

MARYLAND GAZETTE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1776. 21

To the PRINTER of the VIRGINIA GAZETTE.

Mr. PINKNEY,

FROM officers, who have arrived in town from colonel Woodford's camp since the battle of the Great Bridge. I have, I think, collected a more particular account of that action than any which has yet been communicated to the public. You will therefore oblige me by publishing it, and perhaps afford, at the same time, no disagreeable entertainment to our countrymen. As the scene of action is but little known to the generality of people, it may be necessary to give some description of it, that the relation may be more clear and satisfactory. The Great Bridge is built over what is called the Southern Branch of Elizabeth river, twelve miles above Norfolk. The land on each side is marshy to a considerable distance from the river, except at the two extremities of the bridge, where are two pieces of firm land, which may not improperly be called islands, being surrounded entirely by water and marsh, and joined to the main land by causeways. On the little piece of firm ground on the farther, or Norfolk side, lord Dunmore had erected his fort, in such a manner that his cannon commanded the causeway on his own side, and the bridge between him and us, with the marshes around him. The island on this side of the river contained six or seven houses, some of which were burnt down (the nearest to the bridge) by the enemy, after the arrival of our troops; in the others, adjoining the causeway on each side, were stationed a guard every night by col. Woodford, but withdrawn before day, that they might not be exposed to the fire of the enemy's fort in recrossing the causeway to our camp, this causeway being also commanded by their cannon. The causeway on our side was in length about one hundred and sixty yards, and on the higher extremity our breast-work was thrown up. From the breast-work ran a street, gradually ascending, about the length of four hundred yards, to a church, where our main body were encamped. The great trade to Norfolk in shingles, tar, pitch, and turpentine, from the country back of this, had occasioned so many houses to be built here, whence these articles were conveyed to Norfolk by water. But this by the bye. Such is the nature of the place as described to me, and such were our situation, and that of the enemy. On Saturday the 9th instant, after revell's beating, two or three great guns, and some musquetry, were discharged from the enemy's fort, which, as it was not an unusual thing, was but little regarded by col. Woodford. However, soon afterwards he heard a call to the soldiers to stand to their arms; upon which, with all expedition, he made the proper dispositions to receive the enemy. In the mean time the enemy had crossed the bridge, fired the remaining houses upon the island, and some large piles of shingles, and attacked our guard in the breast-work. Our men returned the fire, and threw them into some confusion, but they were instantly rallied by capt. Furdyce, and advanced along the causeway with great resolution, keeping up a constant and heavy fire as they approached. Two field pieces, which had been brought across the bridge, and planted on the edge of the island, facing the left of our breast-work, played briskly at the same time upon the enemy. Lieut. Travis, who commanded in the breast-work, ordered his men to reserve their fire till the enemy came within the distance of fifty yards, and then they gave it to them with terrible execution. The brave Furdyce exerted himself to keep up their spirits, reminded them of their ancient glory, and waving his hat over his head, encouragingly told them the day was their own. Thus pressing forward, he fell within fifteen steps of the breast-work. His wounds were many, and his death would have been that of an hero, had he met it in a better cause. The progress of the enemy was now at an end; they retreated over the causeway with precipitation, and were dreadfully galled in their rear. Hitherto, on our side only, the guard, consisting of twenty-five, and some of these, upon the whole, amounting to not more than ninety, had been engaged. Only the regulars of the 24th regiment, and number 120, had advanced upon the causeway; and about 230 Tories and negroes had, after crossing the bridge, continued upon the island. The regulars, after retreating along the causeway, were again rallied by capt. Leslie, and the two field pieces continued to play upon our men. It was at this time that col. Woodford was advancing down the street to the breast-work with the main body, and against him was now directed the whole fire of the enemy. Never were cannon better served; but yet in the face of them, and the musquetry, which kept up a continual blaze, our men marched on with the utmost intrepidity. Colonel Stevens, of the Culpeper Battalion, was sent round to the left to flank the enemy, which was done with such activity and spirit that a rout immediately ensued. The enemy fled into their fort, leaving behind them the two field pieces, which, however, they took care to spike up with nails. Many were killed and wounded in the flight, but col. Woodford very prudently restrained his troops from urging their pursuit too far. From the beginning of the attack till the repulse from the breast-work might be about fourteen or fifteen minutes, till the total defeat upwards of half an hour. It is said that some of the enemy preferred death to captivity, from a fear of being scalped, which lord Dunmore inhumanly told them would be their fate should they be taken alive. Thirty-one, killed and wounded, fell into our hands, and the number borne off was much greater. Through the whole of the engagement every officer and soldier behaved with the greatest courage and calmness. The conduct of our sentinels I cannot pass over in silence. Before they quitted their stations they fired at

