FRANZ VON LOHER (1818-1892), lawyer, historian, professor, and archivist, wrote and edited more than forty books, mostly travel accounts. His preparation as one of nineteenth-century Germany's leading travel writers started early. He distinguished himself as a student at the gymnasium of his hometown, Paderborn, and at the universities of Halle and Freiburg, studying history, philosophy, theology, and law, while beginning his travels with hikes in the Black Forest and, in 1840, through southern France and northern Italy to Munich. The young lawyer and legal and political essayist could not restrain his curiosity about faraway places. In 1846, on the first of his major travels to many parts of the world, he went to England, Wales, and North America. Back home, he remained active in politics, edited newspapers, received an honorary doctor of laws, served as secretary to the king of Bavaria, and in the work for which, outside authorship, he is best remembered, directed Bavaria's legal archives. Retraining the archives' personnel, and reorganizing and classifying the records, brought him government honors. Meanwhile he never stopped traveling and writing about it. His better-known books, authoritative in content and distinguished in style, merited translation: on Cyprus (into English); on the Canary Islands (into Spanish); and on Russia (into Russian).

Of interest to Americans are his travels to North America. On the way, he practiced in England the English that enabled him to converse with Americans and write out of closer observation and greater familiarity than most German travelers in America. German travelers, with their "professional training and characteristic thoroughness," were among the best commentators on America; and Löher was "especially outstanding" among them.1 He sailed on the South Carolina

Dr. Trautmann, an associate professor of speech at Temple University and author of The Voice of Terror: A Biography of Johann Most, has published several articles on German travelers in America.—Editor

to New York and set out to see and report the land and people: Niagara Falls, Canada, New England, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Missouri, and the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. He reported in Land und Leute in der alten und neuen Welt: Reiseskizzen. It established “in Germany and abroad” his reputation as an “outstanding stylist.”

To Western Pennsylvania he devoted three chapters, as much as any other locality except New York City — so interesting did he find it. In the third chapter he proved the perspicacity that won him renown as a travel writer, by predicting with uncanny accuracy the decline and end of the Harmony Society. Here, in translation, are those chapters.

In the Alleghenies

I went into western Pennsylvania [in December 1846] on the train from Harrisburg to Chambersburg. The train, moderately fast and seemingly well-built and adequately manned, gave but one cause for concern: the danger of being roasted alive, for the stove in my car was almost red-hot. We passed through several small towns, stopping long enough for me to walk a little in them. Each had an open square in the center, around which stood church, inn, and county courthouse. Four thoroughfares intersected at the square; and straight off from them led smaller streets, clean and handsomely paved. Houses were small but of stone and pretty. Dirt-producing animals were kept in pens and stables. People on the streets had a calm, kind demeanor. Here, for the time being, German ways repelled American crudeness and haste.

In Chambersburg I had to wait two days for a seat in one of the stagecoaches that go daily with mail and passengers to Pittsburgh. Those lucky enough to squeeze at last into the small space with eight others had to vigorously twist torsos and adjust arms and legs so as not to be squashed. At least this exercise kept off the cold, which the

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2. Land and People in the Old and New Worlds: Travel Sketches, 2 vols. (Göttingen and New York, 1855). This book has not been translated into English.
4. Volume 2, Chapters 1, 2, and 4; pages 1-13, 14-22, 36-45. Ellipses indicate deletion of brief passages that do not refer specifically to Western Pennsylvania.
5. That is, on the Cumberland Valley Railroad.
6. “County courthouse” is probably Löher’s error. Between Harrisburg and Chambersburg he would have passed through only one county seat: Carlisle. He refers perhaps to seats of other units of government.
leather flaps at the coach's sides did not, for they were full of holes and could not even be fastened.

The coach's cramped condition became painfully evident when the doorway darkened as a woman entered. She was an utter denial of the expectation in this country that women always be slender and slim. Matter-of-factly she handed me her baby to hold. Not only very restless but also completely unmanageable, it screamed with all its might. When another passenger took pity on me, the woman reproached me for not knowing how to manage children. I could only express regret that I had not been raised in America and therefore had as yet little experience in pampering the youngest of children. I was alluding to the American custom whereby men, as much as possible, at home and when traveling, relieve women of child care. Indeed, when a woman gets into a stagecoach or railway car, all men rise and wait respectfully for her to choose the best seat. Has she an infant with her, it becomes the pet of all; and each strives to please it with sugar and kisses.

