PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH: A DIALECT OF SOUTH GERMAN WITH AN INFUSION OF ENGLISH

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Pennsylvania Dutch: A Dialect of South German with an Infusion of English by S. S. Haldeman

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S. S. HALDEMAN

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A DIALECT OF SOUTH GERMAN WITH AN INFUSION OF ENGLISH.

BY

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MVR

NOTICE.

WHILE I was engaged with the third part of my *Early English Pronunciation*, Prof. Haldeman sent me a reprint of some humorous letters by Rauch, entitled *Pennsylvanish Deitsh. De Campain Breefa fum Pit Schwefflebrenner un de Bevvy, si alty, gepublished olly woch in "Father Abraham."* Perceiving at once the analogy between this debased German with English intermixture, and Chaucer's debased Anglo-saxon with Norman intermixture, I requested and obtained such further information as enabled me to give an account of this singular modern reproduction of the manner in which our English language itself was built up, and insert it in the introduction to my chapter on Chaucer's pronunciation, *Early English Pronunciation*, pp. 652-663. But I felt it would be a loss to Philology if this curious living example of a mixture of languages were dismissed with such a cursory notice, and I therefore requested Prof. Haldeman, who by birth and residence, philological and phonetic knowledge, was so well fitted for the task, to draw up a more extended notice, as a paper to be read before the Philological Society of London. Hence arose the following little treatise, of which I, for my own part, can only regret the brevity. But the Philological Society, having recently exhausted most of its resources by undertaking the publication of several extra volumes, was unable to issue another of such length, and hence the present Essay appears independently. Owing to his absence from England and my own connexion with the paper, which I communicated and read to the Philological Society, on 3 June, 1870, Prof.

Haldeman requested me to superintend the printing of his essay, and add anything that might occur to me. This will account for a few footnotes signed with my name. The Professor was fortunately able to examine one revise himself, so, that though I am mainly responsible for the press work, I hope that the errors may be very slight

Sufficient importance does not seem to have been hitherto attached to watching the growth and change of living languages. We have devoted our philological energies to the study of dead tongues which we could not pronounce, and have therefore been compelled to compare by letters rather than by sounds, and which we know only in the form impressed upon them by scholars of various times. The form in which they were originally written is for ever concealed. The form in which they appear in the earliest manuscripts has practically never been published, but has to be painfully collected from a mass of various readings. The form we know is a critical, conjectural form, patched up by men distinguished for scholarship, but for the most part entirely ignorant of the laws which govern the changes of speech. The very orthography is medieval. We are thus enabled to see as little of the real genesis of language, in form, in sound, in grammatical and logical construction, in short in the real pith of philological investigation—the relation of thought to speech-sounds—as the study of a full-grown salmon would enable us to judge of the marvellous development of that beautiful fish. Such studies as the present will, I hope, serve among others to stimulate exertion in the new direction. We cannot learn life by studying fossils alone.

ALEX. J. ELLIS.

KENSINGTON,
23 APRIL, 1872.

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