

The fourth and fifth were employed in making arrangements for opening Wood Creek (which the enemy, with the indefatigable labour of one hundred and fifty men, for fourteen days, had most effectually choaked up) and the making a temporary road from Pine Ridges upon Fish Creek, sixteen miles from the fort, for a present supply of provision and the transport of our artillery: the first was effected by the diligence and zeal of Captain Bouville, assisted by Captain Harkimer of the Indian department, with one hundred and ten men, in nine days; while Lieutenant Landy, acting as assistant quarter-master general, had rendered the road in the worst of weather, sufficiently practicable to pass the whole artillery and stores, with seven days provision, in two days.

On the 5th, in the evening, intelligence arrived by my discovering parties on the Mohawk River, that a reinforcement of eight hundred militia, conducted by General Herkimer, were on their march to relieve the garrison, and were actually at that instant at Oriska, an Indian settlement, twelve miles from the fort. The garrison being apprised of their march by four men, who were seen enter the fort in the morning, through what was thought an impenetrable swamp, I did not think it prudent to wait for them, and thereby subject myself to be attacked by a sally from the garrison in the rear, while the reinforcement employed me in front. I therefore determined to attack them on the march, either openly or covertly, as circumstances should offer. At this time, I had not two hundred and fifty of the King's troops in camp; the various and extensive operations I was under an absolute necessity of entering into, having employed the rest; and therefore, could not send above eighty white men, rangers and troops included, with the whole corps of Indians. Sir John Johnson put himself at the head of this party, and began his march that evening at five o'clock, and met the rebel corps at the same hour the next morning. The impetuosity of the Indians is not to be described on the sight of the enemy (forgetting the judicious disposition formed by Sir John, and agreed to by themselves, which was, to suffer the attack to begin with the troops in front, while they should be on both flanks and rear) they rushed in, hatchet in hand, and thereby gave the enemy's rear an opportunity to escape. In relation to the victory, it was equally complete, as if the whole had fallen; nay more so, as the two hundred who escaped only served to spread the panic wider; but it was not so with the Indians; their loss was great (I must be understood Indian computation, being only about thirty killed, and the like number wounded, and in that number some of their favourite chiefs and confidential warriors were slain.) On the enemy's side, almost all their principal leaders were slain. General Herkimer has since died of his wounds. It is proper to mention, that the four men detached with intelligence of the march of the reinforcement, set out the evening before the action, and consequently the enemy could have no account of the defeat, and were in possession only, of the time appointed for their arrival; at which, as I suspected, they made a sally with two hundred and fifty men towards Lieutenant Bird's post, to facilitate the entrance of the relieving corps, or bring on a general engagement, with every advantage they could wish.

Captain Hoyes was immediately detached to cut in upon their rear, while they engaged the lieutenant. Immediately upon the departure of Captain Hoyes, having learned that Lieutenant Bird, misled by the information of a cowardly Indian, that Sir John was pressed, had quitted his post to march to his assistance, I marched the