CHAPTER XVIII.

The bank of John's Creek the probable site of Fairchild's Stockade Fort—The facts in the case—Description of the remains, discovered on the plantation, of P. D. Klugh, Esq.—Old John Youngblood and Wm. Buchanan—A search for hidden treasures; the excavation still visible on the ancient site of the fort—The old John's Creek settlement, &c.

After diligent search, we have had the satisfaction of discovering the probable site of the ancient fabric mentioned in the last chapter, which, though scarcely now perceptible, links the present with the earliest civilized period in the history of the old Ninety-six District. If our conjecture is correct, it was built—and as Fairchild wrote to the Governor—of puncheon logs, on the north bank of John's Creek, a rifle-shot from it, on the brow of a considerable hill, at present the property of P. D. Klugh, Esq.

The facts are these: On that spot, even previous to the Revolution, an old stockade fort was found standing in a ruinous condition. A slight embankment of earth had probably been thrown up, and on this the puncheons fixed in an upright position. The entire structure inclosed an acre or more of ground. On the west side of the hill, some sixty yards from the fort, ran a branch to which a covered ditch was cut, for the purpose of securing a supply of water

for the occupants of the stockade, when surrounded or menaced by enemies. The remains of this ditch are still traceable.

Within the southern edge of the fort there yet stands a huge slippery-elm, which has been preserved by the proprietor of the plantation, in the midst of a cultivated field, partly for its medicinal virtues, but chiefly for the sake of its venerable associations.

Old John Youngblood—who removed about the close of the Revolution from the territory of Edgefield, and settled on the Jews'-land near this place—related, that when he first saw it, many of the tumbling palisades were still standing; particularly the heavier timbers about the gate, and on them were the marks of the augur and saw, proving it to have been the work of civilized men. Yet, Wm. Buchanan, an old settler, and a Revolutionary soldier, of the same neighborhood, stated, on being inquired of by Youngblood, concerning the origin of the fort, that he had often seen it, but knew nothing of the time or the occasion of its construction.

The truth is, the Buchanans and their neighbors had come into the country long subsequent to 1751—the period at which Fairchild built his puncheon fort—and the rapid changes incident to the population of every pioneer settlement had left not one of its previous settlers, who could have given the desired information.

A tradition having become prevalent at the beginning of the present century, to the effect, that rich

treasures had been buried in troublous days of the olden time beneath the fort on John's Creek, a party, quite hopeful in their anticipations of success, sunk a pit near the foot of the ancient elm, which still remains, a monument of the cupidity of men, as the site of the old stockade inclosure is of the Indian hostilities and pioneer dangers and hardships of colonial periods.

To these circumstances, it may be further added, that the settlement on John's Creek corresponds well with Fairchild's statement, that he had built this fort near Ninety-six—it being only some fourteen miles north-west of the creek, a distance which was relatively much less in that age of widely-scattered communities than a modern estimate would regard it. And since, besides the fort built at the same period, by the Gowdies, at Ninety-six, and the block-house of Fort Boon, erected several years later by the Calhouns, Nobles and Houstons, on Cheves's Creek, there is no other known site of a similar structure in the present territory of Abbeville, we are almost driven to the conclusion, that it was at this spot, on John's Creek, Fairchild built the stockade fort of which he speaks in his letter to Governor Glen.

These facts shed a new and interesting light upon the history of the John's Creek settlement. They would prove incontestably, that on the fertile cane-bottoms of that stream a flourishing civilized community was founded; cotemporaneous with the first ever planted in any portion of the Ninety-six Dis-

trict. And there is much in the present aspect of this section of Abbeville, to corroborate this view derived from intimations already referred to in the records, and from others that have not been mentioned.

No part of the district, not even the Flatwoods or the lands around Old Cambridge, present a more worn or ancient appearance than that portion of the Long-Cane Valley lying between John's Creek and the Abbeville Branch of the Greenville and Columbia Railroad.

