

THE STAR,

And North-Carolina State Gazette.

[No. 49.]

RALEIGH, (N. C.) FRIDAY, MAY 10, 1816.

Vol. VIII.]

PUBLISHED WEEKLY,

BY THOMAS HENDERSON, JUN.

Subscription, three dollars per annum—but no paper will be sent without at least half a year is paid in advance, and no paper discontinued but at the option of the Editor, unless all arrearages are paid.
Advertisements, not exceeding 14 lines, inserted three times for 50, and 25 cents for each continuance.

BIOGRAPHY.

From the American Magazine.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF THE LATE
BARON STEUBEN.

I am not certain in what part of Germany, though I think it was in Suabia, that this respectable man was born. He was not a Prussian, for had I, said he, speaking of the strong passions of Frederick the Second, had I been born his subject, I should have been sent to Spandau, for daring to demand a dismissal from his service.

The Baron had been for some time in the family and friendship of Prince Henry, the king's brother, of whom he never spoke but with the greatest tenderness and affection. In an unfortunate campaign of the seven years' war, the prince incurred the displeasure of his harsh brother; who directed him to retire from the army, and ordered his aids-de-camp to their different corps, or put them upon such unpleasant duty as might make them feel the misfortune of belonging to a man who had dared to displease, perhaps to disobey him.

Steuben was sent into Silesia to recruit, equip, and discipline, within a certain period, a corps broken down by long and hard service. The pecuniary allowance for this object, was entirely inadequate; but who, in the Prussian service, dared to murmur or remonstrate! By the assistance of friends, funds were found, and the regiment complete, was marched to head quarters within the time. Pleased with the prompt performance of a duty, of the arduousness of which the king was well apprized, the Baron received his compliments, and in a little time after, the appointment of aid-de-camp to the monarch, with the department of the quarter master. It was undoubtedly, an excellent part of the Prussian system—the different departments, each having a particular person near the commander in chief, to whom every officer of the corps could, on all occasions, address himself; and on whom at every moment, and for every kind of information relative to the branch of service with which the aid-de-camp was connected, the king could call. In this proud station he remained four years; why it was abandoned I never knew. I never asked; for though some anecdotes of the king's conduct, to his officers, which were heard with silent wonder, were from time to time told, there was a delicacy observed in speaking of that man's faults, which marked the feelings of profound respect, with which he was remembered. When the death of his old master was announced, I saw a tear steal down the Baron's cheek. Strong ties are broken when stern soldiers weep! An American, who had been prisoner on Long Island, had said, a German officer had informed him that it was understood the king was jealous of the Baron's military reputation—it was mentioned; jealous of me! said the Baron, the fellow was a fool, a sot! There can however, be no doubt, of the consideration in which the military knowledge of the Baron was held. When General Lincoln, then secretary for the department of war, was directed by Congress, to apply to the different powers of Europe for a transcript of their military codes, Monsr. de Hertsburgh, prime minister of Prussia, answered that the instructions in question had never been published, or transcribed, except for the chiefs of the army, to whom alone they were confided; adding, that he was surprised at the request, having understood that Baron Steuben, was in the service of the United States, who knew every thing relative to the Prussian system, *au fond*.—Major Jackson, then of the war office, politely sent the Baron the above extract from the Prussian Minister's letter. Whatever may have been the cause, the Baron retired from Prussia, and entered into the service of the sovereign Prince, Charles of Baden, who gave him, with the order of fidelity, the command of his troops amounting to between three and four thousand men. Some time after he was elected, or, appointed Lieutenant General, of one of the circles of the Empire; a station, rather honorary than lucrative. The troops of the circles were militia, and the duty at that time little more than attending a periodical review. How changed, for many years, has been the situation and duties of those unfortunate people! God help them, they have drank deep of the cup of affliction!

