# The Hessians in New Jersey

## JUST A LITTLE IN THEIR FAVOR

BY

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Far away from a railroad, on the sunny slope of a Somerset hill, an old country house, with low eaves and thick stone walls, lies back from the meadows that border the North Branch of the Raritan River, just where Peapack Brook loses itself in that stream. This sturdy homestead has a wealth of old-fashioned accessories, and its surroundings are in perfect keeping with its happy expressions of utilitarian simplicity and homely picturesqueness. The short, rich turf of its facing dooryard is shaded by contemplative elms, and studded with tall bulbous bushes of box and roses of Sharon. At its eastern gable, in an ancient garden, bloom hereditary lilies, sweet peas, and many colored asters. The little windows that pierce the western gable, look out on a colony of barns, hay-mows and straw-ricks; while still beyond, an old orchard flanks the highway, which creeps up a long hill until it disappears over its crest, a quarter of a mile, and more, away.

This ancestral dwelling was built by the writer's great great grandfather, Johannes Moelich, in the year 1752. At that time the forests buried the Bedminster hills and valleys in vast undulations of leafy verdure, and much of the country lay in a broad and almost unbroken extent of fertile waste, with but few traces of human habitation discernible. Population had been slow in penetrating this township, and its primeval mantle of continuous green was interrupted by but a few houses clustering as the embryo villages of Pluckamin and Lamington, while an occasional

interval, open to the sun, marked the germ of a future farm. The founder of this homestead emigrated in the year 1735, from Bendorf, Germany, a town of gray antiquity, located a few miles below Coblentz, on the right bank of the Rhine; a point where the storied beauty of that river is richest in hillsides terraced with vineyards, in bold declivities stored with legends, and in charming valleys, filled with the romance of the middle ages.

At the outset of the Revolution Johannes Moelich had died, and the head of the family in the Stone House was his eldest son, Aaron, who was born in Germany, in 1725. He was beyond the age required for service in the militia, but was an earnest patriot, and an active member of the Bedminster Committee of Observation and Inspection. Johannes' second son, Andrew, enlisted on the memorable day of the Declaration of Independence, and eventually rose to the command of a company in the First Sussex Regiment; Aaron's eldest son, John, carried a musket, under Lord Stirling, in the battle of Long Island, and, being captured by the British, spent many weary months in one of the New York Sugar Houses.

Since reaching America the members of the family had continually corresponded with relatives and friends in the old country. From their letters they had learned that, some time previous to 1745, Bendorf had been transferred from the sovereignty of its former owners to that of the Margrave of Anspach. At that time Germany was a most extraordinary patchwork of large and small governments, including Electorates, Duchies, Bishoprics, Free cities, estates of Imperial Knights and dominions of Land-graves and Princes. Many of the petty German rulers governed with despotic power dominions that were often no larger than one of our own counties, and frequently their territorial possessions were at detached distances. The County of Sayn-Altenkirchen comprised the districts of Altenkirchen, Freusburg, Friedewald and Bendorf. Late in the Seventeenth Century this territory was the personal estate of Johannetta, wife of the Duke Joh. George I, of Sachsen-Eisenach. By her will

of the thirtieth of November, 1685, it was to descend, under the rule of primogeniture, in the line of her eldest son. In 1741, the male line having become extinct, it passed to the descendants of her daughter, Eleanora Sophie, wife of the Margrave Johann Friedrich of Brandenburg-Anspach, and consequently fell to her grandson, the Margrave Karl Wilhelm Friedrich, of Anspach, who reigned from 1729 to 1757. If the people of the Bedminster household knew anything of the character of the new owner of Bendorf, they could well appreciate that they had good cause for thankfulness at being citizens of free America, rather than the subjects of a ruler who was entirely without sympathy for the rights and wrongs of his people; a prince who himself was governed by impulse and prejudice, rather than by a knowledge of justice, and the desire to deal fairly with those whom the chance of birth and circumstances had placed in his power. Like all men controlled by their impulses, he could, at times, be generosity itself; but when the Margrave was in a bad temper, and his judgment distorted by passion, his cruelties were apt to be of the most atrocious character. At such a time, woe betide the noble, burgher or peasant upon whom he set his malignant eye in anger. But it is not the purpose of this paper to recount the numerous instances that might be given of the severities and excesses of this prince, though many pages could be filled with tales of the idiosyncrasies and crimes that marked the career of this erratic ruler.