In May, Captain Francis, of Ninety-six, sent a letter to the Governor by Robert Gowdy, urging him to take into consideration the dangers to which the people there, and on the Saluda, were exposed from the incursions of the northern Indians, and the schemes of the French. The inhabitants had assembled, and forted themselves. James Maxwell rode an express from the Nation, and laid the following narrative before the Governor and Board:

"Having arrived at Keowee, a lower Cherokee town, I went to the house of Richard and Abraham Smith, traders there, and asked the news. They replied that the Indians had grown insolent and insulting; three nights before, they expected to be killed by them, several councils having been held to deliberate on their fate. A half-breed fellow came to the house, and, in an insolent manner, asked Abraham Smith what he thought? 'What should I think?' answered Smith. 'Why, I have killed a white man,' he replied, 'do you think your Governor

will be cross? He may be cross if he will; I wish I could see an army of white men coming down yonder hill, I would be the first to strike my tomahawk in their heads.'

"A few days ago, when returning from a ball play, we heard the Indians laughing heartily at something that had been remarked in their conversation. We stopped to hear what they were talking about, and discovered that they were mocking the dying agonies and exclamations of the four white men they had murdered at the Oconees, such as, 'O! Lord, O! Lord have mercy upon us,' and the like, at which they laughed again most extravagantly.

"These Indians also declared that the traders should not leave the Nation till they had brought up the promised ammunition. The latter were in great fear of their lives. The same evening the good warrior of Tocquillo came to me—Maxwell further relates—and asked how his Excellency did, and the beloved men below? 'What does his Excellency say,' he added, 'of the murdered men at the Oconees?' 'I have not lately seen the Governor,' I answered. He asked again, what I thought of it, and if the Governor would resent the killing upon the whole Nation? I told him that such was not the way of the English, to punish the innocent for the guilty; the Nation would not be punished unless it was concerned in the deed. The Governor will, however, require satisfaction from the guilty. He answered that that would be very just.

"From Keowee I went to Cheowee and Tomassee,

and heard the same complaints from the traders at those towns. I now crossed the mountains to Hiwassee, and called on Dougherty, at his trading-house. He informed me that the Over-hills were well disposed—that the Raven of Hiwassee, and the chiefs of the Seven Towns, would not hear bad talks. I likewise met here Robert Gowdy and Samuel Bonn, who made the same report. From Hiwassee, I came to the town of Johree, on my return, where I had scarcely lighted from my horse, when I was told that a runner was in the house, sent from the lower towns to cut me off. I was struck with astonishment; and, calling the fellow out, demanded of him if what I had heard was true. He did not deny it. I then told him that such villainy should be severely punished.

"Next day, meeting three men who were walking very fast, I called out to one of them, James May, and asked what was the matter. He replied 'Bad news.' An Indian woman had come up from Sticoe, on the Tucosigia River, and reported that an Indian fellow had killed Daniel Murphy, a trader, and robbed the store of Barnard Hughes, who had taken refuge in Tucosigia. This was done by a man and a warrior. I now sent for the head-men of Johree and the neighboring town, and asked them if they had heard of the murder of Murphy, and the plundering of Hughes's store. Hoy answered that they had heard of it that morning. 'Why, then,' I asked again, 'did you not tell me of it?' 'We thought you knew it,' he replied. 'Do you believe

it?' I asked. 'Yes; we have received messages that confirm it.' 'Do you approve of such acts?' 'No, we do not.' 'Will you protect me if they come to cut me off?' 'Yes, if it is in our power. They may be too strong for us. We will send for the Raven of the Valley, and be directed by him in the matter.' The white people now advised me to leave the Nation, and not to return by the way of Keowee or Ninety-six, as the Indians would certainly murder me; whereupon I procured arms for seventeen white men and two negroes, and, setting off at midnight, we made good our escape to this place, by the Augusta path."

The four men mentioned as having been killed at the Oconees, were Hugh Murphy, Bartholomew Hughes, Thomas Langley and Charles Grows.