The Baron's income from his military & ecclesiastical rank, for he was a canon of the church, amounted to the value of five hundred and eighty Louis d'ors per annum. By whom he was made a dignitary of the church, I have forgotten, but it is certain that not only the king of Prussia, but other continental sovereigns bestowed church livings on their officers; nor would Frederick, I presume, have felt any scruples of conscience, in assigning the whole revenues of the church militant, to troops, in whose weapons and tactics he had greater confidence, could the assignment have been effected without danger or disgrace.—In a country where money was so valuable, that a chief cook, or a coachman could be hired for ten dollars and a suit of clothes, per annum; where many of the luxuries, and all the necessities of life, were proportionably cheap—twenty-four, or twenty-five hundred dollars a year, was a

revenue which put its possessor much at his ease. The Baron frequently passed his winters in Paris. In that city, in 1776, he first met Benjamin Franklin, our Ambassador at the court of Versailles, in the society of Count de Vergennes and the Prince de Montbarre, then secretary at war. Mr. Franklin, venerable in his appearance, high in reputation, and full of enthusiasm in the cause of his country, spoke with energy and with all the art of a politician, of the undaunted spirit of the people of the United States; of their ample means, and well founded hopes; of the glory to him who should effectually assist in laying the foundation of a great empire, and of the gratitude, honors and rewards which awaited the man, who should give instruction in the military art, to the brave but undisciplined army under Washington! The French ministers supported the arguments & joined in all the wishes of the philosophic negotiator. It was undoubtedly the intention of the king, their master, they said, to declare himself as soon as circumstances would permit, the protector of this virtuous people, who had bravely taken arms against an haughty, and imperious nation, whose ambition went to the subjugation not only of America but of Europe. That though the moment had not yet arrived, in which the king could openly espouse the cause of the Americans, steps were now taking secretly to supply them with arms, and there could be no doubt of his favorable regard to him, who, by teaching the most effectual mode of using them, would render essential service to an oppressed people, struggling against their tyrant. The glory attendant on a successful achievement of this untried adventure, was painted in such glowing colours, (and who can colour like the French?) and the picture so often presented to view, that the Baron, without entering into or demanding any stipulations with Messrs. Franklin or Dean, returned in the spring of 1777, to Germany, resigned his places, & their emoluments, came back to France, and in the autumn of the same year embarked for the United States, on board a ship, freighted, ostensibly by private persons, but in fact, by Louis the Sixteenth, with arms, clothing and munitions of war and commanded by Captain Landais, a brave & experienced officer, who had sailed round the world with Monsr. de Bouzanville, and who for the service he then performed to this nation, deserved a recompense, the benefits of which he might yet feel. I passed, not long since, this veteran in the street at New-York, and saw, with pain, that adverse gales seemed still to thwart his course.

The Baron landed in December, at Portsmouth, in New-Hampshire. The first time I saw him, was in the spring of 1778, at an assembly in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He had been received in the most distinguished manner by Congress, then in session at York, and was on his way to Head Quarters, at Valley Forge. His reputation had preceded him, and those who yet remember his graceful entry, and manner in a ball room, the novel splendor of his star, and its accompanying ornaments, can easily conceive the feelings of his countrymen, and of their assembled wives and daughters; they might indeed with the honest Fluelling, have "thanked God, that they had no reason to be ashamed of him." The troops, in log huts, at Valley Forge, were in the most abject state of want; ill armed, worse fed, confined to their gloomy habitations, by sickness, or want of raiment. The Baron, frequently afterwards declared, that no European army could have been kept together under such dreadful deprivations. What must have been his feelings, to see, as he passed with General Washington through the cantonment, the half naked figures, and to hear at every turn, the hollow, mournful cry, No pay! no provisions! No clothes! No rum! His heart sickened at the scene, and well it might; the misery was great! Beef from the pine barrens of North-Carolina, poor to a proverb, and yellow with, perhaps, the billious fever of the country, without the luxury of salt! Good Heaven! Francois, said an officer, as he saw black grains floating on the top of the camp kettle, Good Heaven! where did you get black pepper? It is not pepper, it is dried whortleberries, said the Frenchman; and if not those, not any thing—O! 'twas wretched there, and almost every where throughout the war. I mean not with the citizens, tho' with them it was full bad. I knew a delegate in Congress, who offered his watch to Mrs. House, in Philadelphia, as a pledge for payment of his board; she had the grace and goodness to refuse the offer, and to let the debt remain till he could pay it—that man of high worth and honor, of large possessions, and most respectable connections—Why should I hesitate to say, that man was James Duane? In such a time it was honest, it was virtuous to be poor. But I must quit this theme, or it will lead me where I do not wish to go;—perhaps the present generation would have suffered more, with better bearing. The spring opened, partial supplies were received, and the Baron commenced his labors, as Inspector General; and certainly it was a brave attempt.—Without understanding a word of our language, to think of bringing men, born free, and joined together to preserve their freedom, into strict subjection; to obey without a word, a look, the mandates of a master! that master, once their equal, or possibly beneath that, in whatever might become a man! It was a brave attempt, which nothing but virtue, or high raised hopes of glory could have supported. At the first parade, the troops neither understanding the command, nor how to follow in a change ment to which they had not been accustomed, even with the instructor at their head, were getting fast into confusion. At