Immediately beyond Chambersburg we began to climb. Having heard so much about the charm of the Alleghenies, I was delighted to be headed once again into mountains. Here were their beginnings: meadows with creeks, groves of fir, masses of boulders, and small houses of crudely worked stone. We climbed higher and looked back on a big, level tract below, surrounded by proud mountains. Ahead a steep mountain was a long stroke of blue against the clouds. When we ascended it, we saw, sharply below, a narrow valley and, across from us, another long range that blocked from sight everything beyond. And so it is with the mountains' configurations now: far-reaching ranges march along at about the same height, here and there linked by a cross-range; and between them nestle bright, pretty valleys, out of which farmers' fields often reach far up onto the wooded slopes. Usually the road follows a stream; but where the stream tumbles down the mountain, the road switches back, then climbs very gradually up a slope. At the top, where can be seen only mountain peaks in rows like waves, the road follows a cross-range to the next main range and then winds with a stream down the other side, quickly crosses a valley, and begins to climb another mountain. In valleys, whose deeply-watered, green bottoms the eye can trace for distances from above, we went through little towns that seemed quite black in color, with many forges. Wretched wagons knock themselves to pieces on the stones of ever-worsening roads. Therefore, at roadside, wheelwrights and blacksmiths get much work. At dusk we saw them beside their fire near the road, hammering in a shower of sparks a wheel's red-hot rim.
After dinner, when we had again gained a considerable elevation, the mountains shimmered in a wonderfully bright moonlight. Range after range lifted their crests one beyond the other; here and there on cliffs and trees lay some early snow; and out of deep valleys bristled crowns of countless trees. All passengers got out of the coach. Around me staggered two drunken livestock dealers from the West. Farther down, crude laughter of several young fellows resounded as they followed the meandering of a newly-married couple. The Alleghenies divide East from West and form a boundary between refined urban manners, between decorous conduct of people of old cities, and free-spirited and warm-hearted but crude behavior of Westerners. What I saw of Westerners did not incline me much in their favor. They were an abrasive, card-playing, whiskey-drinking lot, who always spoke first of Dollars and Cents.

Because I did not want to converse with the others, they tried with crude jokes to make me talk. The average American finds unbearable the refusal to reveal one's business and expose what's on one's mind. This inquisitiveness, so irritating and repulsive, gives one the uncomfortable feeling that there is desire to peer even into one's soul. At dinner the innkeeper, an old Pennsylvania German, had hesitated to take a banknote, wrongly thinking it counterfeit. Now the company referred to him as a "regular dutch blockhead" and indulged in the crudest jests about the "damn German people." When I said nothing, they began to push and shove until I thought the old coach would burst. Seeing a bad night ahead, I finally began cursing — in English, German, French, Italian, whatever I could think of — and lifted my foot to the face of the man opposite, with the promise that I would kick him there if he pushed me one more time. He laughed. Then they grew friendly and asked about Germany and the Old World. I told them wonderful things and with much success: not only did they become courteous, but half of them also confessed to German descent.

Next morning we stopped in a small town for breakfast. From the long valleys wafted some of the mountain air that brings strength with every breath. The mountains' dark hollows promised even more sublime beauty than I had found thus far. So I let my companions go their way, having had enough of them, and in town quickly rented a horse. Since Americans continually do business over great distances

7 "Regular dutch blockhead" is Löher's English, probably an accurate recording of what he heard, which he has in German (masculine, singular, accusative) as regelrechten deutschen Dickkopf: "regular German blockhead."

8 In all probability the town was McConnellsburg.
and don't like to walk, horses and wagons are easily rented even in small towns.

I rode up a creek that gushed merrily over rocks. The basis of the soil here is limestone covered by decayed vegetation which is very loose. Hence these mountain creeks are seldom very clear. If they were, what with the frequency at which they rise out of thickets, they would make the scene livelier and brighter. The deep course of this creek is overgrown with strawberries, wild grapes, and laurel. Less often, red, blue, and yellowish-white flowers lift above ferns and other broad-leaved plants. What add more variety in color are large mushrooms against a dark background, and moss flourishing red against a green background. In valleys, where slow-flowing water can clarify itself, creeks draw bright silver threads through uncommonly charming settings. But where water lacks quick drainage, it spreads into black swamps, whose miasma weakens even some tall trees.

Before I had ridden half an hour, a deep sylvan desolation surrounded me. Even in these early-settled places, towns will have virgin forests at their doors for a long while. Although here on the mountain neither tree trunks nor vines were exceptionally big, the forest was for the most part impenetrable on either side. What a relief to leave the dark-green night of a forest and reach open places higher up! There, too, forest blocked the view; but perhaps below could be seen blue smoke curling up — a sign of life from beings that think and feel like us. After all, it was a blessing that the view was not always of foliage, tree trunks, moss, and vegetation decaying into soil, but also of open spaces and boulders at a distance of half the range of a rifle. For such thick and endless forests are like a dark power of nature, depressing to the spirit. And to try singing is to hear oneself in the echoes of the first verse, and to sink back into the heavy silence of nature.

