

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

F R I D A Y, DECEMBER 3, 1779.

the MARYLAND GAZETTE. NUMBER XIX.

THE advantages are many which have resulted from the expedition of our ally to the coast of the continent this season. The movement has been felt, not in the state of Georgia only, but the most remote distance. From the first arrival of the Count, fear and apprehension spread themselves on the wings of every pulse of air. The cannon discharged in that state were heard every post of the enemy to the northward. Frightfully, they received a shock, and were made tremble and collect themselves, as when a knight of romance, coming to a castle or a city, commands them to be founded, and the dwarfs to hammer the battlements. The shock was felt at New-York, and in Rhode-Island especially. The town of Newport, which had before cost us two campaigns, one under general Spencer, and one under general Sullivan, in a fruitless attempt to reduce, was now evacuated. It was not to be held by the enemy that the Count should have in his power to attack the two ports of New-York and Rhode-Island separately. Their junction was necessary, in order to defend themselves; and what general Spencer, with a formidable body of militia, had it not in his power to effect; and general Sullivan, with a body of the best continental troops, did not find it possible to accomplish; and general Gates, through the whole of this season, thought it not prudent to attempt, has now been done by the approach of the Count to the coast of this continent. It has been done though he has remained in Georgia.

At New-York the enemy were in continual expectation. The armed vessels have been retained in the harbour to assist, with the fort, and the batteries on the wharfs, to defend the city. From this circumstance, our merchantmen from the several ports, have been at liberty to pass through the seas in safety. In the mean time the grand army of the enemy have been under the necessity of relinquishing the campaign which they had projected, and in which they had advanced considerably, having established several posts upon the North river. The affair of Stony-point, and the arrival of the Count, obliged them to fall back, and to reside, like a broken wave, on the shores of the York-Island. It has been owing to the seasonable, though distant movement of our ally, that many settlements of New-York, Connecticut and Jersey, have been saved from the ravage of the enemy. It is true our army was at hand to repel their attack; but in the circling manœuvres and fluctuating movements of the war, seeking and avoiding an engagement, the intermediate ground is overrun, and the miserable inhabitants suffer almost as much from the unavoidable company of their friends, as from the hostile presence of their enemies. Besides, if an enemy is repelled, it is with the loss of brave men, even to those who are victorious. Our army, weakened by the detachment of a considerable body of our troops to the northward, under general Sullivan, were not, for some months, in full force to receive the enemy. It has been happy, that, in these circumstances, the British troops have been under the necessity of falling back to the environs of New-York, to head themselves against the expected blockade of the count d'Estaing on the one side, and of our army on the other. That the above was the case will appear from a survey of the circumstances; and I find it to be observed by a gentleman who writes from Elizabeth-town, New-Jersey, an extract of whose letter has appeared in the Gazette of that state. "The count d'Estaing, says he, although he has not been successful at Savannah, yet has made a most powerful diversion in our favour, by keeping the British mercenaries at New-York and its dependencies, with a train of Tories and refugees constantly engaged in throwing up various works, and sinking vessels in the Narrows and at the Hook, they being in daily expectation of his arrival there for two months past; but the vessels which they sink have chiefly drifted away with the current. In Georgia, the war, on the part of the enemy, in consequence of the arrival of the Count, has been changed from offensive to defensive. The reinforcement intended for that state; has

been retained on Rhode-Island and at New-York; for while the Count was master of the seas, no reinforcement could be sent thither. If it had arrived, it would have been unequal to the task of instituting a campaign against the combined and superior force under general Lincoln, and the Count, in those parts. We may justly reckon it the consequence of the movement of our ally to this quarter, that the enemy, confined to Savannah, have not been able to make their way once more to the walls of Charles-town, and with repeated devastation of the country through which they might propose to pass. The campaign in Georgia has been crushed; and the enemy have thought themselves happy that they have been able to defend themselves. They have not been able to assist their allies, the Creek Indians, who have been subdued by general Williamson, in his expedition to the frontier settlements. It was pleasant enough to see the vindictive Prevost, and the more active colonel Maitland, with the troops under their command, meditating incursion, depredation and conquest, but obliged to sit down in the town of Savannah, with watching, with labour, and with the spectacle of the vessels falling into our hands, which were intended for their assistance in money, clothing, and other necessaries. Many vessels were captured, and the military chest itself, on board the Experiment, was a considerable prize, and must have been a radical injury to their future operations. The prisoners we have taken, both on board the vessels, and on the land, have been a compensation for the trouble the enemy have given us, and will considerably reduce their force in that quarter. In Ogechee river, particularly, five armed vessels, having taken shelter from the count d'Estaing, and having the remaining part of the Sunbury garrison on board, officers and privates, one hundred and forty-one in all, have fallen into our hands, by the address of colonel White of that state.

