

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

F R I D A Y, O C T O B E R 27, 1780.

Following letter from a gentleman at camp, to a friend in Philadelphia, giving a particular and satisfactory account of a late important transaction, we doubt not will be acceptable to our readers.

SINCE my return from Hartford, my dear friend, my mind has been too little at ease to permit me to write to you sooner. It has been wholly occupied by the incidents, and by the tragic consequences, of Arnold's treason. My feelings were never put to so severe a trial. You will have heard the principal part of this reaches you; but there are particulars, to which my situation gave me access, that cannot have come to your knowledge from any report, which I am persuaded you will find interesting.

From several circumstances, the project seems to have originated with Arnold himself, and to have been long premeditated. The first overture was traced back to some time in June last. It was conveyed in a letter to Colonel Robinson, the substance of which was, that the ingratitude he had experienced from his country, concurring with other causes, had entirely changed his principles; that he now only sought to restore himself to the favour of his prince by some signal proof of his repentance: and that he wished to enter a correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton for this purpose. About that period he made a journey to Connecticut, on his return from which Philadelphia he solicited the command of a post; alleging that the effects of his wound qualified him for the active duties of the post. The sacrifice of this important post was a treason he intended to make. General Washington hesitated the less to gratify an officer who had frequently rendered eminent services, as he was convinced the post might be entrusted to one, who had given to many distinguished specimens of his bravery. The beginning of August he joined the army and received his application. The enemy, at this time, had embarked the greatest part of their force on an expedition to Rhode-Island, and our army was in motion, to compel them to relinquish the enterprise, or to attack New-York in a weakened state. The general offered Arnold a post, on the left wing of the army, which he declined, on a pretext already mentioned; but not without the embarrassment. He certainly might have executed the duties of such a temporary command, and it was expected from his enterprising spirit that he would gladly have embraced so readily inviting an opportunity; but he did choose to be diverted a moment from his favorite object, probably from an apprehension that some different disposition might take place, which would exclude him. The extreme solicitude he discovered to get possession of the post had led to a suspicion of treachery, had been possible from his past conduct to have suspected him capable of it.

The correspondence, thus begun, was carried between Arnold and Major Andrie, adjutant general to the British army, in behalf of Sir Henry Clinton, under feigned signatures and a counterfeit disguise. In an intercepted letter of Arnold's, which lately fell into our hands, he speaks an interview "to settle the risks and terms of the copartnership;" and in the same letter, intimates an expected augmentation of the garrison, and speaks of it as the means of extending their traffic. It appears by another letter, that Andrie was to have met him (the lines, under the sanction of a flag, in character of Mr. John Anderson. But some cause, not known, prevented this interview. The 20th of last month, Robinson and Andrie set up the river in the Vulture sloop of war. Robinson sent a flag to Arnold with two letters, one to general Putnam, enclosed in another to him, proposing an interview with Putnam, or in absence with Arnold, to adjust some private concerns. The one was evidently meant as a bait to the other, in case by accident the letters should have fallen under the inspection of a third person.

General Washington crossed the river in his boat to Hartford the day these dispatches arrived. Arnold, conceiving he must have heard of the transaction, thought it necessary, for the sake of appearances, to submit the letters to him, and ask his opinion of the propriety of complying with the request. The general, with his usual caution, though without the least surmise of the design, dissuaded him from it, and advised him to reply to Robinson, that whatever related to his private affairs must be of a civil nature, and could only properly be addressed to the civil authority.

This reference fortunately deranged the whole plan, and was the first link in the chain of events that led to the detection. The interview could no longer take place in the form of a flag, but was obliged to be managed in a secret manner. Arnold employed one Smith to go on board the Vulture and bring Andrie ashore, with a pass for Mr. John Anderson: Andrie came ashore accordingly, and was conducted within a picket of ours, to the house of Mr. Smith, where Arnold and he remained together in close conference all that night and the day following. At daylight in the morning, the commanding officer at King's ferry, without the privity of Arnold, moved a couple pieces of cannon to a point opposite where the Vulture lay, and obliged her to take a more remote station. This event, or some lurking distrust, made the boatmen refuse to convey the two passengers back, and disconcerted Arnold so much, that by one of those strokes of insatiation, which often confound the schemes of men conscious of guilt, he insisted on Andrie's changing his uniform for a disguise, and returning in a mode different from that in which he came. Andrie, who had been, undesignedly, brought within our posts in the first instance, remonstrated warmly against this new and dangerous expedient. But Arnold persisting in declaring it impossible for him to return as he came, he at length reluctantly yielded to his persuasion, and consented to change his dress and take the route he recommended. Smith furnished the disguise, and in the evening, passing King's ferry together, they proceeded to Crompond, where they stopped the remainder of the night, at the instance of a militia officer, to avoid being suspected by him. The next morning they resumed their journey, Smith accompanying Andrie a little beyond Pines-bridge, where he left him. He had reached Tarry-town, when he was taken by three militia men, who rushed out of the woods and surrounded him.

