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Title: A Defence of the Hessians

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Release Date: July 23, 2010 [EBook #33235]

Language: English

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A DEFENCE OF THE HESSIANS ***

A DEFENCE OF THE HESSIANS.

CONTRIBUTED BY

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*Reprinted from
"The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography."
July, 1899.*

PHILADELPHIA:
1899.

A DEFENCE OF THE HESSIANS.

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[In a pamphlet printed in Melsungen and published in Cassel in 1879 under the title of "Frederick the Second and Modern History, a Contribution to the Denial of the Fairy Stories as to the Pretended Sale of Soldiers by Hessian Princes, with a New View of Seume's Statements," there is quite a full defence of the Hessians and their service in America under the British flag. As it is a second and enlarged edition, it must have found readers, although I do not think I have ever seen any notice of this somewhat novel view. It may not be without interest to students of history to have a brief summary and statement of the defence of the Hessians and their princes, who ever since our Revolutionary War have been the subjects of obloquy and treated with lofty scorn and contempt.]

The Seven Years' War had enlisted England's rich help in men and money. A powerful army of one hundred thousand men, composed of English soldiers, of twenty-four thousand

Hessians, of Hanoverians and Brunswickers, enabled Frederick of Prussia to continue a resistance which otherwise he could not have maintained for two years. The North German states were not Prussian vassals, but allies of England for a hundred years, on the basis of common political aims. Hesse, as the stronghold of the Protestants of North Germany, had been in close alliance with England at a time when Brandenburg was little thought of. The ancient military glory of Hesse during the Thirty Years' War was so great that Gustavus Adolphus on landing in Germany had asked for a Hessian, Colonel Falkenburg, as military governor of Magdeburg. For a century and a half Hessian soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder with the English troops, mainly against France. That they should again act together in America was not more surprising than that the Sardinian Italians should cooperate with the French in the Crimea. The same statesmanlike wisdom was shown in Cassel and in Turin, and led to a like result. The little Hesse of 1866 must not be confused with the old Hesse, which was an important factor in German politics. In almost every war of the last century Hesse had taken part with its army of twenty-four thousand men,—an important contingent at that time and one that made Hesse the object of many invitations to close alliance. In the Seven Years' War, England joined Frederick the Great, so, too, did the Hessians and the other German allies. It fared badly with Hesse,—repeatedly it was overrun and often held by the French, while its army was serving in Westphalia and Hanover; the Elector died away from his home and was succeeded by his son; none of the eastern provinces of Prussia suffered like Hesse.

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The Elector Frederick had been educated on the Rhine, and shortly before the outbreak of the Seven Years' War was the guest of the Archbishop Elector of Cologne. Political honors have been made the reason of the Elector of Saxony's change of his Protestant faith—that he might secure the throne of Catholic Poland. Vanity and want of patriotic pride have led German princesses to win Russian husbands at the sacrifice of their Protestant faith, while no Russian princess has ever given up her church for the sake of a foreign husband. Frederick of Hesse changed his religion from purely personal reasons and in perfect honesty. It was long concealed from his father, a strong Protestant, ruling the church in the spirit of his ancestor Maurice. An accident revealed the secret, and violent was the anger of the sturdy Protestant father. At first he wanted to exclude his son from the succession, but this required an appeal to the Emperor, who naturally would refuse. The elder prince then, with the approval of his Parliament, made a close alliance with England, and this added to the security of his son's English marriage. The eldest son of that marriage, later on Elector William, was to rule in Hanau, free from any influence of his Catholic father, under the protection of an English garrison, so that his home was temporarily separated from Hesse, and put under strict protection of its church rights. Parliament, people, and army all took an oath to abide by this, and Elector Frederick always kept his Catholic predilections strictly personal, never influencing the old Protestant rule; indeed, out of his own purse he completed the Reformed church in Cassel begun by his father, and endowed it.

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In 1762 Elector Frederick returned home at the head of the Hessian army, and Hessian administration replaced that of the foreign invaders; but the treasury was empty, the resources of the state exhausted, and the population reduced one-half. The country had been laid waste. The Elector declined all show, and quietly reoccupied his ancestral castle on January 2, 1763. The Parliament was summoned, and again exercised its constitutional rights to examine and criticise the financial statements of the government. These showed that the only resource for the needs of the army was the claim against England for unpaid subsidies, amounting to 10,143,286 thalers. The government was authorized to reduce the army and to apply any saving thus effected for pressing civil needs. The representative in London was instructed to urge the prompt payment of the debt due for Hessian forces in English service. The matter was warmly discussed in Parliament, and only in 1775 was the debt discharged in part to the amount of 7,923,283 thalers. In 1772 a short supply of food led to the establishment of public warehouses, where flour bought abroad was sold at cost price.

The agricultural condition, however, was a very unfavorable one, and in 1775 England first broached a renewal of the old alliance, with a view to the employment of Hessian troops in the case of war in America. The project of American independence was heartily disapproved of in Germany and even in republican Switzerland. It was turning colonies into rival states. Then, too, in seeking an alliance with France and Spain, America was turning to the hereditary enemies of Germany. The course of the English Whigs in endorsing the American rebels was condemned as a mere party move against the Tory ministry, crippling the government. Moser, the historian, represented the current opinion of Germany when he described the Yankees as perjured subjects. The modern and advanced German prefers Mirabeau to Moser,—vice to virtue. The threats of that French agitator against Germany have no more historical value than the declamation of Victor Hugo during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. Moser's was the general opinion of his time. As to the English offer, the Elector was personally against taking part in the war: he wanted peace to restore prosperity to the land, to which he was contributing freely out of his own means, while he took almost nothing for his own wants. He objected to sending the army, composed almost entirely of his own subjects, far away, and if he had anticipated a seven years' struggle he would never have consented. His Parliament was anxious to hasten the payment of the balance due by England, which had only of late quickened its remittances. Without a new English alliance it would be long before the country could recover from the exhaustion of the Seven Years' War. Prussia had recouped its exhausted treasury by the booty of the Polish

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division in 1772. England's offer could not be refused. At that time Hesse was tempted by an offer of a share of the Polish treasure in return for a loan of Hessian troops to Prussia, which it sturdily rejected.

