

This modest beginning of the German invasion was soon followed by more imposing additions. The repeated strategic devastations of the Rhenish Palatinate during the French and Spanish wars reduced the peasantry to beggary, and the medieval social stratification of Germany reduced them to virtual serfdom, from which America offered emancipation. Queen Anne invited the harassed peasants of this region to come to England, whence they could be transferred to America. Over thirty thousand took advantage of the opportunity in the years 1708 and 1709.¹ Some of them found occupation in England and others in Ireland, but the majority migrated, some to New York, where they settled in the Mohawk Valley, others to the Carolinas, but far more to Pennsylvania, where, with an instinct born of generations of contact with the soil, they sought out the most promising areas in the limestone valleys of the eastern part of that colony, cleared the land, built their solid homes and ample barns, and clung to their language, customs, and religion so tenaciously that to this day their descendants are called "Pennsylvania Dutch."

After 1717 multitudes of German peasants were

¹ John Fiske: *The Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America*, vol. II, p. 351.