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Adolf Heinrich Strodtmann: Friend and Associate of Carl Schurz

Among the political refugees of the failed German Revolution of 1848 who immigrated to America were a few who found it difficult to assimilate and became disillusioned and tired of trying to make a living in America, often in professions for which they were either unprepared or unsuited. They eventually returned to their German homeland, even though this meant that they had to suppress their political views and bow to the dictates of the Prussian government. One of these was Adolf Heinrich Strodtmann, who had immigrated to the United States in the summer of 1852 and had settled in Philadelphia, only to return to Germany after four years and to make a name for himself as a poet, journalist, translator, and literary historian.¹

Born in Flensburg on March 24, 1829, Adolf Heinrich Strodtmann was the son of the theologian Johann Sigismund Strodtmann, the assistant rector of the Gymnasium in Flensburg in Schleswig. The precocious young Strodtmann received a humanistic education at the classical secondary schools in Flensburg, Hadersleben, Plön, and Eutin, where his father at the time held teaching positions, and which, because of their proximity to Denmark, provided Strodtmann with the opportunity to become proficient in the Danish language, a skill that would prove useful to him as a translator. Not long after enrolling at the University of Kiel, Strodtmann joined a student volunteer group to fight for the independence of Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark, even though he was found unfit for military service because of his near-sightedness and severe hearing loss. When the student fighters were attacked by Danish troops on April 9, 1848, Strodtmann was severely wounded and captured, spent the summer recovering from his wounds in a military hospital, and then was confined with other captured students on the Danish prison ship, the *Dronning Maria*, in the Copenhagen harbor. After the



Fig. 1: Adolf Heinrich Strodtmann 1829-1879

Armistice of Malmö was signed on August 26, 1848, Strodtmann was freed in a prisoner exchange, and he published a collection of poems about his captivity, “Lieder eines Kriegsgefangenen auf der *Dronning Maria*” (“Songs of a Prisoner on the *Dronning Maria*”).²

In the fall of 1848 Strodtmann enrolled at the University of Bonn to study languages and literature and soon became a close friend of Carl Schurz, a fellow member of the Franconia, one of the most famous of the German *Burschenschaften* or German student associations. When Schurz had enrolled as a student at the University of Bonn in 1847, he could not matriculate fully because he had not yet passed his exams for the Abitur from the Gymnasium in Cologne, the exam given at the conclusion of secondary school that is required to qualify for the university. In spite of this deficiency and with the support of fellow students, Schurz was invited to join the student fraternity Franconia. According to Schurz, the Franconia did not draw its members solely from the families of wealth or of the noble class, but instead chose members who were interested in science and literature, and its activities did not revolve only around drinking beer and dueling. In the Franconia Schurz developed life-long friendships with students, who later distinguished themselves in astronomy, archaeology, medicine, and literature.³

Strodtmann and Schurz were devoted students of Professor Gottfried Kinkel, from whom they took courses on art history, literature, and rhetoric at the University of Bonn, and both became members of his democratic movement and took up arms against the Prussians troops who had been sent to restore order in 1848. At the siege of the fortress Rastatt, Kinkel was wounded and captured, but unlike many other revolutionaries who were tried and executed, he was spared because of his spirited and eloquent self-defense. Kinkel was first sentenced to life in a fortress, where he would have been under military supervision and allowed to wear civilian clothing. However, he was moved to a penitentiary in Naugard, Pomerania, after Frederick William IV of Prussia declared his sentence illegal, and later he was incarcerated in a prison in Spandau near Berlin. When Strodtmann learned that his former

professor, with his head shorn and required to wear prison garb, was forced to spend his days spinning wool and could be flogged if he misbehaved, he tried to raise popular support for Kinkel by writing a poem titled “Lied vom Spulen” (“The Spinning Song”). When university authorities learned of this poem, Strodtmann was expelled from the University of Bonn in 1849 and was even banished from Cologne. The following year Strodtmann published a collection of radical poems, “Lieder der Nacht” (“Songs of the Night”) and a two-volume biography of his professor, *Gottfried Kinkel: Wahrheit ohne Dichtung. Biographisches Skizzenbuch* (Hamburg, 1850-51), the royalties of which he generously assigned to Kinkel’s children.⁴

When the Prussian military defeated the revolutionaries at Rastatt, Schurz escaped through an unguarded sewer and fled to France and eventually to Switzerland. Holed up in the little village of Dornachbruck near Basel and almost out of funds, Schurz was surprised one morning in August of 1849 to hear the loud voice of his eccentric friend Strodtmann, who spoke in an unusually loud voice because of his deafness and who walked with one shoulder pushed forward as the result of wounds he had sustained in the war with Denmark. Strodtmann came with letters for Schurz from his parents and money raised by friends in the Franconia student association. The next day the two friends set out for Zürich, where they were surprised to run into their friends Fritz Anneke, Gustav Adolph Techow, Alexander Schimmelpfennig, and Friedrich Beust among the German refugees living there. After a ten-day visit, Strodtmann returned to Bonn, and Schurz continued his historical and military studies and supported himself by writing articles for a newspaper in Cologne edited by Hermann Becker, a friend from student days in Bonn.⁵ He also enrolled in courses towards a doctorate in history at the University of Zürich with the hope that he might be able to teach there some day.⁶

Soon, however, Schurz was involved in the planning and execution of the greatest escapade of his life and one that would make him famous, namely arranging the escape of his Bonn professor, Gottfried Kinkel, from the Spandau prison near Berlin. With a large sum of money raised by his student friends and Johanna Kinkel, Kinkel’s wife, and using a passport in the name of his cousin Heribert Jüssen, whom he resembled, Schurz travelled to Berlin in November 1850. With Kinkel successfully liberated from prison, Schurz and his former professor headed to Rostock, where they boarded a grain ship for England. After a stop in London, Schurz accompanied Kinkel to Paris, where many of the German revolutionaries had sought refuge. Here Schurz met up again with his friend Strodtmann, who had also been forced to leave Germany and had been living in Paris.⁷

