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FREDERICK THE GREAT

AND THE

UNITED STATES.

J. G. ROSENGARTEN.

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A PAPER READ BEFORE
THE PENNSYLVANIA-GERMAN SOCIETY
AT THE
FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING
HELD AT
GERMANTOWN, OCTOBER 25, 1904

BY

J. G. ROSENGARTEN

LANCASTER, PA.
1906

FREDERICK THE GREAT AND THE UNITED STATES.

STATUE PRESENTED BY THE GERMAN KAISER WILLIAM II.
UNVEILED AT WASHINGTON, D. C., NOVEMBER 19, 1904.

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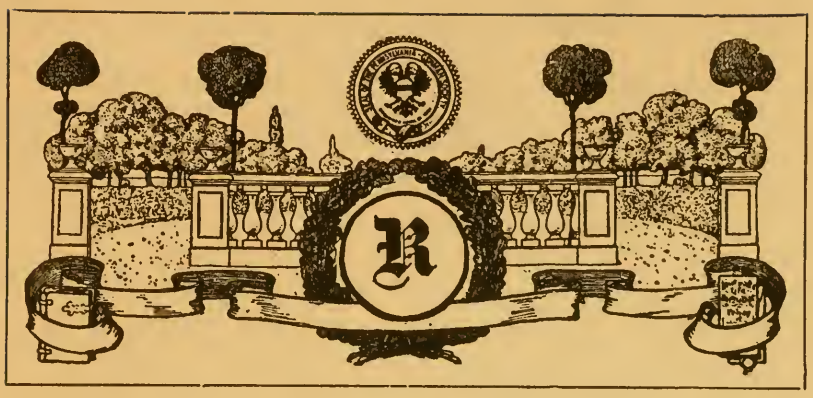
(Person)



FREDERICK THE GREAT AND THE UNITED STATES.*

IN view of the presentation of a statue of Frederick the Great to the United States by the Emperor of Germany it may be of interest to refer to the contemporary sources of information as to the relation of Frederick the Great to the American Revolution. There is much interest in seeing how that great soldier followed the course of events in America and with what kind of welcome he received the American agents sent to Europe to enlist recognition, aid and support in the struggle for independence.

* A paper read before the Pennsylvania German Society at Germantown, October 25, 1904, by J. G. Rosengarten.

The best authority on this subject is Frederick Kapp, whose two books dealing with the subject have not been translated. One is "Frederick the Great and the United States," published in Leipsic in 1871, and the other "The Traffic in Soldiers," published in Berlin in 1874. To these may be added "The Hessians and the other Auxiliaries of Great Britain in the Revolutionary War," by Edward F. Lowell of Boston, published by Harpers in 1884, and the "Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution," edited by Sparks. Little on the subject is to be found in Carlisle's "Life of Frederick the Great," or in the latest German biography, that by Koser, or in any of the other biographies of Frederick.

Frederick the Great was very unfriendly to the English government of Lord Bute for its failure to carry out the support promised and given him by the elder Pitt when he was at its head. When the war of American Independence broke out, Frederick was charged by the English ministry with preventing England from hiring a Russian corps to fight for it in America and with allowing Prussian officers to serve with the Americans. Both charges were groundless, but served to show England's fear of Frederick's revenge for old injuries. Neither Steuben nor DeKalb was in his service when they volunteered in the American Revolution, and the other German officers who joined them did so of their own good will, and not with his sanction. The many "King of Prussia" tavern signs attest that Frederick was popular in America. As the leader of Protestant resistance to Austrian aggression, alike in Puritan New England, among the Germans of Pennsylvania and in New York, and with the leaders of the American Revolution, he was looked on as the ablest sovereign and greatest soldier in Europe, and his heroic

struggle was pointed out as an example for America in its war for independence. Every expression of his hostility to England and his contempt for the German princes who sold their soldiers to England was published here.

Washington, Franklin, Greene, all spoke of him with admiration. Steuben was welcomed as one of his soldiers. Jefferson spoke of his death as a European disaster and an event that affected the whole world.

Frederick was guided in all he said and did by the interests of Prussia. He hoped to secure advantages by opening a trade between his ports and those of America, by exchanging his linen and iron and other wares for tobacco and other American products. His representative in Paris met Silas Deane and reported to the King his request to establish diplomatic and commercial relations, recommending a commercial treaty. The King was ready to supply arms and other munitions of war in exchange for and when the Americans could land tobacco in his ports at a reasonable rate.

