this image of eternal and sublime – the mighty river whose flood raises the sunbeams of every clime and like some god of olden times makes old ocean give way to his mighty coming where pours not his tribute but his treasures out upon that oceans boundlessnefs **(page 20)** Go with us to you tall cliffs the White Cliffs at that hour of spring when the days golden eye is closing itself for sleep look out upon the scene above around below, or cast your glance with farthest reach across the wide extent of lowland and drink in the matchless beauty of the scene and you will with us feel the glad delight spring from within and take wing with thought to roam free far and wide amid its glories

Give give us the voice that we may tell
 Of the beauties bright that round us dwell
 Room room for the thought which flies away
 To catch the beams of the dying days

“Time Sacrilege”

For an eye incapable of appreciating those beauties to gaze upon them as it was of old amid the Jewish ceremonies high crime for others than those pure and holy to enter within the sacred portions of the temple as it was amid the Natchez for others than the delegated Priesthood to feed the Eternal Fire to gaze upon its halowed flame

Poor historians dear reader you may think us but we for a moment left one theme that we might “mid hours when the exercises was forbidden us roam in thought amid the beauties we so love to look upon” twas a debt we owed the hours of former enjoyment, excuse us and we will not again trouble with our musings when given as such and disconnected from historic details To resume that detail the opinion formed by Iberville of the unflinching bravery of the Natchez their will and power to protect themselves from injury made the French for a time cautious in their conduct returning kindnefs for kindness, but as in most instances had continued for some years on the most amicable and friendly terms encroached upon the Natchez infringing slightly on their rights (**page 21**) and thereby exciting their jealousy. The Natchez had in every instance shown the strongest disposition to oblige and had from the first settlement of the colony proved themselves exceedingly useful But the bright dream was interrupted the commandant M de Chopart a haughty and overbearing man unfitted for the post he held by the vices which made him contemptible even to the Indians on the occurrence of the first difficulty treated them with indignation and injustice It happened toward the latter part of the summer of 1723 the circumstances are as follows

An old Natchez warrior had obtained credit of a soldier for a small amount one agreed during the ripening and gathering of the crops to deliver corn as payment, about the commencement of the harvest season the old warrior visited the Fort, the soldier met him and demanded his pay he answered that the corn was too green to be gathered but that as soon as possible it should be delivered, not satisfied with this reasonable excuse the soldier threatened to beat the old man, which so aroused the old warriors feelings, that he returned from the Fort and challenged his opponent to single combat The soldier with that meanness common to the low minded and vulgar which under similar circumstances causes the curr distant though he be to ape the valiant mastiff retreated and raised the cry of Murder! Murder! When the old man too proud to vent his ire upon an unworthy foe turned upon his heel and departed from his village – the Guard was ordered by some one authorized to fire and one was so imprudent as to do so

the old warrior received a mortal wound no punishment was inflicted upon the perpetrators of this dastardly act they received a slight reprimand from M de Chopard who had taken pains on other **(page 22)** other occasions to render himself obnoxious to the Indians. Revenge that dark passion of the human heart which refinement removes not, and which nought but purest religion in thought and practice can obviate – that passion one of the fostered and predominant features in the Indian character; prompted the Natchez to take arms but revenge alone was not the only inducement they had for highest patriotism warranted the steps redress had been demanded and denied and the blood of a noble warrior a distinguished brave called aloud for ~~revenge~~ vengeance on the dark ungrateful foe! They attacked the French and killed many of those settled on the St. Catharine and below Fort Rosalie! At last one of (serp...?) the lesser Suns the Stung Serpent a chief of influence and distinguished for his ability in council and in field was prevailed on by the French to whom he was partial to interfere a truce was the result and a treaty was finally concluded by which peace was restored confidence reinstated and all former enmities appeared to be buried in oblivion. This peace had no other effect than to lull the Natchez into security and to precipitate the French into the blackest treachery – The treaty was duly ratified by M de Bainville or rather the Major General who shortly after arrived from New Orleans – The winter of 1723-24 succeeding this was the severest ever experienced by the Natchez, an old warrior says the rain fell in icicles, and so intense was the cold as to astonish the oldest of the nation – The French now ripe for the full development of their treachery was advised that M-de-Bainville would be with them shortly aided by such assistance as to punish the Natchez his information was given privately to M-de-Chopart and as private was his arrival in **(page 23)** conveying his information he had taken the precaution require the commandant to seize all the nations who might on the day of his expected arrival visit the Fort. He arrived as appointed having advanced from New Orleans in the most secret manner he brought with him regular troops citizens and friendly Indians to the number of seven hundred men – Immediately on his arrival he picked a flaw in the treaty so lately ratified (some say by himself) and so friendly kept by the Natchez and without delay attacked them in their huts slaughtering indiscriminately all ages and sex after which as the price of peace he demanded the head of one of the Suns whom he styled a mischievous Chief – with this demand they were compelled to comply – But from this time fourth the black ingratitude of the French their base violation of a treaty which the poor untutored Indian held inviolable - the foul wrong done them by the serpent they had warmed into being kept alive that brooding thought – these were the themes that filled their heads – and with truth they believed the land was not as the Great Sun of the tribe had said wide enough for the French and Themselves, one or the other must be blotted out – the means to attain this end was the burden of that thought and they for long months worked the matter in their own minds to the consummation of their scheme, day by day the encroachments of the French increased, and their love of rapine grew with their rapidly increasing numbers – The Natchez anticipated a state more dreadful to those of the free thought, than death itself – they feared an assumption of starving by the French, and with the

noble daring of a free people who rightly esteemed the rich inheritance they determined to make one last effort in defiance of their homes, their families, their freedom **(page 24)** to die if it might be so, but living or dead to breathe to the last the air of Liberty

Theirs was that courage proud and high
 First born of that sweet liberty
 Which knowing how fears not to die

Jan 10th 1848

THE NATCHEZ

No. 4

(page 25) Perceiving as did the Natchez no medium between their own destruction and the total annihilation of the French, they became each day more thoughtful distrustful, pensive and melancholy and as mentioned at the close of the last (Number) extremely cautious in devising means of future security – Shortly after the last outbreak on the part of the French one of the superior officers accidentally in his rambles met the Stung Serpent with whom he had formerly been on the most friendly terms – the Serpent maintaining a moody silence endeavored to shun him, why said the officer addressing him do you seek to avoid me we were once friends, we are so no longer – The proud chieftan one of the noblest of the Natchez turned upon him his glance of fiery indignation and replied in the thrilling tones of nature's eloquence in speed detailing the wrongs done his people and referring to the thousand benefits bestowed by them upon the ungrateful French, and among other things observed "Why did the French come to our country" we went not to seek them – they asked for land we gave it – enough enough was there for them and us – the same sun beamed – the same paths was open before us and we would have walked in it as friends but would not you wanted food our labours supplied you, we promised to till for you your fields and to build your houses, we have done so. The officer one of the few of right feeling among the band knew the truth of the Stung Serpent's tale of wrong and made no reply – The Natchez being well convinced that they could not openly contend with the French were the more patient of injury and they resolved to bear with them until the day of revenge arrived affairs continued in this state until "29 when a **(page 26)** circumstance occurred which for a time filled the Natchez with hope and caused them to show their joy in high exaltation but which in the end precipitated their wished for vengeance and finally plunge them in ruin – M de Chepard the commandant of

Fort Rosalie had so repeatedly been guilty of high misdemeanor and acts of violence in his administration as to render an investigation indispensably necessary and for this purpose was ordered to New Orleans to undergo the requisite scrutiny into his conduct – Ever disliked by the Natchez for his rapacity and the thousand crimes growing out of his love of rapine – his departure by them was hailed by universal joy but it was of short duration M-de-Perier, commandant general of the province and residing at New Orleans, having but lately arrived and being entirely unacquainted with the character of Chopart allowed himself to be persuaded by the winning ways of the latter, into the belief that he was of all men the most peculiarly fitted for the post of commandant at Natchez. His gross misconduct was glossed over by his friends and M Perier was induced to reinstate him in his office unconscious that he was placing a proud and noble race in the power of one, who was in all respects their opposite. On his return to his post he considered himself now so firmly fixed as to indulge to the full extent his malice against the Natchez on account of his former difficulties with them, but more particularly in consequence of the joys evinced by them at the prospect of his disgrace, that bitterness that marks the mean mind causing it to descend in order to attain its end – induced him to form plans for the purpose of breaking down the proud spirit of the Children of the Sun annoyed them by petty exactions increased and unauthorized by the treaty, and finally drove them to the last tragic act which covered the hills of Natchez with the blood of **(page 27)** the entire colony. “Twas thus on his return from New Orleans his reins of grandeur had increased to such an extent that he was determined to found a city which should rival the former – for this purpose he caused the lands of the colony granted by the Natchez to be examined – no spot was wide enough for this seat of magnificence, and to fill up the cup of misery for the gallant Indians he demanded of them the surrender of their village of the White Apple situated about ½ **(or 12 ?)** miles south of the City of Natchez, 3 miles from the Mississippi and within a short distance of Second Creek – a lovely spot where the gently undulating grounds gradually slope to the valley of the sweet stream and containing a square league with the homes of the happy and peaceful race who had “neath lovers rivalling those of Arcadia, or the fallen graces of old (Tempes sunt benevolentia)[~~preceding crossed out; replaced with:~~ times sweet embowered vale] buried in sweet seclusion their lives running on as soft and gentle as the waters of the sunny stream which rolled its crystal flood within their view – sweet scene of peace content and joy even to this day though shorn somewhat of its forest glories yet for quiet beauty scarce surpassed we have thought that an air of softened light hung round it as we oft lingered in its vicinity at morn at noon at eve or at mid hour of queenly night when returning from some wild jaunt through the forest which crown the Cliffs far to the right or from the wild demiswamp from hunt or angling. That softened light told of by a beautiful writer which hangs like a dreaming mist over the sweet sequestered vallies that lend their beauty to the Hudson would that his words was ours to tell the beauty of this and other scenes in this vicinity one thought may at future time take wing and gather in the image then so sweetly pictured but the words were wasted to give the reader participation in the glowing participations glories then profusely thrown

wide and far by Nature's lavishing hand. In accordance with his determination Chopart sent for the Sun of the White Apple (**page 28**) told him of his splendid intentions, and directed him to clear away the huts of the Village and remove to another place. The Sun replied that their ancestors had resided there for ~~years~~ ages and that it was good for them to be there "good for their descendents to live upon the spot endeared to their nation by a thousand tender ties sacred too as the seat of one of the temples of their worship and as the resting place of many a proud warrior of old and matron sire and son and maiden fair. In the language of an eloquent chief of our own day – the bones of our forbathers cannot rise and go with us – where they sleep we their sons shall sleep". This noble and dignified language of the Sun, struck no vibrating chord in the heart of Chopart that heart festering in vice and foul with all foulest feelings every bad passion felt no corresponding throb to the proud eloquence of feeling employed by the savage, he blunted in sympathy and lost to virtue truth and shame mocked that pure feeling that beautiful sympathy which binds us to the spot where those we we love and cherish on earth lie enwrapped in the mantle of the shadowing king – But few months since it was our lot to meet with a venerable imigrant from the Emerald Isle who lived far away to the north had a son who wandered to this vicinity in search of fortunes he sought for wealth but found a tomb long months after the old man heard of his death – we met him then far from his home in search of his sons grave, the gude wife sent me and she bade me bring her a stone from his cairn why asked we did you not send your elder son. Said he it was far off he did'nt know the people or the country and we thought he too might be lost. "I was old and but little use to any one and at the ould womans... packed up my wallet and came the long journey the old mans tale was interesting to us he spoke in calm subdued tones suited to the theme and then he told of his perils upon the waters the steamboats to him was matters of wonder "to think (**page 29**) said he, I left P. only ten days since and to look at the map I thought I should never see the old woman again

This beautiful feeling was beyond the comprehension of Chopart and he ordered the Sun to remove within a few days or he should repent his disobedience. The Sun for a moment expostulated with him but this rendered the brutal Chopart more outrageous and he told the sun "twas his fixed resolve to be obeyed without delay. The Indian without disclosing any emotions and with observing that he would assemble the nobles of his village, the council to ~~deliver~~ reply to the commandant that the corn was yet young and that their fowls were wild laying their eggs. That if they should remain at present, the chickens and corn would be lost both to the French and themselves as the French was not numerous enough to tend all the corn they had sown in their fields. This reasonable proposition was made to the commandant who rejected it threatening to chastize them if he was not obeyed within the time limited. The Sun also acted as ambassador reported this haughty answer on his return. The council debated the question which says one of the authorities consulted by us with great simplicity of manner was knotty the policy of the council was to obtain time. They therefore repared again to Chopard that they should be allowed to stay in

their village until they harvested their corn and grain on condition that each hut should pay him in so many moons a basket of corn and a fowl. The Natchez partly understood his character and knew that his rapacity would induce him to except with avidity the terms offered. The Sun again called on the commandant and proposed to pay the stipulated tribute if he would wait until the "first Colds" the october frosts the offer was accepted by Chopart with joy which his cupidity would not allow him to restrain in presence of the proud but humiliated chief who keenly felt the degradation of his position his keen glance gleamed with **(page 30)** with flushes of vengence when he saw the last(?) was taken his throbbing temples told the boiling of his bloody thoughts within him but Chopart was blinded to the certain consequences of his tyranny he with bland swavity of manner and smooth and silv'ry tongue and in words flowing in liquid sounds told the sun that he agreed to the offer out of favour to a Nation so beloved by him and the French who had ever been kind to them the Sun surprised to hear his judgement of character and estimate notion(?) with equal blandness of manner and with words soft as the lute note expressed himself as delighted as he was – but "twas the glad delight which glistens in the eye of the mountain cat when couched for a sudden spring twas the joy we have noted in the eye of that dread serpent of our clime the Rattle Snake when coiled all taut with head erect and quivering tongue ready an instant to strike the bold invader of his haunts we have looked often on the latter and on such occasions the Satan like expression the serpent of Du Buffes painting of Eve Tempted where the very poison takes form and becomes visible in the breath the expression stood living before us but not more lifelike than the matchlefs painting that serpent hath not in its anger glanced so dreadful as the speaking eye of the red man when aroused

The Sun returned once more to his village his steps told the welcome news that delay had obtained that delay they had so ardently hoped for in order to give time to wreak their vengence in one dreadful blow wide in extent as the colony itself for their full intent was that no Frenchman should be left living among them. In our next we shall proceed to detail their plans formed for the attainment of this object. Those debates are lengthy more so than the cursory reader would care for although of interest as in the language of any people the observing eye cannot fail to detect the marked characteristics of the race and in **(page 31)** stances those richer shades of distinction which marked the varieties of human character then distinguished when of sought for elsewhere could not be found **(page 32 blank)**