In July, 1751, Captain James Frances wrote as follows, from Ninety-six, to Governor Glen: "We, therefore, beg leave, with all due submission, to declare to your Excellency, that to such lengths have matters now gone on the frontiers, that peace and quietness can no more be expected, unless a fort is built here on some commanding spot, and a company of rangers sent up, of sufficient force to drive these Northern or French Indians* from molesting and destroying our effects, which are our livelihood.

"When the Indians in other of his Majesty's provinces behaved formerly in the same manner, all

* These French Indians were the Natawegese, from the Ohio, a branch of the Shawannese, the devoted allies of the French.

efforts of the public authorities to keep them in submission were unavailing, until this method was proposed and carried out: a fort and body of rangers were put in force, which had quickly the desired effect; and those parts, though never so much encroached upon by the savages, soon began to be strong settlements, and made ample amends for the expenses the country was at to sustain them during their minority. And as the world can scarcely surpass this region in healthfulness of climate—in clear and wholesome streams running over a soil both fertile and beautiful—thousands would be induced to come and partake of it with us, when they understand that this government hath taken such methods that they need be under no concern or fear of danger from the Indians. It is certain that a fort in the Cherokee Nation will be of service on sundry accounts. It is absolutely necessary, however, to prevent the breaking up of the lower towns. But while the people believe it would secure the present settlements on the frontier, and all future settlements, it cannot, they think, be efficient without a company of rangers to scour the woods continually in those parts where the French Indians have taken possession.

"Captain Fairchild was very ill at the Congarees when I came by. His men, however, had gone on to Ninety-six, where they arrived three or four days before Captain Gibson reached the same point.

"Captain Minnick has also since met them there, who had previously acquainted those officers of the

mischiefs committed, and of the necessity of concentrating the rangers at Ninety-six.* Capt. Gibson was so good as to come over to my house to inquire for the truth of the rumor of Indian depredations recently perpetrated; but as it was thought too late to pursue with success the retreating gang of northern savages, who had been killing the cows of the settlers, he returned to his company at Ninety-six. The neighborhood, however, humbly begs leave of your Excellency, that one, at least, of the ranging companies be appointed to range these woods back of the settlements, on the north side of the river; for it is only there that much damage can be done, there being no livers on Ninety-six to receive any."†

A few days after the reception of this letter by the Governor, Captain Roger Gibson sent down the following additional information. He wrote from the Coronaka: "According to the first instructions given by your Excellency, I visited with my troops the several places and inhabitants that had been designated, but without meeting with any Indians or accidents worth mentioning. I must, however, inform you of the miserable condition in which we found the upper settlers: they had been driven from their homes, their houses robbed, and their crops destroyed. I did all that I could to dispel their fear, by telling

* These officers were leaders of companies of rangers—a force that it had been the policy of the colony to maintain on the frontiers from an early period. None, however, had yet been posted higher up than Ninety-six.

† State Records vol. 5th.

them that your Excellency and council would do everything that could be done for their safety and protection.

"I have also, in compliance with the same instructions, ranged with my troops as far as Ninety-six. About one mile above that place we encamped, and, taking a small detachment of my men, I went up the river to Coronaka, to discover, if possible, the Indians who, we learned, had killed the cattle of the people there, cut down their corn, and committed other acts of violence.

"My Lieutenant and Captain Fairfield's company ranged likewise in another direction with the like object in view, but we saw none of the enemy. While we were gone, however, these Indians came to a house with long knives drawn in their hands, and having entered it, one of them fired off his gun, and immediately after re-loaded it. They told the people living in it, that they were Cherokees, and went off showing impudent airs, as if they despised and did not value us. So that from all we can learn, they meditate nothing but war; and it is the opinion of every one acquainted at all with Indian character, that as soon as they know your resolution by Mr. Bunyon, they will break out and fall upon us and the upper inhabitants, and cut us all off before your Excellency can come up with an armed force to our relief. I therefore advised Captain Minnick to join us, and delay his visit to the Catawbas; fifty or sixty men being too small a number to withstand three hundred Indians; for that number you may

surely expect. It is the desire of these upper inhabitants that we go no farther up, but stay and build a fort near Ninety-six, to which they may resort when the danger comes. At that place we shall await further orders from your Excellency."*