In Paris Schurz at first shared Strodtmann’s room in a hotel in the Faubourg Montmartre district. However, this arrangement soon came to an end after

Strodtmann's messy housekeeping resulted in a fire. Not only were Schurz's papers set on fire, but a large hole was burned in Schurz's prized winter cloak. The two friends decided it was better to rent separate accommodations, but they remained on good terms. Schurz and his German friends held weekly musical soirees, often in Schurz's room, and according to Schurz's account, Strodtmann's recitations of his German translations of socialist French poems provided great entertainment at these gatherings. Even though partly deaf, Strodtmann claimed to enjoy these musical evenings, and the guests enjoyed his enthusiastic and honest assessments of people and events. Schurz described his good friend as exhibiting all the characteristics of the typical "absent-minded professor." One of the most amusing anecdotes that Schurz recounted was when Strodtmann asked Schurz whether he could lend him a boot because Strodtmann had only one pair and the seam of the right boot had burst. Schurz luckily had two pairs of boots, but one boot of the second pair was also damaged. It turned out that Strodtmann now had two good boots, but they were of two different fashions, one having a pointed toe and the other having a broad toe, and both for the left foot. This, however, made no difference to Strodtmann, who wore two left boots until his boot was repaired.⁸

While in Paris Strodtmann developed an interest in clairvoyance and spiritualism and invited Schurz to a *séance*. Because of an invitation to visit Kinkel, Schurz was unable to attend the *séance*, but he decided to test the powers of the clairvoyant by giving Strodtmann two sealed envelopes, one with a lock of his hair in it and the second one in which he had placed a small piece of a letter that he had received that day from the Hungarian General Klapka, with the request that the clairvoyant describe the person, character, profession, and home of the person from whom the articles in the envelopes had come. A few days later Strodtmann wrote Schurz, who was now back in London, that the clairvoyant had described him accurately, indicated that he was famous for carrying out a daring exploit, and was now living with a happy family in a large city on the other side of a body of water. Similarly, the clairvoyant also to Schurz's amazement correctly described the person, character, and activities of General Klapka. Schurz's interest in extrasensory powers continued in America, and in 1865 he attended a *séance* in the home of his friends the Tiedemanns in Philadelphia, where one of the daughters acted as the medium. Schurz requested that she call up the spirit of Lincoln and was surprised when she forecast that Schurz would undertake an assignment in the South and would one day be elected senator.⁹ Two years later Schurz visited his sister in Chicago, who was quite taken with spiritualism, and together they attended a *séance* where supposedly the spirit of his daughter Emmy appeared. These experiences with spiritualism clearly

had a lasting affect on Schurz.¹⁰

As a result of pressure from Prussian authorities, Paris in 1851 was no longer a friendly refuge for German revolutionaries, and after Schurz was arrested and imprisoned for four days, both Schurz and Strodtmann decided to leave for London, which had also become a haven for revolutionaries forced to leave Germany. Kinkel had not only arranged for lodging for Schurz in St. John's Wood Terrace, but he had also found students whom Schurz would instruct in German and music, thus making it possible for him to cover his living expenses. Strodtmann was hired as a private tutor for the children of a German baroness.¹¹ However, both Schurz and Strodtmann were dissatisfied with their existence in



Fig. 2: Carl Schurz 1829-1906

London and decided to emigrate to the United States in summer of 1852 and may have even planned to travel together. However, the departure of Carl and Margarethe Schurz, who had married in a civil ceremony in the parish registry of Marylebone, London, on July 6, 1852, had to be delayed because they were unable to obtain passports in time and because Carl came down with scarlet fever. They were finally able to sail from Portsmouth for New York in August 1852.¹²

Strodtmann was able to sail to the United States several months before the Schurzes, and he was already settled in Philadelphia when the Schurzes arrived in New York City on September 17, 1852. The Schurzes spent several weeks in the city, while Margarethe recovered from an illness, before leaving for Philadelphia to visit Strodtmann and Heinrich Tiedemann, under whose brother Gustav, Schurz had served as aide-de-camp during the attack at Rastatt.¹³

Soon after his arrival in America, Strodtmann had settled in Philadelphia, where with financial help from his father, he had opened a German bookstore and lending library and had started publishing a weekly German literary magazine, *Die Locomotive*. However, because his bookstore and publishing business did not bring in sufficient funds and the money from his father was exhausted, Strodtmann was forced to close his bookstore in 1854 and cease publishing *Die Locomotive*. For the next two years he supported himself by writing for German-American newspapers in New York City and translating



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I. Band.

„O du meine liebliche Liebe!“



Es war dort unter dem Lindenbaum,
Da träumt' ich seligen Frühlingstraum;
Sie hielt den Becher in weißer Hand,
Ich aber saugte in's helle Land:
„Dein Wohl, du liebliche Liebe!“

Es war dort unter dem Lindenbaum,
Da hab' ich begraben den Jugendtraum;
Kein Stern erhelle die kalte Nacht,
Als sie die Keulelein zugemacht,
Die bleiche sterbende Liebe.

Nun sitz' ich unter dem Lindenbaum,
Und denk' an den flüchtigen Liebesträum,
Bei Nacht und Tage, bei Tag und Nacht,—
Mein Eins und mein Alles, gut' Nacht, gut'
Nacht!

Lebwohl, du liebliche Liebe!

Adolf Strodtmann.

