

„Junior-Bibliographie“

Das vorrangige Interesse unserer Gesellschaft gilt selbstverständlich ihrem Namenspatron Carl Maria von Weber, unser Anliegen ist es allerdings auch, die Forschung zu den Familienangehörigen Webers zu befördern (vgl. in Sonderheit die letzten Hefte der *Weberiana*). Angeregt durch die Dissertation über Max Maria von Weber von Hartmut Herbst reizte es uns, die darin enthaltene Werkliste zu ergänzen. Nach diversen Zufallsfunden entschlossen wir uns, die Suche systematisch zu betreiben, und tatsächlich konnte das Œuvre-Verzeichnis des überaus produktiven Autors beträchtlich erweitert werden. So fand sich etwa ein Hinweis auf ein umgearbeitetes Libretto zur Weberschen *Silvana*, das der Sohn des Komponisten anlässlich der Wiederaufführung der Oper 1855 in Dresden verfaßte. In der Zeitschrift *Europa* heißt es dazu:¹

„Der Text der »Silvana« gehört zu den unsinnigen; es schien wünschenswerth, der reizenden Musik bessere Worte und vernünftigeren Inhalt unterzubreiten. Der poetische Sohn des Componisten [...] lieferte diesen bessern Text; gleichwohl ging die Oper in Dresden voriges Jahr mit dem alten Libretto in Scene [...].“

Wie schon bei der Mitgliederversammlung in Ermlitz angedeutet (vgl. S. 166), beabsichtigen wir, in Kürze auf der homepage unserer Gesellschaft eine Bibliographie zu veröffentlichen: Sie verzeichnet alle bislang nachgewiesenen Publikationen des Weber-Sohns sowie ausgewählte Beiträge über ihn und soll möglichst fortlaufend aktualisiert werden.

Der aufmerksame Leser der von Hartmut Herbst herausgegebenen Sammlung *Sturm auf den Schienen* mit Texten Max Maria von Webers (vgl. Rezension S. 139ff.) wird im Bericht über dessen Amerika-Studienreise im Jahr 1880 (S. 241) das Erstaunen und die unverkennbare Freude nachempfunden haben, die den Berichterstatter erfüllte, als er im kanadischen Toronto ganz offensichtlich das erste Presse-Interview seines Lebens gab und es am übernächsten Tag gedruckt in der Zeitung lesen konnte, voller Zufriedenheit, daß der Text mit seinen Antworten auf die Reporter-Fragen übereinstimmte. Diese Passage machte uns neugierig, und so gingen wir auf die Suche nach der Veröffentlichung. Es gab zur fraglichen Zeit in Toronto zwei Zeitungen:

¹ Vgl. „Eine Jugendarbeit Karl Maria v. Webers“, in: *Europa. Chronik der gebildeten Welt*, hg. von F. G. Kühne, 1856, Nr. 31 (2. August), Sp. 924.

The Toronto Telegram und *The Globe Toronto*; durch freundliche Vermittlung von Mrs. Susanne Arnold (McTier/Ontario) und mit Unterstützung der Bibliotheken in Perry Sound sowie von *Interlibrary Loan* in Ottawa gelang es, Kopien des besagten Interviews aus der letztgenannten Zeitung, erschienen am 19. Juli 1880, zu erhalten.

Aus dem Text geht hervor, daß Weber auf dieser Reise sein Hauptaugenmerk auf die Schmalspurbahnen in Amerika richtete. Er wollte die Erfahrungen mit diesen Modellen studieren, um daraus Schlüsse für deren möglichen weiteren Einsatz in Deutschland zu ziehen.

Interessant ist, daß er nicht nur zu technischen Problemen befragt wurde, sondern auch die Emigrantenfrage Gegenstand der Unterhaltung war. Diese Passage entbehrt selbst zum heutigen Tage nicht der Aktualität. Auf die politischen Themen reagierte Weber allerdings sehr zurückhaltend und betonte, daß er als offizieller Vertreter der preußischen Regierung nicht befugt sei, zu dem Anliegen der Reporter Stellung zu nehmen.

Das Interview zeigt wiederum eine neue Facette im Leben des Max Maria von Weber und soll aufgrund des Seltenheitswertes nachfolgend wiedergegeben werden.

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„A German Councillor

The Visit of Baron Von Weber, Prussian Minister of Railways

A Brief Conversation on Narrow Gauge Railways, German Emigration, and Socialism.

Baron Von Weber, who occupies a position in the German Government similar to that held by our Minister of Railways, and Mr. Boherstedt², one of the Government engineers, arrived in the city on Friday night on a short visit in connection with an enquiry into the working of narrow gauge railways, which they are now making under direction of the Government of the Fatherland. They were received at the station by Mr. J. A. Simmers, German Consul, who accompanied them to the Queen's Hotel, which will be their headquarters during their brief sojourn here. A GLOBE representative on Friday evening called upon Baron Von

² Gemeint ist der Ingenieur Bohnstedt, der Weber auf der Reise begleitete; vgl. die Erinnerungen von Maria von Wildenbruch, geb. von Weber, in: Hartmut Herbst, „Weber-Spuren in Weimar“, in: *Weberiana* 11 (2001), S. 31.

