

peared in the same place about three weeks since and promised to be very abundant this season.

Oral communications were made as follows :

By Prof. Henry F. Osborn :

1. Upon the Displacement of the Foot-bones in the Mammalia.

2. Upon the Perissodactyla of the Uinta.

By Prof. W. B. Scott :

1. Upon the Relations of the Uinta to the Bridger and White River Fauna.

2. Upon the Artiodactyla of the Uinta.

The question of printing the old minutes of the Board of Officers and Council was deferred until the next stated meeting of the Society.

Pending nominations 1183-1187 were read.

And the Society was adjourned by the President.

Folk-Medicine of the Pennsylvania Germans.

By W. J. Hoffman, M.D., Washington, D. C.

(Read before the American Philosophical Society, May 3, 1889.)

Reverting to the period in the history of Pennsylvania, when the homesteads of the colonists were remote from one another, it may readily be conceived that ordinary social intercourse was impracticable. One of the first duties was considered to be the erection of a house of worship so located as to be accessible to the greatest number of people within a given area. Thus it generally happened that the gatherings before Sunday service were of social importance and were looked forward to with great interest as a means of exchanging the news and incidents of the preceding week. This practice still obtains in the rural districts.

Except in the villages, and larger towns, professional medical services were scarcely to be had, and hence in other than simple cases it was the pastor who was called upon to administer to the bodily as well as to the spiritual welfare of the members of his flock. Common complaints were treated by the application or administration of household remedies, the collection and preparation of which formed no insignificant part of the wife's duties. For this purpose various plants, roots, barks and blossoms

were gathered at specified times, and preserved in special ways, each separately wrapped or inclosed in a small bag, and ultimately suspended from the rafters of the attic ready for use. This custom was not a new one, but merely the perpetuation of a practice transmitted through preceding generations, and the custom survives even at the present day.

Although many of the plants used are well known to possess the therapeutic properties attributed to them, and their selection seems to be based upon sound principles, yet the greater part of them are coupled with some form of superstitious belief, either pertaining to the time of gathering, method of preparation or administration.

There are numerous instances in which certain plants are supposed to possess special virtue in particular diseases, on account of their fancied resemblance to some part, or organ, of the human body ; and others again where color plays an important part in their selection.

Among the less intelligent and truly illiterate prevail the practice of laying-on of hands, breathing upon the affected part, charms, incantations, exorcism, making passes with the hands and crosses with the index finger, at the same time pronouncing the name of Jesus and coupling therewith some act in His life ; besides various other mysterious actions seemingly for the purpose of impressing the credulous and superstitious. Such practices are still indulged in, and when a patient suffers from an insignificant disorder which in due time disappears, the restoration to health is accredited to the operator and consequently adds to his already established reputation.

The several methods of procedure just mentioned are seldom practiced by the same person. There are individuals of both sexes who become famous for success in special complaints ; one may have a specialty in erysipelas and other inflammatory diseases ; another may be noted for his success in arresting hemorrhage, and still another may be celebrated as the possessor of a "mad-stone," which is often equally applied to the bites of rabid dogs and venomous serpents.

To another class may be relegated the workers of evil, witches or *hex'a*. In opposition to these, to cure sickness or to remove spells, are a class of sorcerers who work countercharms, frequently employing mystic writings, charms and fumigations. Some of these even go so far as to profess the power of producing good or evil effects upon absent persons, regardless of distance, and in this respect they occupy a position identical with that of the Indian medicine man or shaman.

Another form of cure is by the transference of disease, either to some person or animal or to an inanimate object ; sometimes a disease is cast out at a specified time or upon the fulfillment of certain injunctions.

Investigation proves conclusively that some of the superstitions and practices found in Pennsylvania were introduced by the colonists from the countries from which they had emigrated ; and it is evident, also, that others of them have become modified, as were deemed necessary, or were changed by the adoption of new methods resulting from a new environ-

ment. One of the chief reasons pertaining to the last-named may be on account of the difference of the flora of Western Europe and that of Pennsylvania.

A number of charms and recipes appear also to have been selected from old works alleged to contain valuable secrets. One of these, known as the "Sixth Book of Moses," is said to be of great value in that it contains formulæ for casting bullets, which never fail to strike the object *thought of*; compelling game to return, before sunset, to the footprint over which the operator pronounces certain mystic words, etc. I have thus far been unable to see a copy of this work, although its possession by certain persons has been reported to me from time to time.

Another purports to be a reprint of a work by Albertus Magnus, a learned philosopher of the thirteenth century, in which are given a large number of formulæ, recipes, charms and other secrets for exorcising evil spirits from man and beast.*

A third work, a copy of which, as in the case of the last named, in the possession of the writer, is unfortunately without title page, and it is only from the introduction of one short article that it becomes apparent that the work was printed in America sometime during the earlier portion of the present century. Much of the information contained in this little volume appears to have been selected from "Albertus Magnus," though there are a number of charms and recipes entirely new, and quite unknown to the people under discussion.

Before detailing some of the methods of procedure in the cure of disease, it may be of interest to note several superstitions pertaining to the indication and prevention of disease, and the avoidance of bad luck.

By many it is still considered a forerunner of illness for one to sneeze, and the usual "helf Gott" or "Amen" is uttered by some one present. This is a very old custom, and Brand† remarks, "In Langley's Abridgment of Polydore Vergil, fol. 130, it is said: 'There was a plague whereby many as they neezed dyed sodeynly, werof it grew into a custome that they that were present when any man neezed should say, "God helpe you." A like deadly plage was sometyme in yawning, wherfore menne used to fence themselves with the signe of the crosse: bothe which customes we reteyne styl at this day.'"

The writer has discovered the survival of a belief—prevalent in many portions of the Old World—in regard to the position of sleeping "north

* Albertus Magnus bewährte und approbirte sympathetische und natürliche egyptische Geheimnisse für Menschen und Vieh. Für Städter und Landleute. Neueste Auflage. In 3 Theilen. Brabant, 1725. sm. 8vo., pp. 71, 84, 70. Although bearing the above date, this is a recent reprint, issued in New York.

Albertus Magnus was born at Lauingen in Bavaria, about 1200. He occupies the first rank among philosophers and theologians of the Middle Ages. He became a Dominican friar in his youth, and lectured later in life both at Paris and Cologne. He died in 1280 and left a great number of works, which treat of logic, theology, physics and metaphysics. Thomas Aquinas was his disciple.

† Popular Antiquities. London, iii, 1882, p. 125.

and south," *i.e.*, having the head end of the bed to the north. Mr. D'Arcy Power* quotes several instances of prominent people who were successful in attaining advanced age upon practicing this method of sleeping themselves, and insuring sleep to invalid children when every other prescription had failed. "A physician who died at Magdeburg, at the advanced age of 109, states in his will the manner in which he preserved his life. 'Assume,' he said, 'as often as convenient, and especially during the hours of sleep, the horizontal position: the head towards the north pole, and the rest of the body in a direction as much as possible that of the meridian. By this means the magnetic currents which pervade the surface of the globe keep up a regular and normal kind of nutrition of the mass of iron contained in the economy; and hence arises the increase of vital principle which regulates all the organic phenomena having a direct action on the preservation of life.'"

