CHAPTER 2

German Women Writers at Home and Abroad

The North American appetite for entertaining German “romances” was well supplied in the last four decades of the nineteenth century, for despite virulent and enduring prejudice in Germany against women and their artistic endeavors, German women writers of popular fiction had begun to flourish, fostered by changing political, social, and economic conditions. By the end of the nineteenth century, the industrialization of publishing and the emergence of mass markets had made possible the phenomenon of the self-supporting woman writer in the German-speaking world.¹ From 1865 to 1879 women’s magazines, family magazines, and belles lettres experienced a 202.8% growth as a result of an increase in overall reading and women’s reading and writing in particular.²

The popular family magazine *Die Gartenlaube* cheerfully maintained in 1876 that in Germany prose fiction was unquestionably the “natural” territory of “female production.” “It is to be feared,” the author asserted, “that if all the notable authors of today were assembled it wouldn’t be possible to come up with even one gentleman for each lady.”³ A quarter of a century later, in 1902, Rudolf von Gottschall, who, unlike many German male authors of such national histories, devoted considerable space to women’s writing, acknowledged women’s significant production of novels as a part of Germany’s “national literature.” Yet while Gottschall offered a more appreciative assessment than most of his male contemporaries, he shared some of the common assumptions and prejudices of his times. He observed, for example, in condescending tones that the novel of contemporary life was suitable terrain for “women’s more passive and reproductive talent.”⁴
In America *Lippincott's Magazine* also recognized the growing prominence of women in German fiction writing, observing in 1873 that in Germany the novel had been chiefly cultivated with success by women “whose delineations have gained a popularity in America only less than that which they enjoy at home—in part because the life which they depict has closer internal analogies to our own than to that of England or of France.” These depictions themselves appealed, moreover, because they were “suffused with a romantic glow which has long since faded from those of the thoroughly realistic art now dominant in the two latter countries.” The magazine might have added here that Americans were accustomed to reading and enjoying novels by women; women had written nearly three-fourths of the American novels published in the previous year.

Four women writers, who number among the most frequently translated German authors of any kind in the nineteenth century, figure prominently in my account of translation and transnational reading. They include three popular authors who established their reputations with fiction serialized in *Die Gartenlaube*: E. Werner, whom Henry A. Pochmann identifies as ranking ninth among all German authors translated into English in the nineteenth century, E. Marlitt, who ranks fifteenth, and W. Heimburg, who ranks twenty-third. Luise Mühlbach, the tenth most frequently translated German author in this period in Pochmann’s tally, also merits attention, her “historical romances” embodying an important related genre of popular fiction that in allegedly writing German history laid claim to a certain pretension as well. A fifth author, Wilhelmine von Hillern, likewise deserves a closer look up front. Hillern’s novels crossed boundaries with respect to their contents, venues of publication, and reception. In Pochmann’s groupings of translated German authors according to genre, Werner, Mühlbach, Marlitt, and Heimburg occupy four of the five top spots under the rubric “lesser fiction and prose writers.” Hillern follows in eighth place. Ahead of Werner and Mühlbach in the general rankings is a mix of highbrow and popular male authors: Goethe, Schiller, the Grimm Brothers, Richard Wagner, three juvenile authors (Christopher von Schmid, and Johann David Wyss and Johann Rudolf Wyss, the author and reviser, respectively, of *The Swiss Family Robinson*), Baron de la Motte Fouqué, whose story of the water sprite *Undine* was a perennial favorite, and the explorer-scientist Alexander von Humboldt, who, as Kirsten Belgum has observed, was an international figure who came to be adopted as an American national icon.

The novels of eleven additional authors also figure in this study: those of Marie Bernhard (1852–1937), Nataly von Eschstruth (1860–1939), Claire von Glümer (1825–1906), E. Hartner (pseud. of Emma Eva Henriette von Twardowska [1845–89]), E. Juncker (pseud. of Else [Kobert] Schmieden
Fanny Lewald (1811–89), Ursula Zöge von Manteuffel (pseud. of Frau von Trebra-Lindenau, 1850–1910), Golo Raimund (pseud. of Bertha [Heyn] Frederich [1825–82]), Moritz von Reichenbach (pseud. of Valeska von Reiswitz, Gräfin von Bethusy-Huc [1848–1926]), Hedwig Harnisch Schobert (1858–1919), and Julie Adeline Volckhausen (1823–93). In four cases represented by a single novel, they were translated, marketed, and read in America alongside Marlitt, Werner, Heimburg, Mühlbach, and Hillern. The works of these less-translated authors resemble those of Marlitt, Werner, and Heimburg, testifying to the emergence of a German genre in America and to strategic mining by American publishers and translators of German publications for novels likely to please the American palate that publishers and translators had cultivated with the more successful German women authors. One final author, whose works are included in my tallies, joined this identifiable group late in the century: Ossip Schubin (pseud. of Aloisia Kirschner [1854–34]). Although an Austrian by birth, Kirschner published her novels in imperial Germany, and they arrived in America, translated by, among others, Annis Lee Wister and packaged much like the others.

Born for the most part between 1810 and 1855, these seventeen authors belonged to two generations that benefited from the burgeoning book trade in Germany, a historical moment that enabled greater numbers of both men and women to enter print culture. Far from securing a place in the canon of writers deemed important by literary scholars, however, most of these seventeen writers are wedged in time and in literary historical scholarship uncomfortably between such now recovered, quasi-canonical older women authors with intellectual pretension as Dorothea Schlegel (1764–1839), Rachel Varnhagen (1771–1833), and Bettina von Arnim (1775–1859) and such protofeminist and feminist authors of a slightly younger generation as Gabriele Reuter (1859–1941) and Helene Böhlau (1856–1940). In 1911 the Encyclopaedia Britannica identified Reuter and Böhlau as the authors of “some of the best fiction of the most recent period,” yet at that time none of their important works had been rendered into English. Most of the novels of Marlitt, Werner, Heimburg, and Mühlbach, by contrast, had been translated and repeatedly reprinted and were still being read in America in the new century.

