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THE AMERICAN IMAGE OF GERMANY
SET FORTH IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY
TRAVEL BOOKS

DISSERTATION
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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CHAPTER I

THE DISCOVERY OF GERMANY IN THE 1820'S AND THE FORMATION OF THE AMERICAN IMAGE OF GERMANY

The travel books in which Americans of all degrees set down their views of nineteenth-century Germany have long been neglected--and regrettably so. For, while most of them lack literary merit, these books demand attention because they promulgated remarkably unanimous responses to German politics, manners, customs, and morals and thus gave rise to distinct patterns of American attitudes toward Germany. To trace these patterns from their origin in the mid-1820's until about 1900 is the main purpose of this study.

The power of travel books to form and to direct public opinion derived from the vogue of travel and from the popularity of travel writings. Lectures on travel belonged to the stock in trade of the lyceum. Serialized travel letters of "foreign correspondents" entertained and instructed readers of newspapers and magazines all
over America. Travel books, many of which were but collections of such serials, sold by the tens of thousands. Many appeared in reprint after reprint and remained in demand for years, and even decades, though most of them are now forgotten. Like other travel writings, many books wholly or partly on Germany were read by generations of Americans and left a deep impression upon the public mind.

Apart from their significance as an index of American opinion of Germany, these books are of considerable interest because they reflect the image which Americans abroad cherished of their own country. Almost invariably, travel writers assured their readers of their loyalty to America; and yet, in looking back from their German point of vantage, some of them questioned and even criticized certain aspects of American manners, morals and institutions. Besides, as I will show by W.D. Howells' *Their Silver Wedding Journey*, many of these books do deserve notice in literary history. They provided the background against which authors like Irving, Cooper, Longfellow, Melville, Howells, and even Twain set up images of
foreign countries, in a significant form somewhere between travel writing and fiction.

The opening pages of this study afford a glance at the flourishing cultural relations between Colonial America and Germany and at the debt owed by the young republic to German scholarship and literature. This background information suggests the following three basic facts, which justify my undertaking this study. First of all although a few Americans were familiar with German thought and letters, this country did not gain first-hand knowledge of Germany until the early nineteenth century. Second, neither the early interest in German Protestantism, philosophy, and literature nor the much later influence of German-trained teachers and scholars accounted for the forming of conventional American attitudes toward Germany. Finally, notwithstanding wide interest in other cultural contacts between the two countries, scholars so far have virtually ignored the travel literature that shaped these patterns in the nineteenth century.

The main purpose of this first chapter is to describe the conditions that produced and helped spread
patterns of American attitudes toward Germany. Accordingly, this chapter presents various facts about the beginnings of American travel in Germany and about the writings concerning this travel. It describes the surge of interest in Germany which justifies our speaking of the "discovery" of Germany early in the nineteenth century. It also includes factual information about the improvements in the means of travel, about travel time, fares, and routes, and about the familiarity with Germany which resulted from the sudden American concern with that hitherto "unknown" country during the second quarter of the century. This chapter also introduces the travelers whose writings are the subject of this study, describes the origins and circumstances of publication of these books, and, finally, explains the popularity of travel writings during the nineteenth century. Besides being important to this study, all of these facts deserve attention because they are bits of cultural history in their own right. To the best of my knowledge, they have never been presented elsewhere, perhaps because many of the travel books that I consulted are not really available.
The German influence on America in various areas has long been recognized. Yet, contrary to the traditional view, German-American cultural relations flourished long before Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* (1813) stirred a group of young Harvard graduates to go to German universities. The influence reaches back to the seventeenth century, when a multitude of German books and papers crossed the Atlantic. Many of these, we know, could be found in the libraries of John Winthrop, Jr. and of the Mathers, and Cotton Mather even carried on an extended correspondence with a number of German Protestant leaders, among them August Hermann Francke, the great Pietist.¹ The German influence was, moreover, by no means limited to religious thought. Pufendorf's *De Jure Naturae et Gentium* (1672), for example, became one of the chief sources of eighteenth-century conceptions of natural law, and thus of American democracy.²


²Ibid., p. 46.
It is true, however, that American interest in Germany surged in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Madame de Stael's book reached America just at the right moment: the strong desire of men like Jefferson to raise the standards of higher education, by learning whatever lessons could be learned from Europe; the apparent consolidation of Europe after the Peace of Paris (1815); and the rapid improvement in trans-Atlantic communications—all encouraged a group of young Americans to enroll in German universities, and above all at Göttingen. The story of some of these men has been told by O.W. Long in his Literary Pioneers (1935).3 Men like Ticknor, Cogswell, Bancroft—to name but a few—returned to teach and apply in America the method they had learned in Germany. Ticknor became the chief founder of the Boston Public Library. Cogswell reorganized the Harvard Library and planned and reorganized the Astor (later New York Public)

Library. Bancroft, with Prescott, Parkman, and others, reoriented American historiography according to the scientific, or philosophical, method of the Germans. His *History of the United States* (1834-1874) was widely acclaimed upon its publication and still is the most popular of the older American histories. These "literary pioneers" as well as other early American students in Germany—such as Robert Bridges Patton, George Henry Calvert, William Emerson, elder brother of Ralph Waldo, Henry Edwin Dwight, Henry Boynton Smith, and James Eliot Cabot—set an example for thousands of others. The effect which the ensuing pilgrimage to Germany exerted on American thought can hardly be measured. By the end of the century, as H.A. Pochmann has pointed out, "upwards of ten thousand Americans had studied in Germany, and . . . of the first 225 of these, 137 became professors in American colleges and universities."\(^4\)

Following German example, American universities

\(^4\)Pochmann, p. 77.
introduced the elective system, encouraged graduate studies, adopted the seminar method of instruction, fostered the sciences, and provided room for the study of modern languages and literatures. The latter is best illustrated by Ticknor, Longfellow, and Lowell successively holding the Smith Professorship at Harvard.\textsuperscript{5} The general reorganization of the curriculum, however, made slow gains in the older universities of the East. It was the University of Michigan under President Tappan, soon followed by Cornell University under President A.D. White, that first introduced, in the fifties, the ideal conception of the German university.\textsuperscript{6} Even today American universities and scholarship testify to the early close alliance of German and American thought. The scientific method—careful research, meticulous analysis, and a willingness to follow through to conclusions indicated by data—recalls the acceptance of the method of the Germans.

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., pp. 67, 78.

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., pp. 310-311.
Germany on American universities and scholarship is the influence on literature and the arts. The impact of Goethe, though by no means limited to a single book, is most strikingly apparent in the Wertherfieber of the 1780's and 1790's: the first American printing of the early Goethe novel in 1784 precipitated nine other printings by 1809 and inspired many poetical and dramatic adaptations. 7 Besides, every student of American literature knows of the influence on Emerson of eighteenth-century German scientists and idealists, and above all of Goethe. A random survey of nineteenth-century American authors recalls the literary relations of Longfellow and Freiligrath, the real or supposed indebtedness of Irving, Poe, and Hawthorne to the German tale—to the romantics E.T.A. Hoffmann and Jean Paul Friedrich Richter. In the visual arts the German influence is exemplified by the colony of American painters in Dusseldorf, among them Emanuel Leutze (1816-1868), still widely known for his large canvas of Washington Crossing the Delaware. For fif-

7 Ibid., p. 327.
teen years, about the middle of the century, pictures of that school were on exhibition in the Düsseldorf Gallery in New York; and as one American, who saw some of them again in Düsseldorf, says, that gallery "was the best collection of pictures Americans had access to, and gave thousands their first idea of good painting." 8

While these various areas of German influence on America have received much scholarly attention, the formation of American attitudes toward Germany still requires investigation.

American reaction to Germany, one might argue, must have begun well before the nineteenth century. The first German immigrants arrived in New England as early as the 1670's, and in 1683 the Mennonites, soon followed by other Protestant sects, settled in Pennsylvania, from where they spread through the South and Middle West. 9 By the time of the Revolutionary War,


9 Pochmann, p. 3.
the number of Germans had increased considerably; the role of German settlers, mercenaries, and officers on both sides is well known. But the young republic was still predominantly Anglo-Saxon, and the number of Germans remained comparatively small. In this frontier society several thousand of one ethnic group could not have much of an impact. The distances between homesteads and towns were long, the roads arduous and hazardous, the settlements widely scattered. Most important, rural eighteenth-century Americans were too much concerned with sheer survival to care about Germany.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the first big waves of Germans reached this country, but well before then the American image of Germany was essentially fixed. From the second decade of the century on, two forces joined in shaping this image which, except for minor modifications, remained intact until the First World War. The first of these forces was the vogue of foreign travel, through which untold thousands of Americans went to Germany, formed impressions of the land and people, and conveyed them to their friends
at home. The second, and more important, force was the vogue of travel writing—more important even than travel itself because, long before going abroad, most nineteenth-century American travelers knew, and accepted, the established patterns of reaction to Germany and the Germans. These patterns owed their origin to the mass of travel books wholly or partly on Germany, many of which had previously appeared serially in newspapers or magazines.

Thus, ultimately, nineteenth-century American attitudes toward Germany and the Germans, the American image of Germany, reflected certain typical views abundantly set forth in travel writings.

While, in the beginning, most Americans were preoccupied with the problems of daily life, while the rigors of the frontier turned the attention of many Americans away from Europe, those who had the leisure and the means to travel had reason not to go abroad. The hazards of sea travel deterred all but the most venturesome from a journey across the ocean. Before the nineteenth century no American ever seems to have
gone abroad for the sake of pleasure or, more accurately, for any reason other than urgent business. Even those undaunted by the idea of a month-long voyage had little choice but to stay at home, for, six years after the Revolutionary War, the fall of the Bastille signalled a long period of unrest all over Europe, and for the next twenty-five years a succession of wars shook the continent, with reverberations even in distant America.

The experiences of Benjamin Silliman, celebrated teacher of chemistry and natural history at Yale, illustrate the frustrations that must have beset travelers like him in the age of Napoleon. In 1805 Professor Silliman went abroad, mainly in order to buy books and to gain first-hand knowledge of the state of science in Europe, but except for a sally into Holland and Belgium, he spent most of his year of travel in England and Scotland. The uncertainty of the political situation made him forgo further travel on the continent.10

Had he gone to Germany then, as he did forty-five years later, after his retirement, his impressions might have been of great consequence for the shaping of the American image of Germany. After his return home he published the record of his observations, *A Journal of Travels in England, Holland and Scotland* (1810). The book went through three successive editions, a fourth being arrested by the failure of the publisher. Like Madame de Stael's *De l'Allemagne*, Silliman's *Journal* hit the American market at just the right time and encouraged many to set out on a journey to the Old World. Long after it had gone out of print, about the middle of the century, the *Journal* was still in demand as a guidebook for would-be tourists. Thus, while circumstances had kept him away from the heart of Europe for the time being, Silliman helped quicken the interest of his countrymen in European travel and was partly responsible for the "discovery" of Germany.

*Europe had yet to live through the last convul-

*\textsuperscript{11*Ibid.*}

*\textsuperscript{12*Ibid.**}
sions of the Napoleonic era when the first American "literary pioneers," in Orle W. Long's phrase, were on their way to Germany. Two months before Waterloo, in April, 1815, George Ticknor and Edward Everett, soon followed by Joseph G. Cogswell, George Bancroft, and others, left for Gottingen. Their goal: the thorough specialized German university training which Madame de Staël and other recent writers had praised. Two years later, in September, 1817, Everett completed his studies, the first American to receive his doctorate from the University of Gottingen.

Yet for all their significance in giving new directions to American academic and intellectual life, these literary pioneers—among whom we must also count H.W. Longfellow and J.L. Motley—played a minor role in the shaping of the image of Germany. Their influence as intermediaries of German literature, thought, and scholarship can hardly be overestimated, but for several reasons it cannot be compared with the impact which the

13 Long, p. 9.
14 Ibid., p. 71.
reports of some other travelers in Germany made upon the general American reading public.

First of all, when Ticknor, Everett, and those who followed their trail returned to America, they offered the fruit of their labors abroad to a highly select company of scholars. As university and college teachers, many of them, no doubt, reached a large audience, but even so their influence remained, at least at first, limited. Everett's fifty-five page review of Goethe's Dichtung und Wahrheit in the North American Review of January, 1817, for example, ranks as a milestone in the history of German-American intellectual relations, but surely it was read by relatively few Americans.\textsuperscript{15} For the time being, the enthusiasm of these literary pioneers hardly carried beyond the college campus and the studies of the intellectual elite. Furthermore, the letters and journals of these men, through which the common reader might have formed his view of Germany and the Germans, were not published at the time. Some of these papers appeared in posthumous biographies or in

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 68,
special studies, such as James T. Hatfield's *New Light on Longfellow* (1933) and Long's *Literary Pioneers* (1935), and some remain unprinted to this day. The literature that grew out of the early contact of American authors with Germany was also relatively insignificant. It did, beyond doubt, help familiarize Americans with Germany; but it appeared too late. Besides, as guides to Germany, Cooper's *Heidenmauer* (1832), Longfellow's *Hyperion* (1839), or Motley's *Morton's Hope* (1839), for instance, can hardly compare with the factual reports of other travelers.

The first American to publish a book-length account of his travels in Germany was Henry Edwin Dwight, the youngest son of President Timothy Dwight, of Yale, and a great-grandson of Jonathan Edwards. Like other Americans before him, he went to study at Göttingen; but, unlike his predecessors, he stayed there for just three months. From November, 1825, until June, 1826, he was the first American student at the University of Berlin. Dwight's *Travels in the North of Germany in the Years 1825 and 1826* (1829) is remarkable in many ways. Its significance is reflected in the two
detailed reviews which appeared, immediately upon its publication, in the American Quarterly Review and in the North American Review. I shall refer repeatedly to this account of Dwight's travels and of his reactions to Germany and the Germans. For the moment I am primarily concerned with Dwight's role in what I have called the "discovery" of Germany.

In his "Preface" Dwight states his purpose for writing this report on Germany of some four hundred pages. "Germany," he says,

has been, until within a few years, a terra incognita to most Americans; as, during a long period our intercourse with that country ceased, and even since the peace of Paris, German literature has excited but little interest in Great Britain, the principal channel through which we have become acquainted with the intellectual and religious state of that continent.

In these letters, I have endeavoured to present a view of the religious, literary, and political institutions of northern Germany, and their influence on society. As the sects, the present state of religion, the schools, and the universities appeared to me the most striking features of Germany, I have devoted a considerable part of my work to these subjects. That they will interest the reader as much as myself I can not hope, but I trust that he will find some novelty in the sketches I have drawn; and the subjects I am confident can not be devoid of interest to an intelligent mind. If from the view which I have presented of the most inter-
esting nation on the continent [the italics are mine], the Reader should be led to study the language of Germany, he will find in its literature, sources of pleasure which will add not a little to his happiness, and in some degree lighten the burden of care and suffering from which no one is exempted.\textsuperscript{16}

The phrase in this passage which deserves special attention, because it justifies my speaking of the "discovery" of Germany, is \textit{terra incognita}. Yet, in 1829, when Dwight published his \textit{Travels}, Germany was no longer quite unknown. From 1815 on, the enthusiastic reports of the earliest American students in Germany, no doubt, joined forces with Madame de Stael's \textit{De l'Allemagne} in intensifying American interest in Germany. At any rate, shrewd American publishers quickly sensed the trend and, in exploiting the lack of copyright restrictions, followed the common practice of reprinting British books whose appeal had been tested overseas. A number of such books on Germany by British authors appeared in America in the 1820's and 1830's.

In 1825 Wells and Lilly, of Boston, reprinted, from the second Edinburgh edition, John Russell's *A Tour in Germany and Some of the Southern Provinces of the Austrian Empire, in the Years 1820, 1821, 1822*. This bulky volume of some 470 pages provides ample evidence of British familiarity with Germany. Since Russell based his report on sound, first-hand information, he could speak with authority, and since his prose reads remarkably well, it retains considerable appeal even today. Such high standards were met only infrequently by later, American books on Germany.

Even after Dwight and others had described Germany from an American point of view, there still was a market for similar books by British authors. In 1834 Harper and Brothers published a travel book with materials on Germany by Mrs. Anna Brownell Jameson (Murphy), an Irishwoman who had achieved some fame with her *Diary of an Ennuyée* (1826). Anna Jameson's *Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad* deserves mention here only because it is often referred to in later travel books by American writers and because its very publication in New York at a time when American books
on the same subject were already available seems to underscore the steadily growing American interest in travel literature during the second quarter of the century.

By the mid-1830's a travel book on Germany was no longer news from an "unknown country," but the interest of American readers in Germany, or, for that matter, in foreign travel generally, was not to wane for decades to come. The change that had occurred in the short span of fifteen or twenty years, from 1820 or 1815 until about 1835—in other words, the "discovery" of Germany—marked merely a beginning: travel books on Germany were popular immediately, and remained popular year after year. Still "a terra incognita to most Americans" in the early 1820's, Germany had become so well-known by the mid-1830's, that many authors felt obliged to apologize for pressing another book on such a well-worn subject upon the reading public. The first apology of this kind that I have seen appeared as early as 1836 in the "Advertisement to the American Edition" of another travel book by a British author, John Strang's Germany in 1831, where we read:
The vast country occupying the centre of Europe, under the general title of Germany, has been so long known in the most intimate of her political relations; her antiquities have been so accurately noted; the rise of progress of her various governments, and her institutions, have been so carefully described; and she has been traversed by the curious in so many sections of progress, that really at the first sight of a book with the word Germany as its head and front, one is inclined, with a peevish tone, to exclaim, "What more can the twaddling of travellers inform us concerning that country?" Strang's question was, of course, rhetorical. The popularity of travel books, on Germany or any other country, was phenomenal; but, as I shall try to show later on, it was not so inexplicable as Strang would have us think.

While scores of travel books on Germany appeared, and sold, year after year, more and more travelers of all classes and ages followed the trail of the literary pioneers. Except during the Civil War, the numbers of young Americans attending German universities grew steadily throughout the century. The rising enrollment figures, again, suggest the simultaneous increase in

17John Strang, Germany in 1831 (New York: Theodore Foster, 1836), pp. 5-6.
travel generally. From 1820 until 1830, an average of 5 Americans were enrolled annually. By 1840, there were 9; by 1850, 11; by 1860, 77; by 1880, 173; by 1890, 446; and by 1900, well over 500. The flow started with a mere trickle and swelled into a stream, with the sharpest increase in the decade between 1850 and 1860. Similarly, in the few years from 1850 until 1855 alone, American travel in Europe increased five-fold. By 1860 a trip to Europe was already commonplace. "By a long and perilous voyage alone," says one passionate pilgrim, Erastus E. Benedict, "can we visit the historical world, yet what increasing thousands swell the number of American travellers in Europe! A friend of mine declares he will not go, it is so vulgar. The distinction, he says, is now in staying at home." But such considerations were not typical. The lure of

18 Pochmann, p. 77.


Europe was too strong. Beginning with the Great London Exhibition, in 1851, exhibitions or World's Fairs attracted thousands of Americans, and most of these would hurry on to a quick tour of Europe, including Germany. A "moderate estimate" predicted that 50,000 would cross the ocean to see the Paris exhibition in 1878. 21 "Going to Europe?" said a friend of an Ohioan who went abroad that year, "truly it is not much of an event now." 22

This annual rush to Europe, and to Germany, depended upon fast improvements in the means of transportation. At the time of the literary pioneers, traveling in Germany was still anything but a pleasure. The highways were notoriously rough; the railroads were yet to be built. The first short line, between Nuremberg and Furth, opened in 1835. In 1825, when H.E. Dwight entered Germany, from the northwest, as did thousands


of other Americans after him, no steamboats plied the Rhine. The diligence from Cologne to Kassel took three days and three nights, without any overnight stops, to cover a distance of 140 or 150 miles. Less than twenty-five years later, all of the important railroad lines were in operation. The last link of the railroad connecting Antwerp and Cologne, for example, opened in 1843, and with it one of the most-traveled lanes of traffic into Germany. According to Thurlow Weed, who witnessed the arrival of the first train on that new line in Antwerp, from now on a traveler could "leave London in the morning and reach Dover by Railway in four hours, go over to Ostend by the steamer in eight hours, and be at Cologne, upon the Rhine, by Railway, in ten hours more." "Every year and month," said

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24 Ibid., pp. 310-311.
George P. Putnam in 1848, "... increases travelling facilities...." 26

No less important than this progress on the continent were simultaneous improvements in trans-Atlantic transportation. In 1823 George Henry Calvert, one of the first Americans at Gottingen university, crossed the Atlantic on an armed brig of 300 tons—"in his own words, "one of the British packets that plied monthly between New York and Falmouth, by way of Halifax." 27 All through the 1830's sailing vessels supplied the only scheduled service. In 1836, when G.P. Putnam first went to Europe, seven packets sailed from New York to Britain every month. 28 The institution of

26 George Palmer Putnam, A Pocket Memorandum Book during a Ten Weeks' Trip to Italy and Germany in 1847 (New York, 1848 p., 139; hereafter cited as Memorandum Book.

27 George Henry Calvert, First Years in Europe (Boston: William V. Spencer, 1866), p. 9; hereafter cited as First Years.

regular steamship service by the Cunard Royal Mail Line in 1840, marked an epoch in the history of trans-Atlantic travel. Further milestones in this development were the adoption of the screw propeller, improving on the paddle wheel, in 1850, and of the iron hull a few years later, and the first use of the compound-expansion engine in Atlantic steamers about 1870. Gradually these improvements rendered ocean journeys relatively safe and shrank the distance between the New World and the Old.

Although the first steamboats were slow, often slower than sailing vessels, Atlantic steamers soon became the most efficient means of transportation. In 1823 Calvert's tiny brig took "only" 20 days for the crossing, but under adverse conditions the passage might well have been slower; even in the 1850's a sailing vessel might take up to 4 weeks. In 1851 the 3,000-ton steamer "Baltic," on the other hand, averaged 16 passages a travel time of 10½ days.  

29 Calvert, First Years, p. 75.  
30 Weed, p. 408.
This shortening of travel time made it worth-while for more and more Americans to visit Europe, even if they could spare only two or three months. The increase in travel about the middle of the century becomes apparent from the expansion of the Cunard company. From modest beginnings, with only four vessels, in 1840, the Cunard fleet grew to 24 liners by 1867.\(^3\)\(^1\) Equally important, finally, were the rapid increase in size of ocean vessels and the corresponding increase in accommodation. Calvert's brig, for example, could carry only eight passengers.\(^3\)\(^2\) In the late 1830's a packet held 25 passengers in the cabin, and 40 in the steerage.\(^3\)\(^3\) The steamers of the 1860's accommodated between 200 and 300 passengers.\(^3\)\(^4\)


\(^{32}\)Calvert, *First Years*, p. 13.


\(^{34}\)Forney, p. 369.
While it became ever faster, safer, and more convenient, travel to and in Europe remained relatively inexpensive. By the beginning of the Civil War, the American tourist in Europe had long been a familiar figure—partly, at least, because low fares had helped to keep foreign travel within the means of many, not just of the wealthy few. In 1843, for instance, passengers caring for their own provisions could travel first-class steerage for $50, and second-class steerage for but $10. By the late 1860's, trans-Atlantic fares had risen sharply, but from then on they remained fairly constant. In 1882 round-trip first-class fare from New York to Liverpool was between $100 and $200. The general expense of a European trip depended, of course, very much upon the individual traveler. 

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35 Weed, p. 6.

36 Forney reports (p. 369) that in 1867 a first-class passage on the Cunard line "Persia" cost $155.

who, like young Bayard Taylor in 1845, enjoyed "roughing it," could go to Germany for little, and maintain themselves there for next to nothing. Others, who, like G.P. Putnam in 1847, valued certain amenities, could take a ten-week tour of Italy and Germany for about $700.\(^{38}\) As late as 1879, a young Ohioan, following the example of Bayard Taylor, went to Europe and traveled, for two years, through various countries—including Holland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Denmark, Switzerland, France, Malta, Egypt, Palestine, Turkey, Greece, England, Scotland, and Ireland—all on $750.\(^{39}\)

In the last third of the century, increasing numbers of Americans, particularly those of limited means, visited Europe on the new, economical plan devised by Thomas Cook. Beginning with a publicly advertised excursion train which carried visitors to a temperance

\(^{38}\)Putnam, Memorandum Book, p. 140.

meeting in 1841, Cook gradually expanded his business, first all over England, then over the continent and, in 1866, to the United States. In 1873 "Cook's Excursions" offered Americans an eight-week tour of Europe, including a visit to the Vienna exhibition, for $400.40

Since thousands of Americans could well afford a trip abroad, the tourists were, sometimes to the embarrassment of their countrymen, a cross-section of American society. According to one observer, these travelers included "all sorts of Americans, from the most polished and elegant gentleman to the rudest boor...."41 Little wonder that, in their comments on fellow Americans abroad, some travel authors echoed criticisms of American manners which had been voiced by some English visitors, such as Dickens and Mrs. Trollope, whose comments had elicited indignant protests. Among those who took issue


with the boorishness of some of their fellow tourists
was Curtis Guild, editor of the *Boston Commercial
Bulletin.* In his *Abroad Again; or a Fresh Foray in
Foreign Lands* (1877), Guild says:

"Foreign travel is doubtless a most valuable
instructor, and few Americans of average common
sense can travel to any extent, either at home
or abroad, without adding to their stock of
knowledge and receiving a certain amount of
practical instruction of real value. But
certainly I have met American parties abroad
as unfit for foreign travel, and who would
receive as little intellectual benefit from it,
as a student in mathematics, who has advanced
to further than simple addition, would from a
week's instruction in a calculation of loga-
rithms.

The cheap excursion system has enabled a
large number of this class of travellers to visit
Europe; and, although not for a moment denying
persons of limited means an opportunity for
foreign travel and sight-seeing which they might
never have been enabled to enjoy, yet many of
the most *outrageous* [sic] and verdant specimens of
humanity that even in our own great cities would
have excited observation from all, and even ri-
cule from the unthinking, attracted by the won-
derfully low figure of a Cook excursion ticket
to Europe and the Vienna Exposition [1873],
scraped together their three or four hundred
dollars, or withdrew it from the country savings
banks, and swarmed into the old country like
crusaders after this new Peter the Hermit, who
preached the attraction of the distant capital
to them which they were to advance upon, and
painted the journey in glowing colors. There
were men from Vermont who had never seen the
Green Mountains; from Western New York who
couldn't tell you the height of Niagara Falls;"
an Illinois farmer who had never been in a city in his life but Indianapolis, and that but twice, till he started on the European excursion trip. Great tall fellows, with mourning-clothed fingernails, who chewed tobacco and spat on the marble floors of the cathedrals, and were the very types of characters which English writers have described in their books of America as representative of our country; descriptions which may have vexed us and caused more than one to avow them to be caricatures, overdrawn sketches, or malicious representations. Yet here they were in propria persona, stalking through the Vienna Exposition, sticking their boots up on railroad-car seats, and stumbling over kneeling worshipers in St. Peter's.\textsuperscript{42}

Though longer and more outspoken than most similar passages to be found in travel books, the above is still typical. Significantly, criticism of the sort expressed in this passage was a common theme, not only in travel books but in literature, too. Its most deadly weapon was, of course, humor—ridicule of the incongruous and of the absurd. Such humor could, however, make its point only if the foibles attacked were generally recognized as such. When Howells', Twain, and Henry James, for example, caricatured a certain type of American tourist, notoriously ignorant and ill-bred, they could

\textsuperscript{42}Curtis Guild, Abroad Again; or, A Fresh Foray in Foreign Lands (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1877), pp. 19-20.
do so effectively because, I submit, even by the middle of the century, that type was well known, not only in Europe but also in America. Readers at home had been familiar with accounts of blundering, untutored American travelers long before authors like Howells, Twain, and James began to write their novels and travel fiction. The following two entertaining examples occur in a travel book by one Nicholas Murray, a New York minister, which was published in 1853:

One meets abroad with every variety of travelers, and especially from America. We are a locomotive people, loving to travel beyond any other. Our men of tact and industry make money rapidly, and spend it often lavishly and unwisely. But few Europeans travel save scholars and the aristocracy; but Americans of every grade, if they have the means, will travel, unless kept at home by some strong antagonistic influence. Hence you will meet with some of them in the Coliseum, utterly ignorant of its great history—and in St. Peter's, who see there nothing to admire—and paying a thousand francs for a modern daub, as a production of one of the great masters—and seeing nothing of art in the great frescoes of Angelo in the Sistine—and passing unnoticed the "Dying Gladiator." Hence the laughable and characteristic reply of an American merchant, on his return from Rome, when asked by a friend in Liverpool, "Well, sir, you have been in Rome, what do you think of it?"—"Not very much, sir; I think its public buildings are very sadly out of repair!"43

Much in the same vein is the following sketch:

We had as fellow-traveler down the Rhine one of these sagacious Americans. He was a general, and an ex-state senator, and a brewer, according to his own showing. He was large enough for a general, pompous enough for a senator, and there was a swelling protuberance beneath his waistcoat which might suggest the idea that he had swallowed a barrel. He slept most soundly near me as we flew along our iron way. I greatly disliked to have him lose the points of great attraction which were rapidly opening upon us and as rapidly receding. We turned a curve where a beautiful panoramic view opened up, and laying my hand upon him, I gave him a hearty shake, exclaiming, "General, what a beautiful look!" He rubbed his eyes and looked out for a moment, and as he quietly composed himself for another sleep, he replied, "I passed up this way before." After that I gave him up. He was a fit subject for staying at home, and is a fit representation of a certain class of travelers. "Were you at Naples when abroad, sir?" said I to one of our upper ten. His reply was characteristic. "I really forget, sir," said he; and, turning to one of his daughters, he asked, "were we, Sarah?" "O yes," she blushingly replied; "do you not remember Vesuvius?" But all traces even of Vesuvius seemed buried under the lava of dollars and cents. Why do such persons travel?  

