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To surviving grandchildren  
of H. A. Rattermann

George's children (-) (born) (died 10/14/32)  
100th birthday?  
Pearl (6/15/40) H.A. Rattermann  
Walter (died 8/31-4)  
Dorothy

Nov. 1938

HEINRICH ARMIN RATTERMANN

GERMAN-AMERICAN AUTHOR, POET, AND HISTORIAN

1832-1923

10,432-1,02

This dissertation was conducted under the direction of Paul G. Gleis, Ph. D., as Major Professor, and was approved by

Right Rev. Msgr. Peter Guilday, J. U. D. }  
Leo Behrendt, Ph. D. } as readers.

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HEINRICH ARMIN RATTERMANN  
German-American Author, Poet,  
and Historian, 1832-1923

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND  
SCIENCES OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY  
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THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA  
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1937





## PREFACE

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The purpose of this dissertation is to make Heinrich Armin Rattermann better known and to restore an interesting figure in the history of the cultural relations of Germany and America to his rightful place as an author, poet, and historian, by instituting a revival of his memory.

Once a popular chronicler of German emigration to North America and of German life there, Heinrich A. Rattermann may suffer the misfortune of passing into oblivion since German emigration has ceased and American sentiment in general has turned anti-German.

For the student and scholar interested in German letters to neglect Rattermann would be an irretrievable loss to the literary and historical investigator as well as to the cultural history of America.

So far no serious attention has been given to a detailed study of the life and works of Rattermann in order to present them in their entirety or to emphasize their significant influence upon the cultural development of America.

In this investigation, we will attempt to bring together for the first time the available sources for a biography and an appraisal of Rattermann, and to testify to the sturdy characteristics of this great German-American. Special stress will be laid on the value, volume, and significance of his literary, historical, and artistic attainments.

The few extant biographical sketches are extremely brief, incomplete, and unreliable.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of a few of the briefest items, registering two or three pages at most, and the occasional

<sup>1</sup>Julius Goebel has given us a short sketch of Rattermann in the *Deutsches Biographisches Jahrbuch*, 1923 (Stuttgart, 1930), which served as a necrology. The new *Dictionary of American-Biography* (vol. XV, 387), contains a brief account of Rattermann's life by A. B. Faust, and a third biography, more detailed but very incomplete as to the years it covered was found in *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter* (XVIII-XIX, 1920). The latter consists of several letters written by Rattermann himself to Klemens Möllenbrock in Ankum, Germany. It does not, however, account for the last sixteen years of his life.

reports in the German-American newspapers, little has been written or known about him. They merely give the facts of his life. We shall endeavor to round out the picture by approaching the subject under the topical headings of Rattermann, the Man, the Poet, and the Historian, as based on available source material and under the light of information which the new sources contain.

Gratitude is due to Rev. Mother Thomasine, O. S. F., and to my congregation for the opportunity afforded me to pursue studies at The Catholic University of America. The writer is also indebted to Prof. Paul Gleis, Head of the Department of German, who suggested the subject of this study and for his assistance and kindly encouragement. For a careful reading and criticism of the manuscript the author is under obligations to Rt. Rev. Monsignor Peter Guilday and Doctor Leo Behrendt. To Miss Katherine Rattermann grateful acknowledgment is made for her generous cooperation and the information which she has so willingly given. And lastly, to the officials of the Library of the University of Illinois, sincere thanks are due for their assistance and courtesies.

*The Catholic University of America,  
Washington, D. C.*

May 2, 1937.

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## INTRODUCTION

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The United States of America form a cosmopolitan country, an amalgamation of various nationalities and racial groups which comprise it. Our country is the result of one of the most interesting processes in the development of nations which has ever taken place in the world's history. Since every element of this composite has made and continues to make its own peculiar contributions to the whole, any attempt to withdraw or eliminate one or other important member of this uniform whole, or to belittle its merit and contributive factors must of necessity be detrimental to the progress of our country in particular and to the history of the world at large.

H. Gramm expresses himself very appositely when he says:

The fiction of the inferiority of those descending from non-Anglo-Saxon stock can no longer serve a good purpose. The sooner we secure for presentation to our people, a fair and truthfully documented picture of the contributions made to our history by the various racial groups in our midst, the sooner we will approach the goal set up for our generation, namely, the amalgamation of the Americans into an American nation.<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be denied that the German element has been an important constituent factor whose beneficial influence was most conducive to cultural, economic, and political progress in the rearing of our great national edifice. The future, too, holds a fundamental trust for the German element of America according to modern opinion. A Berlin newspaper correspondent recently said:

Der letzte grosse deutsche Philosoph, Kuno Fischer in Heidelberg, äusserte das bemerkenswerte Wort, dass die Zukunft der Menschheit und der Kultur vielleicht drüben über dem Ozean liege, und dass vom deutschen Volk und von der deutschen Wissenschaft starke Ströme geistiger und wirtschaftlicher Befruchtung dort hinüber geleitet worden seien. . . . Und so ist zum guten Teil durch deutsche Forschung und deutsche Wissenschaft, deren Ergebnisse beide Völker einander näher brachten, immer mehr die Einsicht befestigt worden, dass zwischen dem Volk der Vereinigten Staaten und dem deutschen Volk ein starkes Band der Rasse und der Wirtschaft besteht, welches zum Heil beider Völker nicht zerrissen werden darf.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The American-German Review*, IV (1937), 3.

<sup>2</sup> The last great German philosopher, Kuno Fischer, of Heidelberg, advanced the remarkable idea that the future of mankind and of culture

Comparatively little has been done hitherto by historical and literary students writing in English, and even in German, to elucidate in its various aspects the history of the German element since the Civil War and more recent times.<sup>3</sup>

Most books on German-American history deal with the older phases, being less informative and certain on the last decades of the nineteenth century. Aside from some more or less desultory attempts of individual scholars and a few German societies, however good in themselves, the sources for the years around the turn of the century are few.

There are many phases and details of our early and later history which must remain obscure without a thorough acquaintance with the part taken in them by prominent individual citizens of German extraction.<sup>4</sup> Their economic, social, religious, educational, scientific, political, literary, general technical, and cultural contribution were manifold and noteworthy, being an inherent part of our civilization.

One of the outstanding and highly distinguished modern German-Americans, to whom America and especially its citizens of German extraction must forever be under obligation, is the late Heinrich A. Rattermann, a modest, but deserving author, and promoter of German culture. Perhaps no individual German-American in the last half of the nineteenth century has done more than he to rescue the German element of the United States from obscurity and

may lie across the ocean, for powerful streams of intellectual and economic fructification have been directed beyond the sea by the German people and by German erudition. Through research and learning the two nations, Germany and the United States, have been brought closer to each other, ever more confirming the opinion that between them there exists a strong racial and economic bond which for the welfare of those nations must not be severed.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. Cronau, *German Achievements in America* (New York, 1916); A. B. Faust, *The German element in the United States* (New York, 1927); C. Ross, *Unser Amerika* (Leipzig, 1936); H. Kloss, *Um die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums* (Berlin, 1937); G. Timpe, *Katholisches Deutschtum in Amerika* (Freiburg, 1937).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. T. Roemer, *The Ludwig-Missionsverein and the Church in the United States (1838-1918)*, Dissertation, Catholic University (Washington, D. C., 1933); L. Schrott, *Pioneer German Catholics in the American Colonies (1734-1784)*, Dissertation, Catholic University (Washington, D. C., 1932).

oblivion. Probably no one has left a deeper and more lasting imprint on the social and intellectual life of his fellow citizens in the Midwest, and on those interested in things German-American, than this talented immigrant poet, historian, and journalist.

As far as the writer was able to ascertain, no one has so far devoted any comprehensive historical or biographical studies to this pioneer of German-American history, literature, and scholarship in the United States. The late Julius Goebel, of the University of Illinois, a recognized historian in the field of Americana-Germanica, lamented the fact that uncontrollable circumstances had prevented Rattermann from writing the story of his long active life in the land of his adoption. It would, no doubt, have coincided with the intellectual and cultural history of the German-American element, which he as no other thoroughly comprehended and pursued in his research.<sup>5</sup> Goebel was well aware of the fact, that a Rattermann biography would almost amount to writing a history of modern German-American life.

Professor Ralph Wood, a colleague of Professor A. B. Faust, of Cornell University, in a speech before the members of the Deutsche Pionier Verein of Cincinnati said in 1934, that Rattermann is a great reminder and admonisher of the German intellectual life and customs of Cincinnati; the greatest member of the German Pioneer Society who should never be forgotten as long as Germans shall live in America.<sup>6</sup>

This shows the esteem in which he is held even today among competent American scholars. Our own American historian, George Bancroft, who duly appreciated the work done by Ratter-

<sup>5</sup> Leider ist es dem trefflichen Manne, der seines Augenlichtes wie seines Gehöres beraubt war, nicht vergönnt gewesen, uns am Abende seines langen arbeitreichen Lebens die Geschichte seiner Entwicklung und seiner vielseitigen Tätigkeit selbst zu zeichnen. Sie wäre ohne Zweifel zugleich zu einer Geschichte des amerikanischen Deutschtums und seines geistigen und politischen Einflusses auf Amerika geworden, eines Einflusses, den er wie kein Zweiter, als Augenzeuge übersah und als Forscher zu verfolgen wusste. J. Goebel, "Aus Rattermanns Leben," *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, XIX (1920), 88.

<sup>6</sup> So stand Rattermann da als grosser Mahner des Cincinnatier Deutschtums, Rattermann, das grösste Mitglied des Deutschen Pionier Vereins, der nie vergessen werden sollte, so lange Deutsche in Amerika leben. "Der Auslandsdeutsche," *Deutsche Arbeit*, XXXV (1935), 355.

mann in the field of historical research gave splendid recognition to him as the historian when he said: "The history of the United States would be incomplete without the writings of Rattermann."<sup>7</sup> This is particularly applicable to the many detailed biographical accounts which ranked so high in Rattermann's works and shed so much light on American affairs from 1800-1850.

Another statement which testifies to the significance of Rattermann's literary career is from no less an authority than the late Professor of the University of Pennsylvania, Marion Dexter Learned, who wrote: "Although more than fifty years of age, Rattermann now entered upon that career which was to insure him so significant a place in the history of German-American writers."<sup>8</sup> Professor Learned makes a special reference to Rattermann's *Gesammelte Werke* here which were published after 1900.

These few quotations alone would indicate the importance which may be ascribed to Rattermann in the life and history of the modern German-American and the desirability of a study of his life and works, in order to ascertain his place in German-American letters.<sup>9</sup> It is just and befitting that he now, finally, be given due consideration and recognition for his untiring efforts in behalf of the German element in particular and of American citizens in general.

The task of assembling the material for a relatively adequate life of Heinrich A. Rattermann is not as easy as might at first appear, and an attempt at a complete account of this long and fruitful career must necessarily be deficient for the want of sufficient printed literature on the topic. However, the present student of Rattermann's life had the advantage of spending some time at the library of the University of Illinois, in order to make an inten-

<sup>7</sup> Cited by J. Rothensteiner, "Heinrich Arminius Rattermann," *America*, January 9, 1923.

<sup>8</sup> "Rattermanns Gesammelte Werke," *German-American Annals*, XIII (1912), 261.

<sup>9</sup> Heinz Kloss in his latest work stresses the necessity of *Kleinarbeit für die Zeit der Dreissiger* (1820-1847), for noteworthy personages, historical movements, phases, or developments. He says that for some of these, individual, intensive, investigations thoroughly substantiated by contemporary newspapers, periodicals, letters, and other primary sources, will be necessary. *Um die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums* (Berlin, 1937), 13.



sive study of the manuscript material found in the Rattermann collection and to survey the book collection of his library, which is housed there.

In the early part of this investigation the writer furthermore has had the good fortune to discover a series of Rattermann correspondence with the late Monsignor Rothensteiner, the German-American historian, poet, and critic. The letters date from 1903-1915. This material being original, and up to this time unknown and unused, proved very valuable in so far as it reflected an excellent picture of Rattermann, the man and author. Another source of information was opened through the assistance of a number of personal acquaintances and friends of Rattermann, all of whom have been very helpful. The most pertinent help, however, was derived from correspondence with Rattermann's youngest daughter, Katherine, who has given information on the various phases of her father's life.

We hope to arrive at a just appreciation of the man through a careful scrutiny of his work and the meager sources at our command. His *Gesammelte Werke*, the files of the *Deutscher Pionier* 1874-1886, and *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin* 1886-1887, constitute externally, his monumental achievements. The citations in this study are mainly based on these works and the aforesaid letters. The apparent trivial details entered into occasionally are for the purpose of presenting a more accurate estimate of Rattermann, the man.

Rattermann's works have been found worthy of honorable mention in Germany in such highly standardized works as the following: Wilhelm Kosch, *Deutsches Literatur Lexikon* (Halle, 1930); Joseph Nadler, *Literaturgeschichte der deutschen Stämme und Landschaften* (Regensburg, 1928); Max Schneider, *Deutsches Titelbuch* (Berlin, 1927); Fritz Eberhardt, *Amerika-Literatur* (Leipzig, 1920); Richard May, *Auslanddeutsches Quellenbuch* (Berlin, 1937); Colin Ross, *Unser Amerika* (Leipzig, 1936); Heinz Kloss, *Um die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums* (Berlin, 1937); P. Merker u. W. Stammler, "Auslanddeutsches Schrifttum," *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, IV (Berlin, 1931); and *Der Grosse Herder*, III (1932).

These works are essentially of a fundamental literary or biblio-

graphic nature. His name and books are also mentioned in a number of German periodicals of Germany and in books on German-American history. According to letters found in the files of the Rattermann collection, the *Deutscher Pionier* and volumes of his *Gesammelte Werke* found their way to the various German speaking countries of Europe. Personal letters to the writer from Otto Lohr of Deutsches Ausland Institut, Stuttgart, and from Georg von der Haar, Mittelschulkonrektor, Ankum, assure us that his works are not uncommon in Germany.

With the thousands of Germans who have come to America during the last quarter of the nineteenth century the study of the German language and literature have rapidly advanced in this country. German poetry has taken root in the New World and gradually developed into a healthy hopeful tree in the *Deutsch-Amerikanischer Dichterwald*.

If literary productions are the exponents of the social and intellectual life of their respective times and a fair index of the cultural status of a people, then we must conclude that the German-American cultural element as promoted through the individual members of its society, has contributed a liberal share to the higher and nobler things of American life.

## CHAPTER I

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### RATTERMANN, THE MAN

#### ANCESTRY AND CHILDHOOD, IN ANKUM, GERMANY

In the opening chapter of the first number of *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin* 1886, Rattermann, its author and editor, makes a plea to all Americans of German extraction and to the future American historians to give due credit and recognition to the merits of the German-American element in the formation and development of the American nation. He added by way of admonition:

Zu dem Behufe ist es nötig, dass wir unsere Leistungen auf den Gebieten der Kultur—der Literatur, der Kunst, der Wissenschaft, im Bilde erhalten, als auch das aufs neue wieder auffrischen, was unsere Vorgänger in bereits verflossener Zeit geleistet haben.<sup>1</sup>

This applies, of course, in retrospect also to his own accomplishments and we will therefore, first of all, make a study of Rattermann, the man, whose life and works form such an important chapter in recent German-American history. The best angle, no doubt, from which to study the man is from his own active career as portrayed in his daily life and achievements. Our appreciation of his works will be intensified by a knowledge of his life and the circumstances which gave rise to them.

Of Rattermann's ancestry we know but few facts. We learn from a letter which he wrote to an old friend in Ankum, Germany, that his name may be traced back to his grandmother on his paternal side. He wrote regarding it:

Wir führen unseren Namen nach dem Kolonat Rathermann, welcher in Amerika eine kleine Änderung erfuhr. An die Giebelbalken des von meinem Grossvater erbauten Hauses war der Name Hermann Gerhard

---

<sup>1</sup> In order that this recognition be effected and our deeds be recorded on the pages of future history, it is essential that we ourselves ever bear in mind and guard as a sacred heritage the spiritual and material contributions of our German ancestors, to American life, culture, and progress, in the fields of literature, art, and science. *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin*, I (1886), 15.

Rathermann eingehauen. Auch mich nannte man als Knabe in der Schule *Ratherings Heinrich*. In der Schule und öffentlichen Schriften wurden wir belehrt, das "h" wegzulassen und uns einfach Ratermann zu schreiben. Mein Oheim in Amerika (seit 1835, ausgewandert) hat das weggelassene "h" in "t" abgeändert—Rattermann—, mit diesem Namen wurde ich amerikanischer Bürger gemacht.<sup>2</sup>

His grandfather, Hermann Gerhard Berling of Bokraden married Katherine, the heiress of an estate belonging to the Rattermanns in Ankum, and in accordance with the customs of the country or the law, he took on the name of the estate, Rattermann. Heinrich A. Rattermann's father was the offspring of this marriage. He became a cabinet maker and lived in Ankum, Hanover, near the borderline of Oldenburg, Germany, which at that time belonged to the diocese of Hildesheim-Osnabrück.<sup>3</sup>

Rattermann's mother, Katherine Helmsing, was the daughter of the farmer Helmsing from the peasant village Doten, and a sister of Rektor Helmsing of Werden on the Ruhr (they were all Catholics as far as is known). After her marriage she and her husband made their home at 217 Franske Platt in Ankum, and it was here on October 14, 1832, that Heinrich Hermann Rattermann was born.<sup>4</sup>

In one of his reminiscent moods as an old man Rattermann gives the following picture of his childhood home:

Das Elternhaus war halb-bäuerlich, halb-bürgerlich. Im hinteren Teile des Hauses hatte mein Vater, Tischlermeister, seine Werkstatt. Neben dem

---

<sup>2</sup> Our name was derived from the Rathermann estate but it has undergone a slight change in America. The name Hermann Gerhard Rathermann was carved into the gable beams of the house erected by my grandfather. I recall that as a boy in school I was called Ratherings Heinrich. We were later taught to omit the "h" but my uncle who had emigrated to America in 1835, substituted the letter "t" for the omitted "h." I, too, later became an American citizen under the name of Rattermann (September 11, 1854). J. Goebel, "Aus Rattermanns Leben," *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, XIX (1920), 83.

<sup>3</sup> The poet speaks of Ankum mostly as a Westphalian town. He has in mind the Westphalia in a wider historical sense. J. Goebel, *loc. cit.*, 79.

<sup>4</sup> In America he latinized his second name Hermann into Arminius because two other members of the family bore the names of Heinrich Hermann. In later years Rattermann was jestingly called "Der Leuchtturm" (The Beacon Light), which in reality he was to his contemporaries and to the younger generation of students and scholars.

Hause war ein Obst- und Gemüsegarten. Die Mutter hielt viel auf schöne Blumen und Ziersträucher. Da gab es Rosen, Lilien, Tulpen, Nelken, Levkojen, Hollunder und Wucherblumen.<sup>5</sup>

His intense love for nature, which influenced so many of his poetical productions, he ascribed to his mother who was very fond of flowers and shrubs. Even in America, with its hustle and bustle of city life, this attraction for the beauty and charm of nature never left him. He sought it on every occasion.

His paternal grandfather, who made his home with the family, was also a great lover of nature. He had traveled through many foreign lands, including the Orient, and had brought from these countries a variety of shrubs and fruit trees which were transplanted in the garden of the Rattermann home.

To his place of birth—Ankum—Rattermann dedicated several beautiful poems which are an evidence of his lifelong attraction to his native village and his happy childhood there. In 1912, he wrote:

Du trautes Dorf, wo meine Wiege stand  
 Von wo das Schicksal mich hinweg getrieben,  
 Dir bin ich doch, mein Ankum, treu geblieben,  
 Auch in dem weltentfernten fremden Land.

Du warst die Mutter, die mir an die Hand  
 Den Weg zum Guten mahnend vorgeschrieben:  
 Ob wir uns trennten, muss ich doch dich lieben,  
 Und nimmermehr reisst dieses teure Band.<sup>6</sup>

His happy childhood in Ankum, his esteemed teacher Möllensbrock, the village church, and the prayers of his mother always remained sacred memories to him. Rattermann never again returned to his native home but throughout his long years in America

<sup>5</sup> The parental home was adapted to farm and to city life. The rear part of the house was occupied by my father's carpenter shop and adjacent to the house was a fruit and vegetable garden, sprinkled with a colorful array of flowers and shrubs. There were roses, tulips, lilies, snapdragons, carnations, and many wild flowers. *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>6</sup> Beloved village where my cradle stood, fate has driven me from thee. You were the mother whose guiding hand led me on the path of virtue, and though we have parted one from another, I have remained true to you, my Ankum. Our bond of affection shall endure forever. H. A. Rattermann, *Gesammelte ausgewählte Werke*, IIIb (1914), 436 (hereinafter cited as *Gesammelte Werke*).

(1846-1923), he was devoted to it and cherished a grateful and loving remembrance of it. The inhabitants of his native village, realizing his later attainments, honored him with a memorial tablet on the house of his birth.<sup>7</sup>

A photograph of the old home which he had received at the age of 70 years, inspired the following verse:

Noch steht das alte Haus in seinen Wänden,  
In welchem ich das Licht der Welt erblickte!  
O, wie sein Bild mich innerlich entzückte,  
Als ich es zitternd hielt in meinen Händen!

Das Gärtchen auch, wo ich des Frühlings Spenden,  
Die Rosen und Levkojen, eifrig pflückte,  
Zu Kränzen flocht, womit ich dann beglückte  
Das Mutterherz, die Liebe zu verpfänden.

Wie war doch (wenn Erinnerung ich auffrische)  
So schön die Kindheit! — Was ich hab' gefunden  
An Ehr' und Glück, bringt diese doch nicht wieder! <sup>8</sup>

Scarcely six years of age the sickly but precocious boy, Heinrich, started to attend the Catholic village school which was under the direction of "Herr Lehrer Möllenbrock" who was said to have been an excellent pedagogue. Heinrich's mother had taught her little son reading and spelling before he entered school. The teacher was more than astonished at the reading ability of this quiet and thoughtful little lad. Without ever having had a primer or other book for beginners, the little fellow was at once entered in the third grade where he sat among the taller boys who were three or four years older than he. At the age of ten, he had reached the highest class, while his schoolmates were fourteen years of age or more. The boy was frail and sickly until his thirteenth year. He was also afflicted with eye and ear trouble and it was only after he came to America that he became stronger physically.

<sup>7</sup> H. Fick, "Wir in Amerika," *Cincinnati Freie Presse*, November 12, 1922.

<sup>8</sup> The old house in which I first saw the light of day still stands. What a feeling overpowered me when I held this picture in my trembling hands! The garden, too, where I culled spring's first blossoms to present them in a garland as exchange for mother's love, is still there. If I recall — how happy was my childhood! Honor and good fortune which I have found do not repay me for the happiness which I have forfeited. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIa (1914), 67.

The teacher instilled into his young charge an early love for poetry and music. He frequently assigned to his pupils lengthy poems to be committed to memory. On one occasion the boy of scarcely twelve years, memorized Schiller's *Lied von der Glocke* and was called to declaim it before the class.<sup>9</sup>

The verse of Klopstock, his future model and master, also made a deep impression on the boy Heinrich. As he himself said: "Der musikalische Hexameter fiel mir ins Gehör und verblieb seitdem in meinem Gedächtniss."<sup>10</sup> Although Heinrich's favorite studies were ancient history and literature, he was particularly gifted in composition, a talent which influenced his literary career so greatly. Arithmetic was at first a source of confusion to the little man, but soon there was an awakening and he mastered the entire field without difficulty, even the elements of trigonometry. This mathematical ability in so young a child may seem very unusual, but Rattermann himself tells us that his teacher once said:

Heinrich, ich habe nichts mehr für dich zu lernen, du kannst alles rechnen was ich auch kann. Ich bin nun über achtundzwanzig Jahre (lang) Lehrer an der Ankumer Schule und in dieser langen Zeit habe ich keinen so fleissigen, aufmerksamen und folgsamen Schüler gehabt wie du, Heinrich.<sup>11</sup>

The study of Bible History also had its charms for Heinrich. In the Old Testament it was the story of Job which fascinated him and made the greatest impression on his youthful mind. Still another source of attraction were the letters of Saint Paul, whose forceful words appealed to him and pleased him more than the narrative style of the Evangelists. He was particularly fond of the episode dealing with Diana of Ephesus.<sup>12</sup>

Thus we see that Rattermann, even as a child, gave evidence of that keen sense of perception and appreciation which marked him later as the poet, critic, and historian.

<sup>9</sup> Though he loved poetry, we have no evidence of any boyhood poems.

<sup>10</sup> "The musical hexameter impressed itself upon my hearing and remained with me ever after." J. Goebel, *loc. cit.*, 100.

<sup>11</sup> Henry, there is nothing more for you to learn, you know all that I know of arithmetic. In the twenty years of my teaching profession in Ankum I have never found a pupil as docile, industrious, and attentive as you, Henry. *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

School days which had meant so much to the studious boy and which had laid that solid rock foundation for the future man, were soon to end for him. In the spring of 1846, "Herr Lehrer Möllenbrock" informed Heinrich's father that the boy had progressed far enough in both age and study to receive his first holy Communion, which in those days also implied a discontinuance of attendance at school. Heinrich, who possessed an insatiable hunger for knowledge, realized that his father had not the means to send him to the Gymnasium and begged to be allowed to attend the village school for another year. The father consented after it had been agreed upon that the teacher would give his pupil private instructions in the study of the English language. But to the disappointment of the lad, the plans came to naught when at the close of the summer vacation of 1846, the father decided to emigrate to America with his family. With the exception of a few months' attendance at St. John's Catholic school in Cincinnati, young Rattermann's education ended here. To his faithful teacher he paid a tribute of gratitude in the following verse:

Dem teuren Lehrer, der den Sinn mir weckte  
 Zum stillen Grübeln und zum freien Denken  
 Und löste so die dunkeln Geistesschranken,  
 Der willig mir die Hand entgegen streckte,  
 Um mich von falschen Zielen abzulenken:  
 Dir, Heinrich Möllenbrock, hab ich's zu danken! <sup>13</sup>

#### THE EMIGRANT—LEAVING ANKUM

In 1846, the Rattermann family left the town of Ankum to emigrate to America. It was the time when thousands of other Germans left the homeland to seek a better life on the distant shores of hospitable America, reputed to be the land of liberty and opportunity. The reason why the poor carpenter Rattermann left the ancestral country was not far to seek. Carpenters, often members of the guild, have always been, at least in Germany, of the liberal-minded type, experienced in the world's affairs. Life among

<sup>13</sup> To you, Heinrich Möllenbrock, who awakened in me the spirit of discerning inquiry and independent thought, I am grateful. You have broken down the barriers of intellectual darkness and extended to me a guiding hand to preserve me from an alluring goal. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIb, 403.



farmers, shopkeepers, and artisans in the towns of the then known kingdom of Hanover was hard enough as such, especially in the section of Ankum where the soil is comparatively poor, where the heather grows and sandy plains stretch for miles around in every direction. Here, hardy and God-fearing people tried to make a scanty living from meager crops and by cattle raising. But here, as in other small principalities of Germany, the government made life harder and more difficult by harsh and vexatious measures of law enforcement, and by exorbitant taxation. Hanover had received a liberal constitution in 1833, which for the first time in its history had some consideration for the just demands of the farmer and others. But Rattermann, the carpenter of Ankum, had decided to leave the poor tyrannized country of Hanover for better lands. In 1846, securing his belongings and his family on a big wagon, he left the little village. The wagon rolled along the dirt roads northward towards Bremen. Heinrich Rattermann, then a lad of almost fourteen years, and at a very impressionable time of his life, he the dreamer and North German child of the plains, never forgot this event. He can still see himself taking leave forever from the peaceful fields, gardens, and streets of his beloved Ankum, when as a boy he set out for America. In hopeful anticipation he seemed to say even then:

Fort! Die Sonne eilt nach Westen,  
 Strahlt auch dort mit hellem Blick,  
 Aus dem Lande fliehn die Besten  
 Mutig trotzend dem Geschick.  
 Wo die Kraft sich frei entfalten,  
 Frei bewegen kann die Hand,  
 Wo ein freier Geist darf walten,  
 Sei mein künft'ges Heimatland!<sup>14</sup>

It is quite clear that economic and political conditions forced the Rattermann family to seek its fortune in the New World. The purpose of their emigration, like that of so many others, was to find freedom from the oppression of their home country.

<sup>14</sup> Behold, the sun hastens to the West, shining there with equal splendor. The best are gone from their native land, bravely facing their fate. Where the hand is unrestrained; where the powers may freely unfold; and the spirit free may reign—there, shall be my future home. *Ibid.*, I, 230.

A collection of poems in Rattermann's *Gesammelte Werke* known as *Der Auswanderer* gives us a good descriptive outline of the voyage to America.<sup>15</sup> They form a small journal of the events of the journey and reflect the emotions, fears, and hopes which accompanied the emigrant lad from the time he left his native Ankum to his arrival in his new home.

Rattermann as a child had never been beyond the confines of his native village, and the overland journey to the sea proved very fascinating to the boy. The great city of Bremen was particularly interesting to the alert lad. The famous "Rathaus" with its three-mast glass vessel, and the imposing statue of Roland before it, quite overawed our young traveler. It was here, too, where in the company of his father and grandfather he visited the famous Bremer Ratskeller which was immortalized by the poet Wilhelm Hauff in his *Phantasien im Bremer Ratskeller*. The grandfather, realizing that this was his final farewell to his dear native land, invited his son to a last luxury of wine in the "Ratskeller" saying: "Lasset uns noch eine Flasche echten deutschen Wein trinken, ehe wir das Vaterland verlassen."<sup>16</sup>

They embarked on the *Hermitage*, a sailing vessel, August 15, 1846, with 128 other passengers. The boy went through the usual experiences of sea traveling: the towering waves, dawn and night, and other phenomena were all poetical inspirations which would bud and blossom in the life of the future poet of nature.

After a wearisome journey of two months, the emigrants landed at Baltimore, October 14, 1846. They were, however, not detained here but set out at once for Cincinnati, where a relative of the family was living at the time. Many Germans from the northern plains had gone to this great German center of the Midwest in the years preceding, and the Rattermann family was not friendless on its arrival there.

Perhaps, nothing is more significant of Rattermann's concept of America, and indicative of his future cultural contributions to his fellow citizens in this country than the words of his poem, *Auf der*

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Der letzte Gruss, Abschied vom Lande, Spiel der Wellen, Nacht auf dem Meere, See Jungfern, Meeres Stille, Sturm, and Land!* *Ibid.*, I, 229-248.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 234.

*freien Erde*, which was written about 1868, to commemorate his landing at Baltimore:

Gegrüsst sei Land der Freiheit mir,  
 Das ich mit frohem Fuss betrete!  
 Gegrüsst du sternbesüt Panier  
 Das mir so stolz entgegenwehte!

O, nehmt den flücht'gen Pilger auf,  
 Kolumbias Volk, Kolumbias Fluren!  
 Hier soll mein künft'ger Lebenslauf  
 Einprägen seines Daseins Spuren! <sup>17</sup>

And seventy-six full active years spent in the United States have given testimony to the truth of these words. Circumstances had made Rattermann a man of action. In his long years of indefatigable work as business man, editor, and publisher, he has given to all German-Americans and to future generations a collection of German poetry and a store of authoritative German-American history as no other one had done before him.

#### YOUTH IN CINCINNATI—MANUAL LABOR

Soon after their arrival in Cincinnati, Ratterman's father obtained work at his carpenter trade. The expenses of the journey had left the family quite destitute and Heinrich, being the oldest child, was early forced to join the ranks of the active wage-earners, for the father was of the opinion: "Der Junge kann auch etwas verdienen helfen," <sup>18</sup> and the decision went into effect soon after. Through the help of a relative Heinrich obtained work in a brick-yard in nearby Newport, Kentucky, driving a team of oxen for the scant wage of six dollars and board per month. With high and hopeful spirit the boy began his apprenticeship. The experience which this new life in the brick-yard afforded him in strange surroundings must have been decidedly disagreeable to his delicate, sensitive nature, so well-attuned to the refined and cultural things of life. For a miserable pittance of a few dollars a month, he was

<sup>17</sup> Hail, Land of liberty, upon whose soil I hopefully set foot. Hail, star-spangled banner, so proudly beckoning me! Columbia's people, Columbia's fields, welcome the fugitive pilgrim; here shall my future course leave the noblest imprint of its being. *Ibid.*, I, 248.

<sup>18</sup> J. Goebel, *loc. cit.*, 114.

compelled to mix with associates whose habits and manners were not infrequently of the coarsest type.

After two hard tried months, his wages were increased to fourteen dollars per month and by October, 1847, the proud young wage-earner, scarcely fifteen years of age, was able to give his father eighty dollars in cash and a good outfit of clothes. It was while working at the brick-yard, that the eager boy received his first lessons in English reading and pronunciation. The wife of his employer, Mrs. Jane Boyles, had found the lad with book in hand during his spare moments, and she took pleasure in teaching the apt pupil to read English. He grasped it very rapidly.

This new environment at Newport afforded the boy a splendid opportunity to satisfy his love for the outdoor life. The city was at that time surrounded by a dense virgin forest, and here we find our future poet and art critic during the late afternoon and evening hours gathering wild flowers and listening to the woodland songsters.<sup>19</sup> The singing of the birds reminded him of the nightingale of his native Germany and appeased his longing for his early boyhood home.

The winter months brought other hard work for the boy. This time we find him occupied in a Cincinnati *freezing-house*.<sup>20</sup> Here in this damp cold place of work, the youth contracted chronic catarrh, which afflicted him during the rest of his life. It was concerning this occupation that Father Rothensteiner remarked: "It was crude labor which did not harmonize with the aesthetic nature and ambition of the future poet."<sup>21</sup> Although gifted with a temperament and inclination for the nobler and more beautiful things of the spirit, young Rattermann never shirked menial labor. No matter how heavy the work, he was always cheerful and contented, in spite of enduring physical sufferings.

The next position, in which we meet him, is that of a waiter in a restaurant and barroom of Louisville, Kentucky. The proprietor was a relative of the family and showed an interest in the boy's welfare. This restaurant was frequently the rendezvous of

<sup>19</sup> The inspiration for some of his poems,—*Nord-Amerikanische Vögel in Liedern*, had their origin during this early period of his life in America (1847).

<sup>20</sup> *Porkopolis* was an early nickname for Cincinnati.

<sup>21</sup> "Heinrich Arminius Rattermann," *Amerika*, St. Louis, January 9, 1923.

the intelligentsia, whose open discussions on cultural and political topics of the day fascinated the young waiter. Almost unconsciously he imbibed knowledge and insight into affairs which stimulated his eagerness for learning and proved so useful to him in later years.

After having spent about eight months as a waiter, the youth of seventeen years took to palette and brush, aspiring to become an artist. He was encouraged in this step by an aunt who had observed his aptitude for sketching and drawing. She arranged with a local decorator in Louisville, to employ the boy in his studio as an apprentice, in exchange for board and lodging. The lad's father, however, did not agree with this plan and like so many other hopeful dreams, the realization never dawned. All that remained to recall this brief episode was a painted landscape in oil colors and a self-portrait sketched before a mirror.

After an absence of almost a year the youthful Rattermann returned to his home in Cincinnati in the later months of 1849. But the fire of his ambitions and love for the beautiful, which burnt too rapidly, even in his childhood, urged him on. Work, nature, music, and books were his constant companions. He possessed a ready facility for comprehending new subjects or situations and a natural tendency towards the ideal and uplifting elements which came to good use under the varying vicissitudes of his long life.

During these years (1849-1860), in Cincinnati, he became acquainted, among many others, with Father Klemens Hammer, probably the first German Catholic poet of America.<sup>22</sup> It was he to whom Rattermann ascribed his inspiration and encouragement for his early attempts at poetry, which gradually developed into a bountiful harvest.

#### EARLY MANHOOD

The year 1850, brought a change into young Rattermann's life. The youth of little more than seventeen years, who up to the present time had contributed his meager earnings towards the sup-

<sup>22</sup> Hammer was born in Joachimstal, Bohemia, came to America in 1837, and acted as pastor of the German Catholic St. Mary's Church in Cincinnati from 1840-1865. Rattermann himself later wrote and published a biography of Hammer. *Gesammelte Werke*, XII, 135.

port of the family, suddenly found a new obligation imposed upon him by the early death of his father, January 18, 1850. Heinrich was the oldest of three children and the duty of providing for the family fell to him.<sup>23</sup>

The serious responsibility thrust upon such youthful shoulders did not dishearten or put a check on the young man's ambition or on his thirst for knowledge. He had been working as a cabinet-maker in the factories of Cincinnati for some time, when in the winter of 1853-1854, a demand for higher wages brought on a strike among the workmen. Rattermann, who had managed to save some of his earnings while working at his trade, now decided to enter Grundey's Business College to acquire a knowledge of bookkeeping. After the completion of the course in the fall of 1854, he took up a position as accountant in the building material business of his uncle. The latter soon recognized the young man's abilities in finance and executive duties and accepted him as a partner in the firm. This business association was destined to be of short duration, for the uncle soon retired and the firm was dissolved. Without much hesitancy Rattermann invested his small capital in a grocery and market enterprise, which proved quite successful for a number of years.