On that cold day after Christmas, in 1776, when the story of the Battle of Trenton went flying from hamlet to farm, over the hills and valleys of Somerset, the startling news was a matter of peculiar interest to the members of the family at the "Old Stone House." Their rejoicing over the victory of the Americans was tempered somewhat by the knowledge that the vanquished were Germans, and that some of them with but little doubt, had been the fellow-townsmen, in the old country, of the head of the household. At the time of the rupture between the colonies and the home government the prince over Anspach, and consequently over Bendorf, was Charles Alexander, the son of the murdering Margrave.

He it was who, when George III. applied to the princes of Germany for troops to aid him in subduing his revolted American subjects, supplied the English government with three regiments, aggregating 2,353 men, for which he received over five hundred thousand dollars. Among the enemy captured at Trenton was a portion of one of these regiments, and its flag taken on that day was deposited in the Museum at Alexandria, Virginia. When this Museum building was burned a few years ago, the flag was destroyed, together with that of Washington's life guard, and other interesting relics placed there by Mr. G. W. P. Custis. It was the custom for German Princes, in filling the ranks of battalions intended to be bartered to foreign governments, to secure recruits, when possible, from their out-lying possessions rather than from the home dominions; it is fair to presume, then, that Bendorf was obliged to furnish its full quota to the forces destined for America. Aaron was probably well informed of these facts by his correspondents abroad, and, though the news of the affair at Trenton may have added much to the happiness of the holiday season, yet, he would have been quite wanting in sensibility had he reflected without concern upon the possibility of there being among the unfortunates, who had been killed, wounded, or captured, men who in their youth had been his playmates on the streets of his native town.

When the British ministers found that an American revenue could only be collected by force of arms, they had but little difficulty in finding German rulers who were willing to sacrifice their troops in a quarrel that did not concern them, provided they were well enough paid. Duke Earnest, the prince ruling Saxe-Gotha and Altenburg, though a relative of England's King, declined peremptorily the offer of the British ministers for troops. Bancroft states that when England applied to Frederick Augustus of Saxony, he promptly answered through his minister, that "the thought of sending a part of his army to the remote countries of the New World touched too nearly his paternal tenderness for his subjects, and seemed to be too much in contrast with the

rules of healthy policy." Charles Augustus of Saxe-Weimar refused to permit any of his subjects to recruit for service in America except vagabonds and convicts. This ruler, who was but nineteen years old, was doubtless influenced by the broad and generous spirit animating the counsels of his minister, Goethe. Frederick the Great, also, to his credit be it said, condemned the practice of putting armies in the market, but other princes were only too glad to swell their treasuries at the cost of the loss of a few subjects. From Edward K. Lowell's valuable work on the Hessians in the Revolution, we learn that the English Government secured soldiers from five German rulers, besides that of Anspach-Beyreuth. Frederic II., Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, furnished 16,992, of which 10,492 returned home after the war. From Charles I., Duke of Brunswick, were obtained 5,723, of which returned, 2,708. William, Count of Hesse-Hanau, 2,422; returned, 1,441. Frederic, Prince of Waldeck, 1,225; returned, 505. Frederic Augustus, Prince of Anhalt-Zerbst, 1,152; returned, 984. Of the troops furnished by the Margrave who owned Bendorf less than one-half again saw Germany. Jones, the Tory historian, avers that the British ministry stipulated to pay the German Princes ten pounds for each man that did not return home at the close of the war; for each wounded soldier, however slight the injury, five pounds were to be paid. Commandants were careful to report even the scratch of a finger, consequently, in 1786, when the bills came in from the German Powers, the English were obliged to pay four hundred and seventy-one thousand pounds, in settlement. Mr. Karl Schnizlein, Royal Bavarian Director of the General Court of Justice, and Secretary of the Historical Society for Mittelfranken, Germany—in a letter dated the twenty-eighth of September, 1887—assures me thrt the treaty between the British Government and the Margrave Charles Alexander, of Anspach, differed very materially from those made with the other German Princes. This was especially so as to—as he expresses it—"paying premiums for perished soldiers." Furthermore, that the money allowed for the Anspachian-Beyreuthian troops by the Brit-

ish ministry was not to the personal advantage of the Margrave, but was paid into the treasury and used for the redemption of the indebtedness of the Country. Mr. Schnizlein, in his letter, also states that while he does not know of any archives from which information can be obtained regarding enlistments in the troops that went to America, it is probable that among the subsidiary forces of the Margrave there were men liable to serve as soldiers from the Margraviate of Sayn-Altenkirchen, (Bendorf).

