In Old-Time Pennsylvania

"LET no one see this but your family," writes Margaret Dwight at the close of her *Journal* of a journey from Connecticut to "New Connecticut" in 1810.[1] She was sending the *Journal* to her cousin, Elizabeth Woolsey, and it has, ever since, been a family or a college treasure, for its author was a niece of President Timothy Dwight, a descendant of Jonathan Edwards, and a New England bluestocking generally. Miss Dwight was twenty years old when she made the long journey from New Haven to Warren, Ohio, traveling with a certain Deacon Wolcott (a well-meaning but exasperatingly economical person), his wife, son, and daughter. Other travelers, in adding themselves to the little party from time to time, subject themselves to the severe slating of the young woman, who added a page or two to her diary every evening. It was an exceedingly sharp-tongued young woman, to be sure; and her provinciality expresses itself in a natural but exaggerated regard for "old Connecticut," and scorn of any departure from Yankee ways. Differences in accent, dress, etc., seem to this young traveler not diverting phenomena, but abuses to be complained of. She is as critical of the country she travels—New Jersey, Pennsylvania—as any captious Englishman of her period writing of any American State. Probably she corrected some of her faults as time went on, and by the time she had married a Mr. Bell in Ohio, and had borne him thirteen children, she had got bravely over her intolerance and snobbishness. In spite of the faults of this young woman, we sympathize with her in reading these pages. There were some few hardships connected with the driving trip of six hundred miles; the inns at which stops were made lacked comfort, and sometimes afforded neither privacy nor decent protection against the rude advances of Pennsylvania wagoners, by day and by night. Yet the inns of Pennsylvania cannot all have been so bad as she would have us believe, for Dr. Schoepf's "Travels in the Confederation, 1783-1784," tells of a tavern at Bethlehem "seldom without guests" that was good enough to delight General Phillipps, who went out of his way forty miles to make a second visit. True, at the inn in Bladensburg there were negroes and negresses in such deshabille as to horrify "our European ladies" and throw them into the *vapeurs* because of "the disagreeable atmosphere"—and it all depends upon the point of view, when all is said. Schoepf remarks that the German taverns in Pennsylvania were "pretty generally allowed" to be the best; but the "good beer, and at this season wurst, hog meat and sauer-kraut" that he praises were probably not to Miss Dwight's liking. She is at least a pungent writer:

"The whole world nor anything in it, would tempt me to stay in this State three months—I dislike everything belonging to it."

"Prophanity is the characteristic of a Pennsylvanian."

"When I am with such people, my proud spirit rises and I feel superior to them all—I believe no regard to the Sabbath is paid anywhere in this State."

"Nothing vexes me more than to see them

[1] A JOURNEY TO OHIO IN 1810. As Recorded in the Journal of Margaret Van Horn Dwight. Edited, with an Introduction, by *Max Ferrand*. 12mo. Pp. vi, 64. (Being Number One in the series of Yale Historical Manuscripts, published under the direction of the Department of History, from the income of the Frederick John Kingsbury Memorial Fund.) New Haven: Yale University Press. $1.

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sit and look at us and talk in dutch [*i. e.*, Pennsylvania German] and laugh."

Her *Journal* is an interesting document, especially in its pictures of the inns of the period and their ruder patrons, but we fail to see any point to the editor's description of it as "a perfect gem," or to his allusions to "its perfect beauty." The editor's school-girl patter has an odd sound, emanating from a great University. Of course it is easy to pardon the young traveler for the sweeping charges she makes against all inhabitants of Pennsylvania, for she saw little that was agreeable and was too inexperienced to realize that she missed discovering the charm of life in a State which offered many social, moral, and intellectual attractions to those who did not hurry out into its wild west. She knows no more of Philadelphia, for example, than did the Chevalier de Beaujoir, who, in his "Aperçu des Etats-Unis" (1814), wrote:

"Philadelphia is not, as has been said, the most beautiful city in the world; all the streets and all the houses resemble one another, and nothing is sadder than this uniformity, unless it be the sadness of the inhabitants, of whom the greater part are members of the sect of Quakers, or of that of the Puritans."

What that charm was in earlier times is suggested in the handsome volume which a Philadelphia publisher issues: *The Colonial Homes of Philadelphia.*[2] The illustrations will please anyone interested in Colonial architecture; the bookmaking is praiseworthy; the text is readable from cover to cover. Here social and family history is presented to the world with generous sympathy, not to say outright reverence. Homely details of the life of the eighteenth century are abundant, and the surviving "Colonial homes" are humanized most delightfully, till we feel that we really know their old-time masters, the heroes and heroines of Dr. Mitchell's novels of old Philadelphia. If any one is of Beaujour's opinion that the Quaker City has always been an abode of dulness, here is an opportunity presented for him to disabuse himself of a misconception. Not only were the old Philadelphians good trenchermen, and fond of their Madeira; they had their wits, their worldly-wise and hospitable Bishops, their charming hostesses. "The Episcopalians showed most grandeur of dress and costume; next the Presbyterians, the gentlemen of whom freely indulged in powdered and frizzled hair." Nowhere in the colonies (unless perhaps at Charleston, where there seems to have been more dissipation than at Philadelphia) were the comforts of life more fully enjoyed. Here is a characteristic entry from a Friend's diary:

"This morning most of the family were busy preparing for a great dinner, two green turtles having been sent to Johnny ———. We concluded to dress them both together here and invited the whole family in. We had three tureens of soup, the two shells baked, besides several dishes of stew, with boned turkey, roast ducks, veal and beef. After these were removed the table was filled with two kinds of jellies and various kinds of pudding, pies, and preserves; and then almonds, raisins, nuts, apples, and oranges. Twenty-four sat down at table."

Small wonder that the next entry states: "My husband past a restless night with gout."

But the life of the Philadelphia of long ago was not exclusively gastronomic in its pleasures, or Miss Dwight's observations would carry more weight. Dr. Haniston, in his account of the proceedings of the Governour's Club, which met at a tavern, tells us that the conversation on one of the evenings he attended (it was in 1744) ran upon Cervantes and the English poets. As for the belles of Philadelphia, they need no praise from us, for Colonial history is full of them, and they have furnished forth more than one romancer. One of them, albeit a "standpatter" (which meant, in those days, loyalist), manifested more than a little of the modern suffraget spirit; a second, as a girl of twelve, went to the British camp and demanded of Lord Cornwallis the return of her commandeered pet cow. Besides these heroines, Rebecca Franks and Ann Rudolph of Darby, there is Peggy Chew, whose triumphs illuminate the pages of Edith Tunis Sale's *Old Time Belles and Cavaliers*[3]—a book of more than local interest, richly illustrated.

[2] THE COLONIAL HOMES OF PHILADELPHIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD. *By Harold Donaldson Eberlein and Horace Mather Lippincott.* 8vo. 72 Illustrations. Pp. 366. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. $5.

[3] OLD TIME BELLES AND CAVALIERS. *By Edith Tunis Sale.* 8vo. 61 illustrations. Pp. 285. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. $5.

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