THE CRISIS IN THE EARLY LIFE OF GENERAL PETER MÜHLENBERG.

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["The Crisis in the Early Life of General Peter Mühlenberg," was compiled by Rev. Dr. Germann in 1881, from the original records entrusted to him by the authorities at Halle. The translation from the German was made by the late Miss Helen Bell.]

General Peter Mühlenberg has become so public a character through the prominent part which he played during the War of Independence, that it is the duty of the historian who possesses the means of doing so, to state accurately the facts, already almost legendary, concerning the crisis in his early life.

In the biography of the General* we read that when Peter was sixteen years of age, he sailed for London, on the 27th of April, 1763, in company with his two next oldest brothers, Friedrich and Heinrich, and under the protection of Chief Justice Allen, a friend of his father's arriving there on the 15th of June. Thence he was sent by the Court Chaplain Ziegenhagen, by way of Rotterdam to Halle, where, not being ready for the University, he was received into the preparatory classes; but, in the course of the next year, on the occasion of a Public Procession, he incurred an insulting reproof from his tutor, to which he replied immediately by a box on the ear, whereupon, without waiting for the inevitable official punishment, he fled bag and baggage, and enlisted in a passing regiment. Later, a British Colonel, a friend of the Mühlenberg family, who was on the point of giving up an official position in

Hanover to return to America, discovered young Mühlengberg by chance in a garrison town, procured his release and took him with him to America, where they arrived some time in the course of the year 1766, when he was received by his father with open arms. He, however, could not allow him to follow his inclination for the Army; but conducted his education for the Church under his personal supervision. Early in 1768 he was ordained a Lutheran Minister. Whatever the legends may be, "Littera scripta manet" and written testimony mercilessly destroys the poetic woof of such family traditions, but leads us all the more to recognize in the sober prose the marvellous hand of God, who prepares a way for His children.

As early as January 10th, 1762, Father Mühlengberg had written about his son to Court Chaplain Ziegenhagen, in London, as follows: "Your Reverence will kindly permit me, in conclusion, to make a humble inquiry and request of you. My oldest son, Peter, is entering his sixteenth year. I have had him taught to read and write German and English, and, after the necessary instruction, he has been confirmed in our Evangelical Church; moreover, since I have been in Philadelphia, I have sent him to the Academy to learn the rudimenta linguae latinae. But now I write in great anxiety on account of the corruption among the impudent and emancipated youth of this city, and I am not able to provide for his welfare any longer. It would be a great scandal and offence in my position, and to the ruin of his own soul, if he should fall into wild ways. Is there not an opportunity among the members of your Church for him to learn surgery, or

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*He was ordained by his father, and, on the 12th of May of the same year, he became Assistant Rector of the congregations of New Germantown and Bedminster, N. J., where he remained until he was called to a church in Virginia. As this place required an English Episcopal ordination, he went to London, where, on the 23rd of April, 1772, he received an Anglican ordination.
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even an honest trade! Or will the blessed Institution in Glaucha (the suburb of Halle, the seat of the Institutions founded by Francke) by the power of God, reach so far as to provide for him? Next spring I shall have a good opportunity to send him hence to London with my good friend, the Rev. Mr. Peters, the former Secretary of the Country."

The circumstances under which Peter and his two brothers made the voyage to London, are correctly given in the Biography. The brothers arrived at their father’s birthplace and home, Eimbeck, accompanied by their cousin Bense; from there they reached Halle the latter part of August or the First of September, for on the Second of September, 1763, at Halle, Johann Heinrich Bense gave a receipt to Professor G. A. Francke for ten thaler in gold for "bringing Pastor Mühlenberg’s children from Eimbeck to Halle." A bill, dated the 4th of October next for the expenses of Mühlenberg, the purchasing of a trunk, shoes, gaiters, and roquelaure, was repaid to Grotian, a manager of the Orphanage, by Crusius, while at the same time the outlay for posting to Aschersleben is stricken out; but a second receipt is added "For the Journey to Lübeck, I have received twenty-two Reichsthaler and three groschen cash, which I hereby acknowledge and receipt for. Halle, Ocober 5th, 1763. Johann Peter Gabriel Mühlenberg." This is the day of Peter’s departure for Lübeck, where he was to learn to be a merchant. The few weeks in Halle served to decide him in his choice of a profession, and for the beginning and closing of the negotiations with Leonhard Heinrich Niemeyer, a merchant of Lübeck. There is not the slightest reason to suppose that any conflict arose in these few weeks. The next document is the following indenture:

In the name of the Holy Trinity.

Know all men by these presents that S. T. [Salvo Titulo] Herr Director, Doctor and Professor Francke of Halle, having a power
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of attorney from his Reverence, Pastor Heinrich Melchoir Mühlenberg of Philadelphia, in the Province of Pennsylvania, in America, in behalf of his son, Johann Peter Gabriel Mühlenberg, of the first part, and Leonhard Heinrich Niemeyer, druggist, merchant, and tradesman of Lübeck, of the second part, do enter upon and execute the following contract of service:

First. The aforesaid Johann Peter Gabriel Mühlenberg, with the consent of his Reverend father, binds himself to serve as trade apprentice to Leonhard Heinrich Niemeyer, of Lübeck, for six years from Michaelmas of this year, 1763, until Michaelmas of the year 1769, D.V., to perform faithfully his master's business and any other affairs undertaken by him, and to do whatever he is ordered by his master willingly, faithfully, cheerfully and industriously; to work for his master's best interests, and to endeavor to avert any injury from him. Moreover he must arrange everything in an orderly manner in the shop, accost, and serve every one in an obliging, polite, and cordial manner, so that their custom shall be retained. More especially, he must not associate with any one, either at home, in the shop, in the street, or wherever he may happen to go, he must not allow himself to be led astray, or misled by anything that would give occasion for him to be led astray; he must not serve, or buy for other servants of his master, unless he has received permission from his master or the wife of the same, he must neither have, nor carry, money with him without a good reason. If he should see, hear, or notice, anything unfaithful or wicked in any of his master's servants, he should not be silent, or connive at it, even if they threaten or entreat him, or make promises to him, but he should immediately inform and make it known to his master, or mistress. And in order to become more clever, he must pray to God diligently for His grace and assistance, and commend himself in prayer to the Almighty both morning and evening; when he is sent to church, he must attend duly and reverently to the service, returning home immediately after the sermon and hymns, to read religious books and thus to end the day of the Lord in a manner well-pleasing to God. He must never leave the house without the consent of his master, or mistress, much less stay out over night without their knowledge. He must so use the money and goods entrusted to him that he can give a correct account of them; what he does not know how to manage according to his own knowledge, he must tell his master and ask him what to do, so that no goods are given incorrectly, causing people to complain; he must also take care that the other apprentice sells things correctly and not to his master's prejudice, and that he observes silence during business.

Second. It is agreed that the S. T. Reverend Herr Doctor Francke is to provide young Mühlenberg with the necessary clothing, linen, and every requisite during the six years of his apprenticeship.

Third. I, Leonhard Heinrich Niemeyer, promise not only to provide the aforesaid Johann Peter Gabriel Mühlenberg with food and drink during the six years of his apprenticeship, but also to instruct
him in my business and merchandise, and in all that is good, and, after he has served the six years of apprenticeship honorably and faithfully, to give him a journeyman's black cloth suit of clothes, consisting of coat, waistcoat and breeches, together with a hat, cane, shoes and stockings, or, instead of it, one hundred marks Lübeck currency, in money. If, after his apprenticeship is over, his master shall desire to keep him longer as journeyman, he may remain at a fair salary as long as they both please; but if he is dismissed from his master's service, he can get a situation elsewhere wherever he wishes, in which his master will help him to the best of his ability, only remembering that he must not serve in another shop in the Mühlenstrasse where his master dwells; with this exception he is free to take a place with anyone, whoever it may be, in the whole city.

Fourth. I assuredly hope that young Mühlenberg, having come to years of understanding, will not maliciously damage, steal, or destroy, anything in his master's business, which may God in His mercy forbid, and therefore I excuse him from the customary bail and security.

And in order that all these things shall be faithfully observed, S. T. the Reverend Herr Doctor Francke binds himself that this contract shall be fulfilled on the part of young Mühlenberg in every particular. Without fraud, in witness thereof, this agreement has been prepared in duplicate and signed by all three of the contracting parties with their own hands.

Given at Lübeck, September 29th A. D. 1763.
Leonhard Heinrich Niemeyer,
Johann Peter Gabriel Mühlenberg.