A succession of American diplomatic agents went to Berlin, but the King would not recognize them officially, although his ministers said that when France recognized American independence, he would do so too. Frederick wrote to his brother to watch Washington and learn how he carried on war against Howe and Burgoyne. He granted the request of the American agent to buy arms in Prussia. He rendered, perhaps unwittingly, a still more important service by refusing permission to take German soldiers, on their way to join the English army in America, through his dominions, and thus delayed reinforcements, when Howe was waiting patiently for them, so that the Americans really were helped by him. His refusal kept these German troops idle in Germany all through the

winter of 1777–8, while Washington and his little army were suffering at Valley Forge. Frederick's course was almost as useful to Washington as an alliance or recognition, for it gave him time and helped to change the fortunes of war, while, as the King said, without a fleet or forts to protect his ports, recognition could do no good. He saw and said that the business of recruiting German soldiers to serve against America was depopulating Germany of the men needed for his army. He watched the successes of the American army and felt a personal pride in that of the German soldiers serving in it, although Riedesel had married the daughter of the Prussian Minister of War, Massow, and his imprisonment after Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga, was a source of great regret to his friends in Berlin and the Prussian army. The King wrote in October, 1777, "I never think of the present war in America without being unpleasantly affected by the greed of some German princes, who sacrifice their troops in a war that don't concern them at all. My astonishment increases when I see this violation of our Old German rule, never to spill German blood in behalf of foreign interests."

In 1778 he wrote to his minister in London: "I will never lend myself to an alliance with England. I am not like so many German princes to be gained by money." His minister wrote: "The German Princes who have hired their troops, besides having rendered themselves extremely odious, have suffered greatly by the emigration of their subjects, for fear of being forced into this service, which is excessively unpopular through all Germany"; and later, "His Majesty has refused passage to the auxiliary troops of Germany destined for America. He interests himself very much in the events of your war and wishes that your efforts may be crowned with success." Later he made a

commercial treaty with the United States on terms that were very liberal, and thus set an example that other European powers soon followed.

The legend that he presented a sword to Washington inscribed "From the oldest to the greatest General," is based on the gift of a sword with a very fulsome dedication engraved on it by a cutler in Solingen. It had a curious history, for the son of the maker brought it to Philadelphia, when Washington was living here as President, pawned it in a tavern, where it was redeemed by some unknown person, who took it to Alexandria, whence it was sent to Mount Vernon. Washington never knew who this was. His letter on the subject is printed, with a note explaining the real facts of the gift, in the eleventh volume of Sparks' "Washington," p. 169, etc. Now, however, the successor of the great Frederick has given the United States his statue as a memorial of German friendship. It may well serve to show how large a measure of influence Germans and Germany have had in the making of the United States, and the friendship of the Emperor of Germany and the German people for the Republic of the United States, and it will recall the share the great Frederick had in the success of the American Colonies in their struggle for independence and in the welcome extended to the new republic by the old King of Prussia.

In Sparks, Vol. 11, p. 169, etc.: Washington writes to John Quincy Adams, Philadelphia, 12 September, 1796: "Sometime ago, perhaps two or three months, I read in some gazette, but was so little impressed with it at the time (conceiving it to be one of those things which get into newspapers nobody knows how or why) that I cannot now recollect whether this gazette was of American or

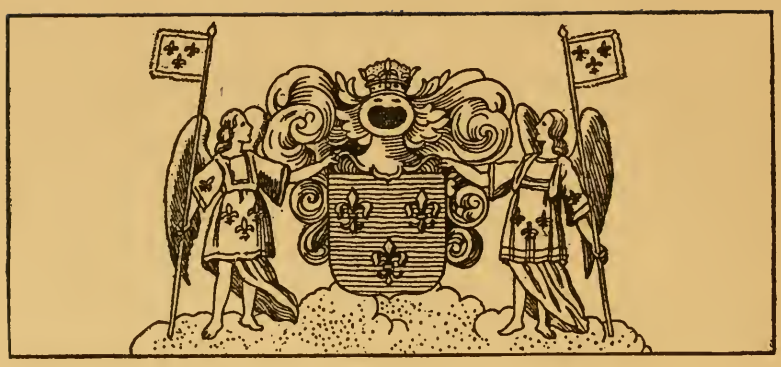
foreign production, announcing that a celebrated artist had presented, or was about to present, to the President of the United States a sword of masterly workmanship, as an evidence of his veneration, etc. I thought no more of the matter afterwards until a gentleman with whom I have no acquaintance, coming from and going to I know not where, at a tavern I never could get information of, came across this sword (for it is presumed to be the same) pawned for thirty dollars, which he paid, left it in Alexandria, nine miles from my house in Virginia, with a person who refunded him the money and sent the sword to me. This is all I have been able to learn of this curious affair. The blade is highly wrought and decorated with many military emblems. It has my name engraved thereon and the following inscription, translated from the Dutch: 'Condemner of despotism, Preserver of liberty, glorious man, take from my son's hands, this sword, I beg you. A Solingen.'