So I rode all day, uphill and down. The lesser slopes are wooded entirely; the mountains, almost to their peaks. It can clearly be seen how the river at the upper part of the valley forms itself from creeks; and how the creeks, higher up, rise from the confluence of many rivulets cut by rain into the soil. At the very top, runoff looks like threads lying near one another. Thus, streams carry mud that, in the valley below, accumulates into fertile bottomland; and rotting leaves and wood in the forests replace the loss with the makings of new soil. Gradually, the higher one climbs out of the valley, one sees regular

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9 A branch of Licking Creek. Going up the creek, Löhler was headed toward Burnt Cabins and Fort Littleton, an early course of the Forbes Road.
changes in trees and undergrowth: first there is sugar maple among
ginseng, dogwood, papaw, and the like; then walnut, beech, ash, gum,
and various vines; next rhododendron and several kinds of oak; and
above them, chestnut and fir climb the mountain row upon row, their
roots covered by blueberries and thorny creepers.

These mountains are less suited than lowland for raising live-
stock: there are no meadows, and good grass grows only in lower
valleys; higher ones are damp and cold. Conversely, land can be
profitably tilled anywhere the forest is cleared. Already there are log
cabins on fertile plots of a few acres; while on main roads, general
stores exchange all sorts of wares, tools, and clothing for wheat, hides,
maple sugar, and meat. True, such a store has been thrown up hastily,
like the farmers' cabins; but it signals refreshment to the traveler, who
can there relax over apple wine (from farmers along the way he'll get
only water or, at best, a glass of muddy whiskey).

In a rustling grove, at a junction of roads that run for miles to
outlying farms, stands a small, rough, log cabin. Its windows shine
with more light than is usual for these farmers' cabins. In front of this
one is a pile of firewood, and the door is open, but no one is to be
seen. It is a country school, furnished with a blackboard and a few
shabby benches. Children attend for a few months of the year, when a
teacher is to be found. In valleys, which communicate with a much-
travelled thoroughfare, farmers already have elegant homes and
gardens. Yet these beginnings of culture are like a few specks scattered
about the forest that runs for hundreds of miles unbroken over stretch-
es of hills and mountains in which there are, even now, wooded acres
and craggy slopes where no human sets foot the year round, where
only deer and bear roam. Therefore, here in Pennsylvania, as in the
far West, land in many places is still very cheap. In recent years, many
German immigrants have settled here; and the older settlers are main-
ly Pennsylvania Germans.

I went into several of their cabins and found a completely back-
woods character. People live alone in the dark of the forest, cut off
from all the happiness of fellowship. Life is a monotonous battle with
nature every day, and thoughts go no further than to the thicket that
hems in home and field. To these people, axe and rifle are treasures;
self-confidence and the Bible, the only sources of ideas and solace in
this desolation. Silence and emptiness of wilderness, which surround
these people unremittingly, fill their souls with a dismal religiosity.

I spent the night in a cabin with Pennsylvania Germans. Dinner,
mainly fried bacon and hot cornbread, was eaten almost without a
word. Then the man and his half-grown son sat by the fire and chewed tobacco. Grandmother sat there, too, and smoked a short, black pipe. The farmer's wife sang to her youngest, while the others stood in the middle of the room and stared at me, hair hanging around their faces, glances flashing shyly but brightly and attentively. Although overfilled with people, the room was so still the clock could be heard: ticktock. Outside, a storm raged. I could hear clearly the groan of limbs rubbing each other. Then a dull crash and the screech of birds: the storm had toppled a giant old tree.

I had passed similar evenings in huts and cabins of woodcutters and foresters in German mountains but never saw people so eerily quiet and, over such distances, so uniformly alike in countenance, dress, and behavior; [never saw such] unshakable equanimity, silence to guests, haste and abruptness of movement, glances like those of a bird of prey, and dark skin, in addition to an odd patois. . . . The backwoodsman is even restless like a wild animal: when people and cities draw near, he heads deeper into the bush. These Pennsylvania Germans are not well-educated but decidedly ignorant. Young people usually go to the country school until they are 20, but the few ideas they get dissolve in the monotonous life of the forest. . . .

