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Citation
Carpenter, Kenneth E. 2016. Translating Benjamin Franklin's "Way to wealth" into German . . . and then back into English. Harvard Library Bulletin 25 (3), Fall 2014: 55-71.

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Translating Benjamin Franklin's "Way to Wealth" into German . . . And Then Back into English

Kenneth E. Carpenter

Benjamin Franklin's "Way to Wealth" first appeared in Philadelphia in October 1757 in *Poor Richard Improved: Being an Almanack . . . for . . . 1758*. It there had no title and was simply a preliminary essay signed "Richard Saunders." Franklin's nephew, the printer Benjamin Mecom, brought it out as an anonymous pamphlet in Boston on March 30, 1758, with the long but accurate title of *Father Abraham's Speech to a Great Number of People, at a Vendue of Merchant-goods; Introduced to the Publick by Poor Richard, a Famous Pennsylvania Conjurer, and Almanack-maker, in Answer to the Following Questions: Pray, Father Abraham, What Think You of the Times? Won't these Heavy Taxes Quite Ruin the Country? How Shall We be ever Able to Pay Them? What Would You Advise Us To? To Which are Added, Seven Curious Pieces of Writing*.

On exactly the same date Franklin's text appeared, also anonymously, in London, in the third issue of *The Grand Magazine of Useful Intelligence, and Monthly Chronicle of Our Own Times*, under the title of "Curious preliminary address prefixed to the Pennsylvania almanac, entitled Poor Richard improved: for the year 1758. Printed at Philadelphia." The periodical was published by Ralph Griffiths and William Strahan. Franklin was then in London, and it seems likely that Strahan, an old friend of Franklin, asked him to help fill up the pages of the fledgling periodical.[1] That is more likely, at least, than presuming the colonial Philadelphia almanac was circulating in London and that the London publishers independently ran across it.

That London periodical appearance was, of course not in copyright, and it was soon picked up by other periodical publishers in London, Edinburgh, and Newcastle. An employee of the Newcastle publisher in 1758 was Thomas Slack, who soon became a publisher under his own name. His wife, Ann Fisher, was an editor of schoolbooks,

1 Franklin's earliest letter to Strahan is dated July 10, 1743, and *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* project shows correspondence between the two men during almost every one of the next forty-two years, but not in 1758. Franklin's involvement is also suggested by the fact that on January 3, 1760, he sent to Lord Kames some "Sketches" that had been published in the *Grand Magazine*.

and she recognized that the text from the Pennsylvania almanac was appropriate for inclusion in her anthology, *The Pleasing Instructor: or, Entertaining Moralist; Consisting of Select Essays, Relations, Visions and Allegories, Collected from the Most Eminent English Authors*. It appeared in the third edition (Newcastle upon Tyne: Printed for Thomas Slack, 1760), under the title "Preliminary address prefixed to the Pennsylvania almanac for 1758: On oeconomy and frugality." Ann Fisher sought to promote morality, but with a smile, and the text signed "Richard Saunders" fit perfectly, as the quotation from the "Preface" suggests:

> The Reader will be kind enough to observe, that *The Pleasing Instructor* was at first chiefly undertaken, and since continued, with a View to exhibit a *connected Plan* of *Morality* for the Instruction of the Youth of both Sexes, and free from that incoherent Jumble so remarkable in all Collections of this Kind which have hitherto been published.—The *Utile Dulci* has been consulted, and *Morality* here appears smiling, and free from that unpleasing formality with which she is too often disguised by partial, or mistaken Pedants. . . . And though the Pleasure and Instruction of Youth has been principally considered in the following Collection, it will not (it is presumed) be unworthy the Attention and Perusal of those more advanced in Years, and be in general approved of by the Polite and Judicious throughout the Kingdom.

The text that has come to be known as "The Way to Wealth" consists of admonitory maxims within the framework of a story with characters. It begins with the narrator stopping his horse at a site where a crowd is awaiting the start of an auction. Those gathered are grumbling about taxes, and someone asks a white-haired man off to the side, Father Abraham, what do you think? In reply, he chides the assembled crowd. "Friends," he begins, "We tax ourselves far more than any government does by our sloth and our extravagance." He details that we should work hard, live frugally, and avoid debt. Father Abraham backs up his points with proverbs or maxims attributed to Poor Richard. "As poor Richard says": Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise; Lost time is never found again; Creditors have better memories than debtors; No pain, no gain; Never leave till tomorrow, that which you can do today. The listeners pay respectful attention; but when the auction starts, they show that they regard what they have just heard as if it were a "common sermon," that is, not at all. They start to bid on extravagances, except for one person, Poor Richard. He re-enters at this point as the narrator, rather than the one quoted, and he reports that he decided to continue to wear his old coat "a little while longer." "And if you reader, do the same, thy profit will be as great as mine."