His unconquerable spirit went on in the face of every difficulty. On May 10, 1856, Rattermann launched his last and greatest business enterprise—one which became permanent and kept his larder filled for himself and his large family for sixty-five years. He founded the German Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Cincinnati, which soon became one of the most prosperous of its kind in the United States. Rattermann remained in this prosaic business in the capacity of secretary and manager until his death in 1923. Regarding this newly organized company of 1856, Rattermann wrote fifty years later to an old friend in Anklam:

Die Gesellschaft verfügt jetzt über anderthalb Millionen Dollars Kapital, und hat einen Überschuss von mehr als einer halben Millionen Dollars. Dieses ist meine Brotkammer, und obwohl ich keineswegs reich geworden bin, so habe ich doch zur Grosserziehung meiner starken Familie ein mässiges Auskommen gefunden.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> His mother died in 1881, at the age of 77 years.

<sup>24</sup> The company disposes of a capital of one and one-half million dollars

His daughter has given us an idealistic picture of her father's generous and noble character in the following terms:

He cared nothing for money except as a commodity and scorned to make the accumulation of it the aim of his business. The insurance company which he organized was a mutual one and the wealth it had stored up was left the property of the policy holders. Had he been crafty or mercenary, he could readily have turned it into a stock company and kept controlling interest in it. But he was too idealistic for that. All he drew was a salary and later a pension to supply his needs and those of his family, a large one. But there was always room in his home and heart for some lone member of another's family. Fortunately, the financial affairs of the company were in the hands of an able body of business men, for father's generous impulses were always getting any surplus away from him.<sup>25</sup>

We are informed by his daughter that the relation between the company officials and the employees was most congenial. They rarely dismissed a person from their employ; the old men tottered about until completely incapacitated and then were pensioned. One of the old bookkeepers related, with tears in his eyes, that everyone rejoiced when the aged Rattermann visited the office. He was a genial host to those who served him.<sup>26</sup>

Rattermann also possessed an inventive talent for mechanical contrivances. A manuscript of the Rattermann collection at the University of Illinois library shows that in April 1870, he made application to the United States Patent Office for a patent on a machine which facilitated the pitching of lager beer and other casks. The patent was granted to the applicant, on the receipt of twenty dollars.

Dr. H. Fick has sent to the writer an impression of a metal token, similar to a five-cent piece, bearing the Indian head on one

now (1907), and has a surplus fund of more than one-half million dollars. This is the storehouse which supplies the needs of my large family. Although I have not become a rich man, I have found a moderate means to rear and educate my family. J. Goebel, *loc. cit.*, 110.

<sup>25</sup> Letters of Katherine Rattermann, June 30, 1936.

<sup>26</sup> During the World War, the name of the company was changed to "The Hamilton County Mutual Fire Insurance Company." Feeling was so intensely bitter at that time that the figure of *Germania* on the company's building had to be transformed to represent *Columbia* in order to suit the mood of the press and the public. *Ibid.*, November 10, 1935.

side and the name of Rattermann on the other. He called it *Notgeld* and stated that Rattermann was the first person to use these tokens for change after the Civil War when coins were scarce and business men felt inconvenienced for the want of change in coin.

To keep himself properly informed on the various procedures and duties of business Rattermann took up the study of law. For a while he practiced at the bar but fearing the encroachment on his spare time, which he had dedicated to literary pursuits, he gave up the practice of law and concerned himself only with the legal aspects of insurance.

If we now take a retrospective glance over Rattermann's youth and early manhood with its reverses and disappointments, its hours of hard, coarse labor, and the frequent change of occupation, together with the sacrifices demanded of him, we might be inclined to look upon his early life as drab and cheerless. But nothing was further from his intrepid soul. He met all the bitter realities of life with dauntless courage, for he never over-estimated material loss or gain at the expense of cultural and intellectual advantages, which his finer tendencies led him to seek. We have his own words: "We are not in this world to see only the shadows of life, but to appreciate the good, noble, and beautiful in order to awaken and promote the ideals of existence."<sup>27</sup>

#### THE FAMILY

Amid the trying and changing scenes of early manhood, Rattermann decided on another serious step which carried with it grave responsibility, namely, that of founding a home and family. He married Katherine Ruff (a Catholic) April 15, 1856. The marriage ceremony was performed in St. John's Catholic Church by Rev. Father W. Untertiner. But even this happiness was destined to be of short duration, for after scarcely a year of wedded life the young wife and her newly-born infant died January 18, 1857.<sup>28</sup>

A brief period of six months elapsed when the young man, in pursuit of happiness and a permanent home, entered upon his

<sup>27</sup> Rattermann letters to Father Rothensteiner, March 6, 1913.

<sup>28</sup> H. Fick, "Wir in Amerika," *Cincinnati Freie Presse*, November 12, 1922.



second marriage. His choice was Katherine Dorothea Müller, a German Catholic of Cincinnati.<sup>29</sup> Rev. Father P. Otto of the above named church officiated at the nuptials.<sup>30</sup>

The second marriage proved a very happy and harmonious union which endured for thirty-nine years. It was blessed with twelve children, six of whom survived their father—Friedrich Schiller Rattermann of Denver, George of New York, Frank, assistant secretary of the Hamilton County Mutual Fire Insurance Company, Charles, secretary of the National Ad Service Company, Mrs. Fred Zwicker of Indianapolis, and Katherine Rattermann, Cincinnati, Ohio.

In spite of his active life, which must have kept him away frequently from the companionship of his wife and family, he was dearly devoted to them and always most solicitous for their welfare. It is noteworthy that a man so deeply engaged in an enterprising business career, and the promotion of cultural projects, took the utmost care that his family had a suitable home environment and the proper means of education. The opportunities to hear good music and to attend first-class German plays were also not wanting in Cincinnati. His daughter Katherine writes:

To live near father was a liberal education, although he was only an autodidact. To hear him talk on literature, art, history, and music was enough to make one gasp. I recall when I was a young girl father took my sisters and me to hear a whole series of *Wagner operas*. He was never niggardly where cultural pursuits were to be encouraged. He believed in fostering these in the young people. I feel most grateful to his memory for having opened my heart and mind to the beauty of Wagner and other great musicians. To me father was always the most interesting person I knew. He was so kind, so unselfish, in his daily life, to us.<sup>31</sup>

The high esteem and noble attributes with which Rattermann clothed woman in his poetical tributes were ever exemplified in his family life. His sentiments were beautifully expressed in the following words:

<sup>29</sup> She was born in Wasserlos, Unterfranken, Bavaria, April 10, 1836, and had come to Cincinnati with her parents in 1840. She died August 18, 1896.

<sup>30</sup> A record written by Rattermann on the flyleaf of his mother's prayer-book, gives us definite data concerning both of his marriages.

<sup>31</sup> Letters of Katherine Rattermann, November 10, 1935.

Kein grösser Glück auf Erden ist zu finden,  
 Als eine edle Frau dem Mann gesellt,  
 Die ihm das Dasein liebevoll erhellt  
 Und hilft ihm alle Stürme überwinden.<sup>32</sup>

He sings the praise and virtues of his beloved spouse in his *Müllerlieder*.<sup>33</sup> No tribute which he might pay was too great or lofty to do honor to his wife and the mother of his children. His daughters, too, whom he was wont to call his "Graces" were sung in verse while they in turn loved and revered their father.<sup>34</sup> From Katherine's own words we have the assurance: "I adored my father who was my constant companion and inspiration from the time I was able to understand him. After mother's death he and I became inseparable companions."<sup>35</sup>

The excellent principles which he inculcated on the hearts and minds of his children are reflected in their letters. From Charleston, S. C., where he had gone to recuperate after several months of indisposition, he wrote to his little daughter Rosa on the reception of her first holy Communion: "Congratulations to your beautiful feast! You will bear in mind, my dear daughter, that from henceforth you cease to be a child and you must endeavor always to be a modest, docile, and virtuous maiden."<sup>36</sup>

In the letter files of the Rattermann collection the writer found several letters written by the sons, Charles, Fred, and Frank during their absence from home. They had apparently left their home city, Cincinnati, and gone out to other centers for more favorable working opportunities. We find Charles as a surveyor at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin; Fred, as an employee of a furniture business in Chicago, and another son on the road, traveling as a representative of some company. Their letters to the father reflect filial devotion and confidence in a parent who is ever alive to the

<sup>32</sup> A man possesses no greater treasure on earth than a noble wife and companion who lightens his burdens, brightens his path, and gives him strength and courage against the storms and trials of life. *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 16.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 344-345.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 187-188.

<sup>35</sup> Letters of Katherine Rattermann, December 15, 1934.

<sup>36</sup> Rattermann's letter to his wife and children, April 27, 1889. Written while on a journey to the South for his health.

best interests of his children. They consult with him in their difficulties and share their joys of success with him.

A few excerpts from these letters will assure us of the sound principles, integrity, and honor which Rattermann ever implanted in the hearts and minds of his children. Charles, after having paid all current expenses, sent his spare money home to his father to be kept for him as an emergency fund or to cover any loans which he might have to make. On one occasion, having strictly abided by his father's advice regarding expenses chargeable to the company, he suffered a loss thereby, for his employers had unfairly reduced his road allowances and wages. The son wrote to his father as follows:

I am on the road for the company and have strictly abided by your advice, not to charge the company more than my actual traveling expenses. Now, they have lowered my wages without any cause and I have suffered an unjust loss through my honesty—what am I to do?<sup>37</sup>

Fred, who worked in the furniture business in Chicago, (Lake and Dearborn Streets) informed his father of the happy fact that owing to his ability to speak the German language, he had served more customers and made more sales than the other salesmen, and that working on a commission basis it gave him quite an advance in pay. He, no doubt, experienced the advantage which the knowledge of an additional language brings to a business man.

Charles, working in a large city, (Chicago) with many attractions and opportunities for gay life, wrote to his father that for the want of diversion after working hours, he had purchased a copy of Joynes Meissner's German Grammar and spent his evenings studying the rudiments of the German language.

It is to be remembered that these letters were never written for publication. Only through sheer force of habit the father stored up all letters, business or social, with no thought of later publicity. The writer is perhaps, the first to have entered into these private affairs. There are also letters of his little daughters—childlike and affectionate. They were greetings for the feasts of Christmas and New Years, expressions of gratitude and love. These letters reflect not only the dispositions and qualities of the children who wrote

<sup>37</sup> Letter of Charles Rattermann to his father.

them, but the father who reared and trained them. His sterling honesty, love of truth, manliness, and studiousness are all brought out as in the light of day. We find the virtues of the father mirrored in every one of the young men. Though not under the parental roof and the vigilant eye of a dutiful father, they lived in an honorable and praiseworthy manner. When all is said, Rattermann was of exceptionally sound character, a conscientious and devoted father who knew how to combine his intensive activities and home life to the mutual advantage of parents and children.

That he had his family constantly in mind is shown by the many poems devoted to them on various occasions.<sup>38</sup> Examples of love, fidelity, and devotedness to wife and children are not wanting in his poetry nor in actual daily life. He was a most faithful husband and a tender loving father to his children.

#### LOVE OF SONG AND MUSIC

A glance at Rattermann's book of verse, *Erinnerungen aus meiner poetischen Lehrzeit*, will convince us that attendance at operas, concerts and theatrical performances was a frequent occurrence with the youthful Rattermann. His associations and recreations always afforded some cultural advantage either to himself or to others. He never regretted the spare hours which he devoted to music and song, or to the dissemination of cultural elements. It is evident, too, that he was fully capable of a highly qualified interpretation and appreciation of the masters and artists in the realms of literature, music, and song. This talent had been developed and fostered in him since his early youth, for he himself tells us:

Besides learning the rudimentary three R's and the catechism, singing was one of the enjoyable features of our education. The teacher accompanied the songs on the violin and thus trained his pupils' musical talent and appreciation. I delighted in the fact that I was considered one of the best singers of the school.<sup>39</sup>

It was during this time of his school life that the eager boy was instructed in the rudiments of music. His mother's young cousin, who was a student at the Gymnasium in Osnabrück, often spent

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 422; IIIa, 21; II, 344, 345.

<sup>39</sup> Rattermann MS. (in the writer's possession).

his summer vacation at the Rattermann home in Ankum and noticing the boy's fondness for music, taught him the scales, intervals, and time values of the notes, also the keys and the significance of the terms major and minor. These facts were memorized without the help of an instrument and with it also went the ability of reading music. His teacher loaned him a book of school and folk songs and the boy of eight years copied a number of these songs as best he could. This musical manuscript he preserved and treasured until his later years.<sup>40</sup>

As a lover of song and music, Rattermann joined the choir of St. John's Catholic church in the capacity of an alto singer, soon after their arrival in Cincinnati, in 1846. Having educated himself in the theory and practice of music, he became choir director of St. John's Church in the sixties. For twelve years he worked untiringly, making St. John's choir one of the best in the city. At a later time he made the statement that a large number of prominent singers of Cincinnati were indebted to him for their musical and vocal training.<sup>41</sup> We can readily understand this, for the average German has a singular capacity for music. His love of song, in particular choral singing, is proverbial. He uses it as the expression of his spiritual and emotional experiences. Wherever German music is heard it elicits intelligent appreciation and evokes a generous response.<sup>42</sup>

Certain it is that Germans are addicted to gathering in groups. They also love to sing, it was natural, therefore, that the German-Americans should organize for the purpose of promoting song and music. Mr. Coffinberry, the first American-born president of the Columbus *Maennerchor* says: "Wherever two Germans get together there will be a *Verein*—a society . . . and if there are three Germans, there may be two societies."<sup>43</sup>

In June 1849, Rattermann participated in the first *Sängerfest* celebrated in America and aided in the organization of the *Nord-Amerikanische Sängerbund*. This organization included the various German-American choral societies in the United States and Can-

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> J. Goebel, *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, XIX (1920), 111.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. G. Pfeilschifter, *German Culture* (Freiburg, 1916).

<sup>43</sup> *Columbus Citizen*, October 16, 1937.

ada. By 1850, the *Bund* had a membership of fourteen societies or individual *Gesangvereine* member-branches. Rattermann in his *Geschichte des Ersten Deutschen Sängerbundes von Nord-Amerika* carries its history with all its constituent members down to the time of his writing (1883), showing its development in the various sections of the country and its cultural influence on America.<sup>44</sup> Few organizations ever achieved such a record of harmonious and resultful activity. Social gatherings and music were the two reasons for the founding of the choral society, they were the ties that bound its membership together through successive generations and preserved the finest traditions of the German people. Rattermann laid stress on the annual reunions or *Gesangfeste* of this organization together with their social influences. It may be noticed that these great annual *Sängerfeste* were not mere local affairs but rather national events, in so far as they brought together the various branches from every section of the country. Their spirit is best expressed in the following toast: "May your song be harmonious, your lives peaceful, one heart and one soul."<sup>45</sup>

Mr. Joseph Berning of Cincinnati gives the following report of Rattermann's interest in music and song:

Rattermann was of that substantial and music-loving citizenship of German extraction which helped to upbuild Cincinnati as a music center. He was an accomplished musician and choral leader, he organized singing societies, and long before the College of Music was founded, or the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, or May Festival Chorus Association were organized, Rattermann was conductor of a large orchestra and chorus, and one of the foremost among the group of German-American lovers of singing who met in Cincinnati in 1848, and organized the *North American Sängerbund*. He was a leader in staging the *Sängerfest*, at which were heard German singing societies from various parts of the world.<sup>46</sup>

Just what particular singing societies Rattermann established we cannot say, but we have evidence of his membership in several choral societies—the *Maennerchor*, *Orpheus*, North-American Federation of Choral Societies, and the American Amateur Association for Music. The latter consisted of about fifty singers, ladies and gentlemen, and of a dozen musicians playing string instru-

<sup>44</sup> *Deutscher Pionier*, XI (1880), 23, 50, 90, 273, 309, 438.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 473.

<sup>46</sup> Citation sent to the writer by F. P. Kenkel of St. Louis, Mo.

ments, flutes, and cornets. In April 1847, it presented *Creation* by Joseph Haydn, and the following year the oratorio, Händel's *Messiah*, was effectively rendered by the same association—certainly no small undertaking for amateurs.<sup>47</sup>

Rattermann related how in the spring of 1853, he joined a few musically inclined friends in Sunday afternoon gatherings at the home of Mr. Junkermann on Elm Street, where they performed a type of chamber music for their own entertainment. The instruments played on these occasions were piano, violin, viola, violincello, guitar, French-horn and flute, young Rattermann playing the guitar. Speaking of these meetings he said: "These Sunday afternoon exercises were real treats for all of us and gave us greater pleasure than other people find in going to a circus or at present attending a baseball game."<sup>48</sup>

Rattermann was also the business manager of a series of delightful operas which were presented by the choral society, *Orpheus*. He translated some of the librettos of the operas into German, to make them more effective to a German audience.<sup>49</sup> Among those presented were: *Stradella*, *Undine*, *Die Weisse Dame*, *Die Stumme von Portici*, *Zampa*, *Wildschütz*, *Gustav der Dritte*, *Das Unterbrochene Opferfest*, and a German translation of *Oberon*.<sup>50</sup>

Another musical episode for which Rattermann deserves the praise of all appreciative citizens and lovers of music was the Beethoven Centennial Celebration, 1870. He made every effort to arouse the interest of the musical and singing societies of Cincinnati in a memorial project for this great composer. But the Franco-Prussian War, which was running its bitter course in Europe, had antagonized the minds of many of the American people so intensely against the Germans that even a Beethoven could not pacify them. Rattermann was at the time choir director of St. John's Catholic church and he determined to do honor to the memory of the great master of music, although those who were responsible for the promotion of classical music and song held aloof. With a select choir of seventy voices, and the accompaniment of an orchestra under his direction he rendered Beethoven's

<sup>47</sup> Rattermann Collection, MS.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Letters of Katherine Rattermann, July 7, 1935.

<sup>50</sup> H. Fick, "Wir in Amerika," *Cincinnati Freie Presse*, November 12, 1922.

Mass in C, *Opus 86*. And thus the High Mass was celebrated and the solemnity of the occasion enhanced by the impressive music of the great master, December 17, 1870.<sup>51</sup> Rattermann was pleased with the result and proud of the excellent rendition by the choir and orchestra. On the evening of the same day a banquet was set in which the choir members, the musicians, and lovers of music participated. Rattermann graced the occasion with an interesting speech on the life and merits of Beethoven, experiencing no doubt, a secret satisfaction that through his efforts the event had been appropriately commemorated. He never missed an opportunity of giving due praise and recognition to those men and women whose deeds made them worthy of it.

He was closely associated with professionals and teachers of the musical art, such as, Karl Barus, Karoline Rive, and Franz Joseph Fassig, and he frequently befriended and gave hospitality to European artists and foreign opera companies. It was his constant endeavor to promote and encourage a love for music and art and to cultivate it among German-Americans as their sacred heritage. No privation was felt more keenly by him during his years of deafness than the loss of the sweet strains of music and song. He, the great lover and connoisseur of music, sadly admitted this in the poem *Altersklagen*.<sup>52</sup>

#### CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS

In Rattermann we discover an ever active man who divided his time between faithful service to the public in business and to the pursuits and promotion of the noble and beautiful, cultural things of life, above all to literary progress. These he called "Meine Lieblingsarbeit." A man of such varied talents and attainments could, of course, not remain in seclusion. It required no publicity agent to make the name of Rattermann known; his own literary efforts did that. His editorship of the *Deutscher Pionier* (for eleven years), and his own *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin* had carried his name far and wide throughout the country and even to Europe.

His literary contributions to the various German newspapers and periodicals emphasized the importance and popularity of the

<sup>51</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, VIII, 225.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, IIIa, 88.



*littérateur*. There was scarcely a festive occasion or other public event among his German-American fellow citizens that Rattermann was not called upon to attend either as director of the program or as speaker of the day. Very frequently, too, he enhanced the celebration with the contribution of his poetical creations, namely, by suitable verses.<sup>53</sup>

Rattermann was one of the first members and co-founders of the "Deutscher Literarischer Klub von Cincinnati" which was founded in November, 1877. It was an organization of energetic literary spirit, a salon where a coterie of learned men gathered to discuss the best and latest in literature, art, history and music.<sup>54</sup> To the stimulating influences of these cultural gatherings Rattermann responded spontaneously. But while it helped and encouraged him greatly in his literary pursuits, he was perhaps also the greatest contributing member of the club on the various occasions, for from his letters to Klemens Möllenbrock we learn that he delivered no less than 150 lectures on literature, music, art, education, or scientific topics. Papers on religion or party politics were not allowed at the discussions of the meetings. Many of the members of this club were graduates of foreign universities—Jena, Leipzig, and Heidelberg. His daughter says: "This (the club) was father's university." Rattermann was also invited to become a member of the exclusive Literary Club of Cincinnati and in November 1909, he was elected as an honorary member. "To me it is essentially remarkable that a boy as poor as he, with no one to spur him on, was later allowed to sit with the 'elect' as one of them," said his daughter.<sup>55</sup>

He informs us that it was owing to his historical research that he gained admittance to the various cultural societies. Besides his membership in the different choral societies and literary clubs he was also a member of the Philosophical Society of Ohio and a

<sup>53</sup> It may be interesting to note that on September 28, 1891, Father Hahne of Madisonville, Ohio, invited Rattermann to be present at the dedication of the new St. Anthony's Church and to act as sponsor at the blessing of the church bells by the Archbishop. Rattermann's baptismal name was given to the church bell while his complete name was inscribed on the records of the parish. Rattermann Collection, MS.

<sup>54</sup> Letters of Katherine Rattermann, June 30, 1936.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

corresponding member of the Historical Societies of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Wisconsin.<sup>56</sup> Rattermann was rising to national prominence. In 1891, he was elected a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and in 1914, he was requested to accept membership on a committee for a proposed Palace of German-American History and Culture, to be erected on the Panama Pacific Exposition grounds.<sup>57</sup>

In 1910, after several futile attempts to organize the German literary men of the country, "Der Verband der deutschen Schriftsteller in Amerika" became a reality. Its membership included the outstanding German literary men of America. Rattermann's fame was at its height at this time, for he was just about putting out his last volumes of *Gesammelte Werke* and we would expect to find his name on the register of the association—but it was not to be found there. What may have been the reason for this aloofness? The writer made inquiry as to the cause of this, from those who would be in a position to know, and received the following answer:

I am not at all surprised that Rattermann did not belong to the literary association of German-American authors. He was a very independent character who preferred to go it alone. He could not bear to be hitched up or harnessed to any group.

From one who knew him,

Dr. Frederick L. Schoenle.<sup>58</sup>

It is this same spirit of independence which prevented him from being a "Vereins Deutscher" or to become a member of the "Nationalbund" founded in Philadelphia in 1900. Rattermann loved independence of thought and action too much to be docile to the laws and guidance of federated leadership. He possessed a full measure of the self-sufficient pride of his Saxon ancestry.

Another type of association, and one of the interesting features of early Cincinnati life, was the Round Table or Stammtisch, a group of men who met each day at Wielert's well-known beer garden on Vine Street. These were men of varied vocations and pro-

<sup>56</sup> J. Goebel, *loc. cit.*, 110.

<sup>57</sup> The memberships in the various associations are all confirmed by letters or documents found in the unclassified material of the Rattermann Collection at the University of Illinois.

<sup>58</sup> Letters of Katherine Rattermann, June 30, 1936.

fessions who gathered to discuss the questions of the day. The politicians occupied one particular table where George B. Cox, the Boss of the Republican Party ruled. In another group were found men interested in the promotion of culture and learning—Judge Stallo, Dr. Zipperlin, Dr. Brühl, and Heinrich Rattermann. They usually gathered after office hours (after four p. m.) for a glass of wine or beer and familiar chats. They enjoyed life in a quiet refined way that seems to have been characteristic of a period when men had more leisure.<sup>59</sup>

A mere glance at Rattermann's collection of poems which were dedicated to prominent members of the German Literary Club suffices to give us an estimate of his intimate associations with highly cultured men. We shall find in his *Pantheon* names such as these: the psychiatrist, Dr. George Holdt; Normal School teacher, G. H. Borger; the musician, Otto Körting; the architect, Adolph Strauss; the poet, F. A. Schmidt; the political economist, Wilhelm Jüngst; Judge Emil Rothe; the journalist, H. von Martels; the geologist, Paul Mohr; the paleontologist, Dr. J. C. Meyer; the chemist, Prof. George Eger; the poet, Gustav Brühl (Kara Giorg); the physiologist, Theodore Sittel; the musician, Franz Schilffahrt; the sculptor, Joseph Sibbel; the superintendent of schools, John Peasle; and other names of distinction.<sup>60</sup>

These were but a few of the associates from whom he drew inspiration and intellectual power.

Perhaps nothing added more to the popularity of Rattermann than his numerous lectures on all occasions. The invitations and applications from various societies, organizations and festive programs were more than the ordinary speaker could hope to satisfy, but his intellectual energies like his spirit of enterprise, seemed limitless. His lectures were all of a cultural nature, history and literature predominating. No audience ever carried away with it more interesting and useful information; no speaker was better informed on the subject of discussion. He shirked neither energy, time, nor expense to secure the proper sources.<sup>61</sup> Copies of his speeches were frequently sent to institutions of learning and also to scholarly individuals. Rattermann carried on a correspondence

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 143-168.

<sup>61</sup> *Deutscher Pionier*, XI (1880), 126.

with Prof. Rosenstengel, University of Wisconsin; Prof. Julius Goebel, University of Illinois; Prof. Oswald Seidensticker, University of Pennsylvania; Prof. Zimmermann, Chicago School Board; with the Jesuit faculty members of St. Xavier's College, Cincinnati, and others.

The value of his lectures and speeches may be estimated from the praise which Father Rothensteiner conferred upon them. He wrote as follows:

Ihre Denkrede und Vorträge-welch überaus reiche Geistes-schätze haben Sie darin zusammen getragen. Da wird jeder Leser etwas finden zur Belehrung. Ich selbst habe sehr vieles vortreffliches gefunden, welches mir viel Neues und Interessantes bot.<sup>62</sup>

He was, in fact, considered one of the most captivating and convincing speakers of his time. Those who were present or were privileged to hear his lectures were astonished at the universal knowledge of the speaker and the thoroughness with which he treated his selected topic. The *Cincinnati Press* said: "We are not exaggerating when we pronounce Rattermann's lectures as the best ever given in America."<sup>63</sup> The earliest account of Rattermann, the lecturer, was found in the *Tägliche Abendpost*, Cincinnati, January 12, 1879.

A perusal of the *Humoristische Chronik des Literarischen Klubs von Cincinnati* affords us another mental vision of Rattermann's cultural opportunities.<sup>64</sup> In seven brief chapters the *Chronik* presents, by means of humorous allusions, an inventory of the lectures given by members of the club from 1877-1880. The variety of topics dealt with in the lectures is astounding. The following will give a slight concept of the fields that were covered: medical matters, travels, art, the literature and language of the Indians of America, the use of the piano in the orchestra, pioneer life of the Northwest, newest inventions in spectral analysis, mesmerism, art

<sup>62</sup> What a wealth of intellectual treasures you have gathered together in your speeches and lectures! Every reader will find in them something very particular for his own instruction. I myself, have found an abundance of excellent material which was both new and interesting to me. February 18, 1910.

<sup>63</sup> *Cincinnati Freie Presse*, April 24, 1910.

<sup>64</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, II, 315-328.

in America, causes of insanity, Fritz Reuter, Till Eulenspiegel, German language instruction in the United States, science of education, blood and its anomalies, origin of religion, origin and history of family names, food and its calories, aims of social democracy, criminology, hygiene, history of medicine, Oberammergau, Lübeck, Ferdinand Lasalle, Bayard Taylor, High German and Low German, aesthetics in music, travels in South Spain, protoplasma, money and finances, Swiss Colonists on the Hudson Bay, Yosemite Valley, meteorology, the ear, Goethe as Business Man and Politician, Bodenstedt as Poet of Love and Wine, Faust, Tell, Liberty, Prehistoric Antiquities, Copernikus, Dante's Inferno, Old and New *Weltanschauung*, Art and Beauty in Education, Women's Rights, the Romantic School, Hawthorne, Cosmogenetic Gas, History of Zoological Gardens, and Civil Service in Great Britain. No one could ever attempt to measure the culutral and educational value derived from such contacts.

Quite characteristic of Rattermann's love of the cultural was his attitude in regard to the teaching of the German language in the public schools of the country. It was made the topic of enthusiastic speeches at local gatherings and at teachers' conventions. He was untiring in his fight for what he termed the inalienable right of every German-American child, namely, the German language. He demanded this of the public schools and strongly advocated it for parochial schools and seminaries. But so thoroughly American was he that he did not approve of using German grammars and books printed in Germany and meant for the schools of Germany only, saying that the material contained in the school texts should be in harmony with the life and customs of the respective people. It is not only the technique and form that we must observe, but the spirit of its contents.<sup>65</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. XVI, presents a reprint of a lecture: *Staatsrechte und Elternrechte* in which Rattermann indirectly defends German instructions in the Catholic parochial schools, which were threatened by local laws in the states of Wisconsin and Illinois around 1890.

To make the teaching of the German language a possibility and actual success, he promoted by every means within his power the organization of a German "Lehrer Seminar."<sup>66</sup> In the files of Rat-

<sup>65</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, V, 29.

<sup>66</sup> *Deutscher Pionier*, XVI (1885), 227.

termann correspondence the present writer found a large number of letters to and from the "Deutsch-Amerikanischer Lehrer Bund," indicative of Rattermann's keen interest in this project. Prof. Wood in *Deutsche Arbeit* quotes Rattermann as having said that for the preservation of the German language, the principle of utility has been unduly stressed, and that business is by no means the most important reason why we are endeavored to promote the use of the German language.<sup>67</sup> This apparently expressed his personal opinion and urged him to most energetic efforts in behalf of the German language in the schools of the country. Significant of these efforts is his poem: *Mahnruf an die deutsch-amerikanischen Lehrer zur 25 jährigen Jubelfeier des allgemeinen deutsch-amerikanischen Lehrerbundes*. The poem is a song of praise of the German language and German culture, the echoes of his true German heart.

#### RATTERMANN IN POLITICS

The rivalries between the *Grays* and *Greens*, i. e., the older German residents and the newcomers from Germany after 1848, are of interest here because of their effects on politics and especially the fortunes of the young Republican party. The Germans, particularly those of the West, were noted for their interest in the anti-slavery struggle and the Know-Nothing movement which threatened foreigners of all religious beliefs.<sup>68</sup>

A man as actively engaged in public interests as Rattermann could naturally not remain a stranger to the political questions of the day, nor could he keep himself aloof from the strife of political life, though he never aspired to political offices. In his earlier days he was unrelentingly an anti-slavery democrat, and as such he was strongly opposed to the Civil War at all times, disapproving it as a solution of the problems then confronting the country. He was an ardent pacifist and deplored the reverting to such measures as war and bloodshed. Rattermann opposed the election of Lincoln and stumped for Stephen A. Douglas, whom he greatly admired. He did not enlist when the Civil War broke out, but

<sup>67</sup> Ralph Wood, "Der Auslandsdeutsche," *Deutsche Arbeit*, XXXV (1935), 355.

<sup>68</sup> Ernest Brunken, "The German element in the United States," *Annual Report of American Historical Association* (1898), 347.

later, being drafted during its progress, he paid for a substitute, for he could not leave his wife and many children without support and protection. The affairs of his business also required his presence and continual attention.<sup>69</sup>

After the Civil War, when great dissatisfaction arose with the two major parties, Rattermann worked strenuously for an independent Reform Party, and we find him a delegate to their convention in Cincinnati in 1872. Many of the leading men of Ohio were members of this party. They opposed Greeley's nomination for the presidency in favor of Charles Francis Adams. Greeley was the opponent of all reform.<sup>70</sup> In 1876, we meet Rattermann throwing his full strength into the political arena with word and pen for Tilden, who as governor of New York, fought corruption and introduced numerous reforms.<sup>71</sup>

Rattermann, characteristically clean-cut, upright, and honest in dealing with his fellow men, could brook no intrigue, hypocrisy or corruption in the government or its representative officials. He opposed it with all the antagonism of a relentless foe. His vigilance never abated. When not actually fighting for the just cause in the political field, we find him attacking the foe quietly from the retreat of his study. From this sanctum he sent out his warnings, admonitions, and not infrequently, his strongest invectives against the enemy. Satire was his favorite literary weapon in his attacks.<sup>72</sup>

An entire group of sonnets was written as presidential campaign messengers in 1912, several hundred copies of which were distributed to promote the cause of the election. Rattermann, eighty years old at this time, was as energetic as a man of thirty, when the cause of justice and of liberty were concerned. He shirked neither time, money, nor efforts in order to promote the welfare of the country and its citizens, or to protect them against unfair legislation, political aggression, and corruption. The following is one of his milder warnings:

<sup>69</sup> Letter of Katherine Rattermann, March 7, 1937.

<sup>70</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, XII, 38.

<sup>71</sup> Gustav Körner, *Das Deutsche Element in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1880), 194.

<sup>72</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 66; II, 122, 131, 136; IIIb, 355-364.

Parteien, die dem mächtigen Reichtum dienen,  
Sind jedem Volkswohlstande zum Verderben!  
Sie lassen Strebsamkeit im Elend sterben,  
Und häufen Drohnen in dem Korb der Bienen.

Da weicht des Landes Glück bedrängt von hinnen,  
Wo nur die Reichen das Vermögen erben,  
Vergebens Fleiss und Tätigkeit nur werben,  
Den Bettelstab der Zukunft zu gewinnen.<sup>73</sup>

Evidences of Rattermann's interest in politics are not wanting. Among his papers the writer found lists of roll calls of the House and the Senate; election returns of the different political parties; bills that were introduced; the pros and cons of certain measures under discussion, and various letters of notification, informing him of appointments or election to minor offices. Here are duplicates of a few of such notices:

Cincinnati, O., October 6, 1873, You have been appointed as speaker of the 21st Ward.—J. A. Mackey, Sec.

This is to testify that H. A. Rattermann on August 29, 1888, at the Primary Election, received 31 votes as Judicial Delegate, and was elected by the Democratic Party of the Precinct D. Ward 14.

Dear Sir—The amount of \$75.00 was assessed against you as a candidate for the office (on the Peoples Ticket) to the House of Representatives for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the campaign. J. A. Mackey, Sec.<sup>7</sup>

Another item of interest is the *Parteifreie Politische Epistel an die Deutschen in den Vereinigten Staaten* in which Rattermann attempts to enumerate the chief causes that keep German-Americans out of politics, or that prevent them from holding political offices; they are as follows:

They (the Germans) are not practical politicians; in the old Fatherland they were deprived of a voice in government affairs; the majority of the

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<sup>73</sup> Political parties, that cater only to wealth must be detrimental to the interests of the people. They allow honest endeavors to die in misery and crowd the beehive with indolent drones. Where only the rich control the wealth of the country, the contentment of the masses must depart. All industry and labor are in vain, for only poverty will be their future reward. *Ibid.*, IIIb, 359.

<sup>74</sup> Rattermann Collection, University of Illinois.



old settlers are either farmers or craftsmen, too busy as pioneers to bother about politics; the greatest obstacle is their foreign origin. They are only *Dutchmen* to the other part of the population with no right to aspire to a rank above the great majority; and lastly, they are strongly opposed to the corruption which they suspect everywhere in political life.<sup>75</sup>

These are Rattermann's opinions; they may have held for his day (1880) when the political and social status of the Germans was different from the present time.

His patriotic spirit was also revealed in the names which he gave to his sons—the oldest son was named after our first president, whom Rattermann deeply revered, Henry George Washington Rattermann. The second one was called Friedrich Schiller Rattermann. He was born on November 10, 1859, the hundredth anniversary of Schiller's birth. (Schiller was an ardent believer in democracy.) Next in line was the favorite, Frank Steven Arnold Douglas Rattermann; the fourth son's name had an echo of the Civil War in it: George Brinton McClellan Rattermann, and the fifth was honored with the name of Karl Maria von Weber Rattermann, the great German composer of operas.<sup>76</sup> His patriotism was not a mere badge or outward garment, but proceeded from a sincere, noble, active, American spirit.

x  
American  
1893

RATTERMANN'S PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

"Ich habe zu des Meisters Füßen gesessen und seine Weisheit, seinen Fleiss, seine Wahrheitsliebe, und seine unbestechliche Gewissenhaftigkeit, seinen Geist und seinen Charakter bewundern gelernt."<sup>77</sup> By these words Rattermann refers to no other than Judge Johann Bernard Stallo, who in 1848 was considered the most learned of the German-Americans of Cincinnati, although he was only a young man of twenty-five years. To him Rattermann attributed his philosophical views of the world; a mere boy at the time, he looked up to Stallo as a teacher, master, and guide. Stallo's exalted reputa-

<sup>75</sup> *Deutscher Pionier*, XI (1880), 40.

