NUMB. XXIII.]

THE PITTSBURGH GAZETTE

[DECEMBER 30, 1786

Price SIX-PENCE.] SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1786. [VOL. I.

From the COLUMBIAN MAGAZINE, for September, 1786.

SKETCH of the LIFE of the Late NATHANIEL GREENE, Major General of the Forces of the United States of America.

THIS gallant officer, whose death is so generally and so justly regretted, was born in the town of Warwick, Kent county, Rhode-Island, in or about the year 1741, and was the second son of a respectable citizen of the same name, (descended from some of the first settlers in the colony) who was extensively concerned in lucrative iron works, the property of which, at his death, (prior to the war) he left to his children.

The subject of this sketch was endowed with an uncommon degree of judgment and penetration, which, with a benevolent manner and affable behavior, acquired him a number of valuable friends, by whose interest and influence, he was, at an early period of life, chosen a member of the assembly of the then colony of Rhode-Island. This trust, in which he gave the highest satisfaction to his constituents, he continued to possess until, and at the period, when the folly and madness of England severed a world from her empire.

After the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord, when a spirit of resistance spread like wild-fire, over the continent, Rhode-Island was not deficient in her contributions for the general defence. She raised three regiments of militia, the command whereof was given to Mr. Greene, who was nominated brigadier general. The liberty, safety and prosperity of his country being exposed to imminent danger, the pacific principles of quakerism, in which he had been educated, proved insufficient to combat the ardent spirit of liberty with which his bosom glowed.

He led the troops under his command to Cambridge, and was present at the evacuation of Boston, by a force which had in England been wantonly stated treble the number that would be requisite to dragoon America into unconditional submission.

General Greene's merit and abilities, as well in the council as in the field, were not long unnoticed by general Washington, who reposed in him the utmost confidence, and paid a particular deference to his advice and opinion, on all occasions of doubt and difficulty. This excited the jealousy of several officers, of older date and higher rank, who were not wanting in endeavours to supplant him; but in vain---the commander in chief knew and prized his worth as it deserved.

He was appointed major general by Congress, the 26th of August, 1776. Towards the close of that year, he was at the Trenton surprise; and, at the beginning of the next, was at the battle of Princeton, two enterprises not more happily planned than judiciously and bravely executed, in both of which he highly distinguished himself, serving his noviciate under the American Fabius.

At the battle of Germantown, he commanded the left wing of the American army, and his utmost endeavours were exerted to retrieve the fortune of that day, in which he second met with the approbation of the commander in chief.

In March, 1778, he was appointed quarter-master general, which office he accepted under a stipulation that his rank in the army should not be affected by it, and that he should retain his right to command in time of action, according to his rank and seniority. This he exercised at the battle of Monmouth, where he commanded the right wing of the army.

At the battle of Brandywine, general Greene distinguished himself by supporting the right wing of the American army, when it gave way, and judiciously covering the whole, when routed and retreating in confusion; and their safety from utter ruin was generally ascribed to his skill and exertions, which were well seconded by the troops under his command.

In the capacity of quarter-master general, he fully answered the expectations formed of his abilities, and enabled the American army to move with additional celerity and vigour.

At the battle of Monmouth, the commander in chief, disgusted with the behavior of general Lee, deposed him in the field of battle, and appointed general Greene to command the right wing, where he greatly contributed to retrieve the errors of his predecessor, and to the subsequent event of the day.

About the middle of the same year, an attack, in conjunction with the French fleet, on the British garrison at Newport, Rhode-Island, being planned, general Sullivan was appointed to the command, under whom general Greene served. This attempt was unsuccessful------the French fleet having sailed out of harbour, to engage lord Howe's fleet, they were dispersed by a storm, and the Americans were obliged to raise the siege of Newport, in doing which general Greene displayed a great degree of skill in drawing off the army in safety.

After the hopes of the British generals, to execute some decisive stroke to the northward, were frustrated, they turned their attention to the southern states, as less capable of defence, and more likely to reward the invaders with ample plunder. A grand expedition was, in consequence, planned at New-York, where the army embarked on the 26th of December, 1779, and landed on the 11th of February, 1780, within about thirty miles of Charleston, which, after a brave defence, was surrendered to sir H. Clinton, on the 12th of May.

A series of ill success followed this unfortunate event. The American arms in South-Carolina were in general unsuccessful, and the inhabitants were obliged to submit to the invaders, whose impolitic severity was extremely ill calculated to answer any of the objects for which the war had been commenced.

Affairs were thus circumstanced, when general Washington appointed general Greene to the command of the American forces in the southern district. He arrived at Charlotte, on the 2d day of December, 1780, accompanied by general Morgan, a brave officer, who had distinguished himself to the northward, in the expedition against Burgoyne. He found the forces he was to command, reduced to a very small number by defeat and by desertion. The returns were nine hundred and seventy continentals, and one thousand and thirteen militia. Military stores, provisions, forage, and all things necessary, were, if possible, in a more reduced state than his army. His men were without pay, and almost without clothing, and supplies of the latter were not to be had but from a distance of two hundred miles. In this perilous and embarrassed situation, he had to oppose a respectable and victorious army. Fortunately for him, the conduct of some of the friends of royalty obliged numbers, otherwise disposed to remain neuter, to take up arms in their own defence. This, and the prudent measures the general took for removing the innumerable difficulties and disadvantages he was surrounded with, and for conciliating the affections of the inhabitants, soon brought together a considerable force, far inferior, however, to that of the British, who esteemed the country perfectly subjugated.

