

Alte Drucke

Falckner's Curieuse Nachricht von Pennsylvania

Falckner, Daniel

Philadelphia, 1702

Chapter V.

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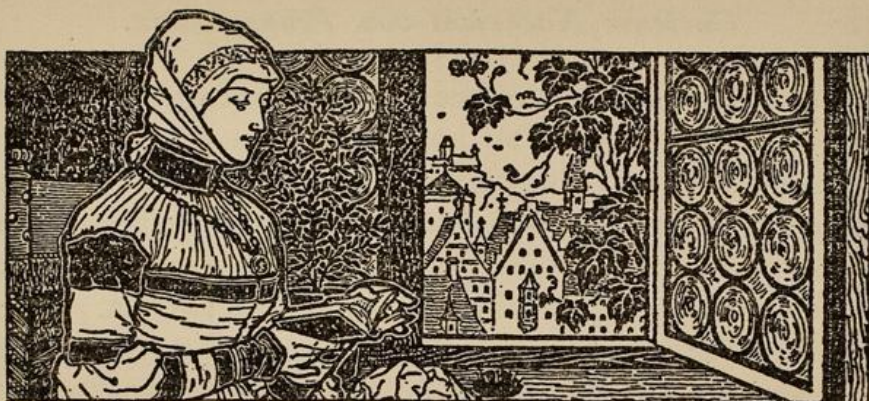
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CHAPTER V.

DANIEL FALCKNER.



DANIEL FALCKNER, author of our *Curieuse Nachricht*, Citizen and Pilgrim in Pennsylvania, in Northern America, as he signs himself therein, was born November 25, 1666, was the second son of Rev. Daniel Falckner, the Lutheran pastor at Langen-Reinsdorf (formerly known as Langen-

Rhensdorf and Langeramsdorf), near Crimmitschau, parish of Zwickan, situated in that part of Saxony formerly known as the Markgravate of Meissen, and was a scion of an old Lutheran family. His ancestors on both sides had been ordained Lutheran ministers.

His grandfather, Christian Falckner (died November 5, 1658), as well as his son, Daniel Falckner (died April 7, 1674), father of the subject of our sketch, were both pastors of Langen-Reinsdorf. Pastor Daniel Falckner, the

elder, was a man well versed in many branches of learning besides theology, as his library, an extensive one, contained works upon almost every branch of the arts, sciences, philosophy and history, besides the theological works of the day. This great collection was kept intact until the year 1704, when it was sold at auction. A printed catalogue of this library, which forms a book in itself, is

Daniel Falckner

still preserved in the great *Stadt Bibliothek* of Bremen, and was examined by the writer during the past summer.