<sup>76</sup> Letters of Katherine Rattermann, March 7, 1937.

<sup>77</sup> I sat at the master's feet and learned to admire his wisdom, assiduity, love of truth, incorruptible conscientiousness, and his noble spirit and character. *Gesammelte Werke*, XII, 53.

George... Boyce...  
children...  
Tracts - artist 1880-1920  
Zbornik - 1889-1932  
Pearl - 1893-1925

tion for learning filled the youth with admiration for him. In his later years, Rattermann alluding to what might have been the cause of his own defection from the faith said:

“Meine religiösen Anschauungen waren damals noch stark von dem Glauben meiner Eltern befangen und Stallo, der früher zu der selben Kirche gehört hatte, machte sich, eben durch tiefere Naturanschauungen gewonnen, von seinem väterlichen Glauben frei.”<sup>78</sup>

For more than thirty-five years Stallo exercised a supreme influence over Rattermann's life and works, who, according to his own admission, went to him for the solution of every difficult problem which he encountered. “Ich habe Stallo mehr zu verdanken als irgend einem andern Mann meiner Bekanntschaft.”<sup>79</sup> Here then, probably, lies the key to Rattermann's *Weltanschauung*. Stallo's philosophy has been in part the source of Rattermann's natural philosophy and religious tolerance, or rather lack of interest concerning the Catholic church, in his middle and later manhood.

There was no room in Rattermann's life for pessimism. Even under the most trying circumstances he was serene and hopeful, ever striving onward or taking the initiative in one or other new project. Of all schools of philosophy he despised that of Schopenhauer with its unlimited pessimism. He praises the song of Solomon above all the lamentations of Jeremiah.<sup>80</sup> He was of a happy, affirmative, and cheerful spirit; although suffering, he was uncomplaining, and when in his last years total blindness befell him, he

<sup>78</sup> My religious views were at that time still firmly involved in the faith of my parents, while Stallo, who formerly was a member of the same church, but now led on by the influence of his natural philosophy, was fast drifting away from the faith of his father.

Stallo was born in Oldenburg, not far from Rattermann's birthplace. He devoted most of his life to the study of philosophy, physics, and mathematics. He wrote among other books *General Principles of the Philosophy of Nature* (1848), with ideas on Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, and Schleiermacher. Furthermore, *Reden, Abhandlungen und Briefe* (1893), and “The Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics” in *Appleton's International Scientific Series*, XXXVIII (1882). *Ibid.*, XII, 11.

<sup>79</sup> I am more deeply indebted to Stallo than to any other person of my acquaintance.” *Gesammelte Werke*, XII, 12.

<sup>80</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, IV, 96.

was not unhappy but found new sources of joy in the recollections of his past life.

In alluding to contentment and resignation Rattermann said:

Ich habe mir den Wahlspruch des katholischen Priester-Dichters erwählt: 'Der Mensch muss es nehmen, wie es kommt, es bleibt doch immer die beste Welt.' Diesen Gedanken habe ich in meinem Leben festgehalten. Ich bin dabei nicht leichtsinnig, denn auch mir schwebt der letzte Tag meines Lebens stets vor Augen. Aber was helfen alle Schmerzensäusserungen und Klagen über die Vergänglichkeit unseres Erdenseins? Bei dem gläubigen Katholiken sollte der Weltschmerz nie Einkehr halten können.<sup>81</sup>

Having sent his manuscript of *Philosophische Betrachtungen*<sup>82</sup> to Father Rothensteiner, he remarked:

Sie sind ein Spiegelbild meines Geistes und meiner Weltanschauungen. Sie sehen, dass ich Naturkind geblieben bin. Mit meinen Dichtungen versuche ich nicht, jemand zu meinen Ansichten zu bekehren. Nur das fordere ich, dass man sie nur als meine Weltanschauung betrachten und gelten lässt. Ich ehre und achte jede religiöse Anschauung, wie sehr sie auch von meiner abweichen mag. Ich freue mich, dass die Gedankenwelt so mannigfach ist.<sup>83</sup>

The influence of Stallo and his naturalistic philosophy is very evident in Rattermann. He contends that just as the multitudinous variety in nature is her greatest charm and asset, so in like manner he looks upon the number and variety of religious opinions or beliefs as the glorious freedom of thought and as an advance to intellectual liberty. According to his theory identity of religion is no more possible than absolute identity in the physical world is possible.

<sup>81</sup> My motto has always been that of the poet-priest: 'Man must accept all events as they are sent, for after all, the world is always at its best.' But though I abide with this saying, I have not become careless or indifferent, for I am always conscious of my last day. But why lament about this transitory life? A true Catholic has no cause for melancholy or sadness. Rattermann letters, April 7, 1909.

<sup>82</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 171-204.

<sup>83</sup> These are a true picture or reflection of my spirit and philosophy. I am still a child of the world, but it is not the purpose of my writings to convert others to my religious views or opinions but only to consider them as mine. I respect and honor all creeds, even though they differ greatly from my own, and I rejoice that the world of thought is so manifold. Rattermann letters, March 6, 1913.

Although Rattermann glories in freedom of thought he must not be identified with the freethinker whose theories he abhorred as radical and rationalistic. He condemns them as "Gottesleugner und Religionsverächter." Notwithstanding his claim to religion, he cannot subject his mind to the authoritative dogmas of the Church.<sup>84</sup>

A man's philosophy and religion have so much in common, that after what has been said above it will hardly be necessary to go into detail regarding Rattermann's religious status as a Catholic. He was a Catholic by birth and early training but was not a member of the Church in his later life nor at his death.<sup>85</sup> He felt, however, no animosity toward the Church, nor did he ever revile or malign her.<sup>86</sup> Among his cherished friends were a number of Catholic bishops and priests of a literary trend, who frequently communicated with him on literary matters. He was never known to be anti-clerical. Rattermann never failed to show the highest esteem for the priesthood and its sacred mission, nor did he seek to minimize, in his writings or lectures, their merits and the deeds that were accomplished by Catholic missionaries and churchmen in the various fields of progress. He is unstinted in his praise for them when circumstances demand or call for it.<sup>87</sup> Father Rothensteiner, highly competent to judge, and just, gives us Rattermann's religious status as follows:

Of positive religion there was scarcely a trace. His religion might be described as the humanitarianism of Herder, Jean Paul Richter, and the German classicists in general. The object of their hearts' devotion was the divine in man. His virtues were those of the natural man — truth, honesty, kindness, pity for the fallen and hatred of tyranny.<sup>88</sup>

Rattermann's letters betray the lover of the outward forms of the religious ceremonial of the Church. He frequently alludes to the feast-days of the Church and their beautiful impressive ritual. That he also possessed a distinct knowledge of the lives and legends of the saints, we may conclude from the frequent allusions in his

<sup>84</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, XII, 205.

<sup>85</sup> Letters of Katherine Rattermann, February 13, 1935.

<sup>86</sup> Rattermann letters, May 20, 1907.

<sup>87</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, XII, 20, 138; XVI, 328; IIIb, 128.

<sup>88</sup> Letter to the author, June 14, 1936.

letters. The faith and religious practices which he learned at his mother's knee and practiced throughout his childhood, and early manhood, left a deep impression on the mind and heart of Rattermann. Evidences of this were not wanting throughout his long life.

Father Rothensteiner did not hesitate to say that Rattermann could be classified as a Catholic writer in so far as he did not apostatize and lived in Catholic surroundings. His children and also his partner in business were Catholics.<sup>89</sup>

The sonnet: *Am Grabe Meiner Mutter*, may well serve to illustrate his religious attitude during the latter years of his life:

O Mutterherz, wie hab ich dich betrübt,  
Dass ich nicht kann den alten Pfad mehr wallen,  
Den du mir zeigtest einst mit Wohlgefallen,  
Als Weg zum Heile, treu von dir geliebt.

Im Anschau'n der Natur noch ungeübt,  
Wie kniet ich gläubig in des Tempels Hallen,  
Zum Herrn der Welt mein fromm Gebet zu lallen,  
Der, wie du lehrtest, alles Gute gibt!

Mein Geist doch strebte tiefer einzudringen  
In's Rätselspiel, das dieses All bewegt;  
Da riss der Jugendschleier dann entzwei.

Du wusstest es und klagtest; doch bezwingen  
Lässt sich der Geist nicht, der im Innern regt!  
Die Träne nimm, die ich dir dankend weih!

Im Kampf und Ringen bricht manches,  
Das wir einstens fromm gehegt;  
Dein Gott ist mein, er sei auch wer er sei!<sup>90</sup>

Is this not a confession of his failings against the faith which his mother had implanted in his youthful soul? "Die Träne nimm, die ich dir dankend weih"—the author is inclined to think that this is the tear of gratitude, of repentance, and partly of pride,

<sup>89</sup> January 8, 1935.

<sup>90</sup> The poet recalls the days of childhood and youth, when walking in the path of salvation which his saintly mother had pointed out to him, he prayed fervently to the Lord of heaven and earth. But in the pride of manhood he sought to penetrate the great mysteries of faith and life—the veil was rent asunder, his treasure of faith was lost. He offers a repenting tear and confesses: "Thy God is my God still." *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 405.

on the part of an old man who keenly realizes the precious gift of faith which he has sacrificed at the altar of free thought and free interpretation of religious principles.

#### THE GERMAN-AMERICAN CITIZEN

We are also interested in Rattermann's political and social fate and we seek to know his views as a German transplanted into the New World—his reactions to all the strange things around him. Would he welcome America as a home and haven of security, as a field for pioneers and men of hope and optimism, or would he turn into a pessimist? Would he love this country and the American concept of society and state and surrender whole-heartedly to American freedom and independence, taking an active and constructive part in the building of the new nation, or remain German intellectually and try to reform and to model life around him upon German ideas and philosophy?

All these questions would obviously suggest themselves in the course of the long life of an intellectually robust man like Rattermann. We have already seen how and with what spirits he landed as a young German boy in Baltimore in 1846. He was poor, modest, and unpretentious and he hated the despotism of the Old World. For the first time in his life he saw the world, the big city, the hustle and bustle of commerce and human ambition. He was astonished at the wonders of the universe; cheerful, happy, without prejudice or envy; full of song and laughter, and willing to meet the new responsibilities. He was determined to find a new and happy home in America and to dedicate his life and labor to it, happy to have escaped the thralldom of despotism.

Although proud of his German ancestry he always felt himself a full-fledged citizen who demanded respect and recognition; sought to advance himself materially and intellectually and to be a good influence on others.

According to his beautiful poem, *Auf der freien Erde*,<sup>91</sup> America was to Rattermann a land of promise and hope, where toil, talent, and industry were rewarded; where opportunity beckoned the high and the low; where free man carried on proudly and courageously,

<sup>91</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 248.

overcoming hardships, failure, and adversity; where nature and harvest time bestowed abundant blessings upon the industrious man; where one might enjoy the fruits of his honest efforts.

This, then, to Rattermann as a young man, was America! Few men have found such lyrical strains of poetry or words of praise for it, as he. He speaks of America as, "Das Wunderland der Welt," which can boast of men like Washington, Jefferson, Paine, Steuben, Jackson, Franklin, and Lincoln, all of whom he had eulogized in verse.<sup>92</sup>

In Franklin he admired the scholar, inventor, the lover of liberty, simplicity of mind, honesty, and the ambition of the pioneer. In Washington he sees an anointed apostle of liberty and the enemy of every oppression. Jefferson is pictured by Rattermann as a leader, a Moses who conducted his people to a new land of life and freedom; who fought also for freedom of conscience, tolerance, and for equality of men before the law and nature. He is to him the paragon of democratic ideals and independence. Steuben and Kalb, of Revolutionary War fame, were naturally Rattermann's favorite historical heroes. They were to him the embodiment of the virtues, of bravery, duty, obedience, and endurance; men who sacrificed all for the sake of liberty. Jackson is glorified by Rattermann as another Siegfried, and Lincoln is portrayed as an angel guarding with flaming sword the honor of his country against the inhuman slave trade of exploiting Englishmen. He is lauded as a martyr, a liberator, and friend of humanity. Rattermann also praises the Founders of the Constitution as men of vision and guardians of the inalienable rights of man.

Rattermann passionately admired the heroes of the American Revolution and ceased not to sing the glories of his adopted country, America:

Kolumbia, du Stern bedrängter Seelen;  
Zuflucht des Geistes, der Tyrannei entflieht!  
Bei dir ein menschenwürdiges Gebiet  
Zur freien Heimat durft' der Geist sich wählen.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. *Amerikanische Heroengräber — Unabhängigkeits-Erklärung, Die deutsche Leibgarde Washington, Hans Stark, General Kalb's Tod, Marion, Der letzte Schuss, and Yorktown. Gesammelte Werke, IIIa.*

<sup>93</sup> Columbia, thou guiding star of souls oppressed, refuge of the spirit

If there are critics of America, Rattermann opines that they are inspired by envy and malice which see only the shadows and not the light:

O, leuchte fort in deinen Herrlichkeiten,  
Kolumbia, der Welt für alle Zeiten! <sup>94</sup>

He does not hesitate to say that the evil and ills that exist in America were inherited from England and from Europe; <sup>95</sup> America as such is good and free:

Hier, wo die Freiheit lebt, der freie Geist sich regt,  
Hier strebt das warme Herz empor stets frisch bewegt,  
Und es soll immerdar so bleiben! <sup>96</sup>

In the opinion of Rattermann most of the Germans left their home land in order to escape economic and political hardships, slavery, distress, war and persecution. America was the promised land to them, Germany a land of serfdom:

Der Landmann muss die Räuberbrut ernähren,  
Er darf nur leiden und hat keine Rechte.  
Drum lasst uns, Freunde, aus der Drangsal fliehen,  
Dem Los des Elends, uns'rer Trübsal Nächte  
In Tag verwandeln und nach Westen ziehen. <sup>97</sup>

This is and was, the language not only of seventeenth century Germans but of Rattermann himself. Gladly the old Germans followed the invitation of William Penn and Pastorius and found in America a paradise of freedom. Rattermann, too, gladly followed in their footsteps. He was at home in his new surroundings; never did he see the old country again; he was satisfied to die in America whose fundamental laws, history, and people he so loved, whose

which flees from tyranny. You offer to man a worthy haven and free abode. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 278.

<sup>94</sup> Let your light shine gloriously, O Columbia, to all the world and for all times. *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Cf. *Amerika*, *ibid.*, IIIa, 413.

<sup>96</sup> Where freedom dwells, the spirit rules unhampered, the heart is constantly quickened, and thus it shall remain! *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> The farmer must support the greedy nobles; he has no rights except to suffer and endure. Let us flee from misery and oppression to the land in the West where our tribulation shall be changed to a brighter day. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIa, 346.



flowers, birds, and trees, he immortalised in song, and whose mountains, rivers, and landscapes he portrayed in glowing colors. Rattermann in fact became so thoroughly Americanised, every line and thought of his poems breathed the American atmosphere.

To a native of Germany, not familiar with American life, views, and history, Rattermann may not be the object of admiration or be fully appreciated, owing to his complete attachment and surrender to American ideals. But Rattermann's love for his adopted country was not that of an unintelligent man nor that of a passive onlooker, but rather of a keen observer and alert citizen who realized his duty and appreciated his privileges.

As the years advanced and Rattermann gathered more practical experience, he grew less optimistic and confident. By degrees he gave vent in his writings to some apparently justified resentment towards corruption in American politics and hypocrisy in public and private life which he could not help noticing. He became critical of his fellow-men, not because of a sense of righteousness or malice, but because his German-bred sense of truth and honesty made him protest against bribery, bigotry, fanaticism, and against unscrupulous politicians.

Again and again as a typical son of German lands, accustomed to plain living, saving, and thrift, and to intelligent management, he manifested his devotion to the ideals of real democracy, integrity, liberty, and truth. He still defends America against German criticism and harsh charges. America, in his estimation, is young and experienced, and he hoped for more perfection in the future. Even against Goethe, who encouraged poets to stay at home, because home offers the best of all the world, he wrote:

Ausser dem Vaterlande  
Ist auch eine schoene Welt:  
Da hemmen nicht Fürstenbande  
Zu dichten, was mir gefällt.  
Wohl ketten mich Liebesbande  
Noch an das Vaterland;  
Doch erst im fremden Lande  
Hab' ich die Freiheit erkannt.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Beyond the father-land there lies a beautiful world where the bans of nobility can not control my pen. Though the bonds of affection for the

But at the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth, America is, to Rattermann, no longer the land of the free. Intolerance in spiritual and religious life, a sensational press, which lies and intimidates; monopolistic interests, imperialistic wars in Cuba and in the Philippines, individual greed and graft, materialism, prohibition, and office seeking—all this was abhorrent and repulsive to the sensitive, gentle poet and idealist who was not hardened to the demands of political expediency, compromise, and realism. As he looked around, he gradually became resentful: offices are for sale, the people are misled, exploited, and deceived; legal remedies cannot be invoked to prevent unrestrained profiteering; moral pressure is unavailing; demagogues dominate the political market. Lack of respect for authority, disobedience, superficiality, and very often a false patriotism, are in evidence.

During the entire period from 1900-1912, Rattermann was highly dissatisfied with the manner in which public life in America was governed and controlled. A glance at his poems collected under the title of *Amerikanische Politik aus den Jahren 1900 bis 1912*,<sup>99</sup> will provide us with an insight into the mental attitude of Rattermann, the German-American, as he perceived political and social life about him during these years. If in former years he was truly an optimist he now regrets the change of heart which later circumstances forced upon him. The poem, *Mein Pessimismus* well illustrated his sentiments:

Ich war dem Optimismus zugetan  
 Und sah die Welt im schönsten Rosenlichte . . .  
 Doch jetzt seh ich mit trüben Augen an,  
 Wie alle meine Freude wird zu nichte,  
 Seit man das Recht verdreht in dem Gerichte;  
 Am Freiheitsbaum frisst der Vernichtungszahn!  
 Im Land, das man als Freiheitshort besingt,  
 Eilt man den Fanatismus in den Rachen,  
 Der überall schon seine Geißel schwingt.<sup>100</sup>

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land of my fathers are unbroken, it was in a foreign country where I first experienced freedom. *Ibid.*, V, 199.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, IIIb, 335-364.

<sup>100</sup> I was optimistically inclined and beheld the world in its brightest colors. But now my joy is frustrated, for I behold justice perverted and

And now there follows in this series of the above named poems a long list of typical German-American complaints on *Zwang-gesetze* (Blue laws), *Fanatistische Heuchelei* (lack of liberty), *Geld-prozentum* (Bankers and monopolies), and *Kriegsrüstungen* (preparation for war). In harmony with his general contempt for tyranny, Rattermann also abhors all wars; he is a pacifist. Even though he conceded renown, honor, and fame to the brave defenders of the Union during the Civil War against the Southern rebels at Sumter, and in the Lincoln poems, in which he calls the people of the North to arms, "*Volk, Rüste dich mit Schwert und Schild,*"<sup>100a</sup> he now raises his voice in strong protest against armament and selfish munitions makers and proposes conciliatory measures for international relations and life:

Nicht Pulver, Waffen, mächt'ge Söldlingscharen  
Gewalt'ge Flotten, heilen Völkerwunden,  
Der Friede nur lässt Staaten frisch gesunden  
Und jedem Lande Wohlstand widerfahren.  
Törichte Völker, die mit Krieg sich brüsten,  
Sind stets hinab von ihrer Höh' gesunken,  
Wie Griechenland und Rom in alten Zeiten.  
Barbaren sind's, die sich zum Kriege rüsten  
Und mit der Rauflust vor der Welt noch prunken,  
Statt ihren Staaten Segen zu bereiten.<sup>101</sup>

He protests even against the very presence and existence of soldiers and a national army when he says:

Die grössten Nachteile im Leben, wie in der Gesellschaft, sind Soldaten. Gäbe es keine professionellen Soldaten, so würde das aufregende Drängen nach Krieg und kriegerischen Zuständen weniger stattfinden. Die Vereinigten Staaten, als Gegensatz zum jetzigen Europa, sind ein lebendiges Beispiel.<sup>102</sup>

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distorted. The tree of liberty is doomed and the land that gloried as a haven of freedom is threatened by the swinging scourge of fanaticism. *Ibid.*, 363.

<sup>100a</sup> "Arm yourself with sword and shield." *Ibid.*, 622.

<sup>101</sup> Not armaments, mercenaries, and fleets heal the wounds of nations. Peace alone brings health and prosperity. Behold, how the haughty nations who prided themselves in their warfare have fallen from their heights, even like Greece and Rome of old. Barbarians are they, who glory in battle and strife in preference to the blessings of peace. *Ibid.*, 342.

<sup>102</sup> Soldiers are the greatest detriment to life and society. If the professional soldier were eliminated, much clamoring and incitement to warfare

This hostility toward militarism on the part of Rattermann coincides, however, with his entire liberal outlook on life. In another poem he says:

Ich habe nie zum Kriegesspiel gerufen,  
 Im Waffentanz nie brach ich eine Lanze  
 . . . . .  
 Nur Friedensklänge mir die Musen schufen  
 Nur frohen Menschen spielte ich zum Tanze.  
 . . . Der Friede ist das höchste Glück auf Erden.<sup>103</sup>

And again, Rattermann assures us of his utter love of national peace at any price:

Kein Lobgesang des Krieges entrauschte je  
 Den Saiten, die nur einzig dem Friedensschall  
 Geweiht, und die das reine Glück des  
 Menschlichen Herzens voll Lust besangen  
 . . . . .  
 Mir galt der Friede süßter als Kriegsgeschrei,  
 Der Erde Schreckbild, Geißel der Menschheit, die  
 Der hehren Göttin Huld verscheuchte . . .<sup>104</sup>

In war time, passions are awakened and men long for glory and powers; truth and virtue flee; hatred fills the hearts of men. Rattermann did not believe in heroism and fame, if based on wars of conquest:

Einzig der Krieg ist gerecht, der für die Freiheit geführt. Sind die Fürsten, die Krieger, Störer des menschlichen Glücks nicht? he asks, and answers: Was ist rühmender wohl als stilles, idyllisches Wirken ohne Waffenge töß, ohne das klingende Schwert? Stolzer raget empor der Kampf der geistigen Entwicklung als der Ehrgeiz, der nur suchet in Waffen das Heil.<sup>105</sup>

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would of necessity cease. The United States as a contrast to present-day Europe (1900-1912), is a living example of this. *Ibid.*, V, 134.

<sup>103</sup> I have never incited to warfare or taken up its defense. Only strains of peace and happiness the Muses produced in me—peace the greatest blessing on earth. *Ibid.*, IIIb, 401.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. citation 103. The underlying thought is similar. *Ibid.*, IIIa, 283.

<sup>105</sup> Only that war is justifiable which is fought for the acquisition or the preservation of liberty. Are not the princes destroyers of human happiness? What is more commendable or glorious than a calm idyllic state of affairs? The battle of intellectual development rises more proudly than the ambition of the war-lord. *Ibid.*, 340.

Gloom and pessimism pervade the rest of the series of poems entitled, *Amerikanische Politik*. Rattermann's former enthusiasm and hero-worship is gone, and he realizes it himself for he said: "Ihr fragt mich, warum ich so bitter jetzt Heroen-götzenanbetung verspötte?"<sup>106</sup> The leaders of the country no longer fight for the people's rights and the welfare of the land. Congress is an assemblage of plunderers; oppressive laws and petty taxation crush out the last spark of former freedom. Party leadership is gone; the house of government is divided against itself.<sup>107</sup>

The American people in Rattermann's appraisal had unfortunately lost their former sound judgment and common sense. Party interests are now everywhere put above the country's interests. The party must be saved regardless of given promises. Rattermann deplored these conditions in his *Jeremiade*, which he wrote in 1912:

Wie tief, wie tief, o Land, bist du gesunken  
 Dass du dich ducktest unter Räuberbanden,  
 Die deine Ehre stahlen und mit Schanden  
 Gebrandmarkt dich als Heimat von Hallunken!  
 Einst durftest du als Land der Freien prunken  
 Ehe noch hier Recht und Edelsinn verschwanden.<sup>108</sup>

. . . . .

This poem has reference to American party politics in August, 1912. Rattermann's former view of a glorious, free, ideal America was almost shattered when he finally closed his life's work, the printing of his poems and writings in 1914. A last warning to the American people—to be on their guard and ever watchful in the preservation of their liberty, appeared in the poems: *Warnung vor Despotismus* and *An das amerikanische Volk*.<sup>109</sup> In this critical and resentful spirit he wrote his last poems before physical disability forced him to stop writing. When the war trumpets and the war gods called to mass-murder, his voice became silent. His

<sup>106</sup> You inquire why I despise hero worship now. *Ibid.*, IIIb, 353.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. "Der 61. Kongress der Vereinigten Staaten," *ibid.*, 348-349.

<sup>108</sup> How despicably hast thou fallen, my country, among desecrators who have divested thee of honor and branded thee as a country of scoundrels—thou who couldst formerly pride thyself as the land of liberty and freedom. *Ibid.*, 361.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 363-364.

hopes and former optimism had been destroyed; his confidence and pride in America had waned.

Rattermann's attitude towards his adopted country, America, is most significant in this, that he considered the country's historical and political life in colonial times and previous to the Civil War to have been honest, renowned, and praise-worthy, a model for others. Throughout his writings he defended the civilization of America and the sturdy, solid, honest character of its early German immigrants against European and other critics. He idealized the Revolutionary War period and the first half of the nineteenth century.

#### RATTERMANN'S DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Rattermann was even more critical in looking at the social and cultural life around him. In his two volumes of aphorisms he deplored the prevailing conditions of the American school system. He claimed that the teachers had no real vocation for their task and considered their position merely as a temporary employment or stepping stone for other offices. Children of the elementary and high schools are taught by women who, according to Rattermann's views, are out of place in a school; "Das Weib soll im Hause Lehrerin sein, in der Schule lehre der Mann,"<sup>110</sup> and he goes on to say: "Ich messe dem Übermass der weiblichen Lehrkräfte in den amerikanischen Volksschulen die alleinige Schuld zu, dass Korruption und Heuchelei in diesem Lande so sehr überhand nehmen."<sup>111</sup> Against these American women and their sense of independence and emancipation, Rattermann seems to nurse a strong prejudice. He speaks of them as being greedy for power, vain, domineering, ornamental, and pleasure-seeking. He is thoroughly old-fashioned in demanding that women belong, above all, in the home and not in the field of work which by tradition and right belongs to man. He says: "Domestic work should not be despised by American women because it is not below their dignity." He disliked masculine women; they should rather strive for grace, charm, and sweetness; become wives and mothers and not go in pursuit of higher worldly knowledge.

<sup>110</sup> Woman is destined to be the teacher in the home, man in the school. *Ibid.*, V, 23.

<sup>111</sup> The American woman teacher is made responsible by Rattermann for the corruption and hypocrisy in American life. *Ibid.*, 20.

Women of the type of Susan Anthony and Mary Walker found no favor with Rattermann.<sup>112</sup> According to his views there has never been a Beethoven or a Goethe among women.

Observations on public life (as found expressed in his aphorisms and poems) had embittered the poet. He looked at Christianity in America, and discovered paganism and the intolerance of zealots; in the temperance movement, the hypocritical prohibitionists; in national life and economies, he experienced the all-powerful influence of the rich, and a subserviency to capitalism and to cheap demagogues; and looking about him he perceives a dire lack of appreciation for art, music, and the higher things of life—America is apparently losing its former ideals and balance.

In contrast to all this he tried to find consolation and happiness in his German surroundings in Cincinnati, in German literature, art, music, and in his host of German friends with whom he exchanged views. Cincinnati was as German as any town in the old country, and in some respects Rattermann was fortunate and more favored with cultural opportunities than if he had remained in Germany. Six or seven German newspapers and magazines (two of them dailies) were published in Cincinnati at that time. The editors were well-educated men from German universities. They engaged in cultural controversies, discussed art, philosophy, religion, music, science, and politics. Rattermann took full advantage of this erudite atmosphere and the happy situation of Cincinnati life. These surroundings also explain his intimate relations to German life and letters, his political and moral viewpoints, his qualified knowledge, and his definite rationalistic outlook on religion, state and society.

Rattermann's environment represented a mixture of old time European views and New World concepts. He was not a crusader or reformer, although in political life he supported for a time a Reform Party. Neither do we wish to leave the impression that he was a misanthrope. No one was further removed from a gloomy outlook on life in general than he. His indignation resulted rather from his inborn sense of justice than from a melancholy or dejected disposition. His inclination was quite to the contrary; he loved conviviality, song, happy company, hilarity, wine, laughter.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

humor, and music, as he has shown often enough in his poems collected under the title: *Gesellige und Gelegenheitslieder*.<sup>113</sup> He joined most whole-heartedly in the many *Kommers* of his German friends, who continued the happy customs from university student days in the old country. God gave him a voice to sing and he used it to a good purpose. Meeting Rattermann privately, one discovered in him a generous, enthusiastic, friendly, and most entertaining personality.

Rattermann seemed not unconscious of his individual distinction and at times we discover an unusual amount of egotism. He frankly admitted this when he said that egotism and self-conceit could not be completely stifled in him, for he was not unlike the poet of whom Goethe has so strikingly written in his *Westöstlicher Divan*, who having written a poem desired that all should know about it and praise his work.<sup>114</sup>

Dr. Heinrich Fick, a lifelong friend of Rattermann, said of him: "He was a very positive character, a true friend, but also a bitter antagonist."<sup>115</sup> We find this characterisation verified in the various circumstances which surrounded his daily life, for a man of such diversified occupation could scarcely avoid occasional misunderstanding or even disputes. On one occasion he found himself wrangling with the editor, Max Heinrici, of Philadelphia, regarding the loan and return of a manuscript. The latter had requested him to make a literary contribution for the German-American Yearbook. Rattermann readily complied with the request but later found that his kindness had been abused—a quarrel ensued in the course of which he threatened to go to law in order to vindicate his claim.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *Frisch gesungen, Anakreon, Jubellied zum Sommerfest, Bunte Reihe, Erneute Burschenherrlichkeit. Gesammelte Werke*, IIIa, 537-608.

<sup>114</sup> Rattermann letters, November 14, 1906.

<sup>115</sup> Letter of H. Fick to the author, February 13, 1935.

<sup>116</sup> Ich wurde von einem Herrn Max Heinrici, der eine Empfehlung von Prof. Learned mitsandte, ersucht, für ein deutsch-amerikanisches Jahrbuch einen Beitrag zu liefern, und ich sandte mein Manuskript der beiden Franklin-Artikel ein. Als ich sah, dass das Jahrbuch erschienen sei, schrieb ich an Heinrici, er möge mir das Buch nebst Rechnung zusenden, erhielt aber weder Buch noch Antwort. Dann wandte ich mich an Prof. Learned: derselbe antwortete zwar, er würde sich darum erkundigen,



This little incident well serves to illustrate the characteristic will power and determination of Rattermann. Although he was ever ready to give and to help others, he would not be the victim of an unwarranted imposition. Another example of his honesty bringing him into disagreeable situations, the writer learnt from a letter addressed to Rattermann. The Orpheus Singing Society of Cincinnati had summoned Rattermann to appear before the Board of Directors to account for a public accusation which he had made against the railroad committee of the Louisville excursion, accusing that body of having misappropriated one hundred dollars for private purposes. We have no evidence as to the outcome of this investigation, but Rattermann, no doubt, was capable of supporting his contention and justifying his conduct.

But, now for a brighter side of the picture: "He was a true friend," says Dr. H. Fick.<sup>117</sup> Rattermann's friends were many; some of the nearest were those who had spent almost a life time in his employ in the insurance business. Of these he designated Joseph Sebastiani and Theodore Wilmes as his two most faithful friends. Both were men of high cultural attainments, to whom he was indebted for intellectual stimuli and cultural inspiration.<sup>118</sup> His literary career brought him a host of friends to whom he was most sincerely devoted and not unfrequently he paid tribute to them in verse and song. Their familiar chats, their mutual exchange of ideas, and above all, their well-meant constructive criticism, afforded him the greatest satisfaction. Of these he wrote: "Ich liebe es überhaupt von Zeit zu Zeit, mein Herz einem lieben Freunde gegenüber auszuschütten."<sup>119</sup>

His estimation of friendship is well illustrated in the following stanza:

allein, nichts kam. Nun wandte ich mich an Dr. Hexamer mit der Bitte, er möge sich darnach erkundigen, und wenn nichts hälfe, würde ich einen Advokaten anstellen replevin Klage einzuleiten. Dr. Hexamer war mir nun behülflich, das Manuskript zurück zu erhalten, und zugleich sandte er mir auch das Ungetüm (Buch) aus dem ich wohl sah, dass meine beiden Aufsätze nicht hinein passten. Rattermann letters, September 17, 1905.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Citation 115.

<sup>118</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 412.

<sup>119</sup> It affords me great satisfaction to lay bare to a friend my innermost feelings and sentiments. Rattermann letters, February 2, 1906.

Uns Menschen steht so wohl nichts an,  
 Als treue Freundschaft halten.  
 Sie ist des Lebens Zauberbann,  
 Drum soll sie nicht erkalten.  
 Das wahre Glück nur dort wir sehen,  
 Wo Freunde treu zusammen stehen.<sup>120</sup>

Special mention should be made of such friends as Bishop Henni, Father Hammer, Monsignor Rothensteiner, Father Michael Lochemus, Judge Stallo, Gov. Körner, Gustav Brühl, Dr. Seidensticker, Theodore Kirchhoff, Heinrich Fick, Heinrich Raab, and many others which would make the list too long if added here.

He was not only a friend but also a defender, ready to break lances for all those who were maligned or unjustly attacked. The case of Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg, who became a convert to the Catholic faith, affords us a splendid example of this. Stolberg was tauntingly censured by the poet Johann Heinrich Voss as "Der Unfreie" because he had joined the Church. Rattermann gave evidence of displeasure at this undeserved reproach in the following verse:

Als du im Glauben deine Freiheit übest,  
 Da rief ein Tadler keck dich in die Schranken  
 Und wagte dich als unfrei noch zu schelten.

Wie du ihn da betrübtest,  
 O, Voss, der du aus deinem Joch nicht wanken  
 Wolltest, das tadle ich vor allen Welten.<sup>121</sup>

It was not from the standpoint of religion, that Rattermann defended Stolberg's affiliation with the Catholic Church, but rather for liberty of thought and decision in matters so clearly related to his very being. Rattermann's eloquence usually waxed strong, as we have seen, when he discoursed on liberty, justice, or the rights of man.

<sup>120</sup> Nothing is more appropriate or becoming to man than the cultivation of true friendship. It is the magic charm of life whose fervor shall never grow cold. Only there can happiness abide where faithful friends are united. *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 276.

<sup>121</sup> Rattermann reproached Voss, who as a bold critic challenged the spiritual freedom of Friedrich von Stolberg, the convert to Catholicity, but Voss himself had not the courage to live up to his own religious convictions. *Ibid.*, IIIB, 54, 46.

His distinctive characteristics are best studied from his works and letters, these more than anything else exemplify the man in all his traits.

#### OLD AGE

Rattermann's serene spirit and his aesthetically inclined nature accompanied him from early childhood through his long busy life, to its closing. It helped him to bear the reverses and opposition which not infrequently crossed his path. He had been schooled to face situations under the ever-changing circumstances of life. He tells us how he went about it:

Durch das leitende Bewusstsein, du bist zu etwas in der Welt, hast Kraft, nach dem Rechten fortwährend zu streben, besitzest die Macht, den falschen Zielen der Welt zu entsagen, wirst du den rechten Weg des Edlen, Schönen und Guten gewiss nicht verfehlen.<sup>122</sup>

As the years rolled on with their alternating joys and sorrows, Rattermann felt old age gradually coming upon him. In 1904 he wrote to his friend Father Rothensteiner that old age which had not incapacitated him so far, now began to assert itself. During the last months digestive ailments have afflicted him to no small extent and he can no longer carry on as in the years of his youth and mature manhood, but though physically indisposed, his spirit is still hail and sound.<sup>123</sup>

His general physical condition together with his rapidly failing eyesight during his later seventies caused him considerable alarm at times, but he collected his energy, picked up new courage, and continued at his task. His great ambition was to finish his *Gesammelte Werke* before night should set in. His difficulty in securing a publisher for his works either in this country or abroad delayed the work for some time but by no means deterred him from his purpose. He set up the necessary printing apparatus in his own home and with the help of his youngest daughter, Katherine, put

<sup>122</sup> Through the guiding conviction that he was in this world for a purpose, that he had the ability to strive towards the good and praiseworthy, and that he possessed the strength to renounce the false alluring world,—he would constantly remain on the path which led to the noble, the beautiful, and the good. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIa, 524.

<sup>123</sup> Rattermann letters, October 19, 1904.

out his works, not only in an efficient manner, but with artistic finish.

