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Metaphysics Investment Archaeology

**THE POLISH PEASANT IN EUROPE
AND AMERICA**

**VOLUME II
PRIMARY-GROUP ORGANIZATION**

THE POLISH PEASANT IN EUROPE *and* AMERICA MONOGRAPH OF AN IMMIGRANT GROUP

By

WILLIAM I. THOMAS

and

FLORIAN ZNAŃIECKI

VOLUME II

PRIMARY-GROUP ORGANIZATION



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CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MEMBERS OF FAMILY-GROUPS.—*Continued*

KOZŁOWSKI SERIES

The Kozłowskis are a poor family in the province of Łomża. At his death the father left a small farm of two morgs—possibly inherited from his mother. The widow, Franciszka, remained on the farm with the youngest boy, Franek. One daughter (stepdaughter?) of Franciszka married a shoemaker of the same village. The position of a village shoemaker is rather bad, and this explains the apparent cupidity of the daughter. The other children had gone to America. Meanwhile there had remained undivided a farm left by Franciszka's late husband's father, and the trouble begins with the division of this land. In the division six morgs of land are added to the small farm of Franciszka. She has no right to sell these 6 morgs, but at the same time she wishes to get as much profit from the situation as possible, and, on the other hand, she is really not in a position to take care of the whole farm until Franek grows up. The shoemaker's wife has a right to part of the value of the whole farm and she claims her share, but Franciszka wants to pay her only a sum corresponding to her part of the original farm of two morgs, and wishes to drive a sharp bargain even then. Her first plan is to sell the farm, conceal as much money as possible for herself, and go to America to be supported there by her children. But the children are unwilling to give her power of attorney; they seem rightly to distrust her. Then, as the opportunity to marry presents itself, she changes her plans, sells whatever can be sold without legal authority, gets money from her children to join them in America, invents pretexts for not going, gets

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married, and tries to keep the whole farm for her youngest son, while getting in addition as much money as possible from the sale of the forest and stock. She succeeds perfectly, and is evidently too clever for her children. They not only get no money from her, but she succeeds in getting some from them. Ultimately she conciliates even her most dangerous antagonists, the shoemaker and his wife.

All this shows no lack of maternal feeling. On the contrary, she shows that feeling on the occasion of her daughter's death. But she has a powerful personality, and she has probably been independent for a long time; she has governed her environment, and she does not wish to fall into the position of an old, helpless, and moneyless mother, supported by her children. And as having some money herself is the only way of keeping her independence, she endeavors by all means to get it. As a woman, she has not the same tradition of familial solidarity as men; she is not the head of the family, the rightful manager of the common property; there are no rights and responsibilities of leadership to set limits to her egotism. The family-group as a distinct whole does not exist for her; she means to deal always only with individuals and opposes to them her own individuality. In so far the case is different from that of the old Wróblewski, who shows a much more far-going moral degeneration, since he is the head of a family and nevertheless breaks off all relations with his sons.

The influence of Franciszka's personality upon her environment is very well shown by the circumstance that everybody who comes into immediate touch with her finally does whatever she wishes. Her youngest son is under her absolute control; her *kuma*, Maryanna Szczepańska, is dominated; her second husband manifests a real devotion to her; even the stepdaughter and the shoemaker are subjugated, though not without protest. Her brothers and

children in America are, of course, less under her power, but even they cannot quite avoid her influence. The letters give us a good idea of the means by which the social environment may be controlled through merely psychological influences, without any socially acknowledged right to control—one of the practical problems of the peasant woman and solved by many of them in the same way as by Kozłowska.

The fundamental device is, of course, the appeal to sentiment. Kozłowska uses it artistically. In order to appreciate this we must remember the peasants' tendency to schematize people and things. Every person belongs to a certain determined social type and is presumed to have the attitudes of this type; every person has a determined position, and from this position conclusions about his behavior may be drawn. The surest way to provoke a desired sentimental reaction in the environment is therefore to assume and to keep consistently a character corresponding to the sentiment it is desired to provoke. Thus, for example, a noble, a priest, a teacher, an official, a newspaper man, an agitator, wishing to win the attachment of the peasants, must each act in a different way. There are also reactions which only a person in a determined position can arouse. For instance, envy is most easily awakened in peasants by a peasant. A priest or a noble will hardly succeed in provoking pity, etc.

Now, Kozłowska has a determined character and she tries to arouse only such feelings as are habitual with regard to a person of this character. She is a widow and therefore presumed to be helpless. The supposition of helplessness has a stronger basis, because she is old and formally poor, i.e., she has little which is rightfully her own. Further, she is a mother and grandmother, and supposed to have the feelings of love, longing for her absent children, grief for a child's death, anxiety for her grandchildren when they

become orphans, etc. The type of favorable reaction which she can easily provoke in her environment is thus predetermined; it is pity for her helplessness and sympathy for her maternal feelings. And, indeed, she plays continually those two chords. And she does it with just the intensity required by the social milieu to which she belongs. In a more cultivated milieu, more accustomed to restrain the feelings, her behavior would appear highly unnatural, distasteful, and hysterical. Perhaps she is in fact a little hysterical, but certainly her behavior is adapted to her social sphere—one accustomed to a display of feelings. She has nothing to lose and much to win by exaggeration; therefore she exaggerates her helplessness as well as her motherly love, her poverty and her (certainly unreal) bad health, her grief and her gratitude.

Of course, her actions are not in accordance with her assumed character; but she knows like a master how to present them in a suitable light. The gradual selling of the forest is given as the result of her poverty and inability to farm. When she wants the farm sold, she appeals to her oldest son as her “guardian” and pretends to acknowledge his authority. When she marries, she pretends that she was forced to it by her helplessness. Her anger against “the shoemaker’s wife” is justified by her motherly indignation, because of the invectives and curses which the stepdaughter hurls against her children. And the hardest blow to her is the—just or unjust—allegation of immoral conduct, which tends to wreck completely her assumed character.

But she knows also how to use other weapons. She appeals to religious feelings—by using in a clever way the name of God, by sending religious tokens, by exploiting the magical fear of a mother’s curse, by presenting other people’s duties toward her in a religious form, etc. Expressions of indignation and pride alternate with appeals to pity and strengthen each other by contrast.

The second typical means of control is the use of the feelings aroused, instead of rational arguments. In asking for anything or in explaining her conduct Kozłowska does not rely upon the strength of her arguments. On the contrary, she seems to avoid intentionally the real issue and instead creates around the problem an atmosphere of sentiment favorable to her. It is hardly a fully conscious, rationally motivated policy, any more than is her ability to provoke the desired feelings; both are certainly naïve. Her use of sentiment instead of argument is also largely due to her insufficient training in argumentation. Most of her arguments, are, in fact, rather weak, and in this respect she is also a type. The essential features of her argumentation are almost universal, not only among women, but also among men of the peasant class, and this is precisely the argumentation which is most efficient with peasants. In order to demonstrate something rationally, we must not only be able to develop a logically perfect chain of reasoning, but must also have an opponent able to follow this reasoning to acknowledge its binding character; and first of all, we must have identical premises. But a peasant opponent is not trained to follow a line of reasoning, is not accustomed to accept a thing as true solely because it has been demonstrated to him. And even if he admits a premise explicitly, he has always some other implicit premises which he keeps intentionally unexpressed and which invalidate in his mind his opponent's conclusion. So it is a difficult task to get the peasant to accept your argument. But if, with regard to a given problem, you succeed in arousing a set of feelings favorable to your view, the work is done, for the peasant will *himself invent* arguments which will persuade him. This is the mechanism used consciously by all those who want to influence the peasant, and they imitate it from the half-conscious

procedure of the peasants themselves, of which Kozłowska gives a good example.

The third means which the old woman uses to obtain what she wants is to be as exacting as possible. She not only does not give her children what is due to them, but she continually demands money from them, and not only from them but even from her brothers, who have no obligation whatever toward her. She simply reverses the situation, making demands which the others might naturally make. It can be understood then that under these conditions her son-in-law, instead of claiming his wife's dowry, would be satisfied if she sent him back his own money, or her son would be satisfied if she let him alone. The principle is the same as in bargaining, which is a general characteristic of the peasant as well as of the Jew. In their dealings with the manor-owners the peasants' claims are sometimes impudent. They do not expect those claims to be granted, but they hope to get at least something. In many cases the source of this unlimited exacting is found in a curious psychological identification of wish and right. Thus, the peasants' wish to get the land of the nobility gives rise to a half-determined, sometimes even fully determined and rationally justified, conception that they have the right to this land. In Kozłowska's case certainly there is much of this attitude. We find it also in most family quarrels about property, and in many lawsuits.

Among the other personalities in this series the most interesting is perhaps the *kuma* (Marysia's godmother), Maryanna Szczepańska. She is notable because of the nature of her friendship with Franciszka. This kind of old women's friendship is very frequent. It is based upon a community of interests and attitudes. The women seek in each other a help against their respective families and comfort in domestic troubles, and, being of the same generation

and the same social group, they agree perfectly with each other, particularly as there are no practical problems to divide them. The necessity of such a friendship is felt mostly in older age by women who do not know how to adapt themselves to the young generation, and who begin to feel solitary in their own families. Of course if there is a close and harmonious relation between husband and wife such a friendship has less occasion to arise, and indeed we do not find it in most of our series. In their relation the old women manifest much mutual adulation, and this shows that their friendship has still another function; it is their only way of getting social recognition of the kind and degree they desire. It seems to be a tacit pact between them always to praise, never to blame each other. They behave in the same way when speaking about each other, and Maryanna's letters are good examples of this behavior.

Old men, like old bulls, do not care much for society. Their social standing is more assured, their instinct of domination finds place enough in the family, their familial attitude does not allow them to initiate strangers into their home affairs, and they do not need any help against their families. After their retirement the situation changes, and then we find them sometimes associated in friendship with retired neighbors of the same age. The usual consequence of retirement, however, is to strengthen the bonds between husband and wife.

THE FAMILY KOZŁOWSKI

Franciszka Kozłowska, a widow

Antoni (Antoś), her son, living in America

Franek (Franciszek), her son, living with her

Józef Plata, her second husband

Marysia (Mania) Baranowska

Zosia Bieniewska

Julcia Brzostowicz

} her daughters, living with their husbands
in America

"The shoemaker's wife," her daughter or stepdaughter

Antoni Hermanowicz, "the shoemaker"

Wincenty } Franciszka's brothers (or brothers-in-law)
Antoni }

Maryanna Szczepańska, Franciszka's *kuma*

226-45. MAINLY FROM FRANCISZKA KOZŁOWSKA IN POLAND,
TO MEMBERS OF HER FAMILY IN AMERICA. 237-38,
FROM MARYANNA SZCZEPAŃSKA; 230, 239-41, FROM
FRANEK; 242-43, FROM JÓZEF PLATA; 244-45, FROM
ANTONI HERMANOWICZ

226

DANIŁOWO, March 15, 1906

[TO MARYSIA AND JAN BARANOWSKI] In the first words of my letter I speak to you with these godly words, "Praised be Jesus Christus," and I hope that you will answer me "In centuries of centuries, Amen."

I inform you, dear children, about my grief. Were it not for my soul for which I am anxious lest I lose it in eternity, I should have drowned myself, and you would have nobody to write to any more. Dear children, I write to you and I don't see these letters from crying. I am only glad from your letter that you intend to take me to America. There perhaps I should still live some years more. But, dear daughter and son-in-law, make some plan about all this.

Dear daughter and son-in-law, the worst is the forest, for I could find some farmer for [renting] the field, but the worst is about the forest. People would cut it down [steal the wood in my absence]. Dear children, you said in your first letter that you would take me, so take me indeed, I beg you heartily.

Dear children, I describe to you my grief. On the same day when I received that letter from you, I received also a notification from the bailiff that the shoemaker's wife wants it [the farm] sold at auction, and the auction will be on March 21. Now, dear children, when we were at the court, I asked them: "How much do you want to be paid off." She said 60, and he [her husband] said 70. She said that she wanted not only [the inheritance] after her father, but also after her grandfather. I offered her 50. But now I will give her nothing at all. Let her go by [the way of] lawsuits, I will give her

nothing at all.¹ Now, dear children, I inform you that she writes letters to America, and particularly to Antoni. Moreover, through acquaintances she sends messages against me. And now Antoś has not written to me for more than 3 months [as a result of this slandering]. And perhaps, dear daughter and son-in-law, dear children, perhaps they [Antoś and wife] don't know that you wish to take me to America, and they don't know. But, dear daughter and son-in-law, don't be angry with me for the thing which I shall mention. Dear children, I could not get to America for my money. Why, and I should not go without my son who is with me. Dear daughter and son-in-law, perhaps you will send me a ship-ticket. Dear children, sign, all of you, that you want me to come. For perhaps you want me to come, dear daughter and son-in-law, and perhaps those [the son and daughter-in-law] don't want me to come at all.² Dear daughter, I ask you whether you received that letter in which were the scapularies and the veil of God's Mother? You say, dear daughter

¹ One of the main sources of the innumerable and interminable lawsuits. Whenever in a dispute one party goes to court, or so much as threatens with a lawsuit, it is enough to harden the other party against all persuasion, even if he knows that he is totally wrong. But at the last moment, before the suit comes to trial a reaction usually comes—reflection and fear of losing—and if there are mediators the matter is frequently settled at this moment. Much depends also upon the judge, whether he is able to give the whole affair an *unofficial* form and to persuade the parties to agree. Therefore the country judges use as little formality as possible, for if once the matter is put upon a formal basis it ceases to be a question of right or wrong and becomes a mere fight. The lawsuits between family members must be considered from this point of view. As long as the matter remains within the family, agreement is always possible upon any basis; the peasant is ready not only to acknowledge any just claim but even to make any sacrifice. But as soon as the question assumes a formal character no considerations of justice, and in general none of the moral norms regulating the family life are applied at all; the law is outside of morals. An attitude which would be judged immoral, unjust, sinful, from the standpoint of familial or communal relations, is *not judged at all*, by any moral standards in legal relations. And this attitude is not always unconscious. A peasant who was in the midst of a lawsuit with his brother, and who was evidently and absolutely in the wrong from the standpoint of justice; replied, when we pointed this out to him: "Why, they did not want it settled *by the way of justice!*" meaning that they went at once to court instead of trying to get his consent in an amiable way.

² This request may have two aims. She either wants to be assured that in any case she will be supported in America, or she wants to have a document which, while not equivalent to legal authority, may still enable her to dispose of a part of the property or to persuade the guardians to let her do so.

and son-in-law, that I was angry with you. No, I was not angry at all, I was very much satisfied, only I waited for your answer. Dear children, you are so dear to me, that I kiss these photographs of you upon the wall. . . .

FRANCISZKA KOZŁOWSKA

227

November 4, 1906

. . . . MY DEAR CHILDREN: And now I inform you that I am healthy, but scarcely, from all this thinking which I have upon my mind. . . . I received your letter and 3 photographs; I gave one to Szczepańska and I have two left. I inform you that I am very much satisfied, dear daughter and son-in-law, may our Lord God bless you, and God's Mother. May she help you in your work and in everything. . . . Now I write, your mother, to all of you, my children, in general. First to you, dear son, and to my daughter-in-law, and to the Bieniewskis and to the Brzostowiczs and to the Baranowskis, and I wish you every good, whatever you want for yourselves, my dear children.

Now I inform you about this land, that to these 2 morgs were added during the new division, 2 morgs of field and 1 morg of forest to each. . . . So there are now 6 morgs of field and 2 of forest, 8 morgs together. Now I inform you, dear children, on what spots we received this addition. [Describes in detail.] You, Antoś, and you, Marysia, you know where it is and in what position.

Now, my dear children, it would be the best if we sold it, for I have nothing from it except trouble. I don't sow the land, only [strange] people do, for I rented it, for I cannot manage it myself. Even if I wanted to sow myself, you know that there is no barn and there is no place to put the crops. I keep the forest, but again people steal. A man could guard it more easily, while I, a woman, what can I do? I have only trouble. So it would be the best, my dear children, to sell it, for all this is wasted for the land they pay [the rent]; but in the forest whatever anybody snatches is his own, and when I need money, I also sell some tree,¹ and so all this is wasted. If you don't do as I advise you, dear children, after a few years it will be much cheaper [worth less]. Now they would give money, for they

¹ She has no right to do this, and she confesses it, for evidently the shoemaker's wife has written more than once to her brother and sisters that the mother is wasting the forest.



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America nor paying her off. Our guardians asked her how much she wanted to be paid off. Then this old beggar, this carcass [her husband] wanted 70 roubles, and she asked 60. I will give her 50, and the guardians also tell her to take 50 and no more. But, dear son, I would rather give her nothing. What do you advise? I was everywhere [for advice], and I thought of either renting the field or selling the forest [to pay her]. But, dear son, I wish I had never lived until this new division and addition, since I am a hinderance to all of you and you are angry with me and you don't write me for half a year. Were it not for this affair I would rather have died [*zdechła*, used here vulgarly like the English "rotted," is properly used only of animals = German *krepiren*] and would not have written. Now, dear son, come rather to an understanding among yourselves, take it, sell it and make peace with this shoemaker's wife. Let her not call God's vengeance upon you and grieve me. And now after all this she intends to have an auction, for her part of the inheritance from your grandfather and your father. You left me here for sorrow only. Dear children, don't believe anybody, when the shoemaker's wife slanders me to people. Why, you get it [bad words] also from her, dear son, into your eyes, and behind your eyes [proverbial, to your face and behind your back]. And you get still more from her. She says: "Much did he care for his mother! And when he came to Warsaw, he let his nails grow a *sążeń* long [6 feet] pretending to be a gentleman."

Dear son, I thank you for writing to me so often! But don't think, dear son, that I write it from my whole heart [that I am grieved]. I say it simply because you write once in a year. If I had known that you would guard me so! May our Lord God and your children care for you as much as you do for me! If you had not gone into the world you would have known better what a mother is, while now in return for my education [of you] you are ashamed of me. But Mańka did the same. She accidentally wrote one letter, that we might know only that she got married. Dear son, please say to Mańka about this letter that she rejoiced me awfully, that I don't know what to do in the country, and she gave me precisely such advice as the letters she writes [no letters, no advice]. To the shoemaker's wife she can well send bows and write, but when her god-mother sends her a gift—she sent her scapularies and a veil of God's

Mother—she did not even thank her.¹ Dear son, and all my dear children together, I tell you sincerely I won't write you any more letters since you are so turned to stone against me. Since you are so little curious to learn what is going on here with us I won't inform you. I bless you all with the holy cross [old habit in bidding farewell].

Dear son, you said to Franek, "If you manage well I will send you some assistance." And now you don't even send a naked letter [without a stamp]. But if this shoemaker's wife sells our land at auction then our assistance is over. Dear son, we keep two pigs for ourselves, but there can be no cow from them [probably alluding to some promise to send money for a cow], the less so if the shoemaker's wife drags us about courts, as she is now doing. Dear son, I ask you, and do you answer me. Do you agree to pay her 50 roubles, as I wish, or not? Perhaps you will send us some money for this payment? For if we sell these pigs, we can have perhaps enough to buy a cow. I beg you, dear son, for a speedy answer. I salute you all, yourself and your wife and my grandchildren.

[FRANCISZKA]

229

June 2, 1907

. . . . DEAR CHILDREN: I inform you that I am not very healthy, for even an iron man would have no longer any health. I thank you heartily for this letter, dear children, which you sent me.² And then, dear children, I received also the letter from Zosia. Dear children, I beg you all together, answer me, what is this "dirt" which I have on me?³ Answer me, who wrote that letter so that this "dirt" may not grieve me longer. Dear children, I have enough of my own trouble. Dear children, I can never in the world bear these troubles, for, dear children, in the week when I wrote this letter I went to Czerwin, and I hardly got there, for my feet were covered with blisters.

¹ The members of the family in America are evidently disaffected by reports from the shoemaker's wife and realize that Szczepańska is in the scheme with their mother.

² The son has been moved in some way by the preceding letter to write; probably by the mother's words: "May our Lord God and your children care for you as much as you do for me." This is the kind of mother's curse which never fails to be impressive.

³ "Dirt" is commonly used in the sense of "immorality." She has probably been accused of immoral relations with the man who afterward marries her.

And I went in vain, for not all of our guardians were there; 3 were and 3, not. Now I shall have to go again, and when winter comes and it is necessary to creep upon the snow, surely I shall die. And since the shoemaker's wife made the inventory, the guardians won't allow me to sell this property, for Franek is a minor.

And now, dear children, could you arrange so: Send me such a decision that I can rent [the farm] for some years. Now people are afraid to pay money down for some years, lest it be lost. I should be glad, dear children, to step away from her [the shoemaker's wife's] eyes. [*Ślepie*, in the original, is properly used only for the eyes of animals.] Let her not cause me any more grief. If I went to you perhaps God would guard me for a year or two, while thus, dear children, when these troubles fill my head I have [peace] neither day nor night. There is no work from me at all, and soon I shall go away from [lose] my reason, and I shall no longer understand any of your writing. O God my dear, God my dear, why do you keep me in this world?¹ Dear children, I beg you, take me to you, I want to have one hour of relief at least and not have to listen to this [calling of] vengeance against you, dear son, and against Zosia. Moreover, she [the daughter] persuades some dogs like herself to write dirt against me. What dirt do they write against me? Perhaps she writes against me about this [man]? I who can hardly walk with my pains, and she writes dirt about me! For this land I should have more than one purchaser, but when I learned that the guardians won't let it be sold, I have no more strength to bear all this. Oh, nothing can be done, my dear children, evidently she must kill me with trouble in this country!

Dear brother, you ask me in your letter about money. I did not see any money and probably I am to see none. When you sent me some, I saw it, but now when you don't send, I see none.

I greet you also, my dear children. It is true that I received at last a letter from you, but I will remember it until my death—what [sorrow] you gave me about that dirt.

¹ Here the grief, although also affected, seems more real than in the first letter, for besides the quarrel with the "shoemaker's wife" there is another reason, i.e., the matter of the "dirt." Whether justified or not, such a suspicion is likely to affect a peasant woman more profoundly than anything else. And the impossibility of selling the land, meaning the failure of her scheme, is a third reason for grief.

I have nothing more to write to you, dear children and brother. Remain with God. May God help you.

[FRANCISZKA]

I salute my sister-in-law and my brother. Sister-in-law, why should we be angry with each other and what for? I have not seen you, sister-in-law, with my very eyes, and I shall die without seeing you. Well, my dear, let us kiss each other, at least by letter, at least through this paper; let us give hands to each other. I thank you so much, sister-in-law, for not forgetting me yet, and that you both remembered me. Dear brother, I thank you for this, for your knowing that I am your sister. Remember, dear, how you cared for me and I cared for you.

[FRANCISZKA]

Dear children, I don't want to make you any trouble about taking me [sending me a ship-ticket]. I should prefer if you sent me a few roubles [in cash], but I should find my way more easily if you take me [if you send me a ticket].

230

[June 2 1907]

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTERS: Have pity and take at least our mother, let her have at least a few easier hours. Dear brother and sisters and brothers-in-law, I beg you, if you want to see your mother before she dies, take her to you. Have pity, for, dear brother and sisters, you have written already 4 letters, thanks to God, and in each of them you say that you will take us to America. So mother waits for this letter like the mercy of God. When the letter comes, mother kisses it from joy and wets it with tears, but when she opens it [she is deceived].

[FRANEK]

231

July 12 [1907]

. . . . DEAR SON ANTONI: Answer me how I shall manage, for my son-in-law Baranowski sent me a letter saying that he is sending me a ship-ticket for myself and for my son, and wishes to take us to America. And you, dear son, come to an understanding yourself with the others, whether all of you know about it or not, for I am not just as I stand, but I have land and forest, and I don't know how to manage. It is true that my son-in-law is good. But you, my son, you are my

guardian, and answer me, how I shall have it there [what conditions]. For, my dear son, there is a marriage opportunity for me, with Józef Plata, who is a very good man. So answer me, my son, as soon as possible, whether I may live in our country, for I don't need to wander about the world in my old years, only my [youngest] son wants us to go. Dear son, answer me as soon as possible, for I am awaiting this letter with my journey and with my wedding.¹ . . . Dear son, reflect all of you only once, but well, for my son-in-law tells me to rent the land and the forest. . . . I cannot sell it myself, a father can, but not I. I have nothing more to write, only I wish you health, happiness, and good success. . . . Dear son, when you receive this letter, don't show it to my daughter Mania, and don't tell her anything, for my son-in-law wishes to take me secretly to America [to surprise his wife].

FRANCISZKA KOZŁOWSKA

232

September 11 [1907]

. . . . DEAR SON: You advised me to go but now I am not going. I have married that Plata who had Ewa Pieńkos as wife, from the same village I came from. What could I do in this misery? When I received the ship-tickets I did at once what you ordered me to do. I rented the land for 3 years, I sold the cow which I had and the forest which was left after father's death, while yours [inherited from the grandfather] is still there. I have wasted all the living which I had [store of grain, potatoes, etc.] and I have bought everything for the journey. And now living is expensive, and I spent some money on living, and I had to dress myself and Franek a little before going to you . . . and I bought 2 shawls for 13 roubles and 15 pounds of feathers for 12 roubles. [Went twice to the doctor, then to Libawa, and was sent back.] This journey cost us much, for everywhere money had to be paid, and I wasted everything. I have not written to you for I fell sick from grief and I waited until our Lord God changed [restored] me. But now I am somewhat better and I describe this to you. Hermanowiczowa [the "shoemaker's wife"] moved to me, to my lodging and I live with Plata. He built a new

¹ The letter shows clearly, behind the cautious expressions, a total change of intentions. She no longer wants to go to America, but she does not dare to take a decisive step at once. Probably at the moment of writing this letter the later scheme is not yet ready in her mind.

house, and Franek is with me. How good he [the husband] is to me, thanks to God! May he be always as good! For when I am sick, he at least cares well for me, and it is well now. I had decided to go to America, but when these Baranowskis managed it so badly, I changed my mind, for now I have no land, and therefore I had to marry. Inform the Baranowskis how I did, and let them send their address, then I shall send them the ship-tickets back. Don't be angry with me for having done so, for I have wasted everything through this. And in the office [in Libawa] they said that these are tickets for a working-ship [steerage?]. And you can know what this journey has cost me. From Warsaw to Libawa alone 42 roubles. . . .¹

[FRANCISZKA]

[Postscript]

And I inform you that we went [started] to America all three, the shoemaker went with us for money, for he borrowed it. When

¹ The story, as related in this and the following letters, is full of contradictions and totally false. In spite of her son's and son-in-law's wish, she decided not to go to America at all, but to marry Plata. She wished evidently to profit from the opportunity, and to get as much money as possible for herself, as a dowry. Thus, according to her son's wish, she rented the land and sold a part of the forest. Evidently, she had to sell also her farm-stock and household effects in order to make it appear that she really intended to go. Then she had to find a pretext for not going, to account for the money, to explain her marriage, and to conciliate her son-in-law, the shoemaker, and his wife—her worst enemies—that they might not betray her but corroborate her story.

She hoped first to be detained on the score of sore eyes (suspicion of trachoma). She went therefore to many oculists, hoping that one of them would tell her that she could not go. It is very probable that she even tried to get her eyelids inflamed, and went to a Jewish barber in Goworowo (the Jewish barbers act secretly as physicians and are ready to do anything—abortion, artificial crippling to exempt young men from military service, etc.), who, as she says in letter No. 233, "almost burned her eyes." She then went to Warsaw hoping to deceive the oculists there. When this plan failed, she invented the story of the tickets, which is wholly false. First, she says that the tickets were for a "working-ship"; now, this term is current only among the peasants to indicate ships which take only steerage passengers, and she could not have heard this term from the steamship agents. Then she says the tickets were not valid at all. But it is evident that the agent in Warsaw would not have sent her to Libawa with such tickets, for he would have been legally responsible. Certainly the tickets were valid, but for steerage; somebody must have told her that steerage traveling was bad, and she profited from this suggestion to stay. Perhaps she would not have gone even to Libawa if she had been alone,

October 24, 1907

we returned he gave this money back at once, for he borrowed it from the priest and wished to go along with us.

I inform you also that when I intended to go to America I went to Goworowo to a doctor. He poured something into my eyes and almost burned my eyes. I went twice to Warsaw, and there the doctor said that I could have been blinded. You say that I did not wish to go. But I went twice to Ostrolęka to the [district-] chief for passports, and I paid once one rouble, then two. So much trouble and cost I had.

. . . . Now I inform you, my dear children, daughter and son-in-law, that I received your letter and we answer you at once and we inform you that we are in good health [wishes]. Now you write to me, son-in-law, and you are angry with me. But nothing can be done. I am not guilty at all in this matter, my dear son-in-law, for I was already on the way, in the last station, in Libawa, and from Libawa we were sent back. Now, my dear children, would I have caused such a cost for you without wishing to go to you? Why, our Lord God would punish me severely for it. And as to this, dear children, that

but her son-in-law, the shoemaker, was with her. Then she tries by all means to make it appear that she spent all her money on the journey to Libawa and back. It is easy to calculate how much money she really had with her. The cow, crops, household furniture, must have brought at least 150 to 200 roubles. Rental of 6 morgs for 3 years at least 180 roubles. The son-in-law Baranowski sent 60. The sale of a part of the lumber perhaps 150—200—together about 600. The journey to Libawa and back for 2 persons, 28 roubles. As she writes 42, she must have paid her son-in-law's fare in order to win his discretion. The journeys to Warsaw and back, inspection by the oculists, etc., no more than 20, probably less; buying of the shawls and feathers (which she later kept for herself), 27, passport, 3. If we take into account the living during this time and the son's clothing we have not more than 150 roubles for all the expenses. Thus she had certainly about 450 roubles left. She writes in the letter No. 232 that she was obliged to buy clothing for herself, while later her *kuma* Maryanna Szczepańska says that she was obliged to sell her best petticoat. The *kuma* is evidently "fixed"; the daughter, the "shoemaker's wife," also, for after all the preceding quarrels she comes to live in her mother's house. Thus, the scheme is carried out, and Franciszka must have brought to her husband no less than 400 roubles of dowry. As she was old, the man would never have taken her without money. And all this was so cleverly done that she does not lose her right—a part of the inheritance left by her first husband. Indeed she expects to receive the total income from the land when the period of its rental has expired, for there is mention that her husband must feed her until that time.



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If you want to come here, sell her part and take it, for it belongs to her. It is as if she had it in her pocket.¹

Now I send you a greeting from myself, your mother, and from Franek, and from your father, my husband. Dear children, I did not marry a young man, only a man in the same age as I am, and he is good for me, and he does not hinder you at all, for he won't waste your fortune; he has enough of his own to live. In another letter I will write you still more about my journey, for it is too much writing at once.

Your truly loving mother,

FRANCISZKA KOZŁOWSKA

234

December 24, 1908

DEAR SON-IN-LAW: I inform you that we received your letter on December 21, for which we thank you heartily. But instead of being comforted, I was grieved, and I should even prefer if you had not answered me so soon, for I should think her still alive. Why did you send me, dear children, such a letter, at once about money and about my dear dead daughter? Probably you intend to push me alive into the tomb through such writing as you write to me! You write, son-in-law, and you trouble me about sending you at least 100 roubles back. But I thank God that I have anything to put into my pot, for I have wasted everything through your fault. I rented the land, and I live now as I can, poor orphan, upon this world of God. And now, dear children, do you think that I grieve only about your money? Oh no, my children, I grieve because my beloved daughter is dead and the orphans are left. How do they live there, my dear little grandchildren? And I grieve, because Franek will have to go to the army, and you all scattered about the world, away from me, poor orphan. And you cause me still more grief by this bit of paper, asking me to give you this money back. I know that you wasted money on me, but I wasted also everything which I owned upon this journey to you. But I don't deny what you sent me. Only, if you want to have this money, come back to our country, as other people do; you have your parts, sell them and you will have your money. But evidently you want to bury me alive into this holy earth, that I

¹The journey would cost more than this part would be worth. He had evidently complained that he not only got no dowry with his wife, but that he has expenses on account of the mother-in-law.

may not live any more upon this earth with my beloved daughter [*sic!*]. But why should you, dear son-in-law, persuade me that it is time for me to go into this holy earth? When I shall go to my tomb, you won't even know it.¹ So, my dear son-in-law, don't make me grieve any more, for you made me grieve enough in a single letter.

Dear son-in-law B., I beg you, if it is very hard for you to be there with these children, I beg you, if it is possible, send me one child, so I can educate it. I beg you, dear son-in-law, do as you think the best. And I beg you, dear son-in-law Franuś [pet name], if you could send it, write me in a letter whether you will send it or not, my dear son-in-law!

Dear son-in-law [Janek] and daughter, although you are angry with me about this money, I beg you still, care for these orphans, for you see that they have no mother now. And if it is possible, I beg you, dear daughter, send me one child. I would keep it as long as my eyes shine upon this world. I beg you for it, my dear daughter. Reflect how you should act with regard to my words. May God grant us to live until this. Amen.

[FRANCISZKA]

235

April 18, 1909

And now, dear children, we answer you "In centuries of centuries, Amen." And now we inform you that we received your letter on Good Friday, for which we thank you heartily, for not forgetting us. [Health and wishes.] I am healthy, by the grace of God, only this death of Zosia torments me and gives me no peace. How is she buried there, and why was I not there when she was dying? But, dear daughter and son-in-law, try that at least these orphans get on well, that they don't suffer hunger, for you see that they cannot have a mother any more, only you are their guardians. Care for them, and God and Mother Mary will care for you.

And I ask you, my dear children, how do you live without your sister and my dear daughter, for I think continually about her, day and night. I gave money for recording her, and if God helps me I will

¹ All this about being buried, etc., is probably nothing but a rhetorical development of her reproach for the grief her son-in-law has caused by his letter, or it may be an indirect allusion to some phrase in his letter. He may have written, for instance, that she was too old to marry.

give also for a holy mass for repose of her soul.¹ And I pray for her to God and to our Mother Mary, that God may take her to himself. Pray you also to God for her soul, and God will forgive her certainly.

And now, dear daughter, you mention these feathers, asking me to send them to you. You see, it is so, dear daughter. These feathers which I had bought began to be eaten by mites, so I sold a part of them, but if somebody happens to go to America, I will buy some and send them to you.² But if nobody goes, then nothing can be done, and don't be angry with me, dear daughter and son-in-law, for I am not guilty at all. It is true that it costs you a few roubles, but I have also lost everything which I had. So don't be angry with me, my dear children, for if I cannot reward you, I will pray to God for your health and success, and God will help you in your work. . . .

[FRANCISZKA]

And I greet you, dear brother Wincenty. I cannot give you my hand in this [help you], for I have nothing myself, but you, children, do your best and nourish your uncle as you can. Dear brother, can you not help yourself in any way? Come to an understanding with our brother and make some plan, so that it may be well.

You see, dear brother, when you were in good condition, you did not want to know anything about your wife and children, and now you remember them!

236

February 9, 1913

. . . . I received your letter, my dear children [Baranowskis], for which I thank you heartily, for I waited for it with longing. My dear children, you say that I am angry with you. Oh no, my dear children, I am not angry with you. You say that I did not answer your letter. It is true, my dearest children, that I did not answer you, but why? You see, it is true that you wished to take me to you, and I was glad because of your wish, but I don't know whether that ticket was bad or those guides. And so you sent me money and I sold everything, or rather wasted everything [sold too cheap] and

¹ The priest has a record of those of his parishoners who have died, and between the sermon and the mass prays for their souls, calling their names. A mass costs from one to three roubles. A record is cheaper and less efficient than a mass. Franciszka may have had a mass celebrated, but prefers not to acknowledge that she was in a position to spend that amount.

² She used the feathers as part of her dowry.

went. And when I was returned, was it my fault? I wasted your money, and very little of mine was left. When I returned home, I found a desert house. What could I begin then, poor orphan? Should I have called to you, my dear children, and related to you my trouble? But my voice could not have reached you, for you are in a far country, and I was left, an orphan, among waste and troubles, and I had slowly to provide myself once more with the outfit which I had wasted. You were angry with me, dear children, as if I did so intentionally in order to take the money without coming to you. Oh my children, our Lord God is above us, He sees and hears everything. Should I lie?¹ Should I have renounced you and not [wanted] to go to you and not [wanted] to see you? Why, you know that I am left now alone, I have none of you, my dearest children, with me, I am left alone, an orphan, and I can see none of you alive, only I look continually upon these dead photographs. But you, dear daughter, surely you forgot me in truth, since you let a year pass without writing to me, and you forgot when I asked you for the photograph of that orphan after [left by] Zosia. You sent one to the shoemaker's wife and you did not even mention me. I asked the shoemaker's wife for this photograph, but she did not wish to give it to me. . . . Well, and now, dear daughter, you remembered that you have still a mother somewhere in the world, and you write, curious how I live here and how I succeed!

And now, dear daughter and son-in-law, please don't be angry about that which I shall ask for, and send me a photograph of these orphans; let me see them once more at least.

Now I send an image and a toy for my granddaughter.

[FRANCISZKA]

237

[November 4, 1906]

I write to you both, my dear goddaughter, I, your godmother Szczep[ańska], and I wish you every good and whatever you want from our Lord God, the best. I thank you for not forgetting about

¹ This appeal to God is curious, for a peasant never makes a false oath, unless totally demoralized. But an oath with mental reservation is frequent. In this case the oath does not refer to anything in particular, unless to the following phrase, and as she probably really wanted to see her children, it is in so far true. It may be also that in repeating all her lies she has finally half-forgotten her real intentions, which she had perhaps also never very explicitly stated to herself.

me, so I send you a gift. These are those scapularies from Częstochowa, and in this one scapulary with the cross there is sewed up a [part of the] veil of God's Mother of Częstochowa. This is important. I send you a blessing for your whole life. May God bless you, and God's Mother. And my daughter Helcia is very glad that you don't forget her. . . .

SZCZEP[AŃSKA]

238

[December 28, 1908]

And now I, dear daughter, greet you, I, your godmother, greet you, Mania! Dear daughter, I write you about this: Why did you cause such costs for your mother that she might go to you, to America! Going to this America, your mother sold the forest and rented the land, and all the money which she had was wasted in journeying. She went twice to Ostrolęka; no little money was spent; twice to Warsaw on account of her eyes. Then at last they went to Libawa and there they remained for some time, and the rest of their money was spent on their living, for the ship-tickets were bad, and they had to return home. Your mother had sold everything, she had sold even her best petticoat for this journey, and when she came back, if Pl[ata] had not married her, I don't know how she would live, for she had not a grosz left. Now, you wrote that Zosia is no longer alive, and I am also sad, and what do you think about your own mother? And you make her grieve still more about this money. You have no idea what a sad Christmas your mother had this year, for she is grieved because of the death of her beloved daughter. And this field which your mother rented is still sown by strange people, until the years are ended [the renting-term], and your mother, as you know, is fed by Pl[ata] until [the end of] this time. And now, dear daughter Mania, don't be offended at my writing it to you, but your mother is almost senseless, and she continually cries and complains, what a bad fortune befell her upon this world.

I, who love you, my daughter,

MARYANNA SZCZEPAŃSKA

Dear [god]daughter, I have learned to know your mother now. If she could take her heart out, she would give it to you, but she cannot take it out and what will she do with her misery? And now I bid you all goodbye. May God grant it. Amen.¹

¹ The letter is evidently written under the influence of Kozłowska, and is perhaps instigated by her.

239

October 24, 1907

DEAR SISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW: I send you holy images. . . . Dear sister and brother-in-law, you don't believe us that we wanted to go to America; but . . . I, your brother, will draw my lot [be called to military service] in two years after next spring, so . . . I should be glad to see all of you at once. . . . Dear brother-in-law, I am very much grieved that you say that you will tear all the hair from your head [from despair]. Dear brother-in-law, it is not the fault of my sister. . . .

FRANEK KOZŁOWSKI

240

[April 18, 1909]

And now I, Franciszek [Franek], thank you, dear brother-in-law and sister, for at least not forgetting me, for my brother dear [irony] does not write me a single word. He is angry with me, I don't know what for. Although we ought to love each other, for we are only two and I must go to the army instead of him, he does not care for me. Such a good brother, loving his brother! It is bitter and hard for me to remember such a brother! What is my fault toward him? O God, be merciful to us, your sinners!¹

And now, dear brother-in-law and sister, I go to Prussia, so please write me a letter there. I will send you my address. I was in Częstochowa, but I did not expect that a letter from you, dear sister, would come, or else I should have brought a greater token. Now I send you only scapularies of Mary the Virgin, already consecrated, ready to be put around the neck. . . .

[FRANEK]

241

June 11, 1911

. . . . DEAR SISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW: [Complains about military service.] May never any good man serve in the army, for here everybody must be a slave and is not free, as at home. And now I ask you, my dear sister Mania and brother-in-law, how do you succeed in that America, whether well or poorly. Write me please, dear sister, how are these orphans kept after Zosia[']s death], . . . for

¹ A strange phrase for a young boy; a typical phrase for an old woman. The style of the whole letter is clearly an imitation of the mother's style.

I am very curious [interested]. And answer me, whether our brother-in-law B. married [a second time] or not. [Describes military life.]

And now, dear Mania and brother-in-law, I beg you write a letter to our sorrowful dear mother, and don't be angry with mother, for she is without guilt toward you, and sinful before God alone.¹ Dear Mania and brother-in-law, you are probably angry since the time when you wanted to take her to America. But old mother then wanted to go to you as to God (without comparing it),² and she rejoiced that in her old years she was to see her children. But what could she do when she was unable to go to you? And now, dear sister Mania and brother-in-law, you are angry with your sorrowful and grieved mother, while perhaps you won't see her any more unless in the next world. And with this anger you will go into the next world, and so we shall look upon one another—and what will God say to this? How shall we justify ourselves? Dear sister and brother-in-law, mother writes to me always and says that she has no letter from you, and she always weeps in her letter, so it is not pleasant for me either, for she is my mother and yours. . . . If you saw our mother, you would never recognize her, how she is now without children, for always something new happens [some new trouble].

FRANEK KOZŁOWSKI

242

[July 12, 1907]

I, Józef Pl[ata], wish to take your dear mother for my wife. Answer as soon as possible whether you will take her or whether you tell her to marry me. I would give my life for her. I have nothing more to write, only I send a low bow to you all, to the whole family.³

Your well-wishing

JÓZEF PL[ATA]

¹ Not to be taken as an admission of any particular sin, but only as the application of the general principle of Christian humility that all men are sinners before God.

² The restriction is made because a real comparison would be a sin; the restriction characterizes it as a simple metaphor.

³ The man simply asks for permission to marry their mother. This indicates once more the degree to which the family is felt as a reality, and the marriage of any member—father or mother, brother or sister, son or daughter—as affecting immediately this reality, is a familial as well as an individual matter.



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and said, "Why do you waste this timber?" they abused me, she and her son, and denied that there was anything to which I had any right. So I was obliged to have a guardianship established, because Franek was a minor and mother took rather too much liberty. And excuse me, don't be angry with me, dear sister and brother-in-law, for I tell the truth always into one's eyes, not behind one's eyes. For so many years since you have been in America I have never had even a small sheet from you, except now this address, for which may God reward you. I should not go to America, except for my children. My daughter Mania can marry. She is 20 years old. My son Władzio is 16 years old, Zygmunt 6 years, Genia 4 years, and I am very sad that I cannot help them, for in our country there is no work and the expenses are big. What I earn is only enough for living, and when we have to pay the rent we must go hungry. If you could draw me to you I don't know how I could reward you. [I should be so grateful.]

ANTONI HERM[ANOWICZ]

245

May 29, 1912

. . . . DEAR SISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW: As to the ship-ticket which I mentioned, I did not count on you alone, brother-in-law. For there are three of you. I don't count B., for he is like a strange man.¹ I am not acquainted with you, so I did not look [to you alone]. I beg your pardon politely for importuning you. For I believe everything you wrote about Antoni, as if I were there myself. You tell me to borrow 140 roubles, but it is not so easy, for here people lend only to a man who has something to look upon [some property]. Meanwhile, I live only from these five fingers; I have nothing but what I earn. Even so our beloved [= "loving," ironical] mother, whenever she sees anything new of clothes upon us, wonders whence we get money for it. Instead of being glad that we manage to dress ourselves as we can, she is angry with us.² How can I expect strange people to help us, when our own mother begrudges us a piece of bread? If I had wanted absolutely to be in America, I should have gone about 6 years ago when I went to Libawa with Franek and with

¹ The gradual incorporation of the brother-in-law in the family is interrupted by the death of his wife, and he becomes a "stranger."

² Probably not envy, but an expression of Kozłowska's general disposition to keep others down.

mother. Then I had all my documents, and I begged mother to help me a little, but she did not want to. I said, "Then send Franek instead of me." But mother said, "I don't go and you shall not go either." And so mothers act toward their own children! Because she ruined herself, she wanted to ruin her children. But she returned to her own house, while I returned like the farmer whose buildings are all burned and who is left without a roof above his head. The few roubles which I had, I lost them for mother's sake, and later I was obliged to earn and economize again. And excuse me for writing this, for I tell the truth. As I believe you, so do you believe me, please. And now mother is angry for your not having sent money for Franek when he was going to the army. . . . Antoś [her son] sent her 10 roubles, and now Antoni [her brother] sent also 10 roubles, but all this is not enough for them. . . .

ANTONI HERM—

JACKOWSKI SERIES

These are letters from a plain Galician peasant family. The oldest son, Jan, went, probably very early, to Germany and from there came to America and settled in Chicago. The second son, Stanislaw, was with him, and then alone, in Germany, but returned to Austria for his military service. The third son, Franek, is young and stays at home.

The quarrels alluded to in the beginning of the correspondence have their source in economic matters. The conditions must be very bad in Wietrzychowice upon a small piece of land. Jan, who does not seem to be of a generous disposition, is irritated by the demands for money, especially as he suspects that Stanislaw has drawn as much money as possible from the parents during his military service, and that he has tried to win the favor of the parents and assure for himself the better share of the inheritance after his return from the army. In addition, Stanislaw has evidently been a rather light-headed boy, without much force or practicality, and Jan converts some of his general irritation into personal criticism of his younger brother.

On the other hand, the efforts of Stanislaw to introduce harmony into the family are interesting. It frequently happens, as in this case, that when the family begins to dissolve one member holds it together more or less. In the Osiński series the mother does it successfully. In the Terlecki series (below) the mother tries to do it, but without success.

THE FAMILY JACKOWSKI

Jackowski, a farmer
 Franciszka, his wife
 Jan
 Stanislaw, his sons
 Franek
 Marysia, his daughter
 Jasiak, a cousin
 "The aunt," his mother

Two more aunts and two cousins.

246-67, TO JAN JACKOWSKI, IN AMERICA, FROM FAMILY-
 MEMBERS, IN POLAND

246

TRAWNIK, August 11, 1909

DEAR BROTHER: A long time has passed since we saw each other and a (relatively) longer time since we wrote. But whose fault is it? Surely not mine. . . .

On Christmas I came home [from the army] for a ten days' leave, and precisely then we received your letter. Evidently if they had known what was written there, they would certainly not have read that letter. Seeing what was going on, I went into the field, for tears stood in my eyes. Dear brother, what I did, I know it well enough myself, and what you do and will do, you must know it the best yourself, and it concerns nobody else at all. Now, dear brother, you sent a little money home. Don't think that I shall take it. They won't ever give it to me. The second year of my service approaches its end, and during this time they sent me once last year 3 crowns, for which I did not ask. Now, when I went from the Servian frontier, we drank merrily, because we returned in good health from those troubles during the winter in Bosnia. Somebody probably made a mistake and reached in my pocket instead of his own, or I simply lost [my money] somewhere. Then I asked for 4 crowns and they sent me them [from home]. I think it was not much during 2 years.

Now, dear brother, if you have time and wish, please write me a few words and inform me why you don't write home. Perhaps you are angry because I shall return home after my military service [and take over the farm]? Well, don't think it, for I won't be at

home, I shall willingly yield to everybody. The world is wide and high, one can quietly wander through it. Or perhaps something else happened between you and the home?

STANISŁAW J.

247

September 18, 1909

DEAR BROTHER: I received your letter and also a dollar in it, for which I thank you heartily. Now, dear brother, I asked you why you do not write home, and you answer me that it is not my affair. I confess that it concerns me very little, and I must write also that the other matter was my affair, not yours. I should not have gone so soon to the army or home, but I had to, for they caught me. Were it not for this, perhaps we should be now together. And if you are taken to the army, you cannot hope that you will be set free for a day or half a day. With me it was the same; they took me and held me until Christmas. And if my parents came to me at once in the same week, I cannot help it, and it was not my fault.

Now, secondly, when they were with me, I did not boast to them that I had much money and that I knew 4 languages. They asked me, whether I had money, and I said that I was not without a cent. It seems to me that it was not a lie. Later, when they were leaving me, they told me not to do any silly thing, at least in the army [probably meaning that he did silly things before], and to keep well. I said that nothing bad could happen to me in the army, and I said that I knew German, so it would be always easier for me than for a boy who does not know it and comes immediately from his village. In these things which I told them there was no lie even for a heller. But as to what they wrote you, I am not the Holy Spirit that I can know everything, whether they wrote the truth or added something more. If you wrote in anger, dear brother, that I gave my money to somebody to keep, it was not so much anger as scorn [you said it ironically].

Dear brother, you remind me also of this fault, that though I had not seen my parents for 8 years, I should not have allowed them to come and visit me before I went to them.¹ But you are mistaken, for if you were in America for 10 years and appointed the day on which you would visit them, and if you came to the frontier and they [the Austrians] caught you, you could offer them thousands, they wouldn't

¹ It is not easy to understand the basis of Jan's reproach, but (cf. the following note).

let you go until your time came. Just so it was with me, dear brother. I was taken not even at the frontier, but in Bremerhafen. From there they brought me to Eger and thence to Tarnów. What could I do? I only looked to see that none of my acquaintances saw me, for he would have thought I had killed or robbed someone.

Now, dear brother, you write me that you have experienced many lies from me. I am curious how you did it, since we have not written to each other. You remind me of Plagwitz, where I worked when 14 years old. But now I am a grown-up man and I have different privileges [*sic?* Probably different character and habits]. What I said and did at 14, I surely would not do now, at 22.

Dear brother, you write about Jasiek and you say that you cannot believe that I had no opportunity to write to him. If I had had his address, surely I would have written. I was at home, and our aunt asked me to write a letter to Jasiek, but a moment after she went to Sowa and wrote from there. What can I do if they quarrel between themselves? Surely it is not my fault.

Dear brother, you write me that in my life you see a whole series of lies. This only interests me—whence do they come, whether from me or from somebody else? I did not write to anybody except 3 letters to Jasiek. So you must write me whence these lies come.

Dear brother, you write me that I give you admonitions. These are not admonitions at all [when I say] that you left nothing [no money of your own at home?], for I left still less. You could care only if I took anything from home, but I wrote you clearly that I take no money from home.¹

Dear brother, you write me that the world is wider before you. I believe you, but not strongly. Though I am a slave and servant

¹ From the whole letter it is evident that Jan, having an unreasoned grudge against Stanisław, probably connected with the fact that the latter is nearer home and more able to control their parents, tries to find some rational cause of his own feelings, and thus invents various pretexts to explain his animosity. The case is perfectly typical for a peasant. The powerful background of traditional attitudes gives rise to a behavior whose nature and reason are a puzzle to the subject himself. The latter, when asked for explanation, gives imaginary conscious reasons, more or less inadequate, depending upon the degree of his intelligence. And a curious evolution also occurs; the imaginary reason, through the power of expression, becomes more or less a real reason for the future—a part of the subconscious feeling flows through this new channel. This factor enters into the evolution of the peasant's attitude toward the manor-owner, the Jew, the government, and into many religious and familial attitudes.

of the emperor, yet you are also a slave, a servant of somebody else. Perhaps the same happiness awaits you also—which I don't wish you—that you will be in the same situation as I am, and I in the same as you are. So we cannot speak much about it.

Now, dear brother, I inform you that I am a corporal. I succeed well enough, I can say nothing against it, for in the army it cannot be better. In a few months this slavery will come to an end. Next month I will send you my photograph and I beg you to send me yours, since we have not seen each other for so long a time. Dear brother, let us forget what was before, and perhaps our luck will serve us better in the future. . . .

STANISŁAW J.

248

October 22, 1909

DEAR BROTHER: I received your photograph, for which I thank you heartily and which rejoiced me very much. Now, dear brother, I ask about your dear health and success. For myself, thanks to our Lord God, I am healthy and my success is good enough; a better one cannot be found in the army. Now, on October 18, I became a *Zugsführer* [sergeant] and I am with the recruits. Dear brother, you have sent me your photograph and probably you await mine, so it will come soon after this letter. You must pardon me, but I don't feel at every moment equally strong in my pocket. . . . Now, dear brother, here in Bosnia there is no news to write. If I were in our country, I should have more to write you, for there I should sooner meet somebody and talk, while here are only strangers. . . . Now I ask you, dear brother, what is the news in America, who gets married or will marry.

I greet you kindly and heartily, until I see you again. May God grant it. Amen.

Your loving brother,

STANISŁAW J.

249

December 24, 1909

DEAR BROTHER: In my first words I inform you that I received your letter and a dollar in it, for which I thank you heartily.

Dear brother, you write that they did not inform you by telegram about our father's death. I am quite stupid [I don't understand] myself. When our sister died, I was then in Tarnów, and they wrote



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some illness or some misfortune, it would finally be necessary perhaps to take a bag and a stick and to go begging about villages.¹ Dear brother, I don't know your ideas, for you can remain in America as long as you like it, and when you come back, the military service won't let you escape, but I have served 3 years, and [formerly] I have wandered enough about that Germany, and I have experienced enough of good and evil. But I don't know how it is in America. If I am not accepted as a constable, nothing will be left for me except to go to you. Dear brother, if you receive this letter, please describe to me your condition. What is the news with Jasiek? I sent him a photograph, but I had no answer. . . .