The Pleasing Instructor was a great success. It is not the kind of book that libraries have collected and retained, but the evidence is that generations of British children, through at least 1815, read it in not fewer than thirty-six editions. It was also the source text for other appearances of "The Way to Wealth," even broadside printings. The anthology was reprinted in Boston in 1795, and, of course, copies imported from England had surely circulated in this country.[2]

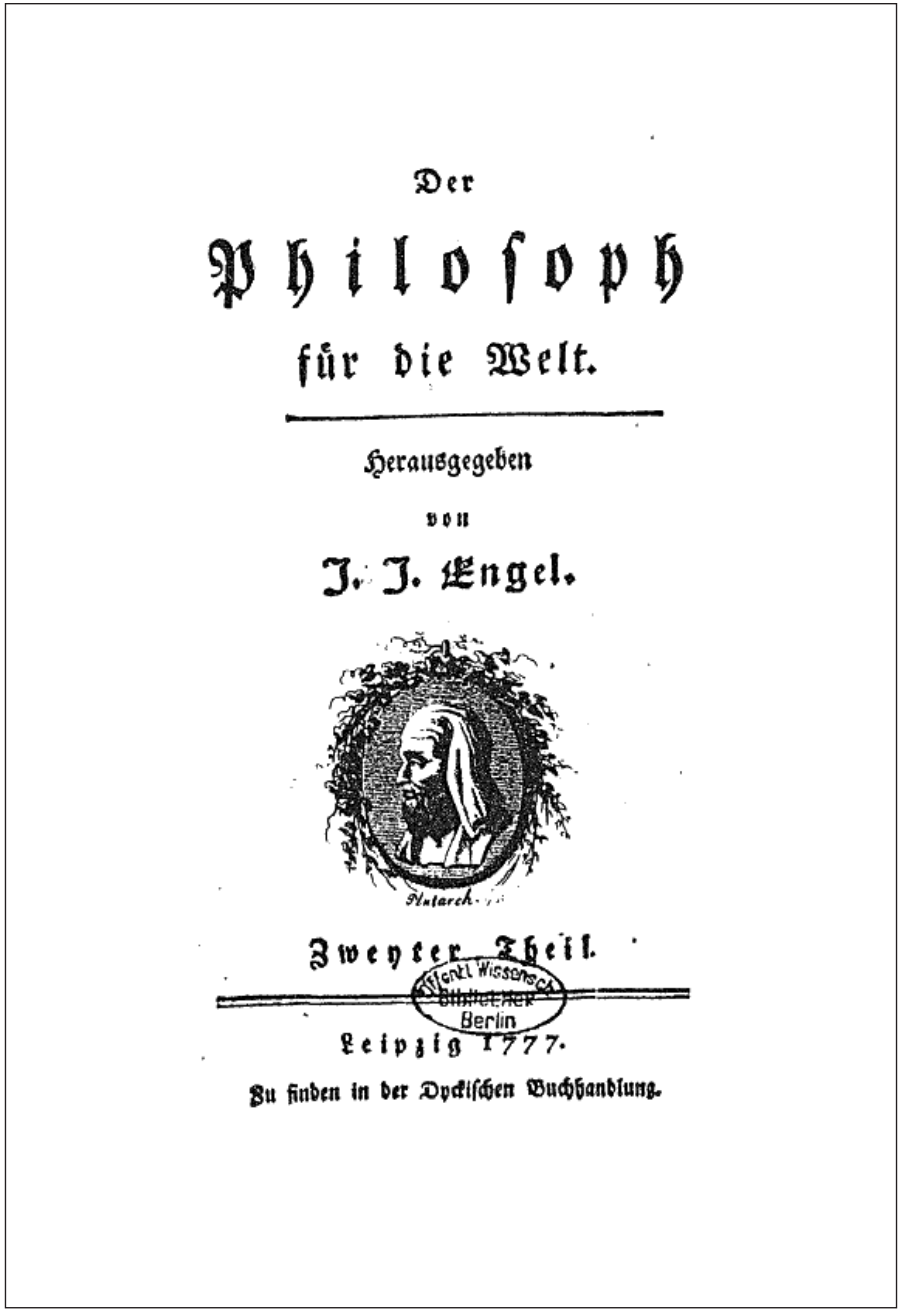
In the early 1770s a somewhat revised version of Franklin's text, under the title of "The Way to Wealth," appeared in numerous British pamphlets, but still without Franklin's name attached. He was first identified as author when the text was included in the *Œuvres de M. Franklin* (Paris: Chez Quillau l'âiné, Chez Esprit, et l'auteur, 1773, 2 vols.), translated by Barbeu Dubourg. There it also had the "Way to Wealth" title, "Le moyen de s'enrichir, enseigné clairement dans la Préface d'un vieil Almanach de Pensylvanie, intitulé: *le pauvre Henri à son aise*" on pages 171–183 of the second volume. The hundreds of appearances in twenty-five other languages up through 1850 are all translations of that "Way to Wealth" text, or, more cautiously, almost all are, and they customarily identify Franklin as the author. One notable exception is a German translation published in 1777. That German translation was the source for another translation—into English.

Translations from translations were not uncommon. French was the source language for some translations into German, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, and Spanish. German was a source language for translations into Danish, Dutch, Hungarian, and Russian. English must be added to the list, for that German translation of 1777 was the source for a 1794 translation into English, by a translator who, of course, knew neither the original text nor its author's name. Those two translations, the 1777 German and the 1794 English, are the subject of this essay.

The 1777 German translation identified itself as from an American almanac ("Aus einem Amerikanischen Allmanach"). It was in the second volume of *Der Philosoph für die Welt*, edited by Johann Jacob Engel (Leipzig, Zu finden in der Dyckischen Buchhandlung, 1775–1800, 3 vols.).[3] It has the title "Der arme Jakob, der genug hat" (see figures 3.1 and 3.2). That literally translates as "Poor Jacob who has enough," but

2 The bibliographical information in this paper is drawn from my bibliography of appearances in whatever form of Franklin's "Way to Wealth" up through 1850. A database of titles and imprints, drawn from a somewhat preliminary version of the bibliography, is available at <waytowealth.org> (accessed April 19, 2016), mounted by Knowledge and Library Services of the Harvard Business School. The full bibliography, with expanded descriptions, extensive notes, and numerous additional entries, is expected to be available in print in 2017.