In the spring of 1909, he completed the little epic, *Auf dem Vogelberg, eine Alt-Ankumer Geschichte*. After its completion he remarked: "This will be the last of my poetical productions. I feel my seventy-seven years exercising a weakening influence on mind and spirit."<sup>124</sup> This literary interruption was of short duration, however, for his creative spirit soon took to flight again and decided to mount the Pegasus once more. A few months later he wrote: "Although almost seventy-eight years old, I still indulge in poetic phantasies. My only consolation in blind old age is to fructify the field of the beautiful and elevating."<sup>125</sup>

He learned of the approaching silver sacerdotal jubilee of his poet-friend, Father Rothensteiner, and he determined to endow the occasion with a becoming poem. To illustrate the poetic effusions of our poet in his advanced age (79 years) we will quote part of this graceful poem:

O Freund der Musen, die getreu  
Dich leiten durch das Erdenleben,  
An jedem Tage immer neu  
Mit reichen Kränzen dich umschweben,  
Sie nahen heute sonder Scheu  
Sich deines Wirkens heil'gem Zelt  
Mit lichtem Kerzenstrahl erhellt,  
Am Ambon des geweihten Ortes,  
Zu künden mit der Macht des Wortes:  
Dein Reich ist in der Geisterwelt.

Als Priester stehst du am Altar  
Zu bringen Gott die Opfergabe,  
Im Geist des Neuen Bundes dar,  
Ein Führer mit dem Hirtenstabe,  
Dem treulich folgt die gläub'ge Schar.  
Du waltest bei dem Gottesmahle  
In dieses Heiligtumes Saale  
Beglückt für ein unendlich Leben,  
Vom Himmelskronenglanz umgeben:  
Dein Reichthum sind die Ideale!  
Als echter Priester bist Prophet  
Und Dichter Du zu allen Zeiten.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, April 7, 1909.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

Was Du verkündest, wird Gebet  
 Und tönt durch Erd und Himmelsweiten,  
 Wo immer Gottes Odem weht.  
 Dein Sang weckt mit des Blitzes Strahle  
 Im Herzen, Freund, die Wundermale.  
 Und führt den Geist, wenn er umnachtet  
 Im Trüben irrend, fast verschmachtet,  
 Als Leuchte durch die Nebeltale! <sup>126</sup>

Rattermann was now threatened with the complete loss of sight. For almost a year he was helpless and could neither write nor set the type for his work. But there was yet a ray of hope to spare him from total blindness, namely, by submitting to an operation for the removal of a cataract from his right eye. The operation was performed in December, 1910, and proved a success for the time being. But only for a few brief years was it granted him to use his eyes again. His publishing activities and lectures were carried on down to the time of the World War, when blindness and loss of hearing forced the venerable octogenarian to withdraw permanently from all public functions, but in a manner which made true his own prophetic words:

Nicht in dem Weltmeer darf mein Geist verspülen,  
 Nicht ohne Ruhm will ich von hinnen ziehen:  
 Man wird mich noch in fernen Zeiten fühlen.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Friend of the Muses, who faithfully accompany you through life and daily favor you with immortal garlands, today they approach the sacred illuminated temple of your labors to proclaim that yours is the realm of the spiritual.

As a priest at the altar you offer unto God the sacrifice of the New Testament, you, a true guide and shepherd, whom the faithful dutifully follow. Within the sacred precinct you are the guardian of the Infinite at the Divine Banquet.

You are priest, prophet, and poet at all times. Your divine message penetrates heaven and earth. The erring soul is aroused by your song and led safely through the misty vale. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 620. Reliable critics have pronounced Father Rothensteiner the greatest German-American lyric poet. He is the author of several volumes of graceful and inspiring poems—*Hoffnung und Erinnerung* 1903, *Indianersommer* 1905, *Heliotrope* 1908, *Am sonnigen Hang* 1909, and *A German Garden of the Heart* 1934 (a translation of German lyrics from the Volkslied unto Rainer Maria Rilke).

<sup>127</sup> My spirit must not be lost in the sea of this world; not without fame

The last nine years of his life were spent in total seclusion of the outer world. His mind, however, was keen and alert, for he lost none of that noticeable interest in the cultural things of life which had always distinguished him. His spirit is best expressed in his own verse:

Klage nicht, o Herz, in trüben Stunden,  
Weil des Lebens Herbst den Blick geraubt;  
Noch im Innern ist es grün belaubt  
Und noch mancher Kranz wird da gewunden!

Nicht einsam fühl' ich mich in meiner Klause,  
Wenn auch des Stares Schatten mich umgeben,  
Nicht fühl' ich einsam da im stillen Leben,  
Denn noch die Muse wohnt in meinem Hause.<sup>128</sup>

His daughter Katherine describes his days of blindness thus:

He was ever mild and gentle and uncomplaining even in his lonely blindness. On my return from school (she is a school teacher) I would usually talk to him on matters *Urbis et Orbis*, as he put it, until he retired at an early hour.<sup>129</sup>

Letters and visits of old friends and acquaintances were a great consolation to him in his affliction. He remained ever youthful and vigorous of heart and mind until his last years. He found a means to prolong his intellectual life, that is, the gratification or enjoyment of the past in treasured reminiscences. He lived in a world of beautiful thoughts and still enjoyed so rich and happy a phantasy as one would scarcely expect to find in a man of such an advanced age.

His end came not unexpectedly. He had been a man of excessive activity and it is amazing that his energies had not burned out years before. He died January 6, 1923, at the patriarchal age of ninety-one years. "Rich in years, in honors, and in friends."<sup>130</sup>

will I leave this life, but future generations shall realize the value of my work. *Ibid.*, 430.

<sup>128</sup> Lament not, dear heart, because the autumn of life has robbed you of your sight. The spirit is yet adorned with fresh blossoms and poetic garlands are woven still. Though surrounded by shadows within my little cell, I am not lonely, for the Muses abide with me. *Ibid.*, 427.

<sup>129</sup> Letters of Katherine Rattermann, February 13, 1935.

<sup>130</sup> J. Rothensteiner, "H. A. Rattermann," *Amerika*, January 9, 1923.

The writer has endeavored to give a true picture of Rattermann, the man. She trusts that the words of Wilhelm Müller, a friend of Rattermann, will find their fulfillment in the hearts of all true German-Americans:

Und nennt ihr froh und dankerfüllt die Namen  
Der Wackren, die gefördert deutschen Brauch,  
Und ausgestreut der Wahrheit edlen Samen,  
So nennet dankerfüllt den seinen auch.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> When in grateful remembrance you celebrate the names of the brave and true who have sown the seeds of truth and promoted German customs, in profound gratitude remember also his name. Wilhelm Müller, *Rattermann Centennial* (Cincinnati, 1932).

## CHAPTER II

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### RATTERMANN, THE POET

Although Heinrich A. Rattermann's claim to recognition or fame rests primarily on his achievements in the realm of German-American history, his merits in the field of German poetry are by no means small.

From his earliest days he had a fondness for writing rhymes and poetry and later during the demands and distractions of his business career he fostered it as a pet occupation.

Wer in der Muse Fessel liegt, dem bleibt  
Kein Ausweg mehr; die Muse wird ihn zwingen  
Mit ew'gem Reiz zum endlichen Gelingen.<sup>1</sup>

To determine his place or position in the province of German poetry is not easy; for so many and so varied are the factors that contribute to the making of a poet or the tastes and standards of those to whom his works may or may not appeal for recognition. Joseph Wharton, a good critic, says:

It is not the clear head or the acute understanding that makes the poet, but a creative and glowing imagination, and that alone can stamp a writer with this exalted and very uncommon character which so few possess, and of which so few can properly judge.<sup>2</sup>

Thus we see that the enjoyment of wide recognition or the shadow of comparative obscurity are not always safe indexes of a poet's true worth. Though Rattermann's literary record has been somewhat unknown in late years (his works have been out of print since 1914), those who are familiar with the best poetical products of his pen generally pronounce him as outstanding among his German-American contemporaries. But we will allow Rattermann to speak for himself as to his intentions and aspirations: "Mich hat in meinen Schriften einzig das Gefühl des Wohlklangs und

<sup>1</sup> Whomever the Muses captivate, he must submit. They with their eternal charm will lead him to final success. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 237.

<sup>2</sup> J. Wharton, *An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* (London, 1806), 11.



der Ordnung geleitet. Ich habe die besten Dichter und Schriftsteller unserer Sprache und auch im Englischen gelesen und danach habe ich mich gebildet."<sup>3</sup>

He aspired to noble heights in this respect; he may not always have succeeded but no one would deny him a respectable and even estimable place in the field of poetry.

#### EARLY ATTEMPTS

Rattermann may not have been an innate poetic genius, but his love and fondness for poetizing substituted the poetic spark which is essentially necessary for the creation of good poetry. With the greatest assiduity he applied himself to the study of the most intricate forms of poetic art. The odes of classical antiquity, the hexameter and pentameter used by Klopstock, Platen, Hoelderlin, Goethe, and Herder were his joy and his pride. Not only these forms were mastered and carried out in their perfection, but he also wrote rhymed verse and free rhythm with accomplished grace. Every emotion, experience, and event, every festival occasion in the bosom of his family or in the circle of his friends, became a living poem. Thus Rattermann's poetical works—his odes, songs, ballads, sonnets, epigrams, and occasional verses fill no less than five octavo volumes of 400 to 500 pages each of his *Gesammelte Werke*. A prudent winnowing or discrete selection from this over-abundance of verse should place the name of Rattermann among those of the great German-American poets.

Regarding the quantity of his literary productions he wrote to Father Rothensteiner, May 23, 1905:

Wollte ich über mich selbst reden, so kann ich sagen, dass ich etwa 3000 Gnomen und Epigramme und nahezu 400 Rätsel gedichtet und nahe über 600 lyrisch und lyrisch-epische Gedichte verfasst habe, deren Wert Sie nach den Ihnen bekannten Gedichten ermessen mögen.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In my writings I was guided solely by a natural feeling for musical rhythm and sense of order. I read the best German and English authors and regarded them as my models. *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, XIX (1920), 103.

<sup>4</sup> If I desired to speak of my own literary merits I could say that I have composed about 3000 gnomes and epigrams, almost 400 riddles, and am the author of more than 600 lyric and epic poems, the value of which you may estimate by those which are known to you. Rattermann letters.

The habit of the poet and the aspiration for poetical expression was always with him. Poetry encouraged him in the trying days of his youth and consoled him in old age, for as he wrote:

Reizlos mein Jugendleben floh dahin;  
Arbeit und Sorgen drückten oft mich nieder;  
Doch immer hoben holde Musen wieder  
Die Seele mir nach jedes Tages Mühen.<sup>5</sup>

His early poetical attempts appeared long before the publication of his *Gesammelte Werke*, which were started in 1887, and published in the years 1904-1914. But what induced him, not schooled in literary expression, to enter upon a literary career so late in life? We find the answer to this question in his own words: "Nur Weisheitsschätze konnten mich beglücken und Edelsinn hielt meinen Geist gefangen."<sup>6</sup>

Or, perhaps, more to the point would be the answer that we find in his letter to Father Rothensteiner, November 14, 1906: "My poetry was not put into print hastily, for I wished to offer to the literary world a well ripened and matured product. And thus old age (72 years) overtook me."

His daughter wrote as follows regarding his collected works:

*Gesammelte Werke* were never completely published although the plates were in readiness for the printer for several years. The work was planned for sixteen volumes, only twelve of which were ever published. The plates for the unfinished volumes, (numbers XIII, XIV, XV) were later destroyed for want of storing space and for some person sufficiently interested to pay for the publication of the same.<sup>7</sup>

Though already at an advanced age, Rattermann had hoped to present to the lovers of literature his complete, well-planned collected works. However, various adverse factors prevented him from attaining his purpose. Progress was slow and in 1913, physically handicapped, the aged poet was forced to cease his literary activity, his life's ambition unattained.

<sup>5</sup> My youth fled joylessly. Labor and cares were my lot, but again my soul was refreshed by the gracious Muses after the trials and sorrows of the day. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 404.

<sup>6</sup> Treasures of wisdom alone could satisfy me, and nobility of thought enchanted me. *Ibid.*, IIIb, 411.

<sup>7</sup> Letter of Katherine Rattermann, July 7, 1935.

As to the comparative priority of the poems, the question is unsettled, although some of the groups of poems bear signs of chronological sequence. We find this arrangement in *Der Auswanderer*, in *Erinnerungen aus meiner poetischen Lehrzeit*, and in *Vom eignen Herd*. We have little evidence to offer regarding the time element of the poems, except the general statement of Rattermann which may offer some solution of the question:

Auch mich fesselten die Töchter Mnemosyne's bereits von Jugend auf, und was sie meinem Geiste eingaben, das findet der Leser in den Bänden meiner Schriften. Einzelne der Gedichte reichen bis in mein zwanzigstes Lebensjahr zurück. Da ich jedoch nur den Unterricht der heimatlichen Dorfschule bis ins vierzehnte Altersjahr geniessen konnte, so blieb dem Autodidakten lange die Kenntniß der Prosodie fern, die ich nur ahnen konnte und mir allmählig durch Selbststudium mühsam aneignen musste. Zum Glück hatte ich vor meinem fünfunddreissigsten Jahr (1867), fast gar nichts von meinen Reimereien drucken lassen, und was ich seitdem nicht vollständig umarbeitete, das habe ich einfach dem Feuer übergeben. Vieles aus dem Abschnitt *Jugend und Liebe* stammt aus der beregten Zeit, aber die Gestalt, in welcher die Gedichte hier erscheinen, haben sie erst in meinem späteren Alter erhalten.<sup>8</sup>

In 1852, the *Volksfreund* of Buffalo printed one of Rattermann's earliest lyric poems, *O Blümlein, steht mir bei!* This poem later reached Germany where it attracted the attention of the Frisian poet Foke Hoissen Müller who transcribed it into Low German.<sup>9</sup> Many of his early poems appeared in *Freie Presse*, *Sonntag Morgen*, *Abendpost*, and *Anzeiger*, all of Cincinnati; *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, and in *Anzeiger des Westens*, St. Louis.

Out of sheer diffidence for his literary ability, or from a desire to evade public criticism, Rattermann's poetic productions from 1852, to the late sixties appeared in the German Cincinnati news-

<sup>8</sup> I, too, from my youth was captivated by the daughters of Mnemosyne. The results of their inspiration are found in the volumes of my collected works. Some of these poems originated in my twentieth year. Since I had received only the education of my native village school, the knowledge of prosody had to be acquired gradually and laboriously through my own efforts. Fortunately, none of my poems had gone into print before my thirty-fifth year (1867) and whatever was not revised since then was consigned to the flames. Many of the poems in the group of *Jugend und Liebe* originated in my early career, but their present form is the work of later years. *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 379.

<sup>9</sup> *Cincinnati Freie Presse*, November 12, 1922.

papers under the pseudonym of "Aukum." After 1867, he used the name, "Hugo Reimmund," to cover his identity. That he was motivated in the choice of this pseudonym we infer from the following rhyme:

Mein Mund zum Reimen ist geneigt,  
Wie schon der Name Reimmund zeigt—  
Der Reimerei setzt Hugo Schranken,  
So heisst's: Mund, reime nur Gedanken!<sup>10</sup>

Rattermann was not what one would term a prolific poet up to the age of fifty (1882). His better years were devoted rather to intensive historical research and to disseminating and publishing his discoveries in the field of German-American history. Later in life, however, the poet ripened and matured and the products of his poetic pen increased in quantity and quality. A perusal of his *Spätherbstgaben* are evidence of this. He referred to this late awakening in his complaint to Apollo:

Apollo warum hast du mich erst in Altersjahren  
Besucht, beglückt?—Als ich noch unerfahren,  
Da hätt' ich Dich begrüsst als Heilsverkünder!  
Jedoch, was groll ich dir, du Überwinder?  
Du wolltest meine Kräfte prüfen, sparen,  
Bis sich geläutert das Genie zum klaren  
Begriff des Schönen, bis ich geistgesünder.<sup>11</sup>

#### POETICAL INFLUENCES

The facts of Rattermann's life have been presented briefly but as thoroughly as the meager sources would allow. We may now be interested to know in how far such a life of activity and manifold duties influenced his literary career and its productions. While his infancy and childhood were not surrounded, as it were, with poetry, there were nevertheless conditions and circumstances of

<sup>10</sup> The name Reimmund is indicative of my inclination to rhyming, while the term Hugo sets a limit to my rhymes—to poetry of real thought. *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin*, I (1886), 143.

<sup>11</sup> Apollo, why have you delayed so long with your enchanting visit? As an inexperienced youth I would have hailed you a messenger of cheer. But I bear you no grudge, for you have tested and preserved my powers unto a purer concept of beauty and maturity of spirit. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIa, 54.

birth, environment, and early education which impressed themselves upon his youthful heart and fostered a love for the beautiful in God's creation, and a consequent appreciation of the higher things of life. The poet's youth was spent not within the confines of a large bustling city, but in a village surrounded by fields of heather and forests, where the song of birds was heard. All these were contributing factors in the making of the future poet.

The boy was also fortunate in having a teacher who instilled into the hearts of his young charges an early love of poetry, music, and song, and the sister arts. No one enjoyed the hours devoted to the study of poetry and literature more than our little Heinrich. To him it was always the most enjoyable occupation. In later years he dedicated all his spare hours to its cultivation. In his *Lebensbild* we have a picture of potential influences which gave impetus to his poetic spirit:

Da fand ich dann an meinen Wegen blühn  
 Manch Blümchen, das ich flocht zum Kranz der Lieder;  
 Und Kolibri's mit prunkem Goldgefieder  
 Sah ich voll Lust die Blütenpracht umziehn.

Das hob den Geist mir stets zu neuem Wagen  
 Und immer frische Blumen musst' ich pflücken,  
 Um sie zu schönen Kränzen auszuweben.<sup>12</sup>

Though in later years he did not live in the seclusion of village scenes, his communion with nature was not less observant and regardful, for Cincinnati in 1846-1870, was still a town with natural beauty on all sides, surrounded by wooded hill slopes. In the course of his travels he also had ample opportunity to admire the grandeur of our virgin forests, our fields and streams, for America was not yet shorn of so great a part of her natural beauty during the early years of our poet.

Rattermann's keen interest to what was going on in the world of philosophy, literature and art, and his clear insight and knowledge of men in daily life were all incentives and inducements to his musing spirit. He possessed that poetic faculty which could

<sup>12</sup> Along my paths bloomed many a flower which inspired me to weave my garland of song, while the humming bird in brilliant plumage flitting in the blossom's splendor raised my spirits to new creations. *Ibid.*, IIIb, 404.

give charm and novelty to the smallest and humblest as well as to the greater things of everyday life.

Social and political events coupled with an intense spirit of patriotism were also inspirational and influential factors in deciding the trend of his poetic vein. Thus we see a group of political poems, twenty-eight in number, called forth by the current conditions in the United States during the years of 1900-1912.<sup>13</sup> As a wide reader, keen observer, and above all, an ever-active and highly interested citizen, nothing ever escaped his vigilant eye.

To one possessed of a poetic impulse, influences and incentives are found on all occasions. At one time his lofty spirit of American patriotism and his singular admiration for the great men, whose heroic deeds and love of liberty had laid the foundation of our Republic, are an inspiration to him,<sup>14</sup> at another, some social or political event might set the strings of his lyre to sweet melodies.

He always showed the greatest deference and due appreciation for the deeds of others, for as he wrote to Father Rothensteiner: "A God-given gift to me has always been to recognize the good that is in others."<sup>15</sup> This seems to have been one of the great objectives of his life's work—to convey to future generations the efforts and noble deeds of those who went before them, but whose memory had not infrequently been lost in the stream of time. With a laudable pride he contributed to the records of time the truths of the past, so that he could justly say:

Wenn jene Stunde naht, in welcher prüfend  
Man die Taten der Völker auf der Wage wägen wird,  
Dann lass auch mein Quentchen Wahrheit lenken die Schale.<sup>16</sup>

As a last material poetical influence we might mention his love for the mother tongue of Germany. It was a perennial fount of inspiration, whose music and charm he never failed to catch. Significantly enough he dedicated his German literary works to his children with the admonition, not to forget in their free native

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 333-367.

<sup>14</sup> "Amerikanische Heroengräber," *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIa, 309-343.

<sup>15</sup> Rattermann letters, March 6, 1913.

<sup>16</sup> When that hour approaches in which the attainments of men shall be evaluated, then may my contributions to truth also direct the scales of justice. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIa, 340.

land, Columbia, that rich and beautiful language of their parents and ancestors, the beloved German mother tongue.<sup>17</sup> This same precious heritage he desired to leave to each and every German-American in the form of uplifting and inspiring verse.

What could be more beautiful in sentiment than *Das deutsche Lied in Amerika* which seemed to transport him to the higher realms of poetic exuberance:

Deutsches Lied im freien Lande  
Blühe fort in stolzer Pracht,  
Schalle von Kolumbias Strände  
Durch die Welt mit Zaubermacht!  
In den Tempeln Gott zu ehren,  
In den Schulen erster Keim,  
Brause laut in mächt'gen Chören,  
Töne sanft im trauten Heim.<sup>18</sup>

As far as his many occasional verses are concerned, they were of a sporadic type, depending on the nature of the event or festivity which called them into being. We learn from one of his letters that on the great feast of Pentecost he wrote his lofty ballad *Benedictus*, inspired no doubt, by the solemnity of the feast and the spark of faith that lingered in his heart.<sup>19</sup> It was also under the impulse of the spirit of the day that he wrote his patriotic, *Unabhängigkeitserklärung* on July 4, 1906.

Volume I of *Gesammelte Werke* contains a group of sixty-five occasional poems, many of which were written for the use of social gatherings at the Deutscher Literarischer Klub von Cincinnati and which could be sung to the tunes of familiar melodies. Some of these made-to-order poems are very adequate and appropriate and usually have a certain felicity of thought.<sup>20</sup> The other volumes also offer a number of these *Gelegenheitsgedichte*.

In considering the influences which affect a poet's work, it is not

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Bloom forth proudly, German song, in the land of the free; peal forth from Columbia's shores through the world with magic power! In our temples to the honor of God; in our schools as a first awakening; ring forth loudly in powerful chorus, murmur softly in our dear homes. *Ibid.*, IIIa, 539.

<sup>19</sup> Rattermann letters, November 14, 1906.

<sup>20</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 267-377.

sufficient to take into account the physical or material factors, such as environment, nature, parentage, social and political trends, but one must also regard the influence which the literary works, thoughts, principles, and ideals of other great poets exercise upon him.

Rattermann's literary tastes and influences, his likes and dislikes may, in a way, be gleaned from reading his collection of poems entitled *Die Meister der Kunst*.<sup>21</sup> There he devotes in uplifting language a cycle of sonnets to the glorification of prominent German poets. The selections which he here makes (and the omissions) are indicative of his preferences as regards the German writers. It is significant that he chose practically only lyricists: Opitz, Fleming, Haller, Klopstock, Ramler, Bürger, Stolberg, A. W. Schlegel, Seume, Hölderlin, Eichendorff, Chamisso, Uhland, Rückert, Kerner, Platen, von Droste, Freiligrath, Geibel, Redwitz, and Scheffel. But we also find a few other names like Fritz Reuter, Abraham a Santa Clara, Jean Paul, A. Humboldt, chosen for different reasons.

In Opitz he praises the father of German poetic expression; in Fleming the pathfinder for the sonnet; in Haller not the scholar, but the poet; in Klopstock the pious devotee to divine elevated thoughts; in Ramler the founder of aesthetics and purity of speech; in Bürger the poet of love; in Stolberg that of liberty; in Goethe the genius who in old age undertook to sing in sonnets; in Jean Paul Richter the clean humorist; in A. W. Schlegel the warrior in the realm of beauty. Seume he defends against the narrow criticism of Vilmar; he regrets Hölderlin's early insanity; loves Eichendorff's healthy and inspiring works; in Chamisso he admires the literary ability of a foreigner in Germany; he points to Uhland as the singer of legends, truth, and people's rights; to Rückert as the patriotic composer of *Geharnischte Sonetten*; to Kerner as the poet of Wine and Wanderlust; to Platen as the serious thinker and noble artist; to von Droste as poetess of exceptional clarity of thought. He recalls the patience and courage of Freiligrath; the pathos and humor of Fritz Reuter; the fluency of language, rhyme, and purity of Geibel; the masterful sonnets of Redwitz; the lyrical and epic efforts of Scheffel; and medievalism

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, IIIb, 1-86.



of F. W. Weber's *Dreizehnlinden*. He condemns Heine's occasional descent to the low, vulgar, or ridiculous.

We miss in the above list the names of dramatists and realists like H. von Kleist (who appears to be almost unknown to Rattermann), Hebbel, O. Ludwig; the Young Germans: Börne, Gutzkow, and Mundt; romanticists like Arnim, Brentano, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Z. Werner; novelists like Storm, Heyse, Gottfried Keller, C. F. Meyer, Raabe, Freitag, Spielhagen, Fontane, Ebner-Eschenbach, Rosegger, Liliencron, and Wildenbruch. With the exception of von Droste, women poets do not appear in his works. The poets of the *Sturm und Drang* period are also omitted.

Chamisso, A. W. Schlegel, Tieck, Goerres, Eichendorff, Fouqué, and the neo-romanticists like Bodenstedt and Oskar von Redwitz excepted, Rattermann generally speaking, does not favor romanticism; it is to him too *süsslich*, not manly enough. He agrees with Goethe's attitude saying: "Goethe . . . weicht doch von den mit saloppem Scheinheroismus und süßlicher Überschwänglichkeit beladenen Romantikern sehr ab."<sup>22</sup>

Again Rattermann expresses himself concerning romanticism: "Die Romantiker sind zumeist krankhaft affektirt; Voltaire aber ist ein gottesleugnender Romantiker."<sup>23</sup>

Rattermann cannot be classified as a romanticist, naturalist, neo-romanticist, expressionist, or as an 1848 liberal or Young German. It is strongly perceptible that the old conservative type of influence has left its traces on his mind. He was not affected by the modern writers of his own days or certain definite other groups, but by those of an earlier classical period.

He prefers clarity of mind to everything else, for as he expressed it: "Wo die Klarheit eines Schriftstellers aufhört, hat ihn der Verstand verlassen."<sup>24</sup>

Rattermann is particularly fond of Lessing. Bestowing the highest praises on him, he said: "Lessing verbindet Grazie mit Würde, seine Dichtungen sind klar wie Krystall, scharf wie Stahl,

<sup>22</sup> Goethe deviates greatly from the romanticists in respect to their exaggerated pseudo-heroism and in their extravagance of sentimentality. *Ibid.*, V, 151.

<sup>23</sup> Most of the romanticists are diseased with affectation, but Voltaire is an atheistic romanticist. *Ibid.*, V, 123.

<sup>24</sup> Where clarity ceases, reason leaves an author. *Ibid.*, IV, 124.

und rein wie Gold."<sup>25</sup> He estimates the classicists as the culmination of literary perfection. His advice to the students of literature is:

Vergil, Dante, Tasso, Shakespeare, Calderon, Milton, Klopstock, Wieland, Lessing, Herder, Bürger, Goethe, Schiller, Platen und Geibel musst Du fleissig lesen, mein Sohn. Diese Meister liefern dir kräftige Geisteskost. An den Süßigkeiten der Andern nascht man nur, nachdem man gesättigt ist.<sup>26</sup>

To the contemporary poets in Germany Rattermann gave very little or almost no attention, for he said that they have not ripened as yet and though many of them may still improve with the coming years, others may fall by the wayside as mediocre or even inferior poets.<sup>27</sup>

The new generation in Europe appeared to him to be almost degenerate, repellent, because it presented proletarian misery and depended largely on theatrical effectiveness and photographic likeness of evil, sin, and atrocities. He hated the low and vulgar banalities, the underworld poems of indecency in the modern, especially the naturalistic drama as he conceived it; the decadent odor in the works of Zola, Schnitzler, Hauptmann, Tolstoy, Ibsen, and other contemporary writers. He would contrast this modern wading in social mud with the clean simple "Klänge der Volkslieder" and with the healthy naturalness of the Swabian poets: Uhland, Kerner, Hauff, and Hölderlin. They appealed to his North-German innate sense for order, clarity, and simplicity; to his abhorrence of the ugly, of the dark shadowy sides of life.

Comparing the modern German writers with Goethe, he said:

Goethe war gewiss ein Realist, allein er hat niemals das Greuliche in seinen Dichtungen dargestellt. Selbst sein Jugendwerk, *Werthers Leiden* bewegt sich nicht in dem Schlamm der Versunkenheit. Sein Roman weckt sentimentale Gefühle, reizt die Frauenwelt zu Tränen, aber er spielt nicht mit der Abscheulichkeit, der Verrohung der Gesellschaft.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> "Lessing combines grace with dignity. His works are clear as crystal, keen as steel, and pure as gold." *Ibid.*, IV, 127.

<sup>26</sup> These masters you must diligently read, my son. They will furnish you with healthy nourishment for the mind. One only nibbles on the dainties of the others after he has been satiated by the former. *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>28</sup> Goethe was certainly a realist but he never portrayed the gruesome in his writings. Even in his earlier work of *Werthers Leiden* he does not sink

A perusal of *Erinnerungen aus meiner poetischen Lehrzeit* will convince us that Rattermann's opportunities for cultural advancement were most favorable in Cincinnati's social life. Productions of excellent German dramas were weekly events, and the chances for artistic appreciation and critical interpretations of the great German masters were frequent. A definite classical impress was left on the mind of the aspiring author, while his artistic taste was stimulated by plays such as Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, *Don Karlos*, and *Kabale und Liebe*; Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* and *Nathan der Weise*; Goethe's *Egmont* and *Faust*; Halm's *Griseldis* and *Fechter von Ravenna*; Laube's *Graf Essex*; Shakespeare's *Der Widerspenstigen Zähmung*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo und Julia*; and the dramas of Körner, Houwald, and Grillparzer.

This favoring of classical German poetry and drama appears to be generally typical among modern nineteenth century literary circles of German-Americans. They are, like Rattermann, more or less opposed to men like Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Zola, and the very modern Germans of extreme tendencies; at least, the moderns are not quite so popular.

Rattermann's literary knowledge and reading extended through the entire range of the world's masters, with a preference shown to the German writers. The background of his entire cultural progress was along the classical lines and traditional paths, in harmony with German-American trends for the time around 1850-1890. Speaking of his poetic activity he remarked: "Bei meinen Dichtungen muss ich immer lesen, aber nur die vorzüglichsten Dichter. Das regt die Gedanken. Ich nehme mich aber in acht nichts zu kopieren oder nachzuahmen ausser vielleicht ein nötiges Zitat also Hinweis."<sup>29</sup> This is entirely true. Rattermann is very independent in his verse. He did not imitate or copy. It was his pride to be at all times his own master in all that he wrote.

He was an habitual critical student and persistent reader of the great German literary masters. Klopstock and Herder loomed

into the mire of depravity and the lower trends. His novel arouses sentimentality and moves women to tears, but it does not tamper with the sordid and the vile. *Ibid.*, V, 151.

<sup>29</sup>The writings of outstanding poets are my models and incentives to higher endeavors. I am, however, cautious never to copy or imitate anything except the necessary citations. Rattermann letters, May 23, 1905.

large on his poetical horizon. These he considered indispensable for any poet who desired to attain artistic skill in meter, form, and verse. He made himself extensively acquainted with the subject matter of their writings. His counsel to prospective poets was:

Es lohnt sich für jeden, der Dichter werden will, zuerst Klopstock gründlich to studieren. Er wird aus ihm besser die Kunst der Poesie erlernen als aus irgend einem andern Dichter des deutschen Volkes.<sup>30</sup>

Rattermann's admiration for Klopstock is well illustrated in his ode, *An Klopstocks Geist*. He attributes to him a revival of the German spirit in literature and of having stripped German poetry of its foreign garb. He compares Klopstock to Homer, Dante, and Milton, saying: "Greater things you have accomplished, Klopstock, for you have presented us with a language, beautiful as the Muse herself, a characteristic language."<sup>31</sup>

Though the most ardent admirer of Klopstock, Rattermann's final choice rests with Herder. Herder becomes the teacher, master, and model in whom he finds a prototype of all his poetic ambitions. He wrote to Father Rothensteiner, concerning Herder:

Es war schliesslich Herder, der mir den vollen Einblick in das Wesen der Poesie verschaffte. Von den ältesten Zeiten und den entferntesten Völkern liefert er die Beispiele und erklärt sie so eindrucksvoll, wie es kein anderer Kritiker verstanden hat. Herder ist zwar kein grosser selbständiger Dichter, aber er ist doch der grösste Erklärer, der vortrefflichste Lehrer für den suchenden und strebenden Dichter. Durch Bürgers und Schillers Lyrik ward ich verleitet, ohne grosses Nachdenken einige Sachen zu schmieden und glaubte schon, wie die meisten Dichterlinge, ein Dichter zu sein. Da fielen mir Herders Werke in die Hände und nun sah ich wohl, wie fehlerhaft meine Skribbeleien seien. Und jetzt wurde, was ich nicht neu umarbeitete, einfach dem Feuer überliefert.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> It will be advantageous to all those who desire to write poetry to make a thorough study of Klopstock. They will acquire the art of poetry more efficiently through the study of his work than those of any other author of the German people. *Gesammelte Werke*, IX, 160.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 3.

<sup>32</sup> After all, it was Herder who taught me the essence and true character of poetry. His models are from the earliest times and remotest people. As a critic he has not his equal. He is not an independent or original poet, but the greatest teacher and master for the assiduous striving poet. Bürger's and Schiller's lyrics urged me to some presumptuous versification, but when I chanced upon Herder's works, I realized the incorrectness

Rattermann is, indeed, in spite of his general independence, under the influence of Herder as the above lines indicate and confirm. He may differ from his teacher and model in poetical power and metrical art, but his ideas and reflections are in harmony with Herder's trend of thoughts.

Like his model, Herder, who introduced the poetic form known as *Paramythien*, (narrative poems modeled according to Greek mythology), Rattermann revelled in this type even outdoing his master in number, writing thirty to Herder's fourteen. But that is not astonishing, for Rattermann is a man of superlatives. He demonstrates his practical ability in this newly-acquired poetic type in prose, blank verse, and in rhymed verse. Although the idea must be attributed to Herder, the poetry is Rattermann's. It reveals his individual characteristic.

Through the study of Herder's *Terpsichore* Rattermann became acquainted with the works of the gifted lyric poet, Jacob Balde, a Jesuit, who takes the first place among the Latin poets of the seventeenth century. Having read Herder's translation of Balde with the greatest gratification, he enthusiastically exclaimed: "Die Herderschen Übersetzungen waren mir ein herrlicher Genuss!"<sup>33</sup> He at once attempted to procure Balde's works but the only available edition was vol. II of *Carmina Lyrica*, Cologne edition.

It was through the kindly interest and friendship of Father Ferdinand Hundt, a Catholic priest of Richmond, Indiana, that Rattermann first became interested in the study of the *Divina Comedia*. Father Hundt possessed one of the largest known Dante collections in the country. He had several hundred editions, which covered the various centuries. Rattermann informed himself on the authenticity of the different versions by reading A. W. Schlegel, whose authority rested on Pompei Venturi (Venice, 1758, 1760), Vollatelli, and Damiello.<sup>34</sup> Rattermann sought and welcomed every opportunity which would add to his literary attainments. It is surprising to note the interest and eagerness with which he studied the foreign authors.

of my scribblings and they were either revised or consigned to the fire. Rattermann letters, April 23, 1914.

<sup>33</sup> "Herder's translations were a grand delight." *Ibid.*, December 5, 1905.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, December 18, 1912.

Another factor which influenced Rattermann's poetry was his contact or association with the contemporary German-American authors. This influence may, however, only have been a secondary one, for Rattermann was superior to many of them. It was his good fortune to know personally most of the German-American poets and prose writers of the last half of the nineteenth century. His activity as editor of the *Deutscher Pionier* brought him in touch with the representatives of German culture throughout the land. He himself tells us that he numbered among his contributors the best German poets of the country. Among them may be named: Theodore Kirchhoff, Kaspar Butz, Konrad Krez, Ernst A. Zündt, and Dr. Gustav Brühl, as the most prominent.<sup>35</sup>

The high standards of these German-American poets are attested to by most of their poems, many of which are found in the volumes of the *Deutscher Pionier*. Konrad Krez's poem *Mein Vaterland* has become a literary treasure, internationally known wherever Germans are gathered. Brühl and Butz have found recent recognition in Germany.<sup>36</sup>

Rattermann as editor of the *Pionier* for eleven years had the opportunity of sifting and selecting the material sent to him by contributors. It was only the best that stood the test of his highly critical demands, for he was craftsman enough to feel the highest quality of poetic skill. We are indebted to him for having opened the pages of his magazine to poets like the above-named, and also for having called attention to German-American religious poetry like that of Hammer, Henni, Oertel, and others.

We may add here that Rattermann realized his lack of talent for dramatic creations. He never attempted to write drama in spite of his fondness for variety. Shakespeare and Calderon were to him the immortal masters who could not be excelled.