Yet these forest people were still German. Warm feelings still glowed under cool exteriors, so to speak, and it didn't take long for these people to thaw out somewhat. That even Germans could be reduced to such a state has been prompted not only by wilderness but also by climate, which robs one's abundance of tender warmth, and to which a fierce sun and abrupt changes are peculiar. Time enough has passed, however, that old farmers, who persist in their half-German seclusion, can readily be distinguished from their offspring, who gradually assume language and ways of other Americans and participate in business and trade. Even German immigrants who settled here only twenty years ago are in stark contrast to neighbors who came later: the former have a silent and rough manner, a definite severity and bluntness of character, concerned only with necessity and the immediately practical, and wanting nothing else. The longer in the forest, the further from European civilization. . . .

I rode back the following day to the little town and continued my journey on the next coach. . . . I had entered the Alleghenies full of delight and expectation, and now left chagrined. I saw no ranges of sublime mountains, no masses of jagged rocks. True, a few slopes were strewn quite handsomely with boulders and virgin forests. And the bright blue of peaks, bright green of forests and valleys, fast streams
that mirror huge old trees and reflect all colors of foliage, together with countless small waterfalls and extremely attractive wooded glens — all will offer future painters excellent subjects. But majesty of towering cliffs with bare rocky crags and wild gorges must be forsaken. The Allegheny Mountains therefore chiefly please the traveler so much because he is jaded by the boring landscapes he must traverse for days on end first. But perhaps I have seen only prosaic parts of this extensive range: in Virginia and North Carolina the scenery is supposed to be spectacular.

Pittsburgh

At 3:00 A. M. a sharp odor of burning coal and the rattling of the old coach woke me. We were on the streets of Pittsburgh. Finding light and a warm stove in the tavern, and not sleepy, I occupied myself with reading. From time to time a night-reveler entered and drank a glass of brandy to wet his whistle. If there were two revelers, the talk was of an important bankruptcy incurred by a Pittsburger recently. They pitied him and admired the new sources of wealth his enterprising spirit had opened for the country. When an entrepreneur goes broke, the American thinks not of what so many families have lost, only of the creative achievement of one man’s commercial spirit.

The room I was in, intended mainly as a restaurant, was elegantly decorated; but everything in it had the disagreeable look of overuse and abuse. As soon as a mere glimmer of daylight touched the windows, I went out into the street. Clouds of fog and smoke swirled about so thick I couldn’t see farther than three steps, and people seemed dressed in nothing but dirty linen. I spoke to a young man, who most courteously took me to the big foundries and, during our conversation, said he was descended from Hessian soldiers.

Eight days are by no means enough to see all and everything of Pittsburgh’s industries. Everywhere — in huge steel plants, rolling mills, machine works, cotton mills, glass works, and many other factories — the visitor is welcomed. His hosts gladly show him around and explain things to him. It looks much too neat, the way man so simply and easily manipulates nature’s gigantic forces and substances, the way streams of molten metal gush forth and shape themselves into prescribed forms: here Nature is like a frightful giant, tamed and instructed to serve, politely and on order, a clever mankind. In nail factories, one worker makes fifty nails a minute, and does it merely by putting an iron rod into a machine that cuts it into nails perfectly with a few smart strokes. . . . Well-dressed and friendly young women
work in woolen mills. (I saw poverty here [in Pittsburgh], too, but very little compared to European industrial cities.) Immense machines that power waterworks are as worth seeing in Pittsburgh as in all big cities in the United States. By shape and strength, buildings that house waterworks distinguish themselves from factories in the city and vicinity: factories have a mostly black and ramshackle appearance; people here build nothing but what's essential, so as to spend as little as necessary and make as much as possible — fast. The European manufacturer puts into factories a graceful taste that makes them downright homey inside, but only the first traces of that grace are to be noticed here.

I saw only partial outlines of houses and rivers, now and then, when the wind scattered the clouds of smoke. It was the same as in Birmingham [England], where the wind always blows smoke into people's eyes. Pittsburgh now has stone buildings in place of wooden ones destroyed by fire. Perhaps another fire will bring improvements a third time.

In the afternoon I went up on Grant's Hill, around which the city has been built; but it was impossible to look down through layers of smoke that reached even this high. Able to see truly only what lay a few steps below me, I had to walk back and forth and catch glimpses, in order to piece together a picture of the surroundings. Even though unclear, they were majestic.

Towards evening, after heavy rain, when I was standing exactly at the place where the three rivers meet, the view into the valleys of the rivers suddenly brightened and became so beautiful that I decided on the spot to stay longer in Pittsburgh. I moved out of the noise of the large inn and into a German house on the riverfront. I had a quiet, very comfortable room that looked out on the river and to hills and towns beyond.