Most deplorable was now the condition of the struggling settlers of the upper-country; never before, not even in the darkest hour of their partizan conflict in the Revolution, did they suffer more, or stand in greater need of assistance from a stronger arm than their own. Their territory over-run by roving bands of savages, more barbarous in some respects than the nest of restless hornets on their border; themselves murdered in cold blood at their fire-sides, or while wrapt in sleep, unconscious of an enemy's approach; their children carried into captivity, their houses burned, and their property destroyed or plundered—every settlement in a panic of fear, the frightened people hurrying at constantly recurring alarms to the friendly refuge of forts and block-houses, hastily constructed in some central spot.

And these dangers and agitations—this violence and invasion—were not endured for a week or a month; during many gloomy years they were more or less the constant portion of the early pioneers of the upper-country. From 1749, to the close of Col. Grant's campaign, in 1761, embracing a period of more than ten years, there was not a settlement in

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* Indian Books.

this portion of the province that was not exposed to the inroads of hostile savages, and, at their hands, became the not unfrequent scene of bloody tragedies and domestic ruin.

Through the most critical and trying half of this period, the destinies of the colony were presided over by Gov. James Glen. The question forces its own consideration: Did he sustain his trust with fidelity? We have already intimated, that Adair, a sufficiently intelligent, though not altogether disinterested cotemporary, does not hesitate to charge him with the deliberate sacrifice of the public interest to the promotion of his own private aggrandizement;* and it must be confessed that an impartial review of all the facts in the case, drawn from various and the most reliable sources, does not restore his memory to the unqualified admiration of posterity.

He entered upon his office in the very midst of the energetic and open efforts of the French to seduce the Cherokees and Catawbas from their alliance with Carolina; Priber, the prince of the intriguers, was known to be among the former people, and busily preparing for the accomplishment of designs that must issue in the serious injury if not total ruin of the province; yet nothing is heard of a more efficient opposition to these encroachments than the occasion-

* The conduct of Governor Glen, in this respect, as estimated by many of his cotemporaries, was severely reprehended in a pamphlet published at the time, entitled, "A Modest Reply to J. G., Esq.," and which is, no doubt, still preserved among the other valuable collections of the South Carolina Historical Society.

al advice to the traders to keep a sharp eye upon the French and Spanish emissaries. A feeble effort had just been made to apprehend the scheming Jesuit* through the agency of Colonel Fox, which resulted in a complete failure, and the ejection of Fox from the Nation, under circumstances of mortification and disgrace; yet nothing more was done in the matter, till the accidental opportunity that was offered for his arrest by the Carolina traders, on the Tallapoosa.

A few years later, and the savage allies of the French, from the banks of the Ohio, were already over-running the settlements on the border, and even boldly depredating in the very vicinity of the capital. We have already related how, at this time, a band of them captured and tomahawked, in cold blood, Herman Geiger, a respectable and popular trader of the Congarees. But if any effort was made, even now, to vindicate the rights and secure the safety of the people of upper-country, or to receive Geiger during the considerable time that the savages were encamped with him in the Cherokee country, further than a simple message sent to the lower towns, and a petty reward offered for his re-capture, it does not appear in any record or chronicle of those times.

When, at length, after depredating, for years, with impunity, upon the property of the prisoners—for it has been shown that, in the absence of assistance from the government, the feeble settlements

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* Priber was in the full tide of success with his plans, when Glen was appointed Governor, in 1743.

were utterly unable to protect themselves—the savages began the wholesale butchery of defenceless families, the minute details of which, with earnest prayers for deliverance, were constantly sent down to be laid before the Governor and his council; what shall be said of their continued indifference to these foul wrongs, or at best, their puerile efforts to remove and redress them through the instrumentality of a few patrol bands on the back of the settlements?