**Clara Mundt / Luise Mühlbach (1814–73)**

In May 1873 Luise Mühlbach, who was by then well known in the United States for her historical fiction, promised to serve as a foreign correspondent to the New York Herald on the occasion of the World Exhibition in Vienna.
The *Herald* reminded its readers of Mühlbach’s importance in Germany and hence of her suitability to her present task, effusing, “Where is the boudoir in that land of philosophy and music where some tender-hearted woman has not shed tears over the loves of Frederick and Joseph? Where is the young school girl who has not dreamed of some hero with ‘flaming eyes’ and all that perfection of manly beauty with which every lover is endowed by Luise Mühlbach?” In feminizing history, the *Herald* noted approvingly, Mühlbach had made it more accessible.\(^\text{11}\) While Mühlbach herself tended to speak merely of her readership and not women readers per se, the *Herald* accurately identified the tendency of her novels to foreground romance and reasonably supposed that women—as readers of fiction—made up a significant percentage of her readers on both sides of the Atlantic.\(^\text{12}\)

Mühlbach was a prolific writer, ever more driven in later life by the need to support two daughters, her mother-in-law, and her own liberal spending habits. In his bibliography of her works, Brent O. Peterson lists more than sixty separate items, many of whose parts and volumes each amount to full-length novels.\(^\text{13}\) A contemporary remarked that she once filled an entire bookshelf of the lending libraries with twelve volumes in a single year, and the American poet and translator Bayard Taylor maintained in 1869 that her works to that date amounted to “more than sixty volumes.”\(^\text{14}\) Even Otto Heller conceded her “considerable talent,” but then criticized her “ruinously facile pen” that catered to “the shallow taste for historical anecdote.”\(^\text{15}\)

Born Clara Müller to a prominent family in the town of Neubrandenburg in Mecklenburg, Mühlbach began corresponding in her twenties with the then-infamous “Young German” Theodor Mundt (1808–61), whose works, along with those of four other authors, had been banned in the German territories in 1835 as immoral and blasphemous. When the couple married in 1839, Mühlbach had already published three novels. Encouraged by Mundt, she proceeded in the 1840s to write several more social novels that addressed political issues, including the status of women. This literary production belonged to Mühlbach’s “kecke Jahre” (feisty years), as Renate Möhrmann aptly termed this period.\(^\text{16}\) While, as Peterson has argued, these social novels are not as unambiguously progressive as they may appear to be at first glance, they number among the important early instances of German women’s fiction that addresses the status of women.\(^\text{17}\) Indeed, a younger contemporary characterized Mühlbach in the pre-1848 years as one of the most zealous and passionate German women acolytes of George Sand.\(^\text{18}\) None of these social novels was translated in North America.

After the failed revolution of 1848, Mühlbach shifted her focus largely to the past, thus finding the vein of writing that corresponded to contem-
temporary tastes and her own talent. She enjoyed her first big success in 1853 with *Friedrich der Große und sein Hof* (1853) and went on to publish scores of novels dealing with German history (including Austria) as well as a handful of novels on English, French, and Russian history. After unification and the founding of the German empire in 1871 and a trip to Egypt, she tried her hand at more exotic material, writing two novels set in Egypt, *Mohammed Ali und sein Haus* (1872) and *Mohammed Ali’s Nachfolger* (1872). Research of German lending libraries reveals Mühlbach to be “the single most popular German author of the period 1849–88.” Ahead of her were otherwise foreign authors in translation—Alexandre Dumas, Eugène Sue, G. P. R. James, and Paul de Kock. In the period 1889–1914, Mühlbach moved up to second place in Germany just behind Dumas.¹⁹

In the 1850s, soon after their publication in the German territories, Mühlbach’s historical novels began appearing in German-language newspapers in the United States.²⁰ The first American translation of a Mühlbach novel appeared in 1864 in the midst of the Civil War in Mobile, Alabama, as *Joseph II and His Court*. Two years later, the New York publisher D. Appleton launched a series of Mühlbach translations, starting with *Frederick the Great and His Court*. In 1867, in an unusual gesture for the time, Appleton paid Mühlbach an honorarium of 1,000 thalers to acknowledge her achievements.²¹ If, in voluntarily remunerating Mühlbach, Appleton seems generous in view of the practices of the times, the firm had no cause to regret its largesse. The combined sales of Mühlbach’s historical novels in the end “reached the millions.”²² Meanwhile, in that same year, O. Janke, the Berlin publisher of Mühlbach’s historical novels in the 1850s reprimanded American publishers for pirating German intellectual property, threatening to report on every such future transgression. Singling out Appleton, he claimed that the American firm was boasting of publishing the most important German authors at prices lower than the German originals and yet had never contacted the publishers or the authors of these works.²³ Perhaps this complaint prompted the remuneration.

The American liking for Mühlbach’s novels is well documented. *Putnam’s Magazine*, for one, remarked on their unmatched allure for postbellum Americans.²⁴ As Lieselotte Kurth-Voigt and William H. McClain point out, the National Union Catalogue lists “some five hundred American editions and impressions” of Mühlbach’s historical novels.²⁵ My independently gathered data corroborates that finding (see Appendix E). According to the *Literary World*, in 1873 the Lawrence Public Library in Massachusetts listed Mühlbach’s fiction as thirty-sixth in popularity among all authors checked out of the library over a year’s time.²⁶ A year later, in 1874, the Lawrence
Public Library again supplied telling data. Within a single month the works of Mrs. Southworth, a best-selling American novelist, accounted for twenty-two of every thousand volumes borrowed; those of Dickens, the next most frequently borrowed, fifteen; Louisa May Alcott, seven; the Brontë sisters, two; and Thackeray and Trollope, four each. Mühlbach's novels, by comparison, accounted for three per thousand, which put Mühlbach in the top half of the list.  

In 1898 Appleton set a monument to the thirty-odd years in which Mühlbach had been avidly read in translation with a twenty-volume reprint collection titled *Historical Romances of Louisa Mühlbach*, a set that includes mainly novels about the history of the German-speaking world and of Prussia in particular. Mühlbach's novels are still widely available in American university libraries, their availability suggesting that they were once understood to have cultural value transcending their status as mere popular reading. They claimed from the start, after all, to recount history. Continued interest in Mühlbach prompted the Marion Company in 1915 to reprint the twenty "historical romances" originally published by Appleton. In 1927 Americans could still read about three of Mühlbach's novels—*Henry the Eighth and His Court, Berlin and Sans-Souci, and Marie Antoinette and Her Son*—in volume 12 of Rossiter Johnson's "world's great stories prepared in brief," that is, side by side with works by such American authors as London, Longfellow, and Melville (*Typee* and *Moby Dick*), and international writers such as Lewis (*The Monk*), Loti, Manzoni, Martineau, Marryat, Meredith, and Mérimée as well as novels by two German women, Lewald and Marlitt. In number of works represented, only Marryat and Meredith match Mühlbach.  