Fig. 3: *Die Lokomotive* 1853-1854

contemporary American literature into German.¹⁴

Strodtmann published *Die Locomotive*, an eight-page literary magazine, from July 3, 1853, until June 25, 1854. It appeared every Sunday, and readers could either subscribe to it for \$1.50 a year or pay six cents per issue. From the greeting to his readers in the first issue, we gain insight into Strodtmann's views on life in America after having lived in the country for a year. In the first part of the greeting, which he entitled "Amerika," he asked his fellow German immigrants whether they felt deceived by all they had heard back in Germany about American equality and freedom and the quick acquisition of wealth, and whether those Germans who came to America with a higher education felt uncomfortable because of the ignorance and raw power of prejudice they experienced here. According to Strodtmann, German immigrants missed most of all German "*Gemütlichkeit*" or the good fellowship of German festivals and gatherings and the absence of a national popular literature. While admitting that all these complaints were legitimate, Strodtmann reminded his fellow immigrants not to look down on the American people because the country was still young and that they could help correct these deficiencies. He pointed out that Germans had encouraged Sunday afternoon festivities out in nature, that Turners promoted healthy bodies and minds, that German choral societies provided good fellowship, and that German workers' associations educated their members so that they would have a strong influence on the political and social development of the country. He also credited the 150 German newspapers for helping to maintain the German language and customs, but only *Die Locomotive* would advocate for the German-American way of life in both a serious and humorous, but politically neutral manner. This would entertain the reader on Sunday without resorting to the use of pretentious language of narrow book learning. In the second half of his greeting, titled "Programm," Strodtmann laid out his goals for this new literary magazine, namely to educate, teach, and entertain in all fields of life, politics, science, and art. Each issue would contain artistic and humorous illustrations, some by an artist from the *Fliegende Blätter* published in Munich; novellas, short stories, and dramas; poetry; articles on history and nature; popular essays on trade, politics, and society; reviews of recent literary publications on both sides of the Atlantic; puzzles, riddles, problems for chess players and mathematicians, with prizes for the readers who could solve them the fastest. Twenty-six issues of *Die Locomotive* would comprise a volume.¹⁵

Strodtmann often opened an issue of *Die Locomotive* with a poem, either one he composed himself, for example, "O du meine liebliche Liebe" ("Oh, my dear darling") in the first issue, or a poem that he translated, as in issue three, "Der flüchtige Negersklave" ("The Slave in the Dismal Swamp," 1842) by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. He also published poetry by such German

authors as Heinrich Heine, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Joachim Ringelnatz, Ferdinand Freiligrath, and Friedrich Gerstäcker. In some of the issues he serialized short stories or short novels over a number of issues. For example, Heine's "Die Götter im Exil" ("The Gods in Exil"), which had just been published in Germany in 1853, was serialized over ten issues; Strodtmann's own "Die Taube von Erie" ("The Dove of Erie") was divided over four issues; and Friedrich Gerstäcker's novel *Die Flusspiraten des Mississippi* (*The Pirates of the Mississippi*, 1848) appeared in five issues. Strodtmann also republished items, like the Low German folktale, "Dat Wettloopen twischen den Haasen un den Swinegel" ("The Race between the Hare and the Hedgehog") in issue seven, which he indicated he took from an old Holstein calendar and for which he provided definitions of some words for readers not familiar with Low German.¹⁶ He frequently included work of his own, as, for example, the piece "Humoristische Freischärler-Fahrt eines Schleswigholsteiners im Jahre 1848" ("Humorous Journey of a Schleswig-Holsteiner Volunteer in 1848"), which he serialized over seven issues and in which he reminisced about his experiences after joining the volunteer student corps of the University of Kiel to fight for the freedom of Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark and about his being wounded and captured by the Danes.¹⁷

A year after Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* appeared in 1852, Strodtmann produced a German translation of the novel, which was serialized in Philadelphia's *Freie Presse*.¹⁸ Stowe immediately filed a lawsuit for copyright infringement against F. W. Thomas, the publisher of the *Freie Presse*, for printing an unauthorized translation of her novel. Her case came up in federal circuit court in Philadelphia before Judge Robert Grier, who was known for his strict enforcement of the rights of slave owners under the Fugitive Slave Law, and he ruled that the publication of Strodtmann's translation could go forward since it was not a copy of her book.¹⁹

Strodtmann decided to return to Germany in 1856 after only four years in America and before Prussia had declared the general amnesty of 1862 for those who had participated in the Revolution of 1848.²⁰ He became a citizen in Hamburg, was employed for a time as a teacher, held an editorial position with the publisher Hoffmann and Campe in Hamburg, was editor of the *Hamburger Börsenhalle* until its sale in 1869, and then worked as a journalist, all the while continuing to write and publish his poetry as well as numerous literary translations from English, Danish, and French. During the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) he accompanied the German Third Army and reported from the field for the *Hamburger Börsenhalle*, the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, and the *Indépendance belge*.²¹ Strodtmann never reached a point in his life where he was financially independent and did not have to be concerned about his finances.

According to Hans Trefousse, Strodtmann visited Watertown, Wisconsin, in the summer of 1855 as the guest of Schurz and his parents. Schurz had just returned in July from Malvern, England, where he had taken his wife Margarethe along with their two-year-old daughter Agathe for treatment of a lung ailment. Schurz returned to finalize the purchase of a farm of eighty-nine acres on the northwest edge of Watertown, but that would have to wait until September when the owner of the land was back in town. According to Trefousse, Strodtmann had arrived in Watertown excited about his visit to a “free-love community in northern Wisconsin,” but Schurz did not mention such a visit in his *Reminiscences*. Charles J. Wallman, who counted Strodtmann as one of the 1848ers of Watertown, claimed without documentation that Strodtmann spent the summer of 1857 there. However, in a letter to James Lorimer Graham, Jr., Strodtmann referred to the fact that he had spent only four years in the United States and had returned to Germany in 1856.²²

At an early age Strodtmann demonstrated a talent for composing verse, ranging from revolutionary verse to occasional poems reflecting the mood of the moment. Later in life he was well known for his translations of English and American poetry into German in the original meter. The first collection of his own poems, *Gedichte*, appeared in 1857, but it could hardly be counted as a success since it sold only 200 copies; it was reissued in a second edition in 1870 and in an expanded edition in 1878.²³ Strodtmann also showed an early interest and skill in translating, and the number of his translations increased substantially during the last two decades of his life. His translations acquainted German audiences with the political ideas of the French philosopher Montesquieu and the literary views of the Danish author and critic Georg Brandes. Strodtmann introduced Germans to the poetry of such English poets as Byron, Shelley, George Elliot, and Tennyson and to the American writers Hawthorne, Longfellow, Bryant, and Poe, among others. In 1863 Strodtmann founded and edited the *Orion: Monatsschrift für Kunst und Literatur*, which was devoted primarily to translations of the works of new American authors, some of whom are now largely forgotten, their biographies, and reviews of their works. Even though the magazine was published by the well-known Hamburg publishing house of Hoffmann and Campe for whom Strodtmann worked, it did not attract the interest of readers, and to Strodtmann’s great disappointment it ceased publication in 1864.²⁴