In the interval that elapsed between the murder of the Goulds, or Clouds, and the horrible massacre of the immigrants and wedding party on the Buffalo, Governor Glen was coolly sitting in Charleston, dictating, in a masterly manner, it is true, a correspondence with the Governor of Virginia, in relation to the interference of that colony with the business and profits of the Cherokee peltry trade. Like many, who had figured in responsible places of public trust before him, he seemed much better fitted to shine in the management of the etiquette and pageantry of a court or government, and in fostering its literature and arts, than in discharging the more arduous duties of the statesman and military leader.

Negociation was his strength. Negociation conducted with tact and vigor, must accomplish everything; and it must be confessed, that no Governor of Carolina ever presided in her councils or public conferences with a better dignity or more graceful address than James Glen. The Indians regarded him as a consummate orator; but were certainly never im-

pressed with the least respect for his prowess as a warrior. An old chronicler thus briefly describes him: "He was a man of considerable knowledge, courteous and polite; exceedingly fond of military parade and ostentation, which commonly have great force on ordinary minds, and by these means he maintained his dignity and importance with the people."*

It was chiefly by diplomacy and management that he had hoped all along to quell the disturbances on the border. The manuscript abounds with mutual communications that passed, during these years, between him and the most prominent head-men of the Nation. The Cherokees with their usual shrewdness, soon discovered this bent of his genius, and showed themselves neither remiss nor unskillful in the art of amusing it. In the spring of 1751, the chiefs of the lower towns,† of Keowee, Tomassee, Cheowee, Ustustee, Estatoe, and Sugaw Town of Toxso, addressed him a letter, in which they express their sorrow for the outbreaks that had occurred to disturb the peace of the upper settlements; and promise that a better state of things shall be maintained in the Nation; concluding with the assurance, that it had all originated in the lies of those who went about to sow the seeds of discord.

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* Hewit.

† The following names of chiefs were signed to this communication: Skiogusta, Little Conjurer, Howsutto, of Keowee; Skiogusta and All Bones, of Cheowee; Chumroheke, of Ustustee; Tuckeorufteke, of Tomassee; Oconaco, of Sugaw.

Similar communications, either written or in the form of a message, were frequently sent him by Old Hop of Chote, and the Raven of Hiwassee. We have seen that even the wary traders in the Nation were sometimes beguiled by these fair promises, and penitential regrets of the chiefs.

At length, in the summer of 1753, Governor Glen invited all the leading men of the Nation to meet him in a general conference in the town of Charleston. As many as were able to come at the appointed time promptly obeyed the summons, and as this was one of the most remarkable Indian *talks* that ever occurred in Charleston, developing important historical facts, as well as many interesting details illustrative of Indian character, we have ventured to quote its proceedings entire, as they are recorded in one of the volumes of the Indian Books.

Before introducing these, however, it may be well to recur to a few previous events. In 1751, tired out by the continued misrule and disorder on the border, it was seriously proposed in council to throw off altogether the commercial alliance of the Cherokees. This proposition met the wise and unqualified disapproval of Gov. Glen. His remarks on the occasion are, however, characteristic:

"It would be impolitic to resent, in the manner proposed, anything they have yet committed. To prove this, I would refer you to a few facts that must be fresh in your memories. Soon after the breaking out of the present war between France and England, the French were very busy with their

agents and friendly Indians, endeavoring to obtain a foot-hold in the nations in alliance with the English. The Catawbas returned an answer to the overtures made to them, that they would have no connection with any other than the English of Carolina—they would stand or fall with them. These were overtures not of peace only, but to instigate the Catawbas to take up the hatchet against the English.* The same proposals were made to the Cherokees, and received a similar answer.