"The hilt is either gold or richly plated with that metal, and the whole carries with it the form of a horseman's sword or long sabre. The matter, as far as it appears at present, is a perfect enigma. How it should have come into this country without a letter, or an accompanying message, how afterward it should have got into such loose hands, and whither the person having it in possession was steering his course, remain as yet to be explained. Some of these points can only be explained by the maker, and the maker is no otherwise to be discovered than by the inscription and name, 'A. Solingen,' who, from the impression which dwells on my mind, is of Amsterdam. If sir, with this clew, you can develop the history of this sword, the value of it, the character of the maker, and his probable object in sending it, you would oblige me and

by relating these facts to him, might obviate doubts which otherwise might be entertained of its late reception."

Sparks, in a note to p. 171, gives the explanation that Alte of Solingen near Dusseldorf in 1795 sent by his son this sword, directing him to present it to President Washington. The son sold it at a tavern in Philadelphia. More than a year afterwards the father wrote a letter to Washington on the subject.

In view of the presentation of a statue of Frederick the Great to the United States by the Emperor of Germany, it may be of interest to refer to the contemporary sources of information as to the relations of Frederick the Great to the American Revolution. For that purpose, the following notes may enable the reader to see just how far that great soldier followed the course of events in America, and with what kindly interest he received the American agents sent to Europe to enlist his recognition, aid and support.



FREDERICK THE GREAT AND THE UNITED STATES.
(BY FREDERICK KAPP, LEIPZIC, 1871.)

AFTER a long series of offences at the hands of the English government, Frederick the Great was charged by it with preventing England from hiring a Russian corps to fight the Americans, and with allowing Prussian officers to serve with America—both groundless complaints, serving to show the English fear of Frederick's revenge. He took a friendly interest in the American struggle, but sent none of his officers to America, for he was never asked to do so. Characteristic of the general opinion, is Franklin's clever skit, the edict of the King of Prussia, dated Potsdam, August 25, 1773, which made its mark alike in England and America. Frederick was popular in America as the leader of Protestant resistance to Catholic aggression, alike in Puritan New England, among the Ger-

FREDERICK THE GREAT, BY KAULBACH.

mans of Pennsylvania and New York, and with the leaders of the American Revolution. He was looked on as the ablest sovereign in Europe, and his heroic struggles in the Seven Years' War was pointed out as an example for America in its struggle for independence. Every expression of his against England and the German Princes who sold their soldiers to serve under the English flag in America was published in exaggerated terms. Washington, Franklin, Greene, all spoke of him with admiration. Steuben found a ready welcome as one of the King's pupils. Jefferson spoke of his death as a European disaster and an event that affected the whole world.

The gift of a handsome sword by a Prussian artisan, Theophilus Alte of Solingen, was the foundation of the legend often repeated, that it was Frederick the Great's recognition of the American leader. Bancroft pays due tribute to his character, example and influence in America. Frederick never thought of anything but the interest of Prussia in the struggle between England and its American colonies. He hoped to secure great advantages for his maritime province of East Prussia. Acquired in 1744, he sought to increase the trade of its ports, by exporting linen and importing tobacco. In 1751 Emden was made a free port, and first an Asiatic, and next in 1753, a Bengal trading company established. The merchants sent ships to China, East Indies and America, and the neutral Prussian flag protected ships sailing from Holland and Bremen.

After the Seven Years' War, Frederick was ready to encourage fisheries and to attract business from Amsterdam to Emden. Silas Deane, the first agent sent by Congress to establish diplomatic and commercial relations, asked the Prussian business agent in Paris if arms and munitions of war could be got in Prussia for the American col-

onies. Montesuy was active, but a little too energetic, and in July, 1777, he reported the inquiry and recommended a commercial treaty between Prussia and the American colonies. The King was ready to arrange for the importation of American tobacco at a better rate than that then paid for it, already advancing in price in English and French ports. In answer to questions as to direct importation, Deane said that tobacco could be got in exchange for linen, woollens, copper, lead and steel. Deane wrote to Congress urging that an agent be sent to Prussia, for while France and Spain were natural allies, and Italy needed American harvests, Prussia required information as to its own interests in trade with America (Diplomatic Correspondence, Vol. 1, p. 45). Montesuy told Deane that the King would be glad to see an American agent in Berlin (Dip. Cor., Vol. 9, p. 346) and Deane asked if Carmichael would be received, and Carmichael went in the autumn of 1776 by way of Amsterdam to Berlin. Carmichael showed ability in explaining the mutual advantage of trade between Prussia and America, but the King was not ready for a treaty, nor even to recognize Carmichael in any other than his private and personal character. Appointed in September, 1776, Franklin, Deane and Arthur Lee addressed the Prussian government on the subject of establishing trade relations with the colonies. The King promptly pointed out the practical impossibility of commerce, in the absence of either Prussian or American ships to carry it on, and asked for further information as to the method of exchanging Prussian and American products. The commissioners tried to enlist Frederick's help in preventing the shipment of German soldiers to serve the English in America, and promised to send a minister to Berlin to discuss commercial relations. The King replied

gnädigsten Vaters Erben zu schicken so der
Majestät Quat von Sachsen bekommen, und wünsche
von Herzen das sein Moriam allergnädigsten
Vaters schwerdten müssen
Und ich mit allem ersinnlichen respect lebe
und Sätisfion bis an mein ende bevorran als
Meiner allergnädigsten Königin
und Vaterin

