THE

FOUNDING OF THE GERMAN CHURCHES

OF

PENNSYLVANIA.

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A century ago the Germans of Pennsylvania were generally recognized as consisting of two widely-contrasted classes, which were popularly known as "church people" and "sect people." In more recent times this classification has been somewhat affected by the rise of new denominations, but in a general way it is still understood. There was nothing invidious or disrespectful in the use of these terms, and the ground of the distinction was very simple. The "church people" were those who in the Fatherland had belonged to the churches as by law established: Lutheran, Reformed, or Roman Catholic. The Moravians were also recognized as "church people," because in a general way they agreed with the churches in doctrine, and preferred to be regarded as a missionary brotherhood rather than as a separate ecclesiastical organization. Concerning the Roman Catholics it need only be said that they were few in number and did not constitute an important element in

the religious life of the province. Indeed, in Philadelphia, no less than in Lancaster, Goshenhoppen, and Canawauga, they constituted a close community; and the successful establishment of these missions, in the face of ancient prejudices, was not the least of the achievements of the Jesuit order.

The distinction between the "church" and the "sect people" was broad and unmistakable. The latter represented bodies which, in Europe, were not recognized by the government and had frequently been made the object of unrighteous persecution. In some respects they were much more picturesque than the "church people," for it is always the unusual which attracts attention. Though they differed widely among themselves, they could at a glance be recognized by their peculiar garments, said to have been a survival of the ordinary attire of the German peasantry of the sixteenth century, which had long been discarded by the "world's people." The sects included all the minor bodies, such as Mennonites and Amish, "Brethren," or Dunkards, and Schwenkfelders, besides others which have passed away, leaving hardly a trace of their existence, such as Labadists, Gichtelians, "New Born," and Inspirationists. Not all of them were disciples of Menno Simonis,[1] for the "Brethren," or Dunkards, though they adopted many Mennonite peculiarities, were founded by men who were born in the Reformed Church and were actually disciples of Jakob Boehme, the mystic of Görlitz; and not all of them were Anabaptists, for the Schwenkfelders did not baptize at all; but if we except a few sectarians who have now disappeared, all of these varying communities agreed in testifying against war and its attendant horrors, and it is not without reason, therefore, that they are sometimes called "the peace sects."

The early history of these sects is peculiarly fascinating on account of the peculiarities or, if you please, the oddi-

[1] Also written Simon, Simons, and Symons; pronounced *Seemons*.—Goebel, I., p. 191.

ties of their leaders. For this reason, perhaps, it has been more written about, especially in the form of popular articles, than the development of that peculiar Anglo-German life which characterizes the greater part of the State of Pennsylvania. It should, however, not be forgotten that the sects, after all, constitute but a small part of the German population of the State, and that in some counties they are almost unknown. That they were first in the field may in a general way be conceded, and it is not to be doubted that many Germans who belonged to the established churches at first preferred to settle in other provinces, because Pennsylvania was regarded as in a peculiar sense "the land of the sects;" but it did not take long to exhaust the obscure fountains from which the sects were derived. In some instances, such as the Dunkards and Schwenkfelders, the whole sect emigrated to America, and in others the body was so depleted that it ceased to occupy an important place in the ecclesiastical history of Germany. Long before the middle of the last century the sects had come to be greatly in the minority; though as the important publishing houses of Christopher Saur and of the monks of Ephrata were in their hands, they exerted an influence greater than that to which their numbers might have justly entitled them. Whoever would understand the development of the German life of Pennsylvania must, therefore, make himself familiar with the history of the German evangelical churches. There are German churches besides these, but I venture to consider my theme in the popular sense, as it would have been understood by a German farmer a century ago. Even in this sense the subject is too broad to be properly treated in a single discourse, and I must crave your indulgence if I should say little or nothing concerning the Moravians, who have a splendid history of their own, and the Roman Catholics, whose extraordinary increase in numbers and influence is a source of constant astonishment. If I should, unfortunately, at any time appear to give undue prominence to the religious denomination with which I am personally connected, I hope the deficiency will rather be attributed to

want of information than to any lack of disposition to do full justice to others.

