

Sir Henry Clinton and Admiral Arbuthnot jointly summoned the town to surrender ; but General Lincoln, who commanded there, answered that he would defend it to the last extremity.

On this refusal, the batteries were opened on the ninth of April, and operated with such effect, as quickly to abate the fire of the enemy. The works were carried on with so much spirit and activity, that the besiegers in a few days approached within little more than four hundred yards of the town.

In order to cut off the communication between the town and country, a detachment of chosen men was formed ; the command of which was given to Colonel Webster, an officer of noted skill and bravery : He was accompanied by Colonel Tarleton, with a body of cavalry ; and by Major Ferguson, with a party of light infantry.

The enterprize they were sent upon, was attended with a variety of difficulties. They had rivers to cross, and other arduous operations to execute, in presence of an enemy strongly posted, and who had a very superior cavalry. It was principally at this corps their efforts were aimed. Through the great diligence and dexterity of Colonel Tarleton, it was surprized and totally defeated. This obstruction being removed, Colonel Webster advanced into the country, and seized all the principal passes, by which means the town was now completely invested.

These successes enabled the British army to carry on the siege with additional vigour. The enemy, on the other hand, made no less resolute a defence. They had used great industry in fortifying the place. The neck of land inclosed between the two rivers, Ashley and Cooper, was a continued chain of lines, redoubts, and batteries. At their extremities, towards both rivers, they were covered by deep swamps, communicating by a canal cut along their