Few travel writers, to be sure, were able thus to make their lesson palatable, by adding a dash of humor to their chiding. Almost all of them, however,  

44 Ibid., pp. 212-213.
expressed concern about the conduct of some of their fellow citizens abroad and urged their readers, if they ever went to Europe, to preserve their dignity and sense of propriety as representatives of America. In The Tourist in Europe (1838), George Palmer Putnam, for example, appealed to the common sense of prospective travelers:

An American, who conducts himself as a patriotic and gentlemanly American should do, has no reason to be ashamed of his name or nation. He belongs to Nature's nobility—-and to a country unequalled in extent, beauty and natural advantages, by any on earth: and he may, with reason, be proud of it. On the other hand, avoid the too frequent practice of continually referring to it by invidious comparisons, or lofty boasts. "A word to the wise." 45

Likewise typical is the following advice to tourists, which appeared in 1849:

These sketches are written for Americans: for those who intend to travel, and those who do not: the former, perhaps, nearly as numerous a class as the latter. "The Travelling English" have been, in a great degree, the cause of increased facilities for travel on the Continent; but have none the less injured the countries through which they have pursued pleasure, by the introduction of expensive and corrupting habits, and selfish and insolent manners. I should be glad to think that the

45 Putnam, Tourist, p. 6.
traveling Americans, who have already become no
inconsiderable class, will, in some measure,
remedy this evil, by setting the example for
simplicity, kindness and consideration for the
rights and feelings of others. 46

The educational significance of travel books can
hardly be overestimated. Through such writings, not
only did the common reader learn much about Europe, but
thousands of travelers oriented themselves by the reports
of those who had preceded them. Frequent references in
later travel books to Bayard Taylor and George Palmer
Putnam illustrate the authority of those masters of
the art of traveling. The very titles of many later
travel books suggest that they, in turn, were also meant
to instruct, to suggest how to make the most of a brief
trip to Europe. Eleven Weeks in Europe; and What May Be
Seen in That Time (1852), Europe in a Hurry (1852),
A Physician's Vacation; or, a Summer in Europe (1856),
A Run through Europe (1860), Ninety Days' Worth of
Europe (1861), Hints for Six Months in Europe (1869),
On the Wing through Europe (1880), A Tramp Trip; How

46 Caroline Matilda (Stansbury) Kirkland, Holidays
Abroad; or, Europe from the West (2 vols.;
to See Europe on Fifty Cents a Day (1887)—all of these and others with less obvious titles could serve as handbooks for prospective tourists.

Although the majority knew little or no German and were thus not ideally suited for their undertaking, most travel writers were more sophisticated and better educated than their fellow tourists and could, therefore, speak with some assurance and authority. While insisting that foreign travel could be an invaluable educational experience, they agreed that, on the uneducated, it was almost a total waste. In order to learn anything of value from, for example, a stay in Germany, a traveler would have to bring with him, not only some general information about the country, some knowledge of geography, of history, of literature, and of art, but—above all—a measure of humility before the testimony of the past. Proud of their institutions and of their freedom from Old-World ties, many Americans, however, found such humility hard to muster. They were more likely to shrug off any reminder of the European past and to glory in America's freedom from the "fetters of tradition." In a later chapter I shall discuss in detail
the consequences of this attitude. Moreover, even if they were well informed and otherwise ready to benefit from their travels, most Americans were handicapped by lack of time. Anxious to see as many places as they possibly could within the few weeks or months they could spend abroad, many nineteenth-century Americans were not very different from their jet-traveling descendants who rush through thirteen countries in four weeks. If such travelers chose to write about their impressions, the inevitable results of their hurry were errors in both fact and judgment.

Unlike most other tourists, most travel writers were familiar with Germany even before going there. The average tourist knew probably no more about the country than does his counterpart today. Most travel writers, on the other hand, were well informed, and many spoke of German history, geography, and literature in terms that suggested long familiarity. Many of them knew Germany so well that, even on their first trip, they greeted every crag and castle on the Rhine as though they had been old acquaintances. Their diaries and letters often preserve the pleasure of such recognition.
Most of these writers, in describing their tours along the Rhine, would mention, and even summarize, the local songs and legends, which they had known for years. Thus they would show, not necessarily that they knew German, but that they were well read and well informed.

The itinerary of such a travel writer and his private associations with the sights he saw reflect his interests and the degree of his familiarity with Germany. On his way to the Rhine, he would stop over in Aix-la-Chapelle, familiar to him as the site of a Carolingian palace and of the tomb of Charlemagne. Next he would go to Cologne, to marvel at the greatest of German Gothic cathedrals. Düsseldorf he might pass by; but he might catch a glimpse of the Academy of Art and recall the significance, for painting in America, of the Düsseldorf school. In Bonn he would enquire for the university and for Beethoven's birthplace. While passing under the Drachenfels, he would recall Byron's Don Juan; and in the shadow of the Lorelei, he would remember Heine's famous poem. The sight of the Maueturm near Bingen would bring to his mind the legend of Archbishop Hatto, as told by Southey. In Frankfort he would listen for
the footsteps of Goethe, in Worms for those of the Nibelungs, of Frederick Barbarossa, and of Luther. On a side trip to Heidelberg, he would pay homage to the old university, then climb up to the ruined castle and be impressed, like thousands of other tourists, by the size of the famous tun.

In spite of all the interest in Germany and other European countries, many Americans still held the vogue of foreign travel unpatriotic and voiced clamorous protests. For this reason, many authors went to great pains to demonstrate the advantages of foreign travel and to reassure their countrymen that the stay abroad had strengthened rather than weakened their patriotism. Erastus C. Benedict, for instance, answered familiar objections when he said, in 1860:

I rejoice in this increasing desire to visit the Old World. I see in it inevitable cultivation and instruction, which cannot come otherwise, and which, if properly gratified, must be of great value to our national character, in opening our eyes wider—in reducing our pretensions—in moderating our boasts—letting some of the gas out of our conceit and some of the hyperbole out of our vanity, and teaching us that there are other nations which are growing and prosperous, other people that are thrifty and contented, and other forms of government that secure life, liberty,
and the pursuit of happiness, to the peaceable and the good. It seems to me that no right-minded American can return from Europe and its routine—its marks of the collar [italics mine]—without an affectionate longing to greet again our free and easy shores, nor without a deepened conviction that our form of government is, beyond peradventure, the best for us—long live the Republic!—nor without being convinced that it would not be the best for the present or even the next generation of any of the great monarchical nations of Europe, even if they desired it, and that those who desire it are so small a minority that, on our own principles, they are not entitled to change their form of government for ours except by coming hither and adopting congenial institutions....

Benedict's sense of superiority concerning Europe's political condition is typical. Equally typical, with reference to Europe generally, is the phrase, "its marks of the collar." Yet, unlike most of his fellow Americans, Benedict does not consider his country's institutions a cure-all for the troubles of the Old World. American democracy, in his opinion, cannot, and should not, be exported.

Even if they avoided speculations about the success of democratic reforms in Germany, American travel authors

47 Benedict, pp. 16-17.
usually made a point of extolling their type of government. Almost all of these travelers, and especially the most outspoken Germanophiles, assured their readers that the stay abroad had reaffirmed their loyalty to their own country. The strongest argument against the foes of foreign travel was the assertion that travel in Europe was a lesson in patriotism; no American, upon his return from Europe, could help holding in higher esteem his own free institutions. That this patriotic sentiment was genuine, need not be doubted. Americans were understandably proud of their own country. At the same time, however, many authors, anticipating raised eyebrows at their praising anything foreign, emphatically declared their loyalty to and their love for America. Apparently they wished to protect themselves against any possible suspicion from their readers. Thus, Bayard Taylor again and again told both his lecture audiences and his readers that, of all the countries he had traveled in, he liked none better than America. He had, to be sure, made Germany his second home; he had a German wife and felt a close affinity for German culture. Yet he kept his loyalty to America so much beyond doubt that,
in 1878, he was appointed American minister to Berlin. Thanks to his often reiterated patriotic protestations, nobody in America ever seems to have resented the fact that, in his enthusiasm over the German victory in 1871, Taylor translated, and published in American newspapers, one of the most chauvinistic war songs against France—"Die Wacht am Rhein." 48

Since they intended not so much to entertain their readers or to take them on a vicarious tour of Germany, or of Europe, as to compare American with foreign morals, manners, and institutions, many travel writers, especially the most noteworthy among them, found themselves caught in a dilemma. How could they voice their admiration, for example, for certain German customs, for German conviviality, without inviting indignant protest from righteous readers who were wont to consider smoking, drinking, and dancing temptations of the devil? How could they praise the German university

and urge the adoption of German scientific and educational methods, admitting that America had yet much to learn from Germany, and at the same time communicate to their readers their belief in America's moral and political superiority over the Old World? As early as 1829, Henry E. Dwight, in his *Travels in the North of Germany*, saw the difficulty of his dual mission as an advocate of progress and as a patriot:

> From the remarks which have been made by me on the subject of education in Germany, as well as from my great approbation of the character of their universities, I hope you will not think that I am becoming too Germanic in my feelings, or that I have lost any of my attachment to my native land. I have, however, been too long absent from home, to use nothing but superlatives when speaking of every characteristic of our own country, or to shut my eyes upon the improvements which exist on this side of the Atlantic. We have much in which we may glory; and when looking at the future prospects of our great nation, my heart often beats with pride, and I hope with gratitude, for our own civil and religious liberty, as well as for our almost universal spirit of enterprise and religious philanthropy. But I trust that this admiration will not so dazzle my eyes, as to prevent me from seeing elsewhere the good which we do not possess, and from profiting by the view. Though we are able to teach the governments on the continent many political truths, we have yet much to learn from them in return; and peculiarly on the subject of education, before we shall attain that literary
pre-eminence which is the blessing and the glory of Germany. 49

In her Letters from Abroad to Kindred at Home (1841), Catharine Maria Sedgwick, the popular novelist, who must have known her audience, likewise made sure not to offend her patrons by seemingly unpatriotic admiration for a foreign culture. She qualified her "delightful recollections" of what she termed "the urbanity of the Germans" by the following footnote:

I cannot be understood to say, or suspected of intimating that Germany impressed me as happier than our own country of general activity, progress, and equalized prosperity. No, every American must feel, wherever he goes from home, that this is the happiest country for the general interests of humanity—the favored land; but let us remember there are some compensations to other countries—and thank God for it—and imbibe, if we can, their spirit of contentment and enjoyment. 50

Often such patriotic affirmations were full of swagger. Self-conscious and defensive about the cultural lag of their frontier society, some travelers cli-

49 Dwight, pp. 253-254
maxed their accounts of a tour abroad with flights of rhetoric. Let Europe have its past and its traditions. America was strong and young, and it was living for the present and building for the future, pushing ahead to fulfill its Manifest Destiny. The political thinking of the age, and its clichés, were thus apt to inform particularly the concluding paragraphs of many a travel book. A good example of such a blend of genuine patriotism and jingoism is the following, from Samuel S. Cox's *A Buckeye Abroad* (1852), one of the most widely read travel books of the time:

She [that is, America and, specifically, Cox's "native Buckeye State"] has not a long line of heraldry—renowned in war, and great in council; but she has yet in her midst many of her own pioneers—honest, hardy, and true—who have seen her grow in a half century from a wilderness, supporting a few Indians by its game, into a State with nearly two millions of free people, and outgrowing her old constitution, and within that time forced by the expansive spirit, and the increased prosperity of her people, to adopt a new organic law! She has not ruins and temples, basilicas and minsters; but she has great cities rising in the might of sleepless energy; and all the product of a few years. Well may the philosopher and economist wonder at the results attained by the Republic of the New World. Her progress, her civilization, her polity, her comforts and amenities of life, and her prosperity, have no parallel in the history of nations. Those who are in her midst
are not conscious of this supremacy. From the shores of the Old World one can gaze at the United States, with a full appreciation of its truth, and return to its bosom to mingle with her masses, with a citizen's pride, that no display of royalty, or glitter of rank, no monuments of past glory or evidence of present power, from the Bosphorus to the Thames, can mortify or humble. If more of our young men could see the nations of the Old World, as to whose enfranchisement from galling tyrannies the heart almost ceases to hope; if they could breathe the stifled air, which must not hear a whisper of liberalism; and then contemplate our free country, rising in the greatness of her strength and instinct with the prompting of Destiny; would there not be instilled into the hearts a warmer love and purer devotion to their native land?51

Thus the returning tourist would present, not only his image of Germany, or of Europe generally, but often also his image of America, brought into focus or redefined through the experience of foreign travel. Later on I shall return to this important effect of Germany on the American mind, on America's view of herself. Now I am mainly concerned with the stereo-

51 Samuel Sullivan Cox, A Buckeye Abroad; or, Wanderings in Europe, and in the Orient (Cincinnati: Moore, Anderson & Co., 1854), pp. 442-443. The first edition of this volume was published by George Palmer Putnam in 1852.
typed professions of patriotism and with the lapses into provincialism both of which characterize many of these travel books. If he preferred to offer more than a mere travelogue of sights and scenes, if he intended to present a balanced account of praise and blame of what he had found abroad, and if, at times, he dared invite America to follow European examples, an author had to reckon with the biases of his potential audience. In order to keep their books marketable, some authors, like the ones quoted above, put on gratuitous displays of patriotism, even at the risk of overacting their roles of apologists for America. One more example will illustrate my point. The following is the concluding paragraph of *On the Wing through Europe* (1880), by Francis Charles Sessions, President of the Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society, in Columbus, Ohio:

> If I may be pardoned, I should be glad to indulge a little local pride, and say that, in all my travels, I have not seen so prosperous and thrifty a city as my own city of Columbus, Ohio, nor, for its size, any place so attractive in public buildings of masterly design and splendid workmanship. The old State House, with its Doric style of architecture, massive and grand, is a noble structure, and if the dome were
remodeled so as to render it symmetrical with the other parts of the building, surrounding it with columns, as has been suggested, it would challenge the criticism of the world. Our Hospital for the Insane is the largest of any yet erected, and all of our public buildings--the Idiot asylum and those for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, the Ohio State University and the Penitentiary--are certainly, considering their cost, equal, for style of architecture, to any in the world, and would attract the attention of all who are competent to judge in the matter.\textsuperscript{52}

This curious example of provincialism surely demands some explanation, especially if one considers that, when he wrote this passage, Sessions, an intelligent, well-educated man, had just returned from an extensive tour which had included, not only the capitals of Europe, but also such stars of lesser magnitude as Lucerne, Geneva, Naples, Florence, Munich, and Heidelberg, to mention but a few. Even though, in 1880, Columbus may have seemed physically more attractive, at least to a native, than it does today, it is hard to take Sessions seriously. Why, then, does he pretend to place, for example, the monstrous Ohio Penitentiary on the same level of excellence with the most

\textsuperscript{52}Sessions, pp. 296-297.
famous public buildings in Europe? Sessions may, of course, simply have meant to pull his readers' legs. Whether he did so or not, he was likely to act according to very practical considerations. Like a great many other travel books, his was a collection of letters that had appeared originally in a newspaper. Not until two years after their first publication in the Daily Ohio State Journal were these letters gathered in book form. Thus, in addressing, first of all, a relatively small audience in central Ohio, Sessions was expected to sing the praise of his city and region—and, understandably he obliged. All of this would hardly be worth reflection if Sessions' situation had been unique. Yet it was not. Many travel authors first addressed provincial newspaper audiences, and, as a matter of course, they fashioned their reports according to the tastes and preferences of their readers. Such yielding to a local audience helps to explain why even sophisticated travel writers tended to lapse into provincialism.53

53Sessions must have been gratified by the reception of his book. In 1889, nine years after H.W. Derby, of Columbus, Ohio, had first put out his On the Wing through Europe, the New
A good many, perhaps surprisingly many, travel writers were professional authors, and many of them figure in literature and in the history of American civilization. To be sure, several of the most celebrated authors who were at home in German literature and thought never went to Germany, even though they traveled in Europe. Like many other Americans then and now, Emerson, Hawthorne, and Melville found the lure of Italy and France irresistible; their interest in Germany, however, was literary and intellectual. Yet, William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, and a few others belong here because they, as I pointed out before,

York firm of Welch and Fracker published a third edition. The need for a third edition seems to suggest that, though originally Sessions' book addressed a small regional audience, it was also of interest to readers outside of Ohio. Thus, with respect to its successive places of publication, Sessions' *On the Wing* contrasts with Cox's *A Buckeye Abroad*. First published by G.P. Putnam in New York (1852), the latter went through several editions in Ohio. One of these was brought out by Moore, Anderson & Co. in Cincinnati (1854), and the seventh, and last, by Follett, Foster & Co. in Columbus (1859). Apparently, Cox's report remained a favorite among Ohioans long after it had lost its market elsewhere in the nation.
relied on their experience abroad, in writing books that combined elements of travel literature and of fiction. Quite a few other tourists were hardly less well known than these. Among them were a number of popular novelists, essayists, and journalists of the day, such as Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Nathaniel Parker Willis, Caroline Stansbury Kirkland, John William De-Forest, Helen Hunt Jackson, Francis Richard Stockton, and Louise Chandler Moulton, and humorists like Richard Malcolm Johnston and David Ross Locke ("Petroleum V. Nasby"). Apart from all of these, one deserves special mention: George Henry Calvert, who, as the first American biographer of Goethe, as critic, and as translator, played, in H.A. Pochmann's words, "a commanding role in the introduction of German literature" to America.\(^5\) The most influential, because he wrote more books on Germany and was more widely read than anyone else, was, however, Bayard Taylor, whose long familiarity with the country made him an authority on German culture.

\(^5\) Pochmann, pp. 334-335.
Professional authors were, of course, not the only travel writers with a national reputation. Equally prominent were a number of publishers, among them George Palmer Putnam, of Wiley and Putnam, and Peter Carpenter Baker, of Baker and Godwin, and editors, such as William Cullen Bryant, of the New York Evening Post, Horace Greeley, of the New York Tribune, John W. Forney, of the Philadelphia Press and the Washington Chronicle, Charles C. Fulton, of the Baltimore American, Curtis Guild, of the Boston Commercial Bulletin, Joel Cook, of the Philadelphia Public Ledger, and James Edmund Scripps, of the Detroit Evening News. Some of these were, of course, also names in literature or in public life. Even before he became chief editor of the Evening Post, Bryant, for example, had established himself as the leading poet in America. Similarly, Greeley's political career can hardly be separated from his editorship.

A third large group of travel writers were clergymen of various denominations, few of whom, probably, were known outside of their communities. A notable exception in this latter respect was Wilbur Fisk, President of Wesleyan University, at Middletown, Connecticut. There
is, however, no need to continue this list. Besides professional authors, publishers, and editors, it includes men and women of diverse background: farmers and ministers, doctors and lawyers, students and teachers, Boston ladies and Virginia gentlemen, New England maidens, and an Indian chief.

The books in which all of these described their experiences and impressions abroad owed their publication to different circumstances. Some were collections of private letters, often unedited, which the writers had been prevailed upon to publish. Others were collections of articles which had been contracted for, and thus been published previously, as "foreign letters" to newspapers. Still others were truly travel books, written from notes and diaries after their authors' return home. Since they were thus either composed on the spot or based, at least, on notes taken abroad, these books almost invariably express the genuine reactions of the writers. Whatever the circumstances of their publication, almost all of them are remarkable for their immediacy.
Their direct, personal, journalistic note set these travel books apart from the standard guides and handbooks on European travel. Up-to-date editions of the latter were published regularly, for example, by Harper & Brothers (Fetridge's) and by Hurd and Houghton (The Satchel Guide), and D. Appleton and Company put out a whole series of illustrated handbooks. Better known even than these were Bradshaw's Continental Handbook, the world-famous Baedeker's Guides, and Murray's Handbook for Travellers on the Continent; the latter, first published in London in 1836, appeared in its sixteenth edition in 1868. Occasionally a shrewd businessman like G.P. Putnam published the account of his travels in the form of a guide book, but the ordinary travel book could not, and would not, compete, for variety and thoroughness of information, with these standard guides.

What, then, explains the popularity of travel books throughout the nineteenth century? Primarily, perhaps, the subject matter—the romance of travel. Readers who had no hope of ever seeing Europe experienced vicarious thrills through books of foreign travel, partly because
they could identify themselves with writers who addressed them as familiar correspondents. The fortunate ones who were planning a trip welcomed advice and information, and promises of adventure. Those who had been abroad relished the tales of travelers because such tales stirred memories of their own tours. Yet the appeal of this vaguely romantic subject matter was not the only reason for the vogue of travel books. No less important was the thirst for knowledge which was characteristic of the age.

The popularity of the travel book was a phenomenon comparable to that of the public lecture: both thrived upon the common urge of nineteenth-century Americans for self-improvement. Significantly, the sudden interest in travel writings, one aspect of which was the "discovery" of Germany, coincided roughly with the founding of the lyceum movement in 1826. To satisfy their thirst for information on a wide range of subjects, motley crowds of all ages flocked to the lecture halls of the lyceum; for the same reason uncounted thousands turned to accounts of travel. If he could speak as well as write about his tour abroad, a traveler was sure to
draw sizable audiences for both his lectures and his book. "Evening after evening I have been requested to recite my impressions of the country...," says one travel writer in his preface.55 Well-known professional lecturers who also wrote on travel included Edward Everett Hale, Horace Greeley, and—of course—Mark Twain. It is, perhaps, no accident that the best known and most successful of all travel writers, Bayard Taylor, made his fortune as one of the most popular lyceum speakers.

In the "Preface to the Fifth Edition" of his Travels in Europe (1839), Wilbur Fisk, President of Wesleyan University, refers to the above-mentioned utilitarian appeal of travel books:

That the imperfection of the work, of which none, it is believed, can be more sensible than

the author, have been so far overlooked as to make way for so large a sale in so short a time, affords some evidence that the author's well-meant endeavours to interest and profit the public have not been unavailing.

The world is already too full of books which afford mere amusement, or, what is unspeakably worse, which corrupt the heart while they sport with the fancy. A cordial reception of such a work could afford no occasion of self-congratulation to the writer, except the sordid motive of covetousness or a love of dishonourable fame. But as mere amusement is as foreign from the design as it is from the talents and taste of the author of the present work, and as he has carefully avoided contributing knowingly to anything that could court popularity at the expense of correct principle, the inference is drawn with the more confidence, from the extensive sale of the "Travels," that the public have been profitably interested in them.56

Almost half a century later, in the preface to his *Five Months Abroad* (1882), James Edmund Scripps, of the *Detroit Evening News*, claimed much the same purpose:

The aim in the preparation of the work has been three-fold: First, to convey to the reader as graphic an idea as possible of what he would see and how probably be impressed were he himself to make the same journey; Second, to interweave with the narrative of travel such an amount of collateral historical and biographical fact as should make the book valuable as a medium of

56Fisk, p. 1.
general information; and, Third, by frequent reference and allusion to make the work somewhat of a basis for and stimulus to culture in the realms of art and literature. If it shall incite the reader to further reading and research, one of its principal aims, indeed, will have been accomplished.

It may be hardly necessary to add that the book is addressed in the main to western people of ordinary information—to the intelligent farmers and mechanics of Michigan and neighboring states; and that it makes no pretense to either high literary merit or infallibility in every statement. All reasonable care has nevertheless been given to render it both intelligent and trustworthy.57

Chiefly for these two reasons travel books remained marketable throughout the nineteenth century: they entertained generations of readers with fascinating tales of foreign lands; and at the same time they contained useful information.

Since many travel books were gathered from the "foreign letters" common in newspapers and magazines, such writings must have taught hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions, most of what they knew of Germany. Indeed, since even those who never read a book were apt

57 Scripps, pp. v-vi.
to read such serials, virtually anyone who read at all was sure to read of travel. The list of publications that printed travel letters includes, besides many provincial journals, such well-known papers as the United States Gazette, of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Public Ledger, the New York American, the New-York Tribune, and the New York World; it also includes such weeklies as the short-lived Literary World and the then still provincial Saturday Evening Post, and such important monthly magazines as Putnam's and The Knickerbocker. Since travel copy was in great demand, shrewd travelers would supplement their incomes through contracts with publishers who sought such contributions. Bayard Taylor, for example, financed his first visit to Germany in 1845-1846 through previous engagements with the United States Gazette, the Saturday Evening Post, and Greeley's New-York Tribune. The book he published after his return, Views A-Foot (1846), consisted largely of those letters. Another traveler compiled a book from letters previously published in no less than four newspapers, one each in Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York. Almost one third (22) of all the American travel books on Germany that I examined (75) appeared
originally in periodicals or daily newspapers.

Even without the common practice of serialization, the impact of the travel book alone would have left a deep mark on the American mind, certainly deep enough to determine American attitudes towards Germany for a long time to come. Of course, not all of these books climbed to the crest of popularity. If they had no inherent merit or if they were addressed primarily to small, regional audiences, such books were not likely to achieve any fame. Many others, however, enjoyed extraordinary popularity. Their special appeal to the book-buying public can be explained variously. Some of them caught immediate attention because of the originality of their approach. Many—and not just those by professional writers—must have sold on the recommendation of their readability. Many, too, were assured wide success because their authors were already nationally known. For these and other reasons, certain travel books sold three or more consecutive editions, and the most popular of these remained in demand many years after their first appearance. Wilbur Fisk's Travels in Europe (1838), for example, required a
fifth edition within nine months of the first. The first edition of W.C. Bryant's *Letters of a Traveller* (1850) was followed by a second and a third in the same year, and by a fourth in 1855. Horace Greeley's *Glances at Europe* (1851), likewise required a third edition only a year after its first appearance. Even Samuel S. Cox's *A Buckeye Abroad* (1852), long after having lost its appeal for a national audience, held enough interest among Ohioans to warrant a seventh edition seven years after the first. An even more amazing sales success was Henry M. Field's *From the Lakes of Killarney to the Golden Horn*; first published in 1876, the book went through eleven editions in just five years. The most remarkable of all, however, is Bayard Taylor's *Views A-Foot* (1846), for its immediate success was more spectacular, and its fame more enduring, than that of any other travel book: within a year and a half of its first appearance, it sold seven editions, and by 1860 it had gone through twenty-four.