Strodtmann’s collections and anthologies of poetry, prose, critical commentaries, and biographical sketches contributed significantly to providing German readers with access to contemporary Danish, French, English, and American poets and writers.²⁵ Among the most important of these works are: *Die Arbeiterdichtung in Frankreich: Ausgewählte Lieder französischer*

Proletarier (Hamburg, 1863); *Lieder- und Balladenbuch amerikanischer und englischer Dichter der Gegenwart* (Hamburg, 1862), which is dedicated to Ferdinand Freiligrath and is Strodtmann's first collection of contemporary American and English poems translated into German in their original meters; *Amerikanische Anthologie: Dichtungen der amerikanischen Literatur der Gegenwart* (Hildburghausen, 1870), an expanded version of his *Lieder- und Balladenbuch*, featuring Walt Whitman, James Fennimore Cooper, Edgar Allen Poe, and Washington Irving, among others, which contains most of the translations from his *Orion*; *Das geistige Leben in Dänemark: Streifzüge auf den Gebieten der Kunst, Literatur, Politik und Journalistik des skandinavischen Nordens* (Berlin, 1873); and *Dichterprofile: Literaturbilder aus dem 19. Jahrhundert* (2 vols., Berlin, 1878). Not all of the avant-garde poets selected by Strodtmann achieved lasting fame, but many did become well known, thus making Strodtmann a major figure in the history of literary reception in Germany.²⁶

During a trip to Europe in 1862, James Lorimer Graham, Jr., a New York patron of the arts, became acquainted with Strodtmann's *Lieder- und Balladenbuch amerikanischer und englischer Dichter der Gegenwart* and was surprised that the collection included poems by the Americans James Russell Lowell, William Cullen Bryant, and Richard Henry Stoddard, a leading literary critic, who was represented with 12 poems. Graham immediately forwarded copies of the *Balladenbuch* to his poet friends Stoddard and Bayard Taylor, a popular travelogue author for the *New York Tribune*, and both men responded with high praise for Strodtmann's German translations. In a letter to James T. Fields, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Taylor, who was fluent in German, praised Strodtmann as "a German poet, who translates American authors better than any living man."²⁷ In Strodtmann's first letter to Graham of August 16, 1862, which undoubtedly was a response to Graham's initial correspondence, Strodtmann thanked Graham for his kind words and asked for his help in securing poetry and critical literary essays from American poets for the new literary journal, *Orion*, that he would begin editing and publishing in 1863 with Hoffmann and Campe in Hamburg. Strodtmann's letter was noteworthy also because it revealed his extensive knowledge of the current American literary scene. Through Graham, Strodtmann received more new works by contemporary American poets than he could translate, and he developed long-lasting friendships with Stoddard, Taylor, and Edmund Clarence Stedman, who was known as a "banker-poet" because he was a New York stockbroker by profession. Strodtmann regularly asked them for recommendations of works by contemporary American poets, especially those who wrote about the Civil War, since this was a topic which interested

many Europeans.²⁸

In a letter to Bayard Taylor of April 23, 1863, and one to Graham of July 4, 1863, Strodtmann mentioned that he was sending them some of his poems as well as a copy of *Lothar: Zeitarabesken*, which he described as a poetical autobiography of his youth with “a few successful passages,” but otherwise not of much value. He added, however, that they might be interested to know that he had modeled the character of August in *Lothar* on his friend Carl Schurz, the liberator of Gottfried Kinkel and now a brigadier general in the Union Army.²⁹ Even though Strodtmann and Schurz may not have been in contact with each other, Strodtmann was aware of what Schurz was doing in America.

Strodtmann’s major contribution to German literary scholarship was the publication of the first critical edition of Heinrich Heine’s *Werke* (21 vols., Hamburg, 1861-66) and his well-received two-volume biography of *Heinrich Heines Leben und Werke* (Berlin, 1867), which went through three editions and which Schurz mentioned in his *Reminiscences*. Strodtmann concluded his Heine research with a more personal analysis, entitled *Immortellen Heinrich Heines: Mit dem Titelbilde Heinrich Heines Grab* (Berlin, 1870), in which he summarized Heine’s views on such topics as death and immortality, religion and philosophy, and love and marriage. Strodtmann’s next large project was the publication of a four-volume edition of *Briefe von und an Gottfried August Bürger: Ein Beitrag zur Literaturgeschichte seiner Zeit* (Berlin, 1874).³⁰

We know little of Strodtmann’s personal life after he returned to Germany in 1856 or to what extent this former revolutionary later moderated his political views. After settling in Hamburg, he married Johanne Louise Henriette Steinhoff, whom he referred to as Henni, his young wife, in letters to James Lorimer Graham, Jr. In a lengthy postscript to Strodtmann’s letter to Graham of March 9, 1869, Henni mentioned how busy they were with the Heine biography, and that her husband would dictate to her his translation of a long Danish novel that he was working on.³¹ Henni clearly was an enormous help to her husband, who often admitted in his letters that he was “mit Arbeiten bis zum Erdrücken überhäuft.”³² In 1871 the Strodtmanns moved to Steglitz near Berlin, where they built a small villa with a large garden. Here Strodtmann continued to pursue both his journalistic career and his literary endeavors and translating. After living in Steglitz for about five years, the Strodtmanns ended their marriage, and both remarried. According to Berlin marriage records Strodtmann married Agnes Sidonie Selma Reichenbach on his forty-seventh birthday, March 24, 1876, and on July 29, 1876, Henni Strodtmann married Georg Brandes, the Danish literary historian and critic.³³ Strodtmann and his first wife Henni obviously knew Brandes well, since he had authorized Strodtmann to produce the German translations of

the first four volumes of his seminal work on European literary movements of the nineteenth century, *Die Hauptströmungen der Literatur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts: Vorlesungen, gehalten an der Kopenhagener Universität* (Berlin, 1872-76), which were published almost simultaneously with the original volumes.³⁴ When Brandes was not selected for the open position of professor of aesthetics at the University of Copenhagen and after his marriage to Henni Strodtmann, he moved to Berlin in 1877. After living there for the next six years, he and Henni, who now went by the name of “Gerda,” moved back to Copenhagen, but he was not appointed to a professorship at the University of Copenhagen until 1902.³⁵

