

The Sound of Silence
[*Aus der Stille*]

Poems

by

ADA LINDEN

published by KARL SCHRATTENTHAL

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W. Rob. Langewiesche

Preface

When I set to work collecting material for my anthology entitled *A Selection of the Poetry of Our Nation's Women*¹, I discovered a number of women poets, among whom was Ada Linden. Her narrative poems impressed me quite positively. I now know that my appraisal is also shared by more important authorities than myself, for none other than Emanuel Geibel² expressed words of appreciation regarding Ada Linden's poetry, and Emil Rittershaus³ encouraged the literary endeavors of the poetess living in her remote village.

Ada Linden, whose actual name is Luise Förster, is the daughter of a mining superintendent from Grübsthal, in the Prussian Rhine Province (Rhenish Prussia⁴), and was born there on October 1st, 1847. Losing her father quite early, the fatherless child attended school in the neighboring village and found in the local parson, Mr. H. Dörrien, a kind protector and counselor, who helped in educating our budding poetess, so that she was later able to pass the examination for a teaching certificate and was thus in a position to financially support her mother and sister.

Even as a child when trudging the long and lonely path to school, she would sing songs which she had composed herself. And later, when her cast of mind and imagination moved her to poetic expression, she would write down her verses and, under the aforesaid *nom de plume* would submit them to the public at large. That which in the course of years has borne poetic fruit and is collected, at least in part, in this little volume, should be offered to the discerning reader and should rap on the doors of those families who are still receptive to the beauty of verse. I myself shall refrain from comment as to the artistic value of the poems; critical evaluation will come of its own accord, and public opinion will render judgment on the merits of this little book.

My heartfelt wish is that Ada Linden's poems will be warmly received in German families and, in particular, in her Westphalian homeland. I cannot avoid stating this because a positive reception would offer both consolation and satisfaction to the poetess, who leads a secluded life and who has been obliged to relinquish her teaching post at the elementary school in Wickrathberg due to a heart complaint. I would count myself a happy man if my modest words could contribute to bringing about the recognition this ailing poetess so justly deserves.

Pressburg, late autumn of 1895

Professor Karl Weiß-Schrattenthal.

Annotations:

1) Professor Karl Weiß-Schrattenthal, *Unsere Frauen in einer Auswahl aus ihren Dichtungen. Poesie-Album zeitgenössischer Dichterinnen*. Mit 12 Portr. Stuttgart 1888. (Listed in footnote 4, p. 4 of *Deutschlands Dichterinnen, Blüthen deutscher Frauenpoesie, Erster Theil* by Karl Wilhelm Bindewald. (Druck und Verlag von A. W. Zickfeldt, Osterwieck/Harz, no date of publication provided).

2) Cf. http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emanuel_Geibel

3) Cf. http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Emil_Rittershaus In the Rittershaus article, in the section with the heading "Dichter" ("Poet"), Rittershaus's close friend Emanuel Geibel is mentioned.

4) Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhine_Province and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Ac.prussiamap3.gif>
As the Rhine Province belonged to Prussia, Luise Förster had Prussian citizenship.