STANISŁAW J.

[Letter of April 1, 1910, asks for a little money to buy clothes when he leaves the army. States that he has not received more than 10 gulden from home during more than 30 months.]

251

June 9, 1910

DEAR BROTHER: In my first words I thank you heartily for your letter and for \$10.00 which I received from you. . . . My success is good enough, only I am bored; these days go so slowly in the last year. . . .

Dear brother, I received also letters from home but they don't rejoice me at all, for mother is sick. She wrote me a letter that during the whole month of May she was in bed. Something crept into her arm and she cannot move it. She asked me to write her, when I received your letter, what is going on with you, for she has had no letter from you at all. Dear brother, I don't understand all this. If God allows me to end my service happily and if I go home, I will describe everything in detail. Now I don't even know who is my guardian, although we don't need him now any more. I cannot remain at home after my military service, for what should I have of it? If I wished to remain at home I should have to marry, and it looks silly to keep a wife upon a morg of land and to work like a horse in a threshing-machine. . . .

STANISŁAW J.

¹ A rather unexpected standpoint from a peasant. Cf. the attitude of Aleksander (Osiński series), who dreams of nothing but coming back, settling upon the farm and marrying. Perhaps the reason in the case of Stanisław is to be found in his wandering for eight years in Germany.

252

July 29, 1910

DEAR BROTHER: I inform you that my clothes are ready and my shoes also; I wait only for the maneuvers, which will be from August 14 until September 10. We don't know yet when we shall go home.

As to you, dear brother, mother complains that you wrote her not to write to you any more. Secondly, somebody informed them that you will marry a girl who has [only her] ten fingers, and that everybody laughs at you. As to me, I don't believe it, perhaps somebody said or wrote it in joke, and they believe it.

Now, dear brother, they have very good crops, only they cannot manage alone, and there is lack of people in the village [because of emigration]. When I go there now, I must look well at everything, and go further. Dear brother, in ending these few words I greet you kindly and heartily, and don't be angry with me about what I write, for it does not come from me, but from home.

STANISŁAW J.

253

September 1, 1910

DEAR BROTHER: I thank you heartily for your letter and the dollar. On October 10 I am going home. The maneuvers were rather short, but helped us enough [tired us]. Now we rest after all this.

I wrote home what they merited. I hope that they won't write such slandering any more [about you]. I don't marvel they did, for you know how people are in the country, particularly in our village. If somebody succeeds well, the others' eyes are aching, and if they cannot annoy him in any other way they talk at least. As to myself, I owe [have wronged] no one either, but their eyes ache because I am a sergeant, so they say in the village that when I came to Tarnów my uniform was full of holes and patches, and that the better guests were ashamed to go with me to the town. But I laugh at them all. Let them talk further. If God grants it, everything will go well.

STANISŁAW J.

254

WIETRZYCHOWICE, October 21, 1910

DEAR SON AND BROTHER: In my first words: "Praised be Jesus Christus" [etc.].

Dear brother, I inform you that I came home on the 20th in the evening and I am very glad that this military service is ended at last. As to our home, dear brother, I found everything in health and in very good order. Mother is healthy, Franek also, and Marysia keeps well enough.

Dear son and brother, we inform you that up to the present everything is in the same state as it was when our deceased father left it. Here everybody is against us, everybody is envious, one does not yield to another even for a *grajcar* [kreüzer]. Father had been sick for 2 years; an abcess grew on his stomach. He was more than once consulting the doctors, and nobody could help him, only everybody advised him to go to Cracow to a hospital. But father would not agree to it, saying that he preferred to finish his life at home, with his own people, not among strangers and in another city. In the last time he could eat nothing, for it [the illness] did not allow him. At the most he took a glass of wine or of milk every hour, and it threw out of him even this.¹ For some months mother could not leave him for a moment, but sat with him day and night. And when father was giving his spirit to God, he explained to mother all his arrangements, how mother ought to do in order that everything might remain as he left it. Only, dear son, all the relatives and friends forgot about your father, and in the last moment instead of going to the funeral some of them went with oxen to the fair. For example, your aunt from the other house sent Franek [her son] to the fair with a Jew, and when your aunt from Szymonowice mentioned it to her she abused her and said that she [the aunt from S.] had come to the funeral only to eat and to drink. So you can imagine how all this went on. Dear brother, when they related all this to me, tears stood in my eyes. And not only at home, but also in the village I have been told the same.²

¹ Speaking of sickness as of some impersonal "it" is a vestige of the old magical system in which "it" meant "the evil," the noxious principle.

² The greatest disrespect which can be shown a family is lack of eagerness in assisting at the funeral of one of its members. It shows that the social standing of the family must be very low indeed. In this case there were no grown-up sons at home. The son in America sent no money; the one in the army had been away from home a long time and, as a soldier, did not count; the father had been sick for two years. These factors had lowered the standing of the family.

Now, dear brother, I inform you that Nog. from Siedliszowice came here to us and wanted mother to make a marriage-festival, saying that you had married her sister there in America. It is her luck that I was not at home; I would have given her a festival which she would have remembered for a long time. Here in Wietrzychowice they fight among themselves like dogs and cats.

Dear brother, when you receive this letter, please describe everything that is news there with you. Mother is old already. She cannot work as she did before, for she has not strength enough. I think it would be the best for her to sell [or rent?] the field at auction, and to leave the house and a bit of garden. She could keep a pig and go about the house [keep order], and we could help her a little. When I came home, I pitied her so much that I wept like a child when she told me all this.

Dear brother, I have sent a petition to the constable's department. If I learn that they will accept me, I will remain here, but if not, I will go to you. I will write you later about it.

Now, dear brother, there is work enough. . . . Times are hard, mother has paid 24 renskis of taxes, and the cattle are sick. Nothing can be sold. Whoever has anything cannot sell it. . .

Now, dear brother, finishing these few words, I beg you to write your thoughts, for mother cannot do otherwise. She has worked enough, let her have at least in her old years a few days of rest. I have talked already with mother and she agrees. She wants to keep it for a year still, for she has everything sown. Dear brother, we must try that everything may be well. It won't cost us much, and at least mother will have rest and comfort in her old years. Although we have lost our father, yet our mother lives and we can be proud that she is so good that another could be found with difficulty in the village. She does not ask a cent from anybody and she won't waste her own money on trifles, as others do, for she wants to leave a remembrance [inheritance] to her children after her death.

[STANISŁAW J.]

DEAR BROTHER: [Health and success.] As you know already, I am in Lwów [Lemberg] in a constable school for 5 months, i.e., up to the 1st of August. If I hold out I shall go to a post in August, and if not I must seek for some other bread. . . . If our Lord God

allows, it will go perhaps well, for here discipline is in the first place. As to the school, I don't need to speak. Whether there is holiday or Sunday, you must always look into the books, and even at night.

[Misery at home and in the country; taxes heavy; Franek not diligent or steady.] Now, dear brother, I will mention further the letter which mother wrote to you asking for a few hellers. You got a little angry, but what can be done? When we are in need we look for any means by which we can get something. It was the same here. I did not realize it myself before I left home, but when I came home and mother showed me the accounts, what she spent after father's death, I was astonished; I should never have believed it. But never mind. At last it happened that there was not a heller at home. Only then this letter was written. But since you did not want to send anything, nobody can tear the money away from you. For this money which you sent for *medicine* for father lies in the bank. The last decision of father was, not to touch it. For if they wrote you before to send them some and you did not do it, it was over. It came too late and father thanked for it [refused it]. Now you wrote also that you had worked enough for us, that you must think about yourself. It is all right, but there has not been so very much of it. You earned some money in Prussia, our parents added some of their own and bought a piece of land for it, which you have still. You ought not to make reproaches to mother, for it is not proper. Mother wept more than once and said if you had a little remembrance, at least about our father, you would send at least once in a year [money] for a mass for father. Don't think that I want to teach you. I don't do it ever. But I can write what I hear, for I don't know what is the opinion of anybody [how others look at the question, i.e., I let everyone have his own opinion].

[STANISŁAW]

256

May 5, 1911

DEAR BROTHER: I am curious why do you not answer me. I wrote first a card, then a letter, and I received no answer; I don't know the cause. Certainly my last letter offended you, for there was nothing else between us. I won't hide [retract] what I wrote you. I wrote what mother told me. If you got angry, it is not my fault. There was surely nothing so disagreeable as to bring anger between us. You are a grown-up man and you can manage according

to your own ideas. Up to the present nobody has any right to dispose of others; everybody is his own lord. Now I am a free citizen of the Austrian state; I can do what I like. I can take at any moment what I received after the death of my father, and do with it what pleases me, for in the will it is clearly said that when we become 24 years of age mother has to give each what belongs to him, and each can do according to his will.

I was, it is true, for a few weeks at home and I know very well how everything is going on. Nothing can be said against what is at home. Everything is in the greatest order. But as there is nobody to work at home, I told mother to rent [?] the field, so that only a garden would remain with her; then she would not have to work so hard in her old years. She first asked you for advice, whether you would agree. You answered that you agreed, but as everything was sown she wants to harvest the crops this year and to rent not until the autumn. I don't know yet how she will do. I could take my part now, but what do I care for it? As long as mother lives let it remain with her, let her do with it what pleases her. Meanwhile I can do without it, and later in a year, when I become a real constable and keep [the place], I shall have a nice living. The school is rather hard and there is little time, but nothing can be done, as man can and must get accustomed to everything. And so, dear brother, don't be angry, for we are only three and we don't know what yet awaits us in this life. I say only this, that only concord will bring good results and fruits among us.

[STANISŁAW]

DEAR BROTHER: I am astonished at your silence. Why have I had no answer from you for so long a time? I cannot imagine it. Four months have passed since I left my home, and as soon as I came to Lwów I wrote you first a card, then a letter, and I received no answer at all. But I hope that this silence between us will not remain. What is my guilt toward you? Have I done you any wrong? Certainly not I. When I wrote you the letter from home, I did not write from myself, but I wrote what mother asked me to. And you know certainly mother as well [as I do], so you should not be angry, but do as you please, for today it is permitted to everybody.

As to myself, I cannot say anything now. On the one hand, when I consider everything, it seems painful and I regret a little having become a constable, but on the other hand, if I reflect, everything ceases and some spark of hope rejoices me. If I remain, I shall have a piece of bread, but earned with difficulty, not on account of heavy labor, but because every inconsiderate step leads the constable to the garrison [military prison], and at last he may be dismissed and go whence he came. In another regard, he is always exposed to danger of life and health. And in the third place, anybody who wants to serve as constable to the end must be deaf, dumb, and blind. Only such a man is a good constable. There are orders enough, and every order must be well executed, and everybody wants to say [to order] something, so nothing remains except to keep your mouth shut and to work. [Describes the school.]

Now, dear brother, if you receive this letter, I beg you be so kind and if you can, send me a few kronen, for after the end of this month I need them very much. I don't know where to turn to get some money, and it is not suitable to go to my post without a kreuzer. I hope, dear brother, that you won't refuse me, and I will also try to requite you later on. You have nothing to fear, for I won't deny any heller which I received from you. . . .

STANISŁAW J.

258

NADWORNA, October 5 [1911]

DEAR BROTHER: Why do you not answer me? Don't mind if I wrote to you for money. It was in your hands, you could [have sent it] but you didn't have to. It is your business. I wrote, because I needed it. I did not receive it, so I must get on without it. Don't mind it at all, for if you had sent it I should have paid it back sooner or later. Don't wonder that I wrote asking for money, for I had just left the school. So don't be angry, dear brother, only answer me as soon as you receive this letter, and if you have a photograph, send it, for I have left the other at home. Mother asked me to leave it and I could not refuse.

STANISŁAW J.

259

BEDNARÓW, July 20, 1913

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER-IN-LAW: I send you hearty thanks for your letter and photograph. I have had no news from



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poor [beggar] a few cents or bread, he goes to the Jew and gets so drunk that he lies under a hedge. So it is better to give for a mass than to the poor. . . .¹

FRANCISZKA J.

262

July 4, 1912

DEAR SON AND BROTHER: We received your letter and \$5.00 for which we thank you. Now, dear brother, you ask about the crops. [Hail ruined the crops.]

Now for these dollars we thank you heartily, for we need them like eyes in the head. Now black pox reigns in our country; it is still worse than cholera. The doctors come and inoculate everybody trying to save them from it. And if anybody dies it is forbidden [to take him] to the church, only directly to the cemetery, and they don't allow him dressed, except in a shroud.

Now, dear son and brother, there is no other news in the village except these two misfortunes. Now there will be calmness for there will be nothing to harvest and nothing to thresh, and at last there will be nothing to eat, except what one buys, if he has money.² Now we greet you innumerable times, hoping to see you again. Amen.

[FRANCISZKA J.]

¹ The son in America has evidently developed the idea that giving money for religious purposes is wasting it and that it would be better to honor his father's memory by using the corresponding sum on philanthropy. But the peasant knows no philanthropic ends except helping the beggar. Assistance given to a neighbor or to a family member does not come under the head of philanthropy, but of mutual help. But even the helping of beggars is not a purely philanthropic, but a half-religious act, not only because it is ordered by religion, but because the beggar is bound to say prayers for the giver. In fact, the beggar has somewhat a religious function. (Cf. Wróblewski series, No. 31, note.) If therefore Franciszka explains that it is not well to give money to beggars, the background of her attitude is not merely the feeling that the money is wasted unproductively, but also that the beggars are unworthy of their religious function, and that their prayers, profaned by their going to a Jew, getting drunk, and lying under a hedge, would be less efficient religiously than a mass. For her it is a matter of comparison of homogeneous things, not of heterogeneous, as for her son. This peculiarity of the peasant life—the lack of a purely philanthropic attitude—explains to a great extent the mistrust which the peasant shows toward all philanthropic institutions, organized by the higher classes, unless these are based upon religion. The latter exception shows that the origin of the mistrust does not lie in the general hostility toward the higher classes. Cf. No. 31, note.

² The curious feature in this letter is what the Germans call *Galgenhumor*. It is often found in the peasant songs and stories.

263

October 8, 1912

. . . . DEAR SON AND BROTHER: [Letter received; health and success.] Now in the village there is no news, for nobody got married. Now we have had rains for 2 months and nothing can be done. Now, dear son, you write about marrying. Well, you can marry, only you must know whom you marry. And now consider that she may be an honest girl, who would respect you and would not throw money away for [just] anything. Now consider that she may have there something [some money], or at least that she may be of an orderly [good] family. Now from Wietrzychowice there is no orderly girl [in America]. Now take care of yourself, for afterward it will be too late. You know that you get married neither for a year nor for two, but for your whole life. Now, when you marry, may our Lord Jesus also bless you for the wedding. And now I, your mother, bless you and wish you good luck in everything. Now there is nothing new or interesting; if there is anything, we will write you. Now we greet you and we bless you once more in order that you may marry the best possible.

[FRANCISZKA]

264

May 5, 1913

DEAR SON AND BROTHER: We received your letter from which we learned about your health and success and marriage. Now we are very much satisfied that you are married. Now, as to the wedding-photograph, my dear son, you ought to send it without asking, for you can know that whoever marries sends a photograph home after his wedding, and a few crowns for his parents in order that they may rejoice [feast] that he got married. So now, dear son and brother, since you ask, we beg you for it, in order that we may see [your wife] at least upon the paper, since we did not see her with our eyes.

Now, dear brother and sister-in-law, I wish you health in your marriage and good success, that you may live the best possible. [Village-news and greetings.]

[FRANCISZKA and FRANEK]

265

July 19, 1913

DEAR SON AND BROTHER: We received your letter, for which we thank you, and \$5.00. Now you write that you sent two

photographs, and we received only one, where you are, and Józek, and yours [wife], and the older best-maid, but there is no other. . . . Now for these dollars, my son, I arranged a marriage-festival. I invited my friends and Marysia's mother and so we amused ourselves. Now, dear son, Koźlok came and said that the guests had a very small feast, and we can even know ourselves, for you sent us a photograph with two pairs, while we have seen weddings where at least 5 or 6 pairs were [photographed]. You have been for 5 years in America and yours [wife] 6, and still you did not make yourselves a decent wedding. Now we learned that you are a Sokół. Well, my son, we would advise you to leave it, for you won't be well off. For nobody has yet been well off for being a Sokół, and you won't either. [Greetings.]

[FRANCISZKA and] F[RANEK] J.

266

September 30, 1913

DEAR SON AND BROTHER: You ask what was in this [lost] letter. Well, there was this. Don't dare, my son, to sell your field here without my knowing it and don't let yourself be cheated, as Stokłosiak cheated Kazimierz M., who sold him his lot of land half-gratis. So I admonish you, my son, that you may know what to do. If you intend to sell, write home, and I will describe, what and how you should do with all this. [Crops; weather; farm-work.]

Now, dear brother, write us how do you wish and what do you think whether you will return or will stay there. Now as to me, dear brother, I want to go there to you, for here we work but we can produce nothing, for whenever we make a few cents, at once there is an expense, and it looks as if one measured the water, and the water is always there. So I beg you, describe to me what you think, what you think about yourself and about me.

[FRANCISZKA and] FRANEK J.

267

June 12, 1914

DEAR SON AND BROTHER: When you write, describe to us how far from Chicago you will go to this farm. Now describe to us whether this land is fertile, and how many morgs. For we would dissuade you from this intention. In our country there are terrible

taxes and so many different expenses that it is impossible to pay, while the crops are bad, and if rain comes [during the harvest], everything sprouts, so that it is impossible to eat the bread. Now, as you know, two years ago hail beat everything and only the naked soil remained. Last year everything sprouted, and now God alone knows what will be with the crops. So if you have money, it would be perhaps better for you to buy a house in Chicago than a farm. Now don't be angry with me for giving you advice, but I, as your mother, want you to live the best possible. Now, you see, there are many people from our country, but they all settle in Chicago.

[FRANCISZKA]

KANIKUŁA SERIES

In contrast with the preceding materials—relatively intelligent and showing a great variety of interests—we place here the most stupid series of our whole collection.

The letters—their style, the manner of dating them, etc.—show a very low degree of intellectual development. Two of the letters are dated: “The present day of the present month.” On receiving from us a money-order, the son protested, saying that he expected money and received a mere scrap of paper—and this after three years in America. He did not know how to write his own address.

Now this series discloses the meaning of the peasant’s stupidity. This does not manifest itself in an inability to manage the normal, habitual business of life. The Kani-kulas know well enough how to farm, to make good marriages, to buy land, etc. And the most ignorant peasant may be quite successful within the usual circle of practical problems. Perhaps, indeed, in the peasant tales the success of the youngest, stupid son is precisely the expression of the fact that lack of development of the reflective faculties goes along very well with practical cleverness. (Cf. Introduction: “Theoretic and Aesthetic Interests.”) The usually admitted manifestation of stupidity is the inability to adapt one’s self to new practical situations. But even this criterion is not exact enough. Indeed, a new situation is seldom immediately imposed by the environment and passively accepted by the individual; usually the latter selects out of a diversity of external circumstances some practical situations among many others equally possible, and tries, consciously or instinctively, to select only such problems as he is more or less able to solve. In this way, for instance,

is to be explained the fact, often noted with astonishment by the peasants themselves, that the facility of adaptation of emigrants to their new environment is not proportional to the degree of their intelligence and culture. It evidently depends upon the merely negative ability of the man to limit his sphere of activity.

The only criterion of intelligence is therefore the width of the sphere of activity within which the man can be successful, the range of problems which he is able to solve. The mere faculty of adaptation depends only mediately upon the degree of intelligence. In a completely new environment an intelligent man will more easily find soluble problems within his reach than a stupid one. But, on the other hand, his claims are greater, and thus subjectively his chances may be equal or less. The stupid Kanikuła is much happier in America than the intelligent Piotrowski or Porzycki. (Cf. those series.) And this criterion of intelligence depends in turn upon a feature with regard to which the Kanikuła series is particularly instructive—the range of interest. It could hardly be narrower than it is here.

To this general point of view we shall return in a later volume, when we attempt to appreciate the intellectual evolution of the peasant during the last thirty years under the influence of the movement of “enlightenment.”

The Kanikuła correspondence covers two and a half years. Four letters, very much like the first, are omitted—three asking for money and one expressing thanks for money. The family solidarity seems to be preserved. The son, indeed, did not send money home at once, but probably he could not.

268-72, FROM PIOTR KANIKUŁA, IN POLAND,
TO HIS SON, IN AMERICA

268 Letter written on the present day of the present
month [1912, Spring]

[Usual greetings, wishes; information about weather.] And now, dear son, we inform you about this money that you sent, that we received it and answered you directly. [One page about letter-writing follows.]

[PIOTR KANIKUŁA]

DEAR BROTHER-IN-LAW, I beg you very much, describe to me how it is there in America, and how is the work now, whether good or bad because I want to go to you. Dear brother-in-law, I shall ask you to help me in some manner to get to America, because in our country nothing can be done. The wages are now very small. . . . I have nothing more to write. Goodbye.

[JÓZEF]

269 Letter written in 1912 [Spring]

[Usual greetings; letter received.] And now, dear son, we beg you very much to send us money. Don't forget about us, because it is more and more difficult for us to work in our old days. Father has sprained his hand and cannot work, and you went away and took with you every penny wherever it was, and you left us without a penny, so if (God forbid!) death comes, we shall have not a penny. . . . And Józef, your brother-in-law, had no work in the factory during the whole winter, only walked about Huszczka, and now he has gone to Chelm, since Easter. [More asking for money and describing bad conditions.] And now, dear son, I ask you, where did you put the ax? Write, where you put it, so we shall not have to search for it. . . .

PIOTR KANIKUŁA

270 Letter written on June 8, 1912

. . . . We send you already the third letter and you don't answer. Have you forgotten about us already, or what? And you don't send money, although we need it very much, because Joszt is parceling a field, so we would take some morgs. You don't even send those few



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there they got married. Because Loza did not wish her to marry him, he married her against his will. Now they are sitting in the house of Józwa, but Loza refuses to give her anything.

[News about weather.] Dear son, don't forget about us. Our dear children, remember about us old people, because you know that we have now to live like small children. As we formerly cared for you, so now it is our turn to be cared for by somebody. I repeat, we are now like small children whom somebody must dress and put their shoes on and feed them. [Greetings, blessings; request for letters.]

[PIOTR KANIKUŁA]

Now the wife of Józef greets very much her husband and the son greets his father.¹

¹ Kanikuła evidently took his brother-in-law to America.

TOPOLSKI SERIES

The family is now living in a town and working in a factory, but they came from the country. There is therefore some difference between the parents and the children; the latter are already developing to some extent the features of townspeople, while the parents are typical peasants. The relation between parents and children assumes a particular form; the children are totally independent and the parents try to keep up the country-relations, not by authority, but by sentiment.

THE FAMILY TOPOLSKI

- Topolski, a factory-worker
- His wife
- Waclaw (Wacek) } his sons
- Antek }
- Janek }
- Stefek }
- Bronka } his daughters
- Józia }
- Stasia (Stachna) }
- Michalowski, Bronka's husband
- G——, an aunt of Stasia
- Michal } cousins
- Edzio }

273-80, TO STASIA TOPOLSKA, IN AMERICA, FROM
FAMILY-MEMBERS, IN POLAND

273 OSTROWIEC, March 20, 1912

DEAR CHILDREN: We write this letter on Good Wednesday, for Stefek came for the holidays and he writes it, while Antek does not want to write. He would prefer to be sick for 3 days rather than write one letter. We gave the process to a lawyer. . . . Your father aspires and prays to God that he may go to Kujawy [the

farm which is the object of the lawsuit], if it were only one hour before dying, and not hear any more this bullying in the factory. . . .¹ Bronka wrote to us that Michalowski [her husband] teases her in his letters. She complains that she is unhappy. She has always some misunderstandings with him. And you there [Stasia], keep away from Michalowski, lest people ascribe to you some [evil] things, for Malczykowa asked already whether you are not living in the same apartment.² Has Michalowski sent some money to his wife? Write us what work is Wacław doing. . . . Bronka also wonders that in your letters to her you mention little about Wacław. Janek is such a disorderly boy as he has always been; he does not put any money aside. We had hardly put 40 roubles in the bank for him when he drew it and bought a bicycle.³ And if he has some trouble in the factory he comes and asks us to gather any money that we have, saying that he will go to America. For the holidays we have 30 pounds of flour, 12 pounds of ham and a leg of veal. Michal brought all this from Iwaniska. . . .

EVERYBODY FROM HOME

274

December 29, 1912

DEAR STASIA: We received your letter and we were very much rejoiced, but when we read it we wept. Why did you leave Wacław [brother with whom she went to America] thus? You ought to remain with him and to come back together. God knows what has become of him? Perhaps in such a big city he cannot find you. What did we suffer until we got this letter from you! People said that you were arrested [while crossing the frontier] and put into prison, others said that you were sent back by *etapes* [from prison to prison to the native village]. Jula, from Kielce, said that the ship stopped in the sea and no ship was permitted to go. And now

¹ Longing for land and for independence. The feature is almost universal among peasants who work in factories in Poland, but is weakened or disappears in America.

² This suspicion would hardly arise in a village. Bronka is Stasia's sister, and a relation between Stasia and her husband would be felt as almost incestuous.

³ Were the family living in the country, the father would probably not allow Janek to withdraw the money. For example, the money earned by the children at season-work in Germany, even if not given to the parents for spending, is nevertheless almost always given to them to keep until the son or daughter marries.

the people say that it is bad in America, that this new president is not good, that factories have stopped and only a few of them are active, that he has diminished the pay for work, and that he endeavors not to admit the Poles into America, saying that they spoil the people there.¹ All this is more grief for us, for while you did not lose much, Wacław had money and good work and lost it all. If he does not get work there, it will be bad. Write us about everything. . . . Did you get acquainted with somebody from Ostrowiec? If not, try to do it.² Write us whether you are boarding with somebody else or cooking for yourself, and about Wacek also, whether you both are not homesick. For while you have been away from home for a long time [she was first in Russia], Wacław left the home for the first time so we don't know how he feels. [News about the factory in which the father is working.] Janek [brother] has left that girl in Kunów, for she wanted him to rent an apartment for her in Ostrowiec and to furnish it, while he wanted to go to her [to live in her parents' house] for some time, until they earn and put aside more money. As he had not money enough [for the apartment], they separated.³ [Politics; calls for military service; condemnations of political offenders.] There is no more news, but you must describe your journey, what they gave you to eat upon the ship, how much money you spent, and everything. . . . Write us regularly, a letter every two weeks. . . .

YOUR PARENTS and EVERYBODY FROM HOME

275

February 26, 1913

DEAR CHILDREN: We are curious how you look now, Stasia. We imagine that you must look very bad, because you grieve [are homesick]. But nothing can be done, it must be so for some time. Antek K. went to America. He did not wish to go to the

¹ The childish idea of the president's influence upon social and economic life is evidently the result of two factors—familiarity with the idea of absolutism and the enormous agitation which precedes the presidential election.

² Parents are always glad when their children find in America people of their own village or neighborhood. There is thus maintained some semblance of community interest, oversight, and mutual aid.

³ The reason seems trifling. Among peasants where the question of an independent home is connected with the question of a farm, such an attitude would be justifiable, and even then a girl would hardly object to her husband's living for some time with her parents. Here the evident motive is vanity—a vanity of the type which develops in towns.

army, he preferred America. He took your address. . . . You cannot imagine how many people go to America. Soon very few will remain in our country. We are curious whether Michalowski sent some money to his wife. Write us exactly about everything, how you like it in America. How does the food taste to you, for we hear that the cooking is different there? Write us whether you did not meet somebody else of your acquaintance. Perhaps you feel better now than in the beginning. Did you dance during the last days of carnival? For Rem. wrote that he danced so much as to lose his heels. My dear Stasia, when you write a letter, write it in the presence of Wacek, that he may dictate a few words in his own name, for it is so painful for us—as if he were not there. We know nothing about him. . . . And yourself, you write such short letters, there is nothing to read, although you are in such a distant country. . . . Now we inform you about this lawsuit. The lawyers assure us that we shall win. We have asked two and they both say it. . . .

YOUR PARENTS and EVERYBODY FROM HOME

276

April 22, 1913

DEAR CHILDREN: . . . Our lawsuit about Kujawy will be judged on May 5. As soon as it is over we will write you at once. And we beg you, in the case we need money to pay this farmer's part, send us as much as you have. Ask even Michalowski to give you those 100 roubles back. We expect that if we win in Radom he will appeal to Warsaw. Then we should not need the money so soon. But perhaps he won't be able to appeal. . . . You need not be afraid about your money, for it would not be lost if mortgaged upon the farm. Of the 100 roubles which Wacław left we spent 50 on this lawsuit, but we keep a pig which we bought for 7½ roubles after Christmas. Now we could get more than 30 for it. So if we don't win, we shall sell the pig and put the money in the bank¹ [to Wacław's account]. [News about friends, etc.]

YOUR PARENTS and EVERYBODY FROM HOME

277

DYMINY, August 22, 1913

DEAR STACHNA [STASIA]: I read your letter to Edzio. The content of the letter touched us very much. It is true that you have been courageous in going so far. This only is happy, that you suc-

¹ In these money matters the attitude of the parents is typically peasant.

ceeded in persuading Wacław [to go with you]. Probably your time passes more pleasantly together. Are you healthy at least? I really cannot imagine that you are there at the other end of the world; I should not muster courage enough to do it. I admire you. . . .

God, O my God! What does destiny do with man! He finds himself suddenly there beyond the sea. Man is like a ball. I feel this all, I have experienced it myself to some extent, this working for a piece of bread, . . . but I should not have equaled your boldness in leaving your country and your native home.¹ I imagine your fear, your regret, your fears! My dear, God has seen all this. . . . The Highest Creator will reward you, since he has tried you thus. The confidence in God's mercy never deceives anybody. Perhaps God will grant you some good lot in reward for that trouble and labor which you have borne up to the present.² O God! don't fail to come with help to them. From my poor side, I wish you to come back happy and to reach the end for which you left your home, and may the presence of the Highest always be a witness of your lot.

You ask about my children. [Information about children.] Józia [Stasia's sister] was here not long ago and mentioned that you dissuaded her from marrying a widower. But I understand her very well. He is an honest and laborious man, and the children don't play any part. The boy is 5 years old and can even be useful, while both the girls are kept by their grandmother. The girl [Józia] is not in her first youth. Moreover, he liked her [fell in love with her].³ I advised her to marry him. I told her that if she is good she will be happy [of] herself. Have you no opportunity [to marry] there? I advise you also to marry, not to wait and not to select, for this is the worst. As long as you are in good health all is well. I notice it in myself. Evidently it is easier to hold out someone's else back [to be beaten] than one's

¹ The difference between the older and younger generations is here clearly expressed. Indeed, the emigration of women (not going to their husbands) is a comparatively recent phenomenon.

² The suffering as such is here considered as a sufficient claim on God's reward although no one obliged the girl to go to America.

³ It is characteristic that the usual term still used in the country for love before marriage (love without either sexual relation or marriage-tie) is "liking," not "loving," while between parents and children or brothers and sisters the term "loving" is current.

own. But I shall wait soon for news about your marriage.¹ It is to be hoped that such a girl as you are should not waste her time there. . . .

[YOUR AUNT] G.

278

OSTROWIEC, February 9, 1914

DEAR STASIA: We received your letter on Feb. 1, and Wacław came back on Feb. 3. He came in good health, had no accident. The crossing of the frontier cost him 4 roubles. . . . He says that he is bored here, he regrets that he came back. As to the work, we don't know yet—for he has not yet asked anybody—whether he will get any or not. . . . Your father keeps well, but he could not be a shooter anymore, for he does not see well. When he comes back from the factory he often falls or jostles people. In Ostrowiec it is as warm as in summer. If we were in Kujawy, we should think about sowing, while as it is probably that farmer will sow for us. We are tired with waiting. It seems to us as if there were 10 years left until the end of this suit. But what can we do? When we were the plaintiffs the suit was soon decided, but now he is the plaintiff, and we can do nothing. . . . Wacek asks you to thank the agent who said that he would go 6 days [by sea], while he went 10. He regrets now that he came and says that in the spring he will go back. That would be a trouble for us, if he went back, took the money, and we should have nothing to pay for Kujawy. Nobody feels it as much as I do [the mother], for I should like to get there as soon as possible, while it lasts so long. . . .

YOUR PARENTS

279

May 21 [1914]

DEAR STASIA: You know that you worry me now in writing that we have forgotten about you. Why, we sent two postcards and two letters after Easter. And now I am obliged to send you a letter without a stamp, for evidently you gave a bad address. You may know that there is not an hour during the day without my thinking of

¹ The aunt and the parents retain the traditional attitude as to the necessity of marrying, but the aunt cares less than the parents whether the girl makes a good match. Cf. Nos. 279, 280.



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more than forty and as if he had gray hair. He must not have been for a long time in America, for he wears whiskers not in the American fashion, cut and fixed, but hanging down in disorder. But if he is an honest and good man, don't mind anything. For us it matters only that we might see you some day. . . .

We kiss you a thousand times. We hope that you will send us a letter before your wedding. Don't give him this letter to read, lest he be offended.

YOUR FAMILY

SEKOWSKI SERIES

Up to the present we have had to do with families of peasant farmers. Here we find a family of manor-employees. Jan Sękowski, the father, is probably a farm-clerk or a land-steward. He has some education. His letters are written in rather good Polish. The other letters of the family are on the average not above the usual level of peasant letters. But a letter which Mania wrote to us in sending the letters shows an astonishing progress made during her four years in America. Perhaps it is due to her husband's influence. She is one of the few of our peasant correspondents showing an interest in our work.

The manor-life develops features which differ to some extent from those of the peasant farmers. The series therefore assumes a particular importance. There are over two million manor-servants (families included) in Poland. The main bulk of them are the so-called *parobeks*, i.e., those who do physical farm-work (plowing, sowing, harvesting, threshing, driving, etc.). Then come the cattle-, pig-, and sheep-herders, forest-guards, watchmen, etc.; then handworkers (blacksmiths, carpenters, gardeners, millers), then private servants (butlers, cooks, maids, grooms, laundresses, coachmen), and finally the "officials" (overseers, clerks, stewards, cashiers, managers, distillers, head foresters). A rather small estate has thirty to forty servants, most of them married; a relatively large estate, of some seven or eight thousand acres, has two hundred to three hundred servants; but there are estates which keep many more than this, although the largest ones, from about twenty thousand to three hundred thousand acres (or over) have partly the tenant system. Thus, the manorial organization exerts a

powerful influence upon country life, and this extends beyond the sphere of the manor-servants, because there is intermarriage between them and the farmers, and a ruined farmer, or his children, frequently goes into service.

The characteristics which the life of a manor-employee tends to develop are rather negative. The dependence upon the manor-owner is much greater than that of employees upon employer in the city, because the whole life of the manor-employee is spent in the manor, and even his private life is not completely his own. At the same time, we find in addition to the business relation a social hierarchy much more rigid than in the town. A higher employee in a town business may be received in his employer's house, may marry his daughter, may become his equal if he makes money; the manor-official is once and forever outside of the social sphere of his noble employer—unless, of course, he is a ruined noble himself, or his employer's relative. On the other hand, the manor-official tends to keep between himself and the physically working servants the same distance as that which separates him from his employer. In this way the system always keeps alive the idea that social hierarchy is something absolute. In accordance with this idea, humility toward the superior and arrogance toward the inferior appear quite natural; no moral condemnation of any kind is attached to them.

Moreover, while we have distinguished only three degrees in this hierarchy—the employer, the official, the servant—there are in fact many more. On a large estate there is a continuous gradation from the head manager down to the unmarried *posylka* (servant helping the *parobek*) involving sometimes as many as six or seven degrees of social (not merely business) hierarchy. On the other hand, on a very small estate the distinctions between employees may be rather small, as the highest type of employee may be an

overseer or clerk. This is Sękowski's position. It is easy to understand how many insignificant interests, petty vanities, and ridiculous fights result from this system.

Another feature, still more negative, which manorial life tends to develop, is petty dishonesty. The control of the employees in a manor is particularly difficult because of the complexity of the functions, the difficulty of introducing a permanent division of labor, and a corresponding specification of responsibilities, etc. The temptation to steal is stronger here than anywhere else, because of the old prepossession that "stealing" means stealing only money, cattle, horses, or manufactured things, while stealing natural products which serve to maintain human or animal life is simply "taking" and hardly reprehensible. It becomes reprehensible when these products are stolen *and sold*, but the difference is easily overlooked.

Egotism is also more easily developed in manorial life than in village life. The idea of *mutual help* and of collaboration scarcely exists. The manor-servants look for help to the owner, not to one another; there is no mutuality and no reciprocity, as in help between equals. Instead of this, another solidarity develops—the *complicity* in laziness and stealing. Only during the regenerating movement of the last twenty years has the idea of the *solidarity of general interests* of manor-servants *as workers*—the counterpart of the socialistic idea—succeeded in developing; and it has resulted in many successful strikes, in which, nevertheless, only the lower workers, not the manor-officials, took part.

In familial relations the influence of the manorial life is also rather negative as compared with that of the village life. There is indeed no rivalry and no struggle among children for inheritance, but there is also no solidarity resulting from common interests. The father does not look upon his

children as upon collaborators and helpers, but as upon a burden of which he tries to get rid as soon as possible (as Sękowski does) by sending them away to work on their own account. When the children have left their parents' home, nothing else keeps them together, and there is no tendency to return. As most of the manor-servants wander from place to place, there are no stable associations with a determined locality. The egotism and hardness of the parents in village life are tempered by the idea that their children will inherit the farm upon which they have worked during their whole life, and will continue their work; the sphere of interest includes the future generations. In manorial life the only interest which makes the parents care for the future of their children is the hope that one of the children will take them when they are unable to work.

THE FAMILY SĘKOWSKI

Jan Sękowski, a manor-employee

His wife

Adam (Adaś)	} his sons
Tadeusz (Tadzio)	

Kazia	} his daughters
Mania (Maryanna)	
Leosia (Leokadya)	

Frania (Franka), Adam's wife

Teodor Kacperski, Kazia's husband

Janek, Mania's husband

Żytniewski and wife, Sękowski's parents-in-law

Mańka, their granddaughter

Staśka, niece of Sękowski's wife

"The aunt," Staśka's mother

Walenty, the aunt's second husband

281-95, LETTERS FROM THE SĘKOWSKI FAMILY, IN POLAND,
TO FAMILY-MEMBERS IN AMERICA

281

LAZY, December 5, 1909

DEAR HUSBAND: I inform you that we are in good health, and we wish to you also the best health and success from our Lord God. Dear husband, the third star¹ [Christmas] approaches already since you have been far away from us in that foreign country. Dear husband, there is no more painful moment for me than when I remember that you are there far away and quite alone. So we send you a star and at the same time I divide a wafer² with you. Dear husband, as to our coming, you must know first whether we have good eyes. Dear husband, so we shall go to to Poznań, when we shall know certainly that we are going. Dear husband, I beg you in the name of everything in the world, don't change your word. For I won't write you [ask you] any more about it, because you wrote [as if reproaching] that I wanted absolutely to come to America. Dear husband, it is true, but don't be afraid [of my coming, for I will be a good wife]. For I know what [a life] I had when you were at home, how you always made my heart joyful. Dear husband, I did not know at all how to respect [appreciate] you.³ But now, dear, and only now, I know

¹ The word is used in connection with Christmas ceremonies to indicate (1) the first star on Christmas eve, with the appearance of which the supper, the most important ceremony, begins; (2) the Christmas celebration in general; (3) the Christmas gifts; (4) stars cut out of paper, wafers, etc., hung upon the Christmas tree or sent in letters as Christmas tokens; (5) a transparent and illuminated star of paper or glass with which boys walk about the village on Christmas night, singing, offering wishes, asking for gifts.

² The consecrated wafer plays an important, partly magical, rôle. It is consecrated before Christmas and during the eve supper the members of the family divide a part of it among themselves and, while eating, express wishes, evidently with a half-conscious idea of a power inherent in the wafer to fulfil wishes, and with the conscious idea of communion. The rest is kept and used during the year, more or less with the idea of its healing properties; powders are preferably taken in connection with it. Preparing and selling wafers is the privilege of organists.

³ We have seen (Introduction: "Marriage") that "respect" is the fundamental norm of conjugal relations. The love included within the norm of respect is not romantic or sensual love. Sensual love as such is clearly outside of the idea of normal, that is, perfect conjugal relations. And while it exists in young marriages, it is not to be spoken of; it is considered as being something indecent. There is, for example, a letter from a peasant in the newspaper *Zaranie* describing how a priest in his wedding-address condemned sensual abuses, but spoke of them so

how necessary it is to respect the husband, as the conjugal duty orders.

Dear husband, I inform you also about our daughter, how intelligent she is. When I ask her, "What will father buy you?" she says, "Shoes." She says, "Dear papa, Mania will go to papa."

I wish you health and happiness for your name-day, dear Adaś.

Mania [sister] begs you to find a nice boy for her.¹ But she begs you not to write about it, for father reads every letter. When we come to you we shall speak of it. I greet you kindly and heartily, and goodbye.

Your loving wife and daughter,

[FRANIA]

282

February 1 [1910]

DEAR BROTHER: I have a little wish [request] for you. You wrote before that you would send ship-tickets for Frania and for me, and that we should go together to America, and now you sent us such

realistically as to make his hearers indignant. This is the reason we so seldom find expressions of love in conjugal letters, particularly if these are dictated. In one letter from America (Struciński series) a husband makes to his wife some sensual allusions but immediately begs her pardon.

The best illustration of the antithesis of conjugal feelings within the norm of respect and outside of this norm is afforded by the practice of *beating*. Beating one's wife is evidently among the worst actions from the standpoint of the norm of respect. But between young people it harmonizes perfectly with *love*. A young woman often likes to be beaten, particularly when the husband beats her because he is jealous, because the wife is not demonstrative enough, or refuses marital relations. Beating is then considered a proof of love; a woman considers herself wronged, not loved, when the husband never beats her. Women speak with pride of being beaten, and are unhappy because of the indifference of husbands who do not beat them. Any interference in these cases ends badly for the interfering person, who may be beaten by man and wife together. Evidently, such an attitude toward beating is to be understood only upon the sexual basis. The attitude is quite the contrary when the pair (or the husband) is old, when the reason of beating has nothing to do with the reciprocal relations of man and wife, as, for example, when the man beats his wife in some quarrel about money or about the children.

¹ There is a general and justified opinion among Polish girls that it is very easy to get married in America and that the Polish-American husbands are better. This explains partly the fact that girls are willing to go to an unknown man who asks them in marriage (cf. the case of Staśka in this series), and in general that they risk going alone to America while they are often afraid to go alone to the nearest town in their own country.



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tired with staying in our home she may go to service,¹ and everywhere it will be well. Thus she ought not to dream about America, but she will go to Prussia. And then you can write to each other. . . .

We all greet you most kindly.

Your father,

J. SĘKOWSKI

284

March 18, 1910

DEAR SON: We all at home wept about your misfortune, and we try to find some way to improve your lot, but we are unable to do anything. God alone is left to you, and He will help you without doubt, only you must pray warmly to Him. But at the same time don't let your hands fall, try in every way. Sometimes it is even necessary to humiliate one's self deeply, but one must not mind it. . . .² May God help you.

Your father,

J. SĘKOWSKI

285

March 18, 1910

DEAR HUSBAND: I inform you about our health, that we are in good health, only for me there is no greater pain of the heart than that God has sent you such a sickness in that foreign country. Dear husband, what may not happen with you there when you are so severely sick! Who takes care of you in this sickness? My heart cannot bear any longer this grief about your misfortune! What conditions do you have there, in that America? Dear husband, if God grants you to recover, and if you see that the conditions are bad in that America, come home! I will go again to season-work. Dear husband, I beg you, if God still gives you health, write to me and describe to me everything about your illness. If this letter [finds] you still alive! For I think that you are no more alive. Dear husband! How I wanted to see you once more before your death! For you know how I have loved you, and I never have lost hope in God, and even now I don't lose it totally. Perhaps our Lord God

¹ A farmer would never allow his daughter-in-law to go into service; he would consider it derogatory to his son and himself.

² This is the phrase to which the writer's daughter Kazia Kacperska alludes when she says that "father told Adam to beg." In fact, this is an advice which a farmer would hardly give his son, while it shows that the writer's attitude in these matters is influenced by his servile position.

will still give you health! Only I am very anxious because of my dreams, for I had them very bad. Dear husband, if you live still, answer me as soon as possible, for my heart will be grieved until I receive news that you live still. Dear husband, I should prefer to die rather than you should die. For what should I do if you were to die?¹ I put all my hope in you! Dear husband, I am even unable to describe this pain which I have upon my heart. But never mind for myself—but the child! If you knew how she rejoiced that she would go to you! These last days she continually pointed at you[r photograph], saying, “This is my papa, and this [the old Sękowski] is papa’s papa.” And she was so glad that she would go to her papa! And she loved [caressed?] you so, as if someone had ordered her.² But we did not tell her at all; she did it of herself. And all this was for this pain and grief! When we tell her that her father is sick and mother will go to Prussia, she says, “Mama won’t go Prussia, but will go with Mania to papa.” If she sees that I am weeping she begins to cry and does not allow me to weep. Dear husband, I greet you kindly and heartily.

YOUR LOVING WIFE and YOUR DAUGHTER

I commend you to our Lord God and I pray to our Lord God that He may give you health and that we may see one another. And if not upon this world, may we merit to see one another in the other world.

286

December 13, 1910³

DEAR SISTER MANIA: Tadzio is very glad that you will send him money for a new suit. He knows already how to read and to write a little, and now he says that he will learn still better. We have now two boarders, both from Prussia. One of

¹ This letter shows traces of tears and is perhaps the strongest expression of conjugal love in our collection. The traditional form of conjugal relation, as a mere familial relation, here breaks down completely; the married couple becomes a unique, almost isolated, social group. We shall follow later the same process in detail in other series. Here the conjugal relation is more easily liberated from the familial ties because in manorial life those ties themselves are not very strong.

² The word “loving” for “caressing” is very often used; the peasants are indeed little inclined to caress, and a caress is always the expression of a strong feeling.

³ One letter preceding this one is omitted. It contains Jan’s enumeration of the expenses of the journey of Mania and Frania to America.

them speaks Polish, but the other does not. They are the kind of engineers who put water-pipes in the manor. Both are still unmarried. We killed a pig not long ago, and I went to Kazia to take her some [meat]. I was there for a week, and Kazia made a skirt for me and for mother a ——— [illegible word] which I brought home. I had put some money aside for this journey, for I sweep the room of these gentlemen. Your hen is dead. Tereska's man has been taken to the army, and her sister has a child [illegal]. Józef went to America, and Zośka will also go before summer, for she was his girl. Kazimierz [Mania's sweetheart] is not taken to the army. He neither walks nor speaks with any girl, only is always very pensive. Dear Mania, mother is now so feeble and tired that she cannot work. As long as I am at home I do everything, but father talks already about my going to [season-] work. Could you write that I should not go, for I don't mind anything except mother.¹ Mother longs also for you.

Your sister,

LEOKADYA SĘKOWSKA

287

March 20, 1912

DEAR CHILDREN: Yesterday we had St. Joseph's holiday. In the afternoon we were with Tadeusz in Zagórow, for mother ordered a suit for him there, for 6 roubles. It will be ready for Sunday. We have now such nice and warm days; the pig is well fattened. He will be killed as soon as Kazia comes to help mother work. May God grant, dear children, your wishes to be fulfilled, that you may be able to take us some day to you, for here one cannot count for anything. As long as I can run [work] well they keep me, but when I get older, they will do the same with me as they did with Mr. R.²

¹ The situation shows once more the father's egotism and avarice; this attempt to drive the last daughter from the home while the mother needs her help could only exceptionally occur in a farmer's family.

² This insecurity of the manor-servant's position justifies to some extent his faults. It had been always the custom to support old manor-servants when they had served long in the same manor, but in later times changing of place has become more and more usual. Ten years ago an association was organized for the pensioning of the old manor-servants. A manor-servant can hardly put aside money enough from his salary to keep him in his old age. The only way to amass some capital is the illicit one, and there are indeed many manor-servants who have bought nice farms and houses in small towns. Sękowski evidently has money, although he does not acknowledge it.

If the Żytniewskis [wife's parents] come we shall be almost obliged to support them. Then I should like your mother and Tadeusz to go to you, and I should still remain for some time with the grandparents, and grandmother would keep my house. . . . I will tell Tadeusz to write you also something in the evening, for I have nothing more to write. Only he does not want much to write, saying that he has enough of his own writing [for the school].

[J. SĘKOWSKI]

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[March 20, 1912]

DEAR SISTERS: I received your card, for which I thank you heartily, for remembering me. . . . And now I beg you, economize as much money as possible, that I may come some day to you with mother and father. And now I inform you also about those ducks of yours. You know, that gray duck, when she sees me far away she quacks and runs toward me.

I remain, your brother,

TADEUSZ SĘKOWSKI

289

April 9, 1912

DEAR FRANIA: I received your letter. . . . Grandfather and grandmother Żytniewski came to us to stay, and they brought one granddaughter, 10 years old. What can I do? I cannot grudge a little food and a corner. As long as I am in Lazy they can be with me.¹ [News about work, friends, and acquaintances.]

J. SĘKOWSKI

290

January 15, 1913

DEAR DAUGHTER [MANIA]: So at last that time has come to you when the human lot is totally changed. From a maiden you will become a married woman, from a free being a slave of your husband and of fortune, from a merry and lively [girl] you will become sad, for there is no true happiness in this world; it exists only after death, and then only for the chosen ones. In this world there is a valley of tears, nothing but anxiety, suffering, and different troubles which we must bear patiently in order to merit that true happiness. We

¹ We see in this example how the supporting of aged parents is felt as an absolute obligation. Even the old miser Sękowski, who drives all his children away to work, cannot begrudge his wife's parents a place with him.

can never avoid misfortunes and we are unable to bear them with patience without the help of God. Therefore, may the Lord God who blessed Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, this God who blessed our forefathers and who remembered us in His Providence, who will never forget His creatures up to the end of the world—may He bless you until the end of your life as your parents bless you now. In the name of the Father †, the Son †, and the Holy Spirit †, Amen. May God grant it. Amen.¹

YOUR PARENTS

291

April 8, 1913

DEAR CHILDREN: Yesterday we received your letter and I answer you at once. First I inform you that we, i.e., your father, mother, and grandfather, are in good health and we wish you the same with our whole soul and heart. Grandmother and Mańka went to Kalisz, and Tadeusz is probably in the middle of the sea or already near America, and will be there sooner than this letter. You could have written sooner about feathers [for pillows], then Tadeusz would have taken them. Mańka Kowal won't go now; they have changed their mind, and first Kaziak will go and two daughters of Kamiński the miller.² They will surely go to Chicago, because a rich brother of Kamińska lives there, and I believe that the F's borrowed money from him for the exemption of Kazimierz from the army. Moreover mother says that you have enough feathers,³ while Leosia has nothing, and what will Leosia say to it? Well, perhaps it would not matter much, these few feathers, but there won't be any opportunity [to send them] until I go with your mother. As to the gift from Janek, I did

¹ The pompousness of speech and the preaching attitude of this letter, as well as of some other of Sękowski's letters, are explained by the combined influence of religion and manorial life. They imply a relative superiority of the "preacher" over his hearers, and are found most frequently among men who are more or less outside of the proper peasant community and a little above it by their learning—organists, commune secretaries, shop-keepers, manor-employees, etc. As these men having no land property are looked upon by the peasant farmer with a curious mixture of superficial respect and a profound and hidden disdain, the display of their relative learning, particularly in divine and moral matters, is a means of securing and defending their superiority. The peasant is, in fact, much impressed by good speaking.

² Kaziak (Kazimierz) was formerly engaged to Sękowski's daughter.

³ Feathers are the most necessary part of the dowry; the poorest girl must have a good feather-bed. Feathers and pillows are collected beyond the real necessity.

not rejoice [expect] so long as I did not hear anything, but now, since I have been promised, I will wait patiently till it comes. I am very glad that I have a son-in-law who is able to buy a gift for his father, while I must present gifts to Kacperski [other son-in-law]. He does not ask for them, but it would not be suitable otherwise.¹ On Easter they did not come to us, but on Pentecost they will certainly come, and mother always finds something to give them, while I give them 20 marks, as if for their traveling expenses. They don't wish to go to America, and probably they will never go, although a factory-workman like Kacperski would earn more in America than in Prussia. Be energetic with Tadeusz there, and make him learn well; the more and the better he learns the better it will be for him. As to the photograph, it is necessary only to know how to stand and to arrange one's self the best possible. Why does your mother look so well in her photograph? Because she is taken more from the side. Mother does not look so young today; she did perhaps 20 years ago. If you don't look well in your first photographs, I think that it is not the fault of the photographer, but your own. Still I don't intend to burn these photographs, for in a few years you will look exactly thus, and then they will be good. And now I wish you would have your photograph taken once more, but all of you together, and without any strange persons except those who belong now to our family. . . . Janek's parents asked me to tell them how they could come from their locality to us, for they intend to visit us. But I doubt much whether they will risk it, the more so when I describe [the way] to them, for they are not far away from the railway, while we live about 10 miles [Polish=50 English] from Kalisz, the nearest station.² . . .