The sheer volume of Strodtmann’s writings, translations, and editorial projects testifies to the fact that he enjoyed an active and productive intellectual life while supporting himself as a journalist during the years after he had returned to Germany. In a letter to James Lorimer Graham, Jr. of February 17, 1863, Strodtmann pointed out how difficult it was to have poetry published in Germany and that he would not be able to pursue his favorite activity of translating poetry into German if he did not have work that was more profitable:

Gedichte werden in Deutschland von den Verlegern sehr schlecht bezahlt; für Übersetzungen fremder Gedichte ist selten überhaupt ein Verleger zu gewinnen. Mein “Lieder-und Balladenbuch” wurde von mehr als zwanzig der renommiertesten Buchhändler abgewiesen, obschon ich zuletzt auf jedes Honorar versichtete, bis endlich nach fünf Jahren vergeblicher Mühe Herr Campe sich erbot, den Verlag zu übernehmen und mir vierzig Thaler für eine Arbeit zu zahlen, die mit so viel Aufwand von Zeit und Sorgfalt vollendet war. Das hat mich nicht eben entmuthigt, denn—wie Sie sehen—ich fahre fort, in meinen Mussestunden werthvolle Perlen der amerikanischen Literatur meinem Volke bekannt zu machen; aber ich darf mir nicht verhehlen, dass jede andre Arbeit besser bezahlt wird als diese! Ich kann daher nur selten einmal Nachts an solche Lieblingsbeschäftigung gehn, wenn ich nicht einträglichere Arbeiten versäumen will, die mir das tägliche Brot verschaffen.³⁶

While Schurz and Strodtmann both suffered from failed business ventures in America, Schurz had the good fortune that he could rely on the substantial inheritance of his wife to support his family during the first years, and he successfully supplemented his income by writing articles for newspapers, lecturing, selling insurance, and working as a land agent, notary, and lawyer. Later, when he was in government service, he had a regular income and did

not have to worry about his finances.³⁷

Unlike Schurz, Strodtmann had a more difficult time financially once the funds from his father were exhausted, and after he was forced to close his bookstore and publishing business in Philadelphia, he tried to survive by producing translations and by writing articles for German-American newspapers in New York City. In a letter of December 29, 1862, to Robert Taylor, Strodtmann wrote about the difficulties he endured during his four years in America and especially his inability to establish contact with contemporary poets and authors there. He wrote that he often did not know how he would survive from one day to the next and that he was so discouraged by his lack of recognition and his precarious existence that he hid out on a farm in the remote west, without indicating exactly where. He admitted that he was not suited as a businessman, and that his future as a correspondent was put into question when owners of German-American newspapers informed him that there was no place for a reporter who could not be a political hack or one who was too educated to be able to write for the masses. As Strodtmann explained in this letter, he felt he had no other option but to return to his homeland to escape the hopeless circumstances that he found himself faced with in America:

Aber das Unglück hatte mich gebeugt und entmuthigt, ich befand mich Jahre hindurch in der traurigen Lage, heute kaum zu wissen, wovon ich morgen leben sollte, und in so verzweiflungsvoller Stimmung vermied ich lieber aus Stolz jeden Umgang und verbarg auf einer Farm im entlegenen Westen meine hoffnungslose Existenz. Was sollte auch ein Dichter in Amerika beginnen? Ich hatte die Heimat verlassen, weil ich den politischen Druck nicht länger ertrug. Zum Geschäftsmann taugte ich nicht, und die Eigenthümer deutsch-amerikanischer Zeitungen erklärten mir offen, dass ein Mensch, der sich nicht zum Karrengaul der Partei hergeben wolle und zu gebildet sei, um für den rohen Geschmack der Masse zu schreiben, bei ihnen keinen Platz finden könne. So blieb mir zuletzt Nichts übrig, als Tag für Tag 16 Stunden lang Lippard'sche Romane zu übersetzen, um wenigsten nicht Hungers zu sterben.³⁸

Apparently the grind of sixteen-hour days translating the second-rate novels of George Lippard (1822-54), a contemporary American author who was popular with the working class, was the final blow, and Strodtmann returned to Germany.

Strodtmann provided another view of the four years he had spent in America in his humorous essay "Aus meinen amerikanischen Erinnerungen,"

which appeared in the feuilleton section of the *Westböhmisches Zeitung* in 1877. At the beginning of the piece he reminisced about his days in Philadelphia as publisher of *Die Locomotive* and the humor he exposed in the foibles and weaknesses of recent immigrants from Germany in that magazine:

Zu Anfang der fünfziger Jahre gab ich in Philadelphia ein illustriertes Unterhaltungsblatt: "Die Lokomotive," heraus, dass in seinem humoristischen Theile sich besonders die Thorheiten und Schwächen der deutschen Einwanderer zur Zielscheibe seiner meist harmlosen Witze nahm.³⁹