The two so-called "evangelical" churches—the Lutheran and the Reformed—have since the days of the Reformation been the main channels of German religious life. To relate their history would be to tell the story of Protestantism in Germany and the world; to describe their peculiarities would be to enter on the field of theology, and to attempt to include in a single lecture what has been made the theme of thousands of volumes. The Lutheran Church—the church in a special sense of Martin Luther—certainly needs neither description nor eulogy. It included from the beginning the great body of German and Scandinavian Protestants; and even in this country it has prospered until it is known throughout the land. The Reformed Church, on the other hand, presents the curious anomaly of being "least known because it is best known." In history and doctrine it has been so closely allied to the forms of Protestantism with which England and Scotland are most familiar that it has frequently been identified with them. It is, in fact, the oldest of the series of national churches which derive their origin from the great religious movement in which Zwingli and Calvin were the most prominent leaders, and in its early history its most important centres were Zurich, Geneva, and Heidelberg. Some one has found in its history a certain analogy to the river Rhine, on whose banks so many of its members dwelt; deriving its origin from comparatively obscure sources in Switzerland, it gathered tributaries from France and Germany, while it flowed onward to refresh the plains of Holland.

The founding of the German Lutheran and Reformed churches in Pennsylvania was practically simultaneous, though the earliest records of the Lutheran Church antedate those of the Reformed Church by a few years, and are rather more complete and satisfactory. Both churches founded some of their earliest congregations in other colonies, particularly in New York, and both were in Pennsylvania preceded by Christians of other nationalities who

professed a similar form of faith. The Swedish churches were Lutheran in doctrine, and their pastors freely co-operated with the German Lutheran missionaries. We are informed by Acrelius that in 1703 the Swedish pastors, Rudman, Björk, and Sandel, ordained in Wicacoa Church a student named Justus Falkner, who had been invited to take charge of "a congregation of Germans in Falkner's Swamp, in Philadelphia County, which received its name from him."[1] This, it appears, is the oldest German Lutheran congregation within the present territory of the United States.[2] In this way we may trace a connection between the German Lutherans and the Swedes who had preceded them. The dependence of the German Reformed churches on the Dutch churches of their own confession was even more complete. These churches were not numerous along the Delaware, though they had been early on the ground. Peter Minuit, the leader, in 1638, of the earliest Swedish colony, had been a deacon of the Reformed Church in the German city of Wesel,[3] and a Dutch Reformed church was founded at New Castle in 1642.[4] The Dutch Reformed congregations at Bensalem and Neshaminy, in Bucks County, were the earliest Reformed churches in Pennsylvania, and antedate all the German Lutheran congregations, except the one at Falkner's Swamp.[5] From the Bensalem record we learn that on the 4th of June, 1710, the Rev. Paulus Van Vleck organized a church at White Marsh. This may be regarded as a Dutch church, because it was founded by a Hollander; but as we find a German Reformed preacher settled there ten years later, it becomes probable that the church was organized in the interest of the Germans. In those days the national difference counted for nothing in ecclesiastical matters, and the relations of the Reformed people of Pennsylvania to the Dutch of New York and New Jersey were most

[1] "History of New Sweden," p. 214.

[2] "Halle Reports," Dr. C. W. Schaeffer's translation, p. 54.

[3] Kapp's "History of the Immigration," etc.

[4] Corwin's "Manual of the Reformed Dutch Church," p. 307.

[5] Dr. B. M. Schmucker, *Lutheran Church Review*, July, 1887.

intimate and fraternal. Of the purely *German* Reformed churches it was once usual to assign priority to the congregation at Skippack, Montgomery County (now extinct), and to fix the date of its organization at 1726 or 1727; but it is now known that a Reformed church was built in Germantown in 1719, and that John Philip Boehm preached for the Reformed churches at Falkner's Swamp, White Marsh, and Skippack at least as early as 1720. The first Reformed church of Philadelphia was founded in 1727, and its first pastor was George Michael Weiss. The oldest consecutive church records are those of the church at New Goshenhoppen, Montgomery County. They were begun in January, 1730, by the Rev. Johannes Heinricus Goetschius, who styles himself *Helvetico Tigurinus*, a native of Zurich in Switzerland. On the title-page he enumerates ten congregations as constituting his charge. They are scattered through a region which is now occupied by at least a hundred Reformed ministers.

In a letter recently received from Dr. Herman Escher, city librarian, I am informed that it is stated in the MS. *Züricher Geschlechtsbuch*, that Moritz Goetschius, pastor at Saletz, about 1736 set sail for America. According to a letter written by his son, he landed at Philadelphia, April 30, 1736, but fell dead immediately after he had stepped on shore. The son was but seventeen years old at the time of his father's death, but at once began to preach in Pennsylvania, probably as an assistant to his relative, John Henry Goetschius. These facts appear to be unknown in this country, and it affords me pleasure to announce them on this interesting occasion.