¹ Sękowski gave no dowry to any of his daughters, and even thus he complains of one son-in-law that he must give him presents, whereas he himself accepts presents from the other. Such an attitude would be normal in village life only in an old and helpless widow. A farmer, even a poor one, would accept a present from his son-in-law, but only because he considered that after his death the son-in-law would have the inheritance; and he would never grudge the giving of a present. He would consider Sękowski's attitude humiliating.

² The family lives near the German frontier. As the Russian government, for strategical reasons, did not allow the building of railways in this part of the country, while on the German side the railroads were numerous, the life of the frontier-districts is much more closely connected with the life of the Polish provinces in Germany than with that of central Poland. The season-emigration (in the district where the Sękowskis live, 20 per cent of the population goes every year to season-work) develops direct relations with central and western Germany and is a medium of German influence.

My father and mother live in Smulsk still. Some days ago I received a letter from my father in which he asks for a few roubles. I answered him and I promised [to send them] somewhat later, for now I have none, as I spent everything on Tadeusz['s journey]. But my father writes that he is already very feeble, and my mother also. He is 78, and mother 79 years old. If I can, I should be glad to visit them once more. . . .

Your parents,

[J. SĘKOWSKI]

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March 4, 1914

DEAR SON: I received all your letters, the maps and the booklet. I looked over all this. At the first sight it seems very good and promising much; even if only one-half were true of what is printed in this booklet it would still be very good. In any case I advise you not to begin anything before you learn the truth. You have time enough, since you have not yet sold your house. So, as I wrote you in my preceding letter, ask your paper for advice. They write there precisely that they don't want to make a fortune from their paper, only to inform the Poles as much as possible. They will neither praise nor blame, but will write you the truth; they will perhaps even print it in the paper. Perhaps in the office of that paper in Chicago they know about these farms, and perhaps not; you could send them one such booklet, if you have any more, for it would be better if they first read the booklet and answered then.¹

I believe you that factory work can become a bore, and that it will pay less and less, while living will be always more and more expensive, for people continually go to America. Write also to Franek, Leosia's [husband], and send him such a booklet if you can. He has money, and perhaps there, where he works, somebody knows Florida.

About all points it is necessary to ask everybody's advice, but not to listen and not to believe everybody, and above all not to try to catch the pigeon, letting the sparrow go, and then to have nothing.

¹ The old man's conceit is clearly manifested in this giving of advice without knowing the conditions. At the end of this letter he gives the text of the letter which his son ought to write to the paper. Another example is the question of photographs, which recurs in many letters. Evidently the manor-life, developing the tendency to keep as strong as possible small hierarchical distinctions, leads to the custom of asserting one's own superiority in any matters, however trivial.



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when it is ready, and I am to send it to you, but if it does not please me I will send it back and let her have another taken.

As to my opinion, I don't like to praise anybody much but I must confess that Staśka is a very good girl, intelligent, working, saving, handsome, only a little too tall and not instructed. But these are secondary faults. At any rate she deserves good luck. Today is precisely the twenty-ninth anniversary of our marriage with your mother. It was also Sunday, and St. Peter's and St. Paul's day on Monday. We have lived together for so many years, struggling with a various fortune [*sc.* rather bad], which is likely to be found in every marriage. Well, good or bad fortune must be accepted alike. . . .

Our priest is still alive, but very feeble. . . .

[J. SĘKOWSKI]

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July 5, 1914

DEAR CHILDREN: . . . It is perhaps better that you did not succeed in selling your house, for there is no evil which does not turn to good.¹ Perhaps later you will sell it more profitably, and in America when you have money you can buy land at any moment; there is enough of it there. I thank Frania very much for her work upon Tadeusz. It is well that he is now with Leosia. Let everybody have a part of the trouble. And thus a day [will pass] after a day, a year after a year, and you won't even notice how he will reach his 16th year, and then, according to the American laws, he will be able to work himself. [News about acquaintances.]

From Mania I received a very strange letter. She and Leosia like to write much and to add larger and smaller scraps to the letter. And this letter had also such a scrap—and nothing more. . . . Probably the letter was too thick and somebody hoped that there was money, opened the letter and did not put back the main sheet. . . . Upon this scrap . . . Mania writes us to send Józef's [daughter] Staśka to America, saying that she had a boy there who would send Staśka a ship-ticket. Mother was a week ago in Kalisz about this matter.

¹ This kind of optimism is nothing but the ultimate expression of the usual peasant resignation to the past and the irreparable which prevents him from being ever discouraged and always enables him to begin again. The emigration to Brazil afforded many such examples. Peasants who were born rich came back completely ruined and began at once as manor-servants to work and to economize with unrelenting energy and vitality.

Staśka would be glad to go but your aunt and her Walenty [her second husband] won't let her go from Kalisz, for Staśka has a good position there, while your aunt and Walenty suffer misery, because they both keep drinking heavily. Your aunt quarreled at once with your mother, so that the latter cried. I don't wonder, for the Żytniewski family [from which the aunt comes] is good only for drinking vodka, quarreling, and discord.¹ Staśka, as it seems, will be something else. As I noticed, she is intelligent, sparing, pretty enough, only somewhat too tall. Grandfather Żytniewski is with us . . . but quite impotent [feeble *and* useless].

[J. SĘKOWSKI]

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July 19, 1914

DEAR MANIA: Yesterday we received Staśka's photograph from Kalisz and today we send it to you. I don't know whether all this will succeed and whether Staśka's journey will come about. She wants to go to America; your aunt is not satisfied with it, but she cannot hinder it. Everything will depend upon how they write to each other and how their photographs please them. . . . If they come to an understanding, I would advise you not to send a ship-ticket, but money . . . for in the case of some unforeseen hindrance it is easier to get the money back. . . . But send it to my address, for it is impossible to trust your aunt. They are in a bad situation, and very avaricious. . . . If you don't receive any answer from Kalisz, don't think that it is Staśka who does not answer, but that perhaps somebody plays bad tricks, i.e., either her employers [she is a housemaid] or your aunt. So write simultaneously here and to Kalisz. Before Staśka leaves, we should like to bring her here and to send her from here upon the journey. . . .

• [J. SĘKOWSKI]

296

BYDGOSZCZ, November 23, 1913

DEAR MANIA: I received your letter with the photograph and I am very glad that you got such a man. But first of all, let him be good, for money is of no use if your life is not happy. When you

¹ This is a hard expression, as his own wife comes from this family and her parents live with him.

wrote that I could also have such luck Teodor [her husband] was terribly angry and is still angry with you. It is true that I could have also such luck. But no, even now I still fear to go to America, and when I was at home I was so timid that I would not have gone to Konin alone. If I had gone when father had ordered me, when Rozyna went from the manor, I should have fallen precisely into that misery. Perhaps I should not even live today, for you know how Adam had it how father told him to beg.¹ And I am so inclined to crying and so timid, I should never have talked to anybody [father or mother] about it. You know how it is with the Bajtlers now, how much Rozyna cost them [how large a dowry they gave] and what a splendid wedding it was. And now what has she?² You know that he wanted to shoot her down. Everybody must bear the lot which God designed for him. I have not a gay life either. I did not intend to write of it to you ever, but now over this letter of yours he made me suffer more than ever. You see how it happens. You know him, for he was in our house. Do you remember how good he was—like a child—and now he sins as if he were not the same man. Formerly he mended my stockings and made my bed when I was alone, and now he says that mother and father persuaded him and that we held him in order to make him marry me. And what did he say to me? He said that he would be so good that I should beat him rather than he me, that he would take me even in a single dress if father gave nothing, that he had 1,000 marks and this would be enough for everything. And now he says that it is not true, that he never said so. He reproaches me always that others got so and so much, and what did I get? And he denies that he ever said so [that he would take me without dowry]. May your husband only not be so false! I don't even wish to write home about it, for father would tell it to everybody, and it is a shame for us. Nothing can be done. . . . I became a guiltless victim, for I thought that he loved me so of himself, while it was mother who persuaded him and gave him more than one glass of liquor. And now he reproaches me with all this. Father also plagued me and I did not have a merry life at home, while he painted everything so sweetly to me—that I should have every-

¹ Allusion to No. 284.

² Rozyna probably married the man the writer was to marry. Her allusions to dowry mean that a wife with a dowry has an additional right to good treatment.

thing so good. Do you remember how it was in Ruda at that party, how he danced with all the girls while I stood in the corner and wept? And this was only the first year. What must it be now, when 5 years have passed? I cannot write you everything.

I greet you a thousand times and wish you good sleep. Could you not have sent me at least a dollar, to drink some wine, for I was not at the wedding?

[KAZIA KACPERSKA]

Love each other, that you may have a child, a boy, in a year. Remember me and comfort me.

MAKOWSKI SERIES

We find here again a modification of the fundamental peasant attitudes, due to the fact that the Makowskis are not farmers, but belong to the handworker class in a small town.

The letters of Antoni Makowski give us the expression of a paternal feeling distinct from that which we find in other series; it is a father's love without any assumption of authority or any patronizing. But this simple attitude is less primitive than the complex one of love and authority which we have seen in the earlier series. The lack of paternal authority implies a disintegration of the primitive familial group. This is proved in the present case by the familial quarrels alluded to in Makowski's letters and by the lack of solidarity of which he complains. The causes of this change are: (1) the fact that among the handworkers the old forms of social life, though slower to disappear in provincial towns than in large cities, dissolve more rapidly than in the country; (2) the emigration, both to America and to Prussia, of which the district of Przasnysz is one of the oldest centers. In consequence of this the father, in his relation toward his children, ceases to be the representative of the family-group and becomes a mere individual.

Another interesting point in this series is the attitude toward death. As noted elsewhere, death for the peasant is an important but normal phenomenon—normal not only as to theoretical reflection but also as to the sentimental reaction toward it. In the intelligent classes, on the contrary, the death of a beloved person is always reacted upon as an abnormal fact, in spite of the theoretical reflection. The difference has its source in the social regulation of the

attitude toward death which we find among the peasant traditions. Socially, death is a normal fact, and will be such for the individual in the exact measure in which the individual's attitude is socially determined. This view is corroborated by the fact that in any concrete case of death among the peasants today (if we abstract the remnants of the old naturalism and of the magical Christianity) the important part is played by the social-religious system, while the individual mystical attitudes are relatively little developed. Death is viewed by the dying person and by his relatives from the standpoint of the religious community to which the individual and his family belong; the interest in future life, the problem of the relation to God, are less absorbing than the questions of social ceremonies before and after death, and of the attitude of the family and the community toward the dying individual, of the common prayers to be said, masses to be celebrated, etc. This shows the extent to which social regulation of the attitude toward death is dominant.

In the present case, where the familial connection is weakened, one link of this social regulation is lacking. The death of Zygmunt and that of his mother are reacted upon in the socially determined way within the narrow circle of the nearest family on the one hand and within the widest circle of the community on the other, but not by the intermediary circle of the family in the wider sense, as including all relatives. (Cf. the behavior of Walery's father, in the Wróblewski series.) Further, in the case of Zygmunt's death there is a socially abnormal element—the extraordinary nature of his sickness. But otherwise, we find the typical attitudes—the calm, although sorrowful, expectation of death by the dying person and the family; the traditional farewell and blessing given to those who remain; the religious ceremonial before death (with its

magical background); the funeral ceremonies, with their social importance, etc.

THE FAMILY MAKOWSKI

Antoni Makowski, a shoemaker

His wife

Stanislaw (Staś, Stach)

Zygmunt

Waclaw (Wacuś, Wacek)

Kazio (Kaziek)

} his sons

Mania (Marynka), his daughter

W. Makowski, Antoni's brother

Wladek (Władysław), a cousin

Grandmother Grudzińska, the mother of Antoni's wife (probably)

Hipek

Franek

} her sons

297-305, TO STANISŁAW (STAŚ) MAKOWSKI, IN AMERICA,
FROM FAMILY-MEMBERS IN POLAND

297

PRZASNYSZ, December 29, 1908

In the first words of our letter "Praised be Jesus Christus."

We received two of your letters, and we are very much satisfied, for in your first letter you wrote that you were sick and we were terribly grieved, but in your second letter you write that you are in good health, and we thank our Lord God, for this [health] is a treasure from God. . . . We are very much pained that it is already the second Christmas eve that we divide the wafer and you are not here. We said "With whom does our Stach divide the wafer?" and we looked upon your photograph. I shed tears that you are not here, dear Stach, and we cannot divide this dear wafer with you, for we don't know whether we shall live until the next year. May God grant us to see one another as soon as possible! We divided all of us the wafer which you sent among all of us. Kaziek took a bit of it and went to your photograph and pretended to put it into your mouth, saying, "Dear Staś, bite a little of this wafer!" and we wept.¹

¹ Kaziek expressed symbolically the idea of the spiritual participation of the absent brother in the familial festival. We see here how new symbols are created in order to keep up the spirit of the old organization in new conditions.



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The deceased Zygmunt was a little angry with you for having written him thus, that he behaved badly. Somebody must have informed you falsely, for he was interested in nothing except work and church. He had improved himself for two years and passed the examination in the school. Your father has wept a long time for you, but there remains the hope that at least we receive sometimes a letter from you; this is our whole joy. But from Zygmunt we shall never more receive anything. Before dying, he bade us all farewell, and you also, dear Staś. He asked you not to be angry with him. He had a very nice funeral. There were as many people as on All Saints Day, even many Jews. Four garlands were carried before the coffin, which were made for him in the town, and we received two telegrams, one from Plock, from the priest Królikowski, and one from his companion. I cannot write any more about Zygmunt's funeral, for our heart bursts open with sorrow.

Dear Staś, you may be exempted [from military service], because Zygmunt is dead, and these others are small. Your father hopes you will come home perhaps. We have nothing more to write. We hope that you will share our sorrow. Now we all greet you. Answer us as soon as possible. As to Władek [cousin], don't answer him at all; why should you have this trouble with him? When Zygmunt was sick he did not even drop in once.

[Your father]

ANTONI MAKOWSKI

299

November 15, 1909

. . . . DEAR STACH: First I inform you about the sad situation of your parents. Zygmunt is dead, on November 2, after terrible sufferings, for he was terribly ill for 3 weeks and did not speak a word for 2 weeks. I have lived 40 years and I have never seen a man so desperately sick as he was. Your parents did not undress for 17 nights for they both had to sit with him, because he always tried to run away, and beat himself so that his arms and legs were all bruised. And now I write you news which is much sadder still. Your mother fell sick at once after the death of the late Zygmunt and is now severely sick, so that the priest was there with our Lord God [sacrament], and she will soon follow her son. And as to their material situation, they have exhausted whatever they had. Your father walks like a shadow from grief. And you ask why do they not answer you. But perhaps you don't receive our letters; perhaps you are

then in the factory and somebody else receives your letters. Moreover, somebody has turned your head and you listen to him and write foolish letters to your parents. When they received your last letter they became still more sick. So, dear Staś, forget everything and share the sorrow of your family. Now we, your uncle and aunt, send you sincere greetings. Amen.

W. MAKOWSKI

300

December 8 [1909]

. . . . We received your letter, for which we thank you. Now, when the Christmas holidays are approaching, we send you a wafer and we divide it with you and we wish you merry holidays. We wish you to have merrier holidays than we have here in our country, for we have very sad ones, because we are pained that you are not here and Zygmunt is not here and mother is very sick, so that she cannot rise, and she may not live until the holidays. Now we won't describe anything more until the next letter. I, your oldest brother Wacław, and Mania and Kazio, we three little orphans, we divide the wafer with you and wish you a Merry Christmas. And don't forget us.

WACŁAW MAKOWSKI

301

January 1, 1910

. . . . DEAR STAŚ: We received your two letters, for which we thank you, for only your letters rejoice us. Your mother was awfully glad to receive this letter; she even kissed it from joy. For your mother is very sick. Dear Staś, don't grieve that you are far away in the world and have nobody except God. Your mother has been sick for more than two years, and has remained in bed for 10 weeks, and thus, dear Staś, I must worry terribly, for I have nobody. I must cook myself, for Marynka is too little yet and needs care herself. And as to the family [relatives], in happiness they are good, but in misfortune they don't even look. I don't know how I shall do now. Your mother won't live long; Mania and Wacek must be sent to school, for they have not yet learned much. But I don't know how I shall manage all this. Our Lord God has put a terrible cross upon me, and I have carried it for 3 months already. I don't work any more at all in my shop. Now I thank you for the money, for it was very useful to me. May God give you health [as reward]. And Kaziek is a pretty boy; you would not recognize him. And he is clever! [Weather.]

Your mother cannot write any more, so she tells me to write you thus: She kisses you with her whole heart and her whole soul, and wishes you every good, whatever you want from God, and success in your intention. "And [she says] I wish you to be my true child, good and religious. And may we see each other in Heaven. And don't forget about your father and these little orphans. And now I bless you in this far world, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen! And now I bless also my dear brother-in-law. Don't abandon my Stach! And I bless you, my sister, and your children; may God bless you! And also my brother [cousin] G."

Only don't grieve, only don't grieve; perhaps our Lord God will still grant health to your mother. Now we greet you, I your father, wish you a good New Year, and Waclaw, and Mania, and Kazio.

ANTONI MAKOWSKI

302

January 14, 1910

DEAR STAŚ: We send you sad news, for we have already buried your mother. A great sorrow reigns over us after the loss of our dearest [wife and] mother and the dear Zygmunt. We have gone through two funerals in so short a time. The funeral was very beautiful, for there were 4 priests. The priests did not cost me very much. And there were many people. Yes, dear Staś, I am totally ruined. Your mother has been sick for more than two years, and the doctors cost, and I could not work, and now I cannot work either, because a terrible sorrow overcomes me for your mother and Zygmunt and you, dear Staś. Now I don't know what to do. If I knew that in America I should be able to educate these three orphans I would go to America. So I beg you, answer me and advise me how to manage all this. Yes, dear Staś, don't grieve, only pray our Lord Jesus for health and don't forget about us and don't be angry with us for writing you so often. Now we greet you, I, your father, kiss you heartily, and Waclaw, and Marynka, and Kazio.

ANTONI MAKOWSKI

303

February 15, 1910

DEAR STAŚ: I thank you heartily for your letter, because only your letter can rejoice us. We cannot cease to long for our beloved Zygmunt and our dear mother who loved us so. And now

we must think about ourselves. But nothing can be done. God's will! Your mother was not sick with consumption, but with chronic lung catarrh, so the doctors said. It is only your "dear" grandmother who gossiped that your mother was sick with consumption. She told it everywhere in Przasnysz and even wrote it to America. Such is our dear family!

Now, dear Staś, I shall describe to you our incident—what the Lord God can do! When Zygmunt died, our deceased mother wept terribly, lay down at once and died from this sorrow. On the third day after your mother's funeral Wacuś fell sick with typhoid and had 41° [Centigrade] of fever. What could we do? Marynka and Kazio with tears prayed to God's Mother and devoted him to God's Mother and asked God's Mother for his health, promising that when he recovered, he would go to Częstochowa. The fever disappeared at once. It was at 3 in the afternoon, and at 4 the fever had already yielded. The doctor could not believe that he was better. He was weak after this, but for the last two weeks he has walked and now, thanks to God, he is already going to school and is perfectly healthy.¹

Dear Staś, I should advise you that it would be better if this Miss Szczepańska went to you. You know her very well, so perhaps she would be good for you. Now she is in Warsaw, and even got a little instructed. As to Miss Drewniacka, I cannot tell you anything, for it could spread about [gossip], only I write you that she wrote a letter to one boy here in the town asking him to come [and marry her].²

ANTONI MAKOWSKI

. . . . I thank you heartily for your letters, for only your letters rejoice me. I should like to have a letter from you every day, but it is impossible. Now, dear Staś, I write you about our holidays. We had very sad holidays, so that I cannot even describe them to you. Nobody from our family calls upon us and nobody helps us. As long

¹ Cases like this one are related by the thousands, not only among peasants, but among intelligent classes. The vow of a pilgrimage to Częstochowa is considered particularly effective.

² The fact would be considered reprehensible in two respects, (1) as proving that the girl is not really attached to Staś, since not long before becoming engaged to him she wrote to another, and thus she wants to marry just anybody; (2) as proving that she lacks self-appreciation, since she makes advances.

as everything was whole [clothes, etc.] it was only half as bad, but now I don't know what way to turn. You wrote me to take some woman, but it is not worth while, for I must give her a room and pay her, and the children won't have any benefit. Probably I shall be obliged to marry. Up to the present I see nothing convenient. And the shoemaker's work is bad, there is no earning at all. I don't know how it will be. All the men are going to America. . . . Now our priest from Przasnysz is going to Częstochowa, and I have devoted Wacek [made a vow in his name that he would go]. But I don't know how to send him alone, and then it will cost about 15 roubles. . . .

A. MAKOWSKI

305

June 21, 1911

. . . . DEAR STAŚ: I won't describe to you my success; you know yourself very well how I succeed. You write in your letter that when Wacek and Mania grow up it will be very well with me.¹

And now, dear Staś, I called upon Mrs. Drewniacka on the same day when I received the letter, and Mrs. D., had also received a letter from Mania [her daughter]. So we talked it over and I went to the priest and took both birth-certificates, which I send you.² Why did you not write, when your wedding will be? I would have gone to your wedding, while now I won't go. It is very painful to me not to be at the wedding of my first son. And now describe to me, how the wedding was and who was at it. . . . Send me your wedding photograph. Dear son, I send you my blessing, may Lord God bless you and God's Mother and St. Józef. I wish you every good [etc.]. In the name of the Father [etc.]. Now I cannot write any more for regret contracted my heart,³ only I greet you and my dear daughter-in-law.

Your loving father,

ANTONI MAKOWSKI

¹ Evidently an unfinished reproach. The father is offered small comfort. The son should have promised to come back, and the following paragraph seems to indicate that he had formerly promised to take his father to America.

² The son marries precisely the girl whom the father sought to dissuade him from marrying, and the father complies with the fact without protest.

³ The letter is one of the best expressions in our collection of paternal resignation and affection in the face of the repudiation by the child of the familial ties. Usually in such cases the father rebukes, threatens, preaches, or curses.

CUGOWSKI SERIES

The author of these letters, Józef Cugowski, is a skilled workman of peasant origin and has evidently some general instruction. His letters are in rather good Polish. He has kept almost all the traditional peasant attitudes, only more individual, conscious, and equilibrated.

After his father's death he assumes immediately, as the oldest brother, the rôle of head of the family, and if he still seems to recognize that his brothers have an equal right of decision and asks for their advice, it is partly a formality, partly a desire to keep harmony, partly, finally, the lack of personal interest in any possible economic arrangement about the fortune left. This lack of personal interest shows that for him the rôle of head of the family is nothing but a social function imposed by circumstances and resulting from the familial unity. But there is one point in which his attitude differs slightly from the average peasant's—he goes further in his patriarchal attitude than is normal in the country by practically excluding from the family-group all the members who do not bear the same name, i.e., married sisters and brothers-in-law. In this respect his (otherwise justified) treatment of Graj, his contemptuous attitude toward Margas, his (probably willing) limitation of the subscription to their parents' monument, are very significant. He goes so far as practically to consider his stepmother and his sisters-in-law more as real members of the family than he does his own sisters. Now, there is of course some superiority of masculine over feminine relationship among the peasants, but not to such an extent; there are localities where no such superiority seems to be acknowledged at all. As to the question of keeping the father's

farm—it is evidently Graj who is nearer to the peasant tradition than Cugowski. Since no son can take the whole farm because all the sons have other occupations, according to the peasant's ideas it should be taken by a son-in-law rather than be divided. But Cugowski wants the farm to remain in the hands of some male member of the family, and since this cannot be done he no longer cares for its integrity.

In religious matters Cugowski keeps most of the characteristic features of the actually dominant moral-religious system, particularly the rich formalism and the lack of really mystical or eschatological interests. But religiousness is already much more individualized and internal. Except the mention of the crime in Jasna Góra (Częstochowa), we find nothing in his letters concerning churches, ceremonies, meetings, etc. Thus, we can consider his religion as intermediary between the moral and the mystical system. The same may be said of his attitude toward death; still to some extent socially determined, it leaves much more place for individual sorrow.

One of his features is typically peasant—the pomposity of style so usual in all the peasants who rise intellectually above the average level. In this particular case there is hardly any showing off. We have rather the impression (which all the peasant speeches leave) that the man simply enjoys his own ability of “fine” talking or writing. It must be remembered also that a letter ought to be the best literary work of which the writer is capable.

THE FAMILY CUGOWSKI

Cugowski, a farmer	
His second wife	
Józef, a skilled workman	} his sons
Teoś, a merchant	
Staś (Stanislaw)	
Piotr	



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would have arranged it, for he even refused, or rather did not wish to send a telegram for me and Teoś, but busied himself with everything until the priest and the neighbors forced him. He wished to push his work to the end, but he did not succeed at all. What is worse for him, he has become now in our eyes and conviction our worst enemy forever. When we came everything was ready, i.e., the funeral agreed upon, the coffin bought. But God have pity, what a coffin! First too narrow, but, what is the most important, about 6 inches too short. But it cost only 17 zloty [2 roubles, 55 copecks], so you can imagine what can be had for that money. As soon as I came I ordered at once another made and I took upon myself the decision of everything until Teoś came. Graj was very much dissatisfied and spoke very little with me. But that is not yet the end. After the funeral it was necessary to decide about what was left, of course, with our whole family present, that is, I, Teoś, Graj with Wikcia, Ludwik with Frania, Anusia, mother and Piotr. It was to be divided into equal parts, but as father said while alive that it was to go to one of you two, I don't oppose the will of our father, but respect it and resign my poor part for the benefit of you or Teoś. But as you were not present, I gave it in your name to Teoś. Frania with her husband and Anusia did the same. Only he [Graj] did not want to agree to anything; he wanted to be the farmer after our father's death, to give a few roubles to mother and to drive her out upon the road. But it cannot be and won't be so. I proposed to give him, as remuneration for the pains which he took for our father, one meadow, half of the harvest for this year, one part of the turf and the wood which lies near the house. But he refused to accept it. Then he got a few roubles in cash and such a dismissal that he went home without even bidding us goodbye. After this I called two farmers and wrote an authorization in favor of our mother, that she was to live in the house until her death, harvest everything, pay the taxes and keep the house in order, with the help and advice of these two farmers. They bound themselves by their own signature that they won't permit anybody to take anything, except Teoś in the future and our mother at present. In case of violence, these two have the right to call on others for help and to prevent positively any abuse.

Now, my Staś, he begins to protest furiously that as the oldest son-in-law he has the right to sell the farm at auction, and he says

that he has your authorization. But we don't believe that you could have resigned in his favor, particularly in writing. I don't expect it to be possible, knowing his mean intentions with regard to us all. [Work; condition of the country.]

JÓZEF

307

September 7, 1907

. . . . DEAR SISTER-IN-LAW AND BROTHER: We received your letter on Thursday for which we thank you very much. We waited for some news from you, but alas! such a large space divides us that no news can come rapidly from the other hemisphere of the earth. But glory be to God that you are both in good health, and that you, my Staś, have some work and can earn for your living and that of your wife. I hope that later on you will get better and more profitable work and then you can live better than in our native country. You know how it was when you were leaving, and now things don't seem to get better but rather worse. The trade and industry are stopping, particularly now when winter approaches. Our factory goes on very badly and you know, my dear ones, that there is a numerous family to nourish, so there is enough to think of when one cannot earn. And what is the worst, there is no place to go, for in the whole country it is the same, in some localities still worse. Food has become much dearer everything costs about $\frac{1}{3}$ more than before. It is because in many localities hail has beaten the crops, in other localities they have rotted, in Russia and Lithuania there were strikes in many manors, and the crops were left in the field. Moreover fires, incendiary and from lightning, have also destroyed much bread. In a word, our Lord God took the bread away and begins to punish these beastlike elements which now don't acknowledge their Creator as their Lord above them, but in the most horrible way blaspheme against Him and against everything which is holy, i.e., the faith and His commands.¹

Dear Staś, you ask me now for the second time to get from Barański your 40 roubles. So I shall describe to you now his present situation. When he came back he got sick and stayed for some weeks in bed. I was just then in their house, but they begged me

¹ A good expression of the peasant's hate of revolutionary ideas, not counter-balanced in this case by any reflection on the probable bearing of these ideas upon the condition of the lower classes or upon the national Polish life.

in the name of everything [and said] that when he was better and began to work somewhere he would try to get money and would give it back. But what happened? A few days later he came to health again, and went in search of work in the direction of the frontier, to Zawiercie. And what did this scoundrel do? A few steps from the railway-station he cut his throat and stabbed himself three times. When people noticed him, he gave few signs of life. They took him . . . to the hospital . . . and sent her a telegram asking her to come. I don't know whether he is still alive, and even if he recovers, criminal responsibility awaits him, the scoundrel, for suicide.¹ And thus, my dear ones, your 40 roubles are to be considered lost. In their home is misery, some children, and not a penny put aside. . . . And you must know, dear Staś, that you are not the only one who is the victim of this cheater. He had borrowed money from many people when coming back from America, and even more than from you. Who is to be made responsible for this money, while this woman and her children ought rather to have some help? You remember probably how I advised you to be careful, for you did not know him, and now my prophecy is almost fulfilled. . . .

From our mother we have had no news for some weeks. I don't know how Graj treats her there. But it seems to me that he won't get anything by his avarice and wrath. . . .

Dear brother, I inform you about one thing more. I don't know whether you will both agree. We decided, Teoś and I, to erect a monument to our dear parents. It would cost about 150 roubles, and the local priest would take charge of the matter, for it was he who gave this idea, a very good one. So if you wish to contribute, it would be a monument from the sons, for our sisters refused to take part in it; only the sons with their wives. . . .

JÓZEF

308

December 29, 1907

DEAR SISTER-IN-LAW AND BROTHER: [Expression of familial affection; New Year wishes; news about work and factory.] I received a letter from our mother a few days ago. She describes to

¹ Technically correct as to the possibility of prosecution, but a more unreserved and self-righteous condemnation of suicide than is usual among peasants. As shown by popular tales and songs the attitude is by no means uniform, but, as in the higher classes, varies with the motive of the suicide, the character of the person, and the social consequences of the act.



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that through our fault he got too little, well, I shall try to add some [money] more, that he may have enough and may not complain about me or my wife. And I will mention, or rather remind him, what he got and what we got. And I will ask him also who has more rights, whether he, as the oldest son-in-law, or I, as the oldest son. And if I made such a decision, it was not for my own benefit, but for the benefit of you and Teoś. This is the first point. And the second point is that all this [the farm] ought to remain in totality, as the only remembrance of our parents in our native country. He thought probably that he would inherit all this and would manage it alone, but it cannot be by any means and will not be. [Easter wishes.]

JÓZEF

310

July 12, 1908

. . . . MY DEAR AND BELOVED L[UCIA] AND STAŚ: I received your letter. . . . Don't be angry with me for not having written to you, but I was sure that you would do as hundreds and thousands of people do who come back in throngs, cold and hungry. But since your condition is not so bad, and moreover you are both in good health, we are very glad, and thanks be for it to God the Highest. It would not be a crime if you should come back, but you know how it is now in our country, and so you are right in not moving. [Describes the economic and political conditions of the country, lack of work, murders.]

Now I inform you, my dear ones, about our success and health at home. I and my children are now healthy, thanks to God, but with Ewcia things are very bad. For a long time she had been weak, she walked and did what she could. But almost since Christmas she has been worse and worse, to such an extent that on Easter there was nobody to make anything [any Easter food]. I don't care for myself, but the children had almost nothing, and I have a heavy sorrow, for she was lying sick during the whole holidays, so weak that she could not come up these few steps. I asked factory and private doctors, but it did not help at all, for it is a lung disease which requires a special cure. So a private doctor, after examination, decided that she must go abroad. So I had to do it, in order to save the health of the mother of the family which God gave us. Well, without much hesitating I took my wife to Zakopane and placed her in a sanatorium there. The cost is enormous, for it will cost almost 150 roubles

monthly, but nothing can be done, I must comply with it. May God only grant her to recover.¹ I cannot determine today how long she will be there, for it has been only a week and a half. The doctor, after examining her, gave me this comforting hope, that she can recover, but not soon, at least in two months. May God the Omnipotent grant it, for I am unhappy with these small children in such a time as now. Believe me, my dear ones, I cannot keep my ideas together in view of the burden which overwhelms me. I try to get along with these children as well as I can, for it would be impossible to hire anybody. I must hire only for washing, and the rest Genia manages alone, according to my directions. You waited for a letter from me, but I was unable to write even a few words. When I came back from the factory, instead of resting I had to try to give some food to this poor sick woman. But could I do it as it ought to be done? And can one get everything always, even for money?

Yes, dear Lucia and Staś, my destiny strikes me hard, particularly as in the present time, which is so bad, I ought to be thinking about economizing as much as possible, and here, on the contrary, I must take the money which I have put aside in order to save health. But if God gives health, we must live in some way. Meanwhile may Thy will be done, my Lord!

It was at the end of May in Petersburg, I took Romuś [son] to Teoś, that he might learn business and help them. I have received already two letters from them and one from Romuś. He is very much pleased and he understands everything well. Perhaps God will grant him to have a piece of bread in this way in the future. He has not much instruction, but Teoś also has little and he manages

¹ From a man in Cugowski's position the sacrifice is great, for it probably means a sacrifice of his whole fortune. A peasant farmer would hardly do this. But it would be a mistake to explain it merely by a stronger affection. Cugowski's affection is probably not much stronger than that of an average peasant, particularly as it is his second wife and as half a year after her death he marries for the third time and seems to be happy again. There is certainly another reason for sacrificing more than a peasant would; he is a hired workman, his whole life is organized upon the basis of salary, and property has for him only the secondary value of a resource in the case of extraordinary expenses; its influence upon his social standing is also very slight. For the peasant, on the contrary, property means a basis, not only of economic life, but of the whole individual and social life. Farm-work is his main interest, land is the essential condition of his social standing in the community. Therefore for a peasant a sacrifice, economically equal to that of Cugowski would be subjectively incomparably greater, almost impossible.

a rather big business. Romuś has finished two classes, and if he is willing he can learn there, for it is easier than in our town. Teoś and his wife don't look well, although they have enough to eat and don't lack money. But they don't lack work and trouble either. They keep ten men, so there is enough to think about. Three good shops and a bakery are upon his head. There is income, but also enormous expenses. I advised them to take a smaller business and to manage it alone, then it would be easier. But they say that everything would be well were it not for those people who don't pay their debts. . . . I have sent long ago the money for our father's monument, but I have no news yet whether it is ready. . . . Genia learns very well; she got prizes last year and this year. She passed to the 3d division. . . .

JÓZEF

311

BOLESŁAWÓW, September 7, 1908

DEAR AND BELOVED LUCIA AND STAŚ: . . . I am a little comforted in hearing that after so long a time you got some work and you will be able to earn at least for a modest living. . . . At least you made your wife free from that heavy work. This is your great luck, granted by God, that health favors both of you in these troubles about material existence, for otherwise it would be bad in that distant and foreign country. You write yourself, my Staś, that it is not well to be sick there, because the doctors' treatment is bad. The same usually happens here, with a few exceptions. Whoever has money, has everything, and whoever is poor, the wind always blows into his eyes [Proverb]. And it is no news that the working-class is ill-favored today, not only there but upon the whole earth-sphere.

As I have written you in the last letter, I think, Ewcia is sick. Up to the present she remains in bed, not even at home, but abroad, in Zakopane. . . . But thanks to God, she feels much better, and perhaps God the Almighty will grant her to recover, although it costs us very much. More than two months have passed since she went there, and I manage to get on alone, as well as I can with my children. . . . If I could earn more! But work is so bad, that I earn scarcely enough to keep the house, and God sent Ewcia the sickness, for which I spend the rest of the old supplies. I really don't know what will happen when everything is spent, and if health does not



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313

February 28, 1909

. . . . DEAREST LUCIA AND STAŚ: I announce to you, my dear ones, a very sad news, a terrible blow that befell me a few weeks ago. Even today I don't know how to describe it to you, because of my heavy sorrow and terrible grief.

As I told you in my last letter, we both were sick, Ewcia and I. Today I am in good health, thanks to God, for my sickness was transitory and through care my pains have disappeared. But my dear poor Ewcia bade us farewell forever, leaving these little children orphans and me in a heavy sorrow with them. I don't know how to describe to you, my dear ones, what a terrible woe and despair are tossing me. I don't know how to define this terrible blow; I almost lose my senses. After such care on my part, after such enormous expenses, it was impossible to save her by any means from that terrible disease, until it ended with death amid horrible sufferings. She was conscious almost till the last moment, and begged us in the name of everything that is sacred to help her, poor martyr. You can imagine, my dear ones, what was going on within me when my children's mother and my wife implored for help and I could not help her. My heart almost burst open with grief in looking at a dear person whose life was going out forever before my eyes, and who had a right to live, who was very necessary in this world to bring up her children who were so small. You have no idea what a torture it is for the dying person when she is conscious. I cannot describe it and nobody can relate it. But I had no less to suffer in looking at such an agony. For if an old person dies one can more easily comply with it, while my poor Ewcia was still a young woman; she had lived scarcely 36 years, she was in the fulness of life, and she had to die. I was glad when she came back from abroad in September. She looked so well, and she was so full of joy that she had got her health back. But our rejoicing did not last. After a few weeks she began to get worse, and so rapidly that there was no help. Every day she was worse; you could almost see her fade away. I brought doctors again but it did not help at all. Three weeks before Christmas she lay down and did not rise again. Sad is my lot, for I am today in such a situation, that I have neither money nor wife, nor, what is the most important, a mother for my children. You must know my dear ones, that the 3 months abroad cost more than 500 roubles and, counting other expenses, I suffered an awful loss. And all this was in vain, for

nobody has ever recovered from consumption, and poor Ewcia was sick with this terrible disease. Now, after her death and funeral I had to sell, almost for nothing, her bedding and many other things which she used, and I don't know what to do with the things which are left. It is easy to waste them, while they cost a considerable sum of money. And I have no near friends with me who would give me salutary good advice. Everything has fallen upon my head, troubled with a heavy sorrow. You can agree yourselves, my dear ones, that my present situation is painful above any expression. But Thy will be done, O Lord! I must carry this heavy cross which you have put upon me, O Lord! Give me only strength and patience in order not to fall under its weight!

My dear ones, I should have much to write you still, but excuse me, for even in penning these few words my heart is cut with sorrow, and I write almost without ideas, they have become so entangled. Three weeks have passed today since she left us, i.e., on February 7, at 10 o'clock in the evening, and still I cannot come to myself and I don't know what will be further. I only pray God to give me health in order to earn bread for these poor orphans, and to educate them that they may find their way in life. For myself I don't foresee any happiness upon this miserable world, for I have experienced none up to the present. In less than 17 years I have buried two wives, and in such conditions one may become weary of his life.

JÓZEF

314

April 2, 1909

. . . . MY BELOVED LUCIA AND STAŚ: You probably received my letter with the sad news, what a severe blow befell me. The second month since the death of my dear Ewcia will be ended soon, and still I cannot adjust myself to this reality. I feel so lonely. Every object reminds me vividly how great a lack is felt at every step when one has no wife, mother and housekeeper. Still more I feel it now, when the solemn holidays of Easter are approaching. Everybody rejoices, even if he is in misery, on this joyful day, while I, unhappy man, experience for the second time such an awful pain of heart, particularly today, being burdened with so numerous a family and in the critical times which have prevailed in our country during the last few years. But nothing can be done, such is evidently my

destiny from God, to bear only heavy crosses and sorrow and toilsome labor. In a word, it is not granted to me to share bright and pleasant days, but only thick clouds overshadow the horizon of my life and send sometimes strong lightnings which shatter almost totally the remnants of hope of my wretched life in this valley of tears. And I can say truly "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." But Thy will be done, O Lord! And although I am so tormented with different kinds of afflictions, still I don't lose hope in the mercy of the Highest, that He will deign to comfort me at least for the short time of my shattered life. And conscious of the duties which I have, I invigorate myself with this hope and say, after the Lord's Psalmist: "Sursum Corda."

Dear Staś, I inform you moreover that besides the sorrow which I bear one thing still harasses us, i.e., this miserable fortune which was left after the death of our parents. As you know, my Staś, Graj was the mainspring in trying to manage so that it might not get into your hands or those of Teoś, that it might not be willed to any of you by a notarial act during our father's life. And thus it happened. So now Graj gives Teoś no rest, but "dries his head" [annoys him by asking] continually that a division may be made, or that Teoś will give him the power to be a trustee of it. But I cannot agree to it in any way. He does not write to me, for he is afraid because I have abused him much, once during our dear father's funeral, and then for the second time in my letter. So he corresponds now only with Teoś and gives him no rest but wants to benefit from it himself and to drive our step-mother away. But he does not succeed, for I know about everything because Teoś sends me all his letters; he does not suspect it probably. He tries to persuade Anusia's husband also, a man named Margas, to cede him their claims, and proposes to let this Margas live in this house. This Margas wrote already to me and to Teoś that a part is due to him also. But I don't know him and don't wish to have this pleasure. And so, my Staś, think about it well, how to act. If you want to keep this farm, I as well as Teoś, will give you a written document that we resign our claims in favor of you, and you may then make some plan with it, that it may remain with you and that in the future our name at least will be there. To tell the truth, it is not a resting-place for us even in the future, for I suppose that it will end by being equally divided, and then each member of the family will get perhaps 60 roubles or even less, and it will not profit one member to pay all the



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and I shall know how to appreciate it duly after so many troubles and such a heavy sorrow. But I won't describe it in detail; perhaps God will grant us to see one another and then you will get acquainted with my chosen little wife. Meanwhile . . . we send you our wedding photograph. I don't know whether you will like her in the photograph, although I may say that she is well [pretty] enough.¹ But I inform you at the same time of news sad beyond expression. Genia has been dangerously and severely ill for some weeks, and this grieves us much. May God give her recovery, for it is really a pity. Such a good child. . . .

MARYA and JÓZEF

316

October 15, 1910

. . . . MY BELOVED LUCIA AND STAŚ: First I inform you, my dear ones, about the very sad accident which happened in that miraculous place, Jasna Gora [Częstochowa], through this scoundrel and murderer, the Paulinist Damazy Macoch, and his mates. They disgraced the miraculous image of the Holiest Mother and robbed it of jewels and costly adornments. Moreover, they have long passed their time in the cloister-cells in revelry, and this year in July they committed a murder in this holy place. It is impossible to describe what a feeling of oppression prevailed in the country. . . . But thanks to God, the main criminal and his associates have been caught, and justice will measure a merited punishment to them. [News about work, factory, weather.]

Dear Staś, there is the question of this miserable property left by our deceased parents. As you know, it is not willed to anybody, but must be divided into equal parts. Teoś wrote to me asking me to arrange it, but no other arrangement can be made except an equal division. So we came to an understanding with Teoś and it is decided thus, for you must agree yourself that such a situation cannot last long; everything gets wasted, and there is no proprietor to repair. . . . Write me your opinion. . . .

MARYA and JÓZEF with THEIR FAMILY

¹ Here the man's conjugal attitude is completely individualized. Although the marriage was probably contracted partly for economic reasons, partly with regard to the children, Cugowski, whose individual feelings are more developed than in the average peasant and less subordinated to the familial attitudes, introduces a sentimental element into his conjugal relations, which is usually lacking even in first marriages of peasants.

317

August 5, 1911

. . . . BELOVED LUCIA AND STAŚ: I beg your pardon for not having given you any news. . . . It is not a big thing to write a few words and it does not take much time, only the most important part is played here by a thought free [of care], while I have very little of it, for trouble and sorrow have been my continual companions since long ago. Our Lord God does not spare me His crosses in this miserable valley of sorrow. And so, beginning with the sickness and death of my wife Ewcia, a year later [came] the death of my beloved and always regretted daughter Geniusia. She was extinguished like a light while still like a blossoming bud of a pure lily. The sorrow of my heart after the loss of these dear beings is not yet calmed, the wound of the heart is not yet healed, and already a new blow begins to wound my heart, for even if I do not wish it, I must tell you the sad news in order to relieve myself a little at least. Well, it is so, my dear ones. Henio [son] has been sickly for a long time, but now for a few months he has been seriously sick. I don't wish to believe it, but it proves that he has the same symptoms of disease as Ewcia and Geniusia had. Neither medicine nor strengthening food is of any help; he is weaker and weaker, he looks worse and worse, until at last he will end with this sad death.

And so, my beloved Lucia and Staś, this is more or less the first side of the medal of my present life, concerning the feelings of my heart and the moral side. And now as to the material side, I cannot say that it is painted with bright colors. [Work; factory conditions.]

Dear L. and S., inform me what is the news with you. . . . From Teoś I have had no news lately. They succeed rather well, but health favors neither of them. Romuś and Micio are with them. Romuś has been there for more than three years, and I took Micio last October. Romuś is already a rather good salesman. As to Bogunia, she has finished three divisions [of the village school] and we don't know what to do with her now. Irenka passed into the second division. She does not learn well, but she is healthy and strong. Stasia is also in good health, only my poor dear Henio is very weak and it will clearly be difficult for him to recover. But may God grant it, for I am very sorry for him.

Now I shall mention in short our actual common life. Thanks to God, I cannot complain about my wife. She complies with everything as well as she can, not badly. Well, and the fruit of our love

came to us, of female kind; she is 6 months old, is healthy and keeps well.

Inform us, my dear ones, what is the news with you, how does your health serve you, how do you succeed, and how about your progeny? Do you think of increasing your family now, or only when you have put some capital aside?

MARYA and JÓZEF with THEIR FAMILY

318

November 12, 1911

. . . . BELOVED LUCIA AND STAŚ: We are glad that you are both in good health and success, and the proof of it is that you intend to buy a house. May God help you, my dear ones! Happy the man who does not need to pay this awful tribute of rent, having the opportunity to come to [acquire] his own property.

My dear L. and S., probably you think more than once why do I write to you so seldom? But you will agree that I have many reasons to be downhearted and sluggish and lazy toward everything, so to speak. I shall explain to you at least some part of these reasons. Well, you know what I passed through after your departure. I lost first my wife, a year later my dear Geniusia. This year a third blow struck me, a not less hard one; my beloved little son Henio bade us farewell forever on September 13. I am unable to describe my woe; you have no idea what sorrow and pain of heart toss me after the loss of these my dearest beings. I should not wish to my worst enemy that which God sends upon me. Among such pains and afflictions one simply does not want to live; the world, even in its most beautiful colors, loses its charm, and one becomes indifferent toward everything. Verily I am that martyr whom God puts to the test and whom destiny strikes heavily. But Thy will be done, O Lord! I say only this: Ill-fated [euphemistically, instead of "accursed"] is this disease against which no remedy has been found up to the present, but whoever is afflicted with it sees an inevitable death before his eyes. And it is the most terrible disease, for it consumes gradually, leaving the mind conscious almost until the moment of agony. And how many victims it swallows at different ages, mostly in youth. I will add only this, that it cannot be described, what a grief tears the heart in looking upon the slow agony of a dear being when you are unable to help, to give some relief or even some



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BARSZCZEWSKI SERIES

The family Barszczewski lives on the limits of ethnographical Poland. The province of Grodno has a mixed Polish, Lithuanian, and White Ruthenian population. As it lies outside of the kingdom of Poland fixed in 1815, the efforts at Russification have always been stronger and more continuous there; thus, there is a certain influence of Russian culture. These two factors explain certain differences in attitudes when compared with the normal psychology of the Polish peasant. The infiltration of eastern influences may perhaps be the reason for the marked dissolution of the family relation which we find here. The father does not live with the mother (No. 322), Stanislaw quarrels with Józefa, with Kryszczak, with Aleksander B., and breaks off relations almost completely with his parents—all because of certain economic misunderstandings. Tomasz writes an exceptionally hard letter to his mother when she asks for help (No. 328). Their brother-in-law, Stefan, is accused of indifference by his sister and parents. And it is evident from other facts that this situation is the result of the dissolution of a former state of greater solidarity. Indeed the claims of familial solidarity are the same as in a normal Polish family. For example, everybody asks Stanislaw for money on the basis of the familial relations. And those claims are still partly recognized; Tomasz had lent money to Stanislaw, Stanislaw gives a dowry to his sister. More than this, we find here a typical endeavor to establish a personal connection between two members of the family who do not know each other (No. 328). Thus the fundamental

familial organization was evidently the same as everywhere among the Polish peasants. And the disorganization cannot be explained merely by the influence of modern life, since it exists already in the older generation and could hardly develop so rapidly in the young generation if it had not been prepared.

The second feature is the “philosophical” attitude toward social and religious problems which we find in the letters of Tomasz and Aleksander. It is not Polish in its form, but reminds us of the socialistic and mystical reflections, usually clad in poetical expressions, of the Russian home-bred “philosophers of life.” The route by which the influence came is easily explained; it can be only the Russian literature. Accordingly, those attitudes are rather superficial, particularly with Tomasz; they do not greatly influence the practical life.

THE FAMILY BARSZCZEWSKI

Jan Barszczewski, a farmer

His wife

Tomasz	}	his sons
Stanisław		
Antoni		
Aleksander		

Józefa Kryszczak	}	his daughters
Wiktora Błaszczuk		

Antonina, wife of Tomasz

Marya (Wiszniewska), wife of Stanisław

Marya (Górska), wife of Aleksander

Paulina, wife of Antoni

Aleksander Kryszczak, husband of Józefa

Alfons, son of Tomasz

Adela, daughter of Wiktora Błaszczuk

Stefan Górski, brother of Marya, Aleksander's wife

Stefan's father

319-48, TO STANISŁAW BARSZCZEWSKI, IN AMERICA, FROM
FAMILY-MEMBERS, IN POLAND

319

GRODNO, November 17, 1906

[To Stanislaw Barszczewski. Beginning of the letter missing.]
About 70,000 people are tortured in prisons, hundreds have been shot and hanged. The spring will probably put more innocent victims to the sword than the present winter, for the blood that is shed, the fire of cities and villages, do not subdue the people but rather kindle hatred against their persecutors and oppressors. In our province it is a little quieter but at Indur robbers compelled the post-official to give them all the money from the office. In Sisdra the post-official killed one and wounded another of 12 robbers, and the others fled without money. But it does not matter much as long as there is no army with guns in villages and cities. Now everything is dear, from salt and matches up to the coat on your shoulders and the wagon of firewood at the market; cheap is only the life of the poor man, because it is taken away without question, without witnesses, without court.

Probably you are longing there, dear brother, and sometimes sorrowful. I anticipate that although such a great distance of land and sea separates you, still in your thought you visit your country, your relatives, and friends; you remember the radiant moments and the painful hours, you imagine the circumstances met long ago; your native country-house with its straw-roof and its dear inhabitants seems lovely to you; perhaps even the curved ridge between the fields or a naked stone upon the stripped soil reminds you sweetly of some mystery of the past.

TOMASZ BARSZCZEWSKI

320

VILLAGE SYTKI, December 26, 1906

OUR DEAREST SON STANISŁAW: We, your parents, inform you that we are alive and healthy, thanks to our Lord God. We wish to you also good health, and may God's Mother bless you in your health and help you in your plans, and may the Savior of the world not forget you, because you don't forget us. Truly, you are our son, because you remember our family. So we also bless you, at least in a letter, since we cannot speak with you face to face and heart to heart. God



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would send me money for a cow. And now you write about being angry with me. But I did not take it myself. Our parents said so, "We have, thanks to God, two cows, so take the old one, and the young one will remain with us, and when your brother sends you money, you will buy another, or you will have it for something else."

O, dear brother-in-law, if you knew, what a misfortune I had. A cow, when calving, went away [died], and a young horse, 3 years old, died also. Therefore we beg you, dear brother-in-law, don't be angry with me and with my wife, because we have a farm which, thanks to God, cannot be counted as small—two parts of [my father's] farm (the third is taken away for my uncle), and 10 desiatinas [= 20 morgs = 26 acres] which I bought. . . . And what you say about taking the cow away, I don't mind it, but your parents said themselves, "For such a large farm it would not be nice of us not to give the cow."¹ And they said, "Take the cow, children, and when Stanislaw sends you money, you will buy another, and for us this young one will be enough." I gave them hay and vetch for their cow. So now, my wife and I, we beg you, brother-in-law, to keep your promise. Yes, dear brother, you have no reason to be angry. We beg you, if you cannot give us, then lend us at least, because we need it now very much. Goodbye.

JÓZEFA and ALEKSANDER KRYSZCZAK

322

[Spring, 1908]

[Three-fourths of the letter filled with greetings from all the members of the family.] And I, Aleksander, write further about how all this happened. Brother, you are very angry with me, because it happened so in our life. It is not you and not I who arranged it, but our Lord God himself sent it. In our life we were compelled to bear greater misery than this one, and we bore it; so we must bear this one also. My brother, if we don't forgive each other, our Lord God will not forgive us. You said, brother, to provide for the wedding of Józefa. So I gave such a wedding as was suitable. It cost all together, with the bed-furnishings, about 100 roubles, and the 100 roubles of dowry which you sent and the cow before calving, worth 80 roubles.

I did not write to you, brother, where father lives. Father is in Baciki at home. He does not wish to be with mother.

[ALEKSANDER BARSZCZEWSKI]

¹ The meaning is that Józefa's husband is a rich man, owns a large farm, and it would not be suitable if Józefa had too small a dowry.

[July 21, 1908]

DEAR LITTLE BROTHER: It is long that we have had no news from you, about your health and existence, and we want to know something about you—how you hammer out your happiness abroad. We know that in America it is no longer as it used to be, because a multitude of factories have stopped work. Many of our people have come back under their native roofs; but you give no news of yourself.

