

GERMANY HAS A TALKING DOG.

DEEP in the heart of Western Germany is the village of Theerhütte, a nest of low-roofed houses fringing one of the royal hunting preserves near Magdeburg. The hamlet, destined in the ordinary course of events not to have escaped oblivion, has become over night the Mecca of Europe's zoological scientists, circus proprietors, music hall agents, and special correspondents, drawn thither by the revelation that Theerhütte is the abode of nature's newest wonder—a talking dog.

Strangely enough, America is primarily to blame for the discovery of this canine marvel, a well-bUILT and beautiful German setter or pointer, just over five years of age.

Some German newspaper a few weeks ago recorded the remarkable fact that Prof. Graham Bell of Washington, inventor of the telephone, had, by dint of long effort and Spartan persistence, taught his terrier to speak. Nobody in the Fatherland paid any particular attention to the news, for Germans expect anything of America, which they have long considered "the land of unlimited possibilities." But the paragraph arrested the attention of at least one reader, who proceeded to inform his compatriots that America was not entitled to priority in the realm of talking dogs, because his uncle, a worthy royal gamekeeper named Herman Ebers of Theerhütte, in the Letzlinger Heath, was the possessor of a dog which has been speaking for five loquacious years.

The statement gained widespread circulation and provoked universal ridicule and incredulity. But there was one feature in the story which commanded respect. The dog's master was a Prussian official, and if a Prussian official solemnly affirms a thing it is an unwritten law in the Kaiser's domain that the assertion is entitled to belief.

The little Post Office at Theerhütte suddenly found itself the centre of unwonted and perplexing activity. Telegrams and letters addressed to Gamekeeper Ebers began arriving in shoals. The burden of their contents was the same—insistent inquiries to know if he were really the possessor of a dog with talents no canine of Grecian mythology, not even Argos of the Odyssey, or scientific history had ever known.

To one and all of these interrogatories, which breathed skepticism in every word, Ebers responded: "Story is true. Inspection is permitted." And from that moment dates the siege of Theerhütte. It has been in progress for over two weeks

Don, the Marvelous Setter with a Vocabulary of Six Words --- Scientists Stupefied.

and shows no indication of ceasing, for the once humble and simple gamekeeper has developed astonishing commercial acumen, and is waiting for the highest bidder with the sang-froid of a magnate born. He has already refused \$15,000 for his wonderful Don, and has scornfully rejected \$5,000 for the souvenir postcard rights alone. It has dawned upon him that a week of Don on some metropolitan music hall stage is worth a lifetime of royal gamekeeping at \$150 a year.

The correspondent of THE NEW YORK TIMES is enabled to tell the story of Don's amazing talents on the strength of "ear-witness" testimony gathered by a visitor to Theerhütte of indisputable sanity, impartiality, and reliability. Like all the rest, he went there a skeptic and came away an enthusiast.

Don, the splendid specimen of the German hunting dog, variously catalogued as a setter or a pointer, was born in 1905. Beyond a pair of wonderfully appealing eyes, sometimes almost human in their expression, there is nothing specially conspicuous about his appearance. He is somewhat more than medium large, with a wealth of dark-brown hair, and is, apart from his linguistic abilities, an uncommonly intelligent animal.

Don's power of speech was revealed when he was 6 months old. It came to light without training or teaching of any kind upon the part of his master. The dog took up his position one day while the Ebers family was sitting at supper and began begging, in familiar dog fashion, with his eyes. "Willst du wohl was haben?" (You want something, don't you?) asked the game keeper, expecting nothing in reply except the stereotyped, grateful, affirmative look from Don's soulful eyes. To Herr Ebers's consternation, the dog answered, not with a look, but with unmistakably plain and intelligent speech, "Haben!" (Want.) It was the first time a spoken word had ever escaped his lips.

The gamekeeper repeated his question in order to satisfy himself he had not misconstrued a peculiarly plaintive bark.

"Haben! Haben!" came the response quick as a flash and clear beyond any question of doubt.

Then Don's education began. The gamekeeper noticed that the dog was peculiarly apt. It was not long before Don learned to repeat his name when asked to tell it. A few months later his vocabulary included "kuchen," (cakes,) a particularly difficult word even for a German child to pronounce, because of the pursing of the lips required to enunciate the "k" and the throaty "ch" of the guttural German language. "Kuchen" have always been a weakness of Don's, and his master proceeded to exploit the dog's special fondness for cakes by teaching him to say "Hunger" (the word is almost the same in German and English,) when asked "what he had." It was only a matter of weeks, when, with the three words "Haben," "Kuchen" and "Hunger" at his command, Don was able to string them together intelligently, and would repeat half-a-dozen times without stopping "Hunger want cakes," or sometimes, depending on the particular form of the question, "Want cakes, hunger."

His record talking achievements is a sentence of four words, "Don hunger want cakes," or "Don want cakes—hunger." "Ja" and "Nein" (yes and no) were mastered by him subsequently, and he says them intelligently now in reply to questions. Don, for instance, abhors wet weather, and when intuition or actual experience tells him that it is damp or raining outdoors, he will invariably say "No" when asked if he cares to go out.

Skeptics persist in the belief that whatever the dog "says" is at best only articulate growling or barking. None who have heard him agree with this view. They are unanimous in describing the "deep breast tones" which escape the animal as unmistakably human in timbre and inflection. Some are clearer than others.

His first achievement, the verb "Haben" (want,) is enunciated with absolute distinctness and can be understood by a person standing in another room with a door between. "Hunger" is accentuated with hardly less clearness, although the dog drags out the last syllable a trifle. The voice seems to emanate from the very depths of the throat. He speaks, too, with a manifest effort, and when he is talking vigorously and proclaiming "Hunger! Hunger!" with particular eagerness, his body distends, and one gets the impression that the speaking process is not effected without some sort of internal distress.