

KARL FOLLEN: A RE-APPRAISAL AND SOME NEW BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIALS

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The name of Karl Follen (1796-1840) is one of the best known in the history of American-German relations and has been highly respected on two continents for a long time. Follen's reputation began with his success in winning public recognition in his adopted land for the ideas and ideals which he taught to students, expounded in lectures and literary writings, and which seemed to direct his own conduct. Consequently, he has been considered an embodiment of many of the best characteristics distinguishing those German refugees from political reaction, who as martyrs of their convictions came to America during the first half of the nineteenth century, before the immigration wave of the forty-eighters.

Later he was mainly identified with the introduction of systematic academic instruction in German language and literature and commended for his still usable textbooks. Although the importance of this branch of study within American education is better appreciated at present than ever, Follen's merits in this regard are more of a methodological than of an ideological significance. It is the idealism he preached and he tried to live that deserves more of our attention today.

In recent years, however, several efforts have been made to mar the sympathetic Follen picture of a personality of high ideals and strong moral principles. Some endeavors have been aimed at an almost complete reversal of the portrait sketched by the older generations of American and German scholars and critics who saw an idealistic individualist in Follen and presented his personality in this vein. To nearly all biographers who wrote on Follen's life and works before the end of World War II, it was obvious that he was a most competent and efficient interpreter of Kant's philosophy and ethics in America by his determined and relentless fight against any form of oppression endangering individual and democratic freedom. On the other hand these authors also understood that to Follen himself Kantian idealism of pure and practical reason had found its best symbolic expression in the dramatic works of German classicism, above all in the tragedies of Schiller's dynamic creation. Even when Follen's rather inflexible Kantian ideal of human freedom finally got him into trouble with the Harvard Corporation, so that for a while his very existence was threatened after he had joined the New England abolitionists, to those friendly critics his rigid attitude and the issues involved resembled the motives of a tragedy by Schiller. Moreover, Follen's message appeared to have made him an inspirer of New England transcendentalism too, since it established his association with the circles around Channing and Emerson. Follen regarded both men with admiration and esteem, though it is not certain, as far as Emerson is concerned, whether these feelings were always mutual. At any rate, within the course of American intellectual history the reception and integration of the German ideology preferred by Follen evidently had been a boon especially since it could be reconciled with Puritan traditions. Hence American and German biographers praised him; in addition the Germans were proud of him.

In order to appreciate fully the attempts of the last years to replace a somewhat idealized image of Follen by an entirely different one, it will be necessary to look first at their historical starting-point. Chiefly they arose from doubts and suspicions cast upon Follen. To single out the two most serious accusations supposedly representing the basis of a new but unfavorable picture of Follen's personality we mention the charges of a sinister super-nationalism foreshadowing the terror methods of future fascism and an allegedly malicious and harmful misrepresentation of Goethes' humanism. Minimizing these imputations by explaining them as due to the iconoclastic tendencies of a generally angry younger generation of critics would be a grave mistake in judgment. Actually, they rest upon an objective historical truth: namely that Follen's character, and that of many of his German contemporaries, was in succession dominated by two strong intellectual forces of a paradoxical nature.

Indeed, the general intellectual development of German bourgeois youth during the last decade of the eighteenth and the first two decades of the nineteenth centuries is reflected in Follen's formative years. This was the period when the families of the educated German middle-class brought up their sons and daughters by guiding them towards the ideal of a moral autonomy. Moral autonomy, as set against the heteronomous ethical values of revealed positive religion, was the center of the new secular religion of idealism to which the meaning of life was a harmonious, gradual, eventually total unfolding of the individual's true character. In its practical realization it was the obedience to the moral law discovered through the inner voice of conscience. It was the compliance with the principles of the categorical imperative, while looking up to the stars in the firmament in awe and humility before the creator, two aspects of a piety leading to an ever growing personal perfection. By the end of the first decade of the century, however, this religious and educational ideal going back to and based on thoughts of Leibniz and Kant respectively was significantly transformed. Now the realization of the individual personality would reach its fulfilment only when it immersed itself in the collective individuality of the nation to become an integral part of the latter. After it had insolubly tied itself to the nation the individual would arrive at the consummation of its destiny. Hence a quite different spiritual force, antagonistic to the motives for moral action of an extreme individualism, took hold of Follen's generation.

Karl Follen was faced with the same dilemma. Should he give up his native German individualistic liberalism, which had been strengthened by kindred influences from France, England, and the young independent United States and culminated in the ideal of a national community composed of free and unfettered personalities in favor of the concepts of an exclusive nationalism? Most of his contemporaries changed their allegiance from idealistic individualism to a chiefly utilitarian nationalism, and apparently so did he. Why? Did he perceive that this transition was inevitable and by necessity of fate the direction in which the German national course would have to run? There is no possibility for a really satisfactory answer to that question, because it touches on ultimate mysteries.

To be sure there are the explanatory circumstances of historical events. Shortly after Follen had completed the first decade of his life, the German states were conquered by the French armies of Napoleon I. His victory began a prolonged period of severe foreign rule with all the humiliations and degradations of military occupation lasting for almost a decade. But it became also the incubation period of nationalism in Germany. These

years stirred the patriotic conscience of the Germans and induced them to see in a close alliance of all German states with Prussia the only hope for a liberation from the Napoleonic yoke. Prussia had been the nationally most self-conscious state since the reign of Frederic II.