As far back as 1757 the King of Prussia had asked leave to buy eight hundred Hessian recruits to take the place of that number of Saxon Catholic prisoners of war, who had been forced into the Prussian service to turn against their own king and country and had all escaped; but the old Elector of Hesse peremptorily refused permission. Prussia denounced the treaty by which the Hessian army served as allies of the British, but wanted to buy the individual soldiers as so many slaves. The young Elector openly disapproved the partition of Poland and refused any offer from Prussia. The feeling through Hesse-Cassel was strongly against Prussia and just as strongly friendly to England, and this was clearly shown in the debates and action of the Hessian Parliament and in the reports of the Hessian representative in London, Schlieffen. The request of England was finally agreed to. The Hessian troops went to America with the full approval of their country, in accordance with the wishes of its legal representatives, in joyful courage, bent on winning new laurels at the side of their old allies.

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The first meeting with the enemy, soon after the landing of the first Hessian division under Lieutenant-General Heister, was a glorious one for his troops. At Flatbush Washington's army was driven at the point of the bayonet almost to destruction, most of the American leaders captured, and nearly all their flags taken. The Hessian grenadiers who at Minden had attacked the French cavalry with the bayonet had lost nothing of the vigor they had shown in the Seven Years' War.

The war might have been finished in one campaign and the loss of the Colonies prevented, for at least two-thirds of the population of America looked on old England as the true source of liberty, but were coerced by the rebellious minority. But the English commander, Lord Howe, was a Whig, and forbade Heister's pursuit and use of his victory. Howe ordered defensive lines to be fortified against the broken force of Washington's army. This turned the tables. Washington enlisted a new army, largely by the promise of liberal head-money to recruits, and France and Spain appeared on the scene. The Yankees alone never could have achieved their independence. The Colonies then had only two and a half million white population. The Americans of to-day are the children of later immigrants, to a great extent the grandchildren of the very men who resisted the causeless rebellion, and even of those who fought against it. The anger of the Yankees wreaked itself on their adversaries by publishing the greatest untruths, the shallowest, idlest lies, that at first were unnoticed in Germany, but gradually, especially after the French Revolution, passed into German reactionary literature. These are now the stock in trade of modern historical writers. In spite of clear proof from the Hessian archives, these vamped-up stories are repeated and renewed.

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England paid into the Hessian state treasury, not to the Elector himself, between 1776 and 1783, besides indirect expenses, 21,276,778 thalers as subsidy money, and of this 2,203,003 thalers were arrears from the Seven Years' War. Of this amount part went to pay the difference between the war footing and the peace footing expense of the Hessian army for eight years. The soldiers received the high English pay without deduction, often in gold, as is shown by reports, pay lists, and money accounts. The exceptions to the advantage of the war-chest were very rare, and for these the troops gained in a larger proportion at home. The wealth of the Hessian army in America is shown by the fact that in the first three and a half years of the war the common soldiers sent home through the regular channels some 600,000 thalers, and at least two or even three times that amount by mail or other facilities. The idea of a sale of these troops is absurd and ridiculous.

Just as in other wars where allied troops serve together, so did the Hessians fight on the side of the English in America, with the advantage of not serving in unwholesome climates. They served under their own officers and were subject only to Hessian laws of war. The troops could not be divided unless in case of necessity; the supremacy of the Hessian state was never touched. If there were a "sale," then there must have been a re-sale to their own country. At the beginning of the American war the Elector recommended to his Parliament the establishment of a war fund of 4,549,925 thalers for future state requirements. His wisdom secured a thoroughly good government, and at his death a national reserve fund of 12,473,000 thalers, while he had relieved the people of taxes to the amount of 8,255,000 thalers, practically a saving of 20,000,000 for the people. All he asked in return was an increase of his civil list of half of one per cent. He had found the country a waste; he left it a blooming, prosperous garden; he deserved the praise of Müller, the historian, and he earned the love of his people, who in his lifetime made voluntary gifts for a memorial to testify the gratitude of his country for his services.

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At this time Frederick the Second [of Prussia] made another effort to draw Hesse within the influence of his policy. In 1779 he asked the Elector to send troops against a threatened Austrian advance from Belgium, then still under the Hapsburgs, so as to leave Prussia a free hand against its old enemy, and Prussia promised to pay subsidy for the force thus helping it against Austria. The Elector was supported by his Parliament in refusing thus to be tempted to violate his loyalty to the Emperor Joseph, for whom he had always felt profound respect.

Frederick the Second was stirred to great anger, as he had made the Elector the honorary

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colonel of the Prussian regiment stationed at Wesel, and wrote to Voltaire: "If the Elector were of his way of thinking, he would not have hired his troops to England, but to Prussia; but the Elector was a Catholic and therefore loyal to the Emperor." His real anger was thus confusing England with the Catholic powers. But it was a great good fortune that, thanks to the wise policy of its sensible Elector, Hesse was spared a renewal of the horrors of the Seven Years' War, which its unquiet neighbor would have gladly invited, to its own great injury.