Mr. Power, in commenting upon this and similar instances, concludes: "These facts, whether scientifically accurate or not, will suffice to prove that this particular position in sleeping was commonly regarded as the most favorable one possible. We think that many customs of the kind, which are sometimes considered as mere superstitions, may be traced to some underlying truth which affords a more or less sufficient justification of them." †

A common belief is to the effect that if a potato be carried in one's pocket it will secure freedom from rheumatism. In some instances a horse-chestnut is claimed to possess similar properties, and is therefore carried in a similar manner.

If the rattle of a rattlesnake be attached to a string and suspended from the neck, it will prevent, as well as cure, rheumatism.

To carry a bullet in one's pocket will prevent an attack of toothache.

The following, to prevent poisoning from ivy, was given to the writer by a correspondent in Fayette county: "Eat a small portion of the root in the spring, and you will be proof against it during the whole year."

During the prevalence of contagious diseases, sliced onions are exposed in sleeping-rooms in the belief that the infectious matter would be absorbed, and not affect the occupants.

To prevent cramp while bathing, a thong of eel's skin is tied about the leg or wrist.

For the purpose of preparing the system for warm weather, an infusion of the crushed bark of sassafras root is used early in spring. A teacupful is swallowed once, or twice, daily for about one week. Thirty years ago it was a common practice for all elderly people to be bled, or cupped, each spring. The belief was that the blood was sluggish, and an accelerated circulation could only be produced by reducing the quantity in the body.

* The Folk-lore Journal, London, II, 1884, pp. 92, 93; also quoting the Lancet (London), March 3, 1866, and Notes and Queries, December 3, 1870.

† The Folk-lore Journal, Lond., II, 1884, p. 93.

To kill the first snake found in spring will enable one to thwart the evil designs of one's enemies for the remainder of the year.

A very common practice is to nail a horse-shoe against the lintel of the stable door, to insure good luck and safety to the animals. Horse-shoes are also nailed over the doors of the house to insure good luck to the occupants. That such a horse-shoe be found upon the highway is of additional importance.

The custom of employing horse-shoes in the manner above mentioned, and the representation of the outline or impress of a hand, is of Oriental origin. The Romans drove nails into the walls of cottages, as an antidote against the plague : for this reason L. Manlius, A. U. C. 390, was named dictator to drive the nail.* In Jerusalem, a rough representation of a hand is marked by the natives on the wall of every house whilst in building.† The Moors generally, and especially the Arabs of Kairwan, employ the marks on their houses as prophylactics, and similar hand-prints are found in El Baird, near Petra. In Persia, it appears, these hand impressions receive another interpretation so as to become related to an important fact in the history of that people. General A. Houtum-Schindler, Inspector-General of Telegraphs of the Empire, says : " All through Persia, principally in villages though, a rough representation of a hand, or generally the imprint of a right hand, in red, may be seen on the wall or over the door of a house whilst in building, or on the wall of a mosque, booth or other public building. It is probably an ancient custom, although the Persians connect it with Islam and say that the hand represents that of Abbas, a brother of Husain (a grandson of the prophet Mohammed), who was one of the victims at the massacre of Kerbela in A. D. 680, and who had his right hand cut off by el Abrad ibn Shaibân. In India I have noticed similar marks, hands, or simply red streaks." ‡

That these practices and the later use of the horse-shoe originated with the rite of the Passover is probable. The blood upon the door-posts and upon the lintel (Exodus xii, 7) was put upon the most conspicuous places and formed, as it were, an arch ; and when the horse-shoe was invented it was naturally adopted by the superstitious as conforming to the shape, or outline, upon the primitive doorway, and in time it became the symbol of luck, or " safety to those residing under its protection." §

In the following notes, under head of each disease, are presented the facts pertaining to ailments and their treatment by internal remedies, charms, transference of the complaint, etc. :

AGUE.

The following remedy is reported from Fayette county, where, according to the informant, it is held in high repute : " Take one quart of ale,

* Brand's Antiquities, Lond., iii, 1882, p. 18.

† Lieut. Condor, " Palestine Explor. Fund," Jan., 1873, p. 16.

‡ Letter dated Teheran, Dec. 19, 1888.

§ This has been previously referred to in an article entitled : " Folk-lore of the Pennsylvania Germans," printed in *The Journal of Am. Folk-Lore*, Boston and New York, Vol. i, No. 2, 1888, p. 129.

put into it nine pieces of burdock root and nine pieces of plantain root, and after dark bury the vessel under the eaves of the house. Take it up next morning before daylight and drink."

BRONCHITIS.

Make a gimlet hole in the door frame at the exact height of the top of the patient's head, into which insert a small tuft of his hair and close the hole with a peg of wood, then cut off the projecting portion of the peg. As the patient grows in height beyond the peg, so will the disease be outgrown.

This has recently been practiced in the case of young boys, but it is not stated what would be the course adopted in the case of an adult, who had attained his full height.

COUGHS ; COLDS.

A common remedy is to put brandy into a saucer and set it on fire. When it has burned several minutes extinguish the flame, by covering the dish, and add sufficient white sugar to make a syrup. The dose is a teaspoonful, taken in intervals of an hour or two, as the case may require.

Peter Kalm* refers to sassafras berries being used, by putting them into rum or brandy, "of which a draught every morning" was taken. "The bark being put into brandy, or boiled in any other liquor, is said not only to ease pectoral diseases, but likewise to be of some service against all internal pains and heat; and it was thought that a decoction of it could stop the dysentery."

The inner bark of the wild cherry tree (as well as the berries) is put into a bottle of whisky or brandy and allowed to stand for a week or more, when small doses of the mixture are taken for cough.

A stocking tied around the head has been used for a cold in the head, and it is probable that this may be a modification of a remedy suggested many years ago.†

CUTS AND WOUNDS.

If cut with a sharp instrument, or tool, grease the cutting edge of the instrument and lay it aside to hasten the cure and to prevent lockjaw. This practice prevailed also in some parts of England, and Mr. Black‡ suggests that the secret lay in the simplicity of non-interference with the wound and treating the instrument instead.

Wounds and bruises are bathed with a tincture of balsam-apple—*Momordica balsamina*—a bottle of which is generally kept on hand for the purpose. When the plant, or vine, has blossomed and the pod begins to grow, a bottle is slipped over it so as to allow the fruit to grow to its full

* Peter Kalm. En Resa etil Norra Amerca, etc. Stockholm, 1753, 1.