However, after Napoleon's defeat in the so-called wars of liberation, in which Follen too saw action as a volunteer, what originally and at the outset had been a spiritual call to regeneration and unification of a whole nation more and more developed and expanded into narrow chauvinism. Then, when a conservative reaction, particularly linked with Metternich's rule and the "Holy Alliance," tried to restore to power the old order of the times before the French Revolution by stigmatizing and suppressing every expression of liberalism as a revolutionary ideology, men like Follen saw no choice but to attach themselves to the cause of a nationalistically directed liberalism. Unfortunately by that time German nationalism had already started out on a calamitous march towards an arrogant hatred of everything foreign and was far removed from anything that could properly be called the realization of a collective ideology.

When Follen actively participated in a political movement which separated itself from the individualistic ideals of his youth he did by no means try to forget them. He preserved them as hidden treasures, and there would come a time during his American exile when he would draw on them and return to them as to the backbone and the essence of his teaching. Since we can never know the motives of a man's actions we must again be satisfied with looking at some circumstances in order to understand Follen's political attitude at the time when he fought the restoration. First of all he was not inwardly detached from the controversies of his times. He was, body and soul, right in the middle of these battles, and not at all inclined to withdraw from them. Furthermore he was a disciple and enthusiastic admirer of "Turnvater" Jahn. Jahn's gymnastic organization, founded in 1810, had begun as a group movement to bring about a physical as well as a national rebirth of the German people. Whether some of its less impressive operations were to blame on Jahn himself is a moot problem. Although the grey shirts of his followers may remind us of the brown or the black shirts of recent days, to call Jahn the first storm-trooper, as has been done, seems to be somewhat ridiculous. Finally Follen in his capacity of a university instructor found himself in the center of the nationalist activities, the universities. It was by the efforts of the student fraternities, especially the *Burschenschaften*, in cooperation with Jahn's sport-associations that the academic youth of Germany was politically activated.

Follen's activity as the energetic, active politician, first at the University of Giessen and then at the University of Jena, provided the basis for the severe and concrete accusation of his recent critics. The political event in strifetorn Germany that forced him into flight and exile was the assassination of the reactionary poet and journalist, August von Kotzebue, in February 1819. His murderer was Karl Ludwig Sand, a fanatical member of the particularly radical Jena *Burschenschaft*. Sand was also an intimate friend of Karl Follen. Did the latter have any connection with the crime? Did he instigate it? Even some of their friends believed it. Certainly the police thought so and arrested Follen, but had to set him free again because of a lack of evidence.

While all Follen biographers have been familiar with the facts concerning the close friendship between Follen and Sand, the reasons for Follen's arrest and his escape abroad, and even with the insinuation that

he seemed to believe in the justification of political murder, none of the earlier ones has taken such a suspicion seriously. The reason for this incredulity is simple and obvious: except for the memoirs of another political refugee there is not a single authentic source to support Follen's implication.¹ It remained for recent writers to talk about and stress "that dark affair in which he was involved without ever being fully cleared." The argument runs that manifestly Follen did not only defend political slaying when "freedom" was at stake, but by that he also introduced it into German politics as a fair weapon, a doctrine that was to bear its final bitter fruit in his native country more than a century later. It was just one step to extend the accusation from Follen's person to the whole group of the *Burschenschaften*.²

Though less degrading yet still quite unfavorable is the accusation that Follen was to blame for the lack of appreciation for Goethe in America during the first half of the nineteenth century. Recently a booklet by Johannes Urzidil was published with the title *Das Glück der Gegenwart: Goethes Amerikabild*.³ It is a brief account of Goethe's acquaintance with America in the broadest meaning of the word, and is based on previous investigations but almost without any bibliographical documentation of the sources which have been used. On page 29 ff. we are told that Karl Follen was responsible for destructive influences upon the formation of early American Goethe criticism. The author states that he had won the admiration of the liberal student body in his homeland as a nationalist and author of patriotic songs, and by implication, that he had something to do with the Kotzebue assassination. In America he was a professor of German language at Harvard University and as such a co-founder of American Germanic studies but also a member and preacher of the Unitarian Church. From his lecturing platform as well as from his pulpit he "served up" to students and to his congregation a repulsive Goethe portrait. He castigated the poet for a morally dubious life, for his lack of appreciation of the efforts for political freedom, and suggested that Goethe probably inspired the hostile measures against the freedom-loving students, the Carlsbad Decrees, which suspended the *Burschenschaften* in September 1819. Follen's rantings against the "heathen" Goethe fell on fertile ground in America and were responsible for the prejudices of Bancroft, Irving, Melville and even Emerson, who once said of Goethe "he was incapable of a self-surrender to the moral sentiment."⁴

If these two modern character pictures (Schuppe and Urzidil) portray Follen's personality then he may have been a man of ideals but definitely of no principles. But what about the biographical sources on which they were ostensibly based? We have stressed that there are no biographical materials of a documentary nature known to sustain either assertion.

¹ Friedrich Münch, *Erinnerungen aus Deutschlands trübster Zeit* (St. Louis und Neustadt, 1873), 21 ff. It seems that Münch's recollections, written down late in his life, were more alive to Follen's immature, often sanguinary, political poetry of his early years than to the latter's performance in his manhood. In general Münch's portrait of Follen is quite positive, but it is easy to understand that Follen's youthful verses, horrible as they were in many respects (see Münch, 15), were particularly lingering in the memories of his chums.

² Erwin Schuppe, *Der Burschenschaftler Wolfgang Menzel. Eine Quelle zum Verständnis des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt a. M., 1952).

³ Johannes Urzidil, *Das Glück der Gegenwart: Goethes Amerikabild* (Zürich, 1958).

