

[XXXVth Year.] THE MARYLAND GAZETTE. [No. 1758.]

F R I D A Y, SEPTEMBER 22, 1780.

PHILADELPHIA, September 12. Extra of a letter from general Gates, to the president of congress, dated Hillsborough, August 20, 1780.

S I R, N the deepest distress and anxiety of mind, I am obliged to acquaint your excellency with the defeat of the troops under my command. I arrived with the Maryland line, the artillery, and the North-Carolina militia, on the 13th instant, at Rugely, 13 miles from Camden; took post there, and was the next day joined by general Stevens, with 700 militia from Virginia; colonel Sumpter, who was at the Waxaws with 400 South-Carolina militia, had, the Sunday before, killed and taken near 300 of the enemy, who were posted at the Hanging Rock. This, and other strokes upon the enemy's advanced posts, occasioned their calling in all their out posts to Camden. The 15th, at day light, I reinforced colonel Sumpter with 300 North-Carolina militia, 100 of the Maryland line, and two 3 pounders from the artillery, having previously ordered him down from the Waxaws, and directed, as soon as the reinforcements joined him, that he should proceed down the Wateree, opposite to Camden, intercept any stores coming to the enemy, and particularly the troops from Ninety-Six, who were likewise withdrawn from that post. This was well executed by colonel Sumpter, as his letter enclosed will shew.

Having communicated my plan to the general officers, in the afternoon of the 15th instant, it was resolved to march at 10 at night, to take post in a very advantageous situation, with a deep creek in front, seven miles from Camden; the heavy baggage, &c. being ordered to march immediately by the Waxaw road. At 10 the army began to march in the following order.—Colonel Armond's legion in front, supported on both flanks by colonel Porterfield's regiment, and the light infantry of the militia, the advanced guard of infantry, the Maryland line, with their artillery in front of the brigades, the North-Carolina militia, the Virginia militia, the artillery, &c. and the rear guard. Having marched about five miles, the legion was charged by the enemy's cavalry, and well supported on the flanks, as they were ordered, by colonel Porterfield, who beat back the enemy's horse, and was himself unfortunately wounded; but the enemy's infantry advancing with a heavy fire, the troops in front gave way to the first Maryland brigade, and a confusion ensued, which took some time to regulate. At length, the army was ranged in line of battle, in the following order: general Gil's brigade upon the right, with his right flank to a swamp, the North-Carolina militia in the center, and the Virginia militia, with the light infantry and Porterfield's corps, upon the left; the artillery divided to the brigades, and the first Maryland brigade as a corps de reserve, and to cover the cannon on the road, at a proper distance in the rear. Colonel Armond's corps were ordered to the left, to support the left flank and oppose the enemy's cavalry. At day light the enemy attacked and drove in our light party in front, when I ordered the left to advance and attack the enemy; but to my astonishment, the left wing and North-Carolina militia gave way. General Caswell and myself, assisted by a number of officers, did all in our power to rally the broken troops, but to no purpose; for the enemy coming round the left flank of the Maryland division, completed the route of the whole militia, who left the continentals to oppose the enemy's whole force. I endeavoured, with general Caswell, to rally the militia at some distance, on an advantageous piece of ground, but the enemy's cavalry continuing to harass their rear, they ran like a torrent, and bore all before them. Hoping yet, that a few miles in the rear, they might recover from their panic, and again be brought into order, I continued my endeavour, but this likewise proved in vain.

The militia having taken to the woods, in all directions, I concluded with general Caswell, to retire towards Charlotte. I got there late in the night, but reflecting that there was no prospect of collecting a force at that place, adequate to the defence of the country, I proceeded with all

possible dispatch hither, to endeavour to fall upon some plan of defence, in conjunction with the legislative body of the state. I shall immediately dispatch a flag to lord Cornwallis, to know the situation of our wounded, and the number and condition of the prisoners in his hands.

Copy of a letter from colonel Sumpter, to general Gates, dated Wateree ferry, August 15, 1780.

Dear General, I HAVE just time to inform you, that early this morning I took possession of all the pass ways over the Wateree river, from Elkisles ford to Mr. Whitears ferry, five miles below Camden. The enemy had guards at many different places upon the river, all of which was evacuated last night or this morning, and the guards ordered into Camden, except those at Wateree ferry, which was continued on both sides of the river, of which the guard upon the west side, was surprised by a party of my men, who killed seven, took about thirty prisoners, among which was colonel Cary their commander, together with thirty-eight waggons, loaded with corn, rum, &c. also a number of horses, the boats are all upon the opposite side of the river, the ground upon this side is very bad, the enemy keep up a constant fire, but I have received no damage yet, I intend to keep possession, if I can, until I am honoured with your excellency's further commands. I should not have been so precipitate in my movements, but fore-saw the excessive disadvantage that would result from their having the communication open, whereby they were constantly receiving both men and provisions.

The number of troops, regulars I mean, do not exceed 1200, and not as many as 1000 of the militia, who are generally sickly and much dispirited; there is a reinforcement said to be upon the road from town, will arrive in two days, the number about five hundred.