this moment, Captain, now Colonel Walker, then of the 2d New-York regiment, advanced from his platoon, and offered his assistance to translate the orders, and interpret to the troops. If, said the Baron, I had seen an angel from Heaven, I should not have been more rejoiced. The officers in the army who spoke English and French fluently, were indeed very few in number—how few were so capable of giving assistance to the Baron, in the formation of his system. Walker became, from that moment, his aid-de-camp, and remained to the end of the Baron's life, his dear and most worthy friend. From the commencement of instruction, no time, no pains, no fatigue was tho't too great, in pursuit of this great object. Through the whole of each campaign, when troops were to manoeuvre, and that was almost every day, the Baron rose at three o'clock; while his servant dressed his hair, he smoked a single pipe, and drank one cup of coffee, was on horseback at sunrise, and with or without his suit galloped to the parade; there was no waiting for a tardy aid-de-camp; and those who followed, wished they had not slept! Nor was there need of chiding; when duty was neglected or military etiquette infringed, the Baron's look was quite sufficient. It was a question, why in the first instance, our troops had been put to the performance of the great manoeuvres? I beg pardon for calling them great, but they were great to us, for we were ignorant.—Bland's exercise, and Symmes' military guide, were almost the only poor and scanty sources from which we drew. To the question it was answered, that in fact there was no time to spare in learning the minutiae—the troops must be prepared for instant combat; that on a field of battle, how to display or fold a column, or to change a front, was of the first consequence; that the business was to give the troops a relish for their trade, a confidence in their skill, in the performance of complicated evolutions. That even if time permitted, the officers copying the bad example, set them by the British, of referring all instruction to the sergeants, would feel themselves degraded in attending to an awkward squad—but the time will come, said he, when a better mode of thinking will prevail; then we will attend to the A B C of the profession. This prophecy was amply fulfilled—a year or two afterwards, the Baron said to me, do you see there, sir, your Colonel instructing that recruit? I thank God for that!

On the 17th of June, the battle of Monmouth was fought. Colonel Hamilton said that he had never known, or conceived the value of discipline, till that day. The Baron had no command in the line, for although Congress had given him the rank of Major-General, the benefits expected to be received from his military acquirements were not to be confined to a single division of the army.—Indeed there were other reasons; the troops were not more in number than the older Major Generals could command; and there was such an influx of Frenchmen, from the continent, and from the islands, all demanding, and many receiving high rank, that the American officers began to be disgusted, and to murmur loudly at being commanded by foreigners. What the Baron had received, had been given without asking for, and he wisely left it to time and service to point out his station. The assistance he gave in forming the troops and in reconnoitering the enemy, in which service he narrowly escaped being taken, were acknowledged. His report to the Commander in Chief, respecting the situation of the enemy, and of the column commanded by General Lee, induced that gentleman, in his defence, to make some remarks of which the Baron thought it proper to ask an immediate explanation. It was given, and in the most satisfactory manner. General Lee, conscious of the part he had acted, with respect to General Washington, probably looked upon that gentleman's friends as his own enemies. He had been unfortunate, and believing that he had little favor to expect, he stood, as it were, at bay. He had an exalted opinion of British troops, with whom he had formerly served, and not great confidence in those he commanded—but whether their misbehavior before the enemy was owing to a want in their commander of skill and energy, I recollect was, at the time, doubted. So soon as the army became stationary, the Inspector-General introduced a system of inspection and police, which pervaded every branch of the service, within its purview, and by which millions were saved every campaign, after it was in operation. Honorable and worthy men, yet in existence, among whom are Judge Peters and Colonel Pickering, cannot but remember, to what a ruinous extent the spoil and waste of tents, arms, ammunition, accoutrements and camp equipage, was carried. Both those gentlemen were then of the board of war, and have not forgotten the incalculable service rendered by the Baron, to our country. One of those respectable patriots, it was Judge Peters, said, not three months since, 'sir, the services of our friend, cannot be too highly estimated. I knew him well, and take him altogether, a better man did not exist.' To whom else, how few the number left—To whom can I appeal! The masters and the laborers, in that great work of independence, have passed away; and with them, how great a portion of the virtue and the talents of our country! With what strict scrutiny were the inspections made! I have seen the Baron and his assistants, seven long hours inspecting a brigade of three small regiments! Every man not present must be accounted for—if in camp, sick or well, they were produced, or visited; every musket handled, searched, cartridge boxes opened, even the flints and cartridges counted; knapsacks unslung, and every article of clothing