THE NATCHEZ

No. 5

(page 33)The sun after detailing the result of his mission stated to the council necessary wisely to avail themselves of the time allowed them to concert the proper measures for carrying their design into execution for said he the French grow more dangerous as they increase in numbers. He recalled in strong language to their recollection the unprovoked war made upon them in violation of the treaty concluded between them and by themselves truly faithfully kept; that this war having been directed more particularly against their village it became them to be among the first to consider the means of a just and certain revenge; that this enterprise being of the last(?) importance to them as a nation required much secrecy and policy and that it was more than ever necessary to cajole the Commandant requiring as it does neater reflection let us said he first bring the matter before the Grand Sun and his council where is assembled the highest wisdom of the Nation that at present they should return and again meet in a few days to mature their plan, in the course of a few days he again assembled them having in the meantime ascertained through the old men of the village that the opinion was unanimous in relation to the destruction of the French they proceeded with all possible care and omitted nothing to ensure success. The Sun of the Apple a man of distinguished ability among the Natchez undertook to rise over the Grand Sun the petty Suns and any others who might be opposed to their views; eloquent feeling and full of the proud chivalry of his race, respected for his station and all the rude virtues which ever rise the esteem of the Indian. He found no difficulty in attaining his object The Grand Sun scarce arrived at mature years was the son of a Frenchman who had taken for his wife the Stung Arm a female sun having however had but little personal correspondence with the French his pride of character and station prevented him being influenced by the relationship to the **(page 34)** white man The result was the sun of the Apple was delegated with the necessary power from the Grand Sun to ratify the proceedings of the great council of the nation which was called secretly together at the White Apple Village This council fixed upon one of those days when the offering of corn and fowls was to be made to the Commandant for the general massacre of the colony when a larger number of them than usual should repair to the Fort from this and other villages that at a signal they should seize the guard obtain possession of the Fort and out buildings and use the arms of the French against their owners. They then appointed embassies to their allies abroad naming for this important purpose their most aged and distinguished nobles, who were attended each by a guard of honor. They were all on the pain of death charged to be profoundly silent in the conduct of their mission. So well were their measures taken that the French had no knowledge of the departure of the numerous ambassadors dispatched to the various tribes The lower order of the people not as yet being fully aware of the matter were filled with uneasiness & a thousand vague surmises were afloat among them as to the portentous signs of

the times. Of all the nation beyond the immediate council the Female Suns alone had the right to demand an expostulation prudence dictated however that on this occasion that privilege should be refused this aroused the angry passions of several and among them the Stung Arm a woman of proud imperious temper refusing to submit to any curtailment of her privileges and with that determination which mark the strong minded She determined to fathom the secret and with woman's wit she commenced by reproaching her son with wants of confidence in not informing his mother of the measures under deliberation. Then with returning kindness she breathed the sweet words of motherly affection referring to the tendernefs with **(page 35)** which she had watched over his infant hours, how her eye had in youths glad times glistened at his success in the games with his youthful companions She enquired of him the object of the numerous embassies his reply that the Natchez wished to renew their amicable relations with their allies to whom they had not sent for a long time past. She seemed satisfied with this reply and commending him for a kind son left him for the time. The return of the embassies a few weeks afterwards again called the council to secret session an unusual thing with them as it had ever been customary to meet in Public and free admission allowed to all the exclusions of the female Suns aroused to greater violence the angry feelings of the Stung Arm prudence alone restrained her from a public exhibition of her rage. The report of the ambassadors was most favorable, all the nations approving their plans and agreeing to join with them in exterminating the French, the Choctaws binding themselves to destroy all the French settled below the Natchez and that as the Tu-ni-cas and oumas were too much wedded to French to join the massacre they should be involved in the general destruction. The Chickasaws were to take charge of the settlements on Yazoo. A bundle of rods containing a number of sticks one for each day until the fatal period arrived, all duplicates was sent to each of the tribes the Natchez themselves returning one, this bundle was placed most securely as a sacred deposite and from which each day a stick should be withdrawn and destroyed in order that there might be no mistake to time and that the massacre should be general throughout the entire colony. The Stung Arm with wily art persuaded her son to accompany her on the day after the council to the village of the Meal to visit a sick relation during this visit she succeeded in drawing from him the details of the plan, (in one of the works we have referred to a long and ample narration **(page 36)** is given of the conversation it is interesting only for its simplicity and the artlessness which apparently marked the Stung Arm, she having thus obtained the desired information was now only anxious to defeat the plan that she might avenge the insult and wrong she believed put upon her by her exclusion from the council. She managed by different times and by various means to convey information to the Commandant in such a manner as not to implicate herself. Seeing no note of preparation on the part of the French she in person desired a soldier to tell M De Chopard that the Natchez had lost their senses to be upon his guard for danger surrounded him This message was faithfully delivered but Chopard believing it a trick to alarm punished the poor fellow for his pains. I will not take a single step towards repairing the Fort as the Natchez will then believe I fear them.

Still determined to mar the plot the traitress under the privilege of her caste entered the holy place of the temple where was deposited the bundle of Sticks taking for several days in succession a few in order that she might not be suspected and hoping by this means to hasten the day thereby giving the more distant colonies an opportunity of averting the blow, and knowing at the same time that if the day was anticipated the Chickasaws who was to send a party of warriors to Natchez to join in the massacre would have good cause for offense. Time after time she sent messages to Chopart who at one time had Seven of his soldiers in irons for bringing him this information he treated them as cowards telling them they feared their shadows That the Natchez feared him too much to attempt their old tricks. Again the Stung Arm risked her own safty by going in person to the Lieutenant and detailing to him the minutest particulars of the plan. It has been beautifully and with truth remarked that when woman for purposes of vengence or when giving sway to the wild passions of any notion becomes a transgressor. Her rapid pro **(page 37)** progress downward mocks the speed of man. As the crystal field of Ice the glacier that has long hung with dazzling purity on the mountain height when loosed from its stay rushes down with a velocity ef accelerated by its coldness, so it is when passion has melted the virgin snow of womans character a moral avalanche ensues destroying in the wild rivalry of its mad career all then that was of purity of beauty and good report. The Stung Arm had from her youth been one of the proudest of the proud to her belonged the high honor of giving to the Natchez the highest dignitary of the tribe, one invested with sacred with sacred character, herself in youth possessed of beauty and all the graces becoming her station for she was the noblest of the land. Twas strange that she should descend from her high pinnacle of pride to become the wife of the Frenchman this first false step led her on from crime to crime until finally as we have seen she fitted herself to become the foul fiend seeking to destroy her proud tribe, to take from them not their glory and honor alone but all else. Notwithstanding the numerous hints and many messages received by the Commandant, he left the Fort in company with several of his officers on the evening preceeding the fatal day (the Eve of St. Andrews of 1729) on a party of pleasure passing the night in gay and festive dance and song at the Grand Village of the Natchez, and did not return to the Fort Rosalie until sunrise the following morning The day which was to bathe in blood every white individual of the Colony, the Commandant still wreaking with the fumes of his nights debauch sent an impudent message to the Grand Sun asking whether the stories told were true the Sun returned an answer complimentary to the overerring vanity of Chopart, to him satisfactory

He repaired to his residence just below the Fort upon the point jutting out towards the river part of which still retains original position the balance having sunk during the great "shake" at New Madrid in December 1811 it had **(page 38)** been undermined by numerous springs which poured from its base and the superstratum by the shock sunk to its present position. The Natchez on that eventful eve towards its close we presume the god of their worship shone out

giving his golden glory to the rich autumnal scene tinting the wide forest and hill tops distant heights and throwing his rich mantlings ~~around~~ over the bosom of the Sun Water as we have oft witnessed during this month of glorious harvest time made their appearance at the Fort in unusual numbers laden with the offering of corn and fowls, far in the rear might be seen one a poor degraded being of the lowest cast bearing in his hand a large wooden hatchet – the duty of each man was known and on the signal (the firing of a Gun) – the gates of Rosalie were seized the guards disarmed, and the wild shriek and death yell and shrill scream and smothered gurglings of deaths last gasp were heard, and the loud battle cry stung by revenge to loudest pitch filled the wide air with its thunderings Have you heard the wild breakers battling mid the rocks of the Iron(?) shore! Have you heard the dread storm bursts with the wild Tornado such to the ears of the French was that battle cry – Their funeral knell

The destruction was complete not a man of the French lived some few women children & slaves through pity was saved Chopart their cruel enemy was brought forth from his stupor-sleep he was aroused and by proper application sobered – the most degraded of the tribe him we spoke of as bearing the hatchet was selected as his executioner he performed the deed and the last act of revenge was complete in the sacrifice of him who had caused such evils to himself and his colony – the implement was a foul polluted thing consigned to the flames and the victim left as food for carrion

(pages 39,40 blank)

The Natchez

No. 6

(page 41)The settlement about the period of the massacre contained about seven hundred souls and few of whom escaped except among the settlers on the distant plantations to carry the tidings to New Orleans the capital. The Forts on the Yazoo and Ouachita shared the same dreadful fate thus the extreme possessions of the French on the Mississippi which were rapidly progressing to maturity and the most wealthy and promising in the whole colony presented a melancholy picture many a scene of rustic beauty scattered over the sunny vales or on the shaded banks of the St. Catharine was now a smouldering ruin no trace of which now lives the mememto of the dim and shadowy past

The news of this disaster created much consternation in the Capital and many imagined that the fate of their friends was but the precursor of bloody disaster to

themselves. The result anticipated by the Stung Arm in hastening the massacre was as she anticipated the Chickasaw chieftens conceived themselves ill used as their wish was to be present at the sacking of the store houses and the division of the spoils, and although the Natchez offered to divide and yet they were not satisfied, at the same time threatening vengeance for what they believed a breach of faith. The Natchez innocent of intentional envy to them could yet give no explanation of the matter as they were entirely unaware of the treachery of Stung Arm. M. Perire the Governor of Louisiana took active measures to punish them determining to march a sufficient force against them as early as practicable, he sent M. Le Suerer to the Choctaws and Chickasaws to negotiate a treaty with them and engage them to join him against the Natchez.

The French were not aware that those tribes had been connected in the conspiracy and were not a little surprised to find them so willing to join in league against their old allies **(page 42)** The Kings lieutenant M. de Loubois was nominated chief of the expedition, in February or March 1730 he arrived in the vicinity of Natchez and was soon joined by the new allies of the French to the number of fifteen hundred. The army encamped on the Bluffs near Fort Rosalie meeting during their stay of five days with no interruption from the Natchez, after recruiting his men, M. de Loubois marched to the enemys fort a league distant from the spot of his encampment. It is a matter of doubt where this Fort of the Natchez was located it has been supposed by some to have been on the plantation of Col Bengamin (Fatherland) others suppose it was situated on the point of the Bluff just above the bend of the St. Catharine on the place formerly owned by Mr. Quigless. This is a spot susceptible of strong defence and with slight labour and was within a convenient distance of the village situated on the Lynwood plantation of Major James Surget. The dearth of evidence in fact is entirely obscene on this subject! With its capacity of defence induces us to believe that this was the spot of its location it is but a short distance from our city and a lovely ride, let the lover of a free breeze mount his horse just before sunset and ride to this point look out upon the far reaching swamp catching here and there a glimpse of the river, see the sun sink amid the sea of golden clouds which surround his vision in the bright summertime then wind his way down the Bluff seeking the shaded recesses of the valley of the St. Catharines and on natures verdant lawn follow upward the course of the creek amid the dense forest of willows or the tall Cheiba or Cottonwood having on the right the rich forest of oak which crowns the hills on the left the creek and through the long vista catching a hurried glance of the wide fields of Belmont, and after striking the main road near the lower St. Catharine bridge, and if he enjoys not the wild ramble if he comes not again into the worlds busy throng with **(page 43)** with a better thought and a lighter heart, he is no lover of nature no boon companion for us in our wild rambles through the dim woods afar.

The Natchez anticipating the attack prepared themselves well by adding the defence of their strong position. The French having several pieces of cannon with them opened their trenches and for several days fired upon the Fort with but

little injury or effect selecting an nearer position they were more successful and in the course of a short time a flag of truce was sent from the fort with an offer to release all the captives taken at the time of the Massacre provided a lasting treaty of peace was made with them and they were allowed to live peacefully at their old village with sacred pledge that they should not be interfered with in future. An equivocal answer was returned by Loubois as he was not disposed to grant conditions so favourable to the Natchez – another account states that he accepted their terms and assumed those of peace – we doubt this as the former was more in keeping with the previous conduct of the French towards them. Deception was practised on both sides and the wily French were completely duped by their lefts civilized but more crafty foes. The wish of the Natchez was for an opportunity to leave their old ~~houses~~ homes and seek others in the west where removed from the French they could live undisturbed and enjoy peace as of old and that calm content which until the arrival of the French among them blessed their quiet life with sweet serenity. Various terms were proposed and rejected by both parties. At length it was determined that the prisoners should be given up the next day and that on the day following the Natchez should evacuate the Fort then destroying it and once more returning to their homes – Loubois thinking that he had by this skillful arrangement (page 44) trapped them, was much pleased the Natchez were as much delighted for from the peculiar location of the fort which was invested only on the northern and eastern sides they could therefore carry on their operations for removal under cover of the Bluff and dense swamp which was aided by the darkness of the night & and their characteristic caution would ensure their escape without doubt

The next day arrived and according to arrangement the prisoners were surrendered into the hands of the allies of the French from whom the latter afterwards had difficulty in obtaining them in which they did not succeed until they paid the sum stipulated by M. de Surier for their assistance in the expedition, with the Natchez during that day matters moved so quietly as to lull all suspicion of their intention. The still hour of midnight arrived no note of preparation was heard no signal rocket no stirring drum sleep was not with them on that eventful occasion when they were again to become homeless wanderers as tradition told their fathers had been of old with slow and solemn march and steadied tread at that dark hour when their Bright God was to them buried in profoundest slumbers, they bade adieu to their beautiful dwelling place and fled their homes of olden time breaking asunder a thousand associations near and dear to them throwing back from their gaze the memories of the glorious past and once more launching upon the waves of the boundless and unseen future to them doubly dark when contrasted with the pleasures known and enjoyed during their long and happy residence upon the sunny stream and wooded slope and shaded dell of the land whose name alone now remains as the only remnant and memento of

That proud tribe of old
(page 45)

That proud tribe of old
 Its daughters fair and warriors bold
 With whom; of this glorious clime
 Amid those wilds in early time
 No tribe then known could e're compare
 In warriors bold or daughters fair
 For thoughts enobling proud and high
 Which lent to them high dignity

Scilently and unobserved by the French they removed loaded with their baggage and the plunder of Fort Rosalies store houses and crossed the Mississippi so complete and masterly were their arrangements that the French on discovering their escape the next morning could find no traces of their flight – Masterly it must have been for the French allies who was equally alive to all the stratigem of war, and with their assistence neather the manner of their retreat or the course of could be found, and it was not until some months afterwards that M. Perier after diligent enquiry ascertained they had retreated west, amid the wild swamps dense forests and breaks of Louisiana They indeed before discovered planned an expedition against the Tu-ni-cas exterminating the almost the whole tribe

M. de Loubois on discovering their retreat from the Fort and finding no traces of them feared an ambuscade or as his soldiers whispered some diablerie and retreated in haste to Fort Rosalie erecting for defence a terrace Fort instead of the insecure shackadee formerly deemed sufficient, it is the remains of the latter erection which still stands the only memento of French domination in the vicinity of Natchez. After completing the Fort M. de Loubois leaving M du Crenet in command with a hundred (**page 46**) and twenty men well supplied with cannon and amunition, left for New Orleans The Choctaws Chickasaws and Tunicas returned home we neglected mentioning it the proper place, that the latter who were the constant allies of the French were with them from the commencement of the expidition from this cause and the old grudge existing between them and the Natchez arose the expedition which terminated in the extermination of the Tunicas, one of the writers from whom we have gained this compilation states that the Natchez on their retreat being well supplied with canoes made for Red River then upwards to the mouth of the Black and up that stream to Silver Creek and then to Silver Lake there is now no stream of that name known in that vicinity from the circumstance of several mounds existing in the immediate vicinity of the mouth of Little River and above its confluence with the Oauchita and Yazoo (the three forming black river) we are of opinion that Little River is the stream then known as “Silver Stream” or as we think it might more appropriately be called Silver Lake Another writer in speaking of the route of the Missieurs Perier upon the expidition which resulted in the final destruction of the Natchez, speaks of the same stream, others again fix the Silver stream and Lake at a point some six miles below Natchitoches as far as our knowledge extends of the geography of that section of country we do not believe there is water communication from the mouth of Little River up that stream to Natchitoches or the point refered to. At

that early period little was known of that district and the errors once made others follow without proper examination in the footsteps of those preceding them

(page 47) We were once only and for a short time in the vicinity of the point we believe the true spot, and hope to be again should opportunity offer we shall take pleasure in tracing as far as feeble abilities will allow, the error if it exists We shall append a description of the mounds mentioned together with their dimensions as they existed in 1812 and also in 1842 a lapse of thirty years a short period in the history of nations but which has filled the rich valley of the Louisiana in the in this vicinity with a teeming population yet the mounds stand in the original grandeur of their structure a striking object which fixes the eye of the wanderer **(page 48 blank)**

(page 49)

The Natchez

No. 7

The Natchez on their arrival at the spot situated for their new homes immediately commenced the erection of a Fort which they deemed of sufficient strength to repel any attack which might be made upon them

M. Perier acertaining that his information in relation to their location was correct intended as soon as sufficiently reinforced to search for and attack them he wrote to the court an account of the tragedy of Fort Rosalie and requested urgently that succor might be sent forward immediately as the existence of the remaining posts of the colony depended upon early and efficient means being taken to chastise the Natchez for the massacre

The Company under the grant and protection of the King discouraged by the awful disaster gave up their charter to him again as their efforts to colonize this district of country had been attended with enormous expense for which as yet they had received no return. The Company at the same time ceded to the King the stores of every kind and description

