

Through the efforts of the late Joseph Leibert, whose wife was a grand-daughter of Martin and Susanna Nitschmann, a marble monument was erected on the same spot August 7, 1848. This bears the following legend: "To honor and perpetuate the remembrance of the Moravian martyrs whose ashes are gathered at its base this monument is erected."

Such was the Massacre of Gnadenhütten in Pennsylvania a hundred and fifty years ago. A second Massacre of Gnadenhütten followed less than twenty-seven years later in Ohio. The story of this second tragedy, which was much bloodier than the first and more deplorable, since white men were the murderers and Indians the victims, will be told in our March number.

## The Spelling of Our Dialect

BY THE EDITOR

THE difference between dialect and language is mainly one of limitation. A dialect is limited to a particular part or section of the country in which a certain language prevails. It is also limited in its vocabulary and consequently in its literature. As a number of small streams, each draining a small territory, unite to form a river, yet remain separate streams, so dialects uniting their word-stores have formed languages, while still remaining separate and distinct forms of speech.

In consequence of their literary use, languages have in the course of time and through the molding influence of the printers' art acquired a certain fixedness of form, or standard of spelling. In some, such as Italian and Spanish, this standard is very simple and almost phonetic; in others, notably English, it is very complicated and irregular. Dialects, being much less used for literary purposes, have not as a rule attained to a like degree of uniformity in spelling. Yet the spelling of the Germanic dialects of Europe—the Alemannic, Suabian, Swiss, *Berlinerdeutsch*, *Plattdeutsch*, *Westlicher Mundart* and others—is order and system itself compared with that of our Pennsylvania-German vernacular, which is to be the subject of these remarks. Of this it was truthfully said by an eminent speaker at the latest meeting of the Pennsylvania-German Society, that every one has his own way of spell-

ing it, so that nobody, or hardly anybody, can make sense of what another has written. Let us consider briefly why this is so and what may be done by way of remedying this very unsatisfactory state of affairs.

Our dialect, as it is to-day, has grown from the dialects transplanted from Germany by our immigrant forefathers, especially those from the Palatinate. Travelers have told us that the popular speech of that section of the fatherland still greatly resembles the German spoken in eastern Pennsylvania, excepting, of course, the large admixture of English words in the latter. On page 13 of *THE PENNSYLVANIA-GERMAN* for July, 1900, will be found a poem in *Pfaelzerdeutsch* by Franz von Kobell, which clearly illustrates this similarity.

Another proof that our Pennsylvania-German vernacular originated along the Rhine is found in the survival, at least in the speech of some of our older people, of certain words that are undoubtedly of French origin. Examples: *juschtement* (Fr. *justement*), exactly, just right; *apartig* (Fr. *a part*), separate, particular; *sich kuscha* (Fr. *se coucher*, to lie down), to subside, submit; *sich sekundira* (Fr. *seconder*, to help), to help one's self; *Batallja* (Fr. *bataillon*), military drill. Years ago I have heard people speak of the Delaware river as *die Revier*, a word evidently derived from the French *riveire*.

It is probable that our dialect a hundred and fifty years ago contained a considerable number of French words. These have gradually dropt out, while English words and phrases have been creeping in and are still being introduced in ever increasing number. The Pennsylvania-German to-day is a mixture of the original Palatinate dialect (*Pfaelzerdeutsch*) and English, this or that predominating, according to the locality or individual taste. Still in its essence or framework it is a German dialect, even as English, notwithstanding its large admixture of Latin, Greek and French words, is in its essence an Anglo-Saxon or Germanic form of speech.

In this dual nature of our dialect, its being part German, part English, lies the reason of the almost infinite diversity of spelling complained of before. The same causes that have made the orthography of English so complicated are at work here; however, our dialect is not destined, as was the conglomerate of Anglo-Saxon and Norman-French, to become a national language. Some writers, especially the older ones, write it in German characters and German sounds; the younger ones try to make it readable to those not familiar with High German by writing it according to English sounds; still others seek to attain their end by the use of some more or less phonetic system. Thus we find three general tendencies at work in the matter of Pennsylvania-German orthography.