#### TYPES AND FORMS OF POETRY

Owing to an absence of modern naturalistic, impressionistic, and expressionistic trends in Rattermann's poetry, one may be inclined to look upon it as an outworn commodity, to be relegated

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, December 2, 1905.

<sup>36</sup> G. Timpe, *Katholisches Deutschtum in Amerika* (Freiburg, 1937); L. Finckh, *Ein starkes Leben* (Tübingen, 1937).

to the back shelves of our libraries or attics. Nothing should be further from our minds—his poetry is as opportune today as it was yesterday, and to the appreciative student and lover of German poetry, it will always remain a treasured bequest. Its great variety of thought, form, and types should gratify and stimulate the interests, while lending new charms to his verse. Regarding this variety Rattermann wrote:

Sie werden finden, dass ich alle Arten der Poesie und ihre Formen und Gattungen versucht habe. Vorwiegend ist allerdings das Lied. Ich pflegte mit besonderem Vergnügen die Ode und mit Vorliebe die antike Form, wie sie bei Klopstock und Platen vorhanden sind. Auch die Strophendichtungen: Sonett, Triolet, Kanzion, Ghasel, Madrigal, Glosse, Siziliana und Ritornelle, Hymnen, Dithyramben und Elegien gehören hierher. Drei Dichtungen der Italiener habe ich nicht gemogt: die von Petrarca, Dante, und Tasso verfassten Strophen der Canzone, der Sestine und der Terzine. Es sind allzusehr Künsteleien. Ausser diesen dreien habe ich nur noch eine Form nicht versucht: Die Spenserstanza. Sie erscheint mir zu schwerfällig. Ich konnte von Spenser's *Fairy Queen* immer nur eine kleine Portion zur Zeit lesen und verdauen.<sup>37</sup>

Rattermann attempted a new metrical artistic creation in the eclogue in that he made different use of the amphimacer, choriamb, and the paeon, thereby giving a strong rhythmic feeling of unrest or fear as we find it expressed in the words of his ode—*Waldliebchens Klage*.<sup>38</sup>

Another evidence of Rattermann's ingenuity in the realm of German-American poetry was the tenson, (Streitgedicht). It was the result of the collaboration of two poets, H. A. Rattermann and E. A. Zündt, and the first of its kind in German-American poetry. It appeared in the first number of the *Deutsch-Ameri-*

<sup>37</sup> You will notice that I have experimented with all types and forms of poetry but with a pronounced preference for lyric or songs. The ode was my delight, particularly the old form as used by Klopstock and Platen, to which also the strophic poetry such as the sonnet, triolet, kanzion, ghasel, madrigal, siziliana, the ritornelle, dithyrambus, hymn, and elegy belong. The kanzione, sestina and terzarima of the Italians Petrarch, Dante, and Tasso were not pleasing to me, they were too artificial. There is only one other form which I did not attempt: the Spenserian stanza. It is too cumbersome for me. I could only read a few stanzas of the *Fairy Queen* successively with due appreciation. Rattermann letters, February 2, 1906; December 5, 1905.

<sup>38</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 57.

*kanisches Magazin*, October, 1886. The subject of the quarrel was *Mutterliebe* versus *Frauenliebe*, Rattermann defending the former and Zündt the latter, each contending the type of love in whose favor he argued was the greater.

We frequently find a striking display of Rattermann's love of variety in his poetry of the *Deutscher Pionier*. This is amply demonstrated in vol. IX of his magazine. Here the editor treats his readers to seven different types of poetic verse successively: Rondeau—*An den Lenz*, Kanzion—*An den Mai*, Madrigal—*Sommerabendphantasie*, Priameln—*Trinkspruch*, Sonnett—*Zweisilbige Charade*, Triolet—*Die Quelle, Die Sterne, Liebchens Augen*. Rattermann is truly a lover of color and variety. He loves and admires it in nature and finds in it an ever new and quickening spirit.

Another type of verse over which Rattermann claims the mastery is the classical ode. Marion D. Learned said: "It must not be overlooked that Rattermann himself is the chief of the classical ode in the German poetry of America."<sup>39</sup>

In his poetic taste for the classical he may have been carried away by the sayings of Goethe: "Klassisch ist das Gesunde, romantisch, das Kranke."<sup>40</sup> Rattermann always, like Iphigenie in Goethe's drama, was a poet who longed for depth, soul, emotion, and beauty.

His preference for the ode may be due to the fact that it more than any other type of poetic expression gives free reign to the poet's fancy to soar wherever it would, unhampered by rule or laws of rhyme and versification. It is especially adapted to express rapture, ecstasy, sublimity or even disorder and obscurity, in its inspiring song.<sup>41</sup> On one occasion Rattermann said: "Ich habe mich in den griechischen Versmassen vielfach geübt, in allen Variationen, wozu mir neben den Griechen und Römern selbst, besonders Klopstock und Platen die vorzüglichsten Vorbilder waren."<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> *German-American Annals*, XIII (1912), 261.

<sup>40</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, V, 151.

<sup>41</sup> H. Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (London, 1796), 129.

<sup>42</sup> I have exercised myself in Greek versification of various types, wherein besides the Greeks and Romans themselves, Klopstock and Platen have



Anticipating some uncalled-for criticism or difficulty in the analysis of his many varieties of odes, he sought to forestall objections by usually inserting a diagram of the metric scheme for each peculiar type. In his opinion the majority of critics are only acquainted with four or five of the most common types of odes and are inclined to consider every other form as faulty or incorrect. This erroneous idea he sought to eradicate by giving ample proof of the contrary in his numerous types.

Both in number and kinds of his poetic creations the sonnet takes precedence. It is his most significant contribution in the field of poetry, and we do not hesitate to say that as a sonneteer he holds the first rank among German-American poets. We have his own words for it: "Quantitatively, I have supplied the largest number of sonnets (over 600) after Lope de Vega, and qualitatively, I dare hope I will not be the last one. I know not whether they will satisfy the critical literary circles."<sup>43</sup>

The sonnet was a vehicle of expression in Rattermann's poetic life, as early as 1871, but the greater part of his sonnet collection was produced in his last years. The conditions under which they were written and their purpose in his career is beautifully set forth in the following sonnet:

Gesammelt hab ich sie in trüben Stunden,  
So wie ein Blinder Blumen pflückt im Garten;  
Am süßsen Duft erkannt' ich ihre Arten  
Und habe sie zum bunten Kranz gebunden.

Mir Armen ist das Augenlicht entschwunden,  
Und fühlend musst ich auf den Genius warten,  
Bis er die Blütenknospen mir, die zarten  
In Sang und Sprache, sorgsam festgebunden.

Mich trieb der Geist, mein Lebenswerk zu krönen,  
Denn in mir noch die Funken lebhaft glühten,  
In den Sonettenklängen fort zu tönen.  
Den vollen Kranz von wild und zahmen Blüten,  
Ich flocht ihn für die Freunde alles Schönen:  
Sie mögen ihn empfangen und behüten!<sup>44</sup>

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served as excellent models. Rattermann letters December 5, 1905; September 11, 1903.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, March 6, 1913.

<sup>44</sup> The thought of this sonnet is somewhat similar to that expressed in citation number 45.

The narrow limits of the sonnet, however difficult it may be of composition, make possible a finished poem without a long maintained effort. It was best suited to the conditions under which he was writing and a form ideally fitted to his time and his powers, for the greater number of his sonnets were written under very trying and adverse circumstances as we learn from a letter like the following:

Sie müssen bedenken, dass ich eigentlich das Dichten der Sonnette den trüben Stunden meiner Blindung zuschreiben muss. Halbblind kritzelte ich die Sonnette auf Blättern, so gut ich konnte. Was ich da gedacht habe, ist in den Sonetten niedergelegt. Sie müssen diese Dichtungen in der Weise beurteilen, wie sie erstanden sind, als Nothelfer in einer schlimmen Zeit.<sup>45</sup>

#### VATER RHEIN

In 1906, Rattermann started out on what we might consider his lengthiest and, perhaps, his most beautiful poetic creation—*Vater Rhein*. Though partially blind, he lacked neither the power of conception nor of execution for this large epic unit. His art of development of the theme shows spontaneity of thought and classic beauty in a large measure. The history of its inception and execution we find in his letter to Father Rothensteiner:

1871 habe ich ein grosses Gedicht, *Vater Rhein*, in Sonetten geschrieben, dessen unvollkommene Gestalt, 1872, als Pamphletchen gedruckt wurde. Es gefiel mir aber nicht, und ich machte den Anfang, die ursprüngliche Fassung gänzlich umzuarbeiten und zu einem Epos zu gestalten.—Die Idee—der Rheinstrom als Vater erzählt alles, was ihm auf seinem langen Wege von den Quellen bis zum Meere begegnet ist—ein reiches geographisches Bild des Rheintales und seiner Geschichte. Wie ein kaleidoskopisches Gebilde zieht die lange Reihe Sonette am Leser vorüber, jedes Sonett ein anderes Bild, und doch durch den Mund des redenden Vaters Rhein ein zusammenhängendes Ganzes.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> You must bear in mind that most of my sonnets originated during the dreary hours of my blindness. What my thoughts were at that time you will find reflected in the sonnets. Therefore, you must criticise or judge them according to the circumstances which gave rise to them. They were helpers in need during a distressed period of my life. Rattermann letters, April 7, 1913.

<sup>46</sup> In 1871 I wrote a lengthy poem in sonnets called *Vater Rhein*, which in its imperfect construction was printed in pamphlet format. But it

The Rhein has been glorified in poetry from the time of the Nibelungenlied and of medieval minnesingers to Richard Wagner, Heine, Brentano, Wolfgang Müller, Kerner, Uhland, Simrock, and innumerable others, but in a wreath of sonnets which traces the river in its historical significance, never before Rattermann. His is a most unique manner of presentation. Germany's beautiful river Rhein, celebrated in a cycle of glorious sonnets, is pictured in a manner worthy of all it has ever inspired in verse or song. Geography, history, mythology, religion, legend, traditions—all are brought into play in this charming epic and combined into one beautiful harmonious whole in this astonishing picture. Father Rothensteiner commented on it as follows:

In Bezug auf den Cyklus Vater Rhein—ich bewundere ihre geistige Frische und Tatkraft, solch einen gewaltigen Stoff zu verarbeiten und noch dazu in so schwieriger Form. Das hätte ich Ihnen nicht mehr zugetraut in Ihrem Alter. Das Ganze liest sich flott. Der ganze Zauber des goldenen Stromes geht einem auf bei Ihrer herrlichen Sängerfahrt. Vater Rhein ist das Hohelied unseres deutschen Stromes mit seinen Bergen und Burgen, seinen Städten und sagenumrankten Ruinen, und seinem sonnig heiteren Volke.<sup>47</sup>

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did not satisfy me and I set out to revise the original form and to fashion it into an epic. According to the plan, the Rhein as father of streams, relates all the adventures which he encountered in his long journey from the source of the river to the sea, presenting a beautiful geographical picture of the Rhine valley and its interesting history. Like a kaleidoscopic creation it passes before the reader in a chain of 130 individual sonnets, whose coherence and continuity of context present an entirety of thought.

Rattermann intended this to be his last literary monument. The presentation of this extraordinary cycle of sonnets has given him the greatest pleasure and he sought to adorn it with perfect uniformity in its various component parts. He believed that the plan of development was something entirely new. *Ibid.*, February 2, 1906; March 30, 1910; April 11, 1912.

<sup>47</sup> I admire your intellectual alertness and energy which is capable of working such heavy material into so difficult a form of poetry. I would not have believed you capable of the task in your advanced years. The whole story reads elegantly. The entire charm of the golden stream is unfolded by your poetic journey. *Vater Rhein* is the canticle of our German stream, with its hillsides and castles, its cities and legend-clad ruins, and its sunny cheerful people. Rothensteiner's letter to Rattermann, September 13, 1913.

Among the literary blossoms which have grown on American soil in modern times there is scarcely a more fascinating one to be found. The very nature of the theme must appeal to every German-American and strike a note of gratitude and pride in recalling the glorious history of the old Fatherland and the sterling qualities of his German ancestors.

The prologue or *Vorgesang* gives a general idea of this sonnet cycle of *Vater Rhein*:

Du sagenreichster Strom der ganzen Welt,  
 Du deutscher Rhein, dich ruf ich in die Schranken!  
 Verkünde uns die herrlichen Gedanken.  
 Die dich auf deiner Wanderschaft beseelt!

An hohen Taten hat es nie gefehlt,  
 Die sich um deine grünen Ufer ranken.  
 Aus deinem Borne alle Sanger tranken  
 Begeist'ung sich und mancher kuhne Held.

So rede denn, o Strom, mit freiem Munde,  
 Von hohen Edelmuten Wunderdingen!  
 Von kuhnem Wagen sprich und vom Gelingen.

Es lauscht dein Horerkreis rings in der Runde,  
 Bei Feuerwein, den deine Ufer bringen,  
 Wenn die gefullten Glaser hell erklingen! <sup>48</sup>

Only a man like Rattermann, could conceive and elaborate in such an exalted manner so imposing a German theme, even without ever having seen the Rhine. How he must have longed to visit Richard Wagner's Rheingold country and E. M. Arndt's object of patriotic fervor! He himself had so often joined the uplifting chorus, "Es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall."

The material for the other groups of sonnets was drawn from many sources and ideas, among them: the great masters of literature, music, and art, philosophical contemplation, phantasies, life,

<sup>48</sup> German Rhine, so rich in legendary lore, I challenge you to proclaim the glorious thoughts which animate you on your meandering journey. Your verdant shores abound in noble deeds; at your fountains bards and heroes imbibe their inspirations. Speak then, O stream, with open mind, of noble deeds and wonders great, of daring courage and success, while your admirers lounge at the goblets of fiery wine, your banks, productions. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 447.

friendship, nature, politics, and the most interesting of all, his own life and experiences as expressed in the groups of poems: *Vom Eigenen Herd* and *Erinnerungen aus meiner poetischen Lehrzeit*. They give us a fair index to his personality, his cultural trends and inclinations. These sonnets were inspired by the reminiscences and realities of his own life's story through youth, manhood, and old age. Into them he projects memories and aspirations, hopes, fears, sorrows, and joys. He finds pleasure in recalling events and persons that were a source of inspiration to him. In the absence of detailed biographical data, these sonnets may well serve as an authentic journal of his life.

Was zur Begeist'ung mir die Brust gehoben,  
Ich hab' es in der Seele tief empfunden:  
Nun möge auch das Werk den Dichter loben! <sup>40</sup>

Rattermann's book of sonnets is the last of his poetical productions and as he termed it: "Das Erzeugnis eines überlegten reiferen Geistes."<sup>50</sup> In his letters and elsewhere he speaks not unfavorably of his literary endeavors, but rather as a poet who is proud of his work. Even in his old age he is prepared to challenge the literary critics of his times with his latest work. As poetical creations, the sonnets deserve the praise and recognition of the literary world.

#### NATURE POETRY

We do not measure Rattermann's literary merits merely by his learning and eloquence, or by his important contributions to modern German literature, but also by his appreciative attitude towards the external world and his ability to set in relief the minutest as well as the greatest phenomenon of nature.

Even as a boy he was gifted with a keen sense of appreciation for nature and her beauties, which never left him but accompanied him through his long life as an uplifting factor and an inspiring companion. The following sonnet well illustrates their wholesome relation:

<sup>40</sup> The passions, affections, and thoughts which have animated my bosom, I have experienced to the depths of my soul. Now, may the work sing the poet's praise. *Ibid.*, 442.

<sup>50</sup> *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, XIX (1920), 113.

Mich zog es oft zum grünen Wald hinaus,  
 Wenn Sommerlüfte durch die Zweige wehten;  
 Da durft ich dann dem Schöpfer näher treten,  
 In dem naturgeweihten Gotteshaus.

Bald leises Flüstern, bald mit Sturmgebraus,  
 Als ob hier Geister Gottes Huld erflehten,  
 Mahnt' es das Herz zum andachtvollen Beten  
 Und alle Erdensorgen zogen aus.

In diesem hehren Tempel der Natur,  
 Umweht ein heilig Ahnen meine Seele,  
 Es sinkt die Endlichkeit zu Boden nieder.

Hier wand'l ich freudig auf des Ew'gen Spur,  
 Hier jauchzt sein Lob aus tausendfält'ger Kehle,  
 Und Himmelsseligkeit umfängt mich wieder.<sup>51</sup>

According to Hans Röhl an appreciation of nature is an essential part of lyric poetry and finds expression in the works of all great lyricists.<sup>52</sup> Using this as a criterion, Rattermann's inborn love and attraction for nature would place him in the rank of great poets. Father Rothensteiner conceded this when he wrote:

Sie erinnern mich sehr an unsern Herder, sowohl in Hinsicht auf den Reichtum an Gedanken, als auch der Vielfältigkeit der poetischen Formen. Die Oden sind meistens gedankentiefe Dichtungen, von schönstem Wohlklang der Verse. Ihre schönen Lieder so leicht und graziös wie Schmetterlinge, sollten überall Anklang finden. Dass Sie gerade im Alter die schwierigere Form des Klanggedichtes bevorzugten, dürfte sich wohl aus Ihrer unvergleichlichen Sprach- und Formkunst erklären.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> I was frequently drawn to the green forests where gentle zephyrs floated through the branches. There in nature's consecrated house of God, I approached closer to the Creator. Soft whisperings and furious storms exhorted me to fervent prayer. In this sacred temple of nature, my soul over-awed takes its flight from the finite to the Infinite. Here, where the bliss of Heaven embraces me again, do I gladly wander in the paths of the Eternal One. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 317.

<sup>52</sup> *Wörterbuch zur deutschen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1931), 168.

<sup>53</sup> In wealth of thought and also in the diversity of poetic types you remind me of our Herder. The odes are profound in thought and melodious in verse, while your charming lyrics so light and graceful should meet the approval of all critics. But that you should have shown a marked preference in old age for the difficult form of the sonnet, can only be attributed to your perfect mastery of language and form. Rothensteiner letters, March 31, 1914.

To Rattermann, nature in all her moods affords rare delights. He loves her skies, her woodlands, her streams and her flowers. All speak to him and dispose him to solemn thoughts. His keen observation and sensitiveness to harmony, music, color, sound, and beauty, are remarkable. In his group of sonnets—*Die Jahreszeiten*—he becomes nature's interpreter. His impressions of nature throughout the year are represented. Frequently, too, nature is a symbol of his own life. Winter does not appeal to him, for its message is that of sadness—

Der Zypresse dunkles Haupt  
 Deckt nun weisses Silberhaar,  
 Und des Lebens Lust beraubt,  
 Schläft der Urwald stumm und starr.<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps the poet recognized a similarity between his last joyless years of blindness and the long dreary winter. And how truly was not his old age symbolized in:

Nun schlafen die Blumen, die kleinen,  
 Es trauert der Buchenwald,  
 Still einsam verlassen von seinen  
 Liebgästen, die mit ihrem reinen,  
 Klanghellen Gesang ihn durchschallt.<sup>55</sup>

Spring has, of course, some lovely descriptive lines to interpret to man nature's message of joy and life:

Du holder Lenz, du breitest deine Schwingen  
 Nun wieder über Feld und Fluren aus,  
 Und im Gefolge eilest du, zu bringen  
 Den Frohsinn, jung erneut, in jedes Haus.  
 Der Vöglein Schar mit ihrem muntern Singen,  
 Die Kinder Flora's, die uns rings umdringen,  
 Geschmückt mit Perlen frischen Morgentau's,  
 Dies Alles, Alles konntest du vollbringen.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> The dark crown of the cypress is covered now with hoary hair and the primeval forest, divested of the joy of life, sleeps silently and motionless. *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 191.

<sup>55</sup> The flowers are sleeping and the great beech forest, abandoned and forsaken by the loving guests who filled it with their song, mourns. *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>56</sup> Charming spring, you spread your wings again over fields and plains, and in your train follow renewed cheerfulness and mirth, which enter

Rattermann had a natural love and veneration, so typical of the German, for the great deep forest, for wild flowers and woodland songsters. As a "Jugend-Erinnerung" he treasured the memory of them throughout his long life in America. In this love and admiration of nature he proves himself the follower of Klopstock, the Goettinger Hain, and Herder. The forest is to him a great mystical cathedral in which the greatness of the Creator is proclaimed by thousands of tongues. In spirit he joins the numberless hosts of God's creatures, proclaiming His glory. He delights in the recollection of the happy days of his youth, of hours spent in the shady forest, his favorite retreat, and deplores the destruction of our noble forests and with it the deprivation of happy wholesome recreation which nature affords man.<sup>57</sup>

To Rattermann, the great outdoors is the sanctuary wherein the soul is raised to the contemplation of the Creator. Much of his own religion or "Naturphilosophie" was involved in this mystic veneration of the forest and the language of birds and flowers. But not only the majestic, the imposing grandeur in nature attracted our poet with its overwhelming and inspiring magnitude, he also found the greatest delight in the observation of the humblest creations; in the modest little flower, a tiny bird, a murmuring brook, or a homely shrub. They all carried a message for him which he in turn translated into song. We have a beautiful example of this in *Abendlandschaft* in which the poet in a transport of joy and rapture sings of the simple, familiar everyday scenes of the outdoor life. Nothing escapes his keen observation, the mossy-covered earth, the rippling spring, the songsters in the trees, the golden fields, the happy reaper, the lowing cattle, the rich clover, the crystal lake, the light skiff, the playing fish, and the lowering shadows,—all lend their peculiar charm to this poetic setting.<sup>58</sup>

Even in old age Rattermann at heart was the happy youth to whom the birds sang gayly, the flowers blossomed charmingly, every home. The little birds with their lively song, the children of Flora thronging about us, bedecked with pearls of fresh morning dew,—all this you could effect. *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Rattermann, *Nord-Amerikanische Vögel in Liedern* (Cincinnati, 1904).

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 63.



and the woods rustled lustily. Nature still held her endless charms for him and served to increase the vigor of his poetic impulse.

It has often been said that German-American poetry is deficient in individuality; that it is a mere echo of the poetry produced by the native German poets. But this accusation is unfair in the case of Rattermann, for with the abundance of new poetical matter found in America, the vision of the German-American poet was opened and ever widened. The new resources and inspirations which America's natural beauty, her wealth, and her freedom offered, were fountain-heads from whence flowed verse and song imbued with a truly American spirit. Regarding this Americanizing of German poetry, we have his own statement:

"Wir sind in Amerika, und sollten dies in unseren Dichtungen offenbaren. Ich versuchte wenigstens die Gedichte mit neuen Ideen auszustatten. Ich trieb meinen Pegasus aus der Allgemeinheit und leitete ihn nach unserem Lande Amerika."<sup>59</sup>

We mention a few of these typically American-clad poems which give evidence of Rattermann's loyalty to America: *Washington*, *Grover Cleveland*, *Auf der Prairie*, *Indianersommer*, *Der Stumpredner*, *Grant's Ankunft in Hades*, *Adelina Pattie*, *Amerika*, *Kolumbia*, *Cincinnati*, *Die Königin des Westens*, *Niagara*, *Der Urwald*, and *Am 4. Juli*. It would be too much like tabulation to recount all the genuine American themes which Rattermann treated in his variety of poetic forms.

One production essentially American in spirit and material is his separate volume of *Nord-Amerikanische Vögel in Liedern*. The singer-poet does full justice to the American woodland songsters. He vindicates them against the malicious attack of Nicolaus Lenau who having spent some time (1832-1833), in America in general discontent and pessimistic mood remarked on his return to Germany: "Amerika ist ein Land, in welchem die Vögel nicht singen und die Blumen nicht duften."<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> "We live in America and our poetry should manifest an American tone or spirit. I endeavored to clothe my verse in a new garb, or to drive my Pegasus out of the general field into our country." *Rattermann letters*, April 26, 1906.

<sup>60</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, XI, 419. The proof of this assertion is doubtful.

This little volume of *Nord-Amerikanische Vögel in Liedern* comprises fifty-five original German poems which glorify our best known and most beautiful American song birds. Our poet endeavors to present each bird in its native life and environment. With few exceptions, this collection of poems is the result of personal observation and study of bird life. It may be traced to the early period of Rattermann's life in America, when as a youth he found his delight in nature's bowers.

Since he had never visited Colorado, Arizona, California, and Texas, he depended on H. Mehrling's *Die Nord-Amerikanische Vogelwelt* (Milwaukee, 1891), for an accurate description of the birds of those states.

This little anthology of American songsters in the form of German poems is not only charming and beautiful in its poetic conception and execution, but it possesses at the same time a significant educational value as a nature study. Rattermann's purpose was to give to German-Americans, particularly to youth, a study of bird life in its native American setting and to acquaint them with the beauty and glory of nature as the poet himself saw it. His daughter Katherine was secretary-treasurer of the Audubon Society of Ohio for many years. Her interest and delight in ornithology, no doubt, inspired the father to write and publish this volume in 1904.

As a fitting companion to his *Nord-Amerikanische Vögel*, Rattermann wrote *Amerikanische Blumen in Liedern*, a group of seventy poems, many of them annotated with scientific data. These, however, do not appear in a separate volume but are incorporated in his *Gesammelte Werke*. The collection includes not only names and classifications of flowers but portrays them in all their beauty, color, language, and charm, according to the season and setting. The meadows, fields, woodlands, prairies, gardens, hills, and mountains, all have their own peculiar flora. Only the keenest observer of nature and lover of the great outdoors could paint such a glowing array of American beauties. These poems had their origin in the earlier years of his life in Cincinnati.

The significance of Rattermann's words: "Although born in Europe, I am in a patriotic sense an American,"<sup>61</sup> is evident

<sup>61</sup> Rattermann letters, May 23, 1905.

more or less in all his writings. We find America extolled and elevated in glowing verse; her great men honored; her natural resources praised; her heroes eulogized; and her liberty exalted in his poetic exuberance. He symbolized the union of the German and American spirit of poetry in a unique manner. Among his possessions he treasured a leaf of a linden tree from Klopstock's tomb at Ottensen, and another from the "Reuter-Eiche" at Skavenhagen—with these he united a golden leaf of the American maple tree, thus forming a cherished symbolic union of German-American poetry. The poet rejoiced in the possession of this sacred keepsake and in the newly welded bond. His hopes have been realized, the German song has already taken root in the distant American field of poetry.<sup>62</sup>

#### THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT IN RATTERMANN'S POETRY

It is not the purpose of the writer to investigate the sources of Rattermann's religious persuasions, whether they be Spinoza's or St. Augustine's, but only in so far as it adds to the completion or the evaluation of the topic under consideration. We must remember that poets are more men of feeling than reasoning. They speak as artists and literary men, not as theologians, and consequently we are not justified in applying to their words the rigid interpretations of a theologian. In short, we must use prudent reserve in reading the mind of a poet from the words he writes.<sup>63</sup>

It was never Rattermann's aim or ambition to write or argue for the support or promotion of any class or kind of religion, for he said: "In all questions of a religious and sectarian nature, I maintain an independent and neutral attitude. I do not wish to represent or to oppose either of them."<sup>64</sup>

This was Rattermann's attitude as late as 1910. Five years earlier, having sent his manuscript to the poet Rothensteiner, he apparently feared that the latter might misinterpret some of the philosophical viewpoints as expressed in his book of aphorisms,

<sup>62</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 324.

<sup>63</sup> L. N. Shea, *Lowell's Religious Outlook*, Dissertation, Catholic University (Washington, 1926).

<sup>64</sup> Rattermann letters, March 30, 1910.

*Meine Weltanschauung*, as he termed it, for he wrote as a mitigating factor to his friend as follows:

Wenn Sie meine Gedichte lesen, müssen Sie bedenken, dass ich ein Weltkind bin und mich über manches ergehe, das hier und dort unlieb aufgefasst werden dürfte. Betrachten Sie mich als Weltkind, der vom Standpunkt des Natürlichen auch gegen religiöse Exzesse schreibt.<sup>65</sup>

It must have been under the influence of a strong provocation or an irate spirit that Rattermann gave vent to his feelings when he wrote:

Das sind die Frommen nicht, die nicht beachten,  
Was Andern ihre Seligkeit bereitet!  
Wo man in blindem Fanatismus streitet,  
Da müssen sich die Sinne stets umnachten.<sup>66</sup>

Had his pride been wounded, or was it to vindicate his religious indifference that he had assumed this attitude? Whatever the cause may have been, Rattermann at heart still had faith, for it cropped out willingly or unwillingly, to betray the hidden spark which lurked in his soul. His early religious training by a sainted mother was too deep-seated to be forgotten or obliterated. Religious passages and sentiments are not wanting in his poetry, as we shall see. A recollection of divine services which he attended as a youth offers a splendid example of the faith which still lived in his heart:

Zum hohen Dom in meinen Jugendjahren,  
Bin ich an manchem Feiertag gegangen,  
Wohin mich zogen, wenn die Glocken klangen  
Musik und Sang und fromme Beter-Scharen.

*O alma virgo!* klang's aus Frauenmunde  
So wundersüss: *Spes alta cordis mei!*  
Das weckte mir im Innern selig Sehnen.

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<sup>65</sup> When reading my poetry, remember that I am a worldling, who launches forth into many things that may be interpreted unfavorably. From the standpoint of the natural, I may also write against religious excesses. *Ibid.*, December 5, 1905.

<sup>66</sup> Those can not be considered devout and godly who regard not the happiness of others. Where wrangling and blind fanaticism rule, there the intellect must be shrouded in darkness. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIb, 409.

Wo solcher Sang dringt aus dem Herzensgrunde,  
 Ruft es die Andacht wach zur *Mater Dei*,  
 Und aus den Augen quollen meine Tränen.<sup>67</sup>

The spark of faith had not departed from the heart of one who made this profession in his old age: "Ein inneres selig Sehnen! . . . Andacht zur *Mater Dei*. . . Und aus den Augen quollen meine Tränen."<sup>68</sup>

Do these fervent sentiments not speak for themselves—can heat issue from dead coals? Another evidence of faith we have in the following:

Wir wachen täglich auf zum Licht,  
 Wenn neu erklingt des Morgens "Werde!"  
 Und dieses "Werde!" ewig spricht  
 Zu all den Ihren Mutter Erde.  
 Warum denn zweifeln in der Nacht?  
 Kein Stäubchen wird die Zeit verwehen!  
 Das Alte sinkt mit seiner Pracht,  
 Das Neue muss daraus erstehen!<sup>69</sup>

This stanza apparently bespeaks faith in the future eternal life, or the consolation found in the thought of eternal life. His declining years kept the thought of death and the longing for a blessed hereafter constantly before him, for on one occasion he remarks: "Auch mir steht die Stunde meines Abscheidens von diesem Leben beständig vor Augen."<sup>70</sup>

In his ballad *Imelda und Azzo* the lovers plan to elope in order to prevent the father of the girl from giving her in marriage to

<sup>67</sup> During my youth I attended services in the majestic cathedral on many a festival day, attracted by the music and song, and the host of pious worshippers.

Sweetest strains of woman's voice pealed forth: *O alma Virgo! Spes alta cordis mei!* that wakened in my soul a blissful longing.

Where the depths of the heart pour forth such song, devotion to the *Mater Dei* is enkindled—and from my eyes issued copious tears. *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>68</sup> The soul's longing . . . devotion to the Mother of God . . . filled my eyes with tears. *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> We awaken daily to new life and light at the sound of the great *Fiat!* Why doubt when night breaks in upon you? Not a particle of dust shall time destroy. The old sinks with its glory, the new must rise therefrom. *Ibid.*, I, 25.

<sup>70</sup> I am constantly mindful of the hour of my death. Rattermann letters, April 7, 1909.

a man whom she does not love. Rattermann puts these words on the lips of Azzo:

. . . . .  
 Sprach Azzo; nimmer weich' ich von meinem Platz  
 An deiner Seite! Lass uns entfliehen! Es führt mein Arm  
 Dich sicher nach Pistoja, dort sind wir ausser Harm.  
 Ein Priester soll dort segnen der Ehe heil'gen Bund,  
 Dann wird uns wohl Versöhnung von deinem Vater kund.<sup>71</sup>

Rattermann's attitude towards the sacrament of matrimony is that of the Church. He does not speak of it lightly, but with a reverential tone—"Der Ehe heil'gen Bund." He also states in plain language that this holy contract shall be entered into in the presence of a priest: "Ein Priester soll segnen der Ehe heil'gen Bund." He carried out this precept in his own life, for both of his marriages were performed in the Church and blessed by a priest.

In the spring of 1864, Rattermann was present at the dedication ceremonies of the Catholic cathedral of Philadelphia. Sister Agnes Gubert, known in the world of song as *die amerikanische Catalani*, and later upon entering the Visitation order as *die Nachtigall von De Chantal*, sang the *Benedictus* of Mozart's *Mass* 7. He was so transported by this angelic voice that almost fifty years later the memories thereof cast a charm over him, for he said: "Ihr *Benedictus* ist mir nie aus der Erinnerung entflohen." As a sacred keepsake he left for future generations the beautiful ballad *Benedictus*:

*Benedictus qui venit!*—Der Gruss erklang  
 So wundervoll rein in das Herz und Ohr,—  
 Wo hob wohl zaubrischer je Gesang  
 Des Lauschers Seele zu Gott empor?—  
 Den Lauscher entzückte die Nachtigall,  
 Und füllte mit Wonne die ahnende Brust:  
*Benedictus*, so perlte die Melodie,  
*Qui venit in nomine Domini!*  
 Es hauchte quellend der Töne Flut  
 Die gottbegnadigte Sängerin aus:  
 Wie Engelsklänge in flammender Glut  
 Durchweht es das weite Gotteshaus;

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<sup>71</sup> Never will I depart from your side. Let us elope! I will lead you safely to Pistoja. There a priest shall bless our sacred bonds. We may then learn of your father's reconciliation. *Gesammelte Werke*, II, 5.

Und selig schwebt es fort und fort  
 Ein himmlischer Odem am heil'gen Ort:  
*Benedictus*, so strömte die Melodie,  
*Qui venit in nomine Domini!*

Im Nonnengewand die Sängerin kniet,  
 Ihre Seele erfüllt vom heiligen Geist,  
 Und wie sie den Himmel geöffnet sieht,  
 Ihre Stimme entgegen den Kommenden preist.  
 Den Lauscher entzückte die Nachtigall,  
 Die göttliche Sängerin von De Chantal.  
*Benedictus*, so jauchzte die Melodie,  
*Qui venit in nomine Domini.*<sup>72</sup>

Do not these religious allusions speak for themselves? "Das Gotteshaus—am heil'gen Ort." What are his convictions that make it a holy place? Are they not reverential at least? Again, "Der Himmel ist geöffnet—ihre Stimme den Kommenden preist." How beautifully he expresses his belief in Him Who descends upon the altar at the words of consecration! These words could only come from the heart of a man whose faith in the Real Presence of God in the Blessed Sacrament was still alive, or at least dormant.

Another evidence of faith and trust in God's providence is expressed in his *Neujahrs-Gruss*:

Wir bauen auf des Himmels reichen Segen  
 Ein Auge wird ja über uns stets wachen  
 Und schirmen uns auf allen unsern Wegen! <sup>73</sup>

A group of poems dealing with religious subjects in art may be considered another demonstration of Rattermann's faith. In these sonnets he loses himself in ecstatic praises of Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper, Albrecht Dürer's Adoration of the Holy Trinity,

<sup>72</sup> *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini!*—the greeting resounded.—the devoted singer beholds the heavens opened during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and in a rapture of ecstasy her angelic voice proclaims the coming of the heavenly Guest. *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini!*—has ever a song more magically transported its hearers to the realms above! The spirit is filled with heavenly delight. The swelling voice of the god-favored singer fills this spacious temple with a glowing ardor, as a celestial breath in a sacred abode. *Ibid.*, IIIa, 414.

<sup>73</sup> We depend upon heaven's abundant blessing; an all-seeing Eye constantly watches over us and protects us through life's devious ways. *Ibid.*, IIIb, 309.

Raphael's Madonna di San Sisto, Titian's Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, Murillo's Immaculate Conception, and Holbein's Madonna. These verses abound in sentiments of faith, devotion, love, worship, and an atmosphere of reverential awe. The sonnets are all inspirational and betoken a Christian-like reverence and faith in the holy mysteries of the Catholic religion.

Rattermann asserts that it was the ardent faith of the Middle Ages that created these heavenly masterpieces, and he does not hesitate to say that modern art has deteriorated for the want of faith. It has forfeited the artistic impulse of the ancients and has failed to find exalted greatness in the modern age.

The excerpts which we have quoted should amply prove that Rattermann's faith was not dead but that he was still guided by its principles. He could have made no better admission in favor of the Catholic religion than when, as we mentioned before, he said: "Bei den gläubigen Katholiken sollte der Weltschmerz nie Einkehr halten können,"<sup>74</sup> by which he meant to say that the true religion excludes melancholy and sadness, and when faithfully practiced and carried out in daily life, it is the greatest source of happiness to a soul imbued with faith, hope and love.