The late Dr. B. M. Schmucker says, in an article in the *Lutheran Church Review* for July, 1887, "Throughout the district between the Schuylkill and Delaware the Reformed congregations were formed somewhat earlier than the Lutheran congregations in their vicinity;" and for some time the allied churches of Philadelphia, Trappe, and Falkner's Swamp were the main seats of the German Lutheran Church in Pennsylvania. The earliest existing congregational record of St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, was

begun by the Rev. J. Caspar Stoever, in 1733; but its organized existence dates from the arrival of Muhlenberg, in 1742.[1] It might be added that the Reformed were at first decidedly in the majority; and, indeed, in a report presented to the Synod of South Holland, convened at Breda in 1730, it is stated that at that time "the Reformed holding to the old confession constituted more than one-half of the whole number [of Germans], being about fifteen thousand." It could not well be otherwise, for most of the early immigrants came from the region of the Rhine, and along the whole course of that river the Reformed was the leading church. As the great migration extended to other parts of Germany, the Lutherans in Pennsylvania rapidly increased in numbers, and long before the end of the century had become the larger body. Indeed, it must be confessed that the Reformed Church in many respects failed to employ its early opportunities for denominational advancement. It represented different nationalities, and included elements which even in Europe had never been completely harmonized. Of this character were the Huguenots who had lingered awhile in Germany, but had never been thoroughly Germanized. There were so many points of contact between the Reformed and the English churches, that where the latter were already in the field the former rarely attempted a separate organization. To their mind the English churches were Reformed also, and the government of the Presbyterians was recognized as in most respects like that with which they had been familiar in the Fatherland. Indeed, in 1743, before the Synods of Holland took charge of the Reformed churches of Pennsylvania, they addressed a letter to the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia, inquiring whether it would not be practicable to consolidate the Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed, and German Reformed into a single body; but national prejudices probably interfered, and the Presbyterians tacitly declined the union. Dr. Briggs, in his "American Presbyterianism," expresses his regret that this grand opportunity

[1] "Halle Reports," Reading edition, pp. 64 and 65.

was neglected; but perhaps it was better that the Reformed Church was left to work out its mission in its own way.

Whatever may have been the doctrinal position of the Lutheran and Reformed churches, it is certain that their social relations at the time of their first settlement in this country were most intimate. They had passed through the same mill, and the grist was very much alike. While it is manifestly impossible to relate on this occasion the history of these churches in Europe and America, it cannot be denied that their development was similar, and that in many places they came into the closest contact.

It has sometimes been said that the sects left their Fatherland on account of religious persecution, while the "church people" emigrated to America for no higher purpose than to improve their temporal condition. If such a statement is accepted at all, it must be done with many qualifications. No persecution was ever more atrocious than that which the Lutherans of Salzburg endured from 1728 to 1732, before they fled to America; and religious elements played an important part in the sufferings of the Reformed and Lutherans in the Palatinate. Historians tell us that by the terms of the treaty of Westphalia, in 1648, religious freedom had been granted to Protestants. This freedom was, however, more apparent than real; and such as it was it would never have been granted if it had not been expected—in accordance with the policy of Richelieu and Mazarin—to promote dissension, and thus to aid in the final dismemberment of Germany. The "three confessions"—Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed—were formally recognized, but there was a vast difference in the positions which they were severally made to occupy. By a secret article in the treaty, it is said, the imperial government pledged itself to maintain Roman Catholic worship wherever there were people who desired it, and it often happened that in villages which were prevailingly Protestant, a few Roman Catholics, on this pretence, secured permanent possession of the churches. Some of the princes made their peace with Rome, and the servile company of their flatterers was only too ready to

follow their example. "The government," says Löher, "cared nothing for the people, and almost everywhere the party which happened to be in power oppressed dissenters. This state of things was worst in the Palatinate, where the electors had changed their religion four times in as many reigns. The whole country was expected to follow the example of its rulers, and whoever was unwilling to submit, could do no better than to take up his pilgrim's staff and leave his native land."

That under such circumstances religious persecution was a matter of frequent occurrence cannot be doubted, but after all it was but a single element in the prevailing misery of the Fatherland. Of this misery it is difficult at present to form a proper conception. It embraced all the relations of life, civil, social, and religious; and it seemed, says a writer of the period, "as if hope had left the earth forever."