† "Du musst es für gewiss alle Abende thun ; wann Du Deine Schuhe und Strümpfe ausziehst, so fahre mit dem Finger durch alle Zähne und rieche daran. Es wird gewiss helfen." From the third-named work *Mittel und Künste* above alluded to.

‡ Folk-medicine, etc. Lond., 1853, p. 53.

size within the vessel. When fully ripe, the stem is cut and the bottle filled with whisky or brandy, and after several weeks the liquid is ready for use.

Dog-fat and skunk-fat are both used in certain localities for bruised and incised wounds ; and for the latter, a piece of bacon-fat is also sometimes applied by means of a bandage.

CORNS.

If any one suffering from corns takes a small piece of cotton cloth, rubs it over the offenders and hides it, unobserved, in a coffin with a body about to be buried, the corns will leave him.

CRAMP.

It has already been noted that boys, to prevent having cramp while bathing, tie a thong of eel skin about the leg or wrist ; and when entering the water an additional safeguard is for them to urinate upon their legs.

CROUP.

A common remedy consists of a mixture of goose-grease and molasses, given internally to induce emesis.

One less frequently used is to make a poultice of grated poke-root and vinegar, and applied to the soles of the feet.

In Lehigh county an emetic for this complaint is prepared by boiling three (or five) onions until soft, and mixing the juice therefrom with honey.

In Fayette county an emetic for croup is made by mixing urine and goose-grease and administering internally, and also rubbing some of the mixture over the breast and throat.

DEAFNESS.

This, it is believed, may be successfully treated by dropping rattlesnake oil into the affected ear.

A native "herb doctor," who lives in the Blue mountains of Cumberland county, presented the writer with a card bearing the following recipe: "One ounce of refined camphor oil, the ears of a weasel, a male weasel for a male, is proved and insured, by putting it in cotton in the ears of a man, to cure all deafness."

DIPHTHERIA.

In Fayette county a poultice consisting of the fresh excrement of a hog is worn about the neck for one night.

Cow-dung poultices are also known to have been used for this disease, but more faith is placed in a band of red flannel secured about the neck. There is great faith in the color of the material used ; the general impression prevailing is that all *red* flannel is medicated ; and there appears to be an association of ideas between the color of the flannel and that of the inflamed throat.

DOG BITES; HYDROPHOBIA.

The belief noted by Mr. Phillips,* as current in the vicinity of Philadelphia, obtains in various localities along the eastern base of the Blue mountains: "To cure a bite use a hair of the dog that caused it; it is sometimes placed between two slices of buttered bread and eaten as a sandwich."

In one of the publications already referred to as containing a reference identifying it as an American work,† a remedy for mad dog bites is given in which chickweed forms the subject. This plant must be gathered in June, when it is in full bloom, dried in the shade and powdered. It is taken in the form of powder. The dose for an adult is a small tablespoonful, or by weight, a dram; for children the dose is the same, but it is divided and given at three different times.

One of the most popular fallacies is the surviving belief in the powers of the mad-stone. We frequently read interesting notices in the newspapers of reputed cures, and the prevention of hydrophobia, but there are pretensions also that these stones may be used with equal success in the extraction of serpent venom. In this respect the practice reverts to the custom as first known in Asia Minor, and later in Europe.

Among the various individuals in Pennsylvania who profess ability in exorcism and charms, we occasionally find one who is reputed to possess a mad-stone. These pebbles are of various sizes, and appear to have been selected on account of some peculiarity of color or form. A specimen,

* Procs. Am. Phil. Soc., Philadelphia, Vol. xxv, p. 159.

† *Mittel und Künste*. On account of the peculiarity of the recipe, I append it in the original:

"Ein gewisser Herr Valentin Kettering, von Dauphin County, hat dem Senat von Pennsylvanien ein Mittel bekannt gemacht, welches den Biss wüthender Thiere unfehlbar heilen soll. Er sagt, es sei bei seinen Vorfahren in Deutschland schon vor 250 Jahren, und von ihm selbst, seitdem er sich in den Vereinigten Staaten befindet, welches über 60 Jahre ist, gebraucht, und immer als untrüglich befunden worden. Er macht es bloß aus Liebe zur Menschheit bekannt. Dieses Mittel besteht aus dem Kraut, welches er Chickweed nennt—es ist eine Sommer-Pflanze, und bei den Schweizern und Deutschen unter den Namen: Gauchheil, rother Moyer oder rother Hühnerdarm, bekannt. In England nennt man es: rother Pimpernel; und in der Botanik heisst es: *Annagellis Phönicea*. Es muss im Junius, wann es in voller Blüthe ist, gesammelt, im Schatten getrocknet und dann zu Pulver gerieben werden. Hiervon ist die Dosis für eine erwachsene Person, ein kleiner Esslöffel voll, oder an Gewicht ein Drachma, und ein Scrupel auf einmal in Bier oder Wasser; für Kinder ist die Dosis eben so gross; allein es wird zu drei verschiednen Zeiten gegeben. Wenn es für Thiere grün gebraucht werden soll, so schneide und vermische man es mit Kleie oder andern Futter. Wenn man es Schweinen geben will, so mache man das zu Pulver gemachte Kraut mit Teig zu Kugeln. Man kann es auch auf Butterbrod, mit Honig oder Molasses, etc., essen.

"Ein gewisser ehrwürdiger Herr in diesem Staate sagt, dass man von dem Pulver dieses Krautes in Deutschland 30 Gran schwer des Tages viermal gebe, und so eine Woche lang mit einer geringern Dosis fortfahre, und mit der Brühe dieses gekochten Krautes die Wunde wasche, und auch Pulver hinein streue. Herr Kettering sagt, dass er immer nur eine Dosis mit dem glücklichsten Erfolg gegeben habe.

"Es wird gesagt, dass dies dasselbe Mittel sei, mit welchem der verstorbene Doctor William Stoy so viele Curen verrichtet und glücklich geheilt habe."

which had a high reputation in the State from which it had been brought, was described by the present writer,* as consisting of a worn piece of white feldspar, and possessing none of the properties of absorption attributed to it.

The first notice of stones used in extracting, or expelling, poisons, occurs about the middle of the thirteenth century, though the knowledge of them, and their use, by the superstitious of Asia Minor, without doubt antedates that period. They were called bezoar stones,† and consisted of a calculus, or concretion, found in the intestines of the wild goat of Northern India, known as the Pazan, described by Aldrovandus as *Hircus Pezoardicus*, and which Linnæus mentions as *Capra bezoartica*. Various other ruminants were subsequently found to possess a similar calculus, such as the chamois, and the llama and guanaco furnished the early Spaniards in South America with this highly valued article. The latter was recognized in therapeutics as the Occidental bezoar stone in contradistinction to the Oriental variety, which latter was considered more efficacious. A specimen in the British Museum, described and figured by Van Rymdsdyk‡ in 1791, is called Bezoar Germanorum, although it had been found in Jamaica.