least three rounds as the enemy were crossing the bridge, and one of them, who was posted behind some shingles, kept his ground till he had fired eight times; and after receiving a whole platoon, made his escape over the causeway into our breast-work. The scene was closed with as much humanity as it had been conducted with bravery. The work of death being over, every one's attention was directed to the succour of the unhappy sufferers, and it is an undoubted fact that capt. Leslie was so affected with the tenderness of our troops towards those who were yet capable of assistance, that he gave signs from the fort of his thankfulness for it. What is not to be paralleled in history, and will scarcely appear credible, except so such as acknowledge a providence over human affairs, this victory was gained at the expense of no more than a slight wound in a soldier's hand; and one circumstance, which renders it still more amazing is, that the field pieces raked the whole length of the street, and absolutely threw double-headed shot as far as the church, and afterwards, as our troops approached, cannonaded them heavily with grape-shot.

CAMBRIDGE, December 24.

Yesterday an express from Marblehead brought advice that three men of war were seen off that harbour, and it was apprehended an attack would be made upon the town. Col. Glover's regiment with a company of artillery were immediately ordered to the place. A good fortification was lately erected at the entrance of the harbour, with 30 pieces of cannon.

Since our last 9000 of the brave sons of New-England, (3000 of this colony, and 2000 from New-Hampshire) have joined the continental army under the command of his excellency general Washington.

Dec. 22. Capt. Martindale, in one of our privateers, was lately decoyed near to one of the enemy's ships of war, in the bay, and was unhappily taken and carried into Boston.

Capt. Manly has within a few days past, taken another valuable prize, a sloop from Virginia, bound to Boston, loaded with corn and oats; fitted out and sent by lord Dunmore.

Last Friday night seven American masters of vessels, who had, at different times been taken by the enemy and carried into Boston, made their escape from that place. From one of them we have obtained the following intelligence, viz. That all the drugs and medicines in the town have been seized for the use of the army. That on the 14th instant general Howe issued orders for taking down the old north-meeting-house, and 100 old wooden dwelling houses and other buildings, to make use of for fuel. That vessels are fitting out for the West-Indies, in order to get supplies for the garrison. That capt. Martindale, mentioned above, with his officers and men, were sent to England. That one Morrison, who officiates as a presbyterian minister, being appointed searcher of those people who were permitted to leave the town, promised on receiving a bribe, to let a person bring out 240l. sterl. in cash and plate; but afterwards safely deprived him of the whole of it.

That recruiting parties out of each regiment are going to England: that two regiments and a number of light horse, under convoy of a frigate, were embarked for Halifax; and that there were not in the town, provisions sufficient to supply the navy and army for a longer time than six weeks.

It was yesterday reported that the above two regiments, &c. were failed for Rhode-Island.

PROVIDENCE, December 16.

Yesterday Mr. Philip Palmer arrived here from Quebec, by way of lake Champlain. He was taken in a fishing vessel the 5th of October last, by the sloop General Gage, on her passage from Boston to Quebec, which place he left the 21st of November, and was at col. Arnold's head-quarters, 7 leagues from the city, on the 21st. The colonel, with his detachment, had been within musket shot of the walls, taken four prisoners, and killed two men in a barge belonging to the Lizard frigate; he was fired on from the walls, and had two men wounded, one of whom is since dead. He was waiting to be reinforced by gen. Montgomery, and expected soon to be in possession of the place. Thirteen sail of vessels from Montreal had fallen into the hands of gen. Montgomery, having on board 1500 suits of cloaths, 150 chests of arms, 900 barrels of pork, 700 barrels of flour, but they had thrown overboard large quantities of powder before they surrendered. The Gaspee brig and a snow escaped, on board one of which general Carleton got to Quebec disguised, with about 40 regulars. Before Mr. Palmer left the city, 147 recruits had arrived from Newfoundland, 40 marines had been landed from the Lizard with her guns, and it was expected Carleton would muster about 500 men to defend the place; but the Canadians in general refused to take up arms.

Several vessels, loaded with fuel, provisions, &c. bound to Boston, were last week taken, and carried into Beverly. A privateer from Plymouth has likewise taken several small craft, bound to Boston, with provisions and fuel.

NEW-YORK, December 25.

A letter from St. Kitts of the 15th November, mentions, that a packet was just arrived at Dominica, from England, which it was reported had brought a proclamation prohibiting the exportation of West-India produce to the continent.