As late as 1932, Baker and Packman listed eleven of the Appleton translations in their *Guide to the Best Fiction*, inaccurately describing them as a "patient and methodical amplification of the bare historical record, designed to illustrate any given period according to the letter and spirit of historical fact."  

Evaluations of Mühlbach's novels were mixed on both sides of the Atlantic. Even as this fiction found enthusiastic readers in Germany in the 1850s, literary pundits withheld approval. On the American side, Bayard Taylor, who considered himself an expert on German literature and a good judge of literary quality, asserted in 1869 that Mühlbach's romances were popular among the "semi-intelligent" classes of readers in Germany" and that they could have no "permanent place in the literature of the country." His male counterparts in Germany were unlikely to dispute that assessment. In 1860 the German critic Robert Prutz had ridiculed these novels as a "factory industry," although he conceded that readers liked them. Mühlbach, writing with both eyes on the market, plied her trade with a "grandiose lack of
inhibition” and a “sublime disregard for literary criticism and good taste,” he objected.\(^{31}\)

Identifying her books as “historische Memoirenromane” (historical memoir-novels) and “romanhafte Historien” (novelistic histories), Rudolf von Gottschall later recognized that over the course of writing so many novels Mühlbach achieved a better style and gradually exchanged the audience of “silly little working girls” for whom she wrote in the beginning for a more refined circle of readers.\(^{32}\) He identified the cycle of Frederick the Great novels, some of the same works that introduced Mühlbach to the American English-speaking public, as the turning point in her career. Still, he was not willing to grant her novels depth. Lacking a genuine historical perspective, they merely satisfied readers’ wish for entertainment that focused on “the petty idiosyncrasies of great men,” thus mediating a feeling of closeness to these historical figures.\(^{33}\) This last point merits attention, for it suggests the highly personal ways in which readers engaged with the historical figures in such fiction. Precisely such engagement constitutes an important piece in the story of the sojourn of Mühlbach’s novels in America. We shall return to this aspect of Mühlbach’s work in chapter 6.

Despite its condescending tone, a review of *Berlin und Sanssouci oder Friedrich der Große und seine Freunde* (1854) in the *Deutsches Museum* usefully identifies key aspects that made possible the author’s popularity in both Germany and America. After opening with disparaging remarks about “Schriftstellernden” (women trying to be writers), the reviewer scolds Mühlbach for writing sensation literature, nastily quipping that while literary criticism could not prevent her from publishing novels, Mühlbach in turn could not force critics to take note of her books.\(^{34}\) When at the midpoint of the essay he finally addresses the novel at hand, his tone changes. While continuing to enumerate flaws, he admits that the enchanting subject matter riveted his attention and made it impossible for him to stop reading. He sees this novel as wholesome in contrast to what he has described as her recent sensation fiction; readers not only will be entertained but will also be able to confess to reading it without blushing.\(^{35}\) This particular history, in his view, has curbed the wantonness of Mühlbach’s writing.\(^{36}\)

Precisely the combination of absorbing, reasonably wholesome entertainment with allegedly sound historical fact lay at the heart of Mühlbach’s popularity in the United States, her books constituting, in the formulation of McClain and Kurth-Voigt, “gehobene Unterhaltungsliteratur” (elevated entertaining literature).\(^{37}\) It made the novels acceptable reading for men, women, and even older girls, despite the fact that Mühlbach spiced her sto-
ries with illicit, occasionally even adulterous, romances. The *New York Times*, believing the novel written by a “Herr Muhlbach,” enthusiastically endorsed *Frederick the Great and His Court* as “one of the best historical novels lately published.”\(^3^8\) The family magazine *Hours at Home* noted that Muhlbach’s works “are full of interest and less objectionable than the highly wrought and sensational novel.”\(^3^9\)

This is not to say that American critics were always friendly; some were decidedly hostile and questioned the taste of her readers.\(^4^0\) Furthermore, some did not find these historical novels wholesome in the least. Whereas a review of *Frederick the Great and His Court* in the *Catholic World* noted their freedom “from the false sensationalism which furnishes the spice of the lower school of modern fiction,” the same journal later decried their low and “unwholesome” moral tone that is “pagan, not Christian.”\(^4^1\) The *New Englander* disapprovingly pronounced Muhlbach’s novels “of a highly sensational order.”\(^4^2\)

These works baffled American reviewers who were looking to categorize them; indeed, discussion of them in print revolved largely around their generic affiliation and their relationship to history. History lent them a prestige not accorded to fiction per se. Some reviewers characterized Muhlbach as having laboriously researched her subject matter. At the same time, they remarked that in attempting to be true to the historical record, the works could not be called novels at all but rather were “ingenious compilations from historical sources, with the gaps in continuity skilfully filled.”\(^4^3\) Many reviewers were disquieted by the hybridity of Muhlbach’s novels, their combination of fact and fiction. *Harper’s Magazine* termed Muhlbach’s *Queen Hortense* “only a history with a little imaginative filling,” asserting that Muhlbach wrote “novels without imagination and history without facts.”\(^4^4\) A perplexed reviewer for the *Catholic World* complained, “unless one is exceedingly familiar with the real history of the times, one never knows whether he is reading history or only romance.” The reviewer feared, moreover, that most people would read them as history and “thus imbibe many erroneous views of real persons and events.”\(^4^5\) Yet some reviews identified their appeal as precisely the combination of history and romance: *Hours at Home* pronounced them “exciting and entertaining far beyond the ordinary stereotyped novel,” since they had “thrown the dark veil of romance over the dry records of history.”\(^4^6\) Sensitive to the confusion expressed in these reviews, *Appleton’s Journal* published an article by John Esten Cooke in 1874 that aspired to explain Muhlbach’s novel “system” and show how it deviated from that of Scott, Thackeray, Bulwer-Lytton, Dumas, Ainsworth, James, and others. Unlike these authors,
Cooke asserted, Mühlbach did not employ history “as the canvas and framework of their groups.” Instead, she went to history “for the actual figures, making her books history dramatized.”

Whereas critical American reviews of Mühlbach worry over historical inaccuracies or fault what they perceive as a lack of narrative talent, I have found only one that mentions “national convictions and patriotic impulses” in these novels, obliquely suggesting that Mühlbach’s novels mediate a vision of an emergent Germany at once exciting and skewed. Precisely this critical question of patriotic intention will concern us when we return to Mühlbach in chapter 6.

