

of my regiment, excepting the artillery, and many of them without shoes and other necessary clothes. They have received no pay since the first of August last, and if they had money there is no clothing nor shoes to be purchased here. The chief of Captain [Abraham] Swartwout's company insist that their times are out the first of this instant, and their officers acknowledge it to be so. Five of his company went off this morning without leave, almost barefooted. I have sent out a party after them, but if they be taken they will be of no service here, and many more of them without shoes, and some other necessaries, which, if they were provided with, I believe they would serve a while longer contentedly; if not, in my opinion it would be better to discharge them. I wish there would be some shoes and stockings sent here for the men. \* \* \* \* But without shoes and some clothing, we will not be able to keep up our guard and get firewood, and do other necessary duty of the garrison."

Colonel Jacobus Swartwout, then in charge of Fort Constitution, six miles south of Fort Montgomery, on the east side of the Hudson, and opposite West Point, writing to the New York convention, on December 20, indicates by his timely suggestions concerning the garrisoning of that fort that he was moved to offer them wholly on the ground of economy and prudent forethought. "Whereas the limited time we engaged in the service will expire by the last day of this month, which is nigh at hand, except we are relieved or stay longer than our time, this garrison will be left vacant; but in all probability you have provided a relief to relieve us at that day; but, on the contrary, if you have not, it would be best to let me know *per* first opportunity in what manner to act. It is reasonable to think that the greatest part of the men will be very anxious to get home when their time expires; notwithstanding, I believe with the other officers, we might prevail upon a sufficient number to garrison this fort until a proper relief might be procured from the continental troops. But if you have already a sufficient number of continental troops it will be saving money by sending them, as they are under pay. I should be loath to leave this garrison with my regiment till I heard from you gentlemen, as there are many things here which will not admit of leaving without a guard, such as cannon, ammunition, etc."<sup>1</sup>

The five New York regiments of the continental line began the campaign of 1777 at such places in the state where, in the absence of any armed forces of militia, the peculiar exigencies of the time required their temporary presence. The first New York, Colonel Goose van Schaick's regiment, which had been quartered at Fort George, was sent in the spring to Cherry Valley, to defend the inhabitants from attacks of bodies of Indians, who

<sup>1</sup> American archives. Fifth series, vol. iii., pp. 1170, 1318, 1319.