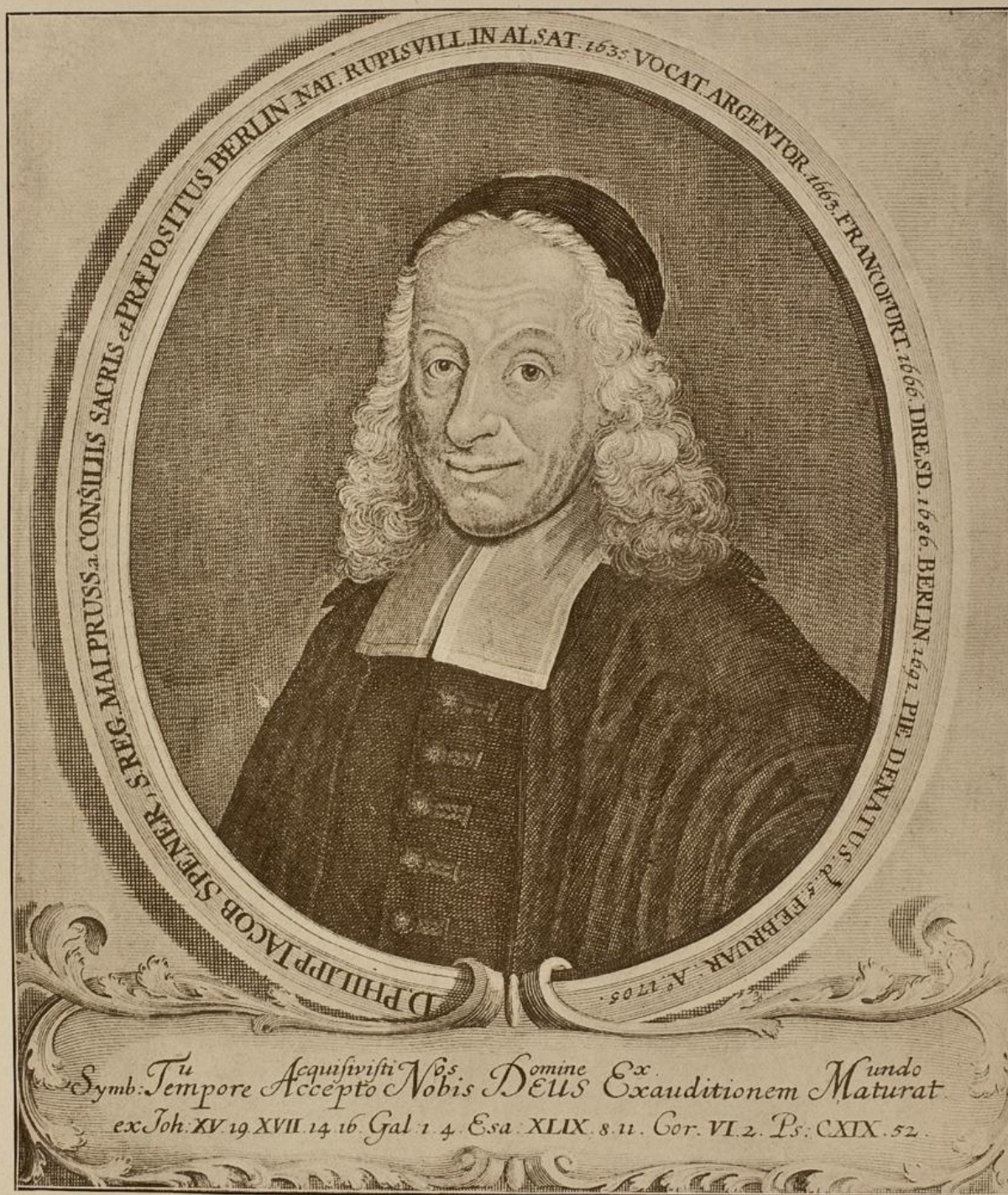
Thus it will be seen that the children of Dominie Falckner had exceptional facilities for obtaining knowledge at that early day.

From data that have come down to us, we learn that the subject of our sketch, during his early life, was not of a robust nature, as he was a weak and sickly child from the time of his birth, a condition which changed but little until he came to Pennsylvania, where he himself credits the improvement in his physical condition to the out-door life and exercise in the New World. It will be further noted that in the very introduction to his *Curieuse Nachricht* he makes mention of his "bodily ailments."

The connection of Daniel Falckner with the German Pietists dates from almost the very commencement of the movement which opposed the rigid and externalized orthodoxy in the Lutheran churches in Germany during the close of the Seventeenth Century.

From the correspondence between Spener and Francke, still preserved in the archives of the Halle Orphanage, it

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PHILIPP JAKOB SPENER.

B. JAN. 11, 1635; D. FEB. 5, 1705.

appears that Daniel Falckner, the same as both Spener and Francke, was imbued at the very outset with a belief in the visions and supernatural powers of several ecstatic maidens, such as Rosamunda von Asseburg, Anna Maria Schuckart alias the Erfurth Prophetess and Magdalena Elrichs. Further that even Daniel Falckner himself at times went into a state of ecstasy seeing visions and making enraptured exhortations. A condition from which he was awakened by the austere Köster. This fact is commented upon by Spener in a letter to Francke, dated Berlin, May 6, 1693, some months before the Kelpius party sailed for Pennsylvania, wherein it says: "Thus has Henry Köster brought Herr Falckner so far that he now has no further *ecstasis*. He has also told how he came thereto, and how he himself could by intense imagination awaken divine matters. And that as he now intends differently and seeks a better path, he is more calm."

It was not until nine months after this letter was written by Spener that the long cherished plan of founding a colony of German Pietists in Pennsylvania was consummated, and the start was made by the party of religious enthusiasts from Germany to Pennsylvania by way of England.