In addition to the fact that the fable of poison-extracting stones may be traced back to the Middle Ages, it is probable that they had been used long anterior to that time, in Asia Minor, and it is more than probable that a knowledge of their reputed properties, and possibly specimens, were brought back to Europe by Crusaders on their return from the Holy Land.

Several objects found in 1863 at Florence, on the site of the old Church of the Templars, dedicated to St. Paul, are of interest and may be briefly mentioned. One of them is an earthen vase, and another, a medal. These relics are in the collection of M. Gaucia. Lacroix says of these antiquities:§ "The Earthen Vase, on one side of which is seen, between two fleurs-de-lis, the figure of St. Paul bitten by a serpent, bears a Latin|| inscription,

* The Western Lancet, San Francisco, Cal., 1884.

† Known in German as *Bezoarstein* and "*Herr des Gifftes*;" Greek, *Alexipharmacum*; Hebrew, *Beluzaar* or *Belzaar*; Chaldaic, *Beluzaar*, from the Persian *Pád-Zahr* — *pád* = expelling, *zahr* = poison.

The medical works of a century ago still mention this substance in its list of remedies, and it was given internally—for a variety of disorders—in combination with other substances, such as powdered red coral, etc. For further information relative to its claims, see inaugural dissertations published as follows: G. Becker. *Lapis bezoar*, Wittebergæ, 1673; J. D. Ehrhardo. *De tinctura bezoardica essentificata*, Jenæ, 1698; J. H. Slevogt. *De lapide bezoar*, Jenæ, 1698; C. W. Vesti. *De lapide bezoardico orientali physice et medicæ considerato*, Erfordiæ [1707].

‡ Museum britannicum, etc., London, M,DCC,XCI, Tab. VI, No. 7.

§ Military and Religious Life in the Middle Ages, and at the Period of the Renaissance. Paul Lacroix, New York, 1874, p. 187, Figs. 148-187.

|| "Expelleo lapide hoc paŭli virtute venenvm."

'In the name of St. Paul, and by this stone, thou shalt drive out poison.' On the other side is engraved in relief the cross of the Temple, between a sword and a serpent. * * * On the Medal is represented a dragon with an Italian* legend signifying, 'The Grace of St. Paul is proof against any poison.'"

In addition to the representation of a dragon, the figure of a scorpion also appears in the space between the beginning and the end of the latter legend.

The fact that St. Paul is the one appealed to in the above cases may be attributed to the fact that he was not affected by the bite of a serpent, when almost instant death was the result expected by his associates (Acts xxviii, 3-6).

EPILEPSY.

The patient must drink the warm blood of a freshly killed dove. It is better if the head be cut-off and the blood taken directly from the neck.

FEBRILE COMPLAINTS.

For ordinary febrile disorders strawberry leaf tea is administered to produce diaphoresis.

Tea made of elder blossoms is given to hasten the eruption in measles and scarlatina.

An infusion made of parsley roots is considered excellent as a diuretic, and to produce free lochial discharge.

Tea made of sheep cherries (*Gen. et sp. ?*) is given for measles.

A decoction of blackberry roots is sometimes given for fever accompanying diarrhœa.

FRECKLES.

To remove freckles from the face, one must rise on the morning of the first day of May, before the sun is up, moisten the hands with the dew upon the grass and wash the face therewith. Not a word must be spoken aloud either before or during this procedure.†

GOITRE.

It is believed that if the hand of a corpse be rubbed over a goitre the afflicted may be certain of recovery.

HYDROPHOBIA. See DOG-BITES.

INCONTINENCE OF URINE.

For children who are affected in this manner, they must be whipped with a *hud'l lum'ba*, i.e., the cloth used in removing ashes from the oven previous to depositing the loaves to be baked.

* Gratia D. S. Pavlo contra tutti Veleni Vivi.

† This custom was indulged in by some of the young people of Hawick, England, to secure "twelve months of rosy cheeks." Folk-lore Journal, Lond., ii, 1884, p. 191.

When the patient has reached the age of adolescence, the alleged relief is obtained by urinating into a newly made grave; the corpse must be of the opposite sex to that of the experimenter.

INFLAMED EYES.

Quince seed, soaked in cold water until it is slightly mucilaginous, forms a common remedy for inflamed eyes.

The pith taken from the green branches of sassafras is similarly used.

When the eyes become unusually sore a small piece of bluestone (sulphate of copper) is dissolved in water, and a few drops applied several times daily.

Another common remedy is to put a drop of molasses into the eye and allow it to remain until washed out by the tears.

When sore eyes are accompanied by symptoms of scrofula or other constitutional disorder, the lobes of the ears are punctured and gold rings inserted. This is practiced by men as well as women.

ITCH.

The following is from Fayette county: "Mix equal parts of lard, sulphur, and the inner bark of the alder; heat the mixture, and prepare as an ointment which must be used on three successive mornings, when, on the morning of the fourth day, after careful washing, new clothes must be put on."

The addition of the alder bark is probably on account of some mysterious property attributed to it.

JAUNDICE.

Hollow out a carrot, fill it with the patient's urine and hang it, by means of a string, in the fire place. As the urine is evaporated and the carrot becomes shriveled, the disease will leave the patient. *

In this there is an evident belief in the connection between the properties and color of the carrot and the yellow skin of a patient having jaundice. To this class may belong the belief respecting the use of a band of *red* flannel for diphtheria, and yellow—or amber—beads for purulent discharge from the ears.

MEASLES.

A patient having the measles is required to remain in a close, warm room, and tea made of elder blossoms is administered at intervals to keep him in a perspiration, to hasten the eruption.

MUMPS.

To cure the mumps, the swollen parts must be rubbed against such parts of a hog-trough as have been worn smooth by that animal.

* Mr. Black records a somewhat similar custom prevailing in Staffordshire, where a bladder is filled with urine and hung near the fire. *Folk-Medicine*, London, 1883, p. 56.

Here there is apparently a relic of a belief in the transference of disease, of which more will be said further on.

PLEURISY.

To cure pleurisy the child must be passed beneath a table to an assistant.

It is necessary to state, in this connection, that pleurisy is believed to be caused by the attachment of the liver to the ribs ; the cure being to rupture this adhesion by stretching the body. This disease is commonly known as liver-grown—*âⁿgewak'sa*, lit., grown fast.

PURGING AND PURGATIVES.

A decoction of the leaves of the bone set—*Eupatorium perfoliatum* L.—although recognized by physicians as a tonic, is used both as an emetic and purgative by the people generally. If the leaves are stripped from the plant in an *upward* manner it is emetic, and if pulled *downward* it is purgative.