Notwithstanding this diversity of form our dialect has a respectable body of literature. The amount of prose and verse that has been published therein would fill many volumes. Years ago "Pit Schwefelbrenner" showed by lectures and in a manual devoted to this purpose that our vernacular is capable of being used for the higher forms of literature, and by way of illustration translated passages from Shakespeare into "Pennsylvania-Dutch." Some of our local papers have for years had regular contributions of dialect matter, generally of a humorous nature. While much of this literature is necessarily ephemeral, some of it—for example, poems like those of Har-

baugh, Fischer, Grumbine, Zimmerman, and others, and occasional bits of humor and philosophy scattered through our periodicals—is certainly worth preserving. The proposal has been made to select what is best in Pennsylvania-German literature and publish it in suitable and permanent form. We certainly favor the idea and will lend some of our pages to this praiseworthy purpose; but in our judgment the first step to be taken in this direction is to set up some standard of spelling for the dialect, to agree, at least in its general outlines, upon the dress in which this literature is to be clothed. To open the way for doing this is the object of this article.

Among those who have adopted the German method of spelling our dialect, Dr. Harbaugh, who by general consent is ranked as a Pennsylvania-German classic, stands foremost. A few lines from "*Die neie Sort Dschent'leit*" will illustrate his method:

'Sis net meh so: m'r gebt juscht Notis dorch  
die Editors,  
M'r het geclos't un dhet cumpaunde mit de  
Creditors.

Wer so betriegt, der is en Dschent'lmann.

These three lines contain six English words, four of which are adapted to German spelling and two remain unchanged, because the German reader would not be likely to mispronounce them.

Dr. Harbaugh evidently took for granted that every reader of his dialect poems was familiar with the literary or High German. In our day, unfortunately, there are thousands of our people who use the dialect in daily conversation at home, in the office, the shop and on the street, but who have not learned to read High German. To accommodate these, most of our later writers of the vernacular try to adapt its spelling to English sounds. Here is where the most deplorable confusion arises, from the simple fact that English orthography is so full of anomalies that it can hardly be said to have any rules, and can not therefore serve as anything like a reliable rule or guide. Besides, the dialect has sev-

eral sounds that are not found in English at all. We challenge any one who does not practically know the spoken dialect to read the following sample of this mode of spelling, and get the right pronunciation:

Tsvetdar shdrache, un gly dar drit!—  
Kinthite's tsida—yora fit  
Far de shbeel-tsite, frish un harlich, vu so  
kshvint uns oll fargate.  
Lust uns drowarra far dar hofe,  
Voo mar kshbeelt hen mit em shofe—  
Voo mar olse de blumma kot han—voo mar  
kshvunga han om gate.

A German scholar who knows nothing of our dialect could hardly be made to believe that this is intended to represent anything akin to his language, though, if it were read to him as it is meant to be, he would understand it at once. There are but two English words in the whole stanza, *fit* and *gate*; all the rest is German. But to an eye accustomed to see German literature in its own dress, the above appears decidedly foreign and very grotesque.

Conscious of the inadequacy of English spelling rules, and knowing that the majority of their readers are unfamiliar with High German, still other writers have attempted to spell our dialect phonetically. The late Dr. A. R. Horne followed such a system in his Pennsylvania-German Manual, which recently appeared in the third edition. We subjoin a sample of his spelling:

D'r Nusbickel hüt ěmol ěn drub bōtreslā ōm  
m'hoishdūk awg'drūfā, un se sin ōls drum  
rum g'shprungā. 'Ar hüt se no nět ōněrsht  
drěfā kěnā bis ěr sei flindālawf grum g'bogā  
hüt un hüt nā no g'shūsā. No we de shrot  
ōls rum sin kumā is ěr ōls in de ha g'jump.  
Sělā wěg hüt ěr se ōl g'rickt.

This method has the advantage of being more scientific, but also the disadvantage of requiring special types that are not usually found in printing offices.

A strictly phonetic system of spelling our dialect, using an alphabet like that devised by the American Philological Association, in which every elementary sound is represented by one distinct character and no other, would probably be most satisfactory all around. Possibly

the dictionary upon which Professors M. D. Learned and Edwin M. Fogel, of the University of Pennsylvania, are said to be engaged will solve the problem for us and establish an authority of spelling to which we may all be willing to submit. Meanwhile, however, how should the Pennsylvania-German dialect be spelled?

We think it should be spelled according to German sounds, primarily because, as shown above, it is still a German dialect. As Dr. Croll has said: "We should remember the rock from which we were hewn." We surely have no reason to be ashamed of our German ancestors or the language they bequeathed to us, and why should we disguise this by dressing it in an English coat that fits it so ill? German sounds answer best for all its German words, such as still form the basis thereof, and should be used in preference to English terms whenever they render the thought and spirit equally well.