Francke's signature is wanting, because it is the copy of the articles of apprenticeship destined for Halle. Probably the agreements made by letter previous to Peter's arrival in Lübeck were reduced to writing, and two copies sent to Halle, one of which was sent back duly executed, and the other retained. Peter, who was seventeen years old on the 1st of October, was to be an apprentice for six years behind the counter of an ordinary drug and grocery store. The highly esteemed Archdeacon Niemeyer was living in Halle at that time, and his relative in Lübeck having sent to him for an apprentice from the Franconian, so-called Francke Institute, Dr. Francke, deceived by the name Niemeyer and the capital city of Lübeck, into thinking it a large mercantile house, consented in his ignorance to a six
years' apprenticeship. For a considerable time everything went well. On the 23rd of March, 1765, the head of the firm wrote to G. A. Francke as follows:

"I am enabled by this [fourteen Pounds sterling sent direct from America] to purchase what young Mühlenberg needs in the way of linen and clothing, and thus your Reverence will not need to send any money for such things. I shall endeavor to manage in every way for his dear parents' advantage, and shall not allow him to get anything unnecessarily, for every now and then I quietly present him with pieces of my own clothing, especially as he deserves it, for being hitherto faithful, and obedient, and industrious in business, besides which he has the blessing of sound health and a heart at peace with God. At the same time, I heartily wish that he may all the more diligently and frequently, especially in his many idle evening hours, praise and thank his Creator and Preserver for these things, and beseech Him for further aid. Most people are slow in doing this, and he is not altogether an exception; in order to encourage him in diligent study of the Holy Scriptures, I bought him an English Bible, and he has ample time both morning and evening to read the Word of God. Your Reverence may be assured that I contribute, to the best of my ability, to everything necessary for his eternal and temporal welfare. His worthy Mama wrote the letter he received, and, as she intimated therein that his respected father will write to him shortly, he will await that before answering your esteemed lines; in the meantime, he desires his humble respects to you and commends his dear parents and brothers to your Reverence's kind remembrances."

A letter of the 26th of August, 1765, written by the wife of Professor Francke to Frau Mühlenberg, in Philadelphia, in answer to a letter of the 20th of November, 1764, doing ample justice to Peter's good conduct concludes thus:

"As Pastor Schulze will have given you by word of mouth the best news of the welfare of your dear children, up to the time of his departure, I will now assure you to your joy, that they are still well, are doing, and promise to do, well. Since they surmounted the first consequences of change of air and manner of living without being dangerously ill, they seem to have excellent health. From the first, the youngest has not shown the same amiable and tractable disposition which was noticeable immediately in the two oldest. But he seems to improve and to promise fairly, and we hope and believe that he will do well. I have had the guinea which you sent changed and given to your two dear children here for their enjoyment. As I noticed that they were too timid to ask anything of me, I gave it to Herr Inspector Weise, who was to give it all to them,
a little at a time. My worthy Frau Pastorin may moreover feel assured that not only does my husband take especially affectionate care of her children; but all their inspectors and teachers have a particular affection for them, because they impress all honest natures as being the children of a faithful servant of God, and are strangers here. For my part, I will be glad to show them a mother's love, at the same time taking an opportunity to admonish them well. May the Lord hear the prayer of the worthy parents and give his blessing upon their education for His love's sake! We hear constantly good accounts of your oldest son, who is in Lübeck; he is happy and his employer, Herr Niemeyer, a Christian druggist, is well contented with him. Now may the Lord rejoice the worthy parents with good news henceforth, and may they live to have much joy in their children in the Old and New World!”

Instead of the good news thus wished for them in the future, the parents were soon to receive intelligence quite the reverse. A letter of Peter's, written the 25th of October, 1765, in answer to one from his father's friend, Sebastian Andreas Fabricius, the Inspector of the Orphanage, and sent by carrier is as follows:

“I was very pleased to hear that Pastor Schultz and Mons. Bernhold reached London safely, for, as Mons. Bernhold staid some time with me in Lübeck, he will be able to give my dear parents the best accounts of me. Pastor Schultz, too, carries letters from my patron and from me. I have no news from home since last December, except what I have received through your Reverence's kindness. I humbly request you to send the enclosed letter to Philadelphia, and the one to my dear brothers. Please present my respectful duty to Doctor Francke, Archdeacon Niemeyer, Inspector Rechenberg, Inspector Crusius and the other gentlemen. With my best compliments to your wife, I remain, my respected Inspector's obedient servant.

Johann Peter Gabriel Mühlenberg.

The letter sounds harmless enough, but the messenger had made his own observations. About the 12th of December, 1765, Father Mühlenberg, at Niemeyer's request for curiosities, had sent a box of them to an apothecary in Lübeck, Edler by name, in which were packed other presents: ‘‘For Herr Niemeyer, a pair of garters which had been worn by an Indian King and made by Indian women; for Madame Niemeyer, a fur muff and collar; for my Peter, a cap, a muff, a pocket-book, a medicine book, and a handkerchief; for Friedrich
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and Heinrich, in Halle, a pocketbook for each, which my Peter is to send to them by the traveling postman.”

About the same time, Herr Niemeyer received a direct letter, and which contained the answer to the news brought by the merchant Barnsholdt, or Bernhold, and to the letter sent by Pastor Schultz and received the 24th of October:

"Concerning my son Peter, your bound apprentice, or disciple, I rejoice from my heart that, through Divine Providence and the recommendation of his Reverence, the beloved Doctor and Director Francke, he has found a master who cares for his bodily and spiritual welfare like a father, and who speaks hopefully of his good behavior. Therefore I respectfully request you to let him be provided with warm clothing, especially in winter, at my expense, so that with God’s blessing, his health may be preserved; for, as we are from ten to twelve degrees nearer the sun here, American, or Pennsylvanian youth cannot easily bear the cold of your latitude. With the Divine help, nothing shall fail on my part, so long as he behaves himself well. And, since my principal aim and object in sending my three sons away, was the welfare of their souls, for I had neither the slightest time or opportunity to look after their education, being day and night in toil and moil on account of the varied duties of my profession which obliged me to leave the poor children either exposed to danger, or to send them away; but now my affairs being more compact, I have more time, as well as a piece of land inherited by my wife from her late father, on which all my children can, by the blessing of God, together with work and prayer, be maintained, and as the children generally have the strongest attachment and affection to their first Fatherland, the country where they were born, I will repeat the request I made in the beginning, and ask for the kindly release of two of the six years stipulated for, a compensation therefore in money being fixed by your own free choice, but with the condition that his Reverence Doctor Francke and yourself shall consider it for the boys’ best advantage, and that my circumstances shall not have changed when the four years are passed.

"In this English America we have a land that alarms me somewhat; which is that a father has no control over his son after he is twenty-one years old. As soon as the son has reached that age, he is of full age and free. If a son does anything wrong before he is of age, his father is answerable and responsible for him; on the other hand a father has the right and power to sell his son before his majority, or to otherwise dispose of him as his own property. Children here know and learn this law generally before they learn the fourth commandment. I ask and desire nothing more than that their souls may be saved, and that they may learn

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an honest trade so as to be able to support themselves honorably and be a support to, instead of a burden on, the community."

The key to this letter is furnished by another written in the greatest confidence to Lector Pasche, in London, on the 14th of October, 1765:

"Sub rosa rosarum. I have been informed by some one from Lübeck, in regard to my son Johann Peter, that the affectionate fatherly intentions of his Reverence Doctor Francke about him were not being fulfilled. Ratio 1. A young man can learn that small trade and the whole retail business in four weeks and does not need to remain six years. 2nd. Before my draft for 14£ sterling arrived, the boy was in rage, and obliged to wear the same shirt unwashed for three or four weeks, besides suffering greatly in winter time from insufficient clothing and nakedness. 3rd. The other apprentices were bound for four years only, while this stranger was to serve for six years, even beyond his majority. 4th. He has not even learned to spell German correctly in his position, much less to decline a Latin case, and nothing at all of bookkeeping which would be of so much assistance to a poor young man. He has to eat in the kitchen with the servants, clean the shoes, wait and serve at frequent "Frolicks" [sic] or feasts, and also listen to the jovial colloquia. And his master has even been heard to say in company that it cost him an anker of wine to get the American for six years. My dear Brother, I know the world well, and am aware that every Christian has his praisers, his enviers and his calumniators, neither do I believe the report, because the youth himself has not yet complained, except that it was hard for him in winter and he asked for warm clothing, as according to the custom there, he was allowed to warm himself at the charcoal fire, only. I also see from his letters that he still uses the Pennsylvania letters and the old style, etc., and I have already asked the respected Herr Niemeyer if I cannot buy from him two of the stipulated six years. For doing so there were several reasons: A. The boy is an Englishman born, and, according to the English laws in force here, cannot be bound after twenty-one years of age. B. I am anxious that after these four years he shall have learned something at least that will contribute to his future advancement, for instance: to write a German hand, to decline and conjugate, and as much arithmetic and bookkeeping as possible, or at least a trade."