⁴ Perhaps Urzidil's accusation may be traced back to Camillo von Klenze's *Brooks Farm and the Genteel Tradition* (Boston, 1937) in which the opinion is expressed that Follen's personal prejudices hindered an impartial estimation of German literature and that consequently his influence cannot be regarded as uniformly beneficent (p. 18). A sound refutation of this assertion, at least as far as the Schiller reputation established by Follen is concerned, can be found on p. 5 of Stanley M. Vogel's *German Literary Influence on the American Transcendentalists* (New Haven, 1955). His book represents also the most recent recapitulation of our knowledge of Follen. As to the most crucial problem of the paper submitted here, Vogel does not take sides but simply states that it was not surprising when Follen, active in revolutionary circles and a friend of Sand's, was arrested as an accomplice in the assassination of Kotzebue.

Especially puzzling to the Follen biographer is Urzidil's distorted picture. While Follen's great regard for Schiller, whom he considered the genuine protagonist in the eternal dramatic struggle for freedom, has always been recognized, nobody ever thought that Follen had on that account disparaged Goethe, as Urzidil now wants us to believe. When Follen censured Goethe because of his failure to join the German people in the liberation movement, he only expressed what the poet himself later confessed by his famous verses: that he was ashamed of himself for having stood aside inactively. Similarly no documentary proof can be cited to charge Follen with having been a conspirator together with Sand in the Kotzebue murder, but neither is there any counter-evidence. No doubt the two accusations are closely linked together, for Follen's assumed misrepresentation of Goethe is alleged to have originated from his nationalism.

Where do we go from here? Which of the two character portrayals of Follen clearly contradicting each other, must be accepted as historically true? The former one that looked at him as a man deeply rooted in individualistic humanism, an ardent idealistic cosmopolitan in his heart, in spite of passing nationalistic inclinations caused by the Napoleonic wars and their aftermath? Or the modern one of an unscrupulous politician who would neither shrink from sacrificing the life of an individual nor from character assassination? Since the available biographical sources are inadequate the biographer must attempt a psychological understanding of human character, which is always complex and variable, described as "the abysmal depths of personality."⁵ In other words, the same psychological method that produced the two opposing personality portraits as a result of interpretative "insight" and not from distinct and unobscured documents, has to be employed in order to obtain a portrait coming nearest to Follen's real personality. Here we are concerned with "motives and the internal dynamics" of an historical individual, and only an impressionistic answer to our question can be provided.

Rejecting the recent picture we are convinced that the first one established by the older generations of scholars still stands and for the following reasons. Modern historical, especially biographical, research in general has come to evaluate periods of strong nationalistic trends as unfavorable to the cultural or intellectual development of peoples as well as of individuals. Behind this observation is, of course, the disillusionment with the part played by nationalism, which in almost all instances had a ruinous effect on the development of nations. The German in particular could tell a thing or two about that experience in the history of their nation. Hand in hand with being disillusioned with general nationalism goes the disillusion with persons who rightly or wrongly have been responsible for producing it. Follen, however, could serve as an illustration of this type of historical thinking. Even supposing it to be true that he had been carried away by nationalism during the early period of his life, there is the important fact that he did everything in his power to forget, or make others forget after he had gone into exile, this temporary aspect of his mundane existence. By fighting for democracy and against "formalism and conventionality," against "general subserviency to wealth," against "political and legal inferiority of women," against "secterianism of the churches" and for academic freedom in America, Follen redeemed himself. Thus one is led to favor a character portrayal of Karl Follen that shows his personality as that of an idealistic individualist, unless one wants to condemn him,

⁵ John A. Garraty, *The Nature of Biography* (New York, 1957), 215 ff.

not of having been an unrestrained nationalist, but of having been an insincere hypocrite. But let us also keep in mind that this Follen picture rests on "intuitive judgment" based upon a thorough examination of all available biographical sources.

So much for a re-appraisal of Follen's personality. When we now turn to a presentation of some hitherto unknown and unused biographical materials, we are treading on scientifically less difficult and less dangerous ground. Before we introduce the materials themselves, a very brief survey of the present state of the Follen biography seems to be in order.

Only two years after Follen's untimely death in 1840 during a stormy January night in a horrible shipwreck between Long Island and the Connecticut coast, his widow, Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, published the first account of his life. It was the memorial of a loving and bereaved spouse and it still is the principal source of most of the facts concerning Follen's life and works. Many years later, George W. Spindler wrote a scholarly and reliable Follen biography which sensibly refrained from overrating him.⁶ Afterward new light was shed on various biographical details, particularly in articles by Herman Haupt and Gottfried Fittbogen published on the one hundredth anniversary of Follen's arrival in the U. S. A.⁷ They included letters, which, if collected in a fairly complete correspondence, could form a genuine journal and could be some of the most valuable personal documents for a biographer. A discovery of letters revealing unknown biographical facts and aspects is still possible, and what is following here now is of this category.

The first letter reproduced from the original here for the first time is a letter of Karl Follen to Franz Lieber. To understand fully its contents and implications the following should be kept in mind. The letter is dated Boston, February 21, 1827; this means that it was written during a period of Follen's life which is not well documented and hence not known in detail to Spindler, namely his first years after his arrival in Boston. It was the time when he tried to make a living by teaching gymnastics. About one and a half years after Follen had introduced gymnastics in Boston he resigned his position in favor of a fellow refugee from Germany, Franz Lieber. Lieber later became known as the founder of political science in the United States and a most successful academic teacher in later years.⁸ Although most accounts of American-German literature place Follen and Lieber very close to each other as the two German immigrant authors who around 1830 successfully influenced American life, they were in friendly contact only at the beginning of their respective American careers. One could call their connection a fellowship due to a common fate and it would be incorrect to speak of an intimate friendship of the two men. Their contacts were made at Boston and Cambridge and were concerned with the early stages of gym instruction according to Jahn's method in America. Our information about this period, as has been stated, is meager and indirect.