In sum, although the history of German-American cultural and intellectual relations reached far back to colonial times, Germany had remained, to most Americans
an "unknown country" until the second decade of the nineteenth century. American attitudes toward Germany were shaped by two main forces. The "literary pioneers," who had heard Madame de Staël's praise of the German university and who had gone to Göttingen and Berlin, privately told their friends at home of their impressions and, later on, helped introduce Americans to German life, language, and letters. Their influence was strong and far-reaching; but it affected, at least at first, a relatively small number of Americans. The public at large gained its impressions of Germany through the reports of other travelers, which began to appear in the 1820's. Within a few years, scores of such reports appeared in America. The rising number of travel books corresponded to the increase in travel. Encouraged by the development of faster, safer, and economical travel facilities, thousands were lured to Europe year after year. A tour abroad was well within the means of many, and some Americans were ill prepared to profit significantly from their travel. By contrast to these, most travel writers were well educated and were remarkably familiar with Germany even before they
went abroad. They flatly denied the charge of some Americans that foreign travel was unpatriotic; they argued that, on the contrary, one of its main advantages was a lesson in patriotism. This premise often led even sophisticated authors to lapse into provincialism. The travel writers came from various backgrounds. Many of them were popular novelists, journalists, editors, publishers, and others prominent in public life; many others were professional men, above all ministers of various denominations. In writing about Germany, these authors chose different approaches and different emphases, according to their different interests. Most travel books had, nevertheless, one common characteristic—immediacy. They were not guide books, but subjective records of their authors' first reactions to Germany, and to Europe. Their significance today lies in their popularity through most of the nineteenth century. This popularity, comparable to that of the public lecture, was phenomenal. The common reader responded to the strong, vaguely romantic appeal of the subject matter; at the same time he saw in travel
writings a means to satisfy his urge for self-improvement. Travel reports in form of serialized "foreign letters" abounded in newspapers and magazines throughout the country. Travel books, which often were collections of such serials, sold by the tens of thousands, and were in such demand that many of them went through several editions. In either form, travel accounts were staple reading matter for almost all nineteenth-century Americans.

In their initial impact upon the reading public early in the century, such travel writings first acquainted large numbers of Americans with Germany. In time, owing to their enduring popularity, travel writings impressed upon their readers certain patterns of response to German manners, morals, and institutions, and thus, largely, determined nineteenth-century American attitudes toward Germany.
CHAPTER II

THE AMERICAN VIEW OF GERMANY'S POLITICAL CONDITION

No sooner had the first American observers sketched Germany's political condition after 1815, than there appeared a distinct, rather uniform, and simple pattern of response. Year after year, decade after decade, generations of travelers cited new proof of the Germans' virtual enslavement to their rulers. Admittedly, many writers had been too rushed to observe German life at close range. And yet, however brief their trip, however few their glimpses of daily life, perceptive travelers were struck by the political and social contrasts between America and Germany. The random observations of even the most hurried often agreed, remarkably, with the considered judgment of those who had paid long and repeated visits. Could one ignore the gulf between the splendid robes in the casinos of Baden-Baden, Wiesbaden, and Homburg, and the rag-clad women, children toiling in the fields? Did not the people sweat and bleed for their rulers' display of
wealth and lust for power? Was not all Germany one vast, frighteningly efficient military camp? Had not those soldiers, who manned the guns and casemates, been pressed into the service of their sovereign, forced to forsake their homes and families? Had not these women been abandoned to tend the hearths and plows and counters while their men bore the burden of this arsenal? Such questions occurred naturally to almost every American. The contrast between rich and poor and the inequity of universal military service were too conspicuous to be overlooked.

Had their appraisals been contradictory and inconsistent, had their responses lacked accord, travel writers could not have set the tone for nineteenth-century American attitudes toward Germany's political condition. Indeed, their relative unanimity may, at first glance, seem surprising. No single isolated region forged their politics. No single university gave shape to the diversity of their intelligence. They came from north and from south, from farms and from towns. They were the sons of clergymen and tradesmen, of politicians and physicians. Why, then, despite diverse
political, moral, and intellectual convictions, did they speak out virtually in a single voice against the internal politics of nineteenth-century Germany?

Conservative or radical, agrarian or capitalist, most travel writers shared certain basic political convictions. The first of these was their faith in democracy as the best possible form of government. American popular government was, in their view, perforce superior to Old-World despotism: individual freedom had become fact only in America. Moreover, since they knew the blessings of democracy firsthand, these writers nourished a common hope for a democratic Germany. The American experiment, many believed, had blazed the trail which Germany would follow. It spurred the enlightened few, the democratic leaders, and sustained them on the road to freedom. But the journey was bound to be difficult and long. Still bowing mutely to authority, as was their age-old habit, the masses had as yet hardly stirred. Not until general education and the press unlocked the prison of their ignorance would they escape from their servitude and misery, and hasten toward the goal set by their leaders—a united democratic Germany. Little
wonder that American democracy filled travelers in Germany with a sense of pride.

Familiar recent historical events accounted for the setbacks of the democratic cause in Germany. The people, American observers knew, had been betrayed by their own rulers. Fired by a rare, almost un-German sense of national unity and purpose and, ironically, by the ideas of the French Revolution, they had fought in the wars of liberation and had freed Germany from the Napoleonic yoke. Yet all their sacrifices seemed to have been in vain. At the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815), their wishes for unification and for political equality and justice had been ignored. The patriots had lost out to the privileged and princes, to the resurgent forces of dynastic politics. With Metternich as prompter, the old guard had revived the age-old pageant of German "particularism," in which each state, regardless of its size, enjoyed the rights and wore the trappings of full sovereignty. Guided by the idea of "legitimacy"—the principle that nothing short of the conditions prior to the French Revolution would satisfy divine law—the princes had tried to restore as best
they could the map of 1789, and, where they failed, had bartered lands and populations, without regard for the people. No single, unified Germany for these reactionaries. They had founded, instead, a German Federation, consisting of thirty-five sovereign states and four free cities, none of them with a truly democratic government. Even though several progressive princes, among them Karl August of Weimar, had decreed constitutions for their tiny dominions, and eased their grip on the people, the power of most German sovereigns was all but absolute. No German citizen enjoyed the basic freedoms of the Bill of Rights, much less the freedom of representative government dear to Americans.

And yet German liberals kept their cause alive. Citizens of all classes kept calling urgently for civil liberties and for unification. To them, the one seemed as important as the other. Soon after the Congress of Vienna, in October, 1817, university students from all over Germany met at the Wartburg, in Thuringia, to demonstrate against the police methods of their governments. At this historic castle—Luther's hide-out after his banishment—students and teachers formed the
Burschenschaft, the movement of intellectuals for national unity and political reform. Similar gatherings and movements throughout the '20's, '30's, and '40's rallied Germans of all degrees--tradesmen and farmers, workers and professors.

But every time the people rose in protest, their governments struck back with force. The universities were placed under supervision, pamphlets and newspapers made subject to strict censorship. The so-called "demagogues" were muzzled or imprisoned; many went into exile, and many more--hundreds of thousands--emigrated to America. Between 1851 and 1860, one third of the 2.6 million immigrants to this country were Germans;¹ and many of these came in order to escape economic straits and government oppression.

¹Otto Heinrich Müller, Deutsche Geschichte in Kurzfassung (4. Aufl.; Frankfort: Hirschgraben-Verlag, 1850), p. 176. This figure is confirmed by the U.S. Census of 1860, which lists a total of 4,960,189 immigrants during the period of 40 years and 8 months ending May 31, 1860. During the 40 years from 1820 to 1860, the total number of German immigrants was, again according to the Census of 1860, 1,489,044.
All of these recent political events were in the minds of Americans who traveled in the German Federation. Yet even if they had been ill-informed, these travelers would have had reason to fear for the country's future. Accustomed to the civil liberties guaranteed by their Constitution, they found the curbs on the Germans' freedom of expression intolerable. They voiced their anger at the government's abuse of power, and their misgivings at the silent submissiveness of the masses. In 1826, Henry E. Dwight, for example, was surprised and outraged that, for fear of prosecution, none of his acquaintances in Berlin dared discuss politics with him. Yet, compared with the stormy 1840's, the mid-1820's were relatively calm. At least so they seemed, in retrospect, to George Henry Calvert, who, after long, intimate contact with German life and learning, could utter strong convictions with a voice of authority. Calvert's three books of travel deserve special attention, for his comments are strikingly articulate. His admiration for German scholarship and

2Dwight, p. 132.
letters, dating back to his student days at Göttingen in 1824-1825, and his warm friendship for the German people matched his contempt for the masters. The title page of his first travel volume, *Scenes and Thoughts in Europe* (1846), bears the proud label: "By an American."

When he returned to Germany after fifteen years, Calvert decided not to visit his alma mater. With academic freedom dead, the university, he thought, was but a shell:

> It would have been but a melancholy pleasure to re-visit the noble old University, now made ignoble by the base-mindedness of her rulers. What a fall, with her seven hundred students, from her palmy state in 1824-25, when she counted over fifteen hundred; and when, drawn from all quarters of the globe by her renown, we sometimes assembled together under the *Cathedra* of a single Professor, listeners from North America and from South America, from England and from Italy, from France and from Sweden, from Russia and Switzerland, from Poland and from every State in Germany. The galaxy of teachers she then had, the successors of others as eminent, the cowardly policy since pursued towards her, has prevented from being renewed. Göttingen has ceased to be what Napoleon called her, "l'Université de l'Europe." She has dwindled into provincialism.³

When he returned again, in 1850, Calvert found Germany's political condition even more desperate than before. In Scenes and Thoughts in Europe, Second Series (1852), he denounced the reactionaries who had duped the people in 1848 and who could now cling to their reins only because their conscript armies steadied them. Like most Americans, Calvert considered standing armies a monstrous injustice, an intolerable burden on the people forced to support them. "Are they not 'sores and blains,'" he asks, "on the people, a moral and physical corruption, and a drain upon their strength?"4 "They are a coarse, brutalizing Force," he continues, "in contrast and conflict with the subtle, humanizing, liberating power of the intellect and heart of man.... They exist to enforce man's law against God's law, to be jailers of thought, the executioners of freedom."5 The provocation for this outburst was the mere sight of Prussian troops in Heidelberg.


5Ibid.
A little later, in explaining the title of his travel book, *Doré* (1857), W.W. Wright summed up the attitude of many Americans, not just toward Germany, but generally toward the monarchies of Europe. "Doré," says Wright, means simply the difference between the inside and the outside of things, and as the difference has always struck the author more than anything else in Europe, he has adopted that title more as a fit emblem of the position of the Old World than as a representation of the general tone of this work, which is merely a book of travels, as little in the style of guide-books as possible. The comfortable and orderly appearance of things in Europe, as compared with America, has often been remarked upon; but, as the author of the *Contrat Social* says, "there is a comfortable and orderly appearance of things about a dungeon." That is no indication of happiness. The bayonet can make everything look orderly up to the very day when an unhappy and oppressed people break out in revolution. If any American be alarmed at the noisiness and boisterousness of his own country, which must, of necessity, always show the worst side to the world, just let him rub off the gilding a little in Europe, and he will find no cause for dissatisfaction with Republicanism.\(^6\)

However passionately they thus quarreled with the régime and its machinery, most travel writers

\(^6\)Wright, pp. iii-iv.
lavished sympathy on the disfranchised people. Their hearts went out to all who dared stand up against oppression, above all to the liberals and democrats of the popular movements in 1830 and 1848. They cheered each stir for freedom, and mourned each failure as though it was their own. German democracy, it became plain to many of them, would grow but slowly. In order even to survive on German soil, the tender sapling would have to struggle hard. It had been planted late, and its roots were as yet much too thin: unlike America or England, Germany lacked democratic traditions. Meanwhile, the people, most Americans agreed, deserved pity for their suffering, and admiration for their endurance.

Amazed at the civil obedience he had observed in Stuttgart, a typical German Residenz, George Henry Calvert spoke for virtually all his countrymen, in saying: "To an American, there is no more astonishing feature in European existence, than the patience of the people. Their forbearance is to me a daily marvel."? 

Calvert, Scenes, Second Series, p. 15.
Similarly, Horace Greeley pitied the Germans for the anachronistic political condition of their country.

In his *Glances of Europe* (1851), Greeley says:

> The Germans submit passively to arbitrary power which they see not how successfully to resist, but they render to rank or dignity no more homage than is necessary--their souls are still free...®

The Germans are a patient, long-suffering race. Of their Forty Millions outside of Austria, probably less than an eighth at all approve or even acquiesce in the despotic policy in which their rulers are leagued, and which has rendered Germany for the present a mere outpost of Russia--an unfinished Poland. These people are intelligent as well as brave--they see and feel, yet endure and forbear. Perhaps their course is wiser than that which hot impatience would prompt--nay, I believe it is. If they can patiently suffer on without losing heart until France shall have extricated herself from the toils of her treacherous misrulers, they may then resume their rights almost without a blow. And whenever a new 1848 shall dawn upon them, they have learned to improve its opportunities and avoid its weaknesses and blunders. Heaven speed its auspicious coming.9

In one of his *Letters of a Traveller* (1850), entitled "Europe under the Bayonet," W.C. Bryant strikes

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the same note of sorrow. "Whoever should visit the principal countries of Europe at the present moment," says Bryant, "might take them for conquered provinces, held in subjection by their victorious masters, at the point of the sword." His impressions of Germany are poignantly recorded in the following:

On my journey, I found the cities along the Rhine crowded with soldiers; the sound of the drum was heard among the hills covered with vines; women were trundling loaded wheel-barrows, and carrying panniers like asses, to earn the taxes which were extorted to support the men who stalk about in uniform. I entered Heidelberg with anticipations of pleasure; they were dashed in a moment; the city was in a state of siege, occupied by Prussian troops which had been sent to take the part of the Grand Duke of Baden against his people. I could hardly believe that this was the same peaceful and friendly city which I had known in better times. Every man in the streets was a soldier; the beautiful walks about the old castle were full of soldiers; in the evening they were reeling in the streets. "This invention," said a German who had been a member of the Diet of the Confederation lately broken up, "this invention of declaring a city, which has unconditionally submitted, to be still in a state of siege, is but a device to practice the most unbounded oppression. Any man who is

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suspected, or feared, or disliked, or supposed not to approve of the proceedings of the victorious party, is arrested and imprisoned at pleasure. He may be guiltless of any offence which could be made a pretext for condemning him, but his trial is arbitrarily postponed, and when at last he is released, he has suffered the penalty of a long confinement, and is taught how dangerous it is to become obnoxious to the government."11

Disheartened with the Heidelberg he had found thus transformed, Bryant turned to Heilbronn. On his trip up the Neckar River, he saw more soldiers—entire companies of them—"while in the fields," as he puts it, "women, prematurely old with labor, were wielding the hoe and mattock, and the younger and stronger of their sex were swinging the scythe."12 From Heilbronn Bryant traveled on to Stuttgart, to Geisslingen, to Ulm, to Munich. The same spectacle everywhere. Even the villages he passed were full of soldiers, and rooms were hard to find, because inns and hotels had become billets. In Munich Bryant heard a German say: "These fellows ... are always too numerous, but in ordinary times they are kept in the capitals and barracks, and

11Ibid., p. 427.
12Ibid., p. 428.
the nuisance is out of sight. Now, however, the occasion is supposed to make their presence necessary in the midst of the people, and they swarm everywhere."

Tired of the sight of soldiery, Bryant turned from Bavaria to Switzerland. While here at least he had the satisfaction of being once again in a republic, he was somewhat disturbed to find that, in order to protect their freedom, even the Swiss were in arms. In St. Gallen he observed a group of Swiss youths practicing their marksmanship at a shooting range. But Bryant saw the difference. "Here," he says, "it was the people who were armed for self-protection; there it was a body of mercenaries armed to keep the people in subjection.""14

Thus these Americans voiced their regret and anger at the rulers' misuse of force to silence calls for democratic freedoms. The princes, according to these writers, deserved scorn for arming one half of the nation in order to prevent or quell rebellions of

13 Ibid., p. 429.
14 Ibid., p. 431.
the other. The gentle, patient people commanded sympathy as victims of their masters' lust for power.

Only rarely did an observer break this pattern of reaction. Some travelers in the Rhineland and other Prussian provinces, for example, less deplored the lack of civil liberties, for which the Prussian army was largely responsible, than they admired the efficiency of the administration. One of those that applauded this efficiency was G.P. Putnam. In 1836 Putnam noted that Mayence, which was then occupied jointly by Austrian and Prussian troops, had a population of only 32,000 as compared to a garrison of 12,000; yet, on leaving Prussia, Putnam wrote home from Aix-la-Chapelle:

The present king and all his family are said to be exceedingly popular with the people. The government, although in theory despotic, is evidently mild and liberal in practice. In education, I need not tell you, Prussia stands pre-eminent; and if you are curious for information on this point, I would refer you to the recent report of Victor Cousin. The regulations of the police, the public conveyances, etc., in the Prussian dominions, are certainly excellent.16

15Putnam, Tourist, p. 259.
16Ibid., pp. 262-263
In his enthusiasm for the orderliness and the smooth operation of the Prussian bureaucracy, Putnam all but ignored the fact that the King of Prussia, dead certain of his "divine right," ruled his domain with but a token representation of the people.

Yet most Americans did not share Putnam's view. Almost all visitors to Germany, and above all to Prussia, were disturbed by the contrast between the poverty among the people and the enormous expenditure for troops and armaments. In Prussia, said Orville Dewey in 1836, "...everything looks like a military despotism."17 Like others, Dewey admitted the superior quality of the Prussian educational system; but, he continued, "...that an enlightened population of thirteen or fourteen millions will consent to support nearly two hundred thousand regular troops, besides training more than three hundred thousand militia, is what no person who has studied the tendencies of modern

intelligence and consequent freedom, can believe."  

Most travelers agreed with Dewey, among them Sarah R. Haight, a New York socialite. Though they were never published in book form, Mrs. Haight's comments on Germany deserve mention here; for they appeared in her "Letters from Europe and Asia," a serial in The New York American, in 1839-1840, and thus must have been read by thousands. The King of Prussia, Mrs. Haight noted disapprovingly, had not fulfilled his pledge of a constitution. Sooner or later, she suggested, Prussia, too, would become a constitutional monarchy; but for the time being it was still a "pure despotism."  

George Henry Calvert's judgment of the Prussian state best illustrates the pattern. In 1846—that is, 

18 Ibid., pp. 176-177.  
19 Sarah R. Haight, The Travels of Sarah R. Haight through Switzerland, Austria-Hungary, Bohemia, Bavaria, Prussia, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Russia as Published in the New York American 1839-1840 (n. p.: Compiled and edited for Susan B. Huntington, 1953), pp. 39-40. For the opportunity to examine a copy of this diary, I wish to thank Mrs. Katrina R. Huntington, of Bedford, New York, who is a descendant of Mrs. Haight's.
even before the failure of the revolution had turned
his resentment into bitterness—Calvert said about the
Prussian administrative system:

The civil government of Prussia is after the
military model. The king is the commander-in-
chief of the nation, and the school-master is
his drill-sergeant. The boys are taught in such
a way that the men shall fall readily into the
ranks of obedience. A uniform is put upon the
minds, and, as with the rank and file of a
regiment, the uniformity is more looked to than
the fitness. The government does all it can to
save the men the pain of thought and choice, and
if it could would do everything. The officers
of administration having the intelligence and
industry of the cultivated German mind, and
these being everywhere the German solidity and
honesty, the system bears some good fruit, such
virtue is there in order and method, though only
of the mechanical sort. _Prussia is a well-managed
estate, not a well-governed country_ [italics
mine]; for good government implies a recognition
of the high nature of humanity, the first want
of which is freedom. The only basis whereon the
moral being of man can be built up is individual
independence. To reach that higher condition of
freedom, where he shall be emancipated from
the tyranny of self, of his own passions, he
needs first of all to be free from that of his
fellows. The one freedom is only possible
through the other.20

The aphorism, "Prussia is a well-managed estate, not a
well-governed country," is, to my knowledge, the most

concise summary of the virtues and sins of Prussian paternalism. Nevertheless, with his republican abhorrence of government regimentation, Calvert vastly exaggerated the restrictions placed on the freedom of the individual. Presumably, like most of these Americans, Calvert would have rejected any form of autocratic government. True to the pattern, he flatly condemned the rulers and pitied the ruled. Indeed, while representing Prussia as a police state, Calvert saw no alarming signs of chauvinism—much less of militarism—among the people.

Even in the last third of the century, these writers remained sympathetic toward the Germans. Some of them did scourge Prussia for her militarism, above all for the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. Yet even the most severe critics of Bismarck's statesmanship had no harsh words for the Germans. They tended to accuse the government of saber rattling, but they merely poked gentle fun at the people for their fondness of uniforms. Perhaps Americans had lost some of their own innocence in the Civil War. Just ten or twenty years before, the wars with Denmark (1864), with Austria (1866),
and with France (1870-1871) would have shocked most Americans intensely. Now, after they themselves had fought a long and bloody war in order to preserve their country's unity, they felt relieved to see the Germans finally achieve unification. To most travel writers, Prince Bismarck's power politics—the means through which the Prussian chancellor forged Germany into a single empire—did not appear entirely immoral. About 1870, most travel writers agreed with the Germans that the unification of their country had to be sealed with the sword. In other words, they accepted Bismarck's argument—which had also convinced the German people—that, over the resistance of Austria and France, Prussia should solve the German problem with "blood and iron."
Surprisingly, no traveler recorded any dismay at this turn of events. The Germans, they seemed to reason, were, after all, as intensely patriotic as other nations. Their pride in their national identity, their passionate desire for political unity, their groundless or well-founded fear of aggression and foreign domination—all seemed to justify the Germans' eagerness in answering the summons of their sovereigns. If they saw patriotism
perverted into chauvinism, these travelers tended to blame the government—but not the people. Nor did they cry shame when the Germans reversed their attitude towards their armed forces. Once, in times of civil stress, the people had jeered at the soldiers as lackeys of their lords. Now, in times of patriotic zeal, they cheered them as defenders of the fatherland. Yet travel writers let this betrayal pass: the people, they seemed determined, could do no wrong.

Henry Whitney Bellows' *The Old World in Its New Face: Impressions of Europe in 1867-68* (2 vols., 1868-1869) illustrates the changes in American attitudes towards Germany's political condition that became evident after the Civil War. In a chapter entitled "Prussia and the Rhine," Bellows says:

Passing from Holland into Prussia we found ourselves, the moment we crossed the frontier, in a military country, and felt at once the change from a nation at rest and in the ordinary condition of things to a nation aroused and thrilled through and through with new life and ambition. The depots seemed almost American in the activity and crowded appearance they presented. Soldiers were almost as thick as civilians, and they looked like men with business on hand, and not mere frames for uniforms. The country, too, though old and uninteresting in itself, presented
an appearance of rapid improvement, and looked
new with its new life. The farther we have gone
into Prussia, the more the awakening of the
nation has struck us. The recent war with
Austria, in 1866 has put this country into a
striking sympathy with the United States in the
revival of all its energies, the consciousness
of her power, and the prevalence of the sentiment
of nationality. The mighty and successful
effort it lately made against Austria, so far
from exhausting its strength or ambition, has
only nerved it for greater things, and aroused
every drop of military feeling in a people who
have not forgotten Frederick the Great. It will
be fortunate if its rising tide of public life
is safely directed into economical sic channels.

The Luxembourg question was settled not with­
out much resistance from the popular feeling,
which would have enjoyed an opportunity of measur­
ing swords with France. How long the itch for a
chance to pay old scores with their natural
enemy, as Prussia holds France to be, will be
controlled by prudent statesmanship remains to
be seen. But we saw daily evidence that among
the people at large, and especially the army,
war with France would bring every Prussian to
the front, and render almost any amount of
personal sacrifice easy. It is to be hoped that
the magnificent series of military displays
France has lately made for the entertainment of
her royal visitors will do something to arrest
the recent perilous disposition to underrate
the power and spirit of the French. Earnest
and vigorous as Prussia is, and great as the
late display of her military power, she is not
a match for France, and would engage in a rash
undertaking to presume upon her victory over
Austria, and try conclusions with Louis Napoleon.
We are too warm lovers of the new German Empire--
for that is the manifest destiny of things
here--to wish to see it risked by a war with
France. Meanwhile, let us confess the strength
of the favorable impression all the Prussian officers have made upon us. A handsomer, more intelligent, or more spirited set of soldiers we have never met. They certainly wholly out-shine the French officers in mere exterior promise. Tall, well-made, soldier-like in bearing, they have the manners of educated gentlemen, and look as fit for peace as for war.21

To a generation of travelers who had grown used to thinking of their own country's expansion west as "manifest destiny," the Prussian claim to power and leadership in the future German Empire seemed plausible enough. Characteristically, Bellows did not protest against the principle of German imperialism directed against France, but merely expressed fear that Prussia might not yet be equal to her task. Similarly, far from reproaching the Germans for their militant nationalism, he openly admired their military prowess. How different is Bellows' praise of the Prussian officer corps from Bayard Taylor's contemptuous remark on the same subject! In his At Home and Abroad (1860), Taylor says of "the military gentlemen" that their "assumed importance is the more insufferable, because

21Bellows, I, 72-73.
it is generally based neither upon wealth, character
nor intellect."22 Taylor's disdain is as characteristic
of American thinking before the Civil War as Bellows'
admiration reflects sentiments generated during that war.

Compared with the anger former travelers had
voiced against displays of military power in the German
princedoms, the sympathy of Bellows and of most of his
contemporaries with Prussian, and with Wilhelminian
German, power politics might, at first sight, seem
utterly inconsistent. Yet it was not. The responses
of these writers changed quite simply with the whims
of popular feeling. For decades these Americans had
sided with the people against their governments. Now
Bismarck's power of persuasion had swayed both the
people and their American well-wishers. Bismarck, most
of these authors were convinced, would achieve Germany's
unification, and lead the Germans to wealth, and power,
and glory. Their sole criterion of Germany's political

22Bayard Taylor, At Home and Abroad: A Sketch-
Book of Life, Scenery, and Men (New York: G.P.
Putnam, 1860), p. 459; hereafter cited as
At Home.
condition was, it would seem, the question: what is best for the people? Thus, Bellows wrote in 1867:

Two years ago he [King William I] shared with Count Bismarck the odium of dissolving the Parliament because it would not vote supplies for an increase of the army. The wisdom of the policy they had steadily pursued, of increasing and every way strengthening the military power of the country, has now been revealed by the results of the struggle with Austria and the Consolidation of North Germany with Prussia; and the popularity of King William and his Prime Minister has suddenly become quite overwhelming.23

Yet however inconsistent they might seem in their sudden endorsement of Prussia's leadership, American travelers did not turn monarchists. For all his sympathy with Prussia's efforts to build a new German empire on military might, Bellows remained true to the rule that Americans deplored any form of autocratic government. After a visit to the new palace of the Prussian kings in Potsdam, he commented: "The Neue Residenz is a magnificent extravagance in its interior, and adds another to the thousand superfluous palaces which have been built out of the bones and cemented in the blood of overtaxed and half-consenting

23Bellows, I, 74.
dupes to the pretensions of selfish, idle and corrupting courts. They have been the curse of Germany, and are not yet abated—but on the way to correction." No earlier American observer nor any German "demagogue" in the '30's or '40's could have pleaded for representative government more passionately than does Bellows here. Yet, while Bellows and other travel writers kept hoping that, eventually, the people would wrest all essential power from the crown, the people themselves had been lulled by Bismarck's promise of the power and glory of a united Germany. About 1870, few Germans would have shown as much insight into the limitations of their political life as Bellows does when he says:

There is a system of military subordination running through the whole social and economical [sic] life, and this narrows and limits everybody's sphere, and contracts and paralyzes energy and hope.

The people are driven to pleasures and trifles, as a substitute for engaging occupations. They pass an immense amount of their time in beershops and gardens, listening to dance-music. They are not rude and drunken--far from it--but they are unaccustomed to the concerns and unfamiliar with

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24 Ibid., pp. 132-133.
the purposes that characterize our life. And with all the freedom of which they boast, they are practically drilled out of the best part of freedom by a parental government that takes care of them like so many ungrown boys and girls. The very students in the University are numbered like state's prisoners, and carry round a card in their pockets which they must show on demand. The police, or some government functionary, are forever meddling with the freedom of the people, who are so used to being watched and ordered and instructed that they do not even know that they are imprisoned in government rules and bureaucratic regulations.... They talk very loudly and proudly of English and American license and disorder, and civic immoralities and drunkenness and crime, and admire very much their freedom from these misfortunes; but they forget that alongside these tares the strongest wheat is growing, and that their political soil is much like their sandy territory, unfavorable to any large growths of either weeds or wheat.25

Thus Bellows and most other travel writers refused to be impressed with the efficiency of the Prussian administrative system.

