CHAPTER IX.

The sites of ancient Cherokee towns abounding in Upper-Carolina—The original limits of the Nation defined—The divisions of Ayrate and Otarre, Upper and Lower Cherokee—Statistics of the Nation, extracted from an original paper copied in London—Catalogue of towns with the names of a few of their chiefs—Seneca, Tugaloo, Keowee, Mudlick, Ceronaka and Johnson's Creeks, &c.

Thus far we have taken a general view of the ancient Indian trade, especially so far as it related to the traffic in slaves; we are, however, more particularly interested in that portion of it which belongs to the history of the Cherokees. These were the aboriginal possessors of the upper-country, and the remains of their once populous towns, and the sites of their rude homes, are still to be seen on our valleys and verdant hills. Here the brave Cherokees were intimately associated with the English during all the gloomy years of their colonial history, sometimes as friends and allies, at others as treacherous, dangerous enemies.

The manners, customs and traditions of this once noble people—the curious antiquities that lie scattered over every part of the upper-country, illustrative of their warlike and domestic life—the details and thrilling incidents of the wars waged by them

upon the frontier settlements of Carolina, Georgia and Virginia—their romantic conflicts on the border with our Scotch-Irish forefathers—the midnight alarms and horrid butcheries of helpless women and children, and the terrible scenes of their more dreadful tortures in captivity and at the stake, have not yet received due notice at the hands of any chronicler.

We resume, however, for the present, further details of the ancient commercial relations that so long bound together the old English adventurers and Carolinians of Charleston, and the great Nation of the Cherokees. It is important, however, to define, first, as accurately as can now be done, the ancient limits of the Nation, and to trace the names and sites of its then flourishing settlements.

The first white men who penetrated the wilderness of north-western Carolina and northern Georgia, found it in the possession of the Cherokees; and no history relates when their settlements here were formed. Mr. Pickett, in his History of Alabama, informs us—but on what authority it is not stated—that a powerful branch of the tribe at one time occupied lands much farther south than those now embraced in the upper-country. "About the same period," he says—1623—"a large branch of the Cherokees came from the territory of South Carolina, near Charleston, and formed towns upon the main Tennessee, extending as far as the Muscle Shoals."*

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* Page 154, Vol. i.

The Over-hill settlements, on the Tellico and Little Tennessee, were established, according to the same author, in 1623, by a branch of the Cherokees, who had been driven from the Appomattox by the first settlers of Virginia. Adair thus minutely describes the boundaries of the Nation, as it existed at the period of his sojourn among the southern Indians. "The country lies in about thirty-four degrees of north latitude, at the distance of three hundred computed miles to the north-west of Charleston, one hundred and forty miles west south-west from the Catawba Nation, and almost two hundred miles to the north of the Creek country. The Cherokees are settled nearly in an east and west course, about one hundred and forty miles in length, from the lower towns, where Fort Prince George stands, to the late unfortunate Fort Loudon. They make two divisions of their country, which they term *Ayrate* and *Otarre*, the one signifying 'low,' and the other 'mountainous.' The former division is on the head branches of the beautiful Savannah, and the latter on those of the easternmost river of the great Mississippi."*

The earliest account that has been preserved of the Cherokees, from which it is possible to glean any reliable information in regard to their numbers, and the extent of their settlements, is found in a very interesting paper, taken from the records in London, for Mr. Bancroft, a copy of which was presented by him to Prof. Rivers. This document, prepared origi-

* Page 226—History of North American Indians.

nally by the highest official authority in Carolina, contains a minute statistical report of the strength and locality, in relation to Charleston, of many Indian tribes, in and around the province. It has never before, if we mistake not, been published.*

Just before the Revolution of 1719, the proprietors had made the request of Gov. Robert Johnson, to furnish them with a full statement of the strength of the colony, and of the aboriginal tribes around the English settlement. We select chiefly that portion of the governor's report which relates to the Cherokees. He says: "By the within accounts of the number of Indians subject to the government of South Carolina, in the year 1715, your lordships will find upwards of eight and twenty thousand souls, of which there were nine thousand men who traded with Carolina, besides several small tribes, such as the Congarees, Santees, Seawees, Pedees, Waxhaws, and some Corsaboys; so that by war, pestilence and civil conflicts among themselves, the Cherokees may be computed as reduced to about ten thousand souls, and the Northern Indians to two thousand five hundred.

The Cherokee upper settlements contain 19 towns, 900 men, 480 women, 980 boys, 400 girls; middle settlements, 30 towns, 2,500 men, 900 women, 2,000 boys, 950 girls; lower settlements, 11 towns, 600 men, 480 women, 620 boys, 400 girls—total, 11,210.

It would be a very difficult task to extract from

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* Professor Rivers, with his usual kindness and liberality, allowed us the free use we have here made of this valuable record.

the records in Columbia, a complete list of the towns embraced, at any period, in the two divisions of the Cherokee Nation, so confused is the orthography of the names there given, and so indefinite the information relating to their respective situations. In 1751, the following entry was made in one of the Indian books, from the report of a trader:

*Keowee.**—29 warriors, 3 chiefs, viz., Skiagusta, or the Old Warrior; Oruste, the Catawba king, and the Chote king.

Estatowee.—9 warriors, 1 chief, Clugoitosh, the Good Warrior.

Tucksoie.—7 warriors, 2 chiefs, Osquosoftoi and the Raven.

Jommantoo.—1 warrior, 1 chief, Schollo loskie.

Chewohee.—7 warriors, 1 chief, Skiagusta.

Oussazlay.—4 warriors, 1 chief, Johnny.

