

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

F R I D A Y, J U N E 4, 1 7 7 9.

C H A R L E S T O W N, April 20.

T H E following letter and message was sent by Thomas Kelly, Esq; major of brigade, to brigadier general Williamson, commander of the troops near Fort Moore; viz.

S I R, I AM ordered by col. Prevost to acquaint you that if you choose to exchange the three Indians taken by your troops, he pledges his honour that he will (on their arrival in our camp) send back any three subaltern officers of the province of South Carolina that you shall name. I have the honour to be, &c. &c. (signed) T. KELLY, major of brigade.

S I R, THE extraordinary treatment which his majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects receive at your hands, will not permit me to omit remonstrating to you on the impropriety of making so extraordinary distinction between the king's regular troops and such of his faithful subjects, who, actuated by principles and attachment to the best of constitutions, have endeavoured to give a proof of it, by endeavouring to join the royal standard. You cannot, Sir, have lost sight of the consequence that must result from so cruel a treatment, a prior a sacred right to the allegiance of these men, and of every other British subject, and the penalties attending the breach of it, ought to make the Americans cautious how, under the pretence of new made laws (which the strongest can only obtain a sanction for) they will put us under the necessity of exhibiting a scene of punishments, which the mild hand of government, and the dictates of humanity, have hitherto restrained. I must also mention lieut. William Butler, who shot the safe-guard near Augusta, at Mr. Moore's house, and one Wells who mangled and cut to pieces the dead body of a person who, from all circumstances, should have been respected and held sacred (being placed there to secure the property of an enemy to government) such persons, I say, remain unpunished; the former boasts of that deed, and (if I can trust information offered on oath) of having wantonly killed men in their houses, because they refused to take arms against their sovereign; the other is at liberty, & these acts of lawless brutality exasperate the soldiers, and will be productive of hundred fold retaliation, which it will not be in the power of the officers to prevent, and a proper punishment ought to be inflicted on such flagitious crimes.

A war is sufficiently productive of calamities. I think it the duty of every man, not totally destitute of humanity, to alleviate its miseries whenever it is admissible. I have been often told of instances of your humanity, and your good treatment of some of our prisoners, which the fate of war has put into your hands, convinces me that if it was solely in your power there would be few grounds of complaint. I beg to be informed what number of prisoners you have now in your hands, and to acquaint you that we don't hand-cuff your people; you should be cautious how many of ours are put in irons.

The last point which I have to mention to you is relative to depredations daily committed on the inhabitants of this province, over which I have the honour to preside. That part of the country above Augusta, and from thence across to Ogeechee, may be equally and quietly enjoyed by its inhabitants, till less calamitous times succeed the present ones. If you approve of it, those who favour the American cause shall be left unmolested, provided the loyal inhabitants are permitted to remain in the same manner, and respectively confine themselves to the care of their plantations. You cannot but be sensible that such a proposal, being suggested by mere humanity (if approved of by you) will be only a temporary neutrality to be broke at any time by giving a previous notice of ten days at least, unless you would agree to have it fixed for a limited time. I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

J. M. PREVOST.

Brig. gen. Williamson, commanding the troops of the American States, near Fort Moore. Brigadier general Williamson's answer.

S I R, I AM favoured with yours, not dated, by major T. Kelly, and shall endeavour to satisfy you in respect to the different matters which you so seriously mention. With regard to those people you speak of as your king's dutiful subjects, I can assure that no persons, who with propriety come under that denomination, have ever met with the treatment from me which you are induced to believe on the contrary. Many, who in every sense come under the criminal laws of this state, have been admitted as prisoners of war, none of whom were ever handcuffed or otherwise treated with severity, farther than being kept in close confinement, in the only way I had in my power. I shall observe, that two persons who say they were officers in your army, viz. Aquilla Hale and Jacob Williams, the first for a cruel murder committed in North-Carolina before the revolution, and a robbery in this state, and the other for a highway robbery previous to their entering into your service; these, I say, coming immediately under the jurisdiction of our laws, I was left no choice what to do in the matter. Several others who under the name (but without the least order or sanction for such conduct) called themselves king's men, and have daringly taken up arms against, and wantonly plundered the honest and industrious inhabitants of this state, were properly seized, and delivered up to the civil law. You will have the less to feel in regard to these people, when I acquaint you, that on the most credible evidence it has appeared that, not satisfied with the innumerable rob-