spread on the soldier's blanket, and tested by his little book, whether what he had received from the United States, within the year, was there, if not, to be accounted for. Hospitals, stores, laboratories, every place, and every thing, was open to inspection, and inspected; and what officer's mind was at ease, if losses or expenditures, could not, on the day of searching, be fully and fairly accounted for! The inspections were every month, and wonderful was the effect, not only with regard to economy, but in creating a spirit of emulation between different corps. I have known the subalterns of a regiment, appropriate one of their two rations to the bettering the appearance of their men; but this was at a later period of the war, when supplies and payments were more ample and more regular. It was, I think, in the winter of 1778—9 that the Baron formed and published his regulations. The difficulties he encountered in carrying on that work, were indeed great. The bookstores were not then filled with military authors and compilers. All he set down, was drawn from his own recollections of the Prussian code and service; these to be arranged in order, the language in which they were written to be translated into English, and by those not conversant with military evolutions, scarcely with military phrase. To sketch, re-sketch the plates, and fit them for the engraver—the engraver, the paper, the types and printer, with difficulty to be found. None but those who lived in those dark days of poverty and death of every thing, can think a thousandth part of all the penury with which we were surrounded. The *Blue Book* at last appeared, and was studied—and except the bible, was held in the highest estimation. 1779 and 1780, passed, as well as I recollect, in attending to the discipline of the army, and without any occurrence of greater moment, in which the Baron was engaged. The flight of Arnold, which was announced in whispers, at midnight, and the trial and execution of Major Andre, gave birth to strong, but very different feelings in his breast. With the inevitable fate of the unfortunate British Adjutant General, he was exceedingly affected. It is not possible, said he, to save him. He put us to no proof, but in an open manly manner, confessed every thing but a premeditated design to deceive. Would to God, the wretch who drew him to his death, could have suffered in his place! In the autumn of 1780, the Baron was ordered to the southward. General Gates had been defeated, and his force dispersed. The southern states were supposed to be in the greatest danger, and that the war, in that country, could be committed to no one with more propriety than to General Greene. There was full time, during the journey, to mature the plan of operation. Baron Steuben was left in Virginia, to gather whatever of men or means might possibly be gathered, to form the troops, and at all risk of clamor or dissatisfaction of the Virginians, to dis-furnish their state, for the moment, in the hope of securing its ultimate safety.

[TO BE CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT.]

CONGRESS.

LIST OF ACTS

Passed at the First Session of the 14th Congress.
An act to authorise the President of the United States to lease, for the term therein mentioned, the new building on the Capitol Hill, for the better accommodation of Congress.
Making additional appropriations to defray the expenses of the army and militia, during the late war with Great Britain.
For the relief of Jonathan B. Eastman.
To authorise the payment for property lost, captured or destroyed, by the enemy, while in the military service of the United States, and for other purposes.
For the relief of Charles Markin.
Rewarding the officers and crew of the sloop of war Hornet, for the capture and destruction of the British sloop of war Penguin.
To enlarge the time for ascertaining the annual transfers and changes of property subject to the Direct Tax, and for other purposes.
For the relief of Henry Fanning.
To regulate the commerce between the United States, and the Territories of His Britannic Majesty, according to the convention, concluded the 3d July, 1815, and the ratifications of which were exchanged on the 22d December, 1815.
For the relief of William Morriset.
For the relief of John Redman Cox.
For the relief of Martin Cole, John Pollock, George Westner and Abraham Welty.
For the relief of Charles Ross and Samuel Breck surviving executors of John Ross, deceased.
To enable the people of the Indiana territory to form a constitution and state government, and for the admission of such state into the Union on an equal footing with the original states.
To incorporate the subscribers to the Bank of the United States.
For the relief of certain purchasers of public land in the Mississippi territory.
To authorise the President of the United States to lease the Saline, near the Wabash river, for a term not exceeding seven years.
For the relief of Jonathan White.
For the relief of John G. Camp.
To amend an act for the relief of Edward Halliwell.
For the relief of Jonathan Rogers, junr. of Hartford, Connecticut.
For the relief of Wm. Hamon.
Providing an additional compensation to the District Judge of the southern district of New-York.