Kowee.—1 warrior, 1 chief, Jaccutee.

Oustate.—4 warriors, 1 chief, the Yellow Bird.

Stocowee.—3 warriors, 1 chief, Tacitee.

Noquossee.—4 warriors, 0 chief.

Jacasechoo.—5 warriors, 1 chief, Chuchachoo.

Inforshee.—12 warriors, 3 chiefs, the Beaver, his son Skiacow, and Tacitee, the Notched Warrior.

Little Tellico.—7 warriors, 2 chiefs, Sananulohoo and Onaloee.

Tommotly.—7 warriors, 0 chief.

Jollohee.—1 chief, the Prince.

Great Tellico.—16 warriors, 2 chiefs, the Blind Warrior and Cæsar.

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* Written Kewhohee.

This is obviously an imperfect statement of the strength of the Nation, at this period. The list presents, however, a few names nowhere else found. Some four years afterwards, in new-modeling the trade, the whole Cherokee country was subdivided into what were called hunting districts, from the record of which we are enabled to extract the following more complete catalogue of towns:

FIRST DISTRICT.

Over Hills.—Great Tellico, Chatuge; Tennessee, Chote and Toqua; Sittiquo and Tallasse.

Valley Towns.—Enforsee, Conastee and Little Telliquo; Cotocanahut, Uayowee, Tomatly, and Chewohee.

Middle Towns.—Joree, Watoge, Nuckasee.

Keowee.—Keowee, Tricentee, Echoee, Torsee; Cowee, Tarsalla, Coweeshee, and Elejoy.

Out Towns.—Tucarechee, Kittowa, Conontoroy; Steecoy, Oustanole, and Tuckasegee.

Lower Towns.—Tomassee, Oustestee; Cheowie, Estatoie, Tosawa; Keowee, Oustenalle.

In the spring of 1776, the Cherokee Nation was visited by Bartram, who supplies, in his interesting journal, several additional names of towns then existing, or just deserted.

Over-hills on the Tennessee and its branches.—Nucassee, Ticoleasa, Conisca, Nowe, Noewe, Clennuse, Ocunnolufte, Chewe, Quanuse, Tellowe, Hiwassee, Chewase, Nuanha, Chelowe, Sette, Joco, Tahasse, Tamahle, Tuskege, Nilaque, Niowe.

Lower towns east of the mountains.—Seneca.

On the Keowee.—Keowee, Kulsage or Sugaw-Town.

On the Tugaloo.—Tugoola, Estotowe.

On Flint River.—Qualatche, Chote.

On other rivers.—Great Estotowe, Allagae, Jore, Nacooche.

Mouzon's map, in Carroll's Collection, adds to the lower Cherokees the following names of towns that were standing as late as 1771, and which we have seen nowhere else recorded.

On the Tugaloo and its branches.—Turnraw, Old Estatohe, Noyowee, Tetohe, Chagee, Tussee, Chicherohe, Echay, Takwashnaw.

On the Keowee.—New Keowee, Quacoretchie.

On the Seneca.—Aconnee.

Adair observes, that several of their best towns on the southern branch of the Savannah are now forsaken and destroyed: as Ishtatohe, Echia, Tugaloo, and others, and they are brought into a narrower compass. At the conclusion of the war of 1760, the traders calculated the number of their warriors to consist of about two thousand three hundred, which is a great diminution in so short a space of time. The Cherokee towns were generally built wide of

each other, owing to the scarcity of good situations on the rivers and creeks; it being rare to find in that mountainous region a tract of four hundred level acres.

In the rich valleys, however, of the Keowee,* Seneca and Tugaloo, they were numerous and exceedingly populous; not yet have the leveling operations of Anglo-American progress completely effaced here the deep traces of aboriginal art and life; but when all else have been obliterated, when no wigwam's site or tumbling sacrificial pillar shall remain, the beautiful names of the Seneca, Tugaloo, Keowee and Isundiga,† will continue to proclaim a history of the once blest Cherokee, in accents as soft as the murmur of their waters, and as enduring as their granite falls.

The towns situated on the head waters of the Savannah were not the only Cherokee settlements in that portion of their beautiful Ayrate embraced in the present territory of Upper Carolina. Straggling villages and solitary wigwams were discovered to

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* Isundiga was the Cherokee name for the ancient Keowee and Savannah. The present name of Savannah was derived from the Shawano or Savannah Indians; a warlike tribe that once lived on its western bank, near the present site of Augusta. Some time after the settlement of Carolina they removed beyond the Ohio. Adair declares they were driven away by the foolish measures of the English. We shall have much more to say of them.

† The name Isundiga, we believe, is now nowhere known in the territory of Pickens District. It should be revived and preserved in the name of some new village or educational institution.

have once stood on all the rivers and creeks whose waters abounded in fish, from the Congarees to the mountains. Several of these were, no doubt, standing as late even as the period when the Scotch-Irish began their settlements in Laurens, Newberry, and other districts.

Eight miles from Dorn's Gold Mine, in a valley of the Long-Cane, on lands belonging to Benjamin McKittrick, is an ancient Indian mound, nearly one hundred yards in length by thirty in breadth. It appears to have been once a lofty as well as capacious terrace, on which might have conveniently stood several other buildings besides the usual great town-house.

This mound was evidently constructed of earth, brought with vast labor from some other spot than the one on which it was reared; and notwithstanding the wastes of time, and the yet more ruinous washings of centuries of floods in the creek, it still rises some three or four feet above the general level of the valley.