After dark, steamboats berthed under my window were splendidly illuminated: a long chain of dancing lights, among which I heard the roar of boats going past. More than forty were tied up there, side by side; among them, ten being built right on the water. The slight frameworks of the latter seemed so weak that the finished boats would sunder in fast currents, but they sail even in them. Besides, they need last only a few years. Boats here are also built of iron. In the afternoon I went below in a big steamboat and a brig, both of iron. These iron boats may be sturdy enough; but they are also uncomfortable enough, because instead of windows they have only small portholes (not to mention that the sun makes iron unbearably hot).
Fortunately, the next day being Sunday, the countless chimneys stopped belching smoke; and the air was clear. This area is really charming. It's regrettable that the Americans have put their large industrial cities right in the most beautiful places. True, Pittsburgh is well-situated for trade and in the middle of the richest coal fields. Two rivers, the Monongahela and the Allegheny, here meet and mingle at an acute angle, create a peninsula, and flow on together as the Ohio. In the middle of the peninsula, Grant's Hill rises in considerable prominence. Even on the landward side, and there by a deep valley, the peninsula is sharply isolated from surrounding elevations. Thus, from up here, the view in all directions is into thriving valleys. They comprise all the more a diverse yet complete picture by virtue of their slanting abruptly into one another; while their sides, as tall and steep as they are bright and green, are decorated with colorful rocks and luminous country houses. Nature has made this locale a most charming interval amid water, greenery, and rocks — Americans have made it the smokiest place in the world. On Grant's Hill, excellent bricks are baked. In Germany, each and every manufacturer would have improved with parks a hill with such beautiful views; in America, parks get in the way. From the tip of the peninsula the city gradually ascends with the terrain; the lower part is already built up; and in its center rises the magnificent courthouse. As is so common in America, water in one river is clear; in the other, yellow. From up here the streak between yellow and green water is visible for a stretch down the Ohio. Even on the other sides of the two rivers, houses and factories crowd level places; meaning that what has happened to New York will happen to Pittsburgh: the outlying towns' pushing gradually to the central city until all form a metropolis divided only by rivers.

German manufacturers and merchants own some of the pretty country houses on the heights — Germans here a long time who, it can be assumed, want to stay for good. . . . One German in Pittsburgh has had the luck to become a millionaire through the rising value of land he bought many years ago for a song. But despite wealth, the old man has not stopped wearing his lederhosen. Not a few Germans started here in a foreign country as poor boys and made a million. . . .

The freer and more informal lifestyle, which sets East apart from West, was evident in Pittsburgh. Sunday looked like Sunday in Germany. The streets were alive with people crowding outdoors. No dance music there, true, but great merrymaking nevertheless. A main reason this sort of thing is livelier in Pittsburgh than in eastern cities are the masses of Irish and Germans who have settled here as laborers,
factory workers, and craftsmen. I saw many signs in German. One, on
a street leading to one of the excellent river bridges, said in German
and English: "To Ohio." How many on the move west have probably
read it with high hopes! Until recently, Pittsburgh was a rendezvous
for exploration and settlement of the West. How many intrepid river
travelers have pushed off here and headed across uncharted territory!
Happy is the memory here of people's astonishment in New Orleans
when, one fine day, a Pittsburgh boat arrived and would not pay duty
on its cargo, because it had not been carried on open sea.

Pittsburgh does not lack churches, and several are impressive. I
was told of many manifestations of religion in this big factory-town,
remarkably like religion in the Wuppertal but with the intensification
that in America makes this sort of thing grotesque. Thus men —
pale, with long beards and ragged clothes — preached in the open
street and looked positively as if they would take the money collected
for their ranting and sacrifice it in the evening to whiskey. Baptists
conducted a large baptism on the riverbank. The congregation was
standing there singing when the preacher approached with those to be
baptized. They were dressed in black, he in sailors' bell-bottoms. He
waded in chest-deep, took each by the head, and without ceremony
dunked them; after which they shivered not a little. I also visited a
service of the German Evangelical Association,¹⁰ to whom gossip
attributes much methodistic frenzy. But I neither saw jumping exer-
cises in church nor heard mass wailing there. Rather, a sermon the
congregation could understand alternated in a dignified manner with
prayer and song. The preacher, whose simple words went straight to
the heart, was a young tailor.

In the evening the streets were strikingly empty and quiet, which
in a city with so many Irish speaks well for the police; and Pitts-
burgh's rowdy element is notorious enough.

