

While in the region of Old Fort, a detachment of the enemy, under the command, it is believed, of Col. Ferguson, concluded to pay a visit to Captain Thomas Lytle, a noted Whig leader, who resided some four miles south-west of that locality on Crooked creek. Mrs. Lytle, a spirited woman, heard of this intended visitation a little in advance of the approach of the party, and concluded she would don her nice new gown and beaver hat, in procuring which for his young wife, Captain Lytle had spent nearly all his Continental money. It was pardonable of Mrs. Lytle to make this display, for there were no meetings or public gatherings, in that frontier mountain region, in those troublous times, where she could appear in her gaudy array of new finery. She naturally felt a secret satisfaction, as her husband was not in the way of danger, that this occasion had presented itself, in which she could gratify the feelings of a woman's pride in making what she regarded as an uncommonly attractive appearance. She took unusual pains in making up her toilet; for though she was no Tory, she yet supposed that Colonel Ferguson was a gentleman, as well as a prominent British officer.

At length, the Colonel, at the head of his squadron, leisurely rode up toward the house. He halted in front of the door, and inquired if he could have the pleasure of a few moments' conversation with Captain Lytle? Mrs. Lytle stepped to the door in full costume—probably the best dressed lady the Colonel had seen since he left Charleston—and dropping him a polite courtesy, in accordance with the fashion of that day, invited him to alight and come in. He thanked her, but his business, he said, required haste; that the King's army had restored his authority in all the Southern Provinces, and that the rebellion was virtually quelled; that he had come up the Valley to see Captains Lytle and Hemphill, and a few others, who had served in the Rebel army against the King, and that he was the bearer of pardons for each of them.

“My husband,” Mrs. Lytle replied, “is from home.”

“Madame,” inquired the Colonel, earnestly, “do you know where he is?”

“To be candid with you, Colonel,” said Mrs. Lytle, “I really do not; I only know that he is out with others of his friends whom you call Rebels.”

“Well, madame,” replied Ferguson, deprecatingly, “I have discharged my duty; I felt anxious to save Captain Lytle, because I learn that he is both brave and honorable. If he persists in rebellion, and comes to harm, his blood be upon his own head.”

“Colonel Ferguson,” she responded, thoughtfully but firmly, “I don't know how this war may end; it is not unlikely that my husband may fall in battle; all I positively know is, that he will never prove a traitor to his country.”

“Mrs. Lytle,” said the Colonel, patronizingly, “I admire you as the handsomest woman I have seen in North Carolina—I even *half way* admire your zeal in a bad cause; but, take my word for it, the rebellion has had its day, and is now virtually put down. Give my kind regards to Captain Lytle, and tell him to come in. He will not be asked

to compromise his honor; his verbal pledge not again to take up arms against the King, is all that will be asked of him." He then bowed to Mrs. Lytle, and led off his troop. A straggler in the rear rode back, and taking off his old slouched hat, made her a low bow, and with his left hand lifted her splendid beaver from her head, replacing it with his wretched apology, observing with mock gravity, "Mrs. Lytle, I can not leave so handsome a lady without something by which to remember you." As he rode off, she hallooed after him: "You'll bite the dust for that, you villain!" Thus Mrs. Lytle momentarily enjoyed the occasion of arraying herself in her best; but, as she afterwards confessed, she paid dearly for the gratification of her pride, and long mourned the loss of her beautiful beaver hat.\*

\* MS. correspondence with the late Colonel Silas McDowell, of Macon County, North Carolina, in 1873-74, who had these particulars from Mrs. Lytle herself. Colonel McDowell thought it was Tarleton who visited Captain Lytle's, but it could not have been, as his "Campaigns" and map of the route of his excursions show that he was never above Cowan's Ford on the Catawba, while it is certain that Colonel Ferguson was in Burke County. Captain Lytle died not very far from 1832, at the age of about eighty-three years; and his venerable companion gently passed away about the same time.

Draper, Lyman C. *King's Mountain and Its Heroes : History of the Battle of King's Mountain, 1780, and the Events Which Led to It*. P.G. Thomson, 1881. 149-150. Google Book Search. 25 July 2006. 27 Nov. 2008 <http://books.google.com/books?id=6lv28uvzquic>.