The belief in the virtue of the remedy, whether removed from stalk in one direction, or another, survives also with respect to the following :

A decoction of dogwood bark—*Cornus florida* L.—is given as a purgative, as well as to produce emesis ; but the desired result depends upon the manner in which the dose has been prepared. The belief pertaining to these effects, the preparation of the bark, and the decoction, is as follows : When the mixture is to act as an *emetic*, the bark is scraped from the branches from *below upward*—when the sap is rising in the spring. This is put into boiling water and a strong decoction made, which, if swallowed, will quickly produce the desired effect. If, however, a *purgative* is wanted, the bark must be scraped *downward*, in autumn, when the sap is believed to *run downward*. The scrapings must be put into a vessel of cold water and boiled for a considerable period of time. If a sufficient quantity be swallowed, purging follows.

That the desired effect is generally attained by adults may appear singular, but it may readily be attributed to the will and action of the patient himself. The decoction, if taken as an emetic, is readily disposed of at the earliest sense of nausea, but when the purpose is to purge, the patient, with some effort on his part, retains the obnoxious mixture until it has passed beyond the control of the stomach into the intestines, when the desired result follows.

A mixture of sulphur and molasses is frequently given to children, to purge, as well as to purify the system, in spring.

Various mixtures are resorted to by adults for the same purpose, to prepare the system for the warm weather and to remove the impurities from the blood, which are supposed to have accumulated during the preceding winter. Should this be neglected one is in danger of having various kinds of eruptions.

Most of the remedies employed for the above purpose contain greater or less quantities of sassafras root, burdock root, bone set, cream of tartar, etc.

RHEUMATISM.

A potato carried in one's pocket will insure freedom from rheumatism. As a potato is perishable and likely to become shriveled, it must be replaced by a fresh one when necessary.

By some persons horse-chestnuts are used in a similar manner.

The rattle of a rattlesnake, attached to a string and worn suspended from the neck, is believed to cure, as well as to prevent, an attack of rheumatism.

Rattlesnake oil, if rubbed over the affected part, is also believed to be an unfailing remedy. The present writer saw this article prepared and offered for sale, only a few months ago, in the mountains of Cumberland county.

A decoction of witch hazel bark is also used as a local application.

A decoction of the bark, or an infusion of the blossoms, of the prickly ash—*Zanthoxylum americanum* Mill.—is also employed in the same manner as the preceding.

SCROFULOUS AFFECTIONS.

Chronic or purulent discharge from the ears is believed to be cured by putting a necklace of yellow or amber beads around the neck of the afflicted one.

In the above-mentioned work—*Mittel und Künste*—is a recipe which has also been found in practice. It is nothing more nor less than a mixture of lime water and oil in such proportions as to become semi-solid, after which it is melted with hog's fat and wax. This is applied daily to the affected limbs, in the form of a plaster.

It has frequently been reported that there are certain persons who are possessed of the power of curing, what is locally termed white swelling, by the laying-on of hands and the recitation of certain secret formulæ. I have as yet not personally met with any one who had such a reputation. The belief may probably be a survival of the older custom of the royal touch. King James II, becoming wearied at such a ceremony, was relieved by merely holding one end of a string while the other, terminating in a loop, was put over the head and neck of each subject presented; in this manner the influence passed from the king's hand to the string, and from the string to the patient's body.

“Kerchiefs dipped in King Charles' blood were found to have as much efficacy in curing the king's evil as had the living touch,”* and “in 1838, failing the royal touch, a few crowns and half-crowns, bearing the effigy of Charles I, were still used in the Shetland islands as remedies for the

* William George Black. Folk-Medicine, Lond., 1883, p. 100.

evil. They had been handed down from generation to generation, along, perhaps, with the story which some travelled Shetlander had told of the ceremony on St. John's day, 1633, when Charles I went to the royal chapel in Holyrood, 'and their solemnlie offred, and after the offringe heallit 100 persons of the cruelles or kingis eivell, younge and old.'""*

This practice prevailed at different periods and in different countries; and it is only reasonable to suppose that the occasional practice of the laying-on of hands which occurs in this country is nothing but a survival of the English and continental practices; many of the inhabitants of the remote rural districts—as well as some professedly cultured of the literary centres—are in just that plane of development to seize hold of such practice.

SLABBERING--IN CHILDREN.

Slabbering is cured, it is alleged, by passing a live fish through the child's mouth. This was practiced in Reading in the summer of 1888, and survives in other localities also.

SNAKE BITES.

As there are many kinds of harmless snakes found in Pennsylvania, and but two venomous species occur there, many of the reputed cures are to be attributed to the fact that many persons are really bitten by harmless kinds. It is a fact too, though perhaps not generally known, that many of the wounds inflicted by rattlesnakes are not fatal. There are a number of reasons for this, chief among which may be noted the condition of the person at the time of the accident, and the time of the year and condition of the serpent—whether much of the poison had lately been discharged or not.

The ordinary treatment is to endeavor to intoxicate the subject with whisky.

In some localities pounded onions and salt are bound over the wound.

Place the vent of a live chicken upon the wound. It is supposed that this has the power of extracting the venom, but it will kill the chicken.

The following practice obtains in Clinton county, among those occupied in picking berries. Rattlesnakes are very common, and the pickers abstain from eating onions, as that seems to accelerate the effects of the venom. If, during the day, one of the number is unfortunately bitten by one of these reptiles, he is immediately taken to the nearest house, where a chicken is secured, cut in two, and the warm bleeding surface of one of the halves placed upon the wound. It is believed that the poison is quickly extracted and no fear as to evil consequences is entertained.

* William George Black. *Folk-Medicine*, Lond., 1883, pp. 142, 143. (Quoted from Pettigrew and Lecky.)

The following formula was practiced by specialists in Northern Lehigh county :

Gott hot al'les ärshaffa, und al'les war güt ;

Als dū al'lēⁿ, shlang, bisht ferflucht',

Ferflucht' solst du saiⁿ und daiⁿ gift.

†

Tsiñg,

†

tsiñg,

†

tsiñg.

Which means :

God created everything, and it was good ; except thou alone, snake, art cursed, cursed shalt *thou* be and thy *poison*.

† Tsing,

† tsing,

† tsing.

The operator recites the above phrase and then, with the extended index finger, makes the sign of the cross three times over the wound, each time pronouncing the word *tsiñg*. This word is probably meaningless ; though it is possible that it may be a contraction of *tsuñg*—tongue, or *tsiñg'la*, as the rapid movement of a snake's tongue is termed.

A poultice of the bruised roots of the black snakeroot (*Cimicifuga racemosa* Ell.) is also applied to the wound, and a decoction of the same parts of the plant is administered internally. It is generally believed that the blacksnake, when bitten by a rattlesnake, eats of this plant which causes the venom to become inert.

SORE BREASTS.

Warm cow dung is applied as a poultice to sore or gathered breasts. This appears to be used in only one locality, and it is believed that the remedy was suggested by an Irishwoman who was a very energetic advocate thereof. The same substance is used, also, in the south of Hampshire, as an application to open wounds.*

SPRAINS.

Apply a poultice made of yellow clay and vinegar, renewing the application as soon as it gets dry. This is resorted to in Fayette county.

