THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE.

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**Decorated Stove Plate, 1764, from West of the
Susquehanna.**

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In the very interesting and valuable historical contribution of Professor Henry Mercer on "The Decorated Stove Plates of the Pennsylvania Germans," published by the Bucks County Historical Society, all the half-tone illustrations, twenty-three in number, are from castings made east of the Susquehanna. It is an interesting question not only when and where such castings were first made west of the Susquehanna, but also how they might be related in design and craftsmanship to those in the eastern part of the State. In the "Postscript" to the original paper Professor Mercer alludes very briefly, without illustration, to a plate which has an interesting bearing on this question. What seems to be a duplicate of the one alluded to has been added, recently, to the local historical collection at Carlisle, Pa.,* taken from the back of a fireplace.

It is about $24\frac{1}{4} \times 27\frac{1}{4}$ inches, with a narrow flange all around, and bears the date "1764," and the words "Carlisle Furnace," and what is intended for the names Thornburgh and Sanderson, misspelled and clumsily executed. The design, on the other hand, of the twisted column, arch, and tulip pattern is well executed and bears such a marked general resemblance to *Fig. 16*, of the brochure alluded to, as to suggest identity. Inspection, however, soon shows variations in details; but the panel containing the name of the furnace, the figures of the date, and some other details seem, so far as comparison with a half-tone instead of the original will permit, to justify the inference of identity of portions of

* Presented to the Hamilton Library Association of Carlisle, Pa., by Miss Emma Aberle.

the mold, certainly of the caster. In regard to the "Delight of Warwick," as *Fig. 16* is named by Professor Mercer, he remarks that it is "half-German, half-English, the ill-spelled words *Iahn* (Johann) *Pot* (Potts) and *Warck Furnec* (John Potts and Warwick Furnace), and the German legend '*Las den Besen und thue Gutes*' (eschew evil and do good), betray the handiwork of a German designer working at the Warwick Furnace, near Pottstown, Pa., in 1764." He suggests that one or more German casters, finding employment from

Decorated stove-plate, Cumberland County, Pa., 1764. (Original, $24\frac{1}{4} \times 27\frac{1}{4}$ inches.)

time to time at Warwick and Durham furnaces, carried their wooden molds with them. The point of peculiar interest in connection with the Carlisle casting is that it seems to carry the influence of the early Pennsylvania German artistic craftsmen to this then remote point west of the Susquehanna, and into a community not regarded as belonging to the German portion of the State, and to a furnace non-German in its origin and control, possibly the first fur-

nace, or at least as early as any, west of the Susquehanna. There was a bloomery and forge at Spring Grove, York County, as early as 1756, and Mary Ann Furnace at that place was erected on land leased for that purpose in 1762 by Geo. Ross (one of the signers) and Mark Burd. This furnace is suggested by James M. Swank, Secretary of the American Iron and Steel Association, as the first furnace in Pennsylvania west of the Susquehanna, as noted in Gibson's "History of York County." The Carlisle Furnace, however, better known in the accounts of it as the Carlisle Iron Works, located at Boiling Springs, on the Yellow Breeches Creek, in Cumberland County, was erected by John Rigbey & Co., on land patented by Richard Peters in 1762 and conveyed to them on the day following, and of which they were already in possession, and on which they had commenced the erection of a furnace. In 1764 the property was conveyed to a firm of six members, five from Philadelphia, one of whom was Robert Thornberg, and another, Francis Sanderson, of Carlisle. It was these latter names that the caster endeavored very awkwardly to introduce, transposing the "r" and "u" in Thornburg, inserting an "e" before the "a" in Sanderson, and so crowding it as to render it liable to be mistaken for an "f." In "Carlisle" the "s" and "l" have also been transposed. The substitution of the names of members of the firm in the place of the usual religious legend, in German, is regarded by Professor Mercer as an evidence of artistic decline. But when we consider that a German legend would not have been appreciated, perhaps even not enjoyed, by the Scotch-Irish dominant in that region, the omission hardly justifies such conclusion any more than does the awkwardness in execution of the English names. The "curious sundial-like medallion," to use the term employed by Professor Mercer, repeated on many of these plates, in the upper left-hand corner of this one, suggests a legend or motto, but, if so, it has eluded all efforts thus far to decipher it in this example.