Pasche, upon this, wrote to Peter Mühlhember, telling him to answer these inquiries of his father in all sincerity; but the latter, in order to spare his parent, wrote to Pasche:

"Lübeck, January 2nd, 1766.

"Respected Sir!

Yesterday for the first I had the honor of receiving a valued letter from you, in which I noted the observations which your
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Honor had received from my dear Papa. (I had been very uneasy lest my dear parents were not well, as the last letters which I received from home were dated December, 1764, and thus it rejoiced my heart that your Honor had news of them.) Although I have not the privilege of knowing your Honor, yet as your letter opens the way for me, I take the liberty of answering your questions immediately. First. I am indeed bound for six years, but, as the contract was made at Halle, and I did not know that I was not going to a first-class merchant (I believe that Herr Dr. Francke does not know it yet), I consented joyfully to the six years, because at that time I had a great fancy for business. But as it has turned out quite differently, I leave it to your Honor's opinion, if six years are not too many. Second. It is really true that last winter I was obliged to wear one shirt for from four to six weeks, because I only had two and because my clothing was very bad, and we had to stand the whole winter long in an open shop, and I was obliged to suffer from the cold; the very day before the money came, I begged my mistress to have something mended for me. She answered shortly, she would have nothing else repaired for me, and if my parents did not send any money, I might go naked, and because I troubled nobody with complaints, it was always so. Third. There are certainly some who are apprenticed for six years, but while I am now in my twentieth year, they are from ten to twelve years old and even children. Your Honor knows very well that there is not much to be learned in a grocery store, and I assure you that when I had been here four weeks, I knew as much as I do now, for when I learned how to pour out a glass of brandy and to sell a little tea, sugar, etc., I had learned everything. He himself takes charge of the little drugshop, and, as I have by this time entirely forgotten my Latin, I have no longer any desire to learn medicine. We have nothing at all to do with writing, or reckoning. My associate, who will be free next Michaelmas, is the first apprentice my master has had, and, as he leaves his apprenticeship as wise as when he entered it, he intends apprenticing himself again to a merchant; but he is just sixteen years old. Fourth. As lowest apprentice, I could willingly accommodate myself to everything, eating in the kitchen as well as doing other work, if I was only learning something. But I have already found out how much I can rely on the affection of my master, for, as he refused to be kind to me when I needed it, I will not ask anything of him now when I am not in such great need. He certainly promised me that I should eat at his table next Michaelmas; but I do not ask about it, and would much rather that he would let me learn bookkeeping. I begged him to let me do so some time ago; but he gave me such an answer as I do not wish to hear again. I would have written to Herr Doctor Francke long ago, but did not venture on account of Herr Archdeacon Niemeyer. But I assure your Honor that, to please my dear parents, I will willingly stay out my apprenticeship, only it seems to me very hard that I must sacrifice six of the best years
of my life without learning anything. If my master would allow me to learn bookkeeping, I could serve him willingly and heartily. He does not complain of me, but is very well pleased with me and promises me much, only nothing is said about teaching me. If I only had Sunday free, I could practice writing and arithmetic a little; but our shop is open Sundays as well as other days until ten o'clock in the evening. Then it is too late. You advise me to apply to some acquaintances who have learned something; but I assure you that we dare not converse in a friendly manner with anyone without being suspected of giving away money or goods, for it is an open shop. However, I know that I serve my master faithfully, and that he cannot complain of me. If your Honor doubts the truth of these things, I am entirely willing to have this letter laid before my master, but I most dutifully beg my dear parents not to write everything. The fourteen pounds sterling are already gone, as my master gives me to understand; I know nothing about it. I would hardly have known that he had the money, if I had not heard it by chance. When your Honor writes to Philadelphia, please send my dear parents the heartiest greetings, etc.

N. B. In the greatest haste.”

The explicit and moderate letter which showed at the same time a love of duty and a child’s hearty affection for his parents, made a great impression in London. Court Chaplain Ziegenhagen and Pasche did not conceal from themselves that the unpleasant news about Peter Mühlenberg’s situation was founded in entire justice. Pasche sent G. A. Franche, at Ziegenhagen’s instance, “for his enlightenment,” an extract from Father Muhlenberg’s epistle and Peter’s original letter, to which he added, under date of January 24th, 1766:

“The Court Chaplain deplores the necessity produced by these circumstances of making this unpleasant business known to his Reverence the beloved Herr Doctor Francke, and with most respectful regards and hearty good wishes entreats him to take to his benevolent heart this case, to communicate something of it (it might not be advisable to tell the whole) to his most worthy assistant, Herr Niemeyer, and by his wise and powerful mediation, to so arrange the matter, that the future life of young Mühlenberg might be passed more in accordance with the wishes of the father and son.”

It was not to be expected that such a message would be welcome in Halle. Pasche received a memorial written in March, 1766, to which the letter of Niemeyer’s mentioned therein as enclosed, is wanting.
This epistle is an excited justification of his own proceedings and of Niemeyer's business, and shows throughout no inclination to urge the shortening of the time of apprenticeship, but Francke says he will write to the principal, to give permission for an hour of arithmetic a day. We extract some portions:

"From the whole context it seems as if young Mühlenberg had been set on by others, and also that some people from envy had tried to influence his father's mind against Herr Niemeyer. A plain proof of this is the fabrication that Herr Niemeyer was overheard to say that it cost him an anker of wine to get this American for six years, which is plainly and positively false, for neither the Reverend Doctor Francke, nor Herr Niemeyer, is capable of such corruption, moreover neither of them received the slightest present of coin from him. Herr Niemeyer is not a mere grocer, but a druggist, who is a learned apothecary and puts up prescriptions for others, of his own as well as foreign, drugs; but he also keeps an open shop.... In the enclosed letter of young Mühlenberg's to his father (which has been opened in order to get more particular information of his circumstances), it is incorrectly stated that Doctor Francke had overpersuaded him. He gave him all particulars and left the choice to his own free will. He himself had above all a great fancy for business, and immediately inclined to seize this opportunity.... After the six years are passed, he will be in the twenty-fourth year of his age, when he will still have time to make an attempt, for some years longer, at another kind of business. Doctor Francke does not advise that, according to his intention expressed in the English letter to his father, he should immediately take matters in his own hands."

On the 3rd of April, Francke wrote to Peter a letter of admonition, at the same time writing his master as follows:

"I perceive from the worthy Herr Niemeyer's letter to his cousin that young Mühlenberg, since the departure of the senior apprentice, and his enjoyment of more honor, together with the hope held out to him of getting off with four years and remaining the two last as journeyman, is now well contented, from which it is all the clearer that his previous complaints had no real foundation. I have heartily admonished him above all to give his heart entirely to the Lord, and as for the rest, I shall have the more opportunity from his answer to give him a fitting reproof. In the meantime I request that you will impart farther candid particulars of his conduct. Moreover, I must beg you, for the sake of politeness and good habits, as well as order and system, to insist upon his mending
his clothes properly, having them washed regularly, and keeping himself clean, at the same time avoiding unnecessary finery, such as cuffs. He must report himself in these matters and give Herr Niemeyer no occasion to find fault with him."

Suddenly opinions in Halle changed, and that even before the last quoted letter with enclosures was received in Lübeck. Inspector Sebastian Fabricius had applied confidentially to a business house in Lübeck for information, and it turned out that the correspondent of this firm was a cousin of Niemeyer's, by the name of Meymann, and it had all the more weight when he, unwillingly, from friendship for Dr. Francke and compassion for the young man, under date of the 2nd of April, 1766, could not do otherwise than say that, "the youth had gone to the wrong merchant to learn his trade, and had probably cause enough to be discontented with his situation. We wonder greatly that Herr Niemeyer's conscience would allow him to take a young man who had come so far to learn the business, as an apprentice for six years, when the business can be perfectly acquired within a year. We had young Mühlenberg with us yesterday, etc. It is a sin that anyone should want him to stay here with Herr N.; only the worst of the peasant youth from the country, accustomed to rough work from their youth up, are taken into such a business."