Since spring our parents have been living in Grodno, father with me, mother with Aleksander. With the present letter I hastily address myself to you, hoping that I may find in your kindness a gracious help for me in the present moment which is a very difficult one for me. The question is this: As you know, if you wish to earn a miserable rouble here, you must bathe it in your sweat before you receive it. In order to support my small children and my wife and to assure their existence in the future, I must, according to my obligations, rise when the night with her dark cloak begins to fly before the light of the coming day. While all people around me calmly sleep untroubled on their soft couches, I set to work in order to clear the roads for them, that when the powerful of this world walk in their leisure they may not hurt their delicate feet against any small lump of earth, or that the capricious ladies may not soil their many-colored silk dresses. The whole long day I work like an ant in an ants nest, until night drives away the last light of the day. And so days, weeks, months, and years pass, and who knows whether my whole life will not be like this?¹ Thanks to hard labor I succeeded in putting aside a small sum out of which I bought a little land and built a small house, but I cannot finish it because of lack of money; there are

¹ On this type of philosophizing, cf. Introduction: "Theoretic and Aesthetic Interests." The content—the contrast between the rich and powerful, and the poor workman—shows the influence of city life and of the workman psychology. We do not find this attitude among the peasant farmers who, even if poor, have in those matters a psychology of independent proprietors. Socialism finds little interest among the farmers, not only because of its standpoint in matters of property but also because, since the abolition of serfdom, there has developed a certain self-consciousness and pride in the peasant which render the idea of being a class oppressed by the capitalist devoid of content and difficult of acceptance. There is envy, of course, and a sentiment of injustice in the division of property, but no consciousness of being exploited—except in matters of taxes. Moreover, the peasant farmer, being the member of a family, does not feel so isolated in his struggle for life as does the workman. Tomasz is only beginning to develop the workman psychology.

neither stoves, nor doors, nor windows, nor many other things. I can borrow nowhere, even at 10 per cent, and now the time hurries me to finish it. So I beg you, dear brother, don't refuse my request, send me the soonest possible at least what you owe me, and hereby you will do a great service to myself and to my family. You know, fear comes upon me when I remember that if I don't have my own small home when my strength and my health refuse their service and I shall be compelled to take a stick into my hand as a help to my feet, that I shall then have to spend the rest of my days in some damp and half-dark cellar. I feel ill at this thought. I endeavored to add one penny to another in the measure of my strength and capacity in order to secure myself against any black hour, and to have at any rate a roof of my own.

Besides what you owe, please tell Stefan that we beg him to lend us about 50 roubles, and at the first opportunity we promise to give it back, with our thanks.

TOMASZ and ANTONINA BARSZCZEWSKI

324

February 4, 1909

. . . . DEAR BROTHER STANISŁAW: We beg your pardon, don't be angry with us if we offended you about this ship-ticket, because we did not know at whose cost you counted it, and now we thank you for explaining to us how it ought to be. Aleksander says that he will give us 100 roubles [of the debt he owes you] and we thank you for it, for your good will and your good actions. We thank also our brother Aleksander, because he did not disavow that [debt], which he pays us.

Now it is your parents who write. Dear son, you write to us, your parents, and you ask us about the money which you sent. But you sent us 50 roubles when Aleksander came from the army, which were for his journey, and you sent the rest at our disposition, and now you ask about it. The 150 roubles [additional] which you sent, you wrote and said yourself in your letter that you were providing for the marriage of Józefa, and we did everything, as you wrote, we your father and mother, your parents. And now, Stanislaw, you demand 200 roubles from Aleksander. We ask you what [200 roubles]? He is giving 100 roubles to Tomasz, and 100 roubles were spent for our different expenses, for wedding-clothes, marriage-feast, and different things.



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somebody stole my purse with my money. There was not much, five roubles with some copecks, and American, Belgian, Dutch, German, coins. I don't regret the Russian money, but I do those strange coins, because I gathered them for remembrance. And moreover, it was not nice, an American coming home in a cab and asking the landlady to pay the cabman. Everything else I brought arrived safely. . . . I gave the ear-rings to your sister-in-law, for which she thanks you very much. She is very much pleased. Tomasz bought a lot and built a small house, your second brother bought also and builds, and your parents are in Grodno, your father with Tomasz, mother with the younger son, and so they live. Only they are very angry with Tomasz because you wrote to the younger brother to give Tomasz your money. Tomasz took 100 roubles, and the rest remains with the younger brother, because both of them need it. They both bought [lots] and they are both building.

[Signature missing]

326

September 5, 1910

. . . . We inform you, dear brother, that we received 200 roubles of money, and [we], your brother and sister-in-law, thank you very much for not refusing our request. Now, brother Stanislaw, you asked whether our parents are alive, so we answer you and inform you that they left for the country, because mother was very ill and she was afraid of dying in Grodno, so they left for the old place. But, thanks to God, now they are in good health. . . . Now you ask, brother, about Chodorowski. He is now a great lord, he does not even wish to speak to us, because he has opened a beershop and a store. You say that you sent him 3 letters, and he says that he has received none. . . .

TOMASZ BARSZCZEWSKI [Probably written by his son.]

Now your [god]son bows to you. He tends the cow.

327

November 7, 1910

DEAR BROTHER: [Generalities about health.] I heard, dear brother, that you wrote that you intended to come in a year. So we beg you, come, and we will live here as best we can. Now I beg you, dear brother, if you can, send me 100 roubles. I don't want them for drinking, but I should like to buy another cow. I have some roubles,

but it is not enough. I have a piece of land, but I hate to sell it. If you come you can take it for your house, and if you don't want it I shall then sell it to somebody else and give you the money back. I should like to borrow money here, but nobody will give it to me. Good men have none and bad men are envious. Now I inform you, dear brother, that my house costs me 705 roubles, and the cellar 105 roubles. I beg you, dear brother, together with my wife, don't refuse my request. . . . Now your [god]son Alfons greets you, wishes you every good and begs you to come.

[TOMASZ BARSZCZEWSKI]

328

[Probably winter, 1910-11]

. . . . I, Aleksander, your brother, and my wife Marya and my children, we Barszczewskis, send you a greeting brother Stanislaw and sister-in-law. We don't yet know our sister-in-law, but by letter we kiss you, brother and sister-in-law, and we wish you, in the name of Jesus, health and whatever you want from God. And now I ask you, brother, whether our Lord Jesus loved the world or the man? I say, the man, because for his sake He was hung upon the cross, and He loved the man. When hanging upon the cross, He saw John under the cross, and said to his mother, "There standing near you is your son." And He said to John, "That is your mother." So He called us sons of Mary, and His brothers. Our Lord Jesus says to us, "Brothers, love God, and I will love you." Our Lord Jesus orders men to love one another and to call one another brothers. Why do we, children of the same father and the same mother, not love one another? Why? Because fire is kindled among us, and hell burns, and satans rejoice, that we, brothers, live well and remember one another and love one another in such a way [irony]. Oh, may God and the Holiest Mother grant us, brothers, to love one another; as Mary loved our Lord Jesus, so we ought to love one another and have charity. As Christ our Lord said, "Love one another and have charity, then your Highest will love you."¹ But you, brother, did you remember that you had a father and a mother in your land? You forgot how your mother nursed you, how many nights she did not sleep. You went to make money, and you forgot that you

¹ The whole religious introduction may be either an imitation of a sermon or a result of "philosophizing" under Russian influence, as with Tomasz. But from this point to the end the letter is typically Polish and peasant.

left old parents. Do you know, brother, what a sorrow there was when our mother was dying? She called to us, "My sons, why do I not see you? You went far away into the world, and you forgot about us." What a pity it was when our mother was dying that there was nobody to wipe the tears from her eyes. And nevertheless in dying she blessed [her sons], and she blessed you, brother Stanislaw. She did not forget you, although you forgot your mother. Before her death she wrote asking for help, then I borrowed some money and sent it to them; but Tomasz wrote such a letter that our father could not listen when they read it to him, so he wrote me. . . .

ALEKSANDER BARSZCZEWSKI

329

VILLAGE SYTKI, December 29, 1913

MY DEAREST SON STASIO AND MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW: I, your father, send you my blessing. May God bless you in your intentions and help you; whatever you wish for yourselves, I wish it to you. And now I inform you, dear children, that I am alive, but as to my health, I scarcely live in this world. I cannot nourish myself [take the same food] as before, and to tell the truth, it is very hard for me to live now. And I inform you, dear son, that we buried your mother 3 years ago, but you did not know about mother's death, because you forgot about us. It seems to me that 7 years have passed since we spoke to one another by letters. More than once we wept for you, thinking that you were no longer alive. But at last we received news from you, and I was glad that in my old days I heard at least by letter some words about your life and success. Now I beg you, my son, don't forget about me, your old father, and perhaps God will not forget about you. I wish you, my dear children, every good, and above all health. Your father, old already,

JAN BARSZCZEWSKI

[Follow greetings from brother and an old companion.]

330

May 19, 1914

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER-IN-LAW . . . I, your brother Antoni, address myself to my brother Stanislaw with a great request. My dear brother, I, your brother, with great timidity beg you to be so good and to lend me at least 300 roubles. I will give it back, every penny, because, to tell the truth, I have enough to live on from



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To my godfather:

DEAR FATHER, I send you my lowest bow, bowing below your knees, and I kiss both your hands. I inform you that I am healthy, thanks to God, and I wish you the same, good health from our Lord God, every virtue and happiness. You ask me whether I learn, so I will tell you that I wish it very much, but now it is cold and snow fell, and I have no shoes, only old slippers. I kiss your hands and I beg you for a pair of shoes, and then I beg your pardon.

The sun is set, the light is out, my pen slipped from my hand, I want to sleep. Goodbye!

Your well-wishing,

ADELA BŁASZCZUK [a very young child]

HALICKI SERIES

In the Barszczewski series we noticed certain effects which Russian influence has upon the peasant on the eastern border of ethnographical Poland. Here we find the German influence manifested in the west. The Halicki's live in a small town in the province of Posen. They are not peasants, but belong to the lower bourgeoisie. The original difference in attitudes between the peasant class and the lower bourgeoisie (handworkers, shopkeepers, etc.) in small towns was, however, rather small. In fact, the Polish bourgeoisie was constituted mainly of two elements—German immigrants of the bourgeois class and Polish peasants settled in towns. In small towns the latter element prevailed. Town life developed, of course, different attitudes in economic, and to some extent in religious, life, but the character of familial life and the relation toward the community remained essentially the same, and even in economic life most of the fundamental features of the peasant are preserved, e.g., quantification of economic values, property as fundamental category. Nevertheless these old attitudes disintegrate more rapidly in towns, and any external influence shows its effects much sooner in a town than in a village.

And this is precisely true in the case of the Halickis. The hard, business-like attitude toward life which characterizes the Prussian organization has been assimilated by the Poles in the province of Posen; this assimilation was necessary in view of the economic and national struggle which they have to carry on. The changed attitudes require a reorganization of the old familial and communal solidarity upon a new basis, and this reorganization is going on. But

wherever it is not yet achieved the new attitudes merely dissolve the old social system, and we find such situations as the present one.

One special point is strongly emphasized in this series—the character of a letter as means of literary expression and the feeling of obligation to make the letters as good as possible from the literary point of view.

THE FAMILY HALICKI

R. Halicka, a widow	
Polikarp	} her sons
Kazio (Kazimierz)	
Michal	
Tadek (Tadzio, Tadeusz)	
Pela	} her daughters
Jadwiga	
Stasia (Stacha, Stanisława)	
Mania (Maryśka, Marysia)	
Staś (Stanislaw) Rakowski, Pela's husband	
Krukowski, Jadwiga's betrothed	
Grandmother	

332-47, TO POLIKARP HALICKI, IN AMERICA, FROM FAMILY-MEMBERS IN POLAND, AND A LETTER (348) FROM HALICKI TO THE AUTHORS.

332

ZALESIE, October 7, 1912

DEAR SON: I thank you for your letter, for which I waited with longing. We knew that one ship sunk with the men. Glory be to God that you are healthy and happy. I beg you, my dear son, write to us as often as you can, you know how glad I am when I can speak with you at least by letters. . . . My sickness has decreased a little; during the past week I was so sick that I did not recognize my friends. I don't know whence this sickness came . . . but Stasia knew how to help me, and God is good and let me leave my bed. And you, dear Polikarp, have provided me so well with housegoods that I can have everything, whatever a sick person may need. When I look upon the furniture bought from your economized money I must shed tears. In your room lives your successor, Mr. Frankowski.



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she is somewhat calmer. I would not grieve you with sad news; I think nevertheless that it will be better if I describe to you everything sincerely.

I am very pained that we have spent the last times so sadly. Perhaps you regret it yourself, for if you had known that you would get so far away certainly you would not have acted thus, and you would have spared our mother's tears. And Stasia, and even Jadwiga, is not so bad, although she has a sharp tongue. Particularly, I could not bear it that you hated her so. What should I say? I ought to avenge myself more than you did. Perhaps you won't be pleased with me for mentioning old sins. But I know how much we have all wept when we learned that you were to go away in earnest. It seemed to us so improbable. Jadwiga cried for whole days that she did not bid you goodbye. Everybody said that it would be better if Michal had left, he would have caused less sorrow.

Your place is occupied by a Mr. Frankowski. The boys ought to take him for a model. What a quiet man! For whole evenings he stays at home, reads, plays with the boys at different games. Mother would even prefer sometimes if he went somewhere or shut himself up in his room; she could then do more [housework]. Mania is with me during the day, helps me in everything and waits impatiently for the evening to come—they are so merry and jest so much there at home. But Jadwiga stays with me continually; she helps me in sewing and sleeps here. I have only 3 girls for sewing, and there is very much work. . . . Don't wonder that we did not answer you sooner. Staś [husband] committed it to me, and I have too much to do. The business goes on very well. . . . But although we have enough to eat and to drink I am not satisfied with all this. Staś is iniquitous. He never gets drunk but he has such a something in him that more than once the worst ideas come into my mind. I put all the fault upon myself and reproach myself [for having married him], and you would do the same. . . . You write me that you are pleased there and succeed well. Thanks to God, if it is really so, but it seems to me that you try to stifle yourself [your feelings]. I cannot believe, I know your disposition, I know how much I suffered without showing it, although I was judged very bad. And today, when I reflect, it seems to me that there was nobody worthy of my sufferings. Staś would not be so bad of himself, if he were better educated and did not lack religion. This kills me, that he was able thus to pretend. And

today it seems as if he wanted to avenge himself upon my family, as if he hated them. He won't let the children come to our home. Although for the sake of appearances we don't show it to people, yet as we are in business, people notice enough. And for his own family he fights to the last. Surely he would like to have them with him. They moved to Leszno, God knows for how long. If they had known that Staś would come so rapidly to his own business, they would not have done it. What I shall have to struggle with still! And it pains me still more when I see discord at home, lack of attachment of one to another. My heart burst open! I should like to sympathize more with them during my life, but they [the boys] are too hard. Although they have Frankowski's example it is of no use. I don't praise him too much—I know little of his past life—but as far as we know him it is difficult to find such a kind and quiet man. But Michal! If he does not improve he will perish miserably. Nobody praises him.

Perhaps I shall bore you with my scribbling, but I don't know how to compose a letter as well as you do. Moreover I have written it during a whole week, and I have a sore hand. Only I beg you very much, you have already the letter from Krukowski, help them as you can, but keep him in hand. . . . Don't be obstinately grudging against Jadwiga, for we have enough to suffer from others [outside of the family]. Today I so much want concord among our family. I have always desired it, but today, after a new catastrophe with Staś—perhaps they will write you about it from home. I finish this letter at home, for I cannot do it in my own house from fear of Staś. . . .

I wish you healthy and merry holidays—health, happiness, and God's blessing in the New Year.

I have still so much to write—but later.

Your loving sister,

PELA

DEAR POLIKARP: I write to you for the first time. . . . I wish you a Merry Christmas. . . . I noticed that you have stopped writing. But you ought to keep in yourself the feeling of a *Poznaniak* [man from Posen] and not to have already that of an American. If

I could find there some suitable position, I should come next spring, for here I am bored to death. . . .¹

The [family-] war is a little calmed, but not for long. I hope you don't intend to come back while it lasts. . . . Mother says that when she receives a letter from you she feels as if she spoke with you. . . . In the house of Rakowski [brother-in-law, Pela's husband], there was an outbreak lately. R. told mother to get out of his house, without any reason. But don't be anxious about mother; I will avenge her. Pela is much changed, for R. has beaten her severely. A real crazy bandit. If you write to him abuse him soundly. And don't make him a gift of your money [ask him to pay his debt to you], for he has scarcely got feathers, and he wants to fly. [He became arrogant toward his wife's family as soon as his own business developed. Probably he was formerly dependent upon them in financial matters.]

Your brother,

KAZIMIERZ

335

New Year, 1913

DEAR SON . . . : I was very glad to receive the money, but I felt how parsimoniously you must have lived, dear son, wishing to help me for the holidays. Even if I had not the lord's help [probably a widow's pension], I should not ask anything from you. Try only to put some money aside and to come back as soon as possible to our country, at least for a short time. Naturally only if we have peace, for in the contrary case you must give up coming, for I hope that you won't come here for death. Take care of your health and life. Krukowski and we are waiting for your answer to his letters. It would be better [if it comes] for you would describe everything, but I believe that he won't mind [if it does not come], but will go. He has relatives enough there. Frankowski is no longer here. The reason was that he saw here no future at all. . . . He noticed it at once and tried secretly to find another place, and he succeeded. . . . When he bade goodbye to the priest . . . the latter asked him whether Michal [the writer's son] is able to occupy his [Frankowski's] place.

¹ The tendency to get away from home is becoming so general among Polish boys that it may be considered one of the most important causes of emigration. Even in Poland children feel as a burden their dependence on their parents and their obligations to them, and, of course, this feeling can only increase in America.



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so and so much." They have already given him the title "director of the mill." But in the office-work he is very industrious. They are satisfied with him and believe that he will be a good merchant.

Now sad days will begin here [because of Lent]. We shall spend Sundays only in reading books.

I finish my short writing. Correct my faults, for it is my first letter.

I embrace you heartily.

MARYŚKA [MANIA]

337

February 10, 1913

DEAR SON: For some days I have had the intention of writing this letter, but I could not gather my thoughts, for my heart was burdened with sorrow, because Michal also was leaving us. I am very anxious that he may get back his good name. You know him very well, so you can guess how he is. He has found a place himself and wanted absolutely to go into the world, but when the moment of separation came, he could not withhold tears. I have at least this one comfort, that he made his peace with God. In the evening he went to town to confession, the next morning he received holy communion, and he left on the third day. He wrote that he is working with a veteran of the last insurrection. I hope that under the influence of such a man he will be edified.¹ You will receive soon a letter from him.

Dear son, Stasia and I have had sad dreams. We saw you always gloomy and weeping. But, as I guessed from your letter, you must have borne painful moments when you were leaving the Ganzes.² Only take care that these disagreeable things don't happen any more. I beg you for God's sake, don't poison your health with this, that I may see you and embrace you once more, as my most beloved child.

What a joy it was when we received the parcel of tea! It has a very good taste and seems to us more healthful than ours. I was very glad that you had such an idea. Grandmother even mentioned once that as you remember about your mother, our Lord God won't forget you.

¹ Cf. No. 336, note.

² He was engaged to their daughter and left because of some quarrel. The mother means that the bad dreams are already fulfilled and no further misfortune is to be anticipated.

As to the gossip of Ososka, I have calmed her already. Now they begin to talk about the Ganzes. Ososka said that Mrs. Ganz and her daughter are running after men, and Mr. C. took an aversion to her [the daughter] once and forever.

Dear son, I inform you that Krukowski intends certainly to go to America. Before leaving he will be engaged to Jadwiga, and when he comes happily to America, he will take her at once. Only I am afraid that you won't receive her as a brother [should]. But it is true that her character has changed and she is now very serious. When Krukowski comes show him where he can find the best work. Don't be afraid about money, for he finds his way himself. I think that it would be the best for them if they could settle in Milwaukee, for it is the best to be among one's own people. You know Krukowski, that he is a good man. . . .

Wherever I go, everybody asks how you succeed. Our priest asks often about you; whether you intend to remain there and how you succeed. I say only that good people get on well everywhere, while bad people are always sour. . . .

YOUR MOTHER

338

February 19, 1913

DEAR AND BELOVED SON: I received the money for which I send you a hearty "God reward." I rejoice very much, dear child, that being in such a far world, you nevertheless remember about me. I doubt whether any of your brothers will do it. But certainly God will reward you. Dear son, it is not your duty. Why should you ever refuse anything to yourself? And, moreover, you have still the burden of the journey [the debt]. So once more, may God reward you! . . .

As I have mentioned already, dear son, Krukowski is going on March 8, for he saved so much that now he can boldly go, and if he does not like it he can boldly come back. Before leaving, i.e., next Sunday, he will exchange rings with Jadwiga. So I beg you, consider him a member of our family, i.e., in the beginning, until they marry. Later let them do as they like. Krukowski . . . confessed to me sincerely that if he had married Jadwiga at once he would be happier today. But it is not his fault. . . . He told me that he loved you much. And you know how Jadwiga has always intended to go to America. Perhaps fortune will be kind to her. . . . I shall send

you something through Krukowski; I think perhaps cigars and a bottle of cognac. . . . And I beg you, take care of Krukowski, lest some American girl should seduce him. Well, God's will. . . .

YOUR MOTHER

339

April 3, 1913

DEAR SON: We had here nice [Easter] holidays. Michal was away only 3 days, he couldn't hold out longer. . . . O my God, how Michal is changed! He sat at home, and when I told him to go and amuse himself he petted me and said, "Eh, mother, I feel the best with you." Imagine this! He, who was so insolent! I won't even describe how they behaved, he and Kazimierz, after your going. And their demands! Kazimierz is a little angry for the truth which you wrote him.

Tell me what you want. I will send you everything through Jadwiga. For, as you know, the ship-ticket will come soon. And may God grant it, for I have already spent money enough. And people envy her, marrying Krukowski.

Grandmother is mortally sick. All her children came, and she blessed us all.

Krukowski wept much in leaving. When Jadwiga receives the ship-ticket, we shall order a mass. The singers here want to sing "Veni Creator" for her.

Your truly loving

MOTHER

340

May 25, 1913

DEAR POLIKARP: I thank you heartily for your letter. You ask me why I have not given any news about myself for so long a time. I think you gave the reason yourself in writing me that I am drinking, loafing about restaurants, etc. I wonder much that you, being in America, know better what I am doing than myself. Evidently you ought to know that the news of your correspondent (I know even who it is) is not at all in accordance with the truth. [News about his future examination for journeyman-builder; complaints about his master.] Well, but all this will last only for a certain time. I think that this will be the last winter I shall spend at home. I don't know yet where I shall go, but I will *not* remain here.¹

KAZIMIERZ

¹ Cf. No. 334, note.



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pleasant for you to receive news written by your sister Stacha. But Tadek came once from the mill asking me whether I knew how to write a letter; if yes, then you ask me to write you a few words, and if not, then he said that he would help me. . . . So I take the pen, but I have no time to compose a beautiful style, only whatever thoughts come to my head, my hand follows them obediently, in order to describe my life for a rather long time.

I must confess that I have now greater and greater duties, as the oldest in the house. The whole house rests upon me, particularly since we have a strange person at home. Mother is burdened with years, but nevertheless she is always active; she has nobody [else] to help her. Mania is in business (I should like it better if she occupied herself with sewing, for among these people she will get a bad character), and thus she must be rather served at home, for even if she wished to help us, she can sometimes scarcely walk, poor girl. And thus we both, mother and I, struggle with the cruel lot. I thought that when Jadwiga left there would be fewer persons at home, but instead of her there is grandmother, who can scarcely breathe. Moreover, I took an apprentice for sewing. You can imagine my yoke. In the morning I comb my ladies [she is a hairdresser], when I come home there is a great hurry about cooking dinner. (I cook myself since we have boarders.) Sometimes I have no time to breakfast. And then cleaning of rooms, the apprentice asks about work—it is maddening! And, as you know, there is no little [farm-] stock. In a word, we have very much to do. But though we work so much, life is calm, for the boys behave well enough. We can thank God that He gives us health. Moreover, you send us from time to time what you can; whatever you do for mother, you do it also for us. Often we have mirth. When your letter comes everybody tries to get it first. For example, when you wrote your last letter to mother you must have been in a splendid humor, and it caused us a great joy. Now I permit myself also to describe to you how Michal was for two weeks at home. The poor fellow, he has improved very much in his home life; we spent very pleasant hours and days. The poor boy, he looks so bad and does not care for his health. He tried to get a place, but he was dismissed everywhere. You know how mother is. She began to get anxious, he became very irritable lately, and finally he got some place in O., but he will be there only a month. Even if one wanted to put the blame on him, one could not. It is evidently his destiny. I noticed during his stay at home that he

never said a prayer, slept over the time of mass. Perhaps he got so Germanized in that last place. I pity him much, but I cannot help him.

Dear Polikarp, in your letters to Michal I read about a secret which you had confided to him. If you will not be angry with me I will tell you. Leave off this intention. The actor's life is miserable and your health is not good enough. If you were in Posen, it would be another question; we should admire you also. It is well that mother does not know about it, for certainly she would have counted it among the worst crimes.¹ This news came to the ears of Pela and Mania; even Kazio and Tadzio know nothing.

Describe to me what coiffure is fashionable in America and what dresses. Jadwiga writes so little that I cannot get an answer to any questions, and Krukowski does not write at all. Soon it will be mother's name-day, and on September 2, that of Frankowski. Don't forget to send him wishes. He got another place. . . . Everybody invited him, . . . but he did not go anywhere, he remained with us. Three days after his departure he came through Zalesie from Posen to his new place, and came to us again. He was angry, for Mrs. Ch. congratulated him on leaving his heart in Zalesie, and in general everybody in Z. says that I go nowhere because I am engaged to him.

. . . I am proud that I became an interesting person in Zalesie. Though never such an idea—to marry Frankowski—came into my head; but people talk. It is true that he got attached to us. He writes often to me, and it is difficult for me to answer him. Often if mother did not oblige me I should not do it. But I doubt whether he will be now equally attached. Probably he will be proud of his luck. . . . Don't forget about Michal. Give him always good advice. Frankowski himself when he knew him, said that he needed continual advice and remonstrance, for he is very light-headed. . . . I send you a hearty greeting.

Your sister,

STACHA

¹ The prejudice against the actor's life is not at all based upon any idea of the immoral character of theatrical shows—which does not exist in Poland—but upon the current conception of the actor's private life, as wandering, insecure, immoral in sexual relations, given up to drinking. The conception is drawn from the observation of wandering provincial troops half a century ago. The artistic *Bohême* is precisely the antithesis of the life-ideal of the Poles of Posen. The theater itself in Posen is an exception in public opinion because of its national importance.

344

September 16, 1913

DEAR POLIKARP: I cannot understand how my letter could have angered you so much [the letter referred to is missing], and how the moment after reading that letter could have been the most disagreeable since you have been in America. Don't believe that I, writing that letter with good intentions, wanted to give you any advice or to make any reproaches about your behaving badly. Oh no! I know your character now. I know that you have been not only a good, but a model brother, for I don't know how the others will be but I think that no one of them will behave as you. I have particularly Michal in mind, for although he was able to behave well during the 2 days which he spent at home, in reality he is not like this. Mother grieves now over the lot that awaits him. Now he works in the mill, but I don't know how long it will last. For Tadzio it is disagreeable, for he is more respected than Michal [though he is only a boy], and more than once he complains about him when he comes back home. Michal feels happy with Kostek, with whom he keeps company as if he were dependent upon him. But through this he ruins all his future. Do you know, he has become worse, not better. Even if there are strangers at home he behaves as if he were quite uneducated, and swearing is with him a usual thing. Perhaps he will have more humility when he has not a pfennig in his pockets, as it was in Kamień where he had not even money enough to send a postcard home. Mother did not write you, perhaps, about it, but I am obliged to, for you believe that he has reproaches to hear from us. But you are mistaken, for it is not he, but we who hear reproaches. Mother [does not reproach him, for she] is afraid that he may take his life. I won't write any more, for I don't know what an impression this letter will make upon you, and then it is already 10 o'clock at night and time to sleep. The best time to write is night for me, for nobody hinders me. . . .

Be healthy, cheerful, keep far from you all troubles and don't get angry.

With kindest greeting and hearty embraces.

Always the same,

MARYŚKA



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346

February 2, 1914

DEAR BROTHER: Probably you expected to receive my letter sooner, but I could hardly find a quiet moment, for I not only have much work in the shop, it awaits me at home. When a moment comes I profit by it to sew my dresses. And now mother is with Staś and Pela, at a family-festival, for Pela's little son Polikarp is baptized today. Stacha is at a performance at the Sokols. Everybody is away, and I am glad that I can pen a few words to you.

The winter season [in the shop] was very good, and the proprietor is satisfied. It is perhaps because the expropriation [of Polish land] is postponed and people are less criticized [when they buy in German shops. The girl is in a German shop]. I should never have believed that at such a time people would go to strangers; in our shop . . . almost two-thirds of the buyers are Poles. Although in Zalesie exceptions are not so much made [Poles who work with Germans are not so despised], nevertheless it is very painful for me that I must be among people who persecute us continually. How glad I should be to stay at home, for there is work enough everywhere. Only mother cannot decide and keep her decision. You don't know what annoyances I must bear sometimes. In one of your letters to mother you wrote that my demands are too great. But you are mistaken. I know that somebody has written false things to you about me. But I will bear patiently everything. For, to tell the truth, I am only a victim, as you mentioned once in a letter, and I must suffer for all the others. Perhaps Jadwiga was also misused in this way and now she must suffer for it, for what nobody was willing [to say] Jadwiga had to say. Therefore it was said that she had a big mouth, and finally she was considered the worst at home.¹ But perhaps the time will come when after getting rid of this scorn she will be considered the best.

It is very difficult for me to talk about Michal, for at this thought my ideas seem to leave my head. I think that you have been also much oppressed by this news. He was always a dreamer, with no seriousness, and he will remain one. After all the letters from mother, after all the begging and imploring he decided, after a long time, to write that he lighted a cigarette with these silly stories [that he does not mind them; he is evidently accused of some dishonesty]. And here the Jew threatens mother again with the court. I don't know

¹ Cf. No. 348.

how this matter will end. Polikarp, make this sacrifice, write him a few words, they will certainly act upon him, I am sure. What a life he must lead now with the Lejowskis, where anger is always boiling. Antek L. and his father pass each other by as if they were not acquainted. How can Michal improve there? So, I beg you, grant my request. [Weather; skating; amusements.] You have forgotten about my name-day; everybody has forgotten except mother. I never remember having such a name-day. . . .

I finish my splendid writing and kiss you many times.

Always the same,

MARYŚKA

347

February 22, 1914

DEAR POLIKARP: . . . You ask me whether I am in such a financial position that I could go to the architectural school. Don't you know our condition? Don't you know that the money which I bring home is immediately spent? It is very nice of you that you wanted to deprive yourself and to put aside for me, i.e., to lend me, some money. I am glad that I have at least one such brother. Could not Michal send some money home, for I hear that he gets 140 marks a month? As to me, I shall see later, in May or June. I shall risk writing to Posen [to the school]. . . . Perhaps Rakowski could also lend me some money, for I have nothing myself. . . . There was a call to military service yesterday. Everybody was taken except 3 boys. Mother even wept from pity. . . .

KAZIMIERZ

348

March 4, 1915

DEAR SIR: . . . The quarrel with my sister Jadwiga arose, in my opinion, from a very trifling cause, although my mother and my sisters ascribed to it more importance.

When we were once together at a party, Jadwiga noticed that my behavior toward one of my friends was too cordial. My brothers and sisters disliked the whole family of this girl for some wrong caused us a few years ago, but I did not care about it. At home they required me to avoid altogether our so-called enemies, but I did not conform to this demand, considering such behavior not suitable in society (in the club). Although I never met this girl intentionally outside

of the club meetings, the gossip grew that I was secretly engaged to her. Jadwiga caught this gossip and was the first to inform mother of it. My family would never have consented to such an alliance, and I did not think of it either. In general, there was no love-relation at all with that friend. In view of the gossip, I gave no explanation but demanded that they should not annoy an innocent girl. This only strengthened the suspicions. The whole matter was later cleared up, particularly when, in consequence of this incident, I let myself be persuaded by some persons from America, who were then in Zalesie, and came with them here, leaving a splendid position and my "sweet-heart." I succeeded in getting my mother's permission, promising to remember her and to come back after two years. . . . Jadwiga refused nevertheless to bid me goodbye. She is now here in America, and our relations are again harmonious. . . .

P. HALICKI



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THE FAMILY RZEPKOWSKI

August Rzepkowski, an emigrant

Michał	}	his cousins
Jakób		
Klemens		
Staś		
Emilia		
Marya		
Wikcia		

Zocha, daughter of another cousin

349-52, TO AUGUST RZEPKOWSKI, IN AMERICA, FROM
FAMILY-MEMBERS IN POLAND

349

January 27, 1908

DEAR AUGUST: I lack words to thank you for remembering me. You gave me a great pleasure in sending your photograph and that of your family. When I came to the Radońskis (to Wikcia) and she gave me your photograph saying that it was for me and asking whether I recognized you, I could not recognize you; you have changed very much.¹ And you would not know me either. I am already a gray-haired old woman. My misfortunes, griefs, sorrows about my children ruined my health. It is already 25 years since I married, 7 years since I became a widow. I have five children, three boys and two daughters. The oldest, Kazimierz, is 23 years old. He is in a military school in Czugajewo, government Cherson. When my husband lived he was in the fourth class, and finished it after the death of my husband, but had no great wish to learn and went to the army [as volunteer].² But as the number of Poles in the military school is limited, for 3 years he could not pass the examination, only last year he suc-

¹ August has renewed relations with his cousins and his brother after more than twenty years of absolute silence. This sudden revival of familial feelings is a frequent case and comes without any apparent reason. Not less frequently it happens that members of a family who have never known one another feel suddenly interested, write and try to meet. This behavior is obviously due to a functioning of infantile memories, and points back to a more communistic familial organization.

² It is considered rather bad for a Pole to make a military career in the Russian army. As, moreover, the instruction of the army officers is very insufficient (hardly equal to the gymnasium instruction), this explains why the mother considers her son's choice as a result of his unwillingness to learn.

ceeded after many difficulties. The other son, Boleslaw, 22 years, could not learn because of deafness. He finished only two classes in the gymnasium in Kalisz. After his father's death I sent him to the chocolate and candy factory "Cukiernicy Warszawscy," but nobody would accept him because he lacks instruction and is deaf (in one ear). The third, Maryan, 21 years, finished 6 classes in a real gymnasium and is studying in Warsaw, in the school of Wawelberg. He will become a technical engineer, but he is in only the second year, and there are four. The oldest daughter, Janina, is 17 years old; she is in a boarding school in Warsaw in the sixth class. In June she will finish there and will go to the musical conservatory, because she has great ability and talent in music. She has 4 years still to work, and then she must earn her living by lessons. The younger, Wieslawa, is 16 years old, she is at the same school in the fifth class. When she finishes I shall try to get a place as teacher for her. After the death of my husband very little [money] remained; were it not for the help of the family I could not educate my children. God took their protector away when he was most necessary for the children. Michal, my youngest brother, is a priest in Dzierżenin. He took me with all my children to himself;¹ and Jakób and Klemens help with money. Thanks to their good hearts, I can instruct my children. Mother and Karusia had been also with Michal. Four years ago Karusia died. . . . She was 55 years old. Mother died on November 4, one year ago. One half of her body was paralyzed; she lay months in her bed. Poor thing, she suffered much, but was always calm, submitting to the will of God. Her death was very easy, she slept quietly and left us orphans. God took away from us this beloved bond of the whole family. My husband died also from a heart illness. . . . He was buried in Warsaw, because there Jakób has his tomb, where his wife is buried. Father, mother, and Karusia

¹ To have a member of the family a priest is considered the greatest luck by the peasants. The fact itself more than anything else raises the social standing of the family; some of the priest's religious character is, in the eyes of the peasant, communicated to his relatives. And in economic matters the priest proves, as we see in the present case, of the greatest help to the family. He has a good income and no personal obligations; he is supposed to preserve the attitude of familial solidarity, and he does preserve it in fact. Therefore every peasant, almost without exception, when giving instruction to his son, dreams that the latter will become a priest. We have here the same attitude which for many centuries the noble families had preserved; one son had to become a priest for the sake of the family, even if it meant a sacrifice of personal aspirations.

are buried in Ciechanów, because Jakób erected a family tomb of the Rzepkowskis there, as uncle Wiktor is a priest there and will be there up to his death. Mother wished father to be buried there and uncle to take care of the chapel and to celebrate the holy mass for the souls of the deceased family as long as he lives.

Lastly I have had trouble because in spite of the deafness of my son Boleslaw they insisted on calling him to the army. They kept him in the hospital in the fort of Modlin, and wearied him during 6 weeks. I had much to suffer before I succeeded in getting him free. You have no idea what lawless things are going on here, we are so happy that often the living envy the dead. A small star shone for a moment and again clouds are coming [referring to the promises of autonomy made by Russia in 1906].

Do you correspond with anyone from Lipsk? Do you know that they have been permitted to build a church?¹ I was there a year ago, after 30 years. I had hoped to find a little progress and improvement, but I saw with pain that it is worse than it was when we lived there. The glass [drinking] plays the main part there. The backwardness is enormous. I write this letter in Zaremby, where I have been for a week with [my brother] the priest Klemens. Wikcia came also, and Emilia lives here. We come so very seldom together; we are the only sisters since Karolcia left us [died].

Your sister [cousin],

MARYA

350

January 28, 1908

DEAR AUGUST: By a very strange and unexpected accident we got news of where you are living in America; up to the present we did not know where to find you. We take advantage of the address we received and without delay we take the pen in order to inform you what is the news with us. But during such a long past and such a long time of our common silence many changes had to come, very sad changes for our family. Our parents are dead, and sister Karolina, the husband of Auntie Misiewicz, both the Żółkiewskis, the husband of my sister Mania, etc. Only my husband Pawel is alive and the young generation, which also is getting old. It is very sad that in Lipsk they devote themselves so much to the glass.

¹ The permission to build a (Catholic) church is still difficult to get in Russian Poland, particularly in the east.



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The more so as our health is no longer good. Rheumatism especially prevails in our whole family. "Old age is not a joy." The priest Michal is the youngest and he was born in 1863; what shall I say about us older ones? But I must inform you about my children, that Janek is still unmarried but already betrothed, and Jadzia, my daughter, married a student of medicine, so she must work until he completes his medical studies. It is only bad that they must live apart, for he is in Cracow. If there were a [Polish] university in Warsaw it would be much easier for them, and much better to be together. But probably Mania informed you about our family, that three brothers are in Warsaw and sister Wiktorja, who is married. Staś is in Riga in the army, two brothers are priests in their parishes, and two sisters, myself and Mania, are with them. . .

[EMILIA]

351

WARSAW, May 12, 1909

MY DEAR, MY BELOVED UNCLE: I received your letter this week. It was so sad that it frightened me and therefore I write directly in order to share my thoughts with you. I regret that I caused you pain without even knowing it. It is true that lately I did not give you any sign of life but believe me, I was so ill that I could not take a pen in hand, and [brother] Wacio is as afraid of writing as a Jew is of water, and moreover nobody can write for me as I write myself. Therefore I did not ask either my other brothers or my parents. I believed that I should die and then my parents would write to you. Meanwhile it has turned out otherwise. I am still alive, I don't know for how long a time. In any case every letter that I write seems to me the last which I can write. Therefore you see, dear uncle, in what a position I am. Please don't wonder if I am late in writing, although I will try to avoid it as much as possible. You don't write whether you are in good health. How are auntie and my cousins doing? I know only that they are working but that is not enough for me. With us there is no news. My parents and brothers are in good health and in the best of spirits. It is always so, only sometimes it changes under the influence of higher forces, but everything ends happily.

I had lately the honor of getting acquainted with our countryman from Lipsk, perhaps you remember him—Mr. Adam Chomiczewski. He deigned to come to us because his cousin Skokowska, who is in Warsaw for treatment, lives with us. You have no idea what a man

he is, you cannot remember all the benefits he has done to people, all the wealth and relationships he has! He is a friend of the first persons in Warsaw and in the whole country! He poses egregiously but evidently he does not know that whoever listens to him, says, "Stupid man!" I like people from my country, but this one does not please me. I will write today about no general questions, because to tell the truth I am very sleepy. It is late already, and during the day I have no time to write because I am preparing to go away next week, or some day. Then there is nothing of importance. About personal questions also much cannot be said. I will write to you at length after getting to Wyzarne; I shall have more time there and my thoughts will be freer. I hope to live for those few weeks, and if it happens otherwise, well, then my parents will inform you that your correspondent has removed from here to eternity. But I confess that, if formerly I wished to die, now such an ending is displeasing for I want to live. It seems that I perceived too late that life is beautiful in spite of all. I am curious whether in dying one has all his presence of mind, whether he understands what is going on at that moment with him and around him. If so, I thank very much [wish to be excused]. I don't wish to die in full consciousness. I cannot imagine what occurs in the head, in the thoughts of the dying person, what he feels and thinks. Do you know, I have the intention of dying with a pen in my hand, namely to write what I feel in those last moments. Of course, if it is possible to do it and if regret for the flying life does not oppress me.

I write as if I were already with one foot in the grave, but it is not so, because I don't even lie in bed, but I walk. I even sew sometimes with the sewing-machine; only this "death" persecutes me, and I cannot write more today, because all my faculties are covered with mourning crape. [Greetings and kisses.]

ZOCHA

MY DEAR UNCLE: Two weeks have passed already since I left Warsaw, and not until today have I found time to write to you, dear uncle. I had to renew my old acquaintances, and had other obligations also, which did not permit me to do until now what I should have begun with. How is your health, dear uncle and auntie? Are my little cousins in good health, do they play or work? I am curious

how the weather is, and the temperature in America, because here it is bad, not wet, but very cold. Do you know, not all the potatoes have yet come up? The summer will be very late.

I feel worse than bad in my health. It has come so far that while 5 years ago I weighed 148 pounds, now I weigh scarcely 112; it is perhaps the smallest weight that a grown-up person can have. I have little hope of living for a long time, and still less of having the health and strength, which I need so much for work. That is the reason I cannot follow your advice, dear uncle, about long walks. From Wyzarne to Lipsk is 6 versts; to Prolejki, 4 times as far. It is not for my strength to walk so long a way, since if I walk a little through the forest I feel terribly tired. Corsets and narrow shoes I don't wear even in Warsaw, the less so in the country. I take as much sour and sweet milk as I can and everything made from milk. I also eat all vegetables, but what is the use of all this? In the country, indeed, I get better during the summer, and some pounds are added to my weight, but the winter takes all this away and more still. How long will it last, and what kind of illness is it? No doctor can know it. The home remedies, the so-called old woman's remedies, don't bring the desired results either. I try everything that anybody advises me to do, and in vain. Now somebody got the idea that it is a tape-worm, and they gave me some poison; but I fear to use it lest I may poison myself in reality. Death does not let us wait very long for itself; why should I hasten its visit?

In Lipsk I found everything as it has been from old; no changes reach these retired places. If there were not the frequent, too frequent, emigration to America and back, people here could remain for a long time "as in God's house behind the stove" [Proverb: happy and calm] without knowing that there exists a world besides Suwałki, Grodno, Warsaw, and Częstochowa, and that in this world people are more intelligent, richer and better prepared to live. Here it is that those who have money enough sit every day in the tavern—no, it is not a tavern, these belong to the past—but a "restaurant"! Lipsk has been able to do this much for the comfort of its citizens. And those who have not so much money work the whole week in order that they may at least on Sunday "be equal to men" and sit at the same table—or under the same table. Not everybody is like this, but an enormous majority. The cause of all this is the lack of schools, and therefore people who are a little more intelligent cry



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lords," as the Jews say. In America people are more practical, therefore it is better there than here.

Staying in the country annoys me very much, not because I am without occupation—I have enough for my strength—but much time remains which in Warsaw I spent in reading books, and here I have none. I am robbed of this only pleasure that remained, because I like books better than all amusements and plays or society, all visits, etc. In Warsaw I surrounded myself with books like a true bookworm; here I cannot borrow them anywhere, and I am sad. [Greetings and kisses.]

ZOCHA

KALINOWICZ SERIES

We have here an interesting case of familial solidarity preserved in full strength by the children after the death of their parents, in spite of the usually disintegrating influence of emigration. Affection seems to have grown stronger and has taken the place of the subordination to the head of the family. In this way the moral unity of the group is kept, although there is neither a common economic basis of existence nor any external pressure of the community, and in spite of the fact that the members are separated.

The growth of affection is shown by the exaggerated sentimentality in the letters. The expression of feelings in the peasant is seldom proportionate to their real importance, but, when we find such an exaltation as throughout almost all of the letters of the members of this family, there is certainly a very real intensification of the feelings. There is also a very good opportunity for the familial solidarity to manifest itself in the fact of the marriage of one sister. And, in general, we see this solidarity in its purest form, free from any questions of money, social opinion, etc.

THE FAMILY KALINOWICZ

Władzio (Władysław)	}	brothers
Leon		
Janek		
Helcia	}	sisters
Stasia		
Todzia (Teodora)		
Antosia		
Kasia Hulewiczka, cousin		
Bronek, Helcia's husband		
Kasia's husband		
An uncle		

353-63, TO WŁADZIO (WŁADYSŁAW) KALINOWICZ, IN
AMERICA, FROM FAMILY-MEMBERS

353

[December 5, 1913]

DEAR WŁADZIO: We send you a kind and hearty greeting, we embrace you and kiss you innumerable times and we inform you that, thanks to God, we are in good health, and we wish you also with our whole heart the best of health. Dear brother, after a long waiting and a great longing we received your letter which rejoiced us so much that we wept the whole day from joy that you are alive and from sorrow that perhaps you bear there misery, dear Władzio. Today it is December 5, tomorrow we are going home, and I think to myself, O God, even if I had to work as hard until the next December, or even a year more, I would work gladly, if I could help our dear little brother. But nothing can be done.¹ Dear Władzio, when we remember you, we shed bitter tears and we think that there is nothing more left for us upon this world. I would be glad to go to you, dear Władzio. . . . Now we finish these few words, we greet you once more, kiss you and embrace you. Perhaps God will comfort us and we shall see one another still. When we get home we will write oftener. . . .

T[EODORA] and J[ANEK] KALINOWICZ

Now we greet dear Hulewiczka [cousin], with her husband and son.

354

[ŁĄD, end of January, 1914]

MOST BELOVED WŁADZIO: I, Todzia [Teodora] write to you these few words. First, I greet you with my whole heart, I kiss you and embrace you hundreds of times. Now I inform you first, dear Władzio, about Helcia's wedding. The wedding was performed on January 21, at 7 o'clock in the evening. It was very beautiful, all the lights in the church shone, rugs were spread out and singers sang. But, dear Władzio, all this changed for us into a great sorrow and we all wept, because our most beloved Władzio was not there. Dear Władzio, we feel very sad without you and we long for you. Dear Władzio, write a few words to Bronek, our brother-in-law, for he is always very sad; he imagines that perhaps you are angry with him.

¹ That is, they must go home, for the Polish season-workers are not permitted to stay in Prussia during two winter months, the Prussians fearing that they will settle in the east provinces and strengthen the Polish element there.



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than that of others [my companions]. So I beg you very much, dear brother, if somebody tells you that you are alone, spit into his eyes, and remember that you have brothers and sisters who want news from you. You wrote in the beginning and you complained about me, [saying] that it interested you and you wanted to know about my condition, about my success. And you think that I am not interested. But I want very much to know about your health and success, to know where my dear brothers are. So I beg you very much, write me where you are, how do you succeed for from home they write me nothing about you; they say only that you don't succeed in America. Such is our lot, that we don't succeed anywhere. . . .

Your brother,

LEON

356

February 11, 1914

MOST BELOVED BROTHER: Today I had the happiness to receive your letter which caused me a great joy. . . . When I received it I could not eat my dinner. . . . You ask me how long I have still to serve. I cannot tell you exactly for I don't know it myself. I was glad that the last year was coming but now I am very sad for people say that there will be a war with Prussia and Austria and England. . . . You know what my life is, far away from my dearest brothers and sisters. I cannot complain that the conditions are bad, but what about this slavery? For what am I a slave in these Siberian mountains? I could be something else than I am [not a simple soldier], but I don't want it, I am weary of life. . . .

You say that Helcia is getting married. Yes, she asked me for advice [permission], and I advised her also to do it, for I pity her very much, that she remains so alone, while we don't know whether any one of us will ever come back to our beloved Poland and to our beloved sisters and brothers. It seems to me as if I never should tear myself out of this slavery. Your intentions are very serious [probably the brother intends to take his family to America], but don't worry about me as long as I am in service. When I see that things are bad I shall address myself to you, but now for a time I will be patient. The service is easy. [Expression of brotherly feelings; news and request for news about relatives and friends.]

I remain in longing.

Your loving brother,

LEON

357

May 19, 1914

MOST BELOVED BROTHER: You ask me why I send you letters with stamps, whether I am so rich in money. Well, I don't grudge these 10 copecks. Why, I have 90 roubles—oh, I beg your pardon, 90 copecks—a month. But for this money I can send more letters than my brother-in-law, who has more honor [higher position?] and more money than I.¹ They wrote to me not long ago, complaining that you don't write to him. He says that he is often in despair, because everybody in our family, particularly the brothers, looks at him with an unfavorable eye. Stasia and Todzia complained also that you wrote seldom to them. I told them to write more often, then they will receive more letters. And why does Helcia not write to Hulewiczka? I will learn it and inform you. If it is through him [the brother-in-law], I will thank him when I come back.²

LEON

358

LĄD, March 22, 1914

DEAR WŁADZIO: In our first words to you P[raised] b[e] J[esus] Chr[istus]. We hope that you will answer us: "In centuries of centuries, Amen." [Greetings; health.]

Dear Władzio, we have written 4 letters to you and we don't know what happened, for we received an answer to none. We are very much pained that our most beloved brother forgets about us. Dear Władzio, we love you so much, I pray to our Lord God that I may see you at least in a dream, and you have forgotten about us.

Dear Władzio, don't believe Janka that she is faithful to you. She has already Józef Balczak. She bought a ring for him, and she dares to write to you! Pardon me, dearest Władzio, for writing thus to

¹ The brother-in-law is required to become at once a member of the family in the full sense of this membership.

² In spite of the extraordinary efforts to preserve the familial solidarity, the brother-in-law is not assimilated, and the sister is estranged; the family not only does not acquire a new member but is in danger of losing one. The family Kalinowicz is not held together by a community of economic or social interests, but merely by affection, and there seems to be no immediate relation of solidarity between it and the family of the brother-in-law, simply because the family Kalinowicz is no longer a complete and organized family-group, and does not count as such in the eyes of the community. A family must either have a head (or rather, a head-couple) or be composed of married, settled, and socially mature members, in order to have a social standing as a group.

you, but we have a dear brother and we want to have also a dear sister-in-law, and that is the end of it. I write you nothing but the holy truth. I inform you, most beloved Właczio, that we shall go into the world on March 30. We are very sad that we must wander about the world, but nothing can be helped. God's will be done, let it be so for some time. Dear Władzio, don't be angry with Helcia, she grieves very much that you have not written to her for so long a time. Dear Władzio, Helcia longs much for Hulewiczka, sends her a sincere greeting, kisses her and embraces her thousands of times and begs her to write. Dear Władzio, don't be angry with Helcia for having married. She had nothing else to expect but this Prussian grease [figurative for "season-work;" a particular kind of grease is given to the season-workers for cooking], and we don't like this Prussian grease; we are tired of it. Dear Władzio, Janek is a good-for-nothing, he always plays cards, refuses to listen to anybody, is very vulgar, offends everybody; such a rogue as the world has never seen. Write him a few words, dear Władzio, perhaps you will correct him a little in this way.

Dear Władzio, perhaps you are displeased with me for describing everything thus, but what you don't like, forgive me. I write you the sincere truth, because I love you sincerely.

I remain your truly loving sister,

TEODORA

359

May 8 [1914]

. . . DEAR WŁADZIO: Don't be angry with us for writing little to you, for it seems to me that we have written more to you than you, dear brother, to us. Believe me, I never felt so sad at home as this winter. You say, dear Władzio, that we have a brother-in-law now and therefore we forget about you. It is not true, we shall never forget you, for you are our most beloved little brother and we long for you as a deer for water, like earth without rain; and we want to see you as soon as possible. Dear Władzio, if you knew how every letter of yours rejoices us you would write more often, our beloved brother. . . .

I wrote to you after Helcia's wedding, but I don't know whether you received this letter. I pitied [regretted?] Helcia very much, I cried during the whole festival; the festival was not a festival, but a sorrow for me [play of words, *wesele*, marriage.



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or since they lay down for the first time to sleep they have not awakened up to the present. Well, I will arouse them when I go back. . . . I received a letter from Mińsk. They wrote me that uncle is getting married and they invite me to come to them after the end of my service. I have had for a long time the idea of visiting them and of getting acquainted with them, for they are very good people.¹ They always ask whether or not I need anything. But they have not sent me anything up to the present, for my character does not permit me to beg. Everybody knows that I am not earning wages, but in slavery [and they ought to send without asking]. . . .

