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British American Colonies, 1764-84.

CHAPTER XLII.

On the morning of the 18th Gen. Leslie's reinforcement joined the army, and on the 19th it moved towards King's Creek; on the 20th Tarleton was directed to pass Broad River with the Dragoons to gain intelligence of Morgan's movements; he recrossed that evening with information that Gen. Morgan had crossed the river at the high fords leaving the wounded under a flag of truce, with the intention of taking up a position on the Catawba where General Greene had appointed a rendezvous for the purpose of effecting a junction between his own and Morgan's corps. In order to prevent this movement Lord Cornwallis determined to advance by forced marches, but finding the quantity of baggage carried with the army an incumbrance, he halted on the 25th at Ransome's Mills for the purpose of destroying all superfluous material, and pushed on so rapidly that he reached the Catawba on the 29th January two hours after the rear guard of Morgan's corps had crossed it. A heavy rain having fallen during the night raised the river so much that it was impassible for two days; by this means Morgan was enabled to get rid of his prisoners by sending them to a place of safety under suitable escort, and aided by the militia with the main body of his troops he guarded all the fords so that it became a matter of some hazard to attempt the passage of the river. General Greene, leaving his army on the Pedee under the command of General Hager with orders to retreat by forced marches to the northward in order to force a junction with Morgan's corps wherever it might be practicable, hastened to join the latter that he might be enabled to regulate his movements for facilitating the proposed junction: travelling with great expedition he arrived at Morgan's camp on the 31st January.

As the river had fallen so much as to war-

rant an attempt at crossing, and in order to perplex the enemy it was determined to cross at McCowan's ford below the public road at Beatty's ford, on which latter a feigned attack was made, while the main army crossed with little opposition at McCowan's on 31st. Morgan's troops abandoned Beatty's ford and fell back in confusion and began a precipitate retreat to the Yadkin—as this river is only the principal stream of the Pedee it became of the utmost importance to follow up Morgan's corps and prevent its junction with the army under the command of General Hager, but failed in doing so, as Morgan reached the Yadkin on the 3rd February, and having removed all means of crossing took up a position on the left bank, and finally effected the desired junction at Guildford Court House. It now became a matter of the utmost importance to prevent General Greene's army from returning to Virginia, (a course recommended by a Council of War held in the American camp after the junction had been effected,)—in order to effect this it was necessary that the right flank of the American army should be turned and that the British should interpose between them at the fords of the Dan and the Ferries of the Roanoke—these rivers being identical and holding the same relation to each other as the Yadkin and Pedee.

If North Carolina at any time contained a loyal population they did not on this occasion render any service to the troops of their Sovereign; but on the contrary, by conveying to Lord Cornwallis the false information that the Roanoke was impassible owing to the small number of vessels at the various ferries and the distances the latter were a part, and by inducing him to direct his march to the northward when he had all but turned the right flank of General Greene's army and got well into its rear, under the idea that by crossing the fords on the Dan and marching in an easterly direction along the Roanoke he would either force that General to disband or fight at a fearful disadvantage. The moment the British troops were in full march for the Dan General Greene commenced a precipitate retreat towards the Roanoke which he reached on the 14th February, and

had all his troops ferried across at Boyd's and Morris' ferries on the same day. The British General accidentally discovered the trick which had been played him, directed a pursuit with the intention of forcing General Greene to action south of the Roanoke, but the latter had taken his measures so well that his rear guard had passed the river six hours before the advance of the British appeared in sight.

Having failed in compelling Gen. Greene to fight, Lord Cornwallis retired to Hillsborough for the double purpose of giving his troops an opportunity to recover the effects of the great exertions made during their recent advance and recruiting the loyalists supposed to exist in the neighborhood. In order to effect this latter object he put forth a proclamation inviting all loyal subjects to repair to the King's standard and take an active part in the establishment of order and constitutional government. This caused considerable excitement throughout the Province, and General Greene having received a reinforcement from Virginia threw his light troops across the Roanoke, and on the 22nd February crossed it with his whole army. A circumstance which immediately occurred illustrates with what fidelity and energy the inhabitants served the American armies: a number of loyalists had determined to join Lord Cornwallis at Hillsborough, they were to be under the command of a man of considerable wealth and influence named Pyle who was commissioned as their Colonel. Intelligence had been conveyed to General Greene of this movement and he sent Colonel Lee to disperse the loyalists; meantime Lord Cornwallis had despatched Colonel Tarleton for the purpose of affording the necessary protection; he ordered Colonel Pyle to join him at once representing the danger which threatened him, and on two different occasions repeated the order and warning; it appears the royalists, however, were a convivial set and fond of *Cornstalk* Whiskey, they unnecessarily delayed joining Tarleton's corps but spent the time in deep potations with their friends and foes as it turned out, for their march was betrayed to Lee who surrounded them with his dragoons