In a general way it may be said that this misery was the result of the wars which went on unceasingly during the seventeenth and the earlier part of the eighteenth centuries. Many writers have derived the great Palatinate migration from the destructive raids of Turenne, in 1674 and 1675, and especially from the invasion of 1688–'89 which was the direct result of the violent sequestration by the French king of the hereditary estates of the Duchess Elizabeth Charlotte of Orleans, who had been a Palatinate princess. It may be said that as far as Pennsylvania is concerned these dates are too early; but it is true that in those dreadful days the German people, who had hitherto clung with peculiar attachment to their native soil, first began in large numbers to seek a refuge in distant lands. No country in modern times had been so dreadfully desolated. In one year Worms, Mainz, Speyer, Mannheim, Heidelberg, and many other cities and villages were either burned or utterly devastated. The castle of Heidelberg, the chief residence of the Electors of the Palatinate, was ruined, and its remains still stand as a memorial of that awful time. The barbarity of the invasion was unexampled in history. The French general, Melac, it is said, cut down all the vines on the hill-sides near

Heidelberg, thus depriving the people of their sole means of subsistence, and driving thousands from their humble homes in the dead of winter. Many of them found a refuge in Switzerland and Holland, and multitudes died of starvation. No wonder that, as a German friend once told me, the peasants of the Palatinate still call their dogs "Melac," but that the name is given only to curs of inferior degree.

In their profound misery the suffering people of the Rhine country might naturally have turned to their hereditary rulers for sympathy and relief, but all authorities agree in declaring that the German princes of this period had no conception of the responsibilities of their position. They are described as, in general, a multitude of petty tyrants, without enough dignity or culture to render them respectable. Prince Eugène said concerning them, "God forgive them, for they know not what they do; much less do they know what they want; and least of all, what they are."

Not the Palatinate only, but all the surrounding countries suffered intensely during this dreadful period. "War," said Turenne, "is a terrible monster that must needs be fed," and all the Rhine provinces, Alsace, Upper Hesse, Baden-Durlach, and Würtemberg were swept by constant raids. Switzerland was overcrowded with Huguenots and Palatines, and the poverty of the people became extreme. Trade had found new channels, and the ships of Hamburg and Bremen lay rotting at their wharves. The peace of Ryswick, in 1697, brought an interval of peace, but it continued only until the breaking out of the War of the Spanish Succession, in 1701. Indeed, it is doubtful if the condition of the people was more tolerable during this interval of peace than it had been before. The soldiers who robbed the land had at least been prodigal with their booty, and in this way some fragments had returned to their original owners; but now even this uncertain means of subsistence was taken away, though their merciless rulers did not hesitate to send out companies of soldiers to distrain the goods of a people who were already on the verge of starvation.[1]

[1] *Der Deutsche Pionier*, xiv. 271.

According to Christopher Saur, the great migration to America was due to an official invitation from the British government. "In 1704," he says, "after the Duke of Marlborough had defeated the French at the battle of Schellenberg (Blenheim), Queen Anne of England invited the suffering Palatines to find a home in America, and transported many thousands thither at her own expense." If the queen actually extended this invitation,—which is more than doubtful,—she probably soon discovered that she had been too generous, though she certainly pitied the sufferers and did all in her power for their relief. A sufficient reason for the migration was the fact that the misery of the Fatherland still continued and was even increasing. For several years the harvests failed, and the winter of 1709 was the severest that had ever been known. "It was so cold," says Löher, "that the birds froze in the air and the wild beasts in the forest." Then the people said one to another, "Let us go to America, and if we perish, we perish!"

It is not our purpose to relate the story of the emigration. It has often been told, and no one can doubt that, compared with the sufferings of the German emigrants on the way and in the forest, the trials of the Pilgrim Fathers in the preceding century were very gentle experiences. It is no wonder that the joyous dwellers by the Rhine became on the way a solemn people. The theme is one on which I would willingly linger, more particularly as it appears not to have received the attention which it properly deserves. The pictures which imagination presents may not be brilliant, but they are full of the heroism of patient endurance. For our present purpose it is enough to call attention to the fact, that in their greatest trials the German pioneers were sustained by a profound religious consciousness. Through all their sufferings they held firmly to their ancient confessions. Every father regarded it as his duty to have his children baptized, and as soon as they were able to learn, to see to it that they were prepared for confirmation and the Holy Communion. In the iron-bound chest of almost every German immigrant might have been found at least a Bible,

a hymn-book, and a catechism. Before their churches were established they were especially careful to cultivate religion in the home and in the school. In my own family, I have often been informed, the house-father gathered the household for instruction on every Sunday afternoon, and I still have in my possession the great Palatinate catechism which every one in the family committed to memory, proof passages and all. All this could not, however, supply the want of public instruction, and we accordingly find that wherever Germans were settled in sufficient numbers they proceeded to found a church and a parochial school. In some instances a good farm was set aside for the use of the school-master; and though the schools are now no longer strictly parochial, there are still a few teachers in ancient German settlements who enjoy glebe and stipend for playing the organ on Sunday.