When I got home, I sampled several vintages of Ohio wine and
had to agree with the enthusiastic praise of my landlord. He was not
only a connoisseur of wine but also a judge of people, long an important
member of the Democratic party's standing committee on elections.
He was kind enough to tell me something of American electoral
practices. . . . Politics here [in Pittsburgh] are like politics elsewhere:

¹⁰ That is, the Evangelische Gemeinschaft or, as Löher has it, the
Albrechtsbrüder (Brothers of Albrecht), founded 1803-1808 by Jacob Albrecht
(1759-1808), a German-American farmer, born in Pennsylvania, active as a
methodistical preacher after 1796, and named bishop of the sect in 1807. In
English the sect was known as the United Brethren Church, a friendly division
(because of language) of the Methodist Church, with which it reunited a few
years ago, becoming today's United Methodist Church.
the people are led by a few who influence elections; and in elections, dollars do as much as goodwill. An election costs much money and effort; victory must bring restitution for both. . . .

The Rappites

I went from Pittsburgh down the Ohio in pouring rain. The river rose; steamboats roared by in groups, heard before seen; rain and fog threw a thick veil over river and shore; and a small town surfaced, or a gap in the shoreline appeared, only when a gust of wind parted the veil. Ahead of us puffed an imposing steamboat, its smoke a long brown streak in the white fog. Our little craft, straining and smoking, surged ahead at its best and, amid passengers’ loud applause, finally passed the one ahead. “We beat her!” these Americans shouted, rubbing their hands with glee. Westerners, far more than Easterners (on the Atlantic side of the Alleghenies), use expressions — witty and colorful, enthusiastic and pugnacious — that characterize the language of a young nation.

After an hour and a half a small boat was put out for me: a tiny nutshell that danced up and down on theraging waves while water splashed over the gunwales. Every minute I thought either I or my baggage was headed into the drink. Finally we reached shore. I waded through shoreline mud to dry land; my baggage was quickly unloaded; the boat shot back into the mist; and there I stood in it, looking up the steep bank where, beyond its brow, some Rappite houses waited. I carried my baggage out of waves washing ashore, put it under a tree, and hurried up the steps.

I had heard much against the Rappites [even though they are the most successful socialist-religious community in America12]. . . . But the minute I stepped into that little town the grace of its good order amazed me. Someone came to the window of the first house and in beautiful German directed me to the innkeeper, who sent for my

11 That is, the Harmony Society of practitioners of communal living, common property, and celibacy, established in Butler County in 1804 by George Rapp (1757-1847) and 600 German Separatists, pietistic dissidents from the German Lutheran Church in Württemberg. In 1815 they moved to Indiana and prospered but, beset by fever and hostile neighbors, sold out to Robert Owen, who founded New Harmony there. The Rappites returned to Pennsylvania, settled permanently at Economy (twenty miles below Pittsburgh), and by intelligence, thrift, and diligence, succeeded remarkably in agriculture and light industry. As Löher predicted, celibacy spelled the society’s doom, and lack of new members sealed its fate. The society diminished gradually; by 1903 most property had been sold; and the society continued for a while as a legal entity only to support the last four members, all aged.

12 Löher, Land and People, 2: 35.
baggage straightaway. The people looked gentle and friendly as well as healthy, and a calm happiness shone in their eyes. Theirs was an agreeable — indeed, refined — demeanor, even though the men wore rough blue denim, short jackets, and low, wide-brimmed hats; and the women looked conventual in dark clothing of Württemberg farmers. Everything at the inn was clean and not without comfort; and every small service was rendered with quiet friendliness, making it doubly satisfactory.

I spent the afternoon with the Society's factor, Romelius Langenbacher, second in importance to Rapp. He welcomed me with grapes and home-made wine, and told me the Society's whole story: sufferings and struggles, happiness and joyous success. I gained respect for these courageous and upright people who, by nothing but their own strength and faith in God, had changed themselves from poor Swabian farmers to veritable American benefactors, and thereby attracted national attention. . . .

In the evening I conversed with men of the Society. The women returned, and I listened with pleasure to winsome talk; such gentle tones I had not heard for a long time. Everything about the Society's conduct, as well as their entire being, expressed pure moral goodness and joyous expectations for the life to come. When I asked who would get their millions of dollars worth of property when the Society died out, the innkeeper answered snappishly: "Why, we're going to leave it to the state." They easily judge questions to be impertinently inquisitive. I felt as much at home as among the dearest of my countrymen, yet felt alien, more alien than among foreigners speaking another language. For, behind everything, lurked the mystery of their religion, which had produced not only this peace of mind and these rich fruits of shared labor and common ownership, but also the vow of celibacy and the withdrawal from the world.