The mixed reviews of Mühlbach suggest deviation in the criteria and purposes of reviewing and display decidedly different attitudes toward literature that is read for pleasure. While the Catholic World concluded that popularity is “a pretty good indication of their merit,” this same popularity prompted a harsh response in the New Englander. Here the reviewer judged these “widely read” novels—widely read even among “people who cannot be charged with a want of cultivation”—as “ineffably stupid, fantastic, interminable books.”

Such critical reviews of course provide only a partial picture of American reception, since they do not tell us much about leisure-time reading itself. While American reviewers equivocated on the value of entertainment in general, two reviews of Mühlbach from the 1860s doubted the ability of Germans in general to write “light literature.” The New York Times, although commending Mühlbach, remarked, “The very mental characteristics which unfit [Germans] for properly appreciating what is strictly termed ‘light literature’ prepare them to enjoy the historical novel.” The Round Table likewise stereotyped German writers’ shortcomings in the area of “light literature,” maintaining,

Were it true that the popular taste of a nation is reflected in its light literature, we should have cause to think but poorly of the readers among whom Louisa Mühlbach’s interminable so-called historical novels find favor; but in Germany the novel does not suffice for the intellectual wants of the great body of her people, and save in Wilhelm Meister, and some noteworthy productions of Freytag and Auerbach, the attempts at this species of fiction have not been attended with success.

German novels, American pundits claimed in the 1860s, are ponderous and serious. Yet at this very moment in 1868, J. P. Lippincott and the translator Annis Lee Wister were on the verge of changing this perception among novel readers with translations of two novels by E. Marlitt. Although some review-
ers clung to stereotypes of German fiction writing as labored and dry as dust, Americans who read Marlitt in translation learned instead to expect German novels to be lively, entertaining, and optimistic.

Die Gartenlaube as Venue for German Women’s Writing

In 1853 the liberal German publicist Ernst Keil founded *Die Gartenlaube*, a new kind of unifying publication for a politically fragmented Germany, a family magazine that provided something for everyone. With its rapidly burgeoning sales, *Die Gartenlaube* became a quintessential mass-market phenomenon in the German territories.

*Die Gartenlaube* offered articles on a variety of subjects of contemporary interest at home in Germany and abroad, including hygiene and medicine, the arts, technology, politics, poetry, short biographies, historical sketches, and serialized fiction. As Kirsten Belgum outlines, although claiming not to be political, the magazine from the beginning had a central political aim: it sought to popularize and solidify the idea of “nation” in the critical years of German unification. And while *Die Gartenlaube* was not narrow or jingoistic in its outlook, it did cultivate and cater to an audience hungry for information about Germany and its place in the world, a place that changed rapidly after 1871. Keil intended the magazine to be a “thoroughly German magazine”: its contributions were German originals from German authors, its illustrations were by German artists (not reprints from images in foreign magazines), and it treated German life and aspirations. When in 1894, for example, *Die Gartenlaube* reported that the popular E. Werner was spending the winter in Egypt, where she was writing her next novel, it also hastened to assure readers that the characters in her new work were German; Egypt provided only the backdrop of the story.

Growing from its first printing of 5,000 in 1853 to its peak of 382,000 in 1875, *Die Gartenlaube* reached many more readers than these numbers indicate. It was available in reading rooms, lending libraries, and the homes of middle-class families. Each copy therefore reached at least five readers, historians of the book trade estimate. It circulated in the New World as well as the Old, read in America by ethnic Germans as well as Anglophone Americans who had learned German in school or from tutors at home. The translator Mary Stuart Smith, for one, subscribed to the magazine, which she combed over several decades for prospects for translation. In 1873 the *Chicago Tribune* reported that, of the great number of German newspapers and periodi-
cals subscribed to and read in Chicago, *Die Gartenlaube*, “a literary paper of rare excellence, . . . considered [by many] the best in the world, . . . takes the lead. . . . Something over 2,000 copies of this paper are circulating in this city,” the *Tribune* noted. “Many Americans, understanding the German language, subscribe for [*sic*] it.” The article particularly remarked on the “excellent novels” of E. Marlitt that appeared therein.

While *Die Gartenlaube* was ambivalent on the subject of women’s roles and rights—and became more conservative toward the end of the century—the magazine gave not only Marlitt but also a host of German women the opportunity to earn their living as writers and provided the platform for its most appealing authors to become internationally famous. Serialized fiction by the women to whom *Die Gartenlaube* had given opportunities in turn contributed significantly to the appeal and sales of the magazine. These authors and the magazine and its editor thus found themselves in a mutually beneficial and productive relationship. Secondarily and inadvertently in the broader, international publishing context, *Die Gartenlaube* provided opportunities for female translators as they too acceded to cultural activity and agency. It proved a reliable source of appealing fiction that Gilded Age American translators and publishers mined with hardly a second thought as to the ethics of doing so.

### Eugenie John / E. Marlitt (1825–87)

The serialized fiction of Eugenie John was unquestionably a critical factor in the success of *Die Gartenlaube* at home and abroad. John, who initially concealed her gender under the pseudonym E. Marlitt, became not only one of the best-selling authors in Germany in the last third of the century but also an international success. Between 1865, when her first published story, *Zwölf Apostel*, was serialized, and 1871, when *Das Haideprinzesschen*, her fourth full-length novel and sixth contribution to the periodical, began appearing in installments, subscriptions to *Die Gartenlaube* grew from ca. 150,000 to ca. 310,000. Reporting in 1868 on the success of *Goldelse* (serialized 1866; book 1867), *Die Gartenlaube* gleefully noted that after only eleven months the novel had been reprinted three times. By this time it was also well known that Marlitt was a woman.

Marlitt’s German contemporaries were keenly aware of her popularity and talent; and although she was not without detractors during her lifetime, some established male authors acknowledged her gifts as a storyteller. Upon the publication of her third novel, *Die Reichsgräfin Gisela*, in 1869,
Gottschall expressed admiration for her international success—even on “the shores of the Mississippi”—wherever Germans might be reading Die Gartenlaube. In an attempt to explain her popularity, he praised her descriptive powers and her style. He also identified as a decisive factor what he called the “Volksthumlichkeit” (popular national quality) of her material, for example, elements of German legends and fairy tales in her plots. Yet he also noted evidence of her international reading in her inclusion of familiar titillating elements from Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre and Victor Hugo’s Notre-Dame de Paris. Gottschall approvingly pointed to Marlitt’s strong liberal messages. If several decades later German critics, among them one Otto Heller, felt that Marlitt’s were battles that had long since been won, in 1870 they still rang true with readers. Marlitt long remained a favorite with women readers. In 1931 in her autobiography, the anarchist Emma Goldman, for example, recalled her consumptive, tender-hearted German teacher in Königsberg with whom she had read Marlitt and wept.