Though all of them apparently agreed that any German political issue must be judged by its ultimate effect upon the welfare of the people, these travelers did not, of course, invariably reach the same conclusions. Even when some, like Bellows, were swept away with the high tide of German patriotism, others stayed on firm

25Ibid., pp. 355-356.
ground. In their reaction to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871, for instance, American observers were divided. Since it was climaxed by the coronation, in Versailles, of William I as German Emperor, that war fulfilled the hopes, not only of the Germans but also of those writers whose main concern was the country's unification. Yet since it strengthened above all the power of the privileged, while it exacted tribute and sacrifices from the people, without emancipating them, this war struck many as a monstrous evil. Could such an evil produce an ultimate good? Was it not just a thinly disguised scheme for the further exploitation of the people? While many hailed the Prussian victory, because it ended Germany's fragmentation, many others deplored the means by which it was won and the form of government which it affirmed. In his Nasby in Exile (1882), David Ross Locke ("Petroleum V. Nasby"), for example, expressed typical American impatience with German, and European, power politics. After a detailed description of the siege of Strasbourg in 1870, and
especially of the damage done to the cathedral, Locke concludes:

This is war, and what was this war all about? Why, Louis Napoleon, who stole France and kept the French enslaved by amusing one-half of them that he might rob the other half, had to appeal to French patriotism and plunge France into a war to cover his Imperial thefts. On the other hand, the Kaiser William, and his iron-handed Bismarck, who had been grinding the people of Germany [sic] for years to prepare for war, were not slow to accept the challenge. What they wanted was to have more territory to plunder. There was no bad blood between the French and German people; it was the self-constituted rulers of the two peoples, who, for their own glory, set them to butchering each other. And so at it they went.

These kings and emperors respect neither God nor man, and so they sent their bombs hurtling through this wonderful temple dedicated to God.

I have expressed my opinion of kings before. The more one sees of them and their work the less love he has for them. Soldiers and thin soup for the people in Germany, soldiers and starvation in Ireland. That's what royalty and nobility mean everywhere--brute force and suffering.26

Locke may well have spoken from his heart, but he

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26David Ross Locke, Nasby in Exile: or, Six Months of Travel in England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium, with Many Things Not of Travel (Toledo: Locke Publishing Co., 1882), pp. 594-595.
cannot have based his judgment on his observations of the German people. His passionate condemnation of royalty echoed familiar American convictions, but it did not express the Germans' attitude toward their government in the early 1880's. When he visited Germany, in 1881, the people were, on the whole, satisfied with their form of government. The founding of the empire had fulfilled more than just their dream of their country's unification. Under their new national constitution, they were now exercising a basic right which they had failed to win in 1848: they voted in parliamentary elections by universal, equal suffrage and by direct and secret ballot. Apart from enjoying this unwonted constitutional right, the people shared in the economic boom of the "founding years." Only now was the country reaping the first benefits of the industrial revolution; but so rapid was its industrial and economic growth that, by the 1880's, it began to compete on the world market with England. Hand in hand with this economic development into a world power went the political imperialism of the new Germany, marked by the establishment of colonies in the Pacific and in Africa. The obvious advantages that both the
nation and the individual derived from these political and economic changes tended to reconcile most Germans with their government. Most Germans now seemed persuaded that the empire assured their personal and national well-being. Such rational considerations received strong support from their emotions. Their national pride, their fondness for tradition, their love of pageantry—all tended to sway them in favor of the Wilhelminian state. Far from loathing the government's extravagance, most citizens delighted in the pomp and circumstance of empire. As one American observed in 1874, the Germans seemed willing to pay for "the cost of royalty."  

By the end of the century, American reaction to Germany no longer corresponded necessarily to the Germans' own view of their political condition. The comments on the Prussian-inspired militarism of the empire, for example, ranged from outbursts of anger, through cautious acknowledgements of sympathy, to professions of open admiration. Each judgment was, no

27Fulton, p. 16.
doubt, determined by the writer's own concept of international relations. Some travelers, like Locke, condemned the very principle of war as a means of politics. Others, while admitting this principle, deplored the arms race and expressed concern over the near certainty of a new war between Germany and France. Some tried to ignore the threat of another conflict and took cheer in what one of them called, in 1879, "the wonderful recent growth and prowess of the German Empire."\(^{28}\) Still others, such as Professor Rodney Glisan, M.D., frankly admired the Germans' military spirit. Besides a travel book and a textbook on medicine, Glisan's writings also included a *Journal of Army Life* (1874), an account of experiences during the Oregon and Washington Indian wars, 1855-1858. Perhaps because of his own military background, Glisan ventured the bold conclusion that some profit could be derived from service in the Prussian army. In his *Two Years in Europe* (1887), he says:

> I have never seen in any country such noble-looking and well-drilled men as those composing the army

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\(^{28}\)Cook, p. 189.
division at Berlin. Notwithstanding military service is compulsory in Germany, and the actual pay of the soldier is only five cents a day, service in the army is not altogether devoid of advantage to many of the poorer class, as it affords them a chance to see other parts of the country besides their own contracted surroundings, and to acquire a good military education.29

Similarly sympathetic are John Bell Bouton's comments on the militarism he found rampant in the German Empire. After referring to the innumerable monuments, pictures, and busts celebrating William I, Bismarck, and Moltke which he had seen in Berlin, Bouton—in Round about to Moscow (1887)—says apologetically:

> It is but natural that the Germans should love to honor the illustrious sovereign, the statesman, and the general who have made their country united and powerful. They know perfectly well that what they have won by the sword can be kept only by the sword in that terrible struggle for national supremacy, and even for existence, of which Europe is the theatre. As long as the profession of the soldier is thus exalted above every other by force of circumstances, what wonder that the Germans should indulge their passion for hero-worship to an extent unknown in all modern history?30


Yet even those who tried, as did John Bouton, to understand the exaltation of military virtues in the German Empire, could not conceal their uneasiness. Elsewhere in the account of his stay in Berlin, Bouton says:

It must be confessed that the most peaceful-minded person may catch the military fever here. The people of Berlin, like all other Germans, protest to you that they hate war and desire peace above all things. No men can look more pacific as they smoke their pipes and drink their beer, and listen to the best music in the "Gardens." Still, it is the truth that they impress the impartial tourist as the most war-like race in Europe. No capital that I have seen compares with Berlin in the predominance of military ideas and suggestions. The officers and privates everywhere on view are but a small part of this total.\(^{31}\)

In the end it made little difference whether or not a traveler was a staunch pacifist, whether or not he admitted the need for armaments, whether or not he tried to defend German militarism at least on some grounds. When everything was said and done, most writers would, beyond doubt, have concurred with Lee Meriwether in the uneasy comment: "In Germany the

\(^{31}\)Ibid., pp. 189-190.
American traveller feels as if he were in a vast military camp." 32 With the same author, they would have tended to conclude that: "As long as the nations of Europe spend their energies marshalling vast hosts, and glaring at each other over breastworks of fixed bayonets, the masses will inevitably be ground down in the hard mill of poverty—miserable hewers of wood and drawers of water." 33

Thus, though the Germans' view both of themselves and of their government changed radically in the last few decades, the pattern of American reaction to Germany's political condition remained essentially unchanged throughout the century. Even while watching the disturbing spectacle of German militarism, American observers spoke harshly of the state, yet kindly of the people. They saw the Germans lulled by siren songs that promised, not justice and equality for all—true

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33 Ibid., p. 233.
parliamentary representation—but peace, prosperity, and—glory. These writers all but ignored the fact that, after all, the people countenanced their government's imperialism. They failed to consider that the military spirit which, as they knew, pervaded every phase of German life drew its force from a fatal national weakness—the people's all too willing submission to authority. Traditionally sympathetic toward the Germans, all travel writers—even severe critics of Imperial German militarism—absolved the people and blamed either circumstances or the government. John Bouton came as close as any of them to accusing the people of complicity, but his criticism, like those of others, was oblique. In asserting that, in Berlin, "the most peaceful-minded person may catch the military fever," Bouton suggested that German militarism was but a symptom of an unspecified illness. Beyond such hints no American would go.

Only by implication, through gentle humor, did travel writers register their disapproval of the Germans' delusive quest for power and glory. Their references to the people's fondness for uniforms, for
instance, became stock comments on German militarism. With mild amusement, many of them reported on the amazing number of military uniforms they had seen in the "Fatherland." It seemed incredible—not only soldiers and police, but railroad and tram conductors, station masters, even the porters at stations and hotels, indeed, an entire nation sporting military dress of every color and description. Comments to this effect abounded; Francis R. Stockton's *Personally Conducted* (1889) contains the following:

The porters at the German railroad stations are dressed in such fine green uniforms that we shall probably mistake them for some of the higher officials of the road; but when we see the conductors and station-masters, who wear much finer uniforms, and who have more military airs, we shall get the matter straight in our minds. The railroad we are on does not, as in England, cross common roads by bridges and tunnels, but all roads intersecting it are closed by gates, and at every one of these, and at every little farm gate opening on the railroad, there stands an official, who, as the train passes, draws himself up in military fashion, toes out, chin up, with a short stick in his hand, which he holds as he would a gun. No one can cross one of these railroads when a train is due.34

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In the same vein, David Ross Locke's *Nasby in Exile* must have made untold thousands chuckle at the absurd, soldier-like punctiliousness of German railroad officials. Locke tells how once he almost missed a train because the ticket agent refused to sell tickets while his uniform coat was being brushed.\(^{35}\) Similarly, a full-page illustration in a travel book by Adeline Trafton Knox must have caused many readers to reflect on the limits of German militarism. This drawing, or, more properly, cartoon, presents three squads of Prussian soldiers drilling on the parade ground. Its sub-title reads: "At the word of command they struck the most extraordinary attitudes."\(^{36}\) One can imagine the startled disbelief of any visitor to Germany on first witnessing feats such as that unique Prussian contribution to military science--the goose step.

In concealing and sweetening their criticism with

\(^{35}\)Locke, pp. 640-641.

a coat of humor, these travelers betrayed a pardonable bias: they could no more judge Germany's political condition quite objectively than stop their hearts from beating for the underdog, the common man. As I shall show in a later chapter, their image of the Germans was at times naively idyllic.

Sooner or later almost all of these Americans were apt to make errors in judgment because they could not, or would not, see the truth. They glossed over the people's bent for militarism. Similarly, most of them turned utopians when they considered the possibility of democratic government in Germany. During the first half of the century, in hoping that the Germans would rid themselves of the restrictions of their freedom, these writers were not at all deluded. Many of them had met members of the German intellectual elite--professors, artists, poets--who belonged to the most dedicated, most capable proponents of the democratic cause. The movement did seem to be gathering momentum. Yet before long the ideas of the revolution of 1848 were dissipated by the failure of the Frankfort National Assembly and by reactionary measures of the rulers. Thereafter, to
hope for a united democratic Germany meant to indulge in wishful thinking. But even when the democratic movement was strongest, some of these travel authors, in pleading for reform, sounded quite unconvincing because they were incredibly naive.

In The Alps and the Rhine (1845), one Joel Tyler Headley, for example, proposed the following solution to the German problem: "The duchy of Nassau is a beautiful portion of Germany, and if the Duke would only abrogate, like a sensible man, some of his foolish tyrannical laws, and become father to his subjects, it would be a delightful spot every way. But the petty prince of every petty province seems to think he is more like a prince the more despotic he behaves." While he differs from most of these Americans because his simplicity makes him sound somewhat foolish, Headley is typical because many expressed similarly unfounded hopes or made similarly vague predictions of a democratic

Germany. One of these was Anna C. (Johnson) Miller, whose Peasant Life in Germany (1858) ends with the following flourish of rhetoric:

The mixture of the German and the American element makes the best compound for republican citizens, and when their children's children shall come back to the Fatherland, with spirits born and nourished upon free soil and by free air, the dry bones of these crumbling dynasties will awake, and the tocsin of freedom ring the death-knell of tyranny once and forever.38

Many of these observers founded their hope for Germany's rebirth on an appealingly simple argument. The people, they maintained, were being led by the nose because, through centuries of arbitrary rule, they had forgotten the very meaning of the word freedom. They did not demand freedom because they had been slaves too long to miss freedom. This in itself questionable proposition started the chain that ended with the following insupportable corollary. In time, these writers held, general education and the press would rouse the people and make them will their freedom; once

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roused they would straighten their backs, though they were bent from ages of submission.

This argument was patently unsatisfactory. Although perhaps the people as a whole lacked both the democratic spirit and the sense of politics on which democracy depends, they did not lack enlightened, articulate, and well-intentioned leaders. More than once, and especially during the revolution of 1848, these leaders did manage to rouse the people. Yet even in the stormy days of that decisive year, most Germans asked merely for constitutional reform. Except for a few "radicals," some of whom had been to America, no German dreamed of founding a republic after the model of the United States. Besides, even before the revolution of 1848, the people did not live in ignorance. And though, until mid-century, strict censorship prevailed throughout the German states, the revolution did, after all, fulfill the people's demand for freedom of the press. During the 1850's, scores of new journals joined the older ones, some of which dated from the eighteenth century. Thus, Mrs. Miller proved
herself ill-informed when, in 1858, she maintained that, apart from local papers, about a foot square, "nothing like a newspaper exists in the whole Confederation."39 Nor did another traveler report the facts correctly when, upon arriving on German soil in 1874, he noted with surprise that the inhabitants of Bremen lacked any interest in newspapers.40 Like many others, this traveler apparently did not know any German. Until well past the middle of the century, most of these travelers deceived themselves about the Germans' political condition and ambitions. Indeed, although they chafed at some of the abuses of their sovereigns, most Germans looked upon monarchic rule as natural. Most certainly they were not cowed. The proclamation of the Empire, in 1871, fulfilled the people's political ideal.

As the example of Bayard Taylor proves, even the best-informed among these writers never quite rose above their democratic bias. Like most of these

39 Ibid., 263
observers, Taylor seems to have hoped for a German Republic, but unlike most Americans, he was not unduly optimistic. He looked upon the Germans as being almost hopelessly trapped by the snares of tradition, by the habits of thinking that held them in willing submission. This view was quite preposterous, because, by Taylor's own admission, the Germans did protest, and were indeed free to protest, against their rulers' policies. Taylor's remarks on current political events in Views A-Foot (1846) are obviously slanted. "Since I have been in Frankfort," he reports,

an event has occurred which shows very distinctly the principles at work in Germany and gives us some forboding of the future. Ferdinand Freiligrath, one of the most popular living poets, has within a few weeks published a volume entitled "My Confessions of Faith, or Poems for the Times." It contains some thrilling appeals to the free spirit of the German people, setting forth the injustice under which they labor, in simple but powerful language, and with the most forcible illustrations, adapted to the comprehension of every one.\(^4\)

The fact that Freiligrath and other liberals were free
to voice their views, free to become popular in print,
apparently did not strike Taylor as inconsistent with
the practices of the police state which he had pictured.
Similarly, Taylor betrays his bias in suggesting that
the poets Heine and Herwegh had been banished, for in
reality they had exiled themselves. After describing
Freiligrath as a distinguished champion of freedom,
Taylor concludes:

He is now in Paris, where the poets Heine and
Herwegh, both banished for the same reason, are
living. The free spirit which characterizes
these men, who came from among the people, shows
plainly the tendency of the times; and it is
only the great strength with which the tyranny
here has environed itself, combined with the
proverbial apathy of the Germans, which has
prevented a change ere this.\footnote{Tbid., p. 133. Taylor's account is incorrect.
Freiligrath went to Switzerland, Belgium, and
England. In 1848 he returned, but had to flee
again in 1849. Eventually he returned for
good, triumphantly, in 1868.}

Other observers also noticed this, in Taylor's
phrase, "proverbial apathy," but few of these thought
that this attitude might prove fateful for German
politics. George Henry Calvert, like Taylor an
usually close observer of the country, was struck by much the same phenomenon, the unheard-of humility with which the Germans were wont to please their sovereigns.

In *Scenes and Thoughts in Europe, Second Series* (1852), Calvert illustrates this point. After reporting that, on a hilltop opposite Marburg, he found a most extraordinary monument, Calvert explains:

I defy all the millions of guessers in the United States to divine why this monument was erected. No American imagination could in such a search come near enough to have even "warm" cried to it, as in the game of Hunt the Slipper. After looking round at the panoramic landscape, I turned towards the monument, an obelisk twelve or fourteen feet high, built of freestone. When I had read the inscription, I read it over again. Yes, there could be no misreading; the words were plain, well-cut German. I am counting perhaps much too largely upon my character for veracity, in hoping that it will be able to withstand the shock of the reader's incredulity, when I tell him that their purpose was as follows: A princess of Hesse-Cassel had one fine day walked up to this spot, and enjoyed the views thence. To commemorate this fact this monument of stone was built by some grateful inhabitants of Marburg. And these good Germans would at times take airs over us on account of African Slavery! I must in justice add that it is a monument of the past, having been raised about thirty years ago.\(^\text{43}\)

\(^{43}\)Calvert, *Scenes, Second Series*, p. 44.
The final comment in this account must, by no means be understood ironically. Like many others, Calvert thought—and with good reason—that even though it failed, the revolution marked definite progress toward a democratic Germany. Yet, again like others, he was unduly optimistic. In a passage just preceding the one cited above, Calvert points to the wholesome changes in Germany's political climate after 1848 and predicts another, more thorough revolution. His exultation turns into bitterness, as he says:

In the Frankfort Assembly, two years ago, an orator said bitingly of his countrymen: "A German without a prince, is like a dog without a master." He could not and would not have said it, if it had not already begun to cease to be true. In these two years the Germans have not made progress simply, they have made a leap. They have, in opinions and convictions, leapt clean out of princedom. One is astonished to hear of and to witness the so rapid and general conversion to democracy.... In two years what a revulsion! After the popular victory in 1848, how forgiving, hopeful, magnanimous, trustful, was the whole German race: in 1850, how full of wrath, bitterness, menace. There will be no forgiveness of the past the next time.44

Yet Calvert was mistaken. "The next time" of which he

spoke did not come until 1918. And then, for reasons not to be enlarged upon in this study, German democracy stood only a fair chance of survival. At any rate, history did not bear out Calvert's prediction. Like most American observers of Germany's political condition, Calvert envisioned a brighter future than the tarnished present warranted.

Reflections on Germany's political fate almost inevitably led many of these Americans to compare German social and political conditions with those at home. As Orville Dewey put it in the "Preface" to The Old World and the New (1836), "every traveller to the Old World stood on a vantage ground for surveying the institutions, customs, and character of his own country, which might entitle the results of his observation to some regard." These writers never questioned the basic superiority of their own over any other form of government. They spoke with pride of their republic and left no doubt about their patriotism. Yet, except for some chauvinists among them, they were not blind to the faults of their own country; and as patriotic Americans they claimed the right to criticize what
they considered wrong. Some of their criticisms of American democracy were topical, others basic—and sometimes startling. All of them were voices in the continual debate on a familiar topic: what is and what should be American?

Since they concerned morals and manners rather than politics, most of the issues in this debate belong to another chapter of this study. Besides, since this study concerns patterns of reaction, occasional topical references hardly deserve attention. Any politically minded traveler would, of course, take the opportunity to criticize abuses and inefficiency at home. In speaking of the storks in Strasbourg, David Ross Locke, for instance, wove political allegory into his account. "There are thousands of legends about them," he says,

in brief the stork figures in everything Strasburgian. It is said that about a week before their departure in the Autumn, all the storks meet in a meadow outside of the city and hold solemn council, the oldest acting as chairman, and all talking and discussing things the same as men do, in their own language. It is not said that they come to blows in their debates, as American Congressmen do, but that is doubtless because they know only French and German usages. The stork is a well behaved bird.46

46 Locke, p. 604.
Significantly, Locke criticized both German and American usages. While he complained that some American politicians lacked dignity, he ridiculed the Germans for being "well behaved," that is, for lacking spirit, for being cowed by authority.

At times, with overtones of a clearly political pitch, these writers modulated one of the most significant, ever recurrent themes in America—the question as to which of two opposite cultural forces, change or tradition, was the more desirable. Change, many held, was the mood appropriate to America: a new country, which started by rejecting its political past, must go on testing the new and unexplored. Tradition, others argued, was a stabilizing force without which no nation could exist: the wisdom of age grew only out of the rich soil of tradition. No traveler expressed this latter view more full than Dr. Walter Channing. In A Physician's Vacation (1856), Channing rejects change merely for the sake of change. More generally, he tries to suggest the imponderable consequences of tradition for all phases of life. "I have been much impressed," says Channing,
with the evidence of the perpetuity of things abroad. By which I mean to say that a system which works well remains here unchanged, and seems unchangeable. The houses seem to have been built all at once, and to have undergone no change. There is an endless repetition of the like or the same. One tells the story of all. So of governments, and those who administer them. These remain as they were. Religion and educational systems have the same character of permanence. National physiognomy, habits, modes of living, dress, repeat the story. My mind, in view of these facts, was irresistibly carried back to America, and the contrast between all which makes it what it is, and all which was before me, was too strong not to arrest attention. Change there is on every hand, and reaches to every interest, as if this agency necessarily resulted in improvement,—individual and national advantage.

But if improvement come not of change, excitement does, and in this may be found the principal food of the American mind, as an active power. On the continent of Europe permanence of institutions, and of modes of thought, are the necessary consequence of the long established, and which is known by thinking men to have worked well,—has preserved public peace, and order, and national prosperity. The simple fact that an institution has been, and for a long time, comes to be a reason and cause of its continuance. So to speak, it continues itself. With us the institution, the form of government continues, but the mode of application, and especially the agents by which it is carried on, are perpetually undergoing change. The public mind is thus kept in a constant state of fret,—of unrest,—states not always favourable for the highest or best intellectual activity. The new, or change, comes to be an
object of paramount interest, and the country feels it from one end of it to the other.\textsuperscript{47}

On this basis Channing proceeds to argue against temporary, short-term, appointive public service and to propose, instead, the adoption in America of a politically independent, regular civil service after the European model. He sums up his argument by pleading:

\textit{Let the tenure of office be good behaviour. Take from the executive its disastrous patronage, which is a nuisance to the nation, and of most demoralizing tendency to the people. This is all that is necessary to give dignity to public office, and make it acceptable to the best men of the nation. Party power—spirit—tyranny, would lose their hold on the public mind, and public want; and the honour of the country would replace the present struggle for place and for bread.\textsuperscript{48}}

Perhaps Channing would have come to the same conclusions if he had never gone to Europe. Yet significantly, according to his own account, this criticism of one aspect of American democracy was a fruit of his European tour. Similarly, other writers concluded that

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., p. 145.
the cultural backwardness of their own country, in comparison with Germany, was an inherent flaw of American democracy. Bayard Taylor, for instance, spoke of the harmful consequences of democratic leveling in America. Yet, since they were only implicitly, but not primarily political, Taylor's remarks and comparable ones by other authors will be discussed elsewhere in this study.

In sum, throughout the nineteenth century, American reaction to Germany's political condition remained true to a surprisingly simple pattern: invariably travel writers sided with the people, against the sovereigns and the governing elite. At first travelers in Germany deplored above all the restrictions of personal freedom and of civil liberties. They felt akin to the liberals and democrats during the stormy 1830's and 1840's, especially to the insurgents of 1848. In their reaction to Prussia, the largest and most powerful among the German states, most of these writers claimed not to be so dazzled by the country's

49Taylor, At Home, pp. 495-496
charm or the regime's efficiency as to blink at the rulers' oppression of the people. Most of them owned to a strange ambivalence, which one of them summed up by quoting Rousseau's laconic comment: "there is a comfortable appearance about a dungeon." During the last third of the century, these writers criticized the government and the nobility less *vehemently* than they had done before. At times some of them even hailed events, such as the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-1871, which they might have been expected to abhor; but they did so because, in their opinion, such events furthered less the ends of the ruling class than those of the people. Louis Napoleon's defeat, they reasoned, removed the last block on the road to Germany's unification and thus fulfilled the highest hopes of the people. Similarly, some writers half-closed their eyes to the Empire's power politics because the people themselves approved of it. Besides, after the Civil War these travelers lacked the sure sense of moral superiority that had filled many of their countrymen before that war. Nevertheless, they often criticized the military spirit of the German Empire; from the 1880's on, stock
comments on Prusso-German militarism were part of the pattern. Yet even then these writers aimed their fire at the government, and--apart from harmless mock attacks--spared the people. Similarly, since they were well-wishers rather than prophets, most of these travel authors deceived themselves and their readers about the country's future: few of them realized how remote was a democratic Germany.
A nineteenth-century American observer of Germany's political condition would readily have justified his siding with the people against the government. Was it not natural, he might have asked, for a well-meaning man to cheer the underdog? Was it not also natural for an American to sympathize with those who buoyed by the success of American democracy, demanded freedom and popular government for their own country? And did not all hope for a democratic Germany depend almost entirely upon the people? Indeed, at least implicitly, most travel writers both late and early in the century explained their bias by some such argument. Yet, while at first it was apparently borne out by the political events and by the strong democratic sentiment all over Germany, in the last few decades of the century this rationale was little more than wishful thinking. Even before the proclamation of the Empire, in 1871, the Germans'
democratic zeal was on the wane. Why, then did these Americans continue to express strong sympathy, even affection for them? Partly, no doubt, because they were, or wished to be, deceived about the people's political ideals and about the prospects for a democratic Germany. Partly because, even before they went abroad, many had formed a favorable image of the Germans from the writings of other travelers. Mainly, perhaps, because they liked the Germans. At any rate, their warm responses to the national characteristics of their hosts represent a distinct, almost unbroken pattern of American reaction to Germany.

Almost without exception these travelers were charmed both by the temperament and by the customs and manners of the Germans; throughout the century many expressed their fondness in such epithets as friendly, considerate, polite, frank, unreserved with strangers, good-natured, kind, sincere, affectionate; simple yet earnest, easy-going, modest, domestic, sociable, hearty, and others equally approving. Travelers who had also studied national traits of other Europeans often found
that the Germans compared favorably with the rest. Thus W.W. Wright notes in his *Doré* (1857):

Here in Heidelberg, as in most parts of Germany, one forms attachments—in France, acquaintances. The German character is just the reverse of the French...there is nothing doré either in the character of the people or in their manner of living. Their furniture is as plain as their manners. There is not the slightest disposition toward humbug among them. I doubt if there is a people on earth with whom the act is more an index of the thought than with the Germans. They think more of the matter than the manner of things, hence they are often rather rough. The French think more of the manner than the matter, hence they are often over-polite.¹

In his *Nasby in Exile* (1882), David Ross Locke compares the French, the English and the Germans, and finds the latter the most admirable of the three. He finds the French vivacious and effusive, but generous in speech only, not in deeds. The English, he claims, delight in what they consider dignity, but he finds them pompous, dull, and heavy.² "The German," says Locke,

is neither the one nor the other. He goes through life tranquilly, in perfect content with himself,

¹Wright, p. 276.
²Locke, pp. 635-636.
always making the best of his opportunities, and in a perfectly rational way getting all the enjoyment he possibly can.

He does not profess to be your friend unless he is so in good faith, and when he invites you to his home he always means it. He is rather careful about his friendships, for as he never falsifies in this, he needs to be, but when once said it is done. A rare good man to meet is your German. He has his peculiarities, but he is solid all the way through.³

These writers were particularly pleased to find that, with the Germans, conduct and manners were no sham, not a mere coating, but rather externals corresponding to a core. Catharine Maria Sedgwick, for example, assured her readers that German friendliness was tempered by a large measure of human sympathy. "There is," she says in her Letters from Abroad (1841), "a deep-seated humanity in the courtesy of the Germans."⁴ Similarly Orville Horwitz, in Brushwood, Picked up on the Continent (1855), says of the Germans:

They possess more real bonhomie than any people I have ever lived amongst; and have more of that true politeness that springs from the heart, than I ever met with elsewhere. They are not led

³Ibid., p. 636.
⁴Sedgwick, I, 177.
by it, however, into heedless extravagance, or indiscreet sociability, but they appear to unite the prudence of New England to the generous hospitality of Old Virginia.5

Horace Greeley, in his *Glances at Europe* (1851), voices a similar, typically favorable view. "I have been but two days wholly among the Germans," says Greeley, but I have previously met many of them in England, Italy and Switzerland. They are seen to the best advantage at home. Their uniform courtesy (save in the detestable habit of smoking where others cannot help being annoyed by their fumes), indicates not merely good nature but genuine kindness of heart. I have not seen a German quarreling or scolding anywhere in Europe. The deference of members of the same family to each other's happiness in cars, hotels and steamboats has that quiet, unconscious manner which distinguishes a habit from a holiday ornament. The entire absence of pretense, of stateliness, of a desire to be thought a personage and not a mere person, is scarcely more universal in Switzerland than here.6

Since Greeley rushed through Germany in just five days---from Basel down the Rhine, to "do" Cologne, and on to

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6 Greeley, p. 266.
Paris—his comments might seem hasty. Yet his impressions were confirmed in every detail by less hurried travelers before and after him. Among the latter, many were likely to conclude, as did one in 1861: "The Germans at home seem to be the same good-hearted, phlegmatic, slow-going people as they appear among us."7

Greeley's judgment is also typical because, parenthetically, it refers to the one objection raised by almost all Americans—the Germans' excessive smoking. Some, and not all of them Fundamentalists, looked upon the tobacco habit as a vice. Others, like Greeley, merely considered it a nuisance and a mark of ill-breeding. Still others, while apparently indifferent, found it remarkable enough to deserve mentioning, and often spoke with mild amusement of having noticed Germans puffing their pipes without restraint in all places and situations. One of these, Joel Cook, in

A Holiday Tour in Europe (1879), says playfully: "We were bound for the Fatherland and the Rhine; the land of castles, legends, and churches; of famous baths, of thrift, and true politeness; the land that has sent America millions of her best people, and has a sincere admiration for most things that emanate from America, especially petroleum and tobacco." Cook evidently knew the patterns of reaction which travel writers had created within a few years after the "discovery" of Germany—among them the image of the genial Bürger whose otherwise perfect politeness was marred by his inveterate habit of blowing clouds of tobacco smoke at his fellow men.