3 "Der arme Jakob, der genug hat" is on pp. [89]–100, of the second volume of *Der Philosoph für die Welt*, which is paginated [4], 191 p. The full text is available through the digital Zeitschriften der Aufklärung. It is included in that full-text version of periodicals because it was initially published serially.



Der

Philoſoph

für die Welt.

Herausgegeben

von

J. J. Engel.

Plutarch.

Zweyter Theil.

Königl. Wissenschaftl. Bibliothek Berlin

Leipzig 1777.

Zu finden in der Dyckiſchen Buchhandlung.

Figure 3.1. Title page of the 2nd part (Leipzig, 1777).
<http://www.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/diglib/aufkl/philosophwelt/philosophwelt.htm>

Zwanzigſtes Stück.

Der arme Jakob, der genug hat.*)

Meine lieben Freunde! Die Abgaben ſind freylich ſchwer; und hätten wir nicht mehr, als die zu bezahlen, die uns die Obrigkeit auflegt, ſo könnten wir leicht damit fertig werden; abet wir haben noch ganz andre, und die den meiſten unter uns noch weit mehr zur Laſt fallen. Unſre Faulheit macht unſre Abgaben doppelt, unſre Eitelkeit macht ſie dreyfach, und unſre Thorheit vierfach. Es giebt keinen Landesverordneten, der uns von dieſen Abgaben befreyen, oder uns einigen Nachlaß verſchaffen könnte. Indeſſen hört einen guten Rath an: es läßt ſich noch etwas für euch

*) Aus einem Amerikaniſchen Almanach.

Figure 3.2. Page [89] (Leipzig, 1777).
<http://www.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/diglib/aufkl/philosophwelt/philosophwelt.htm>

native speakers confirm that it can also be translated as "Poor Jacob who has had enough." What Jakob had enough of was people whining about taxes and hard times, when the source of the problem really lay within themselves, in their sloth, folly, and extravagance.

In the original of 1758, that message was conveyed with a certain humor, even self-deprecation, as Father Abraham revealed himself to be subject to the human foible of vanity:

> I have heard that nothing gives an Author so great Pleasure, as to find his Works respectfully cited by other learned Authors. This Pleasure I have seldom enjoyed; for tho' I have been, if I may say it without Vanity, an *eminent Author* of Almanacks . . . my Brother Authors in the same Way, for what Reason I know not, have ever been very sparing in their Applauses; and no other Author has taken the least Notice of me, so that did not my Writings produce me some solid Pudding, the great Deficiency of *Praise* would have quite discouraged me.[4]

That passage is not present in the 1777 German translation, and, indeed, Father Abraham is not present at all.

The original also concludes with humor and with a recognition of human frailty. The opening of the final paragraph states that those awaiting the start of the auction treated Father Abraham's remarks as they would a "common sermon," that is, they did not practice thriftiness. Instead, they bought "extravagantly" at the auction:

> Thus the old Gentleman ended his Harangue. The People heard it, and approved the Doctrine, and immediately practised the contrary, just as if it had been a common Sermon; for the Vendue opened, and they began to buy extravagantly, notwithstanding all his Cautions, and their own Fear of Taxes. . . .[5]

Not only is Father Abraham absent from the 1777 German version, so is the auction, and so is the crowd awaiting its start. There is, thus, no humor and no story; and although Poor Richard is present in the form of "Arme Jakob," he is only a voice who states maxims that must surely have their German counterparts. Unlike in the English text, he does not appear in person at the end. He does not show himself to be the

4 *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, Leonard W. Labaree, ed. and Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., assoc. ed., 41 vols. to date (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959–2011), 7:340.

5 Ibid., 7:350.

individualistic non-buyer at the auction. People have disappeared. Not even an author's name appears, only the initial "W." at end.

"W." has not heretofore been identified, but he was almost certainly Christian Felix Weisse (1726–1804), a prominent dramatist, poet, and general man of letters. Engel, the periodical's editor, was a close friend of Weisse, as is shown by an edition of Engel's correspondence.[6] Weisse had a reason to find appealing a work telling readers not to whine about taxes. He was a district tax collector (Kreissteuereinnehmer) in Leipzig. Perhaps that is even why only his initial, not full name, is at the end of the German translation, which is contrary to the practice of other friends of Engel. Their works in *Philosoph für die Welt* are fully identified.

Further evidence that "W." is Weisse is the fact that he translated numerous works from English. Moreover, he published a weekly, *Der Kinderfreund* (The children's friend), from 1775 to 1782. Weisse has been called the father of German children's literature, and he would have had reason to come across the English text in Ann Fisher's anthology for school children. Weisse would not there have learned that Franklin was the author, but he would have seen the text identified as from an American almanack.

