Wm Carlon pr

THE NORTH-CAROLINA MINERVA.

RALEIGH:—PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY BY HODGE & BOYLAN.

Twenty-five Shillings per Year.] TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 1802. VOL. VII. NUMB. 332

From the Anti-Democrat.

The following letter reſpecting the fate of major Andre was written in the year 1780, by general Hamilton, then a colonel and aid-de-camp to general Waſhington. No doubt it has long been treaſured up not only as a ſpecimen of fine writing but as the beſt monument of the facts relating to that affecting tranſaction. General Hamilton has been ever conſidered an elegant writer as well as a patriot and brave ſoldier, and we do preſume that this production of his pen, although of ancient date will be accepable and amuſing 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 the tragic conſequences, of Arnold's treaſon. My feelings were never put to ſo ſevere a trial. You will have heard the principal facts before this reaches you; but there are particulars, to which my ſituation gave me acceſs, that cannot have come to your knowledge from public 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 is traced back to ſome time in June laſt. It was conveyed in a letter to Col. Robinſon, the ſubject 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 favor of his prince by ſome ſignal proof of his repentance: and that he wiſhed to open a correſpondence with Sir Henry Clinton for this purpoſe. About that period he made a journey to Connecticut, on his return from which to Philadelphia he ſolicited the command of Weſt point; alledging that the effects of his wound diſqualified him for the active duties of the field.—The ſacrifice of this important poſt was the attonement 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 ſafely truſted to one, who had given ſo many diſtinguiſhed proofs of his patriotiſm. The beginning of Auguſt he joined the army, and renewed his application. The enemy, at this juncture, 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 its weakened ſtate. The general offered Arnold the left wing of the army, which he declined, on the pretext already mentioned; but not without viſible embarraſſment. He certainly might have executed the duties of ſuch a temporary command, and it was expected from his enterprizing temper that he would gladly have embraced ſo ſplendidly inviting an opportunity; but he did not 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 would have led to a ſuſpicion of treachery, had it been poſſible from his paſt conduct to have ſuppoſed him capable of it.

The correſpondence, thus began, was carried on between Arnold and major Andre, adjutant-general to the Britiſh army, in behalf of Sir Henry Clinton, under feigned ſignatures, and a mercantile diſguiſe. In an intercepted letter of Arnold's, which lately fell into our hands, he propoſes an interview, "to ſettle the riſks and profits of the copartnerſhip;" and in the ſame ſtile of metaphor, intimates an expected augmentation of the garriſon, and ſpeaks of it as the means of extending their traffic. It appears by another letter, that Andre was to have met him on the lines, under the ſanction of a flag, in the character of Mr. John Anderſon. But ſome cauſe or other, not known, prevented this interview.

General Waſhington croſſed the river in his way to Hartford the day theſe diſpatches arrived. Arnold, conceiving he muſt have heard of the flag, thought it neceſſary, for the ſake of appearances, to ſubmit the letters to him, and aſk his opinion of the propriety of complying with his requeſt. The general, without his uſual caution, though without the leaſt ſurmiſe of the deſign, diſſuaded him from it, and adviſed him to reply to Robertſon, 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 Andre aſhore, with a paſs for Mr. John Anderſon: Andre 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 day-light in the morning, the commanding-officer at King's ferry, without the privity of Arnold, moved a couple 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 boatman refuſe to convey the two paſſengers back, and diſconcerted Arnold ſo much, that by one of thoſe ſtrokes of infatuation, which often confound the ſchemes of men conſcious of guilt, he inſiſted on Andre's changing his uniform for a diſguiſe, and returning in a mode different from that in which he came. Andre, 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 arrived at King's ferry together, they proceeded to Crown-Point, 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 Andre a little beyond Pine's bridge, where he left him. He had reached Tarry-town where he was taken by three militiamen, 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 confeſſion 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 a council of war, held by general Waſhington, a few weeks before.

The priſoner was at firſt inadvertantly ordered to Arnold, but upon recollection, while ſtill on the way, he was countermanded, and ſent to Old Salem. The papers were incloſed 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 to 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 perſuaded, but much too late to overtake him.

A moment before his ſetting out he went into Mrs. Arnold's apartments, and informed her, that certain tranſactions had juſt come to light, which muſt forever baniſh him from his country. She fell into a ſwoon at this declaration, and he left her in it 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 affection. Exhauſted by the fatigue and tumult of her ſpirits, her phrenzy 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.

Andre, 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 or 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 meaning. 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 impoſter: 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 diſhonorable. 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 involved 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 candor 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 behavior 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 marks 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 tranquility. 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 did, I would not for the world leave a ſting in his mind that ſhould embitter his future days." He could ſcarce finiſh the ſentence, burſting into tears in ſpite of his efforts to ſuppreſs them, and with difficulty collected himſelf enough afterwards to add, "I wiſh to be permitted to aſſure him I did not act under this impreſſion, but ſubmitted to a neceſſity impoſed upon me, as contrary to my own inclination as to his orders." His requeſt was readily complied with, and he wrote the letter annexed, with which, I dare ſay, you will be as much pleaſed, as I am, both for the diction and ſentiment.

When his ſentence was announced to him, he remarked, that ſince it was his lot to die, as there was a choice in the mode, which would make a material difference to his feelings, he would be happy, if it were poſſible, to be indulged with a profeſſional death. He made a ſecond application by letter, in conciſe but perſuaſive terms. It was thought this indulgence, being incompatible with the cuſtom of war, could not be granted; and it was therefore determined in both caſes to evade an anſwer, to ſpare him the ſenſations which a certain knowledge of the intended mode would inflict.

When he was led out to the place of execution, as he went along he bowed familiarly to all thoſe with

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