At the crack of dawn the striking of many clocks called the Society to prayer and work. Here all was hustle and bustle, while sleep prevailed in American cities and towns. Wagons rumbled, workshops hummed; and in passing, people greeted each other like brothers and sisters. The sparkling little town lies in the middle of a small, elevated, fertile plain [about 3,000 acres], encircled by hills most pleasing to the eye, the source of the clear water that runs through the streets. The Ohio flows past, in the 80-foot-deep gorge it has cut for itself here. On the opposite bank a majestically green, wooded elevation rises like a mountain range.

Langenbacher came for me after breakfast. We looked at the
abundance of livestock first. Nowhere else have I seen such beautiful oxen and cattle, such herds of sheep and swine; and even the horses were bigger than usual. An animal here was raised with affection and tender care. Each full-grown one had its own name, came when called, and without fear gently licked our hands. Even animal husbandry was a masterpiece here; and I was shown how man can make the animal world friendlier and more intelligent. Then we went through farm buildings, weaving sheds, spinning mills, and shops of various crafts. The whole town, every house and business, is situated according to well-laid plans: what needs to be together is together; and the Society, neatly interlocked, runs like clockwork. After settlements elsewhere [Butler County, Pennsylvania; and Posey County, Indiana] had been built according to plan, and the best arrangements gradually determined by the test of experience, Economy was designed for maximum efficiency. The entire setup deserves to be a model for future settlements, copied and reproduced to the last detail.

Over many years the most ingenious machines have been developed, and every year an improvement is devised. Thus a steam engine draws utility water from the Ohio and drinking water from ten feet deeper. After steam serves the laundry, heats various boilers, powers the grinding of colors [for dyeing], and participates in many other operations, it is condensed back into water and, with a small addition of fresh water, returned through pipes and boilers, which remain free of deposits for years because the water has been cleansed of minerals and sediment. Fresh, hot steam drives the gristmill, dries the flour so it can be stored fifteen years, and conjointly heats and supplies power to weavers’ sheds, spinning mills, and other shops. These Swabian farmers, by cerebration and experiment, have gradually discovered the Best and at the same time the Simplest. In every enterprise their work is tops. . . .

Each group of workers we approached greeted us with the quiet courtesy of warm hearts. In the silk mill, innocence and joy radiated from the lovely face of a young woman at work; and she sang in a sweet and gentle voice. But most of the people I saw were old men and old women: whoever was not fifty was still a youngster. Thus they worked together: saying little, quietly meditating the entire day, without emotion or worry. The story of the apostles must be read in order to understand the lives of these people. It was also remarkable how well Rapp knew the Society’s members and put each in the right job: the serious in the shops, the sprightly in the fields. Langenbacher was considered a sharp businessman outside Economy. The landlord
at the inn read newspapers and liked to talk but remained ever
solemn and dignified. The manager of the dining hall was a friendly
old man, never happier than when his meals were praised. The head
of the stables liked to crack a good joke, was as curious as a magpie,
and looked at the world and people with all possible congeniality and
peace of mind.

In the evening a drunken American came into the inn, declared
he had not a cent, yet wanted to act, and in a coarse manner, as if he
owned the place. Anywhere else he would have been thrown out; here
he was taken seriously, treated with compassion, and calmed down.
But I had to laugh when some German tramps arrived, looking for
lodging and a handout from the hospitable Rappites. In the friendliest
way they were asked to cut wood; and although they began petulantly
and awkwardly, the dining-hall manager talked to them so nicely that
they sawed happily and with vigor.

Next morning I was told I would see Rapp; probably I had been
spoken well of in the periodic meeting with him the prior evening.
I went to his house, accompanied by the two elders. There we met
the farm manager, the head weaver, and the master mechanic. I had
seen them earlier, at work, and knew they were leaders. Now they
wore their Sunday best. Rapp’s favorite pupil was there, too: a young-
er man, witty and handsome. None used tobacco, because it pollutes
the body. Only the elderly and sick take whiskey, as a stimulant. The
rest drink wine at times, for refreshment.