In nearly every district the ordinary application consists of hot vinegar, in which a cloth is dipped, then wrung out, the cloth being used in the form of a bandage.

STINGS OF INSECTS.

“Bind three kinds of weeds upon the spot stung by a bee.” The correspondent who furnishes this, as still practiced in Fayette county, fails to name the plants ; but it appears to partake rather of a charm than a remedy, on account of the use of the number three, which occurs in numerous other instances also.

A silver coin applied to a bee sting is believed to not only remove the pain but to extract the sting.

* Folk-medicine, William George Black, Lond., 1383, p. 161.

Moist clay is also applied by some, in which the moisture and temperature of the substance appears to furnish relief.

To charm a wasp, so that it may be handled without danger of stinging, breathe upon it, and repeat the following words three times without taking breath :

*Wish'bli, wesh'bli, shtech mich nicht,
Bis der Dai'w'l di sē'ga shpricht.*

The equivalent of which is :

Wasp, wasp, sting me not.
Until the devil recites the creed.

STITCHES.

To cure the stitches, pick up a pebble and spit upon it three times, then replace it where found.

STOMATITIS.

Blisters on the tongue of children (stomatitis) are caused by telling fibs. When they show no disposition to leave, the following course is pursued : Three small sticks are cut from the branches of a tree, each of a finger's length and as thick as a leadpencil. These are inserted into the mouth of the patient and then buried in a dunghill ; the next day the operation is repeated with a new set of sticks, and again on the third day, after which the three sets of three each are allowed to remain in the manure, and as they decay the complaint will disappear.

STY.

Rub the sty with a gold ring, and it will disappear. In a similar custom found in West Sussex, England, the sty must be rubbed three times,* and in some known instances it is necessary for the ring to be a wedding ring.

TONSILITIS.

Place a thin slice of bacon fat over the swollen tonsil, and secure it by means of a bandage or handkerchief.

A stocking, turned wrong side out and tied about the neck, will relieve the swelling.

A bandage of red flannel worn about the neck is also looked upon as a good remedy. This is, no doubt, another instance of the belief in the efficacy of color rather than material, as has been noted in the reference to other throat troubles.

WARTS.

Steal a piece of fresh meat—beef being more beneficial—rub it upon the wart and bury it at a cross-road. As the meat decays the wart will disappear.

* The Folk-lore Record, Lond., 1, 1878, p. 45.

Tie a horse-hair tightly around a wart and it will leave. This may occur through ulceration.

Shave off the top of a wart and touch the exposed surface with the juice of milkweed—*Asclepias*.

The juice of the common dandelion, if applied to warts at certain intervals, is believed to cause their disappearing in a short time. A number of other plants are also supposed to have this property.

Steal a piece of bacon rind, rub it upon the wart and bury it under the eaves of the house. As the rind decomposes the wart will disappear.

Water from a blacksmith's barrel (in which hot iron is cooled), if applied to warts, will remove them.

Rub the warts with a piece of bone and replace it where found. Who-soever picks up the bone subsequently will have the warts transferred to his own hands.

To remove warts or scars, the person so affected must look at the moon and repeat the words :

Was ich raib, nem ab ;
Was ich sën, nem tsû.

The English equivalent is, "What I rub, decrease; What I see, increase." This must be done three nights in succession, beginning before full moon, so that the last trial comes on the night of full moon.*

Another method of a similar character is as follows: Rub the warts with the fingers of the opposite hand, on the first night that the new moon is visible, and recite the following lines :

The moon will increase,
But my warts will decrease.

This must be done unperceived by any one ; and it is believed that before the next new moon all the warts will have disappeared.

A curious procedure consists in frying hens' feet in lard and anointing the warts.

WENS.

To remove a wen, a person must strike it a severe blow with a small Bible. It is apparent that a blow of sufficient strength will rupture the synovial membrane, but the cure is attributed to the influence of the book used.†

* The above appears to be one of the methods adopted in accordance with the following, extracted from *Mittel und Künste*, above referred to, viz.: "Am dritten Tag, im zunehmenden Mond, Abends, wenn du den neuen Mond zum ersten Mal siehst, dann nimm du den Kranken hinaus, lege deine Finger der rechten Hand auf die Warze und blicke nach dem Monde, dann spricht wie folgt: Dasjenige darauf ich sehe ist zunehmend und dasjenige was ich jetzt anfasse ist abnehmend; nachdem du dieses dreimal wiederholt hast, gehe in das Haus zurück."

† Mr. Székely says wens are caused, it is believed by the Magyars, by trying to count the stars. Folk-lore Journal, Lond., ii, 1884, p. 96.

At some localities, after the blow has been given, a silver coin is placed over the spot and securely fastened with a bandage.

WHOOPING COUGH.

The following method is pursued in the upper Susquehanna valley: Make a tea of hornets' nests, and allow the patient to drink of it each day. The length of time of continuance is not stated.

Another practice is to administer milk stolen from a neighbor's cow.

One instance of treating a child having the whooping cough consisted of thrusting a live fish into the throat.*

CONJURERS.

Under this caption may be classed all persons professing more than ordinary ability in the cure of the sick or those under spells. They may be of either sex, and are locally termed *blant'sa dok'tor*—herb doctors—and *hex'a dok'tor*—witch doctors. The latter practice various methods of what is generally known as *brauch'a*, which includes powwowing or exorcism, incantation, stroking, etc. It is not always the case that they are called upon to operate directly, but they may communicate a formula or method to the applicant, from whom they receive a fee. Should a remedy be known to one requiring such aid, he first consults the witch doctor both to verify the correctness of his own proposed plan and to conciliate him that no countercharm may be practiced and compel extortionate demands for freedom therefrom.

There are many persons who claim to possess the gift of using the divining rod in the discovery of ores and water. Instances are frequent where wells are sunk after an indication of the presence of water has been ascertained in this way. In fact, it is amusing to learn the particulars of the search, and the ultimate labors of the well-diggers, who continue until they do find water. Naturally, water would have been found under ordinary circumstances, but the rod receives the credit.

Forked sticks of hazel, willow or elm, are generally used for this purpose. One of the Pennsylvania methods is as follows: On Christmas Eve, between the hours of eleven and twelve, the one who intends experimenting must break off a branch that has grown during the year, and, while facing the east, must at the same time speak the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The rod must be used three times when searching for an object. If the top of the rod inclines toward the ground, the operator is over the spot sought. When using the rod, recite the following words: "Thou Archangel Gabriel, I beseech thee through God, the Almighty, if there is water here, or not, indicate it."

It is supposed that the top of the rod will incline to the front and toward the ground if water is present beneath the surface.

* Notes and Queries. Lond., 5th ser., Vol. ix, p. 64. This was observed near Philadelphia.

If search is made for ore, the name of the kind desired must be mentioned in the above phrase, instead of the word water.