Unterthänigst treugehorsamster
Diener und Sohn
Friedrich

Rheinsberg den 9 Aprill: 1757

AUTOGRAPH LETTER OF FREDERICK THE GREAT.

through his minister that an American agent might come to Berlin, but could have no official recognition, and that until America had established its independence, he could not enter into any treaty with it. Lee went to Berlin and at once set to work to point out the advantages and possibility of direct commercial relations between Prussia and America. There was an active correspondence between Lee and the Prussian minister, but the King simply allowed it to be carried on that he might gain time and information. He refused absolutely to open Emden to American privateers, lest he should be involved with England, much as he disliked the English government and its American policy. In his correspondence and conversation he never spoke of the Americans as rebels and in writing to Voltaire, he sneered at the English, and in a letter to D'Alembert he anticipated American independence as early as October 5, 1777. He said that England had treated its colonies unfairly, that it had underestimated their power, had hired troops in Germany and provided no ships for their transportation, had bought in London provisions for its army that was to fight in Pennsylvania, where everything was much cheaper. The separation of Carleton and Burgoyne prevented the one from supporting the other. With all its troubles in America, it had quarrelled with Russia and Holland, and would soon be in open warfare with France. In November, 1777, on receipt of the news of the surrender of Burgoyne, which came from Paris, in spite of the effort of the English government to conceal it, Frederick wrote to his brother, Prince Henry, that Prussia must watch Washington, Howe, Burgoyne, Carleton, and learn from them the great art of war, laugh at their mistakes, and approve when they act intelligently. His old hostility to England was increased by its war with Holland.

The theft of Arthur Lee's papers (copied and returned to him) by the agents of the English minister in Berlin, was passed over by the King with contemptuous indifference. Lee, a young American lawyer of thirty-six, wrote a characteristic letter to the King of sixty-four, in the hope of securing his recognition of the independence of the colonies at a time (June, 1777) when the King was sedulously avoiding any further difficulty with England. Lee wrote again and again, but never got a favorable answer. To his urgent appeal that no troops be sent from Russia, Germany and Denmark, to serve in America under the British flag, the Prussian minister replied that besides a few hundred German recruits, no more soldiers would be sent. William Lee, a brother of Arthur, and a man of more tact, never came to Berlin, but wrote frequently on all points of interest there. The King refused to take any steps until France recognized the independence of the English colonies in America. He granted Lee's request to be allowed to buy arms in Prussia, and added his request for information as to events in America, expressed a hope that the colonies might achieve their independence, but repeated his refusal to acknowledge it until France did so. Lee bought eight hundred muskets, but made the purchase a ground of complaint which met no favor from the Prussian authorities.

The outbreak of the Bavarian Succession War (January 3, 1778, to March 13, 1779) made the King anxious to enlist the sympathy of Great Britain, and cooled his interest in the American cause. When France did recognize American independence, Frederick said that he was too busy with home matters to consider the request of Lee, and as he had no fleet, his recognition could not have any real benefit for America.

Lee continued to supply information as to events in America but got no encouragement as to recognition. The King indeed continued his abuse of the English government and was inclined to hinder their efforts to transport German troops through his kingdom until he needed English influence in the Bavarian war of succession, and to gain that he was ready at least to cease sneering, as he had always done, at the petty German princes who sold their soldiers to England. He feared that his own army might be weakened by such a drain on the supply from which he drew recruits. With expressions of regard for the King of England, Frederick annoyed his representatives by refusing permission to take the Hessian Hanau and Anspach troops through Prussian lines to reach ports for shipment. The petty German princes had asked and almost obtained Frederick's consent to the sale of their troops to England, and therefore his interference was all the more annoying to its agents. The news of the surrender of Burgoyne made a very painful impression in Berlin, as Riedesel, in command of the Brunswick Corps, was the son-in-law of the Prussian War Minister, Massow. Most of the imprisoned Brunswick officers were well known in Berlin and had been in friendly relations with the Prussian officers since the Seven Years' War. Eliot, the British minister in Berlin, wrote home on November 29, 1777, that the approval of the passage (through Prussian territory) of the allied troops was already completed, when the news of Burgoyne's surrender was received, and it was withdrawn and an end came apparently of all favorable Prussian policy.