As Hans Arens argues, Gottschall also fostered long-enduring misapprehensions of Marlitt when he characterized her novels in terms of fairy tales, in particular their endings as “Aschenbrödel’s Braut- und Himmelfahrt” (Cinderella’s honeymoon and ascent to heaven). While, as I argue below, the happy ending was critical to the international reception of her novels, Marlitt’s happy endings do not unambiguously project an intact world. Nineteenth-century readers could relish the happy ending yet remain disturbed by some of the characters, situations, and problems in these books. The American Agnes Hamilton, for one, was forced through her reading of The Old Mam’selle’s Secret to associate with “the nastiest people whom I should not speak to in real life.” Marlitt also does not generally traffic in rags-to-riches tales, Cinderella stories, in which women of low social rank marry aristocrats, or, as in Mulock’s best-selling John Halifax Gentleman, men rise from abject poverty to prosperity and prominence. Some of Marlitt’s heroines are themselves aristocrats or heiresses who must learn tolerance. Plots depict marriages of extreme difference as unviable, and in every case the texts emphasize the importance of the education and sterling character of both husband and wife.

After her death and from the turn of the new century on, Marlitt became an easy target for critics of many stripes who saw embodied in her fiction the taste and mores of a generation that they were eager to displace, even if advice books continued to recommend her books to “young girls” into the new century. In 1905, for example, the Austrian feminist Rosa Mayreder pilloried such popular reading, pointing an accusing finger in particular at the literature favored by family magazines. Although she did not name Marlitt, as the
best-known writer for *Die Gartenlaube* Marlitt would have immediately come to mind. Two years later, Ernst von Wolzogen likewise excoriated the bad taste of contemporary readers of family magazines, whom he characterized as silly girls, women, and old people. He expressed disappointment that *Die Gartenlaube* had lost sight of its original national liberal mission as a result of the bad literature serialized there.\(^69\) Forgetting that Marlitt in particular had participated in that mission, he grumbled that she and others put their indelible stamp on *Die Gartenlaube* and that subsequently all the editors of family magazines took these novels as their touchstone since they were certain to satisfy their customers.\(^70\) In the new century even *Die Gartenlaube* began to speak of Marlitt’s fiction as characterizing a past phase of the magazine and of the nation as well.\(^71\) Yet her work continued to be republished on both sides of the Atlantic.

Marlitt wrote ten novels, the last of these completed after her death by W. Heimburg in 1888, and three shorter pieces. Her books were translated into not only English but also French, Danish, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian, Italian, Spanish, and Polish; most of this translation took place without the permission or even knowledge of the author and publisher.\(^72\) While her international success brought her more adulation than material gain, her German earnings were enough to enable her to live comfortably and to support her family. Her publisher, Keil, famously built her a villa in her hometown, Arnstadt, to express his gratitude.

Marlitt’s novels were widely read in the United States and circulated in both German and English translation. In 1871 an article on the New York Mercantile Library described the “animated scene” on Saturdays as the clerks struggled to serve the many customers. Among the popular recent publications mentioned is Marlitt’s third translated novel, *The Countess Gisela*: the library had fifty copies of it ready to meet customer demand.\(^73\) The first two full-length Marlitt novels appeared in the United States in 1868. According to Morgan’s data, seven titles appeared in the 1860s in the United States, nineteen in the 1870s, twenty-four in the 1880s, and nine in the 1890s.\(^74\) My own tallies indicate more vigorous publication even than what Morgan records. Indeed, Marlitt’s works were translated three times more frequently than Mühlbach’s many novels, each of which was only translated once for book publication (compare Appendices C and D). Furthermore, the total number of translations, editions, and reprint editions of Marlitt novels in the United States places her second after the American Mühlbach factory, even though Marlitt had furnished less than half as many original texts to begin with (see Appendix E).\(^75\) My ever-expanding database records more than 250 American editions and reprint editions of Marlitt’s ten novels.
The American reception of Marlitt was cordial from the start. The very first translation published in book form in America, *The Old Mam’selle’s Secret*, was reprinted at least twenty-two times over thirty-three years by J. B. Lippincott alone; I have documented 101 unique American issues of the novel in three different translations and suspect that there are still more unique issues to be found. In 1868 the *New York Times* welcomed *The Old Mam’selle’s Secret* to America with a review recommending it for a “pleasant idle hour’s reading.”76 Four years later *The Nation* confirmed that *The Little Moorland Princess*, the fourth Marlitt novel in translation, was “as entertaining as the first one,” and *Southern Farm and Home Magazine* maintained that the “highest praise” it could give this “really charming tale” was to pronounce it “fully equal if not superior to Marlitt’s former works.”77 Marlitt’s popularity endured. In 1876 a reviewer deemed *At the Councillor’s*, Marlitt’s sixth novel in American translation, “one of the best German novels we have recently read,” maintaining that Marlitt’s novels were the sort that readers read through “from title page to the end.”78 Marlitt’s books, the *American Socialist* averred, were “healthy”; they taught that “purity and uprightness of personal character [were] of prime consequence, and of more value than rank or riches.”79 These reviews offer only a small sample of the enthusiasm that met these Marlitt translations across a spectrum of American periodicals.

When Marlitt died in 1887 with one novel unfinished, *Die Gartenlaube* lamented the loss of an author who had known so well how to fascinate readers.80 Two issues later, the magazine made certain with a biographical sketch that it kept Marlitt fans on the hook, also reporting that the remaining episodes of Marlitt’s *Das Eulenhaus* were forthcoming and that it had designated a new author to complete the novel as Marlitt would have wished.81 Predictably, *Das Eulenhaus* appeared in two American translations as well—*The Owl-House* (Munro) and *The Owl’s Nest* (Lippincott)—even as American newspapers and magazines mourned the passing of a woman who could be counted as “one of the most popular of modern German novelists” whose novels were “never dull and never gross.”82 Mary Stuart Smith’s commemorative sketch, “a fresh-plucked spring of Virginia ivy,” recalled the author’s contribution to the “wealth of innocent and healthful fiction” and the “loving admiration in which E. Marlitt is held by thousands of Americans.”83

Marlitt enjoyed a robust afterlife in America that endured at least two decades into the new century. In 1876 *Publishers’ Weekly* conducted a contest for the book trade asking which novels were the most “salable” (setting aside Bulwer-Lytton, Dickens, Eliot, Scott, and Thackeray). Marlitt’s *Old Mam’selle’s Secret* ranked twenty-third, and all five of her then-translated novels (three of them in the top fifty) made this international list of 204 novels headed by
These five Marlitt novels were, moreover, still circulating decades later.