It is quite time that the name of the German auxiliaries of the English army in America, was severed from the odium attached to it for over a century past. Most of the barbarities and cruelties practiced upon the citizens of New Jersey, by the entire British forces, have been charged against the so-called "Hessian" troops, and it is only within a few years that some disposition has been shown to deal justly with the record of the conduct of the German soldiery. When it is remembered that the writer is descended from an ancestry whose place of nativity presumably furnished men to swell the ranks of the so-called Mercenaries, it may fairly be considered within his province to attempt a few words in vindication of the memory of these over-maligned Hessians. Such an effort will not have been made in vain if the presentation of the following impressions and facts shall tend, even in a small degree, to relieve these people from a long-standing and unmerited obloquy.

Hessians ! how they have been hated by the Jersey people ! The very name is still spoken by many with a prolonged hiss-s. For generations the word has been used even as a bug-a-boo with which to frighten children, and by the imperfectly read, the German troops have been stigmatized as "Dutch Robbers !" "Blood-thirsty Marauders !" and "Foreign Mercenaries !" Why blame these tools ? While many of them were not saints, neither were they the miscreants and incendiaries bent on excursions of destruction and rapine that the traditions fostered by prejudiced historians would have us believe. Many of these Germans were kindly souls, and probably the best-abused people of the time. Indi-

vidually they were not mercenaries, and a majority of the rank and file, without doubt, objected as strongly to being on American soil, fighting against liberty, as did their opponents to have them here. Some idea may be obtained of their repugnance to coming to this country, from Schiller's protest against the custom of his countrymen's being sent across the seas in exchange for the gold of foreign governments. He tells how, on one occasion, upon orders being published directing a regiment to embark for the colonies, some privates, stepping out of the ranks, protested against crossing the ocean, and demanded of their Colonel for how much a yoke the Prince sold men. Whereupon the regiment was marched upon the parade ground, and the malcontents there shot. To quote Schiller: "We heard the crack of the rifles, as their brains spattered the pavement, and the whole army shouted, 'Hurrah for America!'"

Germany's despotic princes justified their human traffic with the specious plea that it is a good soldier's duty to fight when his country requires his services—that whether it is against an enemy of his own government, or that of another, should not be considered, or enter into his conception of allegiance. They argued that there is no boon so great as a full treasury, and when a subject contributed, by enlistment, to that end, he was fulfilling the highest duty of citizenship. Their people, unfortunately, did not respond to such views of patriotism; consequently in securing recruits, the most severe measures were necessary. Impressing was a favorite means of filling the regimental ranks; strangers as well as citizens were in danger of being arrested, imprisoned, and sent off before their friends could learn of their jeopardy, and no one was safe from the grip of the recruiting officer. This is illustrated by an interesting account given by Johann Godfried Leume, a Leipsic student, who was kidnapped while traveling, forced into the ranks of a moving regiment, and dispatched to America to fight England's battles. As every conceivable method of escape was devised by conscripts, desertions were punished with great severity, though, as a rule, not with death, as the princes found that their private soldiers had too

high a monetary value in European markets to be sacrificed by the extreme penalty. In many principalities the laws obliged the towns and villages in which soldiers escaped to supply substitutes from among the sons of their most prominent citizens, and any one aiding a fugitive was imprisoned at hard labor and deprived of his civil rights. Bancroft avers that the heartless meanness of the Brunswick princes would pass belief if it was not officially authenticated. On learning of Burgoyne's surrender, they begged that their captured men might be sent to the West Indies, rather than home, fearing that on reaching Germany their complaints would prove a damage to the government trade in soldiers. Notwithstanding the severe penalties visited on deserters, when the Anhalt-Zerbst regiments—1228 strong—on their way to embark, passed near the Prussian frontier, over 300 deserted in ten days. In 1777, when the Margrave of Anspach-Beyreuth wished to forward some recruits to America, he was obliged to march the detachment unarmed to the point of embarkation on the Main, and while on the way the recruits were guarded by a trusted troop of yagers. In spite of these precautions many escaped, and several were shot while making the endeavor.

