

Extract of a letter from an Officer, dated Charles-Town, January 30.

This gentleman went from New-York, with a detachment drawn from the Provincial Brigade, which were commanded by the Brave Major Patrick Ferguson; his letter gives the most circumstantial account yet received of the action at King Mountain, in South-Carolina, October 7.

I THINK the last letter I wrote you was from Fort Moultrie, which I left a few days after. We marched to a place called Ninety-Six, which is about two hundred miles from Charles-Town; we lay there about a fortnight, in good quarters, after which we proceeded to the front of South Carolina, and frequently passed into North Carolina, and can say with propriety, that there is not a regiment or detachment in his Majesty's service, that ever went through the fatigues, or suffered so much as our detachment; that you may have some faint idea of our sufferings, I shall mention a few particulars. In the first place, we were separated from all the army, acting with the militia; we never lay two nights in one place, frequently making forced marches of twenty and thirty miles in one night, skirmishing very often; the greatest part of our time without rum or wheat flour; rum was a very essential article, for in marching ten miles we would often be obliged to ford two or three rivers, which wet the men up to their waists. In this disagreeable situation we remained till the 7th of October, when we were attacked by two thousand, five hundred rebels, under the command of General Williams. Col. Ferguson had under his command 800 militia, and our detachment, which at that time was reduced to an hundred men. The action commenced at two o'clock in the afternoon, and was very severe for upwards of an hour, during which the rebels were charged and drove back, several times, with considerable slaughter; (when our detachment charged, it, for the first time, fell to my lot, to put a rebel captain to death, which I did most effectually with one blow of my sword; the fellow was at least six feet high, but I had rather the advantage, as I was mounted on an elegant horse, and he on foot) but their numbers enabled them to surround us and the North Carolina regiment, which consisted of about 300 men. Seeing this, and numbers being out of ammunition, which naturally threw the rest of the militia into confusion, our gallant little detachment, which consisted of only 70 men, exclusive of 20 who acted as dragoons, and ten who drove waggons, &c. when we marched to the field of action, were all killed and wounded but twenty, and those brave fellows were soon crowded into an heap by the militia. Captain DePeyster, on whom the command devolved, seeing it impossible to form six men together, thought it necessary to surrender, to save the lives of the brave men who were left. We lost early in this action, Major Ferguson, of the 7th regiment, a man strongly attached to his King and Country, well informed in the art of war, brave, humane, and an agreeable companion—in short, he was universally esteemed in the army, and I have every reason to regret his unhappy fate.—We had 18 men killed on the spot, Captain Ryerson, and 32 serjeants and privates wounded, of Major Ferguson's detachment.—Lieutenant M'Ginnis, of Allen's regiment, Skinner's Brigade, killed. Taken Prisoners, two Captains, four Lieutenants, three Esquires, one Surgeon, and fifty four serjeants and privates, including the mounted, waggons, &c. Militia killed, one hundred, including officers; wounded, ninety, taken prisoners, about six hundred; our baggage all taken of course.

The rebels lost Brigadier General Williams, and 135, including officers, killed; wounded nearly equal to our's. The morning after the action we were marched sixteen miles, previous to which, orders were given by the rebel Col Campbell, (who the command devolved on) that should they be attacked on their march, they were to fire on, and destroy their prisoners. The party was kept marching two days, without any kind of provisions; the officers baggage, on the third day's march, was all divided amongst the rebel officers. Shortly after we were marched to Bickerstaff's settlement, where we arrived on the 13th. On the 14th a mock Court Martial, composed of twelve field-Officers, was held for the trial of the militia prisoners; when, after a short hearing, they condemned thirty of the most principal and respectable characters, whom they considered to be most inimical to them, to be executed, and at six o'clock on the evening of the same day, executed Col. Mills, Captain Chilwood, Captain Wilson, and six Privates; obliging every one of their officers to attend at the death of those brave, but unfortunate Loyalists, who all, with their last breath and blood, held the rebels and their cause as infamous and base, and as they were turning off, extolled their King and the British Government. Twenty-four others, then under sentence of death, were reprieved for a time.

On the morning of the 15th, Colonel Campbell had intelligence that Colonel Tarleton was approaching him, when he gave orders to his men that should Colonel Tarleton, come up with them, they were immediately to fire on Captain De Peyster and his officers who were in the front, and then a second volley on the men. During this days march the men were obliged to give thirty-five Continental dollars for a single ear of Indian corn, and forty for a drink of water, they not being allowed to drink when fording a river; in short the whole of the Rebels conduct from the surrender of the party into their hands is incredible to relate. Several of the militia that were worn out with fatigue, and not being able to keep up were cut down and trodden to death in the mire.

After the party arrived at Moravian Town in North-Carolina, we officers were ordered in different houses. Doctor Johnson (who lived with me) and myself were turned out of our bed at an unseasonable hour of the night, and threatened with immediate death if we did not make room for some of Campbell's officers; Doctor Johnson was after this knocked down and treated in the basest manner for endeavouring to dress a man whom they had cut on the march; the Rebel officers would o'ten go in amongst the prisoners, draw their swords, cut and wound those whom their wicked and savage minds prompted.

This is a specimen of Rebel lenity—^{or} you may report it without the least equivocation, for upon the word and honour of a gentleman, this description is not equal to their barbarity. This