A letter dated Nov. 21, from col. Arnold's camp at Point aux Trembles, 8 leagues from Quebec, mentions, that their little army consisting of about 600, are in good health and spirits, waiting the arrival of general Montgomery, to attack Quebec, which they expect will soon be forced to surrender, though their forces consisted of about 2000 men, viz. from St. John's 150, col. M'Lean's irregulars 170, marines and seamen from several armed vessels 450, French and English inhabitants 130, ditto compelled to bear arms 700, neutrals in the town 400. Col. Arnold's tent an officer with a flag, but he was fired upon both times. He had good intelligence, that the inhabitants in general were averse to taking up arms against us, and were very short of provision. General Carleton got into Quebec, the 20th of November, on which there was great rejoicing by his party.

Extract of a letter from Philadelphia, dated the 19th instant.

The following is taken from a letter to a gentleman in this city, dated St. Fustatia, Dec. 1, 1775.

We have undoubted authority of the arrival of 2500 men at Martinico, 1800 at Guadalupe, being part of a reinforcement of 10000 men ordered out for their islands. There are 4000 ordered out for St. Domingo, some of whom are arrived.

Extract of a letter from a gentleman at New-Haven, to his friend in this City, dated Dec. 20.

I take this opportunity to inform you that one regiment of foot, and three troops of horse, are embarked at Bolton, and going somewhere; there is not the east doubt but they are destined for your place, pray be on your guard.

Accounts have been received, which are credited in the camp, of the arrival of a sloop, supposed to be the Macaroni, of Connecticut, and a French ship in company to the eastward of Cambridge, with powder; the former said to have 20 tons, and the latter 40 on board. A confirmation of which was impatiently expected when these advices came away.

His majesty's ships the Phoenix and the now lie in the east river; the latter opposite Murray's wharf; and the former near Burling's Slip.

Dec. 28. We are credibly informed, that the people of the Massachusetts-Bay have completed 13000 suits of soldiers cloaths, entirely of their own wool, flax and manufactory, since the battle of Lexington.

We are informed by a gentleman who left the camp at Cambridge on Tuesday week, that a party of the Continental army who had entrenched on Littlemore's Point, were observed by a frigate of 20 guns, that was lying within musket shot of them, who soon began a heavy cannonading on them, which our people immediately returned with interest, and fired three shot through her quarter, two into her stern, and damaged her rigging considerably, which occasioned her to move her station.

Extract of a letter from Cape Nichola Mole, dated November 13, 1775.

There is very great preparation making in this quarter to receive a number of French troops; lodgings are engaged for the officers, barracks building and refitting to receive the men at Cape Francois as well as here. I have it from the best authority here, who say it is kept a profound secret at home, but a severe blow is to be struck by them and the Spaniards, who are to act together.

By a vessel from the West-Indies, arrived at Providence, we learn, that a proclamation from St. James's was lately published at the island of Barbados, forbidding the inhabitants of that island holding any correspondence with the United Colonies on pain of being deemed rebels and traitors. Similar proclamations, it was expected, would be published in all the English West-India-Islands.

By capt. Lippitt arrived at Providence from the West-Indies, we are informed, that on the 17th of October, a violent gale of wind happened at St. Fustatia, in which 63 sail of vessels were obliged to put to sea, but they all had the good fortune to return in five days. At St. Kitts, 12 sail were lost not being able to put out. Capt. Lippitt was informed at St. Fustatia, that an English vessel, loading with salt, at Alertuda, had been seized by a Spanish armed vessel. He touched at Lurk's Island about the 10th of Nov. and was told by the governor of that island, that a ship of war from Jamaica, was daily expected there, to prevent vessels from the northern colonies taking in salt.

PHILADELPHIA, December 23.

Extract of a letter from a gentleman at Cambridge, to his friend at New-Haven, December 22.

Yesterday about 600 of the regulars on Funker's Hill, demolished their advanced works over on this side the causeway; various are the conjectures of this manoeuvre, some think they are about to abandon the hills, and take possession of Dorchester point, others think that as those advanced works were of little advantage to them in making a defence against an attack, they did not think them worth the trouble of guarding, others imagine they will all retire to Boston, and remain there during the winter and others, that they have done it to lull us into security, and intend to make an attack that way; my opinion is, that they have no great inclination to fighting at present, and will be content if they can defend themselves through the winter. I imagine some time this week we shall have some fighting, as Litchmore's point is to be fortified in a day or two. By accounts received from Boston last week, they are in great want of almost every thing.