The late Freiderich Kapp has contributed greatly to our knowledge of Hessian and Anspach soldiery. In regard to recruiting, he informs us that an officer in charge of a detachment of newly-enlisted men, was directed, when on the march in the old country, to avoid large towns, also the vicinity of the place where any of the recruits had lived, or been formerly stationed. So great precautions were considered necessary to prevent escape, that it was the duty of an officer, when billeting at night with strangers, to room with his men, and, after undressing, to deliver his weapons and the clothing of the entire party to the landlord or host. In the morning the men's clothing was not to be brought in until the officer was completely dressed and he had loaded and primed his pistols. While *en route* should a recruit grow restive or show signs of insubordination, the instructions were to cut the buttons and straps from his trousers, forcing him to hold them up in

walking, and thus rendering flight impossible. Lieutenant Thomas Anburey, a British officer captured with Burgoyne, in a book descriptive of his experiences in America, has much to tell regarding the Hessian contingent of the Northern Army. We may suppose that his following recital as to the manner of foreign enlistments was based on information gained from German officers. "The Prince caused every place of worship to be surrounded during service, and took every man who had been a soldier, and to embody these into regiments he appointed old officers, who had been many years upon half-pay, to command them, or, on refusal of serving, to forfeit their half-pay. Thus were these regiments raised, officered with old veterans, who had served with credit and reputation in their youthful days, and who had retired, as they imagined, to enjoy some comfort in the decline of life." This American service was especially objectionable to the Germans, because of the knowledge that our country was the home of many of their nationaitly. They did not wish to fight friends. Nor were their fears groundless, for, in their first engagement after landing—the Battle of Long Island—among the troops commanded by Lord Stirling, opposed to the Hessians, were three battalions mostly composed of Pennsylvania Germans. They were well uniformed and equipped, and looked so much like the Mercenaries that, at one time, the English thought them to be Hessians, which error cost the British a colonel and eighty privates. This was not the first time that princely avarice had been the means of causing men from the valleys of the Rhine and its tributaries to contend with each other. Lowell recounts that in 1743, Hessians stood against Hessians, six thousand men serving in the army of King George II and six thousand in the opposing force of Emperor Charles VII.

When the news of the capture of the Hessians at Trenton spread through New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the inhabitants thronged from every direction to view these beings that they had been led to believe were monsters; they were much astonished to find them like ordinary men of German extraction. The people were filled with wonder, however, at

their strangely martial appearance; their officers, with embroidered coats and stiff carriage, were in strong contrast to the easy-going commanders of the Continental forces, while the men in their dress and accoutrements presented a very different appearance from that of the generally poorly clad and equipped soldiers of the young Republic. This was especially true of the grenadiers. They wore very long-skirted blue coats which looked fine on parade, but were ill-calculated for rapid marching; a yellow waistcoat extended below the hips, and yellow breeches were met at the knee by black gaiters. A thick paste of tallow and flour covered the hair, which was drawn tightly back and plaited into a tail which hung nearly to the waist. Their mustaches were fiercely stiffened with black paste, while above all towered a heavy brass-fronted cap. When in full marching order they must needs have had stout legs and broad backs to have sustained the weight they were forced to carry; in addition to cumbersome belts, a cartouche box and a heavy gun, each man's equipment included sixty rounds of ammunition, an enormous sword, a canteen holding a gallon, a knapsack, blanket, haversack, hatchet, and his proportion of tent equipage.