A letter from Peter to Fabricius, dated the 5th of April, 1766, arrived a few days later:

"Your Honor will not take it unkindly that I take the liberty of troubling you with my writing; the reason of it is, that, on the first of this month, Herr Meymann sent for me to inquire about my situation, as he had received a letter from you on the subject. But as Herr Meymann is a cousin of my principal's and knows his whole business, I begged him to write his candid opinion to Herr Dr. Francke, which he agreed to do. I would indeed have willingly written long ago to Herr Dr. Francke; but refrained for fear of making trouble. I can assure your Honor that I have profited very little here, and knew as much in the first four weeks as I know now, and have only lost my precious time. I cannot profit at all by the little drug shop, and take pleasure in nothing but business,
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as I wrote to my Papa, and my employer has no business by which I can profit. I have done my duty and served my principal faithfully, so that he cannot complain, and on account of this he took me to his table last week, because my associate had gone. I cannot complain that my employer does not keep me well in food, etc., but it seems very hard to me that I am ruining my health by standing the whole winter and spring in the shop and learning nothing. My dear brothers will be able by the grace of God in the future to point to what they have gained in Europe, but I have nothing to show. I leave it all to Herr Dr. Francke, and shall be pleased with whatever he finds best to do. I dutifully beg to greet my dear brothers.” A postscript on the cover was as follows: “If your Honor finds that it will not be possible for me to leave here entirely, I entreat you to say nothing to my employer, otherwise I might have nothing but uncomfortable hours here.”

Sebastian Fabricius’ answers to Meymann and to young Mühlenberg were dated on the 18th of April. In the letter he says:

“The greatest mistake was in not writing in the beginning to Herr Dr. Francke, or to me, and saying that you did not believe you could remain in this business with profit, then there would have been no difficulty in annulling the contract, and you would not have had the slightest cause to fear anything disagreeable. Now it is much more difficult, as two years and a half have passed, and the matter cannot be otherwise arranged than by making an amicable compromise with Herr Niemeyer, and paying for several years, that you may not only be freed, but honorably dismissed, especially as your father has already begun the negotiations. His Reverence Dr. Francke has written to Herr Niemeyer, to know if he will not free and honorably dismiss you after four years for a sum of money, also permitting you to have an hour’s instruction in arithmetic daily, and Herr Archdeacon Niemeyer at the same time takes some trouble to induce your employer to make a fair arrangement. Both of them have your welfare at heart. They only fear, that you may have committed yourself too far, for your employer wrote that your father had left everything to you, and that you were well content now.”

Then follow reproaches for not having written to Halle for warmer clothing and money, and for not having his washing done out; in conclusion, he is reproved for making a parade which the other apprentices did not do, by wearing cuffs, for instance, which is not approved of.

The employer’s answer, written on the 30th of April,
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contains nothing but praises of his apprentice, who is so skilful that he brings custom to the shop by pleasing all the customers. He is treated like a son of the house, never complains, and gives them to understand that he is perfectly contented. He (the principal) would—unwillingly—give up any of the six years, after previous notice of from four to six months, for an indemnity of fifty thaler a year. His employer was entirely deceived as to his apprentice's sentiments. The latter had made his decision in the meantime, as he plainly says in his answer of the 8th of May, 1766:

"Respected Herr Inspector! Your honored letter of the 18th of April has been duly received through Herr Meymann, and I respectfully thank you for the news so kindly imparted; but I am very sorry that your Honor is displeased at some parts of my conduct, especially on account of the writing for money, as it was my employer who caused me to do so, for when he knew that I had only two shirts, and must necessarily wear one until the other was washed and dried, which takes a long time to dry on the ground in winter, and yet made no preparations to get me any clothes, saying that he had already laid out so much for me which he did not know when he could get again. Thereupon I offered to write to Halle. He answered that I should not do so, for, if the money came from America, he would be obliged to send it again to Halle and he could thus still have something to ask Herr Inspector Niemeyer for. As to what I wrote home about my mistress, I still assert it; but since then they have tried diligently to make amends to me by kind treatment. But as to what concerns my years of apprenticeship, it will not help me at all for my master to take me as journeyman after four years, for I would gain just as little by being journeyman as I have as apprentice; but with God's help I have decided not to stay any longer with him than this Michaelmas, in which time he will be able to sufficiently provide himself with servants. This winter, please God, I shall be glad to give my attention to writing, arithmetic and bookkeeping, for I can do nothing at them this summer while I am still alone and will probably remain so. I shall have opportunities enough afterwards to better myself by getting an advantageous place, where I can spend my time to better advantage, and I think it is enough to have served my master faithfully and honestly for three years without gain. Your Honor will not take it amiss that I have expressed my meaning very plainly, but will, if it so pleases you, write to me in your first letter as to how I shall act. Several merchants here have told me that if it was not of one's own will, it was not at all necessary to buy my time from my master; but if
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It was brought before the magistrates, he would be obliged to let me go free."

He had expressed himself with the same decision to Meymann:

"I have informed young Mühlenberg of what was necessary. He will write today, the 7th of May, himself, representing that he will stay with Herr Niemeyer no longer than until Michaelmas. We have advised him against this, and have undertaken to settle matters amicably with his master; but notice that he has no mind to do this; we think, however, that it would be very unfair for him to be obliged to pay Herr Niemeyer money for the remaining years of apprenticeship agreed upon, for the youth intended, when agreeing to his apprenticeship, to learn a trade with Herr Niemeyer, and not to stand in a grocery store, for that is not regarded as a trade. If Herr N. had let this out in the beginning, no one would have given his consent; of course it is only an injury to the young man to have remained there so long. He will have to serve in another place after this one. Consequently no Judge would forbid him to look around for a better situation, and Herr N. ought to let him go without requital. We can assure you in confidence that Herr Niemeyer will be derided by all and every one for taking an Englishman into his service to learn a trade. It is as absurd as anything can be; and we do not consider it expedient for Mühlenberg to take an hour a day to practice arithmetic and writing, for in his hard daily work and mortar-pounding, this will be neglected again, besides which Herr Niemeyer cannot spare him out of the shop, as he is alone."

Fabricius’s answer may be surmised from Peter’s next letter, dated the 14th of June, 1766:

"I received your favor of the 27th duly through Herr Meymann. and note your advice to endeavor to gain my principal’s consent to let me go. I began about it to him with the greatest courtesy; but he was very angry and said that I was bound to him by my indenture and must serve my time out. I have an associate now, but he is only a child who can help me very little, for he cannot look after the shop himself and let me have a few hours to myself every day. I represented all this to my master; but he said that I would have time enough next summer to learn something, and this is the way it is put off from year to year. As to what your honor says about not being out of a place this winter on account of the expense, I think that if I am only to serve in a small shop, there are plenty of such places always to be had here, where I could learn arithmetic and bookkeeping besides for my money, and thus it would not be necessary for me to be out of a situation. If I only knew that it would not offend his Reverence Dr. Francke, there would be ways enough of getting free this Michaelmas. If
your Honor would instruct a gentleman here in Lübeck with whom you are in correspondence, such as Herr Neubauer, or Herr Günzlach, to undertake the matter for me, it would be quite easy. For to buy my remaining time from my principal without my having profited in the slightest by the years that have passed, would be contrary to all equity and not to be consented to on my part, and my master would just as little be permitted to receive much money for the remaining years as I would be to give it. Several merchants here are my good friends. I having become acquainted with them in this wise: last year two, and this year five, English sea captains arrived here with goods, and large as the trade of this town is, there was no one able to speak English, so they were obliged to ask my principal to permit me to translate their letters into German and talk to the merchants for them. They were all surprised that I was in such a business, and if I were free from my master, I would soon have a situation. However, I think the only way to leave my master amicably, would be for a boy from the Orphanage, who wanted to learn this trade, to come here in my place, then both parties would be satisfied, and this business is useful and profitable enough for those who are to remain in Germany. I heartily wish to come to an amicable agreement if it be possible. But if it be not possible, then other means must be used; but I dutifully implore your Honor's advice beforehand. My principal is now doing everything possible to induce me to refuse all propositions made to me from Halle, and wants me to write that I had decided to remain with him. He gave me a form which I am to write and which I enclose, so that your Honor may understand his views. I have written none of these matters home as yet, and I humbly beg you to write nothing to my dear parents until I am settled in one way or the other. Day before yesterday I went to Herr Meymann's to ask for his advice. Your Honor well knows the reasons which restrain him from assisting me openly, on which account he proposed the gentlemen I have mentioned."

