



Chronicon Ephratense: A History of the Community of Seventh Day Baptists at Ephrata, Lancaster Country, Penn'a (Classic Reprint)

Lamech Lamech

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Excerpt from Chronicon Ephratense: A History of the Community of Seventh Day Baptists at Ephrata, Lancaster Country, Penn'a

In offering to the public the following translation of the Chronicon Ephratense, a few words of explanation seem called for.

Of the original, probably not more than twenty copies are known to be in existence; and these, with possibly a few exceptions, are in the hands of collectors and antiquarians. To them its chief value lies not only in the great rarity of the work, but also in the fact that it is one of the most interesting specimens of book-making in Pennsylvania to be found anywhere, the paper, printing, and binding all being of strictly native production, the handiwork of the Solitary Brethren of the Community at Ephrata whose history it so quaintly and naively narrates.

It is believed, however, that the work has also a larger interest, and an intrinsic value of its own, as an exceedingly frank and ingenuous contribution to our knowledge of the peculiar and wholly unique social and religious condition, and entire spiritual life, of a very considerable part of the early settlers of Central and Southern Pennsylvania. The otherwise incomprehensibly heterogeneous social and religious life of that populous, prosperous, and important part of the State of which Berks, Lancaster, Lebanon, York, and Dauphin counties are the representatives; the strange variety of dialect, dress, social habits, religious beliefs, and sectarian organizations, to be met with in those counties to-day; are all readily accounted for as soon as we become acquainted with the history of the people and their surroundings, to which the Chronicon introduces us. Nor does the picture given us of the intense moral earnestness, the power of self-denying endurance, the hard-working industry and ascetic simplicity of life, the blindly stubborn pertinacity of these original "Pennsylvania Germans," leave us in much doubt as to where their successors of the present received their habits of strict economy and frugality, untiring toil, shrewd thriftiness, and patient, all-conquering perseverance, by which they have succeeded in making "the wilderness" and "desert" of a hundred years ago to enjoy to-day the proud distinction of being "the garden spot of the State."

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