When John Duncan arrived upon Duncan's Creek, quite a flourishing Indian village stood upon a hill in the plantation now owned by Major Wm. Young, of that neighborhood in Laurens. The site is still conspicuous for its monumental heaps and other aboriginal remains.*

On the west bank of the Saluda, about a half-mile

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* Conversation of Joseph Duncan.

below the old Swansey's Ferry, in Abbeville, is a broad level area excavated from the hill-side, on which stood, in the recollection of the early settlers, an Indian town. A fertile promontory juts from the east into the Coronaka, at the point of its juncture with Black Rock Creek.* On this spot the Cherokees, in primitive times, had a teeming settlement. The ground has been in cultivation time out of mind; yet to this day the instruments of their husbandry and savage arts continue to be turned up from the soil. The spring which supplied them with water still issues from the foot of the hill. The creeks afforded inexhaustible quantities of game and fish. Long after the Cherokees had retired forever from the territory of Carolina, these streams were famous for their fisheries. It is said, too, that the Coronaka,† like the Saluda, was remarkable, in the early periods, for its production of corn. During the Revolution, if tradition is to be credited, many a seasonable supply was gathered from its fertile valleys.

On the west bank of Johnson's Creek, in sight of the Wards road, on the plantation now occupied by Mrs. John Black, is another spot where also abound

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* Now Rocky Creek.

† There is no clue to the meaning of the Indian name, Coronaka. We are scarcely better informed of its correct orthography. In Drayton's Memoirs, it is written Cornacre; in Tarleton's Campaigns, Coronacre; in the old district land-plats, Coronacco, and sometimes Coronaco; in the Indian books, Corenacay, and as often Coronaca. In other records it is written Coronaka; and this method we have adopted.

the unmistakable relics of an ancient Indian town or settlement. They lie scattered over a cultivated field, and among them are the fragments of a rude pottery, which display some taste of design.

In a plantation on Cane Creek, of Pickens District, well known as the Moultrie Tract—having been originally granted by the State to that distinguished officer of the Revolution, but now the property of Major Robert Maxwell—is a famous spot still called Black-bird's Hill, on which, in the memory of living men, a flourishing Cherokee town once stood. Black-bird, the last of its chiefs, and a man of mark among his people, bequeathed his name to the place, after it had borne, perhaps for centuries, the more euphonious Indian name of Cananaska. Like all the grounds in this region on which were found old Indian settlements or their remains, the soil of Black-bird's Hill and its vicinity is remarkably fertile.

In a field on Mudlick Creek, a part of a plantation belonging to Colonel John D. Williams, of Laurens, are five mounds still rising several feet above the level of the valley. These occupy the site of an ancient Cherokee burying-ground, and mark a spot near by on which once stood a flourishing town. They have never been opened; but a sufficient excavation would scarcely fail to disclose their usual contents of human bones, fragments of vases, pipes, and implements of war.

Deep in a forest, on lands attached to the old Colcock Place, now the property of Dr. H. W. Leland,

and in sight nearly of the star-redoubt at Ninety-Six, is a large mound, in which were deposited the bones of generations, perhaps, of the inhabitants of an Indian town, that evidently once existed in a waste field of the same plantation, lying a short distance north of the mound. The usual relics of a once populous Cherokee community are abundant everywhere in its vicinity, as they are also on the hills and valleys of the opposite bank of Ninety-six Creek, in lands owned at present by Captain James Creswell and others.

The Indians were no agriculturists, but they possessed an instinctive appreciation of fertile soil; and hence, for ages, doubtless, before the rich, cane-covered lands of old Ninety-Six greeted the covetous eyes of English speculators and pioneers, they had given sustenance to teeming settlements of the native red men.

There is an interesting mound on the Tiger in Union District, just opposite the battle field of Blackstocks. It stands, if we mistake not, on lands belonging to Dr. Winnsmith, of Spartanburg: it has never been excavated. These curious burial places of the aboriginese are the more interesting from the fact that they were reared, most of them, long anterior to the landing of any white man in America, and are the only notable monuments that now remain in the upper-country, of its native races.

Adair informs us that, till the Cherokees fell under the influence of the English, they were accustomed to deposit, in the same grave with the dead, all the

implements and trinkets of which they had been possessed before death. They soon learned, however, from the traders, to preserve these things for the use of surviving relatives and friends. The contents of a mound must therefore often fix the time of its construction, either nearly coeval with the coming of the English, or at a period indefinitely anterior to that event.

Besides these earthern tumuli, found usually in the fertile valleys of the streams, and near the ancient habitations of the Indians, they frequently raised monumental piles of loose stones on the tops of their mountains, hills, and near famous passes. These were in honor of departed chiefs, and other great men. Sometimes the stones were collected and piled on the very spot where a distinguished warrior had fallen in battle; and though rough and unlettered, these rude monuments have mocked, in their durability, thousands of structures of marble and brass, whose exquisite forms were carved and fashioned by the hand of genius and civilization. Many of them are standing at this day, nearly as entire as when the last stone was placed upon their conical summits, at a period in the fabulous past, up to which no history runneth. But whether standing erect or scattered promiscuously around their original sites, they are equally monumental, and never fail to teach the curious passer-by the simple story they contain of aboriginal history.

An old chronicler* observes: "To perpetuate the

* Adair.

memory of any remarkable warriors killed in the woods, I must here remark that every Indian traveler, as he passes that way, throws a stone on the place, according as he likes or dislikes the occasion or manner of the death of the deceased. In the woods we often see innumerable heaps of small stones in those places, where, according to tradition, some of their distinguished people were either killed or buried, and their bones suffered to remain till they could be gathered for regular sepulture at home. On these piles they added Pelion to Ossa, still increasing each heap, as a lasting monument and honor to them, and an incentive to great actions."