"These attempts of the French, however, very justly alarmed this government, the more especially as bad talks had been spread by them among the Creeks. These events gave great uneasiness to all our outer settlements and new townships, and they petitioned the council to have forts built on the border, which the council advised to be granted. I, at the same time, thought it important that I should have an interview with those nations, that these things might be looked into, and the Indians confirmed in the British interest. I accordingly went up and met them near their respective countries; I met the Catawbas at the Congarees, and the Cherokees at a place called Ninety-six. Head-men came to this place from almost every town in the Cherokee Nation; and in all their speeches they expressed so much attachment to the English interest, and

* Adair declares that the French, at this time, offered a standing reward to the Choctaws and other Southern tribes, for every scalp of an English inhabitant they should bring in.

spoke with so much sincerity, as not only to convince me, and the gentlemen who were with me, of their good intentions, but likewise all the *inferior sort of people*, to the number of two hundred, who had attended the meeting, and were very attentive to what passed, most of them being greatly interested in the consequences, as settlers in the new townships. And so fully were they persuaded of the friendship of the Cherokees, that they petitioned me that the money it had been proposed to expend in building forts, should be applied to the repairing of their highways.

"Soon after this, a French emissary came into the Nation; the Cherokees beat out the brains of an Indian, who had come with him, and he scarcely escaped with his life. Other instances of their friendship could be given. An Englishman happened to be killed some time ago in one of their towns—a pack-horseman of indifferent character. The town at first refused to avenge the murder; the warrior who committed the deed, they said, was a very great man, while the Englishman was a nothing. I insisted on satisfaction. A council of head-men was called, and they resolved to reduce the town to ashes, and massacre its people, if they did not yield up the murderer, or put him to death themselves. They consented to cut him off, and struck him in the town-house, but only wounded him; he ran and hid in a hollow tree; thence they dragged him, and cut him to pieces with a hatchet, having first chopped off his hands. His friends

begged his body, that they might bury it; the chiefs refused, declaring that it should lie above ground, that the English might see how faithful they were to their engagements."* Such was Gov. Glen's confidence in the Cherokees, and such his plan for remedying the existing evils in the Nation and pioneer settlements.

A brief, but no less characteristic communication, was sent about the same time, by James Adair, the historian, to William Pinckney: "If the government designs to stand on the defensive, and will grant me, with sufficient credentials, that encouragement which, if possible, I might merit, as well in this as in the Choctaw and Chickasaw affairs, I shall induce the Chickasaws at Augusta, and many brave woodsmen, to join me in the service of Carolina; and, if I am not mistaken in myself, with such brave, wanton fellows in the field, I will accomplish something remarkable."†

A fierce war was now raging between the Creeks and Cherokees. It will be recollected that we related in another place, how that Adair, on one occasion, singularly escaped being murdered on the Chickasaw path, by a band of the prowling Savannahs. After he had got away from them, they fell in with a couple of Chickasaw hunters—adopted relations of the Creeks—whom they killed and scalped; and then, as they had been long doing in Carolina, ran and took refuge among the Cherokees. The exasperated

* Indian Books. † Ibid.

Creeks, having more respect for their national honor and private rights, and less confidence in Cherokee honesty, than the intelligent rulers in Charleston, made war at once upon that Nation.

Our credulity is now put to the test, though we are assured of the fact, that Gov. Glen summoned the Cherokee chiefs to meet him in the conference in Charleston, to which we have alluded, not for the purpose of giving them even the gentlest rebuke for the outrages they were obviously abetting, upon the defenceless settlements of the upper-country, nor to require them to make reparation for their recent insult to the Creeks; but solely to persuade them to bury the hatchet, and be at peace with the latter people.

The proceedings of the conference will tell their own story. A cotemporary* has discovered, however, an identical motive in this step of the Governor, with that which induced him to expostulate with Virginia, in relation to the Cherokee trade—the Creek war was greatly interfering with the *profits of the traffic.*

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* Adair.