In December 1825 Follen began his lessons as an instructor in German

⁶ George W. Spindler, "Karl Follen, a Biographical Study," *Jahrbuch der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois*, XVI (1917), 7-234.

⁷ Herman Haupt, "Zum Gedächtnis Karl Follens," *Jahrbuch der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Gesellschaft von Illinois*, XXII/XXIII (1924), 9-55; see also Haupt, "Karl Follen. Gottfried Fittbogen, 'Briefe aus dem Lager der Unbedingten'," *Euphorion*, XXVII (1926), 362 ff.; Fittbogen was one of the first to cast suspicion on Follen's moral integrity in his political activities by his article "Die Dichtung der Unbedingten," *Euphorion*, XXVI (1925), 75 ff.

⁸ Surely all bibliographical references to published sources and studies of Follen's life and works can easily and conveniently be found now in the *Bibliography of German Culture in America to 1940* (1953), by Henry A. Pochmann and Arthur R. Schultz, as well as in the notes to Professor Pochmann's copious *German Culture in America* (1957). Both works must always be consulted by anybody wishing to penetrate more deeply into the problems touched upon here only lightly.

at Harvard University, while his friend, Karl Beck,⁹ was teaching gymnastics at the Round Hill School at Northampton, Massachusetts. The Round Hill School had been founded by George Bancroft and Joseph G. Cogswell and was modelled after the German Classical Highschool (*Gymnasium*). In the spring of 1826 Harvard University in Cambridge likewise built a gym and made Follen the instructor. A little later a society of distinguished citizens united at Boston to erect another one. After its completion Follen took over the instruction in the fall of 1826. The news of the practicing of gymnastics at Boston and vicinity, eager to attain the standards set by Jahn, reached Franz Lieber then a political exile in London. As a native of Berlin he had been an ardent follower of Jahn. Therefore in late summer of 1826 he inquired at Boston whether two positions for gym teachers were open there, one for himself and one for a friend of his by the name of Bauer, a fellow refugee. It is not likely that Lieber and Follen had ever met before the former wrote to Boston, although both had studied at the University of Jena. Lieber obtained a Ph. D. degree there in 1820 and probably associated with the same student groups (*Burschenschaften*) to which Follen had belonged. As we have mentioned, however, Follen was forced to leave the University in 1819 because his permit to lecture (*venia legendi*) had been revoked after he had been arrested as a suspect in the Kotzebue affair.

Lieber's application for a job, or rather two jobs, in Boston probably was addressed to the Board of Directors whose chairman was Professor Warren. Evidence for this is that Follen told his old friend, Professor Karl Jung at Basel, in a letter dated October 15, 1826, that Lieber and Bauer had applied from London for positions as gymnastics teachers and had included testimonials from Jahn and the Prussian general Ernst von Pfuël. Characteristically he added: "I hope that they will soon find positions in one of the big cities." This postscript shows that at that time he did not consider resigning from his post as gymnastics director in Boston, at least not to make way for Lieber. From another letter, also written to Jung two months later and enclosed in the first one not sent off, we can gather that Follen was wrestling with a certain distrust of Lieber. He had heard rumors to the effect that Lieber was reputed to be a renegade from the "cause of freedom." Therefore, he referred to him with the words: "Write me immediately in your next letter, i. e., when you have received this one, what you know about Lieber. You remember what kind of rumors were spread about him, but the favorable testimonials and his emigration speak for him."

In the meantime the Board of Directors had negotiated with Lieber, and finally commissioned Follen to inform him that the conditions under which he and his friend Bauer had offered to serve as gymnastics-, swimming-, and fencing-masters had been accepted and that both were formally appointed. Follen mailed this official letter together with a private one (cited verbatim below) stating that Lieber, on his arrival, would assume the post formerly held by Follen. The tone of the letter indicates that it was not quite easy for him to make such a decision. He added some especially encouraging words which were supposed to smooth Lieber's emigration and his future work. With the greatest respect he spoke of the fine gentlemen on the Board of Directors who were guided in their enterprise only by their pure zeal for the common good. In no other

⁹For two excellent recent papers on Beck and his circle see: Siegfried B. Puknat, "Channing and German Thought," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 101 (1957), pp. 195-203, and by the same author, "De Wette in New England," *ibid.*, vol. 102 (1958), pp. 376-395.

city of the United States was there more high-mindedness for education of all kinds than in Boston. Perhaps there would be a very good opportunity for Lieber to teach gymnastics connected with military affairs. Finally he asked him to bring along with him from England and France books on gymnastics, especially information on gymnastics for women. The necessity for appropriate exercises for women was felt in a particularly urgent way. In order to be certain that all these items would really get to Lieber, Follen repeated the main points the next day in a concise resume of seven paragraphs forwarded after the first letter.

Lieber arrived at New York City on June 20, 1827, and took over the gym instruction at Boston on the first of July. In a letter of July 3rd to the Board of Directors, reproduced in Mrs. Follen's biography of her husband, Follen summarized once more his ideas on the importance of gymnastic-instruction for America but without mentioning his successor. In Eliza Follen's biography, distinguished by its careful tracing of all friendly relations entered into by Karl Follen, Lieber's name can be found only twice in brief diary-notes with no information on the kind of friendship joining the two men. From the well-known paper by Leonard L. Mackall on Goethe's correspondence with Americans, we learn of the existence of a "German Society" in Boston.¹⁰ It was probably founded by Follen, and Lieber too was a member. But this fact does not prove that an intimate friendship between Follen and Lieber had developed, although there is evidence that Lieber on his part stood in close relation to some of Follen's friends, like Channing and Ticknor, until he parted from this circle when he moved to New York City in 1832.

