

more pacific element of the Cherokees, if possible. A few old chiefs crept out of hiding and came to a parley. They agreed to meet Christian and representatives of Virginia and North Carolina at Long Island for a treaty the following summer. This, the Treaty of 1777, was held, but it was meaningless, since neither Dragging Canoe nor his followers took part in it. Dragging Canoe's faction had withdrawn from the Overhill towns to the region of present-day Chattanooga. With his young warriors the Canoe would carry on the fight.

Now, although the Wataugans must watch the Indian frontier and meet the British foe to the east and south, they still had time for politics and government. Their representatives went to the North Carolina legislature. The state of North Carolina, at last officially awake to its western interests, opened a land office in Washington County at which the settlers could purchase the lands they had already bought from the Cherokees. James Robertson became North Carolina's agent to the Overhill Cherokees, and stayed at Chota, to watch the diminished Overhills and hearken for news of Dragging Canoe.

Like other prominent men, Robertson had private business as well as public responsibility on his mind. Further advance down the Tennessee Valley was not practicable. But the Cumberland country could be reached by way of the Wilderness Road—and perhaps also by the water route, down the Tennessee and up the Cumberland, if luck was kind. Very likely he had discussed such possibilities with John Donelson and Richard Henderson at the Treaty of 1777. Probably his mind dwelled on his prospects while he sat in the townhouse at Chota and smoked with the old chiefs. Maybe, between puffs, he prompted Oconostota or Attakullakulla to tell him more about how the land lay at Muscle Shoals, or how things were at the French Lick, on the Cumberland, from which Cherokees and Chickasaws had driven the Shawnees so long ago.

The Tennessee

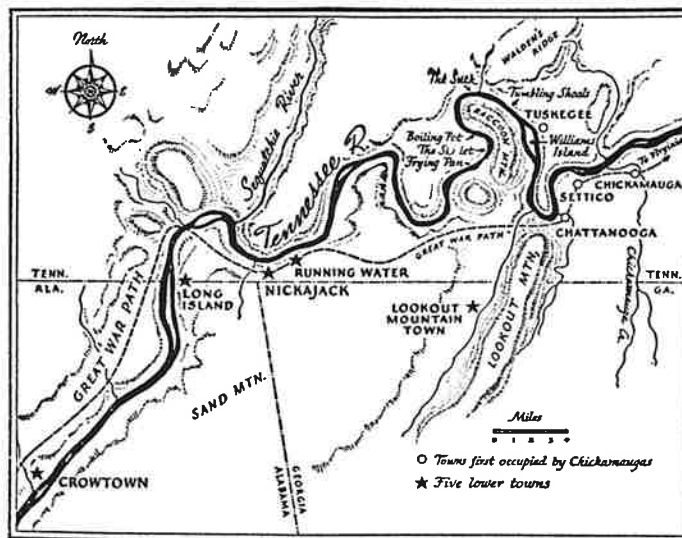
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CHAPTER XI

The Voyage of the Good Boat *Adventure*

THE winter of 1779-80 was one of the coldest ever known in the Tennessee country. Snow began to fall in November, and as winter drew on, the great cold deepened. It was a season when the hardest pioneer might have wished himself a bear, to curl inside a hollow tree and suck his paw,