

Plantation Owners and Farmers

*All I ask in this creation
Is a pretty little wife and a big plantation
Way up yonder in the Cherokee Nation.*

THAT'S PART OF A SONG people like you sing as you wait for the Cherokee to be kicked out of Georgia. Then you and your family can move in.

Some of you are poor farmers. You live on the worst land in Georgia and other parts of the South. The big plantation owners with all their cotton and slaves take up the best land and leave you the scraps. You've heard that the Cherokee land in Georgia is some of the most fertile land in the country. Best yet, the government of Georgia is having a lottery so that even poor farmers like you will have an equal shot at getting good land. One of the reasons you voted for Andy Jackson for president is because you knew he was an Indian fighter who beat the Creeks in a war and then took their land away from them. That's your kind of president. The Cherokee are farmers too. They grow corn, wheat, and cotton. If you're lucky, you'll be able to move onto land with the crops already planted and the farmhouse already built. Others of you aren't quite as poor; you have some land, and grow corn and raise hogs, but you, too, would like to move onto better land.

And some of you are big plantation owners, who grow cotton on your land and own many slaves. You live in Georgia near the coast. The problem is that cotton exhausts the soil, so that after a number of years, your land is not as

productive as it once was. You need new land with soil that hasn't been used to grow cotton for years and years. As of now, the Cherokee are living on the land that rightfully belongs to the state of Georgia. The Georgia legislature recently voted to take over that land and divide it up so that whites like you could move onto it. That's a great law, but some people in Congress and around the country want to stop you from taking this territory from the Cherokee. What's the problem? There is a place set aside for the Cherokee and other Indians west of the Mississippi River. They belong with their own kind, right? Remember, the whole country—no, the whole world—depends on cotton. Your plantation and plantations like yours are what keep this country strong and productive.

But you have another big problem. In Florida, many escaped slaves live side by side with the Seminole Indians. Slaves throughout the South know about this haven for runaways. In fact, sometimes the Seminoles and escaped slaves raid plantations, burn them down, and free the slaves. You won't stand for this. The Seminole communities must be destroyed and the Indians shipped off to Indian Territory along with the Cherokee. As for the escaped slaves who live with them, they need to be recaptured and either returned to their rightful owners or put up for sale. There's also some good land in Florida that you might want to move onto once the Seminoles are gone. ■