In early days the school-master was a very important personage. For many years ministers were few in number. Several companies of immigrants had, indeed, been accompanied by their pastors. In 1708, Joshua von Kocherthal had led his "Palatine" congregation of Lutherans to the banks of the Hudson, and in 1709, John Frederick Hager was ordained in London for service among the "Reformed Palatines" in the same region. Seventeen years later, it is said, George Michael Weiss, the earliest Reformed pastor in Philadelphia, was also the leader of a "colony;" but what were these among so many? The minister, I conceive, was in popular estimation a great personage, who, like a diocesan bishop, was almost constantly travelling, and who under the most favorable circumstances could not be expected to visit each of his congregations more frequently than once a month. For this reason, in the best churches, the school-master became a kind of vicar, who in the absence of the pastor sometimes read sermons from an approved European collection. Naturally enough, some of these teachers developed talent as public speakers and irregularly assumed the pastoral office. Fortunately for both churches, there were from the beginning some congregations which

declined to be served by unordained ministers; but it must be confessed that for many years there was great confusion. Much more objectionable than these *autodidacti*, as Muhlenberg called them, were bold pretenders who, unwilling to make their living by honest labor, assumed to be ministers until their wickedness found them out. Some of them claimed to be of noble descent, though I have not been able to learn that their titles secured them special consideration. In the records of the Lutheran churches of Berks County I have seen the name of Baron Adolf von Geresheim, who may have been a better man than I suppose; and in the Reformed Church the most wicked of all pretenders called himself Cyriacus Spangenberg von Reidemeister. Harbaugh tells a story of one of these fellows who entered the pulpit in a state of intoxication, announced the text, "Follow me!" and then fell reeling down the pulpit stairs. Then one of the elders arose and said, "No, brethren, we will not follow him," and the career of that evangelist was ended.

During this gloomy period sects arose which were mostly short-lived, but served to alienate many from the church of their fathers. From this cause the Reformed Church was, I think, the chief sufferer, and to illustrate my meaning I need but refer to the defection of John Peter Miller. In company with George M. Weiss and John B. Rieger, he had been sent to Pennsylvania by the Consistory of Heidelberg,—a brilliant young man who had just completed his course at the University. For four years he was pastor of the Reformed Church at Tulpehocken, but then fell under the influence of Conrad Beissel, "the magus of the Conestoga," and in 1735 became a member of the monastic brotherhood at Ephrata, of which he was afterwards for many years the leading spirit.

The plan for promoting the unity of the German churches, which was in 1741 proposed by Henry Antes, and afterwards elaborated by Count Zinzendorf, was so grand in its conception, so exalted in its purposes, that we may regret that it did not prove more successful. Seven synods were held, at which a plan of union was formed which was to be known

as "The Congregation of God in the Spirit." This "congregation," as I have ventured to say on a previous occasion, "was founded in strict accordance with Zinzendorf's theory of Tropes, according to which every one might retain his denominational peculiarities, while at the same time he stood in connection with a higher unity. There was no intention of destroying the Lutherans, Reformed, or Mennonites, as religious denominations, but they were to be united by the confederation of those who had reached the highest grade of spiritual perception. Though the fact was rather implied than expressed, the Moravians were the controlling power in the whole movement. Zinzendorf had no idea of establishing a sect; but to him it appeared beautiful that there should be within the church a community of elect souls who would more and more withdraw themselves from worldly affairs to live a life like that of the angels in heaven."[1]

It seemed at first as if this well-meant movement might prove successful. The "congregation" proceeded to ordain ministers for service in the Lutheran and Reformed churches, and in each church there was a little company of pious men who labored in its interest. It soon, however, became evident that the churches were not ready for the proposed union, and in the end it led to controversies and conflicts. When the Lutheran and Reformed churches were severally consolidated, the men who had been most active in the movement generally found a home in the Unity of the Brethren, and the last vestiges of the "congregation" were swept away.

