

THE EMIGRATING INDIANS.

We copy from the Journal of Commerce, the following extract of a letter from a gentleman in the far West, to a friend in Little Rock, Arkansas, dated December, 25, 1837.

There are now arriving at Fort Gibson and on the road between that place and the Mississippi river, near fourteen thousand Creek Indians, under course of removal by the government of the United States to their new country on the Arkansas river. The removal is made by a company of contractors, who receive a stated sum per head for each Indian delivered to the officers of government appointed to receive them, at the lines of their new country.

Those contractors are bound to assist them on their journey; and the removal of Indians is to them a matter of speculation. It therefore becomes their interest to urge them on, regardless of either comfort or convenience to the Indians. And in fact, those contractors could not reasonably be expected to consult the comforts of the Indians to much extent, at their own individual expense.

Those people have necessarily, from the impoverished condition of many of them, to move slowly, and perhaps more so than was anticipated by the speculators previous to their starting; consequently they may not be able, without incurring much individual expense, to extend to the Indians even the indulgence of time that common humanity requires.— Whether they comply with their obligations or not, I am not prepared to say; but be that as it may, no portion of our American history can furnish a parallel to the misery and suffering at present endured by the emigrating Creeks. They consist of all ages, sexes and sizes, and of the varieties of human intellect and condition, from the civilized and tenderly nourished matrons and misses, to the wild savage and the poorest of the poor.

Thousands are entirely destitute of shoes or covering of any kind for their feet; many of them are almost naked, and but few of them any thing more on their person than a light dress calculated only for the summer, or for a very warm climate; and the weather being warm when they left Alabama, many of them left their heavier articles of clothing, expecting them to be brought on in steam boats, which has as yet been very partially done. In this destitute condition, they are wading on in cold mud, or hurried over the frozen ground, as the case may be. Many of them have in this way had their feet frost-bitten; and being unable to travel, fall in the rear of the main party, and in this way are left on the road to await the ability or convenience of the contractors to assist them. Many of them not being able to endure this unexampled state of human suffering, die, and are thrown by the side of the road, and are covered over only with brush, &c. where they remain until devoured by the wolves.

How long this state of things will exist, is hard to conjecture. It is now past the middle of December, and the winter though cold is by no means at its worst stage, and when the extreme winter does fall upon these most miserable creatures, in their present suffering and desperate condition, the destruction of human life will be most deplorable. The American people, it is presumed, are yet unacquainted with the condition of these people, and it is to be hoped when they do become acquainted with the facts, the philanthropic portion of the community will not be found wanting in their efforts to alleviate, as far as practicable, their extreme suffering. They are in want of almost every article in common use, particu-

larly clothing, and any thing of that kind would be highly acceptable—such as coarse gowns, shirts, coats, pantaloons, shoes, &c. which if given during the winter might be the means of saving many lives.

[These Indians, the writer goes on to say, were removed from their homes before the time they could be positively required to remove, and that, on promises which have not been fulfilled. They had not time to effect a sale of their property, and receive little or nothing for it—though it was guaranteed to them.— These people are not hostile; they were, with few exceptions, friendly to the whites, and aided them in the subjugation of Nohemathla and his 2,500 followers. Furthermore, among them are the families of nearly a thousand of his warriors, now serving with our army in Florida.]

The writer concludes by saying, he has no wish to cast any reflection or censure in any particular quarter; but there is fault somewhere, and it is to be hoped that an inquiring community will look to the causes which have led to this great extreme of human suffering]