M Perier who had held the office of Governor of Louisiana by appointment from the French West Indies Company was continued in office by the King at the same time his brother arrived in one of the kings ships under command of De Salvert with the succor demanded one hundred and fifty men soldiers of the

marine. The Messieurs Perin shortly after sent forth in the expedition against the Natchez whom they found as before mentioned one hundred and eighty miles from the mouth of Red River. The Natchez on the approach of the French shut themselves in their Fort and dressed themselves in their gayest habiliments, painted their faces and exposing part of their bodies in **(page 50)** warriors style and made a vigorous sally which resembled a transport of rage more than the calmness of valor. They were driven back with loss – and by the opening of the enemys mortars were confined to their fort. A regular investment was made by the French and their batteries were kept constantly in play, a bomb truly armed fell in the centre of the fort causing immense havoc among the women and children whose wild shrieks and cries was heard above the roar of the deep mouthed artillery whose thunder tones echoed far and wide through the wild forest. The anguish occasioned by this dreadful occasion caused the Natchez to throw out a signal for truce terms were proposed others offered but none suitable to both parties. The day was spent in this fruitless effort of the Natchez to make honorable terms night coming on double guards were placed to prevent their escape which it was supposed would be attempted and in fact it was but the French being on the qui vive met them and drove by far the largest number back into the Fort some few escaped and joining a hunting party which had been off at a distance for game and were unable to join their companions in the Fort They remained in the vicinity until the fate of their tribe was sealed, and claimed protection from the Chickasaws which according to immemorial custom was granted and they were incorporated into that tribe When quite a youth we saw a band of Chickasaws on a trading expedition to Natchez among them we were struck with the noble appearance of two of the number tall and sinewy frame peering proudly above their fellows they were of lighter complexion and finer countenances than any Indian we had ever seen our curiosity was excited and upon enquiring we were told they were descendants of that portion of the Natchez which on that occasion attached themselves to the Chickasaws, of the truth of this reply **(page 51)** we cannot vouch, but our youthful fancy clothed them with a brighter glory borrowed doubtless from our dreamings of the noble tribe of old the gallant Natchez. In vain were the efforts of this gallant band their means of defence against the French mortars were of but little avail a gallant fire was kept up incessingly men women and children the noble and brave were falling each moment beneath the leaden messengers of death – once more amid the thunderings of the artillery and rising above the din of battle was heard the loud and wailing plaints of a song unknown to the French 'twas not a song of festal hours nor the dread battle cry familiar to the ears of all enemys of the Natchez No 'twas their death song heard alone when the brave met death fearlessly boasting in thrilling tones the deeds of their fathers and their own feats of daring(?). The gates of the Fort was seen to open and lo in solemn and slow march came forth the suns and nobles of the tribe in several columns ranged around their wives and children and the holy things of the temple the symbols of their sun worship dear to them as the household deities of Greece and Rome were to the proud of those mighty nations. The French surprised at this bold maneuver for a time stayed their fire thinking the Natchez were coming forward

to supplicate in abject terms pardon and peace – such was not the case loud pealed the notes of the death song its wild funeral tones striking upon the ears of the French like strange unearthly sounds from the spirit land aroused from their surprise the French rushed in disorder upon them surrounding them and with their small arms halberds and other hand to hand arms burst upon them with wildest fury

“The bold Natchez”

(page 52)

This small remnant of the brave
 Who fought nor thought their lives to save
 At bay encircled by their foes
 But skilled in all the arts of war
 These braves by guard kept danger far
 While many a foeman felt their might
 And fell in this ungreatful fight
 They stood – as the three hundred stood
 Of old – opposed to Xerxes flood
 Like the stern rock whose hardy form
 Laughs at the lightnings bolt of harm
 Feels not the fury of the storm
 And this was then Thermopylae
 Faled field of the fearless free
 No bold resolve filled each proud brave
 While fighting o’er their nations grave
 And rushing mid the thickest throng
 Yelled thunder like that death fraught song
 Broke the phalanx round them formed
 And reached the wide plain unharmed
 Swift swift to Silver Lake they sped
 Not as the flying fled they fled
 Reached the green shores then turned again
 Sent their bold war cry over the plain
 As victors of the bloody field
 Loud and long that war cry pealed
 Their gaze was fixed on Sols last ray
 As closed the glory of the day
 An instant more that ray had gone
 Their bright God went in glory down
 These the children of the Sun
 Like that bright god their race had run
 And they leaped form the pebly shores
 And sank ‘neath the wave to rise no more
 But one was left to tell their tale
 Not one their mornful fate to wail
 Not one to lend their funeral bier

(page 53)

Not one to shed for them a tear

The last nobles of the Natchez such was their fate. The proud brave and his gentle wife and his tender child filled one common grave they slept their long sleep 'neath the placid waters of yon lake deep embowered amid the forest wild, and tradition used to tell many a legend of the wild and the wonderful of the spirit songs and battle cry heard at eve when the soft artolian sigh of the spring time sung through the forest and when the storm in wild fury burst upon the lake lashing its mirrored beauty into scenes of wild fury 'twas then that fairys filled the ears with death shriek and harrowing moans; but the day for legend and fairy tales and wanderings of hateful spirits and goblins damned has passed away and facts fill fairys dwelling places

One of our authors tells us that a party of the Natchez were taken prisoners by the French carried to New Orleans and from there sent to Hispaniola and sold as slaves. This is true but the prisoners taken were of the lowest and most degraded caste slaves indeed. Save the foul traitoress the Stung Arm stung by remorse she remained with the degraded the only one of noble blood in the Fort She on her arrival at New Orleans related in detail to guard Choppart against the Massacre traitoress to to her country herself and all else. The French believed her not. She lingered on for long years a poor degraded slave on one of the plantations near New Orleans, despised and avoided as one afflicted with some foul and leprous disease unknelled and uncoffined she died unregretted

(page 54) In detailing this last tragic scene when the proud and noble Natchez were blotted out we have been governed principally by the writings of Mr. Sibley a gentleman of high literary attainments formerly residing near Natchitoches. His sketches of the remains of the different tribes residing in Louisiana in 1806 – 7 are exceedingly interesting, but we believe have never been published separately from the correspondence of the War department of that period of which they form part. He was a man of research and we feel assured that we can rely upon the authenticity of his statements supported as it is by tradition familiar to us of old and other circumstances unnecessary to refer to at this time

(pages 55,56 blank)

The Natchez

(page 57)

No. 8

As to the origin of the Natchez it is of course impossible at this day to determine but from the facts of their history which we with difficulty succeeded in gleaning from written and oral testimony, their traditions which we have in the same manner collected and from a comparison of their customs and religious rites almost precisely and in some instances entirely similar we have no hesitation in giving as our own opinion that they were of Toltecan origin either one of that collateral branches of that family so extensively scattered over Mexico and the southern continent or most probably a tribe directly from the Toltecan head

The Toltecan invaded Mexico about the year 600 of our era their originals as stated by them in their traditions, were situated to the north and north west of Mexico in a country called Hue-hue-ta-pa-lan they were the most refined of any of the nations which at various times invaded the valley of Anahuac or Mexico. They introduced the cultivation of corn and cotton, they made highways lived in towns and cities and over the wide extent of country from the Rio Gila in California to the southern extremity of Peru lie scattered the ruins their monuments of greatness in those architectural remains which to this day excite the wonder and surprise of the traveller, and confound the enquiry of the antiquarian. Among them are pyramids temples grottos bas-reliefs arabesques while their roads, aqueducts and fortresses sufficiently attest their attainments in the arts of life scarce inferior to many civilized nations at the present day and vastly superior to others

(page 58) The ruins of Palanque Copan and Uxmal and the other evidences of ancient grandeur which lie buried in the dense forests of Central America and Mexico and now undergoing an examination (by) Messrs Stephens and Catherwood may hold within them some record by which may be traced the mighty changes and countless revolutions which for long and silent centuries remained in that vast and splendid region the course the rise and fall of empires whose monuments tell the glory and grandeur which once existed when the wildness of nations has long since resumed her sway hiding within her boundless forests those "Lights of other days"

The researches already made by those gentlemen whose daring and fearless perseverance under so many difficulties entitles them to all praise and of extreme interest – the sequel to their first work is impatiently looked for by all alike by the antiquarian, the lover of the wild and wonderful and cursory reader who like ourselves not gifted with taste for research prefers skipping from flower to flower sipping sweets wherever found and even formed on the interesting pages of the writer to whom we refer

In the plates already made public from the ruins of Palanque we note the remarkable conformation of head common to the Toltecan tribes and of a character similar in form to the Natchez and a note in the second volumn from Dias speaks of the singular forms of the heads of the Indians of this day in that region as he distinctly states by compression. Since first referring in a former chapter to this custom we have made enquiries which satisfy us that the same custom can be traced from peru throughout Central Amer(**page 59**) America to Mexico and the Natchez and most of the mound indians of the Mifsissippi valley and to the present day among many of the tribes on the Pacific The Flat Heads Chinooks Clatsaps and various others in that region the custom with some slightly varying being more horizontal than with others During the year 1050 according to the Mexican records the Toltecan suddenly abandoned the mexican territories in consequence of a series of calamities which threatened them with ruin a dearth of rain for several years in succession caused famine while the air was filled with the poison of disease the angel of death was among them and thousands of the race daily fell before his wrath those that escaped those dreadful calamities filled with consternation and dread fled the country seeking in other lands relief from their misfortunes and it is remarkable that the tradition of numerous tribes agreed with the above record, they attest its correctness

A traditionary tale of the Natchez which we here introduce we think refers to a period later than the event abovementioned and after their removal from the valley of Anahuac

One of the nobles of the Natchez a wise man as he was called by them and one of the Guardians of the Temple of the sun relates as follows Before we came to this country we lived yonder under the Sun pointing about South West towards Mexico we lived in a fine country where the earth smiled and always pleasant there our Suns had there abode and our nation maintained itself for a long time against the Ancients of the country who conquered some of our villages on the plains but who never succeeded in driving us to from the mountains (**page 60**) our nation extended itself along the great waters where this river the Hush-in a-ka loses itself our enemies harrassing in power and disposition to do us evil our suns whose dominion extended to the river sent spies to examine the country East of it and to report the result of the examination

They returned reporting the country extremely pleasant upon which the grand Sun ordered all his subjects residing in the plains and who still defended themselves against the Ancients to remove into this country and here build a temple and preserve the Eternal fire – A great part of our nation accordingly removed and settled here where they lived in peace and abundance for several ~~years~~ generations. The Great Sun and those that remained with him had no intention of joining those who removed being tempted to continue in the pleasant country where they dwelt which was very warm And partly by the growing weakness of their enemies who had decreased in consequence civil dissensions

among themselves caused by an ambitious Chief who wished to elevate himself over all the other chiefs making himself superior over all their villages during these discords some of our enemies made an alliance with him – another object which caused him to remain was that our people had so far extended themselves along the banks of the Great Waters and east of this large river and on the Islands of the sea that he wished to occupy a central position so as to assist such as might require his aid. So far had our settlements extended that periods of six and seven years frequently elapsed without his receiving tidings of them This agrees with the scattering and great increase of the Toltecans after their removal from Anahuac and is confirmatory of the extended sway held by them posterior to **(page 61)** that removal It was not until many generations that the Great Sun joined us in this country when from the first fine climate and long continued peace we had multiplied like the leaves of the forest, warriors as fire had arrived in our old country who made the earth to tremble and having entered into alliance with our brethren conquered our ancient enemies but attempting afterwards to enslave our suns they rather than submit left for this land leaving behind our brethren who refused to follow and came hither only with their slaves. Being asked who those fire warriors were – he replied they were bearded white men somewhat of a brownish colour who carried arms that darted out fire with a great noise and killed at a great distance, that they had likewise heavy arms which killed a great many men at once and like thunder made the earth tremble and that they came from the sun rising in floating villages

The antients of the country which they left were very numerous and inhabited from the western coast of the great waters to the northern countrys on this side the sun and very far upon the same coast beyond the sun. They had a great number of large and small villages all built of stone and in which they were houses large enough to hold a whole village. Their temples were built with great labour and art and they made beautiful works of various materials But where said the inquirer did you come! The ancients speaks he replied does not say from what land he came all that we know is that our fathers to come hither followed the Sun and came with him from the place where he rises that they were a long time on their journey were all on the point of perishing and were brought into this country without seeking it

(page 62) The enquirers then answered were made by one who resided for some years among them and acquainted with their language he was a man of education and research for several years an officer in the French Army during its operation in Germany and at the of his residence at Natchez as agent to the French West India Company having charge of the Plantation established there and afterwards upon the transfer of the charter by M Crozat to the King abandoned his office

He determines that they were descended from the Phoenicians and quotes from Diodorus a passage in proof he further remarks that their language contained many bold syriac expressions, he also desides that the Mexicans and Ancients

spoken of was from China or Japan – that he was informed by a gentleman of learning in 1752 that there was then in the Kings Library at Paris a choice manuscript proving that America was peopled from Corea which is bounded on the north by Chinese Territory and opposite to the west coast of Japan.

When the Natchez took possession of this country in which they now resided (1723-28) they found several nations or tribes living on the east and west of the Mississippi known as the Red Men their origin is yet more obscure as they have no distinct tradition all they could tell was that they came from between the north and the Sun setting this lame account not satisfying our enquiring friend he sought others and not amongst the Yazoo a remarkable man known as Monchact-ap-e the killer of pain and fatigue acquainted by his tacits. This old Indian gave him details of a tour north and west which occupied him five years We shall insert it before closing with our notes upon the Natchez

(page 63) ~~The final notes~~ funeral rites of the Natchez were almost similar to those of the Inca Peruvians who are identical with the Toltecans they believed in one God and in the immortality of the soul and a state of rewards and punishment in the next life. The Spirit Land of the good was the happy hunting ground where the brave the good the free from care of life and without war should through endless time enjoy the pleasures of the chase without its pains with regard to their funeral sacrifices and those of the Peruvians and Bogatese they sacrificed female victims than either of the latter nations both as with the others some were sacrificed by compulsion others by choice for on such occasions any one tasting it could enjoy the honors; and in the case with the Inca Huayna Capae no less than four hundred persons voluntarily sacrificed themselves besides those whom custom required should die – being animated by the desire of swelling the Inca nation in the other world where in the simple belief the appendages of worldly honor were supposed requisite to support the dignity of those who upon earth held high and honorable station – we shall at the conclusion of our labour include a description of the ceremonies practiced in anticipation of the death of the sun and other distinguished members of the tribe

(page 64 blank)

(page 65) Handwriting style changes here; less legible than preceding text.

The Natchez

No. 9

The Toltecan were followed by various nations or tribes from the north and east, which like the northern tribes of Europe sent forth its flood of population war succeeding war, at irregular periods and ..(?).. those preceding or..(?)..them forward oer the far South; the Chichimacas are the first in order, and in succession comes the Lochinlous(?), Calihese Japenes Hulunans ..(?).. Colhues and Astecs or(?) Mexicans, as they themselves state by traditionary and other testimony from the northern country called M.-a-quim-a-cam. – Those nations collecting once known as the Nahaukas, differing slightly in their language and customs, all evidently exhibited their common origin some of them called the country where they migrated Aztlan. Subsequently came another great branch called Aluhuans claiming consequently with the Chichimacas and uniting with those and the Toltecan.

Their similarity of language, manners institutions and physical traits, induced Humbolt to embrace them under one head, with an affinity similar to that existing between the northern tribes of Europe, who was ordinarily one and same race. The last arrival from the north bears date during the 12th century of our era, and scarcely more than a century and a half previous to the discovery of America by Columbus. The Natchez agreeable to the tradition we have given, agree with the **(page 66)** arrival of those tribes, and we are upon a close examination induced to believe them one of the collateral branches, succeeding the first and second migration. And tradition states that the ancients of the country were far advanced in civilization, besides which, other circumstances are referred to, which from their arrival is posterior to that of the Chichimaca who it is presumable after long residence the genuine claim of Mexico, had materially advanced in all respects, and so far changed during the lapse of several centuries as not to recognise their brethern who followed them until the more strengthening characteristics and similar language of the Aluhuans proved their consanguinity.

It is an interesting theme for discussion a beautiful subject for examination but we confess ourselves in all respect unfitted for that proper elucidation which it demands, we have gathered together from various sources and thrown them crudely together, that others better fitted may if they deem proper use them.