It was now evident that the evangelical churches must be established on the old historic lines, but progress was greatly impeded by the extreme poverty of the people. They were too poor to build churches or to support pastors. I do not suppose that they were ever quite as poor as those settlers in the province of New York, of whom Rupp relates that nine of them clubbed together to buy an old horse to be

[1] "Historic Manual of the Reformed Church," p. 193.

used successively for agricultural purposes, but they all endured innumerable privations. A few had brought with them the means to purchase land; but the best land was covered by the heaviest timber, and it took many blows to fell the mighty monarchs of the forest. Others were in actual want, especially after the inauguration of the iniquitous system, even then called a "traffic in souls," by which poor people were persuaded to sail to America without paying their passage, and without fully understanding that they were to be sold as *Redemptioners.*

The German churches of Pennsylvania were sorely in need of help, and it was evident that it could not be secured on this side of the ocean. The country was still too young and too poor to engage in an extensive scheme of missionary activity. In 1730, Pastor George Michael Weiss and Elder Jacob Reiff went to Holland and Germany to collect money for the Reformed congregations of Philadelphia and Skippack, and in 1733, Daniel Weissiger, in company with Pastor John Christian Schultze and John Daniel Schöner, was sent to Germany by the United Lutheran congregations in Philadelphia, New Hanover, and New Providence to collect contributions for their brethren in Pennsylvania. The results in each case were unsatisfactory and unpleasant; but these missions, at any rate, directed attention to the condition of the American churches. Through the influence of such men as Ziegenhagen, court preacher in London, and Franke and his coadjutors at Halle, a bond of union was formed which continued unbroken for many years and greatly contributed to the prosperity of the American Lutheran Church. The Reformed would naturally have turned for aid to the Palatinate, but in its depressed condition the church of that country recommended them to the care of their brethren in Holland. The trust was accepted, and for more than sixty years the Reformed churches of Pennsylvania remained under the special care of the Classis of Amsterdam.

As a direct result of these arrangements two men were sent to America, each of whom may be regarded as, in a

special sense, the organizer of his denomination. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, who is often called "the patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America," reached Philadelphia in 1742. Though he claimed no higher dignity than that of a simple pastor, the sphere of his influence soon extended from New York to Georgia, and wherever he went he firmly laid the foundations of his church. It was chiefly through his influence that the German Lutheran ministerium of Pennsylvania was founded in 1748. By his voluminous correspondence he prevented the zeal of European friends from growing cold, and induced faithful pastors—Brunnholtz, Schaum, Kurtz, and others—to come to his aid in establishing the church. He might have been called, like Annoni of Basel, "the pastor after God's own heart;" and when at last he passed away, in the year of the adoption of our Federal Constitution, his name was honored throughout the land.

Michael Schlatter, who was sent to America in 1746, with the rank of Missionary Superintendent, to organize the Reformed churches, was less learned than Muhlenberg, but for zeal and energy he was perhaps unequalled. He was a native of Switzerland, but had lived long enough in Holland to become familiar with its language. Though he became pastor of churches in Philadelphia and Germantown immediately after his arrival, he made extensive missionary journeys, visiting the widely-scattered churches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia. By rude bridle-paths he took his way from one settlement to another, enduring privations of which we can hardly form an adequate conception.

Wherever he preached he induced the people to promise to pay a specified amount for the support of a settled minister. In 1747 he succeeded in establishing a "cœtus," which differed from a synod only in the fact that its proceedings were subject to revision by the "fathers" in Holland. His visit to Europe in 1751 resulted in the collection of the sum of £12,000, which was invested for the benefit of the American churches, and on his return to this country in the following

year he was accompanied by six young ministers, of whom Stoy and Otterbein afterwards became distinguished. The publication of Schlatter's "Appeal," which was translated into English by Rev. David Thomson, was the indirect cause of the organization of the "Society for the Promotion of the Knowledge of God among the Germans" and the establishment of the so-called German charity schools. In order to attract attention to this scheme in England, it is possible that the condition of the Germans was grossly exaggerated. They were not only represented as ignorant beyond comparison, but as fast becoming "like unto wood-born savages." It was even suggested that unless their children received an English education, they might finally join with the French and drive the English from the continent of America. The Lutherans, in 1754, and the Reformed, in 1756, adopted resolutions expressing their indignation at such insinuations. The charity schools proved an utter failure, and Schlatter, who had been persuaded to become their superintendent, was personally the chief sufferer. For some time the Lutheran and Reformed ministers sustained him, but the people were greatly excited and his influence was entirely destroyed. He subsequently became a chaplain in the British army, and was present at the siege of Louisburg. His later years were spent in retirement at Chestnut Hill, near Philadelphia, where he died in October, 1790. Schlatter's public ministry did not occupy a decade of years, but it was brilliant and fruitful. From the fund which he had collected, and which was invested in Holland, every member of the "cœtus," until 1793, received an annual stipend. The unexampled liberality of the Church of Holland must always be remembered with gratitude; but, after all, I cannot think that, after the first years, these benefactions were really needed. It would have been better if the whole amount had been devoted to the establishment of a literary and theological institution. As a guardian the Church of Holland was kind but stern. The "cœtus" was allowed no liberty of action; it was not even permitted to confer the rite of ordination. Every year its minutes, with minute accounts of each partic-