Strodtmann recalled that when he had to travel to New York City on business, his favorite place to stay was the Hotel Konstanz at 218 William Street, located in a part of the city with a lot of German taverns. It was also the favorite hotel for a number of eccentric guests, including German political refugees and newly arrived immigrants. Among this group was an architect, who had caught a strange fever in Texas and who had drawn up plans for the complete reorganization of New York City, including its transportation network; a good-natured Swabian farmer, who railed against the princes and their families back in Germany and wondered what would become of them in the next revolution; an aristocratic gentleman, who after the failed revolution turned his attention to developing a new system for musical notation that unfortunately was rejected by all the music publishers; and a poor law student from the University of Bonn with a face covered with dueling scars, who every evening consumed large quantities of beer, and who for a pittance wrote speeches for a member of Congress that helped the latter raise a lot of money. The strangest fellow of the group was a well-educated, old lawyer from a small Thuringian city, who insisted upon being addressed as "Herr Professor," and who had been forced to flee Germany after the Revolution of 1848 for making what was considered a treasonous speech. He viewed everything in America as horrible, and at the breakfast table he delighted in presenting all the country's bad news of the day to the newly arrived German immigrants, who naively thought they had come to the land of boundless opportunities and equality to make their fortunes. The lawyer also had published a humorous magazine in Germany in which he portrayed the experiences of a German immigrant in America in the most dismal light and now contributed articles to Strodtmann's *Die Locomotive*. The sixth lodger was a lathe operator from Cologne by the name of Schlechter, who shortly after his arrival placed an ad in verse in the New York City *Demokrat* announcing that he was open for business and ready to sell his wares, and customers could reach him at the

Hotel Konstanz. This motivated the old lawyer to write a humorous poem about him, which Strodtmann published in the next issue of his magazine. Schlechter became disillusioned with life in America when he was unable to sell his goods and eventually returned to Germany.⁴⁰

It is a mystery why, in spite of the close friendship of Schurz and Strodtmann dating back to their student days in Bonn, the two apparently did not remain in contact after Strodtmann moved back to Germany. Schurz chronicled their friendship in his *Reminiscences* and described him as

. . . a most sincere and honest enthusiast; of almost childlike ingenuousness in his views of men, things, and events; in high degree capable of self-sacrifice and open to generous and noble impulses. His gifts as well as his inclinations made him devote himself to literature. His verses, which he produced in great profusion and with uncommon facility, excelled less by originality of thought or fancy, than by an abundant and superb flow of poetical expression. It was largely owing to this talent that he subsequently wrote some admirable translations of French, English and Danish poetry and prose.⁴¹

There is no correspondence between Schurz and Strodtmann, and there are no indications that Schurz visited him on his many trips back to Germany, even though he spent time in Hamburg and Berlin. There is also no record that Strodtmann ever visited the United States again after his return to Germany. It is possible that the interests of the two men diverged after the once fiery young Strodtmann returned to his homeland and began to focus his energies on writing, translating, and earning a living, while the equally outspoken Schurz pursued a political career and was concerned with providing for his family. Whereas Schurz remained a sharp critic of government policies or politicians he did not agree with, Strodtmann was more moderate in expressing his political views and certainly less engaged in politics than he was as a student. However, as noted above, Schurz was aware of Strodtmann's literary work and translations in Germany, and Strodtmann at the same time was cognizant of Schurz's political activities and military service in the United States.

While today Strodtmann is viewed as a minor literary figure, he played a significant role in the reception of American literature in Germany during the last half of the nineteenth century. His knowledge of the literary scene in the United States was aided greatly by such people as James Lorimer Graham, Jr., Bayard Taylor, Richard Henry Stoddard, and Edmund Clarence Stedman,

who kept him current on the American literary landscape, supplied him with recent literary publications, recommended up-and-coming literary figures, and also sent him their own poetical works.⁴²

Adolf Heinrich Strodtmann died of a kidney ailment in Steglitz on March 17, 1879, only a week before his fiftieth birthday. His obituary in the *Gartenlaube* praised him for fighting for a free and unified Germany; for his poetry and literary publications, especially his complete edition of Heine's works and literary histories; and for his skill at translating poetry and prose from English, French, and Danish, calling him an "Übersetzungskünstler."⁴³ The obituary in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* cited Strodtmann's biography of Heine as one of his best-known works and called attention to two publications from his time in Philadelphia: his translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and his humorous magazine, *Die Locomotive*, which it described as "one of the earliest publications of the kind on this side of the water, and certainly the first attempt to imitate in German the London *Punch* and the Berlin *Kladderadatsch*."⁴⁴ Three weeks after his death, the St. Louis *Anzeiger des Westens* published a short obituary that referred to Strodtmann as a prominent figure in the field of contemporary German literature and that lauded his biography of Heine, the edition of Gottfried August Bürger's correspondence, and his many literary translations.⁴⁵ It is unfortunate, as Eugene F. Timpe has pointed out, that Adolf Heinrich Strodtmann's significant contributions to promoting the literary and cultural relations between Germany and America were long overlooked and have only recently been recognized.⁴⁶

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Notes

¹ Carl J. Friedrich, "The European Background," in *The Forty-Eighters: Political Refugees of the German Revolution of 1848*, ed. A. E. Zucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 24; see also Lawrence S. Thompson and Frank X. Braun, "The Forty-Eighters in Politics," *The Forty-Eighters*, 151. A. E. Zucker did not include Adolf Heinrich Strodtmann in his "Biographical Dictionary of the Forty-Eighters," in *The Forty-Eighters*, 268-357, with Forty-Eighters who eventually returned to German, e.g., Carl Daenzer, Friedrich Kapp, Gustav Struve, Johannes Gambs, Theodor Olshausen, and Otto Ruppis.

² Ludwig Fränkel, "Strodtmann, Adolf," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (1893), 605-11, <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd119156040.html>; Reinhard Müller, "Strodtmann, Adolf," *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon: Biographisch-bibliographisches Handbuch*, 3rd ed., vol. 21 (Zürich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 1968), 84-86; Robert E. Ward, *A Bio-Bibliography of German-American Writers, 1670-1970* (White Plains, NY: Kraus International Publications, 1985), 295; Walter Killy and Rudolf Vierhaus, eds., *Dictionary of German Biography*, vol. 9 (Munich: K. G. Saur, 2005): 610; Andrew M Kavalecs, "James Lorimer Graham, Jr.: Fosterer of American-German Literary Relations" in *Anglo-German and American German Crosscurrents*,

vol. 4, ed. Arthur O. Lewis, W. La Kopp, and Edward J. Danis (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 115. For Carl Schurz's memories of Strodtmann, see Carl Schurz, *Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, vols. 1 and 2 (New York: McClure Company, 1907–08), I:94, 131–32, 241–42, 250, 342ff, 353–54, 393; II:9. Strodtmann originally spelled his first name with “ph” (“Adolph”), but then changed it to “Adolf.”