The high evidence never existing of the advancement of the Anahuacan nation (we apply the name generally to those above mentioned and which are seen in Mexico, over its entire extent and throughout all Central America and Yucatan from them a race differing wide and far from the other American tribes – independent of the wonderful works, among them the Pyramids of Cholulu(?), whose base exceeds the largest of the proud structures of Egypt. Their palaces towers forts and aqueducts they exhibited proofs of advancements to **(page 67)** considerable extent in the arts and sciences unnecessary for us here to detail. The fact is undoubted, although the sceptical may with unlitary sneer ask how lost their proud pre-eminence, how was the light so brightly burned, so completely, so suddenly extinguished? Go ask the white man, the Christian, who answered with fire & sword then around and upon them the ... of extinction, butchering his thousands which he held above him a protecting shield that emblem of mercy to man, the cross the sign of good, which led the Roman on to glory, victory and to God. Here prostrated(?) to purposes of plunder, devastation, death whose interest of good, yet even in one day and in the same ... , misunderstood by the mass, is used by the fi.. to grind many to the dust, a crime and outrage upon nature and natures God, by those who pretend to be his holy ministers of good and peace to every man.

Humbolt the philosopher traveller whose research threw the light of his genius and philanthropy around many of the dark spots recorded of the early history of that lonely land, with his usual sagacity must truly remark that it is but natural to suppose, the better classes of the Mexicans from whom most resistance was expected by the Spaniards, were exterminated as rapidly as possible. It has ever been the case in the worlds history, that victims to oppression and tyranny, an invasion commences first and continues longest with the intelligent classes of any community. They are even more feared by the tyrant, and the man to be dreaded by the invader in proportion to their intelligence. **(page 68)** The Priests of the Mexicans the keepers of the ancient records of the nation, the depositories of the nation in science, morals, befell the first victims of that Fanatical zeal which marked the introduction of Spanish Religion into Mexico. The priests of that early day attached to the expedition such as Cortez Pizarro De Leon & DeSoto, was generally ignorant of the ... taken by them, having no knowledge of the beautiful ... they bound themselves to exemplify, in act and in deed, - half soldiers – half priests they donned the sacerdotal robe, or the military toga or jacket(?) of war, as occasion demanded – wild with infatuated zeal. They destroyed many of the hieroglyphic paintings which had from generation to generation for centuries – and record which – might, had they been preserved have lent light to the long years of darkness which shrouds the early days of the new world.

If, said Humbolt, all that remained of the French and German nation and a few agriculturists could we read in their features and rude acts, their descent from the proud nation, which produced a Descartes, a Kepler and Liebniz?

The Anauchan family ... the proudest of the amalgamation of the various tribes flowing into that territory, practiced in their religious ceremonies, rites somewhat approximating to those of the Natchez. Their sacrifices were more bloody and more frequent. Their feasts as to seasons were similar but unlike those of the Natchez. The shedding of blood marked their observances. With regard however to sacrifices, we would have **(page 69)** remarked that the Natchez had neither sacrifices, libations or offerings, save the funeral sacrifices we have referred to. Their pursuits as we also stated were commenced with solemnity the prelude of that joy even all feel “when prudence fills enjoyments cup”.

The Natchez, remarked one who visited among them, have two tongues, or languages, one used by the nobles alone and the other, common to the lower caste – both are copious, and more than any other southern nation, their language partakes of the figurative stile of the Orientals. He gives a few illustrations exhibiting the difference, for instance in calling a common person, I say “aquenan”, hark ye, if to the Sun, or one of the nobles I say, “magani” the interpretation being precisely the same. I say to him, tachte –cabanacte, are you there or I address myself to the same purpose as follows, “apapegouaiche” – again to a common person, when asking him to be seated, I address him thus “petchi”. To the Sun I say “caham”. In all matters save such as relates personally to the Sun or noble, the language is the same. The construction of the words also give, and such others as we have from time to time met with bears a strong resemblance to the Mexican, examine the syllables separately, and it is striking, the language as spoken by the women is softer and more melodious. The men giving a more grave(?) and guttural enunciation, but woman as is ever the case with her through life in all things gives her softening influence. L...(?) we believe beautifully remarks this in every land **(page 70)** however ..(?).. from man, the language seemed it ever came in liquid flow from womans ... her lips were ever lighted with smiles, and her hand ever extended. The b... asked by the wild wanderer, amid the wild Y...s, or in Lapland or on the far North west amid the unknown tribes of its farthest wilds, our fearless countrymen found even when with curtesy asked returned(?) kindness from woman. Twas a beautiful truth be told, and in telling honored more himself than her, whose wide spread benevolence, lends the wide earth of richest softest beauty whose melting influence – winning over with gentle sway have softened down the rugged features of man(s) hardened nature, polishing his gentle feelings, and truly making him the more worthy that bright and priceless gift, last-but- first, given to man from God.

The nation of the Natchez was divided into two or more distinct classes. The difference between the lower class not being so marked, as that between the nobles, of whom the Sun was the highest, and the next in grade between. The common people were called Miche-Miche-Quipy, an untranslatable name to us, it was such however as when applied to them by a stranger as to arouse their anger from which we should judge it was given in derision. They are to the last degree submissive to the Nobility. The high classes were first the Grand Sun,

the Suns of the villages and the nobles. The people of the nation are brought up in the most perfect submission to their sovereign and lesser Sun. The authority they exercise over them is almost as absolute and despotic as like that of the Grand Turk **(page 71)** at the time our authority speaks of. The Grand Sun is absolute master of the lives and estate of his subjects, and disposes of them at his pleasure, his will being the law. If he orders one guilty of a crime to death, the criminal neither supplicates or procures intercesfion or attempts escape.

But great as is his authority, and although a number of warriors and others attach themselves to him, so serve him, to attend him abroad and to hunt for him, yet he levies no imports, raises no oppressive taxes, but, rather relying upon the affections of his subjects, receives their gifts, not so much as his rite, as voluntary homage and testimony of their love, gratitude, and veneration.

Their year was like that of the Mexicans, and our own, contained 365 days. The former divided this into eighteen months of 20 days. The Natchez into 13 months or moons, each moon having its appropriate feast, taking its name from the fruits ripening during the preceding moon, or from the animals usually hunted during the moon. We shall append a concise account of those feasts. The corn feast is conducted with more solemnity than any other, and like the festivals still kept up by the tribes removed back of Arkansas, concluding with wild and joyous revelry in which all join with merriment and glee. Reader, twas worth your while to take a run up the beautiful Arkansas, and witness in person the corn feasts of the Creek and the Cherokees, and the manly sports indulged in on that occasion. **(page 72)** This scene alone independent of the beautiful wild and romantic scenery, and a wild run over the wide prairie, were worth the lifetime of the enjoyments sought, but found not, at those hot houses of fashion, the springs resorted to of late years, by thousands who go for health, no, to pass the time best they may by killing it and themselves.

Another remarkable feature among the Natchez was the marked deference assigned the male sex. To such an extent was this carried, on all occasions, that in their assemblies, whither in a general council of the Nation or the gathering of families, or within the family circle, the youngest boy takes precedence of the oldest woman, and at meals, at distributing food, none is presented to the women until the youngest urchin is helped, than a youth of 10 years old is frequently waited on before his great grand dame. Custom renders the woman submissive, having seen nothing different from it, they murmur not, by docility they graciously maintain peace in their families, and it is seldom that ... occur, our authority also informs us, that the most laborious occupation fall to the woman as is customary to this day with all the tribes of this continent. The girls says he, are told from their earliest years, that upon their character for industry, tidiness etc, depends their future fortune in selecting a husband, all the housework of course falls upon them, as also the manufacturing of their apparel, mats, baskets, & their various utensils some of which are curiously wrought. While the mats made by them say Charlevoix are of beautiful appearance, fine and tastely coloured, an article of

cloth made by them from the inner bark of the mulberry, in which is interwoven feathers of various colours, is also spoken of by him, as attracting his attention in a dress of the Natchez.

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The Natchez

No. 10

The mode of sepulture pursued by the Natchez was similar with that of the Peruvians, and the various branches of the Toltecans scattered through the Southern continent. The mounds of the present day, some of which we have seen examined, were often used by the same tribe for different purposes, as for instance in the case of the Natchez, who as their last gallant struggle erected an extensive mound as a fortress for defence – and again in the instance of the Chickasaw in their first war with the French, they had fortified an extensive mound situated on a prairie.

The Indians of the lowlands of Louisiana frequently erected mounds, for the purpose of protecting themselves against the overflow of the Mississippi and the settlers of late years followed the same plan in many instances – we have seen them used for this purpose. The depositories of the dead, amongst the Peruvians were originally, and are to this day are called, Hu-a-cas “To weep” – and the remarkable groups extended north of the city, of Mexico bears the name of “mi-cu-ut-l” The path of the dead, beautiful & expressive as the language of seraphim. And in its force & figure approximating the figurative language of the east. – The valley of the shadow of death.

The extensive Pyramidal structures of Mexico are called Tu-cal-lis or Houses of the Gods explaining the purpose to which they were appropriated; - these however differ widely from the mounds of which we now speak, and which are built of every variety of shape – and have seen the perfect and oblong square, the circular, triangular and elliptical, perfect in figure as if constructed (**page 74**) by a practised hand of art – and in this section of the country they most generally occupy some beautiful plain whose river they entirely command, in some instances, though rare we have seen them situated on hills of considerable size – many which have been examined, contained besides the remains of the dead, their rude implements of war, and articles of potters ware, supposed to have contained the food intended to supply the warrior in his tour to the hunting ground of the happy dead. We have at various times seen many of the articles they gathered – and among them the small greenish granite(?) like stone perfectly

round & with both surfaces convex, precise in kind, greatly in appearance with such as are still found in the graves of the Scandinavians.

We have seen some months since the blade or shaft of which seemed to be a lance, made of hard flint, it was some 12 inches long and regularly shaped and oblong from extreme point & gradually widening for 8 inches. It was taken from a mound in Arkansas, with various other relics, evidencing the advancement of the rude Indian. It is remarkable that the examination of the mounds examined thus far, throughout the Mississippi valley, in Peru and Mexico, upon a comparison presents in almost all instances a singular uniformity as to the position of the bodies and the other contents found therein, and the striking conformation of skull. – the skulls almost invariably evidencing the practice of compression, horizontally and vertically. In a compilation of this portion of our subject, we gratefully acknowledge ourselves indebted to Mortons *Crania Americana* a work of extreme interest to those who have taste for the investigation of matters connected with the tribes of the present day, or those who lived in the dreary parts, and of whom **(page 75)** but slight momento is left us, save the scattered Tumuli, which like the huge masses that mark the spot of many of the cities of olden times in eastern land remain alone of all their former glory. The only unrecorded evidence of their existence the only evidence save that contained in the scriptures, which tells their glory and their shame, the proud and peerless grandeur, their degradation.

“For lo! Though great among nations I will make the small among the heathen and despised among men. The work spoken of gives us the opinion of the author from an accurate admeasurements of various lands from Peru, Central America, Mexico, and throughout the valley of the Mississippi and from other circumstances, that the people whom they represent, are one and the same people and most finally the Toltecan branch.

One of the authorities we rely on, states that none of the Southern Indians seemed acquainted with the practice of some nations of burning the dead, and of others in endeavoring to preserve them by embalming; - or otherwise the different nations of this continent he observes pay most religious attentions to the dead, and each has some particular custom in regard to them.

Their tombs are either within the Temple or near them; - they are raised about 3 feet above the earth, and rest upon four pillars which are forked stakes fixed in the ground. The tomb or rather bier is about 8 feet long and one and a half foot broad. And after the body is placed upon it, a basket work of twigs is raised around it covered with mud, an opening is left at the head for placing the victuals which they presume is still necessary for the dead – When the body is decayed and the skeleton left it is carefully with the dust gathered in a basket of cane work and this deposited in the Temple.

(page 76) The lament for the dead, similar in many respects to the wild Comanche or Coronach(?) of Indians usually last for three days, except upon the death of the brave who may fall upon the field of battle, or the demise of their distinguished fellows, when it is continued for an indefinite period. In the foregoing remarks this author does not it seems does not refer particularly to the Natchez, his observations are generally and as they apply them with truth – to many tribes they do now to many of the present day.

In regard to the burial ground or depositories of the dead, being in the Temple, if this be true, then nearly all the “mounds” in this and the adjoining counties must have been the site of a temple, for all as far as we can at present ascertain are burial places, containing invariably an immense number of skeletons, and the other articles mentioned by us. – Another author from whom we have gleaned some little information speaks of the common burying grounds, but does not refer to its location. As yet notwithstanding the many inquiries and examinations which have been made by the curious in this vicinity, the location of a single Temple has not been definitely fixed, nor can we with the light we have at this distant period fix or pretend to point a locality where we adopt the view that each mound was the site of one, which we deem hardly probable for various reasons, one of which we shall for a moment refer to, with the intention hereafter of giving it in its proper connexion and more full.

The Eternal Fire was kept with most sacred care and no matter how urgent the occasion might be, no other flame was kindled from it, and in case as once happened by the **(page 77)** night g..(?) of the Guardian the fire should happen to go out or to be extinguished, it could not be relighted, save from the kindred fire of another Temple, or from some fire lighted by the ... fluid. And in the former case when snatched from the other Temple, it was necessary that blood should be shed by the parties having guardianship of the latter, and those about to procure the fire. The term snatched was used by a Sun who explained it to our author, as we here stated – meaning violence. The reply thus given admits the fact that there are at least two temples but neither their localities or the distance apart is referred to. Being as our author says, intimate with the Great Sun he afforded me opportunity of entering the Temple, which was situated on the bank of a small river, upon an artificial mound about 8 feet high, this in distance referring to its location is all that we have upon which to base conjectures; - still however as we progress with our labour & seizing every opportunity to gather scraps of information and may possibly meet with more light on the subject, should we be so fortunate we promise to let the reader have its full benefit.

In continuance of the conversation he mentioned, the Sun gave our author an account of a fearful calamity which once had befallen the nation in consequence as he believed of the loss of the Eternal Fire. Our Nation he said, was formerly very numerous and powerful, it extended more than twelve days journey from east to west, and more than fifteen from south to north. We numbered then no less than 500 Suns from which you may judge the number **(page 78)** of the

nobles, the people of rank, and the lower classes. – Now in times past it happened that one of the Guardians of the Temple, two being always left in charge, left it on some business, and the other during his absence fell asleep. The fire was extinguished for want of fuel. – When he awoke and discovered this, to him dreadful event for he had truly incurred the penalty of death. He left the Temple before the return of his companion and procuring some profane fire revived the Eternal Flame.

This transgression was concealed from human sight, but the eye of an unseen power noticed the act, and in punishment, the nation was visited with every calamity, famine and dread disease threw around them the dark pale of death, and for long years, the raging mortality thinned their numerous population, and many of their suns too had departed. The hand of death at length brushed the sacrilegious guardian who faint and worn with sickness nigh unto death. He sent for the Grand Sun and made a full confession of his dreadful crime.

The old men of the nation were immediately summoned(?) in council to deliberate upon the matter, and by their advice fire was according to custom snatched from the other Temple – The pure original flame once more arose(?) from the altar, and wuffed, risen to the God of their adoration, he was appeased and stayed the angel of death from his dread and devastating course. Health and peace was restored, but the nation **(page 79)** never more recovered its former glory. During the time of our authors visit, the Great Sun of that day was extremely solicitous about the preservation of the Fire his vigilance had been awakened by a fearful storm occurred some years previous, which in its course like that of 40; was around and about us, dashing to earth the proud p... and lovely art, leveling a city in its wrath, and scattering death and destruction far around upon the fair and beauteous scene.

The Natchez looked upon it as a remarkable event, and during their long previous residence, tradition tells not of one so fearful in its might and power. It was to them as that of fourty was to us marking the occurrence of an event in which theling hand of Providence protected us mid its wild and furious play when lifted from earth and cradled in the dread Tornados arm.

The tradition given as above related by the Sun of the fearful calamitous falling on their nation upon the loss of the Eternal Fire, or rather the desecration of the Temple, we believe may possibly refer to the period we have told of the history of the Tolteicans, when persued by famine and their population daily wasting away beneath a wild and fearful disease. They were induced to leave the fair vallies, and plains of Mexico, and select for themselves homes in other lands. Imo....(?) as the countless(?) tradition of every **(page 80)** tribe and in mystery many of them changed in important particulars and all more or less in their minor details. It requires extreme caution, we should think in tracing a comparison even in those most analogous.

Could some master mind gather from the mass, the leading features of those least adulterated, some hope might be entertained of an explanation showing their derivation and most probably aid to great extent in tracing out the origin of the two great and distinct race of Americans, their rise, progress and the various mutations which have taken place at times, in their ascent or descent from some fixed point of demi-civilization, a key would be given to the treasured secrets of the memoried past which has been locked in slumber deep as the long past years of earliest time.