#### RATTERMANN, THE ENEMY OF NATURALISM

Rattermann's opposition to the realistic and naturalistic writings of the modern age is very pronounced; he denounces them on every occasion:

Ich nehme den Handschuh gegen die heutigen Ibsen, Sudermann, Hauptmann, und A. Holz Nachahmer auf. Ist denn die Menschheit jetzt zum Mistpfluß hinabgestiegen, dass man nur die Versunkenheit mehr darstellen kann. Dieser sich gegenwärtig immer breiter machenden Strömung in der Poesie, besonders der dramatischen, die sich auf den Wegen der niedrigen Sinnlichkeit, des Lasters und Elends ihre Nahrung sucht, wollte ich meine tief empfundene Verachtung ausdrücken.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Pessimism and melancholy find no shelter and abode in the heart of a believing Catholic. Rattermann letters, April 7, 1909.

<sup>75</sup> I challenge the followers and imitators of Ibsen, Sudermann, Hauptmann, and A. Holz. Has mankind descended to the lowest abasement that only sensual degradation can be presented. For all present day trends in dramatic poetry which move in the path of sensuality and vice, I express my deepest aversion and contempt. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIa, 1, *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, XIX (1920), 114, 127.



He also expressed his resentful attitude towards the naturalistic trend of modern writers as follows: "In the old Fatherland intellectual beauty has at the present time been drawn into the quagmire of vileness and infamy by the disciples of obscenity—Ibsen, Tolstoy, Dumas, Zola, and others."<sup>76</sup> Naturalism is a disease which has seized upon the modern literary world and has seriously afflicted the mind and spirit of poets, dramatists and novelists.

The following is Rattermann's rebuke to the naturalistic poets:

Die keusche Schönheit lebt nicht in eurem Geiste;  
Ihr sucht das Edle nicht in der Gottnatur!  
Nur an dem Niedern, am Gemeinen  
Zeigt ihr, o Dichter, eu'r Wohlgefallen.

Ihr strebt den Glauben tief zu erschüttern und  
Verlöscht den Funken reinern Glückes uns;  
Das Lied, das Schiller sang der Glocke,  
Habt ihr versenkt in den Sumpf der Sünde.

Liebt ihr das Elend, das ihr zusammenwebt;  
Liebt ihr die Schande, welche ihr Ehre nennt?  
Ist euren Sinnen, eurem Herzen,  
Sodom-Gomorrha das Sitten-Eden?

O kehret um von eurer Verführungsbahn,  
Ihr Sündenkuppler! lenket zurück den Geist  
Zum Pfade der stillen reinen Tugend,  
Welchen die edlen Gemüter wandeln.<sup>77</sup>

This should suffice to impress us with the clean, substantial character of the poet Rattermann, whose sole aim and life's work was to uplift and ennoble mankind, to cultivate a taste for the refined things of life, and to wage constant battle against the obscene and destructive element which threatens society.

In his own home city, Cincinnati, he condemned the German theatre for producing the plays of Ibsen, Hauptmann and Sudermann, and according to the words of his daughter:

<sup>76</sup> Rattermann letters, March 6, 1913.

<sup>77</sup> Chaste beauty has no abode in your spirit; you seek not the noble in God's nature, but find your satisfaction in the vile things of life. You undermine the faith and extinguish the spark of pure happiness. Do you love the picture which you paint or the infamy which you call honor? Has Sodom-Gomorhha become the Eden of your morals? I beseech you to turn from your seductive ways to the path of sound virtue on which the nobler minds wander. *Gesammelte Werke*, IIIa, 294.

He failed to see what was to be gained by such a revelation of indency. Life has much that is unpleasant about it, but we should aim to lift the people out of the mire through high ideals rather than to fill the theatre with sordid details and filthy stories.

And substantiating these ideas she added :

Father was an idealist, who believed sincerely that all things should be valued according to their truth and their ability to uplift rather than degrade the masses. I recall his repugnance against the so-called realists who portrayed life from a low and ignoble point of view. Father bought all of their works, made an exhaustive study of them, and readily condemned the theory, that life—the ugly as well as the beautiful—must be realistically presented. He contended that spiritual growth came through striving for an ideal and only in that way could the present be an improvement on the past.<sup>78</sup>

Rattermann stands in striking contrast to some of the greater German poets of his time. His every page is spotless. One sees there no stain of the dross and filth of life's ugliness and most repulsive pages. In his writings we will search in vain for anything that borders on the low and vulgar. There is a purity of thought and expression which places him above many men of genius who have perverted the high purpose of art.

#### THE LITERARY HISTORIAN

Rattermann was not satisfied merely to give his own literary productions to the future student and lover of literature, but he also rescued from oblivion the German-American poets of the first half of the nineteenth century. Painfully, he collected their scattered poems from the remotest corners of the country in order to present to the literary world and to posterity the earliest sheaves of German poetry in America.

This collection of poetry of the past decades is a rare one, for it is the first of its kind in this country. If Rattermann had done no more than to anthologize these earliest attempts of German-American literary men, he would have merited a place among the great promoters of culture. The collection comprises the work of eighty-five poets, possessed of varying degrees of poetic inspiration.

<sup>78</sup> Letters of Katherine Rattermann, November 10, 1935; December 15, 1934.

Three volumes of *Gesammelte Werke* (X, XI, XII) known as *Biographikon und Dichter-Album* are devoted to the poetry and biographies of these pioneers.

We have Rattermann's own account of this work in his letter:

Über ein drittel Jahrhundert lang sammelte ich für eine deutsch-amerikanische Anthologie. Ich habe Dutzende von Reisen gemacht nach Osten und Westen, mit grossen Auslagen; Drucke und Abschriften erworben, und tausende von Gedichten zusammen getragen von Dichtern, deren Namen in der Öffentlichkeit nicht einmal bekannt sind. Ich hielt immer noch zurück mit der Publikation, weil mir noch etliche Lücken bekannt waren.<sup>79</sup>

He protests against those literary historians, who sit at home in comfort and wait for others to send them the material which they have acquired by the most strenuous efforts, in order to compile and publish anthologies which are nothing more than mere collections of poems. According to Rattermann's conception of an anthology, it should be "Ein höheres Vollbild der Leistungen unserer deutsch-amerikanischen Dichterwelt."<sup>80</sup> He was frequently called upon for literary contribution, but when the application came from one whom he considered as not sufficiently schooled in the art of poetics to distinguish between quality and quantity, he was reluctant in giving out his work for indiscriminate use, but demanded a critical ability on the part of the collector.

That Rattermann took no little pride and interest in his work of resurrecting the literary works of the past is seen from the following excerpt of his letter:

Ich kenne alle deutsche Dichter Amerikas—mehr als ein Halbtausend, von denen ich Gedichte gesammelt habe, und habe über deren Erzeugnisse strenge und unparteiisch geurteilt. Alle deutsch-amerikanischen Dichter, ausser Franz Lieber und Karl Follen, vor 1848 oder 1850 eingewandert,

<sup>79</sup> For more than a third of a century I have collected poetry for a German-American anthology. At the cost of great expense I made dozens of journeys to the East and West, acquired prints and transcripts, and amassed thousands of poems of authors whose names were not known to the reading public. Yet, I hesitated with the publication of the same, because I realized that there was still a gap, the list was as yet incomplete. Rattermann letters, May 23, 1905.

<sup>80</sup> A worthy representation of the accomplishment of our German-American literary world. *Ibid.*

sind bis jetzt nur in zerstreuten Blättern bekannt, die ich gesammelt habe. Aus dem ganzen deutsch-amerikanischen Dichterfeld hebe ich hervor diese sieben Dichter: Wagner, Kirchhoff, Brühl, Butz, Krez, Dasch, Zündt, und Sie (Rothensteiner) als achten für den Parnassus, als Jünger der Muse.<sup>81</sup>

Rattermann's *Dichter-Album* introduces us to a long list of early German poets, and one or several of the characteristic poems of each, presented as a fair specimen of his particular type and tendency.<sup>82</sup> The fact that they are of an earlier period does not make them inferior to the poets of later times.

In the poems of these early writers the humblest reader might find pleasure and profit, while in them, too, the most cultured and refined might discover truths and beauties worthy of consideration.

Volume IX of *Gesammelte Werke* presents in printed form some of Rattermann's lectures delivered before the members of the German Literary Club of Cincinnati, (1881-1900). The topics are all of an historical literary nature, dealing with prominent German authors from Opitz to Geibel. With a deep poetic insight he analyzes the individual authors and criticizes their works. Wherever Rattermann carried the message of the world's literature, he be-

<sup>81</sup> I knew all the German poets of America, more than five hundred, whose poems I have collected and criticised rigorously and impartially. All the German-American poets who have emigrated to America before 1848 or 1850, with the exception of Franz Lieber and Karl Follen, have up till now only been known in scattered papers, which I collected. From the entire field of German authors, I selected seven poets: Wagner, Brühl, Kirchhoff, Butz, Krez, Dasch, Zündt, and you (Rothensteiner) as the eighth one for the Parnassus, as disciples of the Muses. Rattermann letters, April 25, 1906.

<sup>82</sup> For the reader who may not have access to the *Gesammelte Werke* of Rattermann, we append a partial list of the German-American poets from 1800-1850, which Rattermann practically discovered and presented: J. B. Stallo, J. L. Tellkampff, Karl Backhaus, Georg Herwegh, Friedrich Gerstäcker, Johann G. Seidel, Klemens Hammer, Maximilian Oertel, Alfred Schücking, Samuel Ludvig, Julius Weyse, Franz Ciolina, Karl Weitershausen, Robert Clemen, Eduard Mühl, Franz Grater, T. Hilgard, Ludwig Hub, F. K. Castelhun, Peter Carabin, Anton Henne, Karl Follen, Johann Martin Henni, Wilhelm Wagner, Jakob Schmidt, Christ Sartorius, Ludwig Stork, Friedrich Münch, Gustav Körner, Bertha Ronbauer, Friedrich Lüdeking, Katherina Schüking, Adolph Bauer, Franz Lieber, Heinrich Harbaugh, Talvj (Frau Robinson), Ludwig Bosecker, Doktor Oswald Seidensticker, Heinrich Koch, and Doktor Karl Beck.

lieved in giving the very best. He was wont to say: "Wer kein Getreide zur Aussaat hat, der soll auch seine Disteln nicht ins Weizenfeld der Literatur streuen."<sup>83</sup>

The subjects of his lectures were Martin Opitz, Abraham a Santa Clara, Lessing, Klopstock, G. A. Bürger, A. W. Schlegel, Börne, Schopenhauer, Theodor Körner, Platen, Heine, and E. Geibel. In each lecture he presented a detailed sketch of the author's life, his training, associations, travels, and literary activities. Rattermann's critical comments betray a thorough knowledge of the subject under discussion and a mind capable of deciding on the merits or demerits of the individual author and poet. By means of these lectures he aimed to educate his audience or his readers and to bring the German authors nearer to the hearts of those interested in German-American literature.

Rattermann's interest in music and his exalted appreciation of the sister art of literature, as he termed it, has already been discussed. It may, however, be well to note here that his love of music induced him to make his favorite masters of harmony the subject of many of his lectures.<sup>84</sup> He fully realized the uplifting and ennobling power of good music and he sought to inculcate a love for it in the hearts of his fellowmen.

Volumes IV and V of *Gesammelte Werke* have thus far not been given any specific consideration but were included rather in the general term of Rattermann's collected works. These two volumes of *Aphorismen und Agrionien* are somewhat difficult to classify as type material because they are neither all prose nor poetry. Their very nature sets them apart from the other productions. He designates them as his *Weltanschauung auf allen Feldern des menschlichen Wissens*. They present his thoughts or views on politics, philosophy, religion, law, education, literature, history, art, love, women, citizenship, and the state. The aphorisms are a true index of his state of mind or opinion regarding

<sup>83</sup> "Whoever has no good grain to sow in the wheatfield of literature, should also refrain from sowing thistles." *Ibid.*, IV, 123.

<sup>84</sup> Volume VIII, *Gesammelte Werke* is of significant value for all the admirers of the great masters of music, for it preserves in book form Rattermann's lectures on Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Karl Maria von Weber, and Lortzing. (The latter does not rank with the immortals. His merit is based on his composition and direction of comic opera.)

these particular topics. After sending Volumes IV and V in manuscript form to his friend, he wrote concerning them:

Es sind dies meine philosophischen Anschauungen auf allen Feldern des menschlichen Wissens. Sie brauchen über den 2. Abschnitt-*Vernunft und Wissen* nicht zu erschrecken, weil ich darin eine Art meines eigenen Glaubensbekenntnisses ablege, ich bin nämlich Skeptiker geworden, doch bin ich damit keines Menschen Glauben zu nahe getreten oder treten wollen, sondern habe nur meinen eigenen Geist offen bekannt. Ich habe meinem Geiste Ausdruck gegeben. Dass Sie mit meinen Ansichten nicht völlig einverstanden sein würden, wusste ich wohl, denn als Priester müssen Sie von Ihrem Beruf überzeugt sein.<sup>85</sup>

In his religious and philosophical attitude as expressed in the book of aphorisms, there is apparently a contradiction to the sentiments stated in some of his poetry which gives evidence of faith and of truly Christian principles. His *Vernunft und Wissen* contains a strong sprinkling of keen satire and cutting wit which seems to touch on the extreme. While his attitude towards the state and politics in general is that of a well-informed and experienced citizen, it is very personal. Many of the points which he stresses are old and time-worn, and are apt to lose their efficacy by too frequent a use of them.

Rattermann's theory on the value of the novel, the merits or demerits of the various novelists is rather an individual opinion, depending on his general attitude or trend in the field. On a whole, his books of aphorisms reveal a wide range of thought and contain many a grain of gold, but they are also mixed with a generous quantity of alloy, especially where matters of religion and philosophy are concerned. Oswald Seidensticker, his friend and critic, in estimating their general merits, remarked: "Eine reiche Gedankenwelt offenbart sich in ihren Aphorismen und Vertrautheit mit den verschiedenen Sphären des gesellschaftlichen Lebens, die sich auf Erfahrung und Beobachtung stützt."<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> "These represent my philosophical views in all branches of human learning. Do not become alarmed, they are merely a profession of my own creed, of my scepticism. I have, however, no intention of criticising the religion of any man, but have only admitted my own attitude of mind. I realize that you cannot agree with my views, for as a priest you must be convinced of your calling. Rattermann letters, February 2, 1906.

<sup>86</sup> An ideal world and a thorough acquaintance of the various spheres

## CONCLUSION OF A POETIC CAREER

Although in his eightieth year, Rattermann still hoped to complete the last volumes of his *Gesammelte Werke*, for most of them were finished in manuscript form.

On this eightieth birthday, when the world still looked bright to him, he wrote his *Abschied von der Muse.-Ende der Poesie*. To his friend, Father Rothensteiner, he wrote shortly after: "Nur die Prosa soll noch lebendig bleiben, so lange der Himmel meinen Geist frisch erhält, denn auch die Prosa gehört in den Bereich der schönen Literatur, wenn sie idiomatisch, rein und ideal ist."<sup>87</sup>

He looked upon his poetical career not as a mere pastime or recreation but as one who feels an inward urge or impulse to uplift society, promote culture, and diffuse sunshine and beauty through his messages. For him, it was a duty, a mission, a religion.

But it was not granted to him to finish the last volumes, for blindness, partial deafness, and poor health prevented him from rhyming and searching any more.

Though business affairs controlled more than sixty years of his life, his artistic ideals were never impaired but grew with age. His poetic fire ran as an invigorating current throughout his business career. Critics have recognized Rattermann's natural gifts. They agree that if he had had sufficient leisure to ramble in literary paths he would have become as prominent in the field of German-American poetry as he was pre-eminent in historical fields. Only uncontrollable circumstances, not the lack of born ability, kept him from reaching the highest pinnacle of poetic fame.

of social life as based on experience and observation reveal themselves in your book of aphorisms. January 1, 1894.

<sup>87</sup> Henceforth my literary efforts shall be devoted to prose only, for it, too, lies within the range of aesthetic writing, provided it be idiomatic, pure, and ideal." *Ibid.*, December 6, 1912.

Rattermann wrote no novels. He seemed to disprove of them when he said: "Romane beschäftigen zumeist nur die zeittötende gedankenlose Leserwelt." He did, however, make an exception with the *Kulturhistorische Romane*, bestowing praise on Charles Sealsfield, Berthold Auerbach, Fritz Reuter, and Wilhelm Hauff as novelists, for their striking portrayal of the people and customs of their own time.

Doch haben wir in langen Wanderstunden  
 Am Wege manche Blumen abgepflückt,  
 Die wir zu bunten Kränzen dann gebunden.

Und ist uns auch das Höchste nicht geglückt:  
 Wo wird das Höchste in der Welt gefunden?—  
 Zufrieden, Herz! die Träne wird zerdrückt.<sup>88</sup>

Step by step, he walked the path of poetic realms with noble purpose and high ideals constantly before him as he scattered the seed from which others shall reap a harvest. His zeal for the cultural, the beautiful, and the aesthetic never abated to his last moments.

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<sup>88</sup> We have plucked many a flower on our long journey which we wove into bright garlands. And though we did not arrive on the loftiest heights of poetic fame, our heart shall be satisfied, the tear shall be suppressed. *Gesammelte Werke*, Iib, 434.



### CHAPTER III

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#### RATTERMANN, THE GERMAN-AMERICAN HISTORIAN

Heinrich Rattermann was a man possessed from youth to old age with a passion for knowing the truth and had an instinctive scientific curiosity which led him into serious and whole-hearted investigation. Fitted out by nature and temperament, though not by professional training, for the arduous, painstaking task of a researcher, investigator, and collector of historical data, he still in the prime of life, set out on his historical career in the field of German-American history in 1874.<sup>1</sup>

Rattermann, like so many Germans, was determined to go out and battle with ignorance and prejudice because he was inspired with a conviction of the righteousness of his cause. He struggled and strove for human advancement in general, but especially for that of the German-American. Perceiving that justice was not dealt out to them in daily political life nor in the history texts of our country, he took up their cause and fought for recognition of their merits against the encroachment of the Anglo-American. He opposed the Anglo-American domination with a German-American honesty and sense of duty. According to his view, America should turn confidently to the German-American element for future cultural, economic, and scientific progress. Rattermann's ideas, as expressed in the above, are, of course, personal.

Sometimes the historian approaches his work with a certain amount of prepossession of race, creed, or of political party, which may lead to strange and unexpected results; not so Rattermann. Throughout his writings he aimed at a rigid objectivity, never injecting himself, but stating facts as they are. We are informed of the purpose of his research by a reliable source:

He aimed to prove that the Germans had played their honorable part in the development of the United States and that they had been very strong supporters of the American revolution and had also helped to win the Civil War. To bring out these facts, he collected his material not from

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<sup>1</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, XVI, 199.

newspaper reports, but from authentic sources. Many months were spent delving into the archives of the States and the Nation in order to substantiate his collected material.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE HISTORIAN IN THE MAKING

Rattermann attributes his incentive and encouragement for historical research to the outstanding German-American historian Oswald Seidensticker.<sup>3</sup> It was this scholar who recognized in him the necessary qualities and ability to carry on independent research, in that phase of American history which was so dear to his own heart. Seidensticker was also instrumental in bringing Rattermann to the convention of the Deutschamerikanischer Presse-Verein Philadelphia in 1876. Heinz Kloss in his latest work says: "Als Gast war H. A. Rattermann, der Schriftleiter des *Deutschen Pionier* zu Cincinnati, anwesend, der hervorragendste literarische Vertreter der dreissiger Einwanderung."<sup>4</sup>

Professor Seidensticker's work, *The Early History of the Germans in Pennsylvania*, published during the seventies brought on a remarkable awakening of interest among German-Americans in the history of their American past and an appreciation for the cultural contributions from the fatherland, together with a consciousness of their racial achievements. Seidensticker's historical work had been preceded by the researches of other scholars in the various periods of German-American history, some of whom fully realized that the American historians of the time failed to do justice to the German population of the country.

Rattermann did not hesitate to denounce even those German writers who in any way minimized and denounced the merits of pioneer Germans. Such writers were F. Kapp, E. Schlager, and H.

<sup>2</sup> Letters of Katherine Rattermann, December 15, 1934.

<sup>3</sup> Seidensticker, a significant scholar in the field of German-American history, was for twenty-eight years professor of the German language and literature at the University of Pennsylvania. His zeal for truth and his genuine spirit of objectivity, together with his critical judgment, stamped him as one of the great German-American historians. He was also a poet and excellent connoisseur of literature. *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 385.

<sup>4</sup> Rattermann, editor of the *Deutscher Pionier*, and most prominent literary representative of the Thirties, was present as guest. *Die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums* (Berlin, 1937), 240.

Bornstein. They over-estimated the Forty-eighters to the detriment of the earlier immigrants. But Rattermann contends that the German-Americans before 1848, were not mere uneducated laborers, peasants, or plebs; there were among them editors, philosophers, physicians, judges and diplomats, and men with university training.

He fully appreciated the education, ideals, and efforts of the German immigrants around 1848 but he resented their arrogant claims. He called them inexperienced university students, *Brausköpfe*; they were enthusiasts with the wrong concept of liberty who had yet a great deal to learn. Rattermann's spirit of research excluded none of the German immigrants regardless of time or place. He included the whole American continent, even South America. This shows how far ahead he was of his contemporaries. He could in all truth say: "Patria cara, carior libertas, veritas carissima!"

In a speech made by Rattermann on the occasion of a Washington Birthday banquet, February 22, 1877, he alluded to the early German historians thus:

Franz Löher schrieb vor dreissig Jahren seine *Geschichte und Zustände der Deutschen in Amerika*. Unter grosser Mühe brachte er einen Band zusammen, für jene Zeit (1847), ein bedeutendes Werk, welches ihn zum grossen Historiker machte. Emil Klauprecht verfasste (1862), seine *Chronik der Deutschen in der Geschichte des Ohiotales*, einen etwa 200 Seiten starken Band, gleichfalls ein schätzbares Werk. Hierzu zählt Kapp's *Geschichte der deutschen Einwanderung im Staate New York* (1867), und seine beiden Biographien *Steuben* und *Kalb*, so wie Rupp's *Spezialgeschichten einiger Pennsylvanischer Distrikte*, und wir haben so ziemlich die Summe der ganzen deutschen Geschichte.<sup>5</sup>

Rattermann was the immediate successor of these historical

<sup>5</sup> Thirty years ago (1847), Franz Löher wrote his *Geschichte und Zustände der Deutschen in Amerika*. With great effort he produced one volume, which caused him to be rated as a great historian. In 1862, Emil Klauprecht wrote his *Chronik der Deutschen in der Geschichte des Ohiotales* (200 pages), which was also considered a valuable work. If we add to these Kapp's *Geschichte der deutschen Einwanderung im Staate New York* (1867), and his two biographies, *Steuben* and *Kalb*, together with Rupp's *Spezialgeschichten einiger Pennsylvanischer Distrikte*, we have the sum total of the German-American history written before Rattermann's time. *Gesammelte Werke*, XVI, 370.

writers in the field of German-American history, the historian from whom recent writers have taken much or almost all of their material. He himself played a prominent part in the making of this history, for he was definitely and actively for more than a half century identified with its cultural, historical, and political life. It was not without a just sense of pride that he said of himself later: "Auf dem Felde der deutsch-amerikanischen Geschichtsforschung habe ich mir einen Namen errungen, der über das ganze Land und selbst nach Europa erscholl."<sup>6</sup>

As his model historians he had selected the famous Justus Möser and Leopold von Ranke for whom he had the greatest esteem and praise:

Justus Möser und der unbefangene Leopold von Ranke sind für mich die Darsteller, deren Ausführungen ich mit grossem Vertrauen nach ihren mancherlei Richtungen folge.<sup>7</sup>

Möser, der Vater der deutschen Kulturgeschichte, drang unablässig darauf, den Blick nach Innen zu richten, statt alles Heil bei andern Völkern zu suchen. Er wies den Deutschen das eigene Land und die eigene Sprache als ein fruchtreiches Gebiet, obwohl ihnen diese damals noch *Terra incognita* war. Auf dem Felde der Geschichte ist es Tag geworden, mit Möser als dem Morgenstern dieses Tages.<sup>8</sup>

Rattermann must be given due credit for his uninterrupted zeal and self-education. He dutifully studied and kept before his mind's eye the governing principles of the great masters in his respective field of study. Like his model and master, Justus Möser, he too, directed his attention inward, that is, to his own United States. Here he sought by a careful investigation into the content, origin, and value of German-American history to give us a

<sup>6</sup> In the field of German-American history I have acquired a name for myself which resounded throughout this country and through Europe. *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, XIX (1920), 109.

<sup>7</sup> Justus Möser and the unprejudiced Leopold von Ranke are the presenters of historical facts whose directions and trends I follow with the greatest trust and confidence. *Gesammelte Werke*, IV, 110.

<sup>8</sup> Justus Möser, the father of German history, urges us to direct our attention to our own country instead of seeking our welfare with other nations. He points out to the Germans their own land and language as the greatest source of wealth and culture. Möser, the morning star, has ushered in the day of historical science. *Ibid.*, XVI, 296.

true picture of the social, political, and economic life of the German element in the United States as based upon authoritative study.

In a reprint from *German-American Annals*, VI (1908), Richard Helbig says:

Among those who manifest an intelligent interest to further the study of the history of the German element in this country and the history of the various reciprocal relations between Germany and the United States, the need has been felt long ago to examine the archives for the purpose of locating and calendaring unpublished material.<sup>9</sup>

If Helbig had turned back three decades, he might have found this long felt need practically satisfied in our own German-American historian, Heinrich A. Rattermann. As a result of this almost meticulous searching and sifting of material, both students and scholars have a valuable source-work today which represents a reliable authority on phases of German-American history, and which may also be used to great advantage by the general American historian to fill in the gaps of early American history. One needs only to read his biographies of Stallo, Wagner, Hammer, Schurz, Körner, and numerous others to be convinced of his thoroughness as a historian. In some cases he opens to the reader for the first time the intricate paths of diplomacy, politics, business, and cultural facts, unknown even to many of the modern writers. Rattermann unconsciously sang his own encomium when in the launching of his new enterprise, the *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin*, he said:

Die Zukunft wird nicht länger zu zweifeln haben, dass es eine deutsch-amerikanische Geschichte gibt. Das Mittel haben wir zur Hand, uns durch die Schrift lebendig zu erhalten für die Zukunft. Sorgen wir dafür, dass unsere Nachkommen nicht vergebens nach uns suchen mögen. Wenn wir nicht selber die Bausteine zum Tempel unserer Geschichte zusammen tragen, so können wir auch nicht fordern, dass Andere unsern Tempel bauen sollen.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *German-American Research* (Philadelphia, 1908), 5.

<sup>10</sup> The future will have no more doubts as to the reality or existence of German-American history. By means of our publication we are enabled to hand down a record of our deeds to later generations. May our descendants not seek in vain for us on the pages of history. If we ourselves do not collect the stones for the temple of our history, we cannot demand that others build it for us. Rattermann, *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin*, I (1886), 14-15.

## THE HISTORIAN, IN THE APPRAISAL OF SCHOLARS

As far as available evidence indicates, Rattermann has been given little credit by modern writers for his work and today references to him are almost rare. The writer has, however, been more than pleased to find that the latest work of Heinz Kloss (Berlin, 1937), makes frequent reference to him as an indispensable authority on German-American history.<sup>11</sup> Another new work printed and published in Frankfurt, Germany (1929), used Rattermann as a source and referred to his work as "Eine gründliche Untersuchung."<sup>12</sup>

The apparent neglect of invaluable source material for the American or German-American historian, may be due to the fact that Rattermann's works have all been written in German and as such they are not always thoroughly comprehensible to the American writer. Another cause may be their rareness and inaccessibility, and the fact that Rattermann was a free lance and an amateur.

In a lecture which Rattermann delivered before the German Pioneer Society of Cincinnati in 1877, he said: "Was wäre wohl die deutsch-amerikanische Geschichte ohne den deutschen Pionier Verein?"<sup>13</sup> We, today, might be justified to interpolate his words: What would German-American history be without Rattermann? Professor Julius Goebel in his book *Der Kampf um die deutsche Kultur in Amerika* spoke truthfully of the importance of Rattermann's historical output in the following:

Als reichstes Vorratshaus geschichtlicher Tatsachen, aus dem sie alle ihre Weisheit holten, die in den letzten Jahren über deutsch-amerikanische Geschichte schrieben, muss die Zeitschrift, *Der Deutsche Pionier* bezeichnet werden, die H. A. Rattermann, der hochverdiente Nestor der deutsch-amerikanischen Geschichtsschreibung, jahrelang unter grossen persönlichen Opfern geleitet und mit bahnbrechenden Arbeiten geschmückt hat.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Um die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums*, pp. 42, 50, 59, 197, 198, 202, 240, 242, 245, 252, 317, 319.

<sup>12</sup> Harry Gerber, *100 Jahre Amerikanisches General Consulat in Frankfurt am Main, 1829-1929*.

<sup>13</sup> What would German-American history be without the German Pioneer Society? . . . *Deutscher Pionier*, IX (1878), 41.

<sup>14</sup> The *Deutscher Pionier* must be designated as the wealthiest source

Rattermann's research has led to the accumulation of a rare type of material which one will look for in vain in the more standardized books. It consists of authentic and most carefully documented data, which up to his time had been inaccessible. It is, of course, not a complete history, nor is it chronologically systematized as such, but is rather a collection of sporadic accounts of the social, economic, cultural, and political activities and contributions of the German element in America. Rattermann not only visited the various states, but wherever he knew of the presence of a pioneer settler, he approached him and through personal questions acquired truthful information. Not infrequently he asked these old timers to write their memoirs for the *Pionier*. Though the material is fragmentary as to sequence and substance, each essay is a complete account of the particular subject under discussion and brings home some hitherto unknown or partially veiled fact of German-American history. Doctor H. Fick said: "Die Geschichte unseres Volkes im Adoptivlande kann nur geschrieben werden, wenn auf ihn gestützt."<sup>15</sup>

The same thought has been reiterated by other scholars both here and abroad. E. Krämer of the University of Wisconsin wrote regarding Rattermann the historian:

Der Nestor der deutsch-amerikanischen Geschichtsschreiber Heinrich A. Rattermann war im Abfassen seiner geschichtlichen Arbeiten stets peinlich gewissenhaft. Wo er für seine Behauptungen und Daten keine unzweifelhafte Belege hatte, gibt er dies jedesmal an. Seine historischen Werke werden darum einstens sehr geschätzt und gesucht sein. Für spätere Geschichtsforscher werden sich Rattermann's Werke als eine reiche Fundgrube und als ein durchaus zuverlässiges Nachschlagwerk erweisen.<sup>16</sup>

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of historical facts from which all the latest German-American historians have drawn their wisdom. It was edited at the cost of great personal sacrifices and enriched copiously with newly discovered material by the highly esteemed Nestor of German-American history. H. A. Rattermann.

<sup>15</sup> The history of our people in the land of adoption can only be written with the aid of Rattermann. "Heinrich A. Rattermann," *Cincinnati Freie Presse*, January 10, 1923.

<sup>16</sup> The great German-American historian, Heinrich A. Rattermann, was extremely conscientious in drawing up his historical works. Where he had no certitude of documentation for the facts and dates, he was sure to make it known. His work will be highly prized and in demand by historical

The St. Louis *Central-Blatt and Social Justice* says: "Seine Leistungen als Forscher und Sammler auf dem Gebiete der Geschichte des deutschen Elements in Amerika werden von der Nachwelt dankend anerkannt werden."<sup>17</sup>

One of the finest tributes to Rattermann, the historian, comes to us from Germany and is therefore all the stronger, for the scholars of Germany are reluctant to contribute praise or value to anything that is produced by a German *Im Auslande*. They rate him as follows:

Heinrich A. Rattermann, der Geschichtsschreiber des deutschen Pionierwesens *par excellence*, Rattermann ist selbst Pionier, urdeutsch und kernbieder, der es sich zur Hauptaufgabe seines Lebens gemacht, der deutschen Einwanderung ihre gerechte Würdigung zu vindizieren. Mit einem seltenen Eifer, einem wahren Enthusiasmus folgt er den Spuren der Eingewanderten deutschen Ursprungs bis in die ersten Zeiten, und seine Forschungen auf diesem und anderen Gebieten sind eben so tief und eingehend, als sie ein scharfes und kritisches Urteil verraten. Wohl kein Buch oder Heft, welches irgendwie Stoff für den Gegenstand seiner historischen Bearbeitung liefern kann, ist ihm unbekannt geblieben, und Die von ihm mit ausserordentlichem Geschick und liebevollster Ausdauer schon seit vielen Jahren redigierte Monatsschrift ist an sich ein ebenso würdevolles Denkmal der Vergangenheit und Gegenwart des deutschen Lebens im Adoptivlande, wie für alle desfallsige deutsche Forschung eine wertvolle Fundgrube und encyclopädische Sammelquelle.<sup>18</sup>

Otto Lohr, a well known historian, now of Deutsches Ausland-Institut at Stuttgart, Germany, ascribes to Rattermann the first place among German-American historical research men and chroni-

investigators, as a most reliable reference. "H. A. Rattermann's Werke," *Monatshfte für deutsche Sprache und Pädagogik*, XV (1914), 107.

<sup>17</sup> His work as collector and researcher, in the field of German-American history, will be gratefully acknowledged by posterity. Vol. XV (February, 1923), 388.

<sup>18</sup> Rattermann, the historian *par excellence*, who thoroughly German and genuinely honest, has made it his life's task to vindicate with due honor and justice the history of German immigration in our country. He traces German immigration to the earliest times. His zeal and enthusiasm in the search of documentary evidence is most penetrating. Not a book or pamphlet on the subject is unknown to him. The historical periodical which he edits with praiseworthy skill and perseverance is an estimable monument of past and future life in America as well as an encyclopedic source collection for all investigators. This citation is from a Germany newspaper, 1880; the title and exact date are unknown.



clers. According to this scholarly exponent, Rattermann was the first to make extensive archival investigations regarding the German colonizing of the Middle West and to rear this phase of American history to a firmer and more stately edifice than it had been before 1860. He said that although Rattermann never succeeded in publishing a complete or comprehensive history of the German-American element in the United States, it was he who made possible the later prize works of A. B. Faust, R. Cronau, and G. von Bosse.<sup>19</sup>

Rattermann must have realized that he lacked the necessary qualifications for writing a detailed, well organized historical work, for he admitted :

Mein Feld in der Geschichte war das sammelnde, forschende, suchende Werk, keineswegs die gordnete, darstellende Gabe des Geschichtsforschers. Ich besass die entwickelnde, entfaltende Fähigkeit, aber weniger die zusammenhaltende, und ordnende.<sup>20</sup>

It is, nevertheless, to Rattermann that we are indebted for the many interesting details of westward expansion, particularly those relating to the Old Northwest, parts of which now form the States of Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, and Minnesota.

It was in a similar spirit that he wrote to his old friend Klemens Möllenbrock in Ankum, Germany, regarding his journeys in the interest of historical research :

Ich habe nun über 60 Jahre in Amerika gelebt, habe den grössten Teil des Landes besucht, und nicht blos auf der Eisenbahn durchflogen, sondern ich bin oft von Haus zu Haus, von Farm zu Farm gegangen oder geritten, habe aller Orten in den Akten der Gerichtshöfe und die Zeitungspublicationen längst vergangener Zeiten bis in die Gegenwart durchgestöbert, und trotzdem gestehe ich es ein, dass ich mir nicht getraute, so allgemein zu urteilen wie unsere flüchtigen Reisenden der alten wie der neuen Zeit das so keck wagen.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "Heinrich A. Rattermann," *Der Auslandsdeutsche*, XV (1932), 593.

<sup>20</sup> My task in the field of history was that of searching, collecting and investigating, but by no means the gift of organized presentation. I possessed the talent to solve, explain, and develop, but not the readiness to assimilate the material into a co-ordinated form. Rattermann Letters, July 6, 1909.

<sup>21</sup> I visited the larger part of the United States, not only by train, but often by riding or walking from house to house, from farm to farm, inves-

As evidence of his capacity for collecting, discerning, classifying, and sifting historical materials we need only to turn to the pages of *Der Deutsche Pionier* the chief depository of the fruits of Rattermann's journeys, investigations, and collections.

THE HISTORICAL JOURNAL, "DER DEUTSCHE PIONIER"

"Let us create a chronicle in which the experiences of our pioneers will be collected and preserved, in order to renew and revive our recollections, and to preserve our history for future generations."<sup>22</sup> These words present the earliest inception of the "Deutscher Pionier Verein," which was founded in Cincinnati, Ohio, May 26, 1868, by Nikolaus Hoffer, Karl Bürgeler, both German pioneers of Cincinnati, and the third, a man of a later generation, Heinrich A. Rattermann. Other charter members of the Pionier Verein were the Messrs. Röwekamp, Hemann, General Moor, Pfau, Siefert, Bast, Fick, and Dr. Pulte. It was decided that the association publish a monthly magazine, the purpose of which was to collect and preserve in printed form the deeds and facts concerning the German element in America for the future student and historian of German-American history. The *Deutscher Pionier*, as the new magazine was called, was printed by S. Rosenthal and published by the "Pionier Verein."