Many had been the difficulties in bringing this cherished object to a final stage of success. Even at the last moment, when all were ready to embark, Magister Zimmerman died. This, however, did not deter the party, who continued the voyage under the leadership of Magisters Kelpius, Köster and Falckner.

There is one important fact in our history that has thus far failed to attract proper attention. This is nothing more nor less than the interest the great Spener took in the success of the German settlement of Pennsylvania. From

letters and memoranda which have come down to us it appears that Spener and Pastorius were in close touch during the early days of the latter's residence in Germantown, and that Spener kept himself well informed as to the state of the Germans in Pennsylvania. That this intercourse ceased upon Pastorius' joining the Quaker fold becomes apparent from Spener's letter of August 1, 1689, viz. :

"I do not remember having heard anything of Herr Lic. Pastorius since I am here. But would be much pleased if one of his pamphlets should come to my notice.⁵ Such as take their refuge thither, I leave to their own opinions. I could not advise anyone to flee, before the Lord drives us out. Thus it appears that yonder place is as liable to come into danger, as any other. As it stands, the present English disturbances may also cause some changes there.

"About Herr Penn it has already been reported for some time among his own people, that he is not by far what he formerly was.

"My thoughts are to remain at all times where the Lord places us, and to remain there so long as he permits, and to go whenever he commands us to go. Upon such paths I am surely safe."⁶

Magister Kelpius writes in his Diary that on Monday, the seventh day of January, 1694, He, being convinced by God, resolved upon going to America, his companions being Heinrich Bernhard Köster, Daniel Falckner, Daniel Lutke,

⁵ Pastorius' Latin missive to Modelius of December, 1688, is evidently indicated here ; so far as known this was not published until April, 1691.

⁶ Philipp Jacob Speners, D. Theologische Bedencken, und andere Briefliche Antworten auff geistliche, sondern zur erbaung gerichtete materien zu unterschiedenen zeiten aufgesetzt, und auff canguirthriges anhalten Christliche freunde in einige ordnung gebracht und herausgegeben. Dritter Theil Halle, in Verlegung des Waysen-hauses, 1702. From copy in Ev. Luth. Seminary, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia.

J. N. 3.

Anno, 1694.

Septima Januarii convictus à Dia. iter in Americam
 institui. convictus Henricus Bernhardt, Cosmas Daniele
 Falkner, Daniele Luthero, Johanne, Geor. Ludo-
 co Adernanno et comitibus simul 40. exacter quatuor
 recensiti ita convicti à Dio in Germania praevidente
 ac huc amo iter istud insuerant.

Conductam ipsi Navim nomine SARRA
 BOXE SARRA capitaneo Johanne Tannero Anglo
 conducebam ego Septima Februarii pro septem argenti
 libris Anglicanis quas in navi Septimus explebam,
 quam 13. ingressus eram reliqui autem 12. quiescebat.

Prima hac dies in Tamisi fluvio Anglicano tranquilla
 transigebatur à nostris à me maximam partem gravi
 sancta: vesperis de ordigendis lectis constatatis feticibus
 tur quae Zelum in G. G. accendebat. pro ut, exprocella
 "cordis pacifico dejectus Zelum pro lecto, cor lumen Christi vult
 seculis seclerere cumulare; donec Maria solitaria
 virginem Ethiopiam adsciscunt, quae prius de puritan
 te virginis Europa informari volebat antequam
 in. conubium conseruere. Georgius vero morbum periclitari
 exprobratio condignaretur. Georgius vero morbum periclitari
 Secunda dies 15. Febr. Secunda nobis: Sed

Tertia fatalis erat. Nemo presage, mala cum even-
 tibus felici mihi presagebat. Idem Falknerus de se spera-
 mabat. Visitabamur primo à Militum Conseriptio-
 Regis. Dein vento contrario ab turbulentis. Propter
 arenosis admovebamur, quas effugere volentes anilona
 salutem quarebamus, quae ipse nos perdidisset. nisi Divi-
 na Promota fecisset ut es. tanta moles sub navi
 navim perforare volens fractura fuisset ipsa. An-
 chora sic depodita turbine tandem ferebamur in sin-

Johan Seelig and Ludwig Biederman, together with about forty other companions, some of whom Kelpius says were numbered and others convinced by God, in Germany, and had in the preceding year resolved upon that voyage. He then states that on Wednesday, February 7, he engaged for them the ship *Sara Maria Hopewell*, Captain John Tanner, for seven English pounds of silver, which was paid out on board one week later, the company having embarked on Monday, February 12, but Kelpius did not join the *Sara Maria* at Gravesend until the 13th. It was upon the next day when the money was paid and the anchor raised, and the good ship, the *Sara Maria*, carrying a crew of thirty mariners and an armament of fourteen guns, commenced on her voyage to America.