These Trenton captives were sent over the Delaware into Pennsylvania and quartered at Newtown. Lord Stirling, who was there, received the officers with much consideration, saying, "Your General De Heister treated me like a brother when I was a prisoner" (after the battle of Long Island). "And so, gentlemen, will you be treated by me." Corporal Johannes Reuber, one of the captives, writes in his journal, that in passing through the towns and villages the Germans were upbraided and treated with contumely by the populace, which continued until Washington caused notices to be posted throughout the vicinity, saying that the Hessians had been compelled to become combatants, and should be treated with kindness and not with enmity. The prisoners were very grateful to Washington for being allowed to retain their baggage, and for their generally kind treatment. In their grati-

tude for conduct so opposed to what they had expected, they called their illustrious conqueror "a very good rebel."

General De Heister, referred to by Lord Stirling, was an old man, who, after fifty years of service, yielded to the earnest entreaty of his personal friend, the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, and consented to command the eighty-seven hundred Hessians who came to America to join Howe's army. During the prolonged voyage the old gentleman exhausted his whole stock of tobacco and patience. From his transport he thus wrote to Sir George Collier of H. M. S. Rainbow, who commanded the convoying war-ships: "I have been imposed on and deceived, for I was assured the voyage would not exceed six or seven weeks; it is now more than fourteen since I embarked, and full three months since I left England, yet I see no more prospect of landing than I did a week after our sailing. I am an old man, covered with wounds, and imbecilitated by age and fatigues, and it is impossible I should survive if the voyage continues much longer." Sir George visited the veteran on his ship and raised his spirits by plentifully supplying him with fresh provisions and tobacco, and by assuring him that the voyage would soon terminate. The old German called upon his band to play, brought out some old hock, and Sir George left him quite exhiliarated after drinking in many potations the health of the King, the Landgrave, and of many other friends.

Of the German officers, Revolutionary literature teems with testimony as to their courtesy and good breeding, and numerous instances could be cited going to show that they often endeared themselves to the people that they were here ostensibly to subdue. Among those of leading rank, De Heister, Riedesel, Donop and Knyphausen left on the communities most agreeable impressions. The latter was a man of honor, possessed a most kindly nature, and while stationed in Philadelphia won the favorable consideration of the citizens. In appearance he was rather distinguished, erect and slender in figure, with sharp martial features. He was very polite, bowing to all respectable persons met on the street, and was fair and honorable in his dealings. In May, 1782, when this

General, in company with Sir Henry Clinton, embarked from New York for England, a diarist of that time recites: "General Knyphausen has the good wishes of all people, but Sir Henry leaves a poor character behind him." Bancroft characterizes Riedesel as a man of honor and activity; and the same historian speaks of De Heister as a brave old man, cheerful in disposition, good-natured, bluntly honest and upright. Colonel Donop it was who fell in the glacis of Fort Mercer, amid the great slaughter which the gallant but rash charge, led by him, had ensured. Colonel Greene, who displayed much bravery in repulsing the enemy, was most humane in his treatment of the wounded that his cannon balls and grape shot had left piled in front of the fortification's double abattis. Among Colonel Donop's last words, before his death, which occurred a few days after the action, were: "I fall a victim to my own ambition, and to the avarice of my Prince; but full of thankfulness for the good treatment I have received from my generous enemy."

As to the Hessian officers of lesser rank, equally good tidings have come down to us. Mr. De Lancey, in his paper on Mount Washington and its capture, published in the first volume of the Magazine of American History, avers that the Hessian officers in America were polite, courteous, and almost without exception well educated; he recites that, as far as birth was concerned, the English officers of Howe's army were much inferior in social rank to those of the Germans. Any rich Englishman could make his boy a gentleman by buying him a commission, but in Germany it was necessary for a youth to be one by birth if he aspired to be an officer. When the British army, in 1776, occupied Manhattan Island, the troops were to a large extent billeted on the citizens. Mrs. Martha J. Lamb recounts in her interesting History of the City of New York, that Mrs. Thomas Clark, a widow lady, owned and occupied with her daughters an attractive country seat near Twenty-fifth street and Tenth avenue. She was greatly distressed because of a party of Hessians being quartered on her property. Like every one else at that time, she supposed them to be iniquitous persons,