Yet irrespective of their attitude toward smoking, almost all travel writers were charmed by the Germans' civility and friendliness, and noted with regret that certain German wonts and customs were, and would probably remain, unknown in America. Thus, in reporting their impressions of the Germans, they criticized more or less

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8Cook, p. 189.
openly their countrymen at home. Like many other travelers, Harry E. Lutz, in *A Student's Views Abroad* (1888), was pleased with the German salutations and other customs. "Nothing is more noticeable to the American," says Lutz,

than the number of friendly salutations that are used by the Germans. When one walks in the country he is met everywhere with a cordial "Gruess Gott," which is as untranslatable as the English "good-bye." As one passes along the streets at noon he hears in every direction parting friends saluting each other with a "prosit," or a "Guten Appetit." German etiquette, too, requires one to doff his hat to gentlemen as well as to ladies. Nor is this a half-hearted movement as in America, but one vigorous and decided. Many of these actions are ungraceful and some are really laughable, but still I think that the warm salutations, which are so universal, are indicative of a national feeling of that good nature which prefers kindness to malice.

Some writers did not stop at such restrained approval, but barbed their comments so as to goad Americans into mending their own manners. In her otherwise undistinguished record of several European tours, Louise Chandler Moulton, for example, marvels at the civility

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9Lutz, p. 69.
of a streetcar conductor in Frankfort, who says "please," and "thank you." With obvious bitterness, Mrs. Moulton concludes: "I wish this conductor, or his like, lived in America, but it would be his fate to be misunderstood. Perhaps they would shut him up in an insane asylum."

In other words, Mrs. Moulton suggests that her countrymen turn to the Germans for a lesson in common courtesy. And, among the thousands that presumably read a travel book by an established, popular author like Mrs. Moulton, some at least may have heeded the plea. Yet while the phrasing of Mrs. Moulton's comment was fresh and somewhat startling, her praise of German courtesy was anything but new in 1898. By then, generations of readers had been used to such approbation of German customs and manners. Ever since Henry Edwin Dwight's *Travels in Northern Germany* (1829), the first American report on Germany to be published in book form, most travel writers had expressed their fondness for the German people and for the German national character.

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So commonly did travel writers express such sentiment that one might choose at random to illustrate this pleasure at the German mentality. During one of his visits to Germany, in 1850, George Henry Calvert, for example, was struck by the phrasing of a signboard, which any less observant traveler would probably have passed unnoticed. On entering the Zwinger, a public park in Dresden, Calvert read a sign: "These grounds are recommended to the protection of the public." "A greeting like this," he comments, "wins at a stroke the affection of the stranger. Such gentle fraternal words, tell of refinement and mutual trust. They make sacred to us every blade and leaf within the enclosure. We walked back to the inn with the sensation that one has, after receiving welcome unexpected news."¹¹ This observation is all the more remarkable because Calvert was one of the most outspoken and most perceptive critics of Germany's political condition. As with most Americans, his disdain of the ruling classes increased with his growing affection for the German people.

¹¹ Calvert, Scenes, Second Series, p. 48.
While many shared Calvert's enthusiasm for the Germans, few travel writers had the gift to present their conclusions with good-natured humor, as did Matthew F. Ward, in his *Letters from Three Continents* (1851). "Oh, I am delighted with Germany," says Ward, the land of poetry and sourkraut—the birthplace of Schiller and Goethe—the seat of learning—the country for superstition, romance, and Westphalia [sic] hams.... The people's cottages with their red tile roofs, seem full of comfort—abundance surrounds them—happiness and contentment are expressed in their faces, and one wonders where all the poverty and misery, that is annually transported to America in the shape of several thousand emigrants come from.

I entered their country violently prejudiced against all classes of Germans, but the little intercourse I have had with them has inspired me with great admiration for their national character. They are exceedingly polite, and although much given to pipes and books, they are free from the reserved, abstracted manner, which such habits might be supposed to produce. Courtiers and great observers of etiquette, they have nothing of stiffness or pretension about them; their universal affability, their willingness to impart information of their own country, the polite interest manifested in ours, and the great pleasure they seemed to feel in doing the hundred little things in which a native can oblige a foreigner, completely won my heart. There is nothing harsh about them except their language, which it seems unnatural for a pretty woman to speak. By the way, 'tis somewhat strange that some of the most
eminent composers of music should have been German, every word of whose language is grunting discord.

I shall always remember with pleasure the Germans....

...their great charm is their politeness. With them, it seems to proceed from goodness of heart, and is not an unmeaning ceremony, as it too often is with the French. There is a heartiness of manners that accompanies their little attentions which renders them particularly acceptable.  

Almost all travel writers professed to be equally charmed by the German national character, though many, who thought that the Germans carried their courtesy just a little too far, could not help smiling at their hat-lifting, low-bowing, hand-shaking hosts.

Yet though he might be somewhat puzzled, and perhaps amused, by the Germans' customs and manners, hardly any American voiced any serious complaint. A brief glance at a British traveler's report, Samuel Laing's Observations on the Social and Political State

of the European People in 1848 and 1849 (1850), provides therefore a striking contrast. None of the few Americans who found fault with German manners matched even nearly the vehemence of Laing's criticism. Laing sees, for example, little distinction between the manners of the different classes. "All," he says,

from the prince to the shoemaker, are what our dainty gentry would call slovenly livers, dirty feeders, and insensible to the disgust they may give by habits confined, among us, to our lowest and most roughly bred classes. Spitting all round a room, picking their teeth at meals with the knife, licking it, and thrusting it into the butter or cheese, and such petty abominations, show that there is not that marked difference in those small observations of delicacy, and regard for the feelings of others, in manners and behaviour, which distinguish the gentleman from the non-gentleman in our population. 13

Clearly, the Germans fared no better at the pen of Laing than did Americans at those of Dickens and of Mrs. Trollope. But though there may have been more than a grain of truth in Laing's observations, most American travel writers did not see the Germans with

Laing's eyes. Americans were likely to agree with Bayard Taylor, whom they recognized as the outstanding authority on German culture. In his *At Home and Abroad* (1860), Taylor offers an answer to those who complain that the Germans have bad manners. Manners, he argues, can be judged by a relative standard only; that is, time and place work changes that may seem incomprehensible to one person, while they may seem perfectly natural to another. As examples, Taylor points out that Sir Philip Sidney drank beer for his breakfast and that Queen Elizabeth picked her teeth with a fork. "Refinement," says Taylor, "(by which I mean what is snobbishly termed 'gentility') does not consist in such small matters." He dismisses the question of German manners with a reference to a notoriously ill-informed travel book. "An American woman [Mrs. Anna C. (Johnson) Miller]," Taylor says, "travelling in Germany, minus the language, has recently published a volume entitled 'Peasant Life in Germany' [(1858)], which is filled with the grossest blunders."
She measures everything she sees by an American standard, as if that were the only admitted test of excellence."14

Yet it did not require the prestige of Bayard Taylor, dean of American travelers in Germany, to discredit British criticism of the Germans. On the contrary, in comparing American and German manners, more than one travel writer suggested that his countrymen might take the Germans as their models. "On the Continent, and in Germany particularly," says W.W. Wright in his Doré, "people of third class means know how to behave themselves.... The words rowdy and rough have no synonym in Germany: I am sorry I can not say as much for my own country and for England."15 Another travel writer, George P. Putnam, was so concerned over the image of Americans abroad that he concluded his handbook, The Tourist in Europe (1838), with the admonition:

14 Taylor, At Home, p. 467.
15 Wright, p. 263.
In short,... I have seen much, very much to admire, much that we of the "New World" might imitate with advantage, and more still to make me better satisfied than ever that we are, on the whole, or ought to be, the happiest people in the world. Let us but pay a little more attention to our manners [Putnam's italics], (for they certainly may be much improved...) 16

While Putnam's exhortation may or may not have been inspired by Mrs. Frances Trollope's well-known strictures of American society, in Domestic Manners of the Americans (1832), the comments of another travel writer, Joel Tyler Headley, on a train trip in Germany echo quite obviously foreign criticism of America. In reading Headley's description, in The Alps and the Rhine (1845), of his journey from Mayence to Cologne, one recalls immediately Dickens' famous, or infamous, account of travel on the Ohio river, in American Notes (1842). 17

"As the day advanced," says Headley,

I was struck with the familiarity exhibited by the passengers. A gentleman would address a lady beside him, a perfect stranger, with some remark about the scenery, which she answered

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16 Putnam, Tourist, p. 281.

with the utmost cheerfulness, and there was that general freedom from restraint; and that confidence in each other's polite behaviour, the reverse of which makes our steamboat travelling like an assemblage of pickpockets, unacquainted with each other, and suspicious of each other's designs. 18

Similarly, in describing a meal aboard a Rhine steamer, John O. Choules says, in his *Young Americans Abroad* (1855): "There was not half the hurry and indecorum that you so often see in an American boat." 19 Though such allusions must have been obvious to many readers, some of these writers went even further in comparing foreign impressions of America with their own views of Germany. They took their countrymen to task for being too impatient of foreign criticism. Wright, for example, says in his *Dore*:

... we are an enfant gâté; thin-skinned and sensitive as women; so successful in most things, we are unwilling to be found faulty in any.

We whine a good deal when told by an Englishman that, while traveling in one of our railway

18 Headley, p. 125.

19 John Overton Choules and his Pupils, *Young Americans Abroad; or, Vacation in Europe: Travels in England, France, Holland, Belgium, Prussia, and Switzerland* (Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1855), p. 265. This volume was first published in 1851.
carriages, he thought there was a snow-storm, but afterward discovered it was only the people spitting; we get very angry because a European lady tells us that she sat a whole hour reading, while an American gentleman, with his feet cocked up on the back of her chair, had a boot against each of her ears! At the same time, the lessons have taken effect, and it is now considered very vulgar to spit snow-storms, or to rub the ears of European ladies with one’s boots; still there is room for much improvement in these matters, and we shall cordially welcome every year as many English and French as have no objection to making Trollopesses of themselves, and who, while caricaturing, misrepresenting, or delivering partial truths only, may touch the sensibilities of Brother Jonathan, and lead him to repair many things that sadly need mending.20

Thus, Wright and others concluded from their travel in Europe, and in Germany, that even the severest foreign critics of America deserved serious attention. Far from reiterating British censures of German manners, many of these travelers suggested that their countrymen would do well to take example by the Germans.

In setting forth this image of the Germans, many writers went indeed much farther, than observations on the Germans' national character, customs, and manners like those cited above would seem to indicate. As

remains to be shown, they led their readers, both singly and collectively, towards fuller self-awareness. They urged Americans to admit of the possibility that, as a nation and as individuals, they stood to gain from Germany, from Europe generally. These writers' seemingly insignificant remarks about the German way of life shattered common illusions about American society. In effect, travel writers opened their countrymen's eyes to the advantages of German social life, much as the "literary pioneers" had introduced the American intellectual elite to German scholarship and education.

Such men as Ticknor, Everett, Cogswell, Bancroft, Longfellow, and Motley had warned that higher education in America would not outgrow its infancy unless it adopted German methods and ideas, unless libraries and universities were organized along German models. Scholars and teachers, these men influenced, at least at first, just a small section of American society. Yet, since they spearheaded the pilgrimage to Europe of untold thousands of Americans, they shared in shaping not only standard patterns of reaction to foreign countries but
also a new image of America. In asserting the inadequacy of American higher education, and America's need to learn from Germany, these "literary pioneers" implied other possible shortcomings of American culture.

Yet, unlike these young Harvard graduates, whose main concern was the Germans' intellectual achievements, most travel writers reserved their admiration above all for the richness, stability, and ease of German social life. Through such whole-hearted praise for Germany, many writers implied, and some expressed, severe criticism of their country. American democracy was not, some writers felt, an unmixed blessing. They did not lay the blame for the barrenness and roughness of their country's social life on youthful inexperience, but saw instead more serious causes for such shortcomings. In abolishing the evils of the feudal system and of monarchic rule, America, they argued, had also cast aside much that was worth preserving. The Germans, many writers noted, enjoyed amenities unknown to most Americans. All of them benefited from the public parks, libraries, museums, theaters, and opera houses, most of which owed their existence to patronage. Such
observations on German social life were, in effect, positive arguments in the continuing debate for and against tradition, for and against a total break with the European past.

Most travel writers greatly admired the German way of life, and many noted somewhat ruefully that the Germans seemed to enjoy a degree of serenity and happiness unknown to most Americans. Almost inevitably, such remarks referred to the Germans' attitude toward leisure. The sight of Germans spending a weekday evening or Sunday afternoon walking through parks or fields or woods, or sitting in a coffeehouse or beer garden, talking and laughing, quite obviously contented with their lives—such a sight filled American observers with delight. Most travel writers marveled at the Germans' contentment and ability to make the most of the simple pleasures in life. Moreover, many found the contrast between this typically German zestful enjoyment of life and the often humdrum existence of Americans perplexing and disturbing.

One need not search long for examples of travel
writers praising the Germans' attitude towards leisure and, often, voicing discontent with the barrenness and joylessness of life at home. With obvious delight, George Henry Calvert, for example, recalls relaxing in a Dresden concert café. "This kind of cheap, good, sociable, conversational concert," he remarks, "is characteristic of Germany."21 In the same vein, Henry Whitney Bellows, in The Old World and the New (1868-1869), calls Düsseldorf:

... a model German town, solid, dull, devoted to art and music, with a fine park and capital accommodations for the first necessity of the Germans, a place for gathering over their wine and beer with their wives and children, and spending at least two evenings in the week in the open air, with orchestral music and pleasant chat.22

Bellows continues by describing a large crowd, gathered outdoors to celebrate the anniversary of the battle of Königgrätz, and adds reflectively: "As I looked upon the cheerfulness and moderation, the cordial intercourse, the absence of carking cares or of haste and

21 Calvert, Scenes, Second Series, p. 54.

22 Bellows, I, 75.
self-condemnation in this German tea-garden, I felt that Germany understood social life far better than any portion of America."23 Similarly, Orville Horwitz, in Brushwood, Picked up on the Continent (1855), observes:

The people of this section the Rhine region seem to understand far better than we do the philosophy of life, and to enjoy, to the full the advantage by which they are surrounded. They have long since learned that they are not mere machines for labor, and that the acquisition of money is not the only thing necessary to the enjoyment of existence. They act as if the beauties of Nature and the charms of Art were designed by Providence not to be disregarded. The shaded walks are frequented daily, the beautiful gardens around the towns are regularly visited, music is everywhere cultivated, and the pleasures of the senses are made to preserve a just equilibrium with the pleasures of the intellect.24

David Ross Locke, in his Nasby in Exile (1882), likewise reports approvingly:

The people of Mannheim are industrious, hard-working Germans, full of enterprise and business tact. During business hours they are always on duty, but, with the purely German characteristic, as soon as business is over they devote themselves to innocent amusement with as much gusto as they do to their work during the day. And the German

23Ibid., p. 76.

24Horwitz, p. 279.
citizen is not selfish in his enjoyments. He wants his whole family to partake of them with him. So in the evening, in the parks where the bands play, you will see him surrounded by his whole family, wife, daughters and sons, sipping beer, chatting with friends, and enjoying the music. They are a social lot of people, these Germans, and know full well how to get all the pleasure there is in life.25

Any further illustrations of this pattern would be redundant. Among all the travel writers considered in this study, only one, Lee Meriwether, in A Tramp Trip (1887), diverges from the rest by trying to discredit the Germans' attitude towards leisure. "The word 'Gemuethlich,'" says Meriwether, "which Germans so fondly declare has no rival equivalent in any other language, is simply a polite expression for 'bumming.'" No other thing is so destructive of domestic happiness as this German custom called "Gemuethlichkeit."26 Yet Meriwether's single voice was drowned out by a ringing chorus of approval and certainly did not affect conventional American attitudes toward Germany.

Most travel writers called the Germans blessed

25Locke, p. 635.
26Meriwether, p. 145.
for measuring their lives at the leisurely pace of an old, established, stable society. Thus, in his Views A-Foot (1846), his first travel book on Germany, young Bayard Taylor comments: "The Germans enjoy life under all circumstances, and are much happier than we, who have far greater means of being so." Then, after describing several long country walks and social gatherings in which he found great pleasure during his stay in Heidelberg, Taylor reflects:

How happily pass our September afternoons, warmed by such true social feeling, and refreshed by all the kindly influences of nature! If a return like this to the simple joys of the child's heart be but obtained by the mature age of a nation, I could almost wish our own country might grow old speedily. The restless energy of Youth is still upon us. The nation overflows with active impulses, which fear nothing, and yield to nothing. We have not yet felt the need of rest.

It is worth noting that, when he made these observations, Taylor was barely twenty years old. His matter-of-course reference to the idea of America's youth and implicit innocence, inexperience, and restlessness

27 Taylor, Views, p. 108.
28 Ibid., p. 112.
illustrates, incidentally, the common acceptance of this idea in the 1840's. Yet, above all, this passage is important because it illustrates the view that the Germans had achieved a more sophisticated attitude toward leisure than Americans and were therefore happier than Americans. Indeed, more than one travel writer thought that the difference between America and Germany could be reduced to a difference in pace of life. "In how many things are we too fast!" says Cyrus Augustus Bartol, in *Pictures of Europe Framed in Ideas* (1855). And from the fact that they literally move too fast, he argues that Americans would do well to slow down "the whole scope and course" of their activities. "Ah! is it not a significant fact," Bartol asks,

that the driver in our country, instead of holding back his wheel on the inclined plane, races down one hill for a purchase to win, easier and quicker, as he hopes, if not overset on the way, the top of the other? So we rush in trade, ex-

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29 Cyrus Augustus Bartol, *Pictures of Europe Framed in Ideas* (2d ed.; Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co., 1856), p. 279. This work was first published in 1855.

pense, enterprise of mines and roads and mills, in our ambition, conquest, physical aggrandizement; but, alas! it was never, in the history of the world, with any such boyish rush that intellectual and moral greatness, which is alone great in the eye of Heaven, was reached.31

Thus many travel writers judged their own as much as German culture by its attitude toward leisure. Many complained that their countrymen failed to detach themselves from the burdens of their daily lives in the happy manner of the Germans.

No travel writer inquired into the causes, consequences, and implications of this failure more earnestly than did Bayard Taylor. For this reason, and because of his great influence as an interpreter of German culture, Taylor deserves special consideration. Fourteen years after his first remarks on leisure in Views A-Foot, Taylor expatiated on this topic in At Home and Abroad (1860). With reference to German feasts and holidays, he says:

I am glad that we are gradually naturalizing the former festival [Christmas], and would willingly see all the others transplanted into our soil, although, when such customs become universal and inevitable, they lose something of that spontaneity

31Ibid., p. 282.
which is their greatest charm. Our life, on the other hand, is too barren; we press continually forward, on a hard, hot, stony road, neglecting every tree that invites us to rest awhile by the wayside. The Germans are much better economists than we. Recreation and domestic enjoyment are always included in the estimate of expenses, and the business of the household is managed in so careful and systematic a manner, that a family with one thousand dollars a year manages to extract much more enjoyment from existence, than most American families whose incomes are triple that sum.32

Surprisingly, this passage introduces, not a disquisition on economics, but Taylor's views on American provincialism. Partly because he felt secure in his popularity, partly because he knew German life more intimately than did other travel writers, and partly because American provincialism disturbed him more than it did most of his fellow citizens, Taylor did not mince words in passing judgment on American society. By 1860, when he published *At Home and Abroad*, Taylor had long been popular as a lyceum speaker and as the author of travel books and of romantic verse. Though he had not yet been appointed nonresident professor of German at Cornell, he was already recognized as an

authority on German culture. It was surprising that this young Quaker from rural Pennsylvania grew up to write volumes of uninspired, traditional verse and to become the unofficial laureate of the gilded age. But it was even more surprising that he raised his voice to decry American provincialism. Yet in his later fiction, and notably in *Hannah Thurston* (1863), Taylor applied his knowledge of Germany and other foreign lands to a criticism of American rural and small-town society. Like many other loyal Americans, Taylor found that his foreign travels had brought the image of his native country more sharply into focus. Like other writers, he did not hesitate to project this new and, as it seemed to him truer image of America for his readers' enlightenment. Yet unlike most observers of foreign culture, Taylor maintained that the imperfections of life in the New World derived from a major social flaw—American provincialism. "There is," says Taylor in a clearly didactic tone,

this lesson to be derived from an intimate acquaintance with other lands and other races—that no country possesses the best. It would be difficult for an American to endure the annoyances of living under European laws, but he could scarcely fail to enjoy the order, and
security prevailing under a long-established Government, and the freedom of a matured and settled Society. With complete political independence, we must still endure a social tyranny. The opinion of the community in which we live, with regard to our opinions, actions, and habits of life, is the Autocrat that rules us. Where this public opinion is enlightened, liberal, and generous, very well; no home in the world could be more fortunate. But where it is narrow and uncharitable, resist it and you will become a social martyr.33

The fact that Taylor talks about America's major social weakness in terms which travel writers frequently applied to Germany's political condition is remarkable. In weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the two worlds, he came as close as any travel writer to saying that the freedom and cheer of German social life all but balanced the iniquity of Germany's political condition and that, on the other hand, the liberty and justice of American government were all but outweighed by American provincialism.

One of the main reasons for this provincialism, Taylor holds, is the virtual absence of a leisure class. In America, he thinks, a man is judged, not

33Ibid., pp. 467-468.
simply by his social value, "without regard to his religious and political opinions." "The main cause of this is," he says, "sufficient attention is not paid to the social amenities of life. In all country communities, work is the prescribed regimen, and a man who chooses to live without it exposes himself to censure and impertinent gossip." Thus, he asserts, but one of the 250,000 inhabitants of Cincinnati is a man of leisure.$^{35}$

In "Preferences after Seeing the World," the final chapter of *At Home and Abroad*, Taylor cites two main reasons why leisure, with its distinct Old World associations, is regarded as immoral or, at least, held in low esteem. One, he thinks is the influence of some self-righteous and narrow-minded Protestant sects, the other the force of democratic leveling in America. At any rate, the American attitude toward leisure seems to suggest to him a major, though

$^{34}$Ibid., p. 494.

$^{35}$Ibid., pp. 494-495.
remediable, weakness of American democracy. "There is," says Taylor,

another feature of small communities, which springs from the nature of our political system. Democracy, which we have thoroughly incorporated into our Government, has two opposite modes of operation in our Society. It levels down as well as up. The practical effect is, not that the uncultivated many shall imitate the cultivated few, but the latter shall be dragged down to the lower platform on which the former stand. This, however, is an evil which will remedy itself in the course of time. The progress in the right direction, which has been made within the last twenty years, is amazing. Nevertheless, one who is familiar with Society in the two hemispheres cannot but admit that in Europe it stands on a broader, firmer, and altogether more liberal and catholic basis than in this country.

In one respect we might profitably imitate the Germans. Our sorest need, as a people, is recreation—relaxation of the everlasting tension of our laborious lives. Among our Teutonic cousins, a certain amount of recreation, public as well as domestic, is a part of the plan of every man's life. The poorest laborer has his share—must have it—and the treadmill round of his years is brightened and sweetened by it. Our seasons of recreation, being so rare, too frequently take the character of excess. They are characterized by the same hurry and fury with which we prosecute our business. If we shall ever intercalate regular periods of genial relaxation into our working calender, we shall be a healthier and happier people than we are now.36

36 Ibid., pp. 495-496.
Even though it is uncommonly detailed, Taylor's incisive yet basically optimistic judgment of American society reflects the views of many travel writers. In comparing German and American society, many of these travelers deplored their countrymen's unwillingness or inability to abandon even for a moment their quest for material success. Most of those who engaged in this comparison rested their case by saying or suggesting that the Germans seemed, on the whole, happier than Americans. Yet Taylor and some others went beyond such bland subjective observations. To them, the constant rush and frenzy of their countrymen seemed but a symptom of the basic insecurity of American life. Unlike most travel writers, they questioned the idea of their country's innocence and moral superiority. Indeed, they tended to regard their country's youth and newness as a handicap.

Nevertheless, even severe critics of American society returned home better patriots than they had left. Thus, after having claimed the right of an American to criticize, Taylor ends his *At Home and Abroad* by summing up his sentimental attachment to his country;
and he concludes: "... I know that no tropical island, no palace on a Mediterranean shore, no advantage of wealth and position in the great capitals of Europe, could ever tempt me to give up the name, the rights, and the immunities of an American citizen." Similarly, Wright left no doubt as to his loyalty. Though he ends his Doré with a "Conclusion—in Which, Like the Last Chapter of Rasselas, All My Conclusions Remain Still Unconcluded," he clearly meant this final chapter to underscore both his faith in American democracy and his concern over his country's immaturity. Since it is very short this chapter can be quoted in full. In an amusing tour de force, with curious over-simplifications uncovering his prejudices, Wright declares:

Having undertaken to prove nothing, nothing is proven. After much observation, however, the writer thinks he has never seen any people so agreeable as the French, none so honest and genuine-hearted as the Germans, none more refined than the Italians. There are no people who are so virile, spirited, and witty as the Irish, nor whose nationality is more strongly marked; and he believes that perhaps an eighth of the English are superior, morally, physically, and intellectually, to a picked eighth of any other nation on earth; and, finally, there is no

37 Ibid., p. 500.
country where there is so much liberty as in the United States.

But whether the sociability of the French would compensate for being a Frenchman; whether German honesty, sobriety, and steadiness would compensate for an ambitionless life; Italian refinement for Italian effeminacy; the superiority of a minority of the English for the arrogance, brutality, and dullness of the masses; whether it were worth the honor of being an Irishman for the sake of desiring to be an Englishman, as so many Irish appear to do; or whether American liberty is a fair equivalent for American license and rowdiness, are questions I leave each to decide for himself; and while pondering these and collateral subjects, I think we shall all conclude it were better to consider more our own, and less the faults of our neighbors. 38

In short, in offering their views on the Germans' national characteristics, customs, manners, and mentality, these travelers impressed upon their readers a distinct pattern of reaction. Yet, even in expressing all but unqualified approval of their hosts, they did convey a sense of their ambivalence toward Germany. Against their anger at the ruling class, they set their fondness of the people; against their impatience with the practices of a police state, their delight at the social life of a colorful, long-established civilization. If Germany had been truly a despotism, the people would hardly have

38wright, pp. 385-386.
struck these travelers as happy, social, genial, and care-
free. Yet the unreason of their reaction seems to have
troubled none of these observers. Indeed, in comparing
German and American society, many enjoined their country-
men to mend their manners and to enrich the fabric of
their lives by the example of the Germans. Moreover, in
marveling at the amenities of German life, most of these
writers made the German people's political subjection seem
less oppressive and, indeed, quite unlikely and unintel-
ligible. In fretting at the lack of such amenities at
home, some of them even made the liberty of the New World
appear less free. Most of these seemed agreed that, in
the words of the late Irwin Edman: "The best test of a
civilization is the quality of its leisure";39 and in
applying this criterion, they found American society de-
icient. Yet, though many of them deprecated the New
World's cultural and social callowness, all of these
travel writers believed in the future of their young re-
public: they professed faith in American democracy and--
with some notable abstentions--in their country's basic
moral superiority.