Karl Follen's letter to Franz Lieber reads as follows:

Boston, 21. Febr. 1827.

Du siehst, lieber Freund, aus dem beiliegenden Schreiben des Turnvorstandes in Boston, dass dieser die Bedingungen, unter welchen Du mit Bauer zur Einrichtung und Leitung eines Turnplatzes und einer Schwimm- und Fecht-Schule Dich erbotest, angenommen hat und Euch beide förmlich beruft. Zu dem freudigen Antheil, den ich an jedem Fortschritt meines neuen Vaterlandes nehme, gesellt sich bei diesem Ereigniss die frohe Aussicht zwei deutsche Freunde neben mir angesiedelt zu sehen, welche dieselben Erinnerungen und Hoffnungen mit mir theilen, derselben Heimat Muttermilch eingesogen, durch ihre Liebe zum Volk den Hass seiner Unterdrücker auf sich geladen, und nunmehr im Auslande ein Vaterland ihrer Grundsätze suchen—Euer Herz darf um so freudiger diesem Land entgegenschlagen, als Ihr hierher kommt, nicht bloss um Wohlthaten zu empfangen, sondern auch mitzuthemen. Der Nutzen der Turnkunst in diesem Lande, namentlich in den Städten, wird Euch erst hier in allem seinem Umfange klar werden; und ich darf Euch aus eigener Erfahrung versichern, dass die öffentliche Anerkennung und Theilnahme mit Eurer Wirksamkeit und Eurem Verdienste gleichen Schritt halten, ja Euch in jeder Hinsicht zuvorkommen wird.—Lasst Euch durch schiefe, scheelstüchtige Gerüchte über dieses Land nicht täuschen. Glaubt mir, wer Kraft genug in sich fühlt, um ohne Gunstschleicherei, Mäzenatenhuld, und verwandtschaftliche Eselsbrücken sich Bahn zu machen, und ein wahrhaft wohlthätiges Ziel im Auge hat, welches er unablässig verfolgt, ohne durch eitlen, einseitigen Eigensinn gegen fremde, in das Volksleben verwachsene Sitte muthwillig anzustossen—der findet hier einen Wirkungskreis, wie die ganze übrige Erde ihm keine darbietet. Aber nicht alle Menschen, für welche Amerika passt, passen darum auch für Amerika. Doch da mir Zeit gebricht, um Dir über den Stand der Dinge hier im Allgemeinen eine einigermaßen befriedigende Auskunft zu geben, so beschränke ich mich auf einige Bemerkungen über den gegenwärtigen Stand des Turnwesens.

Die Schule zu Northampton in Massachusetts war die erste Anstalt, in welcher

¹⁰ Cited in Frank Freidel, *Francis Lieber* (Baton Rouge, La., 1948). Cf. also Leonard L. Mackall, "Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und Amerikanern," *Goethe Jahrbuch*, vol. 25 (1904), 3-37.

ein Turnplatz durch Beck eingerichtet und geleitet wurde. Des geschah im Herbst 1825. Im Frühjahr 1826 wurde an der Hochschule zu Cambridge eine Turnanstalt errichtet, wozu die Universitätsregierung Platz und Geräthe gab, und die Übungen durch mich, mit Hülfe eines der dasigen Professoren, Doctor Websters, geleitet wurden. Im September desselben Jahres wurde von einer für diesen Zweck zusammengetretenen Gesellschaft angesehener Bürger die Turnschule hier in Boston unter meiner Leitung eingerichtet und begonnen.—Die drei hier erwähnten Turnplätze sind im wesentlichen nach Jahres-Plan eingerichtet. An drei Tagen wöchentlich, an welchen ich in Cambridge Unterricht im Deutschen zu geben habe, leite ich dort die Übungen eine Stunde täglich. An den drei übrigen besorge ich den Turnplatz in Boston, welcher an den 3 Tagen, wo ich in Cambridge bin, durch meinen Hilfslehrer, einen jungen Amerikaner, namens Turner, versehen wird. Ich bin verbunden vier Stunden in der Turnanstalt zuzubringen, falls eine genügende Anzahl von Klassen vorhanden ist. Zwanzig bilden eine Klasse, und jeder gebe ich eine halbe Stunde Unterricht; nach dieser halben Stunde tritt die zweite Klasse ein, während die erste, nach Gefallen, an denjenigen Theilen des Turngeräthes sich übt, welche nicht für den Unterricht der zweiten gebraucht werden.—Der Platz hält ohngefähr 80 Quadratfusse, und ist rundum mit hohem Zaun umgeben. Er ist sehr wohl gelegen, in der Mitte der Stadt. Unmittelbar daran stösst der Gemeindeplatz (Common) auf welchem man grosse Laufübungen und Spiele anstellen kann. Wahrscheinlich nicht weit davon wird man einen Platz für die Schwimmschule anweisen; für einen Fechtboden wird man auch sorgen; beides ganz wie Du es vorzeichnen wirst.

Die Zahl der Turner in Cambridge ist 100; hier in Boston war sie im letzten Herbstvierteljahr nahe an 200. Während des Winters setzt nur eine Klasse ihre Übungen fort. Zum nächsten Frühlingsvierteljahr wird die Zahl wahrscheinlich sehr bedeutend werden; und noch weit mehr, wenn eine Schwimmschule damit verbunden wird. Im nächsten Winter wird die Fechtschule eine bedeutende Anzahl zusammenbringen.