³ Carl Schurz, *Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, 3 vols. (New York: McClure Company, 1907–08), were published posthumously by his children. Volume 1 covers the years from his birth in 1829 to his arrival with his wife in the United States in 1852. Volume 2 deals with their first ten years in America, including the move to Wisconsin. Schurz was only able to bring Volume 3 up to the Grant administration before his death. At the request of his children, Frederic Bancroft, a close friend of Schurz, and William A. Dunning, a professor at Columbia University, added a concluding section consisting of seven chapters that detail his career in the U.S. Senate and professional work after leaving government service. Although proficient in English, Schurz wrote the first volume in German because he felt he could best express his experiences in Germany in German. Volume 1 was then translated into English by Eleonora Kinnicutt. The German version of the *Reminiscences* was published as *Lebenserinnerungen*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1907, 1912). Volume 2 of this edition incorporates the first part of Volume 3 of the *Reminiscences* written by Schurz; and Volume 3 of the *Lebenserinnerungen*, published five years after the first two volumes appeared, contains 187 letters selected by his daughter, Agathe Schurz, and a history of Schurz's political career, “Carl Schurz' politische Laufbahn: 1869–1906,” by Bancroft and Dunning that was translated into German by Max Blau. A selection of Schurz's speeches and letters was published by Frederic Bancroft, ed., *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 6 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913). According to Schurz the Franconia was the most distinguished student society of his day, and some of its members achieved fame, e.g., Johannes Overbeck (archeology), Julius Schmidt (astronomy), Carl Otto Weber (medicine), Ludwig Meyer (professor at University of Göttingen), Friedrich Spielhagen (novelist), and Strodtmann (Heine biographer and translator of English, French, and Danish literature); see Schurz, *Reminiscences*, 1:94–95.

⁴ Schurz, *Reminiscences*, 1:94–95, 130–33, 246–50; Hans L. Trefousse, *Carl Schurz: A Biography* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 28–30; Fränkel, 606.

⁵ Hermann Heinrich Becker (1820–85), also known as “Red Becker” because of his red hair and beard, published a democratic newspaper in Cologne and was the city's mayor from 1875 to 1885. He protected Schurz during the latter's secret visit to Cologne. As a member of the German Progress Party, Germany's first modern political party, he served in the Reichstag.

⁶ Schurz, *Reminiscences*, 1:217–46; Trefousse, 26–29.

⁷ Schurz, *Reminiscences*, 1:250–56, 274–76, 283–341; Joseph Schafer, *Carl Schurz: Militant Liberal* (Evansville, WI: Antes Press, 1930), 59; Joseph Schafer, *Intimate Letters of Carl Schurz 1841–1869* (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1929), 71–75, 84–85; Trefousse, 28–36; Chester Verne Easum, *The Americanization of Carl Schurz* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), 35–42, 57–58; Claude M. Fuess, *Carl Schurz: Reformer* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1932), 28–29.

⁸ Schurz, *Reminiscences*, 1:342–47; Trefousse, 37.

⁹ The assignment in the South refers to President Andrew Johnson's request that Schurz do an inspection tour of the Southern states, which resulted in his “Report on the Conditions of the South” (1865). Schurz became U.S. senator from Missouri in 1869.

¹⁰ Schurz, *Reminiscences*, 1:353–56; Trefousse, 153, 164. Schurz's daughter Emmy Savannah Schurz was born on December 30, 1864, in Bethlehem, PA, and died in Detroit, MI, on March 30, 1867.

¹¹ Schurz, *Reminiscences*, 1:357–62; Trefousse, 37–38; Fränkel, 605–6.

¹² Schurz, *Reminiscences*, 1:400–6; Trefousse, 40–44.

¹³ Schurz, *Reminiscences*, 2:9; Trefousse, 46; Easum, 57; Fuess, 42.

¹⁴ Fränkel, 607.

¹⁵ A digitized copy of *Die Locomotive* is available online through the New York Public Library, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/f98930f0-15e2-0132-e29a-58d385a7bbd0>; see *Die Locomotive*, 1 (1853):2-3.

¹⁶ The Low German folktale of the hare and the hedgehog was first published by Wilhelm Schroeder in the *Hannoversches Volksblatt* in 1840 and then was reprinted by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in the fifth edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1843).

¹⁷ Heine's "Die Götter im Exil" appeared in issues 1-5 and 7-11 of *Die Locomotive*; Strodtmann's "Die Taube von Erie" in issues 2-5; Gerstäcker's "Die Flußpiraten. . ." in issues 27-31; "Dat Wertloopen. . ." in issue 7; and Strodtmann's "Humoristische Freischärler-Fahrt. . ." in issues 18-24.

¹⁸ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Onkel Tom's Hütte; oder Leben unter den Verstoßenen*, frei bearbeitet von Adolf Strodtmann (Philadelphia: F. W. Thomas, 1853, 1864). A second German translation of the novel was published in America by H. R. Hutton, trans., *Oheim Tom's Hütte, oder das Leben bei den Niedrigen* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1853). Grace Edith MacLean, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in *Germany*, *Americana Germanica*, no. 10 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1910), 29-30, 36. According to MacLean, the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852 received an enthusiastic reception in Germany; thirteen German translations of the novel were published in 1852 and seventeen in 1853; see Chapter 2 "German Translations," 22-35.

¹⁹ Melissa J. Homestead, "'When I Can Read My Title Clear': Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Stowe v. Thomas Copyright Infringement Case," in *Prospects: An Annual of American Cultural Studies* 21 (2002): 201-45. See Fränkel, 606.

²⁰ After William I of Prussia succeeded to the throne on January 2, 1861, he declared a general amnesty for those found guilty of political offenses, except for those convicted by military courts; see *New York Times*, February 2, 1861, p. 2. This meant that Gottfried Kinkel, who was tried by a military tribunal, had to wait until 1866 to receive amnesty; see Schurz, I:325.