39Irwin Edman, "On American Leisure," Harper's
Magazine, CLVI (January, 1928), 220.
CHAPTER IV

THE AMERICAN VIEW OF GERMAN MORALITY

In spite of differing moral convictions, most nineteenth-century American observers of Germany's moral condition struck an amazing harmony. Indeed, in their comments on the country's moral fiber, they set up yet another major pattern of opinion. The very unanimity of their responses seems surprising because these travelers were, after all, less likely to agree on moral issues than on political and social ones. Their common faith in the principles of their republic accounted for their attitude toward Germany's political condition—their scorn for the ruling class, their pity for the people. Their common fondness of their hosts and, often, their sense of their own country's social callowness explained their admiration for the German's social life—above all for the people's attitude toward leisure. Yet their divergent concepts of morality seemed certain to divide these writers in their estimates of Germany's moral
condition. And, indeed, different observers did react differently, for instance, to "the horrors of the Continental Sabbath": what was, to some, a moral issue did not strike others as a moral issue at all. Moreover, handicapped by both the briefness of their stay and insufficient knowledge of the language, most of these writers seemed to lack the evidence on which they might have based sound judgments of German morality. They remained silent on the Germans' sexual morality and, as a rule, avoided unfounded generalizations on other moral issues--with one significant exception: the assumption of their country's moral superiority over the Old World, and thus over Germany.

Since it informed many observers' comments, this supposition tended to harmonize many apparently discordant voices. Few of these writers, it is true, expressed their sense of moral superiority in plain, explicit statements. Many a one, however, implied a moral judgment through imagery. In The American Adam (1955), R.W.B. Lewis calls this device "the representative imagery and anecdote that crystallized whole
clusters of ideas, "1 among them the ideas of America's youth and innocence, as opposed to Europe's age and decadence. Yet this "representative imagery and anecdote" occurred by no means only in the works of "articulate thinkers and conscious artists," "the chief intellectual spokesman," to whom Mr. Lewis has limited his interest.2 Indeed, it commonly occurred in travel books whose authors were "unknown." Thus, though he was a well-known publisher, George Palmer Putnam surely gained no literary fame with his first travel book, The Tourist in Europe (1838). And yet, by asserting, in his "Preface," that an American "belongs to Nature's nobility," he shared in popularizing the idea of American moral superiority.3 At the


2Ibid., pp. 1-2.

3Putnam, Tourist, p. 6.
same time his comments may suggest that this idea was current even in the 1830's.

The imagery associated with such ideas as innocence and youth identifies, to follow Mr. Lewis, "the beginnings and the first tentative outlines of a native American mythology." This process occurred during the period "from about 1820 to 1860." Significantly, also from the 1820's onwards, uncounted thousands of Americans visited Europe, and many of these travelers must have been tempted to console themselves for the comparative cultural backwardness of their own country by pointing to America's moral superiority. To what degree the travel writers shared in defining this idea is difficult to say. Yet there can be no doubt that many of them had a hand in propagating it. At any rate one need not wonder at many of these writers' tendency—even if they lacked conclusive evidence—to look upon their country as morally superior to Germany.

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4Lewis, p. 1.

5Ibid.
Within this basic uniformity the patterns of American reaction to Germany's moral condition varied considerably. Nevertheless some of these patterns remained more prominent than others. This principle is evident from the wide range of comments on Germany's religious life. Some travelers deplored, others approved of the country's pervasive secularization; but, unlike these, the great majority tended to give objective factual accounts.

This scrupulous impartiality is evident in the accounts of Henry Edwin Dwight and Catharine Maria Sedgwick, both of whom, though for different reasons, unquestionably stamped their marks on the American image of Germany. Like other early students in German universities, Dwight recognized his dual task: first, to describe the eminence of German thought and letters and, second, to plead for more and better libraries and universities at home. Large sections of his Travels in the North of Germany (1829) are none the less devoted to detailed reports on the political, social, and moral climate of the German Federation. Moreover, Dwight included in his Travels statistic data on such
diverse topics as the weather, the death rate, and diseases. For, since he was the first American to write a travel book on Germany, he could be certain that his readers would welcome almost any information on this newly "discovered" country. Dwight carried out his task with the detachment of a scientist. Even in describing, for example, the keeping of the Sunday and the morality of the Berliners, he withheld moral judgments. He carefully maintained his objectivity by simply stating the differences between American and German customs. Thus he allowed his readers to draw their own conclusions.

In Letters from Abroad (1841), Catharine Maria Sedgwick followed much the same method. Indeed, since it echoes the unpopular, long since abandoned realism of her early fiction, her calculated objectivity demands some explanation. First of all, by her very title, Letters from Abroad to Kindred at Home, Miss Sedgwick indicated that, though she might have had an eye to their appeal as travel copy even when she wrote them, primarily these letters had been private. This difference

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6Dwight, p. 230.
between public travel notes and private letters is significant. If they had been addressed directly to a public audience, Miss Sedgwick's observations on religious custom, for example, might well have been less balanced. In fact, as the footnote quoted in Chapter I (p. 46) of this study suggests, Miss Sedgwick edited these private messages before releasing them, for she could ill afford to be suspected of lacking in enthusiasm for her own country.\footnote{Sedgwick, I, 226, n.} Dwight's \textit{Travels}, to be sure, was also a collection of originally private letters. But it appeared some twelve years earlier, at a time when the image of Germany was just beginning to take shape. Moreover, unlike Miss Sedgwick, Dwight wrote before the image of young, innocent America—the idea of America's a priori moral superiority—had taken hold of his countrymen's imagination. Yet, despite some revisions, Miss Sedgwick seems to have preserved the spirit of her manuscript. In her book she maintained the cautious attitude, the tendency to withhold judgments which she had recommended to her private
correspondents. Her constant warning not to judge rashly is illustrated by these comments on the poverty that she had noticed among the German peasants:

When I see the young ones here playing round a heap of manure that is stacked up before their door, I think how favored are the children of the poorest poor in our New-England villages—but softly—the hard-pressed German peasant, in his pent-up village, has a look of contentment and cheerfulness that our people have not. If his necessities are greater, his desires are fewer. God is the father of all, and these are his compensations.8

Similarly, she urged her correspondents, and her readers, not to base moral judgments on the assumption that American religious custom was necessarily superior to any other. Thus, in describing German Sunday observances, she says:

If you [her correspondent] recollect that we are now in Protestant Germany [Wiesbaden], you will be astonished at the laxity of the Sabbath. The German reformers never, I believe, undertook to reform the Continental Sabbath. They probably understood too well the inflexible nature of national customs, and how much more difficult it is to remodel them than to recast faith. We are accustomed to talk of "the horrors of a Continental Sabbath," and are naturally shocked with an aspect of things so different from our own. But when I remember the dozing congregations I have seen, the domestics stretched half the heavy day in bed, the

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8Ibid., p. 164.
young people sitting by the half-closed blind, stealing long looks out of the window, while the Bible was lying idle on their laps; and the merry shouts of the children at the going down of the sun, as if an enemy had disappeared, it does not seem to me that we can say to the poor, toil-worn peasant of Europe, "I am holier than thou."9

It is easy to see why, in her travel book, Miss Sedgwick chose for once not to accommodate her public, that is, not to abandon the objective tone characteristic of her private letters. By 1841, having adapted to the tastes of her genteel female audience, she had secured her reputation as a distinguished novelist. She could by now risk printing views that were potentially unpopular. Indeed, in the explanatory note cited above, (p.46), she merely parried in advance the worst possible charge—that her unqualified approval of the Germans was unpatriotic. Moreover, in encouraging her countrymen to know themselves before presuming to throw stones at others, Miss Sedgwick simply followed her calling as a moralist. Much to her credit, she refused to parrot easy moral judgments. And, in view of her

9Ibid., p. 161
popularity, her tolerance must have affected many a reader's attitude toward Germany's moral condition.

In shunning the cliché of America's characteristic youthful innocence, Miss Sedgwick superficially resembled C.A. Bartol and Bayard Taylor. Yet, unlike these two authors cited in Chapter III, she remained after all in the main stream of American opinion of Germany's moral condition. To be sure, she suggested that to note mere differences in religious custom did not entitle an observer to pass moral judgments. And in citing this axiom, she tried to cut off any serious debate on whether the apparent "laxity of the Sabbath" meant that the Germans' general morality was low. Yet, as is clear from her remarks on gambling cited below, eventually she reached the same conclusions as most of her fellow travelers.

Bartol and Taylor, on the other hand, discredited the very concept of their country's moral superiority. Bartol devoted a long passage in his *Pictures of Europe Framed in Ideas* (1855) to an attack on the cliché of Young America. Taylor announced his reservations
somewhat obliquely—by his remarks on German social life—with much the same results. In taking issue with their country's "boyish rush"¹⁰ or "restless energy of Youth,"¹¹ both of these writers skillfully reversed the imagery often associated with their country's innocence. Indeed, in their hands that imagery became self-defeating. In praising the advantages of German social life, Taylor, most popular of all these writers, called attention to his country's social immaturity. At the same time, in pointing out the disadvantages of youth, Taylor as well as Bartol argued that the moral implications of the familiar cliché were false. Moreover, besides thus denying their country's a priori moral superiority, both of these writers failed to register responses to Germany's moral condition commonly voiced by travel writers. Taylor, for instance, seemed unconcerned about the evidence of secularization. And, in describing a Commers, a student drinking party, he carefully refrained from criticism.¹² Not even once did Taylor

¹⁰Bartol, p. 282.
¹¹Taylor, Views, p. 112.
¹²Ibid., p. 142.
mention seeing a German woman, yoked with a dog, pulling a heavy cart—a sight which most Americans noted with indignation. Perhaps, like those who joined him in his silence, he thought that moral judgments should not be based upon such issues. At any rate, like Bartol and some others, Taylor strongly implied that the experience of his travels had paled the image of America as a young man resplendent with the innocence of youth.

Among the few who dared to publish such admissions, just one, young Orville Horwitz, owned to participating in the follies of a German Sunday. In *Brushwood, Picked up on the Continent* (1855), the record of his second trip to Europe, Horwitz, then twenty-four, gives a remarkable account of a day at Bad Ems, a fashionable German spa. Since it was clearly meant to shock, this report helps define the pattern of American reaction to Germany's moral condition. It differs from most others at the time in both its substance and its implications. Horwitz begins by saying:

The last day we spent at Ems was the last Sunday of July. The mode in which it was spent contrasted so strongly with the usual way of spending Sunday in the United States, that it
occurs to me even now as remarkable. We were not yet free [italics mine] from the impressions of quiet and rest that an American Sunday always brings with it...."13

Horwitz stayed in bed late, awake, and as he puts it, "comfortably thinking and dreaming away the delightful and cool hours of the morning."14 Then, after a leisurely breakfast, he lay down on the sofa and read, or slept, or dreamed again. At 10 o'clock he and his traveling companion went to the Kursaal, that is, the casino, where they found a great many people whiling away the morning.15 "So," he continues,

we, too, sat down and having no work and no book, began to compare the Sabbath here with the Sabbath at home, and were in the very midst of an interesting discussion as to the difference, in actual morality and practical honesty, between the people of Germany, so little constrained [italics mine] by the formalities of religion, and the people of the United States, so puritanical and strict in their ceremonial observances, when the hour for roulette arrived, and the players were in attendance.16

After watching the game for a few minutes, Horwitz strolled to the bathhouse for his bath, and then, at

13Horwitz, p. 289.
14Ibid., p. 290.
15Ibid., p. 291.
16Ibid., p. 292.
12-o'clock, home for dinner, but only after having again stopped at the Kurssaal, to watch the gambling. Then he and his companion dined in private, easing the labor of an enormous meal with some old Rüdesheimer. While they were eating, someone, with the authorization of the Prince of Nassau, took up a collection for the music, much to the astonishment of the two young Americans.\textsuperscript{17} "We supposed, however," Horwitz adds, that as the United States grew older and more enlightened\textsuperscript{18}, our wonder would diminish.\textsuperscript{18} Then someone else came in to offer canes for sale. At five o'clock Horwitz and his companion went for a walk. As they returned, they found the people to be out in the gardens, the gamblers still at their game, and the band in full swing.\textsuperscript{19} "The ballroom," Horwitz concludes,

was crowded, and the dance went merrily on. The neighborhood of the Kur Saal\textsuperscript{sic} was never

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., pp. 292-293.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 293.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.
more full of life and animation than on the night of the last day we spent at Ems. We looked on in astonishment. Returning home, quite fatigued, I once more threw myself in the arms of Somnus and soon forgot, in the sweets of his tender embraces, that I was far from home, a stranger in a strange land, living amongst people with strange habits and stranger Sundays.

As the citations from his Brushwood in Chapter III make clear, young Horwitz was by no means being ironic in suggesting that, as America "grew older and more enlightened," he and his countrymen would gradually cease to wonder at the strangeness of a German Sunday. It would seem that events have proved him right.

How greatly Horwitz differs from other travel writers even in his views on Germany's political and social order, is obvious from his description of a ball at Bad Ems. Here he compares the European aristocracy with its American equivalent:

Most of them [the Duke and the Duchess of Württemberg, a Russian princess, Lord and Lady Shaftesbury, Countess Murat, Countess Polminoff, Lady Malmesbury, Prince Hohenlohe, and others] we had already seen and passed and conversed with, more than once, without knowing their titles, and from their simple, unassuming manners, we

Ibid.
might have been equally guilty and equally ignorant until the day of our departure, if an accidental acquaintance had not directed our attention to the notabilities, and exacted the proper degree of regard from our republican sympathy. They were perfectly secure of their position and rank, and they did not fear to compromise their dignity or to lose their standing, by conversing with a stranger! We could not help observing how much less pompous and self-satisfied they looked than the merchant princes, as they are called, of our own country, whose patent of nobility dates from some Massachusetts cotton mill, and whose arms bear the heraldic impression of some fashionable domestic print, with a bend sinister! - They are dressed with the utmost simplicity, lords and ladies, princes and princesses! Plain black and white, rich but simple, constituted their entire toilette, and distinguished them in their simplicity from the gaudy trappings of the humble burgers.21

Thus, after hobnobbing with members of the European ruling class, Horwitz went far beyond the ordinary travel writer's tendency toward objectivity. Indeed, unlike even his least biased fellow travelers, all of whom recognized a moral wrong in the existence of the privileged class, he claimed to have discovered advantages in Germany's social stratification. His observations, Horwitz implied, convinced him that America was in no way morally superior to Germany.

21Ibid., pp. 288-289.
Even the great majority who never questioned their country's basic moral superiority tried to view Germany's religious life objectively. Yet, being Protestants or even ministers, most travel writers struggled for objectivity against their more or less obvious Protestant bias. At worst this bias broke into the open with bitter tirades against Roman Catholicism. At best it hid behind factual observations on differences between American and German religious custom. Even if, ostensibly, they had no bias, these writers tended to express surprise at the lack of austerity, at the reminders of pre-Reformation usages in German churches. Thus, in *The Tourist in Europe* (1838), George palmer Putnam says: "In the principal Lutheran church in Leipzig, I was a little surprised to see paintings, altars and images!--things opposed, as I thought, to the very spirit of Lutheranism."22 And, in her *Peasant Life in Germany* (1858), Anna C. (Johnson) Miller acknowledges a similar impression of her first visit to a

Lutheran church. "We stare about," she says facetiously, and think how funny! The floors are uncarpeted, and the seats uncushioned; and yet before our eyes are long rows of saints and beatified man, that we presume are rare and costly works of art; upon which we ought to gaze with profound admiration, but we have not yet learned this species of homage.23

Moreover, many of these writers noted somewhat regretfully that their hosts spent their Sundays and religious holidays at secular activities and that, in fact, few Germans seemed to attend church regularly. Yet, even though they disapproved, these writers managed not to let this observation weaken their fondness of the people. That some Americans arrived at this conclusion by a determined effort not to moralize, becomes apparent from Charles Loring Brace's Home-Life in Germany (1853). Brace, incidentally, seems to have been a minister. "I have tried," he says in his "Preface,"

to give a true picture of German Home-Life, and all will, of course, draw their own conclusions. But I do not hesitate to confess that a definite purpose has been before me. It has seemed to me that in this universal greed for money, in this clangor and whirl of American life, in the wasteful habits everywhere growing up, and in the little heed given to quiet home enjoyment, or to

23Miller, p. 35.
the pleasures from Art and Beauty, a voice from those calm, genial old German homes, might be of good to us;—telling of a more simple, economical habit, of sunny and friendly hospitalities, of quiet cultured tastes, and of a Home-Life, where affection and cheerfulness make the outside World as nothing in the comparison

On but one subject, do I hesitate much at my conclusions. I earnestly wish they may be proved incorrect. I mean my remarks upon the German religious character. On those solemn and mysterious relations which bind man with his Maker, I would be the last to speak dogmatically. The expression of the religious Principle is not to be limited by any local or partial measure.

Still, the observations, sad as they are, which I have stated, seemed to me true of the masses of the people. Our hope is, however, for Germany, that the darkest time of Unbelief has past, and that a day of purer Faith and reason is dawning.24

In The Old World in Its New Face (1868-1869), Henry Whitney Bellows, another minister, devoted a whole chapter to explaining why, in his opinion, Protestantism had decayed in the very country of its origin.25 Elsewhere in the same volume Bellows concludes that, despite the reaction since 1848, the small number of churches, and the low church attendance, Berlin is a moral, intelligent and orderly community, of conservative tastes


and habits. Its people are not irreverent in tone and speech, among the better classes, and, so far as I can see, are not unbelievers in the essential truths of Christianity." Characteristically, Bellows attributed the country's secularization to the political condition. The government, he thought, and not the people, deserved censure. In his opinion,

The people have unhappily become accustomed to living without religious observances and without church-going. They have discovered, too, that morality may exist and does exist independently of churches and Sunday instructions. They have invented a kind of piety of their own, and are not without many religious beliefs, hopes and fears. But there is, in spite of all, that decline in earnestness, purity, the sense of responsibility and the service of humanity, which must follow the absence of public worship and religious co-operation. I feel among the people here, with all their geniality and kindness of manners and decorum, a sad want of the moral enthusiasm, aspiration and tenderness which accompany the religious life of the same classes at home. And I believe that a much braver, stronger and more earnest grasping with theological objectives, and a much more radical change in the Christian confession of the Germans is absolutely necessary to bring out and reconstitute in Church communions the great masses of the people. This change will come, and the political movements in Germany will hasten it. It can not come too soon.27

26 Ibid., p. 364.
27 Ibid., p. 367.
According to James Edmund Scripps, of the *Detroit Evening News*, this apathy toward organized religion was common among Catholics as well as Protestants. In his *Five Months Abroad* (1882), Scripps gives the following somewhat improbably account:

In Munich we had our first experience of a so-called "continental Sunday." The first thing we saw from our window the Sunday we were there was the shopkeepers taking down their shutters and arranging their goods in their windows. Then a large load of beer barrels came along; then a load of sand and all the ordinary traffic of a week day. As we passed through the streets on our way to church, people could be seen at work in all the various shops, trucks were delivering goods, and altogether it was hard to believe it was really Sunday. We went into three or four churches, Catholic and Protestant, and found only mere handfuls of worshipers.28

Scripps' report does not seem trustworthy because it is highly unlikely that, on a Sunday, he saw literally "all the ordinary traffic of a week day." Moreover, his assertion that he "found only mere handfuls of worshipers" even in Catholic churches sounds equally suspicious because, even in Germany, Catholic discipline normally seems to effect relatively high church attendance. Above all, Scripps' comments are dis-

28Scripps, pp. 70-71.
credited by the report of Charles Carroll Fulton, in *Europe Viewed Through American Spectacles* (1874). In 1873, only nine years before Scripps went to Munich, Fulton visited Dresden, which was also predominantly Catholic, and found that: "The churches were all largely attended in the morning, and the immense cathedral was literally packed with people." In order to explain these travelers' conflicting evidence, one may safely assume that Scripps was wrong, and Fulton right. For, ordinarily, when they were struck by the great number of vacant pews, these writers were referring to Protestant churches. One more example will further illustrate this point. Reporting on predominantly Protestant Berlin, in his *Two Years in Europe* (1887), Rodney Glisan regrets the fact that "the theatres and operas are much better patronized...than the churches, which rarely draw full houses."30

Thus, though they noted their hosts' apparent secularity, most of these writers took great pains not

29Fulton, p. 22.
30Glisan, p. 310.
to pass moral judgments on the German people. And yet, many communicated to their readers their view that the Germans no longer were true Christians. Ironically, the Germans seem to have reached the same conclusion about Americans. In his *A Student's Views Abroad* (1888), Harry E. Lutz reports the following:

> Americans think the Germans are heathen for presuming to enjoy themselves on Sunday. But they would be astonished to know that the feeling is reciprocated. The Protestants celebrate a great many festival days here which I never heard of before I came to Stuttgart. The other morning as the servant brought me my coffee she announced that it was a sacred day. I assured her that I knew nothing about it and then her contempt for the Protestants of the New World was unbounded. "Humph!" said she in disgust, "the Americans are of no account if they don't celebrate to-day."\(^{31}\)

Since he knew German, Lutz was perhaps better able than were most travel writers to see the Germans' point of view and to append it as a moral to his own observations. At any rate, though they preferred not to spell out their fears, most commonly these writers seemed concerned about the moral fiber of their hosts because German religious life, they thought, lacked vigor.

Surprisingly, these travelers voiced no concern

\(^{31}\)Lutz, p. 72.
about the Germans' heavy drinking. Indeed, far from moralizing on the Germans' penchant for alcoholic beverages, many of these Americans expressed hope that their countrymen might learn to drain their steins or tumblers as quietly and inoffensively as did their hosts. Beginning with Henry E. Dwight, many observers noted the all but total absence of drunkenness in Germany as well as on the Continent in general. "During a residence of two years in France and Italy," says Dwight in his Travels (1829), "I have not observed ten persons intoxicated, with the exception of foreigners in the seaports." In his Europe Viewed Through American Spectacles (1874), Charles Carroll Fulton likewise observes, just five days after his arrival: "We have yet to see the first drunken man in Germany, or one that was even boisterous from the effect of liquor." Such observations recurred in many travel books throughout the century.

As for the causes of this striking contrast between

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33 Fulton, p. 23.
America and Germany, these writers advanced different theories. Dwight, for example, thought that the abundance and popularity of light native wines explained the Germans' dislike for hard liquor and consequent sobriety, and argued that the introduction of winegrowing would help reduce the rate of drunkenness at home.\textsuperscript{34} This argument was obviously false, for many Germans drank beer rather than wine, neither of which was as light a beverage as Dwight thought. Anna C. (Johnson) Miller, in her \textit{Peasant Life in Germany} (1858), expresses a no less mistaken notion. In telling of the Whitsuntide festivities in Frankfort, with throngs of people making merry on the grounds outside the city, Mrs. Miller explains: "But there are not here, as there are certain to be at an American muster, drunkenness and coarse revelry, noise and angry confusion. Wine and beer do not have the same effect in this climate as in that, and the police are more numerous, more watchful, and much feared."\textsuperscript{35} But elsewhere in this volume Mrs. Miller

\textsuperscript{34}Dwight, pp. 26-27.

\textsuperscript{35}Miller, p. 348.
admits that she cannot explain the difference. "In America," she says,

the whole country would be one scene of drunkenness and revel with so many occasions for excitement, drinking and dancing; but either because they are so accustomed to them, that they do not get excited, or because they are not so excitable, or from some cause we cannot divine, the people drink, and sing, and dance, the year in and the year out, without so much noise and hurrah as is to be seen on one Fourth of July.\(^\text{36}\)

In much the same way many other writers suggested many equally improbable solutions to the puzzle. With somewhat greater plausibility, others maintained that the Germans' drinking habits reflected the national mentality. One of these, David Ross Locke, deserves quoting because of his distinctive humor. In his *Nasby in Exile* (1882), Locke has Tibbits, one of his traveling companions, compare American and European drinking habits. "Americans," says Tibbits,

are fools in their way of drinking. All other peoples have a defined idea of what they want to accomplish with stimulants, but the American has not. Your Englishman wants to get stupid drunk; he wants forgetfulness, which I can't blame him for. Were I living in England I should

\(^{36}\text{Ibid.}, p. 385.\)
want forgetfulness in large doses. I can't blame an Englishman, condemned to London climate and London customs, for drinking. The Frenchman and German drink just enough to produce the requisite hilarity, the general good feeling which light stimulants in moderation produces [sic], and then they quit. An American does nothing of the sort. He drinks through all the stages, the slightly exhilarant, the mild hilarious, the boisterous idiotic, the brutally quarrelsome, the pitiful maudlin, and then slips off his chair harmless because helpless.37

No wonder that, as they compared American and German drinking habits, these writers saw no evidence of their own country's basic moral superiority. In fact, their strong approval of the Germans' attitude toward leisure implied approval of their hosts' leisure activities, drinking included. Thus, in his immensely popular From the Lakes of Killarney to the Golden Horn (1876), Henry M. Field, D.D., echoes the judgments of most other travel writers when he concludes:

Some moralists might look upon this with stern eyes, as if it were a scene of sinful enjoyment, as if men had no right thus to be happy in this wicked world. But I confess I looked upon it with different feelings. The enjoyment was of the most simple and innocent kind. Families were all together, father and mother, brothers and sisters, while little children ran about at play. I have rarely looked on a prettier scene,

37Locke, p. 638.
and although I had no part nor lot in it, although I was a stranger there, and walked among these crowds alone, still it did my heart good to see that there was so much happiness in this sad and weary world.38

Indeed, of all the travel writers here considered, just one, Charles Francis Sessions, implied strong reservations as to the Germans' drinking habits. During his stay in Munich, Sessions, like other tourists, went to the Hofbräuhaus. "Women and girls were coming and going," he reports in his On the Wing Through Europe (1880), "crowding their way along among the men with their mugs and their wire casters, holding from three to six glasses of the foaming beverage." But when the guide asked him to take a glass of beer, Sessions had seen enough. "I declined," he says primly.39

Yet, though they tended to treat drinking, not as a moral issue but as their hosts' national pastime, these travelers showed little patience with the amusements of the aristocracy. Indeed, to the government-sponsored

38 Henry Martyn Field, From the Lakes of Killarney to the Golden Horn (New York: Scribner's 1876), p. 166.

39 Sessions, p. 233.
institution of gambling, many of these writers responded with an outcry of moral indignation. Could anything prove the corruptive force of monarchy more plainly, they kept asking, than the fact that the princes not only tolerated but virtually operated the casinos? Were not these gilded halls of marble, these cards and dice and roulette wheels inventions of the devil? And since it was the aristocracy who came here in a vain pursuit of pleasure, was it not the people who ultimately paid for this monstrously sinful extravagance? Thus, until the abolition of gambling, in 1872, many observers partially based their judgment of Germany's political condition on this important moral issue: while they pronounced the people free from any blame, many inveighed against the ruling class, suggesting that in the German princedoms privilege and rank amounted to moral depravity. At the same time, after a visit to the glittering casino of Aix-la-Chapelle, Bad Homburg, Wiesbaden, Bad Ems, Baden-Baden, or any other fashionable German spa, most of these travelers returned with welcome evidence of their own country's moral superiority.

Although they exercised restraint in judging other
moral issues, these writers tended to denounce gambling with extraordinary vehemence. Like other travel writers, Catharine Maria Sedgwick reported her impressions of Germany's religious life with admirable objectivity. Indeed, unlike most others, she even warned her readers to beware of sanctimony toward the Germans' religious customs. But, again like the vast majority of these observers, she disapproved whole-heartedly of gambling. In her account of a visit to the Wiesbaden Kursaal, in Letters from Abroad, she mentions that she saw roulette being played on a Sunday. "It was," she comments, "an odd scene for us of Puritan blood and breeding to witness." And with unusual severity she adds: "This buying and selling, and vicious amusement, is indeed a profaning of the day when God has ordained his earth to be a temple of sacred rest from labour, and sordid care, and competitions. When and where will it be so used as to do the work it might achieve--regenerate the world?"

Perhaps because most commonly they issued from the

40 Sedgwick, p. 162.
41 Ibid., p. 163.
pens of ministers, such denunciations were often keyed to a religious pitch, with their characteristic shrillness deriving from Biblical imagery. Thus, in The Alps and the Rhine (1845), Joel Tyler Headley concludes a chapter entitled "A Day in Wiesbaden" by moralizing:

It must be remembered that these gambling "hells" are not in out of the way places, but meet you as they would if placed in the public rooms of the hotels at Saratoga, and were patronized by the fashionables of both sexes from New York city. Methinks it is time another Luther had arisen to sweep away this chaff of Germany.  

Similarly, in A Buckeye Abroad (1852), Samuel S. Cox describes gambling at the casino in Aix-la-Chapelle.