The contrast between the two cousins and namesakes was a very marked one, for Elector Frederick was an orthodox Christian, King Frederick a follower of Voltaire. The Swiss historian, Müller, republican as he was, wrote from Cassel to his Swiss home in terms of strong praise of the Hessian corps of officers, of their scientific and social culture; the Hessians, he said, are sound, honest folk, warlike and courageous,—all the peasants have served in the army, and in every village the men show the good effects in their manly strength and love of discipline. Almost every one can speak of his own or his father's service in Sicily, in the Morea, in Scotland, Flanders, Hungary, or Germany, under Morisini or Prince Eugene or Maurice of Saxony or Ferdinand of Brunswick.

And now in the New World the Hessians showed their old valor and discipline,—one regiment surrounded in a forest by eight thousand Americans fought its way out. After a march of five hundred miles, without bread or wine or brandy, almost barefooted, in burning heat, after fording seven streams, often up to the neck in water, the Hessians fought so well that Lord Cornwallis praised them beyond all his other troops; and such a preference from the British commander reconciled his Hessians to all their trials. Müller, as a faithful historian, loved to record their brave deeds. He says the country is poor, but that is due to the never ending German wars. The Seven Years' War had left the country waste to a degree that the Swiss, always living in peace, could hardly realize. But the Hessians are industrious, and the country flourished in 1781 under the Elector Frederick, a man of kindly nature and the best intentions, and yet many foreigners criticise him unfairly. Why should a Swiss object to a crowned head? The government is as well suited to the country as a republic to Switzerland, and even there no one has more personal freedom than the Hessian citizen. People and country are unusually attractive. No men were ever finer than the Hessian soldiers; they are worthy of their ancestors, made famous by Tacitus. It is thus that a republican describes the country of this excellent prince, who had healed the wounds inflicted by the Seven Years' War, encouraged arts and sciences, and supported, when he did not found, many charitable institutions, and not only did not enrich himself, but during and through the American war was able to relieve his country of many millions of taxes, and to lay the foundation of a large reserve for the expenses of the government. The administration was so painfully careful that, in spite of the interruption of Napoleon's kingdom of Westphalia, the accounts were so kept as to show satisfactorily just what proportion of the revenue belonged to the nation and what to the sovereign.

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All that Hesse has of material as well as intellectual advantages it owes to Elector Frederick, from hospitals to art galleries. In his day the visitor might think that Cassel was equal to Sparta and Athens. He died all too soon for the honorable love of his faithful subjects. He never ceased to mourn over the long absence of his army, his dear subjects. Instead of a year's service, it lasted for nine years, although the last years of the war were comparatively free from bloodshed, and spent in occasional skirmishes and in marching to and fro through vast regions. The Elector often wanted to put an end to the alliance with England, but his ministers and his Parliament held firmly to it. He did insist on replacing the losses of the Hessians by foreign enlistments, to which he had once so patriotically objected, but now men from beyond his borders poured in with the hope of joining the Hessian army and thus seeing the wonderland, America. Anxiety, years of longing and quiet grief, weighed on his noble heart, so that a few months after the return of the last of his soldiers he died suddenly. He saw once more the old victorious flags that had waved in triumph at Minden and Crefeld, at Flatbush, White Plains, Fort Washington, and Gildford [*sic*] Court-House; he saw them once again and died.

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The circumstances of the enlistment of the Hessian troops may be explained thus: German and other European countries had for centuries strengthened their armies by enlisting men. Hesse, and later Brandenburg Prussia, made service compulsory, and thus, in the years that followed the Thirty Years' War, filled their armies with their own subjects. Still, voluntary enlistments continued and do so still. But no country cared for the enlisted man and for his protection from acts of violence at the hands of officers as Hesse-Cassel did, and yet no country has been so much blamed for its dealing with its soldiers. Personally, the Elector was opposed to all enlistments, both at home and from outside, and he tried hard to limit it after the close of the Seven Years' War. When, however, in 1777, the Hessian Parliament concluded its treaty of alliance, which provided for Hessian troops to serve in the British army, it was necessary to increase the force, and there was a rush of volunteers from all parts of Germany, and the Elector republished an order of December 16, 1762, substantially as follows: "Officers guilty of enlisting men by force or unfair means will be dismissed the service; non-commissioned officers and privates for the like offence will receive corporeal punishment, and the orders of their superiors will not protect them. Soldiers enlisted by force or trick shall be released at once without expense to them or any charge for food or pay, which shall be collected from the officer responsible for such illegal enlistment."

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No foreign subject was ever retained in the Hessian service against his will. All those who voluntarily enlisted for the American war were, on their return, regularly and honorably discharged, and received as a reward half a month's pay at the high English rate as the personal gift of the Elector. All of this is proved by the official records. During his whole reign the Elector made a steadfast effort to prevent forcible enlistment, and went so far in opposition to neighboring sovereigns, who acted differently, that once, at least, this led to a formal declaration of war.

His conduct was met by false reports industriously spread abroad to his injury. Frederick of Prussia knew that the Hessian government neither could nor would allow Hessian subjects to be enlisted against their will in foreign service. With consent of the Parliament, Hessian troops could serve as allies for a time regulated by treaty with any friendly power, but the State could never sell its individual citizens into foreign service. King Frederick could never introduce in Hesse the servitude that put his Brandenburg and Pomeranian subjects at his beck and nod. As early as 1760 the Hessian troops took the oath under the Hessian constitution, but the Prussian and Brandenburg people were helplessly bound to the nobility and princes as chattels down to 1808, and it was not until 1848 that the Prussian constitution, as the outcome of a revolution, gave the people the protection which the Hessians had always enjoyed.