After he had recruited his forces with all the friends to the revolution that he could assemble, he sent a considerable detachment, under general Morgan, to the western extremities of the state, to protect the well-disposed inhabitants from the ravages of the tories. This force, which was the first that had for a considerable time appeared there, on the side of the Americans, inspired the friends of liberty with new courage, so that numbers of them crowded to the standard of general Morgan, who at length became so formidable, that lord Cornwallis thought proper to send colonel Tarleton to dislodge him from the station he had taken. This officer was at the head of a thousand regular troops, and had two field pieces. He came up on the 17th of January, 1781, at a place called the Cowpens, with general Morgan, whose force was much inferior, and was composed of two-thirds militia, and one third continentals. An engagement was the immediate consequence.

The brevity of this sketch will not permit us to go into a detail of the dispositions made on either side.---Let it suffice to say, that the brave Morgan gained a complete victory over an officer, the rapidity and success of whose attacks, until that time, might have entitled him to make use of the declaration of Cæsar, "veni, vidi, vici." Upwards of five hundred of the British laid down their arms and were made prisoners; a very considerable number was killed. Eight hundred stand of arms, two field pieces and thirty-five baggage waggons fell to the victors, who had only twelve killed, and fifty wounded.

This brilliant success quite disconcerted the plan of operations formed by lord Cornwallis. Having entertained no idea of an enemy to oppose in South-Carolina, the conquest of which he deemed complete, he had made every preparation for carrying his arms to the northward, to gather the laurels, which he imagined awaited him. He now found himself obliged to postpone this design. He marched with rapidity after general Morgan, in hopes not only to recover the prisoners, but to revenge Tarleton's losses. The Americans, by a rapidity of movements, and the interference of Providence,§ eluded his efforts, and general Greene effected a junction of the two divisions of his little army, on the 7th of February. Still was he so inferior to lord Cornwallis, that he was obliged to retreat northward, and notwithstanding the vigilance and activity of his enemy, he brought his men in safety into Virginia.

In this state he received some reinforcements, and had the promise of more---on which he returned again into North-Carolina, where, on their arrival, he hoped to be able to act on the offensive. He encamped in the vicinity of lord Cornwallis's army. By a variety of the best concerted manœuvre, he so judiciously supported the arrangement of his troops, by the secrecy and promptitude of his motions, that during three weeks while the enemy remained near him, he prevented them from taking any advantage of their superiority, and even cut off all opportunity of their receiving succours from the royalists.

(To be concluded in our next.)

§ The British urged the pursuit with so much rapidity, that they came to the ford of Catawba on the evening of the same day on which the Americans had crossed it. Before the next day a heavy fall of rain rendered it impassible. Had it risen a few hours earlier, the Americans would have had no chance of escape, and their prisoners would have been retaken by the enemy. Some time after, the same providential interference took place in passing the Yadkin. A sudden and rapid rise, after the Americans had crossed, prevented lord Cornwallis from getting over.

Foreign Intelligence.

LONDON, August 20.

The following order sent to us by our Berlin correspondent, as delivered to the troops assembled on the parade in that capital, breathes so much of the true spirit of a noble hearted soldier, as to do the highest credit to general Mollendorf, who is the author of it, and ought to be held out as a memento to those officers who, more proud than gallant, dare look on privates as hardly worth their notice. We hope it will fall into the hands of some of our overbearing bobadils, and teach them their duty as men and officers. This piece of soldiery eloquence is to the following purport:

"For these two years that I am honored with the command of this residence, I have ever endeavoured to do away amongst the officers that spirit of contempt which they seem to entertain against the private soldiers, and to my great comfort I perceive that the care I have taken has been productive of the best consequences in the regiments that compose this garrison, one only excepted, which I shall not here mention, but whose officers persisting in old prejudices, continue to humble their soldiers by inhuman treatments, outrageous upbraidings, and tyrannical punishments. I would advise, however, the commanding officers, who are the authors of such excesses to put as speedy an end to them as possible, and to endeavour in future to maintain good order and subordination, not by tyranny, but by exciting an ambitious emulation, such is his majesty's intention. The king does not admit in his army pitiful rascals, knaves or rogues, but a set of brave soldiers as ourselves, though a lucky change hath raised us to higher posts which many privates might fill up as well. Each officer ought to deem it a glory to have the command over men of honor, and remember that he disgraces himself by humbling those who serve under him."

We had occasion to mention that by order of the emperor of Germany, afflictive pains have been substituted for that of death in certain crimes. This mitigation is only so in appearance, but in fact worse than the loss of life. For instance, three or four malefactors are fastened together with the same chain, each bears an iron collar, and those three or four iron collars are joined by an iron bar. Thus equipped, those wretches are employed, instead of the usual cattle, in hauling the boats and barges. Those bars are so tight and strong that the sharpest file alone cannot divide them; if one of the four dies in the course of the