I spoke of how they had beautified nature around their settle-
ment; and I heard, from these men in farmers’ dress, of the influence
of God in earthly things, and of progressive refinement of nature and
mankind. This refinement must not be of the spirit alone, they said,
for what has not spirit and body together is helpless in the universe.
I questioned further — how firmly these simple people had grasped
the lovely and mysterious life of nature! On the mantel were flowers
and fruits, perfect imitations in wax and paint, more attractive than
the real thing, done by Rapp’s granddaughter — proof (they said)
that man embraces all powers and forms of Nature; he has it in him to
reproduce them and with a thousand times more beauty. From man-
kind, Nature receives the higher life; but mankind also degrades
Nature and must restore her glory. Without sacrificing self-will, how-
ever, without entering a true community of life, mankind would not
win dominion over Nature and the world. Mankind would awaken
still-unknown human powers by a loving and total association: only
in such a community could mankind conquer the baser elements so
that they would fall away like the first leaves that enclose a plant, which wilt and drop as the young plant grows. Astonished [by what they had said], I stared into the faces of these old men, their features so gentle and venerable, their eyes so friendly and bright.

Rapp entered. I had imagined a man, perhaps still strong but bent under ninety years and a life of struggle and travail — and what did I see? A 60-year-old, high-spirited, with shining eyes and a strong, vigorous bearing. His voice resounded like metal; and his face, encircled by richly gleaming silver of hair and beard, reflected as much good humor and kindness as nobility and sternness. When he drew himself erect, he was like a lion. He held both my hands a long time and talked about my plans and future. Then we sat close together on his sofa; and he spoke like a raging torrent, entirely in Swabian dialect, but with unfailing sincerity.

"You and all others, all of you have in you a natural light, Reason, which is simply everything common to man; but what is higher than man is the light of grace, the inner light from above; and whosoever has it should show it to others. Every person comes to God, everyone carries eternity within, and none gets lost, for all must return to Him because they started from Him; but one has more tribulation and bestiality than another. Those who leave us fall again to earth. But when the hour is come, man will transform Nature; animals will become gentle and beautiful; and plants will become sweet and bright. And in all this the German nation is marked: it will again be the greatest; it has been the most despised. Its language is despised. Its language is the truest. What is a deer? What is an ox? They are the animals who are their very selves: the deer flees, the ox remains. The other languages are done to a turn." 14

In this way he spoke of much else, some of which I understood, some not. He also told me how long I would travel and that I should not stay in America, for here people tore themselves apart like wild beasts and brought to it their own court of law. Then he led me to the table, where we partook of excellent Rhine wine and cake; and he

13 Rapp was in his ninetieth year, the "actual dictator" of this "communistic theocracy," a man of "extraordinary energy, intellect, and moral power," who ruled "with the kindness and, when necessary, the severity, of a father, and was revered and obeyed unquestioningly." George Harvey Genzmer, "George Rapp," in Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 20 vols. (New York, 1927-1936), 15: 383-84.

14 Rapp's teachings were "a Lutheran pietism heavily overlaid with a millenarianism derived from Bengal and Jung-Stilling, a fantastic interpretation of Genesis out of Swedenborg, [and] various minor features from Böhme and other mystics." Ibid., 383. Löher may be suggesting that Rapp was growing senile.
made me fill my pockets with tasty pears. He gave me more wishes for a good journey and said: "So, God be with you, and you be upright for me!" The others shook his hand, saying: "God protect you, dear Father!" They were so agitated they cried. I was moved myself. Rapp sent word I was to be their guest.

Religious services were late in the evening. Everyone went into and out of church together. Rapp dictated each verse of the hymns, prayed and preached sitting down and in the pulpit. Once, when the congregation had not followed the hymn right, he shouted: "What! If you can't do it, leave it alone!" And he dictated another. His sermon dilated on ideas like those I had heard in the morning. Dead silence reigned, except for his voice. It expatiated on mysteries of God and Nature, thundering into the night. Dread came over me, in this community I found so strange and yet so amiable, as if I were in a long-lost cloister of iron-grey monks and nuns secreted in the wilderness in order to do good for animals and indulge religious individuality.

I stayed one more day [then departed on a steamboat down the Ohio in the rain]. A young woman, who had left the Society for the love of a man and now returned to visit, could not tell me enough [on this last day] about how divinely happy she had been in this ordered community, and how troubled she felt now, out among coarse people. She blushed at every intimation, however slight, that she had left for a man — so easily can a dark shadow fall on a noble, natural feeling.

I left the Rappites with deep regret that so much insight, strength, and highmindedness, such genuine religious sense, had set a course that took them from the world, to wither slowly in isolation, leaving few beneficial results of their effort.

Not long after I left, old Rapp died. That quiet death soon affected the Society. Music, among whose joyous tones the members had worked, was heard less; the museum of their books and specimens of natural history grew dusty and deserted; and the printing presses printed no more. In a few years only a few old people will remain around the Rappite cemetery, trying to console themselves about the calamity that the huge fortune, accumulated by them and their brothers and sisters, had served none of the great purposes for which their "Dear Father" had intended it.