Die edlen, allgemein geachteten Männer aus welchen der Turnvorstand besteht, haben mir in allen meinen Maasregeln werthtätig beigestanden, und durch die Erfahrung bewährt, dass nichts als der reinste Wohlthätigkeits-Eifer sie zu diesem Unternehmen bestimmte. Sie werden sich auch Dir, als Freunde der Anstalt, und Deine Freunde, bewähren. Die ganze unmittelbare Leitung bleibt Dir; nur in allgemeinen Maasregeln, die das Ganze der Anstalt betreffen, musst Du den Ausschuss zu Rathe ziehen. Du trittst sobald Du ankommst, ganz in meine Stelle an der Turnschule in Boston ein; und sei überzeugt, dass ich in allem was ich weiss und vermag Dir als Freund mit Rath und That an die Hand gehe.

Sobald Du hier näher bekannt wirst, stehen Dir sowohl als dem Bauer noch manche andre Wege des Unterhalts und nützlicher Thätigkeit offen. An keinem Orte der Vereinigten Staaten ist so viel lebendiger Sinn für Bildung aller Art als in Boston. Für Dich namentlich möchte für kriegswissenschaftlichen Unterricht (Kriegsturnkunst) sehr gute Gelegenheit sich finden.—Doch dies sind Nebenaussichten; die Hauptsache bleibt der Turnplatz, die Schwimm- und Fecht-Schule.

Ich bitte Dich, verschaffe Dir und bringe all genauen Angaben über das Turnwesen in England und Frankreich, insofern Du über letzteres ohne Zeitaufwand Nachrichten erhalten kannst; namentlich auch was für weibliche Turnübungen geschehen ist. Das Bedürfniss angemessner weiblicher Übungen wird hier lebhaft gefühlt, und viel Gutes könnte dadurch gestiftet werden.

Man kann hier in Boston für dreihundert Dollar jährlich und selbst für weniger als das, anständig leben; ich meine Wohnung, mit Heizung und Licht, und Kost. Sobald Du mir schreibst, dass Ihr kommt, sehe ich mich sogleich darnach um.

Beck in Northampton hat kürzlich geheurathet und lebt sehr glücklich.

Grüsse mir jeden Freund von mir in London, namentlich Völker, der mich sehr erfreuen würde, wenn er an mich schriebe.—Schiffe dich mit Bauer sobald als möglich ein nach dieser Freiheitsheimat, wo Dich mit herzlicher Sehnsucht erwartet

Dein
Karl Follen

N. B. Der Turnvorstand wünscht, dass Du von allen Schriften, die im Englischen und Französischen über Turnkunst erschienen sind (Übungen für Männer und Weiber) ein Exemplar mitbringest; die Auslagen werden Dir sogleich ersetzt!

Ever since Mrs. Follen had published in her memorial (volume I, pp. 306 ff., 1842) a letter by the sixth president of the United States, John Quincy Adams, dated Quincy, October 24, 1831, and addressed to Karl Follen, it was known that the two men evidently had carried on a friendly correspondence. In her book *The Life of Charles Follen* (London, 1845) she reprinted this letter, but it is the only one extant. Albert B. Faust's interesting edition of Adams' translation of Wieland's *Oberon* (New York, 1940) again called attention to Follen's close contacts with one of his most distinguished contemporaries. There are, however, two letters of Follen to Adams, made public here for the first time. One dated December 1, 1831, is obviously a reply to the above-mentioned Adams letter and the other, dated April 5, 1832, does not necessarily represent an answer.

Neither of the two letters requires an extensive comment, because both speak for themselves. The first shows Follen giving literary advice for which he had been asked. It may be somewhat surprising that he utters so much praise for Jean Paul (Richter) and for Ludwig Tieck. On the other hand this is understandable in view of the fact that *cum grano salis* each author in his particular way is a manifestation of the two intellectual forces in Follen's thought: Jean Paul, the extreme worshipper of the individual even in overstressing its grotesque and eccentric aspects, Ludwig Tieck, inexhaustible in his enthusiasm for old German poetry and the great stimulator of his times. Concerning the second letter it may suffice to refer to Benjamin Constant's friendship with Madame de Staël, author of *De l'Allemagne*, a book which at the time "opened for England and America the German 'kingdom of the mind.'" These are the letters:

Cambridge 1st Dec. 1831.

Dear Sir:

I cannot employ a part of thanksgiving day more properly than by acknowledging your kind and very interesting letter, as well as the two eloquent and instructive orations by which it was accompanied. The warm praise of German literature from one who possesses the masterkey to all the magnificent halls and secluded cells of universal literature could not but be highly grateful to an individual, who, amidst the benefits of this land of manly freedom, has not ceased to bless the leading strings of his infant mind. Your criticism on some German authors proves that in appreciating the merits of foreign works you are not satisfied with settling their value by the price current of the reading world, but according to their individual excellence. A critic who combines with the impartial and comprehensive glance of a general scholar the sure and delicate touch of a native, knows that also in the republic of letters the market price is not the legitimate standard by which to determine the comparative value of Spartan iron and Persian gold.

With regard to the two authors about whose merits you inquire, I would observe that those of J. P. F. Richter rest on a very extensive as well as deep foundation. Of the numerous family of his novels I will mention only his 'Titan,' his 'Flegeljahre,' 'Quintus Fixlein' and 'Katzenbergers' Badereise.' His 'Levana' (on Education) and his 'Selina' (on the immortality of the soul) are proofs of his philosophic genius. These various productions are the manifestations of a mind equally distinguished by elevation and tenderness of heart, an exuberant and plastic imagination and the Proteus power of wit, which in its lawless, childlike playfulness unshapes all things into a merry chaos, in order to remodel the world after its own fashion.

