

THE NOTTOWAY INDIANS.

The only remains in the state of Virginia, of the formidable tribes which once composed the Powhatan confederacy, are the Pamunkeys and Nottoways, with a few Mattamonies. We gave to the public some time ago, an account of the present state of the Pamunkey and Mattaponey Indians. The following description of the Nottoways we have received from a friend who lately visited their settlement.

The Nottoway Indians in number about 27, including men, women, and children; occupy a tract of seven thousand acres of excellent land upon the west side of Nottoway river, two miles from Jerusalem, in the county of Southampton.

The principal character among them is a woman who is styled their Queen, her name is Edie Turner—She is nearly 60 years of age, and extremely intelligent, for although illiterate, she converses and communicates her ideas with greater perspicuity than women among the lower orders in society.—She has a comfortable cottage well furnished; several horses and cows, and keeps her portion of the settlement in a good state of cultivation.

The ancient Nottoway or Powhatan language, is only known to the Queen and two other old Indians. This language is evidently of Celtic origin, and appears equally harmonious and expressive as either the Erse, Irish, or Welch. It has two genders, Masculine and Feminine, three degrees of comparison, and two articles, but the verbs are extremely irregular.

The old woman gave an account of the ancient superstition or religion of the Nottoways; from which one might suppose that John Bonyan had copied his Pilgrim's Progress.

The Nottoways believed, that the soul after separation from the body, was conducted by a Genius to the bank of a large, dark and gloomy river to the allotted residence of the wicked. Across this river lay a long Pole, roundish, and of a polish as smooth as glass. The spirit was conducted by his Genius along this pole, having the same advice given which Lot's wife had, "*never to look behind.*" The consequence of disobedience to this order immediately proved fatal, for the unhappy spirit slipped his foot, and was instantly precipitated into the river of eternal punishment. But if he reached the opposite bank in safety, a new trial was presented to him. He had to pass, conducted by the Genius, through an extensive orchard, where trees of every description presented to the sight the most delicious fruits, but to the sight only; for if the spirit neglecting the advice of the guide, was induced to touch any of the tempting clusters, he was immediately transformed into a bear, wolf, or some brute animal. If the spirit was fortunate enough to escape from this orchard of temptations, he entered a spacious forest abounding with game of all kinds, but if he did not in this instance also follow closely his guide, he was doomed here to remain, and spend his eternity in the chase of animals. Passing from this forest, he next entered an extensive plain, where groups of men and women were indulging in every species of Pleasure. This was the region next to that of eternal bliss, and those were esteemed fortunate, who even reached this elysium. But the few who still had fortitude to resist all the joys which here presented themselves, were admitted to the presence of the great spirit, with him to dwell in everlasting happiness.

In the Nottoway river adjoining the Indian land and about five miles from Jerusalem, an ore has been found, supposed by some to contain silver, but the more probable opinion is, that the specimens discovered are only sulphur mixed with the baser metals.

Upon Saturday the 4th inst. four lots of the poorer part of the Indian settlement; each lot containing 280 acres, were exposed to sale by an act of the Legislature, for the purpose of paying the debts of the Nottoway Indians—The first two lots brought 4 dollars per acre; the third 5,94 cents, and the fourth 5,01 cents. The terms of the sale were one fourth cash, and three fourths in one, two and three years, secured by a deed of trust given by the purchaser upon the property.

The Nottoway tribe, if we may judge from the looks of the few now remaining, were originally men of good appearance and stature, not darker than a bright mulatto complexion.