

A CIRCUMSTANTIAL ACCOUNT

E 137.9

Of an Attack that happened on the 19th of April 1775. on his
MAJESTY'S Troops,

By a Number of the People of the Province of MASSACHUSETTS-
BAY.

ON Tuesday the 18th of April, about half past 10 at Night, Lieutenant Colonel Smith of the 10th Regiment, embarked from the Common at Boston, with the Grenadiers and Light Infantry of the Troops there, and landed on the opposite Side, from whence he began his March towards Concord, where he was ordered to destroy a Magazine of Military Stores, deposited there for the Use of an Army to be assembled, in Order to act against his Majesty, and his Government. The Colonel called his Officers together, and gave Orders, that the Troops should not fire, unless fired upon; and after marching a few Miles, detached six Companies of Light Infantry, under the Command of Major Pitcairn, to take Possession of two Bridges on the other Side of Concord: Soon after they heard many Signal Guns, and the ringing of Alarm Bells repeated, which convinced them that the Country was rising to oppose them, and that it was a preconcerted Scheme to oppose the King's Troops, where ever there should be a favorable Opportunity for it. About 3 o'Clock the next Morning, the Troops being advanced within two Miles of Lexington, Intelligence was received that about Five Hundred Men in Arms, were assembled, and determined to oppose the King's Troops; and on Major Pitcairn's galloping up to the Head of the advanced Companies, two Officers informed him that a Man advanced from those that were assembled, had presented his Musket and attempted to shoot them, but the Piece flashed in the Pan: On this the Major gave directions to the Troops to move forward, but on no Account to fire, nor even to attempt it without Orders. When they arrived at the End of the Village, they observed about 200 armed Men, drawn up on a Green, and when the Troops came within a Hundred Yards of them, they began to file off towards some Stone Walls, on their right Flank: The Light Infantry observing this, ran after them; the Major instantly called to the Soldiers not to fire, but to surround and disarm them; some of them who had jumped over a Wall, then fired four or five Shots at the Troops, wounded a Man of the 10th Regiment, and the Major's Horse in two Places, and at the same Time several Shots were fired from a Meeting-House on the left: Upon this, without any Order or Regularity, the Light Infantry began a scattered Fire, and killed several of the Country People; but were silenced as soon as the Authority of their Officers could make them.

† After this, Colonel Smith marched up with the Remainder of the Detachment, and the whole Body proceeded to Concord, where they arrived about 9 o'Clock, without any Thing further happening; but vast numbers of armed People were seen assembling on all the Heights: while Colonel Smith with the Grenadiers, and Part of the Light Infantry remained at Concord, to search for Cannon, &c. there; he detached Captain Parsons with six Light Companies to secure a Bridge at some Distance from Concord, and to proceed from thence to certain Houses, where it was supposed there was Cannon, and Ammunition; Captain Parsons in pursuance of these Orders, posted three Compa-

nies at the Bridge, and on some Heights near it, under the Command of Captain Laurie of the 43d Regiment; and with the Remainder went and destroyed some Cannon Wheels, Powder, and Ball; the People still continued encamping on the Heights; and in about an Hour after, a large Body of them began to move towards the Bridge, the Light Companies of the 4th and 10th then defended; and joined Captain Laurie, the People continued to advance in great Numbers; and fired upon the King's Troops, killed three Men, wounded four Officers, one Sergeant, and four private Men, upon which (after returning the fire) Captain Laurie and his Officers, thought it prudent to retreat towards the Main Body at Concord, and were soon joined by two Companies of Grenadiers; when Captain Parsons returned with the three Companies over the Bridge, they observed three Soldiers on the Ground one of them scalped, his Head much mangled, and his Ears cut off, tho' not quite dead; a Sight which struck the Soldiers with Horror; Captain Parsons marched on and joined the Main Body, who were only waiting for his coming up, to march back to Boston; Colonel Smith had executed his Order, by destroying all the Military Stores he could find, and the Colonel, and Major Pitcairn, having sustained considerable Pains to convince the Inhabitants that no Injury was intended them, and that if they opened their Arms when required, to search for said Stores, not the slightest Mischief should be done; neither had any of the People the least Occasion to complain, but they were sulky, and one of them even struck Major Pitcairn. Except upon Captain Laurie, at the Bridge, no Hostilities happened from the Affair at Lexington, until the Troops began their March back. As soon as the Troops had got out of the Town of Concord, they received a heavy Fire from all Sides, from Walls, Fences, Houses, Trees, Barns, &c. which continued without Intermission, till they met the first Brigade, with two Field Pieces, near Lexington; ordered out under the Command of Lord Percy to support them; (advice having been received about 7 o'Clock next Morning, that Signals had been made, and Expresses gone out to alarm the Country, and that the People were rising to attack the Troops under Colonel Smith.) Upon the Firing of the Field Pieces, the People's Fire was for a while silenced, but as they still continued to increase greatly in Numbers, they fired again as before, from all Places where they could find Cover, upon the whole Body, and continued so doing for the Space of Fifteen Miles: Notwithstanding their Numbers they did not attack or only during the Whole Day, but kept under Cover on all Occasions. The Troops were very much fatigued, the greater Part of them having been under Arms all Night, and made a March of upwards of Forty Miles before they arrived at Charlestown, from whence they were ferried over to Boston.

The Troops had above Fifty killed, and many more wounded: Reports are various about the Loss sustained by the Country People, some make it very considerable, others not so much.

Thus this unfortunate Affair has happened through the Rashness and imprudence of the People, who by firing on the Troops at Lexington,

At this Time the 10th and Light Companies loaded, but the Grenadiers were not loaded when they received their first Fire. The firing was continued till the 10th and Light Companies, under the Command of Major Pitcairn, with the greatest Difficulty kept the Troops from forcing into the Meeting-House and getting all the rest into the same.