

# German Literature in Bessarabia 12—Karl Kräenbring

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To have a better understanding of the following translation, it would serve you well if you were able to view German Literature in Bessarabia 01—Introduction.

**A Translator's Lament!** Pages 144-145 have given me trouble in that they are written in the Plattdeutsch (Low German) dialect which I have found difficult to translate. My maternal great-grandparents came from Paris, Bessarabia and spoke a Plattdeutsch also known as Kaschubish. So I heard some of this kind of talk at family gatherings. As far as I have been able to discover, their roots went back to an area then known as the Prussian region of Pomerania. It is territory along the Baltic Sea (today in northwest Poland) and their possible early 1800s location would have been somewhere from Danzig (*Gdansk*), west to Stolp (*Shupsk*), southwest to Schlawo (*Slawno*), and south to an area southeast of Köslin (*Koszalin*). I live in an area of Iowa that has Amish settlements and they speak a dialect of Plattdeutsch. However, in showing them the material I am trying to translate, they were unable to understand that dialect. So I down-loaded Plattdeutsch grammar and a dictionary of Plattdeutsch to German words. There I discovered that even Plattdeutsch has a bunch of dialects. So, until I identify the dialect of Plattdeutsch pertaining to my pre-Bessarabia ancestors' specific location in Pomerania and learn enough of it to wrestle with this document, I am going to submit this Part 12 document unfinished in translation until such a time that I can come back to it and complete the task. If the reader can understand Karl Kräenbring's Plattdeutsch, please contact me so that I can use your help to revise this document and end up with a full translation.

[Note: Comments in square brackets in the document are those of the translator.]

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[Translation Begins]

**Karl Kräenbring. (Unkel Bräsig).**

Autobiographie. Ob nu det Wod plattdütsch, schwobsch ode go houchdütsch es, wel eck ne segge. Det to bestemme, äwelaute eck ganz dem Kolennemann, dei mi des Aufgab opdrogt hett.

*Autobiography: Whether the word Plattdeutsch is Schwäbisch or High German, I cannot say. (Det-----hett--).*

Wi dei Dach weh, an dem eck jebore, ob hell ode klo, ob trüb ode düste, weit eck ne. Twei Tatsache weit eck abe ganz seche, denn des bede hett mi mien Motte vatellt. On wat Motte vatellt, dat es emme woh.

*How the day was, on which I was born, whether bright and (--klo--), or dark and dreary, I do not know. However, two thing I do know for certain, which (--bede--) had my mother told. And what mother says, that is always the truth.*

Dei ehst es: eck ben, so klen wie eck ouk weh, met groutem Jeschrei en des pocklich Welt kome, on dei zweit: dat weh am 11. Mai no olem Stehl 1874. Von de zweite Tatsach hebb eck mi äwezigt, wo eck schon grout weh. Eck köm bi de Scholmeiste, nehm mi dat Jeburtsregeste vom Joh 1874 vä on feikd de 11 Mai. Do stün on steiht ouk hütt noch schwart op wett: Karl Kräenbring, Sohn von Johann Kräenbring on seim Wiff Elisabeth, jeboren Ritz.

*The first is: I was, as little as I then was, came into the (--pocklich--) world with loud screaming, and the second is: this took place on 11 May, 1874. Of these two things I am certain, already when I was grown up. I got to know from the school master's entry into the birth register the year 1874 and on 11 May. (--Do-----wett--): Karl Kräenbring, son of Johann Kräenbring and his wife Elisabeth, born Ritz.*

Ut miene Kinkheit, eck weh a Jongke von 4 Joh, es mi folgend Bild en Erinnerung blewe: Bi ons opem Hoff wehre väl Soldoute on ouk väl Pä. Dese wohre dei Kammhoh on d' Schwänz afschne. Dorom hett ä dat ouck sou schen laute. Ouk spelt hebbe Saldaute.

*During my childhood, a young one of four years old, the following image stays in my memory: In our farmyard there were many soldiers and also many (--Pä--). These were the (--Kammhoh-- ) and the tails were trimmed. That is why (--ä-----laute--). (--Ouk-----Saldaute--).*

Wi wehre fenf Bröde. Twe wehre mi wied värut, während von de andre twei eh twei Joh elle on dei aned twei Joh jünge weh as eck.

*We were five brothers. Two were (--wied värut--) than I was, while of the other two, one two years older and the other one two years younger than I was.*

Wo wi all drei schohlfähig wehre, stün wi jede Morge em 6 Uhr op. Ons Frühstück weh an Melksopp entwede met Nudle ode Riebelkes. Ehne schene Morge sed'de wi ons ane Desch, on grod wo wi enscheppe wolle, köm Motte rene. Sei säd ons, wi scholle ne eite. Wat weh denn lous? Dei Mogd hadd ons statt Sopp an grout Schettel Starksel ope Desch stellt. Wi hebbe abe ons Schettel Sopp doch no kräje. Dei Mogd krej ouk wat, abe ken Sepp.