Most readers of Franklin's *Œuvres* in 1773, which consisted largely of scientific texts, were scientists. Thus, only a scientist who had read volume two of that work would have known that he was the author, and in 1778 such a person did point out Franklin's authorship, in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*,[7] the leading book-review journal of the German-speaking world. The anonymous reviewer of Engel's *Der Philosoph für die Welt* is known to be Georg Simon Klügel (1739–1812), a leading German mathematician, who published extensively, including a multivolume *Encyklopädie, oder zusammenhängender Vortrag der gemeinnützigsten Kenntnisse*. Klügel had translated from English (as well as French), and his scientific work had led him to read the 1773 French edition of Franklin, the only commonly known publication prior to 1779 in which Franklin's name was attached to "The Way to Wealth." In the review Klügel wrote of "Der arme Jakob, der genug hat, aus einem Amerikanischen Allmanach frey übersetzt, dessen Verf. der berühmte Franklin ist, eine Art von ökonomischer Predigt, voll der vortrefflichsten Haushaltungsregeln für Vornehme und Geringe, die werth wäre, jährlich den Calendern mit einigen Veränderungen, beygedruckt zu werden." Besides identifying the author of "Der arme Jakob, der genug hat" as the "famous Franklin," Klügel here stated that it was full of the most excellent rules for households, both those of the elite and the most modest. Klügel's identification of Franklin as the author did not lead Engel to do so in subsequent editions of *Der Philosoph für die Welt*.

6 Johann Jakob Engel, *Briefwechsel aus den Jahren 1765 bis 1802, herausgegeben und kommentiert von Alexander Košenina* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1992).

7 *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 35. Bd., 2.St. (1778): 330–336.

Those of 1783, 1787, 1789, and 1791, continued to print the text, as anonymous, but it was dropped from Engel's *Sämmtliche Werke*, 1801, and from subsequent editions.

No complete translation was ever published of *Der Philosoph für die Welt*, but "Der arme Jakob, der genug hat" was not only often reprinted in German in publications other than Engel's works, it was also the source for a number of translations—into Danish, Dutch, and Hungarian, and quite possibly into other languages as well. The translation into English is in a book for students of English edited by Christian Heinrich Reichel, 1734–1807. Its title is *A Selection of Anthony Wall's Novels; with Others of Professor J. J. Engel's Philosopher for the World; Translated from the German; with Remarks, and Preceded by a Short Abridgment of Grammatical Rules for the Use of Those Who Wish to Learn the German Language, By Christian Henry Reichel*. Published in Leipzig in 1794, by Weidman, "Poor contented Jacob" appeared on pages 165–173 of this book (paginated lxxxvi, 186 p.) Reichel thus literally translated the German title (see figure 3.3).

Anthony Wall is the pseudonym of Christian Lebrecht Heyne, librarian of the University of Göttingen, but there is no indication that he was involved. Reichel was a teacher of languages, especially French, but besides English, also Danish and Swedish. He was among the German professors who kept presses busy, having brought out about twenty-five books. This one is briefly reviewed in *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* Bd. 15, St. 2 (1771): 521, but it has virtually disappeared, as have so many schoolbooks. Even the editor of Engel's correspondence was not able to find a copy in the pre-Internet days, and the book is not recorded in the *Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue*, in any of its formats. It is, however, available in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, and has been digitized as VD 18 11513705.[8] It is from that digitized copy that the following transcription is made.

Reichel obviously did not know that Benjamin Franklin was the author. He translated it solely because the text had appeal, even without the story and without Father Abraham, the crowd, and, at the end, Poor Richard. He translates the entire German text, with the exception of a single unimportant sentence: "Aber zu diesen beyden Dingen muß noch etwas hinzu kommen." Faithful it is, but it also shows so clearly that Franklin was a great stylist.

8 Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachraum erschienenen Drucke des 18. Jahrhunderts (VD 18), <http://vd18.de/>(accessed April 29, 2016).