That the assault on Savannah did not succeed, has been owing "to the strength of the enemy in that garrison; to the unavoidable delay, on our part, in bringing up proper cannon and mortars from the fleet, which took up many days, and was attended with inconceivable difficulties, on account of the distance of the shipping, and a series of tempestuous weather; to the activity of colonel Maitland in throwing up works, so that, having as it were, burrowed his troops in the sand, the tops of their tents being not more than on a level with the parapets, they were safe from the cannonade. It was farther owing to the enemy having discovered, by some means, the approach of our columns a full hour before it was possible for them to reach their respective stations; by which they had an opportunity of pouring upon their assailants such a heavy and incessant front, flank, and cross fire, as no troops whatever could have sustained without being disordered, and occasioned the order for discontinuing the assault, even while the brave French troops had gained one of the enemy's works, and our as brave troops another."

I am happy to find that the inhabitants of the southern states, and even those of Georgia, whose wishes were warmest in the assault of the town of Savannah, whose disappointment was greatest in the event of it, and who were most likely to repine and be dissatisfied with the councils and conduct of those engaged in it, are, nevertheless, fully composed in their minds, and perfectly persuaded that all has been done that could be done in that enterprise. This is indeed a full evidence of it; for it is natural for men, when they are disappointed in any of their expectations, to seek for the causes, not in things, but in persons. It is easy to say that it has been owing to the bad counsel or the bad conduct of this or that man; but it requires general observation to perceive how much arises from the nature of the circumstances, which the wit of man could not have managed otherwise. Unless the wisdom of a measure is incontestably clear and striking, if it is unfortunate it will be said to have been imprudent. Unless the ability and spirit with which it may have been conducted is obvious to all, and forces approbation, it will in some instances be

called in question. I am therefore happy to find that the most perfect approbation is given by every mouth, to the conduct both of our ally and of our own troops in their operations in the state of Georgia. A gentleman, an inhabitant of that state, but now in Charles-town, writes to his friend in Philadelphia to the following purpose: "Our allies have done every thing in their power for the recovery of this country, but we cannot expect them to perform impossibilities. On all occasions the count d'Estaing shewed himself a brave man, and acted in every respect consistent with the dignity of his character, as a nobleman of a distinguished family, and as a gentleman whose best wishes were most ardent for the good and protection of the United states. He remained with us much longer than he at first proposed, and as he was in want of many things, absolutely necessary for his army, it appeared evident to me that he was obliged to leave us. Nothing would have given him greater pleasure than to have gathered laurels on these fertile plains, and in my opinion it would have been the case if the American army had been more numerous. In my former letters I have hinted to you how highly general Lincoln is esteemed for his prudence and merit, and that he had been properly supported with men, since it has been on this command, he would long ago have taken Prevost and all his plundering adventurers. You are sensible of the difficulties an officer must labour under whose army is principally composed of militia, which are continually going and coming, and very averse to military discipline. What man can do he has done, and the anxiety he has endured in this service is much greater than I can describe."

I collect these testimonies of my countrymen with pleasure, because it is an evidence of our good sense and gratitude, and it must be an encouragement to our allies, and to our own officers to labour for a people, whose approbation is not fixed, like that of an ignorant and undiscerning multitude, merely on good fortune, but who are capable of distinguishing what is praise-worthy, even though it is not crowned with every advantage of success. I shall only add, as an evidence of this, that acknowledgment which we find in the message from the president, &c. of Pennsylvania, to the representatives, &c. in general assembly met, and which is as follows: "The seasonable and generous assistance of the count d'Estaing, and the gallant force under his command, though not attended with all the success which our sanguine expectations suggested, may justly be reckoned among the happy events of the year, as it has disconcerted the plans of the enemy, been attended with success in capturing many of their vessels, and is, in every respect, a fresh proof of the magnanimity and attention of our allies, which will justly endear them to every lover of his country." These acknowledgments, and this general sense of America, must strike the minds of the enemy with discouragement; for, no doubt, they had hoped much from that disposition to repine and find fault, which springs up in the minds of men after an unsuccessful enterprise. They will now see that not the least disposition of this kind exists amongst us. Indeed there is no reason that it should exist. The expedition, notwithstanding our repulse, must upon the whole be accounted fortunate. If we could put it in the power of the enemy to chuse, whether matters should be as they now are, or that the Count had not arrived at all, certainly they would chuse to have been without his company. What is the small honour of having defended themselves in the town of Savannah, to the hope which they had entertained of over-running half the southern settlements, by means of reinforcements thrown in to the troops in Georgia; and at the same time of making a vigorous campaign with their main army to the northward. It is their part to push their operations. It is our part to impede them. They have not pushed their operations. We have impeded them. They are therefore disappointed, not we. We have done all that ought to have been expected to be done. The event will discover that we are successful. In the whole history of this war, our enemy will lament no circumstance more than the arrival of the count d'Estaing in Georgia.

Observations in the Maryland journal communicated from Charles-town.