The following directions for selecting a divining rod were given as early as 1751,* at which time the practice of discovering various kinds of ores and water was in vogue. The description is related to have been obtained from "an ingenious gentleman"—not named—who revived the method—which had been greatly neglected—and had made numerous experiments.

"The hazel and willow rods, he has by experience found, will actually answer with all persons in a good state of health, if they are used with moderation, and at some distance of time, and after meals, when the operator is in good spirits.

"The hazel, willow and elm are all attracted by springs of water; some persons have the virtue intermittently, the rod in their hands will attract one half hour and repel the next. * * *

"The best rods are those from the hazel or nut tree, as they are pliant and tough, and cut in the winter months; a shoot that terminates equally forked is to be preferred, about two feet and a half long; but as such a forked rod is rarely to be met with, two single ones of a length and size may be tied together with thread, and they will answer as well as the other. * * *

"The most convenient and handy method of holding the rod is with the palms of the hands turned upwards, and the two ends of the rod coming outwards; the palms should be held horizontally as nearly as possible, the part of the rod in the hand ought to be straight, and not bent backward or forward. * * * The rod ought to be so held, that in its workings the sides may move clear of the little fingers. * * *

"The best manner of carrying the rod is, with the end prolaided in an angle of about 80 degrees from the horizon, as by this method of carrying it the repulsion is more plainly perceived than if it was held perpendicularly. * * *

"It is necessary that the grasp should be steady, for if, when the rod is going, there be the least succussion or counteraction in the hands, though ever so small, it will greatly impair and generally totally prevent its activity, which is not to be done by the mere strength of the grasp, for, provided this be steady, no strength can stop it."

The description continues, embracing directions for using the rod, properties observed, etc., but enough has been quoted to show that the method has not been changed, even up to the present time.

It may be proper to state, however, in further illustration of the form of the rod commonly used, that it resembles the letter Y inverted, thus Λ , the lower arms being grasped with the hands, and bent horizontally outwards. Thus the stem being carried upright is free to move.

* Gentleman's Magazine, 1751, p. 507. Reprinted also in Gentleman's Magazine Library, Vol. on Popular Superstitions, pp. 148, 149.

TRANSFERENCE OF DISEASE, CHARMS, ETC.

Although the belief in the transference of disease, both to animate and inanimate objects, is prevalent in almost all parts of the world, there are but few instances referred to above that indicate its survival in Pennsylvania. The instances cited pertain to the transference of warts to other persons by means of a piece of bone; the conveyance to the dead, of corns; the transmission to fish, of whooping cough and slabbering of children, and transferring mumps to hogs, through the intermediary of the trough.

The passage under a table, of a pleuritic child, although at present stated to "break up the adhesions," may probably be the relic of an ancient custom in which sufferers from scrofula, hernia, etc., were passed through a cleft tree, or an orifice in rocks, whereby the complaint was lost either by the transmission, or perhaps in the belief of a renewal of life. It was necessary, in most instances, that the body touched the inner surface of these objects, whether tree, or stone, so that the disease was transferred direct.

A tree observed at Burlington, N. J.,* which had been thus split and the parts rejoined, was believed to have been used for such a purpose, and numerous instances might be cited of the practice in England and on the continent. In Ireland, holes in rocks were resorted to for the same end, and it may be that the stone collars found in Porto Rico—some of which are now in the Smithsonian Institution, and the use of which is thus far unknown†—were used by the aborigines in a similar manner. These rings resemble horse-collars, and are slightly varying, on account of which they are known as "rights" and "lefts," the orifice being sometimes rather small, but on the whole could still have been used for passing through it an afflicted child.

Both in France and in England the licking of a wound or sore, by a dog, or the application of a dog's tongue, was firmly believed in as an unfailing cure. This may have originated among the superstitious and had its source in the incident of Lazarus and his affliction.

Diseases are claimed to be cured or removed even at a distance from the operator. Such diseases are said to be the effect of charms and spells put upon patients by witches, or the evil conjuration of those gifted with such alleged powers. The disease may then be due to an evil spirit, or demon,

* Notes and Queries, Lond., 6th ser., i, p. 16.

† These collars have—for want of a better name—been termed sacrificial stones, but if they had been put to use in the sacrifice or torture of victims, it is scarcely probable that their forms would have been constructed so as to correspond to what is called "rights" and "lefts"; under such circumstances, on the other hand, symmetry would more probably have been an object in their form and outline. An ancient custom was to pass the sick through the sacred *yonî*, and it is apparent that the stone collars much resemble that Oriental symbol.

which has taken possession of the body of the victim, and in this respect the superstition is similar to that entertained by many of the Indian tribes. Countercharms are resorted to for cures, but for this purpose an article of clothing of the person causing the spell, a hair or a piece of finger-nail, must first be secured before the remedial process of exorcism can be attempted by those professing such powers. Imaginary ailments are thus readily removed by conjurors, in whom the victims have faith and confidence.

There is a prevailing belief, also, that some witches have the power of producing peculiar noises in a house, or some other place, to notify certain persons that wrongs are being, or have been, committed by some one intimately connected. The following incident occurred in 1876, and came under the writer's personal observation while he was practicing his profession in the city of Reading :

A farmer, living in the south-eastern part of Berks county, called one autumn day and stated that he had been very much annoyed by peculiar rappings near, or in, his kitchen stove every time he sat down to his meals. He stated furthermore that he suspected his wife of infidelity, as the railroad watchman, whose station was but a few rods from his house, appeared very fond of calling in the evening and at other times when not on duty. The visitor desired to obtain some "witch medicine" so as to compel this man to remain away as well as to put an end to the rappings. He was informed that the noises undoubtedly proceeded from the stove, as after each meal the fire was permitted to go down, or perhaps out, and in consequence the contraction of the several metal parts caused the cracking sounds, as the same noise might be noticed by him had he been at home when the fires were kindled. The simplest explanation of the results of expansion and contraction, failed to penetrate his mind, so, after leaving the office, he proceeded to visit a "quack," who was reputed to be a *hex'a dok'tor*, where he received some charms and vile smelling herbs, which he was directed to burn in his house so as to drive out the evil and remove the visitor.

The result was not ascertained, but the writer has no doubt that the experiment was successful, as any one with normally constituted olfactories would avoid a house where such a stench repeatedly greeted his visits.

The powers attributed to a seventh son are well known, and a woman who marries but does not change her name is also believed to possess unusual skill and power in curing. One such person, living in the above-mentioned county, is frequently called upon by people from a distance, who solicit aid in relief from illness. Her method is both by *stroking*, or laying-on of hands, and by sending cakes of a peculiar kind, which the afflicted are to eat.

A curious circumstance pertaining to a charm intended to attract the affections of the opposite sex toward the operator may be mentioned, although it is not one of the most elegant methods of love-making. A

widow became impressed with a boatman with whom she casually became acquainted, and as he evinced no response to her numerous manifestations of regard, she adopted the following method *to compel him to love her even against his will*. With the blade of a penknife she scraped her knee until she had secured a slight quantity of the cuticle, baked it in a specially prepared cake and sent it to him, though with what result is not known. This woman was known to have had the utmost faith in the charm.