ular case, were sent to Holland, and sometimes years elapsed before a question could be definitely settled. As the synods of Holland declined to receive communications in German, the correspondence was conducted in Latin or Dutch, and, as one of the secretaries of the "cœtus" says in an extant document, "it is difficult in writing to have to choose between a language which one has forgotten and another which one has never properly learned." In short, the whole arrangement was cumbrous in the extreme, and it is not surprising that some ministers preferred to labor independently. Among these the most eminent was the Rev. Dr. John Joachim Zubly, who exerted an extensive influence in Pennsylvania, though his field of labor was in the South. It will be remembered that he subsequently became a member of the Continental Congress.

The dependence of the Reformed churches on the synods of Holland continued through all the disturbances of the Revolution until 1793, when the correspondence was finally concluded, and the "cœtus" became a synod. It is the centennial anniversary of the latter event which the Reformed Church of this country now proposes to celebrate.

There is an engraving which represents Muhlenberg and Schlatter embracing each other in German fashion. The interview which it depicts is historical, and there can be no doubt that these good men were intimate friends. The picture is, however, suggestive of the fraternal relations of the ministers of the two churches during the whole colonial period. On all important questions they stood together, and there were no denominational controversies between them which were worthy of the name. No doubt these relations were greatly influenced by the prevalence of Pietism[1] in both churches; for, as is well known, Muhlenberg and his coadjutors belonged to the school of Halle, and many of

[1] Pietism, a name applied to a movement in behalf of personal religion and the cultivation of a higher spiritual life, inaugurated by Philip Jacob Spener, of the Lutheran Church, in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The term is often made to include various forms of later mysticism, but it is here used in its original meaning.

the Reformed pioneers were Pietists of a very similar type. But apart from this similarity of sentiment, it could not well be otherwise than that, as educated men living in agricultural communities, the pastors of neighboring churches should seek each other's society and become intimately acquainted. There were always certain peculiarities of ritual and observance by which the religious services of the two churches could be distinguished; but it must be confessed that after the first generation more important distinctions became very obscure. The development of the "denominational consciousness" belongs to a later period. "Union" churches, which were occupied in common by both denominations, had hitherto been erected only in cases of necessity, but they now became numerous. Though they may have served an important purpose in their day, they are now regarded as an obstacle to progress. Under the best conditions, union churches are like houses occupied by several families: there are possible complications which might as well be avoided.

The German churches of Pennsylvania were fortunate in numbering among their pioneers a long series of highly-educated men who exerted an influence which extended far beyond the limits of their immediate denomination. The Lutheran Church was honored by the presence of scholars like Kunze and Helmuth, and scientists like Muhlenberg, the botanist, and Melsheimer, the entomologist; and in the history of the Reformed Church occur the names of such men as Daniel Gros, author of "Moral Philosophy," Otterbein, Weyberg, and Hendel. Otterbein, it will be remembered, in his later years founded religious societies after the Methodist pattern, from which sprang the denomination which is known as the United Brethren in Christ, though he personally, like Wesley, remained in connection with the church of his fathers.

It has been said that the Germans were too slow in accommodating themselves to new conditions, and their ministers have been especially blamed for not encouraging the use of the English language in the services of the church. The imputation may not be entirely undeserved; but, pos-

sibly, if we were familiar with all the circumstances, our judgment might not be severe. The language of a people is not to be changed in a day, and there is a natural presumption in favor of the speech of one's forefathers. That the change of language at a later date was the occasion of serious conflicts we are painfully aware; but I really do not think the pioneers were unduly prejudiced. Muhlenberg, who was an excellent linguist, preached in English every Sunday on his voyage to America, and unless Schlatter had made himself familiar with English he would hardly have been appointed a chaplain in the British army. Sometimes, it must be confessed, the pioneers employed a form of speech which was hardly "the king's English," except that it was of the kind which was spoken by the earlier Georges. There is a story, for which I cannot vouch, that in the days of the Revolution the pastor of the Reformed Church of Germantown occasionally preached in what he fondly supposed to be English. On one of these occasions a British officer found his way into the church, and remained to the end under the impression that the sermon was, as usual, delivered in German. At its conclusion he said to one of the elders that he never before knew that German was *so much like English;* he had understood nearly one-half of what the minister said.