LEON

362

LAD, July 13, 1914

. . . . DEAR WŁADZIO: Your letter found us in good health. [Wishes.] I beg your pardon for not having answered your first letter, but I have no time to write and Helcia does not want to write alone. You were dissatisfied that I did not write. I did not write, it is true, and you were angry with me, it is a fact. But you had no reason. I have more reason [to be angry] but today I beg your pardon for everything. You were dissatisfied with us for not having written to you before our wedding. But you know why we did not write. You did not write to me and therefore I did not write to you.² Today I write to you, dear Władzio, and we are very glad that you don't forget about us, and we don't forget about you either. We remember you continually. Now I inform you what is the news here. Wacek is no more with us, because he got totally spoiled. He attempted to violate Mania F. He invited her to his room saying that he would show her the photograph of the young manor-owner; he closed the door with the key and threw her upon the bed. Only she cried very much. With difficulty people forced the door.³ . . . There was an

¹ The uncle should become the head of the family after the father's death. We see, indeed, that he shows some interest for his nephews. But his long separation from this branch of the family hinders him from assuming any really active rôle.

² From the standpoint of the family-relations, Władzio was perfectly right in being angry, for his permission was probably not asked before his sister's marriage, and it was the brother-in-law's duty to write him first after the marriage.

³ This Wacek is probably an overseer in the manor. The attempt of violation would hardly ever happen in this form in a village, and in general it is one of the rarest crimes. Here it seems to be the result of the influence of season-emigration (about 25 per cent of the population in this locality emigrate for the summer) and the corresponding loosening of morals.

accident: one workman was drowned. He was bathing on Sunday, precisely during the divine service.¹ [Relates who died; weather.]

BRONEK

Dear brother, I greet you also and embrace you and beg your pardon for not having answered you at once. I wanted Bronek to write, but he let one day pass after another. If you knew how much he works you would not wonder at all. . . . He works in Slupca. He leaves at 4 every morning and comes back at 10. He boarded with Felek, paid him 3 roubles a week, but they gave him very miserable living and he had to stop. [News about friends.] I greet you, dear little brother, I embrace you and kiss you a thousand times, and I beg you very much, write often, for we long much for you. . . . Antosia greets you. She remembers you often and wishes you to come as soon as possible. . . .

HELCIA

363

[November] 27, 1914

DEAR BROTHER AND DEAR KASIA: After a painful sighing and a terrible longing [on our part] Todzia [Teodora] sent us two letters which rejoiced us very much. Now we inform you that we, although in great fear and waiting for better times to come, are still alive and healthy, and we wish you the same with our whole heart. Now we inform you that God gave us a son. He is named Stanislaw Józef. For the first time he greets his dear uncle and aunt Kasia and the other uncle [Kasia's husband] and his cousin. Dear brother, we pity you very much, we remember you often, saying that perhaps you are hungry sometimes, since your condition is so bad . . . and you have had no work for 6 months. We are very much pained. And how does my dear Kasia succeed? I long very much for her. Dear brother, we have much news, but all is sad. Now I won't write more, for the day is short, and we spend these long evenings in darkness [no oil because of the war].

[HELCIA]

[Longer or shorter greetings from other members of the family, except those who are in Prussia.]

¹ Bathing during the divine service is considered the cause of his drowning—God's punishment.

WICKOWSKI SERIES

The letters depict a typical economic situation, resulting partly from certain traditions, partly from recent legal factors. Traditionally the peasant preferred rather to will his farm to one son than to divide it. But it was not a universal custom. In some cases it was more profitable to divide the farm, particularly if the father died before his children were of age to be settled. The development of emigration during the last twenty years brought a new and important change of conditions. A season-emigrant can live and put money aside upon the smallest bit of land and buy later a larger farm, while if he has no land at all he is hopelessly proletarianized. Hence division of land becomes an economic necessity. But it is limited by the Russian law: no new farms below six morgs can be created by division. The law was established during the liberation of the serfs, and its intention was to keep an economically strong peasant class, conservative and true to the Russian government, as against the too patriotic and revolutionary nobility. The result was an enormous and continually growing country proletariat, which partly emigrates to America, and we find more and more frequently situations like the one in the present series, where the heirs live upon an undivided property, ruining the farm or quarreling continually.

In the present case there are four brothers and two sisters. One brother, Józef, is in America. One sister, Mania, is married. The other brothers, Jan, Stanislaw, and Antoś, and their sister Helenka, live together and keep the farm. The farm was their mother's, and was a part of the farm of their grandfather; part of it belongs to their uncle. A new survey was made after their mother's



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Mania's husband
 Władka, his niece
 Stanisław Wickowski, an uncle
 His wife
 Wacek his son
 Zosia, his daughter
 Władysław Wickowski, another uncle
 Józefa, his wife
 Andrzej Wickowski, third uncle
 Józef }
 Franek } his sons
 Wicek }

364-68, TO JÓZEF (JÓZIO) WICKOWSKI, IN AMERICA, FROM
FAMILY-MEMBERS

364

GORZKÓW, March 4, 1914

"Praised be Jesus Christus."

[DEAR BROTHER JÓZEF]: You ask whether Antoś is learning. But we inform you that Antoś is so lazy to learn that there is nobody in the world like him. Neither beating nor begging can help. Although he knows how to read a little, it is very little. Moreover, he is a bad boy, disobedient, tearing his clothes, and difficult to keep at home, for he always loafs about. Uncle's [daughter] Zosia, although nobody compels her to learn, learns well herself because she is willing.

We cannot give now anything to our brother-in-law besides this cow, for we have no money. Perhaps later on. Though we had a few roubles, they have been spent during the carnival. Stasiek spent some money on cigarettes and other things, for he is not very parsimonious. Here he gave a deposit for a suit, there he spent money during a wedding, for Wicek A. married Wiśniewski's daughter and went to live with her; she will have 7 morgs of land. And Józef Lisek bought himself out of the military service [was declared unfit by bribing the doctor] and is at home, but we don't know how much it cost him, for he refuses to tell. Perhaps we shall learn some day, then we will write you.

[JAN WICKOWSKI]

Now, dear brother, I will write you a few words. Józef A. wants to rent our land if you take me to America. He says that he will sup-

port Jan [who is sick] and sow the land as we agree. He is exempted from military service; it costs him about 350 roubles. . . .

Your loving brother,

STANISŁAW WICKOWSKI

365

April 11 [1914]

. . . . DEAR BROTHER JÓZIO: We inform you about our health. We cannot come to health, and I don't know what will be with us for Antoś is still sick with his leg. . . . It would be worth while to take him to a doctor, but we always lack money. And I am tortured by this cough which won't leave off. It is difficult to get health, and difficult to die. Miserable is my life, for I see nothing upon this world except misery.

Well, dear Józio, I inform you about our success. Things go on in a various way, not very well, for young people don't know how to manage as well as old people, for one does not want to listen to the other. If mother lived it would be different, and the order at home would be better. Helenka neither sews nor weaves, but wastes her time about cabins [going to neighbors and talking]. And Stasiek does the same. And they would be glad to dress, but they have not money enough. But even so they borrow and buy [clothes]. And the buildings are getting ruined. The roofs are bad. It would be well worth while to transfer them; for even uncle is not satisfied that we don't take the buildings from their place. But what? We cannot do it ourselves, for money is needed for this transferring. [Weather; farm-work.]

You want me to describe all the news. You ask me why Franciszek, the blacksmith, did not answer you He intended to write but now in the spring he has no time. He is not angry at all. Why should he be?

And the Jędrzejskis when they came did not tell anything bad about you. On the contrary they praised you, saying that you work and are parsimonious and don't loaf after girls, as you loafed here in our country after women and girls. Only Franek said that you quarreled with Staś so that it came to fighting. This only I heard from them. . . .

And now I inform you that Helena S. is marrying immediately after Easter. The wedding was to be at carnival, but I don't know

why they postponed it. But it will certainly be, for they have already bought wedding-dresses now during Lent. [Other news about marriages and deaths.]

Dear brother Józio, our aunt Stanisławowa [Stanislaw's wife] asked me to write you, that you might learn about their [son] Wacek. For he wrote them that he suffers a terrible misery in America and begged his parents to send him money for the journey, saying that if they don't send it he would commit suicide, for he had terrible misery. But they did not send him the money, for they had none. The aunt begs you to help him, either to find some work for him, or to lend him money for the journey, then they will pay you back. The aunt begs you very much.

[JAN WICKOWSKI]

366

June 29, 1914

. . . . DEAR BROTHER: We farm as we can and we eat what we have. We have not much milk, for we milk only one cow. The other is big with a calf, but perhaps she will calve about the end of this month.

Wacek will come here on July 1, so he wrote. Our aunt annoys us about taking our buildings away from their place and says that you should send money for transferring them if you intend to remain for some time still in America. And perhaps you have no intention of coming and farming here at all. Then Stasiek would marry and transfer the buildings. Now he does not know what to do, for to remain together thus is bad. The buildings are getting ruined, and lumber is dearer here every year; now a *sąg* of lumber costs 20 roubles. So decide. Either send the money for transferring the buildings, or come yourself and begin to farm. [News about friends.]

JAN WICKOWSKI

367

ORCHOWICE, June 20, 1914

DEAR BROTHER: [Complaints of his not writing news about farm-work, weather, health, etc.] When you receive this letter from us and when you write to us, write us a few words whether you intend to come now, within a short time, or not. For now many people come from America and say that in America things are bad, and we don't know what is your condition. If you come back to



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SERCZYŃSKI SERIES

We have here a third type of situation in which the children are left alone after their parents' death. The legal guardians do not seem to perform their duty conscientiously. The two older brothers are in America. Otherwise it would be their normal function to care for the younger children. So there remain the two married sisters, each of whom wants to take care of the three youngest orphans. It is, of course, their familial duty, but the curious struggle which breaks out between the two married couples discloses other motives besides familial solidarity. There is probably some economic background. The Sławińskis as well as the Puchalskis hope that the brothers who are in America will send money for the children, and keeping the latter may thus prove a good business. Perhaps also Puchalski hopes to win in this way the favor of his brothers-in-law and get a ship-ticket from them for himself. But these considerations are evidently too uncertain and would hardly be a sufficient motive to explain the whole situation. The fundamental reason (besides, in the case of the Puchalskis, some real affection and pity) is the consideration of public opinion. The community will certainly praise the couple which shows its feelings of familial solidarity by keeping the children, and it will no less certainly blame the other couple. And we must add that the popular feeling, always appreciative of familial solidarity, is particularly strong where orphans are concerned.

THE FAMILY SERCZYŃSKI

Two brothers Serczyński in America

Tadeusz (Tadzio) }
Maryan } their brothers

Maryanna (Mania) }
Anna (Andzia) } their sisters
Janina }

Franciszek Puchalski, Anna's husband

Sławiński, Maryanna's husband

369-72, TO THE BROTHERS SERCZYŃSKI, IN AMERICA,
FROM FAMILY-MEMBERS IN POLAND.

369

November 6 [1913]

"Praised be Jesus Christus."

And now I write to you, dear brothers, about our condition, and I beg you to have pity upon us, and I beg you to send me [money] for clothes, because we have nothing to put upon us and nothing to eat. They have sold our beds and we have nothing to sleep upon; we must sleep upon the bed of Andzia. [A part of] our bedding is with Sławińska. I have been there more than once asking her to give me this bedding back. But Mania told me to go to service in Slupca; but I told her, "Have you ever been going around from service to service? I won't go to service." And she said that she won't give me the bedding. So advise me, dear brothers, what shall I do, whether I have to go to service or not. I beg you very much, dear brothers, don't forget about us, the orphans, and send us [money] for clothes because they are worn out. The money which you sent, Sławińska took it and refuses to give it back. She told me that there is no money at all, and moreover she beat me. I cried so much that I could not walk. And that letter which Andzia wrote, that you did not answer at all, she wept very much [*sic*]. And now, dear brothers, I have nothing more to write, but I greet you.

Your sister,

JANINA [about 14 years old]

370

CIAŻEŃ, February 16, 1914

. . . . DEAREST BROTHERS: I shall describe to you now the pain of my heart which was caused by you, dear brothers. I see today that I am deserted by you, but I am not astonished, because

I guess that we are slandered by Sławińska, and you believed her false words. But I call God to be my witness that I have been an open-hearted sister to you, and today I remain with the same heart toward the younger children as I have had toward you. When Sławińska said that these small children ought to be given away to service my heart pained me and I took them to me, I feed them and clothe them. You sent some roubles to Sławińska, I don't know even how much. Say, dear brothers, how ungratefully you reward me! I wrote a letter to you, to which I had no answer at all. Do you remember, dear brothers, how I wanted you to be able to get to America; and now I am not worthy to receive a letter from you. I asked you, as my dear brothers, to give us your advice because my husband intends to go to America. I did not ask you to send him a ship-ticket, because he would go on his own money; he wanted only to come to you. But you are so cold that you don't even deign to give us advice. Oh, believe me, dear brothers, my heart pains me heavily, because for my sisterly love you repay me so ungratefully. We inform you, dear brothers, that we are moving to Konin. I want to place these, our little brothers, because if I let them go from under my care a great misery awaits them, since the family is so careless. If I took three children to me, if I feed them and clothe them, ought they not to have beds on which to sleep? But the beds are with Sławińska, and we are crowded. But the family does not care how the children sleep. So I foresee that if I let them go from under my care misery awaits them. So, dear brothers, I would be very satisfied if you could take Tadeusz the soonest possible to you. We planned so, that if you sent a ticket to Tadzio, and if you advise my husband to come, they would journey together. But you, dear brothers, you are so incited by Sławińska and so lied to by her that you don't dare even to send a letter. But I am astonished that you don't deign to investigate it. You could send a letter to some strange person, then you would learn on which side is the truth. Believe me, dear brothers, you will learn yet on which side the falseness is, because my husband will yet come to America—only not until he places the children well. And when you get acquainted with my husband I hope that you will respect him otherwise than your first brother-in-law, because my husband cares for the children better than their own father did. . . .

FRANCISZEK [and] ANNA PUCHALSKI



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is showing off with those children. He thought that you would send him 50 roubles every month [for them].

Your loving sister,

MARYANNA

372

April 26, 1914

DEAREST BROTHERS: In the name of God I speak to you with these godly words, "Praised be Jesus Christus!"

. . . . I am in good health, thanks to God, only I have hard work, because I am an apprentice with a baker, Smigielski, so I must work hard and without pay.

I am obliged to describe to you our situation. After the death of our dear father we remained orphans forever, only our brother-in-law Puchalski, and no one else, cared for us. The guardians rented our land, sold everything in the house, even the furs [sheepskins], after our father's death, and we were left without any support. So the family wanted to give us into service, but brother-in-law Puchalski prevented it and became our father. He is certainly as good as a father, because he found this apprenticeship for me; he clothed me; when winter came, he had his own sheepskin coat made over for me. He feeds and clothes the smaller children, and so we can feel gratitude toward him for being our true guardian and father. If he is falsely slandered, and you believe it you will find it out later. Surely we shall see one another in America soon, and you will learn that he is not like Sławiński.

And now, dear brothers, I send you my brotherly thanks for the 15 roubles which you sent us. Andzia assisted in getting this money from the post. We bought a suit for me which cost 6 roubles, a dress for Janina which cost 4 roubles, a dress for Maryan, 3 roubles; 2 roubles were left, but we are without shoes, so brother-in-law Puchalski adds from his money and will have shoes made for us all. They will cost 10 roubles or more, because shoes are very expensive here. When Janina went to first confession, brother-in-law Puchalski spent more than 12 roubles for her dress. . . . Did the family take any interest in buying anything? You sent one time some roubles to the address of Sławińska, but we have not been clothed from this money. I am today in an apprenticeship, but they [the appointed guardians] don't think about clothing me, only dear brother-in-law Puchalski comes to see me every week and cares for me.

Now I hear, dear brothers, that I shall receive a ship-ticket from you. Oh, what a happiness for me, that I shall be able to see you! Oh, I see, dear brothers, that your brotherly love is not extinguished, since you intend to send me a ship-ticket. I beg you heartily for it. But it will be difficult for me to go alone. Brother-in-law wrote in his former letter to you that he intends to go to America, but you did not answer anything, dear brothers. How agreeable and pleasant it would be if I could go with brother-in-law. . . . Surely, dear brothers, if you knew Puchalski . . . you would try to have him in America; but you believe false letters and you think him to be a beast. Dear brothers, when you answer me, send the letter to Slupca, to the name of Smigielski, because brother-in-law is moving to Konin in order to send the younger children to school. . . .¹

TADEUSZ SERCZYŃSKI

¹ The letter is evidently largely inspired or dictated by Puchalski.

TERLECKI SERIES

The familial situation is rather complicated. The father of the family went many years ago to America and took later his son Michal, to whom these letters are written. Then he died. His wife, Apolonia, married Dobrowolski. Her oldest daughter from the first marriage, Zofia, married Michal Skrzypek; they live with the husband's parents. The second daughter, Stasia, married Fijałkowski and went with his parents and her son Antoś to America. The third, Aurelia, stays with her mother. The latter rents a manorial garden on the estate of the Godlewskis. The familial relations of other members (Rózia, Aleksandra, etc.) cannot be exactly determined.

The disintegration of the family is the most complete which we find in the present collection. There is not a single member of the family who does not quarrel with some other member. This disintegration cannot be completely explained by the emigration and subsequent death of the father, head of the family; we have seen other series in which the death of the parents destroys indeed partly the familial unity, but not the reciprocal affection of the members and a certain solidarity among them. The mother's second marriage evidently brought a new factor of disintegration, but again it does not suffice to explain the actual situation. We should have expected indeed the mother's complete isolation as against a relatively stronger solidarity of the children from the first marriage, as in other similar cases; but the ties of affection between the mother and the children are still perhaps the strongest ties remaining. Moreover, a dissolution of the familial life is marked also in collateral branches of the family (Aleksandra; Rózia). We



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Fijałkowski, Stasia's husband

His parents

Antoś, son of Stasia and Fijałkowski

Rózia

Aleksandra

Maurycy

Aleksander

} relatives

373

Only don't show it to Roman!

LUBLIN, April 1, 1911

DEAR BRONISIA AND MICHAŁ: We inform you that we are in good health. . . . We did not write to you for so long a time because . . . , to tell the truth, we had no time. Because since we bought the linen-press, we have never had time, and when there is no time, there is no head to think about anything else. And now we sold it, because we did not get on well even with it; although we earned a few zloty and sometimes a few roubles, all this means nothing when lodging is expensive . . . and living is also very expensive here. . . . And father [Skrzypek] works in a starch-factory. He earns 20 roubles a month, and this can hardly suffice to live, even very modestly. . . . We heard from mother that Roman is getting on very well, that he earns enough, and on the other hand, we heard that he is tempted and intends to leave his employment because he will get another here in the cement-factory. He ought not to be tempted to come back to the old misery when he is getting on better. He should rather take his wife and children there, because in our country life is very hard for poor people—not for those belly-gods whom the devils won't take. If we knew that it would be easier to live there, we should also risk going ourselves. But we are afraid to do as we once did already when we went beyond Warsaw and lost some hundred roubles, and now it is as difficult to live as after a fire; we must earn back [what we lost]. It is easy to lose but too difficult to come back to the lost fortune. Dear Bronisia and Michal, you write to have your mother learn about the inheritance after your father. But it is in vain, because how can mother learn it? She won't learn it here, evidently, but she must go there [to the village from which the father came], and this old man [stepfather] will give her no money, and your mother has no money of her own. If she had she could go against his

will. If you saw how your mother now lives I am sure that you would be very much pained. If you saw the lodging where she lives! Only poles with which the ceiling is supported keep it from falling upon their heads; otherwise they would not know where and when to fly. Lola is going to a laundry, but it does not go on very well because her eye hinders her. Stasia's husband intends to go to America, but the whole misfortune is that he has no money for the journey. Whatever he earns he spends on drinking, and if not on drinking, then on girls. Therefore what he earns is not enough for him, and he is dug [sunk] into debts up to his ears. Fijałkowski is such an orderly man that when he leaves the factory after his work at 6 o'clock in the evening he does not even go home to wash himself. She sees him sometimes the next morning at 2 or 3 after midnight, and if not, then at 7 o'clock in the morning when he is going to the factory. His companion went to America last year; now he is writing letters to him asking him to send a ship-ticket. Then he would go.

Sister [probably cousin] Aleksandra, whose husband is in America—her father [or father-in-law?] cannot manage her at all. He beats her as if she were mud, but all this is of no avail. She became acquainted with a married man who had lived already 16 years with his wife. He left his wife, she left her father and those two children whom she had with her husband. She stole 30 roubles from her father and fled with this peasant.

[MICHAŁ and ZOFIA SKRZYPEK]

Dear Bronisia and Michal, now I shall write for myself, that I got married, which you know already. The marriage was celebrated on August 15. Up to the present we are with [my husband's] mother, so it is somewhat easier, but I don't know how long it will be so. Meanwhile I won't write you more because I have nothing particular, only I beg you to answer us soon. Then in another letter I will address myself to you with a request. I don't know whether you will refuse me or not, I am not sure of myself [hardly dare to ask].

[STASIA]

DEAR BRONISIA AND MICHAŁ: If you believe that it would be easier for us to live there than in our country and we should not be a burden to you, we should be glad to come nearer to you. But we should like to come all of us. Perhaps we could have there some

occupation in a factory, myself, father and mother. We kept that linen-press; it was hard for us. Mother then bought 3 pigs which we kept for 6 months. When they grew up, one died, and we have kept the other 2 since October. Up to the present they cost 34 roubles, and they will give me at the fair 40 roubles. [Another page about the pigs, pig-keeping being now a bad business.] Mr. Dobrowolski [the stepfather] said this, that if he wants to, he can spoil everything that is left after your father. He can write that his wife is from Warsaw and born in Warsaw, because you treat him in your letters as if he were some manor-servant and rascal. You don't know who he is. He is not a first best man, because he was born in Warsaw and baptized in the cathedral of Warsaw. If he does not want you to get anything you won't get anything!

The old Fijałkowskis are trying by all means to sell their house and to go to America in the autumn. . . .

MICHAŁ SKRZYPEK

375

September 16, 1911

DEAR CHILDREN: With your approaching name-day, dear son and daughter-in-law, I send you wishes. . . . I don't know why you do not write, whether you are offended because I don't inform you about this property. I have been more than once in the lawyer's office, but I did not find him. But evidently the fortune is best which we earn ourselves. And therefore, dear son, pray to God that you may earn a fortune yourself. I pray for you at every mass. And now, dear children, I inform you that Stasia, with the old Fijałkowskis, is coming to you, in spite of my good advice. She won't listen to me, and perhaps she will regret it, as you do. I beg you very much when she comes to you treat her in a brotherly manner. And now with us there is no news. The crops were abundant, but prices are going up. Bread is 1 copeck a pound dearer, meat costs 15 copecks for a pound of beef, and hogs have got much cheaper, so that it is not worth keeping them, because potatoes cost 2 roubles a *korzec* [about 4 bushels] and in autumn they will go up perhaps up to 3 roubles. As to myself, this year my garden failed, and everything gets on badly with me. I don't know what to begin with, because I don't know whether I shall remain long in this garden; we live worse than dogs in a kennel. . . . And now I have nothing interesting to write you. As to Rózia, she is not worth the pen and



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dropped totally [relations] with the Skrzypeks [daughter and son-in-law] since Stasia left; probably they won't stand behind my threshold any more. And now, dear children, I have nothing important to write you, except that the winter oppressed us early and the old Godlewski [estate-owner] died on December 2. I cannot give you more information, because I could not tear myself away from home for the funeral, although the funeral was on December 6. . . .

Your loving mother,

DOBROWOLSKA

377

March 25, 1912

DEAR CHILDREN: I received your letter for which I am grateful to you and I thank you for your memory and wishes; only I don't like you to write me so little, upon postcards, because I don't even know whom I have to thank, because nobody's name was signed. Dear son, I beg you only, in the name of everything, to advise me how to do that it may be well, besides criticizing. You know that everything cannot be perfect at once. In the beginning you yourself did not get on so well as you do now. And moreover nobody knows what will happen in our country, because people murmur secretly, and around Lublin kettles are built [metaphor] and people say that the explosion will happen soon, and perhaps we shall also perish. But you know more than we do. [Allusions to the preparation for an Austro-Russian war and for a Polish insurrection, in 1912.]

Dear Bronia, I address myself as a loving mother to you, and I beg you, if Antos [Stasia's son] is with you, take care of him. Although Michal says that Antos was educated in a forest, yet he himself, while born in the same Lublin, had more defects, even in his later years, than Antos has, but he does not remember them. And now he [Michal] did not know that this criticism would be painful to his [Antos'] grandmother [to me], because this is my most beloved grandson. Although the others are equally dear to me, yet they did not work with me, as he did during his whole days.

[APOLONIA DOBROWOLSKA]

To my sister it is written upon this side [of the sheet]. Dear Stasia, I beg you very much to write me a few words yourself, because I know nothing about you except through the hands of other people. In spite of your promises that you would write you don't keep your

word to anybody, because even Mr. Czepiński came to me in the garden in order to learn the truth, whether you arrived, because different rumors have been spread. Your thick aunt said that you were sent back and that you live in Rury in a farmer's house. Maurycy came to the garden to learn [the truth] because Stepniak said that Aleksander was drowned. Therefore I beg you, write at least to Czepiński and satisfy his curiosity. I don't feel angry and don't claim anything, although you promised me to write, and different other things. I know that probably you long there for us as we long for you. When you gather much money and there is peace in our country, then come back. . . .

[AURELIA TERLECKA]

378

[1912]

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER-IN-LAW: [Usual beginning, health and wishes.] Dear brother, you write me that you would take me to you, but not so that I should suffer misery. But have I a delightful life in my country? I suffer perhaps a worse misery because I must work heavily and I receive no good word, and I hear reproaches for every bit of bread which I eat. Believe me, dear Michal, I would fly I don't know where. Although this is my native country I have no near persons in this country except mother. And even mother is very often harsh to me, and all this through the instigation of our stepfather, from whom I never have a good word. He pours curses upon me, whatever ones exist in that world of God, so that my tears never wait. Formerly at least Stasia was here; I had somebody to whom I could go, complain, comfort myself, but now I have nobody to go to. I won't go to Zosia, because she said that if I came to her she would drive me away with a broom. And still less will I go to my aunt, since she dared to say to my eyes that mother and I will soon sit before the church [beg]. But perhaps God the Highest won't let this come, and her ugly eyes won't see it.

And now, dear brother, you order me to learn. Learning is good. Above all, not everybody can be alike, because if everybody wanted to work easily who would be left for the heavy work?

Dear brother, pity our poor mother and don't afflict her poor heart, lessen her tears, because poor mother weeps continually and expects every day a letter from you. I beg you once more, answer us as soon as possible. And when you write to me, write upon a separate sheet, that it may not be together.

[AURELIA TERLECKA]

October 22, 1912

DEAR CHILDREN: I received your letter which caused me a great pleasure, but at the same time a great wound in my heart. Because if you believed such a lie, I will never believe [anything], and I implore you and adjure you by the ashes of your dead father, don't believe it. Although it does not matter much to me, yet I want to know who carried such a false tale to you, because I want to know the truth. All the children are good [dear] alike to a mother. In the same way I have wept for many days for you, particularly when I learned that you wanted to return from the frontier. In the same way I weep now for her and I shall not be comforted soon. In the same way as you did not want to listen to me when I advised you not to leave, so did she also. As always, a good mother would like to press all the children to her bosom, but not all of them will listen. Indeed, as you say, in the second and third years I could possibly not have received all your letters, because my address was not fixed. From the manor I received some letters opened, so anything could happen that I did not receive those letters. But it was not as you write, that Stasia would have taken, torn, and burned those letters, because they were of no consequence to her. She got what she was to get, but you would not have got it, because she received [a legacy] from her godmother. After the death of the latter her godfather put 100 roubles in the bank. If I had learned that you were in so critical a position I would have eaten no bread for a month and given none to the other children, but saved you. But I knew that you went to your father [in America] and that he would not let you be wronged. [The father had died in the meantime.] But you are after all a man and you ought to have more strength and energy, and she is a woman. I don't require from you, dear son, to spend money on her and to make expenses for yourself. Only if she needs it, help her with your advice, as an older brother and a man who has lived there for a longer time. As to the Skrzypeks, you are free not to write at all, because since Stasia left I have dropped all relations with them, totally, because they stood like a bone in my throat. [Proverb. They annoyed me too much.] She complained also about you that she wrote two letters and you didn't answer, that if she sent you 10 or 15 roubles then you would answer. And perhaps you sent to their address that letter where you complained that you were in such a difficult position?



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RACZKOWSKI SERIES

These letters show, in a very detailed and varied manner, the influence of emigration upon family life. We see that every individual undergoes a different evolution, but that there are always factors explaining these differences.

In general, emigration, as should be expected, by isolating the individual from the family and from the community, provokes individualization and weakens the control of the primary group; we have found it already in some of the preceding series. But the degrees and varieties of individualization are numerous.

First of all, as we have mentioned in the Introduction, the nature of individualization depends upon the way in which the individual adapts himself to the new conditions. In this respect we find here such instructive differences as those between Adam Raczkowski, Ludwik Wolski, Helena Brylska, and Aleksander Wolski. The first adapted himself rapidly to American life and succeeded without difficulty in attaining a material position, which, when measured by the peasant standard, must have seemed to him almost brilliant. He gradually ceases to consider it his duty to help his family, but he does not break the familial ties, and occasionally—partly from generosity, partly from the desire to manifest his personal importance—responds to the appeals of other members. Ludwik Wolski, who was finally also successful but must have passed through a rather difficult experience before he got his position (the conditions in Russia being unfavorable for the advance of the lower classes), feels the familial ties as a heavy burden and profits from the first opportunity to break them completely. Probably he has not reached the standpoint that familial

affection may exist without an obligation of help, and the familial relation still seems to him indissolubly connected with economic solidarity, so he sacrifices the first to get rid of the second. And the sacrifice was not difficult, because of other factors. Helena Brylska was not particularly successful in her adaptation. Apparently she adapted herself rapidly to a certain narrow circle of American life, changed her attitudes just enough to fit this circle, and for the rest, remained stationary. Certainly in important familial problems her attitudes remain traditional, and it seems probable that her estrangement from her children is due, not to an extensive change in her attitudes, but to an element of asperity in her temper and the difficult American conditions which made it impossible for her to prevent her boys from following the natural impulse to vagabondage. (See note to No. 418.) As to Aleksander, except for his rather insignificant economic success he remains completely misadapted, and his familial attitudes do not change at all during the year covered by his letters. They may of course change later.

The facility and range of adaptation depend, not only upon the conditions which the individual finds in his new environment, but also upon the individual himself—upon (1) his practical ability and intelligence and (2) his habits and traditions. We have analyzed the first point in the introduction to the Kanikuła series, and on the second we find data in the present series. Generally speaking, the younger the individual the more rapidly he adapts himself. Children adapt themselves very rapidly, but not always fortunately, as we see in the case of the children of Helena. Franciszek Olów, who came to America as an elderly man, father of two grown daughters, was unable to adapt himself at all. But in addition to age and its decreasing plasticity the question of the traditions in which the individual grew

up—how numerous and powerful they were—is certainly very important. The relatively easy adaptation of Adam Raczkowski and Teofil Wolski is evidently due to the fact that their families had never been very united. Raczkowski's mother was dead, his father did not live with his second wife, his older brother and sister were in America. As to Wolski, his parents were probably dead long ago, his brothers separated. Moreover, both Adam and Teofil had served in the army before coming to America, and thus the influence of all the social traditions was more or less weakened. Meanwhile, Aleksander Wolski had always lived in the same village with his parents, and so all the traditional attitudes were strongly implanted in him.

This series, particularly the case of Adam, illustrates also the effect of economic conditions on the expansion and development of the personality. Economic success is one of the main sources of the feeling of personal importance, and therefore this feeling is found almost universally among American immigrants. It develops also in Poland under the same influence. (In the autobiography which forms the third volume of this work we see the ups and downs of the feeling of personal importance as a function of the economic condition of the writer at a given moment.) But, generally speaking, the feeling of personal importance can never develop so rapidly and to such a degree under the influence of a merely economic progress in Poland as it does in America; it is hindered by many social traditions. The social standing of the peasant within the community cannot rise very much through his economic progress if his family does not progress economically at the same time. This limitation partly disappears with the dissolution of the old family, but another tradition is incomparably more difficult for an individual to rid himself of—the old hierarchy of classes. This is more and more supplanted by the new



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the social conditions which make the Poles react differently to these factors. To be sure, the problem is, how far the parents will be able to oppose their authority to the disintegrating influences of the environment, and this depends upon the adaptation of the means of control to the circumstances. In Polish-peasant life this adaptation is sufficient. We have seen in the Introduction that the parental authority finds there its foundation in the whole organization of the family and in the social opinion of the community; the family and the community have a sufficient power of sanction to prevent any revolt of the child and at the same time to hold the parents responsible for any abuse. The parental authority in the eyes of the child seems not only sacred and all-powerful, but also just, and raised above individual caprice.

If we contrast now the conditions at home with those which the emigrants meet in America, we see that a loss of control over the child is inevitable if the parents do not develop new means as substitutes for the old ones. First, there is in America no family in the traditional sense; the married couple and the children are almost completely isolated, and the parental authority has no background. (In a few cases, where many members of the family have settled in the same locality, the control is much stronger.) Again, if there is something equivalent to the community of the old country, i.e., the parish, it is much less closed and concentrated and can hardly have the same influence. Its composition is new, accidental, and changing; moreover, it is composed of various elements, influenced each separately and each somewhat differently by the new environment, and has consequently a rather poor stock of common traditions. Further, the members of the new generation, brought up in this new environment, are more likely to show a solidarity with one another as against the parents

than a solidarity with the parents as against the younger members of the family. Finally, economic independence comes much earlier than in the old country and makes a revolt always materially easy. On the other hand, the parents' authority ceases also to be controlled, except by the state in the relatively rare cases of a far-going abuse. The traditional measure of its exertion is lost; the parents have no standard of education, since the old social standard is no longer valid and no new one has been appropriated. The natural result is a free play given to individual caprice, excessive indulgence alternating with unreasonable severity. Thus the moral character of parental authority in the eyes of the children is lost.

The immigrant can therefore control his children only if he is able to substitute individual authority for social authority, to base his influence, not upon his position as representative of the group, but upon his personal superiority. But this, of course, requires a higher degree of individual culture, intellectual and moral, than most of the immigrants can muster. The contrary case is more frequent, where the children assume a real or imagined superiority to the parents on account of their higher instruction, their better acquaintance with American ways, etc.

The same problems confront country people moving to a Polish town; there, however, the break in the social control of family life is neither so rapid nor so complete, the change of the young generation is not so radical, and there are often time and opportunity enough to substitute a sufficient amount of individual authority for the lost part of social authority.

THE FAMILY RACZKOWSKI ·

Raczkowski, a retired farmer

Wawrzonkowa, his second wife

Franciszek } his sons
Adam }

Helena } his daughters
Teofila }

Franciszek's wife

Her mother

Helcia }
Stanislawa } Franciszek's children
Władzia }
Mania }
Janek }
Kostusia }

Zofia, Adam's wife

Władek Brylski (deceased), Helena's first husband

Rykaczewski, his cousin

Staś (Stach) }
Józiek (Józef) } Helena's sons by Brylski
Maniek (Maryan) }

Józef Dąbrowski, Helena's second husband

Their children

Antoni Wolski, Teofila's husband

Olesiek (Aleksander) }
Julek } his children
Aniela }

Teofil Wolski }
Ludwik Wolski } Antoni's brothers

Malgorzata, Ludwik's wife

Bronislawa, Antoni's sister

Franciszek Olów, a cousin of the Raczkowskis.



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a pigsty, from hunger. Such food—a pot of gruel—under his bed, which people threw away after his death! A good daughter! When father worked and gave away everything he had then he was good. Without a priest and alone he died in a pigsty! Let her expect the same—to die in a pigsty. And let her children in the house not come to her.¹

Dear brother, if you have no money for the journey, borrow from anybody, and I will send it back to him with thanks. Write to me from whom you borrowed.

When father wrote to me, as he had nothing to eat, I sent [money] to him. Helena Brylska lives two versts away from me, I give her every letter.

I have nothing more to write, I wish you health and good success.

With respect,

BOTH RACZKOWSKIS [FRANCISZEK and WIFE]

381

February 15 [1904]

. . . . DEAR BROTHER ADAM, AND ALSO DEAR SISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW AND YOUR CHILDREN: We are in good health, thanks to our Lord God, and we wish to you the same.

Now, dear brother, I think well [intentions are good] about you. If work were good you would already be in America. I have had no work for four months now, and I wait for better conditions. If the conditions don't improve by Easter, we will go back to our country, and if they improve and I get work, I will immediately send you a ship-ticket, and you will come. There will probably be hard times in America this year because in the autumn they will elect the president. If the same remains who is now, then all will be well, but if they elect a democrat, then there will be hard times in America, and those who have money enough will go back to their

intimacy is possible between two individuals so long as they remain integrate members of the same family; the family relationship demands a certain degree of intimacy; it determines the relation. But in isolation their relation becomes merely personal and admits of any gradation possible between individuals.

¹ The father lived with Teofila Wolska. This false report about his death was sent by his second wife, the writer's stepmother, Wawrzonkowa (cf. letters of Helena Brylska), who evidently hates Teofila. Probably the reason of this hate is that the old man left her and went to live with his daughter.

country.¹ You will learn [all] in another letter. Hold out a little, until I bring you to me or until I come myself to you, and then we shall suffer together. Inform me about your health and success, and what kind of winter you have, because we have great cold and snows. I have nothing more to write, I send my good wishes and low bows to brother and to the Wolskis. With respect,

Your brother,

RACZKOWSKI [FRANCISZEK]

Helena Brylska is working and earning well. I beg you, don't refuse me but inform yourself, you Wolskis, or you Adam, what is the news about my wife's mother and how she is, because I don't know what it means. We wrote three letters and we have an answer to none. I request you, let somebody go to mother and tell her that her daughter begged you to get information as to how mother is, and tell me about mother, and what is the news in our country.

382

WILMINGTON, DEL., June 25 [1904]

DEAR SISTER: [Usual greeting to sister and brother-in-law; generalities about health and success.] I am already with my brother, thanks to God and to God's Mother. As to work, I don't hope to work sooner than autumn, because brother also has no work since Christmas and cannot get work, because all factories are stopped and there is no work until they elect the president in autumn. Then perhaps we shall get work. And at present brother has no pleasure in life either, because there are five of them and I make the sixth, and all this means spending money. And you know that when I left you, I had neither clothes nor shirts; so when I came to them, sister-in-law and brother gave me at once clothes of theirs and we all three went to the city and bought clothes, one suit for working days and another for holidays, and everything in the way of clothes. So you can understand that when we bought everything, it cost them about 80 roubles. The watch and the suit for church cost alone 60 roubles.² I have nothing more to write, only I bid you goodbye,

¹ This connection of hard times with democratic government is a dogma among the Polish immigrants.

² Franciszek R. and Helena Brylska have divided between themselves the expense burden of bringing Adam to America. Helena paid for the ship-ticket, Franciszek supports Adam until he gets work. This is still familial solidarity.

dear sister and brother-in-law. When I get work I won't forget you. Remain with God. Both Raczkowskis with their children send also their bows. I beg you, answer the soonest possible.

[ADAM RACZKOWSKI]

383

August 15, 1904

DEAR SISTER: And now I write to you a second letter, because when I came to America I wrote you a letter but I have no tidings from you. I don't know what it means, whether you did not write or my letter did not reach you; so please, sister, answer me, and please, sister, tell me what is the news in our country, and whether they have called me to military service or not. And please, sister, tell me what is the news about war in our country. As to the work, we are not working yet, because now they are gathering votes for the new president, so all factories are closed and don't work at all till the president is elected. So when I work I will not forget you, sister dear and brother-in-law. And as to Władkowa [Helena B.] she is earning well and the factory where she works is going well. Władkowa got married [second marriage] on August 17. She married a Pole. And I request you, sister, inform me, how is the weather in our country, and how are the crops, how are you getting on? Here, at the end of July and in the beginning of August we had terrible heat, and rain and thunderstorms. And I request you, sister, greet the Kaliszeskis and their daughter from me. And tell me who reads your letters to you and answers [them]. And I beg you very politely, be so kind and go to Imnielski. Let him give you the address of his daughter Weronika, who is in Warsaw, and send me this address, because I want to write her a letter. And I beg very politely Mr. and Mrs. Imnielski to give me the address of their daughter Weronika. I have nothing more to write, only I send lowest bows to you, sister and brother-in-law, and I salute also Mr. and Mrs. Imnielski and their daughters. Remain with God.

Respectfully,

ADAM RACZKOWSKI

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September 23, 1904

DEAR SISTER: I received your letter and I thank you heartily for answering me. As to what you write, sister, that I may greet Brylska for you, well, I wrote her three letters and she wrote



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sister. You will excuse me yourself; I did not work for five months, so I owed for living alone \$70.00 and for the ship-ticket \$50.00 and for the clothes I borrowed \$45.00. I still have \$109 of debt, but I hope in God that by June I shall get rid of my debt. I request you sister, inform me who married among the young people, which girls got husbands and which boys got wives, and please inform me about Wawrzonkowa.

I have nothing more to write, only I bid farewell to you sister and brother-in-law, and I leave you with respect, and I salute you, Mr. Teacher and Mrs., your wife, and I leave you with respect,

ADAM RACZKOWSKI

386

June 27, 1906

DEAR SISTER: I received your letter on June 26 and I answered you directly on June 27, and I ask you whether you received the money that I sent you or not, because they sent me a receipt from the post-office that you received the money on March 26, and you did not say in your letter that you received the money. So I request you to tell me which month you received the money. And as to the work, I am working in the same factory, and brother also is working in the same factory, where he was working formerly. And as to our country, brother says he will not return, because there is nothing to return for. He has no property there, and it is better for him in America, because in our country he could not even earn enough for a loaf of bread. And I also do not know whether I shall return or not. If I can return then perhaps I shall return some day or other, and if not I don't mind, because I do ten times better in America than in our country. I do better today than brother, because I am alone. As to Borkowianka, I don't know whether she came to America or not, because I sent her neither a ship-ticket nor money. So I beg you, sister, be so kind and learn from the Borkowskis whether she thinks of coming or not, because if she does not come then I will marry in the autumn or during carnival.¹ As to what you write to me about the photograph, I will send you my photograph in August, and brother with the whole family [also].

¹ There is no question of love. There has been mention of Weronika, and probably under the influence of his sister he is thinking of Borkowianka. He simply wants to marry in general. Cf. a similar situation in the Butkowski series.

And as to the money I will send it to you together with the photograph. And about Brylska I do not know anything; she wrote to me at Easter, and since then I have no tidings whatever.

And now, sister-in-law and brother are speaking to you: Be so kind and learn where is the mother of sister-in-law and with whom she lives. Answer us, and I will tell you more in another letter. [Usual greetings.]

ADAM RACZKOWSKI

387

August 6, 1906

[Printed greetings.]

And now I inform you, dear brother [cousin-in-law], Teofil, that I intended to send you a ship-ticket, but I wrote to an agent and the agent answered me that now it is too late to send a ship-ticket, because a ship-ticket takes at least 5 weeks or 6 weeks to get to our country and now, from September 15, they intend to admit no more emigrants to America. So if I sent you a ticket perhaps you would not get to the water soon enough. Meanwhile, a letter takes at most 15 days to go to our country, so if you wish to come to America, as soon as you receive this letter, get ready at once, take money and leave, so you will perhaps land before September 15. Within this letter you have an order for all steamship-lines enclosed, you can buy a ticket for any ship you wish, because this order was sent to me by the agent. And don't think, dear brother Teofil, that perhaps I don't wish to send you [a ship-ticket]. I wish you to come to America, dear brother, because up to the present I am doing very well here, and I have no intention of going to our country, because in our country I experienced only misery and poverty, and now I live better than a lord in our country. I work my 9 hours and I have peace; I have enough to drink and to dress well, and I have money. I wish you also to come; and on the way to America explain that you are going to a cousin [exactly: brother, son of an uncle]. If they ask you how long I have been in America, say 10 years and married,¹ and bring so much money that after landing you will have at least \$10.00 and during the voyage remember not to spend money. From Castle Garden send me a telegram. Then, if they won't admit you, I will get you out from Castle Garden; even if it should cost me \$100

¹ This applies to the older brother.

I would not allow them to send you back.¹ I have nothing more to write, only I leave you with respect. May God grant it. Amen.

ADAM RACZKOWSKI

388

January 28, 1907

DEAR SISTER: As to work, I work, but very little, because the factory where we worked with brother was burned on Saturday, January 19, at 7 o'clock in the evening, and brother's carpenter's tools were all burned. He lost \$50.00. And now I inform you about my old Miss Borkowska, whom nobody wants. I don't care anything about her—such an old maid! I wrote to her only in jest, because I have in America girls enough and much better than she, and even to them I don't pay compliments. I care as much for her as for an old torn shoe. Today I don't need the favor of anybody except God. May God continue to give me such health as he gives me up to the present day. I don't want the favors of anybody except God. As to Teofil, I don't know what he means, and why he will take to himself such a shepherd's bitch. There is no place in America for her, because in America they don't keep sheep. Does he want to keep sheep, and to breed rams, and to become a shepherd? The stupid, where is his reason, since in America there are girls enough.²

As to money, I won't send you any now, because we have expenses ourselves, but I will send you for the holidays some more roubles; you may expect it. You ask, sister, about the children. Will you inform me where is that youngest one, Maryan, and with

¹ Besides a familial feeling and certainly personal attachment, there is much of showing off in Adam's helping Teofil to come, and in this whole letter he is proud of being able to be a benefactor. This is one of the typical attitudes assumed by the peasant when, under the influence of a growing isolation from the old social groups, the claims of solidarity, put forward by the family or the community, cease to be considered as natural and naturally satisfied.

² This abuse is evidently the effect of resentment, particularly as the girl seems to have shown a preference for Teofil. (Borkowska is another name for the Borkowianka whom he has previously mentioned.) But it shows mainly the degree of self-conceit which the man has already reached. The feeling of personal importance and exaltation, based on economic success, is here mixed with a feeling of independence, whose source lies probably in the progressive liberation from the bonds of social tradition, including family and traditional attitudes toward marriage, power of the community, and probably also power of the state, which he had experienced during military service. Cf. 391, note.



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receive this one. I will write also to Teofil in Philadelphia. Inform me whether you have the same horses as when I was there, or other ones; tell me this. And send me the address of sister, because she does not write to me and I have not her address. I have nothing more to write, only I bid you goodbye myself, and brother with his wife and children. And brother's daughter, who came into the world May 21, salutes you. I send low bows to the Imnielskis and to their daughters. Inform me whether Weronika, Imnielski's daughter, got married. Inform me, how are the crops in our country, and what success, and who got married among the young people, and whether my companions came back from the army or not. I leave you with respect and beg for a speedy answer.¹

ADAM RACZKOWSKI

390

January 24, 1907 [1908]

DEAR SISTER [printed introduction]: We are in good health, thanks to our Lord God, and we wish the same to you—health and good success and everything that you wish for yourself from our Lord God. And now I inform you about work. Work is now very bad. Since Christmas I have worked only three days in the week, and perhaps they will send me away entirely. Brother still works but he expects every day to be sent away. Some works have stopped entirely and some people have nothing more to live on, and the city is feeding some people already. As to sister, I don't know anything, because she doesn't write to me and I don't write to her and we don't know anything about each other, I don't know how she lives and she doesn't know how I live. And as to the cold, we haven't had any cold yet—but it often rains.

And now I beg you, my sister, myself and brother with his wife, to be so gracious and inform us where is the mother of our sister-in-law, whether in Przasnysz or in Bartuły. If you see her ask her, please, whether she received 20 roubles or not. Let her write to us. And inform me who has married among the young people, and whether the daughters of Imnielski have married or not. Dear sister, I will

¹ The whole tone of the letter shows a certain lowering of the feeling of personal importance, to be explained probably by (1) worse economic conditions, (2) a certain revival of old memories, which is shown by the interest manifested in the persons and conditions of the "old country," and which brings the man back to his earlier attitude.

tell you about myself, how I am doing in America. I have not yet experienced poverty in America; on the contrary, I am my brother's support. But I am tired of walking about unmarried. Although I could give my wife enough to live, still I fear lest poverty should look me in the eyes. Were it not for the money I have put in my brother's house, which he bought, I could do nothing during a year and live with my wife like a lord. But now I postpone it for a longer time. You write to me that I don't answer you. I answer every letter. I sent you a letter on Christmas, on the same day you sent me one, and I don't know whether you received it or not.

I have nothing more to write, only I send you low bows and I remain respectfully,

ADAM RACZKOWSKI

And I ask you for a speedy answer.

May God allow us to live till Easter, and after Easter I will write to you what girl I shall marry, and I will send you a photograph as soon as I leave the altar. My girl is a cousin of my sister-in-law; her mother and my sister-in-law are born sisters. They are persuading me to marry her, but I still doubt whether it will be so.

ADAM RAKOSKI [*sic*]

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March 2, 1908

DEAR SISTER: As to Teofil I do not know where he is, because he was with me before Christmas and was out of work then, and he intended to go to the mines. So I don't know whether he went or not, because in mines it is this way: One goes there and finds money, another, death. He wanted to go to the mines, so probably he went, because he has not written to me. As to work, I haven't worked for four weeks. There is no work. Brother still works but is not doing well, because almost all factories are closed. Times are so good in America that people are going begging. As to sister, I don't know anything about her, because she does not write to me, and I do not write to her either. In that [former] letter we asked you to inform us where is the mother of our sister-in-law, and whether she received 20 roubles. Let us know, please, where she is, why she does not write to them.

You advise me to marry Książakówna. Besides Książakówna I have others [here] even more stately and I do not bestir myself very

much about them.¹ As to Imnielszczanka [daughter of Imnielski], send her to me, and I will marry her and send you the money for the ship-ticket back.² Now is not a very good time to marry, because work is bad and bad times are coming now.

Tell us about your success, how you are getting on. Have you still a debt, or did you pay it off? And please write your letters more distinctly, because I cannot read what you write. All the letters are covered with ink; it is impossible to make out what those letters are. [Usual ending.]

ADAM RACZKOWSKI

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March 8 [Probably 1908]

. . . Dear sister, you write me that for a year you received no letter from me. But I sent you three (3) letters and I received no answer till I sent you a fourth letter, and only then I received an answer. And about Teofil I don't know anything. It is a year since he called on me, and then he intended to go to the mines for work. I don't know whether he went there or not, because some three months after he had intended to go there those mines fell in completely, and not a single man got out alive. And moreover there were fire and water which took the rest. So I cannot tell you whether he worked there or not, because if he worked there under the surface then probably he is also lying there in the ruins. And as to sister, I don't know how she is doing, because she doesn't write to me and I don't write to her; I don't know where she is. Sister dear, you write me, "Shall we ever see each other again?" You know yourself that I will not go to our country because I fear the Russian,³ and

¹ A curious example of an attitude remaining superficially the same while the social background is completely changed. As long as the boy is more a member of a family, the familial dignity requires him not to show too much eagerness in his courtship—to hesitate, really or apparently, to make his choice slowly and from among many girls. When the individual is isolated, we should expect an easier and more rapid decision and more place for personal preferences. And normally this is so. But here the feeling of personal importance takes the place of the demands of familial dignity, and the old behavior is kept up while its psychological factors are quite new.

² Compare the careless and protective way in which he speaks about the girl here with the humility used three years before in asking the Imnielskis for the address of their daughter (No. 383).

³ He would be considered a deserter because he did not go when the reserves were called during the Japanese war.



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city from which it was sent. It cannot be lost when sent through the post. And if you receive it answer me at once whether you did receive it or not.

As to sister, I don't write to you because I have no word from her at all since the time when you sent me that letter and asked me to send it to sister. Since that time, when I sent that letter, I have had no word from her at all. And as to work, during the whole month of January work is such that we hardly earn enough to live. And as to what you wrote me, that I might send you about 30 roubles for horses, we can speak about that later. I cannot refuse it to you. After Easter I will send you more, but now I cannot, because I intended to marry during the carnival and I spent some money, about \$40.00 on account of the wedding, and I gave this up because I did not like the girl. Tell me who has been married among the young people, because one girl wrote two letters to me and I have the wish to bring her to me. She lives near the manor. . . .

A. R.

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June 1, 1909

DEAR SISTER: . . . And now, please, inform me how do you do. As to work, I am working still, but it is hardly enough to live on. All the iron foundries are closed. Poverty in America is getting worse than in our country, living is dear, and generally everything gets dearer. Please, sister, advise me about what I ask, because I had intended to marry in June, but I intend now to go to our country. I think that I shall not be punished severely for going to America. I did not run away from the regiment; they just sent me back to recover. So I went home, but neither father nor mother was alive and I had no property to live on in our country. I had a brother in America, who had been there 10 years. I wrote to him, he sent me a ship-ticket, and I went to America. I think that for anything like this I should not be punished much.

I have nothing more to write, only I bid you goodbye and ask for a speedy answer.

ADAM RACZKOWSKI

396

July 17, 1909

DEAR SISTER: . . . We received your letter, for which we thank you heartily. And now we inform you about our health and success. Sad is our success dear sister and brother-in-law; we shall not forget

this sorrow up to the grave. Our Lord God gave us a daughter, Stanislaw, who rejoiced our whole household, and our Lord God took her to Him. We buried her on July 1. Today in our home we have room enough, but without her everywhere it is empty. Whenever we look at her clothes, every dress we wet with tears. She came to us as if on a visit, rejoiced us, and went away. She was two years old. Sister dear, if we should tell you about her, a whole newspaper would not be sufficient—how graceful and clever she was. Sister dear, excuse me for not writing you a letter for so long a time. After her death I wished to write a letter, but I could not from sorrow. [To this point written by Adam, but evidently dictated by the older brother, father of the girl.]

