

A body of light troops, new levies, and Indians, painted and decorated for war, struck off from the rest and disappeared in the forest, up Fish Creek. From the great silence observed by Burgoyne in his movements, and the care he took in keeping his men together, and allowing no straggling parties, Colonel Colburn apprehended that he meditated an attack. Having seen the army advance two miles on its march, therefore, he descended from the heights, and hastened to the American camp to make his report. A British prisoner, brought in soon afterward, stated that Burgoyne had come to a halt about four miles distant.

On the following morning, the army was under arms at daylight; the enemy, however, remained encamped, repairing bridges in front, and sending down guard boats to reconnoitre; the Americans, therefore, went on to fortify their position. The ridge of hills called Bemis's Heights, rises abruptly from the narrow flat bordering the west side of the river. Kosciuszko had fortified the camp with intrenchments three-quarters of a mile in extent, having redoubts and batteries, which commanded the valley, and even the hills on the opposite side of the river; for the Hudson, in this upper part, is comparatively a narrow stream. From the foot of the height, an intrenchment extended to the river, ending with a battery at the water edge, commanding a floating bridge.

The right wing of the army, under the immediate command of Gates, and composed of Glover's, Nixon's, and Patterson's brigades, occupied the brow of the hill nearest to the river, with the flats below.

The left wing, commanded by Arnold, was on the side of the camp furthest from the river, and distant from the latter about three-quarters of a mile. It was composed of the New Hampshire brigade of General Poor, Pierre Van Courtlandt's and James Livingston's regiments of New York militia, the Connecticut militia, Morgan's riflemen, and Dearborn's infantry. The centre was composed of Massachusetts and New York troops.

Burgoyne gradually drew nearer to the camp, throwing out large parties of pioneers and workmen. The Americans disputed every step. A Hessian officer observes: "The enemy bristled up his hair, as we attempted to repair more bridges. At last, we had to do him the honor of sending out whole regiments to protect our workmen."¹

¹ Schlözer's Briefwechsel.