

made of such parts of the river as may be most effectually obstructed, so as not only to impede the navigation but likewise to prevent the landing of troops below such obstruction; that they endeavor to procure the advice of the general officers and engineers respecting the obstructions.

“Resolved, That the committee appointed to obstruct the navigation of Hudson’s river be instructed not to pay the blacksmiths who made the chain which was lately drawn across the said river, and broken by the tide, until such time as the sufficiency of their work can be properly examined; and that the said committee take proper measures for that purpose.”

The greater part of the chain, which had been brought from Fort Ticonderoga, had been previously used as an obstruction in the South River. The other part of the iron cable had been made at Poughkeepsie.

In order to ascertain whether the breaking of the chain should be ascribed to the carelessness of the blacksmiths, the committee, having in charge the work of obstructing the river opposite Fort Montgomery, began the necessary investigations. The following certificate was accepted as exonerating the blacksmiths employed at Poughkeepsie in making a part of the cable:

“Fort Montgomery, December 9, 1776.

“These are to certify that the chain that has been stretched across the North River at this fort has been broken twice; the first time a swivel broke which came from Ticonderoga, which was not welded sound. The second time a clewin broke, which was made at Poughkeepsie, in a solid part of the clewin, and no flaw to be seen in any part of said chain; which we do certify at the request of Messers. Odle and Van Duzer.

“James Clinton, brigadier-general,

“Ja. Rosekrans, captain.

“Abram Swartwout, captain.”

“Daniel Lawrence, lieutenant.”

This explanation was regarded as exculpating the blacksmiths, and they were ordered to be paid according to the agreement made with them. Different officers and engineers were later consulted, and, during the spring and summer of 1777, the chain was more securely linked and fastened to resist the force of the tides and diverse currents of the river.¹

The privations of the men in the army at that time caused no little sympathy to burden the hearts of the officers placed over them. Brigadier-General James Clinton, who had command of the garrison of Fort Montgomery, writing to the president of the New York convention, on December 11, 1776, strikingly describes the destitution afflicting the soldiers on duty there:

“I have but a small garrison here at present, consisting of five companies

¹ American archives. Fifth series, vol. iii., pp. 264, 752, 316, 1140, 782, 783, 372.