The *Deutscher Pionier* started its historical career in March, 1869, and ran through a trying course of eighteen years with an output of eighteen octavo volumes, ranging from 500 to 600 pages each. Its editors were: Dr. G. Brühl, 1869-1871; K. Knortz, 1871-1874; H. A. Rattermann, 1874-1885; H. Hensel, 1885-1887. Rattermann's eleven years of editorship were the most prolific, and prosperous in the literary and historical life of this periodical.<sup>23</sup>

By October 1874, six months after Rattermann had assumed the

tigating court documents and newspapers of past times, up to the present, and yet I must admit that I would not dare to come to such general conclusions as the superficial travelers of old and modern times are accustomed to present, regarding America. *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, XIX (1920), 120.

<sup>22</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, XVI, 369.

<sup>23</sup> His fame as a historian has gone out even beyond the ocean. *Deutscher Pionier*, VII (1876), 295.

position of editor, the number of subscribers had increased by fifty percent. As a result of this growth in subscriptions, the magazine took on an eight-page increase monthly—an excellent testimonial to the editor's popularity and efficiency. The *Pionier* may be considered as Rattermann's first pretentious historical adventure. It is one of the richest in historical material, abounding in cultural and political monuments. Its pages are filled with reports and discoveries on the most varied phases of German-American history. A detailed account of the isolated historical facts and articles as they appeared in the issues of the *Deutscher Pionier* would take us beyond the bounds of our present plans. More than one-half of the journal was contributed and written by Rattermann himself but his collaborators also offered very valuable material. They ranked among the most outstanding German scholars of the time, being chiefly historians and literary men. It was to these that he referred when during the second year of his editorship he wrote:

Anfänglich standen wir allein, aber mit Freuden können wir uns bereits einer ganz tüchtigen und kräftigen Mitarbeiterzahl rühmen, und Männer, erprobt in allen Fächern der Landes- und Kulturgeschichte, stehen uns zur Seite. Speciell zu erwähnen sind: Dr. Gustav Brühl, Oswald Seidensticker, General Wagener in Charleston, Emil Klauprecht in Stuttgart, Friedrich Schnacke in St. Louis, Theodor Pösche in Washington, und unsere poetischen Mitarbeiter: Theodor Kirchhoff in San Francisco, Friedrich Schmitt in Louisville, sowie mehrere andere. Auch die Presse hat mit seltenen Ausnahmen den *Pionier* höchst wohlwollend aufgenommen.<sup>24</sup>

The number of collaborators of which the above list is a small fraction, increased from year to year, and with it also the variety, quantity, and quality of brilliant essays and inspiring articles which fascinated the readers of the *Deutscher Pionier*. The various numbers also brought interesting reprints from the different German newspapers of the country such as, the *Westbote*, *Weltbote*, *West-*

<sup>24</sup> At first we stood alone in the field but now we pride ourselves on a number of well-qualified contributors, men experienced in all branches of national and cultural history collaborate with us. Particularly to be mentioned are: Dr. Gustav Brühl, Oswald Seidensticker, Gen. Wagener, Emil Klauprecht, Friedrich Schnacke, Theodor Pösche, and our poetical contributors: Theodor Kirchhoff, Friedrich Schmitt, and others. The press, too, without exception has received the *Pionier* with a neighborly spirit of good will and courtesy. *Deutscher Pionier*, VII (1876), 430.

liche Post, Anzeiger des Westens, Philadelphia Demokrat, St. Louis Courier, California Demokrat, Allentown Republikaner, Wächter am Erie, New York Staats-Zeitung, Washington Journal, and several others.

Political and religious discussions and debates were strictly prohibited in the meetings of the Pionier Verein and as subject matter for its journal, the *Pionier*. One of its early editors, K. Knortz, Rattermann's predecessor, was obliged to resign his position as editor because he had given favorable comments on Franz Löher's article which spoke deprecatingly of the Catholic members of the Pionier Verein: "Der Pionier Verein, von welchem der *Deutsche Pionier* herausgegeben wird, besteht zum Unglück für das Weitergedeihen des Blattes in seiner Majorität aus 'unfreien Katholiken.'"—And Rattermann commented: "Das Referat auf die religiösen Meinungen der Mitglieder des Pionier Vereins schlug dem Fasse den Boden aus."<sup>25</sup>

The *Pionier* was at all times non-partisan, objective, never subjective. It aimed to inform and to educate, not to antagonize and to disrupt, but to preserve an harmonious spirit among its German readers.

While the contents of this journal were predominantly of an historical and cultural nature, it also contained some irrelevant material. A classification of the material must of necessity be imperfect, owing to the endless variety of subject matter found in its pages. The editor usually classified the contents under the following captions: 1. Gedichte, 2. Biographien, 3. Kritische Aufsätze, 4. Miscellanien, 5. Skizzen und Unterhaltendes, 6. Historisches, 7. Kulturgeschichtliches, and 8. Editorielles. Historical subjects of unusual character were printed serially.

From an editorial of the *Pionier*, March 1882, we may draw our conclusions as to the amount of work covered by this valuable journal. Though the estimate shows only a partial picture of the heavy output, it will be an enlightenment for the eager student and reader:

<sup>25</sup> The Pionier Verein which edits the *Deutscher Pionier* is, to the detriment of its success, composed largely of illiberal Catholics, and Rattermann added: "This reference to the religious affiliation of the members of the Pionier Verein forced the bottom out of the barrel." *Deutscher Pionier*, VI (1875), 30.

Die Hefte der vierzehn Jahrgänge unserer Zeitschrift verzeichnen über 1000 Lebensskizzen von Deutsch-Amerikanern; Geschichte von deutschen Niederlassungen und der Teilnahme unserer Landsleute an der Besiedlung einzelner Bezirke und Ortschaften in allen Gegenden Amerikas, und bieten eine Mannigfaltigkeit, wie sie nirgends bedeutender gefunden werden kann. Der Anteil, den die Deutschen an der Kulturentwicklung unseres Adoptivvaterlandes genommen haben, an den politischen und sozialen, den bürgerlichen und militärischen, den religiösen und weltlichen Ereignissen, an dem Kämpfen und Ringen mit der Natur und an dem geistigen Streben, den Künsten und Wissenschaften, das alles ist in reichster Fülle in dem *Pionier* geschichtlich niedergelegt und so weit wie möglich mit der strengsten Genauigkeit und Wahrheitsliebe geschildert. Ein Werk von unschätzbarem Werte, das einzig in unserer Landesgeschichte da steht. Die mannigfachen Daten aus dem Gebiete der älteren wie der neueren Geschichte unseres Volkes in diesem Lande sind durch unsere Zeitschrift für die Zukunft gerettet worden. In der ungezwungenen Form unserer Aufsätze haben wir unsern Lesern Bilder aus dem Osten und Westen, Süden und Norden des Landes vorgeführt, Bilder aus der älteren und neueren Zeit, Bilder deutscher Kunst und Wissenschaft, deutscher Treue und Ehrlichkeit, deutscher Biederkeit, und deutschen Frohsinns, kurz ein klares Bild des deutschen Gemütes und deutschen Herzens, wie es das deutsche Volk überall hin mit sich führt, wohin sein wandersüchtiger Fuss es trägt.<sup>26</sup>

It is astonishing to note (through the pages of the *Pionier*) what the German element really has contributed to the intellectual, material, and cultural growth of the United States, the value and extent of which has been hardly realized by the Germans themselves. Rattermann in his enthusiasm expressed his heartfelt esteem and devotion for the early German settlers. He hoped that this magazine would admonish our younger generations that they have no cause to be ashamed of the German pioneers of

<sup>26</sup> The fourteen volumes (annuals) of our magazine, record more than 1000 biographical sketches of German-Americans; the history of German settlements and their colonizing enterprises in the various sections of the country, together with their participation in the political, social, civil, military, religious, and secular affairs, and their intellectual endeavors in the promotion of the arts and sciences. All these are presented with historical accuracy and in a truthful and impartial spirit in our inestimable *Pionier*. In the unpretentious form of its essays, the reader receives a real impression of German art, learning, integrity, fidelity, honesty, and cheerfulness, in short, a picture of the German disposition and spirit. *Deutscher Pionier*, XIV (1883), 38; VII (1876), 507.

America. On the contrary, that they may always be proud of their German ancestry.<sup>27</sup>

That Rattermann's historical data were looked upon as authentic and reliable and used as such by scholarly men, we may infer from the following incident: the editors of the *Archives of Pennsylvania*, J. B. Linn and Dr. Egle, applied to him for correct translations of some Revolutionary War items, which were first made known to scholars through the *Deutscher Pionier*. Dr. Egle wrote to the editor of the *Pionier* to this effect:

I only wish that I knew enough of German to be able to translate the leading facts of your articles, for use in our volume of *Revolutionary Soldiers*. Your article Armand's Legion was made the subject of a lecture recently by the secretary of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, W. P. Ward. He had your article translated for future use.<sup>28</sup>

This is only one incident out of many in which prominent men were obliged to apply to our self-trained historian for reliable information concerning historical facts. The article concerned this time was that of a thoroughly documented report on a Revolutionary War episode, that of Armand's German Legion. It would be difficult to find a more stirring and interesting account of German stamina and courage. The report traces the activity of this brave legion from the North to the South and back to New York again. The article was not written merely for the interest and amusement of the readers, but rather to give them some authentic, factual, realistic history of our Revolutionary War as fought by German soldiers.

Another proof that the Rattermann reports were considered authentic and true to sources we know from the fact that those in military authority applied to him for reliable information on historic facts. The Rattermann collection contains several letters written by Adjutant General Stryked in 1876, requesting the editor of the *Pionier* most earnestly to furnish him with the necessary

<sup>27</sup> Möchte unsere jüngere Generation durch diese Zeitschrift belehrt werden, dass sie sich der deutschen Pioniere in Amerika keineswegs zu schämen braucht, sondern, dass man im Gegenteil stolz darauf sein darf, ein Deutscher oder von deutscher Abkunft zu sein. *Deutscher Pionier*, I (1870), 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, IX (1878), 35.

data on the battles of Princeton and Trenton, the names of the commanders, non-commissioned officers, and other facts concerning these battles, in order to verify and complete the official records. Rattermann was truly a storehouse of historical information from which others drew their supplies.

Professor Julius Goebel was correct in his estimate of Rattermann, the collector of historical facts, when he stated:

In der Auffindung und Nutzbarmachung wertvollen Materials liegt daher sein Verdienst, mehr als in streng wissenschaftlicher Darstellung. Selbst da, wo ihn die unausbleiblichen Fehler des Autodidaktentums zuweilen übereilen, bewahrt ihn doch sein nüchterner Wirklichkeitssinn vor phantastischen Übertreibungen. Wo es sich um historische Wahrheit handelte, liess ihn kein Ansehen der Person gelten.<sup>29</sup>

Rattermann was absolutely devoted to his work; he shirked neither time, effort, nor expense. On one occasion he said that the editorship of this journal had in the course of time become a part of himself; it required great sacrifices of time and money, both of which he gladly gave.<sup>30</sup>

He continued in the capacity of editor until March 1885, when for some unknown cause he resigned his position. His daughter writes:

Petty jealousies and misunderstanding on the part of some members of the "Pionier Verein" brought on a change of editors. Some members of the organization accused my father of using the magazine to give himself a national reputation, but the truth was that his contributions rather were bringing the publication into national and international prominence.<sup>31</sup>

After his withdrawal there was a marked decline and deterioration in the historical material as well as the general aspect of the magazine. It seemed almost to have dropped to the rank of a secondary journal overnight. Finally, dearth of worthy material

<sup>29</sup> His merits consist rather in the discovery and utilization of valuable material than in his manner of scientific presentation. Even where the unavoidable errors of a self-taught man occasionally overtook him, his calm realistic sense preserved him from fantastic extravagance or excessive zeal. He was no respecter of persons where truth was concerned. *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, XIX (1920), 88.

<sup>30</sup> "Die Redaktion der Zeitschrift ist im Laufe der Zeit mir eine Herzenssache geworden und hat grosse Opfer an Zeit und Geld von mir gefordert, die ich aber gern gebracht habe." *Deutscher Pionier*, XII (1881), 38.

<sup>31</sup> Letter of Katherine Rattermann, February 12, 1935.

forced the publication to appear only quarterly. However, with a frequent change of editors it eked out a subsistence for another two years and was then discontinued in 1887, without any further notification or explanation to its subscribers, a perceptible loss to all German-Americans and to historical research of the future.

We can not enumerate and evaluate the numerous articles and essays which were contributed in the course of eleven years by Rattermann and his collaborators, but since complete files of the *Pionier* are so rare, we will endeavor to describe briefly some of the more significant items contained therein.

#### CONTENTS OF THE PIONIER

No fact was too complicated and intricate to be unravelled by Rattermann. No section of the country, no rank or position in public life, no national problem were lost to him; his research embraced all, when the interests and the participation of Germans were involved.

The articles on the American Revolution and also those dealing with the Civil War must be considered very valuable since they bring so many hidden facts to light. One of the most interesting and extensive serial articles which appeared in the *Pionier* is "Die Beteiligung der Deutschen am Unabhängigkeitskrieg." Here the editor purports to give an original and vivid picture of the patriotic self-sacrificing spirit of the German-Americans during our trying revolutionary period. In so far as the material contained in these sketches had been obtained from unprinted and unpublished sources, it should prove valuable to both German and American historians. The series consists of thirteen different phases or topics, all intensely patriotic, but by no means fictitious or the result of an inventive mind. Their ample documentation vouches for their veracity. They appeared in the following order:

1. Krist Ludwig, der Armeebäcker Washingtons,
2. Hauptmann Johann Schott und seine deutschen Dragoner,
3. General Josef Heister und die Deutschen von Reading, Pa.,
4. Deutsche Offiziere und Waffensendung,
5. Die erste schmiedeiserne Kanone,
6. Die deutschen Revolutionssoldaten und Pensionäre,
7. Eine deutsche Heldin, (Molly Pitcher),
8. Armand's Legion,
9. Ein deutscher Kaufmann,
10. General Herkheimer und die Deutschen



im Mohawk Valley, 11. Der Fouragemeister Washingtons, 12. Ein Helfer in der Not, 13. Die Deutschen in Fredericktown, Maryland, (von Seidensticker).

The authentic sources for these articles were found in the archives of the Pension Office, the Revolutionary War Pension archives, the State of Pennsylvania archives, letters of army officers and officials, and in the United States Gazette.

One of Rattermann's better known contributions to German-American history appeared in the last issues of the *Pionier*: "Die Geschichte des deutschen Elements im Staate Maine." He made his tour of investigation to Maine in 1882, and followed it up by an intensive study of early Massachusetts records. The article presents the original English background of the colony with its first proprietors; the names of the earliest German families (40); their social, religious, and political life; their struggles and vicissitude; the stages of development, and the final abandonment of the colony by the Germans.<sup>32</sup> The Rattermann collection at the University of Illinois contains a manuscript, dated 1770, referring to the German settlers in Maine. This gives a sketch of the Moravian Mission at Broad Bay, Maine. The document is valuable for its detailed account of individual families and the progress and development of the settlement.

To the lovers of dramatic art the early history of the German theatres in Cincinnati as presented in volume VI of the *Pionier* should prove interesting. Rattermann, himself somewhat of a composer and amateur playwright, gives a reliable account of the first German theatre in Cincinnati. The first inception of this cultural institution was given by the German schoolmaster, Herr Meis of the German Catholic Holy Trinity School in 1843. Meis had sponsored several amateur theatrical performances with his pupils for the benefit of the school. These simple plays were so well patronized that a demand for regular scheduled plays was evident. This soon gave rise to a social institution known as "Deutsches Liebhaber Theater," which later brought some of the finest operas and German dramas to the Cincinnati stage. The actors were non-professionals, they played for the love of the art.<sup>33</sup>

The admission fee to these performances, which was frequently

<sup>32</sup> *Deutscher Pionier*, XV, XVI.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI, 26.

dispensed with, or was optional in the beginning, was later set at 10 cents. Such were the simple social pleasures which afforded recreation and cultivated the artistic tastes of the German citizens of Cincinnati, and soon made their city a center of dramatic art.

Another item of historical interest is that of "Die Ansiedlung der Salzburger in Georgia." After presenting the European background of the situation which prompted the "Salzburgers" to leave their native land, the editor proceeds to describe the conditions laid down by the London Company for the acquisition and tenure of land in Georgia. He reports that the emigrants embarked at Dover, January 8, 1734, and landed at Charleston, March 6, 1734. They chose the site twenty miles above Savannah on the right bank of the Savannah River and named the new settlement "Ebenezer." Then followed the history of the new foundation as based on credible records such as, *Bolzcius Tagebuch*, *Letters of Michael Ziegenhagen*, *Recks Tagebuch*, *Report of the Secretary of the Colony of Georgia*, by Benjamin Marlyn, London, 1741, and *Marlyn Bericht*, Maryland, 1742.<sup>34</sup>

Items of church history, too, are not uncommon in the numbers of the *Pionier*. An interesting picture is "Die erste deutsche katholische Kirche des Westens," 1833, which gives an account of the early church in Cincinnati, its membership, administration, and other facts. The account is based on *Hamilton County Records*, Book 99.<sup>35</sup>

Similar to this account is a biography of Rev. Franz J. Pabisch, D. D., LL. D. It is an instructive chapter of church history concerning the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio, during the administration of Bishop Purcell.<sup>36</sup>

Another splendid page in the history of the Church in America as recorded in the *Pionier* is the story of Father L. Hennepin and Father Marquette, Frontenac and Joliet—early Jesuit and French history in North America. It presents a concise history of discovery, exploration, the Indians, Colonial New York, the Great Lakes, the Mississippi Valley, and of the Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries.<sup>37</sup> In this article Rattermann lavishes the highest praise on the work of early Catholic missionaries.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 207.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 410.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 219.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 171, 224, 262.

Rattermann, who delights in bringing forgotten facts or men to the attention of his readers or hearers, presents the first historical biographical sketch of Albert Gallatin, Secretary-Treasurer of Jefferson's administration.<sup>38</sup> Although Rattermann entertained some doubts as to Gallatin's German descent, he seemed to have found sufficient traces of it in his ancestry to claim him as subject matter for German-American history. Here we might very appropriately apply the words of Rattermann's friend, H. Fick, who said: Scherzweise konnte einst gewitzelt werden;

Und so ihr einen Deutschen wisst,  
Der nicht german'schen Ursprungs ist,  
So nennt ihn nur dem Rattermann, der  
Macht ihn deutsch, wenn's einer kann.<sup>39</sup>

The history of this great statesman, Gallatin, is based on sources from the *Federalist*, *Letters of Jefferson to Madison*, *American State Papers*, volume VI, and *History of the United States* by Spencer, volume II. This biography is more than worthy of note; it is the record of an outstanding personage who had given fifty years to the service of his country during the early period of our Republic.

Another German-American phase of history is described in: "Ein Deutsch-Amerikanischer Held im Mexiko Kriege." Here Rattermann attempts to prove how in every important war of the American Republic we find German interests and German heroes in the front lines. In the Mexican war it is the name of Johann Anton Quitmann that looms as the hero. The sources of this sketch are based on *General Claybourne's Life and Correspondence of General Quitmann*, volume I. The story comes to us in the form of a biographical sketch.<sup>40</sup>

The history of early Illinois is presented under the title of, "Geschichte von Adams County, Illinois und seiner Hauptstadt Quincy." It records credible facts of the early Northwest Terri-

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 240.

<sup>39</sup> By way of a jest, it could wittily be said, If you know of a German whose Germanic origin is doubtful, just mention him to Rattermann, he will Germanize him, if any one can. *Cincinnati Freie Presse*, November 12, 1922.

<sup>40</sup> *Deutscher Pionier*, VI, 320.

tory and its later division into Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. Quincy was organized in 1825 and named after the president of the time. Its early inhabitants together with their civil and social institutions such as German societies, banks, churches, schools and business establishments are all brought out in clear relief. The local history is particularly detailed where the German institutions are concerned.<sup>41</sup>

A number of articles on "Die deutsche Sprache in der Öffentlichen Schule" shows how German determination finally succeeded in its effort to have the German language taught in the public schools of the country, especially in German centers. Rattermann claimed that the American Republic had no language of its own, for the English language was imposed upon it. Cincinnati laid the foundation for the German-English School system in the public schools of the United States. The East took up the problem some years later.<sup>42</sup>

A serial article which is in itself a monument of historical research is: "Die deutschen Pioniere des Scioto Tales, Ross County," a lengthy account of German pioneer life in the Scioto Valley, Ohio. The local history of the individual foundations forms the important feature of the story. It is written in true Rattermann fashion with every possible documentation.<sup>43</sup>

An article which called forth considerable controversy was that of, "Die Leibgarde Washingtons." The *Pittsburgh Gazette* refuted the fact that Washington's bodyguard should have been composed of all German soldiers, as a manufactured story by one too eager to attribute fame and glory to the German participation in the Revolutionary War. Rattermann, not the least perplexed, made his way to the Washington archives to find all possible evidence in favor of the argument. However, the government officials refused him access to the necessary documents—not dismayed, he struck upon the happy idea of seeking information at the Revolutionary War Pension Bureau. Here he met with better success. He found not only the documentary proof of his assertion, but a large amount of valuable information regarding the German soldiers who fought for the American cause. The most valuable thing is not the article itself, but all the bibliographical

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 70.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 140.

and documentary material that was uncovered in the course of the investigation. From the great General Washington and his closest officials down to the officers, privates, and Hessians—and the letters, pension list, records of the Revolutionary War, all were included in this work.<sup>44</sup>

Volume VII of the *Pionier* produced an article that elucidates and rectifies many of the mistaken notions regarding the much maligned Hessian mercenaries. It is the story of the Revolutionary War from one who has been in actual service, "Johann Gottfried Seume, der hessische Södling." This historical account is very detailed and reveals many facts informative to the historian. Seume relates his personal experiences in an unbiased spirit.<sup>45</sup>

The biographies of General John A. Wagener, General Adolph von Steinwehr, and Oberst Rudolph Ritzemann are valuable for their data on American history and the wealth of documentation which they contain. Each biography is an original study and a primary source for some phase of our history.

The student and scholar, interested in German emigration, will find surprising information in Rattermann's "Chronik der deutschen Auswanderung und Kolonisation." It is a long list of facts pertaining to German emigration from 409 A. D. to 1876, chronologically arranged and giving a representative picture of the German spirit of adventure.<sup>46</sup>

Rattermann's enthusiasm even carried him beyond the confines of the United States in his historical research. Wherever there are Germans on the globe to whom credit is due, he is ready to make them known to others and to bring them out of their remotest corners. He sets out on an unbeaten path, "Das Tal des Amazon Stromes und seine Erforscher," and a long serial account brings out the hitherto unknown facts of their courageous enterprise, the exploration of the Amazon valley.

Rattermann has always shown a keen interest in the German-American history of the Carolinas and by personal visit has gleaned many facts pertaining to German life and activity in these states. His "Beitrag zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Nord- und Süd-Carolina" offers many items of new information concerning the German element there.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 215.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 141.

The history of early Kentucky was given considerable attention by Rattermann. He devoted much time and space to it in serial articles of the *Pionier*. Under the caption "Die deutschen Pioniere von Lexington nebst Notizen über die ersten deutschen Einsiedler der Blaugras-Region in jenem Staate," he brings out for the first time the following interesting points: daily life of the pioneers (food, clothing, lodging and occupation), an account of Fort Lexington, the first German land proprietors in Lexington, the founding of Maysville and Millersburg, the attack on Bryant's Station, the battle on the Blue Lick, Indian warfare, politics, political clubs, and the outstanding personages of the region. His account of these facts is based on court records, property deeds, Rouck's *Life of Simon Kenton*, Kercheval's *History of the Valley of Virginia*, Marshall's *History of Kentucky*, his own *Geschichte des Grossen Nordamerikanischen Westens*, and the minutes of a great mass-meeting under the chairmanship of Judge Muter, Lexington, Ky. (May 24, 1794). (The minutes of this meeting are comprised of fourteen articles dealing mostly with the rights and privileges of the people west of the Appalachian mountains, boundary rights, navigation rights, and protection by the Federal government.)<sup>47</sup>

Music, as already mentioned, has always had the greatest charm and attraction for Rattermann. Anything pertaining to its history fascinated him, so it is not unusual that he should have delineated its humble beginnings in America in the *Deutscher Pionier*. We learn that the earliest music cultivated in America in accordance with European methods was brought to America by the religious, who accompanied the Spanish Conquistadors. It consisted exclusively of Gregorian music. It is likewise significant that polyphonic music in America was introduced by a German Jesuit missionary, Father Antonius Sepp, who as early as 1692, in Paraguay, on the Rio Platte, had organized a four-voiced choir, soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, and an orchestra, whose members were all Indians. They were drilled to sing Latin and German songs, Masses, Vespers, and Litanies with organ accompaniment. Father Sepp was composer and musician and many of his own compositions were rendered by his Indian choir. To him, therefore, must be attributed the honor of having established the

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, X, XI.

first "German Choral and Music Society in America." By 1836 the *Tonkunst* found itself established independently of the Church or religion in the form of an organization known as "Der Philadelphia Männerchor."<sup>48</sup> The object and aim of this "choral society" was well expressed by the speaker of the "Sängerfest" which was held at Columbus, Ohio: "Der Zauber des Gesanges schwingt die Menschenbrust empor, hoch über den Staub der niederen Leidenschaften und weckt mit heiliger Gewalt den schlummernden Funken des Schönen und Edlen."<sup>49</sup>

At another time Rattermann takes us to the far West, giving a vivid account of an outstanding pathfinder and pioneer of the West, General Johann Sutter. With historical precision he gives the history of Fort Sutter, early life, and occupation in the far West, and the experiences of the early prospectors.<sup>50</sup>

Rattermann, ever interested in the practice and cultivation of the German language, and the "Deutsches Lehrer-Seminar" has spared no effort to bring about the realization of this praiseworthy German institution. The many letters and speeches devoted to its cause are evidence of the great importance of this German-American enterprise. The *Pionier* devoted numerous articles to the promotion and establishment of this undertaking. In speaking of the "Deutsch-amerikanisches Lehrer-Seminar," Rattermann said:

Ein edler Zweck. Er begreift in sich die Erhaltung alles dessen, was uns teuer ist—die Pflege der schönen deutschen Sprache, der Sprache Goethes und Schillers und der Tausende der grössten Dichter und Denker der Welt; die Erhaltung des deutschen Gemütes, der deutschen Sitten in diesem materiellen Lande.<sup>51</sup>

Rattermann's enthusiasm rises high when he speaks of this favorite subject. There is no doubt that he was instrumental to a great extent in bringing about the organization of this German

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, IX.

<sup>49</sup> The charm of song elevates the soul of man high above the dross of the lower passions, and with a supernatural power awakens the slumbering spark of the beautiful and the exalted. *Ibid.*, XI, 422.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 203.

<sup>51</sup> A noble purpose—it embraces all that is most dear to us; the cultivation of our beautiful German language, the language of Goethe and Schiller, and thousands of German poets. It is the preservation of German life and customs in this country of materialistic trends. *Ibid.*, VII, 420.

institution which has trained so many excellent German teachers. It is surprising to see a body of educated men taking advice and guidance from Rattermann, the self-made man.

As a last topic we mention "Die deutschen Truppen im französischen Hilfsheere des amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieges." This article is a revelation to the student of German-American history. The deeds accomplished by the German troops, but knowingly or unknowingly omitted in our American histories, call for a vindication, and Rattermann, always truthful and fair-minded, does justice to these forgotten heroes. The written account is critically documented, the sources and notes accompanying the article run over the hundred mark.<sup>52</sup>

This enumeration of facts, though only a very small fraction of the contents of the *Deutscher Pionier*, should suffice to give a fair index of this journal as an organ of German-American history. The articles discussed are all Rattermann's contributions. If there should be any erroneous recording of facts in his articles it must be attributed to his zeal and eagerness to compensate with a partial recognition a neglected German element in our American history.

In brief but faithful sketches the *Pionier* brings to its readers accounts of German life and activity in America from the earliest times to about 1880. Their colonizing enterprises and participation in political, social, and religious life, together with their love for music, song and theatre, Turn-Vereine, and annual festivals, all are portrayed in a truthful and accurate manner. The German spirit as exhibited in the work and progress of individuals is well illustrated in the various biographical sketches and essays.

The *Pionier* enjoyed an appreciable recognition and circulation during its current life. Complete files of it were found in the libraries of prominent universities, scientific societies, and cities. As early as 1878 we find the *Pionier* in the libraries of Harvard, Cornell, and Western Reserve Universities; in the historical societies of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and New York, St. Xavier's College of Cincinnati, and in the city libraries of Philadelphia and Cincinnati. The historian, George Bancroft, also possessed a complete set in his personal library, and even from far-off Styria the

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 317.



“Steiermark-Landesbibliothek” acknowledged the receipt of seventy-five copies of the *Pionier*.

The Jesuits of St. Xavier’s College, Cincinnati, Ohio, expressed themselves in words of sincerest approval regarding the *Pionier*. Father Sebastiani, S. J., in a letter of October 19, 1875, wrote to Rattermann:

It is with the greatest interest that several of ours, competent to judge, have been perusing the excellent periodical, the *Deutscher Pionier*, and they all concur in bestowing on it the highest encomiums. As far as interesting matter, and well chosen language are concerned, certainly nothing remains to be desired to rank it among the best periodicals of the country.<sup>63</sup>

As a matter of particular historical value and interest we must also mention volume XVI of *Gesammelte Werke*. Most of the printed lectures of this volume are reprints from the *Pionier* (1875-1886), and as such reliable and authentic. In subject matter they deal with immigration, colonization, the German settlers of Pennsylvania, the German-American element, education, German teachers’ conventions, the German language in the American schools, and other interesting topics. These lectures are all more or less of a comprehensive nature and were read or delivered by Rattermann before the German Literary Club of Cincinnati at some previous time.

Among the numerous historical pamphlets published by Rattermann the *Geschichte des Grossen Nord-Amerikanischen Westens*, which appeared in 1875, is one of the earliest. It was first published in the *Volksfreund Kalender* of Cincinnati, and later in a separate reprint of seventy-five pages. It is based on primary sources and treats briefly of the pre-Columbian period; the discoveries and inventions which led to the Commercial Revolution of the 16th century; the gradual opening and development of a new continent; the works of the early missionaries and adventurers; the struggles of the pioneers of colonial days, and the gradual conquest of the great American continent.

#### DEUTSCH-AMERIKANISCHES MAGAZIN

Rattermann’s interest and courage in things German-American never flagged. His innate attraction to historical research coupled

<sup>63</sup> Rattermann Collection, University of Illinois.

with a spirit of emulation urged him on. Scarcely had he ceased editing the *Pionier* when he launched his new historical periodical, *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin*, which he published quarterly on a private, independent basis. The nature and purpose of this publication were the same as those of the *Pionier*, in fact, it differed very little from it. It was permeated with the same spirit of thoroughness, truth, and objectivity, which had characterized Rattermann's earlier journalistic efforts. The Sunday edition of the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* announced the advent of this new magazine as a most promising venture for the intellectual and cultural life of German-Americans:

Wenn für ein solches Unternehmen die Person des Herrn H. A. Rattermann, eine bereits erprobte Kraft ersten Ranges zur Verfügung steht, so wird der dem verdienstlichen Werk zu wünschende günstige Erfolg gewiss nicht auf sich warten lassen. Das *Deutsch-Amerikanische Magazin* wird, wie der *Pionier*, in Cincinnati erscheinen. Und so Vieles der Herausgeber sich vornimmt, umfasst der Titel der neuen vierteljahrsschrift doch das ganze Geistes- und Kulturleben der Deutschen in Amerika.<sup>54</sup>

The completion of the first year's journalistic course of this promising magazine (October, 1887), can point to a quantity of material scarcely found in any other periodical of its kind. *Der Sendbote*, a Catholic newspaper of Milwaukee, enumerates the contents for us:

Mit den eben erschienenen vierten Hefte ist der erste Band von Rattermann's *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin* vollendet, über deren hohen Wert für die Geschichte, Literatur und das Volksleben der Deutschen in Amerika wohl kein Zweifel mehr herrschen kann. Mit einem in der Tat unglaublichen Fleisse hat der Herausgeber durch seine eigene Feder diesen ersten Band so ausserordentlich reichhaltig gemacht, dass man mit Recht staunen muss über das von ihm Gelieferte, das ausserdem den Stempel der eingehendsten Forschung und treuer Darstellung an sich trägt. Der erste Band enthält mehr denn zwanzig Original Gedichte, dreizehn ausführliche Biographien, eine Menge Nekrologe, acht grössere geschichtliche Aufsätze,

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<sup>54</sup> If this undertaking is in the hands of H. A. Rattermann, a tried and efficient power of the highest rank, the desired success will not be wanting. The *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin*, like the *Pionier*, will be published in Cincinnati, and according to the editor the periodical will embrace every phase of German-American intellectual and cultural life. *Sonntagsblatt der New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* (1886).

sieben solcher auf wissenschaftlichem oder literarischem Gebiete, eine grosse Zahl kleinerer Aufsätze, Kritiken über neue Literaturscheinungen, eine Fülle interessanter Notizen u. a. m. Zu bedauern ist bei dem Allen nur Eines: dass die Zahl der Subscribenten noch immer eine viel zu kleine ist, um auch nur die wirklichen Kosten zu decken. Das ist traurig angesichts der grossen Anzahl gebildeter Deutschen in Amerika.<sup>55</sup>

From the above quotation we may form an approximate estimate of Rattermann's latest publication. It was a worthy successor to the *Pionier* as a cultural and historical magazine, and might well serve to educate and elevate the intellectual standards of the German readers. Their past history in America was a noble one, whether viewed from a political, social, economic, educational or cultural angle. No one could read Rattermann's historical journal without becoming convinced of the fact that the German element in America had an important mission thrust upon it.<sup>56</sup>

But knowledge, zeal, and intelligence, are not sufficient for the upkeep and publication of a current magazine. Liberal financial support and an extensive list of subscribers are essential factors

<sup>55</sup> The first volume of Rattermann's *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin* has been completed. Its great value to history and literature, and its beneficial influence on the social and cultural life of German-Americans, cannot be doubted. The wealth of its contents is astounding. Volume I contains more than twenty original poems, thirteen detailed biographies, a large number of necrologies, eight historical essays, literary criticisms on current literature, and an abundance of interesting notices.—It is to be regretted that the number of subscribers is too small to cover the actual expenses of the magazine. Considering the large number of educated Germans in America, this is most deplorable. July 26, 1887.

<sup>56</sup> Rattermann's spirit still lives on and his work in behalf of German-American history and culture will be taken up and continued by an appreciative body of scholarly men. At a convention of German-Americans which convened at Cleveland March 1937, a "Committee for German-American History" (Ausschuss für deutschamerikanische Heimatskunde) was founded, whose duty it shall be to gather in a systematic manner, throughout the United States, all data pertaining to German cultural and educational institutions, in order to arrive at a complete compilation of German cultural life in this country. The cultivation and promotion of the German language in the schools and in divine service was emphasized; and lastly, the systematic advancement of German historical research.

Martin Schütz of the University of Chicago, furthermore publishes the quarterly *Deutsches Dichten in Amerika* with original poetic contributions by German-Americans. The first number appeared in October, 1936.

for its promotion and maintenance. Both of these were sadly wanting to the *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin* which was so excellently edited. Rattermann must have been hard pressed for financial means when in September 1887, he sent the following telegram to Oswald Ottendorfer, proprietor of the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*:

Habe noch keine Nachricht von Ihnen. Muss das Magazine fallen lassen wegen Mangel der Mittel. Persönliches Defizit Tausend Dollars. Vorrat achtzehnhundert volle Bände. Bitte um Antwort, böse oder gut.

H. A. Rattermann.<sup>57</sup>

Oswald Ottendorfer had to all appearances given his financial and moral support to this journalistic enterprise, for the first volume of the new magazine was dedicated to him. Whatever the answer to Rattermann's urgent message might have been is a matter of conjecture, but to the great loss of all concerned, a most beneficial influence was withdrawn from German-Americans and their fellow-citizens. The publication of the *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin* was discontinued after one brief year of circulation in September, 1887, causing a great loss of valuable source material to the future historian and investigator.