The Elector was libelled as no prince was ever before in history. He spent freely and largely of his own private means to help his subjects, yet an American, in his "History of the Trade in Soldiers by German Princes," tries to show that the Elector of Hesse enriched himself by many millions out of the treasury. The German historian Schlosser, with equal indifference to the truth, charges the Elector with putting in his own pocket the money earned with blood and wounds and life by the brave Hessians in the Seven Years' War, and that given as compensation for the injury done his country and its capital, making no return to the poor sufferers, and that the American war produced still worse results,—neither the English pay nor the money for wounds received by the soldiers enriched anybody but the Prince. This charge is utterly baseless. The fact is that compensation for wounds was first introduced in the wars of Napoleon, and the money paid for dead and wounded soldiers under all the treaties of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was given as compensation for the bounty lost by the enlisted men, and was used for the military hospitals, and never intended for the soldiers. The Elector, whose statue still stands in Cassel, was worthy of his great ancestors, and kept alive the grateful memory of his and their subjects. They have always been free men, without any trace of bad government. Their conduct during the French Revolution showed their patriotism.

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After this "Defence" was first published, it was submitted to Mr. Frederick Kapp, the Prussian American, who had attacked the Elector of Hesse in his books, and his charges were referred to the leading authority on Hessian history, who fully refuted them. To further substantiate the character of the Elector, reference is made to the funeral sermon of the Free Masons' Lodge of Cassel on the death of the noble prince. Kapp's books, especially his "Soldaten-Handel" [Dealing in Soldiers], are full of sneers at him and at his son, and although Kapp disproves and discredits the "Urias"^[1] letter, it is on technical and not moral grounds that he relieves the Elector of the disgraceful charge of dealing in the blood and bones of his subjects out of avarice. He does not contradict Mirabeau's appeal to the Hessians, full as it is of party hostility. Kapp repeats the false charge that the Elector made money by false lists, so as to draw pay for more soldiers than were really in service, overlooking the fact that the annual and semi-annual muster-rolls made this impossible. He says the expenses of fitting the soldiers for the field were not paid by the Elector, although the money was taken from their pay. He charges the German princes whose soldiers were in the English army with cheating the contractors for supplies. He accepts the apocryphal story told by Seume of the illegal violence with which men were forced into the service, yet in all of these and many other matters Kapp is altogether wrong.

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No less an authority than Moser, the historian, long ago pointed out that the Americans, with Franklin at their head, had perjured themselves. The Hessians wrote home their contempt for the leaders and the people of America from actual personal observation. From Washington down the greatest unfairness was shown to the "Loyalists," who were driven into exile, stripped of all their property. He it was who tried to tempt the Hessians to desert, who proposed to burn New York, who ordered the execution of Andre, who wanted Aspill [Asgill], an entirely innocent man, put to death, and connived at the robbery of the Hessian prisoners of their English pay, prevented their exchange, and kept the stores and clothing sent for them. In Schlözer's "Letters" are found the unfavorable opinions of the Americans written home by Captain Wagner, wounded at the side of Count Donop; in Wiederhold's "Diary," Philadelphia is described as a "confluent canaillorum," as bad as Sodom and Gomorrah, those who had escaped the gallows in Europe being warmly welcomed in the New World. Ewald warned the people of a suburb of Philadelphia that there was no honor among them; and Bauermeister, a British adjutant-general, was equally emphatic. Pfister, in his "History of the American Revolutionary War," gives many details of the bad conduct of the leaders and people of the young republic.

Dr. Kapp's false charges relate to (1) the enlistment and service of Hessian troops; (2) the frauds practised on them on their discharge; (3) the approval by the Hessian Parliament of the treaty with Great Britain; (4) the payment by England of the amount claimed on account

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of the Seven Years' War; (5) the distribution of English pay among Hessian soldiers; (6) the relief of Hessian taxes; (7) the charge that the Elector received for troops enlisted in the British service some 60,000,000 thalers; (8) and "blood" money for the wounded. Much of our [the pamphleteer's] information is of a confidential kind, but there are plenty of printed books, etc., that, he says, bear him out—biographies of the Elector, sermons on his death, by Raffius, Roques, Rommel, and Pfister, the resolutions of the Guilds on the accession of his successor, all expressing grief for the death of his father; Schlieffen's "Memoirs," "Ephemera" of 1785, with Lith's "Campaigns of the Hessians," Schlözer's "Correspondence and Annals," John Müller's "Letters," the "Military Library of 1789," Ewald's "Life" in Manvillon's Military Journal for 1821, Pfister's "North American War of Independence," Eelking's "History," the Hessian papers of the time, the papers of the Hessian Historical Society, v. Och's "Observations," Valentini's "Recollections," "Debates of the Parliament of Hesse," the treaties with England, the rewards and honors paid by the King of England to German officers and soldiers, even Kapp's writings. There are many unpublished documents, diaries of officers and enlisted men, of pay and quarter-masters, and journals in the archives and offices of Hesse, public and private.

Kapp charges that the Elector reserved the right, forbidden, it is true, to his officers, of filling the ranks of his regiments going to America by compulsory enlistment, and that his subjects fled to Hanover to escape it. Schlieffen and Faucit, the former the Hessian, the latter the English agent, and Suffolk, the English minister of war, had a long correspondence on the subject. The answer to this is that Hesse had passed stringent laws on this subject as far back as 1733, renewed them with increased penalties in 1762, and they were enforced in one case by punishment which included loss of rank and imprisonment and exile. Again, 1767 and 1773 saw republication of these regulations. Losses by desertion or irregular discharge were so small that only thirty out of twelve thousand were so reported, and these cases all took place near Hanover, where it was easy to take refuge and find shelter. Enlistment of foreigners,—that is, other than the subjects of the Elector, who were all liable to be called into service, was introduced by him solely and openly in order to relieve his own people and to fill their places with volunteers. Even the desertions in America were due to the temptations offered by the fruitful farms and the ease with which the Hessian soldier was made an American citizen, the husband of an American wife, and the father of American children. Captain von der Lith, in a pamphlet on the "Campaign of the Hessians in America," says the soldiers welcomed the news of the departure for that land of promise. Lieutenant-Colonel Grebe says that young men left school and college and office and trade to go to America with the Hessian army. Faucit was surprised at the readiness with which the men went on board ship, singing and hurrahing for the Elector. He reported to the Elector that he could do anything with such men. Some regiments did not lose a single man. So, too, with the Anspach troops; their Lieutenant-Colonels von Gall and von Kreuzburg and other officers were surprised at the light-hearted soldiers, who acted as if they were on a pleasure tour. The Prussian General von Gaudi wrote to the Elector that by order of his King he had sent clever recruiting officers to try to tempt the Hessian soldiers to leave and go into the Prussian service, but he did not succeed in getting a single man. Not a Hessian would leave his colors, for under them they were satisfied, got high pay, and were going to America. Another Prussian, General Valentini, says the Hessian troops learned much that was of value in their campaign in America, and helped to renew the prosperity of their native country and improve its condition.