The enclosure is as follows:

"Since last Easter, when our oldest apprentice left, my principal has had the great kindness to allow me to eat at his table, and has also promised that, when my four years of apprenticeship are ended, he will make me a journeyman, at the same time requiring me to remain in his shop without salary as a journeyman for those two years. I have accepted this offer with pleasure and am resolved, with God's help, to remain in Lübeck for that length of time, and I can moreover assure your Reverence that I am now content and give up my will, by Divine grace. After the end of these years, I intend to take a situation in England for some time, in order to familiarize myself with the trade of England and America, and to acquire the necessary knowledge of it; for I am now entirely decided to carry on, with the Divine blessing, at some future time,
a similar business with England and Germany and Pennsylvania, for which reason I shall not carry on my medical studies after my stay here; but as I am now doing, I shall continue to diligently acquire my trade with my master."

Sebastian Andreas Fabricius to Peter Muhlenberg.

Halle, July 4th 1766.

"My worthy Monsieur Muhlenberg!

I see from your last letter of the 14th of June, that your principal will have nothing to say to the proposition made to him of a compromise, at which I am considerably surprised, as, in his last letter to Herr Dr. Fancke, he declared that, if he knew of the matter four, or six months previously, he would let you go before the expiration of the six years, on payment of fifty thalers Lübeck currency for every year. As you proposed that we should give another of our correspondents the commission to treat with your master, I requested Herr Neubauer to undertake the business. He writes that, if you only knew you would not offend his Reverence Dr. Francke, there would be ways enough of getting free next Michaelmas. If there are such means compatible with honor and the promise given by signing the indenture, Herr Dr. Francke would not object. But as you fear that you may offend him by doing so, that is a sign that your conscience troubles you. In the meantime I beg you to tell me what means you are thinking of employing, so that we may consider them. I will use every endeavor to find another boy to take your place with your master; but I cannot promise certainly. When you write that your principal's shop would be advantageous enough for those intending to remain in Germany, I do not see how you can abrogate your contract honorably, and get free, without making a fair compensation for the missing years. I think it would be well to try to come to terms with him, without, however, giving him more than is reasonable. But I do not think you could get off with honor and a clear conscience without making some compensation. Your father has already offered to indemnify him for the last two years, and he would constantly refer to that. Happen what may, it will be far more honorable both for yourself and your father, if you can get free amicably. That you wish to enter a small countinghouse when you are set free, in order to improve yourself by good instruction, is very well, and I do not doubt that you will have a good opportunity in Lübeck, as you are known to our merchants, and may be able to obtain a more advantageous position on account of knowing the English language. Moreover I think that if you remain with your principal until next Easter, he may perhaps be induced then to let you go on more favorable conditions, and two years and a half of the indenture would still remain. Do not vex yourself over this short space of half a year. You will not repent of it in the future. And if you need some warmer clothing in the winter for your health's sake, you have only to let it be known and his Reverence Herr Dr.
Francke will thereupon devise ways and means. Commit all your affairs to God diligently in prayer, and you will find that He will so lead you that all is meant for your best good. Often we do not know why we are placed in unpleasant situations; but there is oftener a gracious and well-meant purpose of God beneath, which paves the way for His ultimate intentions towards us. We must not run away from this school; but be faithful in the present, so that in the future we can all the better experience His gracious government. Dr. Francke and Archdeacon Niemeyer send their cordial remembrances, and I remain yours to command,

Sebastian Andreas Fabricius.”

It will be acknowledged that no father could have written a more fatherly and sympathizing letter, or one more considerate of the first feelings of self-importance of a youth of hardly twenty years. This letter was written by Fabricius just after he had received the following advice from the Lübeck firm of Barckley:

“As to what relates to Herr Leonhard Heinrich Niemeyer, I know nothing except that the standing of the house is very fair; but as to the business I cannot exactly say. He has an open shop and there are four more in the same street, and thus he probably does a retail business principally, and has not much wholesale trade. As his deceased father always had a private pharmacy, I think the son undoubtedly has it yet, and when such is the case, we consider these the best grocery-stores. In other respects he is a pleasant man. I do not consider it unreasonable in him to ask a hundred thalers in currency for the two years and a half. The boy is just beginning to be useful to him, when he wants to leave him. The young men want to be journeymen quickly, often when it is not good for them.”

The firm of Neubauer, who had been appealed to, at last succeeded in bringing the vexed question to a solution and in making an unexpectedly favorable compromise. On the 20th of July, 1766, Peter wrote Fabricius a letter of thanks, which gives a detailed account of the progress and conclusion of the negotiations:

“I duly received your favor of the 11th, enclosed to Madame Neubauer, and thank you most humbly for complying with my request, and entrusting the commission to Madame Neubauer. My master was immediately requested by the bearer of the letter to allow me to go to Madame Neubauer, to which he consented. After she had
told me what was necessary she sent her bookkeeper with me to try if my principal was disposed to make a more reasonable settlement. After the matter had been proposed to him, he promised to give Madame N. an answer on the 14th. The new contract was drawn up ready for the signatures on the 14th, and is to the effect that I am to be set free next Easter, on the payment of one hundred thalers, and moreover, from Michaelmas until Easter, I am to have four hours every week for instruction in arithmetic, bookkeeping, and other things necessary for commercial life, at my own expense. The signing waits only for the approval of his Reverence Dr. Francke and yourself; as soon as Madame Neubauer receives word, the contract will be signed. I think that the object has been attained of letting neither party bear the sole damage. I hardly thought that my master, after it had once failed, would agree amicably to such conditions. It was a very hard point for him to get over, the allowing me four hours instruction. And yet, with one hundred thalers, my principal will not lose by paying a journeyman, for the largest grocery-stores only pay from thirty to forty thalers a year, and others, from twenty to thirty. The worst is that a journeyman cannot be obliged to do rough work, and my present companion, being a child, is not strong enough to pound in the mortar or do similar work. As to my clothing, thank God, I am already provided for this winter, and will only humbly beg that, at the expiration of my apprenticeship, which may God grant to be fortunate! his Reverence Dr. Francke will provide me with the necessary articles of clothing, as I ought to have somewhat better clothes then. I have nothing else to write at present than to humbly thank the Reverend Dr. Francke and yourself for the trouble and anxiety you have had on my account, which I can repay in no other way than by thanks. I have not come into collision with my employer in these matters, but now as before we remain good friends, and I shall leave him to all appearances amicably. He would have agreed long ago to a reasonable settlement, if it had not been for other opinions than his own, for he is a very quiet and peaceable man, and, as long as I have been with him I never received a word of blame from him.”

Before us lies the amended contract, signed by Niemeyer, J. P. G. Mühlenberg, and the widow Neubauer, dated Lübeck, July 16th, 1766; besides a memorial to Father Mühlenberg in Philadelphia, which followed on the heels of one of the 12th of July, and thankfully announced the final conclusion of the arrangements. We have, moreover, the letter of Walter, confidential clerk of the firm of Neubauer, written on the evening of the 13th of August, which accompanied the newly
executed contract when it was sent to Halle, together with the expression of regret that it could not have been done under one hundred thaler, and the promise that care should be taken to allow the instruction and bookkeeping which had been hindered previously by press of business.

Everything thus settled in Europe received the paternal sanction in a letter from Philadelphia, written to Pasche on the 4th of November, 1766, which at the same time betrays anxiety as to what is to be done after the liberation at Easter, 1767:

