

THE BATTLE OF KING'S MOUNTAIN.

SOME HISTORICAL ERRORS IN THE PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS—THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION.

One hundred years ago to-day, upon the southern spur of a ridge of hills extending through Gaston and Cleveland Counties, N. C., and terminating in York County, S. C., was fought the battle of King's Mountain, which bore somewhat the same relation to the Southern campaign of Lord Cornwallis as the battle of Five Forks to the career of Gen. Robert E. Lee and the suppression of the rebellion. The centennial of this decisive victory, which raised the drooping spirits of the colonists after a series of disasters, of which the rout of Gen. Gates at Camden in the preceding August was by no means the least, will doubtless be celebrated with local pomp and pageantry worthy of its importance in the annals of the Revolution, and it is to be hoped that the orators of the day will not forget to correct a number of historical errors which have crept into standard works on the subject, and are now generally accepted as facts. It happens, curiously enough, that Capt. Abraham de Peyster, upon whom the command of the British forces devolved after the fall of Major Ferguson, one of the most trusted Lieutenants of Cornwallis in the campaign of 1780, was the great uncle of Gen. J. Watts de Peyster, of this City, while his direct progenitor was only saved from participation in the disaster by temporary absence from the command. A portrait of the daring young Royalist, in the possession of his grand-nephew, shows a slender, strikingly handsome, and nearly beardless young man, of about 25 years of age, in the elegant uniform of a British officer. Near by, in the General's study in East Twenty-first-street, hangs a breech-loading rifle—the invention of Major Ferguson, and patented by him in 1776—which saw service in the battle, and is the only extant specimen of the first breech-loader ever invented. It has the sword bayonet, also supposed to be of modern origin, and the elevating sight, which has been hitherto claimed as one of the novelties of the nineteenth century.

While the General was exhibiting these relics and referring to antique documents relating to the history of this conflict, a mere skirmish in point of numbers, but actually the turning-point of our struggle for national autonomy—he noted rapidly some of the curious blunders into which historians have fallen. It has always been received, for example, that the battle of King's Mountain was fought by British regulars, whereas the only Englishman in the expedition was Ferguson himself. The force originally consisted of about 150 picked men from the Provincial Corps, (Americans in the British service,) whose number had been reduced to 100 by privation and disease, and 800 raw recruits. Of these 100 veterans, the majority were natives of New-York and New-Jersey, and 70 belonged to a company of infantry commanded by De Peyster, the other 30 being dragoons. The Americans numbered somewhere between 1,350 and 1,900 men, wild mountaineers from the fastnesses of what is now East Tennessee—splendid masters of the rifle. Ferguson, having written to Col. Cruger for assistance—another New-Yorker commanding at Fort Ninety-six—and his messengers having been cut off, he retired to King's Mountain, where he posted his men upon an open hill-top surrounded by woods—the worst possible position for a fight with sharpshooters. The battle began at 2 P. M., and soon after it commenced Ferguson was picked off, and the command devolved upon Capt. De Peyster, who continued the fight until only 30 men were left. After the surrender, 12 or 15 of the 30 survivors were tried and executed by the savage mountaineers. It is a noteworthy fact that the official report of the battle, written at Hillsborough 12 or 14 days later, was evidently not prepared by any of the mountaineer Colonels actually engaged, although Col. Isaac Shelby, Col. Williams, Col. Campbell, and others who were present have left valuable historical materials.

CHARLOTTE, N. C., Oct. 6.—This was the second day of the centennial celebration at King's Mountain, and not less than 10,000 people gathered on the grounds. At 11 o'clock the assembled military paraded on the battle-ground, in lieu of the promised illustration of the plan of the battle, which had been abandoned, to the disappointment of the large crowd which had assembled to witness this feature of the day. Gen. Hunt, United States Army, was in command. Senators Vance, of North Carolina, and Butler, of South Carolina, and the Hon. John W. Daniel, of Virginia, the centennial orator, arrived to-day. To-morrow is Centennial Day anniversary, and the programme includes a national salute at sunrise, review of all the troops at 10 o'clock, procession to the grand stand at 11:30, prayer by the Rev. W. M. Morton, singing of a poem written for the occasion by Mrs. Clara D. McLean, of Yorkville, S. C.; reading of an ode, also written for the occasion by Paul H. Hayne, of Augusta, Ga.; oration by the Hon. John W. Daniels, of Lynchburg, Va.; the procession to the monument and unveiling of the monument, a dress-parade at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and fire-works at 8 o'clock in the evening. There are 5,000 people camped on the grounds to-night, and the battle-field resembles an army bivouac.