Another reason for writing our dialect in German sounds is that German spelling is much more regular than English spelling, and that the German vowels correspond more closely to those of the other leading languages of Europe and to the universal Scientific Alphabet devised for the spelling of all languages.

#### RULES OF GERMAN SYSTEM OF SPELLING

The general rule we have adopted for our guidance may be stated thus: Write according to German sounds and do not depart from the established mode of German spelling more than the difference of pronunciation requires.

The vowel sounds of this system, simple and double, are as follows:

i long, like Eng. e in *me*, heard in *ihr*, *Dier*,  
*friera*.

i short, like Eng. i in *pin*, heard in *drin*, *Flint*,  
*schinna*.

e long, like Eng. a in *ale*, heard in *Beem*, *Esel*,  
*sehna*.

e short, like Eng. e in *met*, heard in *bescht*,  
*letscht*, *welke*.

ā long, like Eng. a in *air*, heard in *Bār*,  
*Fārschta*, *wāra*.

this sound is also represented by e, as in *her*,  
*Erd*, *Gerschta*.

ā short, like Eng. a in *at*, heard in *Gāns*, *Dāns*,  
*Lānner*.

This sound is also represented by e, as in  
*den*, *Mensch*, *wenna*.

a long, approaching E. a in *all*, heard in *Aag*,  
*gar*, *vermahna*.

a short, like Eng. a in *ask, sofa*, heard in *krank, bang, Lanna*.

This sound generally ends the plural of nouns and the infinitive of verbs, corresponding to the High German *-en*. We think a represents it better than e, though in conversation it generally slips into an obscure or neutral sound.

o long, like Eng. o in *ore*, heard in *so, blo, schona*.

o short, much like E. o in *not*, heard in *blott, for, kloppa*.

u long, like Eng. u in *rule*, heard in *wu, schur, Schpula*.

u short, like Eng. u in *put*, heard in *us, muss, brumma*.

ei, like Eng. ei in *height*, heard in *eich, fei, heila*.

oi, like Eng. oi in *oil*, heard in *Oi, Boi (pie), Roia*.

au, like Eng. ou in *out*, heard in *aus, Laus, maula*.

ui, no equivalent in English, heard in *us! hui!*

A double vowel, a vowel followed by h, and ie are invariably long: *Baam, deet, Ohr, Uhr, frih, grie*, etc. The doubling of a consonant always shortens the preceding vowel: *glatt, fett, plärra*.

The sounds of ö and ü, long and short, and of eu or äu, as heard in High German, are not found in our dialect. *Böse* in this becomes *bees*; *können, kenna*; *grün, grie*; *wünschen, winscha*; *euch, eich*; *Läuse, Leis*, etc.

The nasal sounds heard in *a', hi', nei'* and other prefixes and vowel endings, may be indicated by an apostrophe: *a'fang, ei'schteh, hi'gucka, u'mindig*, etc.

The consonant sounds are the same as in English, with a few exceptions. Ch represents two guttural sounds not found in English, one heard in *Lach, noch, Buch*, the other in *ich, bleech, gleicha*. G between two vowels, as in *Aaga, lega, ziega, Vogel, ruga*, also denotes a peculiar guttural, not found in English. J, as in High German, corresponds to English y in yet: *jaga, juscht*. Sch is equivalent to sh; v to f, as in *vor, Vich*; w differs but little from the corresponding letter in English, and z is equivalent to ts: *zeit, zucka*. In conversation the aspirates are generally softened, p tending to b, t to d and k to g.

As in modern High German, all nouns are begun with capital letters.

This, in brief outline, is the system of spelling we have after due consideration adopted as our rule and guide in writing the Pennsylvania-German dialect. How much it differs from the methods mentioned above will be best shown by re-writing the samples there given in our

way. Dr. Harbaugh's lines will suffer very little change; but the other quotations will put on quite a different face.

's is net meh so: mer gebt juscht Notis dorch die Editors,

Mer het geclost un deet cumpaunda mit da Creditors.

Wer so betriegt, der is en Dschent'lmann.

Zwetter Schtreech, un glei der drit!

Kindheetszeita—Johra fit

For die Schpielzeit, frisch un herrlich, wu so gschwind uns all vergeht.

Losst uns traura for da Hof,

Wu mer gschpielt hen mit 'm Schof—

Wu mer als die Blumma g'hat hen—wu mer gschwunga hen am Gate.