Several of these Indian cairns were standing a few years ago, on the romantic top of Gilkey's Knob near Limestone Springs. They were built of white quartz rocks, and looked, in the deep shade of the huge chestnut oaks that surrounded them, like so many motionless spectres on a visit from the blest abodes of the ancient warriors in whose memory they were reared.

We found on the summit of Whitaker Mountain, in the north-west corner of York District, a group of interesting *cairns*. This knob is itself worthy of a visit, for the sake of its noble views. On one side is seen, dotting a vast area, the farm-houses and cultivated fields of North Carolina, fenced in the back ground by the magnificent sierra of the Blue Ridge, encircling nearly one quarter of the horizon. On the east towers near by, in solitary grandeur, the sharp pinnacle of the King's Mountain, supported on

the right by its spur of lesser knobs, and among them the humble, but far more interesting summit, on which Ferguson made his last stand against the enemies of his king. Far away on the west, rising from the banks of Broad River, are the wooded hills and plantations of Spartanburg and Union, while the fertile valleys of that noble stream are traced by the deeper green, and denser shade of their forest growth, stretching many miles to the south. The greatest warrior of a more refined race than the Cherokees, might well be proud of a grave and a mausoleum on such a spot.

There are too distinct piles on this mountain: one on each extremity of the oblong top, extending more than a mile from the north-east to the south-west. They are remarkable for their peculiar arrangement. Each monument consisted of a group of cones several feet in height, and placed in an exact circle, some ten or fifteen feet in diameter; a low wall connected them all, presenting the figure of a miniature fortification thickly set with towers. The stones have, long ago, tumbled from their places, or were pulled down by some one curious to discover any treasure they might conceal, and now the whole fabric exhibits a striking resemblance to Ptolemy's ancient diagram of the epicycular motions of the moon.

A great variety of interesting relics of these aboriginal people are found throughout the Valley of Broad River; such as mounds, and the familiar stone implements of their warlike and domestic arts.

But among them some are occasionally brought to view, so curiously and perfectly wrought, as to force the conclusion that they came from the hands of a people far more civilized and ingenious than the race of mound-builders supplanted by our forefathers. We saw in York District a stone, the exquisite carving of which attracted more attention than the singularity of its shape, or the impenetrable mystery of its use.

It had been wrought from the hardest material—one of the yellow quartz pebbles found abundantly in the shoals of the river. Having first trimmed it to an exact cylinder, four or five inches in diameter, and an inch in thickness, the skilful artist then neatly rounded the sharp edges, and, on each of the flat sides, described as perfect a circle as could be constructed by the most improved mathematical instruments. These being described, with some other implement he managed to excavate them to the depth of a quarter of an inch or more into the solid quartz, leaving the edges of the circumference at bottom and top perfectly sharp and smooth. No modern lapidary, with all the tools and appliances of his difficult art, could have given it a better finish.

The traders inform us that the Cherokees—the most skillful artists of all the native tribes—wrought very slowly while carving in wood and stone. It was a month's work for a warrior to fashion one of his ornamented pipes; and they speak of seeing no such fabrication as the above among them, in all their conversations and reports.

In a letter recently received by the author from Dr. Ramsey, of Tennessee, the accomplished writer of the Annals of his State, and whose collection of Indian antiquities, is perhaps unsurpassed in the Union,* he observes of this remarkable stone, that it is, without doubt, a relic of the ancient mound-builders, whose mysterious history has so long puzzled the brains of philosophers.

The use they made of it can scarcely be conjectured; from its elaborate finish, however, it would appear to have belonged to some part of their ceremonial worship. This opinion is corroborated by the fact that a few others, besides the one seen in York District, have been discovered in places widely separated; yet they are all precisely alike, carved with the same exactness, and from the same material—the yellow rolled quartz of the river's bed. If they had been designed for one of their games of amusement, or for some mechanical use, they would scarcely have been wrought with so much elaborate care. One of these stones is preserved in the valuable museum recently presented by Dr. E. R. Calhoun of Greenwood, to the Laurensville Female Academy. It was originally contributed by Dr. Ramsey, of Tennessee. There is another in the extensive private museum of the late Dr. John Barret, of Abbeville; and a third one is in the possession of a gentleman of his vicinity, who procured it while acting as engineer among the ancient sites of the Over-hill Cherokees.

*See Archeological Researches by Squire.

One of the most singular remains of the primitive inhabitants of the upper-country, was discovered a few years ago in the thickest settled part of the village of Greenwood. The objects themselves are not worthy of particular notice; but the situation in which they are found may well excite surprise, and give rise to interesting conjecture. They consist of a number of aboriginal graves, scattered at random over an area of some one or two hundred yards square. One of the mounds lies a few paces in the rear of the Presbyterian Chapel, and is still shaded by the woods. The rest were found south-eastward of this point on the opposite side of the main street.

The question has been often asked by a few, who are interested in such inquiries, when, and under what circumstances were these ancient interments made? Was this retired, densely-wooded spot, used as a burying ground, in early times, by the Cherokees, who had their settlements on the Coronaka and other contiguous streams? Or is it a primitive battle-field on which their warriors met in deadly conflict the more southern tribes, or the warlike Muscogees, in one of their hostile incursions from beyond the Savannah.