An examination of thirteen late nineteenth and early twentieth-century American library catalogues reveals that all of Marlitt’s novels on the 1876 list (indeed, translations of all of Marlitt’s novels) were available in all of these libraries some twenty to thirty years later (see Appendix B for a list of the catalogues consulted). Some of the remaining 195 once-salable novels on the 1876 list did not prove as enduring. While predictably Mullock’s *John Halifax Gentleman* and Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* are present in these thirteen libraries, novels in the top sixty on the list by such once-deemed-most-salable American, Canadian, Irish, and English women writers as Mrs. Alexander (Annie French Hector), Mary Jane Holmes, M. C. Hay, May Agnes Fleming, Ouida, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and Eleanor Frances Poynter are, by contrast, present in seven or fewer of the same thirteen libraries. Even the once perennially popular *East Lynne* turns up in only nine of these libraries. Borrowing records from the Muncie Public Library, 1891–1902, furthermore reveal Marlitt, represented by twenty-three books (some novels were held in multiple copies), to be the tenth most widely circulating author in the entire library.

Heller might have objected to the inclusion in 1908/1927 of digests of *The Old Mam’selle’s Secret* and *The Little Moorland Princess* in volume twelve of the twenty-volume *Author’s Digest: The World’s Great Stories in Brief*, especially when Goethe was represented by only two works. Surely still more irritating to Heller would have been the reference in the biographical sketch to *The Old Mam’selle’s Secret* as Marlitt’s “masterpiece,” a designation reserved by contemporary Germanists for male cultural production.

**Bertha Behrens / Wilhelmine Heimburg (1848–1912)**

It fell to thirty-seven-year-old Bertha Behrens to complete *Das Eulenhaus* in 1888. Behrens, who also initially hid her gender under the pseudonym W. Heimburg, had made her *Gartenlaube* debut ten years earlier, in 1878, with her second novel, *Lumpenmüllers Lieschen*, which was to become her most enduring work. Her first full-length novel, *Aus dem Leben meiner alten Freundin* (1878), had been serialized the year before in a regional newspaper.

A notice that appeared in *Die Gartenlaube* during the serialization of *Lumpenmüllers Lieschen* indicates that the author’s sex was already known, thus suggesting that the ambiguous initial was by then a gesture so well known as to reveal the sex of the author rather than conceal it. Once published in the magazine, Heimburg quickly met with success. By 1884 *Die Gar-
cited her as one of its favorite authors, and in 1891 Adolf Hinrichsen named her “one of the most popular women writers, especially admired by women.”

Like Marlitt, she attained international fame and could be read in English, Dutch, Swedish, French, Czech, and Finnish. Heimburg published in *Die Gartenlaube* until her death, her last novel, *Lore Lotte*, appearing there posthumously in 1913.

In her study of Heimburg, Urzsula Bonter cites a telling vignette that an envious Theodor Fontane (1819–98), one of Germany’s most prominent realists, included in a letter to his wife in 1885. Fontane, a longtime journalist, had turned novelist seven years earlier and published six novels in the interim. His novella *Unterm Birnbaum* (never translated into English) would shortly appear in *Die Gartenlaube*. In 1885 he had not yet produced his best and most enduring works and was far from attaining the stature that he enjoys in German letters today. In this letter he ruefully describes how an older married couple speaks enthusiastically of having read a novel by Heimburg: when it was serialized in *Die Gartenlaube*, they read it aloud to one another; then the wife read it a second time; now she plans to read it a third time.

The repetitive reading that becomes visible in this vignette evidences a reader enthusiasm different from the “extensive reading” of mere consumption; instead, it suggests savoring and enduring enjoyment of a book that has become familiar. As will become visible over the course of this study, the American packaging of this popular fiction in translation also encouraged American readers to think of it as worthy of a second read and a permanent spot on the bookshelf. It was not understood simply as reading to be consumed and tossed aside.

American firms began publishing translations of Heimburg’s novels in 1881, perhaps cued by *Lizzie of the Mill*, the British translation of *Lumpenmüllers Lieschen*, which appeared in London in 1880, two years after the novel’s serialization. Praising Heimburg as standing “in the front rank of Germany’s best writers,” Smith claimed in 1898 that her translation of the very same novel as *Lieschen, a Tale of an Old Castle* for serialization in the *New York Tribune* in 1881–82 introduced American readers to Heimburg.

The Heimburg vogue in America followed hard upon the publication of Marlitt’s *Eulenhaus* in various translations in America in 1888, the association with the perennially popular author lending Heimburg greater name recognition. In 1889 *Book Chat* praised Heimburg as not merely Marlitt’s successor but as possessing “a strong originality of her own” and as resembling Marlitt only “in her felicitous drawing of the cozy atmosphere of home so peculiar to the best German literature, and in her unfailing success in
awakening the interest of her readers." However, after a spate of translations in the late 1880s and early 1890s, the number of new translations dropped precipitously at the turn of the twentieth century, even though Heimburg herself continued to publish in the first decade of the new century and even though her works were, as Smith noted, newly available in Germany, collected in twenty volumes in three series.

There can be no question of Heimburg’s success with American readers. Morgan lists twenty-one titles of translations published in America in the 1880s and twenty-one in the 1890s. These translations are of close to twenty original German texts. According to my independently gathered data, sixteen novels and book collections of novellas by Heimburg place her third behind Mühlbach and Werner in number of works translated, second behind Werner in total number of translations, and fourth in total number of publications (see Appendices C, D, and E). Heimburg’s fiction was, as these numbers indicate, multiply translated and reprinted; *Herzenskrisen*, for example, appeared in America in four translations under four different titles.