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Prince Charles of Hesse reported that in the war of the Bavarian Succession he lost out of his Prussian division ten thousand men in two months by desertion. The Hessian army lost only eight per cent. in ten years. It is utterly untrue that when the Hessian troops were under orders to go to America, desertion by crowds fleeing into Hungary and Poland was prevented only by threatening the fathers with chains and the mothers with prison, as Kapp seriously writes.

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Kapp says that the Hessian soldiers who returned home at the end of their service received as a reward half a month's pay, but the Elector received from England a whole month's pay. Did he put the other half in his own pocket, or did he pay it all, as well as the extra half month's pay out of his own pocket, over to his soldiers? The answer is, that there is a great difference between the allowance of a year's subsidy after the peace to the treasury of Hesse as compensation, and the voluntary gift, by the Elector, to the foreign soldiers who had enlisted in his service, of extra pay as reward for good conduct. They had no claim, yet the Elector, following the English custom, gave them an extra allowance as compensation, after deducting the expense of their equipment and clothing. Kapp asks for reference to any official report of the action of the Hessian Parliament in favor of making an alliance with England giving the Hessian troops, and urging the Elector to make the treaty under which this was done. The answer is that the Duke of Brunswick set the example, and the Hessian Parliament urged the Elector to secure the payment of the outstanding balance due for the Hessian forces serving in the Seven Years' War, and to do this by a new alliance with England, providing for a Hessian contingent. It was Schlieffen, the Prime Minister, who in the Hessian Parliament urged the English treaty as a means of refilling the state treasury, so exhausted that it was at the end of its resources. The Elector hesitated, but yielded to the urgent wish of all his ministers and the Parliament. Abundant evidence is found in the records of the Hessian army and the Parliament. Kapp asks what authority there is for the statement that, at the outbreak of the American war, England owed Hesse 10,143,286 thalers arrears for subsidies due for Hessian troops serving in the Seven Years' War, and

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paid 2,220,003 thalers. Kapp says the English authorities, especially the exhaustive parliamentary debates, show that Hesse claimed only £41,820 (278,000 thalers) for hospital moneys, which was disputed and denied by England, until in its need of soldiers it agreed to pay it, although saying that it was a dishonest claim and had long before been fully satisfied. The answer to this is that there were long and intricate negotiations on this subject. The war, before the accession of Elector Frederick, had left the country burdened with a debt of 2,559,000 thalers, which the Parliament tried to meet by a tax of fourteen and a half per cent., but the Elector reduced it so as to relieve his poor people. In 1772 England paid 900,000 thalers as compensation, to be divided between the Elector and the country, but the former yielded any claim to it and added 600,000 thalers out of the moneys paid him as subsidy, so that the treasury was enabled to pay off 1,500,000 of the debt. Later there was paid a further sum of 2,220,000 thalers, and still later 672,000 thalers for the people and places on furnishing official proof of special losses. This led to a special mission to England and a long discussion with the money-saving English treasury over the claims for compensation which ran up to millions. The greater part was absolutely rejected, much reduced to a six per cent. basis, and Schlieffen at last forced to accept £41,820 for the actual outlay of 300,000 thalers for hospital expenses. No doubt the foundation of the large savings of the Hessian state treasury and of the Elector was the money obtained as subsidy for the American war. The Elector raised his country from poverty by using this money for the improvement of his capital and its great neighboring palace, for royal roads, for parks and open places, for churches, museums, lyceums, and seminaries, theatres, city halls, hospitals, art galleries, and schools, medical colleges, infants' and orphans' homes, libraries, and the two universities, Marburg and Rinteln, for opera and chapel. The source of all this expenditure was of course the English subsidies. The charge that the Elector had laid aside 56,000,000 as his private fortune is clearly disproved by the fact that in 1831 the whole estate of the Elector amounted to only 14,000,000 to 16,000,000, although Kapp says the Elector Frederick left 60,000,000, mostly subsidy money, but partly profit on lotteries, yet the official records show that during the fourteen years of the lottery the whole profit was only 93,000 thalers. The accounts show that in 1775 the treasury had to its credit in all 4,549,925 thalers, much in doubtful claims growing out of the earlier wars, and, in 1785, at the death of Elector Frederick, it had 12,473,000 thalers. In other words, after the Seven Years' War this little country of 300,000 people earned an average of 1,000,000 thalers a year by subsidies, and by the American war it was enabled to save 18,000,000, out of which much was spent in public improvements. England was very slow to admit its liability for the losses inflicted on Hesse as its ally in the Seven Years' War, but it soon learned to value and pay generously for its help in supplying a fine body of troops for its American war.