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The Natchez

No. 11

In tracing the history, manners customs etc of this interesting people we have found extreme difficulty in keeping up anything like a chain of connection throughout, or of arranging our data ..(?).., with an traditionally(?) in such a manner as the subject requires; - many of the facts are gleaned by us years since, and since the commencement of our labor in extending our inquiries among the living vetrans of the olden times, who yet being like the "light of other days", amongst us, and in an examination of remains, works bearing either mediately or immediately on the subject. Other matters have come to light, and we have introduced them without that opportunity for order, which, under other circumstances we should insist. The want of necessary means to procure other works, which these disastrous times have placed beyond our reach, leaves us without the aid of those researches made by others far more capable in all respects than ourselves.

Without further apology we have given the conversations which occurred between M. Du Pratz a resident among the Natchez for some years. – or rather their results thrown together in narative form. He was informed by the principal guardian of the temple, that they acknowledged a supreme being whom they called "Coy-o-co-cop – Chill" or Great Spirit the Spirit infinitely, or the spirit supremely excellent & good The word Chill, being in their language expressive of the highest and most superlative degree of perfection, and is added by them to the word Fire, when they want to mention the Sun, thus, "Oua" – is fire, and "Oua – Chill" the Supreme Fire or the Sun: - therefore by the coy-o-co-cop Chill they mean the spirit which in greatness goodness and glory, as far exceeds all lesser spirit as does the Sun all lesser luminaries of light. God according to their **(page 82 blank) (page 83)** definition, was a being so great & powerful, that all things an(?) in comparison with him are as naught, he had made all that we see, and all that we cannot see. He was a being so infinitely good, that were had he the

intent he would not do evil, but that lesser spirits, his servants, might by his orders have made many excellent works in the **(blank; D.P.-“universe”)** which we admire, but that God alone had formed man with his own hands; - that he had kneaded some clay, such as the potters use, and had made of it a form of man, and looking upon found it well formed he blew up his work, the form (being of small size) had life it grew – acted – walked and found himself a perfect man. Their antient speech told them not how woman was created, but that she was created after man, who was most courageous and strong, because he was to be his companion How beautiful does this tradition agree with the mosaic account, in all its particulars; - and not of another account of the same went transmitted for centuries amid a thousand changes of country & of clime through long years of weary trial war & famine and countless other events which has come down to us. Du Pratz explained to him the marked difference and enlightened when a want of clearness was visible, he listened with interest, and promised to repeat all that was told him to the nation, and remarked “you are happy in being able to retain the knowledge of those things by means of the speaking cloth. A term commonly used by the Mexicans in speaking of the hieroglyphical records of their nation, and term used by him, and as used in common, leading the mind at once to inferences, that they must have known something of records of similar characters although nothing of the kind was found in existence amon(g) the nation yet we believe that some long period they at least knew of such things & probably used them in their migration from the valley of Anahuac. **(page 84)** When being asked who taught them to build a Temple and when the Eternal fire was given, and their religious rites and ceremonies were obtained; - he replied, my office of Guardian renders it necessary that I should know all these things, I will therefore satisfy you”, - A great number of years ago there appeared among us a man and his wife, who came down from the sun; - not that we believe the Sun had a wife who bore him children or that these were descendants of the sun; but when they first appeared amongst us they were so bright & luminous that we had no difficulty in believing that they came from the Sun. This man told us that having seen from on high that we did not govern ourselves well; that we had no Master that each of us presumed to think himself capable of governing others while he was himself incapable of self government, - and he was therefore induced to come among us to teach us better.

That in order to live in peace among ourselves, and please the Supreme Spirit, we must indispensably observe the following points, we must never kill except in self defense, - and must never know any other woman besides our own, must never take anything that belongs to another, we must never lie or get drunk, we must not be avaricious but must give liberally part of our substance to others who are in want and generously share our abundance with those who are in need of it. Twas a beautiful system of morals and how remarkably parallel with our own dialogue, superior far to the favoured schemes of the deviser Plato, the philosopher Socrates, & the precepts taught by Epicurus . More moral than them all. No scheme of religion known & practiced by those among the nations of old, boasting themselves the proud & peerless, not one among them boasted a

scheme so full of the richness of revelation, the beauty of morality the loveliness of peace with all men, as this the creed **(page 85)** of the wild unhistoried savage whose lights ever hidden in the far forrest depths, of the unknown land while long black catalogue of crime marked the course of empires of the old world, a world where p...., are open to the glad tidings of great joy purchased by the peerless Paul in the person of their ruler and their God, telling to one thetable result of his voice, and throwing blasphemy in their eyes, upon the sticks & stones of their worship. Room for wild conjecture & field(?) for speculation, in him whence came the purity of precept, whence the sun of the sun who came down to give them that light which the soul ever pines for that R.... to imortality which the dreamings of pasts(?) the(?) of the philosopher the thoughts of sages has sought for time immemorial in the wild field of Nature, the far roamings of foray amid scenes of fairy like bliss. The cautious steps in the labyrinth of Stoicism and in the deep mind of the master of antiquity who the ever(?) though far within the unfathomable(?) from its farthest depths the guiding principle which should be to man land-mark for reach(?) of happiness through the coming time.

The words addressed the Natchez by the messenger of light remarked the Guardian, deeply affected the nation, for he spake them with authority, he respected the old & the wise, though he reprehended them as freely as the rest. He was offered the sovereignty of the nation but at first declined it fearing he should not be obeyed and stating that the disobedient should in that event certainly die. He was however prevailed to accept it upon condition that we should go and inhabit another country, better than the one they occupied, which he would point out to us, that we should afterwards live conformable to the principals he had laid down for us, that we would promise never to acknowledge any other Sovereign than him & his descendants that the nobility should be perpetuated after this manner. If I, said he, had **(page 86)** superior intelligence, for in the rude state they, when it was established among them they would most naturally have adopted a simple and more easily understood order of succession, instead of one far more intricate than any we read of in history.

The tradition we give is from one who has been by various historians called a good authority, and from personal observation of many matters described in his writings, we doubt not he is a remarkable chronicler, telling the tale as twas told to him.

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The Natchez

No. 12

We referred in a former number to the feasts, of the "Natchez promising to give as far as practicable, a detail of the ceremonies observed by them. Upon a further examination of the matter we find their mode of celebrating the varied scenes of the changing year was usual with the Mexicans, and other tribes south of them the same practice prevailed, and in very many particulars was precisely similar. – it was as we before observed a Persian custom and in the principal feast is a remarkable resemblance, a parallel of which would be of interest to the curious or inquiring mind. The various tribes of the far east continued in the full practice of thus celebrating the returning seasons & though in many instances abolished or forgotten them remains countless beautiful customs connected with the original observance formerly existed.

And indeed spread and universal in their custom that the mind is naturally led back for its early origin in the first family of the race, and under the command of the Great I am.

We note also in the two great divisions of the north american tribes, a marked difference in the celebrations of the Astec Toltecan or Mexican race, amongst its rudest tribes varying essentially from the other or Mongolian tribes whose practices were far more rude, and evidenced that want of refinement which in many of the customs of the Aztecs adhered to their high superiority and advancement towards civilization.

The Natchez commenced their year on the first of March as was long customary in Europe, at every new (**page 90**) moon, they celebrate a feast, taking its name from the fruits gathered or the animals hunted during the moon preceding: - The first is called that of the Deer which is celebrated at the commencement of their new year with universal joy, and is at the same time an anniversary which commemorates one of their most interesting events in their history. Tradition states that in former times a Great Sun, on hearing a loud tumult in his village left his hut in a great hurry in order to appease it, not knowing that his village was attacked by a numerous party from a hostile tribe, by whom he was taken prisoner for a short time but was rescued by his warriors, who repulsed the marauders, and put them to flight.

In order to preserve the remembrance of this honourable exploit the warriors divide themselves into two bodies, distinguished from each other by the color of their feather, one body representing the invaders, the other the Natchez driving the wild scene mimicked to life. The Grand Sun comes out of his hut partially dressed, and defends himself valiantly for a time with a wooden tomahawk, in the

meantime another party joins the defenders, and together they rescue their Sun driving the marauders into a bower made of cane, and intended to represent the woods, during the whole scene, wild excitement, as that on the battle field is seen, and the loud war cry, the death yell, fills the air with deafning sound.

The Great Sun then continues in his hut for about half an hour to recover from his warrior toil, such as would have tired a man of thirty years old. The performer on the occasion witnessed by Du Pratz was upwards of 90. The Sun after reposing makes his appearance again, and his tribe all **(page 91)** joins him in joyful struts and loud acclamations which ceases when he proceeds towards the Temple. When he arrives in the centre of the court before the Temple he makes several gesticulations then stretches out his arm horizontally and remains in that position motionless as a statue for half an hour. This is then relieved by the master of ceremonies, who places himself in the same attitude for the same length of time, and is in his turn relieved by the principal war chief who continues the same length of time. The Grand Sun having returned to his hut now appears again before the people, ornamented with the insignia of his rank and is placed upon a throne, which is a large stool with four feet cut out of one piece of wood, he has a fine Buffalo robe thrown over his shoulders, and several furs laid upon his feet, and receives various presents from the women, who continue to express their joy by loud acclimation.

If strangers are present they are invited to dine with the Grand Sun, and in the evening there is a dance in his hut, which is about 30 feet square and twenty high and like the Temple, is elevated upon a mound, about 8 feet high and 60 feet over the surface.

The second month, our April, is called the Strawberry moon, as the fruit abounds then in great quantities. – It is strange that within the recollection of an old friend, this fruit, indigenous, and abounding as it did, has entirely disappeared from the southern counties of our state, although it yet abounds in Holmes County & those north and east of it.

The third moon is called small corn. This moon is often anxiously looked for, the crop of large corn being sometimes shortened from the previous season, they have not sufficient to last until the ripening of the approaching crop. –

(page 92) The fourth moon is the Watermelon Moon, and answers to our June. – The fifth is that of the fishes, in this month they also gather grapes. – The sixth moon according to our authority is that of Mulberrys and answers to our August. – in this there is evidently an error, as the Mulberry is the first wild fruit which ripens with us at the present day. During this month they present fowls to the Grand Sun. The seventh being the most important, as it is that of the Great Corn, and is likewise the most solemn. It principally consists in eating in common, from the Grand Sun to the lowest caste, in a religious manner, dishes prepared from the new corn which is now ready for harvesting, the portion of corn

however which is eaten, is such as was planted with an express view to this ceremony: - and was taken from a spot of ground never before cultivated, which is dressed by the warriors of the nation only, who are also alone employed in cultivating, and attending, and when ripe gathering it.

When their corn is nearly ripe, they fix upon a spot, selected by the warriors, as a proper place for the grand feast, and near it they erect a round grannary, the bottom & sides of which are made with cane. This is filled with corn, and when the harvest is completed and the grannary covered in, they acquaint the Grand Sun, who appoints the day for a general feast. Some days preceding that set apart for the celebration they build huts for the Grand Sun, and for all other families around the grannaries, that of the Grand Sun being upon a mound. On the feast day the whole nation form a grand procession at sunrise, leaving behind only such as are unable to travel, and a few warriors who remain to attend the Sun, who they are to carry on a litter to the Feast. The seat is covered with several deer skins, & supported by 8 warriors, who at every hundred paces are replaced by others, & so on to the feast, 2 miles from the principal village. About 9 the Sun comes out of his hut dressed gorgeously, and being placed (**page 93**) upon the litter which is decorated with a canopy of flowers he is carried to the sacred granary, this cornucopia, shouts of joy attend him. Before alighting he is carried 3 times around the grannary and when he arrives before the opening salutes the corn 3 times with the usual, hoo, hoo, hoo. The same salutation is repeated by the Nation who repeats it 9 times. The Sun alights & places himself on his throne. Immediately after which a fire is lighted by rubbing two sticks together, & when all is prepared for dressing the corn, the Chief of War accompanied by warriors of each family present themselves before the throne & address the Sun as follows "Speak for I hear thee" The Sun rises, bows to the 4 quarters of the world, & addressing towards the grannery lifts his eyes & hands to heaven and says, "Give us corn", upon which the great war chief, princes & families, thank him, by pronouncing the word hoo! The corn is then distributed, first to all the female Suns, then the women, who run with it to their huts & dress it with the greatest dispatch: When the corn is dressed in all the huts, a plate of it is put into the hands of the Sun, who presents it to the 4 quarters of the world, & thus says to the chief of war Eat. Upon this signal the warriors all commence the feast, and after them the boys of whatever age, last of all the women.

When the warriors have finished their repast they form themselves into two choirs, in front of the huts & for half an hour sing war songs. – after which the chiefs of war, and all the warriors, according to rank, succesively narrate their warrior deeds, and other bold exploits on the field or in the chase, & in a boasting manner, tell the number they have slain. – The youths fired by the tales of war, and wild foray, & proud exploits, are allowed to harangue, telling what they too will do, when come to mens estate, some fortunate youth of braveheart(?), & bold determined air tells of his future deeds of glory in thrilling tone, which speaks assurance of success, a general hoo from the warriors is his reward, others with faltering tongues tell their degeneracy from noble sires, who fell amidst the glory

he had earned on bloody field. They pass unnoticed, the warriors give silent reproof by hanging he head (**page 94**) in silence & sorrowing look. – The great & solemn festival is concluded by a general dance by torch light, with numerous small canes tied together, when they dance, frequently till day. A man places himself on the ground, with something after the fashion of a kettle drum covered with deer skin, to beat time to the dances, around him the women form a circle, not joined hands, but at some distance from each other and outside of them at some distance the men formed an outer circle in the same manner, each of them having in his hand a chich-i-cous or calabash, with a stick stuck through for a handle, the minor circle moves from left to right, while the men move in the opposite direction, sometime approaching the women, and again receding from them.

In this manner the dance often continues the whole night new performers being always at hand to take the place of those who are tired. – The following morning nobody is seen abroad before the Grand Sun, makes his appearance, usually about 9 oclock & then upon signal from the drum, the warriors make their appearance in two distinct troops, distinguished by the feathers. The Grand Sun heads one party & the chief of war the other, and then for the wild and joyous Ball Play. The sculpture like forms nude as nature save the breech cloth, with nothing of ornament save the coloured feather, now in the wild melee, bending to the aim, and again when the steadied formed with fixed eye upon the flying ball, the monarch of the tribe marked from all others, by feathers of snowy white. The game over they retired to bath, the victor band receiving the feather of the Sun, a proud emblem of their success. – The day succeeding the solemn festival is celebrated in a similar manner – and the feast continues until the sacred corn is entirely consumed. – When finished, the Grand Sun retires to his home, in state with the same ceremonies before described the villiagers also return home, after which the Grand Sun sends forth hunting parties to lay in a sufficient quantity of game for their winter supply, and (?); the wild and beautiful sport of hunting during the sweet season of the year old nature in prime glories then with softened beauty, her robes are slightly tinged with summers (**page 95**) varied tintings, and a thousand sweet shades gleam from forest tree & clustering vine, and the sunny plain ripe with golden harvest unrealed by man. Autumnal flora robes in springlike beauty is art upon the hill side, & in the vale, her beauteous train bright as the fair sisters of the (?) year(?), yet giving not to balmy air the same breathing those thousands mingled odors which cluster round the home of the sweet springtime, yet even here amid the glowing autumn food is there for thought, for there the bright, the beautiful come robed in radiant hue to deck the glad summer green(?), they gather in glory then like those sweet affections which entwine themselves around the earthly home of the good, the loved, the best.

But as those sweet affections wisper of hope, and sorrow not as those bereft of its genial ray, so die then the flowers of the field, till to us a bright and glorious aftertime, a coming friend, when they shall again soul-like leap from earth in gladness and joy.

Bright are ye, and beautiful ye come clothed with a glory which tells that even in the dark silent home of the dead, may be germinated a glory not of earth.

With each returning moon the Natchez continued their feasts. – the eight is that of turkies and answers to October. – The ninth is that of the Buffalo, for this is the free monarch of the wide far plains inherited by them, having discovered where the nearest herd feeds, they go out en-mass to hunt. The bold warriors & maidens bright, mothers son father all go forth for the wild sport the warriors are the hunters, and the females, and the youth of the nation aid in various ways packing in the meat and curing it for winter. Without horses the hunters of this animal did not admit of that high exciting (**page 96**) scene now to be witnessed among the wild sioux the Qawtas(?), Minatana(?) and the hundred other tribes who there hunt them in the west. –

The eleventh festival is our January and is called the Cold Meal Moon: - The twelfth which finishes the year is that of Chesnuts which though gathered during the fall, are now used to mix with the meal. Walnuts were also used by them in the same manner for the next festival. Though the year varied round their festivals and kept joy by all, and were even hailed by old and young with glad delight. – Their origin doubtlessly was similar if not precisely parallel with the thousand practiced by the eastern nations, and we doubt not the fact that this origin was the fiat of the creator whose command was that of the first fruits, a portion should be hallowed and made unto him a thank offering – for we venture the assertion that no custom could have obtained to such extent widespread as the world itself without that being invigorating self existing principle which marks the very command of God.