American reviews were mixed. They variously describe these novels with such terms as “wholesome and mildly entertaining,” “exquisite love story,” “pleasing tale,” or as doing “no harm” or as at least “a shade less hackneyed than the general run of German fiction.” The *Nassau Literary Magazine* even found them realistic: Heimburg “puts his [sic] people in natural situations and makes them talk in a natural way.” Of *A Penniless Girl*, the *Literary World* maintained, charm is “not wanting in this story,” for “When a German novel is at all good, it is generally very good.” Other reviews took a more peevish view. Reviewing *Misjudged*, the *Literary World* pointed to the novel’s targeted appeal to a mass market. A cranky reviewer writing for the same magazine dismissed *A Fatal Misunderstanding* as belonging “to that comfortless order of modern Teutonic fiction in which all life and action are regulated by the strictly sentimental,” where “common sense plays no part in the behavior of anybody.” Nevertheless, *Publishers’ Weekly* identified *A Penniless Girl*, Wister’s translation of *Ein armes Mädchen*, as “among the most notable” translations of foreign novels for the year 1884 and, likewise, in 1891 listed two new Heimburg translations as “among the more notable issues” in translations from the German in 1890—Heimburg is one of eleven German authors mentioned in this summary article. Heller, however, did not deign to mention her by name in his 1905 essay, perhaps because he saw her merely as one of the “swarm of busy imitators who learned the trick [from Marlitt] though they missed the grace.”

Bonter argues for a reevaluation of Heimburg, whose reputation as an inferior imitator of Marlitt, in her view, grows largely out of the fact that
she completed Marlitt’s *Eulenhaus*. She maintains that Heimburg struck out in a direction different from Marlitt’s and that she, unlike Marlitt, by no means uniformly depicted an intact world with happy endings. While Heimburg’s novels assuredly have a stamp of their own—of this more below—Bonter somewhat mischaracterizes Marlitt’s novels to make her point. As some American reviews of Marlitt indicate, Marlitt’s world was both disturbing and satisfying to readers. As we shall see in chapter 4, both Marlitt’s and Heimburg’s success in America depended on the happy ending, but not the depiction of a world without sadness, loss, or conflict.

**Elisabeth Bürstenbinder / E. Werner (1838–1918)**

Daughter of a wealthy Berlin merchant, Elisabeth Bürstenbinder made her debut in *Die Gartenlaube* in 1870 after publishing two insignificant stories in a south German magazine. As had Marlitt, she hid her gender under the initial E. Although *Die Gartenlaube* still coyly referred to Werner as “der Verfasser” (the male author) in 1872, her true identity and the secret of her sex did not long remain concealed in Germany. By 1873 she was out, as it were. *Die Gartenlaube* reported that she had had to make her identity public since in certain circles a woman was impersonating her. By 1873 she was out, as it were. *Die Gartenlaube* reported that she had had to make her identity public since in certain circles a woman was impersonating her. In America, by contrast, she was still known in some quarters as late as 1879 as “Ernest Werner.” In 1876, in an article titled “Eine Heldin der Feder” (Heroine of the Pen), a title that plays off her 1871 novel, *Ein Held der Feder* (Hero of the Pen), *Die Gartenlaube* stood fully behind her as a woman author, featuring a large picture of her and praising women authors in general. In Werner, the editor recognized, *Die Gartenlaube* had another winner.

Werner would eventually publish approximately thirty novels and novellas, many of them serialized first in *Die Gartenlaube* and many of them translated into other European languages including Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Icelandic, Spanish, Italian, Hungarian, Finnish, Czech, Russian, and Polish. Beginning in 1872 with Lippincott’s publication of *At the Altar*, over half of these works were translated in North America as well, sometimes multiple times (see Appendices C and D). Morgan identifies three critical decades for American translations of Werner: the 1870s with twenty-eight items, the 1880s with forty-two, and the 1890s with nineteen. According to my independently gathered data, Werner ranks second after Mühlbach among these seventeen women authors in number of works translated, but first in total number of translations, well ahead of Mühlbach (see Appendices C and D). Available in multiple editions and reprint editions, she occupies posi-
tion number three after Mühlbach and Marlitt (see Appendix E). In its summary article for the year 1883, Publishers’ Weekly names Werner’s Banned and Blessed alongside Emile Zola’s Au Bonheur des Dames among the “chief translations in fiction.”

When Theodor Fontane, the same journalist turned novelist whose letter testifies to Heimburg’s popularity, offered an acerbic critique of German bourgeois sentiment in his novel Frau Jenny Treibel (1892), he supplied Jenny Treibel, the central character, with the maiden name Bürstenbinder, that is, Werner’s real name. One wonders whether he thereby took revenge on Die Gartenlaube and its popular women authors. In the novel the prosaic name Bürstenbinder (broom binder) reveals the pretentious nouveau riche Jenny’s humble origins and ruthlessly pragmatic nature. Her avarice belies her outward sentimentality and jars with the poetic world that she tries to create in her opulent Berlin villa. Bourgeois sentiment, in Fontane’s scathing portrait, provides a saccharine veneer for a heartless class driven by the love of money.

Heller, however, nearly had kind words for Werner. Werner, a writer who could “lay claim to a high degree of skill . . . without being in any sense” a good writer, wielded “a good and steady pen at the business,” he asserted. She surpassed Marlitt, her model, “thanks to a greater breadth of horizon, warmth of conviction, and a certain trenchant critical faculty. Instead of limiting herself to the conventional assortment of heroes, she showed a kindly attachment for misfit individuals; this even betrayed her occasionally into representing an unmitigated crank as a hero.” As I outline below, a signature of Werner’s works is an interest in men and masculinity as it is supported and complemented by women and femininity. Even as Werner’s fiction inhabits the territory of women’s domestic fiction, it offers empathetic possibilities for male readers. Heller at least was susceptible to it.

Wilhelmine von Hillern (1836–1916)

The only child of the prolific, popular, and sometimes scorned nineteenth-century German playwright Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer (1800–1868), Hillern turned to fiction writing after a brief career on the stage and her marriage in 1857 into the lower nobility, a marriage solemnized in haste with her much older admirer Hermann von Hillern (1817–82) when she became pregnant. Armed with the experience of broad reading; contact with writers, musicians, and other makers of culture; an education overseen by her university-educated father and private tutors; and familiarity with the theater of entertainment, Hillern, as Rudolf von Gottschall conceded, knew how to
tells a story. Beginning in the mid-1860s with the novel *Ein Doppelleben* (1865), which contains a fulsome dedication to her parents, she published over the course of approximately thirty years at least fourteen novels and novellas and several plays.

Hillern serialized her work in *Die Gartenlaube* and in Janke’s *Deutsche Roman-Zeitung*, but also in the more pretentious journal *Die Deutsche Rundschau*; in Germany her books thus crossed emergent cultural boundaries. It is misleading to pigeonhole her, as does Lillie V. Hathaway as, like Marlitt, Werner, and Heimburg, one of the “‘Gartenlaube’ ladies.”