As all three were of school age, we got up each morning at 6 o'clock. Our breakfast consisted of milk soup either with noodles or (*--Riebelke--s*). One fine morning, we took our place at the table, and just as we were about to serve up, mother came in. She told us that we should not eat. So, what was the matter? Instead of soup, the maid had set on the table a large kettle of (*--Starksel--*). So we were going to end up with a kettle of soap. The maid got us something, but not soup.

[Photo of Karl Kräenbring]

An am rechte kolt Wintermorge ging eck en d' Schohl. Do wo dat Internat nu es, hadd die ol D. Isert en ehm Kelle an Wollwäscherei enrecht. Dei Kelle weh voll Waute. Det weh frohre on zwar sou hart, dat ma do ganz seche drop schledre künn. To de Wäscherei abe hadd hei a Loch unhacke laute. Det es ene Nacht emme wedde toufrohre. Wie gänge do renne schledre. Eck woll doch weite op ma en dem Loch auk schledre kann. Moukd Prow, rotschd ut, on so grout ode klen wi eck woh, fehl eck en t' Waute. Endlich es miem Brode dat doch jelunge, mi do rutte te schleipen. Wo nu hen. End' Schohl, ode na Hus? Na Hus? Do geft tat an döchtig Portion Prügel. En d' Schohl? Kast di vakülle on krank ware. Doch lewe a betz krank ware as Schläg krieje. Eck güng, sou natt eck ouk weh, en d' Schohl. Dat weh no vä sieben Uhr. Do drögd eck mien Sache on alles weh ene beste Ordnung.

On a real cold winter morning I was going to school. There where the (*--Internat--*) now is, old D. Isert had put up cellar by the wool washing business. The cellar was full of water. It was frozen and it was so solid that one could go sliding on it. However, near the washing business, he had chopped a hole. One which always froze over during the night. We decided to go sliding on it. I wanted to see if I could slide farther onto the hole. (*--Moukd Prow--*), skipped, and as big or little as I was, I fell into the water. Eventually, my brothers managed to pull me out. So what to do next. Head on over to the school, or back to the house? To the house? At that place there is going to be beating waiting. Off to school? (*There is the possibility of getting sick.*) Better chance getting sick than getting a beating. So I went, (*--sou natt eck ouk weh--*), to school. That was then around 7 o'clock. There I (*--drögd--*) my stuff and everything went in good order.

[p145]

Wo eck 15 Joh olt weh, säd mien Motte, Botte weh schon bout, wenn du lere west, denn geihst nu de ganze Sohme en d' Schohl, on em August bring eck di denn no Sarata en d' Zentralschohl. Sou hew denn dat ouk maukt. Trotzdem eck dem rosche Lehrer säd: ja snai troschke poruske, ben eck doch opnohme wore.

When I was 15 years old, my mother told me, (*--Botte-----bout--*), if you want to become a teacher, then go to school the whole summer long, and in August I will bring you to Sarata to the Central School. So That is what we did. Nevertheless, I told the (*rosche*) teacher: (*ja-----wore*).

Die Schohl hebb eck 1893 em Juni endigt; maukd am 10. September en demselbe Joh dat Lehrerexamen en Kischnoff' am ehste Knabengymnasium on weh denn Lehrer bet tom 1. September 1928. Von dessem Datom ben eck ene Ruhestand vasedt wore.

I finished school in June of 1893; took my teacher's exam on 10 September of the same year in Kischinev and became a teacher in the Boy's Secondary School until 01 September, 1928. From that date, I have been in retirement.

Von de 35 Denstjahre, habb eck acht Joh utwärts arbed't on 27 Joh en miem Jeburtsderp Tarutin, wo eck mi hütt noch befind.

Of the 35 years of service, I worked (*--utwärts--*) eight years and then 27 years in Tarutino, the place of my birth and where I find my residence today.

**a) Onsem nige Volksrat to siem Jeburtstag am 27. April 1934.**

Wenn a Kind jebora wat,  
Denn fregge sik mench Lüd;  
On wönsche em op fresche Dat  
Väl Sege, Glöck on Fried.

When a child was born,  
Then people themselves (*--freege Lüd--*)  
And wished it (*--op fresche Dat--*)  
Much blessing, good fortune and peace.

Sou a Kind es ons jebore.  
On heite deit dat noch "Volksrat."  
Mög dat Schecksal äm jewähre  
Lost on Lieb to seine Dat!

Such a child is born to us.  
And today (*--deit--*) that still "folk advice"  
May that destiny be to him  
Pleasure and love to his (*--Dat--*)!

Hei es noch jung on arbeitslostig  
Sie Programm es grout on wied.  
Wi abe, wie sen a betzke borstig  
Wi tewe nu op dei god Tied.