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The Natchez

No. 13

In regard to marriages and their manner of celebrating that event we find it stated: that where a young man has obtained the consent of the fair and, neither the father, mother or female relatives, have any thing to do in concluding the match; - the heads of the two families alone, grandfather, great-grandfather, or a generation beyond, if living, as is sometimes the case with this tribe, being extremely temperate they are remarkably long lived. These two venerable heads of the families, have an interview, and trace the geneology of the two families in order to ascertain whether they are within the proscribed degree of relationship, yet at the same time if the proposed wife is not acceptable to the father, grandfather etc of the husband, the match is not concluded.

On the other hand remarks are nothing, neither ambition, avarice, or the other passions so common in such cases, are allowed to interpose, and stifle in the breast of the father, those dictates of nature which prompt man to seek companionship “with” the “last best gift of heaven”; nor influence them to thwart their children improperly, and much less to force their inclinations. By an admirable harmony nothing of imitation by the civilized and refined, of the present day, they only marry those who love one another and such are only married when the parents agree to it – It is rare for the young men to marry before the age of five and twenty. In consequence of the admirable arrangement detailed above, the connubial state is usually one of happiness. – and du Pratz states that during a residence of eight years at Natchez he knew of but one case of separation, although the right **(page 98)** of divorce was acknowledged, and practised when good cause was shown. The marriage day being then fixed for our young lovers, the hunters for several days scour the woods for choice game, while the women are engaged in preparing other matters for the feast, and in ornamenting and fitting out the young warriors cabin. On the wedding day the old man who represented his grand or great grandfather at the interview leaves his hut and conducts the bride to that of the bridegroom, whose whole family form in procession and follow him in silence, - such as are joyously inclined indulging only in a smile, for it is generally revered as a solemn ceremony.

On the arrival of the procesion before the hut of the bridegroom, they are received, and saluted by the members of the other family, who are then drawn up for that purpose, the expression of congratulations used in the word hoo repeated several times.

The old man and bride enter the hut when they meet the other venerable, on the part of the groom who says to him “are you there”, this common salutation to which is replied yes. They are next asked to sit down, and not a word passes for about ten minutes it being customary with them to allow a guest to become fully rested before they began a conversation, and they dispense with the silly practice of compliments which is so offensive in refined society. After the parties are rested they rise, and bride and bridegroom appearing in front of them are asked if they love each other, and if they are willing to take one another for man and wife observing at the same time that they ought not to marry unless they propose to live amicably together, that they are not forced and that as they are each others free choice they will be driven out of the family if they do not live in peace. The father of the bridegroom then places in the hand **(page 99)** of his son, the present he is to make. The brides father at the same time places himself at his side. The Bridegroom then addressing the Bride “Will you have me for your husband” she replies, most willingly and it gives me joy; love me as I love you, and ever will love none but you”. The bridegroom then covers the head of the bride with the present and says to her, I love you and have therefore taken you for my wife, and this I give to your parents to purchase you” he then gives the presents to the brides father. The husband wears a tuft of feathers attached to his hair, which is braided in the form of a cue, and hanging over his left ear, to

which is fastened a sprig of oak with the leaves, and in his left hand he holds a bow and arrows.

The young bride bears in her left hand a small branch of laurel, and in her right a stalk sprig of maize, which was given her mother when she received the present from the husband, who receiving it in his right hand says, "I am your husband" to which she responds, "I am your wife". They then shake hands reciprocally with each others relatives receiving their congratulations, after which the bride(**groom**) leads her around the hut to exhibit their future home. – The marriage ceremony being then concluded, the party seats themselves, and partakes of the of the feast in honour of the occasion, and in the evening a dance lends merriment to the scene, when though the ceremony reigned silence (and) solemnity merry laugh and jest and shout ring out upon the air and wild delight fills every heart – like some sylvan scenes we read of in the wild wood, and mayhaps near the spot where many such as the one we here tell of occurred in the olden times. The glad stream left from its pebbly bed, and leaves(?) the verdant green which sloped from gentle height above, where are gathered, the bright, the beautiful the fair. – They of the sunny hue and (**page 100**) raven tress, and features fair and form devine

The charm of wit and nameless grace,
Which round sweet beauty radiant shines,
And sweetly lighten over the face.

Twas a fairy scene, such as we have dreamed, dwelt in the olden times, 'mid emerald ..ins(?), legend telling valley, and lake, and verdant grove; - we stood aloof and looked upon, and loved the scene for naught but joy was there, old time seemed for a while to have stayed his course to let gladness for hours have sway supreme. – The bluff whereon we stood, overlooked the sweet stream, here shaded by the old vetrans of the forrest, which for years had battled with the storm and played in the breeze. The deep embowering shade scarce let a ray of sunlight through its dense roofing of leaf and vine, neath which joy held revelry, hours past yet all(?) the glad and gleesome throng kept up the measured dance by muses softest tone. – while the deep recesses of the shaded dell of Second Creek sent back the echoed note.

There was one like ourself a looker on, yet in feeling participating in the holiday joy of mays morning hour, calm as that morn in sweetness of act, though dead, purity itself in all imagining.

For mind was mystress of the fair,
And trustful(?) grace with softening ...(?)
Shone round her walks of daily care
And brightened her cheerful way.
For pure Religion – undefiled
Was seen to rule with genial sway,

To make her mildness yet more mild
 And guide the ...n on their way
 'Tis womans,(?) of good.
 The highest charm she ever can know
 That charm, whose practice understood
 Bids all true joy unceasing flow.

(page 101) Born to bud, to blossom, and to die, she fled with the sweet spring time, from joys surrounding her in life – all that life alone can know, to the better land where joy supremely reigns. Tis said by the writer whose text we partly use, in our public sketch of the Natchez, that though graceful & dignified in their manners, and in their encounters with strangers, they enjoyed to the life innocent pastimes we have named, the Ball play, the mimic battle and their festivals all of which were conducted with kindest gentlest feeling and all propriety, for on such occasions simple harmless pleasure, and healthful recreation, was what they sought and peace ever lent her sunny smile to their holiday sport, festival, and marriages.

It would be interesting were some whriter of research, to make an examination and comparison of all the various games practiced by the different nations of old. The similarity of many are striking at a glance in numerous instances, and we doubt not a critical survey of the subject would form some general interest and collaterally assist in tracing the course of direct progress, wanderings of many nations particularly those in the east, and our Indian tribes whose origin has given such wide field for conjecture.

The little attention we have given to the subject induces us to place strong confidence in the hypothesis, set forth in the volume of "American Antiquities" from M. Delufield. the arrangements are made in a clear and concise manner, and many we know from personal observation as true. The Natchez, and the tribes of the southwest had but few games of diversion many of them were however repeated at irregular intervals, and in the manner their unemployed hours were usually passed The warriors in addition to the games already mentioned had another Ball Play, somewhat after the fashion of Town Ball, the beautiful sport common to the youth of our **(page 102)** day, and also another called the game of "Pole" played by two persons, each of whom with a pole 8 feet long would throw at the same time directing their aim to a small quart like stone. The one striking nearest counting one. – he then rolls the stone to some distance and the same feat is performed. It was a fatiguing game, and quite as exciting and fascinating to them as many of the games of the present day. Some of the players giving themselves up so entirely to its influence as frequently to loose upon its results, their all. – Such instances however were rare, as they were discontinued by the community. Not by the enactment of miffcrient(?) laws, but by public opinion.

That mighty engine which like Archimedian lever, moves man simply in small communities and in masses of millions, like the moving of the vast ocean, or mighty wind, for good or for evil, even more sure, more certain than human law however perfect. The females of the nation had some **(blank)** amusement but never played it (in) the presence of strangers; - their hours were far more completely occupied than that of the men, as is the case with the vast majority of the females of the present day and of every former period of time. Woman, though more sedentary is far more constantly employed than man like the wife spoken of by Solomon, "industry dwells round about her" and like the beauty which rests upon the flower makes her even the more lovely, the more worthy of love. Place her in whatsoever station of life we may, amid the palace hall of proudest wealth, in sweet content of cottage home or in pining penury – and affection never to waste, mind becomes ...ded(?), and thought aimless if occupation in care of household good employs her not. O! many and better are the **(blank)** we have had of those who without an end **(page 103)** than like gossamer birds on fashions fairy wing nor thought of after times, when that time came, and found them all unprepared for battling with wide unfeeling world, that world whose flowers filled their pathway when fortune smiled, but now when tired of her retreats from her, and in the thick darkness dwelling round about the unfortunate, robs her of all hope every friend in hollow heartedness when the whole soul seemed to fill each friendly glance, all cold is the worlds charity, and how deceitful is friendship, when sickening to the heart was it not that content can be found, which the dark minded of the world cannot reach, where no cloudy time comes over the mind, and such it is to know that with woman, the glowing goodness, which gives that content dwells the more and the more pure, than with man.

She the first to err amid Paradise bower, the first to give tidings of returning mercy from God to man, ever the attendant of that embodiment of eternal love, "the word that was with God, and the word that was God, when for a time for purposes of mercy dwelling amongst men – even the first herald of kindness to him in all danger & sufferings, - handmaiden of kindness to him, last only, at the cross, first, last at the tomb and in all after times – first ever to greet the tidings of great joy, sent to far off nations as if her mind more pure, could the more readily move the more truly appreciate the message which has with it growing light in every land of earth, elevated her to the proud, and peerless height she so sweetly adorns, with loveliest grace, & sweet affection and gentle sway, a mother, sister, wife – loved lovely as within her the brighter burns the true love, lustrous light, whose beamings gem light the way to heaven with ray divine. Think not reader that we **(page 104)** wander, for, breaths there one with soul so dead that cannot for a short time follow us in telling the good deeds of woman! For she as your mother cradled you in your infancy watched & garded you, with eyes lustered by the glistening of purest affection, and O! when the dark time comes upon you and all lifes sweets are bitter to the taste and friends are lost and fortune fled, and like the wrecked bark you lay helpless, hopeless, without end or aim to look to, whose voice was it that at midnight hour, when dread dreams

looked(?) strange and told the souls deepest, hidden sorrowings, ..(?), whose silvery tone was it, that fell upon your ear while its breathings, cooled your fevered cheek, and words of merry love, & truth, built(?) hope within thee, and wake again to life and joy.

Where woman is, good dwells, around and about her, where she is good in its wanderings over earth finds resting place, and cheer and aid to others deeds in its far roamings. we looked upon a lone wanderer, toil worn and weary with long travel clothes all soiled and worn, his jaded stud scarce supporting itself, was led by the traveller he approached a rude log cabin one of the first in the “settlement”, then but sparingly populated, asked for shelter, food, rest. The gruff tones of the settler refused him all in rude uncouth speech and told him speed onward “he had but little to live on, and it was hard if a man had to give, what he had naught to spare”. The poor traveller almost sinking from repeated disappointments of similar character, met with during the day, stated his situation his sufferings, his long toil, his object in seeking this wild region – he was a herald of truth, one of the pioneers of that denomination whose doings of good are seen by every eye which looks upon that monument of their zeal their daring enterprise. Their waking up the vast valley of the west & south, to light & life, unknown before, humanizing a hord of wild reckless beings making (**page 105**) them men and giving them lights to guide them in all times, of life, and beyond, through the dark valley of the shadow of death.” Twere poor compliment to name then their first efforts though within our own young memory took ground in good soil woman received The word and her magic might & witchery(?) wispered its sweetness to others, and the whole land throughout that wild and far reaching valley is the living evidence of their mighty deeds, and womans gentle sway, her sweet appreciation of good her soft persuadings of its beauteous precept and its practices of Love. Scarce a century has elapsed since its introduction into America, and view its astonishing results, it has flown faster far(?) like light of signal fire whose flashings fill the valley and the hill tops, and all the homes of man with its ray serene.

But in the traveller he sunk exhausted on a fallen tree, and in desponding, yet with some gleam hope hung his head and wispered to his God; like to breathed fragrance of softest sight, the sound of woman’s voice came upon his ear, in tones of pleading & oft persuading it was used The rude woodman though all (**blank**) to melting(?) mood at length yielded to her intercession, and the ...(?) one was greeted by the cabin wife who made his heart rejoice by the exhibition of all kind and gentle attention, and rich, rich, was the reward given her in return – not of fine gold or silver or prized gems, or gift of worldly worth. No these all were paltry compared with the gift of the living light which came to her and dwelt round about her, she received, cherished it and to her in all times, eternity, good was hers, rejoicing on his way the traveller left, and long time passed ere he again returned, he came, comfort was over and around the spot where of old (**page 106**) rudeness dwelt, and peace and joy sent them summers(?) far and wide ...(?) the scene he returned unrecognised he was greeted with warm

heartedness hospitality, twas evening he was asked to spend the night, he accepted the invitation, during his visit he observed at table that he had once passed this way before, long years since, and remarked the astonishing change. Yes said the silvered haired sire. Tis wondrous to behold, and then the cause, would you believe sir! That to her, my old and loved companion are we indebted with providence for the wondrous work” he related the story of the worn traveller, told of long and affectionate efforts of his wife before he too received the light full of incident and interest, the eye of the traveller glistened with new light, tears rolled down his cheek as he was recognized as Mr xxxx

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The Natchez

No. 14

It is satisfactorily proven by the history of various nations that in their arts, manufactures, manners and customs, and their religion, that they evidence the fact of a retrogression from some long previous state of high advancement and towards civilization. – The religion and tradition particularly of almost every nation point to a time when they were blessed with purer light from heaven, and with many of the softer and humanizing influences begotten by the prevalence of that light; - every religious rite practised under the sun, no matter how wrapped up in superstition, and darkened by crime, points to a source originally pure, - and polluted only by the thousand untold events which make mans forgetful history through centuries of time, revolutions, furious wars, far wanderings and a thousand other causes now unimaginable.

The rude arts of the Natchez were such only as were required for their few comforts their simple wants – for not being luxuriously inclined, they confined themselves to the manufacture of such articles as necessity compelled them to use. – Their cabins were constructed of wood, sufficiently close and strongly built to protect them from the inclemency of the weather, and to resist the violence of the winter. The hut was built perfectly square, and none less than 15 feet, others again being constructed frequently had the appearance of single huts 30 feet front: - In building their huts, they procure from the woods several young (**page 108**) walnut trees about four inches in diameter and from 12 to 20 feet high: - the strongest of which are inserted in the ground as corner posts, and the other placed at the distance of fifteen inches apart between the first, for the sides of the building: - a pole is then laid at the requisite height some 10 or 12 feet high and running along the side posts at right angles from corner to corner, fastened to the others by canes with etc etc. – as strongly as possible: - the four corner posts are

then bent inwards until they meet in the centre, where they are made strongly fast. The side poles are then bent in the same manner and bound to the others, after which a mortar is made of mud and "Spanish Beard" or moss, with which the roof is chinked, and made impervious to the rain: - The sides according to Charlevoix are first intertwined with cane and then daubed or stuccoed with a mortar made of mud, sand, and moss. The larger portion of sand giving the building a neat and comfortable appearance which by many at first sight was taken to be stone. -

The inside was lined with mats made of split cane, such as the basket work of the Indians of the present day. They were of fine & beautiful texture, and ornamented by coloured figures from the dye of the Acacia which gives a beautiful red and yellow color: - and is to the present day used by the Indians. The roof in order to be made more perfect is again thatched with turf and straw, intermixed and over this is laid a mat of canes covering it entirely and after all some of the wild creeping plants of our climate are brought from the woods and trained in collage style over the roof: --

(page 109) Tis said such buildings would last twenty years without repair. For cutting instruments they were obliged to form hatchets out of flint, by sharpening their thin edge, and making a hole to secure the handle: - To manufacture a pirauye or canoe they would fire a tree around the roots, and when it fell again burn it to the proper length and place fire upon the portion of the stick to be hollowed, and cut away the charcoal as it burned.

Sharp split cane supplied them with knives for eating and other domestic purposes - hominy mortars are made in the same manner as their canoes. Their bows were made of acacia wood, which is hard, easily shaped and durable, they stretched that for a long time. Their bow strings were made of the bark of the mulberry, but they afterwards used the thongs of hides: - Their arrows were made of small switch cane, and those intended for war, or against the buffalo deer, & large fish, were pointed with the fins of some of the large fish found in the streams neatly fastened with splits of cane & fish glue.