Frederick's refusal to permit the transport through his borders of any German troops engaged by England, fell like a bomb among the English recruiting agents and the German princes and their ministers. Sir Joseph York,

the English minister at The Hague, wrote to the English agent, Rainsford: "The King of Prussia is too much feared for any one to risk sending troops through his boundaries." Expresses and couriers hurried from one Court to another, notes were exchanged, and efforts made to induce the Prussian minister at Cologne and the commandant at Wesel to close their eyes, but all in vain. Faucitt, the English agent, wrote that "Hitherto the Rhine was open to all the world—now it is suddenly and unexpectedly closed. It is too late to change the route. At Minden the same interruption is threatened. I have written to Berlin and Hanau, Anspach and Cassel, and have advised Schlieffen, the Electors Minister, to send his troops around the Prussian borders." The English minister at Cologne wrote: "The troops cannot march over land or down the Rhine without passing Prussian territory and boats will be stopped at Wesel." The Anspach minister wrote: "If no means can be found to change the King's decision, all is lost, we are ruined, for it is impossible to move over land." Rainsford waited in vain, with the transports ready in Holland, weather favorable, and a day or two only needed to ship the troops. The only thing to do was to quarter the Anspach and Hanau troops for the winter in Hanau, and at the end of February, 1778, march them to the mouth of the Wesel, and it was only late in March that these 534 men reached the port of shipment after avoiding Prussian boundaries. The troops from Zerbst waited until spring, when they went through Saxony, Brunswick and Hanover to Stade, losing nearly half of their number by desertion—of 841 who were in the ranks on February 21, only 494 remained on March 21, 1778. The condition of affairs was largely influenced, if not decidedly affected, by Frederick's policy. Washington

was suffering all the hardships of his winter quarters at Valley Forge from December, 1777, to June, 1778. His weak force could not withstand a vigorous attack by Howe, but when the latter learned of Frederick's prohibition of the passage of troops through Prussian territory, Howe knew that meant cutting off the prospect of any reinforcement. It was not the few men delayed in their journey so much as the uncertainty for future German detachments. Frederick's policy was worth to Washington as much as an alliance, for it gave him time and helped to change the fortunes of war. Without really wishing to do so, Frederick rendered a real service to the young republic. Frederick soon changed his tactics towards England, when he needed its support in the matter of the Bavarian succession. He declared that it was Beaumarchais and his friends who were spreading false reports of his hostility to England to forward their own interests in the American Revolution. The King wanted to see the mother country again on a friendly footing with its American colonies. Early in March the King authorized the passage of the German allied troops through Prussian territory. He and his ministers assured the English ministry that the King never entertained any favorable consideration for the American rebels or their representatives. He wanted England's and Hanover's support. He reported that Austria was urging France to recognize American independence and seize England's German province, Hanover. Little credence as the English gave to these reports, they replied that they would like nothing better than to renew their old friendly relations with Prussia and unite with that country and Russia in close alliance. William Lee was in Frankfort, closely watching events. Breteuil, the French ambassador, tried to secure Prussian and

Russian recognition of American independence in the Peace of Teschen, but it failed, just as did the effort of Spain to act as peacemaker between England and its colonies. Lee reminded Frederick of his promise to recognize American independence as soon as France had done so, but was promptly told that Prussia had no interest in doing so, and as it had no fleet, could do nothing. Lee patiently waited, and John Adams advised Congress to do so, too, for the King of Prussia hoped to make Emden a sea-port, and to open through it trade with the American colonies for his manufactories in Silesia and Holland and Brunswick would follow him in any course he might decide on. Lee continued to advise Prussia of American news, but said nothing of the surrender by the Danes to England of prizes of American privateers. Carmichael from Spain received polite replies refusing to consider his appeals for recognition. Colonel Arendt, a German officer who had served in America, in vain sought permission to use Dutch capital in trade to America under the Prussian flag. Lee, early in 1781, renewed his efforts, this time complaining of the hostility to the colonies of a Prussian newspaper, but to him, and to Arendt, in December, 1783, and in May, 1783, to Jacob Philadelphia, a well-known Jew and quite a famous artist, all seeking Prussian recognition through business or other agencies, the same answers were given, refusing any action. Frederick soon showed England that it was for no love of that country he had granted permission for its German troops to cross his territory. In February, 1780, he had done this, but to the next application he made answer that this business of recruiting was depopulating Germany. England saw his influence against it in St. Petersburg and Copenhagen and The Hague. Frederick followed events in

America and promptly and sharply pursued the English minister at his Court with sneers at the English trouble in America and praise for American success. England believed that Prussia and France were bound by some secret agreement to encourage the rebellious Americans, and that Holland and Denmark were inspired by Prussia in their hostility to England. With the peace between England and America, Frederick offered to enter into close alliance with Great Britain, and urged that the English troops be not too quickly withdrawn from America, for he doubted if that country could long maintain its independence. It was too large for a republic, a form of government possible only to small, compact countries, such as Venice, Holland and Switzerland. He thought the time would come when some of the American colonies would want again to have the benefit of English government and to send representatives to Parliament. The Canadian territory should be very carefully guarded and General Carleton must treat the people very gently, so as to avoid any influence by French or Spanish agents. The Americans achieved their independence without any help from Frederick. All that he wanted was an outlet for the products of his country and a cheap market for their's, and the business came to nothing, because the Americans could not send to a Prussian port tobacco at low prices and take away in exchange Silesian woolen goods, etc. Of any evidence of political or personal sympathy on his part, there is no proof, but it is plain that he used the Americans only to advance his own interests in the game of European politics. Even the most zealous of his ministers could not encourage the American agents in their hope that Frederick would by his recognition give the weight of his good opinion to the struggling colonies.