Tieck stands at the head of the romantic school in Germany. His most interesting productions are contained in a collection of tales and plays called 'Phantasia.' There is no writer I know who has called forth and unfolded more powerfully that principle

in our nature which makes us capable alike of true religion and of superstition, a principle which is perhaps of all the most characteristic feature in the German character—that simplicity which walks by faith, which is ever ready to believe what it has not seen, and though it receives many things without reason, has on the other hand the privilege of perceiving what reason cannot see, what is hidden from the wise and the prudent, and revealed to the simple. The tales by Tieck are characterised by a continuous transition from the most simple every day's events of life, to those which lie beyond all experience and all calculation. This intimate connection at once gives to the miraculous the assurance of experience, and to the simplest reachings of the heart their true heavenly import, by showing that credulity is but the infancy of faith.

While Tieck was among the first who directed the misguided taste of the public to the true sources of sentiment and poetry, he wrote the death warrant of a sickly sentiment in his *Puss in Boots* (*Der gestiefelte Kater*), the best, if not the only good, German comedy; making the stage an *Arsitophanic* self exhibition of authors and critics, the public and the court.

I thank you for the interesting incident from your own literary life during your residence in Germany. It brought to my mind again many interesting and pleasing features of Wieland's personal character, with which I became acquainted through his son Ludwig Wieland, a friend of mine, during my residence at Jena. He was the editor of the most liberal and powerful periodical of that time, the '*Patriot*'; he died in 1819.

Your remarks on Scott's translation of *Lenore* have afforded much pleasure to me as well as to some of my friends. Indeed if the translation were the work of an unknown writer, instead of that of the late Great Unknown, I should be strongly tempted by this strange translation of the seven years war from the eighteenth century, to charge the transferrer with having unluckily confounded king Frederic II of Prussia with his namesake the crusading German emperor.

I am, Dear Sir, with great respect,

Your obedient servant

Charles Follen

Cambridge April 5th 1832

Dear Sir:

I take the liberty of sending to you my proposal for a translation of the work of Benjamin Constant on Religion, which I have undertaken with my wife, encouraged by the favorable opinion of Dr. W. E. Channing, H. Ware, and other of our Boston friends. My own view of the work I have given in the last March number of the *American Quarterly Review*; and what I know of your sentiments on the subject of religion encourages me in the belief that this labor will meet your approbation. If you think well of the undertaking I should be glad to have your name on the subscription paper which I send you. But in case you should not fully approve, I hope you will not hesitate to refuse my request. When you have done with the paper I wish you would be so kind as to send it to my friend the Rev. Mr. Carneaw Palfrey in Washington.

Pardon my troubling you with my projects in the midst of so many important cares and labors, and believe me

With great respect

Your friend and servant

C. Follen

When Follen perished during the night of Monday, January 13th, to Tuesday, January 14, 1840, he was on his way to attend the dedication of a newly built Unitarian Church, or meetinghouse as he called it, at East Lexington in Massachusetts. He had been the minister of this congregation for a few years, or supplied its pulpit together with other Unitarian ministers, among them the Reverend Ralph Waldo Emerson of Concord. Today it is

a pathetic experience for the Follen friend, when he sights this typical New England church with the inscription "Charles Follen Memorial Church" which still stands today a few hundred yards off the turnpike from Cambridge to Concord.

From the not very numerous letters of Emerson to Follen, published in the Emerson correspondence, and from several still unpublished letters of Follen to Emerson we know that the two "Unitarian ministers had an occasional exchange of letters. The extant Follen letters begin during 1835 and the two last ones were written just two months before his untimely death, namely on November 7 and November 15, 1839. None of these letters is particularly significant or informative in regard to their thought or their biographies. In his letter, dated Watertown July 30, 1835, Follen thanked Emerson for a lecture the latter had lent him and "for the high intellectual and spiritual enjoyment" it had given him. "It is a strong additional inducement to me to seek a more direct and frequent intercourse with you." But we do not know what "the MS^{pt}" dealt with. Most of the letters discuss church matters; for example Follen enclosed (September 9, 1835) \$30.00 for three sermons delivered by Emerson in the East Village, Lexington, and in the last two letters, he invited him to take part in the exercises of the dedication of the meetinghouse. Apparently, Emerson hesitated with his acceptance of the invitation since Follen repeated it a week later.

It may be safely assumed that all the ceremonies were called off after the permanent minister of the congregation failed to return from his lecture trip to New York City. It is not known whether Emerson eventually decided to attend the consecration in Lexington. The formality and tenor of Follen's letters, however, seem to indicate some reserve and restraint in the relationship of the two men, as the following quotations may demonstrate. "The Committee appointed by the Society to make suitable preparation for the occasion have requested me to make known to you their earnest wish that you would take part in the exercises of the day. No one has as yet been invited except Dr. Channing who will preach the sermon if his health permits. . . . I hope you will comply with the cordial wish of the Society whose esteem and love you possess; and I beg you to choose among the parts that are usual on such occasions, that which you prefer. . . . But if you prefer an Address to the People I feel assured it would be gratifying to them. I beg you to inform me of your decision as soon as convenient. . . . The church is to be dedicated to religious freedom, and I shall exchange with minister of all denominations." (November 7, 1839).