who would visit upon her family all manner of indignities. To Mrs. Clark's great relief, she found her apprehensions groundless. Nothing was disturbed, and the commanding officer proved not only to be a gentleman, but so considerate and agreeable that he became a favorite both with herself and her daughters. Early in the war experiences of a like character were frequent. Mrs. Ellet, in her "Domestic History," tells that after Howe's army had advanced into Westchester county, a Mrs. Captain Whetten, living near New Rochelle, noticed one day that a black flag had been set up near her house. Upon asking an English officer its meaning, she was much distressed by his replying, "Heaven help you, madam, a Hessian camp is to be established here." Her fears were unnecessary, as, when the Germans arrived, good feeling soon existed between them and the family. One of the officers was quartered in the house; when night came Mrs. Whetten was about sending to some distance for clean sheets for his bed, when he protested against her inconveniencing herself on his account, saying: "Do not trouble yourself, madam; straw is good enough for a soldier."

Graydon, in his Memoirs, gives an account of his spending the winter of 1778 in Reading, Pennsylvania. There were there a number of officers, prisoners on parole; among them several Germans "who," to quote the author's words, "had really the appearance of being what you would call downright men. One old gentleman, a Colonel, was a great professional reader, whom on his application I accommodated with books such as I had. Another of them, a very portly personage, was enthusiastically devoted to music, in which he was so much absorbed as to seldom go abroad. But of all the prisoners, one Graff, a Brunswick officer, taken by General Gates' army, was admitted to the greatest privileges. Under the patronage of Dr. Potts, who had been principal surgeon in the Northern Department, he had been introduced to our dancing parties, and being always afterward invited, he never failed to attend. He was a young man of mild and pleasing manners. There was also a Mr. Stulzoe, of the Brunswick Dragoons, than whose, I have seldom seen a figure more mar-

tial, or a manner more indicative of that manly openness which is supposed to belong to the character of a soldier."

It would be interesting to learn just how so deep seated an aversion to the Hessians first became planted in the minds of the people, particularly in those of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. It could not have been because of their nationality, as, among the populations of those States were many Germans, who had always been appreciated as a worthy folk, quiet rather than bellicose in character. Yet, for some mysterious reason, these Rhenish soldiers were looked upon with great dread by the inhabitants, especially by those who knew the least of them. The terror they inspired was often dissipated by a better acquaintance, as the private soldiers, as a rule, were found to be—with, of course, individual exceptions—simple minded souls and more afraid of their officers than of anything else. Mr. Onderdonk, in his "Revolutionary Incidents," speaks of them as "a kind, peaceable people, inveterately fond of smoking and of pea coffee; their offences were of the sly kind, such as stealing at night, while the British and new raised corps were insolent, domineering, and inclined to violence and bloodshed."

Gouverneur Morris, in 1777, was ordered by the Convention of the State of New York to prepare a narrative of the conduct of the British toward American prisoners. Among the papers submitted was the affidavit of Lieutenant Troop, of the Militia, which recited that he and other officers confined on Long Island were much abused by nearly all of the British officers, and in their presence by the soldiers; they were insulted and called rebels, scoundrels, villains and robbers. That when imprisoned at Flatbush they were given so short an allowance of biscuits and salt pork "that," to use his own words, "several of the Hessian soldiers took pity on their situation, and gave them some apples, and at one time some fresh beef, which much relieved them." The following extract is from a letter written by Washington at Morristown on the 5th of February, 1777, to Samuel Chase, one of a committee of seven appointed by Congress to inquire into the conduct of the British and Hessian officers toward American

soldiers, and toward the citizens of New York and New Jersey: "I shall employ some proper person to take the depositions of people in the different parts of the province of New Jersey, who have been plundered after having taken protection and subscribed the Declaration. One thing I must remark in favor of the Hessians, and that is, that our people who have been prisoners generally agree that they received much kinder treatment from them than from the British officers and soldiers. The barbarities at Princeton were all committed by the British, there being no Hessians there."