The vicissitudes of the party, however, were many, the dangers of Goodwin Sands, storms in the channel, and visits of the press gang were happily passed. It was not, however, until Friday, April 15, when the English coast was lost to sight.

There is but little mention of Daniel Falckner in this Diary except that on Friday, February 15, both Kelpius and Falckner's apprehensive minds presaged evils with a fortunate outcome. These proved to be, first, a visit of the press gang, and later the miraculous escape from destruction on the Goodwin Sands. When Falckner, filled with the spirit of God, poured forth fervent thanksgiving: "Praised be the name of the Lord forever! Amen! Hallelujah!"

Toward the close of the Diary on Sunday, June 17, Kelpius enters a memorandum:

"The memorable excommunication of Falckner by Köster and that of Anna Maria Schuckart, the Prophetess of Erfurth."

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PORTRAIT OF JOHANNES KELPIUS,
BY CHRISTOPHER WITT IN 1705,
BELIEVED TO BE THE EARLIEST AMERICAN PORTRAIT IN OIL.

This entry in the Kelpius Diary has always been a conundrum to students of Pennsylvania-German history, and has led some to suppose that the woman was among the passengers on the ship.

How Daniel Falckner came to Pennsylvania with this party headed by Magister Kelpius in 1694 and settled on the Wissahickon, has been fully told in my volume on the *German Pietists in Provincial Pennsylvania*, and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say, as before stated, that late in 1698 or early in 1699 he was sent as an emissary from the Pietists on the Wissahickon to the Fatherland, to make known the true state and spiritual condition of the Germans who had emigrated to Pennsylvania; and to set forth the labors of the Pietistical brethren among their countrymen in America, and solicit aid and additional recruits, so that the perfect number of forty could be kept intact, and at the same time could extend their usefulness in educating their neglected countrymen in Pennsylvania and Virginia.⁷

Another important scheme then under consideration was the emigration of the members of the Philadelphian Society in a body from England and the Continent to settle in Pennsylvania, and there found a colony or colonies where their peculiar teachings should be their only law. And it may easily be inferred that the plan fully outlined in his manuscript and touched upon in the printed version for a Communal Settlement in Pennsylvania upon a cash

⁷ As a matter of fact there were German settlements in Virginia prior to the beginning of the XVIII. century, as both Köster and Petrus Schäffer journeyed there about the time when Daniel Falckner sailed for Europe. This interesting fact is proven by a manuscript report in the Halle archives from Rev. Petrus Schäffer to Rev. August Herman Francke. He also states that he sent a complete history of Virginia to Halle (1699) and requests that it be published. Thus far this interesting manuscript has not been found in the Halle archives.

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capital of 4000 Rix Dollars alludes to the above scheme, if it does not virtually give us some insight into the plan upon which the original settlement of Kelpius and his associates on the Wissahickon was organized.

It is unnecessary here to follow the course of emissary Falckner while upon his visit to the Fatherland: how he reported to Benjamin Furly the Rotterdam merchant, who did so much to promote German emigration, and was subsequently, together with his younger brother, Justus, made attorney in fact, for Furly's holdings in America; or how the Frankfort Company dismissed Pastorius and substituted Falckner, Kelpius and Jawart as attorneys to take charge of and protect their interests in Pennsylvania. All these facts are matters of history and have been fully told in previous publications.

For our present purpose we shall confine ourselves to the chief result of his visit to Halle on the Saale, which was then the great center of German Pietism and religious thought, with Francke as its leader.



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AUGUST HERMAN FRANCKE.

B. LUBECK, MAR. 12, 1663; D. HALLE, JUNE 8, 1727.