beries they have for years past been accustomed to commit, before and since the commencement of hostilities on this continent, they at last carried their lawless actions so far as to wound and maim some of our respectable inhabitants in the peaceful hours of domestic security. These are facts in my own knowledge, many of them have been more than once pardoned after condemnation for the most atrocious crimes, and I must beg leave to observe, that the lenity of our executive authority, and the interposition of some humane persons in behalf of these villains, has even by themselves been ridiculed. I am apt to believe, Sir, after reflecting on what I have mentioned, you will be satisfied neither cruelty nor harsh usage of prisoners can be imputed to me. British or foreign officers or soldiers who, by the fortune of war, may fall into our hands, behaving with propriety, shall be treated with humanity and generosity, and prisoners of war, of every class, shall have such comfortable subsistence as is in my power to furnish. One Pelther, who had a brevet of captain from col. Campbell, and whom I admitted on parole, stayed about camp a few days, and then went off. At the same time you do me the justice to acknowledge the good treatment that the regular troops have received from me; I must suggest to you the very different treatment of the continental troops by your soldiers. When taken prisoners, your officers have had the privilege of disposing of their property of every kind in my camp for their necessary subsistence; on the contrary, most of our officers and soldiers have been plundered of every necessary, and even the money taken out of their pockets.

With respect to the safeguard you mention, Butler insists he shot him in his own defence; as to his killing men in their own houses for refusing to take up arms in defence of their country, I can positively assert no such thing ever happened; had it been so, Mr. Butler would have been amenable to the law in this case, and his life would probably pay for the act. The circumstance alluded to may arise from his having killed one Gaines, a deserter from the first continental regiment in the service of this state, and who having committed all the crimes before mentioned, and others shocking to humanity, at last with another came to the house of a poor old man, a neighbour of Butler's (who happened to be there) in the evening; on his seizing the old man, and demanding his money, Butler shot him down; this, Sir, you may rely on as a fact, without having recourse to affidavits, which I have no doubt may be offered by some of his accomplices in order to deceive you. As to the man Vesells, who mangled the dead body of the person killed at Mr. Moore's, I will not offer to justify; and so far from countenancing such barbarity, my indignation occasioned my immediately ordering the fellow in irons, and sent him down to gen. Lincoln, with a letter reciting the crime, that he might be punished. He was set at liberty, and gen. Lincoln returned me for answer, that no satisfaction had ever been obtained for the many wanton barbarities committed by your adherents.

I agree with you, that war of itself is sufficiently productive of calamities; and that it is the duty of every man not totally destitute of humanity to alleviate its miseries whenever it is possible. It ever has been, and ever shall be, a rule with me to treat prisoners with humanity; and when you mention your not handcuffing our people, I would not wish to entertain a belief that you mean to consider thieves, robbers, murderers, and persons of the most abandoned characters, as your king's loyal and dutiful subjects. If I am well informed, Sir, some gentlemen of the most respectable characters in your army, think you have enough of such banditti among you already, and for my own part, I think they are a nuisance and disgrace to community.

I enclose a particular list of the prisoners of war. The last point which you mention relative to the depredations daily committed on the inhabitants of Georgia, I could wish you had pointed out some of the sufferers, and the persons who had been guilty of these facts; as I had given positive orders to all the parties sent out by me against plundering any of the peaceable inhabitants, or molesting them in any manner whatever, although to consider Georgia as an enemy's country, it would only be a just retaliation for those committed in this state by col. M' Laurin, major Sharp, and many others; but it is not my wish to distress, nor should even considerations of private interest incite my resentment so far as to ruin a set of people, whose particular situation in a country, the seat of war, is already rendered deplorable. I shall therefore, as far as in my power, prevent them from being injured in the mean time, and in a few days will give you an answer respecting those people whom you wish to enjoy a temporary neutrality.

I have received a few lines from major T. Kelly, acquainting me that you would exchange sub officers for the Indians taken prisoners. These people were several days ago sent with a safeguard to one of our frontier garrisons, in order to be exchanged for any of our people that may be in the hands of the Creek Indians. With regard to the mode of exchange, I hope no officer of ours would wish his release on such a footing; and I am sorry to think that savages should be considered as so valuable allies, and could wish, for the sake of humanity, which you seem so highly to prize, that your arms were not degraded by so frequent application to them, to fall on the innocent and defenceless. Our conduct in this particular has been widely different; even offers of services have been repeatedly rejected, and they have been told, that it is a quarrel in which they ought to have no part; although the method of employing them against an armed force and that of inciting them to the cruel massacre of innocent women

and children, will be considered in a very different light by the impartial part of mankind. I am, &c. (Signed) A. WILLIAMSON.

Lieut. col. James Mark Prevost.