With the view of investigating the subject, a few years ago, several gentlemen opened one of the graves, near the house occupied at present by Capt. Wm. H. Griffin. It was found to contain, besides distinct fragments of human bones, the implements that have been described as peculiar to the earliest known sepulture of the Cherokees. A very curious

pipe, taken from this grave, was deposited, together with the bones, among the collections of the Laurensville College Museum.

These mounds, unlike the tumuli, already described as forming the common burying place of a village, contain, each of them, the remains of a single body. But like the flint rock cairns, their construction was evidently designed with great simplicity and skill, to secure an imperishable durability. The bones of the dead, with the articles to be interred with them, were first placed upon the surface of the ground; they were then covered, to the depth of several inches, with a mixture of charcoal and ashes—the charcoal being most abundant—and the burial completed by a layer of clay brought from some other place, and piled compactly on till a mound was formed several feet in height.

This simple fabric obviously possessed a property similar to that which constitutes the strength of the arch; the storms of centuries only served to beat more firmly together the mass of clay, and indestructible carbon; so that at this day, though embosomed in primitive woods, and covered with the fallen leaves of an age of autumns, it is still perceptible, and not to be mistaken for any natural formation.

The stratum of clay passed through in the excavation, was a foot and a half in thickness, and, with the ashes and charcoal, formed the only protection to the contents of the mound. It would appear therefore, that only the bones had been originally gather-

ed up and deposited in these graves; for otherwise the beasts of prey that then abounded in these wilds, would scarcely have waited for the departure of those who performed the rites of burial, to tear them open and devour their contents. This was a mode of interment usual with most of the native tribes. It must also be inferred that the mounds were raised about the same time; and the question presents itself, why were so many formed at this spot? No Cherokee town or wigwam stood near it. The Indians never planted their settlements on dry ridges; and much less were their cemeteries found in solitary places. Neither, at the period when these graves were constructed, was there any frequented path passing near the spot. The great Keowee trail, of which we shall speak more fully hereafter, that lead by Old Ninety-Six to Charleston, ran some three miles to the east of this point.

We conclude, therefore, that these mounds mark the scene of an ancient battle; a conflict most probably between strolling war-parties of Cherokees and Creeks.* These powerful nations were constantly waging war upon each other; and abundant evidence will appear in future pages of the fact, that the warriors of the latter frequently crossed the Savannah to cut off the Cherokees, and lay waste their settlements in this portion of their territory.

The signs of aboriginal settlements are no less abundant on the Savannah and Congaree Rivers than

* The Muscogees and Creeks were the same people.

on the Broad. The last great floods in those streams washed up from their valleys, and exposed to view a variety of exceedingly curious and interesting remains; some of them belonging to the more modern Cherokees, and others evidently to the ancient mound builders.*

These facts prove incontestably, that, at an early period, though much later than the age of the mysterious race which was supplanted or succeeded by the Cherokees, the whole territory of the upper-country, from the southern border of Richland to the foot of the Blue Ridge, was alive with the flourishing settlements of that great nation. But about the time of the English settlement on the Ashley, they had all well nigh disappeared; their towns were found clustered on the head waters of the Savannah, and in the valleys beyond the mountains, leaving behind them a vast and fertile territory, yielded once more to the sway of wild beasts, and filled with the crumbling remains of their former habitations and rude barbarism. What vicissitudes of fortune, or hostile invasion, produced this wide-spread depopulation and ruin, we leave for those to determine who are better versed in the lore of aboriginal history and tradition.

It was before remarked, that Bartram, the natural-

* Several of the most important of the relics from the Congaree are preserved in the museum of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Columbia; and for an interesting description of these and other objects brought to light by the floods in the same locality, see a paper contributed by Dr. George Howe to Schoolcraft's great work on Indian antiquities.

ist and traveler, made an excursion through the Cherokee Nation, in 1776. His notes and observations of this journey are valuable and interesting; they form the only account which we have from so reliable a source, of the condition of the Cherokees at that momentous period. He was in the midst of their towns, pushing his investigations with the boldness and artless simplicity of the true philosopher, only a few weeks before the famous battle of Fort Moultrie, and the nearly simultaneous onslaught made by the deluded warriors upon the frontier settlements of the old Ninety-six District.

On the 15th of May, he set out from Lochaber, the residence of Mr. Deputy Cameron, in the present territory of Abbeville, and arrived late in the evening, after passing through an uninhabited wilderness, at the town of Seneca. He found this to be a very respectable settlement, situated on the east bank of the Keowee River, though the greater number of Indian habitations were on the opposite shore, where likewise stood the council-house, in a level plain, between the river and the range of beautiful hills, which seemed to bend over it and its green meadows. The house of the chief, and those of the traders, with a few Indian dwellings, were seated on the ascent of the heights, on the eastern bank, from which they enjoyed a magnificent view.

Seneca was a new town, had been re-built since the Cherokee war of 1760, when Gen. Middleton and his Carolina auxiliaries broke up the lower and middle settlements. The number of inhabitants was now estimated to be above five hundred, with one

hundred warriors. Leaving Seneca the next day, he rode sixteen miles through a noble forest, covering excellent lands, to old Fort Prince George.

Keowee was a most charming situation; but its scenery could not drive from the mind of the traveler painful thoughts of his lonely, exposed situation—by himself in a wild Indian country, a thousand miles from his native land, and a vast distance from any settlements of white people. It was true, there were a few of his own color, but they were strangers; and though hospitable, their manners and customs of living were so different from his, as to afford him but little comfort. A long journey yet lay before him; the savages were vindictive from ill-treatment lately received by the frontier Virginians; blood had been spilt, and the injury not yet wiped away by treaty; the Cherokees naturally jealous of white people traveling about their country, especially if they should be seen peeping among rocks or digging up the earth.