The skins of the beasts killed by them, are used for their clothing, they are sewed with the tendons of the animal beaten and split with threads of proper size. The bones of the heron leg sharpened like an awl answered the purpose of needles.

In dressing the skins tis said they used the brains of the animal. - They were an agricultural people and cultivated fields of grain, called by them Chou-pi-choul, Wedley-gouil, and another whose name we cannot ascertain, - the two former are **(page 110)** Indian corn, the other was a small grain similar to wheat and rye. - they baked the meal in the form of cakes, something like the Tortillas now common in Mexico: - another cooked on the ashes and a kind in steam. - They also had various methods for preservation, called it cold meal,(?) meal, and "Sag-a-mi-ty". - The latter when prepared was eaten with a spoon made of

buffalo horn – this custom common to all the tribe as far as the Illini or Illinois, but the Natchez was by far the most devoted to agricultural pursuits.

In case of short crops they are earth nuts found in the woods, and chesnuts – but only when compelled by necessity. The game used by the Natchez for food, was buffalo, deer bear, turkies and the variety of small game common to the country water fowls and fish, - all of which when used was either boiled or roasted. Their manner of roasting when on a hunting tour, was to plant a stake into the ground, sloping towards the fire and on the point would spit the meats, turning it from time to time. – A delicious morsel was thus prepared for the hungry hunter, and reader, if you wish to enjoy a luxury beyond the epicurian dishes of the present day, take a run over the wild prairies of the West, weary yourself with the hunt, return to your camp, and look upon the hunters choice the Buffalo hump, this spitted before you, listen to its hissing and sniff in the odour it sends abroad to the breeze, stretched as you are upon some grassy plain, near some stream whose gurgling steals soft upon the ear. The shades of evening stealing gently over the scene while you await the signal for your feast – then and not till then, will you realize one of the joys of the wild woodsman life. – This is one of the minor pleas- **(page 111)** ures, for theirs' the rich delight they feel in roaming free, far, and wide as the air breathed by them, unrestrained by mans boundaries, of fence and field – moving at ease amid the glorious scenery, abroad upon the boundless plain & upon the proud height, oring(?) the current of unknown & nameless streams seeking farther in the forest depths, when the free thoughts may roam, upon the winds wings afar.

To preserve such as may be intended for home consumption during the winter, they cut it into thin slices, which they partly roast upon a grate of canes placed crossing over a slight fire, and afterwards dry it – after which, when they have killed a sufficient supply it is packed home by the women, in the cane baskets, and of the west & south in the vicinity of the Indians of this day, and accustomed to see used by them in bearing burdens, in some instances requiring their whole strength We have seen long lines of Choc(taw) perhaps 30 women all laden winding on their weary march of an hundred miles, or more and sometimes at their utmost speed, may, striking even a short trot, to keep up with the rest of the party who were unburthened save by their arms. – The baskets are precise with those now used, made of cane, with wide mouth and covering(?) gradually at the side, containing about two bushels, and supported by two straps of wide leather, and resting upon the forehead, the other on the breast, throwing the burden on the back frequently containing a pus ears(?), papoos, or infant whose little face while it slumbers is served up full to the suns warmest ray.

Amongst all the tribes of that day, when sick, the patient was debarred the use of flesh & fish, & confined to Sag-I-mi-ty made with broth with meat. The Natchez when eating at the houses of the French, would eat nothing but meat boiled or roasted – eating nothing raw save fruit and using no sallads: They at no time used raw meats, and have no fixed times for meals, but eat when disposed –

They generally eat from the same dish, except the women, boys & girls, who each **(page 112)** a plate to themselves. – In regard to fasting it was common among them, when they wanted seasonable showers, or fine weather for ripening their corn, to call upon the oldest man who is thought wisest and best among them, and intreat him to invoke the lesser spirits of good, that they may be blest with their wish: - The old man never refuses the request, and prepares to fast for nine days. He orders his wife to withdraw during the whole time of the fast, he eats nothing but the gruel, without salt, which is brought each day about dusk by his wife. – In order that the spirit may always be inclined to grant the favour asked, the old man will not receive any reward.

The women were quite adept in making such utensials as were required by them for ordinary purposes. The clay being dug and mixed by them, was shaped into any form which fancy or convenience might dictate. They make kettles, pitchers with small mouths, gallon bottles with long necks, similar to the West Indian coolers(?) of this day small & large plates, and large pots and jars, containing 40 pints and used for presferving their bears oil. We have within a few days past had the pleasure of examining many perfect specimens of their pottery collected by a scientific gentleman of our city from the plantation of F. Lewis Esq. about 12 miles distant where there is evidence of an extensive cemetery: - among the articles most perfect, is a beautiful vase of the precise pattern and description of one shown by Plate Page No of in Mr. Stephens work. The collection examined by us contains a variety of pottery, vases bottles etc the composition of which they are made is apparently clay & burnt human bones, in this opinion both, the gentleman referred to & myself & supported by others. – of this collection, and the results of some researches made by him & myself, we shall endeavour to embrace if not in the body of this work, in an article we have in preparation upon the subject of the “Mounds”, by which we believe can be traced the migration of the Toltecan race from their departure out of **(page 113)** Mexico throughout the whole extent of Central America & Peru and of the Natchez. Through the Texan territory and extending though the valley of the Mississippi. – The women wove the men belts and garters and also the mats, baskets & straps which they themselves use in carrying burdens. Bear skin is generally used for the straps and belts, so dressed as to soften it and render it pliable: - They manufactured baskets of a peculiar kind for the safe keeping of their trinkets etc. They also make a kind of embroidery with the skins of the porcupine which is black and white – Their colors were arranged according to their fancy & various patterns. – and mentioned in a former article that they manufacture cloth from the bark of the Mulberry tree – this was also practised by several of the nations of the East, the Egyptians carried on the manufacture of it to a considerable extent. –

The men frequently when in hast to crofs a dangerous stream found a safe & simple conveyance before alluded to, the “Cajieux” the plan was to tie numerous pieces of cane together in bundles of from 8 to 12 inches in thickness several of them were laid side by side, and fastened securely together others were prepared in the same manner & laid crosswise on the lower tier forming a light

and secure raft: - increasing in size according to the number of the party – they had also their piroye and their light canoes managed by paddles, & used without rowlocks. The lightness of the latter rendered them so manageable as to astonish a stranger when the Indian for sport, or in the chase chose to show his skill, - shooting in rapid circles, with slight dips of the paddle, like the swallow on its course alone, or more dashing onwards like the swiftest of the finny tribes beneath, of all vessels, we have seen, the canoe for ease of movement, & grace when neatly made & skillfully manned most pleases our eye.

The dress of the Natchez, was during the winter composed of dressed deer skins, made in the hunting shirt stile together with leggings, and in case of severe cold weather a Buffalo robe was thrown over to protect them. The youth of the tribe was **(page 114)** famous as the dandies of the present day for their tone of dress painting themselves frequently, and decking their wrists and arms with bracelets made of the ribs of the deer; which being boiled and in this state made to the proper shape, & polished, & had the appearance of iron(?) **(Du Pratz: “ivory”)** They also wore necklaces and clip off the hair from the crown of the head and then placing a piece of the skin of the swan, with the down on, - the small locks left on the sides of the head were suffered to flout to the breeze while from the small tuft left, back of the crown & on top, springs two of the finest white feathers they could procure. The locks behind were suffered to retain their length unshorn and well plaited into a cue, which was gracefully br..t(?) over the left ear.

To lovers of the long locks of the present day, look upon the lovely sight, and regret that dame fashions tyrant sway debars you from following the custom of the Youthful Natchez, step out the master spirit of the little circle of the Long locks in which you move and set them high example in this line of beauty and the little notoriety you now possess would be far eclipsed by the glory awarded for your daring effort, and we dare venture the opinion that the beauty you so love to show would then ...ked(?), draw upon you the admiration of all dandies to the astonishment of all others: - The beaux of Chillzerh..(?) would become of lesser height, and you second in some obscure villiage, would Caesar like become first in the city. “The laugh, the jest, the wonder of the day.”

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The Natchez

No. 15

One author being a favourite with the “Great Sun” and the Guardian of the Temple was admitted in order to make a survey of its appearance etc. – this was

an unusual privilege as the lower cast of the nation was never admitted, and it was seldom strangers were this highly honoured: - The Temple examined by him was placed on a "mound" about 8 feet high situated near a small river, creek we presume and most probably the St. Catharine.

The mound sloped gradually from the principal front which was on the north, and was on the other side something steeper: - The four corners were posts about a foot and a half in diameter and two feet (**Dupratz: "ten feet"**) high, each made of the heart of the cypress tree.

The side posts are of the same wood, but only about a foot square; and the walls are made of the mortar described in the other buildings, and about nine inches thick leaving the inpailed(?) part on the inside. – The interior of the building was divided into two spaces, or rooms, by a wall running from east to west, one of the rooms being double the size of the other: - in the largest room the Eternal fire was kept, and it also contained a table, or altar about four feet high, six long and two wide upon which a coffin neatly made of canes, was laid, in which were deposited the bones of the late Grand Sun. This was a common custom, and the coffin was allowed to remain for some time after which it was buried either under the Temple or in some other consecrated place. – The inner apartment (**page 116**) being very dark, could not be clearly examined although on the floor are observed some small figures apparently toys. – The roof of the building presented the appearance of a dome or pavilion and was neatly finished both out and inside and on the top are placed three wooden birds twice as large as a goose, and facing the east with expanded wings – Charlevoix who enjoyed the same opportunity with Du Pratz calls them eagles. One finds among their pottery carved figures frequently, they represent however the pelican, at least in resemblance.

The corner and side posts, are placed as deep in the ground as their length above and our authors wonder how the natives could manage beams of such size without the aid of some knowledge of mechanics.

Besides the eight Guardians of the Temple, there was also a master of ceremonies, and misteries, to whom belonged the high privileges with the grand Sun who was himself high priest: in common familiarity with the Great Spirit

The Temple was easily distinguished, as it had placed before the door the post, the top of which were rudely carved in the shape of a mans head: - the door of the building were weighty and so constructed as to prevent the egress of those not privileged.

Charlevoix, describes the Temple as facing the east, and about 40 feet square by 20 in height, we presume from the centre to the top of the ..om(?) – and that it was situated at the eastern extremity of the villiage and separated from it by the house of the Great Sun, which was constructed after the same (**page 117**)

fashion, but not so large, and situated also on a mound. – The Eternal fire was preserved on an altar of stone or earth covered with pebbles, near the centre of the large room. Three sticks of wood were placed on the fire triangularly whence it was required – no one was allowed to warm at this fire, nor to use it for any purpose other than sacred: - two guardians were always at their post, and during winter were allowed a fire in the corner of the Temple lighted from profane, and not the Eternal flame

Charlevoix observed large gourds filled with bones, and also the toys mentioned above, he examined and found them wooden heads rudely carved like the eagle or pelican and from the slight respect shown them did not believe they were used as idols Du Pratz states that the Temples and house of the "Grand Sun" both presented quite a grand appearance being elevated on their respective mounds and apart from the villiage.

The gentleman whom we mentioned as having collected numerous specimens of their pottery impliments of war, and other of domestic use in conversation detailed to us the following facts in relation to the examination of a mound situated on the plantation of William C. Conner edge of this county, and about 14 miles from Natchez. – The mound was some forty feet square on top, with a base of about sixty – he commenced entering it by digging from one of the sides and level with the surface of the ground surrounding it the foundation he found composed entirely of baked brick made of clay and sand ten feet square (**page 118**) and 14 inches thick, and above this a layer of blue clay for about 12 inches, then a strata of common loam, succeeded by another of clay, and one of ashes: - At this point of their progress an old grey headed negro one of the hands kindly furnished by Mr. Conner exclaimed "eh; eh; massa, now you come to nigger grave yard, and such proved to be the fact. The mound had been used for years previous by an occupant of the plantation, as a place of interment for the negroes. – This mound was undoubtedly the location of a Temple. The layers of ashes exhibited portions of human bones not quite consumed its future examination of this mound is in anticipation by us: - did time and means offer we should willingly, and with pleasure devote ourselves to the task of examining the continuous chain throughout the valley of the Mississippi.

We herewith append an extract from Du Pratz, of ourselves detailed by, and upon his authority alone, and we would here remark that thus far we have made, are of nothing as facts seen when supported by other evidence either written or such traditionary accounts as we believe could be relied on – if we have erred it is an error of judgement and not of intention.

Among the Natchez the deaths of any of their Suns, as I have before observed; is a most fatal event; for it is sure to be attended with the destruction of a great many people of both sexes. Early in the spring of 1723, the Stung Serpent, who was brother of the Great Sun, and my intimate friend, was seized with a mortal (**page 119**) distemper, which filled the whole nation of the Natchez with the greatest consternation and terror; for the two brothers had mutually engaged to

follow each other to the land of the spirits; and if the Great Sun should kill himself for the sake of his brother, very many people likewise would be put to death.

When the Stung Serpent was despaired of, the chief of the guardians of the temple came to me in the greatest confusion, and acquainting me with the mutual engagement of the two brothers, begged of me to interest myself in preserving the Great Sun, and consequently a great part of the nation. He made the same request of the commander of the fort. – Accordingly we were no sooner informed of the death of Stung Serpent, than the commander, some of the principal Frenchmen & I, went in a body to the hut of the Great sun.

We found him in despair, but after some time, he seemed influenced by the argument I used to dissuade him from putting himself to death. – The death of the Stung Serpent was published by the firing of two muskets, which were answered by the other villiages, and immediately cries & lamentations were heard on all sides. The Great Sun, in the meantime, remained inconsolable, and sat bent forwards, with his eyes towards the ground. In the evening while we were still in his hut, he made a sign to his favourite wife, who in consequence of that threw a palefull of water on the fire & extinguished it. This was a signal for extinguishing all the fires in the nation, & filled every one with terrible alarm, as it denoted that **(page 120)** the Great Sun was still resolved to put himself to death. I gently chided him for altering his former resolution, but he assured me he had not, and desired us to go and sleep securely. We accordingly left him, pretending to rely on the assurance he had given us; but we took up our lodgings in the hut of his chief servants, and stationed a soldier at the door of his hut, whom we ordered to give us notice of whatever happened.

There was no need to fear our being betrayed by the wife of the Great Sun, or any others about him; for none of them had the least inclination to die if they could help it. On the contrary, they all expressed the greatest thankfulness and gratitude to us for our endeavors to avert the threatened calamity from the nation. Before we went to our lodgings we entered the hut of the deceased, and found him on his bed of state, dressed in his finest cloths, his face painted with vermilion shod as for a journey, with his feather-crown on his head.

To his bed were fastened his arms, which consisted of a double barreled gun, a pistol, a bow, a quiver full of arrows and a tomahawk. Round his bed were place all the calumets of peace he had received during his life, and on a pole planted in the ground near it, hung a chain of forty six rings of cane painted red, to express the number of enemies he had slain. All his domestics were around him, and they presented victuals to him at the usual hours, as if he were alive. The company in his hut were composed of his favourite wife, of a second wife which he kept in another **(page 121)** villiage and visited when his favourite was with child; of his chancellor, he physician, his chief domestic his pipe bearer, and some old women, who were all to be strangled at his interment. To these victims a noble woman voluntarily joined herself, resolving from her friendship to the

Stung Serp(ent) to go and live with him in the country of spirits. I regretted her on many accounts but particularly as she was intimately acquainted with the virtues of simples, had by her skill saved many of our peoples lives, and given me many useful instructions. After we had satisfied our curiosity in the hut of the deceased we retired to our hut, where we spent the night. But at day-break we were suddenly awakened, and told, that it was with difficulty the Great Sun, was kept from killing himself. We hastened to his hut, & upon entering it I found dismay & terror painted upon the countenance of all who were present. The Great Sun held his gun by the butt-end & seemed enraged that the other Suns had seized upon it, to prevent him from executing his purpose.