Besides the letters Follen wrote him, Emerson preserved also one of the printed announcements of Follen's public lectures by which he tried to add to his income after he had lost his Harvard professorship. This one concerned his series of lectures on pantheism and the personality of the deity, held at Boston in December and January, 1838-39. A few sentences from it are quoted here. "The subject of these Lectures, which has of late occupied the minds of many amongst us, has at all times engaged the thoughts of the most gifted and zealous inquirers after the highest truth. It is thought that many vague notions afloat in the community upon this subject may be rendered definite by a plain statement of the principles, preceded by a summary account of the history of Pantheism as it appeared first in the theological speculations of the Hindoos, then in a more scientific form among the Greeks, revived in later times by the New Platonists, and most fully developed by Spinoza and Schelling.

It is believed that an impartial examination of the system will prove, that Pantheism, while it is not to be confounded with modern Atheism, is

inconsistent with the nature of things, and inadequate to supply the moral and religious wants of man. . . ."

Many studies of Follen's life and works have expressed regret that nobody has ever undertaken a biography of his wife. Besides being a biographer of her husband, Eliza Lee Cabot Follen was quite a prolific author in her own right. She was nine years his senior (1787-1860) and survived him by twenty years. She came from one of the wealthiest and oldest Boston families, but had already made a name for herself in literary and religious circles when she met Dr. juris Karl Follen, a political refugee from Germany, and married him. As far as can be judged from some family letters, still extant in autograph collections, but like many of Follen's business letters in American libraries and archives, of no documentary value in respect to his biography, the marriage was successful and happy. In March 1830 it was blessed with a son, Charles Christopher, who was a somewhat odd person, never married and outlived both his parents.

Neither space nor time would permit to supply the often desired biography of Eliza Follen here. Only one of her characteristics will be mentioned as the final biographical material of this paper. It will show that all suppositions that this valiant and extraordinary lady, so active in Sunday School work and so successful as an author, may have been some kind of a blue-stocking, are far off the mark. In April of 1851, when Eliza Follen stayed in England and wrote a number of exceedingly interesting, but still unpublished letters (available in Harvard's Houghton Library) to her American friends, Jane Carlyle, Thomas' wife, said in a postscript to a Mrs. Wilkinson (perhaps the wife of James John G. Wilkinson?) the following: "What a *douce* intelligent looking woman that Mrs. Follen is! I quite took to her *before I* knew her name—luckily—for I should not have *taken to her* after having at one time of my life been perfectly *bored*—with her praises—from several quarters—but chiefly from one—an Italian painter (Gambardella) who used to declare that *she* and *I* were the only two women in the world!" In Lawrence and Elisabeth Hanson's *Necessary Evil: The Life of Jane Welsh Carlyle* (London, 1952) p. 273 we find an explanation of this letter in the report on the happenings in Jane Carlyle's life during April 1843: "She found sitters for another Italian exile, Gambardella. She even persuaded Carlyle to sit for him, but this was a disastrous failure; Carlyle, cried the excitable Italian had been so 'capricious' that he would never visit Chelsea again, but—noted Jane, Gambardella would 'spill his blood for me, or go to the world's end.' He offered to shoot on the spot all the cocks whose crowing was disturbing her sleep. He declared that she was one of the world's two perfect women. Jane at once became curious about the other perfect woman. She was an American, a Mrs. Follen; but, added Gambardella consoling, Jane was not so old. 'God God,' exclaimed Jane to Jeannie, 'how old *is* Mrs. Follen?' She agreed after some persuasion to sit for her portrait, with much more satisfying results."

After Eliza Follen had passed away early in the year of 1860, a friend of hers and of her husband's, Lydia Maria Child (1802-80), who had been a very active fellow-laborer for the causes of the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of women in America, sent a letter of sympathy from her home at Wayland, Massachusetts, not far from Concord, to Charles Christopher Follen. Although Charles Christopher was almost thirty years old, the well-known authoress of *Anti-Slavery Catechism* and *The Evils of Slavery and the Cure of Slavery* addressed him "My dear young friend." It is a fine and touching letter, and some of its passages should be quoted here in conclusion. "Your good mother's life was a constant preparation

for the angelic world, the influences of which shone through her countenance, and rendered her very looks a benediction to all who saw her. 'She looked like one of the eight beatitudes; and as you stopped to consider which of that holy family she *most* resembled, you found that she looked like *all* of them.' Garrison (William Lloyd Garrison, leader of the Boston abolitionists) said truly, that her face needed no change to become that of an angel; and certainly the same was true of her large, loving sympathizing soul. . . . I remember distinctly the last look she ever gave me. It was at the Anniversary Meetings in May . . . she detained me a little, and said, with one of her most loving smiles, '*Do* come to see me soon. You are a comfortable creature to be with.' . . . The last note she wrote me . . . was so cheerful and so strong, so full of life, and hope, and love, that it never occurred to me that the writer was no longer young. Always she presented herself to my mind clad in immortal youth. . . . You are the true son of a lineage spiritually noble; and those who have formed your character must necessarily be near you, because you are walking in the same paths."

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Sources: The present owners of the Follen letters here printed in full have granted permission to publish them. The Huntington Library at San Marino, California, (to Lieber); Mr. Henry Adams at Boston (to John Quincy Adams); the letters to Emerson and the letters of Jane Carlyle and of L. M. Child, only partially quoted here, are in the Houghton Library of Harvard University and in the Library of the Historical Society of Massachusetts respectively. Apart from the mentioned family- and business-letters, not yet published, but probably not informative enough to be so, there are Follen letters and records relating to him in the Records of the Harvard Corporation in their Archives in the Widener Library.