

Whitehall, November 1, 1777.

THE following Letter from Lieutenant-General Burgoyne to Lord George Germain, was Yesterday received by an Armed Transport that failed from Quebec the 7th of October.

*Camp, nearly opposite to Saratoga,
August 20, 1777.*

MY LORD,

IN my last Dispatch (a Duplicate of which will be inclosed herewith) I had the Honour to inform your Lordship of the Proceedings of the Army under my Command to the 30th of July.

From that Period to the 15th of August every possible Measure was employed to bring forward Batteaux, Provision and Ammunition from Fort George to the first navigable Part of Hudson's River; a Distance of Eighteen Miles, the Roads in some Parts steep and in others wanting great Repair. Of the Horses furnished by Contract in Canada not more than a third Part was yet arrived. The Delay was not imputable to Neglect, but to the natural Accidents attending so long and intricate a Combination of Land and Water Carriage. Fifty Team of Oxen, which had been collected in the Country through which I had marched, were added to assist the Transport; but these Resources together were found far inadequate to the Purposes of feeding the Army and forming a Magazine at the same Time. Exceeding heavy Rains augmented the Impediments. It was often necessary to employ Ten or Twelve Oxen upon a single Batteau: And after the utmost Exertions for the Fifteen Days above stated, there were not above Four Days Provision beforehand, nor above Ten Batteaux in the Hudson's River.

Intelligence had reached me, that Lieutenant-Colonel St. Leger was before Fort Stanwix, which was defended. The main Army of the Enemy opposed to me was at Still Water, a Place between Saratoga and the Mouth of the Mohawk.

A rapid Movement forward appeared to be of the utmost Consequence at this Period. The Enemy could not have proceeded up the Mohawk without putting themselves between two Fires, in case Lieutenant-Colonel St. Leger should have succeeded, and at best being cut-off by my Army from Albany; they must either therefore have stood an Action, have fallen back towards Albany, or have passed the Hudson's River, in order to secure a Retreat to New England higher up. Whichever of these Measures they had taken, so that the King's Army had been enabled to advance, Colonel St. Leger's Operations would have been assisted, a Junction with him probably secured, and the whole Country of the Mohawk opened.

To maintain the Communication with Fort George during such a Movement, so as to be supplied by daily Degrees at a Distance continually increasing, was an obvious Impossibility. The Army was much too weak to have afforded a Chain of Posts: Escorts for every separate Transport would have been a still greater Drain; nor could any have been made so strong as to force their Way through such Positions as the Enemy might take in one Night's March from the White Creek, where they had a numerous Militia. Had the Enemy remained supine through Fear, or Want of comprehending so palpable an Advantage, the physical Impossibility of being supplied by Degrees from Fort George was still in Force, because a new Necessity of Land Carriage for Nine Miles arises at Still Water; and in Proportion that Carriages had been brought forward to that Place, the Transport must have ceased behind.

The Alternative therefore was short; either to relinquish the favorable Opportunity of advancing upon the Enemy, or to attempt other Resources of Supply.

It was well known that the Enemy's Supplies in live Cattle from a large Tract of Country passed by the Route of Manchester, Arlington, and other Parts of the Hampshire Grants to Bennington, in order to be occasionally conveyed from thence to the main Army. A large Depôt of Corn and of Wheel Carriages was also formed at the same Place, and the usual Guard was Militia, though it varied in Number from Day to Day. A Scheme was

formed to surprize Bennington. The Possession of the Cattle and Carriages would certainly have enabled the Army to leave their distant Magazines, and to have acted with Energy and Dispatch. Success would also have answered many secondary Purposes.

Lieutenant-Colonel Baum, an Officer well qualified for the Undertaking, was fixed upon to command. He had under him two Hundred dismounted Dragoons of the Regiment of Riedesel, Captain Frazer's Marksmen, which were the only British, all the Canadian Volunteers, a Party of the Provincials who perfectly knew the Country, an Hundred Indians, and two light Pieces of Cannon. The whole Detachment amounted to about Five Hundred Men. The Instructions were positive to keep the regular Corps posted while the Light Troops felt their Way, and not to incur the Danger of being surrounded, or having a Retreat cut off.

In order to facilitate this Operation, and to be ready to take Advantage of its Success, the Army moved up the East Shore of Hudson's River on the 14th, a Bridge was formed of Rafts, over which the advanced Corps passed, and encamped at Saratoga; Lieutenant-Colonel Breyman's Corps were posted near Batten-kiln, and upon Intelligence from Lieutenant-Colonel Baum that the Enemy was stronger at Bennington than expected, and were aware of his Attack, that Corps, consisting of the Brunswick Grenadiers, Light Infantry, and Chasseurs, were sent forward to sustain him.

It since appears that Lieutenant-Colonel Baum, not having been able to complete his March undiscovered, was joined at a Place called Santcoick Mills, about four Miles short of Bennington, by many People professing themselves to be Loyalists. A Provincial Gentleman of Confidence, who had been sent with the Detachment, as knowing the Country, and the Characters of Inhabitants, was so incautious as to leave at Liberty such as took the Oath of Allegiance. His Credulity and their Profligacy caused the first Misfortune, Colonel Baum was induced to proceed without sufficient Knowledge of the Ground; his Design was betrayed; the Men who had taken the Oaths were the first to fire upon him; he was attacked on all Sides; he shewed great Personal Courage, but was overpowered by Numbers.

During this Time Lieutenant-Colonel Breyman was upon the March through a heavy Rain. And such were the other Impediments stated in that Officer's Report, of bad Roads, tired Horses, Difficulties in passing Artillery Carriages, &c. that he was from Eight in the Morning of the 15th to Four in the Afternoon the following Day making about Twenty-four Miles. He engaged, fought gallantly, and drove the Enemy from Three several Heights, but was too late to succour Colonel Baum, who was made Prisoner, and a considerable Part of his Dragoons were killed or taken. The Failure of Ammunition, from the accidental breaking to Pieces of a Tumbril, unfortunately obliged Lieutenant-Colonel Breyman to retire conquering Troops, and to leave behind Two Pieces of Cannon, besides Two which had been lost by Lieutenant-Colonel Baum. The Indians made good their Retreat from the first Affair, as did Captain Frazer, with Part of his Company, and many of the Provincials and Canzians.

The Loss, as at present appears, amounts to about Four Hundred Men killed and taken in both Actions, and twenty-six Officers, mostly Prisoners; but Men who were dispersed in the Woods drop in daily. A correct Return shall be transmitted to your Lordship the first Opportunity.

This, my Lord, is the true State of the Event. I have not dwelt upon Errors, because in many Instances they were counterbalanced by Spirit. The Enemy will of Course find Matter of Parade in the Acquisition of Four Pieces of Cannon, but that apart, they have small Cause for Exultation: Their Loss in Killed and Wounded being more than double to ours, by the Confession of their Prisoners and Deserters, and of many Inhabitants who were Witnesses to the Burial of the Dead.

The chief Subject of Regret on our Side, after that which any Loss of gallant Men naturally occasions,