I addressd myself to him, and after opening the pan to let the priming fly out, I chided him gently for his not acting according to his former resolution. He pretended at first not to see me; but after some time; he let go his hold of the musket, and shook hands with me without speaking a word. I then went towards his wife, who all this while had appeared in the utmost agony and terror, & I asked her if she was ill. She answered me " Yes very ill" & added, " if you leave us, my husband is a dead man, and all the Natchez will die; stay then, for he opens his ears only to your words, which have the sharpness & strength of arrows. You are his true friend, and do not laugh when you speak, like most of the Frenchmen." The Great Sun at length consented to order his fire to be again lighted, which was the signal for lighting (**page 122**) the other fires of the nation, and dispelled all their apprehensions. Soon after the natives began the dance of death, and prepared for the funeral of Stung Serpent. Orders were given to put none to death on that occasion, but those who were in the hut of the deceased. A child, however, had been already strangled by its father and mother, which ransomed their lives upon the death of the Great Sun, and raised them from the rank of stinkards to that of nobles. Those who were appointed to die were conducted twice a day and placed in two rows before the temple, where they acted over the scene of their death, each accompanied by eight of their own relations, who were to be their executioners, and by that office exempted themselves from dying upon the death of any of the Suns, and likewise raised themselves to the dignity of men of rank.

Mean-while thirty warriors brought a prisoner, who had formerly been married to a female Sun; but upon her death, instead of submitting to die with her, had fled to New Orleans, and offered to become the hunter and slave of our commander in chief. The commander accepting his offer and granting him his protection, he often visited his countrymen who out of complaisance to the commander, never offered to apprehend him; but that officer being now returned to France, and the runaway appearing in the neighborhood, he was now apprehended, and numbered among the victims. Finding himself this unsuspectingly trapped he began to cry bitterly; but three old women, who were his relations offering to (**page 123**) die in his stead, he was not only again exempted from death, but raised to the dignity of a man of rank. Upon this he afterwards became insolent,

and profiting by what he had seen and learned in New Orleans, he easily on many occasions, made his fellow countrymen his dupes.

On the day of interment, the wife of the deceased made a very moving speech to the French who were present, recommending her children, to whom she also addressed herself, to their friendship, and advising a perpetual union between the two nations. Soon after the master of the ceremonies appeared in a red-feathered crown, which half encircled his head, having a red staff in his hand in the form of a cross, at the end of which hung a garland of black feathers. All the upper part of body was painted red, excepting his arms, and from his girdle to his knees hung a fringe of feathers, the rows of which were alternately white and red.

When he came before the hut of the deceased, he saluted him with a great hoo, and then began the cry of death, in which he was followed by the whole people. Immediately after the Stung Serpent was brought out on his bed of state, and was placed on a litter, which six of the guardians of the temple bore upon their shoulders.

The procession then began, the master of the ceremonies walking first (**page 124**) and after him the oldest warrior, holding in one hand the pole with the rings of canes, and in the other the pipe of war, a mark of the dignity of the deceased.

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Next followed the corpse, after which came those who were to die at the interment. — The whole procesion went three times round the hut of the deceased, and then those who carried the corpse proceded in a circular kind of march, every turn intersecting the former, until they came to the Temple.

At every turn the dead child was thrown by its parents before the bearers of the corpse that they might walk over it, and when the corpse was placed in the Temple the victims were immediately strangled. The Stung Serpent, and his two wives were buried in the same grave within the temple; the other victims were interred in different parts and after the ceremony they burnt, according to custom the hut of the deceased.”

Du Pratz who resided at “Le Till(?) de Rosalie aux Natchez”, - in the centre of the district of country occupied by the Natchez from 1720 until 1728, the year before the grand massacre of the French gives as a reason for the astonishing dimunition of the population of the tribes, the prevalence and fatality of the small pox, and severe (**page 125**) pleurisies colds etc – which diseases have within a few years swept off almost entire tribes who does not recollect the thrilling recital of Mr. Callin in telling of the devastation of the former disease amongst the Mandans.

The entire tribe was almost litterally destroyed by this dread scourge of the race. – wise are the purposes of that great Being, “whose ways are past finding out”

and whose deeds are ever of good, and for good. May it not be that the peopled desert the populous wilderness has given up to the destroying angle, and millions of the dark minded whose sepulchres are all the land marks thus myriads(?)(?), were leveled to earth, made tenants of the grave, that another race might gladden the desert with bright joy, and fill the wide wilderness with his praise, and bidding "earth(?) place to blossom as the rose", the hidden recesses of the far & farthest west receive the light of truth that with which makes the freeman truly free. Making room for an Empire of Liberty, whose actual history has no parallel through time, and finds similitude in her sudden birth has rapid rose to manhood, in form thought and deed only in that fable of the olden times, in Eastern land and told too by a bold tribe of the West, that they were not born as other men; but sprang full formed a nation from out the earth. The Old World had gloomy(?), and childish age marked her decay, superstition bigotry damned the bright desire, when Hope,

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Bright hope led colours o'er the wave,
And for his prize new Empire gave,
Where yet again, - renewed its day(?);
Fair Truth with all serenest ray;
Should ever shine with boundless ..(?)

Could we look upon the past, and scan the shadowy future knowing such to have been the intent of the Eternal ruler of the universe, might it not be that nobler effort would be made to send that light wider farther, and with might and power through the far West, the last abiding place of the Red Man.

The Natchez appeared as having been, at no very long previous time by far the most numerous and respectable tribe, within the limits of Louisiana, then extending as their territory to Canada and unknown regions in the north. Their own traditions and those of other nations, which had with jealous admiration, gazed for long years upon their greatness attested the fact, that they were the most populous & powerful of any tribe known on the Northern Continent – and were viewed by other nations, as their superiors in arts and arms, and therefore respected by them

It was at the period Du Pratz wrote a tradition fully accredited by all, and unquestioned that they occupied the country from the Manchac in Lower Louisiana as far as the Oua-bash – the Ohio, then erroneously called by the former name, covering a space of more than four hundred leagues and that their ruling Suns, the of the subdivisions of the tribe exceeded Five hundred in number: - The pride and jealousies of their **(page 127)** Great Suns, and also of their inferior rulers brought on civil descension. – these causes combined with the diseases we have spoken of, their custom of human sacrifices, and their objections to connections by marriage with other nations, diminished their numbers rapidly – and other tribes less civilized and far more ferocious & brutal,

came like the screaming Goths of northland, with fire and sword upon them. – The custom of sacrifice was not only common upon the deaths of the Great Sun, but also upon the demise of any of the inferior rulers, and so necessary was it deemed that he should be well attended when he left earth for the ‘happy hunting grounds, that in case he had no friends to volunteer as his s..t(?) the requested number of subjects was immolated

This custom it is supposed gave rise to a division of the tribe, as many subjects and some of the Suns, humanely opposed it. – the branch of the Tensas on Mobile River and the Chitimachas, both of which tribes preserved the Eternal Fire, and practised the the other observances of the Natchez dispensed with, the funeral sacrifices; - and tradition says that other Suns had removed with their subdivisions to a remote distance; may it not be that the Flat heads – the Sho(sho)nes of the West may be descendants of these voluntary exiles?

The remnants of two small nations were incorporated with the Natchez, as was customary with all tribes – upon the demand of the unfortunate, - they were bound by sacred obligations, to receive them as bretheren, to protect, defend and cherish them – the ‘Grigra’ and a band of the Tioux “Thious” or Tous, the latter the remains (**page 128**) of a nation said to have been destroyed by the Chickasaws, but from further examination we believe one of the collateral branches of the Sioux, those wild spirits of the Western Prarie, called by travellers the wild men of the desert.

Charlevoix found the Tioux village in the vicinity of that of the Great Sun of the Natchez” In 1724 it was supposed the ‘Natchez’ numbered about twelve hundred warriors, and this we presume must have been about their strength at the time of their massacre by the French, in 1730 – at or near the mouth of Little river Louisiana. – The Tensas the allies of the Natchez referred to above formerly, occupied an extensive range of country from Lake Concordia to Lake Providence, but were much weakened in their wars with the Chickasaws, and fled thence to the vicinity of Mobile.

Our amiable Du Pratz who proves himself a close observer, and although once or twice at arms against the Natchez yet he observes that their good qualities deserved the respect of all, and that their misfortune rather than lessen the respect entertained for them, should rather blend with it those feelings of pity, the noble heart one feels for the loss of the virtuous and good among men.

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The Natchez

No. 16

With regard to the children, 'The Natchez' were extremely particular in giving the male, the confirmation of head of which we have spoken previously – the child was placed in a cradle neatly made of cane, about two and a half feet long, six inches deep, and of sufficient breadth, between which the infant was placed, a small pallet or matrafs stuffed with moss, the child was thus tied to the cradle by its shoulders, arms, legs, thighs and hips, - and over its forehead was placed two bands of deer skin so placed and fastened as to give the form desired. – We have seen this description of cradle, and indeed it is still used by many tribes. –

In endeavouring to ascertain the object of the "Natchez" in following this singular custom, we find it stated by an early Spanish writer in sketches of several South American tribes, that they informed him their object was to give them a more terrible appearance in battle, and at the same time in the more quiet walks of life adds in appearance to their dignity. – And it may be there is more in this than meets the eye, as the pressure drives the brain from the position intended by nature, giving it a different shape, and sending an undue portion into the cells of destructiveness, we may conclude that they had some smattering of Phrenology.

The skulls we have examined, has that organ well and fully developed, and in some degree we believe from the comparison, - which at the same time increases some of the moral faculties, by throwing an overdose into the compartment of benevolence and veneration; this is the only way in which we can reconcile (page 130) it to our belief that the Natchez, had not an overfondness for fighting and thus held in check alone by the counter action of the overgrown moral faculties. The boys at 12 years of age were presented with bows and arrows suited to their strength, and some old warrior usually arranged games for them and these in emulation by promise of prize, and titles of honor – such as the young warrior, little crane, The eagle etc. and at the same time for their edification fighting his battle over again thus stimulating them from earliest youth with tales of foray wild, and glorious fight. Those scenes which fires the imagination, and kindles in the breast a fondness for the field of glory, and thus the young hours of life stamps their living semblance on the mind and and to the young Indian giving over them to thought, example high for bold and daring deed in strategies(?) or in the battle midst.

They are taught from their earliest years all highest respect for age and in order to deter them from mischief the most certain way was in threatening them with the displeasure of the Old Men. The great, great grand, or great great grandfather – for says Du Pratz, I have seen some of their old men who from the effects of age alone, would not stir without assistance, exercise an influence

beyond any other power by a simple gesture intimating their thought; - The respect paid them by all, was so great that they were judges in all cases of difference, & their opinion esteemed as the decrees of the Midran(?) King.

The old man, however remotely removed from the youngest child, was called by all father, and to distinguish their immediate parents he was called their true father. No fighting was allowed among the boys and young men, brotherly affection was a principle inculcated with the **(page 131)** greatest care, and the threat was frequently made by the old and wise, that if a case of the kind should occur solitary confinement at a distance should be the punishment of the culprits, who could thus prove themselves unworthy to him amongst a peaceable people.

Du Pratz states that during his residence amongst them he neither saw or heard, of a single affair of the kind – so common of late years among the refined civilized – those who account to themselves the title which of all others should belong to those only, who under any and all circumstances ever prove themselves the higher style of men, - respecting of their virtuous and good – but with that true courage which dares in the right to oppose the jibes and jabs of the multitude. - It is a beautiful affection that of filial piety, and is carrying out its surest impulse and but pays back the debt justly due from youth to age; - Shall age whose eye when the young hours of life were usually guarded on every step, watched over as in pain & sickness through the height of it, hope around boyhood gleesome hours and in life's summer time lives upon the smiles of those around a home it loves intertwined by a thousand sweet remembrances It is a sweet theme for thought, would that it were dwelt on, and its principle inculcated cherished, until the wide world should find its sway commensurate with its sweetness and beauty. And its benevolent influence – for then would age indeed be blest by the raptured smiles garnered up from infancy and growing in youth, strengthening in strength, as years came **(page 132)** upon the child, of its affection – and in those smiles reap rich reward for gazing watching leading the frail and delicate plant, like the sweet vine trained for purposes of good.

As the children of the Natchez grew up, their fathers and mothers, each having the care of those of their own sex, would gradually accustom them to the labours to be performed by them through life. –

They are all taught to swim at an early age, and made to expose themselves in proportion to their capacity to sun-shine storm and cold, to train them to the hunters, and warriors life. – The young men though not as fully occupied as the girls, shall ..(?).. their occupation, hunting, fishing, cutting wood cleaning the field for corn, and cultivating it, and during very inclement weather they were making axes, hoes, hatchets, and paddles, and a variety of other implements required by them. –

An old warrior was selected whose charge it is to direct their exercises and “ball play” – In order that their fondness for those amusements should not be carried

to an extent injurious to health, and also to prevent their raillery(?) from ending in quarrels – wrestling was never allowed nor even boxing matches, nor indeed any game or exercise where difficulty might arise. – In the correcting of their children even at an early age, corporeal punishment was not resorted to beyond that which mothers are privileged to apply. The high respect for age, was held up from earliest **(page 133)** years as essential to good deeds and proper conduct, and the fear of offending “the good old men” was not more humane, more moralizing and in the result produced by such mode far, very far preferable to the means resorted to by the “knights of the birch” in punishing his refractory flock; - often have we seen these petty tyrants the “Squires” of the school room, by their deeds of ill sowing seeds of evil, and by their merciless lashing, driving deep the worst feelings of childhood nature, scaring the young heart and fitting it for deeds of darkness – and making it callous to all feelings of good.

For the unfortunate victims are without appeal, far from their homes and at the mercy of the kind excellent, and affectionate monsters, they are driven to deception in order to evade punishment, and once astray, on, and on they fly, step by step in their downward progress, ..ying(?) themselves deeper in guilt, until finally dark disgrace fastened on their name, and they become a thing despised by men: - Reader there is more than fancy here, and we have in the minds eye, the poor despised, and criminal – thus driven, from the school room, to the gallows & more than one harrowing tale, do we know of those whom hope in youths bright morn gave promise to glorious noon, and that green(?) old age, loved respected for honor virtue truth: - led coaxed driven from good by those who in promising to “teach the young idler to shoot” prepared themselves by polluting the young minds point of purity.

In meeting an acquaintance the common mode of salutation, was to shake **(page 134)** hands slightly intertwining the hand with the inquiry in their own language “are you then my friend”: - when entering their house after the same greeting, the guest was asked to be seated, and pointed to a bed, which was commonly extended along one or more sides of the building, and raised some two & a half feet from the ground: - a silence was preserved for a few moments in order that the guest might have time to rest, and as soon as the conversation was commenced by him, he was offered something to eat, which was invariably accepted, as it was deemed rude to refuse.

In conversation however numerous the assembly, only one person spoke at a time, no interruption was allowed; and in their councils each speaker was listened to with attention, and after a spread was furnished and the speaker seated, a short time was allowed to elapse before another succeeded.

They were much amused at the practice of the French in conversation, and Du Pratz remarks that he has often noticed them smile on such occasions, when probably the entire party present was engaged talking at one & the same time or moment.

It was customary among the young men to have the nose pricked, and marked with charcoal. The warriors alone had the privilege of marking any other part of the body; - and upon the performance of some gallant achievement, they would **(page 135)** have the figure of a Tomahawk together with the hieroglyphic sign of the conquered nation thus marked upon the shoulders. The warriors frequently wore small ornaments suspended from the ear. The chief ornaments of the Suns was their crown of feathers composed of b...(?) cap of net work fastened to a red band extending around, and about two inches broad. This was ornamented with a rude embroidery with white stones, and surmounted with white feathers, about 8 inches long in front and lessening as they recede: - we have seen something similar used by the western Indians of the present day, which presented a rich and beautiful appearance. Of fine personal appearance, the dignified manners of this noble race well became them, - and we doubt not were some portion of their manners grafted on those of the present day, all would acknowledge the benefit of the example of the poor Indian.

How different would be the scenes in our deliberation assemblies state and national, compared as things are in a great measure of those who wish notoriety - and to gain what they cannot whether they make themselves supremely ridiculous, or receive deservedly the lampoons of the caricaturist; - instead of exhibiting that propriety which marked the rude Indian, centuries since, they were the manners of the day by a thousand acts which prejudicially influence **(page 136)** alike those manners, as well as the morals of the last. - Exhibiting to the world a thousand scenes which prove their incapacity for the duties they have taken upon themselves, - duties they pledged themselves to perform, as the value given for that received by them on Honour, dignity, fame - all of which shine not now with original lustre but dimly dark.

The End

Postscript.

Such was the Natchez Tribe of Indians, and such has been the effort of an admirer of their character, a sympathiser in their melancholy fate, to reserve something more than their fate & name from oblivion. -

The Whriter of the foregoing notice of the "Natchez" lived to complete but not to revise his History.

Such as he left it, with its unpruned enthusiasm its uncorrected faults its curious facts from many a legend and wild story gleaned, his surviving friends now submit it to the indulgent criticism of an enlightened public.

Natchez Nov. 1840.