In Reddaway's "Frederick the Great" (Putnam, 1904), p. 317, it is said, "When at that time a new republic arose across the ocean, King Frederick made haste to enter into commercial relations with it, in order to exchange cloth, woollen stuffs and linen, iron goods and porcelain, for rice, indigo, and Virginia tobacco. The 'most favoured nation' treaty of September 10, 1785, between Prussia and the United States of America, fulfilled, it is true, few of the expectations which both parties formed of it, for the English, who from a seafaring and capitalist point of view, were more competent, long continued to be the commercial intermediaries between those renegade colonies and the old world"; then cited from Kosen, "König Friederick der Grosse" (Berlin, 1903), p. 332: "He looked on while England and her colonies fell to blows in 1775 (?) and while France joined in the fray in 1778. He blamed the English both for political and military folly, for beginning a terrible civil war with no settled plans or adequate preparations, for underestimating the enemy's force, for dividing her own, and for trampling upon the rights of neutrals. But he avoided with the most scrupulous care any action that could give offence to either combatant, and declared to his ministers that he intended to wait the issue quietly and to throw in his lot with the side which fortune favored. Just before his death (1785) he entertained at dinner Lafayette and Cornwallis."

Kapp's "Soldatenhandel," Berlin, 1874, p. 151, etc. says: "Frederick the Great is almost the only ruler of his time who was worthy of respect, for he felt a personal responsibility for his government. He was, too, the only one who followed great political aims with clear intelligence. He was without prejudices, called things by their right name, and his sovereign contempt for England and its

allies supplying soldiers, was doubly beneficial. The King, like the German Emperor, had a close political interest in this, for it violated the laws of the Empire, and it deprive both of a great number of men who would fill their regiments, if not drawn off by the war in America. At the outset it was thought the number sent would not be large enough to affect the supply needed for the standing armies.

"With the large force sent in 1777, at the suggestion of the imperial representative, the Rhenish princes began to show hostility to the shipment of troops. The Austrian recruiting offices complained that the recruits preferred service in America, and many old soldiers deserted to go there. Frederick, too, although outwardly civil to England, had never forgotten or forgiven Bute for abandoning him, and spoke with bitterness of the government that thought everything could be done with money. In his 'Memoirs' he wrote that England dealt with all the German Courts to obtain soldiers, thus diminishing the numbers at home. The King of Prussia quietly did his best to strengthen his own position and only incidentally interfered with that of England. He detained the new allies at every point in his kingdom, at Madgeburg, Minden and Wesel, and he taxed their baggage, but never openly opposed their transportation. He was, from his dislike to England, always outspoken in his friendship for America, exaggerating, in his conversation with the English minister at his Court, American successes, and dwelling on English disasters. He was credited with readiness to recognize American independence, when he really was not ready to do anything of the kind." To the surprise of the Anspach authorities, he wrote in reply to their request for leave to send their soldiers through his territory, a letter

dated Potsdam, October 24, 1777, not printed in his works, nor published until Kapp made it known on page 161 of his book, from the Anspach archives as follows:

"I never think of the present war in America without being unpleasantly affected by the greed of some German princes who sacrifice their troops in a matter that don't affect them at all. My astonishment increases when I see this violation of our old German rule, never to spill German blood in behalf of foreign interests. In answer to the request of the Anspach authorities for leave to take their troops in the English service through my territory, I call attention to the fact that there are other and shorter routes to England."

In vain did the Anspach ministers appeal, and the English ministers, too, received the same short refusal. Sir Joseph Yorke wrote: "Every one has such fear of the King of Prussia that it is impossible to disregard his action in thus closing the Rhine."