At this critical period, his presence of mind forsook him—instead of producing his pass, which would have extricated him from our parties, and could have done him no harm with his own, he asked the militia men if they were of the upper or lower party—distinctive appellations known among the enemy's refugee corps. The militia replied, they were of the lower party; upon which he assured them he was a British officer, and pressed them not to detain him, as he was upon urgent business. This contention removed all doubt, and it was in vain he afterwards produced his pass. He was instantly forced off to a place of greater security, where he was carefully searched, and in his stocking feet were found several papers of importance delivered to him by Arnold. Among these were a plan of the fortifications of West-point, a memorial from the engineer on the attack and defence of the place, returns of the garrison, cannon and stores, copy of the minutes of a council of war, held by general Washington a few weeks before. The prisoner at first was inadvertently ordered to Arnold, but upon recollection, while still on the way, he was countermanded and sent to Old Salem. The papers were enclosed in a letter to general Washington, which having taken a route different from that by which he returned, made a circuit, that afforded leisure for another letter, through an ill judged delicacy written to Arnold, with an information of Anderson's capture, to get to him an hour before general Washington arrived at his quarters; time enough to elude the fate that awaited him. He went down the river in his barge to the Vulture, with such precipitate confusion, that he did not take with him a single paper useful to the enemy. On the first notice of the affair, he was pursued, but much too late to overtake him.

A moment before his setting out he went into Mrs. Arnold's apartment, and informed her, that certain transactions had just come to light, which must for ever banish him from his country. She fell into a swoon at this declaration, and he left her to consult his own safety, till the servants, alarmed by her cries, came to her relief. She remained frantic all day, accusing every one who approached her, with an intention of murdering her child (an infant in her arms) and exhibiting every other mark of the most genuine and agonising affliction. Exhausted by the fatigue and tumult of her spirits, her frenzy subsided towards evening, and she sunk into all the sadness of distress. It was impossible not to have been touched with her situation; every thing affecting in female tears, or in the misfortunes of beauty, every thing pathetic in the wounded tenderness of a wife, or in the apprehensive fondness of a mother; and every appearance of suffering innocence, conspired to make her an object of sympathy to all who were present. She experienced the most delicate attentions, and every friendly office, till her departure for Philadelphia.

Andrie, without loss of time, was conducted to the head quarters of the army, where he was immediately brought before a board of general officers, to prevent all possibility of misrepresentation or cavil on the part of the enemy. The board reported, that he ought to be considered as a spy, and, according to the laws and usages of nations, to suffer death; which was executed two days after.

Never, perhaps, did a man suffer death with more justice, or deserve it less. The first step he took after his capture was to write a letter to general Washington, conceived in terms of dignity without insolence, and apology without meanness. The scope of it was to vindicate himself from the imputation of having assumed a mean character for treacherous or interested purposes; asserting that he had been involuntarily an impostor: that, contrary to his intention, which was to meet a person, for intelligence, on neutral ground, he had been betrayed within our posts, and forced into the vile condition of an enemy in disguise; soliciting only, that to whatever rigour policy might devote him, a decency of treatment might be observed, due to a person, who, though unfortunate, had been guilty of nothing dishonourable. His request was granted in its full extent; for, in the whole progress of the affair, he was treated with the most scrupulous delicacy. When brought before the board of officers, he met with every mark of indulgence, and was required to answer no interrogatory which could even embarrass his feelings. On his part, while he carefully concealed every thing that might involve others, he frankly confessed all the facts relating to himself; and upon his confession, without the trouble of examining a witness, the board made their report. The members of it were not more impressed with the candour and modest firmness, mixed with a becoming sensibility which he displayed, than he was penetrated with their liberality and politeness. He acknowledged the generosity of the behaviour towards him in every respect, but particularly in this, in the strongest terms of manly gratitude. In a conversation with a gentleman, who visited him after his trial, he said—he flattered himself he had never been illiberal, but if there were any remains of prejudice in his mind, his present experience must obliterate them.

In one of the visits I made to him, (and I saw him several times during his confinement) he begged me to be the bearer of a request to the general, for permission to send an open letter to Sir Henry Clinton. "I foresee my fate (said he) and though I pretend not to play the hero, or to be indifferent about life; yet I am reconciled to whatever may happen, conscious that misfortune, not guilt, will have brought it upon me. There is only one thing that disturbs my tranquillity. Sir Henry Clinton has been too good to me; he has been lavish of his kindness. I am bound to him by too many obligations, and love him too well, to bear the thought that he should reproach himself, or that others should reproach him, on a supposition that I had conceived myself obliged by his instructions to run the risk I

* A band of marauders, who receive no pay, but subsist by plunder.