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At the outbreak of the American war England owed Hesse 10,143,286 thalers in arrears for its services since 1764, of which 2,559,000 was due in 1760, making the total Hessian debt on the former date 7,425,965 thalers. England paid 900,000 thalers first, and later on 2,220,000 thalers, and Hesse still claimed £41,820 for hospital expenses; but there was still due to Hesse 3,128,000 thalers for its increased debt, and 300,000 for losses by fire and the sword, and 150,000 for local expenditures, and 914,772 for the expenses of the Hessian army.

Mr. Kapp says it is claimed that the Elector paid his troops the full English pay, but his authorities show that they got only three-fourths of it, although he had promised Suffolk not to reduce it to one-half in the American war, as he had done in the Seven Years' War. He certainly broke faith by a reduction of even a quarter. That the Hessian soldiers did receive the full English pay is attested by the treaties with England and by the moral honesty of the Hessian Elector. The fact was attested at the time by daily experience, and cannot be contradicted by a perjured soldier, for the rate of pay was better for the Hessian than for the English soldiers, and they knew it too well to be put off with anything less than the full amount. The regular pay was increased by regular additions for winter clothing, food, lodgings, baggage, forage, and other such expenses, while both English and Hessian soldiers were supplied free of cost with wood, etc., and divided fairly all booty. The proportionate charges for arms, etc., were higher in the English than in the Hessian army, but as compensation each man of the jäger regiment was given extra pay of £1 a month.

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The English troops in Gibraltar began their pay with £1 9s. for the sergeants, the Hessian troops with £1 14s. The general officers alike received £59, while the Hessian company commander's pay was increased from £13 to £19 by special allowances. The second lieutenant in the English service got £5 2s., the Hessian one shilling more, and in addition there were extra monthly allowances—for lieutenants 8 thalers, for captains 32 thalers, for generals 180 thalers. The higher officers retained their Hessian rank with its pay. The Hessian commander-in-chief drew his English monthly pay of £121 and the Hessian pay of £182. Captain Ewald, of the famous jägers, is on record as notifying his company commanders that their pay was a guinea a day in addition to their share of booty. For provisions got in the country where the troops were serving there was no charge. The jägers received each twenty English shillings' worth a month and his side arms; the line soldier, twelve and a half shillings. There never was an army so well paid as the Hessians in the English service in America. A married subaltern could support his family at home and live well. Ewald says the company commanders did this and saved money besides. Even the enlisted men saved sums reported at 170 and 300 and 525 and even 700 thalers. The pay department showed that thirty staff officers and six captains saved 106,350 thalers. The highest savings' report shows that four colonels had 24,000 thalers, two others had 26,800

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thalers, and the two last Hessian commanders had, between 1781 and 1784, 11,000 and 15,000 thalers to their credit. General von Mirbach sent home during the first sixteen months of his service in America savings to the amount of 6000 thalers. Indeed, the older officers left at home complained bitterly of their hard fate in losing this advantage, and the total gain of the Hessian troops from extra English allowances may well be estimated at more than 2,000,000 thalers. Schlieffen reported to the Elector in 1779 that up to that time, about three and a half years from the outbreak of the American war, the Hessian enlisted men had sent home through the pay officer almost 600,000 thalers, and the mechanics accompanying the Hessian army to America over 637,000 thalers. Kapp's book is full of rumors that the Hessian troops in America were unfairly treated, but that is absolutely untrue.

The English government dealt directly with the Hessian government; the Hessian soldiers fought alongside the English soldiers as their allies; their pay was regulated by the treaties made by the Hessian sovereign and approved by the Hessian Parliament. These provided fully for the pay and food and equipment and care of the Hessian troops at the expense of England, but on the basis provided by the treaties with Hesse and other allies. Mr. Kapp asks for particulars of the taxes released by the Elector. These amounted to 2,170,140 thalers, besides 56,000 thalers in the reduced interest on loans to public institutions,—the reduction of allowances to Hessian princesses of 159,466 thalers, and a reduction of war taxes of 204,000 thalers. Appropriations for the relief of the people injured by storms amounted to anywhere between 500 and 740,000 thalers; then there were paid for forage 147,000 thalers, for servants 90,000 thalers, and for arrears of 1,090,827 down to 1785, 300,000 were allowed and cancelled, and a debt of 116,000 for the administration was paid.

Mr. Kapp denies that he charged the Elector with putting 60,000,000 in his pocket, for the whole amount received by him for his troops was only 22,000,000. This charge is found in the writings of Vehse, Löher, Menzel, Scherr, Weber, and others who have tried to discredit the Elector Frederick. Kapp does say that the Elector left an estate of 60,000,000,—made partly out of the profits of the lottery founded in 1777, but mainly out of the American war. But the lottery only earned in all the fourteen years of its existence 93,000 thalers, which were paid over to the War Office; the only other source was the sale of soldiers to England.

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Kapp says that pay for wounded soldiers began in the treaty with Brunswick in 1776, although it was implied in the Hessian treaty at the time of the war of the Spanish Succession that three wounded men counted the same as one dead man, at about 51 thalers at modern rates. It is true that there were such provisions in the earlier Brunswick and Hanau Treaties, but Schlieffen had them struck out of the new Hessian Treaty of 1775. Dead men were replaced by living men and the injured and disabled by well men, while the latter went into the Invalid Corps and were duly cared and provided for.