Eight arresting novels and novellas translated into English brought Hillern renown in America. Pochmann lists twenty-five titles stemming from these eight original German texts, all published in the United States from 1865 to 1899. Especially the novella *Höher als die Kirche* gained long-lasting currency in America, although admittedly in a niche market. It was translated four times into English. More importantly, no fewer than eleven different editors prepared it for the purpose of instructing German in the United States. The first American school edition alone, S. Willard Clary’s edition of 1891, went through at least twelve subsequent editions, the last of which appeared in 1911. Eleonore C. Nippert’s 1928 edition for second-year German instruction was republished and reedited as late as 1939 on the eve of the Second World War.

In 1873 *Lippincott’s Magazine* described Hillern as having a “large circle of readers on both sides of the Atlantic,” her *Arzt der Seele* having “established her claim to a high place among the writers of her class.” Inasmuch as Lippincott had published translations of her first three novels, such praise in the magazine perhaps merely served the interests of its publisher. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence for widespread reading of Hillern’s work in translation in America, including, in addition to the above-mentioned *Höher als die Kirche*, especially the novels *Ein Arzt der Seele* (1869) and *Die Geier-Wally* (1875), both of which were available in multiple translations that were subsequently reprinted. Although sixth in number of works translated, Hillern ranks fifth among her fellow German women novelists in number of American publications (see Appendices C and E).

Putnam’s *The Best Reading: Hints on the Selection of Books* particularly recommended Hillern’s *Arzt der Seele*—in Annis Lee Wister’s translation *Only a Girl*—as among the best novels of the day, relying on “the opinions of the best critics, and the judgment of the better class of readers” and designating it as belonging to category “b,” that is, specifically as one of the “books that come under the designation of good novels, and which can be recommended to the readers of fiction.” Hillern told stories that interested
Americans. *Only a Girl*, for example, depicted social expectations that circumscribe women’s intellectual aspirations. Operating in the German genre of the village tale, *Die Geier-Wally* (translated for Appleton as *Geier-Wally: A Tale of the Tyrol*) recounted a bitter struggle between a father and daughter, which the daughter eventually wins. *Aus eigener Kraft* (1870; translated as *By His Own Might*) followed the fortunes of a physically disabled protagonist. Hillern had thus ventured with her writing into controversial territory. *Appleton’s Journal*, however, expressed some dissatisfaction with Hillern’s female protagonists who, the reviewer noted, tended to be a “most gushing spirit” or a “wayward creature to be tamed by love.” In chapter 4 we will take a closer look at one such wayward creature in *Only a Girl*.

**German Popular Fiction by Women as Domestic Fiction**

The German term “Familienroman” (family novel) is but one of many nineteenth-century designations for the novels by German women that Americans liked and read in the Gilded Age. American reviewers variously labeled them “romance,” “light reading,” “German sentimental novel,” “historical romance,” or “wholesome reading.” These American labels evoke the flavor of these novels and suggest the manner in which the books were marketed and the ways their publishers expected them to be read, but these designations are not particularly useful to situating them in literary history in the aggregate. For this purpose, Nancy Armstrong’s characterization of “domestic fiction” proves more helpful.

In *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*, Armstrong brings into focus the mindset, values, assumptions, and class allegiances within which novels classified as domestic fiction operate. “Domestic fiction” flags the function of the family in these works as the site of identity formation, conflict, culture, and politics, indeed, as the place where history is made. The designation “domestic fiction” in my study of German women’s novels in America includes a range of subgenres—from the historical romances of Mühlbach to the claustrophobic family stories of Heimburg. All of these works, despite a variety of generic affinities, offer German versions of Armstrong’s domestic woman and domesticated man. As Armstrong asserts of domestic fiction, in these novels the “individual’s value” is represented “in terms of . . . essential qualities of mind” and “subtle nuances of behavior.”

While I am well aware that Mühlbach’s novels were largely understood in their own time as historical romances, I will argue in chapter 6 that even they
can be characterized in terms of domestic fiction and that they had a similar appeal for some American readers.

In the German context, the emphasis on the power of the individual to effect change flags the midcentury liberal mindset from which the set of novels to be examined here first emerged and the national liberal context in which its earliest representatives appeared, even when the overall political message in many of them was muddy and even reactionary, especially as the century advanced. In this fiction, liberalism tends to be linked to a double vision of a national Germany conceived in the terms of the region and in turn the region conceived as the nation. Although before 1871 its proponents strenuously advocated on behalf of national unity, German liberalism proved more comfortably situated in an imaginary that reflected the values of the middle classes in the scattered German home towns than it came to be in the Reich, especially after the definitive defeat of both the National Liberals and left liberals in the Reichstag elections of 1878.

The persistence of the regional setting of the so-called home town and the outlying estates of the landed aristocracy in these novels projects a Germany that eludes the ills of modernity associated with the urbanization of the last third of the nineteenth century. Social tensions remain largely those between an aristocracy, privileged by birth and custom, and the middle classes, defined by virtue, initiative, ingenuity, duty, and hard work. The laboring classes, while sometimes acknowledged, are depicted in largely sentimental and paternalistic terms. The family itself, sometimes as a metaphor for the German nation, tends to function as the primary site of conflict, even when the novels allude to larger national and international issues.

In such fiction, female subjectivity is critical to overcoming social conflict and achieving social stability. Examining largely eighteenth-century British literature, Armstrong argues for seeing in domestic fiction an overt contestation of “the reigning notion of kinship relations that attached most power and privilege to certain family lines.” This fiction makes gender and remakes the social order, and in Armstrong’s words, “individuates wherever there [is] a collective body, to attach psychological motives to what [has] been the openly political behavior of contending groups, and to evaluate these according to a set of moral norms that [exalt] the domestic woman over and above her aristocratic counterpart.” Such fiction persisted in Germany where the privilege of birth endured. German fiction, however, does not uniformly depict a moral middle class triumphing over its aristocratic counterpart. Rather, aristocratic characters are often imbued with middle-class values and aspirations and defend these against the villainy of other aristocrats. In the moral sense, the middle classes have always already triumphed in these works.
What, then, was the character of this translated domestic fiction by German women, and why did American readers like it? What picture of Germany did it mediate in the nationalist era in which Germany unified, industrialized, modernized, militarized, and colonized, and the United States in essence did the same? Moreover, how German was it once it had been rendered by American translators, packaged and marketed by American publishers, and widely read by Americans in a variety of editions as entertaining fiction? Part 2 undertakes close readings of texts; examination of books as the product of industry, marketing, and circulation; and scrutiny of preserved exemplars in pursuit of answers to these questions.