

M A R Y L A N D G A Z E T T E.

T H U R S D A Y, N O V E M B E R 1, 1781.

To EARL CORNWALLIS, lieutenant-general, &c. &c.

MY LORD, GENERAL, who possesses that dignity of soul, which exalts the conqueror above the insolence of a triumph, and elevates the vanquished above man's enmity and dependence, will ever find the generous among his enemies, ready to applaud his merit and to drop a tear to his misfortunes, whilst the officer, who wages a savage warfare, and sells his victories by insult and inhumanity, will not have a friend among the virtuous, even in the zenith of his success, nor one, of all mankind, to sympathize with him on a reverse of fortune. The philanthropy of America would be highly gratified in paying your lordship the tribute due an enlightened and humane soldier, did your conduct entitle you to such treatment; but as her justice obliges her to view you in the odious light of a cruel leader and an unprincipled plunderer, it would be impious in her to treat you with generosity or delicacy. As an American soldier, I consider it a virtue to embitter your captivity, by recalling to your remembrance the follies which have led to your present catastrophe and to hold you up as an object of universal detestation, by surrounding you with an assemblage of your crimes; but the implacable resentment I feel, when I reflect on your lordship's cruelties, shall not hurry me beyond the bounds of candour and truth, or bribe me to cloud your reputation with one undeserved shade.

Considering your lordship as one of the principal actors in the military drama, I have taken some pains to acquire a knowledge of your principles and abilities, and I sincerely wish the result of my enquiries was less degrading to human nature. As a politician, I have found you devoid of stability and integrity; as a soldier, deficient in every amiable and leading characteristic of your profession.

When the present contest was merely a political question, we observe your lordship engaged in a warm opposition to the ministry, and, if parliamentary records may be relied on, not hesitating to declare, that should an armed force be called in to the aid of their unconstitutional laws, resistance on the part of America would become a duty they owed to themselves and their posterity. These sentiments, my lord, were truly dignified, and had you made them the unerring rule of your conduct, must have ensured you the gratitude of America, and the esteem of the virtuous of every nation; but how opposite were your professions and principles! In a few months, regardless of your solemn declarations, you prepare to embark for America, and to enforce, in a military character, the very measures, which as a senator, you had reprobated, as unjust and oppressive. This is a fact, my lord, which your warmest partisans have not the effrontery to deny, and which no art or eloquence can palliate! Had you displayed in your operations the facility of military talents, and been crowned with every trophy ambition sighs for, this one act would damn you to eternal infamy!

From the moment you consented to draw your sword against her liberties, America ought to have viewed you as a monster; yet she formed a favourable idea of your character, and gave you credit for virtues you never possessed even in contemplation. This erroneous opinion with respect to your lordship must have flowed from your situation, which prevented both your head and heart from having a fair trial. Sir William Howe, whilst you acted under his immediate command, put you almost above the reach of fortune. At the head of the British grenadiers and light infantry, opposed to raw and undisciplined troops, and of far inferior numbers, an officer of the lowest rate abilities could not fail of acquiring credit, and it is very uncommon for crimes to be imputed to the hero of a triumph. The smiles of prosperity cover a multitude of sins in private life, but a fortunate general is immaculate in the eyes of a misjudging world.

An unbounded ambition is the source of all your lordship's misfortunes. Flattered with the fond idea of outstripping your good friend Sir Henry Clinton in military fame, and becoming commander in chief, you used all your influence to obtain a separate command, and the southern states were fixed on as the theatre of your achievements. Like Phaeton, you imprudently engaged in an undertaking beyond your abilities, gave the rein to your enterprise, and left reason and humanity behind to lament your follies and cruelties, and like that rash adventurer, you have not only wrought your own

ruin, but have involved thousands in unmerited calamity.

The battle of Camden was the first memorable event that marked your lordship's operations, which though it afforded you the momentary exultations of a dear-bought victory, and gave you an opportunity of figuring in the gazettes at the expense of candour, proved disgraceful to you in its consequences. Instead of improving the advantages of this success, you suffered your army to relax their discipline in a state of inactivity whilst your enemy was recovering from the shock of the defeat. After dreaming away some months, you marched into North Carolina, and took possession of Charlotte; but finding the rude whigs of Mecklenburg very troublesome, and hearing a small body of continentals and militia were moving towards you, your lordship made a precipitate retreat to the strong holds of Winnsborough, and suffered a part of your baggage to fall into our hands, within sight of your army. In the mean time Colonel Ferguson being unsupported by your lordship, fell a sacrifice to his partisan spirit, and several of your other detachments were defeated by the militia. The Tories, who, encouraged by your superior force and fortune, were arming in your cause gave over the design, and lay still at home. All these events flowed from your lordship's amazing inactivity. Although the American forces did not amount to half the number you could have brought into the field, I verily believe your lordship would have slept away the winter, in a southern climate, the season for active operations, had not general Morgan's detachment aroused you from your lethargy, and alarmed you for your out-posts; but even then, you acted like a man stupified with opiates. When you might have subjected Morgan to the operations of your whole force, you opposed to him a detachment, not much superior in number to his command, and, contrary to the established maxims of good policy, left that doubtful which you might have made certain. Was it just to judge from events, the folly of this measure would receive additional proof from its unfortunate issue. Your darling Tarleton met with a complete defeat, and in return for your lordship's unwarranted partiality in his favour, threw you into a delirium by the tale of his misfortunes. In a paroxysm of grief and rage, you made a burnt offering of your baggage, and became rash, bold, and enterprising. You conceived the daring idea of recovering your captivated troops, and of tearing the laurel wreath from the brow of the illustrious Morgan; and had this triumph affected him as the success at Camden did your lordship, you would have most certainly effected it; but he was too great an officer to consider himself victorious, until he had secured the fruits of his victory. The historian, who delineates the character of the hero of the Cowpens, will be at a loss to determine, whether he deserves greater applause for his gallantry and address in obtaining the victory, or for his great exertion of abilities in securing and improving the advantages resulting from it.