The contemporary accusations are perpetuated by Schlosser, who says in his history that England paid a premium that went into the Elector's pocket for every limb that was lost,—and this is absolutely false. The Elector to the last day of his life made provision for the disabled soldiers. Such charges are made by Germans who ought to go to the Hessian archives and there find the truth. A fair statement ought to satisfy the modern reader that the great majority of American citizens of our own day have little in common with the perjured Yankees of the Revolution, and are, indeed, descendants of the men who fought against, rather than of those who fought for independence. The rebels turned against England and denounced it as a tyrant, although to it America owed Magna Charta and the Habeas Corpus Act. The treatment of the Indians by American governments shows how far they departed from the example of the mother country. The English Whigs in and out of Parliament were allowed a license and freedom of speech which were denied the American Tories by their brethren who proclaimed liberty. The Hessians had for two hundred years been allies of England and naturally helped it against the hostility of France and Spain. Hessians fought at the side of English troops against Louis XIV. of France, and helped to put down the Stuart rising in Scotland, and in the Seven Years' War; the American Revolution was but another outbreak of the same hostility to England, and if Hessian troops had not served in America, it would have been a missing link in the chain of the wise, real German policy of close alliance with old England. The story of the American Revolution that ended in the independence of the American Colonies is largely drawn from French writers, yet they never seem to regret their own loss of Canada. American writers attack the German allies of England, forgetting or ignoring the fact that this was no new relation, but one that had existed for two centuries, and that England and all European states paid for the foreign troops in their service. The Yankees, used to making money by hook and crook, could not but look on the subsidies provided by regular treaties as a sale and bargain of the soldiers of one country to another which paid for them at so much a head. The Yankee fairy stories about the superiority of their native troops may be easily answered, for the famous Virginia cavalry were completely defeated and driven from the field by Hessian foot yägers, mounted for the occasion, and not cavalry at all. In good old times no German would have falsified the facts as to his own countrymen when he could have verified them from the official records. These show that at one time it was proposed to surrender the subsidies in exchange for a large stretch of land in Canada, where a Hessian settlement was to be established. If that had been carried out, Hesse might have been spared the sorrows of 1806 and 1866.

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For many years all of the charges discreditable to the Hessians have been drawn from the

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"Autobiography" of Seume. Much of it was invented by his friend and editor Clodius. It is from beginning to end a false and libellous production. Seume became a friend and admirer of the French Jacobins and repented his service against the Yankees, so he invented the story that he had been forced into the ranks against his will. The fact is that no such compulsion could have been exercised in the face of the orders of the Elector, nor could any young man of Seume's intelligence have failed to know and exercise his rights.

Seume tells another falsehood in reference to affairs at Ziegenhain. There was a garrison at that place of two companies of infantry and some artillerymen, and four hundred recruits, part of the Eighth Division, on its way from Cassel to America, and a handful of jägers under instruction. Some of the recruits planned a mutiny, and intended to kill a sentry and steal the regimental funds. Their plan was discovered and reported by one of the jägers. A court-martial sentenced two of the mutineers to the gallows and others to chains. Elector Frederick, whose weak point was kindness, reduced the sentence of a dozen of the offenders to whipping, and that of the men sentenced to be hung to imprisonment. This is record evidence, yet Seume says there were fifteen hundred recruits who were all at once charged with intending to rob and run away, among them old service men. Some of them had been sergeants and corporals in the Prussian army, yet Seume, nineteen years old and who had never carried a musket, was chosen robber captain. A worthless tailor from Göttingen betrayed the plot rather than help carry the plunder to the next village. The Elector did show mercy to some, but only to enjoy the protracted misery of the men in jail. Now, if Seume knew of any such plot, he perjured himself by violating his oath in failing to report the fact.

In May, 1782, he says there was an outbreak among the troops at Cassel. A body of recruits from Ziegenhain was increased by an equal number from the then Hessian fortress at Rheinfels, all on their way to America. At that time there were complaints of the poor quality of the recruits sent to the Hessian regiments serving in America, where the war had been going on from 1776. These new recruits were worn-out old soldiers and mere tramps, tempted by the large bounty offered by the American recruiting officers and the high wages promised by Pennsylvania farmers. They were a discredit to the old Hessian regiments with their faithful soldiers, sons of the soil. But the Elector took these strangers in order to relieve his own people of the stress and burden of the war. To satisfy himself, he inspected these new recruits and told them that any man who wanted his discharge could have it on returning the clothing and money given him. Seume could have had his release then if he had asked for it, but he stayed by the colors. Then the troops were sent to the port of embarkation,—at Bremerlehe, not at Münden, as Seume says. The recruits were transferred to General Faucit, of the English army, and put on English transports. Seume says that he said at Rinteln, on the way, that he was a Prussian subject, and was afraid that at Münden he would be recognized, and, as it was Prussian territory, he would be arrested, and he therefore asked to be allowed to march by another route. Why was he so much afraid of the Prussians? Presumably because there was a warrant out for his arrest for some violation of law while he was a student at Leipsic. As to his account of his voyage, it is taken almost word for word from the diary of a Waldeck corporal, Steuernagel, who had six years earlier made the journey to India and America, and was a great story-teller.

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The official reports of Colonel Hatzfeld, in command of the detachment to which Seume belonged, and of Commissary Harnier, contain the real facts. The squadron consisted of six vessels for the Hessian recruits, two transports for freight, and eight more troop-ships, and two more with stores, and three frigates as convoy. The names of the ships and the directions as to the care and food of the men are all recorded. There were over one thousand men and a great number of women, wives of the soldiers with their children, all part of the Hessian force,—this was the ninth year of the war and the eighth and last detachment. Next in command to Colonel Hatzfeld was Major von Prüschenk; of captains, lieutenants, and ensigns there were ten,—among them two Münchhausens. The younger one took a friendly interest in Corporal Seume at Halifax. The fleet left the Weser on June 9 and 10, 1782, and the landing at Halifax, in spite of storms and fog and French men-of-war, was made on August 13 without any noteworthy incident, according to the official reports. Seume, however, made the voyage last twenty-two weeks, when in fact that is thirteen weeks longer than it actually lasted, and he declares they never sighted land nor got fresh food, yet there was no unusual death-rate, although Steuernagel complains of the close quarters in the over-crowded ships. On August 19 Colonel Hatzfeld inspected the men with a view to distributing the recruits in the companies and regiments for which they were needed, and not a man was missing from the lists made out when the men embarked and when they disembarked. Just about as true is Seume's account of the return voyage, which took twenty-three days to England and forty to the German port of Cuxhaven. Seume had a very comfortable time in America, thanks to the help of Lieutenant von Münchhausen. He might have become a Hessian officer, and yet he says it was difficult for any one not a nobleman to get a commission. A glance at the Hessian army list shows that this was not true, for a large proportion of the officers were plain citizens, not of noble families. At this very time Frederick of Prussia said publicly that plain citizens had not the proper feeling of honor necessary to make good officers. Seume's own colonel, Hatzfeld, and Huth, Rall, Kellermann, Ewald, all men of note and high command, were not nobles, but plain citizens. Seume's whole service as a Hessian soldier was only for two years. During this time he rose from the ranks to corporal, then to quarter-master, and finally to sergeant, and as he took his discharge in that grade, his complaints are much more discreditable than if he had