"The first contract which I have in writing, and Herr Niemeyer's letters show perfectly that the boy was to learn the drug business as the foundation for the drug-store and mercantile life, and this made me hesitate somewhat, because he could not earn his salt by pharmacy in this country, as the wild Indians are the real apothecaries here, and, as to business, that required a large capital and is learned very easily and quickly here,—shop-keeping particularly, for nearly every tailor, shoemaker, brushmaker, stocking-weaver, farmer, or even former soldier, has a shop besides his trade. In the meantime I comforted myself with the thought that the drug business was his real trade and the basis of pharmacy, and that the boy could build afterwards on this foundation, if he could get through and be bought off a couple of years sooner. Since Herr Niemeyer has declared his willingness, and contracted to dismiss the boy as an apprentice at Easter, 1767, for one hundred thalers, he is perfect in one thing,—in the grocery business, or the drug-store, and in my imperfect comprehension, I should think he ought to go to an apothecary-shop, for which he has received the foundation in the last three years and a half. If he were to prepare himself now for the first for business life, he must study writing, arithmetic, bookkeeping, etc., which would require some years, during which I would be obliged to keep him in clothing, etc., or else he must bind himself out again as an apprentice, to finally become a merchant without money or capital. I will very willingly pay the hundred thalers for him. But I am greatly perplexed as to what is to become of the youth when he is free and no longer under discipline. I am afraid, and do not know what to advise. If he were to return here, I do not know how he could support himself. I should be obliged either to give him some instruction myself to prepare him for a schoolmaster, or catechist, or to send him far into the country to learn farming where he would learn to earn and eat his bread by the sweat of his brow. I do not know what to do. It would be a great comfort to me if his Reverence Herr Doctor Francke would graciously condescend to advise as to
the best course. If, as soon as he is free, he could be immediately taken into the apothecary-shop of the revered Institution [at Halle], and be perfected there, I would willingly expend something more for him, and pay the necessary expenses. Then he would have the best opportunity to take care of his soul and to learn something good, after which he could return to America with honor and earn his bread there. I would not wish him to remain in Lübeck a day after he is free; but to come at once under the immediate oversight of my reverend fathers and brethren in Halle, not however with the intention that he should be a burden on the beloved Institution, but that he might be under close supervision, and where he could learn something. If this cannot be, he may come home, for it is dangerous for a youth to be free and his own master in a foreign land and on his father's credit. I wished to say all this beforehand and in time, because 'periculum in mora,' the distance is great and the time before Easter will quickly pass. His Reverence has already taken much trouble and pains with my children, and will, for the Lord's sake, continue to hold his gracious hand over them, and, in particular, will advise for the best about the one in Lübeck, and the Lord will reward him for it if I cannot."

We can hardly conceive of a sharper, or more definite, condemnation of the unpractical action of the people in Halle in sending a seventeen-year-old American boy to a grocery store as an apprentice. After his discharge at Easter there was nothing left for young Mühlenberg to do, as he had no inclination for the apothecary-shop, but to return home at his father's expense, acknowledging that he had learned nothing that he could not have acquired more thoroughly and with more ease at home. In this light the following documents should be read, which, when the difficulty appeared to be happily settled, inform us of a sudden, violent outbreak and swift progress of another crisis.

*L. H. Niemeyer to Doctor Francke.*

Lübeck, August 16th, 1766.

"After I had signed the contract which Madame Neubauer had been authorized to arrange by your Reverence, on the 15th of July, 1766, in which the six years for which my apprentice Johann Peter Gabriel Mühlenberg had been bound in the first indenture of the 29th of September, 1763, were shortened by two years and a half, I certainly thought that I would have entire quiet in my business affairs; but unfortunately I had yet to experience a proceeding which was as unexpected as annoying to me. On Thursday,
the 14th of August of this year, 1766, my servant maid came up to my bedroom and asked, 'Have you sent Mr. Johann out?' On my answering in the negative, she said, 'He is not in the house.' I sprang out of bed; but found nothing whatever in his bedroom, his trunk and clothing having been taken away. He had evidently gone away secretly. I inquired of the whole street if anyone had been up and knew about it, or had seen him. They all pledged ignorance. As I have the house key in my own custody at night, he must have arranged, immediately after it was delivered early to the watchman, to carry away his things before the other servants were awake, for the girl was roused by the loud shutting of the house door. Greatly troubled, I went all about the city to find out if any one had seen a young man, or a trunk being carried away, until at last, on passing by a house where the English recruiting officers lodge, I received the impression that Mühlenberg was standing in the room. I immediately went in with my neighbor and inquired whether there was a young man there, and, on being answered in the affirmative, desired to see and speak with him. Thus, to my great astonishment, I found Mühlenberg, the Englishmen saying he had just arrived and enlisted voluntarily. I entreated him, in sorrow and with heartfelt remonstrances, to return home with me, but in vain; he would not leave them, and they would not have been willing, even if he had wished it. I returned home unsuccessful, and in the meantime a stranger fellow, the person who, as I discovered afterwards, had carried away the trunk, left a letter for me of which I subjoin a correct copy made by my wife, so that your Reverence can see Mühlenberg's motives, and that I had given no cause for his flight. I immediately notified Madame Neubauer of the matter and took advice of experienced people; but as long as he himself did not wish to get free, his discharge could not be hoped for. I addressed myself, accompanied by my father-in-law, to the English Captain von Fiser, who had enlisted him, and requested his release, which he promised to agree to, if he himself wished it, for he took none but volunteers. All his best friends, my father-in-law, an apothecary here by the name of Edler (who has constantly shown much affection for young Mühlenberg, and in whom he had great confidence), Madame Neubauer's book keeper, and my humble self especially, took the greatest pains to persuade him to agree to this, but in vain, he would listen to no entreaty. He was Secretary of the Regiment and was to remain in Lübeck as long as the Captain did. The latter intended to take him to America, as he knew his parents and relations, for whom he had great esteem. It mortified me greatly to have to undergo such treatment on the part of an apprentice whom I loved and esteemed so much, and to whom I had shown so much kindness and courtesy. Moreover, as is well known, the injury to my business is exceedingly great: but that I hope with certainty your Reverence will indemnify me for, in right and equity. I had expected the greatest usefulness and assistance from young Mühlenberg during the re-
remainder of his years of apprenticeship; and now I am placed in such an inconvenient position, that I can neither attend Divine service, which I love to do, nor even be out of the house for half an hour, because, since Midsummer, I have had only a boy who is inexperienced in the shop, and thus I can neither go to the Exchange nor transact the smallest business properly, and expect to be thus situated for some time, for a new apprentice is always ignorant and must be instructed. Our merciful Father will not forsake me but give His powerful support and preserve my health, otherwise my whole business, which no one understands but myself, could be ruined and my dear wife and children be still more afflicted."

Copy of Mühlenberg's letter received on the 14th of August at six o'clock in the morning from a stranger youth:

"My dear Herr Niemeyer!

You will be not a little vexed when you hear that I have gone away so unexpectedly, without knowing any cause therefore. You have done your very best for me, and it is not your fault. It is partly owing to my love for my native country, and the other reasons I cannot disclose to you. I have enlisted as cadet among the Englishmen who are going into garrison in America. I now humbly entreat you not to injure your health by useless anger, because it cannot be changed now. Bear it patiently, and I swear to you that I will do all in my power to protect you from any injury. You will receive the money from Madame Neubauer, and if you will come to an amicable agreement with me, I will try to procure fifty thalers for you from my Captain. But if you try to seize me forcibly, I will go to Retzeberg. I would willingly offer to remain two or four weeks with you until you are a little in order. But you will hesitate to take me in your shop now. Nevertheless I can take my oath that I leave you with a clear conscience, without having taken away the slightest thing, although I certainly had opportunities enough. Reassure for me my dear parents, whom I should certainly have not done anything in opposition to, if I had not had weighty reasons which God alone knows. I shall thankfully acknowledge, as long as I live, what you have done for me. Your until now faithful servant,

J. P. G. M. . . . . g.

Wednesday morning. I humbly ask an answer from you this morning."

"August 14th, 1766. The next day at five o'clock, I received the following note through a wigmaker by the name of Jung:

"Most respected Herr Niemeyer,

If you write to Halle, I respectfully beg you to tell them that the Herr Captain has made me Secretary of the Regiment, which office I am to enter upon tomorrow.

J. P. G. M. . . . . . . . g."
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Madame Neubauer to Fabricius.

Lübeck, August 16th, 1766.

"The last post day I had the honor of forwarding to you the agreement about Monsieur Mühlenberg, assuring you, at the same time, that everything else should be arranged in the best possible way. You will be all the more astonished when I inform you that the aforesaid Monsieur Mühlenberg, on the day after, the 14th of this month, at half past four in the morning, secretly ran away from Herr Niemeyer's house, having his trunk and clothing carried away at the same time, and voluntarily enlisted as a soldier at the English recruiting office of Captain von Fiser, whence he sent a letter to his employer in the course of half an hour. As soon as Herr Niemeyer discovered this, he came to me in not a little consternation about six o'clock the same morning, to lament over the trouble, whereupon we immediately repaired to Monsieur Mühlenberg at the recruiting-office, so as to have a complete understanding; but he only answered that the reason was merely his great longing to return to his native country. I talked with the Captain, who is a very honest man. He promised to let Monsieur Mühlenberg go free without any penalty on condition that he himself is willing. But the latter asserts that, if two hundred ducats were laid on the table before him, he would not consent to remain here in Germany, since he had now such an excellent opportunity to return home to his native land. M. Mühlenberg said, he well knew that it would not please his father to hear this; but he could not help it. M. Mühlenberg is on the point of becoming Regimental Secretary, as he writes a good hand and has a good appearance, and he told Herr Niemeyer that in this position he was better off than many officers. The young man does not consider the consequences. In fine, there is no reasoning with him, he holds fast to his intention of returning home. As he enlisted voluntarily, I can do nothing by compulsion, the magistrates would not interfere. Finally we are waiting to hear what you and Dr. Francke think in the matter by the earliest post, as he will remain here with the Captain for four weeks longer. I have one thing more to inform you, and that is, that on account of the delay, the compensation for Herr Niemeyer is still in my possession, and, since this has happened, I have not handed it over to him yet, wishing to receive first farther orders from you in the matter. Herr Niemeyer is greatly embarrassed at present, having only a boy and not being able to obtain an apprentice immediately. Just as I was writing this, Herr Mühlenberg came to my house, and I sought by every possible means to dissuade him from his course; but in vain. He says openly that he will not give up; he says 'As soon as I perceive that compulsion is to be used, I will leave here with the Captain, and that will be the end.' In conclusion, I do not know what advice to give; but positively expect an answer by return of post. As I knew that young Mühlenberg had had some intercourse with Herr Meymann here, I intended talking
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over the affair with him; but he has gone to Copenhagen, not to return before a fortnight.”