As to work, we both have no work since July 1. As to Ołów, you praised him as a carpenter, and as long as he was with brother he worked, but when they sent him alone into a car to work, he stood as stupid as an ass, and yet he was angry and swore when we taught him how to work. He got \$2.50 a day. Then he went away from us and got work on July 15 in an iron-foundry. He carts earth with a wheelbarrow. He gets \$1.50 a day and works like an ox in America.¹ I am working in a gabbarnia [?]. I get \$10.00 a week and work only 5½ days in a week. As to my marriage, I will marry in August. I have a girl from Plock; she came from our country not long ago. She is a poor girl, because she has still about \$50.00 of debt that I must pay back for her. As to what you say about money, I will send you some, but not now, because brother spent all his for this funeral and it cost me also some \$10.00 or \$20.00. In another letter I will tell you more. . . .

ADAM RACZKOWSKI

397

December 18, 1909

DEAR SISTER: . . . I received your letter on December 15, and I answer this letter, thanking you heartily for answering me. As to work, I have had no work for 2 months, since they had a strike. It means that they do not want to work for the same money, but they want more wages. Perhaps I shall begin to work in February. As to the ship-ticket, I would have sent it to her if she had not married,

¹ Ołów is a cousin of Adam, older and married. He was at first docile, owing to his unfamiliarity with America, but later resented the show of superiority on the part of Adam, particularly as married men are accustomed to a certain deference from the unmarried.

but now I don't want to hear anything about it. You ask me, sister, to send you money. I have some dollars with me, but now I have no work, and I am also looking around me [I am careful] because I do not know what will become of me during the carnival. Perhaps I shall marry, and then I shall need money myself. As to those several hundred dollars that I have with brother, on that house which he bought, he will not give them back at once because he has no money now. And as to the money that you gave to Ołów, he did not tell me anything about it. Let me know how much money he got from you, because Tryc wrote to him also about money, asking him to send back what he borrowed from Tryc. You write, sister, that people repay you with wrong for your goodness and that therefore you will be ruined. If you [think that you] got ruined through me, through what I have taken from you, then calculate how much I owe you and for what, and I will send it to you, even if it is two hundred dollars, but don't blame me.¹ As to the photograph, I will send it to you after the New Year. And as to sister, she does not write to me and I do not write to her either; I do not even know where she is. And now you write, sister, that Olesiek [Aleksander] intends to come to America in the spring. Well, you can send him if he is a good carpenter or blacksmith or handworker of any kind. Then he can find work and good money. But if he knows only farm-labor, then let him work on his farm; he will be better off. You have already sent us one and we have too much of this one "well-trained" carpenter. Don't be angry with me, dear sister, for answering you with those words, but people come from our land to America and say that you are not in such misery as you write to me. I don't forget you yet I will send you some dollars some day or other. Answer me, did Weronika Imnielszczanka marry or not? I want to know it. . . .

ADAM RACZKOWSKI

398

February 25, 1910

. . . . DEAR SISTER: I received your letter on Christmas, but I did not answer you at once, because I intended to marry, and therefore I waited with the letter, even too long. Excuse me, dear

¹ There is a traditional fear of blame, especially from a person wronged, connected on one hand with the dependence of the individual upon social opinion, on the other hand with the idea of a harmful magical influence in words expressing ill-will. At the same time we have here also the feeling of personal importance as background of generosity.



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work], but not so in our country. As to the work, I have work, because this factory where I am working will not stop at all during this year, but I will stop work now at least for a month, because I am tired of work. As to brother, in the beginning he did not do very well, but now everything is going very well with him. His wife keeps 8 persons boarding in her home and he earns \$2.50 a day. He does piece-work. In the autumn I shall take him with me, and let him learn the same work I am doing, and he will also earn well. As to the weather, up to the present it is very good with us, there are frequent showers and thunderstorms. The heat is not very great.

And now I only name [enumerate] my family: My oldest [daughter] Helcia, Władzia, Mania, Janek, and Kostusia, my youngest. [Usual ending.]

FRANCISZEK RACZKOWSKI

400

May 6, 1912

DEAR SISTER: We received your letter, which afflicted us very much. We learned about the misfortune that befell you, and we send you two letters together, one registered and the other an ordinary one. For two years we did not receive any letter from you, and only now we have received one through Helena and we learned about your trouble. We don't know for what reason you did not write to us. It seems to us that we did not do you any wrong. Why did you not write to us for so long a time? Why did you not even inform us when brother-in-law was sick? We spoke every day about you both. Why do you not write to us? We wrote to you more than a dozen letters and did not receive any answer. It was perhaps that humpbacked fellow who slandered us to you. If so, it is not our fault, sister, that you listened to his words and don't write. If we behave so, sister, and if we listen to such scoundrels, death will take us all and we shall not know anything about one another. When I married my wife had a brother, a scoundrel like Olów. When marrying I paid to that brother \$50.00 for her, for her ship-ticket; later on I paid him \$30.00 more. I gave him back \$80.00 for her ship-ticket, and he claimed \$35.00 more, saying that I owed it to him. We had a lawsuit, which God helped me to win, and today he needs my favors, not I his. Now I let wife's mother come from the old country; she is with me, and today her whole family calls on me and

[begs] my favor.¹ As to health, brother, with his wife and children, is in good health enough and is working, and I, with my wife and child, am in good enough health, and I have good success, but I don't know how God will help me further. As to our meeting, if you wish, sister, to see us, you can. Neither myself nor brother will go to our country, but you can come. And when you answer us then we will tell you more. . . .²

Your brothers, loving you,

ADAM and FRANCISZEK RACZKOWSKI

401

May 6, 1912³

In the first words of our letter we speak to you, dear sister [Usual greetings and wishes.] We received a letter from you on May 5, because of which we wrung our hands that such a misfortune happened to you. You write, sister, that we don't write letters to you. We wrote to you some letters, but to none we received any answer. When Olów went home, brother sent you at once his photograph with his whole family, and a letter, and we received from you no answer. Did you receive the photograph and the letter, or not? Why should we write to you, since you don't answer?

You wrote to us, sister, that Olów was coming to America to us, that we should meet him as our brother. We did it at your request; we gave him what a brother could expect from a brother. And how did he pay us back for our goodness? I asked him to come to my wedding, he did not come. Brother invited him to a christening. He did not come then either.⁴ He went away to our country, and he did not even come to bid us farewell. When he intended to go to our country brother asked him to come and bid us farewell, and said he would give him a gift for our sister; and brother bought a gold

¹ Pride in this situation would be foreign to the peasant in the old country. There the young expect help from the old for a time. The element of pride here expressed is another factor in the waiving of the dowry in America.

² The letter is very cold for a letter of condolence. The coldness is partly an intentional reaction to the fact that the sister did not write for so long a time and thus almost broke the familial relation.

³ This is the letter referred to in the last as sent on the same date.

⁴ This neglect is in itself a great offense to familial and individual honor, but in addition, the man who assists at a wedding or a christening is traditionally obliged to contribute to the "collection," and not to come is a proof of stinginess or hostility.

ring for you and intended to hand it over to him that he might give it to you when he arrived in our country. But he went away, and we did not even know when; he only said to people that he came to us to get some money that we owed him! Sister, when he tells you about us don't believe him, because he is a first-rate liar—this Prussian gooseman! In our home somebody recognized him as the same man with whom he had driven geese to Prussia. Then he was so angry that he seized a whip, but the other still said that it was true.

Write to us, sister, did you receive the photograph of brother or not, because if you did not receive it we will send you another. And you can write letters to us as often as every week; we will answer every letter. We send you two letters [one] registered, so if you do not receive this letter, you will receive the registered one. And describe to us how long he was sick, and what he died of, and how did he safeguard you with that property, and tell us how old are your oldest and your youngest. Do you intend to farm yourself or to rent? We request you, answer us about everything. Answer us the soonest possible.

[ADAM and FRANCISZEK RACZKOWSKI]

402

November 28 [1912]

. . . DEAR SISTER: You write to us and ask us to send you a ship-ticket for your boy. We advise you to let him wait until spring, because it is not certain how work will be in the spring for now they have elected a democrat president and when a democrat is president everybody expects misery to come. Let him wait until March, because only from March on this president will begin to govern, and we shall see how work goes when he governs, whether well or ill. Now work is bad. Brother worked for 9 years in the same factory, and this year he has not worked since spring, because work is stopping. We neither advise you nor dissuade. Sister intends to send him a ship-ticket.¹ If he suffers misery he will not complain about us. We also would send him a ship-ticket very gladly but we have also hard times. Brother has work but it is not even sufficient for him to live on, and as to myself, my health is completely broken. During November I am not working at all, because I am sick and sit at home.

¹ The personal feelings of women are never so completely subordinated to the forms of social solidarity as are those of the men, and on the disintegration of a family the individual affection of women is less likely to disappear than the group-solidarity of the men.



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June 7, 1903

Now I, your sister H. Brylska, write to you, dear sister. [Usual greetings and wishes, printed.]

And now, dear sister, I have been informed about the death of our beloved father, that he ended his temporal life, and that he had such nursing, that he even had no place with you d[ear] sister, in your house, but you turned him out into the pigsty, and there our beloved father ended his life without confession and without the Holy Sacraments. So have you paid him [dear] sister, for the bloody sweat that he shed, caring for us that we might not suffer hunger and that vermin might not eat us. And you did not even know, d[ear] sister, when father ended his temporal life. You cursed me, d[ear] sister, because father asked me for a letter, and I did not get any letter [from him]. I wrote 3 letters [to him] and had no answer. So now perhaps I will not return again to our country, because I have nobody to return to. I sent 2 photographs, one for mother and the other—if you will and have the wish, you can take it. And I inform you, d[ear] sister, that I send money for the holy mass to the memory of father and mother and of my husband and the remaining money for my children's dresses.

I have nothing more to write, only I salute you and greet you kindly and heartily. May God grant it. Amen.

Your sincerely well-wishing sister,

H. BRYLSKA

I ask for an answer.¹

¹ This letter practically breaks off the relation because of Teofila's supposed behavior toward their father. Two points are essential in this respect: Helena's saying that she had no longer anyone to return to in the old country, and the manner in which she puts the question of the photograph. The form of the beginning and ending is in striking contrast with the real content of the letter. The generally moderate style is perhaps partly due to the fact that Helena's children are with her sister and she fears to make her too angry, but at the same time it is traditional. We have not a single really violent letter in our whole collection of family-letters, while among the letters written to the papers, particularly in America, there are many excessively violent ones. And in general, hard swearing and violent expressions are much more seldom found among the peasants than among the lower city classes. This fact seems due to the particularly strong and refined feeling of the value of words which we find among peasants, and which results evidently from the fixed character of expressions in all those social relations which are organized by tradition. Within such a fixed philological system the slightest shading of an expression is immediately felt and reacted upon; there is

405

July 8, 1903

. . . . DEAR SISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW: I inform you that I received your letter on July 6, which found me in good health, and for which I thank you very much. Now, dear sister, I am very much astonished at your writing that I do not write letters to you. I do write letters, I have always written to you all, and I also wrote two letters to you, dear sister, and now you tell me that I don't write letters to you. Dear sister, you write to me that you wept over that letter which I wrote to you, but I had to write so, because I wept myself also heartily when I received such a letter [from stepmother], because my heart pained me very much. It is not true that I believe mother in everything; I understand everything myself; you don't need to write me this; I have some sense myself. But why do you [plural] grieve me with such letters? Instead of rejoicing after receiving a letter, one must grieve.

And now, dear sister, I heard from Niedźwiecki of Przasmysz that this land left by Rykaczewski is lying fallow. I beg you, get advice from the lawyer Cybulski what to do with it, whether to rent it, because if it lies so for some time the government will take it for taxes and you will have nothing from it.

Your well-wishing sister, with respect,

HELENA BRYLSKA

406

July 13, 1903

. . . . And now, dear sister, I beg your pardon, don't be angry with me, for writing you such a letter. It is not my fault, if I received a letter from our country and very bad things were written in it. Then out of impatience and sorrow I wrote to you, dear sister, a letter which was also bad. And about the photograph I wrote because of not sending it to you, but I wrote also that if you wished you could take one. You write, dear sister, that you did not see the

no necessity of using strong words. This explains, for example, the apparently trifling causes of many offenses and enmities. The slightest innuendo means very much when the feeling of measure in expression is traditionally developed. We must also take into consideration the general dependence of thought and feeling upon words, which has been mentioned elsewhere. The proportion is lost completely whenever the peasant gets into a new set of interests and attitudes whose expression has not been determined for him traditionally. Cf. Vol. I, Introduction to the Peasant Letter.

way before you out of this sorrow. I believe you, dear sister, because I suffered the same when I received that letter from our country.¹ So I believe you, dear sister, but I can do nothing. I am not guilty. Pardon me all this, I will not write you such letters any more. Forget, dear sister, about all that has happened; let us forget about it and live as we lived.

And I beg you, dear sister, take care of my children and inform me about everything. I will remember you also.²

Your sincerely well-wishing sister,

HELENA BRYLSKA

In another letter I will tell you more.

407

March 3 [1904]

[DEAR BROTHER ADAM]: . . . I received from you the letter in which you wrote about the ship-ticket, so I gave money to brother and asked him to send you [the ticket], because I was ill and I could not. If brother did not send it to you then perhaps sister will give you money for the journey. If she does not then wait a little; perhaps brother will send you the ticket; because I gave him money to send [it] to you. And when you leave go to brother in Ancona, and when you travel say everywhere the same—that you are going to your brother. On the way to Ilowo wear clothes which you can throw away when they disinfect them, and take good clothes in a valise, because they do not disinfect clean clothes. To live on, take some smoked meat and dry cheese, and try hard to cross the frontier, because if they catch you they will consider you as a deserter and will take you directly to the war; for we have bad tidings, we receive newspapers every day which say there is a great war and many people perish on the water, because ships are wrecked. At the end of April and the beginning of May there will be a great war because Warsaw collected more than a dozen millions for war. And with us it is also bad. We have no work, for there is none anywhere.

And now I write to you, dear sister, that I have sent you 20 roubles. Buy for the children what you think necessary. Are you angry with me, that you don't write? I have written and

¹ She seems to consider her own pain as a kind of a compensation for the pain which she caused, even if the first was not brought upon her by the same person. (See also preceding letter.) This is a very frequent attitude and probably purely naïve, but possibly influenced by the Christian idea of suffering as objectively valuable and propitiating.

² "Remember" usually means "send money."



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[No date]

. . . . DEAR SISTER: You ask me to send you money. I answer, that now I can send none, because the factories are going bankrupt; it means they are stopping work. So I fear that if I send money home and the factories stop I shall remain without work and without money. I shall see later on; perhaps I shall send you some when work gets better. I work in the same factory. And now I salute you, dear brother, and I request you not to send your photograph. I know you well, and why should you spend money? Buy yourself rather something else. And now you write me that you receive few letters from me; but I write letters to you very often. And now I beg you, dear sister and brother-in-law, send my children to school, and let their eyes be rubbed.¹ . . .

HELENA BRYLSKA

410

November 5, 1904

DEAR SISTER: This is the fifth letter that I am writing and I have no word. I don't know what it means, whether you are angry, or what else? For me it is so difficult to write letters, and I have no time, and still I write to you, and you who have more time, do you find it so difficult to write an answer? I beg you very much, answer me, whether good or bad. I beg your pardon, perhaps you will be offended by this that I write, but, dear sister and brother-in-law, don't wonder, because I expect with impatience a letter from you every day.

And please, inform me about my children, how are they? I should like to bring the oldest boy to me, so please, answer me, whether I may bring him to me. I beg you, dear sister and brother-in-law, answer me the soonest possible, in order that I may know what course to take.

HELENA BRYLSKA

¹ As after sleep, so that they may see clearly. This is a very good expression of the peasant woman's attitude toward learning, when this is appreciative. Instruction is good because it makes brighter in a general way, not because it makes more fit for any practical purpose. It is perhaps the consequence of the fact that the appreciation of women is in general more subjective, bearing on the personality, rather than objective, bearing on work. At the same time the peasant man often shares the same attitude, which was, indeed, our own former attitude toward "academic culture," the "polished man," and the girls' "finishing school."

411

December 20 [1904 ?]

DEAR SISTER: I received a letter, dear sister, from you, and a scapulary, a little cross and a [sacred] picture. I thank you very much for these tokens. Now, dear sister, I sent you 20 roubles for my children for clothes. You asked me to send a ship-ticket for them, and said you would bring them. So we send a ship-ticket for the two [older] boys, and you will bring them. Meanwhile, dear sister, I send you this letter [saying] that I sent some money for the children. You will have the ship-ticket soon. Some days after this letter you will receive another letter [saying] for what ship the ship-ticket is sent. Prepare them as best you can and care for them as for your own children. When you write me a letter, I will send more money for them. Add the remainder, what you think necessary, and I will give you back everything, because I did not expect that all this would happen so soon. Please bring me a large shawl. I have nothing more to write. I send low bows. In another letter I will tell you everything, how it ought to be and how you ought to behave on the way, but now I only inform you that the ship-tickets are sent.

Please answer me, how you think [about it].

With respect,

HELENA BRYLSKA

412

December 31 [1904 ?]

DEAR SISTER: I have already sent ship-tickets for Józio and Staś. Let the person who comes with them buy a ticket for herself on the same ship for which this ticket is sent. She can say that she must take care of the children and go with them on the same ship.

The ship-ticket is paid from Ilowo up to my house; no need to pay anything anywhere for my children. Dear brother-in-law, when you leave if you have any baggage, I mean any large trunk or large bag, you can give it up, but don't give it into anybody's hands without a receipt. If you have a receipt the baggage will not be lost. Until you take the steamer there will be a receipt for baggage with the ship-ticket or written on the ship-ticket, and when you leave the steamer they will take those receipts and give iron ones. Without an iron receipt don't give up your baggage, because it would be lost,

and that would be a pity, as when mine was lost. And give everywhere the same names, that there may not be any trouble about names. Please, if you come, bring me a large shawl, and bring a stone against hernia. Try to buy it somewhere in a pharmacy or to get it from somebody, because here such a stone does not exist at all, and it is almost as necessary as the eye in the head. If the person who brings the children spends some more money on them, let her tell me or write to me on arrival; I will at once give or send everything back, with my thanks. Prepare them as well as you can, as your own, that everything may be well. . . .

HELENA BRYLSKA

413

January 23, 1905

. . . . DEAR SISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW: We received your letter this month and we answer you at once, and we answer your request. You ask for a ship-ticket for brother-in-law Wolski and for the children. But I cannot satisfy all this. I wish with my whole heart and soul I could bring my children to me, but nothing is to be done. I could economize for [the ticket of] the children, but so much I cannot. We wrote to you in our last letter that we sent a ship-ticket for the children, but it was a mistake, because a ship-ticket cannot be sent for children alone; it is necessary to send one for an older person also. And so I cannot. This money which was intended for the ship-ticket was sent in the name of brother-in-law Wolski; there are 78 roubles. This [is to be used] if it is possible to send the children with somebody. And if it is impossible then, perhaps later on, if our Lord God helps us, we will send more, either money or a ship-ticket for brother-in-law, for now we cannot. And further, you ask about brother Adam. I don't know much about him because I did not see him at all with my eyes; he went to our older brother Franciszek and they are there together. And about me, for my goodness [in sending him a ticket] he does not mind much, because when he wrote me a letter, I wept. He thanked me for my goodness by not calling me sister, but madam. And how is he doing, I don't know. [Usual ending, with greetings for all relatives and acquaintances "without exception."]

HELENA and JÓZEF DĄBROWSKI¹

¹ If there is an earlier mention of Helena's second marriage the letter containing it is missing from our series.



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wrote you those rather disagreeable words. But, my sister, you ought to pardon me, because as your soul pains you for your children, so does mine. I want to see them, I don't know [can't express] how much, because my soul aches for them. You probably got angry with me, as I have no letter from you. Well, I can do nothing; when it passes, then answer me, dear sister.

Can they come to me this year or not? Because if they don't come this year, I must buy a whole ship-ticket for Staś, because when he is 11 years old a whole ship-ticket is necessary and he can travel alone.

I haven't written any letter to mother, and mother is angry that I don't send them money and they must keep my children. Whether I send money or not my children must work with uncle. Let them send the children to me; I don't want anything else. With me it is also hard. I am not working myself, and in America it is not as it was. If they believe that they are wronged let them send the children to me and I will take them. And I don't wish to take the children at their expense, but at mine. I will not pay money in addition to the work of my children. I know [everything about them], because many people with whom I am acquainted come here, and just now Kaliszewiak came to America and called on me and told me about everything. I have nothing more to write, only I send you my lowest bows and wishes for every good.

BOTH HELENA and JOSEPH DĄBROWSKI

October 12, 1906

. . . . DEAR SISTER: Further, we have heard that brother Teofil wishes to come to America. He wrote about it to Adam and the latter wrote to me. If it is true, then answer, and we will send him a ship-ticket. Let him come and bring my children, because brother Adam wrote that he cannot send a ship-ticket to him because all the money he had he lent to our older brother for his house. He cannot send a ship-ticket and he requested me to take up this question.

So we have nothing more to write, only we beg your pardon. Don't be angry with us. Be good and kind. We send you low bows and good wishes. Your well-wishing sister with husband and little son,

HELENA, JÓZEF, and FRANCISZEK DĄBROWSKI,

With respect forever

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April 19 [1907?]

. . . . You write, dear sister, that Józiek is ill with his eyes. It would be terribly painful for me if you should not send him, dear sister. And [their step]father would be terribly angry and terribly grieved, if they all may not come. He says, "I strive and strive and wish that they may come to us. Although I am not their own father I care for them as for my own [children], and God will not punish me as [he would do] if I did not wish to have anything to do with them." So I beg you very much, sister dear, send him, because I have heard and shall have to hear from my man, "Why should you not have them all with you? Later on any of them could say to himself that through his stepfather he became an orphan and does not see his mother."¹ So send him. If he is so terribly ill they will send him back from Ilłowo, but I do not think that they will send him back. They are on ship-ticket and he goes to his mother, so I do not think that it will be so. Only send him, dear sister, and they will surely let him through. I beg you, Mr. Wiśniewski, very much, don't be anxious and afraid that you will have many difficulties. And at the frontier if you strike a bargain with a smuggler he can get ten persons through the frontier. And I will reward you for this. If he does not come it will be a

¹ The stepfather's motive in having the children brought is not affection for the children, whom he does not know, and is something more than attachment to his wife. We have here, in fact, a good insight into the nature of the feeling of moral obligation in the peasant. It is, first, the religious fear of God; second, the fear of a possible blame and reproach of the wronged persons. If there is the usual fear of public opinion, it is not expressed and certainly not very strong, since the man lives almost completely isolated from his community, while in normal peasant life this fear of public opinion is universally connected with the feeling of moral obligation. We have here a good proof that the crisis brought by emigration or any disintegration of communal life does not lead necessarily to a disintegration of morality. The explanation of the various results brought by the dissociation of the community (or family) in this respect, is probably to be found in the fact that social appreciation is not the only sanction for the peasant, but is indissolubly connected, in various proportions, with self-appreciation, and in certain conditions and for certain individuals this element of self-appreciation may develop strongly enough to substitute itself completely for the social appreciation. Thus, as we have seen in Adam Raczkowski, self-appreciation in the form of a feeling of personal importance, by substituting itself for familial solidarity, changes altruism from a duty into an expression of the personality. Here self-appreciation assumes the form of the feeling of righteousness before God and man. The source of the fear of the blame of the person wronged is not the same as that of the fear of social blame; in the first a magical background is still noticeable, while nothing like this can be detected in the second.

terrible sorrow and trial for us, and a large expense, because they will not give us the money for this ship-ticket back; and I shall ever bear a grief in my heart, that I endeavored to have this child and have it not. Remember, dear sister, send him to me, I beg you for the love [of God?]. And now you wrote that you will send me a shawl, but don't make any trouble about it for yourself and for the [man] who comes. May only all my children come; I don't wish anything more. As you grieve about your children, so I grieve about mine. And I beg you once more, send me all the children, because the ship-tickets are sent for all of them in order that they may all come. We salute you all and we wish you every good. Both of us beg for all the children. We will reward you for it. Mr. Wiśniewski, if they ask you during the journey about anything, say only this, that you bring children to their parents. That is all; you don't need any other explanations. And now again, if God leads you happily through the water perhaps they will require somebody, mother or father, to come and meet you in New York; then they will ask, "Is it your father or mother?" Let them [the children] say, "It is our mother or father." And say Mr. Wiśniewski is my brother. Then all will be well, only don't give any other explanation than such as we request you to give. And now, dear sister, you write that perhaps they will send him back from Iłowo. Well, then nothing can be done. It would be the will of God; he would be an orphan until his death and would never more see his mother. O my God, what a sorrow for me! But perhaps God will grant him to be let through. Prepare them all [for the journey], dear sister, I hope that he will get through.

Your well-wishing and loving,

DĄBROWSKIS

June 6 [1908?]

. . . . DEAR SISTER: . . . I have not written to you for a long time, so that I feel a longing. Is it true, dear sister, that you are angry with me—I don't know for what reason. Dear sister, let us forgive each other, because our Lord God orders us to forgive one another, and we, so far away in the world, should we not forgive? Our Lord God suffered more without guilt and forgave us sinners; should we not forgive each other? Let us forgive each other all griefs, dear sister. Write me a letter about your health and success. It is true that I did not write you any letter for a long time, but you



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Salutations from us both and from our children to you, sister and brother-in-law, and to your children. We ask for an answer.

We remain, well-wishing,

H. J. DĄBROWSKIS

419

January 10 [1909, 1910, or 1911]

. . . . DEAR SISTER: . . . I received the letter with the wafer and I thank you for thinking of me, dear sister. Now, dear sister and brother-in-law, don't be angry if I don't write to you very often, but I don't know how to write myself and before I ask somebody to write time passes away, but I try to answer you sometimes at least. You ask me how much my boys and my man earn. My man works in an iron-foundry, he earns 9, 10, 12 roubles [dollars] sometimes, and the boys earn 4 or 5 roubles. My dear, in America it is no better than in our country: whoever does well, he does, and whoever does poorly, suffers misery everywhere. I do not suffer misery, thanks to God, but I do not have much pleasure either. Many people in our country think that in America everybody has much pleasure. No, it is just as in our country, and the churches are like ours, and in general everything is alike. I wish to know with which son grandmother is. Write me. And who is farming on that land after Rykaczewski? Perhaps we shall yet meet some day or other, dear sister. I should like to see you, and my native country. I have nothing more to write, I kiss you both and your children. I wish you a happy and merry and good New Year. May this New Year bring you the greatest happiness possible. We wish it to you from our heart. The children kiss auntie and uncle and their cousins.

We remain, well-wishing,

H. J. DĄBROWSKIS

My children, thanks to God, are not the worst now.¹

is still a real link with her old life. This proves at the same time how much stronger the old sentimental habits are as compared with the new ones, and how much more difficult is the adaptation to new conditions for a woman than for a man. Compare her brothers.

¹ The process of readaptation between mother and children begins, but it will never be complete: the mother cannot get rid of her old desire of authority and tendency to a complete unity of familial life, while the children, after their period of wildness, can neither come back to the traditional familial attitudes of the old country nor yet develop a new organization of their familial life in which individualism and solidarity would be harmoniously unified.

If perhaps you have some new [question], write the soonest possible; perhaps something about that property. [Salutations.]

Dear sister, somebody writes your letters very indistinctly. Your boy knows how to write; he can always write your letters.

I would ask you for something which I need very much; please send it to me the soonest possible. It is the birth-certificates of my boys which I need. Get them from the priest for 5 copecks and send them to me, I shall be very grateful to you for it, and later on I will tell you all, why I need them. But I beg you very much, send the soonest possible the birth-certificate of Stach. I wish to know how old he is. Perhaps he will still be a man. I will give him to the school, perhaps he will do better afterward, when he learns to be some kind of craftsman. Later on he can do better. But I want his birth-certificate. Please send me one for 5 copecks.

420

April 5 [1910 or 1911]

. . . . DEAR SISTER: I received your letter from Brodowska. She said: "Mrs. [Wolska], your sister, told me something, but I don't remember what it was she said," and she gave me the letter. I send you hearty thanks for remembering me, for your being so good and gracious and remembering about us and our affairs. May God help you, dear sister, in everything; God will help you for your good and true heart. Now, dear sister, as to that property, we beg you very much, dear sister, go to the notary and ask the notary to explain to you exactly how it is and what consequences can come from it. Try to set aside the decision, and strive, dear sister, that they may do nothing. They took father's [my first husband's] life away from him, let them do penance for it. I have suffered misery enough with my children without a father, let them suffer now with this their property. If they were good they would come to you and say: "Why should we destroy one another endlessly, Madam? Let us reconcile ourselves conscientiously with one another. Write to your sister and we will be reconciled, and then perhaps God will pardon us." They could say, "We will give what we can, be it more or less, but let there be a holy concord." They don't wish to do it. Do your best, dear sister and brother-in-law, let them be able to do nothing, let it be so till the minors come to their majority, let it be

for the glory of God, and let them have nothing of it.¹ Dear sister, if the notary says that you have no right to make a claim because you have no power of attorney, then we will send you a paper which will be valid, if you need it. Now, dear sister, I wish very much to go to our country, but it is too difficult for me, because the children are little. Perhaps I shall come some day or other, at least to see you, if God sends us health and long life. Now, dear sister and brother-in-law, if you manage that they shall not waste it [the property], when our children come of age we can send you a power of attorney and you can get [a part of it] for your trouble and toil. Offer [a part] for the glory of God, and give [the remaining] to them [to my children]. If not yourself, then your children can live long enough and take it, but give nothing to them [the adverse party]. They have much to lose and [still] they do not wish to make peace in a godly manner. If they wished it they would make peace in a godly manner, but they do not wish it; so don't let them cheat you out of anything on any pretext [technicality]. Tell me everything, how and what the notary speaks. Even if we should come now to our country it would not pay us to go with small children for this piece of land. Perhaps we shall come later on, after some years, when the children grow larger and I can take them to our country with me. As to the children, two of them are very good children. One is working and gives his money [to me], the other is going to school, and learns well, but the third is not at home at all. Stach has been bad, is bad, and will be bad. So long as he was smaller, he remained more at home. I begged him, "Stach, remain at home with your mother." No, he runs away and loafes about. Well let him run. I had his eyes wiped [had him instructed] as well as I could; he can read, write, and speak English, quite like a gentleman. You say, "Beat." In America you are not allowed to beat; they can put you into a prison. Give them to eat, and don't beat—such is the law in America. Nothing can be done, and you advise to beat! Nothing can be done; if he is not good of himself, he is lost.

¹ Typical attitude. The members of Helena's husband's family who sue her have by the fact of this suit taken the standpoint of strangers and enemies, and merit not the slightest regard, while if they had tried to settle the matter in a conciliatory way, they would have put themselves in the same familial group, and thus the family solidarity would have become a principle of the division of the property. By the lawsuit all ties of group-solidarity are broken, at least for the time.



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they will not let him go until his twenty-first year. I gave him away, dear sister, because he would not go to school and listen. I have always had trouble with him. I had to send him there, and perhaps he will become a [good] man. They teach reading and writing and different kinds of work. When he is older he will not suffer misery. I call on him frequently. He feels well. If he suffered misery there I would not allow this. The oldest is not with me, the second is not with me, I feared this one would run away from me, and I gave him away. He will the sooner learn to be reasonable, and he can become a man. . . .

H. J. DĄBROWSKIS

422

December 18, 1911

DEAR SISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW: . . . I received your letter with the Christmas tokens for which I thank you very heartily. We divide the wafer among ourselves, we wish you a Merry Christmas. May God grant us to live until the next year. I beg your pardon if my letter arrives too late for Christmas; it was written too late, my dear. I don't know myself how to write, so I cannot write when I wish, but when that person who writes my letters has time to spare. Now, my dear sister and brother-in-law, you ask my advice about the boy. It would be very well to give him the school [instruction], because the school is a great fortune, but will it not be too burdensome for you? Do what you consider right, my dear. If he learns well and is willing, try to give him the school. It is not necessary for him to become a priest; he can be something else. The duties of a priest are hard and difficult, and it is better to be a good peasant than a bad priest.¹ Do what you consider right and what your strength suffices for, my dear. Now, you will send your oldest son to America. He is a little too young, and in America work is hard and now the times are bad. In America there are different kinds of work, heavy and light, but a man from our country cannot get the light one, because he does not know the language. A light-headed person can soon be corrupted in America, especially a young man. I don't write it about your son, God forbid! Perhaps your children are not so bad. Well, my sister and brother-in-law, if you wish, send him to America. We will try to find work for him, we will care about him, if he listens

¹ This reflection shows the influence of American democratism. Perhaps it does not come from Helena herself, but from her husband.

to us. I would care for him as for my own child. If he wishes, let him come. Do what is the best for you. My children are sometimes good and sometimes not good. As to that property about which you write, let it be quiet for some time; I will see later on. Now, my dear, I expect a woman's illness, I don't know how God will deliver me. If I am in good health I will write you something more.

I kiss you, little sister, and your man and children. I wish you good success. Your boy wrote the letter well enough. He can at least write himself. From our brothers I have sometimes a letter.

We remain, well-wishing,

DĄBROWSKIS

I ask for an answer. You weep more than once, dear sister, and I also weep more than once.

423

May 6, 1912

. . . . DEAREST SISTER, WITH CHILDREN: I received from you a letter, but what a letter! With a great regret and sorrow and woe! I shed tears and I could not calm myself from the grief and woe and sorrow which came upon you, dear sister. O my God, my God, what a misfortune has befallen you! At so young an age your husband left you a widow, a lonely orphan, with your children! O my dear, whenever I think of it I shed tears, I grieve, but how can I help you? I cannot help you. I know what a sorrow and misery it is, because I was a widow myself. Oh, that is a burden—an indescribable woe. But, my dear sister, I beg you, don't grieve. There is nothing to do. It is God's will, God governs us, not ourselves. God took from you a husband, a friend, a guide, and the father of your children. Conform yourself to the will of God, adjust yourself the best you can, pray for your father, and you, sister, for your husband, and God will love you and bless you, if you conform yourself to the will of God. So I request you, don't grieve, don't despair, I beg you very much. Could I help and comfort you I would hasten at the same moment to do it, but I cannot. I grieve only about your bad fortune.

You, children, I request you, respect your mother and listen to her, because God left you only a mother as guide and took your father to Him. Listen to your mother, respect her and behave yourselves well. Especially you, oldest son, listen to your mother and respect

her. God forbid that you should cause her any sorrow. I, your auntie, beg you, children, very much to do it.¹ I wrote directly a letter to our brothers and I requested them to write a letter to you.

Myself, dear sister, I walk a little already. My health is weak, but I ought to thank God the Merciful for this great grace that I am still alive for the sake of my orphans. But I shall nevermore be so well as before. From Christmas till Easter I did not leave my bed and I could not turn myself in bed. Now I am walking again, but feebly. I ask you for an answer as to how you are getting on after the death of your husband, and whether you received a letter from our brothers. I hasten to comfort you at least with a letter. Remember, don't grieve. I kiss you and your children. Live, you orphans, with God. God bless you.

I remain in sorrow for you, dear sister,

H. J. DĄBROWSKIS

I ask you for an answer.

424

June 12 [1912?]

. . . . DEAR SISTER: You ask me whether I shall come to our country and when. My dear, I will not come to our country, because I have nothing to come for. I wrote you what a misfortune I had with my illness. My illness and the funeral [of the child] cost me much, and in America everything is expensive. Mine [my man] did not work for a long time when I was ill, so I exhausted all my money. My illness and [illegible word], and my children ruined me. They could earn now, but they went away from me. Is it not a sorrow? I brought them here and all this cost me you know how much. Well, I will not tell you much, because it is hard for me. And you wrote me, dear sister, to lend you [money]. But have I money? If I had, certainly I would lend it to you, from my soul, but I cannot. You have property, you can find some way, and myself, what I don't earn here I have not. And you, my dear, you can find

¹ From this and the preceding letter it is evident that Helena keeps unchanged the familial attitude, both in matters of solidarity—in deciding to take her nephew, and in the sincere sympathy she expresses with her sister—and in matters of authority, when she demands beforehand that her nephew shall listen to her when he comes, and when she exhorts all the sister's children to listen to their mother after their father's death.



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426

[St.] PETERSBURG, October 7, 1905

“Praised be Jesus Christus!” [etc.]

DEAR BROTHER [ANTONI]: [Generalities about health.] I received your letter, but I could not answer, because I had no time. The young lady [daughter of a Russian aristocrat whom he is serving] came and remained for some weeks, and I don't know how to write Polish myself.¹ As to Teofil, I spoke to him when he was with me. I told him something quite different. I advised him to go to Prussia, to earn some money there, and only then to go to America, not so [as he intends]. He has got accustomed to travel in trains and would like to travel more, but on whose money? I had some money, but I went to the country, then to Warsaw. I had to feed him and myself for some time. Whence can I get so much money? My money is exhausted. I have been without money myself, particularly during this year when I have spent some hundred roubles in travel alone. And what about living and clothes? I must buy everything for my own money. My lord and lady are not here. They don't give me money [for living]. In Petersburg money is easily spent; it is not like the country. We have nothing more to write, we send hearty wishes to you, brother, sister-in-law, Teofil, and children.

Your well-wishing brother and sister-in-law,

L. WOLSKIS

You could write a letter to America, to your family, in order that they may send him a ship-ticket. He would be better considered then. There is a man here, with whom I am acquainted, who said that this would do very well—better than money. He would be more respected and would get work more easily.

LUDWIK WOLSKI

Greetings to sister Bronislawa. Inform me how she is getting on, because you never write me about her.

427

February 13, 1912

DEAR BROTHER: I received your letter, but I had no time to answer, and the time passes so you don't notice it. I am very much grieved that you feel so sick. You ask me to come, but notwith-

¹ This shows that he either emigrated to Russia as a young boy or, more probably, stayed there after his military service.

standing all my wishes I cannot now, because I am in service. If God grants you to live till summer, then perhaps, but even so I cannot say certainly because I don't know what will be. I should like very much to see you, you know it, but nothing can be done; I don't depend upon myself [but on my master]. I am not in very good health either. I live as I lived, nothing new. I had a letter from Teofil; he is in good health, thanks to God, and is doing well; nothing new or particular.

We have had very cold weather during this whole time for three months. I wish you to bear at least your illness easily. It is necessary to agree with the will of God. We shall all be in that other world sooner or later; even the rich cannot buy himself off from sickness and death, and so it is necessary to agree with God's will. Perhaps God will still allow us to see one another, but it would be vain to think of it beforehand, because things never go on as you wish them. I wish you every good; I don't find words to relieve you. We send to everybody greetings and our best wishes. Dear brother, we don't have any anger against you, how can you think it! I kiss and embrace you most heartily, dear brother.

We remain, your loving and well-wishing,

BROTHER LUDWIK and SISTER-IN-LAW MAŁGORZATA WOLSKI

428

April 8, 1912

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER-IN-LAW: We received your letter and we are very much grieved that you had to spend such sad holidays, but it is necessary to submit to everything. It is the will of God. We shall all die; nothing can be done against it. Notwithstanding all my desires and wishes, I cannot come. If my letter still finds brother alive, please, sister-in-law, explain to him that I cannot leave my place to go. I should not help him in doing it; death will come in any case as it is destined. To us it is very hard and painful and we feel it very much, but we can be of no help. We kiss him and bid him farewell, because probably we shall see him no more. You write and despair, sister-in-law, that you will be left with your children. But the children are big and they can work themselves, and you have a farm. Other widows remain and not a copeck is left after their husbands, and still they find some way; and you have a farm. You need only to work and not to be lazy; there will be enough to live on.

Your son Aleksander writes that he does not know what to do when his father dies, and asks me to advise him. But I do not know what sort of a farm you have, how many cattle and everything. I could give you advice only if I knew how you succeed [in your farming]. And when you write a letter, sister-in-law, request somebody to write it, because it is impossible to understand what is written; it is without sense and one and the same. I wrote in the other letter that I will not come and now you repeat the same things to me. Please tell brother that I and my wife have not any grievance against him; let him rest easy. We send to you all our good wishes on occasion of the past holidays. Submit to the will of God. And I want to know whether you have been away, sister-in-law, because as long as brother was in good health you gave no word of yourself and now, after four years, you have spoken. I received letters from brother and from his children, but you were as if you had never been. It is very disagreeable to me. Probably you acted just so with brother; you could not take care to lengthen his life. As to my coming, I cannot come now. When I am free I will come; only I don't know when, and whether during this year. With us everything is as of old. We are sick a little, but for the time being it is nothing. I remind you once more, request somebody to write your letters, and longer [ones]. It is not necessary to register them, letters arrive so. We wait for your answer and we send greetings to everybody.¹

We remain, well-wishing,

YOUR BROTHER LUDWIK and YOUR SISTER-IN-LAW WOLSKI

¹ This letter is a plain endeavor to get rid of any familial claims, to isolate himself completely from the familial group. While Ludwik does not dare to break completely the relation with his brother individually, he declines completely any future participation in the life of the brother's wife and children. His sister-in-law and his nephew, according to the tradition, want him to be morally the guardian after Antoni's death. He declines absolutely to accept this rôle. At the same time, cruelly rebuking the woman, and trying to place the blame on her—pretending that the reason of his coldness is the fact that she had not written to him for four years, while, as we see from other series, it is sufficient for one member of the family to write in order to keep the familial relation between the group and the absent individual. This is, in fact, the only example we have of the complete and conscious severing of familial relations unjustified by any quarrel. The only plausible explanation is the influence of Russian life. We had to make the same supposition in attempting to explain the rapid disintegration of the Barszczewski family. In Ludwik the influence is still more marked because he has probably lived for many years in isolation among the Russians. Besides the lack of familial unity in Russian life, there may be also other factors—the latent or manifest hos-



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O dear mother, I grieve more than you. Often I weep secretly, and not an hour passes without my thinking about home. Nothing rejoices me in America. May our Lord God give me health that I may get our affairs in order and return to our country the soonest possible. I pay aunt only for board, for nothing more—\$3.00 a week, because living is very expensive. Aunt gave \$2,700 for this house. She borrowed \$700. And those boys whom auntie brought from our country, they did harm. Uncle bought them everything that they wanted, and they did not want to work, although they could already. And then they simply went away.¹ Stasiek went away two years ago, and Józef went away after Stasiek, and since then uncle and auntie have not seen them. I did not see them either, but they are not far away; by street-car from Waterbury it costs only 10 cents. And auntie gave Maniek away to a farm-school; it is so called. It is a sort of a prison where they learn and work. And those who are there are not allowed to speak to one another. He has already been there for 2 years. If aunt wishes he will remain there till his twenty-first year. So I have not seen him either, because [the fare] to him costs half a dollar. I inform you, dear mother, how many hours a day I work and how much a week I earn. I work in an iron-foundry 10 hours a day. Now, in the beginning, I have light work. I choose different irons out [classify], which are good and which not, because now it is terribly hot. Later on I shall try other work. [End missing.]

[ALEKSANDER WOLSKI]

431

July 28 [1913]

[Usual greetings and wishes.]

Now I write to you, mother, about the address of uncle in America; I would have written it from memory, but I do not know the number.

difference is probably due to a number of factors: (1) Helena's boys came to America while still children, and thus the familial attitude was not developed and the individualizing influences had a free field; (2) Helena had married for the second time and this hindered the development of any real familial solidarity between her and her children; (3) Aleksander is the heir of his father's farm, and land is the economic nucleus around which the family would remain grouped in this case, at least until the moment of its division.

¹ The boy's view of his cousins' behavior is evidently influenced by his aunt. At the same time he fully shares his aunt's standpoint of appreciation, which is that of familial solidarity. There is no contradiction, as we shall see, between this letter and No. 435, where he takes the side of his cousins.

Now mother, you want me to write letters more often. What shall I write? I will only answer every one of your answers. This costs you enough, and it costs me doubly, when I send [the letter] and when one comes.¹ Dear mother inform me, please, whether the weather during the harvest is good or not, whether all the crops were good, what others came to America after me. Please describe all this to me. And now I inform you that I have a terrible longing and never can I forget our country. What help can you give me? As soon as I recall [our country], tears come to my eyes every time, and also because I have no friend. Aunt also is not very good. When I come from the shop in the evening, if only I do not help her in anything she gets directly angry, and so she scolds and calls God's wrath down on her husband and me for every trifle. I have never heard this at home.² In the beginning she said I had to "work back" for half the debt [for the ship-ticket], but now she says for the whole. Four weeks more and I shall work it back. May God only give me health, and I will never forget you and I will further try to behave the best I can. I don't smoke, I don't drink. There are two boarding with aunt. They have been in America ten years, are unmarried and work every day, and they have not a cent in their pocket. I will not do as they do, so that I may earn money and return home.³ Let Bronislaw Tkaczyk come if he wishes; different works are going well everywhere. When the days get cooler I will try harder work; now it is too hot. I will do such work as uncle does. I am nearly as [strong as] uncle.

And you, Julek, write to me, whether they [the boys] beat you there in my absence. When I was there many feared me. For myself, I don't suffer misery here in America, but you do there in our country. I have nothing more to write. I send only, and we all

¹ As in Russia, letters are often lost, the Polish peasants usually send them without stamps, because double postage is then collected from the receiver, and the government safeguards the letter with formalities which are equivalent to registration. Registration is safer, but in addition to dread of the formality, the peasant does not like to go to *any office*.

² Helena's character may have become embittered through her experiences with her children, but probably she has always been more despotic and quarrelsome than her rather meek sister.

³ His temperance is not the result of moral considerations, but simply that of the seriousness of his attitude toward life and his estimation of the task which he has to accomplish. This is perfectly typical. In spite of the efforts of the clergy there is never any moral reaction toward intemperance as toward something bad in itself, but merely as toward an obstacle in tending to some end.

send, hearty greetings to you and to our acquaintances. May God grant this. Amen.

And that accordeon I brought with me is not spoiled at all. On Sundays I amuse myself, and it plays like a new one.

[ALEKSANDER WOLSKI]

432

September 1 [1913]

. . . . Now, dear mother, I write you once more. Send me, please, the address of my uncle [Teofil] in America. Dear mother, I have already worked back for the ship-ticket, now I will work for you [to send you money], for digging the potatoes in the autumn. We are both working with Ososki from Bartniki; we do the same work one near another. He greets his brother in Leszno. We both long terribly for our country. He left his wife and children on his farm, and we say to each other, "How they are suffering there alone." When he came from our country 2 months ago, he got at first good work in another city, in Naget. From Union City to Naget is one verst. But that factory stopped for a month, so now we are working together. When it starts, if it goes well, we shall both go there to work. We say to each other that when we earn some money we will soon return to our country, because now it is terribly hard in America; everything is dear, and it is difficult to get work. So I work as hard as I can in order to return soon to our country. I long terribly for my country; nothing gives me pleasure in America. We must be very attentive in our work, every hour, because if anything is bad we are without work.¹ We went once with auntie to Waterbury to her boys, to those farms where they are, but we could not see them; on Sunday we walked about for half a day asking for them, but we could not find out where they are. In August terrible rains fell, and the mornings are cold now.

[ALEKSANDER]

¹ It is not without significance that he mentions working conditions immediately after speaking of his longing for home. The adjustment to hired factory-work is one of the most difficult which the immigrant has to make. In this case the boy is sustained by the expectation of success and a return home, but in cases where the children of immigrants are compelled to hand to their parents their total earnings (which is the usual practice), they frequently decline to be promoted to work paying more. No factory-work is stimulating, and a new adjustment is felt as an extra burden.



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for it, for forcing me to learn.¹ It cannot at all be described how well it is in the world when you know how to read and to write yourself and you can write down everything that you think.

Aunt keeps some nice ducks and hens, and she has some pigeons left by her boys. There were 50 ducks. She keeps 7 for breeding, and she has 80 hens. They are doing well, and she has 10 pigeons, but in comparison with ours they are ugly. You, Julek and Aniela, remember well about mine. Close the opening at night so that something may not devour them. You can sell some young ones, Julek, but leave a pair of the young ones, because otherwise they would be played out, if any of the old ones were lost. Write to me whether the old pairs are both doing well, and don't sell the old ones to anybody. And write me, whether Józef Sobiraj finished being sick [got well] or not, and does he work with his mother or is he hired somewhere. If he would come to America in the spring they would get on better. I have nothing more to write. [Usual greetings.]

[ALEKSANDER]

434

December 8, 1913

. . . . Now I inform that I have sent 65 roubles. I would send more, mother, but we have a slack in America; many people are everywhere without work. Our factory has worked 5 weeks for 5 days a week. We don't work on Saturdays, and on some days we don't work during some hours. This Ososki from Bartniki, brother of that one in Leszno, who worked with me, was paid off from one factory and has not worked for a week. He went everywhere, but he could not find work. I am working in the same place where I began. After New Year perhaps it will get better. I shall not see uncle soon, because I must keep terribly close to my work, and it is far; the journey to him and back will cost \$5.00 and the city is large and it will be very difficult to find him. That letter rejoiced me

¹ "Hands," because she did so by beating him. The attitude of superiority which the boy assumes here toward his younger brother and sister is another sign that he considers himself the head of the family. When he tells them to listen to their mother, his expression is exactly the same as that of a father. We have here one proof more that the old familial solidarity excludes anything like a particular solidarity of the younger generation against the older, but is a kind of hierarchical solidary organization, particularly when there is a material basis of the existence of the group which calls for a manager.

awfully; it is as if I had seen you. And you, Julek [I thank] for writing me about everything. You wrote this letter very distinctly. I am trying to manage so that we may all be together soon. And please, write me about this Zielazczak, whether he helps [you] or not, and whether he does something bad, for there was nothing written about him. Please write me which boys went to the army, which others came to America, whether Józef Sobiraj got rid of his sickness or not, and about those neighbors who live near to us, which of them annoys you. Please, mother, write me, describe to me what is of interest. Here it has rained during the whole autumn. On All Saints Day we had a frost which covered the windows, but now no more frost, only rains are falling. And about aunt I have nothing to write, no news. They have three children [by second husband]. Two are going to the school. I go nowhere myself; we remain together in the evening, we talk and laugh all together. [A man] from uncle's country is also boarding with aunt. He is 30 years old and unmarried. If I want to buy something he leads me everywhere. I have nothing more to write, I send you only hearty salutations and wish you a Merry Christmas. May God grant it. Amen.

[ALEKSANDER]

435

January 11, 1914

. . . . And now I inform you that on Christmas I saw Józef [son of Helena]. He came to us from the farm for the first time. I saw him at home, at dinner. If it had not been at home, I should not have recognized him. He has grown tall, a little taller than I am, and terribly thin and lean. His voice has also changed. He said also he would not have recognized me. We were terribly glad, both of us. He was two days with us, and we both went everywhere. The church is near, so we were both in the church. He related everything to me, and I, everything to him. He left his mother two years ago and had not seen her since. He regretted my father very much. He did not know that he was dead; he will see his uncle [the writer's father] no more. He told me how his uncle accompanied him to the frontier, and how he himself wanted neither to go away from his uncle nor to remain anywhere else; and tears gushed from his eyes. He was very sorry for you, working there alone and nobody with you at home. He said that he loved his uncle and auntie [the writer's parents] better than his own mother, because when he

came to his mother she neither looked at him nor knew him. He wept, and I also shed tears. His mother would have nothing to do with him. He said that if anybody gave him money he would at once go to his auntie, to our country, and help his auntie; if not, he will go with me to our country in the spring after next, and will remain with us until the call for military service; and after the service, if God lets him live, he will take that land back. He says there are few of us in our country, so we will work.¹ When he went away from us and said goodbye to his mother, his mother would not tell him goodbye. So he went away, but nearly fainted from sorrow, and I wept as never [before]. I went with him to the street-car. We went beyond the city, the street-car came, and he bade me farewell. He wept about me and I wept about him, as never yet I wept. Never had I such a sorrow as then. When I returned home I could not walk from sorrow. In our country one does not realize what family is, but in the world, when one sees somebody, it can be neither described nor told. I wept from dinner until evening, and when they asked me at home why I wept, I could not speak from sorrow, till I got a headache. I long terribly, because I have no friend with whom I may rejoice. Bojarski from Gustkowo has been in this city about 20 years, Mańka Leleniewianka from Gustkowo came to him at the end of carnival. It will be two years since she came. Sometimes on Saturdays I go to them. I have nothing more to write, only I send you hearty salutations and ask you for an answer.

[ALEKSANDER]

¹ Józef retains the old attitudes in spite of the evolution he has undergone in America, and though these old attitudes were not exclusive enough to allow him to remain with his mother. It is a case of psychological dissociation or stratification; the new characters are simply superimposed on the old ones without modifying them essentially. The same feature is found in persons of peasant origin who have had American college instruction. The cultural life is here connected with the English language and the American environment, while the Polish language and the Polish environment suggest merely the associations which are inclosed within the sphere of the peasant interests and traditions. These two strata do not interfere with each other and the same person is at one moment a cultivated American, when speaking English, at another moment a Polish peasant, when speaking Polish. Evidently, this situation is possible only because the peasant immigrants were almost completely cut off from the higher culture in Poland. In the present case the dissociation is probably due to the lack of any strong link connecting the previous life with the new one; the only link is the mother. It is very probable that Józef had lived during the past two years without much reflection on the past, absorbed in the actual conditions, and that only the meeting with his cousin and the talk of the latter brought the old attitudes to consciousness again.