The Vale of Keowee is seven or eight miles in length; it extended that distance from the little town of Kulsage, situated a mile above Keowee, southward, to a narrow pass between the approaching hills. After being detained three days at Keowee, waiting for an Indian guide, who was out hunting, he set out alone across the hills, passed the river at a good ford, just below the fort, which he found to be exactly one hundred yards wide, and riding two miles through delightful plains covered with strawberries, struck the rocky ridge of the rising hills.

Having gained a considerable elevation, a mag-

nificent view burst upon him; the town and valley of Keowee appeared again, with the meandering river speeding through the bright green plains. Four miles farther, he came into another valley, watered by a beautiful river that crossed the path. On the left, he observed, at the base of a grassy ridge, the remains of a town once occupied by the ancients, and by the modern Cherokees, as amply appeared from the great number of mounds, terraces, pillars, and old peach and plum trees in view on the spot.

He passed, the same day, through the Oconee Valley, enriched with hills, and at the base of the Oconee Mountain, came upon the ruins of the town of the same name. Thence climbing to an elevated peak of the mountain, he beheld on all sides of him, a scene inexpressively magnificient and comprehensive. Beyond this mountain, he entered a valley surrounded with an amphitheatre of hills, on whose turf-covered bases he found the ruins of another ancient Indian town.

Early in the forenoon of the next day, after passing over a plain red with fields of ripe strawberries, he came upon a ridge of lofty hills, among which were the remains of the famous town of Sticoe.

Here was also a vast Indian mound and terrace, on which had stood the council-house; an embankment encircled it, and orchards of peach and plum, many of the trees still quite flourishing, were growing around.

He entered next the fertile Valley of Cowe, extending some sixty miles in length, and watered by the

head branch of the Tenase. Strawberries were so abundant in the meadows through which his path led, as to dye the hoofs and ankles of his horse. The swelling hills that bounded this valley were a striking feature in its scenery. He observes of them, and of those in the vicinity of all the fertile vales of this region, that they appear to have been the constant situations of the towns and settlements of the ancient mound-builders, and of the more recent Cherokees. He soon after crossed the head branch of the Tenase, and not quite a mile beyond, came to the spot, where, as we shall see more fully in another place, General Middleton, at the head of the Carolinians, met the flower of the Nation, in a decisive and bloody battle. He found the field covered with the conical stone-heaps, in memory of the great number of warriors who fell here. These stood under the forest, on a spur of small hills that projected into the River Valley. The following night he spent in the cabin of a trader, who had married a Cherokee woman, and settled in the midst of the valley, some fifteen miles from its head, on the sources of the Little Tennessee. He was here most hospitably entertained with cream and strawberries, coffee, *bucanned* venison, hot corn-cakes, and butter and cheese. The fruit was brought in by a company of Indian girls, who belonged to a village among the hills, not far off.

Next morning, he set out again for Cowe, situated fifteen miles lower down the valley, and after riding four miles over lands of incredible fertility, he reached

the town of Echoe, populous, and consisting of many good houses. Three miles farther, he came to Nucasse, and three more brought him to Whatoga. This was a large town, and riding through it, the road led him winding about through the little plantations of young corn, beans, and other vegetables, up to the great council-house, which was a very large dome or rotunda situated on the top of an ancient mound. The road here terminated, and he had a fine view of the scene, which consisted of innumerable miniature plantations, green and flourishing, with their mingled crops of maize and vegetables, and divided from one another by narrow borders of grass. These marked the bounds of their respective possessions, and every man's house stood in the midst of his lot.

He was now at a loss where to proceed, when he was discovered by the chief of the town, who led him across a grassy ravine, through which ran a beautiful rivulet, to his house on the top of a hill. He describes this chief of Whatoga as a very fine specimen of the physical man. He was about sixty years of age; but still upright, tall and perfectly formed; his countenance cheerful and lofty, and at the same time characteristic of the Indian—the brow being ferocious, and the eye active, fiery and piercing as the eagle's.

After being seated in the house of the chieftan, he was entertained by the women with their usual dishes of boiled venison and corn-cakes, to which was added on this occasion the famous Indian dish

of boiled hominy, served with cool milk. Even his horse was furnished with a good bait of corn, which was an extraordinary favor; for the Indians regarded their maize, as given by God, to be used only as the food of man.

Tobacco and pipes were next introduced; the chief filled one of them, whose stem, about four feet long, was sheathed in a beautiful speckled snake skin, and adorned with feathers, and strings of wampum, and having lighted it, smoked a few whiffs, puffing the smoke first towards the sun, then towards the four cardinal points, and lastly over the breast of his guest, after which he handed it to him, as ready for his use. In the conversation that ensued, the Indian inquired if he had come from Charleston, and if he knew John Stewart?

He was greatly pleased with Bartram's answers and manner, and assured him of both friendship and protection in his country.* Setting out from Whatoga, he was accompanied several miles by the friendly chief, towards Cowe, where he arrived at noon, having passed over much exceedingly rich soil. The vale of Cowe exhibited one of the most charming natural landscapes, perhaps, in the world; ridges of hills rising, grand and sublime, one above and beyond another; some boldly projecting into the

* It would appear from this hospitable reception of the botanist by the valley towns, that at this critical juncture, as were the Over-hills, in the beginning of the War of 1760, they were less disposed than any other portion of the Nation to break peace with the English or Carolinians.

verdant plain, their bases bathed with the silver flood of the Tenasse; while others, far distant, veiled in blue mists, mounted aloft with yet greater majesty, and ovelooked vast regions.

