

informed of Washington's position, the strength of his army, and the condition of his lines at every point, Lord Howe matured his plan of action deliberately, and decided to advance by way of Long Island. An attack from this quarter promised the speediest success and at the least cost, for should he be able to force the defences of Brooklyn, New York would be at his mercy; or, failing in this, he could threaten Washington's flank from Hell-Gate or beyond, where part of the fleet had been sent through the Sound, and by a push into Westchester County compel the evacuation of the city."¹

On the twenty-seventh of August, the battle of Long Island was fought on and around the site of Prospect Park, in Brooklyn. It began about "three o'clock in the morning and continued until nearly two in the afternoon. Less than five thousand Americans * * * * had been swept up or back by nearly twenty thousand British and Hessians. For the American troops it was a total defeat. They had been forced to abandon the outer line of defence—the very line Washington wished should be held 'at all hazards'—and had been driven into the fortified camp on the Brooklyn peninsula."²

None of the regiments of the New York continental line participated in the battle, nor did Colonel Jacobus Swartwout's regiment, then in Brigadier-General George Clinton's brigade, in Major-General Heath's division.

On the night of the twenty-ninth of August, the Americans evacuated Long Island in a highly creditable manner, and were transported by boats to Manhattan Island. In the forenoon of the thirty-first, the British appeared at Newtown, seven miles northeast of Brooklyn, "where they pitched a number of tents. It is now evident," Major-General Heath observes, "that the next object of the enemy will be to get possession of the city of New York. This night," he writes, "several of the regiments of General Miffin's brigade of his division lay on the hills towards New York, and General Clinton's on their arms."³

In a regimental order, issued by Colonel Jacobus Swartwout, at King's Bridge, on September 4, he directed that all men off duty and fatigue should parade, on the afternoon of that day, on the hill nigh Fort Swartwout,⁴ in order to be reviewed by the colonel commanding, and to receive the other half of their bounty.⁵ On the morning of that day, Captain Barnardus Swart-

¹ Campaign of 1776. *Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society*, vol. iii., pp. 132, 133, 139.

² *Ibid.* pp. 190, 191.

³ *Memoirs of Major-General Heath*, p. 58.

⁴ The fort was evidently of recent erection, and probably was not far from the site of Fort Independence.

⁵ The companies known as having men in them and belonging to his regiment, who had been enlisted in the months of July and August, were those under the command of Captains Duryea, Ludington, Schenck, Lane, Swartwout, Veal, and Van Wyck. *Calendar of New York Historical manuscripts*, vol. i., p. 468.