A lively exchange of letters showed the result of this unexpected interference with the free movement of the allied troops on their way to ports of embarcation. The Rhine princes took their cue from Prussia and made the Anspach authorities, as well as the English agents, very uncomfortable. No passage across Prussian lines, no quarters allowed, no baggage permitted, and naturally frequent desertions, the poor soldiers kept in boats, only allowed to land for exercise, were for four weeks anchored at a little Anspach town, and of course recruiting officers, Prussian, Imperial, French and Dutch, doing their best to tempt the poor recruits into their service. The poor colonel was at his wits end, when finally the English agent arranged that Anspach and Hanau troops should be quartered in Hanau, a fortified town, while the authorities tried

to arrange for transport of the troops. After a long delay a way out was found, but with all this, the troops that left Anspach in October reached New York only in the next September. Later Frederick withdrew his objections and allowed free passage, but the Zerbst regiment had even harder fortune, with loss of men in its roundabout journey, and practically never even entered into active campaigning. The result of Frederick's policy was practically equal to a new ally for Washington, giving him time for restoring his waning strength and overcome his failing fortunes—so that even without wishing to do so, the King of Prussia had rendered the republican chief a great service. That Frederick the Great followed with great interest and close attention the course of events in America, is clear from his repeated requests for information from the Lees and other representatives of America in Europe, but his first and most important aim was the protection of his own kingdom and to that he sacrificed both his hostility to Great Britain and his benevolent interest in America.

E. J. Lowell, in his "The Hessians and the other Auxiliaries of Great Britain in the Revolutionary War" (Harpers, 1884), p. 50, etc., states that Frederick the Great refused his nephew the Margrave of Anspach's request for permission to send his troops to America through Prussian territory and quotes Frederick's statement on the subject of the American war in his Memoirs. "Germany," the King wrote, "already felt the evil consequences of sending so many of her men into those distant climates, and the King of Prussia did not like to see the Empire deprived of all its defenders, especially in the case of a new war and for this reason he made difficulties about the passage of the troops of the princes allied to England."

Frederick subsequently encouraged the French Court to enter into the American alliance (Bancroft, Vol. 10, ch. 3). In January, 1778, Schulenberg, Frederick's minister, wrote to Arthur Lee that the King of Prussia would not delay to acknowledge the independence of the United States as soon as France should have done so, but with the change of interests incidental to the war of the Bavarian succession, this promise was not fulfilled. Later events made it still more difficult to secure from Prussia anything more, until it signed the commercial treaty with the United States.—Bancroft (ed. 1874), Vol. 10, p. 240, etc. Frederick of Prussia had raised the hope that he would follow France in recognizing the independence of the United States, but later he wrote: "The affairs of England and her colonies disappear from my eyes," when the question of his protection of his own country arose. To William Lee he directed his minister to answer in 1778: "We are so occupied with Germany that we cannot think of the Americans; we should be heartily glad to recognize them, but at this present moment it could do them no good, and to us might be very detrimental."

Lee's importunities only made Frederick more reserved. From his camp he always put them aside, yet with gentleness and caution. He could not receive the prizes of the Americans at Emden, because he had no means to protect the harbor against aggression; they might purchase in his dominions munitions of war; and their merchants would be received in his ports on the same terms as the merchants of all other countries.

In 1778, in reply to the effort of the British ministry to propitiate Frederick, he answered: "I will never lend myself to an alliance with England. I am not like so many German princes, to be gained by money." He re-

lented so far as to allow a few recruits for the English army to pass through his dominions, but proposals for closer relations with England were inflexibly declined. He sent word to France, "I offer my vows for the success of the French." Prussia adopted the system of neutrality just when it could benefit the United States the most. In 1779 he wrote: "The balance of power in Europe will not be disturbed by England's losing possessions in other parts of the world."

In "Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution," edited by Jared Sparks, Vol. 2, p. 58, Franklin, Deane and Arthur Lee, Paris, April 19, 1777, write to Baron de Schulenberg, Minister of the King of Prussia: "From the Congress we have their commands to inform his Prussian Majesty's Ambassador here, that they propose to send a minister to your respected Court properly empowered to treat upon affairs of importance, and that we are in the meantime instructed and authorized by Congress to solicit the friendship of your Court, to request that it would afford no aid to their enemies, but use its good offices to prevent the landing of troops by other powers to be transported to America for their destruction, and to offer the free commerce of the United States to the subjects of Prussia. June 5, 1777." Arthur Lee advises Schulenberg of his arrival in Berlin, June 7, 1777, advises him of the articles to be exchanged between Prussia and the United States, *e. g.,* tobacco for muskets—a musket which costs here (Berlin) 22 French livres, can be sold in America for at least 50. With these 50 livres 200 weight of tobacco can be bought, which in Europe will bring 200 livres. June 21, 1777, Schulenberg to Lee: The King is very much disposed to please your constituents, but his Majesty cannot embroil himself with the Court of London. June

29, 1777, Lee to the King of Prussia, urging recognition: "There is no name so highly respected among us as that of your Majesty. Hence there is no King the declaration of whose friendship would inspire our people with so much courage, and add so much force to our cause."