In Cowe, he was entertained at the house of Mr. Galahan, an Irishman and a trader, who had been many years among the Indians, and was greatly esteemed by them, for his humanity and probity—a character to which few white men in the same employment could lay claim. He had often been protected by the Cherokees, when all others around him were broken up, their property seized, and themselves either driven from the Nation, or killed in the fury of the exasperated savages.

The next day he went with a trader a few miles out upon the summits of the surrounding hills, to view some remarkable scenes; and having reached the highest point, enjoyed a magnificent prospect of the enchanting Vale of Keowee, not less fertile or beautiful, perhaps, than the famous fields of Pharsalia or the Valley of Tempe; the town itself, the elevated peak of the Jore mountains, a distant prospect of the Jore village in a beautiful lawn, many thousand feet above the position on which he stood; and numerous other towns and settlements on the sides of the mountains, at various distances and elevations.

Descending again towards the town, he came suddenly upon a scene that appears to have interested him even more than the landscape he had just been so rapturously admiring; a company of Cherokee

girls sporting in all the freedom of their wild nature in a shady vale of the hills. Some were gathering the fruit of the strawberry; others, having already filled their baskets, lay reclining under the shade, or bathed their limbs in a brook, while a few more gay, were wantonly chasing their companions over the lawn. This was a sight, he declares, too enticing for younger men than himself to behold. He arrived safely, however, soon afterwards, at Cowe.

This town consisted of one hundred houses, built near and on both sides of the Little Tennessee. The Cherokees constructed their dwellings on a plan different from that of the Creeks; they formed an oblong square building of one story, with notched logs, stripped of their bark, and plastered the walls both inside and out with clay, mixed with grass; the whole was roofed with the bark of the chestnut or with oaken boards, and partitioned transversely into three apartments, which opened into each other by inside doors. Their manner of conducting this work was curiously similar to that of the ancient builders of Solomon's Temple; each log and piece of timber was carefully notched and prepared in the woods, and then brought on their shoulders and laid in its proper place upon the building, till the entire fabric was completed.

The council-house at Cowe was a large rotunda, of sufficient capacity to hold conveniently several hundred people. It stood on the summit of an ancient mound of earth that had been thrown up some twenty feet in height; and the building itself being

quite thirty more, its pinnacle reaches an elevation of nearly sixty feet above the surface of the earth. This was the usual form, and the artificial mound the common site of the council-houses of all th towns. The Cherokees themselves knew nothing of the origin or first design of those mounds. Their forefathers found them in their present situations when they came from the West and took possession of the country, and the race they supplanted gave no more satisfactory account of them. They were probably used by their builders as sacrificial altars in the public manifestations of their superstitious belief.

The council-house was an imposing fabric, and was thus constructed. They first fixed in the ground a circle of posts about six feet high, equally distant from one another, and notched at the top, for the reception of wall plates. Inside of this was planted another circle of very strong posts, more than twice as high as the first, and likewise notched for a range of beams or plates. Within this again a third circle was ranged of yet larger, stronger and loftier pillars, but fewer in number, and at a greater distance apart. Lastly, in the centre rose the great pillar which formed the pinnacle of the building, at whose top were fastened the upper extremities of the rafters, rising in a sharp pyramid from the last range of plates. Laths, nailed across, secured the rafters and supported the roof, which was usually of bark. The walls were also formed in the same manner. A single large door gave access to the interior, and sup-

plied all the light from without. The Indians harangued and deliberated in their town meetings by the light of their never-absent council-fires. Next to the wall settees were ranged in several circles, one above another, for the accommodation of the people, who assembled in the town-house almost every night in the year, to enjoy some festival or their favorite dances and songs. The settees were covered with mats, curiously woven, of thin splints of the ash or oak.

From Cowe, he penetrated some distance into the country of the Over-hills, but was deterred from proceeding farther in that direction by the dangerous ill-humor of the Indians in this section of the Nation, arising from recent conflicts between them and the frontier settlers of Virginia. Most of the traders had retired from the Over-hill towns. He returned to Cowe, after having turned the summit of the Jore Mountains; and, setting out next day for the low-country, arrived, after two days' travel, again at Keowee.

Renewing his explorations here, he observed in the environs of the town, on the bases of the rocky hills, ascending from the low grounds, a great number of exceedingly curious remains and antiquities. They appear to have been designed by the ancient mound-builders either for tombs or sacrificial altars, and were constructed in the following manner: Three flat stones being set on edge together, were covered by a fourth at top, forming a box-like enclosure, open at one end, and some five feet in length, two in

height, and three in width. They were, however, of different dimensions. A trader who accompanied him regarded them as ancient ovens. The Indians themselves could give no other account of them than that their fathers found them in the places where they then stood.

There is scarcely, in all Upper Carolina, a lovelier spot than this ancient valley of the Keowee—more truthfully written Kewohee—or more interesting for its historical associations. True, its cheerful, animated scenes of aboriginal life are no more; not a trace, save a large conical mound near the river's brink, and a few broken relics scattered upon the cultivated soil, and here and there an ancient shade-tree remain to tell the passing stranger that two great Cherokee towns and an English fortress once occupied the spot.

The surpassingly fertile lands of the valley were not its only attractions to a people keenly alive both to agricultural advantages and the romantic combinations of Nature's loveliest forms. The first feature that strikes the traveler approaching it, at the present day, along the remains of the old Keowee trail, is the same that must have first attracted the gaze of the traders and English warriors, who frequented the spot in primitive times—its magnificent mountain scenery.

