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Family life--Cherokee  
Food--Cherokee

Elizabeth Ross  
No 4251-4590  
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S-149

Story told to  
Miss E. Jane Ross  
By Judge Riley Keys  
Born 1813-died 1884

"SCRATCHING"

Old time Cherokee women punished disobedient children by scratching them on the bare skin with gar fish teeth or bone knitting needle. Recalling having been thus punished in his childhood days, and old man of much prominence in the early years of the Cherokee Nation in the Indian Territory, related that back in the "Old Nation", east of the Mississippi river, he had stayed at times with his grandmother, who was a full-blood Cherokee, but he himself was of both white and Indian blood. The old grandmother usually kept a big stone jar partially filled with boiled hominy grits in her home. All the native Cherokees used hominy almost daily. The young grandson, while playing about the house, was seized with the desire to thrust his kitten into the hominy jar and acted upon the impulse. The experience was distasteful to the kitten, and immediately aroused the indignation of the old woman. Without loss of time the grandmother laid hands upon the boy, reached into the receptacle where she kept her needles and withdrawing one of the sharp-pointed implements, administered sundry scratches to the skin of her young relative, at the same time bestowing upon him some admonitions concerning placing unclean things in the food which they--the family--was to have eaten. The grandson did not repeat the