Paris, July 29, 1777, Lee to the Committee of Foreign Affairs: "Pressing for aid from the King, in artillery, arms and money, I could obtain nothing but assurance of his desire to serve us if it were in his power. Schulenberg delivered me a message from his Majesty, desiring me to assure my constituents that nothing would give him more pleasure than to hear of their success, and that he wished whatever good news I might receive be communicated to him. I did not omit to press his interposition relative to German and Russian auxiliaries. In answer to this, the minister assured me that we had no reason to apprehend anything either from one or the other in the future. The German princes who have hired their troops, besides having rendered themselves extremely odious, have suffered greatly, and are still suffering by the emigration of their subjects, for fear of being forced into this service, which is excessively unpopular and odious through all Germany; under these circumstances, these princes are neither much inclined nor at all able to furnish new supplies. The troops already sent were their utmost exertions, and in all probability will be their last."

October 8, 1777, Schulenberg to Lee: "We must wait for more favorable circumstances to begin a commercial connexion between the two peoples which his Majesty will receive with great pleasure in seeing increase, whenever it will not engage him in measures contrary to his principles."

December 18, 1777, Schulenberg to Lee: "His Majesty will not be the last power to acknowledge your indepen-

dency, but you must feel yourself that it is not natural that he should be the first, and that France, whose commercial and political interests are more immediately connected with yours, should set the example."

December 23, 1777, Schulenberg to Lee: "The information which you have had, that his Majesty has refused a passage to the auxiliary troops of Germany destined for America, is strictly true."

January 16, 1778, Schulenberg to Lee: "The King interests himself very much (in the events of your war) and his Majesty wishes that your efforts may be crowned with success, he will not hesitate to acknowledge your independence whenever France, which is more interested in the event of this contest, shall set the example."

Paris, June 1, 1778, Arthur Lee: "The King of Prussia has found it so necessary to cultivate the aid of Hannover, Hesse, Brunswick, etc., that he has declined receiving an American deputy or following the example of France as he promised."

February 25, 1779, William Lee, Frankfort: "The King of Prussia has formally engaged by a letter from his Minister, who writes in the King's name, that the merchants of North America, who should come with their merchant vessels into the ports of his Majesty to trade there, in merchandise that is not prohibited, should have full liberty," etc.

In Hayden's "Washington and His Masonic Compeers": New York, 1866 (2d ed.), it is said on page 148: "Frederick the Great of Prussia, who was at the head of Masonry in Continental Europe, sent him (Washington) an elegant sword with a complimentary inscription."

In the *Century Magazine,* Vol. 19 (1890–1, April, 1891, p. 945), is an article on "Washington and Fred-

erick the Great with the story of a mythical sword," by Moncure D. Conway. Washington ordered a bust of Frederick for Mount Vernon and had his works in thirteen volumes in his library. Conway says that Carlisle told him he had met no incident or phrase on which the American legend (that Frederick the Great sent a sword to Washington inscribed "From the oldest General in the war to the Greatest") might have been based. The story was originally told, not of a sword, but of Frederick's portrait, in a *New Jersey Journal* of August 9, 1780. There is no evidence that any such picture was sent to Washington. The only mention of Washington by Frederick in his voluminous works is in his "Memoirs," Vol. 4, p. 175—"Washington gained some advantages over the royalists who were assembled near Boston." His sympathies were in a mild way with the Americans—in his letter to D'Alembert, May 16, 1776. Frederick made no reply to D'Alembert's letter about the Hessians. On June 3, 1777, he casually says: "War still continues to be made on the poor Americans." On July 28, 1777, D'Alembert asks his opinion of this war and the manoeuvers of Washington, to which Frederick replied (Aug. 13): "I venture an opinion that the colonies will become independent."

We may feel tolerably certain that no gift was ever sent by Frederick the Great to Washington and that he never recognized in any remark the greatness of Washington. There was, however, a sword sent to Washington from Germany. In 1795 Theophilus Alte of Solingen made the sword which was No. 428 in the Centennial Exhibition (loaned by Miss Alice Riggs) and sent it to General Washington by his son. The son did not take it to Washington, but pawned it at a tavern in Philadelphia for thirty dollars. A gentleman redeemed it and left it

with another in Alexandria who repaid the money and sent it to Washington. On it is Washington's name and an inscription in German "Condemner of despotism, preserver of liberty, glorious man, take from my son's hands the sword, I beg you. A. Solingen." This translation was made for Washington, who thought it was Dutch, and "Solingen" the name of a man in Amsterdam. But a year later Alte wrote to him and the facts came out. This was the sword chosen by George Steptoe Washington under the terms of his uncle's will. It was buried during the Civil War, and it is still rusty, but its admirable workmanship is still evident. Washington was a good deal mystified about the sword, and instituted inquiries during the year in which he heard nothing from Alte or his son. It is possible that during that time the story which had been told about a picture of Frederick was modified into a sword legend. The earliest reference to it on record is on February 8, 1843, on the presentation of the sword of Washington and the staff of Franklin in the House of Representatives. This was his service sword, marked 1757, which Washington had borne in all his great battles. It was presented by Samuel T., son of the Samuel (Washington's nephew), by whom it had been selected.

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