It was the patriotic dream of the "founders" to establish in this country a cultured German community, with literary institutions that could not fail to command respect. We have no time to give an account of their earnest labors in this direction. Certainly the highest credit belongs to Drs. Kunze and Helmuth for the establishment of the German department of the University of Pennsylvania, which in its day did excellent service in the cause of higher education. From this "department" was, in 1787, derived Franklin College, at Lancaster, in whose interest the best German elements were for a time united. Without undervaluing the importance of the patronage of such distinguished men as Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush, the chief honor for the establishment of that institution undoubtedly belongs

to four German ministers: Helmuth,[1] Hendel,[2] Weyberg,[3] and H. E. Muhlenberg.[4] Why the institution which was founded under such brilliant auspices was not immediately more successful it might now be difficult to explain; but apart from the fact that the new institution had no endowment worth mentioning, and that there were from the beginning differences of opinion concerning policy and management, it must be evident to any one who has studied the subject that the expectations of its promoters were unduly exalted, and consequently could not fail to be disappointed. They did not fully realize the fact that the tree which they had planted must have time to grow, and that years must pass before they could expect to taste its fruits.

It has frequently been intimated that the early Germans

[1] Justus Heinrich Christian Helmuth was born May 16, 1745, in Brunswick, Germany; died in Philadelphia, February 5, 1825; came to America, 1769; pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, 1769–1779; Zion's Church, Philadelphia, 1780–1820. He exerted an extensive influence in the Lutheran Church, and was an eminent author. Of his publications, his "Brief Account of the Yellow Fever in Philadelphia" (1793) is now best known.

[2] Wilhelm Hendel was a native of the Palatinate. He was sent to this country in 1762 by the synods of Holland, and was pastor of the following Reformed churches: Lancaster, 1765–1769; Tulpehocken, 1769–1782; Lancaster, the second time, 1782–1794; Philadelphia, 1794–1798. He was regarded as one of the best preachers of his time. Dr. Harbaugh calls him "the St. John of the Reformed Church." He died of yellow fever, September 29, 1798.

[3] Caspar Dietrich Weyberg was a native of Switzerland. He came to America as an ordained minister in 1762, and was pastor of the Reformed Church of Easton, Pennsylvania, 1763, and of the Race Street Reformed Church, Philadelphia, 1763–1790. He died in Philadelphia, September 26, 1790. During the Revolution he was imprisoned for his devotion to the American cause. He ranks among the foremost men in the early history of the German Reformed Church in this country.

[4] Gotthilf Heinrich Ernst Muhlenberg, the celebrated botanist, was the youngest son of the Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. He was born at New Providence, Pennsylvania, November 17, 1753; died at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, May 23, 1815. Studied at Halle, Germany; assistant minister in Philadelphia, 1774; pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1780–1815. He was the first president of Franklin College.

were a rude and uncultured people, abhorring literature and science as proper works of the devil. In the light of their history they could hardly be expected to devote much attention to the cultivation of the social graces, but that as a people they were exceptionally ignorant may be confidently denied. That they were a reading people is abundantly proven by the extent of the German book-trade of Philadelphia during the last century. Though not themselves learned, they had a traditional reverence for learning. Their religious services were dignified and solemn. The furniture of the church was not regarded as complete without an organ, and to its accompaniment they sang the grand old chorals of the Reformation. In social life they were hospitable, and their honesty was even then proverbial. In brief, I venture to say that the darkest period in the history of the German churches of Pennsylvania was not the earliest. It came with the inevitable transition from one language to another, when one was neglected and the other not fully acquired; when the learned pastors of the earlier period had passed away, and their places were supplied by men who had not enjoyed the same scholastic advantages. This was the period when the most eminent men doubted whether the German churches, as such, could claim to have a mission in America. It may be said to have extended through the first quarter of the present century. It was in the year 1825 that the Lutheran and Reformed churches each established a theological seminary, and these have gradually been followed by a long series of literary and theological institutions. Through trials and conflicts innumerable, through occasional periods of deep depression, the course of the churches has since then been upward and onward. To tell the story of their progress and prosperity is not our present purpose. That they have produced men eminent in church and state cannot be denied; that their presence has been felt in the literary and theological development of our country will be freely acknowledged; but their best work has been done in obscure places, and will not be known to men until it stands revealed in God's eternal light.