He is still young and free of work  
His prospect is great and wide.  
But how, how are a (*--betzke borsti--g*)  
How (*--tewe-----Tied--*).

Hei well ouk sorge nu va Arbeit  
Well bringe ons ouk houch.  
Wi wönsche äm, dat dat wat Wohheit,  
On bringt Erfüllung ouk:

He will (*--ouk--*) sorrow (*--nu va--*) work  
Will bring us (*--ouk--*) high.  
We wish him, that (*--dat-----Wohheit--*),  
And brings about fulfillment (*--ouk--*):

Dem Zank well breike hei dei Macht  
An dem wie fast vakome  
Well wedde bringe Stolz on Acht  
Op onse dütsche Nomen!

(*--Dem-----Macht--*)  
On him how quickly appearing  
(*--Well wedde--*) brings pride and attention  
Whether our Germans (*--Nomen--*)!

“Heil äm,” so schallt von Land to Land,  
Laut ons dei Henn nu folle (falten);  
“Du bringst ons nu en’ n nige Stand,  
Mög Gott die ons erholle!”

“Hail him,” so goes the cry from land to land,  
(--Laut-----folle--) (falten = fall/drop/diminish)  
“You bring to us now a (--nige Stand--),  
May God (--die--) us improve/recover!”

### b) Dem Nogel ope Kopp troffe.

#### b) Hit the Nail on the Head

Dat gew, geft on wat ouk emme son Lüd gewe, von de ma sächt: sei ware ne alle. Jewöhnlich sen dat son Lüd, dei sik väl enbille, doch von Utbildung find’t ma an ä ouk ren go nischt.

Von som enjebildete, aber herzlich wenig utjebildete Mensche a ganz kort Beispiel.

A jung Mann stün op seim Hoff. Bi äm were a poo Jonges, von de eh ane ganz besonders schelmische Bleck hat. De jung Mann säd to de Jonges, “Jonges,” säd hei, “eck well ju an klen Reiknung opjewe, on we des utreikent, es a Kerl, abe ehmol a Kerl.” De Kle, met dem schelmische Bleck säd: “Heide!”

A young man stood on his farmyard. Next to him stood a poor youth, of whom he had a completely special (--schelmische Bleck--). The young man said to the youth, “Youth,” said he, “I will give you a little calculation, and as this (--utreikent--), (--es--) a guy, but (--ehmol--) a guy.” The (--Kle--), with the (--schelmische Bleck--) said: “Be sharp!”

“Na, denn ma lous,” mehnd dei jung Mann nu. Dei Reiknung es: wi stoh hie bi mi opem Hoff. Des hett fofzig Meter. Des Stock, de eck ene Hand hol, hett tweidausent tweihonet fofzig mm. Hüt ew de 30. Februar. Wi olt ben eck?”

“Okay, go for it,” the young man replied. The calculation is: How (--stoh--) here in my open farmyard. It has fifty meters. The stick, the one I am holding in my hand, has twenty thousand two hundred fifty millimeters. Today is the 30<sup>th</sup> of February. How old am I?”

Dei Jonges lächde sik nu döchtig en ‘t Jescherr. Künne dei Reiknung abe trotzdem ne ruttekrieje. Ons kle Schelm abe dacht vä sik an ganz allen. Endlich säd hei: “Gottfried,” säd hei, “eck hebb s’ rutte.” “Na, du Kle,” frogd Gottfried nu, “wi olt ben eck?” Dei prompt on abe seche Antwort we: Gottfried, du best fofzig Joh alt. Gottfried, a betz stotzig wore äwe dei sou bestemmt klingend Antwort, frogd ganz vazocht: “Wie hest du dat so flink ruttkräje?”

The young fellow (--lächde-----Jescherr--). Could the calculation however nevertheless not (--ruttekrieje--). Our (--kle Schelm--) however, thought (--vä sik an--) all alone. Finally he said: “Gottfried,” said he, “I have the (--rutte--).” Okay, you (--Kle--),” Gottfried now asked, “how old am I?” The immediate but certain answer was: Gottfried, you are fifty years old.

Gottfried, was a (*--betz--*) startled over the so (*--bestemmt klingend--*) answer, asked completely (*--vazocht--*): “How did you (*--rutkräje--*) that so (*--flink--*)?”

Siegesjeweiß on schmunzelnd antword au dei kle Schelm: “Kick, Gottfried, mien Motte hett an Brode, on dat es mi recht Unkel, on des es fünfonzwanzig Joh. Votte sächt emme: “Hei es a halw Idiot.”

Confident and looking pleased, the (*--kle Schelm--*) replied: “(*--Kick--*), Gottfried, my mother had a brother, and that is my proper uncle, and he is twenty-five years old. Furthermore, father always said: “He is half an idiot.”

[Translation Ends]