

# VIRGINIA ARGUS.

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*Some account of the achievements of the celebrated Virginian hero, George Rogers Clark, in the Western Country.*

The year 1778 constitutes a remarkable epoch in the revolutionary annals of embellished America. In that memorable year, the savage Feroce, who inhabited the vicinity of the American settlements, could not be induced to remain inactive spectators of the contest between Great Britain and the States that had lately shaken off their dependence upon her. Early accustomed to repose, existing in destruction and blood, they wanted no more than their incited ferocity and their hereditary resentments against the Whites in general to hurry them into hostilities. Whites in general to hurry them into hostilities. But to these inherent principles of rancor, and that fondness for war, were added the combustible liberalty and insidious promises of British Emisaries, who seeking a refuge among them, endeavored to infuse into their hearts the malignant and vindictive passions which raged in their own bosoms. The north western frontier suffered excruciatingly from their ruthless incursions.— Like beasts of prey, they unexpectedly fell upon their intended victims; and after glutting with blood, their insatiable appetites, and inflicting all the misery in their power, they most frequently retired, unpursued and unopposed, to their wild and remote haunts.

In this fearful crisis, it was fortunate for Virginia to possess, on her western borders, one of those rare individuals whom nature has endowed with equal energy of body and mind—with genius to plan, and activity to execute. Col. George Rogers Clark saved her back settlements from Indian fury. He did more. He planned her, extended far beyond the banks of the Ohio—and added probable prospects to the glory of establishing a true and consistent line, and of ensuring tranquillity to a whole frontier.

Previous apprehensions and judicious views had induced the Legislature to place under his command a portion of the public forces.— It was well known that the Governor of the settlements planted by the Canadians on the Upper Mississippi, in the Illinois Country, was an inflexible agent of British ambition and British cruelty—paying largely for the services of Americans—and, by every possible method, strengthening the neighbouring Indians to annoy and ravage the frontier. To strike an unexpected and decisive blow at this insidious enemy, had long been a favourite scheme with Col. Clark.— The petty warfare which he had hitherto waged, satisfied neither his patriotism, nor his common sense. Even on the present occasion, he could obtain a small force only,—between 2 & 300 men.— But, like himself, these few patriots were loosed to fatigue, regardless of danger, and panting after their country's applause. No difficulty could tame their ardor. Descending the Mississippi, and the Ohio, down the great falls of the latter—they there hid their boats, and shaped their course northwardly. Their provisions, which they carried on their backs, were soon consumed—for two days, they subsisted on roots, and in a state of famine, reached the town of Kaskaskia, on the banks of the Mississippi. Hitherto Fortine had ruled on their enterprise—no detachment of savage warriors, no straggling frontier, had discovered their approach.— This success heightened their hopes, stimulated their courage. The town and Fort might have resisted a much larger band of assailants—but Clark and his adventurous companions advanced Kaskaskia unseen and unobserved.— The midnight hour favoured their design. They found the inhabitants sleeping in the lap of that security, which the idea of vast distances from the American settlements was calculated to create.— The town and the forts were taken in silence, and without opposition. The surprise was so judiciously conducted, and so completely effected, that not a single person escaped to spread the alarm through the neighbouring settlements. Clark, seizing the golden moment, immediately mounted a detachment of his men on horses found at Kaskaskia, and those other towns, farther up the Mississippi, were reduced with equal success.— Buchanan, the obstinate Governor, was sent to Virginia, with the written instructions which had been forwarded to him from Quebec, Detroit, and Michilimackinack, for exciting the Indians, and paying to them the price of blood. The settlers readily transferred their allegiance, and, as this territory belonged to Virginia by charter and conquest, the General Assembly, at their autumnal session, created it in a distinct county, to be called the county of Illinois.— A temporary form of government was adapted to the circumstances of the people.— To the Governor of the Commonwealth, the appointment of a county lieutenant, & through him, of all military agents, to act during pleasure, was attributed. The choice and support of the usual civil officers were left to the inhabitants. The treasury of the State was to defray extraordinary expenses. In criminal cases, the County Lieutenant might grant a pardon, except in condemnations for murder and treason, when he could only suspend execution until the sense of the Governor in the first instance, and that of the General Assembly, in the second, should be obtained. To supply the wants of the inhabitants and of the friendly Indians in the neighbourhood, a trade, on public account, was opened with New-Orleans, and other places, but without permitting private commercial enterprises, the eventual deficiencies of which the public trade was only intended to cover.— Public works, if properly projected and maintained, evidently promised to check the incursions and depredations of the Indians on the Indian settlements of the western frontier of Virginia.— Levies of infantry and cavalry were therefore directed to be speedily made, and to reinforce the brave and triumphant band of Patriots, who had effected this important reduction, and whose services were so justly rewarded, with the applause of their grateful country.— The following is a

sketch of military preparations whose object was not immediately felt by the mass of the people, and lay at an immense distance from the seat of government, which, like the heart in the human body, does glow with a vivifying heat, while the extremities are cold and languid, provided Col. Clark from receiving, in its full extent, the complete relief. His genius and activity supplied his deficiency. They doubled his physical force, isolated, as it were, in the heart of the Indian country—in the neighbourhood of the most warlike and ferocious tribes—in the track of many others, in the way of all, he knew how to maintain the power of his country, in this new acquisition—not only averting insult and injury—but turning them into the strongest holds, and most military resources of these Indians, who, from one to time, will attack like tigers, in quest of blood—and finally depressing all hostile attempts.

(To be Continued.)

British posts in the Western part of this Commonwealth, on the river Mississippi, and its branches, whereby great advantages may accrue to the common cause of America, as well as to this Commonwealth in particular.

Resolved that the thanks of this house are bestowed to the said Col. Clark, and the brave officers and men under his command, for their extraordinary valour and perseverance in so important an enterprise, and for the important services, which they have thereby rendered this country.

\* As the Basis of Delegation, Nov. 25, 1775.

—Warren's authentic Information, has been reported that Capt. Col. George Rogers Clark, with a body of Virginia Militia, had reduced the