

far than the Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth, better even than the Quakers who established a City of Brotherly Love; they stood for that spirit of universal toleration, which found no abiding place save in America. Their feet were planted directly upon the path which leads from the darkness of the middle ages down to the light of the Nineteenth century—from the oppressions of the past to the freedom of the present.

Bullinger, the great reviler of the Anabaptists (Mennonites), in detailing in 1560 their many heresies, as he describes them, says *they* taught that "the Government shall and may not assume control of questions of religion or faith." No such attack upon the established order of things had ever been made before, and the potentates were wild in their wrath.

But two centuries after Bullinger wrote there was put into the Constitution of Pennsylvania, in almost identical language: "No human authority can in any case whatever control or interfere with the rights of conscience." The fruitage is here, but the planting and watering were along the Rhine. And to-day the Mennonites and their descendants are to be found from the Delaware River to the Columbia.

Among these were our ancestors, William Rittenhouse and his family, and to-day many among them are advocating and are still preaching the same doctrine, and advocate the same principles.

MENNONITES.

Willem Rittenhouse, the first Mennonite minister known in America, came to Germantown in 1688. The name Mennonite came from Menno Simons, a native of Witmarsum, a small town about half way between Bolsward and Harlingen, and the year of his birth 1492. He was reared a Catholic. We find in his writings that he was appointed chaplain in Pingium, a small town which he called his