Der Nussbickel hot amol en Trupp Batriesla am a Hoischock a'getroffa, un sie sin als drum rum gschprunga. Er hot sie no net annerscht treffa kenna, bis er sei Flintalaaf krum geboga hot un hot na no gschossa. No wie die Schrot als rum sin kumma, is er als in die Heh getschumpt. Sella Weg hot er sie all krigt.

The writer is convinced that this mode of spelling is preferable for all dialect words of German origin. It is only fair, however, to admit that English words are not so easily adjusted to this rule; yet English words must be used, in quite respectable numbers, if we want to write Pennsylvania-German "as she is spoke." For example, our people do not nowadays say *Juli*, but *July*. Shall we write *Dschulei*, or *Tschulei*, as uneducated people would be apt to say, or *July*? Shall we write *Dschodsch, dschodscha, gedschodscht, or Judge, judgea, gcjudged*? We must confess that we do not fancy dressing up English words in German clothes any more than the reverse process, and that our sense of fitness in matters orthographical, or etymological rather, inclines us to favor the latter forms. English words used unchanged in sound had better, we think, as a general rule, be left unchanged in form; when they are pronounced differently or modified by the addition of prefixes or suffixes, the spelling also may be modified, if the change required be not too great. In this matter, as in the choice of words, some latitude must be left to individual taste.

The object of this article is not to dictate rules, but merely to suggest what in our judgment is the proper or best way of spelling the Pennsylvania-German. Contributions in the vernacular, if otherwise acceptable, will not be declined on account of spelling, though we ask the writers' consent to change this, if necessary, in accordance with the system here set forth. In choosing dialect literature for our "Literary Gems" we shall strive

to find what is best among the old and new, and as we believe it will be gathered here for permanent preservation, it seems altogether fitting and desirable to adopt some standard or method that is in harmony with the genius of our dialect and will lead to at least some degree of uniformity in its spelling. Will our contributors kindly lend their aid to the attainment of this "consummation devoutly to be wished"?

## Hunting "Elbetritches"

A POPULAR STORY IN TWO VERSIONS

ON a bleak winter morning, when the frosty air quickly nips your uncovered ears, when the iron pumphandle is painfully magnetic to your touch, when folks outdoors all walk as if trying to catch an overdue train, you may still occasionally hear some Pennsylvania-German rustic make the remark we used to hear many years ago when a boy: "*Heit waer awer mol en gute Zeit for Elbetritscha fanga*"—which may be freely translated thus: "This would be an excellent time for hunting 'elbetritches'."

That is a curious remark to make in cold weather, is it not? But there must be a reason for it, and it must have had its origin sometime and somewhere.

What kind of game are "elbetritches"? some one may ask. We confess that we do not know. None of the big English dictionaries—neither the International nor the Standard nor any other—defines the word, and no cyclopedia or work on natural history describes or pictures any creature called by that name. Some pronounce the word *Elfetritscha*, and this has led some one to suggest that the name may have some connection with our English word *elf*. But this is only an individual suggestion, which we give for what it may be worth. We offer no etymology and no definition, but we will let the author of "*Skizzen aus dem Lecha-Thal*," Mr. B. F. Trexler, tell our readers a very amusing story of hunting "el-

betritches," as he heard it years ago from the lips of an old friend. The story runs as follows:

A few miles south of the *Hexakop* (Witch's Head), along the road leading from Bethlehem to Doylestown, northeast of Bursonville, in Springfield township, Bucks county, on the line of Durham, stands a lofty hill, to which the Indians gave the name Buckwampan. From its crest the Delaware may be seen, and the prospect round about is exceedingly fine. This region was settled by our thrifty German ancestors, and German is spoken there to this very day.

Now we all know that in former times, as in our day, along with many good things a lot of superstitious stuff was brought across the sea; that then, as now, there were people who could be made to believe anything. The "green ones" were told, among other things, of horrible serpents living on the Buckwampan that would put the ends of their tails in their mouths, spread out like a hoop and run down the hill faster than a race horse could run. In their tails they bore a horny sting, with which in running along they would frequently strike a tree, making a big hole. Such holes were often found in chestnut trees, which proved the truth of what was said—and you don't need to laugh about it! Other gullible strangers were told of snow-white hares, four times as large as our common jack-rabbits; but not everybody could shoot those hares, because they were a sort of enchanted beings. Only a silver ball, it was said, would hit a hare of that kind. That of course was lucky for them, for silver dollars were not plenteous enough to be cast into balls; so they were let go.

Just like the hoopsnake! I broke in laughing. The white hare and the hoopsnake no doubt ran into the Delaware and were drowned.