

denne and W. L. Mora are members of the tribe, as well as Dan Paul, who is, however, related to the chief.

THE CHETIMACHES.

Something About the Tribe Involved in the St. Mary Trouble.

When the early French explorers of Louisiana reached the Teche region, they met a very numerous and powerful tribe of Indians—the Tchetimaches or Chetimaches—who received their white visitors very courteously. The chief of the expedition perfected a treaty with the head man of the tribe for an offensive and defensive alliance; for there was as much to fear from warlike and treacherous races either on the part of the French or on the part of the Tchetimaches, whose deadly enemies, the Natchez Indians, were liable at any time to swoop down upon their wigwams. As the years glided by the treaty was rigorously observed by both parties. Sometimes the Chetimaches helped the French against hostile tribes, and sometimes the white men hurried to the defense and rescue of their redskin friends. As soon as a form of government was adopted in the colony and grants of land were made to settlers, it was expressly stipulated that the Chetimaches were not to be disturbed in their dwelling and habitation in the Teche region. This was done in recognition of the Indians' faithful compliance with the treaty. Special legislation subsequently confirmed them in the perpetual holding of the lands they occupied; but it was provided in the act or deed that the land would revert to the government when the last man of the tribe shall have joined his forbears in the redman's elysium. This condition caused the Chetimaches to smile (although Indians are traditionally said to be very glum and taciturn people), for they were then, nearly three hundred years ago, very numerous, and they scoffed at the hint of extinction. And yet, they are now but a handful of degenerate sons of worthy fathers. There are not one hundred and thirty of them now living. War, disease, the learning of civilized ways have decimated the Chetimaches. The present remnant of that once warlike and intelligent tribe are listless, indolent and careless of all save the bare attempt to earn a living as hunters, fishermen and laborers. The women seem to be the most energetic, as they work in the fields and do all of the domestic chores, besides pleating baskets and mats and many fancy articles in willowware, which they gather from the extensive plantations of osiers along the banks of bayous and streams which gridiron the Teche country.

Spanish rule succeeded to French domination, as history tells, and the new order respected the treaty and the grant, and confirmed the Chetimaches in their landed rights. Again, when the banner of France waved once more over Louisiana, was the pact with the Indians respected. The United States government, after having purchased the territory of Louisiana from France in the early part of the nineteenth century, quieted the Chetimaches in their title.

The Indians then held a large extent of country, about twenty miles, near the village of Charenton, in St. Mary parish. The land was always held to be the property of the tribe. There was no individual holding. But about seventy years ago some of the Indians sold, for a money consideration, a large tract of land to white settlers, who reclaimed the land, cultivated it and dwelt thereon, transmitting their titles to their descendants to this day.

Several years ago—and after the death of the original parties to those sales—it dawned upon some of the more intelligent members of the tribe that they could claim the land from the heirs of the purchasers, because the vendors had no right to sell what belonged to the tribe. A suit was filed in the United States circuit court to dispossess the later owners of the land—the white people—and, after a long litigation, the matter was finally decided at the fall term of the United States circuit court in this city last year against the Chetimaches. At the trial of the case, their chief, Paul, and several other tribesmen testified before the court, and were objects of general interest and curiosity. Their defeat in the courts was sullenly and resentfully accepted by the Chetimaches, and ever since they have showed their hostility toward the white man.

The serious affair last Tuesday was but the climax of the long cherished discontent of the Indians.