

## Trackers or Tracers.

The ancient Muscogees or Creeks were a very warlike people and seem to have gloried principally in those activities which characterized the good warrior and hunter. Little children even were all named with reference to some act performed by an ancestor in war or the hunt. When the boys became of man's estate they were no longer called by <sup>the</sup> names of their youth, but with a good deal of public ceremony, were given by the old men what we call a war name. It was customary in early days to train some of the young men — or rather to teach — them for special usefulness in time of war, such as procuring and having in readiness the medicines, the moccasins for a hasty expedition etc. etc. while others were taught, as they believed, to seek and find water for the party when in great need of it, while others still were trackers or tracers who could track or trail the enemy hours or days after they had fled or passed, as none else could. I am not initiated in these <sup>and accomplishments</sup> mysteries, and know nothing of my own knowledge, but will write just what has been told me by a full blooded Indian friend who has <sup>much</sup> some knowledge of the subject, vouching for nothing more than a truthful statement of that which he has told me, and the fact that my friend's character for veracity, ~~for~~ honesty, and the like, ~~stands~~ is of the very highest in this community where he now lives. In this communication I will write you of the "trailers" who are said to be ambitious young men who are taken in training by their request by the doctor, or as the white people have come to call

such characters - the medicine man. They are taken apart into some secluded spot in the dense woods where there is good water and where they will be secure from all intrusions, <sup>or observation</sup> of man or beast. Here a small brush arbor is erected and so screened around with brush ~~as~~ to obstruct any sight of them should any one come near enough to see them, and the pupils located. The teacher, a man old and reputed well up in all the mysteries known to the initiated, visits them twice daily giving lessons. What or how he teaches them is not lawful for a man to tell so it has not been told ~~me~~ and I don't know. But we know he puts them through a severe course of fasting which appears to be the feature in the course that prevents the many from seeking instruction. They are permitted, however, to eat 2 spoonfuls of "Sopkey" each day, which barely keeps up their courage, and body and soul together. This dish consists simply of Indian corn broken up into large crystals - the common Cornmeal of commerce and boiled in clear water until thoroughly cooked - <sup>not much</sup> ~~nothing~~ of a feast even could they get all they wanted of it. The doctor teaches them songs and incantations (these are what we may not know) <sup>unless we are being taught</sup> which when sung or recited over a vessel containing water, in which have been thrown certain twigs, roots and other essentials, and blown into through a hollow reed or cane, are said to be powerful in the healing of diseases, certain songs or formulas being for the cure of certain known diseases, snake, spider and other insect bites. This fasting and teaching for the first term, is continued for the period of four (4) days. This over, the pupils may come out of the arbor where they have all

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