Weber as the party were assembled in the gentlemen's parlour after having been for a short drive through some of the principal streets. The Baron, who is apparently about middle age, stoutly built, and unmistakably German in his appearance, received the reporter with the utmost courtesy, and kindly furnished every explanation of the object of his present tour.

Narrow Gauge Railways

The Baron stated that he and Mr. Boherstedt had been commissioned by the Prussian Government to visit America and enquire into the working of the narrow gauge railways here. Several roads of this class are already in operation in Germany, and the Government desires to know what advantages would be likely to attend a considerable extension of such railways with a view to using them as feeders for the trunk lines. An increase of such roads is deemed particularly necessary in the mountainous districts, where engineering difficulties in the way of building railways are so great that the most lavish outlay of money would be necessary to construct lines of the ordinary gauge. The standard gauge is the same as that on this continent, 4 feet 8 ½ inches, and a large number of railways are now running about one half of which are owned by the Government. The Government are not desirous of acquiring more railways unless they may be necessary for military purposes. The military advantages to be gained by any particular step would seem to be regarded as a matter of great, if not paramount importance, judging by the frequency with which the matter was referred to by Baron Von Weber. For instance, in stating the objections which might be urged against the construction of narrow gauge railways, he said that while they were cheap and would no doubt be very useful for traversing a mountainous country, and as feeders to the main line, yet they would be very objectionable from a military point of view, because at the junction with a road of the standard gauge it would be necessary to tranship men, stores, and everything else.

The Baron and Mr. Boherstedt have been in America about two months, during which time they have visited New York, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and other important cities both east and west, and have been as far west as the Rocky Mountains examining a number of the narrow gauge railways there. They have been received with the greatest hospitality at every point, and The Baron expresses himself as much

pleased with a great deal that he has seen. He mentioned that he had had explained to him the Haggas system of water elevating for locomotives, and that he had been so much pleased with it that he had recommended it to his Government as a very useful invention, »especially for military purposes.«

So far, his observation of the working of narrow gauge railways on this continent has impressed him so favourably that he will report in favour of the proposed extension of the system in his own country.

German Emigration.

»Why is it,« asked the reporter, »that the German Government will not permit our immigration agents to carry on an agitation in favour of emigration to Canada.«

»Because,« replied the Baron, »we find that those who emigrate are of a class which it is most desirable to retain in our own country. If you would be content with the paupers and Socialists we would willingly let you have them, but those who have gone out during the present year have taken away with them on an average \$ 100 in your money. You can easily see that that is a very great drain upon the resources of the country.«

»Besides,« said Mr. Simmers, »cases have come under my notice where immigrants from Germany have suffered not a little by coming to this country. The case of one man was particularly hard. He had agreed to work with a man for \$ 8 a month and his board, but up to the end of a year he had received nothing, and was left penniless in a strange country, with the language of which he was unacquainted. Such men are brought out here, but no provision is made by the Government to assist and direct them after they come. The German Government is quite right in wishing to protect its people against immigration agents, when such are likely to be the results of their leaving their own country.«

»But, then there are many Germans who improve their condition very much by coming here.«

»Yes, that is very true.«

»In some of the cities I visited,« said Baron Von Weber, »I found many Germans doing very well, particularly in Chicago, Cincinnati, and Milwaukee.«

»In a discussion in the Emigration Committee of the Dominion Parliament last session,« continued the reporter, »it was stated that

the United States Government had made such arrangements with the steamship lines that the agents for those lines were practically immigration agents of the United States. Is that the case?»

»Not at all,« replied the Baron, »the ticket agents of these lines have the liberty of selling tickets to any who desire to buy, but they must not attempt to induce the people to emigrate.«

»No discrimination is exercised against Canada in this particular, then?«

»No, all countries are on an equal footing.«

»Can you tell why it is so many go to the United States as compared with the number that come to Canada?«

»The name of the United States is well known, it is a republic, and people go there believing that they will have perfect liberty.«

German Socialism

The Baron was unwilling to speak upon the state of political affairs in Germany, and in answer to the question »What is the attitude of the Church party toward the Government?« he said that being a councillor he did not feel at liberty to say anything upon that subject. When asked, however, what was the present position and strength of the Socialist movement, he replied that the Socialists were not nearly so strong as formerly. The return of prosperity consequent upon the business revival in the United States had robbed the agitators of many of their arguments, and their following was rapidly decreasing.

This closed the interview.

On Saturday the visitors took advantage of an invitation extended to them by Mr. Wm. Gooderham to visit the offices and shops of the Toronto and Nipissing Railway. Baron Von Weber made a number of inquiries concerning the working of the road, and expressed pleasure at what he had seen.

Today Baron Von Weber and Mr. Boherstedt leave for Niagara Falls.

Toronto is the first point in Canada that they have visited, but as they do not sail for home until the 11th of August, they will have an opportunity to see something of the country before leaving. On Saturday, at the invitation of Mr. Wm. Gooderham, the party took a trip up the Toronto and Nipissing line. They occupied the directors' car, which had been placed at their disposal for the purpose.“