Just after reaching the head of the ravine in Gab Mountain—itself a historic spot, of which we shall speak in another place—the beautiful valley bursts

suddenly upon the view in a grand vista of lofty hills or knobs, ranged on each side of the river, and terminating far away in the dim distance in the picturesque sierra of the Blue Ridge. These mountains are near enough to disclose to the eye their abrupt precipices and naked rocks, and are yet so far removed as to give the imagination full scope to revel among their misty summits, and the deeper gloom of their mysterious gorges.

That portion of the valley in which Keowee town and Fort Prince George stood, appears to the eye, a semi-circular area some four hundred yards in breadth from the river towards the east, and twice that distance from north to south. The Keowee, which runs almost perfectly straight through the valley, forms the base of the semi-circle, while the ranging hills stud the line of its circumference on the east. These hills are yet covered, in great part, with woods, and on their sides are still found the fragments of the ancient Indian works mentioned by Adair, now utterly demolished and scattered. Nearly opposite the point at which the Keowee trail entered the valley, passing close to the present site of Steel's house, was situated the ancient ford, just at the head of a beautiful shoal, that connected Kulsarge, or Sugar-Town, with Keowee. A short distance above this ford, on the west side, the hills suddenly recede from the river, forming another valley of considerable extent, sufficient for the site of Sugar-Town, and a little lower down, at an earlier

period, for that of Old Keowee. It was on the demolition or desertion of this town, that New Keowee was built on the eastern bank, opposite to Kulsarge. The oldest Cherokee Indian now living east of the Mississippi, and who spent most of his life near the head branches of the Savannah, or in the Valley of Cowe, informed us, that when Kewhohee was first founded, it was called by that name, but on the erection of a town-house it was changed to Tacite—the meaning of which in English is Sugar-Town. The old man's memory was, doubtless, at fault in this; he probably referred to the town already mentioned by that name, on the western side of the river, and which is often spoken of in the Indian books, not as Tacite but Sugaw, of which Sugar-Town is evidently an English corruption. Sugaw may possibly have been first called Kewhohee, and the name afterwards transferred to the more recent New Kewhohee, when the former received the name of Sugaw. Bartram gives the name of Kulsarge to the town corresponding with Sugaw.

The same venerable Indian, Oosqualooyaie, or the Otter, whom we found living with some fifteen hundred Cherokees on the Tuckasege—a branch of the Tennessee in western North Carolina—informed us further, that Kewhohee, or Keowee, means, in their language, the river of *mulberries;* just as the same race, far back in immemorial time, named their beautiful Ennoree, the river of *muscadines.* The Ennoree is now a turbid stream, discolored by the dissolving clay of a wasting soil; but whatever there

is of poetry or beauty in the name Kewhohee,* the stream that bears it merits it all, and more; for we venture nothing in the declaration, that the Kewhohee is the most beautiful river in Carolina. Its waters are still as pure and transparent as when they bathed the limbs of the first boisterous group of Cherokee youths, who lived upon its fertile banks; and when viewed in relation to its numerous dashing shoals, picturesque valleys, and magnificent mountain scenery, it is certainly not surpassed by any stream of equal size and length in the South. There are scenes of beauty on the banks of the Kewhohee and Seneca which are yet destined to awaken in song and architectural combinations the most elaborate manifestations of genius and cultivated taste.

A few miles above Kewhohee, near the juncture of the Toxawaw and Estatoe, is the ancient site of Toxawaw, and on the latter stream, those of Quacoretchie and Estatoe. The latter stood wholly on the west bank of the stream, while the former occupied, in part, both its right and left shores.

Some twenty miles from the juncture of the Seneca with the Tugaloo, near the mouth of Chauga, and in the vicinity of the present site of Bachelor's Retreat, there once stood a cluster of Cherokee towns. On the east side of the Tugaloo, close to one another, were the towns of Old Estatoe, Noyo-

* The Otter is our authority for writing this name, Kewhohee, as well as the various spelling of Keowee and Kewhohee, found in the Indian books.

wee, Tugaloo, Toogoola and Takwashaw. On the west, those of Tehoe, Chagee, Tussee, and two others, a few miles lower down the Tugaloo, whose names are lost, if they are not identical with those mentioned by Adair as having been destroyed by the warlike Muscogees. They have been referred to in another place.

The town of Seneca, which took its name from an immigrant tribe, or the migratory remnant of a tribe, from the province of New York, stood sixteen miles south of Kewhohee, not far from the juncture of the present Little River with the Kewhohee, on the west side of the river. Previous to the coming of the Senecas, it is said that the entire eastern branch of the Savannah was known only as the Keowee. In the old map of Monzon, however, neither the name Kewhohee nor Keowee, appears as belonging to any stream in this region. It gives the name of Keshwee to the present Keowee, from its source to its juncture with the Seneca; and at this point began the ancient Cherokee appellative for the more modern Savannah, which it then bore throughout its entire course to the ocean—the Isundiga.

It would appear from this that the restless Sawannos, like the Senecas. had the address, at a comparatively recent period, to displace from one of the finest rivers of the South, the beautiful name it had, doubtless, borne for immemorial ages, and impress upon its fleeting waters their own forever.

From Keowee he proceeded to Seneca, in which town he again met Alexander Cameron, holding a

talk with the lower chiefs on the important question at that time agitating the entire Nation. The Indians were undetermined what course to pursue, and a general council was appointed to assemble as soon as possible in one of the Over-Hill towns. It was from this talk that they rushed, tomahawk in hand, July 1st, 1776, upon the defenceless settlements of the old Ninety-Six District.