As soon as possible will give you a more particular account of what is passing.

I am dear general, with the greatest respect, Your excellency's most obedient humble servant, THOMAS SUMPTER.

His excellency general Gates. P. S. I have the pleasure to inform your excellency, that I have this instant made out seventy prisoners, all British, six waggons, baggage, &c. just from Ninety-six, many of the prisoners are sick.

Extra of a letter from governor Nash to the delegates of North-Carolina, dated Hillsborough, Aug. 23, 1780.

SINCE our late defeat near Camden, I delayed writing till I could give you some account of that unhappy affair. The militia, except one North-Carolina regiment, commanded on the occasion by colonel Dixon, of the regulars, gave way on the first fire, and fled with the utmost precipitation. The regulars and the regiment just mentioned, bravely stood and pushed bayonets to the last. By the desertion of the militia, the enemy were able to turn the left of the standing troops, and to bend their whole force against them. The conflict was obstinate and bloody, and lasted for fifteen minutes. After our brave troops had retreated from the ground, they were fiercely charged by a party of British horse, whom they repulsed, and to their immortal honour, made good their retreat. General Caswell has sent in a flag, and a surgeon to attend the wounded. As yet we have no particular account of the fate of the missing, except of a few principal officers, among these is the Baron de Kalb, said to be mortally wounded. Generals Gill, Smallwood, Stephens, Rutherford, Butler and Gregory are dead, so is colonel Gunby, who was said to be killed. To add to our misfortunes, colonel Sumpter, who the day before the action had captured a party of the British, with forty waggons, was the day after the action overtaken and surprised near the Hanging Rock, by a party of the British horse. They came on him so unprepared, as to oblige him and his men to fly to the wood, leaving their prisoners, waggons, and even their arms behind them. General Stephens writes to general Gates, that he has collected between 7 and 800 of the Virginia militia and state troops. General Caswell made a stand at Charlotte, near

the boundary line, and called in upwards of 1000 fresh men. These he added to colonel Sumpter's party of about 700, and gave him the command of the whole, whilst he came here. I have ordered out three regiments from this district, and mean to put them under the command of general Sumner, and the officers of three regular regiments of this state; so that I hope in a few days we shall be able to assume a tolerable good countenance.

Extra of a letter from general Gates to the president of congress, dated Hillsborough, Aug. 30, 1780.

S I R, I have the honour to enclose to your excellency, for the perusal of congress, my letter of this date to general Washington.

Extra of a letter from the enclosed letter to general Washington, dated Hillsborough, Aug. 30, 1780.

SINCE my public letter to congress I have been able to collect authentic returns of the killed, wounded and missing of the officers of the Maryland line, Delaware regiment, artillery, and those of the legion under colonel Armond. They are enclosed.

The militia broke so early in the day, and scattered in so many directions upon their retreat, that very few have fallen into the hands of the enemy. By the firmness and bravery of the continental troops, the victory is far from bloodless on the part of the foe, they having upwards of 500 men, with officers in proportion, killed and wounded. Lord Cornwallis, remained with his army at Camden when I received the last accounts from hence. Two days after the action of the 16th, fortune seemed determined to continue to distress us; colonel Sumpter, having marched near 40 miles up the river Wateree, halted with the waggons and prisoners he had taken on the sixteenth. By some indiscretion, the men were surprised, cut off from their arms, the whole routes and the waggons and prisoners retaken. Colonel Sumpter, since his surprise and defeat up the west side of the Wateree, has reinstated and increased his corps to upwards of 1000 men. I have directed him to continue to harass the enemy upon that side; lord Cornwallis will therefore be cautious how he makes any considerable movement to the eastward, while this corps remains in force upon his left flank, and the main army is in a manner cantoned in his front. Anxious for the public good, I shall continue my unwearied endeavours to stop the progress of the enemy, to reinstate our affairs, to re-commence an offensive war, and recover our losses in these southern states.

Published by order of congress, CHARLES THOMSON, secr.

A N N A P O L I S, Sept. 22. Seven hundred non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the Maryland division have rejoined the army.

The following are true copies from two original letters found in a major Rugely's house, thirteen miles from Camden, South-Carolina, the major having departed, on the approach of our troops, in such haste, as not to have time to secure his papers; the originals have been compared with several letters from lord Rawdon to the Baron de Kalb and general Gates, and are exactly and clearly the same hand writing.

Head-Quarters, Camden, July 1, 1780.

S I R, SO many deserters from the army have passed with impunity through the districts which are under your direction, that I must necessarily suspect the inhabitants to have connived at, if not facilitated, their escape. If attachment to their sovereign, will not move the country people to check a crime so detrimental to his service, it must be my care to urge them to their duty as good subjects, by using invariable severity towards every one who shall shew to criminal a neglect of the public interest. I am therefore, Sir, to request of you, that you will signify to all within the limits of your command, my firm determination in this case. If any person shall meet a soldier, straggling without a written pass, beyond the picquets; and shall not do his utmost to secure him, or shall not spread an alarm for