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know on what day and in which month. Dear brother and sister-in-law, I expected a letter from you, because I wrote to you, but I don't know what has become of you. I want at least to receive one letter from you, to speak [communicate] with you before my death, because I don't know the will of God, whether our Lord Jesus will allow me to return or not; I don't know it. And now I beg you, dear brother and sister-in-law, be so gracious and answer me. I don't know whether you are angry with me, because I wrote you a letter and I have no answer. I expect your letter every day and every hour and every minute in vain, and my heart is anxious, because I should be glad to speak with you, at least by letters, before my parting [half a page more about expecting letters and asking for letters]. Dear brother and dear sister-in-law, I beg your pardon, perhaps I did you sometime some wrong, so I ask for your pardon. Forgive me, because I go so far away, as to death. But I do not lose my hope in God, because our Lord Jesus remembers us better than we remember our Lord God, and therefore I pray our Lord God and this God's Mother of Częstochowa. May our Lord Jesus allow me to return, and God's Mother of Częstochowa. I offer myself to [rely on] the will of God and let it be as our Lord Jesus and this God's Mother of Częstochowa will turn me [decide about me]. I am satisfied with everything, because our Lord Jesus sends me such fortune, and nothing can be done against it. And now I bid you farewell, dear brother, I kiss you innumerable times, and I bid you farewell, dear sister-in-law, and I kiss you. Let our Lord Jesus help you for my prayer. And I bid you farewell, little brother Aleksander, and you, Wladyslaw, and you, sister, and the whole household.¹

I, your truly loving brother,

TEOFIL WOLSKI

¹ The letter has the purely traditional form of a farewell before death; it is a substitute for a spoken farewell. At the same time it shows the particular kind of fatalism of the Polish peasant, which is closely connected with the magical-religious system. Since in magic there is no continuity between cause and effect, the inability to calculate with certainty the effects of a cause and the almost unlimited range of possible events in a given situation open a wide field for fatalism. Man should do what he knows with certainty to be right in this situation, and then commit himself to the will of God but without any certainty of the results, because he never could have done *everything* necessary.

There was no place for fatalism in the old naturalistic religion, and the fatalistic attitude becomes more and more formal when magic loses its influence and the modern practical attitude, based upon the continuity of cause and effect, takes its place. The peasant, when stating a plan, still adds some words about the will

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November 1 [1904]

In the first words of my letter I say: "Praised be J. C." and I inform you, dear brother and sister-in-law, that I received your letter on November 1, and I was very glad when I learned that you are in good health, thanks to the highest favor of our Lord God. For myself, up to the present I am still alive and in health, thanks to Lord God the highest and to God's Mother. And as to my success and how I am living, I inform you that up to the present, thanks to God, all is well. We have had no hunger yet up to the present and we haven't now, only now it is already a little cold; little morning frosts happen already, but this is no misery yet. May only God and God's Mother grant that it does not become worse.

And as to the war, I should have much to describe, but I cannot write you much about it. I inform you only that we have been in battle for four days, and now we are in camp for some days. What will be further, God alone knows, when and what will be the end of all this. It doesn't seem at all that it will end soon, on the one or on the other side. Our Lord God alone knows what end will result from it. It is God's will. As God Almighty grants, so will it be. Let us only beg our Lord God and the miraculous Mother of God to give us health and to guard us from every misfortune, and commit everything to the will of God.

I inform Brodowski that his son is also alive and healthy, thanks to our Lord God. I will try to inform him as soon as possible and to repeat to him those few words, which you have written to him. I saw them not long ago, Brodowski and also Rykaczewski. They are also in good health, thanks to God the Almighty. [Bows for the whole family and wishes for good health.]

TEOFIL WOLSKI

439

January 1, 1905

. . . . And I inform you that now we stand in camp. We dug pits for ourselves, as we do in Poland for potatoes, and we are sitting inside. We have no great fighting now, only skirmishes happen;

of God, the weakness of man, etc., but mainly as a manifestation of humility. There seems to be a half-conscious fear that if he does not do it, God may punish him for his presumption, by destroying his plans. But in the matters of death and sickness, which remain the last refuge of magic, and sometimes in matters of marriage, where also magical practices persist even on a higher level of culture, fatalism is still powerful, because precisely in those lines the continuity of cause and effect is the most difficult of prevision.

they are firing one against another every day, but not much. But presently we expect a great fight, and nobody knows what God will send. The air [weather] here up to the present is very good; no snow as yet, but frost began almost two months ago, and we have frost every day, not great, 10° or more [Réaumur], sometimes it reaches 20°. Yes, my dear brother and sister-in-law, up to the present, thanks to our Lord God the Highest and to God's Mother, we have not yet suffered great misery, although you know yourself that it is no pleasure; but in the position in which we find ourselves, up to the present we have but little to complain of. . . .

Now it is going badly with you also, as you write to me, dear brother, that they are calling the reservists. God forbid them to take you also. I advise you, dear brother, if you feel anything bad, [apprehension], don't tarry long but direct yourself according to your thoughts [fly].

TEOFIL WOLSKI

A SOLDIER ON WAR¹

After a long and dark night, at last it began to dawn. The day's apparition was so sad that the heart began to weep.

The sun, arising from behind the mountains, threw to us sad rays; and we remained in intrenchments, watching the shadows of the enemy.

We remained there and we turned our eyes to heaven, appealing for help from there, after so many days spent in hunger and so many tedious nights without sleep.

Everybody sends a prayer to God. May He help us to crumble the enemy and to return healthy after so long and heavy sufferings.

Suddenly a crash interrupted the sepulchral silence—the crash of the enemy's shrapnel which burst in our intrenchment, not missing its mark.

I saw before me a column of dark smoke rising up to the clouds. Oh, what a mark it left and what a blow it cast upon us!

I saw before me my companions lying, without hands or feet, and others in the moments preceding their death, gave sad and terrible groans.

There a surgeon binds up the wounds of the injured, others take them to the hospital, and so companions, helping their companion, save at last his life.

¹ Poetry, without rhythm but with some rhyme. Doubtful whether written by himself or another soldier.



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all the Catholics. Up to the present, thanks to our Lord God and to God's Mother, all is well with us. As to the war, I have nothing to write you, because you know everything there. What you say, having learned from papers and letters, so it is, and I can write you nothing else. If God gives me health and allows me happily to return, I shall have much to relate, but it is impossible to write all this. The fight that lasted for 12 days near Mukden was terrible and obstinate; we fought in it from the beginning to the end. And the end was that we had to retire, because a little more and we should have nowhere to fly; the Japanese encircled us so that only a narrow passage remained through which we fled and the Japanese fired upon us with guns. You know, when we fled thus it could not be without losses; there remained much of everything for the Japanese. Myself, thanks to our Lord God, I got out safe and healthy, and I did not throw away my effects, which I need.

You wrote that we cannot dream about attacking, because as soon as we attack we fly still faster. That we fly is true, but not so fast as you say. We beat them as we like, but they are stubborn and will not give way; so when we are bored with beating them, then we fly. But perhaps we shall fly no more, because we hear that the Japanese have cut us off from Harbin, and we are not so stupid as to fly to Japan.¹

Now I inform you that I received on April 21 a letter and a package from brother [Ludwik] of Petersburg. In this packet were shoes, sugar, tobacco, and a shirt. I have nothing more to write. . . .

TEOFIL WOLSKI

June 28, 1905

. . . . With us now it is calm. We have been camping for some weeks at the same place and nobody disturbs us; we walk about all the mountains, wherever we like, and we are occupied with learning. We learn how to attack the Japanese. We do also some gymnastics in order to make our bones flexible, which are stiffened from sleeping on the naked ground. We got some fun and training from these occupations, so that now we don't fear much even the Japanese [irony].

¹ An enormous amount of satire developed among the Russian and Polish soldiers during the Japanese war. With the Russians it was an expression of their habit of satirizing their own nation, particularly in matters connected with the state of government. With the Poles, as in this case, it was the expression of a latent and open hostility to Russia.

We have no true news at all; what the soldiers say—you hear every moment something new. It is impossible to make anything out of our Manchurian papers which we read every day. From the news of these papers and from the soldiers' tales [one would think that] in one hour the war will end, and then again the fight is beginning and the war going on. So we cannot believe what we hear; we hope in our Lord God that the war will end soon, but up to the present we have no [certain] tidings. What is the news with you about the war? Please inform me, I am very curious. [More about the uncertain news, and about weather.]

As to your hunts, about which you write me, I heard also something, and that the big game is chased and will fall into nets, and with the big game the small will surely have to suffer, because when the hunter is chasing hares and meets partridges, he surely will not let them go.¹ If God grants that the war is over and helps me to get out of this slavery I don't know where to turn myself. My attachment and wishes attract me to my family, but, as it seems, with you it is no worse [no better] than with us. . . .

TEOFIL WOLSKI

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PHILADELPHIA, PA., April 8, 1907

. . . . DEAR WALCIA: And now I write you, my dear, an answer to your letter. Some things in this letter are good, and some things of little worth, because of this: If you come to your brother, I will come and get you and we could marry, remain for some years and return with something [some money] to our country, so that later we might not be obliged to earn [as hired laborers]. If I should return in the autumn I should not have much. It was only during the holidays that I sent back the money for the ship-ticket, and by autumn I shall have about 200 roubles. The journey 100, the remainder for the wedding, and what then? Go again to America? That is no business for me, to work and to throw to the winds. Therefore I write to you the exact truth: If you don't come and don't wait for me longer it means that you will not be mine, because I won't return sooner than perhaps on the next holiday of Easter; by no means can I sooner. And you write that you will wait only till autumn, and so the one disagrees with the other. Therefore, I request you, answer me, what will become of us, whether you will come or not,

¹ Allusion to the revolution. The hunters are the Russian authorities and the game the revolutionists—or the contrary.

or perhaps you will wait a year still. And now I will write you further that you have done a stupid thing by sending that letter to Kowalski. He is a brute, not a man, he was not even worth receiving that letter, and not worth what I have paid for two letters from him which I received, because he wrote to me now and was quarreling and blustering, as if anybody were afraid of him, and all this because of you. You ought not to wear your cloak on both shoulders [practice duplicity]. I sent [that letter] to you in order that you might know, and you sent it back to him. Now he writes silly things to me. I don't praise this in you. But now no matter; it is done and cannot be undone, so I bid you goodbye. I embrace you and kiss you. Embrace everybody in my name.¹ Now goodbye.

Loving you,

TEOFIL WOLSKI

444

December 12, 1909

MY DEAREST BROTHER AND SISTER-IN-LAW: I don't know what it means that you forgot so soon about me, orphan [that I am]. How can I call myself, if not an orphan? You know from your own experience that everybody among you is in his own country and on his own piece of land and defends himself against his poverty with God's help. But what do you think about me? What pleasure have I? As soon as God helped me to grow a little they took me in that far world, and what I suffered there I have related to you already [when I saw you], and I will not write about it, because no writer could describe all my ups and downs. Then I came here to this America.

¹ The letter is a very good example of the typical relation between love and economic considerations. We see these factors equilibrated more or less without the subordination of either of them. The love is strong enough to make the man wait indefinitely for the girl and not to consider dowry, but considerations of the future economic situation put a determined limit to the sacrifice which he is ready to make. This equilibration in various proportions is found in most of the marriages in Poland. But in the old country, marriage is conditioned by social factors more than by individual considerations, and the relation between the economic and the sentimental motives is never so plain and isolated as it is here. Teofil is, at the time when this letter is written, almost completely outside of his family and his native, social environment—more so than his cousin Adam Raczkowski, because of his longer military service, his participation in the war, and his solitude in America. Therefore social considerations cease to play any determining part in his attitude toward marriage, and the individual factors—economic welfare and personal preference—remain alone to determine his choice.



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I had money enough I would return to my country, but for the time being it is difficult to gather so much money, and therefore I must suffer poverty for some time. God only knows how long this will last. We know only that when this man who now, since the 4th of March, is on the throne, became president, we all were glad that there would be work enough. Meanwhile it turns out otherwise, because for poor people the times are getting worse than before. All the prices increase and work is paid less than formerly, and moreover this work cannot be got. And then in our papers it is written that there in our country some mean agents are going around and claiming that in America now work is better than ever before. These agents persuade the people to go and everybody leaves his last possibility of earning his life, sometimes even robs his family and comes here, but why, he does not know himself. Perhaps he seeks his own hunger-death, as many cases happen where in the morning corpses are found lying in the streets and after cutting them open [physicians] come to the conclusion that they died from hunger. So don't listen to these "catch-people." They are sent by the ship-companies, and are well paid to gather passengers who will pay such high rates for the tickets. You must know that a ticket now costs about \$60, i.e., 120 roubles. Those agents know that people enough went to America, but they do not know how [otherwise] to take this hard-earned money away from those poor people and therefore they use such means. Let nobody listen to anybody but only to his relatives whom he has here, in this golden America.

Now I request you to inform me what is the news in your country. How is the winter there? With us it is very light. And what about the young men and girls who got married? Who is dead, who lives?

When I receive a letter from you I will send you my photograph. Now we say goodbye to you, dear brother and sister-in-law, and we embrace and kiss millions of times yourselves and your children.

Your brother, loving to the grave,

T. WOLSKI and STEFAN KUCZBORSKI¹

¹ A friend, who signs as a means of "sending his regards."

REMBIEŃSKA SERIES

We have here a case of familial attitudes quite untouched by emigration. The writer seems to represent as perfectly as possible the *ideal* of a peasant girl according to the traditional norms. There is scarcely anything in her behavior that could be blamed from the traditional standpoint, but also hardly any tendency to go beyond this traditional standpoint. Compare her in this respect with the more self-conscious Frania Osińska

THE FAMILY REMBIEŃSKI

Rembieński

His wife

Aleksandra } his daughters
Stasia }

Julka, sister of Rembieński's wife

Kubarz, her husband

Olcia, their daughter

Karolska, sister of Rembieński (or of his wife)

Her husband

Mańka, a cousin of Aleksandra

446-48, ALEKSANDRA REMBIEŃSKA, IN AMERICA, TO FAMILY-MEMBERS IN POLAND

446 BROOKLYN, N.Y., October 14 [1911]

MY DEAR FAMILY:¹ In the first words "Praised be Jesus Christus."

And now, dear parents, I inform you that I am in good health, thanks to God, which I wish you also with my truest heart. And now I am on duty [a maidservant] and I do well, I have fine food, only I must work from 6 o'clock in the morning to 10 o'clock at night and I

¹ The use of the word "family" instead of "parents" may be either a provincialism or an individual expression, but certainly it has no particular meaning with regard to the conception of the family.

have \$13 a month. And now, dear parents, I implore you don't grieve about me, thinking that I am without money. When I read those letters—because there came four letters in a single week, 2 from Auntie Karolska, 2 from you dear parents, on the same day—so when I read those letters I became very sad, that there in our country is trouble between you, my parents, and the Karolskis. Why do you mind what I say to her? She urged me to send money to her, and not to you and so I sent it to her, but not my last money, only that which I sent. I had still some 10 or 20 roubles, but I wrote intentionally to auntie [that the money I sent was my last]. And you thought, dear parents that I sent my last money away.¹ But you know yourselves that I cannot remain without a cent, because I am in the world [among strangers]. I almost laughed about your sorrow. As it is I have spent more than 50 roubles on myself for the coming winter, and nevertheless I am not so beautifully dressed as all the others. Only I regret to spend money, I prefer to put it away rather than to buy luxurious dresses, like Olcia Kubaczówna who buys herself a new dress every week and doesn't look at money and doesn't think what can happen. She thinks only how to dress and says she does not need to think about anything more. But I am not of the same opinion; I think about my home. I have brothers and sisters and I intend to help them all to come to America.² First I will take Stasia, let her hope to come in the early spring, about Easter, and let her be

¹ She had to send the money to her aunt and uncle first because she had borrowed it from them to pay for her journey. The difference in her behavior toward her aunt, whom she tells that she cannot send any more because it is her last money, and toward her parents, whom she asks not to be anxious because she has still a little money left shows very well the different degrees of nearness in the familial relation. We see the eagerness with which the girl desires the good relations between her parents and her aunt and uncle to be re-established, and we find later that her affection toward her aunt is very real. And further, the fact that the parents have quarreled with the aunt because they think that their daughter has wronged herself to fulfil her aunt's desire, is a proof that the familial affection of parents to children is closer than that between brothers and sisters. This is the traditional situation. Only recently we find contrary cases. (Cf., for example, Krupa series.) On the other hand, if the girl had neglected her familial duties toward her aunt, the parents would certainly have sided with the aunt; this is also traditional, and we find also only recently, as a result of another process of evolution, the complete isolation of the marriage-group as against the rest of the family.

² An instructive contrast. The cousin Olcia is already partly Americanized. Her parents have lived for a long time in Brooklyn and own a house there.



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Antek Lada. He is pretty, that is true. Wait a little; for Christmas we will send you a photograph; then you will see him. As to what I wrote about your photograph, you need not send it, because it will be very expensive. And now, dear parents, I beg you so very much, let nobody learn that I am going to be married and that I have a young man. Let only my family [yourselves] know everything, no other people, neither brothers nor sisters. I beg you, let nobody know what I wrote in this letter. Say only "She wrote nothing; all's well," and let that be all. Don't say anything about this matter. And when I send the photograph, hide it also, please, so that nobody may see it.¹

And now I have nothing more to write, and I bow to you, dear family, and I wish you every good. May God grant that this letter finds you in good health, and I ask you for a quick answer. . . .

ALEKSANDRA REMBIEŃSKA

And I request you, dear parents, send letters with stamps, because I have great difficulties. A letter with a stamp arrives sooner.

447

O DEAR FAMILY [PARENTS], I write this letter to you on November 20, and I got your letter on November 20, and I begin this letter with the words [usual greeting]. And now, dear family, I inform you that I am in good health, thanks to our Lord God, and I wish to you also happiness, health, and good success. And now, dear family, I let you know that in October I did not work for two weeks because I did not like to work for nothing, and I left this place because

¹ Her whole attitude in this matter of marriage shows a slight modification of the tradition, but just to the degree necessitated by the changed conditions of life. She asks for her parents' "advice" as to the time when she should marry, and expresses her readiness to comply with their wish, but she does it with some consciousness of her independence and assumes that the parents will not object to her marrying as soon as she wishes. As to her choice, evidently her parents, not knowing the man, cannot control it personally, and she does not ask them literally for permission to marry this man; but she tries to justify her choice and appeals to the opinion of her uncle and aunt, who under the circumstances are better representatives of the will of the family than the parents. Her wish to keep the engagement secret is justified by the changed conditions of courtship. While in the old country the whole process of courting is necessarily a public affair and leads to a certain degree of social obligation to keep the engagement, here this process is going on almost privately, the engagement may be broken at any moment without important consequences, and therefore the girl does not like to have it known beforehand.

they wouldn't pay me more than \$12. And now I am in another place, only far away from uncle, for it is necessary to travel an hour to uncle; but uncle comes to meet me every second Sunday. I am well enough, I receive now \$16 for this month. I don't feel lonesome, because there are two of us girls in this household. The master and mistress are Polish. We are near a church and they send us every Sunday at 6 o'clock in the morning to the mass. We have every day 18 rooms to clean, and to cook and to wash linen. It is myself who wash every week about 300 pieces of linen, and iron it. But I have easy washing because I don't wash with my hands; the machine washes alone, I only cover the linen with soap and put 5 pieces into the machine at once. After 15 minutes I take them out and put in new ones, and so by noon I wash all the 300 pieces. I iron 4 days, from 6 [A.M.] to 8 P.M. I do nothing but iron for those 4 days. Dear parents, you admonish me so severely to be on my guard. But I cannot and do not walk about the city. I cannot even go out before the house for a while. I am in America and I do not even know whether it is America, only it seems to me as if there were only a single house in the whole world and nothing more, only walls and very few people. Now you ask about this young man about whom I wrote, whether he is a Catholic. Well, he has been boarding with the Felikses for probably 2 years, and when I was with them I have seen. He says his prayer and wears a cross on his breast. I hope I am not yet so stupid as not to know with whom I have to speak. He is even from a country not far away from ours, government and district of Lomża. And now, dear [sister] Stasia, don't think that I will hurry and have the wedding the soonest possible; perhaps there will be no wedding at all. Don't forget to get ready and come. It will be more lively when we are both together. You ask for my photograph. I have none ready. I will send you one in December. I will go soon to a photographer. And now, dear parents, don't think that I am with nobody to care about me. I have a good uncle and auntie; I did not expect they would be so good. They care about me as about their own child; they will allow nobody to do me any wrong. When I go to them I am as bold and grateful, as in my own parental home, but still more so. If you don't believe me, then, dear family, please ask uncle and auntie. They will tell you that it is true.

And now, dear family, I have nothing more to write, but only I send you low bows and wish you every good.

I have received the photograph, for which I thank you very heartily, and I will send you soon an American one, with this young man. And now I have nothing to write, only I greet you, parents, and brothers and sisters, and I wish you all health and happiness. I greet also Aunt Karolska and ask and beg her pardon. Let her not be angry with me, but I had no time to write another letter particularly to auntie. Be so good, auntie, and accept from my parents this same letter, because I should write to you the same as to my parents. I have nothing more to write, only I ask you, auntie, for a speedy answer, and I beg you once more, auntie, let nobody know from these letters about the young man. I request you, dear parents, give this whole letter to auntie to read.

[ALEKSANDRA REMBIEŃSKA]

448

Year 1912

O DEAR AUNTIE: I received your letter on February 20 and I write you on February 25. Dear auntie, you wrote 3 letters and I know nothing about them; I received only this one. O dear auntie, you write to me that I either don't wish to write or that I have forgotten [you]. O dear auntie, I will not forget until my death. I write letters, one to auntie and the other to my parents. Perhaps somebody has intercepted those letters at the post-office and does not give them to you. Now, dear auntie, I inform you that I am in good health, thanks to our Lord God, which I wish also to you, dear auntie. May God help you the best; may I always hear that you are doing well; I shall be very glad then. And now dear auntie, I inform you that I am in the same place in service with an English[-speaking] master and mistress who don't know a word of Polish, and I don't know English; so we communicate with gestures and I know what to do, that's all. I know the work and therefore I don't mind much about the language. But, dear auntie, I went intentionally into an English household in order that I may learn to speak English, because it is necessary, in America, as the English language reigns. I am in good health, only I am a little ill with my feet, I don't know what it is, whether rheumatism or something else. I walk very much, because from 6 o'clock in the morning till 10 o'clock in the evening I have work and I receive \$22 a month, and I have 7 persons, and 16 rooms to clean, and I cook; everything is on my head. And now, dear auntie, you wrote to me about Staś Filinak that he wished to know



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BUTKOWSKI SERIES

We have here another example of traditional attitudes almost perfectly preserved in emigration—this time in a young man. In this case, as in that of Rembieńska, the familial relations at home were particularly strong, and this is evidently the main reason why the dissolution comes so slowly. (Cf. introduction to the Raczkowski series.) We notice also that the familial feelings seem a little weaker in Antoni than in Konstanty. As we have no further data as to their past we may conjecture that the difference is one of individual character.

449-61, KONSTANTY AND ANTONI BUTKOWSKI, IN AMERICA, TO THEIR PARENTS, IN POLAND

449 SOUTH CHICAGO, December 6, 1901

DEAR PARENTS: I send you my lowest bow, as to a father and mother, and I greet you and my brothers with these words: "Praised be Jesus Christus," and I hope in God that you will answer me, "For centuries of centuries. Amen."

And now I wish you, dearest parents, and you also, dearest brother, to meet the Christmas eve and merry holidays in good health and happiness. May God help you in your intentions. Be merry, all of you together. [Health and success; letter received.] I could not answer you at once, for you know that when one comes from work he has no wish to occupy himself with writing [particularly] as I work always at night. . . . I sent you money, 100 roubles, on November 30. I could not send more now, for you know that winter is coming and I must buy clothes. I inform you that Marta has no work yet. She will get work after the holidays, and it may happen that she will marry. . . . I inform you about Jasiek, my brother, that he wrote me a letter from Prussia asking me to take him to America, but he is still too young. Inform me about Antoni, how his health is, for in the spring I will bring him to me. I will send him a ship-ticket, if God grants me health. [Greetings for family and relatives.]

[KONSTANTY BUTKOWSKI]

450

January 1, 1902

DEAR PARENTS: I send you, my dear parents, my photographs, 5 copies. So please, give my aunt Klemensowa that one in which I am with Marta, and leave the other with yourself. From these 3 [where I am alone] give one to the Butkowski's [uncle], the other to whom you wish, and keep the third. For perhaps we shall see one another soon, and perhaps not, so you will have me at least upon this dead paper. But please don't grieve about me; perhaps I have saddened your heart with this letter [the preceding sentence], but, thanks to God we are still alive. I beg you, father and mother, give [money] for a holy mass, for, as you know, in America everything is hypocritical [the priests and their prayers]. As to the apparition, about which you wrote, that in America our Lord Jesus manifested Himself, don't believe in it. Whoever tells you it you may spit into his eyes [as a liar]. It is not true. Those images which are reproduced in your country—don't care for them, for it's not true. So don't believe in it, because it is not valid, it is invented by people. Why, we in America would know it better than they know there in our country. It happened only thus, that in one town, in a church, upon an image above the altar dew appeared. This image was painted red, so people who came to the church early in the morning said that it was blood, while it was not blood, only dew.¹

KONSTANTY BUTKOWSKI

451

February 17, 1902

DEAREST PARENTS: I inform you that I have sent a ship-ticket for Antoni. Expect to receive it soon. And remember, Antoni, don't show your papers to anybody, except in

¹ The man is very religious (cf. letter No. 454, where he asks for scapularies, rosaries, etc.) and his unbelief with regard to the alleged miracle is not the result of any critical attitude toward miracles in general, but merely the negation of a particular fact which might have happened elsewhere at some other moment. The background of this negation is clearly the idea that no such miracle can happen in America where "everything is hypocritical." For the same reason he asks for a mass to be said in Poland, not in America. The underlying assumption is that the efficiency of religious values depends upon the moral perfection of the men who manipulate them. This attitude corresponds to the moral-religious system as against the magical one. (Cf. Introduction: "Religious and Magical Attitudes.") It is the attitude which makes possible the whole "Zaranie movement," to be treated in Vol. IV.

places where you must show them. . . . And if you receive the ticket soon, don't wait, but come at once. And if you receive it a week or so before Easter, then don't leave until after the holidays. But after the holidays don't wait; come at once. . . . And send me a telegram from the Castle Garden. You won't pay much, and I shall know and will go to the railway-station. Take 15 roubles with you, it will be enough, and change them at once for Prussian money. As to the clothes, take the worst which you have, some three old shirts, that you may have a change on the water. And when you come across the water happily, then throw away all these rags. Bring nothing with you except what you have upon yourself. And don't bring any good shoes either, but everything the worst. As to living, take some dry bread and much sugar, and about half a quart of spirits, and some dry meat. You may take some onions, but don't take any cheese. . . . And be careful in every place about money. Don't talk to any girls on the water. . . . Learn in Bzory when Wojtek will come, for he comes to the same place where I am, so you would have a companion. And about Jan Plonka, if he wants to come, he is not to complain about [reproach] me for in America there are neither Sundays nor holidays; he must go and work. I inform [him] that I shall receive him as my brother. If he wishes he may come. . . .

[KONSTANTY BUTKOWSKI]

452

November 11 [1902]

DEAREST PARENTS: . . . Now I inform you about Antoni, that he is working in Chicago; it costs 15 cents to go to him. He is boarding, as well as Marta, with acquaintances, with Malewski. He has an easy and clean work, but he earns only enough to live, for he is unable to do heavy work. I see them almost every evening. I go to them. And Marta works in a tailor-shop, but she refuses to listen to me, else she would have been married long ago. So I inform you that I loved her as my own sister, but now I won't talk to her any more, for she refuses to listen. Family remains family only in the first time after coming from home, and later they forget and don't wish any more to acknowledge the familial relations; the American meat inflates them.

I have nothing more to write, except that we are all in good health. Moreover, I declare about your letters, give them to somebody else to write, for neither wise nor fool can read such writing. If such



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age and about everything which concerns her. I don't need to enumerate; you know yourselves, dear parents. For to send a ship-ticket it is not the same as to send a letter which costs a nickel; what is done cannot be undone. So I beg you once more, as my loving parents, go into this matter and do it well, that there may be no cheating. . . . I shall wait for your letter with great impatience, that I may know what to do. . . .¹

KONSTANTY BUTKOWSKI

Please inform me, which one is to come, whether the older or the younger one, whether Aleksandra or Stanislaw. Inform me exactly.

454

February 14, 1903

DEAREST PARENTS: As to the Sadowskis, I wrote them a letter, and I inform you that I shall send her a ship-ticket, for they wrote me a letter and all this pleased me very much. So in March I will send her a ship-ticket, but I will wait until you answer this letter, my parents. I will send the ticket to her address. As to the money for the journey, they could give it to her, and if not, I will send it for her, but to your address. As to Jasiek, I inform you, let him not risk coming, for he is still too young. Here in Chicago work is very hard. . . . Even Antoni scarcely earns for his living, and you write me to take that one. Let him wait at least 2 years, for Antoni has not worked during the whole winter. He would work for 3 days and sit for a month. For you know that here in America one must always work; there is no rest. He has time enough.

And now I inform you that if she comes to me let her bring a belt consecrated to St. Franciscus, one scapulary consecrated to the Immaculate Conception of Mary and two consecrated to God's Mother of Sorrows, and one *koronka* [arrangement of prayers differing from the rosary] consecrated to the Immaculate Conception. And let her bring also one of those booklets with flower-patterns for embroidery. . . .

KONSTANTY BUTKOWSKI

¹ In spite of the fact that the parents are to select the girl, the marriage is here no longer the familial matter it was traditionally. Its aim is here purely individual. The parents are required to select in view of their son's personal happiness, and the girl, who by emigrating will be isolated from her family, is taken into consideration rather as an individual than as a family-member. We find here the intermediary type between familial and properly individual marriage; the form remains familial but the content is already individualistic. In selecting a stress is put upon the family from which the girl comes, not because the alliance with this family is more or less desired, but mainly because the nature of the family forms a basis for conclusions as to the character of the individual.

455

March 28, 1903

DEAR PARENTS: I sent the ship-ticket on March 26, and I sent to you, father, 20 roubles of money, so you may give her some for the journey. So I commit myself to you, father and mother, for I don't know her. I inform you, dear parents, that not one, but thousands of girls come here to America, get married, live a month or a year or two, and then some scoundrel persuades her and she runs away with him into the world. Thousands of such cases happen. So my dearest parents, I commit myself to you. I embrace you and kiss your hands and I beg your pardon, dear parents, and you, dearest brothers, and my whole family for hazarding myself in such an undertaking. I don't know how God and the Holiest Mother will help me, for it is neither for a year nor for two, but for my whole life. Don't think, father and mother, that when I marry, I shall forget you. Oh no! Whenever I can I will always help you in any case.

As to Sadowska, I have described in my letter to her how she should arrange everything. And if they ask her to whom she is going, let her answer, to her brother Konstanty Butkowski. [Similar advice to his brother.]

KONSTANTY BUTKOWSKI

456

June 13 [1902]

DEAREST PARENTS: Konstanty works in the same factory as before and earns \$2 a day. I have yet no work, but don't be anxious about me, dear parents for I came to a brother and uncle, not to strangers. If our Lord God gives me health, I shall work enough in America. [News about friends and relatives.] Now I inform you, dear parents, about Władysława Butkowska [cousin]. She lives near us, we see each other every day. She is a doctor's servant. And this doctor has left his wife in Chicago and came to South Chicago. She cooks for him, and she is alone in his house, so people talk about her, that she does not behave well. He pays her \$5 a week. I don't know whether it is true or not, but people talk thus because he has left his wife.¹

[ANTONI BUTKOWSKI]

¹ In Poland the girl would not venture to take or keep such a place in the face of public opinion.

457

CHICAGO, December 31, 1902

DEAR PARENTS: . . . If Konstanty wrote you to send him a girl answer him that he may send a ship-ticket either to the one from Popów or to the one from Grajewo. Let the one come which is smarter, for he does not know either of them, so send the one which pleases you better. For in America it is so: Let her only know how to prepare for the table, and be beautiful. For in America there is no need of a girl who knows how to spin and to weave. If she knows how to sew, it is well. For if he does not marry he will never make a fortune and will never have anything; he wastes his work and has nothing. And if he marries he will sooner put something aside. For he won't come back any more. In America it is so: Whoever does not intend to return to his country, it is best for him to marry young; then he will sooner have something, for a bachelor in America will never have anything, unless he is particularly self-controlled.¹ [Greetings, wishes, etc.]

ANTONI BUTKOWSKI

458

SOUTH CHICAGO, April 21, 1903

Now I, Antoni, your son, my dearest parents, and my uncle and the whole family, we inform you that your son Konstanty is no longer alive. He was killed in the foundry [steel-mills]. Now I inform you, dear parents, that he was insured in an association for \$1,000.² His funeral will cost \$300. And the rest which remains, we have the

¹ The emphasis by Antoni of the business side of marriage is probably an individual feature. Konstanty does not mention the economic side at all.

² The immediate passage from the news of death to business seems to show a particular coldness in the brother. But it is probably rather a lack of tact in letter-writing, due to his youth. The letter is written on the second day after Konstanty's death, and this day was probably mainly devoted to business conferences of the family; so the business problems are put first. At any rate, it is not a proof of egotism, since Antoni has no personal benefit to expect. Further, we find here in an exaggerated form a typical peasant attitude. No grief, however great, interferes for a long time with the peasant's practical activity. This is a consequence of the fact that, as we have noted more than once, the peasant's psychology is essentially practical; reflection or sentimental brooding always requires a particular effort and particularly favorable external circumstances, and therefore, in whatever situation, it is the practical side, the point from which activity can start, which naturally tends to occupy the first place. Finally, there is for the peasant nothing mean or low in economic questions in comparison with other and higher interests. Cf. Osiński series, letters of Baranowski.



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buried beautifully. His funeral cost \$225, the casket \$60. Now when we win some [money] by law from the company, we will buy a place and transfer him that he may lie quietly, we will surround him with a fence and put a cross, stone, or iron upon his grave. This will cost some \$150. For his work, let him at least lie quietly in his own place. It is so, dear parents: Perhaps we shall receive from the [insurance] society \$1,000, and from the company we don't know how much, perhaps 2,000, perhaps 3,000, and perhaps 1,000. . . . Whatever we receive, after paying all the expenses I will send you the rest, dear parents, and I will come myself to my country. . . . And let Aleksandra not come now, let her send the ship-ticket back and we will send her the money which he promised her. And don't give her these 20 roubles. Once more I tell you, dear parents, don't listen to anybody, to any letters which anybody will write to you, but listen to me, your son. I cannot close the door myself before lawyers. Some advise well, others still better, but I have a wise man. And now I tell you, dear parents, read this note, which is cut out of a paper; you will know who is guilty of his death. But nothing can be done, dear parents. Don't weep, for you won't raise him any more. For if you had looked upon him, I don't know what would have become of you.¹ . . .

ANTONI BUTKOWSKI

460

May 20 [1903]

DEAREST PARENTS AND BROTHERS: . . . I received your letter on May 18, for which I thank you kindly and heartily, for I learned at least about your health, that you are all in good health. For when I received that letter by telegram, I grieved much when you wrote that you were losing your reason. But I beg you, dear parents, don't grieve and don't weep, for you won't raise him any more. We regret him and grieve still more, for we have looked at him during 3 days, and now still at whatever we look, that was left after him our heart fills with grief. About his funeral I cannot describe everything, but he was buried beautifully. Now I inform you, dear parents, that Stefan Zal. went back to our country. When he comes there try to meet him, and he will relate to you everything, for Konstanty

¹ In this letter the disproportion between the sentimental and the business part is not so great as in the preceding one; the recurring idea is resignation to the fact which cannot be changed and cannot be any basis of practical activity.

had boarded with him for a month. And if God gives me health, perhaps in the autumn I shall come to our country and tell you everything. . . . As to the company in which Konstanty worked, we don't know how it will be. If they give us \$2,000 by good will, we will agree, but if not, we intend a lawsuit. But I won't wait for the end of the suit, for in America a suit may last 5 or 7 years. And for a killed man the company cannot be sued for more than \$5,000. Then the lawyer will take one half, and will give the other half to us, for such are the laws in America. . . .

And about Sadowska, let her not come, for when she comes to New York they will send her back. For now it is so, that when anybody comes to New York he must send a telegram to the person to whom he is going. And now, when he is dead, they won't admit her. They know already that he is dead, for we have been in that ship-agent's office, wanting to return the ticket. But it was already delivered. The agent told us that she should not come. If she wants it absolutely, let her come; but it will be in vain, for she will be sent back. And if she does not come, let her send the ship-ticket back to us. . . .

ANTONI BUTKOWSKI

461

July 23 [1903]

DEAREST PARENTS AND BROTHERS: . . . I inform you that we have received already the money from the association on July 22, and on the same day we sent you 800 roubles. As to the rest, we had to give the lawyer \$100, and uncle took \$300 for the funeral, and the rest remained with me. I inform you, dear parents, that they did not want to pay the money, only we had to take a lawyer. As to the company, we gave the affair up to a lawyer, for we could not come to an understanding. They offered us only \$300 by good will, while by law they must pay some thousands. . . . But I won't wait; I think that on August 25 I shall be at home. . . .

ANTONI BUTKOWSKI

RADWAŃSKI SERIES

In this series the process of individualization goes on rapidly in Janek Radwański, much more slowly in his brother Antoni, and probably does not touch the third brother, who, contrary to the behavior of so many others (cf., for example, Michal Osiński), returns home after a short time to do his military service. Otherwise he could never return, and the attraction of the old country, family, and community proves stronger than the fear of military service and the hope of a career in America.

462-68, ANTONI RADWAŃSKI, IN AMERICA, TO HIS PARENTS, IN POLAND

462 [Second part of a letter. Date cannot be
determined, probably end of 1912.]

And further, dear parents, we answer your parental request, where you ask us to send you money. All right, dear parents, we are glad to fulfil your request at every moment and at every hour, everything that you ask us for, because you have brought us up from childhood, and we have leaned upon your favor. The example you gave us in our younger years we keep in our older years, as God ordered. Dearest parents, to whom shall you appeal for help, if not first to God the Highest and to God's Mother of Częstochowa, Queen of heaven and earth, asking for health for you and your loving children, and then to us for help? We will help you at any time, if only God helps us and the Holy Virgin Mary.¹ So we send you money, 403 roubles, four

¹ The moral character of this familial attitude is already a sign of a beginning disintegration of the familial group. Indeed, there is no question of moral obligation and even little consciousness of the attitude in the really primitive familial solidarity; the relation of the individual to the group is not a moral but a social relation, accepted as a matter of fact. The relation assumes a moral form when it is not the only one psychologically possible, and the number and variety of possible relations grow, together with the progress of individualization. Thus, the moral norm appears as a substitute for the immediate solidarity when the



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now good work and I would like to marry, and now I don't know what to do.¹

And now, dear parents, Bronek asks what is the date of his call to military service. He is curious and wants to know whether it was in the past autumn or in the next, or after the next. He thinks of going back to our country, only does not yet know when. He and Janek work together in one plant and I work in another. [Usual ending.]

ANTONI RADWAŃSKI

465

June 25, 1913

. . . . And now we inform you that Czesława [Czesia] Jankowska from Karwacz came and related to us about your success and health, and we were very glad that you are all in good health. She gave us the gift that you sent us, 3 cheeses. So we will send you also a gift, but don't know what kind of a gift you wish from us. Now further, dear parents, you asked us for our photographs; so I, Antosiek, send you my photograph, and some other time we will send you perhaps all three, because we could not now. Janek went to another city, and Bronek says you saw him not long ago. Dear parents, could you send me your photograph? I would send you money, as soon as you write. Only, dear parents, Czesia Jankowska told me that you don't allow me to marry but [ask me] to return home. So I intend to return home, but I do not know when, because now I have good work and wages, \$75 a month. Therefore I will still work.² [Usual salutations and ending.]

[ANTONI]

466

December 2, 1913

[Usual greetings and Christmas wishes; letter from parents received; thanks.] And another letter I received from Brother Bronislaw, in which he writes me to come back to our country. But I do not intend to come back to our country at once, but only in the spring, because up to the present my health is favorable so I think

¹ Acknowledgment of the parental authority, but this becomes more and more formal, as we see in the following letters.

² The will of the parents proves ultimately insufficient to influence him, but there is not yet a conscious attempt to get rid of the control of the parents. Up to the present the whole process of emancipation seems to have gone on unconsciously.

I shall remain longer. And what you write me, dear parents, that if I do not come, the punishment of prison threatens me, I do not mind it and I do not fear it.¹ And now I inform you, dear parents, about sister, and what you wrote about wishing to send her to a dress-maker. You can do it; let her learn. And as to the help, don't be anxious. If only our Lord God gives me health I will help you at every moment. And now I ask about Brother Bronislaw. After his arrival in our country we received a letter [from him], and he wrote me that he will be free from military service, so I request you, dearest parents, if you receive this letter, answer me directly, because I am curious about it, and I shall await it with great impatience. And now I inform you, dear parents, about Janek, that we are together, only he asks you for your blessing, because he intends to marry a girl from Przasnysz, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leśniewski, who live in Piaski.² I pen to you in this letter whatever I can remember. But I have nothing more to write, only I recommend myself to your kind memory and I beg you for a speedy answer. With high respect,

ANTONI RADWAŃSKI

I shake your hands. Goodbye.³

467

[January, 1914]

[Beginning of letter missing.] Now about your request, what you ask. We cannot help you, dear parents, in this, because as to me, dear parents, I am somewhat [illegible word], and about Janek it is not necessary to explain to you because he is now intending to marry. The second banns of his marriage were on January 4, so he needs money. I lent him myself \$50 for his wedding, and I do not take money from the bank, because I regret to touch it. Then, dear parents, manage it as you can yourself. I will send you [money] later, if our Lord God gives me health. But, dear parents, I think that you are not wronged by me all the same. I help you in the measure of my ability. Not long ago I sent you 50 roubles for your

¹ First conscious, but still only slight, break in obedience.

² Janek is the most emancipated of the brothers; he sends the least money home, and decides to marry without consulting his parents.

³ Shaking hands is a rather disrespectful form of greeting the parents; the normal form is kissing the hands. One of the complaints of old-fashioned parents about the bad influence of emigration is that the children begin to shake hands instead of kissing.

needs, although we were all three in America. So, dearest parents, I beg very politely your pardon. Don't be angry for what I write you. I don't remind you of it, because it ought to be so; it is a duty to respect and help one's parents until the last moment of death [life], because so says our Lord Jesus and the Holiest Mother Virgin Mary: "Do not abandon thy parents and remember about them, and I will not forget about thee." I wear this in my heart and I remember. Only, dear parents, you demand too much.¹ You ask for help because you are already in old age and you cannot do heavy work; sister [asks] also, the brothers also, so my work does not suffice for all this. I requested Brother Bronislaw very kindly: "Bronuś, little brother, I beg you, remain with us for some time, then we will go back together." I implored him as a brother, but he did not listen to my request and did not heed it. Now he longs and regrets; probably he regrets that for which I begged him so. And he is longing now himself, and to me he causes pain, because I wept over that letter when I read it. He caused regrets to himself and to me also, because after his departure I thought that my heart would burst open. And I request you, send me his address, where he is in service. Now, dear parents, I grieved over this letter which you sent to me recently, that not even money [bribery] can help, but

¹ His attitude seems perfectly correct objectively, and still it is quite different from the traditionally sanctioned one. Here again the moral statement of the situation is a sign of the dissolution of the old immediacy of social attitudes. In the old family-group there can be essentially no opposition between the son's and the parents' economic interests. The property is familial; there is no question of any justice or injustice, obligation, antagonism, or, in general, of any moral or immoral relation in economic matters between any two members of the family as personalities. The parents do not wrong the son in requiring all his earnings to be given to them; the older brother does not wrong his younger brothers or sisters in taking the lion's share of the inheritance if it is he who takes the farm; the children do not wrong the parents when, after retirement of the latter, they refuse to them the right to own anything personally and acknowledge only their right to be supported; etc. In all these cases the relation is that between the part and the whole, not that between independent but connected entities. But, on the other hand, when an individual, as in the present case, is half emancipated, there is still no relation between individuals, but between the individual on one side and the group on the other, and each is right from a different point of view. The parents are right here in asking continually for money, if we take the standpoint of the group; the son is right in refusing to send more than he wishes, if we take the standpoint of the individual. But in the eyes of the individual whose feeling of familial unity has dissolved, the situation assumes the form of a relation between individuals, to be regulated by justice.



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talked about it, dear parents, and we have the wish [to marry]. Czesia is a good girl, and wise. She has informed me about everything. If only we could marry, because we know that we are cousins. We are curious what Uncle and Aunt Jankowski say, because they wrote a letter, and I read it, but they wrote us nothing about it. So we beg you very much, speak among yourselves and to uncle and auntie also. We ask for a speedy answer. [End missing.]

[ANTONI]

DOBIECKI SERIES

The relation between an older and a younger member of a family is broken because of the more rapid evolution of the latter. The uncle here assumes with regard to his nephew, who came later to America, the attitude of familial authority usually assumed by the father. The uncle evidently came to this country when already a mature man and has preserved almost wholly the traditional standpoint. His behavior, as related by himself and by his nephew, shows a tendency to despotism. The boy brought also enough of familial spirit as his first letter shows; but his emancipation has been relatively easy. (Cf. the attitude of Aleksander Wolski in an analogous situation.)

469-73, ANTONI (ANTEK) DOBIECKI, IN AMERICA, TO FAMILY-MEMBERS, IN POLAND, AND ONE LETTER (472) FROM THE UNCLE OF ANTONI.

469

PHILLIPS, PA., July 16, 1910

[Usual greeting and generalities; letter received]: Now, mother, you write me that you grieve because you cannot pay your debts and you did not pay the money back to brother-in-law. So I send you another 100 roubles. Give back to everybody what you owe, may nobody look angrily at you because of your owing anybody money; get rid of all your debts. Now I inform you that I sent you 100 roubles on July 13. Answer me distinctly with whom you are living. Now I have nothing to write you, only I send you low bows, dear parents. We send also low bows to brother and sister-in-law. I inform you, dear brother, that you manage your household badly if you cannot give our parents enough to live with you, and even two people have no place in your home. It is your wife who walks in the breeches, not you; your wife governs, not you.

Things are bad in a household where the cow shows the way to the ox.¹ [Proverb.]

Now I have nothing more to write you, only I send you low bows, and I send also low bows to sister and brother-in-law, with their children. And I inform you further, dear parents, don't be anxious about the rent. I will send you money and nobody will look angrily at you. . . .

[ANTONI DOBIECKI]

470

September 26

. . . . And now I inform you that in America things are very bad. Work is bad and living is very dear. We are working 5 days in a week. We earn hardly more than enough to live. You write me to send you a photograph. I will send you a photograph, but only when I have money; then I will send you money and the photograph together, because if I sent you the photograph, and no money, people would laugh at me. [Salutations for the whole family.]

[ANTONI]

471

September 25

. . . . DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER: I pen you some words. First I ask about your health and success. And as to my success, I am in good health, and my success is as ever. I work as before. And now, dear father and mother, why is it that you don't answer? I sent to you 20 roubles and you don't answer whether you received them or not. And now, dear father and mother, I write to you that I am no more with uncle, but with strange people, because he wanted me to get up every day at two or half-past two o'clock after midnight and to go with him to work.² I am working hard enough myself, and I want to rest during the night; 11 hours is work enough. I have worked with him many times and enough. Then he said he

¹ When the parents of wife or husband live with the young couple it is usually the women who quarrel, and it is the rôle of the men to keep harmony. Note the contrast between this sharp passage and the preceding and following ceremonial ones.

² Probably the uncle had a shop of his own and wanted his nephew to help him sometimes.



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country, I cared for him as a father, for his son. I bought him one suit of clothes for my money and gave him another of my own.¹ [End missing.]

[UNCLE OF ANTONI]

473

October 22, 1912

DEAR PARENTS: What you write me, that I cease to help you, is not true, because I think of you and remember and will not cease to remember you. I would have sent you some roubles long ago, but I had no news about the others, whether you received them or not. Since I have learned that you received them, I send you now 120 roubles, 20 roubles for your expenses, and 100 roubles please lend at interest. And if you have not enough with those 20 roubles, write to me, and I will send you more, but let these 100 roubles remain untouched. [Salutations.]

ANTONI

¹ Probably all the facts related by both of them are true. The uncle has certainly treated his nephew in the traditional way, playing the part of a father, making him work, beating him but also helping him and caring for his future.

KONSTANCYA WALERYCH SERIES

Very rapid emancipation of a girl in America is shown in these letters. In less than half a year she is married without asking for her parents' permission. Probably the familial bonds were not particularly strong, and there is an instructive influence of the new environment. The girl comes to her sister's home and finds there the familial attitude very weak, and this example acts more destructively than solitude upon her own familial spirit.

474-76, KONSTANCYA WALERYCH, IN AMERICA, TO HER PARENTS IN POLAND

474 GREENBURG, PA., December 8, 1913

DEAREST PARENTS: To your words, "Praised be Jesus Christus," I answer, "For centuries of centuries. Amen."

Dearest parents, I inform you that I received the letter sent by you from which I got information about your health and success also. As to myself, thanks to God the Highest, I am in good health, which I wish also to you from all my heart. As to my success, it is not very good because I have done housework, and have been paid \$10 for this month, but I had too heavy work; I was obliged to work too long. Now, dearest parents, I inform you that I have at present no work and I don't know what will be further.

Dearest parents, you ask to be informed where I have been boarding after coming to America. I was with my sister and now I am with my sister. Dearest parents, don't be angry with me for not sending you anything up to the present, but I inform you that I could not, because when I traveled to America I remained for a week in Antwerp, and when I came to America I had no work for three weeks, and you know well, dearest parents, that I did not come to parents here; in America nothing is to be had without paying.¹

¹ Allusion to the fact that her sister and brother-in-law take money for board. In the old country they would have given her hospitality at least for some weeks,

Dearest parents, I inform you that I send you meanwhile thirty roubles for Christmas, and by my soul I cannot send you more at present, because I do not work and I need it myself. I have nothing more to write you, only I greet you and send you low salutations, and I wish you a Merry Christmas, and may the Godly Child have you in His care. God grant it. Amen.

Your loving daughter,

KONSTANCYA WALERYCH

Now, dearest parents, I, your daughter, Frankowska, salute you and greet you heartily and I inform you that I was ill and had two boys born, but they were both dead. Now I [son-in-law] greet you and salute you, and all our children bow to you and kiss you.

BRONISŁAW FRANKOWSKI

Dear Zosia [younger sister], I salute you and write to you that you must go to school and learn well, and next year you will come to America, and then you will write letters.

KONSTANCYA WALERYCH

475

January 17, 1914

. . . . DEAR PARENTS: I inform you that I married a man from Galicia. Our marriage occurred on the 12th of January; my husband is named Jan Czarnecki. Now, dear parents, I beg you heartily, don't be angry with me for marrying so hastily and a man from so far a country and for not even writing to you about it.¹ I inform you, dear parents, that I took a husband from so far a country for this reason, that, as you know, the girls who married with us and took husbands from the same village, were most unhappy afterward.²

if not months. The American conditions and customs are considered a justification for not fulfilling the duty of hospitality. The main reason of the change is the fact that here food has to be bought instead of being produced, and thus the economic instead of the social point of view is applied to the question of living. Cf. Introduction: "Economic Life."

¹ The only case in our collection where a girl marries without first asking her parents. Of course it is a complete break of tradition (cf. Introduction: "Marriage"), and a conscious one, since she knows and understands the traditional norms.

² The justification of the breach of this custom is interesting, because based upon consideration of utility and personal happiness.



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much, but be calm, because our Lord God gives his fortune to every man, and we married in conformity with God's will.

Now I inform you about my parents. Both my parents are still living and they dwell in Gałicia, district Ropczyce, village Czarna, post-station Sędziszów. Father's name is Filip, mother's, Dorota. We are nine brothers—four of us are in America, five in our country—and two sisters.

We have nothing more to write. [Usual greetings.]

Your loving children,

JAN and KONSTANCYA CZARNECKI

FELIKS P. SERIES

The letters afford a good example of a conflict between the solidarity of the old familial type (uncle and nephew) and conjugal solidarity. The conflict is both sentimental and economic. We have, unfortunately, only one side of it presented, but it seems that the familial solidarity is here stronger than the conjugal.

477-80, FROM FELIKS P., IN AMERICA, TO A FRIEND
IN POLAND

477

CHICAGO, July 31, 1908

DEAR COMPANION WACŁAW: I have not written to you for so long a time, because I had no reason to boast about my lot. My uncle is very ill, and with his wife, or rather that mad woman. I can do nothing. Work is also difficult to get here. If my uncle were in good health, then at least I could have a job with him, but he must give this business into other hands, because of his illness. I have searched for work 2 days, all in vain. And with my aunt, or mad woman, it is necessary to make order in such a way as if she were not a human being [by beating her]. My uncle had a motorcycle which he bought just before his illness. He lies in the hospital. I called on him for the first time; after some conversation he told me to take the motorcycle and to use it. Do you know what this snake did? She sold it, and she told him that somebody had stolen it. Such [trouble] I have with this woman. Where I live there are no Poles at all; they all live on the other side of the city. I don't know when I shall go to your brother, for my head is totally broken [with trouble]. I can only wait until my uncle recovers; then everything will be in order. If not, I will take the woman by the head, the money in my pocket and run away home. What else can I do here if he dies?

FELIKS P.