Disappointed in this attempt, and general Greene's army and Morgan's detachment having formed a junction, a new object attracted your lordship's attention, and a new field was opened for the display of great talents. Every advantage an officer could wish, who sighed for a brilliant name, was on your lordship's side. Your army was greatly superior both in numbers and discipline to that of your enemy, and you was in the midst of your friends. It was your interest to bring on an immediate and decisive action, and consequently general Greene's to avoid it. Here then was a trial of skill; Greene's address prevailed, and gave him the palm; he retired over the Dan and Stanton rivers, in the face of your lordship's army, in good order and without loss, and by amazing exertions gained such an accession of force, as rendered it prudent and advisable for him to meet your lordship in the field. He knew, that a defeat would be certain ruin to you, and could only be a partial evil to him. Guildford was the scene of action; the contest was obstinate and bloody; and although fortune gave your lordship the field, it terminated honourably for the American arms, and was attended with most of the good consequences of a victory. This is not the suggestion of fancy or prejudice; it is an assertion established by the most undeniable facts. A few days after your boasted success, we find your lordship making a precipitate retreat, leaving your wounded to our mercy, and your Tory friends to the justice of their country. Previous to your re-

treat, you issued a pompous proclamation, embazoning your success, and inviting these insatiable men to fly to the royal standard for protection for their property and persons, and then basely deserted them. I defy your lordship to defend this conduct, either upon the principles of policy, justice, or humanity. To destroy the confidence the Tories had placed in the promises of government and her officers, was surely impolitic; to deny them that protection you promised them, unjust; and to debase them into a conduct which must subject them to punishment, the extreme of cruelty.

With a victorious army you retired to Wilmington, and took shelter under the guns of your shipping, leaving your posts in South Carolina and Georgia, which you had waited much time and spilt much blood in establishing open to the vigilance of general Greene, who instantly took advantage of your lordship's error, made a rapid march into these states, and in a few months, by the most consummate address and unwearied perseverance, reduced all your posts, except Charleston, Savannah, and Ninety-six, and made their garrisons prisoners of war. Ninety-six was on the point of surrendering, and although relieved by the unexpected arrival of troops from Europe, was soon after abandoned. I ask your lordship, what advantages you promised yourself, equal to such certain and important losses? Surely you were not so ignorant, as to suppose that your marching thro' Virginia, would compensate for your posts and garrisons sacrificed in Carolina and Georgia. Deceived by the splendour of the enterprise, you lost sight of every other consideration, and relied your justification on the event, which had it been as brilliant, as it is unfortunate, such is the disposition of your countrymen, that they would not only have acquitted you of rashness and folly, but have decreed you a triumph! You have put all your trust in fortune, and she has jilted you in the moment you most needed her favours. Despairing of nothing yourself, you have taught your royal master and his ministry to hope for every thing. Whilst warned with the prospect of the pestilence of the southern states, and cherishing the fond hope of an entire subjection of America they will receive the sad recital of your misfortunes, and your lordship will be sacrificed to their disappointed ambition, and to appease the clamours of the people. How truly pitiable your lordship's situation! Deserted and abandoned by your own countrymen, for your want of success and military talents; despised and execrated by America, for your want of humanity, you must bid an eternal adieu to temporal felicity; the suffrages of the world will deny you a good name, and a guilty conscience join you of inward peace and domestic tranquillity! Your lot, my lord, is really severe, but it is what you have richly merited! Your inhuman treatment to the wretched slaves who fled to you for freedom and protection, is more than sufficient to entitle you to the heaviest calamity. Callous to the tender emotions of compassion, and steeled against the miseries of your fellow-creatures, your

*It must inspire every feeling bosom with horror and resentment, when they are told, that out of upwards of 2000 slaves, who joined Lord Cornwallis's army, upwards of 1500 have perished from disease and famine. It is a fact, which can be proved by innumerable evidences, that provisions were only given to those men who were able to work, whilst the women, children, and men debilitated by sickness, were left to linger out a miserable existence, embittered by the rage of hunger. Many were turned out in such a situation, that they expired before they could reach our army. Lord Cornwallis's attempt to spread the small-pox among the inhabitants in the vicinity of York, has been reduced to a certainty, and must render him contemptible in the eyes of every civilized nation, it being a practice as inconsistent with the law of nations and war, as repugnant to humanity. The fate of the brave and worthy Colonel Scammell is mediately imputable to Lord Cornwallis; this unfortunate officer was taken prisoner, whilst fixing the first pickets of the allied army. He surrendered to two British officers, and whilst he was under their protection, many minutes after his surrender, a dragoon rode up to him, put the muzzle of his pistol to his back, and gave him a wound of which he died; nor was this all their inhumanity towards him; having robbed him of his horse they obliged him to run near half a mile, exhausted with the loss of blood, and ready to faint under the anguish of his wound. The public may rely on this as a fact; the circumstances are precisely as related by the colonel himself. It needs no comment.*