B O S T O N, May 13.

Last Friday the privateer brig Pallas, belonging to Newbury Port, returned there from a cruise, during which she hath made two prizes, one a vessel laden with salt, the other a ship from Liverpool, richly laden. We are informed that the English papers taken by the Pallas, in the prize from Liverpool, mention that Pondicherry is taken by the English in the East-Indies. That the house of lords had unanimously voted their thanks to admiral Keppel, notwithstanding the ministry had appeared, thro' the whole prosecution, to be much against him; that Sir Hugh Palliser, the ministerial tool, in the persecution of the renowned Keppel, had become so much the object of the indignation of the people, that nothing but a strong guard could protect him; and that all the principal characters of the opposition, attended the admiral on his trial.

The present ferment in England, as well as Scotland, though they proceed from different causes, are both pointed against the Ministry, and may produce before long a great revolution, at least in places.

Last Saturday a party of the enemy, from Newport, landed at Point Judith, and stole from thence about good sheep, and between 60 and 70 head of cattle.

P R O V I D E N C E, May 8.

Last Wednesday evening arrived here capt. Pardon Sheldon, who sailed from this port for Surinam the 20th of February last, but on the 20th of March was taken by two privateers, off Bram-Point, in Surinam river, and carried to St. Vincents, from whence he was sent in a flag of truce to Dominico, where he got a passage to Cape Ann. Capt. Sheldon left Dominica the 15th of April, and informs, that the British fleet and army at St. Lucia were in so sickly a condition, that all the physicians of St. Vincents had been sent to their assistance, and that great numbers continued to die daily. Count D'Estaing's fleet, which lay at Martinick, consisted of 18 ships of the line, beside a great number of frigates, and some ships of the line were daily expected to arrive from France. Byron's fleet, it was said, consisted of 22 sail of the line, besides frigates. Some of the French ships were frequently cruising among the islands, and had captured three British sloops of war.

N E W - H A V E N, May 12.

Wednesday night last, a party of the enemy landed at Middlesex, in Stamford, to take capt. Selleck, who lives near the water-side, but he being from home, they missed their aim; however, they took off one continental lieutenant, and three other persons who lodged at capt. Selleck's.

Friday morning, about 40 men landed from the Halifax brig, on a point, near the above place, and took off about 40 sheep and lambs.

N E W - L O N D O N, May 13.

Last Wednesday night, some villains stole a sloop, burthen about 40 tons, from a wharf in this town, and went off undiscovered. We learn that she was the next day met by two armed whaleboats near Gardiner's Island, who took the vessel and sent her into Mytic river; but the people got a shore on Gardiner's Island, and escaped.

Sunday last, the privateer sloop Eagle, capt. Edward Conkling, then cruising off Point Judith, took six sail of vessels, chiefly small except one of them, which was loaded with West-India goods. The manning so many vessels, reduced the crew on board the privateer to 15, whilst the number of prisoners on board were 16; who taking advantage of this circumstance in their favour, fell upon, and murdered the whole of the sloop's crew, except two boys; many of them were mangled in a most savage manner after they had surrendered. They then retook one of the vessels; but it was again taken by the Hancock and Beaver privateers, and sent into Stonington, where the six prizes have arrived. The Eagle was carried into Newport. Capt. Conkling's death is much regretted by all that knew him. He was a humane and worthy man, and a brave officer.

Last Tuesday was sent into port by the Hancock and Beaver privateers, the letter of marque brig Bellona (one of the noted Goodrich's fleet) mounting 22 guns, but has ports for 18. She was from Bermuda, bound to New-York, laden with West-India goods, and was taken off Sandy Hook.

Sixteen sail of shipping came out of Gardiner's Bay last Sunday, and stood to the westward; they were supposed to be woodmen bound to New-York. Since our last, the ship Oliver Cromwell, Capt. Timothy Parker, owned by this state, sailed from this port.

N E W - Y O R K, May 13.

Yesterday arrived the privateer brig Enterprize capt. Jolly, belonging to this port, from a three weeks cruise, during which she has taken three prizes, one of which was retaken off the south side of Long-Island by a rebel armed sloop of ten carriage guns, and twenty-nine men. Only three brave Hibernians, belonging to the Enterprize, were on board the prize. One of them named Murphy, another Rogers, the name of the third we have not learnt; their gallant fellows, disdaining to remain prisoners in the hands of rebels, concerted a plan, when they were taken on board the pirate vessel, to demolish the crew, and take possession of her; the watch word or signal when they were to set about this laudable exploit was for rifle, an opportunity soon of-