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remained in the ranks,—he perjured himself trebly by deserting. Why did he desert? When the returning troops landed at Bremerlehe they heard that the soldiers who were not natives of Hesse must either re-enlist or be discharged with half a month's pay. The Hessian soldiers, of course, returned to the pay and allowances of the peace footing.

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Hessian soldiers were so well treated that in the last century there was no other army with so few deserters. Why, then, did Seume desert? Why, eight days before the return to Cassel, did he throw away his good name and his pay and his property? Because in a fit of drunkenness he had made himself liable to sharp punishment for his neglect of duty as commissary sergeant, and for fear of the consequences he fled. In ordinary conditions he would never have abandoned the Hessian colors. He makes his fault worse by lying,—pretending that he and others enlisted from Prussian territory were afraid that they would be returned to Prussia and be forced to the hard service in its ranks, and this he says although he knew perfectly well that there was an order published at Bremerlehe which was perfect protection for him and men in exactly his position. Having told one falsehood as to his reason for deserting, he adds another to justify the first, and thus puts himself clearly beyond the pale of credit for any of his statements. He wants to pose as a martyr, and to do so vamps up unfounded charges against the Elector of Hesse.

Between 1783 and 1810 Seume thought it more to his credit to try to forget and make others forget that he voluntarily entered the Hessian service, and pretended that he had been forced into it, as a palliation for serving against the Yankees, and boasted of his desertion, as if that, too, was to his credit. He pretends to give the replies he—an utterly unknown, unimportant enlisted man—made to captains, colonels, and generals. Any such answer would soon have brought down the punishment prescribed by the articles of war for insubordination.

In later life Seume paid dearly for the sins of his youth,—and he did not atone for them by publishing his own autobiography. He had no reason to find fault with the Hessian service; it was only after he had left it that his real troubles began. It is well known how Prussia for eighty years tyrannized over Northern Germany, weighing heavily on its overburdened people, threatening them until Hanover, Brunswick, Hesse, Saxony, and Poland were all forced to forbid its enlistment of men within their borders. It was during these trying times that Seume was taken by force to Emden, in East Prussia, and there put into a Prussian regiment as a common soldier. Twice he deserted,—once when he was on duty as a sentry,—and he was condemned by court-martial to the awful penalty of running the gauntlet, the whipping by a whole line of soldiers. He escaped, finally, by violating his parole. In his Prussian uniform he paid the penalty for the oath to the Hessian flag which he had broken first.

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NOTE.—This pamphlet is a disguised attack on the Prussia of 1866 for seizing and holding Hesse-Cassel, along with Hanover and Brunswick, as part of its own kingdom, driving the Elector of Cassel and the King of Hanover into exile. The author is clearly a champion of the lost cause, and seeks to justify it by rewriting the history of Hesse and Prussia of a hundred years before. He aims at elevating the claims of the Hessian electoral family in the eyes of their former subjects and of the rest of the world, and in depreciating the part taken by Prussia both at the time of the American War of Independence and in enlarging its own borders and increasing its power at the expense of the small sovereign states of Germany, whose princes opposed the aggression of Prussia and its claim to control the whole of Germany. It was the beginning of that series of advances which culminated in the establishment of the German Empire as the outcome of the war with France in 1870. Having crushed out all opposition within and near its borders, having driven the Elector of Hesse away and forced the King of Hanover into a hopeless resistance, Prussia granted its permission to Baden and Bavaria and Hesse-Darmstadt and Wurtemberg and Saxony and Weimar and a few petty local princes to live on just as long as its own supremacy was recognized and extended. The Franco-German War consolidated the power of Prussia, and its king became the German emperor. Naturally the exiled sovereigns had friends, and they sought to make their claims known. A former Hanoverian Prime Minister wrote novels in which the kind King of Hanover and his allies figured in most heroic guise. The friend of the exiled Elector of Cassel defended his prince by showing the real nature of the alliance between Hesse-Cassel and England a hundred years ago, and thus throwing on Prussia the burden of the responsibility of driving away a prince whose ancestors had done great service to his people. For American students of history this pamphlet has a certain value and interest as throwing a new light on part of our own history, and as showing that there is justification for the Hessians in their alliance with Great Britain and in their service in this country in the resistance made by the mother country to the claim of the colonies to independence. The successful outcome of the American Revolution made it difficult to secure a patient hearing of the other side. Even at this late day, therefore, the foregoing abstract of the "Defence of the Hessians" may not be without value and interest. The authorship of the pamphlet is not as yet made public, but it is evidently the work of a man loyal to the Elector of Hesse-Cassel and earnest in defending his ancestors.—J. G. R.

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Footnote: [1] Attributed by Mr. Ford to Franklin.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A DEFENCE OF THE HESSIANS ***

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