G. A. Francke to H. Mühlenberg, Senior.

Halle, August 28th, 1766.

“In my previous letter I informed you of several matters in relation to the agreement I had made with Herr Niemeyer about your eldest son, contracting to pay him one hundred thalers Lübeck currency, on condition that he would set him free at Easter, 1767. I cannot deny that from the beginning I was disinclined to enter into this compromise, because I continually feared that there was some hidden reason for the discontent of the young man. But I allowed myself to be persuaded to let him have his way, first, because his assertion that he could profit more in another business was probable and supported by others, and, secondly, because you yourself wished it and had already written to Herr Niemeyer about it; and, thirdly, because I clearly perceived that you had yielded to him almost altogether formerly, and had even put in his head the idea of English liberty, which does not compel children to obey their parents after they are twenty-one years old, and therefore I feared nothing good would come of it, if everything was not done according to his will. But now I am all the better pleased that I gave up to him in everything, and when he expressed his great satisfaction in the accompanying letter to Herr Inspector Fabricius I never expected that I would receive the news contained in the enclosed letters from Herr Niemeyer and Madame Neubauer. Everything possible has been done and I would certainly not have taken so much trouble if it had not been from especial love for you. There must be a secret reason underneath for his not staying the short time that remains before Easter, as indeed he gives us to understand in his letter to Herr Niemeyer. In order to do everything possible to dissuade him from his infatuation, I have written him a forcible letter, as the Captain is to remain four weeks longer in Lübeck, in which I not only laid before him his going to destruction and greatly grieving his dear parents, but also entreated him to trust himself to some one of his good friends, so that if he has gone astray he can be helped back to the right path. Whether this will accomplish its design, we must wait to see. As for the rest, Herr Niemeyer has been promised one hundred thalers Lübeck currency for the two years and a half which were bought off; but I consider it very probable that he will now require especial compensation for the three quarters of a year which your son has anticipated, as well as for the injury which he has suffered from being left alone without previous notice; and in this matter we must necessarily do what justice requires. I will certainly consult your interests as far as possible; but, as I have allowed my name to be used, I must maintain my reputation and strive to have everything done justly and honorably. I heartily pity your Reverence, for 1
can well conceive the sorrow which afflicts your old age. For my part, I know that I have omitted nothing, and have nothing to reproach myself with. Meanwhile I hope that the prayers and tears of his beloved parents may bring back this erring son, and that, by God’s grace, you may experience more joy in your two dear sons who are here, for nothing is impossible with Him; although at the same time I cannot deny that I am very anxious about the youngest in particular, who has been heard to say that he intended to run away. We will, nevertheless, continue to work with them, not only with earnestness but in love and patience, looking confidently to the Lord for His blessing.”

Niemeyer to G. A. Francke.

Lübeck, October 8th, 1766.

“In the evening of the 19th of September, I had the honor of unsealing your lines of the 12th of September, and it was early on that day that young Mühlemberg departed hence for Ratzeburg, etc. Two days previously he came to take leave of me, when he thanked me for all the love and kindness shown him. Making use of the opportunity, I endeavored in every possible way to bring him into another frame of mind, but in vain! A military life appeared to him, in this last conversation, to be the most excellent of all, and therefore I must leave him to the grace and mercy of God. Perhaps the time will come when he will think otherwise, and my forebodings are strengthened by the following circumstance: Young Mühlemberg declared that he had come to such a point with me now that it depended on a slight assistance from me whether he could remain free, or be more bound that he was until now; that is, according to his statement, he had engaged to go to America as a volunteer! If he supported himself in clothes and washing, he would be able on arriving in America, to get his discharge. Now, as he needed some indispensable washing, shoes, etc., for which he must have at least ten thalers Lübeck currency, he knew that I would be doing the most friendly service to his father if I would give him some assistance. If I would not do it, he would be obliged to inform his Captain and take it from him immediately; although he knew the latter would willingly give him even more, yet he would rather ask me for it, for the aforesaid reason. As all evasions were unavailing, and since I wished first to await an answer from your Reverence, I therefore proposed to give him an address in Hamburg where he could get it on my account. But he rejoined that he could not wait for that; but as I would not do it, he would be obliged to take it from the Captain, therefore I thought it would be better to do it, if by that means his future freedom might be secured, thus giving a proof that I would not withdraw my love for his real welfare but show it all the more actively. He then gave me the enclosed receipt written by himself, and I immediately, as I was writing to London, informed his father of the matter, sending another receipt which he signed too.
Crisis in the Early Life of Gen. Peter Mühlenberg.

Your Reverence will kindly reimburse me, in consideration of the fact that I only gave it to him upon his representation that he would forfeit his freedom. For, if I had not done it, his father might have judged that my affection had grown cold, while I wish from the bottom of my heart to assist in every possible way to influence young Mühlenberg to devote himself to the honorable views of his revered father in America. The enclosed note is returned to you; I sent it to Hamburg to a merchant who returned it to me in a week's time, because it had not been called for, and he thought that he had left for Stade. In the meantime I received lately the following news from Lutterbrodt, a merchant and grocer in Hamburg: "Mr. Mühlenberg called on me quite unexpectedly on the 20th of September a. c. He declared that his journey from Costy through Lauenburg had been by water. They were obliged to remain on board four days, and consequently he could not land before; he did not seem particularly concerned about the note returned to your Reverence, saying that there would be nothing important in it. He appeared somewhat depressed; but was delighted at returning to his own country, and according to his statement, he had a great liking for a soldier's profession. He sailed on the 22nd of October, 1766, under the guidance of God, from Hamburg direct to Philadelphia in the ship Venus, Captain Rogen, and desires his humble compliments to you. The wind was fair at the time, and he may arrive quickly in America; but we may easily imagine what his father's feelings will be when he sees him."

Receipt in Peter Mühlenberg's Handwriting.

"I hereby acknowledge to have received, paid to me in cash on this date, ten Reichsthaler Lübeck currency, from Herr Leonhard Heinrich Niemeyer of Lübeck, at my earnest entreaty, as I was greatly in need of money for shoes and necessary washing, and, although I could certainly have obtained this sum from my Captain, Herr von Fiser, I did not wish to do so, having engaged as a volunteer to provide myself with clothes, and thus be enabled on arriving in America to resign my position if I did not wish to remain.

Lübeck September 17th, 1766.

John Peter Gabriel Mühlenberg,
Sergeant in the 60th Regiment Foot."

P. Mühlenberg to Merchant Lutterbrodt in Hamburg.

Cuxhaven, October 7th, 1766.

"Honored Sir!
I take the liberty of informing your Honor that we arrived here safely today, and, as we have a favorable wind, we expect, God
Crisis in the Early Life of Gen. Peter Mühlenberg.

willing, to sail early tomorrow. Please present my dutiful compliments to Herr Niemeyer and his spouse, and inform them that we go to sea tomorrow, also my dutiful compliments to Herr Winckelmann. When you write to Herr Niemeyer, please ask him to send word about me to my brothers in Halle. I have neither time nor opportunity to write more. Please send the enclosed letter to Altona."

G. A. Francke to H. Mühlenberg, Senior.
Halle, October 13th, 1766.

"In my last epistle of the 28th of August, I informed you that I would make energetic remonstrances with your eldest son and wait to see what effect they would have on him. But from his answer to Fabricius sent with this [of which there is no copy, alas!] you will see, among other things, that he cannot be persuaded from his resolution. As to what remains, since Herr Niemeyer claims sixty marks, or twenty thalers, more, in addition to the three hundred marks granted to him before, as compensation for the thirty weeks wanting to the last agreement, and, as this demand is considered reasonable by others, I have not hesitated to agree to it."