Max von Eelking, in his "de Deutschen Hülpstruppen in Nordamerikanischen Befreiungskriege, 1776 bis 1783," speaks of the effect that the landing of the Hessians on Long Island had upon the inhabitants. After telling that they were in great awe of the Germans, and that many fled on their approach, he goes on to say: "When the first fear and excitement among the population had subsided, and people had become aware that after all they had not to deal with robbers and anthropophagi, they returned to their homes, and were not a little surprised to find not only their dwellings as they left them, but also the furniture, their effects, aye, even their money and trinkets. The fact was that the Germans, used to discipline, did not ask for more than they were entitled to. Their mutual relations now took a more friendly form, and it was not a rare case that a thorough republican would treat the quartered soldier like one entitled to his hospitality, and carefully nurse the sick or wounded one." During the winter of 1776, there was living at Burlington a Mrs. Margaret Morris, who recorded her experiences in a journal, of which a few copies were printed for private circulation. When Count Donop's command penetrated as far as Mount Holly, she, in common with every one else, was at first much exercised over the proximity of the abhorred Hessians. On the seventeenth of December the following entry was made in her diary: "A friend made my mind easy by telling me that he had passed through the town where the Hessians were said to be 'playing the very mischief'; it is certain there were numbers of them at Mount Holly, but they behaved very civilly

to the people, excepting only a few persons who were actually in rebellion, as they termed it, whose goods, etc., they injured."

The bitter feeling evinced by the people toward the Hessians was probably engendered by the conduct of the mercenary troops at the battle of Long Island. There is no doubt that during that engagement they were guilty of unnecessary cruelties, but any fair-minded person, familiar with all the facts, must admit that the circumstances of ignorance and false teaching palliate to a certain extent their behavior on that occasion. The Long Island Historical Society, in its account of the battle, publishes the letter of an officer in Fraser's Scotch Battalion, from which I make the following extract: "The Hessians and our brave Highlanders gave no quarter, and it was a fine sight to see with what alacrity they dispatched the rebels with bayonets, after we had surrounded them so that they could not resist. We took care to tell the Hessians that the rebels had resolved to give no quarter to them in particular; which made them fight desperately, and put all to death who fell into their hands." The statement of this bloodthirsty Highland officer is corroborated by the before referred to historian, Max von Eelking. He records: "That the Hessians were very much exasperated and furious, is not to be denied; * * * * the course pursued by the Hessians was urged upon them by the Britons. Colonel Von Heeringen says on this subject, in his letter to Colonel Von Lossburg: 'The English soldiers did not give much quarter, and constantly urged our men to follow their example.'"

That the heart of the Hessians was not in their work of aiding in the subjugation of Great Britain's colonists is proven by the fact of their frequent desertions. It is estimated that of the nearly thirty thousand German troops brought to America by the English, more than five thousand deserted, many of them becoming valued citizens of the country; and frequent instances can be shown of their descendants ranking among the leading people of the United States. Judge Jones, in his "History of New York," avers that Henry Ashdore

was the first in America of the name now so well known under its anglicized form of Astor. He was a peasant from Waldorf, in Baden, who came to this country with the British during the Revolutionary War, but, after a short period, managed to escape their service, and entered into that of the "Art and Mystery of Butchering." After the cessation of hostilities he induced his youngest brother, then a youth of twenty, to come to New York. This was John Jacob Astor, who died in 1848, the richest man of his day in America. Mr. J. G. Rosengarten, in an interesting paper read before the Newport Historical Society, in 1886, informs us that the ancestor of General George A. Custer was a Hessian soldier named Kuster, who was among those captured by Gates in 1777. He settled in Pennsylvania, but subsequently removed to Maryland, where the distinguished general's father was born in 1806. John Conrad Dochlar, an Anspach sergeant, in enumerating in his diary the German troops made prisoners at Yorktown, mentions the "Prince Royal" regiment of Hesse-Cassel as having once been strong, "but now a great sufferer from death and desertion"; and the Anspach and Beyreuthian regiments as having had about "forty killed and wounded, besides losing fifty deserters." While Burgoyne's captured army was on the march to Virginia, there were many desertions among the Germans, who, as Lieutenant Anburey—before quoted—says, "seeing in what a comfortable manner their countrymen lived, left us in great numbers as we marched through New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Washington, in a letter to Congress from Englishtown, on the day of the Battle of Monmouth, writes that thus far Sir Henry Clinton, in his march through the Jerseys, had lost by desertion five or six hundred men, "chiefly foreigners"; and six days later General Arnold, who had been left in command at Philadelphia, reported that five hundred and seventy-six deserters had reached that city, of whom four hundred and forty were Germans. General Greene, in a letter to John Adams, written from Basking Ridge in March, 1777, thus speaks of the Germans captured on Christmas day: "The mild and gentle treatment the