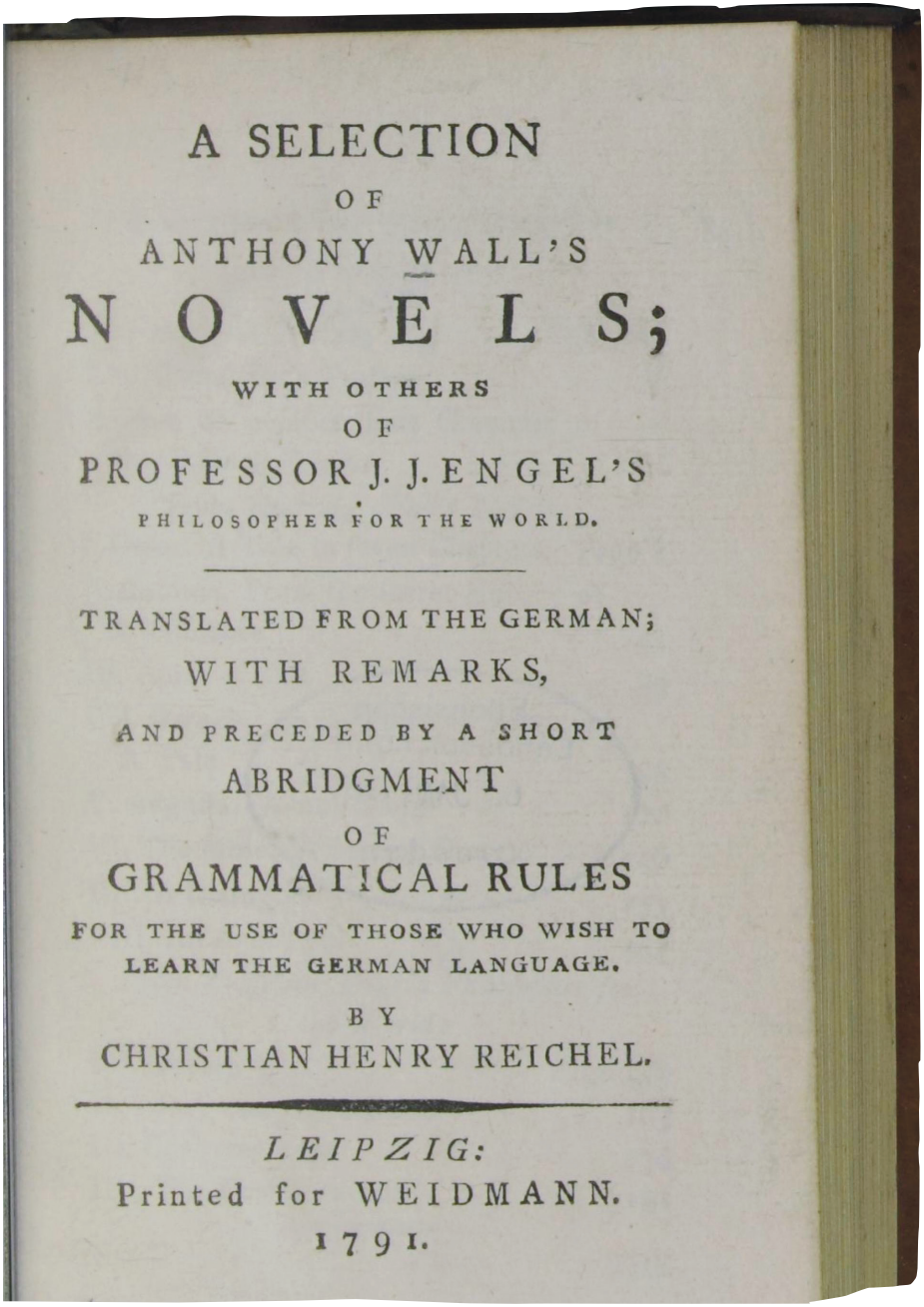

A SELECTION
OF
ANTHONY WALL'S
NOVELS;
WITH OTHERS
OF
PROFESSOR J. J. ENGEL'S
PHILOSOPHER FOR THE WORLD.
TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN;
WITH REMARKS,
AND PRECEDED BY A SHORT
ABRIDGMENT
OF
GRAMMATICAL RULES
FOR THE USE OF THOSE WHO WISH TO
LEARN THE GERMAN LANGUAGE.
BY
CHRISTIAN HENRY REICHEL.
LEIPZIG:
Printed for WEIDMANN.
1791.

Figure 3.3. *A Selection of Anthony Wall's Novels*. Leipzig: Weidmann, 1791.

The Duties are indeed heavy; & had we not more to pay than those which the Magistrature imposes, we could do it easily; but we still have others of a quite different Nature, which are much more burdensome to us. Our Laziness makes our Duties double, our Vanity makes them triple, & our Folly makes them quadruple. There is no Commissary who can deliver us from those Duties, or who can procure us some Alleviation. In the mean While hear a good Advice; something can still be done for us. God helps those who help themselves, says poor *Jacob*.

We should look upon a Government as defective, which forced the People to employ the tenth Part of their Time on public Works; but Laziness is a still heavier Imposition upon most of us. Idleness necessarily shortens our Life, in as much as it weakens us. Idleness is a Rust which corrupts more, than Work itself. The more a Key is used, the cleaner it grows, says poor *Jacob*. If you then love Life, do not lose your Time; for Time is the Stuff of which Life is made. How much do we not lose by sleeping longer, than is necessary, without thinking that a sleeping Fox catches no Hens, & that we shall sleep long enough in the Grave. If Time be the most precious of all Things, Dissipation of it is the greatest of all Dissipations.—Laziness finds every Thing too difficult; Diligence makes every Thing easy. He who rises late, may run about the whole Day; at Night he will scarcely find as much, as he stands in Need of. Negligence goes on so slowly, that Poverty soon overtakes her. Carry on your Business, lest your Business carry you away. To go to Bed by Times, makes a Man prudent, rich & healthy, as poor *Jacob* again says.

> Early to Bed & early to rise,
>
> Makes a Man healthy & wealthy & wise.

Of what Use is it to wish & hope for better Times? Exert your self, & the Times will certainly grow better. Assiduity needs not wish; & he who feeds on Hope, will be starved.

There is no Gain without Trouble. I help myself forwards, by my own Hands, because I have no Estates, & if I have any, because they are

burdened with heavy Duties. He who has a Trade, has a competent Fortune, & he who has Head has a profitable Post of Honour. Carry on your Trade, & employ your Understanding; otherwise neither Fortune nor Post are sufficient to pay your Duties. Are we laborious, so shall we always have Bread; for to the laborious Man Hunger peeps thro' the Window only, but dares not enter into his House. The Officers of Justice do not enter neither; for Laboriousness pays Debts, but Indolence increases them. – You have not found a Treasure? no rich Parent has made you his Heir? Very well! Laboriousness is the Mother of Fortune; God recompenses Labour. Prepare your Field, whilst the lazy Man sleeps, & you will have Corn to live on & to sell. Work to-Day; for you know not, what may prevent you to-morrow. – If you were obliged to serve, would you not be ashamed, if your kind Master should find you idle? Are you not your own Master? Be ashamed then to find your self idle, when you have so much to do for your Family, for your Country, & for your King.