Herr Mühlenberg, Senior, to G. A. Francke.
Philadelphia, December 9th, 1766.

"Right Reverend, most esteemed Herr Director.
Dearest Benefactor!

From your Reverence's two last letters of August a. c, I see today, the 9th of December, a. c, with sorrow that my eldest boy has allowed himself to be overcome by the world, the flesh, and the devil, and gone headlong to destruction, and that the youngest one is not far behind. On the one side it mortifies and bows me to the ground with shame to find that your Reverence and other children of God have been caused so much care, anxiety and vexation by the sending abroad of my perverse offspring, all of which I am in no condition to make amends for. On the other hand, it is some comfort in the sight of God that a trial has been made and everything possible attempted for the welfare of their souls and bodies. There are adequate means in the blessed Institution for a real and deep conversion. The seed is planted and watered and Jesus, the true philanthropes, will in His goodness give the increase. He who will not accept it in due course, habeat sibi. But God's compassion does not end with our limits. He has all kinds of ways of helping. Did not the prodigal son return? But it grieves me that I have caused you sorrow and added this burden to the almost intolerable ones of your office! What I dreaded here, has taken place in Europe. The enemy has attained, and more than attained, his object; he has made me unfit for my office and an offense to the children of God in Europe. For, if the boy comes here to America as a soldier, either to this neighborhood or at a distance, it will be blazoned abroad, and be not only a mockery and derision
to all enemies; but a stumbling-block and a grief to all the evil-disposed. I Timothy Chapter 5th, verse 8th gives me a lesson.* "But if any provide, not for his own," but burdens the Institution with them, "he hath." There is nothing left for me to do but, under God's mercy, to repair to a remote congregation in the country, and there, as my nearest and most pressing duty, to keep my children at work and prayer, while I may be enabled to devote my few remaining powers to the service of a heedless congregation. Lest the cause of God should suffer harm or injury through me and mine, I am obliged to sever my connection with the church, and to leave it, after God, to be cared for in the future by those revered ones in authority, whose inexpressible care and loving pains, not on my account, but for the sake of Christ and the poor lost sheep, have not been without blessing, nor quite without fruit, during these years. I recognize this as a Divine leading and as my bounden duty under these circumstances,—not to flee, but to simply follow the sign, and betake myself to a place where I can bring up my children rightly, and devote the rest of my strength to the good of the most abandoned of mankind. If our American work has any small part of God in it, it will endure, and be continued with more blessing by younger workers. It is therefore a great comfort to me, to hear from Herr Pasche, that the reverend benefactors of the Institution are earnestly, diligently, and prayerfully considering where to find a helper for the minister in Philadelphia. May the Lord give His gracious assistance therein, so that one may be quickly found and sent hither, that no harm may ensue. And although I am absent in a corner, yet my brethren will surely not omit to write encouragingly here and to give advice when it is desired. As to what your Reverence is pleased to disclose concerning Herr Niemeyer of Lübeck, I too, am of the earnest opinion that he must be satisfied in all honesty and fairness. If it can be done from Halle, I am ready to repay everything by a bill of exchange at the first hint. From the beginning it has been my wish to refuse Herr Niemeyer nothing. As soon as he gave a hint in his letters about the boy's clothing and indicated a way of remitting by draft, he wanted for nothing. And when this did not seem to be enough, there was an opportunity to provide the thirteen and a quarter ducats from Ruhlemann's legacy. When he wrote that his good friend, Herr Edler, would like to have some natural curiosities, I tried my best to collect some things for him, and even if they did not turn out to be what was wanted, they cost me more time than they were worth. I could not depart from this world in peace, if honest Herr Niemeyer were to be cut short in the slightest degree. My reasons for being willing to buy the youth off two years earlier were twofold. In the first place, as I myself had received

* "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Tim. 5, 8.
such blessed impressions in the Glauche Institution, I thought that
the youth could experience no greater happiness than first to receive
his human moulding at Lübeck, and then to spend the remaining
time at the blessed Institution where he could become a true Chris-
tian. In the second place, I was troubled about his faint-heartedness
and perverseness, and silly, changeable disposition which tired of
things so soon and went to all extremes when restrained. I have
never, to my knowledge, written to the boy any observations on
the English coming of age under the present law, for he has known
all about it since he was seven years old. The late Herr Brunnholtz
was accustomed to sometimes make a diversion in teaching the
children, by asking a child who did not know the fourth Command-
ment, "When are you free by the law here?" This they could all
answer. Then he seized the opportunity to explain the law of God
and man, and to enjoin on the children the extent of each. Even
if I had expected something better from my boy from blind par-
tiality, I would not have made the observation for fear my Eng-
lish letters to him contained necessary admonitions. The result
has alas! been, his freeing himself before reaching even the above
mentioned English majority. According to the English law, the
parents have this advantage, that a son cannot engage in anything
before his majority without his father's consent. If, before this
time, a boy enlists or contracts marriage without his father's con-
sent, such action is void, and the father can either put him in the
House of Correction, or sell him until his majority. And, if a child
is disobedient to his parents, the father has the right and power
to cut him off with a shilling. If my boy had played me this trick
here and enlisted, I would have sold him as a servant until his
majority, or have put him in the House of Correction. I wonder
what power or authority the youth had to enlist when his father
and those in authority over him had legally bound him to his
master, at least until Easter, 1767, according to the new contract.
I do not know the laws of Lübeck, but should think that the boy
could have been arrested and imprisoned and kept on bread and
water until Easter, 1767, or as long as it pleased the magistrature.
If he were to appear here in such guise, I would have him arrested
and exercise my paternal rights, even if he were several hundred
miles away in garrison. Captain Fiser, as an English officer,
ought to know, that in no free English country could he enlist
a bound apprentice without the consent of his master, or
principal, and much less, one bound by a regular contract, in a
free Imperial city. As the boy would not let himself be led by the
Hand of God and the kindly voice of his well-wishers, friends and
benefactors, let him follow the calfskin and baculo* of the corporal,
and my prayers to God will follow him wheresoever he may be.
If he had been overcome by homesickness and longing for American
garlic, he could have written to that effect, and his return after
Easter, 1767, would not have been taken so amiss as this infamous

* Cudgel, staff.
desertion. And, as I am very anxious about my youngest son, who does not improve, and, as the middle one, F. A., might get homesick if he remained behind alone, I humbly beg that your Reverence will be pleased to direct that they shall both be sent back to me at my own expense, with the new missionaries to Pennsylvania or to Ebenezer*. I will conscientiously keep them under my own discipline, so that they can do me no farther injury. For, both by Divine and mundane authority I am bound to govern well my own household, and not to have children, who will become a burden on the commonwealth, to the dishonor of God; much less such as give trouble and cause vexation to the servants and children of God. They can learn honest trades here, and what they have learned in the blessed Institution will always be of advantage to them. In the meantime, God's gracious providence will give me a small place, aut in, aut sub, coelo, where I can serve Him proportionately to my strength, can govern my household, and devote my last hours to preparations for eternity. I can say with a clear conscience, that it would not have been necessary for me to have burdened my dearest benefactors with my children, had I not been compelled to devote my whole time to the multifarious affairs of the Church, and to turn my back on my children. I might have had my children taught something good for good pay, if my scanty salary had not made it necessary to spend their inheritance from their grandfather for necessaries, for circumstances have always required that the outer structure should be attended to first. My prayers and entreaties for many years, now for New York, now for Tulpehocken, Reading, Jersey, Georgia, Wernigerode, or any corner where I could collect my thoughts, educate my children, and at the same time serve a church, were unheard, and looked upon as proceeding from want of faith, a desire to shirk the duties of a religious life, etc., and this is the result! My wife's little property has nearly melted away and will be still less when my righteous debts are paid. It would not seem unreasonable to anyone who examined my circumstances in all their details, for me to devote my remaining days to my children, and to withdraw, under God's direction, from this complicated position to a country church. On account of this sorrowful adventure of my children, I must say, as Luther does in his translation: "Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me; my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept,"† and I will remind your Reverence of our Saviour's words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me,"‡ with which I cease. Your

*Mühlenberg.

* The Lutheran Colony in Georgia.
† Song of Solomon. Chap: I v. 6.
‡ Matthew. Chap* XXV v. 40.

(To be continued.)