"Some one," says Cox,

observed, in a whisper, that he must soon stake his hat; but, shrewd to the last, he[a lucky American gambler]quit with a hat-full--enough to pay his way to a land where such gigantic splendors of Satan are not licenced by government nor patronized by the rich.

Yet neither Cox nor Headley evoked the atmosphere of evil as vividly as did Adeline (Trafton) Knox, in An American Girl in Europe (1872). One generation earlier,

42 Headley, p. 105.

43 Cox, p. 343.
in his *Rambles in Europe* (1852), her father, the Reverend Mark Trafton, had fulminated against gambling in Baden-Baden. Now Mrs. Knox conveyed her own sense of the corruption of that fashionable spa by drawing a detailed analogy to the conventional concept of hell. "We chanced," she says,

to spend the Sabbath in this most un-Sabbath-like city of Baden-Baden. But so far as we knew to the contrary, it might have been a Puritan village. There was a little English chapel out in the fields beyond the city, where morning service was held, and our windows, overlooking a quiet square, told nothing of the gayeties of the town....

We almost fancied a sulphurous odor hung over the gambling *salons*. Not a footfall echoed upon the softly-carpeted floors as we entered. The most breathless silence hung over everything. In the centre, a crowd, three in depth at least, surrounded and hid the table covered with green cloth, before which sat the *croupier*, with a kind of little rake in his hand. In our eyes he was the incarnation of evil, though to unprejudiced vision he would appear simply a well-dressed—not flashily-arrayed—gentleman, of rather intellectual countenance, who might have passed upon the street as a lawyer in good practice, or possibly a doctor somewhat overworked.


45Knox, p. 163.

At the end of this passage, after describing in detail the happenings in the salons, the author makes the atmosphere of evil once more palpable by adding: "We breathed more freely when we gained the open air. I am sure there was an odor of sulphur about the place."^7

Thus, while presenting the German gambling spots as fully furnished with the machinery of hell, these writers called attention to their own innocence. In the corruption of the fashionable German spas, many observers saw the consequences of man's Fall. In the characteristic innocence of their resorts at home, they saw comforting evidence that man in the New World had been granted another chance, an opportunity to begin life afresh, free from sin. From the white pinnacle of their Adamic state—to use again the terminology of R.W.B. Lewis—many of these writers looked with horror upon the moral depths of the European, and German, aristocracy. In fact, as John Wien Forney's Letters From

^7Ibid., p. 166.
Europe (1867) illustrates, this sense of moral superiority referred not just to gambling but generally to resort activities. Forney compares "the gay and genteel parties at American watering places" with a grand ball in the Conversation House in Baden-Baden. 48 "I looked in vain," he comments, "for the beauty, ease, and grace—the elegance and simplicity of dress—the innocent enjoyment—that characterize the hops of Bedford, Cape May, Newport or Saratoga." 49

In the opinion of almost all of these observers, gambling was a political as well as moral issue—an institution not only in itself evil but also typical of the abysmal degradation of German high society. No traveler expressed this view more forcefully than one Nicholas Murray, another minister, in his Men and Things as I Saw Them (1853). "O," exclaims Murray,

If I have ever seen fiends in human form, I believe it was round that swindling machine in Baden-Baden! And this gambling-house belongs to the Duke of Baden, who claims a monopoly in gambling,
and who farms his monopoly to a company in Paris at an enormous yearly rent! How humiliating, that such robbers and blacklegs should rank among princes! This is a town beautiful for location, but its moral atmosphere is contaminating.

Significantly, almost all of these travel writers visited Baden-Baden or some other spa, and many conceived moral judgments of Germany's political condition much like Murray's. The abolition of gambling, in 1872, ended therefore an epoch in the development of American attitudes toward Germany. For it removed part of the evidence on which, until then, many observers had based their judgments. Thus, besides the reasons mentioned in Chapter II, the ban on gambling helps to explain why, in the last three decades of the century, these writers spoke of Germany's political condition less harshly than they had done before. Since it had ordered the casinos closed, the Wilhelminian Empire seemed to impress these writers as somewhat less immoral than the princeloms of the German Federation.

Yet even the morally corrosive atmosphere of the gambling "hells" disgusted these observers no more

50 Murray, p. 219.
thoroughly than did the sight of German women doing men's work—women of all ages toiling in the fields, spading or harvesting, or on construction jobs, carrying hods or iron bars, unloading heavy logs. Again and again these writers manifested shock and indignation at such apparent evidence of barbarism. And yet they tended to avoid explicit moral judgments. They pointed out that "full half" of the farm hands were women and that these women were "prematurely old with labor." They commented on the indignity of women pulling heavy carts jointly with dogs. They expressed disappointment at finding such conditions all over Germany—even in the Protestant north. Yet, in spite of their obvious displeasure at such evidence, the tone of their remarks was, as a rule, notably subdued: most of these writers did not imply that the Germans callously exploited their mothers, wives, and daughters. Instead, they suggested that, among the lower classes, women were forced by

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51Greeley, p. 263.

52Bryant, p. 428.
poverty and sheer necessity to waste their bodies with manual labor. Besides, according to these writers, while the men were away "shouldering arms;" the women had no choice but to carry both their husbands' work loads and their own. They owed their degradation to the men's absence during long periods of military service and, generally, to centuries of exploitation by the princes.

Since they were plainly shocked at the apparent hardships suffered by women of the working class, these travelers might well have asked whether the men perversely turned their women into drudges. Yet they could not have entertained this view and at the same time have professed their fondness of the German people. Thus, even if they deemed the men not altogether free from blame, these writers tended to control their outrage by phrases such as "it is painful," "it is wrong," "it is a shame," which implicated no one in particular. Only George Palmer Putnam, in The Tourist in Europe (1838),

53 Trafton, p. 299.
exclaimed bluntly: "What brutes must the men be!"54

Yet, unlike Putnam, most of these writers either blamed political and economic pressures or gave strictly factual accounts, without attempting any explanation. Implicitly, at least, all seemed agreed that in the long run the women could not but be brutalized by such continual heavy labor. One who expressed this view more clearly than most other travelers was Wilbur Fisk, President of Connecticut Wesleyan University. In his Travels in Europe (1838), Fisk did no more than analyze his fleeting glimpses of girls and women working in fields along the highways, but his conclusions well deserve consideration. According to Fisk,

... the common people seem of rather an under stature, their skin shrivelled and seared. This is especially true of their women, who, from exposure and hard work in the fields, have lost most of the interesting characteristics of their sex. Their appearance was very coarse, and their manners, in many instances, what with us would be considered indecent. We passed young girls of eight or ten years of age bathing in a state of nudity close by the high road, in the centre of a village, and in the presence of a number of

54Putnam, p. 241.
older females who did not appear at all embarrassed at our passing. The women in the field have the habit of tucking up their petticoats when they are at work so as not only to expose their most interior garment, but also to leave the leg naked from above the knee. I do not mention this as any proof of the want of chastity in their females, for they are probably as virtuous as others; but to show that the slavish kind of labour to which the females are subjected breaks down those delicate sensibilities which are so prevalent even in the lower classes among us, and to give, as far as I may, a portraiture of society as it is exhibited to the passing traveller.55

Although they are uncommonly detailed, Fisk's observations are typical. Indeed, so commonly did travel writers set forth views similar to Fisk's that the single dissenting voice of Walter Channing, in A Physician’s Vacation (1856), can have had no effect upon the patterns of opinion. "Women in Europe," Channing submits, "work no harder than women in America, looking to the amount done, and the time consumed. They enjoy life more; they have better health, and live longer."56

Being a physician in New England, Channing was no doubt better qualified to judge in this matter than many of

55 Fisk, p. 447.
56 Channing, p. 151.
his fellow travelers. Being an active reformer, he was also familiar with the exploitation of women working in Massachusetts mill towns. Yet Channing stood alone. In fact, throughout the century, many of these writers told their countrymen that in Germany, and Europe generally, working-class women were denied the respect due to their sex which was shown to their sisters in America.

Within this pattern the comments of individual travelers varied considerably. Some called this degradation of German women slavery. Others replied that, though they were no doubt being abused, these women were still far better off than Negro slaves. "Riding past the fields of potatoes and tobacco," says Mrs. S.R. Urbino, in An American Woman in Europe (1869), and seeing women hoeing in them, reminds one of slave labor. We dare say that many of the German women work as hard as slave women; but the difference is great; for the one works for her husband and children, and, though often severely lashed by necessity, she is happy in comparison to the negress [sic], who labors for a task-master, and has no right to call her children her own.57

But even those who viewed the problem as dispassionately as did this Boston lady, suggested that these women were being exploited. Some argued that these women's obvious contentment with their lot belied their apparent misery. Yet even these apologists implicitly conceded that such conditions were a moral wrong. Little wonder, then, that virtually all of these observers deplored, though often cautiously, the calloused hands and haggard faces of these women as evidence of Germany's moral decay. Moreover, by implication, they reaffirmed the contrast between this corruption and their own country's youthful innocence. This contrast is implicit, for example, in Wright's comment in Doré: "Keep your women and your Sabbaths properly, and your nation will never grow old and die."58 This comment is characteristic both for its substance and its tone. Had they not been restrained by their spontaneous affection for their hosts, many of these Americans might have called such abuse of womanhood outrageous.

Despite their fondness for the German people, many of these observers might still have criticized the Ger-

58 Wright, p. 262.
moral character more sharply than they did, had they not been embarrassed at their own country's treatment of the Negro. Indeed, Bayard Taylor and C.A. Bartol, two of the travel writers who refrained altogether from commenting on Germany's moral condition, specifically mentioned being pained at the thought of slavery. In his *Pictures of Europe Framed in Ideas* (1855), Bartol reports an incident which happened just before his return home. A native asked him where he was going and, when told to America, replied that he envied him. "Ah!"

Bartol comments passionately,

> if liberty were the universal lot here in our fair domain, if we had worth and moral power enough for that, the tribute could be accepted in a joy dashed with no compunction. But I should not be an honest reporter, if I did not declare that everywhere throughout Europe our American slavery is regarded as our inconsistency and blot. Nevertheless, with our miserable and depressing slavery, I must as honestly affirm, I see not how an impartial observer of the world can behold our country's stand on the scale of character as, on the whole, below that of any other. The essence, the sin, of slaveholding itself, is in one man's using another as his instrument, the tool of his pleasure; a thing, and not a person; an article of merchandise, instead of an inalienable property. It is a melancholy truth, that, of this very same thing, in England, in France, in Austria, and Russia, there is as much, to say the least, as here. Only it is our special shame, as we must confess; because it is the violation
of our standard, and a virtual recanting of all the principles and professions of freedom that lie at the basis of our government.59

Likewise, in his Views A-Foot (1846), Taylor reports that when he met a German family about to emigrate to Texas, he tried in vain to dissuade the man from, as he puts it, "choosing such a country for his home, by telling him of the climate and the Indians.... I would have added, "Taylor continues, "that it was a slave-land, but I thought on our country's curse, and was silent."60

More than one of these travelers must have been similarly troubled. As long as slavery persisted as an institution, even some of the staunchest defenders of their country's faults must have felt handicapped in passing moral judgments on other nations. Indeed, one of these, Anna C. (Johnson) Miller, in her Peasant Life in Germany (1858), acknowledges: "...when they Europeans talk to us of slavery, we are obliged to blush and hide our heads."61 Yet, like virtually all of these Americans,

59Bartol, pp. 283-284.
60Taylor, Views, p. 123.
61Miller, p. 29.
she found considerable reassurance in the thought that her country's glory was its government. 62

To sum up, most of these observers referred to Germany's moral condition with remarkable restraint. Mainly perhaps because of their affection for their hosts, they tended to withhold moral judgments. And when they did attack moral abuses, they tried to aim their fire at the ruling class, not at the people. Political and moral issues were, they implied, inseparable. They seemed convinced that, while the German upper class was hopelessly corrupt, the people by and large were happily unspoiled. By such assuring observations as: "An American...belongs to Nature's nobility" or such sardonic comments as: "...there is a comfortable and orderly appearance about a dungeon," many a travel writer called his readers' attention above all to what he called the moral degradation of the aristocracy. In gambling, most of these writers saw irrefutable evidence of the rulers' corruption, as poignant as the country's general political condition.

62Ibid., p. 32.
In commenting upon such issues as the religious life or female labor, many observers strove to distinguish between cause and effect—between the demoralizing influence of monarchies, and practices deplorably engaged in by the people. Yet, though they bridled their indignation at Germany's moral infirmities, most of these writers looked upon America as morally superior. Thus, in objecting to the Germans' heavy smoking, one traveler asserted:

"Much abused America is pure as a virgin [italics mine] from this pollution of tobacco smoke."\(^6^3\) The phrasing was characteristic, for it affirmed the innocence implicit in the image of Young America. Although some influential travel writers suggested that this image was illusory, many regarded it as true. As Chapter V will show, some of these even argued that the light of their country's innocence outshone the brilliance of German culture.

\(^6^3\) James Freeman Clarke, *Eleven Weeks in Europe; and What May Be Seen in That Time* (Boston: Ticknor, Reed & Fields, 1852), p. 236.
CHAPTER V

CONFLICTING AMERICAN OPINIONS OF GERMAN CULTURE

Though by and large they took a common stand on German politics, customs, manners, and morals, nineteenth-century travel writers voiced widely differing opinions of the country's cultural stature. In their responses to political, social, and moral issues, most of these travelers betrayed their bias for the German people. They cried out heatedly against the people's deprivation of basic rights, cheered every brief stir for freedom in the German Federation, denounced the rulers, and, ironically, kept hoping for a democratic Germany even after, in 1871, the Germans themselves had achieved their political ideal—constitutional monarchy. They praised the Germans' kindness, friendliness, and sociability and found the people's moral fiber firm or, at least, still relatively unaffected by the rulers' moral rot. In their responses to the Germans' artistic and intellectual endeavors, these writers were, however,
sharply divided. Against the central stream of often unqualified enthusiasm for German schools and universities, museums, theaters, and picture galleries, there ran, in fact, a counter-current of anti-intellectualism.

Just as they were divided over the image of Young America, these writers split over the merits of Old-World, and German, culture. Indeed, those who distrusted the idea of their country's youthful innocence most ardently admired German culture and denied that America was culturally self-sufficient. According to these writers, America would not grow up until she recognized herself dependent upon the Western cultural tradition. Yet those who thought of Young America as morally superior, though inexperienced, pooh-poohed the arts and any testimony of the past. America, they held, would in due time evolve a native culture free from Old-World ties.

Thus the two factions were irreconcilable. In commenting on other issues, almost all travelers—whether or not they owed allegiance to the image of Young America—seemed silently agreed that they must curb their criticism
so as to spare the people. Yet, in responding to German art collections, to German architecture, to German music, or to other evidence of a long cultural tradition, the partisans of Young America were not restrained by their affection for their hosts. Against the pattern of approval, these travelers set up a pattern of disparagement, designed to make the gap between American and German culture seem insignificant.

The pattern of approval for Germany's cultural eminence and of complaints about America's cultural immaturity dates back to Henry Edwin Dwight's *Travels in the North of Germany* (1829). Dwight went to Göttingen in 1825, too late to be considered one of the literary pioneers. But he was destined to become a pioneer in his own right. Much like his predecessors, he found that German scholarship and education fully deserved the praise which they had been accorded by Madame de Stael. But unlike Ticknor, Everett, and others, who had voiced their enthusiasm in private letters, which long remained unpublished, Dwight gathered, edited, and published the reports which he had sent home to his friends: he gave his countrymen the model travel book on Germany. Apart
from this distinction, Dwight's *Travels* is remarkable even today because it gives an intimate, detailed, reliable account of German higher education, particularly of the university in Göttingen, in the mid-1820's. In this respect its only rival is G.H. Calvert's *First Years in Europe* (1866). The most distinctive quality of Dwight's report derives, however, from the author's dual purpose, repeatedly mentioned above--his wish not only to acquaint Americans with German culture but also to urge measures to overcome America's cultural backwardness. Implicitly, Dwight warned his readers not to seek comfort in the idea of their country's youth. Thus, since it dimmed the image of Young America just when that image was beginning to take shape, Dwight's *Travels* ranks as an extraordinary statement about America's relationship to the Old World.

America, Dwight argued, had indeed much, very much to learn from Europe, and from Germany. After describing in detail the library at Göttingen, he asks impatiently:

*When will the time come that we shall begin to feel the importance of doing something for the mind? How long must our students hunger for literary nourishment, and not be filled? When*
will the increase of our libraries be thought as important as the construction of a new turnpike, as digging a canal, or draining a marsh, or any of the other physical improvements, which elicit so much eloquence on the floors of our State houses, and attract the gaze of thousands [?].

In the same manner Dwight deplored the chauvinism rampant among Americans or, as he puts it, "the strong prejudice that so universally exists against the literature of other nations." Was it not shameful, he suggested, that Shakespeare was more widely read in Germany than in America and that, at the same time, Cooper and Irving were almost as popular in Germany as Scott?

Yet Dwight did not content himself with stating such discrepancies. "When will the time arrive," he asks, "that works of even one foreign writer can be printed in our country in the native language of the writer without danger of their being consigned to the grocer to envelope his tea and sugar." Similarly he called upon his countrymen to endow libraries that would

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1 Dwight, p. 70.
2 Ibid., p. 77.
3 Ibid., pp. 168, 172.
4 Ibid., p. 173.
be comparable to the best in Europe, true seats of learning which, eventually, would attract foreign scholars to America. "No one," says Dwight,

can lament more than myself the poverty of our libraries. I should look upon the individual who would establish such a library in the United States, as that of Göttingen, as the greatest benefactor to my country, who has lived since the days of Washington. A residence near such a library as that just mentioned, near those of Berlin, of Dresden, or of la Bibliothèque du Roi at Paris, is almost enough, independently of family attachments, to reconcile a student to leave his country, and to reside in a foreign land. How long shall we wait before a small part of the literary treasures of the Continent are [sic] landed on our shores? When will our libraries become objects of interest to the eye of the foreigner? Our country is overflowing with wealth, and her physical and moral resources excite the astonishment of foreign nations. The time has gone by, for us to chant [sic] the old hackneyed song, "We must level our forests before we strike the lyre."^5

Clearly, Dwight recommended no foolish aping of German, or European, culture but, rather, judicious adaptation of the best that the Old World had to offer. Moreover, as has been made apparent in Chapter I above, he wished to forestall any questions about his loyalty. Indeed, in the summation of his main argument, he entered

^5Ibid., p. 183.
a most patriotic plea. Here, eight years before Emerson's "American Scholar" address, Dwight called for a determined effort to provide for America's cultural growth—for an American literature. "I am aware," he says,

that the northern states of Germany have been three centuries in bringing their schools and universities to their present degree of excellence, and that I shall be answered with the proverb, that Rome was not built in a day, a proverb which has done more injury to our country by depressing noble enthusiasm, and by crushing rising effort, than all the good which was ever derived from the adages of our sages. Had it been applied to our merchants and farmers, where would have been the thousands of vessels, whose sails are now whitening every ocean and river; where the countless towns and villages that now extend from the Atlantic to the Mississ.; where that enterprise, which putting forth all its powers, has almost rendered our country the hive of the world? Rome, it is true, was not built in a day; but a country whose resources and power will soon be greater than Rome was in the days of Augustus, has risen into existence, which now bears no more proportion to what she was a century ago, than the oak to the acorn from which it sprung. Shall we not then do something for the mind? Shall all our efforts be confined to canals, to wheat, cotton, and tobacco, and the intellectual character of our country not be elevated? If we will manifest the same energy in providing the materiel of literature, that we have manifested in physical improvement, the time will not be far distant, when we shall be as much respected by the nations of Europe for our literature, as we now are for that enterprising spirit which forms so striking a feature of our character.6

6 Ibid., pp. 392-393.
Thus, in admonishing his countrymen no longer to despise the cultivation of their minds but to prepare instead a proper medium in which American letters and thought would flourish, Dwight showed himself greatly concerned about the anti-intellectualism of his day.

Even when this anti-intellectualism was at its peak, during the decades prior to the Civil War, some of these travel writers shared Dwight's frank admiration for German culture. Yet only one, George Henry Calvert, could match Dwight's familiarity with German scholarship and education. In his *First Years in Europe* (1866), Calvert fondly recalled the atmosphere of learning at Göttingen in 1825 and reaffirmed Dwight's praise of Germany's cultural climate. "In Germany," he says, "there is more culture than in any other country. Her high-schools, her universities, her libraries, are the best in the world, the most numerous and the most accessible. Nowhere is knowledge more valued; nowhere are there so many men with empty pockets and full heads; and nowhere has mere money less social weight." In much the same way,

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7Calvert, *First Years*, p. 172.
Wilbur Fisk, in his *Travels in Europe* (1838), expressed his admiration for German secondary schools. He based his judgment on his visit to a Frankfort Gymnasium. "These institutions," says Fisk, "in respect to the kind of studies pursued, correspond with our highest academical institutions; but, in respect to the perfection with which instruction is imparted, I fear we are, in general, very much behind the institutions of Germany." Some travelers, moreover, indicated their high regard for German scholarship and education by the very choice of their itinerary. Thus, when at the age of seventy-two he undertook the journey through the Continent which, forty-five years earlier, political conditions had forced him to cut short, Benjamin Silliman paid homage at the shrines of German science. His journal of this pilgrimage, *A Visit to Europe in 1851* (1854), includes portrayals of distinguished German colleagues and long descriptions of museums and collections of mineralogy, geology, and natural history.

Apart from these admirers of German schools and uni-

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[Fisk, p. 456.]
versities, some other writers--most frequently professionals--expressed much the same views about some other aspects of German culture, even before the 1860's. These travelers deplored the fact that their own country could not yet support a comparable culture because, unlike Germany, America still lacked a broad popular cultural base--a large enlightened educated class accustomed to appreciate literature and art. At the same time these writers expressed hope for the gradual aesthetic education of their countrymen, and confidence in the creative genius of America. Being both cultivated and patriotic, they urged their countrymen to make the fostering of the fine arts a national concern. In spite of their respect for German, and European, art, they wished their country not just to copy foreign models, but to develop distinct American equivalents. Thus, though protesting against the ugliness of her own country's architecture, Catharine Maria Sedgwick thought that the enchanting quaintness of German houses or the majestic beauty of Gothic cathedrals could not, and should not, be transplanted to America. Instead, she argued in her *Letters from Abroad* (1841), the future architecture of America would have to be aesthet-
ically pleasing as well as unmistakably American. "As to what man has built," says Miss Sedgwick,

from the cottage to the cathedral, the difference between the Old and the New World is--immeasurable. In the material, form, and colour of our buildings, we have done, for the most part, all we could do to deform the fair face of nature. All that we can say for them is, that they are either of so perishable a material, or so slightly put together, that they cannot last long; and when they are to be replaced, we may hope that the inventive genius of our people, guided by the rules of art, will devise an architecture for us suited to our condition, and imbodying the element of beauty. I say' *suited to our condition," for it is very plain that, where property is so diffused as to make individual possession and comfort all but universal, and where society is broken into small multitudinous sects, we have no occasion for the stately palaces, the ducal residences, the cathedrals and splendid churches of Europe; nor shall we have the beautiful, comfortless cottage n iched in an old tower, or made of the fragments of a castle-wall, so enchanting to the eye in the picture-scenes here. After all, dear C. [her correspondent], when I get home, and have nothing to see but our scrawny farm-houses, excrescences, wens as they are on the fair earth, it will be rather a comfort to think they are occupied by those that own them; that under those unsightly, unhatched, shingled roofs are independent, clean, and abundant homes, and a progressive people. Still, with patriotism, common sense, and, I may add, but a common gratitude to Providence for our home-condition, on the whole, I cannot but sigh as I look back upon the delight we had yesterday in seeing surely the most exquisitely beautiful of all cathedrals, the Cathedral of Freyburg [sic]. . . . 9

9 Sedgwick, I, 232-233.
Thus, torn between conflicting feelings toward America as well as Germany, Miss Sedgwick faced the same dilemma as many of her fellow travelers. Deeply impressed with German culture, she hastened to admit that, in comparison with Germany, America was culturally callow. At the same time, apparently somewhat uneasy about this admission, she reaffirmed her loyalty, her faith in her own country's future. The dull drabness of America's cultural scene, Miss Sedgwick pointed out, was brightened by the luster of American democracy. Yet the rich color of Germany's cultural life was darkened by the people's poverty and deprivation of basic rights.

Even in admiring German culture and in admitting America's cultural backwardness, some other travel writers of the forties and fifties foretold, much like Miss Sedgwick, the future cultivation of the fine arts in America. Thus, in his *Rural Letters and Other Records of Thought at Leisure* (1849), Nathaniel Parker Willis defined the kind of music which, in his opinion, future Americans were likely to compose. In his fifty-odd page description of St. Thomas, a well-known church in Leip-
zig, Willis reported his impression of a boys' choir singing a motet. Then, turning his thoughts to his own country, he reflects:

In our comparatively new country, we are too busy, as yet, with the expressible, to appreciate the higher meanings of music, which Beethoven called "the language of the inexpressible." But as a refiner and chastener to the public taste, as an innocent absorbent of popular leisure, and as an easy current of enthusiasm on which may be embarked a great deal of instruction, patriotism, and religious feeling, a general taste for the simple forms of music is a national object, worthy of present and thoughtful attention. The wealthy and refined in our country, as in all others, will command operas, and the best players and singers from abroad; but like the exotics in greenhouses, these expensive importations bring but little of the soil in which they sprung, and produce nothing for "the many." We want American music to give natural fragrance to American feeling, enthusiasm and religion.10

In his Rambles in Europe (1852), the Reverend Mark Trafton struck much the same hopeful and patriotic note. After describing two Goethe sculptures, which he admired in Frankfort and which he calls "grand specimens of art," Trafton continues: "This city, like most European cities,

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abounds in fine statues in public places. I hope, when our country is finished, and the fever of money-making abates, we shall turn our attention to the fine arts more successfully, and encourage and sustain native genius, an abundance of which, I am persuaded, lies hidden among us. In other words, more than two decades after Dwight's impassioned plea for his own country's cultural improvement, Trafton still seemed to see no evidence of change. By German standards, America's cultural climate still seemed inclement, unsuited for the flourishing of the fine arts.

Significantly, most of these writers registered no response to German literature. The literary pioneers and most of those who were acquainted with German thought and letters, the German theater, and German culture in the broadest sense did not write travel books or articles in magazines which might have influenced public opinion. Most of the travel authors, on the other hand, knew little or no German. They had, therefore, no first-hand knowledge of German literature and, as a rule, did not attend

Trafton, pp. 316-317.
a theater performance. Most of these travelers tended
to base their judgments of German culture upon their
personal impressions, hearsay, or biases about the con­
trast between the Old World and the New. The admiration
expressed by some was often as ill-founded as the contempt
of others.

For some five decades after the "discovery" of
Germany, while Dwight and others lavished praise on Ger­
man education and other aspects of German culture, some
travel writers went to the opposite extreme. America,
these writers held, was none the worse for lacking such
cultural institutions as picture galleries, museums,
theaters, and concert halls. Thus, in her Peasant Life
in Germany (1858), Anna C. (Johnson) Miller argues:

America has begun at the bottom—her glory is her
government and the homes of her people. When she
gets so far as to make the encouragement of art
possible and proper, there will be for beauty and
ornament a foundation which will present a tout
ensemble without the incongruity which strikes one
so painfully amid the tottering and cheerless
hovels of Europe.12

Before the Civil War, such comments were characteristic

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12 Miller, p. 32.
of many travel books. Implicitly, at least, many of these travelers maintained that German culture must be judged against the background of the country's social and political condition. Yet, in pursuing this line of reasoning, some of the staunch defenders of Young America pushed their apologies of their own country to the point of absurdity. Since, on the one hand, they wanted to appear more cultivated than they were and since, on the other, they considered it their patriotic duty to play down German culture, such writers often seemed confused. This curious confusion is apparent when Mrs. Miller says:

...to the fine pictures we have no objections, and shall be glad when wealth and taste enable us to furnish our houses or public halls with productions of the fine arts. But to say we are behind Europe in a love of the beautiful, in all that indicates refinement, and elegance, and cultivation, is so far from being true, that we are fifty or a hundred years in advance, and this conclusion is one which has been forced upon us by inches, and so contrary to our expectations, that we stand dumb with amazement as we contemplate all these things.13

Thus Mrs. Miller did admit that, like the vast majority of nineteenth-century Americans, she lacked an adequate

13Ibid., p. 170.
aesthetic education. Yet, in referring to "all these things," she brushed aside the evidence of Germany's cultural tradition, above all certain pictures—not necessarily painted by Germans—which her New-England conscience regarded as objectionable. "We have said, and repeat it here," Mrs. Miller insists elsewhere in her travel book, "that this excessive patronage of the fine arts and sensuous indulgence, [sic] obtained by continual contemplation of this species of beauty [paintings], is relic and evidence of barbarism rather than superior civilization." Even Mark Twain could not be any more indignant at the nudes in the Uffizi when his judgment was clouded by the prudishness of his Puritan past.