Methinks I hear some Body demand: Must we allow ourselves no Leisure-hours at all? I answer as poor *Jacob* did. Will you have Leisure, employ your Time well, & as long as you are not Master of a Minute, do not lose an Hour. Good Leisure is that Time in which a Man can compass any useful Thing; the Diligent will find this good Leisure, but the Negligent never obtains it. *A Life full of good Leisure*, & an *idle Life* are very different. Many would willingly live by their Skilfulness, without working; but they burst rather from Want, than from Abundance. Work on the contrary procures Delight, Ease & Esteem. Fly from Pleasures, & they will follow you. The diligent Spider has a great Web.

But diligence is not sufficient; we must also be constant, not hasty & not negligent; we must ourselves have an Eye on our Affairs, & not rely too much on others. For, as poor *Jacob* says, a Tree which is often transplanted, & a Family which is always running about, do not thrive as well as when every Thing remains in its Place. To remove three Times is as baneful as a Conflagration.—Will you succeed in your Business, look after it your self; will you not succeed, send others after it.—He who will grow rich by the Plough, must take it in Hand himself, or drive it. The Master's Eye does more, than both his Hands. Negligence causes greater Losses, than Ignorance. He who does not watch over his Workman, leaves his Purse open to them.—In worldly Affairs *Confidence* helps less, than *Distrust*.

Be this enough, with regard to Work & Inspection over our Affairs. He that spends more than he should, shall not have to spend, when he would. Who will not keep a Penny, shall never have many. Has the Kitchen been fat, the Heritage will be learn. We have spent much Money, as we gained it, our Wives have forgot to sew & knit, over their Tea, & Men have forgot to graft & prune, over their Punch.

Confine then your foolish Expences, you will not lament so much over hard Times, pressing Duties & burdensome Families. For Women & Wine, Play & false Accounts diminish Money & increase Wants. With that which it costs to feed one Vice, we could feed two Children. Perhaps you believe, that a little Tea or Punch, a Tit-bit, some what finer Cloaths, & from Time to Time some Entertainment are not in themselves of any Consequence, but poor *Jacob* says: One leaky Plank can sink a whole Ship.

You have met together here for this public Sale of different Merchandises & Toys; you call such Things good; but if you do not take Care, it will prove an Evil to many of you. Think of that which poor *Jacob* says: Do not buy what you do not stand in Need of, you will soon be obliged to sell that which you cannot do without. Many have ruined themselves merely by buying Bargains Scarlet & Silk, Velvet & Satin extinguish the Kitchen-fire.

Poor *Jacob* gives very good Advice, when he says: An insipid Taste for Finery is a dangerous Folly. Vanity is a Beggar, as pressing as Poverty, but far more impudent. Have you bought one fine Piece, you must buy ten more, that the whole Set may be complete. But as poor *Jacob* says: He who has Vanity to Dinner, meets with Contempt at Supper, or: Pride breakfasts with Abundance, dines with Poverty & sups with Ignominy.

What a Folly to run in Debt for such Superfluities! Consider, that by making Debts, you give others a Right over your Liberty. Can you not pay at the appointed Time, you will be ashamed of seeing your Creditors; you will tremble when you speak to them, & by Degrees you will loose all Truth, Faith & Sense of Shame, & you will dishonour yourselves by palpable & mean Lies. For to lie is the second Degree of Injustice, & to make debts the first. Debts take up Lies behind them. Poverty abates Generosity. An empty Bag will not stand upright, says poor *Jacob* again.

What would you think of a Prince or Government which forbid you under Pain of Imprisonment, to dress like other People? You strive to fall under such Tyranny, by running in Debt, for Finery. Your Creditor has a Right to deprive you of your Liberty, as soon as he pleases. If you are not able to pay him, he may shut you up in a Goal, & leave you there, for Life. When you made the Purchase, you perhaps thought little of paying; but Creditors have a better Memory than Debtors. Creditors choose their Days, & are attentive to the Term & Time of Expiration. The Day of Payment comes on, before you are yet awakened, & the Demand of Payment appears, before you are prepared to answer it. You are now perhaps in a Situation, that you can do a foolish Thing, without its having any evil Consequences; but make a good Housewifery against old Age & Want. The Folly of the Morning does not last till the Evening., Your Gain may be of a short Duration & uncertain; but your Expences are certain, & last as long as you live. Now it is easier to build two Hearths, than to keep up one Fire constantly.

To conclude. Experience is a dear School; but it is the only one in which Fools learn any Thing. We can give good Advice, but we cannot give good Behaviour. He then who will not receive Advice, cannot be helped.

W.

The German "original" reads:

Der arme Jakob, der genug hat.*

(*Aus einem Amerikanischen Almanach)

Meine lieben Freunde! Die Abgaben sind freylich schwer; und hätten wir nicht mehr, als die zu bezahlen, die uns die Obrigkeit auflegt, so könnten wir leicht damit fertig werden; aber wir haben noch ganz andre, und die den meisten unter uns noch weit mehr zur Last fallen. Unsre Faulheit macht unsre Abgaben doppelt, unsre Eitelkeit macht sie dreyfach, und unsre Thorheit vierfach. Es giebt keinen Landesverordneten, der uns von diesen Abgaben befreyen, oder uns einigen Nachlaß verschaffen könnte.

Indessen hört einen guten Rath an: es läßt sich noch etwas für euch thun. Gott hilft denen, die sich selber helfen, sagt der arme Jakob.