Hessian prisoners have received since they have been in our possession has produced a great alteration in their dispositions. Desertions prevail among them. One whole brigade refused to fight or do duty, and were sent prisoners to New York. Rancor and hatred prevails between them and the British soldiers." From Lossing we learn that of the officers captured at Trenton, Ensign Carle Fried Frurer, of the Knyphausen regiment, and Ensign Kleinsmith, joined the American army; and the historian, Onderdonk, claims that many leading families of Long Island trace their descent from deserters from the ranks of the mercenary troops. On the Sunday after the Battle of Princeton, General Maxwell with some Jersey militia came out of the Short Hills, and, falling suddenly on the British post at Elizabethtown, made prisoners of fifty Waldeckers and forty Highlanders. A writer describes this affair in a letter dated at Philadelphia on the sixteenth of January, and recites that "the English troops at Elizabethtown would not suffer the Waldeckers to stand sentry at the outposts, several of them having deserted and come over to us."

At the time of the Battle of Germantown there was living in that place a rich German baker named Christopher Ludwick. Having learned that among the prisoners taken during that engagement were eight Hessians, this patriotic baker conceived the idea of putting his unfortunate countrymen to a more valuable service than that of being guarded or paroled. He went to headquarters and induced the commander-in-chief to place these men completely in his hands, the only proviso being that there should come to them no bodily harm. He then constituted himself their host and guide, and taking them all about Philadelphia and its vicinity, showed them how the Germans were prospering in this country; how comfortably they were housed, what fine churches they had, with what freedom and independence they followed their vocations, and with what happiness those in the humbler pursuits of life were living. This wise custodian then dismissed his prisoners, charging them to return to their regiments and inform their fellow-soldiers of all that they had seen, and

explain to them the happiness awaiting those who would desert and settle in Pennsylvania. The seed thus planted bore rich fruit. It is said that among the desertions resulting from this action, numbers afterward became prosperous citizens of Philadelphia. Ludwick's success in this enterprise encouraged him to further endeavors in the same direction; he visited a Hessian camp on Staten Island, and, without detection, succeeded in causing several soldiers to flee to Pennsylvania. This honest German afterward became baker general to the American army. He is said to have often been a visitor at headquarters, where Washington recognized his worth, and appreciated to the full the value of his services.

Speaking of General Washington brings to mind the fact that while living in Philadelphia, as Chief Magistrate of the nation, his coachman was an ex-Hessian soldier. It was one of the events of the week to see "Fritz," seated on the box of the Executive's carriage, draw up his four bright bays on Sunday morning in front of Christ Church. He was tall and muscular, looking the soldier, his long aquiline nose pressing closely down over a fierce moustache. In a livery of white, touched with red, he carried himself with an important air, showing a severe countenance under his cocked hat, which was worn square to the front, but thrown a litttle back on his cue. Washington's arrival at church was always the occasion of an enthusiastic, but quiet and respectful ovation. Long before the hour he was expected Second street would be packed with a patient throng of citizens. On the approach of the well known white coach, ornamented with medallions, the crowd silently opened a narrow way or lane from the curb to the church door, and as the President stepped with calm dignity from the carriage, profound silence reigned, every eye being riveted on the distinguished form. His costume was always a full suit of black silk velvet, relieved by silver knee and shoe buckles. His hair, powdered to a snowy whiteness, was drawn back into a black silk bag ornamented with a rosette, and a dress sword hung at his side. Yellow gloves were on his hands; a rich blue Spanish cloak, faced with red velvet, was thrown over his left shoulder, the whole being

supplemented by a three-cornered hat with a black cockade and feathers. As Washington, stately in person and noble in demeanor, slowly moved across the pavement toward the sacred edifice, it was an impressive spectacle. From the dense crowd there came not a sound, but the respectful silence in which the assembled multitude stood in the presence of the "father of his country," testified more strongly than would have the bravest shouts or the loudest acclamations as to the admiration and veneration with which they viewed this "greatest, purest, most exalted of mortals."