Heinz Kloss in his latest work, *Um die Einigung des Deutsch-amerikanertums*, made use of Rattermann's "Geschichte der deutschen Konventionen zu Pittsburgh und Philippsburg," as it appeared in *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin*, 1887, as a trustworthy and reliable source, in his treatment of "Die Pittsburger Bewegung." He was, however, greatly annoyed and handicapped in the completion of the article by the untimely discontinuation of the *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin*. The following expresses his disappointment:

Die Fortsetzung von Rattermanns 1887 begonnener, aber unvollständig geliebener Veröffentlichung seiner Geschichte der Pittsburger Bewegung müsste ausfindig gemacht werden. Leider hat Rattermann diese wichtige Studie nicht in die von ihm selber gedruckten *Gesammelten Werke* auf-

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<sup>57</sup> Have received no advice from you yet. Must discontinue the magazine for want of means. Personal deficit \$1,000. Have supply of 1800 complete volumes on hand. Reply, please, unfavorable or good.

H. A. Rattermann.

From the Rattermann Collection, University of Illinois.

genommen. Hier lag eine doppelte Tragik vor: Rattermann hielt seine mässigen Gedichte für wichtiger als seine geschichtlichen Abhandlungen und druckte sie vor den letzteren. Und da er kaum irgendwelche Unterstützung von aussen erfuhr, sein eigener Setzer sein musste und zu letzt erblindete, musste er die Herausgabe seiner Werke abbrechen, ehe er sie abgeschlossen hatte.<sup>68</sup>

The failure of his latest project brought on a lull in the public literary activity of the editor (as far as the publication of printed matter was concerned.) The German reading public was deprived of a wholesome factor in its cultural life until 1903, when the appearance of the first volume of Rattermann's *Gesammelte Werke* gave a new impetus to German-American poetry and prose writings. The volumes of his *Gesammelte Werke* had been planned during the long interim and were gradually published within a period of ten years. The reader who peruses both *Pionier* and *Gesammelte Werke* will find considerable repetition in the prose writings of the latter.

#### THE BIOGRAPHIKON

Although many of the biographies which we are about to discuss have appeared at some time in the current numbers of the *Deutscher Pionier* or its short-lived successor, *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin*, we feel that they should be treated as a separate division of history, for they are rather a stage in historical development where the individual emerges from the vast masses and leads or influences them. Someone has said that biography

<sup>68</sup> The continuation of the incomplete article, "Die Geschichte der deutschen Konvention zu Pittsburg und Philippsburg," which had been started by Rattermann in 1887, should be investigated. It is unfortunate that he did not take up this important study in his printed *Gesammelte Werke*. A twofold tragic element might be blamed—Rattermann considered his mediocre poetry of greater importance than his historical works and printed it before the latter. He received little or no assistance from publishers, and was obliged to do his own typesetting. At last total blindness set in and he was compelled to give up his work before it was completed. p. 319.

The above estimate of Rattermann's poetry may also account for the fact that Kloss in his earlier article, "Deutschamerikanisches Schrifttum," which appeared in *Dichtung und Volkstum*, XXXV (1934), entirely overlooked Rattermann's works and merits in the field of German-American literature.

is truly the crowning flower of history, for there is more history hidden in the lives of men than in all other events combined. Rattermann must have considered them as such because he collected the biographies and devoted several large volumes of his *Gesammelte Werke* to this purpose.<sup>59</sup>

Concerning their value he wrote to Father Rothensteiner:

Wenn die vier Bände des *Biographikon*s heraus sein werden, dann glaube ich, habe ich ein helleres Licht auf die Geschichte des Deutsch-Amerikanertums verbreitet als die sogenannten Preisschriften der Herren Pastor Bosse, R. Cronau, und Prof. Faust's. Alle diese mussten sich zum wesentlichsten Teil auf Seidensticker's und meine Arbeiten im *Deutschen Pionier* stützen, und was dort nicht zu finden war, blieb eben aus oder wurde mit Phrasen verhüllt. Mein *Biographikon* behandelt die erste Hälfte des verfloßenen Jahrhunderts, was unbedingt die wichtigste Epoche der gesammten deutschen Einwanderung dieses Landes war. Sie sollen ein Bild des Deutsch-Amerikanischen Kulturlebens in allen seinen Phasen entrollen. Ich habe sie nach Gruppen der Einwanderungsperioden geordnet. Meine Arbeit soll eine soviel wie möglich gründliche sein und für die Zukunft als Quellenwerk dienen.<sup>60</sup>

Most of this biographical matter was new and unpublished and therefore made a valuable contribution to the history of the German element in America. These sketches reveal facts which only the patient labor of years could have brought together, a bit at a time, very frequently by personal contact. Rattermann has made them accessible to all who are interested in the achievements of the German pioneers of America.

<sup>59</sup> The present *Biographikon* comprises only three volumes of *Gesammelte Werke*, viz., X, XI, XII. Volume XIII remained one of the unfinished volumes of the planned set which was to include sixteen but never reached beyond twelve volumes, although Rattermann had expressed the hope of finishing them, even at the age of 80 years.

<sup>60</sup> With the completion of the four volumes of the *Biographikon*, I will have cast a brighter light on German-American history than the so-called prize works of the Messrs. Pastor Bosse, R. Cronau, and Prof. Faust. They had to rely essentially on Seidensticker's and my work of the *Deutscher Pionier* and whatever was not to be found there was either omitted or presented in veiled expressions. My biographies deal with the first half of the last century, which is absolutely the most important period of German immigration to this country. I have arranged them according to the periods of immigration. My work shall be as thorough as possible in order to serve as a source for the future historian. Rattermann Letters, January 3, 1912; September 11, 1903.

The individual biographies of German-American poets of this period 1800-1850, are followed by one or other well-selected poem which characterizes the style, quality, and trends of the poet under discussion. With almost infallible judgment Rattermann seizes upon that which is most characteristic in the writer. His biographical compositions are marked by a keen sense of appreciation which discriminates very readily concerning the qualifications of the poet, artist, and musician.

Though Rattermann maintained a level-headed judgment of his literary contemporaries he was capable of criticizing fairly and impartially the work of his confrères. He was just and impartial, and betrayed an eagerness in the cause of all that was beautiful, good and true. But the picture changed when he dealt with deceivers, plagiarists, and hypocrites. Here he lost all patience, whether they were poets, historians, politicians, artists, journalists or authors in general. He vigorously inveighed against those who used his own literary work but failed to give due credit for it. We have an example of this in his sonnet, *Die preisgekrönten Geschichten des deutschen Elementes in Amerika 1910*, in which he denounces all unfair methods of publication and the lack of due acknowledgment.

Rattermann himself was so conscientiously truthful and upright in his writings that he could not bear to be dealt with in an unscrupulous, dishonest manner. He never failed to produce in print the sources for his lectures and articles, giving due credit to his predecessors. In his volume of *Aphorismen und Agrionien* he devoted some pages to scourging plagiarists. That he railed against them without pity we may well conclude from the following passage:

Schlimmer als die Geschichtsfuscher der Journale, spielen die frechen Freibeuter, die Hopp'e, Zimmermann, Cronau's und andere den Geschichtsforschern mit, deren chrliche Arbeiten sie in unverschämtester Weise stehlen oder nachahmen, ohne ihnen Kredit dafür zu geben, als ihre eigenen Forschungen darzustellen.<sup>61</sup>

Rattermann has preserved for future generations not only the

<sup>61</sup> Worse than the distorters of historical facts are the audacious freebooters who seize upon the work of others without giving due credit, they are more detrimental to the historical researcher than the perverters of historical data. *Gesammelte Werke*, IV, 151.

names of early German-American poets, he has also left us the biographies of an appreciable number of other prominent German-Americans, whose deeds and cultural contributions to America well merit recognition on the part of our American historians. A place in our modern standard works has since been granted to some of these worthy characters.<sup>62</sup>

Emil Krämer of the University of Wisconsin gave a critical estimate of Rattermann's *Biographikon* in the following terms:

Von allergrösstem, ja von unvergänglichem Werte sind die Bände, X, XI, XII—das deutsch-amerikanische *Biographikon* der ersten Hälfte des XIX. Jahrhunderts. Diese drei Bände bringen mehr oder minder ausführliche Nachrichten von etwa 125 Deutschen, die zwischen 1800 und 1850 in den

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<sup>62</sup> Owing to the inaccessibility of Rattermann's works today it may be well to enumerate a few of his noted biographies in this monograph: Johann B. Stallo, deutsch-amerikanischer Philosoph, Jurist und Staatsmann; Friedrich Gerstäcker, berühmter Reiseschriftsteller und Novellist; Dr. Ferdinand J. Lindheimer und Dr. Adolph Wislizenus, zwei deutsch-amerikanische Naturforscher; August Renz, Dr. Friedrich Rölker und Joseph Hemann, Pioniere des deutschen Schulsystems in Amerika; Dr. phil. Klemens Hammer, Schriftsteller und Dichter; Maximilian Oertel, der deutsch-amerikanische Abraham à Santa Klara; Heinrich Rodter, Journalist, Jurist und Volksmann; Julius Weyse, Pädagog und Dichter; Anna Ottendorfer, eine Philanthropin; Johann A. Röbling, Ingenieur und Brückenbauer; Philipp M. Wolsieffer und Pastor Heinrich Scheib, zwei deutsch-amerikanische Schulmänner; Johann Ludwig, Jurist und Staatsmann; die Brüder Johann und Gottfried Frankenstein, zwei Künstler; Dr. med. Georg Engelmann, Botaniker; General Johann A. Wagener, Soldat, Volksmann, Journalist und Dichter; Dr. med. Johann K. Spurzheim, Begründer der Phrenologie in Amerika; Ludwig Stork, Journalist und Dichter; Friedrich Münch, der Nestor der deutsch-amerikanischen Geistes-Pioniere; Gustav Körner, Jurist, Staatsmann, Geschichtsschreiber und Schriftsteller; Johann Wesselhöft, Begründer der *Alten und Neuen Welt*, Buchhändler und Anreger der Gründung von Hermann, Missouri; Friedrich List, Nationalökonom, Journalist und Dichter; Charles Sealsfield (Karl Postl), sein Leben und seine Werke; Franz Lieber, Gelehrter und Dichter; Franz J. Grund, Politiker und Schriftsteller; Dr. Karl Follen, ein Lebensbild aus aufgeregter Zeit; Dr. Karl Beck, Professor an der Harvard Universität; Johann G. Ritter, Begründer des neueren deutschen Buchdrucks in Amerika und Journalismus in den Vereinigten Staaten; Gustav S. Peters, Begründer des Stereotyp und Farbendrucks (chromo) in Amerika; Prof. Israel G. Rupp, der Historiograph von Pennsylvania; Dr. William Egle, Geschichtsschreiber Pennsylvaniens; Heinrich Böhm, Begründer des



Vereinigten Staaten gelebt haben, darunter von mehr als 80 Dichtern mit über 400 Originalgedichten. Für spätere Geschichtsforscher, Geschichtslehrer, Journalisten und Literaten wird sich dieses *Biographikon* als eine reiche Fundgrube und als ein durchaus zuverlässiges Nachschlagewerk erweisen, denn Herr Rattermann war im Abfassen seiner biographischen und geschichtlichen Arbeiten stets peinlich gewissenhaft. Wo er für seine Behauptungen und Daten keine unzweifelhafte Belege hatte, gab er dies jedesmal an. Rattermanns historische Werke werden darum einstens sehr geschätzt und gesucht sein.<sup>63</sup>

Rattermann's favorite method of disseminating historical data seems to have been through the medium of biographical sketches. These are worthy memorials of deserving German-American pioneers, whose lives throw light on contemporary history in all its variety, and on the life and customs of the people. In these delineations Rattermann aimed above all to be unprejudiced, and as he himself said, *wahrheitstreu*. Prof. M. D. Learned of the University of Pennsylvania said:

It is to be hoped that these biographical accounts might stimulate greater activity in the field of German-American genealogy. So many Germans of influence have passed from us in recent years leaving no adequate autobiographical accounts—an irretrievable loss to history.<sup>64</sup>

Recent German-American and German scholars concur in bestowing the highest praise on the *Biographikon* as a valuable asset to German-American history. But the real merit of Rat-

deutschen Methodismus; Demetrius Augustin Gallitzin, Fürst und Priester; Dr. Johann Martin Henni, erster Bischof und Erzbischof von Milwaukee; Andreas Gross und Johann Weiler, zwei deutsch-amerikanische Eisenbahn-Unternehmer.

<sup>63</sup> The German-American *Biographikon* of the first half of the nineteenth century is of the greatest and most lasting value. It contains a detailed account of about 125 Germans, who lived in the United States from 1800-1850, including about 80 poets with over 400 original poems. For the future historian, journalist, and literateur these biographies will prove a prolific source and a most reliable reference work, for Rattermann was ever painfully conscientious in drawing up his historical and biographical compositions. Wherever there was a lack of evidence or specific proof, he never hesitated to mention it. E. Krämer, "H. A. Rattermanns Werke," *Monatshefte für Deutsche Sprache und Pädagogik*, XXV (1914), 107.

<sup>64</sup> M. D. Learned, "H. A. Rattermann's Works," *German-American Annals*, XIII (1912), 261.

termann rests on the fact, that he has left this patiently collected biographical data, not in fragments or scattered articles, but in an accurately compiled and reconstructed book form. The greater number of these biographies can lay claim to originality or at least to a newly constructed form or garb. We frequently find that earlier written, but unpublished notes, existed from which he drew his facts, as is evident in the case of Gustav Körner's biography. Most of this material was obtained from Körner's own unpublished autobiography or memoirs. In the biography of Martin Johann Henni, Rattermann drew on such earlier sources as, *Johann Martin Henni, Eine Biographische Skizze* in the *Marienkalendar*, 1880; on *Geschichte des Bistums Cincinnati in Nord-Amerika*, von Friedrich Rese; Klauprecht's *Deutsche Chronik in der Geschichte des Ohiotales*; *Berichte der Leopoldinerstiftung*, and other sources. In the biographical account of Charles Sealsfield, the mysterious man, the greater part of the sketch has been reconstructed from Sealsfield's own works and an earlier unreliable account by Alfred Hoffmann and the Hungarian Count Kertheny. Here, however, Rattermann elaborated on the subject by the addition of an entire new element, namely, the first period of Sealsfield's life in America, which up to this period had been veiled in uncertainty and obscurity.

It must be said to Rattermann's credit that he rarely used extant material without a thorough investigation as to its authenticity and reliability, thoroughly checking and rechecking every statement. The presence of earlier reports on the subject do not detract in any way from his merits as a biographer. He always sought and added new data to that which was already in existence and he was undoubtedly conscious of the original historical value of his *Biographikon*.

It is clear from his works that he had a phenomenal memory and seemed never to forget what he had once read. The great number and variety of allusions and quotations from all sorts of books, but principally from works on history and literature, give evidence of an encyclopedic mind. In reading his essays, one is first of all struck by the ease, elegance, and vigor of style of this man who had so little formal education, (even committing grammatical errors at times). He had a rich vocabulary and showed all the marks of an experienced writer.

## RATTERMANN'S LIBRARY

Books had always held an irresistible attraction for Rattermann, ever since the day that his mother taught him the rudiments of reading, even before he went to school. They have been his lifelong companions and friends as student and scholar. But the actual foundation to his valuable library goes back to the year 1872, when he started out as a serious research worker in the literary and historical field. For almost fifty years he built up his collection by purchase, exchange, and otherwise, in order to further his private studies which chiefly concerned the history of the Germans in America and the development of German culture in the New World. His library was acquired at a great financial sacrifice, as we learn from his own words:

Meine idealen Bestrebungen haben mir die meisten Opfer gekostet. Ich begann zu sammeln als ich in die deutsch-amerikanische Geschichtsforschung hineingezogen wurde. Der Ankauf einer grossen Bibliothek für Quellen und vielfache Reisen nach allen Teilen des Landes, um an Ort und Stelle Geschichtsforschungen machen zu können, stürzte mich in Schulden.<sup>65</sup>

The scope of the collection embraces about 8000 volumes, pamphlets, unbound periodicals, and twelve large files of manuscripts, letters, clippings, and other source material for literary production. There are also ten large bound books in manuscript form of Civil War diaries, records, journals, and registers. The collection is essentially rich in books dealing with the early history of the various sections of America in which German settlements have been made and in early travel and exploration. Notable among these latter are twenty-two volumes of the well-known collection of voyages to America, published by de Bry in Frankfurt around 1600, a nearly complete set of the German edition. Among the early printed books is an incunabulum, *Neue Reformacion der stat Nureburg*, 1484, and in addition a number of volumes printed in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries whose antiquarian worth cannot be

<sup>65</sup> Idealistic endeavors demanded the greatest sacrifices of me. My rising enthusiasm for German-American research was also the beginning of my library. The acquisition of a large library and the frequent journeys which were necessitated by historical investigation frequently forced me into a state of liability. *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, XIX (1920), 95.

questioned. A complete file of the *Deutscher Pionier*, Cincinnati 1869-1887, and a file of *Wesselhöft's Alte und Neue Welt* are two of the treasures in this collection. The latter file belonged at one time, according to our information, to Governor Körner of Illinois.

This treasure house of valuable books and manuscripts was sold by the Rattermann family to the University Library of Illinois in 1916.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup>The addition of so large a collection of books on German-American history is directly in line with the desire of the University of Illinois to gather material for the study of the different racial and national elements in our population.

Some of the more important titles in the *Rattermann Collection* are: *Der Deutsche Pionier*, Cincinnati, 1869-1887; *Wesselhöfts Alte und Neue Welt*; Johann Theodor de Bry, *Grosse Reisen*, vols. 1-10 (about 1600); Johann Theodor de Bry, *Kleine Reisen*, vols. 1-9 (about 1600); Johann Theodor de Bry, *Discursz und cygentliche beschreibung Amerikas*, 1617; Johann Theodor de Bry, *Amerika, das ist, erfundung und offenbarung der neuen welt*, 1617; Ramusio, *Delli navigationi et viaggi*, 1613 (three vols.); A. J. Schem, *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Konversations-Lexicon*, vols. 1-11; Louis Hennepin, *Beschryving von Louisiana*, 1688; J. A. Remer, *Amerikanisches Archiv*, 1777, vol. 1; Miguel Venegas, *Naturlyk en burgerlyke historie von California*, 1761; Norris Birbeck, *Letters from Illinois*, London, 1818; William Gordon, *History of the Rise . . . of the Independence of the United States of America*, New York, 1801; J. F. Smyth, *A Tour in the United States of America*, 1784; J. Moser, *Beschreibung von Nord-Amerika* (three volumes), 1784; J. D. Schopf, *Reise durch die mittlern und südlichen Vereinigten Nord-Amerikanischen Staaten nach Ost-Florida und den Bahama Inseln in 1783-1784*, 1788; Le Beau, *Neue Reise unter den Wilden in Nord-Amerika*, 1752; Kaspar Schwenckfeld, *Apologia und erklerung der Schlesier*, 1529; Kaspar Schwenckfeld, *Ein Christliche ermanung*, 1524; *Die Neue Welt der landeschafften und insulen*, 1534; *Notitia utraque cum orientis tum occidentis ultra Arcadii Honorique Caesarum Tempora*, 1552; Albert Krantz, *Saxonia*, 1563; Petrus Apianus, *Cosmographia, sine descriptio orbis*, 1534; Francis Pretty, *Reyse desz Kandisch*, 1599; E. W. Happel, *Thesaurus Exoticorum*, 1688; Arnoldus Montanus, *Die nieuwe onbekende veereld*, 1671; J. B. Homman, *Atlas, Erde und himmels karten* (four volumes); LaMartinière Bruzen, *Historisch-politisch-geographischer Atlas der ganzen welt*, 1744-1749 (12 folio volumes); *Het Britannische ryk in Amerika* (two volumes), 1721; and *Allgemeine historie der reisen zu wasser und lande*, 1747-1774 (20 volumes).

Mr. W. G. Rattermann of New York City, a grand-son of the late Heinrich Armin Rattermann, has designed and presented to the Illinois University library a special book-plate of artistic design to be put into each of the books.

Rattermann's library and particularly the files of letters and manuscript material reveal, perhaps, the best and most complete picture of Rattermann, the man, the historian, and the poet, as a promoter and interpreter of German-American life and culture.<sup>67</sup>

A glance behind the scenes may be of interest here. The picture, a description of Rattermann's literary work shop, is given us by his daughter Katherine who wrote:

His bedroom and study combined was very simply furnished—a bed to sleep in; a few plain chairs, and a large desk, but book cases and book cases! The huge desk was covered with books and dust. He allowed himself a scant spot in which to write. Could you but see that desk, as I recall it! On one occasion our maid and I carefully selected from his study and carried ten large baskets of books into the library, which comprised two large rooms on the third floor, still leaving three large book cases on the walls, a revolving book case, and the desk covered with books.

Occasionally, when I would dare to straighten his desk, he would scold—but a very mild scolding, for he was gentleness itself to all of us.<sup>68</sup>

Most of his leisure time was spent in his study. Here his literary perspectives found their execution in the cultural productions which we are privileged to read.

It may be of special interest here to discuss briefly a few of the manuscripts and documents which the writer came upon in the unclassified material of the Rattermann Collection. They are as follows: the original manuscript of "Der Ausbruch des Bürgerkrieges in Missouri" by Fred Schnake (110 pages) deals with vital questions of the early Civil War and offers valuable information on this decisive historical issue. Its documentation sheds new light on the subject.

Another interesting document enumerates in detail some of the facts concerning the Moravians in North Carolina. It contains a record of the names of the first settlers, the place and date of their birth in Germany, the time of their arrival in North Carolina, and the date of the individual's death, together with other points of information. Another manuscript very similar to the

<sup>67</sup> It is hardly conceivable how an individual could accomplish so much. The demands made on his person and time came from every stratum of society—Cultural, social, business, political, and educational (not to mention those of his own large family and relatives).

<sup>68</sup> Letter of Katherine Rattermann, November 10, 1935.

former one, also referring to Carolina, dates back to 1680. It reveals the names of individual settlers, the number of acres which they possessed, the locality of their land, and the nominal amount of rent which they paid (usually 1 or  $\frac{1}{2}$  penny).

A very valuable Revolutionary War document, covering four or six sheets of foolscap paper, appears in the form of an accurate account of the Battle of Trenton. It was written in German script and addressed to a nobleman in Germany. This account should prove invaluable to the student of United States history.

"The history of the German Element in Virginia" is another meritorious manuscript for the study of colonial history. Most of our historians seem to emphasize only the English phase of early Virginia. This document reveals the colonizing efforts of the early German settlers and should serve to bring about a more intelligent view of the situation in colonial Virginia.

Brown with age and edges torn, is the worthy document which mentions the honorable discharge of the Private Dragoon, Ludwig Boyer, a bodyguard of Washington during the Revolutionary War. The document was written by Washington's Adjutant, Daniel Cobb, and countersigned by General George Washington, September 10, 1783. Rattermann had received this document from Boyer's son, who at the time of Rattermann's visit to his home in Piqua, Ohio, was an old man of eighty-five years. His father, Private Dragoon Ludwig Boyer, had died September 19, 1843, at the age of eighty-seven years. The following epitaph was engraved on his tombstone:

Here Boyer lies, who Britain's arms withstood  
Not for himself, but for his country's good,  
Who victor oft in famed Columbia's fields  
To death's repose, the aged warrior yields.<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps the most valuable of all his manuscripts are the nine bound books dealing with the German regiments of the Civil War.

<sup>69</sup>The significance of this document lies in the fact that through it Rattermann was urged on to some intensive research pertaining to the German soldiers of the Revolutionary War, which in turn led to very striking discoveries. "Die Leibgarde Washingtons" an article of the *Deutscher Pionier* is a veritable storehouse of information concerning the war of the American Revolution. *Deutscher Pionier*, VII (1876), 215.

They are written in a beautiful legible German script, and had at one time been the property of Col. Augustin Moor of Cincinnati, Ohio, who later became Brigadier General. Their contents are as follows:

Volume I: From Headquarters of the 28th Regiment of O. V. I. (Ohio Valley Infantry), Day Book of Col. Moor, Beverly, West Virginia (February 1864), concerning the German Hussars Artillery Companies A and B and German Volunteers of Hampton Legion; volume II: General orders and noble exhortations directed to his men; volume III: Hauptquartier des II ten deutschen Regiments Cincinnati, June 1861; volume IV: a list of commanding officers, giving data on each individual—promotions, transfers, resignations, and discharges; volume V: non-commissioned officers—staff of the 28th regiment of the United States; volume VI: list of deserters of the 28th regiment and a complete list of enlisted men; volume VII: important reports, orders given and received, movements of the army (very interesting); volume VIII: military post order book—interesting in every detail. These books are invaluable for their historical data concerning the Civil War. They elucidate many facts concerning the German regiments of Ohio. The minute details of individual officers and privates are a revelation to the research scholar.

A document of particular interest to the student of Church history, or the history of religious communities of women in the United States, is a lengthy letter of a German Ursuline nun, which gives a detailed account of the founding of the first German Ursuline sisterhood in the United States at St. Louis, Missouri 1849, and its subsequent branch foundations.

Other unclassified material consists of a large number of Rattermann's poems, speeches, plays, and operas in the original manuscript form, and also a liberal collection of first drafts for the *Deutscher Pionier* by its collaborators. There are files of letters from his host of correspondents in this country and from Germany and Austria. The various papers, policies, and receipts of his Insurance Business comprise another large portion of the collection. Most of the material (with the exception of business papers) is in German handwriting. The miscellaneous contents are beyond description and often beyond deciphering. The whole collection is an

accumulation of various written material stored away during sixty-five years of Rattermann's super-active life (1856-1920).<sup>70</sup>

There is scarcely a German in the Union who has manifested more zeal and interest in the collection and publication of German literary and historical material than Rattermann. He carried out most faithfully the injunction of his friend, Father Rothensteiner, who so fittingly said: "Wenn das Deutschtum sich hier erhalten soll, so darf es sich nicht begnügen, immer wieder auf seinen Goethe und Schiller zu pochen, sondern es muss eigene Literatur aus sich hervorbringen."<sup>71</sup>

Rattermann, more than any other German-American, has beaten a path and gone new ways in the field of literary endeavors. He waited for no man to lead him, but showed others the way.

Er war ein echter Sohn der roten Erde  
Und in ihm wirkte jene stille Kraft,  
Die ruhig mit gelassener Geberde  
Was immer sie geplant, auch richtig schafft.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Any one interested in antiquarian lore would do well to spend several weeks of patient plodding through this puzzling chaos of letters, clippings, manuscripts, and business papers. The various forms and styles of handwriting are however apt to present difficulties to the student who seeks to obtain accurate information.

<sup>71</sup> To maintain German life and culture in this country it is not sufficient to boast repeatedly of Goethe and Schiller, but the Germans must produce literature from within their own rank and file. J. Rothensteiner, *Die Literarische Wirksamkeit der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Katholiken* (St. Louis, 1922), 22.

<sup>72</sup> He was a true son of the red soil in whom was active that silent power which with calm demeanor effects most efficiently what it has determined upon. Wilhelm Müller, *Rattermann Centennial* (Cincinnati, 1932).



## CONCLUSION

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It has been the aim of this dissertation to gather for the first time the available source material and to construct therefrom a biography of Heinrich Armin Rattermann, both as man of action and as a German-American poet and historian. We have followed him through his long wanderings in his favorite fields, and from the evidences accumulated, we hope to justify our conclusion.

To pronounce Rattermann a genius might sound like an exaggeration to some, but if we consider his general abilities, his great fund of knowledge in the numerous fields of learning, and the amount of scientific and cultural work which he has accomplished, in spite of so many handicaps and obstacles, we cannot fail to call him an extraordinary and remarkable man. Even from childhood he was a precocious and noble character, and he possessed a personality in which there is much to be admired, much to be imitated.

Rattermann's activities were divided between the dictates of his material needs and the gratification of his highly aesthetic inclination to art, song, music, and poetry, while his robustness of intellect, his sturdy independence of thought and action, together with his unwavering conviction of the truth, all so characteristic of the man Rattermann, impelled him to an untiring cultivation of German-American activity in every field.

There is something naturally and predominantly healthy about Rattermann, the man. He lived a good clean manly life, always sought that which was beautiful and uplifting, and earnestly strove to do his best as he saw it. He courted acquaintance among the intellectual and scholarly men of his day, and by reciprocal association and exchange of ideas broadened and disciplined his mental and moral capacity. His scholarly attainments were of a high order. One marvels no less at the range and extent of his knowledge than the quality and quantity of his writings. He was evidently handicapped by lack of funds to give his literary work a wider circulation, but that they exerted a considerable influence seems beyond question. The only regret today is that the works of Rattermann are not easily obtainable.

To Rattermann's name is attached an uninterrupted seventy-five years of striving and endeavor for all that is uplifting and noble in

life. What his energetic spirit produced and effected may serve as intellectual building stones for future generations.

In matters of religion, Rattermann was at all times a Christian, but not a believing, practical Catholic. He rebelled against dogmatic ruling or fixed creeds. He never established a new religious criterion but was tolerant to the extreme. He had strong naturalistic philosophical tendencies and declared that there can be no conflict between faith and nature, but that both must contribute to the honor and glory of God. Some of his thoughts as expressed in his book of aphorisms may be misleading to those not well grounded in the faith, but as he himself said, he was not seeking to impose his religious and philosophical ideas on others, but merely to give an expression to his own viewpoint.

Rattermann's poetry is not the work of a young enthusiast but that of a thoughtful, sensitive, idealistic, mature writer, who had already stored his mind with the wisdom of the ages. He possessed a keen sense of the artistic and an ample knowledge of art, literature, music, and human nature. These assets together with a remarkable command of his mother tongue were bound to make him a prolific poet. But not all his poetic creations can lay claim to the meed of poesy, for at times the want of poetic inspiration detracted from their charm. If, however, his copious output of poems were carefully sifted and selected, they would, no doubt, yield a fine array of noble gems. His poetry covers a very wide range of ideas—nature, religion, philosophy, politics, art, literature, and life. His forte was the ode and the sonnet. All his powers are thrown into the classical, giving preference to its stylistic excellence. His models are especially Herder, Goethe, Geibel, and Platen. Romanticism or naturalism found no echo in his poetry.

Rattermann's verse, lectures, and writings betray a broad acquaintance and knowledge in the field of German-American literature and English literary history. His poetry is pure, clean, and wholesome throughout. He is entirely out of sympathy with the naturalistic and realistic tendencies of his own time and condemns and abhors them as opposed to the very nature and purpose of poetry.

Rattermann may not have been the greatest figure in the German-American literary field, but he possessed the virtue of originality and independence of thought and research, which accom-

panies it. He utilized that originality to introduce new types, forms, and material into his poetry.

As a German-American historian, his name is well known among scholars. His concentration of interest upon everything German-American brought out many facts which American historians have failed to record. He taught the recent generation to set new values upon the history of a people which had hitherto been relegated to obscurity and oblivion. Rattermann blazed new trails and solved many doubtful historical problems. He rendered inestimable service to the German element of America by restoring it to its rightful place in American history and life. As an historian he aimed at truth and justice, guided by a spirit of objectivity which regarded neither rank nor person. If he erred in spite of this, it was due to uncontrollable circumstances rather than to discrimination or racial antipathy.

As a German-American citizen Rattermann was interested not only in things German, but he was an active participating, patriotic American citizen, who fully realized and appreciated his rights and privileges as such. His ideals of democracy and the reciprocal duties of each individual citizen were of the highest type. He gave freely of himself to the state and his fellow-citizens and through his medium of cultural contributions did much to uplift and ennoble society. With all the vigor of his honest and truthful character he fought corruption in politics and flayed official incumbents who betrayed the public trust confided to them.

He had grown up with the city and country of his adoption (1846-1923). He knew its history and was acquainted with its social customs as was no other man of his time. This knowledge he used to good effect in his historical writings. He himself was an important constituent part of that history, a potent factor in the life of German-Americans and of America at large. It is to his undying credit that he achieved what he did in an age and time in which his efforts were so little understood and so scantily appreciated. Rattermann fought a constant battle for the preservation of German life, German language, German customs, and German culture.

All in all, Heinrich Rattermann's name is a symbol of what is best in personal character, high ideals, and noblest in German-American endeavor.

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# WOODSTOCK NEWS

Lisa Tiano—Telephone OR 9-9323

## Huguenot Historical Group Given Ratterman Paintings

A collection of 19 oil paintings done by her late brother, Walter G. Ratterman (1887-1944) has been presented to the Huguenot Historical Society of New Paltz by his sister, Mrs. Frederick P. Platt of Ratterman Road in Woodstock.

The group of family portraits covers work by artist Ratterman over a period of 50 years. The earliest work done in 1911 is a portrait of Mrs. Platt's father.

Kenneth E. Hasbrouck, president of the historical society,

Woodstock. His free-lancing covered the field of commercial art, illustrating, portraiture and fine art. The demand for his illustrations established him as one of the important illustrators of his day.

The liquidation of the family collection by Mrs. Platt also coincides with her departure from the imposing family residence on Ratterman Road. The residence was built in 1917 and purchased by Ratterman in 1925. He named it Pinecliff. It was enlarged and refurbished by Frederick Putnam Platt in 1947.

Mrs. Platt will vacate the premises on July 3 and it will be occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Ineson of Kingston, who recently purchased it. Mrs. Platt will spend her summers in Woodstock and winters in Clearwater, Fla. For the remainder of this summer she will occupy a cottage behind the Woodstock Reformed Church.

Kingston, N. Y.

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Furs and Fashions



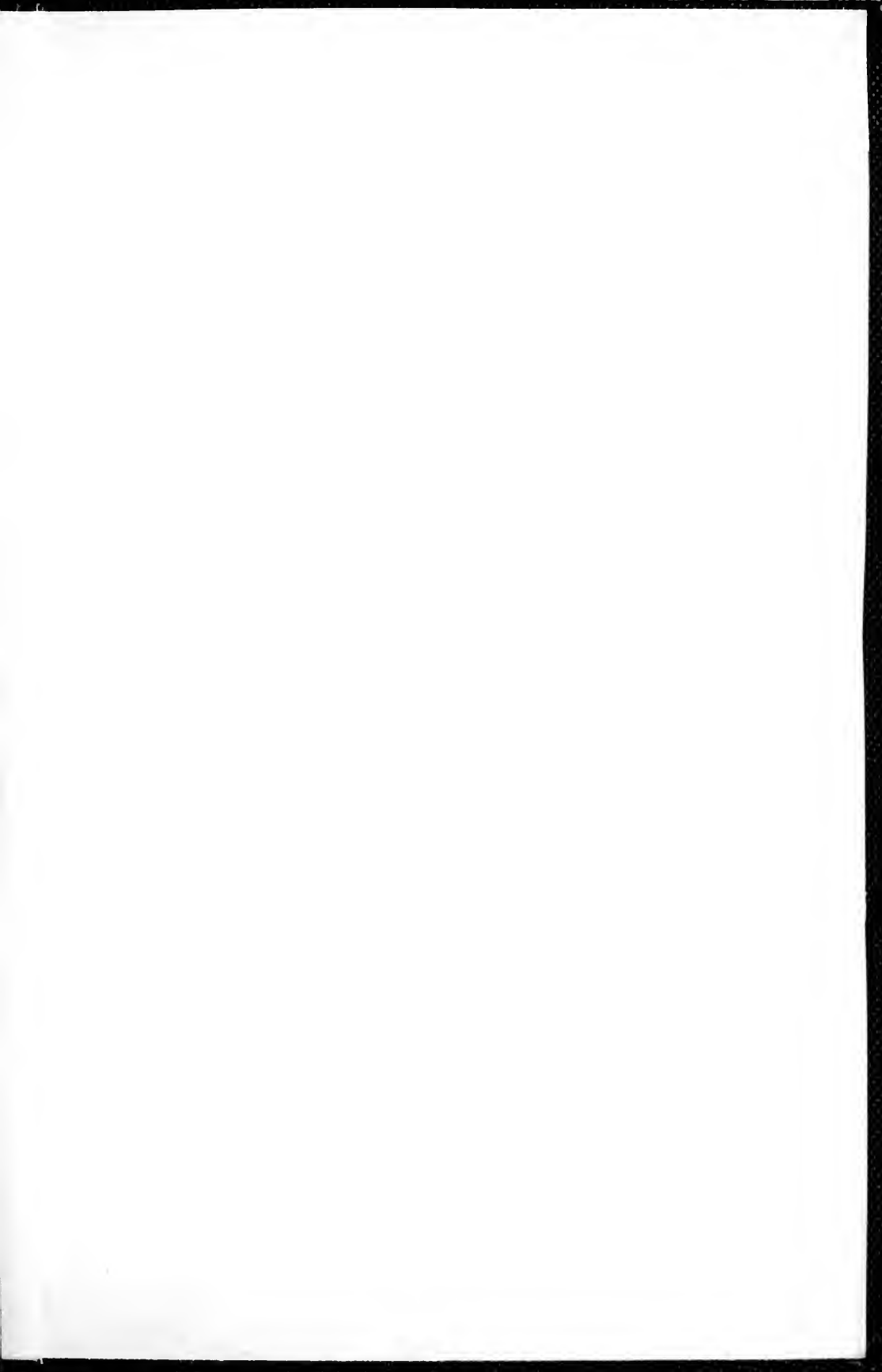
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