Man würde eine Regierung für fehlerhaft halten, die dem Volke auflegte, den zehnten Theil seiner Zeit auf öffentliche Frohndienste zu wenden; aber die Faulheit legt den meisten unter uns noch weit mehr auf. Der Müßiggang verkürzt nothwendiger Weise unser Leben, indem er uns schwächer macht. Der Müßiggang ist ein Rost, der mehr angreift, als die Arbeit selber. Je mehr man einen Schlüssel braucht, je reiner wird er, sagt der arme Jakob. Liebst du nun das Leben, so verderbe die Zeit nicht; denn sie ist das Zeug, woraus das Leben gemacht ist. Wie viel verlieren wir nicht dadurch, daß wir mehr schlafen, als uns Noth thut, ohne daran zu denken, daß der schlafende Fuchs kein Huhn fängt, und daß wir lange genug im Grabe schlafen werden. Wenn die Zeit das Kostbarste unter allen Dingen ist, so ist die Verschwendung der Zeit die größte unter allen Verschwendungen. — Faulheit findet alles zu schwer; der Fleiß macht alles leicht. Wer spät aufsteht, der mag den ganzen Tag laufen; am Abend wird er kaum so viel finden, als er bedarf. Denn Fahrläßigkeit geht so langsam, daß Armuth sie bald einholt. Treibe dein Geschäft, damit dein Geschäft nicht dich treibt. Zeitig zu Bett gehen, und zeitig aufstehen macht den Menschen klug, reich und gesund, wie der arme Jakob abermals sagt.

Was hilft es, beßre Zeiten zu wünschen und zu hoffen? Strenge dich an, so werden die Zeiten besser. Fleiß hat nicht nöthig zu wünschen; und wer sich mit Hoffnungen speiset, der stirbt vor Hunger. Es giebt keinen Vortheil ohne Mühe: Ich helfe mir mit meinen Händen fort, weil ich keine Ländereyen habe, und wenn ich welche habe,
weil sie mit großen Abgaben beschwert sind. Wer ein Handwerk hat, der hat ein standsmaßiges Vermögen, und wer Kopf hat, der hat ein einträgliches Ehrenamt. Man treibe also sein Handwerk, und brauche seinen Kopf; sonst reicht Vermögen und Amt nicht zu, unsre Abgaben zu bezahlen. Sind wir arbeitsam, so haben wir immer Brodt; denn der Hunger sieht dem Arbeitsamen nur ins Fenster, ins Haus darf er nicht kommen. Die Gerichtsbedienten kommen ihm auch nicht hinein: denn Aemsigkeit bezahlt die Schulden, aber Muthlosigkeit vermehrt sie.— Du hast keinen Schatz gefunden? kein reicher Verwandter hat dich zum Erben eingesetzt? Recht gut! Arbeitsamkeit ist des Glückes Mutter; Arbeit belohnt Gott. Bestelle dein Feld, wenn der Faule schläft, so wirst du Korn haben, wovon du leben und wovon du verkaufen kannst. Arbeite heute;

denn du weißt nicht, was dich morgen daran verhindern kann. — Wenn du dienen müßtest, würdest du dich nicht schämen, wenn dein gütiger Herr dich müßig anträfe? Bist du nicht dein eigener Herr? Schäme dich also, dich selbst müßig anzutreffen, da du so viel für dich, für dein Haus und für dein Vaterland und für deinen König zu thun hast.

Mich dünkt, ich höre jemand fragen: Soll man sich denn gar keine müßige Stunde erlauben? Ich antworte, wie der arme Jakob: Willst du Muße haben, so wende die Zeit wohl an, und so lange du nicht Herr über eine Minute bist, so verliere keine Stunde. Gute Muße heißt die Zeit, worinn man etwas Nützliches verrichten kann; der Fleißige wird diese gute Muße finden, aber der Fahrläßige erhält sie nimmer. Denn ein Leben voll guter Muße und ein müßiges Leben ist zweyerley. Manche mögten gern von ihrer Geschicklichkeit leben, ohne zu arbeiten; aber sie platzen eher von Mangel, als von Ueberfluß. Arbeit hingegen schafft Anmuth, Bequemlichkeit und Achtung. Flieht die Ergetzungen, und sie werden euch nachfolgen. Die fleißige Spinne hat ein großes Gewebe.

Aber Fleiß ist nicht genug; wir müssen auch beständig, nicht läufisch und nicht fahrläßig seyn; wir müssen selbst ein Auge auf unsre Sachen haben, und uns nicht zu viel auf andre verlassen. Denn, wie der arme Jakob sagt, ein Baum, der oft umgepflanzt wird, und eine Familie, die immer herum läuft, gedeihen nicht so gut, als wenn alles an seinem Platze bleibt. — Dreymal umziehen, schadet so viel, als eine Feuersbrunst. — Verlaß deine Werkstatt nicht, so wird deine Werkstatt dich auch nicht verlassen. — Sollen deine Geschäfte gut von statten gehn, so gehe selbst darnach; sollen sie nicht, so schicke darnach. — Wer durch den Pflug reich werden will, muß ihn selbst anfassen oder ihn antreiben. Das Auge eines Herrn schafft mehr, als seine beyden Hände. Nachläßigkeit bringt größern Schaden, als Unwissenheit. — Wer nicht über seine Arbeiter wachet, der läßt ihnen seinen Beutel offen. — In Weltgeschäften hilft Zutrauen weniger, als Mistrauen.