Another class of conjurers direct their attention to the cure of sick and bewitched cattle and other domestic animals ; to casting "lucky bullets;" furnishing charms to prevent another man from firing off a gun, usually termed "stealing fire" or "taking fire;" giving charms to prevent dogs from barking, or biting, etc.

It is true that any one acquainted with these methods may himself practice them, but in some there is more certainty of success, it is alleged, if an adept first apply to a recognized conjurer for verification of the method or procedure, otherwise such conjurer, if slighted, might place a counter-charm in the way of success.

As already intimated, witches are supposed to possess abilities in curing the sick, and such as may have been charmed by other witches and conjurers ; but there is a belief, also, that some of these beings have the power of transforming themselves, and their victims, into other animals. The following instance is said to have occurred in Northern Lehigh county, many years ago :* A vicious black sow was frequently encountered by people on the highway, but no one knew to whom the animal belonged. One day, as the sow became too aggressive in pursuit of her victim, the person thus annoyed picked up a heavy piece of wood and threw it, breaking one of the animal's legs. It was learned subsequently that a witch living in that neighborhood had broken her leg on the same day and at the same hour, and it was firmly believed that the witch and the animal—which was never encountered afterwards—were one and the same.

The following is a similar instance of alleged transformation caused by a witch, and although the circumstance is said to have occurred during the early part of the present century, it is still mentioned as inexplicable and supernatural by the present residents. The story, in brief, is as follows :† Near Trexlertown, Lehigh county, dwelt a farmer named Weiler. His wife and three daughters had, by some means or other, incurred the enmity of a witch who lived but a short distance away, when the latter, it is supposed, took her revenge in the following manner. Whenever visitors came to the Weiler residence, the girls, without any premonition whatever, would suddenly be changed into snakes, and after crawling back and forth along the top ridge of the wainscoting for several min-

* Reported by the writer in *Journal Am. Folk-lore*, Boston and N. Y., II, 1889, p. 32.

† *J. Am. Folk-lore*, *cit. sup.*, p. 33. Reported by the present writer.

utes they were restored to their natural form. These curious transformations occurred quite frequently, and the circumstance soon attained widespread notoriety. About the end of the third month the spell was broken and everything went on as before.

Witches may be disabled or their charms counteracted by securing a hair from the head, wrapping it in a piece of paper, and, after placing this against the trunk of a tree, firing a silver bullet into it.

Another countercharm to free enchanted or bewitched cattle is to place fire near enough to the victim, the influence being immediately overpowered, as witches are supposed to be unable to bear such close contact of heat, either near their own person or the object under their influence. This is illustrated in the following narrative, and the circumstance occurred only a few years ago, according to report :* A farmer, now living at Alburdis, Lehigh county, had two cows. One day an old woman, who lived but a short distance away, and who was suspected of being a witch, came to the house, and, during the course of conversation, asked which of the cows gave the greater quantity of milk. The one indicated was then with calf. Upon the following day the cows were driven, as usual, into the fields to pasture, but, on attempting to drive them home, later in the day, the milch cow was found lying helpless upon the ground. The farmer, upon hearing of this, went into the field with his sons, to endeavor to get the animal upon her feet. The sons took hold of the horns while the father grasped the tail, but all attempts to move the cow were ineffectual. The father then directed the boys to gather some wood to make a fire, which was soon placed near the cow. During all this time the witch was standing on the portico of the farmer's house, watching the proceedings; but the instant she saw that fire was to be kindled, she came forward and inquired after the purpose of the proceedings. The farmer accused her of bewitching the cow, but this she denied most vigorously. The witch then bade the farmer call his wife, who, upon her arrival, was told to take hold of the cow's tail while the witch went to the head. After a few caresses and the utterance of some words of endearment and encouragement, the cow rose from the ground and walked away as if nothing had occurred.

The following notice of the trial of witches is reproduced from the *Gentleman's Magazine*,† and relates to a circumstance which transpired in New Jersey, just across the Delaware river. It is probable that the trial was instigated by English residents, as such prosecutions were rare among the German settlers; in fact, but one instance is known to the writer, to which reference will be made further on. The trial above referred to is given in the following words: "From Burlington, in Pensilvania, 't is advised that the owners of several cattle, believing them to be bewitched, caused some suspected men and women to be taken up, and trials to be made for detecting 'em. About three hundred people assembled near the Gover-

* Related by the writer in *J. Am. Folk-lore*, Boston and New York, i, 1888, pp. 134, 135.

† January, 1731, i, p. 29.

nor's house, and, a pair of scales being erected, the suspected persons were each weighed against a large Bible, but all of them outweighing it; the accused were then tied head and feet together, and put into a river, on supposition that if they swam they must be guilty. This they offered to undergo in case the accuser should be served in the like manner; which being done, they all swam very buoyant, and cleared the accuser."

The other trial above referred to is related as follows: * "In the southern part of Williams township, Northampton county, there is a hill, to which the witches have left their evil name and fame. It is known as 'Der Hexenkopf,' or 'the Witches' Head,' because it was there that their ladyships were supposed to hold nightly revels. On these occasions they bewitched their neighbors' cattle, and made themselves generally hateful to all good, order-loving citizens. They did not, however, always escape with impunity, as is proved by the following indictment, which is carefully transcribed from the Session Docket, omitting only names and date. The case was 'for bewitching a horse whereby he became wasted and became worse.'

"The jurors do upon their oaths, present, — That S—— B—— of William township, in the county of Northampton, widow, on the — day of —— in the year —— at the said county of Northampton aforesaid, did commit certain most wicked acts (called enchantments and charms), at the county aforesaid, maliciously and diabolically against a certain white horse of the value of £4, of the goods and chattels of a certain Justice W—— of William township aforesaid, on the day aforesaid, and county aforesaid then being, did exercise and practice, by means of which the said horse of the said Justice W——, on the day aforesaid at the township of Williams aforesaid, greatly *worstended* (*pejoratus est*) and wasted away, against the peace of our said Commonwealth, and against the laws in this case made and provided.' * * * "Judgment: a year's imprisonment, and every quarter to stand six hours in the pillory.'"

"The poor woman at first resolutely denied the charge; but the learned judges at last convinced her of her guilt, and she always confessed herself a witch, though she was unable to say in what manner her enchantments had been performed."

* The Historical Magazine, N. Y., vii, 1863, p. 283; reprinted from the *Lutheran*, under the title of *Gleanings of an Antiquarian in German Pennsylvania*.

APRIL 19, being Good Friday, a public holiday in Pennsylvania, no meeting of the Society was held.



Hoffman, W J. 1889. "Folk-Medicine of the Pennsylvania Germans."
*Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society held at Philadelphia for
promoting useful knowledge* 26(129), 329–352.

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