So commonly did comments sharply critical of the fine arts appear in travel books published before the Civil War that they established a distinct pattern of reaction. The most outspoken and the most unreasonable representative of this peculiar form of anti-intellec
tualism was, no doubt, Mrs. Miller. Unlike some other writers who shrugged their shoulders at famous paintings,

\[14\] Ibid., p. 18.
she turned her back even on literature. "Wherever we
look in that age or in this," says Mrs. Miller,
we see that it is the humble and the useful arts
to which mankind owe all their progression, and
in which we must place our hope for the permanency
of civilization. The encouragement of the fine
arts alone does not promote the comfort or true
elevation of a people. It is proverbial that
only barbarians can produce the highest kind of
poetry, and it has so far been true that only
barbarians have produced the highest kind of
beauty in painting and sculpture. The greatest
artists of the olden time could neither read nor
write, and in the cities and countries where art
is in the flourishing state, the masses of the
people are in the greatest degradation.\textsuperscript{15}

No other travel writer ever reasoned quite this foolishly.
Indeed, quite apart from comments such as the one just
quoted, Mrs. Miller's distinction rests in the fact that
in one book she wrote more nonsense about Germany than
did all other travelers combined. But, in responding to
the paintings in German galleries, which they considered
it their duty to pass through, some other writers proved
themselves no better qualified to judge than Mrs. Miller.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 110-111.
unimpressed by Germany's cultural riches because they wanted to assure their readers of their loyalty. Thus, in his Letters from Three Continents (1851), Matthew F. Ward, a "correspondent" for the Louisville Journal, who called himself "an Arkansas bearhunter," confessed his disappointment in Raphael's Sistine Madonna as well as the whole Dresden collection. "The painting gallery," this traveler reported home,

is said to be the richest in Italian masters of any city out of Italy; but in it, as in most of the galleries I have seen, I was greatly disappointed. Every capital in Europe has its "collection," and in wandering through them "tis somewhat difficult to find on hand the degree of enthusiasm requisite for the explosions of "ohs!" "ahs!" "divine!" "how beautiful!" which most strangers think it incumbent upon them constantly to let off. A damaged Raphael and a rubbed-out Correggio, purchased at an enormous expense, are generally "the gems" about which are ranged a vast collection of old German and Italian masters, whose greatest charm seems to be that they are old. No man can entertain a higher esteem for venerable relics of other days than myself, but I think that women and pictures make the worst antiquities in the world, and I candidly confess that I never could discover beauties in either, when their chief recommendation was their age.\(^{16}\)

Then, after a naively critical description of Raphael's Madonna, Ward adds:

It is, I know, the height of presumption for "an

\(^{16}\) Ward, pp. 47-48.
Arkansas bearhunter\(^n\) to indulge in such criticism upon a picture which critics, connoisseurs, and the whole world of fashion have united in pronouncing divine. But, with no knowledge of the art, or its \textit{humbug technicalities} [italics mine], I merely wish to give my impressions, conveyed through my own eyes, and not through the learned criticisms of others; and I do not pretend to place my judgment in opposition to those so much better qualified to judge, but simply to state the effect produced upon me. In judgment upon all other points of excellence in a picture, I yield most humbly to superior cultivation; but in a simple question of beauty, I flatter myself that I am about as good a judge as Wilkie, Reynolds, or even that most beautifully eloquent critic of painting, Mrs. Jamieson. Nature is my model; women and flowers are my guides; and I am vain enough to suppose that, in these loveliest and purest creations of God, I have as high an appreciation of the beautiful as the most learned critics. This picture of Raphael is greatly injured and faded, and, I feel sure, has lost much of its original beauty.\(^{17}\)

To judge by his apparent familiarity with David Wilkie and Joshua Reynolds, this traveler was not the rough, untutored backwoodsman he claimed to be. His pose was, no doubt, calculated to impress a local provincial audience. Indeed, Ward knew that neither he nor any of the indiscriminate admirers of the fine arts whom he was ridiculing could competently judge a given painting. But, in discounting the "humbug technicalities" of serious

\(^{17}\text{Ibid.}, pp. 48-49.\)
aesthetic criticism, he proved himself no less provincial than many of his fellow tourists. His anti-intellectualism closely resembles Mrs. Miller's.

Ward's references to art criticism bear out Bellows' comments, quoted in Chapter I above, about the exhibition of the Dusseldorf Gallery in New York: about the middle of the nineteenth century, the gradual aesthetic education of Americans was under way. Yet Ward--like most Americans before, say, 1870--still faced the unfamiliar masterpieces of European painting with curious naïveté. The reasons for this lack of critical appreciation are obvious. Before they went to Europe, most of these tourists had at best seen reproductions of first-rate paintings--engravings, drawings, or poorly painted copies of Old-World masterpieces.¹⁸ They were, moreover, unfamiliar with aesthetic theory, with the criteria by which they might have told the mediocre from the good or great. No wonder that, anxious to have his readers share in the

exciting novelty of visiting a picture gallery, many a travel writer padded his book with long, essentially uncritical descriptions of famous paintings. Thus, though his anti-intellectualism prevented him from rising above the critical ineptitude of other travel writers, Ward was well justified in ridiculing these and other pseudo-critics among his fellow tourists.

In their attempt at appreciating the fine arts, some of these travelers were hampered not only by their inexperience but also by their faith in the idea of Young America. Because of their ingrained hostility toward the past and of their preoccupation with the present—with the idea of their country's youth—they limited their interest to modern works of art. Dozens of visitors to Frankfort, for example, reported looking up the celebrated contemporary sculpture of Ariadne, which graced the garden of Bethmann, a wealthy banker. Yet, although they considered visits to art collections all but obligatory, few of these observers seemed to care for the productions of past centuries. Even sophisticated travelers like G.P. Putnam did not escape such lapses into provincialism as
this embarrassing pronouncement on Michelangelo's "Last Judgment": "From here the public library, " says Putnam in his A Pocket Memorandum Book during a Ten Weeks' Trip to Italy and Germany in 1847 (1848),

we walked...to the church of St. Lewis (Ludwig's Kirche), a new edifice, not yet quite finished, but already elaborately decorated in the rich and costly style which has been introduced recently in Munich, under the auspices of the Art-loving king. The frescoes are brilliant and beautiful—the chief one being the "Last Judgment," an immense picture by Cornelius, the leading Bavarian artist—a more reasonable and understandable composition than Michael Angelo's, to say the least.19

Even in the last third of the century, some travelers implied that modern art commanded more attention than all the riches of the past. Thus, in his Europe Viewed Through American Spectacles (1874), Charles Carroll Fulton, editor of the Baltimore American, reports:

We have visited nearly all the great art-galleries of Munich, which are very numerous and rich in their collections of paintings, statuary, and antiquities... We have visited the Old Pinacotheck and the New Pinacotheck, the former a repository of pictures by the old masters, and the latter exclusively for the productions of modern artists. They are both very large and grand collections, and it is needless to say to the readers of these letters that the modern gallery commanded most of our attention. We visited

19Putnam, Memorandum Book, p. 115.
them both on the same day, and there were ten 
visitors enjoying the modern paintings for one 
who was roaming among the ancients.20

Elsewhere in this account, Fulton's rejection of the past 
becomes even more obvious. In commenting upon the pic-
tures in the castle at Darmstadt, Fulton says:

... there is a good collection of modern paint-
ings, from the middle of the last century to the 
present day, which plainly shows that those of the 
present are better even than those of the last 
century. The rest of the gallery is of the old 
Dutch and Italian schools, which are very fine 
in the eyes of those who can see nothing good or 
perfect in the present, and have no hope for the 
future.21

Much like some other travel writers, Fulton refused to 
parrot the common, indiscriminate excessive praise of 
art collections. At the same time, like the majority 
of travel writers, he also lacked reliable aesthetic 
standards. Like many nineteenth-century Americans, he 
may have been profoundly shocked, moreover, at the ap-
parent immorality of certain paintings, especially of the 
Italian Renaissance. At any rate, Fulton explicitly com-

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20 Fulton, pp. 116-117.
21 Ibid., p. 134.
mended Twain's anti-intellectualism in *The Innocents Abroad* (1869). "We put off until to-day," he says in his report on Dresden,

our visit to the famous picture-gallery of the Zwinger Palace, as a place, to us, of minor attraction. Those who have traveled much in Europe get heartily tired of picture-galleries, though it is regarded as fashionable to gaze and admire, and pretend to appreciate them, whether you can heartily do so or not. We decidedly object to straining our necks in staring up at frescoed ceilings and endeavoring to unravel the meaning of the painter in grouping together hundreds of allegorical figures of men and angels. Mark Twain expressed the honest convictions of two-thirds of those who pretend to admire and enjoy ancient paintings, with their allegorical figures and uncertain meaning.22

During the last two or three decades of the century, as they were gradually being reconciled to the political and social differences between America and Germany, these travelers came to acknowledge Germany's cultural stature almost without exception. By then, most of these writers were no longer wont to compensate for their own country's cultural backwardness by claiming that America was morally superior to Europe. By then, too, the gradual aesthetic education of Americans had begun to bear fruit. Thus, in

22Ibid., p. 23.
his *Hints for Six Months in Europe* (1869), John Hazlehurst Latrobe was able to forgive King Louis I of Bavaria his scandalous infatuation with Lola Montez because, after all, as a patron of the fine arts the king had evidenced "enlarged views and excellent taste." Besides, in commenting, for instance, upon the frescoes in the Munich National Museum, Latrobe displayed the taste and genuine appreciation of the fine arts which many of the early travelers in Germany had lacked. The son of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, architect of the first Washington Capitol, he may have been more sensitive by training than were most of his fellow writers. Nevertheless, in the late nineteenth-century, Latrobe was no exception. By then, while almost all of these observers tended to speak of German culture judiciously and highly, none echoed Mrs. Miller's outright hostility toward art or G.P. Putnam's utter obtuseness.


24Latrobe, p. 212.
society, customs, manners, or morals, to German culture generally, or even to the physical appearance of German towns or villages, of fields and woods, rivers and mountains—whatever their immediate concern, many of these travelers defined the difference between America and Germany by pointing to the contrast between change and tradition. The first of these conflicting cultural forces was often associated with the image of Young America—with the ideas of newness, innocence, and youth. Suspicious of the well-worn patterns of the past, the advocates of change wished Young America to shun the dross of Old-World institutions and ideas. Instead, they argued, America should go on searching for what best suited a new people in a new country, building for the future. Blessed with the innocence and strength and enterprise of youth, their country, they felt certain, was singularly favored. Indeed, the very aspect of the land, the vast expanse of virgin soil, seemed to imply the moral power of American democracy. By contrast, the physical appearance of the German countryside seemed to reflect age and decay. Especially before the Civil War, such preconceptions blurred the vision of many travel writers. Anna
C. (Johnson) Miller's first response to Germany was typical. Just a few hours after landing on German soil, she noted in her diary: "Even the grass is not the light, fresh green of an American meadow . . . ." In the same passage in her Peasant Life in Germany (1858), she says of her approach to Bremen: "... how stiff and grim frown these old walls as we near the city. What narrow, dingy, crime and poverty nestling-places are these old streets. Yes, we are in the old world, where antiquity is the pride and boast." Although their comments tended to be less fanciful and much more sympathetic than Mrs. Miller's, many of these writers agreed that America had gained much, and lost nothing, by breaking with the past. Unlike those who, in Walter Channing's words, were "much impressed with the evidence of the perpetuity of things abroad," the partisans of Young America pitied the Germans for their cumbersome burden of

25 Miller, p. 12.
26 Ibid.
27 Channing, p. 141.
traditions. Indeed, the faith in change as a panacea still seems to be characteristic of many Americans even today.

Channing was not the sole dissenter from the common faith in change. His views, cited in Chapter II above, differed from those of some like-minded travelers merely by being more explicit. Significantly, the observers who remained sceptic toward the image of Young America—for instance, C.A. Bartol and Bayard Taylor—suggested that their countrymen, in cutting off both their political and cultural roots, had caused their lives to become dull and drab. Thus, in describing German folk customs of the Christmas season and his Christmas Eve celebration with a German family, young Taylor comments in his Views A-Foot (1846): "We may laugh at such simple festivals at home, and prefer to shake ourselves loose from every shackle that bears the rust of the Past [italics mine], but we would certainly be happier if some of these beautiful old customs were better honored."28 Similarly, many observers, especially in the last third of the nineteenth

28Taylor, Views, p. 147.
century, responded favorably to the color, quaintness, and coziness of many German towns. In his *Hints for Six Months in Europe* (1869), John H. Latrobe noted regretfully the fact that Munich lacked these characteristic Old-World qualities. "Munich," he says,

was the first city in Europe which the party visited that had but few of those signs of age that are so attractive to a visitor from America, where everything seems *monotonously new and fresh* [italics mine]; and perhaps it was on this account that the party left the city with less of a regretful feeling than they had experienced after the briefest residence in those places on which the hand of Eld had been visibly laid.  

Divided in their attitudes toward the testimony of the past, toward the reminders of a cultural tradition, these writers sharply disagreed even in commenting upon the terraced, vine-covered, castle-crowned hills along the Rhine. Indeed, in comparing time and again the scenic sights of this most celebrated German river with those of the Hudson, the Mohawk, or the Susquehanna, the partisans of Young America adhered to prejudices much like those that tended to inform their judgments of German culture generally. The Rhine, according to these

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29 Latrobe, pp. 213-214.
writers, owed most of its reputed glory to the false
glamour of legend and song, and to some ruins reminiscent
of feudal tyranny. Stripped of this artificial setting,
it was surpassed in grandeur and natural beauty by at
least half a dozen rivers in America. In his first travel
book, The Tourist in Europe (1838), George Palmer Putnam,
for example, argues:

On the score of natural beauty, it would take a
good many Rhines to make a Hudson; but, as Willis
says, here we are constantly reminded of the past;
history, tradition, and song, have given every
thing a charm, and even these rough old ruins are
tinted with a couleur de rose; but amidst the hills,
and streams, and forests, of the so-called new
world, our thoughts stretch forward to the future.
We have already the rich material, and perhaps the
time will come when Europe may not claim superiority,
even in works of art, or in historical associations
and reminiscences; albeit we have no princely
palaces or baronial strongholds, and, thanks to
our democratic rulers! we are in no immediate
danger of them.30

Similarly, in his Rambles in Europe (1852), the Reverend
Mark Trafton reported that the Rhine had not fulfilled
his expectations. "I found nothing more beautiful," says
Trafton,

than the Hudson, the Palisades and Catskill mountains;

30Putnam, Tourist, p. 259.
and, indeed, if you will take the cars in Springfield, Mass., and run through the mountains to Albany, you will see as much natural grandeur and sublimity as on the Rhine. Or imagine the sides of those spurs of the Green Mountains covered with vines instead of forest trees, and each crag crowned with a huge pile of old grey stones, once the abodes of robbers and tyrants, and the scenery will even surpass that of the Rhine.31

In his Men and Things as I Saw Them (1853), Nicholas Murray, another minister and firm believer in the idea of Young America, voiced much the same opinion. "If old dilapidating walls," says Murray,

crowned all the mountains and beetling cliffs between New York and Albany—if at every bend of the river, and on every headland, there was something to suggest legends of robbers, stories of battles fought and won, and associations running back a thousand years—in every point in which they could be compared the North River would be superior to the Rhine.32

Although they were most common before the 1860's, such scornful comments on the Rhine and on the country's cultural tradition kept recurring throughout the century.

Yet many of these travelers, especially those who distrusted the cliché of Young America, found that none

31 Trafton, p. 335.
32 Murray, p. 226.
of the rivers in their homeland could match the Rhine.
Judged by its scenery alone, the German river, some
conceded, might well rate second to the Hudson. But the
Rhine's setting, they hastened to affirm, was unsurpassed
because it shone with the rich luster of something lack-
ing in America--tradition. Far from rejoicing over their
own country's youth, these travelers regretfully observed
that in the brief course of its history America had as
yet not accumulated memories like those that added color
and dimension to every crag along the Rhine. In his
*Travels in Europe* (1839), Wilbur Fisk, for example, says:

> I have heard the passage of the Rhine, from Mayence
to Cologne, compared to that of the Hudson from
New-York to Albany; but the natural scenery of the
former will not compare with that of the latter.
The passage of the Hudson is bolder and more magna-
nificent. . . . But we have nothing on the Hudson
to compare with the feudal and ecclesiastical
ruins, the churches, convents, palaces, and castles
that hang over the picturesque valley of the
Rhine.‘

Similarly, George Henry Calvert, one of the most articu-
late admirers of German culture, proved himself thorough-
ly acquainted with the history and legends of the Rhine.

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_Fisk, p. 462._
In *Scenes and Thoughts in Europe* (1846), Calvert describes his journey up the river from Bonn to Mayence and, in recalling his delight, exclaims: "... 'tis a region unmatched, and worth a long journey to behold." Occasionally, even a traveler as frankly hostile toward the middle ages as George Wilkes, the editor, forgot about his quarrel with the past while traveling along the Rhine. Wilkes, for example, confesses in his *Europe in a Hurry* (1852): "At once, on starting, we plunged into the glories of the Rhine, and, before I had spent two hours of observation on the deck, I was to relinquish my notions in favor of the Hudson, to this unexampled scene." More commonly, however, travelers like Wilkes found that the Rhine confirmed rather than toppled their prejudice against the past.

Regardless of their attitudes toward German culture, tradition, and the past, the vast majority of travel

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writers never forsook their faith in their own country's moral superiority. This faith often informed even their comments on the Rhine. Those who discounted the river's nimbus of literary and historical associations plainly passed moral judgments--indeed, so plainly that further illustration seems unnecessary. Yet even those who were impressed and charmed with the pervasive presence of the past often suggested that America was morally superior to Germany. Such moral judgments clearly ring through James R. Lowell's well-known comment, which Edward Everett Hale cites in his Ninety Days' Worth of Europe (1861). "Nature" says Lowell, "is not the same in America, and perhaps never will be, as in lands where man has mingled his being with hers for countless centuries; where every field is steeped in history, every crag is ivied with legend, and the whole atmosphere of thought is hazy with the Indian summer of tradition."36 To many writers, just as to Lowell, America seemed young--wonderfully young; by

contrast, Germany seemed old—and old age meant both wisdom and decay.

Thus, although at first sight they might seem inconsistent with other patterns of reaction, these travelers' responses to German culture in the widest sense might well have been predicted. In a small way, these books recorded some of the growing pains characteristic of the young republic. Long after H.E. Dwight's insistent plea for a native culture, some travel writers, like many other nineteenth-century Americans, refused to see the urgency "of doing something for the mind." Accordingly, some travelers anticipated the anti-intellectualism of authors like Mark Twain. Besides, though striving to seem knowledgeable and sympathetic toward German culture, the average observer simply was not equipped to discuss art collections, concerts, or theatrical performances except in the most superficial fashion. Above all, the almost universal faith in Young America's unequaled innocence and in the potentialities of life in the New World—in short, the American dream—tended at times to darken or distort many a travel writer's image of Germany. The German cultural tradition, these writers held, was rooted in
the ruins of the feudal past, nursed and supported by aristocratic patrons. The future culture of America, they hopefully asserted, would flourish in the virgin soil of the New World, planted and tended by republicans. Much like the patterns of reaction to German politics, customs, manners, and morals, these writers' attitudes toward German culture reflected prejudices and assumptions characteristic of most nineteenth-century Americans.

In time, all of these relatively simple patterns were ready to be put to literary use. With just one notable exception—stock comments upon Wilhelminian German, particularly Prussian, militarism—most of these patterns were established early, during the years just after the "discovery" of Germany. Moreover, except for insignificant modifications, these patterns remained fixed throughout the century—more accurately, until 1917. At any rate, by the mid-1830's, readers were bound to recognize and to accept as fact familiar prejudices, stereotypes, and images which travel books had promulgated. By then the reading public had been conditioned to despise the German ruling class and to extend affection toward the German people.
By then, too, virtually all Americans had come to "know" the arbitrary power of the German civil service, the sight of German women toiling in the fields or, hitched with a dog, pulling a heavy cart, and the epitome of what the Germans called Gemütlichkeit—a concert in the "gardens," with men, women, and children sitting together cheerfully over their wine, or beer, and cheese.
APPENDIX

SOME OBSERVATIONS UPON THE INFLUENCE OF TRAVEL BOOKS ON LITERATURE

The influence of European travel upon some well-known authors of the nineteenth century has long been recognized. As Christof Wegelin,\(^{1}\) August Lynn Altenbernd,\(^{2}\) and others have pointed out, this influence can be observed in the development of both major and minor authors who either traveled or temporarily resided in the Old World. Like other travelers, writers like Irving, Cooper, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Howells, Twain, and Henry Adams found that their stay abroad enabled them to see

\(^{1}\)Christof Wegelin, "The Concept of Europe in American Fiction from Irving to Hawthorne: A Study in the literary Exploitation of the Changing Attitude toward the New World" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of English, University of Maryland, 1947).

\(^{2}\)August Lynn Altenbernd, "The Influence of European Travel on the Political and Social Outlook of Henry Adams, William Dean Howells, and Mark Twain" (microfilmed Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate School, The Ohio State University, 1954).
both Europe and America in a new light. Some were enthralled, others repelled by what they saw. Many returned with notebooks full of new ideas, themes, and motifs. For better or for worse, all bore the mark of their encounter with the Old World.

Like those who dealt with other countries, the authors who wrote about Germany helped to develop certain literary genres—travel fiction, travel feuilletons, and Lambesque essays on the theory of travel—all of which were indebted to non-literary travel books. While ordinary travel writers like most of those considered in this study tried to present no more than interesting, accurate, informative reports on their own trips, professionals such as "Ik Marvel" (Donald Grant Mitchell), Cyrus A. Bartol, Helen Hunt Jackson, Louise Chandler Moulton, Richard Malcolm Johnston, David Ross Locke, Mark Twain, and William Dean Howells, to mention but a few, relied on their experience abroad in writing books somewhere between travel and fiction. Mitchell's Fresh Gleanings; or, A New Sheaf from the Old Fields of Continental Europe (1847), for example, affords mere glimpses of the European scene. Clearly indebted to the travel books of Irving, this vol-
ume relies heavily on anecdotes and on accounts of local legends. The style is highly literary, and often scholar-
ly—indeed, too pretentiously so to be readable. Similarly, Helen Hunt Jackson's *Bits of Travel* (1872) is not a travel book but a collection of short stories and sketches against a European background. The best known in this class of writings is, of course, Mark Twain's *A Tramp Abroad* (1880).

Although much less successful than *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), the fruit of Twain's trip to the Middle East and Italy, *A Tramp Abroad*—or, at least, parts of it—still makes most entertaining reading. Both of these books bear the inimitable stamp of Twain's humor. Yet both *The Innocents* and *A Tramp* are less original than seems to have been commonly assumed. Indeed, their success must have depended partly upon the fact that for some decades most Americans had been familiar with travel writings. Most of the readers who laughed at Twain's descriptions of foolish fellow tourists, of the preposterously high and heavy German feather beds, and of the "tramp's" absurdly hopeless efforts to communicate in German, had been conditioned by other travel writings. Else
they could hardly have appreciated Twain's perfection of the art. No traveler, they knew, had written anything nearly as funny as Twain's mock treatise on "The Awful German Language."

As the discrepancy between William Dean Howells' private opinions and public utterances seems to imply, some of the authors concerned with Germany must have regarded the popularity of travel writings as both a burden and a boon. They could, on the one hand, count upon their readers' familiarity with Germany, upon the universally accepted image set forth by ordinary travelers. They could not, on the other hand, afford to differ publicly from the responses to Germany which travel writers had promulgated. Thus, in Their Silver Wedding Journey (1899), Howells suppressed his private views on Germany's moral corruption and seemingly accepted the popular, essentially idyllic image of the genial, beer-drinking, pipe-smoking Burger caught in the clutches of an autocratic government.

Like other travelers, Howells firmly believed in his own country's basic innocence, and his conviction that America was socially, politically, and morally
superior to the Old World deepened during the five years of his consulship in Venice. But unlike other tourists, who all the same professed affection for the Germans and strove to judge the country's customs and institutions objectively, Howells privately vented his moral indignation at everything German—rulers and ruled, land and people alike. In a letter addressed to his sister Victoria and dated Venice, April 26, 1862, he voiced what must have been his true impression of the country. "Germany," he says, is socially rotten—and the Germans have a filthy frankness in their vice, which is unspeakably hideous and abominable to me. The less we know of Europe, the better for our civilization; and the fewer German customs that take root among us, the better for our decency. You will read the lies of many people who say that life in Europe is more cheerful and social than ours. Lies, I say—or stupidities, which are almost as bad. There is no life in the whole world so cheerful, so social, so beautiful as in America. You see people talking and laughing, here at the caffè; but do you know that this is their only social amusement? The pleasure which we have innocently in America, from our unrestrained and unconventional social intercourse, is guilty in Europe—brilliant men and women know something of it; but they are also guilty men and women. Are you getting tired of my lecture, dear? I think these things over a great deal, with sorrow for errors into which I fell regarding my country; and the most earnest, earnest prayer that my heart can conceive is that America may grow more and more unlike Europe every day. I think when I return home I will go
to Oregon—and live as far as possible from the influence of European civilization. While I write on this theme, I scarcely can have patience with my former impertinent and stupid ideas.3

Significantly, Howells neither went to Oregon nor chose to publicize his loathing for the Germans' decadence. Indeed, in Their Silver Wedding Journey, he reproduced the image which other travelers had been impressing upon their readers for some seventy years.

Inspired, no doubt, by the tour of Howells and his wife in 1897, Their Silver Wedding Journey traces the trip to Germany of Isabel and Basil March. With its loose plot, its episodic structure, and its recurrent comments upon the Germans and, more often, upon American tourists in Germany, this novel follows the pattern of many travel books. March, a hard-working magazine editor, is persuaded by his business manager and by his wife to take a prolonged leave to rest his tired nerves taking the waters in Carlsbad. After their stay at this Bohemian spa, he and his wife go on a leisurely sightseeing tour

to Nuremberg, Ansbach, Würzburg, Weimar, Berlin, Frankfort, Mayence, Cologne, and Düsseldorf, where they decide that they have had enough of traveling and, rather than going to spend the winter in Italy, take the boat train to England, then the next steamer home. The novel gains some interest through the love story of Agatha Triscoe and L.J. Burnamy, two of the Marches' fellow tourists, who first meet on the boat to Hamburg and whose romance, developing along roughly the same itinerary as the Marches', comes to its logical conclusion at the home of the latter after the party's return to New York, during a meeting of the two lovers arranged by the match-making Mrs. March.

Howells agrees with other travel writers not only in condemning the Wilhelminian monarchy and the notorious militarism of the Empire but, surprisingly, also in dealing rather kindly with the German people. Generally his ridicule of German foibles seems good-natured, although his Germans combine kindness and honesty with grossness. Nowhere, however, does he reiterate his outburst at the Germans' moral depravity. At the same time he often finds occasion to satirize Isable March's chauvinism and other tourists' irrationality, vulgarity, and habit of draw-
ing invidious comparisons between America and Germany.

During the twenty-seven years since lecturing his sister on Germany morality, Howells may well have mellowed. As Mr. Altenbernd, on the authority of a much-quoted phrase from Life in Letters, suggests, Howells may well have written Their Silver Wedding Journey with a "changed point of view and with the evening light on everything." This bland, conciliatory attitude toward Germany, and Europe generally, characterizes, again according to Mr. Altenbernd, Howells' later travel writings compared with those based on the Italian residence of the 1860's. From his concern with social injustice in America, Howells, to follow Mr. Altenbernd, may have concluded that the New World was not so white, the Old not quite so black as he had once imagined. Yet, in inquiring why Howells failed to draw the Germans in Their Silver Wedding Journey as morally corrupt, one need not look far. Such a view would have been unfashionable in 1899.

4Ibid., II, 97; cited by Altenbernd, p. 216.
5Altenbernd, pp. 216-217.
6Ibid., pp. 217-218.
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