Das sey genug von Arbeit und von Aufsicht auf unsre Geschäfte! Aber zu diesen beyden Dingen muß noch etwas hinzukommen. Wer nicht so zu sparen, als zu gewinnen weiß, der mag die Nase zeitlebens auf dem Mühlstein haben; er wird keine Gerstengrütze hinterlassen. Ist die Küche fett gewesen, so wird die Verlassenschaft mager seyn. Wir haben viel Geld, so wie wir es gewonnen haben, auch wieder verzehrt, seitdem die

Weiber über dem Thee das Nähen und Stricken, und die Männer über dem Punsch das Pfropfen und Beschneiden vergessen, haben.

Schränkt also eure thörichten Ausgaben ein, so dürft ihr nicht so viel über schwere Zeiten, über drückende Abgaben und über lästige Familien klagen. Denn Weiber und Wein, Spiel und unrichtiger Ueberschlag verringern die Gelder, und vermehren die Bedürfnisse. Mit dem, was ein einziges Laster zu unterhalten kostet, könnte man zwey Kinder unterhalten. Vielleicht glaubt ihr, ein wenig Thee oder Punsch, etwas leckerhaftere Speise, etwas feinere Kleider, und von Zeit zu Zeit einige Lustbarkeiten haben nicht viel zu bedeuten; aber der arme Jakob sagt: Ein leckes Brett kann ein ganzes Schiff versenken.

Ihr habt euch hier zu diesem öffentlichenVerkaufe von allerley Kaufmannsgut und Galanteriewaaren versammelt; ihr nennt dergleichen ein Gut; aber wenn ihr euch nicht in Acht nehmt, so wird es für einige unter euch ein Uebel werden. Denkt an das, was der arme Jakob sagt: Kaufe nur, was du nicht nöthig hast, so wirst du bald verkaufen müssen, was dir unentbehrlich ist. Viele haben sich durch nichts anders zu Grunde gerichtet, als durch ein wohlfeiles Einkaufen. Scharlach und Seide, Sammt und Atlas löschen das Feuer in der Küche aus.

Der arme Jakob giebt einen sehr gut Rath, wenn er sagt: Der läppische Geschmack an Putzwerk ist eine gefährliche Thorheit. Eitelkeit ist eine Bettlerinn, die eben so dringend, als die Armuth, aber noch weit unverschämter ist. Habt ihr Ein schönes Stück gekauft, so müßt ihr noch zehn andre kaufen, damit eure ganze Ausstaffirung sich zusammen paßt. Aber, wie der arme Jakob sagt: Wer Eitelkeit zum Mittagsessen hat, bekommt Verachtung zum Abendbrodt; oder: der Stolz frühstückt mit dem Ueberfluß, speißt zu Mittage mit der Armuth, und ißt des Abend mit der Schande.

Welche Thorheit, solcher überflüßigen Dinge wegen Schulden zu machen! Bedenkt, daß ihr, wenn ihr Schulden macht, andern ein Recht über eure Freyheit gebt. Könnt ihr nicht zur rechten Zeit bezahlen, so werdet ihr euch schämen, wenn ihr eure Gläubiger sehet; ihr werdet zittern, wenn ihr mit ihnen sprecht, und nach und nach werdet ihr Treu und Glauben, und die Scham selbst verlieren, und euch durch grobe und niederträchtige Lügen entehren. Denn Lügen ist die zweyte Stufe des Unrechts, und Schulden machen ist die erste. Schulden lassen die Lügen

hinter sich aufsitzen. Armuth schlägt die Großmuth nieder. Ein leerer Sack sieht nicht gut aufrecht, sagt der arme Jakob abermals.

Was würdet ihr von einem Fürsten, oder von einer Regierung denken, wenn sie euch bey Gefängnißstrafe verböten, euch so zu kleiden, wie andre artige Leute? Ihr gebt euch Mühe, unter eine solche Tyranney zu gerathen, wenn ihr euch des Kleiderstaats wegen in Schulden steckt. Euer Gläubiger hat das Recht, sobald es ihm gefällt, euch eurer Freyheit zu berauben. Wcnn ihr nicht im Stande seyd ihn zu bezahlen, kann er euch in ein Gefängniß verschliessen, und euch Zeitlebens darinn sitzen lassen. Als ihr euren Kauf schloßt, da dachtet ihr vielleicht wenig an die Bezahlung; aber die Gläubiger haben ein besser Gedächtnis, als die Schuldner. Die Gläubiger sind Tagewähler, und geben genau auf Termin und Verfallzeit acht. Der Zahlungstag bricht an, eh ihr noch aufgewacht seyd, und die Schuldforderung ist da, eh ihr zur Befriedigung Anstalten gemacht habt. — Vielleicht seyd ihr gegenwärtig in der Verfassung, daß ihr eine kleine Thorheit begehen könnt, ohne daß sie Folgen hat; aber führt eine gute Haushaltung für das Alter und für die Nothdurft. Die Thorheit des Morgens währt nicht bis auf den Abend. Euer Gewinn kann von kurzer Dauer und ungewiß seyn; aber eure Ausgaben sind gewiß, und dauern so lange ihr lebt. Nun aber ist es leichter zwey Feuerheerde zu bauen, als auf einem einzigen beständig Feuer zu unterhalten.

Zum Schluß! Erfahrung hält eine sehr theure, Schule; es ist aber die einzige, worinn Narren etwas lernen. Denn einen guten Rath kann man wohl geben, aber eine gute Aufführung kann man nicht geben. Wer sich also nicht rathen läßt, dem ist auch nicht zu helfen.

W.

Contributors

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