²¹ Fränkel, 607; Kavalecs, 136-39. Strodtmann published his experiences as a war correspondent in 1870-71 in *Alldeutschland, in Frankreich hinein! Kriegserinnerungen*, 2 vols. (Berlin: A. Dunckers Buch-Verlag, 1871).

²² Trefousse, 54-55; Schafer, *Schurz*, 91; Easum, 101-04; Charles J. Wallman, *The German-Speaking Forty-Eighters: Builders of Watertown, Wisconsin* (Madison: WI: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, University of Wisconsin, 1992), 26. Strodtmann mentions the dates of his stay in America in a letter to Graham reprinted by Kavalecs, 118. There are a total of eighteen letters from Strodtmann to Graham in the Allison-Shelley Collection at the Pennsylvania State University Library. For an overview of the years that the Schurzes lived in Watertown, Wisconsin, see William E. Petig, "Carl and Margarethe Schurz: Their Years in Watertown, Wisconsin," in *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 51 (2016): 28-81.

²³ Fränkel, 608-9; Edward J. Danis, "Adolf Strodtmann's Letters to Bayard Taylor: A Further Fostering of German-American Literary Relations," in *Anglo-German and American-German Crosscurrents*, vol. 4, ed. Arthur O. Lewis, W. LaMarr Kopp, and Edward J. Danis (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 156-57. Danis published Strodtmann's letters to Taylor here for the first time. The letters are located in the Allison-Shelley Collection at the Pennsylvania State University Library.

²⁴ Fränkel, 609-10; Eugene F. Timpe, "Adolf Strodtmann: Eine verspätete Anerkennung," *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 21, 3 (1971): 27.

²⁵ There is currently no bibliography of Adolf Heinrich Strodtmann's complete works.

²⁶ Fränkel, 609-10; Timpe, "Adolf Strodtmann," 27. See also Eugene F. Timpe, "The Reception of American Literature in Germany, 1861-1871" (Ph.D. diss., University of

Southern California, 1961), 1-19, and Eugene F. Timpe, *American Literature in Germany, 1861-1872*, University of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature, no. 35 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964).

²⁷ Kavalecs, 122, quote from Taylor's letter to James T. Fields as cited in Marie Hansen-Taylor and Horace E. Scudder, *Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1885), 1:404.

²⁸ Kavalecs, 116-20. James Lorimer Graham, Jr., born in New York City on January 21, 1835, worked as editor of *Putnam's Magazine* and was appointed U.S. consul general in Florence, Italy, where he died on June 30, 1876. He left his extensive library of books, rare manuscripts, and autograph collection to the Century Association of New York City. Bayard Taylor was born on January 11, 1825, in Kennett Square, PA, and died on December 19, 1878, in Berlin, only several months after arriving as United States Minister to Prussia. In addition to his poetry, he published many popular travelogues in the *New York Tribune* and two novels, which were translated into German by his German-born wife. He was especially well known for his English translation of J. W. von Goethe's *Faust* (1870-71), which remained in print for almost a hundred years. Richard Henry Stoddard, who was born on July 2, 1825, in Hingham, MA, and died in New York City on May 12, 1903, worked as a literary critic for the *New York World* and became well known for his poetry. Edmund Clarence Stedman was born on October 8, 1833, in Hartford, CT, and died in New York City on January 18, 1908. For four years he worked for the *New York World* and reported on the Civil War, but eventually he became a broker on the New York Stock Exchange. In addition to his poetry, he is known as an editor of Poe, Landor, and Dobson and his anthologies of American and Victorian literature.

²⁹ Danis, 156-58; Kavalecs, 130-31. Strodtmann published *Lothar: Zeitarabesken* in his own publishing house in Philadelphia in 1853.

³⁰ Fränkel, 610-11. Schurz, *Reminiscences*, 1:94.

³¹ Danis, 136-37.

³² Danis, 157-58, quoted from letter of April 23, 1863, to Bayard Taylor; see also the same sentiment expressed in letters of July 4 and 29, and August 22, 1863, to Taylor on pp. 161 and 164.

³³ For Strodtmann's marriage registration, see Berlin, Germany Marriages, 1874-1936, www.ancestrylibrary.com. For information on Henni Strodtmann and Georg Brandes, see website for the Braengaard and Heilesen families, <http://www.heilesen.dk/gen/getperson.php?personID=I5721&tree=tree1>.

³⁴ The four volumes that make up Brandes' *Die Hauptströmungen der Literatur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* are: 1. *Die Emigranten Literatur* (1872), 2. *Die romantische Schule in Deutschland* (1873), 3. *Die Reaktion in Frankreich* (1873), and 4. *Der Naturalismus in England* (1876). After Strodtmann's death Brandes wanted to issue a revised version of Strodtmann's authorized translation of his work, but he lost the lawsuit when it was found that he had copied hundreds of pages of Strodtmann's translation; see Fränkel, 608.

³⁵ "Brandes, Georg," *Encyclopedia.com.*, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/brandes-georg>.

³⁶ Kavalecs, 127-28.

³⁷ For an overview of Schurz's finances, see Petig, 12-14.

³⁸ Danis, 152-53.

³⁹ Adolf Strodtmann, "Aus meinen amerikanischen Erinnerungen," *Westböhmisches Zeitung, Wochenblatt und Lokalanzeiger für Eger*, September 20, 1877, feuilleton sec.

⁴⁰ Adolf Strodtmann, "Aus meinen amerikanischen Erinnerungen."

⁴¹ Schurz, *Reminiscences*, 1:132-33.

⁴² Kavalecs, 120-47.

⁴³ Johannes Proelß, "Adolf Strodtmann todt," *Die Gartenlaube* 27 (1879): 258-59.

⁴⁴ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 1, 1879. The obituary incorrectly states that Strodtmann arrived in America in 1849; the correct date is summer 1852.

⁴⁵ *Anzeiger des Westens*, April 9, 1879.

⁴⁶ Timpe, "Adolf Strodtmann: Eine verspätete Anerkennung," 26-27.