478

August 11, 1908

DEAR WACŁAW: I am without occupation up to the present, but the brother of my uncle's wife is trying to get me into the West Pullman shop. I long much for you,

but I hope that we shall yet be here in America together. Here in Chicago, when I looked about, I was not very much pleased with the nature of the place, but as to distraction and society, the occasions are innumerable. Naturally I have not been so merry up to the present. For that it is necessary to shake your pocket out.

FELIKS P.

479

October 10, 1908

DEAR COMPANION: I have some work, but only a kind from which I can earn a bare living. All this [lack of work] is through the fault of my uncle, for he lives in a place where there is not a bit of a factory, and he wants me to work near him that I may live in his house and be with him until he recovers. But I think of making it short and searching for steady and well-paid work, for with him, i.e., with my uncle, one can live as with a man, but when he is ill he cannot govern [his household] as he did before, but his "cholera" [wife] manages everything. But you understand I treat her shortly [severely]. I intended before this to drive her away to the four winds, but with a woman it is always difficult. He, i.e., my uncle, is ill of a sickness which needs a long cure, and even then it is not certain whether he will recover. So this woman thinks so to herself, that if he is cured after a long time all the money will be spent, for it cost them already \$560 for 4 months. And if he dies nevertheless she will have nothing left. . So she wants him to die as soon as possible—such a "cholera." And he, i.e., my uncle, has here nobody of his own family except me. So I have cared for him up to the present, but if this lasts longer I must leave them, for I get very nervous through quarreling and this is bad for me. . . .

FELIKS P.

480

December 16, 1908

DEAR WACŁAW: I answer you at once, but unhappily the answer is unfavorable, for I have no work. I worked for 5 weeks only, and I could only buy what I needed for the winter. It is true that I don't pay board, but then I have been working for only part of the day. I would not sit here so long, but there is now little hope for my uncle. At any moment we expect his death, and then, evidently, I have a certain job. Don't be angry with me. As soon as I begin to work I must pay you back at once, for I owe nobody else.

FELIKS P.



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I will go to the city and then I will send the money, because now I do not have time to go to the city. I am doing carpenter's work, I have 75 dollars a month. There are no Poles here but us two. I have an opportunity to marry, but she is not a Polish girl, and therefore it is likely that I shall not. I intend to go to the old country for a visit, and whoever in the old country wishes me well I will extend my hand to him, and whoever wishes me ill then he will learn who is Stefan [writer's name].¹ I inform you that I have good work. I work only from 8 in the morning to 5 in the evening and afterward we go to learn and to fight and to leap and to weep, as they say in the old country.

I bow to mother and to sister. I ask for a quick reply. Dear mother [find] for me a nice girl in the old country, nice and handsome, whom I greet fondly. I bow to Ososki, to Pawlinow and to all acquaintances. My address .

STEVE [*sic*] WINKOWSKI

482

IRONWOOD, MICH., September 29, 1908

DEAR MOTHER: I decided to write to you a few words and I greet you with God's words ["Praised be," etc.]. Don't be angry with me for not writing you a letter for such a long time. Because I cannot describe to you my lot where I was. It is likely that if my acquaintances knew it they would never believe it. What a nationality there is in America! If such a man were brought to your village then all the people would run away from fear [alluding to the negroes]. And I am toiling here a second year. I have pretty good work. I work as a butcher.² I have a pay day [*peide*] of 75 dollars a month, and I have a further income of 60 dollars, and my brother and Boleslaw Kowaleski are working in the iron mine [*mainie*]. I will have a butcher-shop [*bucernie*] of my own.

Now I inform, dear mother, about my great trouble [*trubel*]. I have a great burden upon my heart on account of one girl. I have been acquainted with her for over 10 months. She is very beautiful and [the daughter] of a rich farmer. She is not Polish. When I

¹ A self-assertion resulting from his feeling of his own importance, developed by success. This normal attitude here takes a rough form because of the man's low degree of moral culture. Cf. the case of Adam, in the Raczkowski series.

² For "butcher" he uses *bucera* and similarly Polonizes a number of words as indicated in brackets. These words will not be understood at home and are a form of showing-off, harmonizing with his lying about his income.

have a butcher-shop [*bucernie*] of my own, then I will get married. I dressed this girl in silk and gold. We meet once a week. When I write to you next time then I will send the money, because now I am in great trouble [*trublu*]. . . .

STEVE WINKOWSKI

483

December 8, 1909

I inform you, beloved mother, and you, beloved sister Bronislawa, that by the favor of God I am well and the same I wish to you. I beg mother and you, sister, to bless me and my Miss Bronislawa Dronkowska with whom I shall be married after Christmas [*Krismusie*]. I ask you to my wedding. She is not Polish. Her fathers come from under German [rule]. They have lived in America a long time already. Their grandfather and grand-grandfather [were] in America. They are Catholics just as we, and she greets you also.¹

STEVE WINKOWSKI

484

January 5, 1910

I inform beloved mother and father, and you, sister, that by the favor of God I am well and the same I wish to you. I received your letter. I beg your pardon, don't be angry at me for not writing often to you. I will always write to you that I am well. Now I write to you about my success. My success is pretty good. I work always. I have good work. I have worked in the store [*storze*] long years. I am very lonesome, I do not hear the Polish language at all.² Here are Poles who have been in America for many years, and therefore they do not care for the Polish language. This girl whom I am going to marry, they say she is Polish but I did not hear Polish language from her.

I greet you fondly and sincerely, mother, father and sister, Aunt Gricanowska and uncle and your children.

STANLY [*sic*] WINKOWSKY

¹ He still asks for a blessing, invites to his wedding, and informs that the girl is Catholic. In so far the tradition persists, but only its form is left, for he would not care at all if his mother forbade the marriage.

² Some traces of homesickness remain. His special longing for the Polish language may be connected with the fact that he feels his isolation on account of his poor English.

485

May 30, 1911

DEAR SISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW: I inform you that I am well and the same I wish to you. I greet your children.

Please answer who died and who got married.

Your brother,

S. W.

486

June 19, 1911

DEAR MOTHER, FATHER,¹ AND SISTER: I inform you that by the favor of God I am well and the same I wish to you. My success is very, very good. My address

S. A. WINKOWSKI

487

Day 10

DEAR MOTHER, SISTER, AND FATHER: I inform you that I received your letter. You write to me that I obtained great wealth after [the death of] my brother, but what is this wealth? I wrote to you that he left 300 dollars, so you may write to Kużeński and even to God himself, then he will tell you that I took 300 dollars. The funeral cost me 200 dollars, the hospital 38 dollars, carriages at the funeral 26, holy mass 16 dollars, the beer for treating 58 dollars, the coffin for him 28, the priest took 35 dollars, the cloth for the deceased 35, lawyer 50 dollars; Kużeński, in whose house he was, took 10 dollars. Now I erected a monument at my expense; it cost me 38 dollars.² I sent 75 dollars to the Chieleńskis, because he was her [Mrs. C.'s] real brother. I could not get anything because he was not our brother [only half-brother]. In the court they were saying that if you want to get his wealth then come over here. The journey will not cost you much [irony]. You know how much the trip cost me. Only bring a big bag [to hold the money], because I do not want anybody's money. I have enough of my own. So long as God grants

¹ His mother was probably married a second time; hence the addition of "father."

² Judging from the general vulgar ostentation and prevarication of the man we cannot accept this as an accurate enumeration of expenses, but the man evidently did conform to the *form* of the old familial attitude by arranging an elaborate funeral for a member of the family. This is a fundamental expression of the solidarity of the family and a sign of its social standing, and Winkowski does it, although his family feelings are almost dead.



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INDIVIDUAL LETTERS AND FRAGMENTS OF LETTERS SHOWING THE DISSOLUTION OF FAMILIAL SOLIDARITY

The dissolution of familial solidarity is not always due exclusively to the member who has emigrated; it may also happen that the group ceases after a time to be interested in its absent member. Or it may happen that the group learns of some real or imaginary break of solidarity on the part of the absent member and repudiates him. In this respect we should remember that sometimes the act of emigration, and always a too prolonged stay abroad, constitute in themselves a break of solidarity. Often the reaction of the group (or of some of its members) is aroused by a false report about the absent member sent by someone from abroad. Gossip, which often forces the individual to remain a solidary member of the group, may become a factor of dissolution when it is false. Finally, it happens also that the emigration of a member of the family-group leads to a breakdown of familial attitudes in another member who stays at home, and whose situation, in consequence of the emigration of the first, becomes abnormal. Thus, for example, a wife left alone by her husband, a child left without the control of the father, become more easily demoralized.

Cases of these various kinds are given in the following.

489-98, ISOLATED LETTERS OR FRAGMENTS OF LETTERS

489

[The group repudiates the member, but the latter has not lost his feeling of solidarity.]

DETROIT, MICH., October 10, 1900

DEAR BROTHER: "Praised be Jesus Christus."

I inform you, dear brother, that I received your letter for which I thank you from my soul and my heart. May God help you the best

possible. And now I inform you that I am in good health, thanks to God, and I wish you the same. And now I admonish you, as my brother, about what you wrote to me—that you will go voluntarily where you may be shot or hung. Remember rather the mercy of Jesus Christ and when this idea [of suicide] visits you, sigh to our Lord God, and it will be better for you.¹ The same ill luck presses heavily upon me also; I suffer poverty and hard words, and I don't know what will become of me, whether I shall ever see you again.

As to the matter which I mentioned to you, about my business, let the clear lightning strike her before she becomes my wife. It would be better for me to break hand and leg than to marry her. I write you so, dear brother, and you can believe me, it will be so. I have other matters in my head than such a crooked stick. And now, dear brother, you write me that paternal and maternal uncles, father and mother, brothers and sisters repudiate me. I don't mind myself; you can repudiate me, because I am an exile and a pilgrim, far away from you, from my father's land and my family, and therefore you repudiate me. Let God repay you all this, good for evil; let it be my wrong and not yours. I beg you, dear brother, salute in my name my parents and thank them that they deigned to repudiate me; but my conscience does not allow me to do it [repudiate them], and God would punish me heavily for it. I beg you for the second time, write a letter to our parents in your own hand in my name, and thank them for everything.² I won't forget you, only be patient, I beg you. And now I inform you that I shall send you for Christmas about 20 roubles and to Stasiulek I shall send also for Christmas 10 roubles and that will be all. And now pardon me, dear brother, for writing so poorly, but I have on this account [the bad news] drowned the worm pretty well, for I received your letter precisely on pay day, and I am writing this letter to you at 1½ o'clock in the night.³ And I bid you

¹ The inclination to suicide is very frequently expressed by the peasant in moments of discouragement, and the only reason preventing suicide from being particularly frequent is the religious fear of damnation, since the fear of death itself, as we have seen, is not very strong.

² The meekness manifested is not ironical, and is intended to provoke a reaction of compassion and remorse.

³ The feeling of grief is compared to the gnawing of a worm, and "drowning the worm" is the usual popular expression for drinking in order to forget grief. Socially there is only one form of normal intoxication, that which takes place during ceremonies of any kind, where the purpose of drinking is to maintain a certain intensity of common feelings. But individually drinking has another function,

farewell, dear [brother]. Remain with the Lord God. And I beg you, write letters to auntie and to our parents from yourself, for I will not write unless I receive an answer, because for 2 months already I have had no letter. Goodbye. I remain,

Your loving brother,

A. REMBIŃSKI

My address is such, the following one. . . . Finis. *Gut naj* [good night].

And I beg you answer the soonest possible and write, my brother, news from [illegible name] and the neighborhood.¹

A. REMB.

490

[Demoralization of a wife in the absence of her husband. The latter, in spite of his emigration, shows more familial feeling, even with regard to the children, than the wife. The letter tends to establish a solidary relation between the husband and the rest of the family as against the wife.]

Letter written the 13th

“Praised be Jesus Christus.”

And now, dear father, what does all this mean that you write me? Why does my wife not wish to come to America, and writes me such stupid things that I am [illegible word] with her? I have sent her a ship-ticket for all, and she writes me such silly things and is not ashamed of it. When I sent the ticket I sent for all, and not for her alone. Could I leave the children? My heart does not allow me to leave my own children. Then, dear father, if she does not wish to listen it will end badly for her. Dear father, bow to her [ironically] and take the children to yourself, and I will send you directly two hundred roubles for the children, and let her do as she pleases. And if not, then give

it becomes a substitute for action whenever a strong feeling is aroused and for some reason cannot find an immediate expression in activity. For the eminently practical nature of the peasant a feeling which does not lead to action becomes unbearable, and he is not accustomed to find relief in aesthetic life or in a more or less long process of theoretic reflection which precedes or substitutes itself for action in intellectual people.

¹ The character of his writing shows that he is becoming more and more intoxicated. He adds some meaningless and corrupted English and German words about “writing letters.”



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492

[Fragment of a letter showing the influence of gossip. Author unknown.]

I wrote you 2 letters, and you did not answer me. And now you write me to send you money, so I can send you a few roubles. One woman will go to our country, so you will receive a gift in a month. You ask me whether I will come home. Well, dear wife, we shall meet soon. Put out of your head [the idea] that I have a mistress here; I did not know that you are still so stupid. When I was in America the first time, I was younger, and did not commit this folly; should I commit it now? I should sooner have expected death than to hear this. Inform me who told you about it.

493

[Fragment of a letter showing the influence of gossip and the demoralization of children in the absence of the father.]

June 4, 1914

DEAR WIFE: I inform you that I am in good health, that I left my old place, because there was no work. I came then to Toledo and I have work. I sent you 20 roubles on June 2, because I had no more. You know that in the world it is indispensable to have some money with you. If God helps me, I will send you more. Here in America it begins now to be so that one does not work more than he works. Thousands of people go about without work. And as to our children, I cannot hear any more about it. Give them some of the broomstick and chase them away on the street, because they are so bad. And you I ask, don't write such letters to me any more, because otherwise I will stop writing to you at all.¹ Tell the man who told you all this that I will send him some roubles for beer in reward for it. Let him get drunk [again].

¹ Probably this expression of provocation has some history, and this is not the first complaint of the wife about the children, but we find frequent protests of this kind from peasants, about the communication of disagreeable facts. They say they do not want to be made sad. (Cf. No. 481.) Reflection is painful to the peasant, especially when he has no possibility of action, and by a sort of passive hedonistic selection he demands to be spared disagreeable news. Or he may resort to positive hedonistic selection, e.g., drink. Cf. No. 489, note 3.

494

[Fragment of a letter showing how familial solidarity is stronger than gossip.]

DEAR WIFE: Probably you have received the ship-ticket already; so you can prepare to leave. You know that people have told me bad things about your behavior, but to me it seems otherwise. I will forgive you all your wrongdoing. I only hope our life together may be good in the future. The bed-furnishings, whatever you have, bring with you, because here they are very expensive. And bring also your better dresses with you; the remainder can be left for the present. Put it into a trunk and let it lie there for some time. Conceal also my army-certificate. I will not send you money; manage as you can until you come to me. The agent said you will have no trouble about anything. Take with you a loaf of black bread—it is the best—and also some apples. I wrote you already how you may explain.

495

[Fragment of a letter showing some coldness between husband and wife as the result of emigration.]

June 16

DEAR WIFE: Why do you make such bad allusions to me? Do you know from what family I come? Did you not know whom you took? I have not worked for 7 months, and now times are so bad that in America it gets worse and worse. A lot of people come from our country, and here in America there is no work for them, and thousands walk about without work. But the people in our country imagine that when somebody comes to America he does nothing but make money. But here in America one must work for 3 horses, and yet this work is scarce. With this letter I send you some few zloty [a little money]. I send thirty roubles which you will have for your expenses. About the holiday of God's Mother [patron] of seed-time I will send you perhaps a ship-ticket and then you will come to me. As soon as you receive this letter and the money write me how many geese and young cattle and pigs you have already. Why is it so hard to persuade you to write letters? Is it so hard for you to write?

496

June 7, 1914

[Fragment showing the introduction of an outsider into family quarrels.]

I inform you, Sir, about my health. I am in good health, Mr. M., and I wish you the same. This Smoliniak went away with another man to New Britain, and they wrote about us that we robbed them and their sisters. So if you ever write [to them], as a man knowing our situation, be so kind and abuse them. And please write them the truth, what profit we had of them. When he was ill with his hand, I had his stove heated for 3 weeks, and during the whole time when he did not work he did not pay his [full] board but only \$2 for his food. Mańka [his sister], as you know, remained [with him] for days and even weeks, and we asked nothing for it, only what we lent her. As to their education, you know the best about it. The big Sobieski stopped me in the street and asked me whether he was my cousin, and said that probably he was educated among cattle. Please tell him some day or other about it.

497

[The writer of the two following letters is the man referred to in the Raczkowski series, in connection with a quarrel with Adam Raczkowski. He came to America at a mature age and emigration produced hardly any change in his attitudes. The present letters are interesting because of the familial situation. Marriage with a Russian is, of course, forbidden by the community on account of both national and of religious considerations, and the family shares the standpoint of the community. In disowning the daughter, Olów conforms to the expectation of the community and, as head of the family, orders his wife to do the same. It is true that in writing to his cousins, the Wolskis, he is asking for information, but he wants them, as family-members, to know of the situation, and he expects them to share his position, and invites their intrusion.]

[November, 1909]

MY DEAR WIFE: I received a letter from you which grieved me very much. But I beg you, don't grieve, because this grieving will not help us. If our daughter forsakes you, dear wife, as a good mother, and her father, who wanders about the world for her happiness, and if she despises all this, then nothing can be done. And when she comes from her wedding, from the Russian church, let her immediately go away just as she stands. And you, dear wife, I beg you, live where you are living, because I do not even know where to



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CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN HUSBANDS AND WIVES

In this connection we find a great variety of problems, but the common problem in all the series of letters is that of the constitution of what may be termed a "natural" family, i.e., a family based, not upon social traditional attitudes, but only upon the actual relations between its members, and therefore practically limited to a married couple with their children; it is the family as elementary social group of the classical sociological theory. It proves here to be the result of a relatively late social evolution. As the older form of familial unity, in which the family embraced relatives up to the fourth or fifth degree (without very clearly determined limits), decomposes under the influence of new conditions, its parts enter into the composition of different territorial, professional, sometimes national and religious groups, and thus their former connection is loosened. Simultaneously an evolution goes on within each of these parts—each elementary group of married couple+children; the reciprocal relations of its members undergo a change. This may perhaps be best expressed in the following way: As long as the familial group was constituted by all the relatives on the sides of both husband and wife, the fundamental conjugal norm was that of "respect," because the married pair was not an isolated couple related only as individuals, but in them and through them their respective families were united, and the dignity of these families was involved in the conjugal relation. When this large family is dissociated, the fundamental conjugal norm becomes that of love and reciprocal confidence, because the relation is a purely personal one. In the larger family the children

were not merely children of the given couple, but in a sense belonged to the family as a whole, and the parents, particularly the father, represented the total group with regard to them, and was to some extent responsible for them before the group. Hence the relation between parents and children was one of authority and obedience, and bore at the same time a certain impersonal character, precisely because it lacked exclusiveness, for the children as members of the larger group had a quality which put them partly outside of the smaller group. The isolation of the latter brought new forms of interior life; the parents' authority and the children's obedience became personal, not social, attitudes, and the individualization called for a new norm—that of reciprocal personal affection.

The Polish peasant is now on the way from the older form of familial life to the new one, and we find in the present volume the two forms mixed in various proportions. But since in the new form individual factors play a much more important part than in the old one, the strength and harmony of familial life begin to depend in a much larger measure upon such factors as character, intellectual development, sentimental refinement, etc. Thus we find examples of a stronger or weaker connection between the members of the new marriage-group, of a more or less perfect harmony in the life of this group, of its more or less solidary behavior with regard to the external world, etc.

In arranging the materials we place first those in which the marriage-group is shown as being merely a part of the family, and later those in which the "natural family" is definitely constituted.

PAWLAK SERIES

The conjugal relation is here very impersonal. There are only a few rather insignificant expressions of affection; business, news about children and relatives constitute the content of the letters. The detailed account which the wife gives of all expenses and other matters of business is significant. In these matters she takes only provisionally the place of her husband as manager of the property which is the basis of the living of the family, and in this respect her position is settled; nothing can be changed. In striking contrast with this behavior stands the fact that she has evidently bought a house, in her own name, with money sent her by the husband. Here a traditional attitude has not yet been sufficiently established with regard to the new property and the money for which it was bought, for the money was earned in a new way—by emigration. Of course the simplest conclusion would be that the rôle of the woman should remain the same, because the new problem is an economic problem like the old ones. But we know that the peasant sees qualitative differences where the economist finds mere quantities, and these qualitative differences in the present case are great enough to lead to a new attitude.

499-505, JÓZEFA PAWLAK, IN POLAND, TO HER
HUSBAND, IN AMERICA

499

BUDZIWOJ, August 15, 1912

. . . . DEAR HUSBAND: I received your letter, from which I learned about your dear health and success. We are all in good health. The children long awfully for you. When you went away I could not calm them; they cried so that they almost became sick. Józuś asks always where is father and whether he won't come.



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the cow? For she is so bold that I cannot manage her. She runs away whenever she wants to and goes wherever she will, and does damage to other people, and I must pay. I would sell her and buy some older one; perhaps she would be gentler. Now, I have not yet sown the rye, for it has rained during the whole month and nothing could be done. I have nothing more to write, only I greet you kindly and heartily innumerable times. May I see you soon again! Franuś, Anielcia, Józio, and Władzio kiss the hands of their dear father. . . .

JÓZEFA PAWLAK

501

January 6 [1913]

. . . . Now, dear husband, I received 250 crowns from you on January 2, for which I thank you heartily. I gave back to the Kustras the sum with interest. They took 12 renski of interest. I have threshed the grain; Wojciech Kret threshed for me. I got 4½ korce [18 bushels] of rye and 4 of barley. The threshing cost me 7 renski and 20 cents [kreuzer]. I have ground in the mill 2 korce of rye and ¾ of barley. For threshed barley I gave mother those 5 crowns which you ordered, and I invited her for Christmas eve, but she did not come; she would have come, but Magdusia did not wish it. . . . I have bad times now for I have no firewood. I have burned all, and it is far to the forest, difficult to drive, and I have little money left. . . .

[JÓZEFA]

502

May 18, 1913

. . . . DEAR HUSBAND: I received your letter and 175 renski. I gave mother 5 crowns, and 22½ renski [45 crowns] were left for me. I have spent it all, for I bought dung at 60 cents; I could get it cheaper nowhere. . . . I had 10 wagons of my own and I bought 10. . . . Now, dear husband, I wrote you for advice, what to do with this house which is for sale, and you answered me neither so nor otherwise. Now people give [offer] for it 530 renski. It seems to me too expensive, but if you order, dear husband, I shall buy it for this money, because it would be good for us. But if you don't order, I won't buy. But there are people who will buy it, for there are buyers enough. Now, dear husband, upon my land I planted potatoes and I left one bed for cabbage. I gave one bed to mother, and I rented two from Lasota and Pasek. As to the crops, they are very

nice; we have also beautiful rye and wheat and barley and clover. Now I inform you that the cow stands in the stable, for they don't let her go upon the manorial pasture and I don't know what will be, how I shall keep her until the harvest, for I have nowhere to pasture her.¹ Moreover I have got a calf, and now it is impossible to get even a handful of grass from the manorial land, for they guard it day and night. . . .²

JÓZEFA PAWLAK

503

November 23, 1913

DEAR HUSBAND: I have already bought that house. I agreed at 530 and I gave them 400. The contract is settled. I paid 13 renski, and 30 cents for the stamps, and I must still give 130 renski. So send them to me. You ordered me to borrow 200 renski from mother, but she did not give them to me, for she had none. She had lent to Kondratka, for you did not mention anything in your letter to her and she did not know. [Enumerates house expenses.] You ordered me to borrow a machine for straw-chopping, but I did not take it for I have no money. The pig keeps well enough, but I won't drive it [to the fair] until St. Paul's Day [June 29]. The cow and calf keep well also. Pasek will sell two morgs [of land] quite near this house which we bought. If we could buy at least half a morg, then even if a hen ran about there she would be upon our own land. Pitera is very angry with me for having bought this house and threatens me very much.³

JÓZEFA PAWLAK

¹ The permission to send cattle to the manorial pasture, when not a right of common, is sometimes granted personally by the manor-owner as a reward for some service or as help. Sometimes the arrangement is tacit, but after some time the fact becomes custom and is claimed as a right. A change of manor-owners or officials often leads to serious troubles.

² Cutting of manorial grass for the cow, carrying of dry wood from the manorial forests, gathering of mushrooms, berries, nuts, is not considered as in any case reprehensible. But little reprehension is attached to such acts as *cutting* of wood, stealing fruit or vegetables, letting the cattle damage the crops, etc., wherever the damage is done to a manor-owner, not to a neighbor-peasant. Cf. Introduction: "Economic Life."

³ The peasants in Galicia are more attached to land and more unwilling to move from the country to the towns than in any other part of Poland. Perhaps the slight development of industry is one of the causes. Owing to emigration there is relatively more ready money than purchasable land. So the price of land is enormous, and the rivalry between buyers assumes the extravagant forms exemplified in this letter.

504

March 1, 1914

DEAR HUSBAND: In the first words of my letter I speak to you, dearest husband, with these words: "Praised be Jesus Christ and the Holiest Virgin Mary, glorious through the whole world." May She be with you, dearest husband.

[Generalities about health and success.] I received 320 crowns, from which I gave 20 crowns to mother and 260 crowns I must give to Pasek for this land and house which we bought; 40 crowns will be left for me. I bought 1 korzec of rye for 20 crowns, and I had to give 12 crowns, 20 heller on account of that land which we had bought before from Dala. The notary with whom we made the contract is dead, and they did somewhere some cheating. The successors have now divided the land and for the expense of this division I had to give these 12 crowns. Now you ask in whose name I made this contract about this house. Well, I have written you so many letters asking you whether I should buy it or not, why did you not write me in whose name to do it? [Farming details.] Now, dear husband, you write me to move into this house. But I won't move until you come, for I am afraid lest somebody should do me some harm, for it is near the road. I admitted as lodger Józef Pieskiewicz, the tailor. He will pay me 40 crowns a year. I shall pluck the fruit from the orchard, and he can plant potatoes for himself in the beds which are there. . . .

JÓZEFA PAWLAK

505

April 17, 1914

DEAR HUSBAND: You write me that your leg bites [aches] you. Well, I cannot help you, for if you were at home we would find some help for it. Only I advise you that there are doctors, so don't grudge money but go to a doctor; perhaps he will help you. And don't put on leeches lest something bad should happen with your leg. [Farm-work, crops, etc.]

Our children learn well, they don't ever omit the classes. . . . Józus will go to church in the summer when it is warm, for if I took him in winter he would catch cold. Władzio cannot yet cross himself, but tries already to do it. [Farm-work; marriages and deaths.]

JÓZEFA PAWLAK



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of attachment as prescribed by the organization of the family. Of course the sexual factor must exert a powerful if unconscious influence upon the conjugal relation, but it is not consciously allowed to interfere with the social and moral side of this relation.

The respective rôles of husband and wife change, as we shall see, as soon as marriage becomes an individual matter.

There is no contradiction between the lack of familial solidarity in the married woman and the solidarity which an unmarried girl shows toward her parents, brothers, sisters, and relatives. The unmarried girl has no particular familial function to perform and hence her personal affection to individual members of the family can still easily fit into the familial organization.

506—9, JAN KUKIEŁKA, IN AMERICA, TO HIS WIFE, IN POLAND

506

August 9, 1911

[A page and a half of the usual greetings, wishes, and generalities about health.] Now I inform you, dearest little wife, about what you ask, whether Mańka shall go to Warsaw, although she is the daughter of a farmer. Well, I answer you that she is not to go, because I do not allow this.¹ Now, as to our son Antoni, with him it's

¹ Going to Warsaw means going to serve as a housemaid. The father forbids it as contrary to the peculiar dignity of a farmer as against a landless peasant. We find the same aversion to any hired work for wives. This aversion is weakened, without disappearing, when the child or the wife has to go, not to a Polish estate or city, but abroad—to Germany or to America. Sending children to hired work in the country is not suitable for a farmer who has some 10 morgs of land, while only rich farmers, owning 20 to 30 morgs, consider it below their dignity to send their children to Germany. Evidently the reason of this difference is that the work abroad has some characters of novelty which make the application of traditional inhibitions to it less natural and immediate. Further, the inhibition is not so strong with regard to boys as to girls, not so strong with regard to girls as to wives, and in the process of industrial evolution the first has almost disappeared. But it seems still to be instinctively held with regard to the oldest son or, more exactly, to the son who is to take his father's farm. It is certainly neither by mere sentiment nor by rational calculation that the son who is destined to take the farm is more unwillingly allowed to go to hired work than other sons. The aversion to hired work cer-

going very badly, and in this way, that he does not keep his work, and is without a cent at all, and if anybody says anything to him, he does not listen at all, but is ready to fight. What can be done with such a boy? You can understand, dearest little wife, that it would be quite unsuitable for me to give him money, because you know yourself that I must think of you all, and it would be too much if I had still to have difficulties with him or to be concerned with his difficulties. When I sometimes predicted to him [the bad consequences of his behavior] he took pains not to meet me at all. What more can I do? I inform you however that he is in good health; that is all that I can tell you, dearest little wife.¹ I inform you also, dearest little wife, that I will send you about 100 roubles after some days. So don't answer this letter, because after some days another will come, and then you will answer both. Now I want to say this also, my dear little wife, that I am very much pleased with your doing good farming for me, and keeping the boars, sows, and pigs, and with your having harvested the crops. I am very much pleased with this letter, dearest little wife.² Now I inform you about my work. I work in a

tainly goes back to the time when the work away from the familial farm was mainly servage work; but this is hardly sufficient by itself to explain the facts. We must take into consideration the distinction, pointed out elsewhere, between farm-income and income from hired labor, the latter being additional and destined primarily to cover such expenses as in the peasant's economy are relatively new, while the farm-income is the essential basis of living of the whole family. All these facts are explained if we remember that economic organization is determined by familial organization. The essentially familial property is the hereditary farm, and against this the money earned outside represents the more individual form of property. Wages, being a relatively recent phenomenon, cannot be as completely subordinated to the familial standpoint as land and land-income, even if their subordination is manifested by the demand that earned money be turned over to the family. Therefore, hired work is felt as particularly unsuitable for those whose connection with the main familial group is particularly close, while a certain relaxation of the inhibition is natural for the members who will sooner or later establish a new branch of the family.

¹ Particularly rapid emancipation of the boy. The father's authority is not sufficient when not supported by the whole family-group and community.

² The farm-work done by the wife is presented here as meritorious and as if it were done for the husband and deserved his particular gratitude. This attitude seems contrary to the familial principle, according to which there is no division of property between husband and wife because there is no private property. Kukielka is also evidently conservative and it is improbable that he would occupy an individualistic standpoint. The explanation is connected with the situation

brick-factory and earn very good money, that is, \$2.70 for 13 hours. The work is very heavy, but I don't mind it; let it be heavy, but may it last without interruption. The brick-factories are going all right during the summer but in winter they stop, and I am afraid of it. But let it be as our Lord God sends it. When that day comes, some way will be found. Now I have nothing more to write, only I may add that in America there have been enormous fevers, for some days thousands. . . . [End of the letter missing.]

[JAN KUKIELKA]

507

January 6, 1912

[Two pages of greetings, wishes, reproaches, and justifications about writing or not writing letters.] Now, dearest little wife, as to what you write about sending a ship-ticket for [our daughter] Mańka, it is so: As to the ship-ticket, it does not matter much, but I mind most this: If I take Mańka, what will you do there, dearest little wife? You know yourself that she is of great help to you. That is one thing. And secondly I mind that the girl will be very sad and will suffer misery. Here in America it is not the same as in our country. What if she does come to me? She cannot remain with me, but must go into service, and in the service it is necessary to learn the English language, and even to learn washing and cooking. Then there will be misery and weeping, because somebody speaks and you can only look at him. If you want it exceedingly I will send [the ticket], but then don't blame me. Now I inform you also, dearest little wife, that after this letter I will send you some roubles, so wait some days before you answer.

The loving father of our children,¹

[JAN KUKIELKA]

508

December 30, 1913

. . . . And now, dear wife and daughters, write to me, when do you think it best for me to return home? On Easter or at some other time? And now I greet you, dear wife and daughters, and I

outlined in the first note on this letter. The husband's emigration and the hired work he is doing, even if necessitated by the situation, are still formally a departure from his familial duty, which would oblige him to remain on the farm. The wife by doing his work performs his duty and is therefore entitled to gratitude. Their arrangement is personal even if its object—farm-work—is familial.

¹ Curious expression of the familial attitude.



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wife, that that letter did not please me at all, because I asked you to write me when I should come, and you did not answer me, as if you were not my own wife but a cook or some other hired woman. And now I inform you, that you wrote twice for me to send you my photograph, you gave me no peace. To tell the truth, I did not even wish it, but when you wrote once and then once more, I was obliged to send you the photograph. But it was expensive for me alone, so I asked my companion, and this cost us cheaper. My companion sent one at once to our country, and they answered him and thanked him very much, but when I sent it I did not even get an answer. Such is the gratitude I got. I had thought that I left a good wife at home, but I was disappointed; the husband is far away. I wrote letters as to a wife, but I did not receive any good answers for them. When I was a little boy with my parents I was glad and happy, I had whatever I wished, and now I have a wife who does not even write to me about my daughters. Such is the reward for one's goodness.

And now, dear wife, you write me that Józef, your brother, writes about those few roubles, asking for them. So I write you, dear wife, you may write to him that I will send him those few roubles, but only when I am at home. Now I will not send money home because I need it for my journey, and what is left I will give back. And now you write, that you have no milk. Do you think that I have it? You have rye for bread, 10 korcy, and I must buy bread; you have a house, and I must pay rent, 7 roubles a month, and so my work goes on. And now, dear wife, you write that you have a fat pig [ready] to be killed, so I advise you, if they pay you well, you can sell him, if pigs are dear; but if they are cheap, don't sell. [End missing.]

[JAN KUKIEŁKA]

JANKOSKI SERIES

A typical conjugal relation upon the familial basis is shown in this series. The wife is a substitute for the husband, performing economic functions; there is a lack of personal interests; the husband's father and wife's sister are in solidary co-operation with the marriage-group.

510-11, FROM SZYMON JANKOSKI, IN AMERICA, TO
HIS WIFE, IN POLAND

510 PERTH AMBOY, N.J., August 11, 1913

[Usual greetings and wishes.] And now, dear wife, I inform you about my success, that my success is good enough because I have work and I work every day. Dear wife, if you find an opportunity to buy [a farm] somewhere for about 700 roubles, then buy it, I request you, dear wife and dear father, for the money that is in the bank there, and if some more is needed, write to me. Dear wife and dear father, if you have the opportunity to buy somewhere near a manor, then buy it, either in Chojnowo or in Obrębiec or in Czernice, because it is always better to buy near a manor than somewhere far away, as there is the possibility of earning something. And now, dear wife and dear father, what you write about money, that I might send you, so deprive yourselves of it for some time yet, dear wife and dear father, because now I shall send you none, as it is not worth sending some cents. I have money but I am not willing to send these few cents. I will send you later and more at once, then you will know that you have received [something] and I shall know that I have sent the money. And so I will send you later, but then about 200 roubles. Now, dear wife, I request you to go to Obrębiec, to call on the Adamskis and to ask them the address of their son, and send me this address to America. Now I have nothing more to write but to greet you, dear wife, lovingly and heartily. I greet Stasiek and Antoś, and I greet dear father. [Greetings from some friends.]

[SZYMON JANKOSKI]

Now I request you, dear reader, if you cannot read what I wrote here, do not answer, because I did not learn in a school, but in a barn; so write me, dear reader, did you read it or not.¹

511

May 13, 1914

. . . . And now I greet you, dear wife, and you, my dear children, I greet you all with those godly words, "Praised be" [etc.]. And now I inform you that I received the letter from you for which I thank you very kindly, dear wife, and you, dear children. And now I inform you, dear wife, that I sent you 20 roubles on the 5th of May. I would have sent you more but my finger was wounded. For three weeks I have not been able to work, and I don't know how it will be further. Now, thanks to God and to God's Mother, this finger does not pain me so much.

And now you ask me, dear wife, how much money Walerka [probably wife's sister] earns, in America. Well, do you know, dear wife, that I spent for her more than \$60, and from her wages I have not a cent. She served with a certain master and mistress for a month and they did not give her a cent for all this work of hers, and so \$14 was lost. And now, I thank you, dear wife for buying this land, and I request you, dear wife, to describe to me how did you succeed with that business, and what about that annuity? Is it already finished or not? I request you, describe all this. You write, dear wife, about that Stasiek, whether you may take him or not. I leave it to your choice. If you are attached to him take [adopt?] him. And now I inform you, dear wife, that I will send you presently the attorney's power. And now I thank you, dear son, that you don't wish to come to America, because now in America there is terrible poverty. It [work] goes badly. I have nothing more to write, I only wish you all health, happiness and good success; what you wish for yourself from our Lord God and God's Mother, and I ask you for a speedy answer. *Got naj* [good night].

SZYMON JANKOSKI

¹ This is a rhyme in the original, and is proverbial.



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I don't spend a single grosz in vain. It seems to you that you have sent me much money. But I have paid so many debts. I have only trouble with these children, for they don't ask whether I have money or not, but require me to give them. I know myself that you are working hard, you don't need to admonish [remind?] me, for I did not buy anything for myself. [Food prices; news about pigs and cow.] Now, dear husband, I wish you a Merry Christmas. It would be better if we were together; it would rejoice us more. . . . In going to bed and in rising remember us always, dear husband.¹

Your most loving wife,

MARYANNA ŁAZOWSKA

513

January 29, 1914

. . . . DEAR [BROTHER] BOLEK: I inform you about my grief. When you wrote a letter and asked how many there are of our family, she spoke and asked us to write about her also.² She fell sick with measles, then she got inflammation of the lungs. There were doctors, but they could not save her. She was awfully clever, it is difficult to relate.³ I am terribly pained. If it were by land, I would go afoot to America. . . . Grandfather despairs continually after Henka's death and he cannot forget her cleverness. His health has got very bad; he cannot work and says that he will die soon.

¹ This request tends unconsciously to assimilate the familial and the religious attitudes. The moments after the end and before the beginning of the daily work are evidently the ones most favorable to an undisturbed and purely sentimental remembrance of home or God in a workman's life. At the same time the periodical character of this remembrance would tend to make of it both a habit and a duty. We understand better the meaning of this request if we remember that the normal life of the peasant is fully practical and always determined by the actual situation. Reflection and remembrance require in him a particular effort and an almost absolute freedom of mind and body. Therefore he carefully selects the time and place of reflection or remembrance and makes for these acts a self-conscious, intentional, and sometimes ridiculously ceremonial preparation. (See Vol. III.) As in letter-writing reflection and remembrance are combined, the same care is shown in the preparation for it.

² The meaning is that her anxiety not to be omitted in the enumeration of the members of the family was a foreboding of her death.

³ Normal idealization after death. In children it is usually intelligence which is thus idealized, in grown-up persons, character. Perhaps this idealization in general is an unconscious attempt to justify individual grief when it goes beyond the limit assigned by the social regulation of the attitude toward death. At any rate it is an attempt to give *objective* reasons for subjective grief.

As to the air [weather], up to the present we had frost, but now it does not freeze any more.

We salute and greet you together with your wife and children.

She died on January 19, and was buried on January 20.

MARYANNA ŁAZOWSKA

514

March 20, 1914

. . . . DEAR UNCLE: What does it mean that we have no letter? We have had no letter since December 5. What does it mean? Are they [the father and oldest sister] dead, or what? We wrote 3 letters and we had no answer to any of them. When Henka died we wrote a letter, but there was no answer. So please, uncle, write a letter at our cost—we will pay for it—and describe kindly what is going on, for we don't know, because we have no letter. We beg you for God's sake, tell us how it is. If somebody is sick there, describe everything. What happened with our father, that he does not deign to write a letter? When Genia [the oldest sister] was leaving, mother admonished her not to forget about letters. And she does not even deign to write a letter. We wonder how can a daughter be so mean.¹ So please, uncle, read them this letter. But perhaps they are no more alive. Then, please, describe to us kindly everything. Only we beg you for a speedy answer. We bow to you, uncle and auntie, and to all our acquaintances. We wish you a merry Easter. *Alleluiah!* The end.

[ŁAZOWSKA'S CHILDREN]

515

April 10, 1914

. . . . DEAR HUSBAND AND DAUGHTER: We received your letter, for which we thank you heartily, and the money also. Dear husband, Henka is dead.² She fell sick on January 5. . . . There was one doctor and another and they tried to save her, and she wanted to live. Everything, whatever the doctor prescribed, she took everything. She had 40 cupping-glasses applied. In the last moment, dear daughter, she kissed your photograph, and kissed me on the face,

¹ The daughter evidently has not a much-developed familial feeling, or perhaps the fact that she is in America with her father and uncle accounts for her lack of longing for home.

² Her first letter with news of the death was evidently not received by the husband, who heard of it through the letter to the brother-in-law.

raised her eyes on high and died. She finished her wandering here and went to eternity, to the Mother and to her Lord. But for me it is a terrible burden, for I loved her and she loved me. When I enter into the house, it is as sad for me as in a den. We grieved because we had no letter, we thought that you were dead. As to the weather in our country, it is so wet that one could drown dogs. In gardens water stands, it is impossible to sow or to plant. Many people died this year. Dear husband and dear daughter, we have sad holidays this year, it is difficult even to describe to you my sad experience of this year. I was in Mlawa, to buy seeds; I spent 50 roubles. . . . Grandfather is also impaired in health and cannot work. I thank you heartily for the dollar. Remember, dear husband, not to forget about letters. . . . Grandmother also grieves that uncle does not write.

[MARYANNA ŁAZOWSKA]

Dear father, what shall mother do with me, for I shall go to the school only till vacation, and mother does not know where to give me [in apprenticeship].

Mother is very angry with you [Genia] for not even sending a bow to the Morawiankis, for when the letter comes they always ask whether you send greetings for them.

[WACEK]

516

April 23, 1914

. . . . DEAR HUSBAND: We are in good health, only grandfather is sick. He made a will, for he is in danger of life. He has willed me everything. This happened on April 22. I am to pay 100 roubles to the B.'s. . . . So I beg you, dear husband, send me money, for it cost me already some 15 roubles. And I am writing already the sixth letter, and I have an answer to none. You see, dear husband, what difficulties and expenses I have; as soon as one is finished, another comes. So I beg you, send me this debt, for they may make a complaint against me, particularly she. Dear husband, nothing rejoices me [not even this will], for I have not my dear daughter. Wherever I go I am sad. At every moment I think about her and about you.

As to the air, it is warm. There is work to be done, and nobody to work, for grandfather is ill. Fences must be repaired and potatoes planted. The prices are very high in our country . . . and work is difficult to get; only craftsmen can earn. . . .



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OLSZAK SERIES

The old solidarity of the family-group has not yet been superseded, but there is a marked beginning of the isolation of the marriage-group. Real personal love is expressed in the letters of the wife. The connection between the marriage-group and the rest of the family is relatively loosened, particularly in the case of the wife's family. But here again it is the husband who is more conservative in his familial attitudes. It is he who tries to re-establish a closer connection between his wife and her parents and sisters. Though he may be moved in this case more particularly by the desire to help his wife, this is certainly not his reason for asking his cousin not only to help but also to control her.

518-21, TO PIOTR OLSZAK, IN AMERICA, FROM WIFE
AND FAMILY-MEMBERS, IN POLAND

518

November 12, 1913

. . . . DEAR HUSBAND: [Health and success.] In my field [cousin] Jakób worked $2\frac{1}{2}$ days with a single horse and then one day with two horses. He has not been paid at all and he will wait till you send him something, because I borrowed 25 [gulden] of money and bought a calf. I borrowed this money from Kólupa. And Jakób bought me a pig for 11 gulden. I have dug the potatoes out and have sown 7 measures of wheat and 1 measure of barley and 7 measures of rye. I have dunged and sown the field where the oats were. I borrowed $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushels from Franek Batuch. He wants money [interest] for it, as much as he pays himself for borrowing from Tomasiak.¹ But don't worry, I shall manage everything. Since you went away neither father nor mother has been here yet, only

¹ She mentions the fact because it is not according to tradition to take money for lending of grain. Traditionally either nothing or a little grain should be taken as interest.

Maryna; and Rózia also, for a week. I went to them and asked them to give me their daughter [to help]. She was here for a week and cried every evening, and once she went home and did not come any more.¹ The knife which you made has not been found, nor the brush. When I went with you to Sącz, Franek took the brush from the shelf in the lobby, for Maryna and Swidzak saw it. But I don't say anything, because there would be trouble for us. . . . I dream about you every night. Sometimes I dream that you come back angry and sometimes good, and I long very much. The day passes in working but in the evening I long much and at night I cannot sleep. . . .

Samek did not thresh . . . because I wanted him to thresh in the autumn, but he was angry, [saying] that if he did he could not go to Hungary through my fault.² In the field nobody does you any damage, nor does anybody damage the hedge. People say about you that you don't need that America, but nobody asked how you would pay the debts of which we have so many. Nobody believed up to the end that you would go. The Gazdas are very curious whether you will write to them. Franek comes here and looks sometimes, and when he has passed by it can always be noticed, for when he sees anything he does not omit the occasion [to take it].

About [your brother] Walek I dream also. He has not written to me; I did not receive any letter from him. . . . Weddings are numerous in our village, but you will learn about them. Our boys remember you. They ask, "Where is father? Why does he not come?" Now I have nothing more of interest to write, but I greet you a hundred thousand times kindly and heartily, dear husband, and I thank you for that letter for which I have looked for so long a time. Be healthy. Let us see each other. Amen. I greet you [enumeration of all the relatives in America]. And if I don't do anything quite well, don't be angry with me. And it is well that you like it there, because I have grieved enough, thinking that you don't like it there. . . . And Piotrek went with Samek to Hungary to work. And the Tyrkiels, when they both went to the fair, slipped into a

¹ She speaks here of her own family, not of her husband's. The unwillingness of her sisters to help her and the indifferent attitude of her father (see No. 520) show that a married couple may become isolated, not by their own fault, but by the fault of the family in which the solidarity is weakened.

² For season-work. The emigration to Hungary is regarded by the Galician peasants as particularly demoralizing.

tavern, and there a fight began. When Waligóra from Brzegi smashed with a glass upon the table, her [Tyrkiel's wife's] forehead was cut in two spots.¹

Answer at once.

E. OLSZAK

519

May 23, 1914

. . . . DEAR HUSBAND: You write that you are worse, but you did not write what befell you, for Wojtek Jakubów wrote that your leg pains you but he did not write what happened to you, and I am so anxious because I don't know. But did you go in search of misfortune there? [To think that you found misfortune there!] I don't know what is going on. Only this I can say, Wojtuś, my dear heart, that when anything bad befalls you, a part of my heart is cut, from longing for you. If you only know that the work won't go or if you cannot work, get a little of that money and come, and if you have none perhaps Jasiek Kuzak will lend it to you. And when you come back, if God the Holiest grants you to come back, we could give back either the field bought from Tyrkiel or the other part. . . . There is no reason to keep it. Why do you need it, particularly if you have no health? And so it seems to me. Whenever I think about you, my heart is cut. And this buying of land from this Tyrkiel is so useless, because you must work and pay this interest, while they live like lords and you cannot say anything to them.² If it were not because of this debt you would not have gone to America and would not suffer misery there. But if you are to suffer there and I here it is better, if you can, to come back. From them [the parents] also [there is no great help, such as was promised]. Sometimes one [sister], sometimes the other comes, but when they are most necessary there is none. When I go anywhere, I take the children, I take them to Popardzina [and] I close the house. I shall have enough grain,

¹ There is a mischievous joy in this description, resulting from the woman's animosity toward the Tyrkiels. The reason of the animosity is stated in the following letter.

² The reason of the woman's animosity toward the Tyrkiels is here explained; it is envy, because, by selling their land, that family found itself in a better position than the buyer. There is a peculiar and mixed attitude in these matters. The price of land is out of proportion to any possible income from it, and while the peasant, under the influence of the traditional land-hunger, still buys the land and pays the price, he bears a grudge against the seller who made him pay more than the land is economically worth.



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us with your letter, and I did everything in the field for her and I have sown, and Franek keeps it [?] well. They have not divided it yet. And now I write you that I gave to Tyrkiel those 10 gulden. . . . You ask whether people from Ciecewina [?] [the wife's family] call upon her. The girls do come, but nobody else. And now you ask how yours manages. So, up to the present she manages well enough, and how it will be further, I don't know. . . .¹ She bought a calf for 50 crowns and keeps it, and now she intends to buy also a pig, and asks me to lend her money, so I will lend her some. And now I write you about this field, that I persuaded her to rent it from Franek, because Franek told me that he would let it be rented, and that he had [prospective] tenants, Wojtek Ciula, and Józek Junczak, and Franek Samek. So it is better if your wife takes it instead of having trouble with them [probably because of a too near neighborship]. So your wife took one morg of this field. . . .

[JAKÓB]

¹ Example of a husband controlling his wife through his friends. In spite of the conjugal affection the individualization of the marriage-group is still incomplete, since other members of the family or community are not only allowed but asked to interfere.

STARKIEWICZ SERIES

Starkiewicz is not a farmer, but had probably worked in a manor, and when he went to America his wife lived with her relatives. This accounts for the woman's lack of economic interest. In their situation it is really not very important whether they have more or less money, for money assumes a real social importance only when it can be used to buy land or can in any way become a basis of an independent existence. And Starkiewicz can hardly hope to earn enough money to buy a farm.

The marriage-group is more isolated from the rest of the family than in the case of the Olszaks; probably their situation as manor-servants has helped to produce this isolation. Still the familial relations are rather close, since the wife can stay with her relatives. Conjugal affection has evidently considerably transcended the traditional limits.

522-28, FROM ZOFIA STARKIEWICZ, IN POLAND, TO HER
HUSBAND, IN AMERICA

522

UŚCIMÓW, April 16, 1914

"Praised be," [etc.].

DEAR HUSBAND: I am very glad that I received your letter, but this kills me, that you don't write me exactly what is going on with you. Here papers write that there is war in New York, that houses are destroyed with bombs, . . . that ships are stopped [do not bring emigrants to America] and that they say there: "We won't admit the strangers any more who came to spoil our land of money, they have taken enough of our money from our land." And you don't write me what is going on with you. Please, my dear, what became of Stasiek Olesiuk? Already 15 weeks have passed and he does not write any letter to her. Is he no longer alive, or what else became of him? For she grieves very much. Don't you know anything

about him? I beg you, my dear husband, you have enough of this earning; come back to us. It will be sufficient for you. You have more than 300 roubles, and you can earn the rest here. You won't take the money with you when you die, and here you can also earn, if God the Merciful grants you health and allows you to live. Instead of working there and wasting your strength you can have here bread enough. If you don't want to serve [in a manor] go to Lublin, and there you can live. You don't want to have most [money] among other men. If it is difficult to return now, if it is true that there are such troubles, then come about autumn, and if perhaps you have sent me all your money, write me and I will send you for the journey. In our country now it is warm, trees are developing their leaves, people are sowing oats and barley and planting potatoes. . . .

I inform you, dear husband, that somebody stole 100 roubles from stepmother, father's wife, from her chest. We all went to the priest, father and stepmother and sister Wiśniewska, and Wojciech, and Helena, and I. Stepmother was absolutely determined to have father testify under oath. Then father would say that his children had stolen the money. But the priest forbade him to make the oath.¹ . . .

[ZOFIA STARKIEWICZ]

523

June 2, 1914

DEAR HUSBAND: I inform you that I received the money, 101 roubles and 5 copecks, and I thank you heartily, my dear husband, for remembering me. Now I inform you that I will do nothing with this money and I won't lend it to anybody, for I am afraid. I will put it into the bank. Just now your godfather Kunak came to me,

¹ The oath is considered a perfectly sufficient proof even if it is false; the responsibility for its truthfulness falls exclusively upon the person who makes it, and it is a general belief that great calamities and even death are the result of a false oath. (The result is conceived partly as divine punishment, partly as immediate magical consequence of the sacrilege.) In this case the author believes that the stepmother's accusation against her stepchildren is either true or not true. In the first case her satisfaction at the priest's refusal to accept the oath—the only possible proof—shows that she does not consider the robbing of the stepmother a bad act. If she does not believe it is true, then she thinks her father either capable of a false oath or so henpecked that he would believe anything the stepmother says, and in either case absolutely estranged from his own children. In that case we have a situation resembling that in the Wróblewski series.



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health, then we shall live. Whether you earn or lose, nobody will add or take away anything from you. I have a hog. They offered me 45 roubles; I want 50. Now I won't sell it until you come. Then we should have 313 roubles, and if we sold the cow there would be about 400. We would put it into the bank in Lublin, and we should live much better than now. . . .

ZOFIA STARKIEWICZ

525

August 9, 1914

In the first words of my letter, dear husband, I inform you about my health and success. Up to the present we are still in good health, but we don't know how it will be further. I sent you already one letter in which I bade you farewell, like going to death, but still war is in some way held up for 2 weeks, only throngs of soldiers are passing by us afoot and on horses; we see no end of them. God forbid, what is going on with everyone of us! How much crying, how much sorrow! Everybody is so grieved, if you looked today upon anybody you would not know him. O my God, what we have lived to see! May God guard everybody against it! Now nothing else but everybody prays and prepares himself for death. The priests listen to confession, and people come during whole days and confess themselves. And nobody knows what will happen, whether we shall be sent away from here or not. Rich people go to far Russia; there is no war there, while here is the worst fire. We are all so afraid that we don't know how to live in the world. The reservists have been sent away. . . . even those are taken who are 48 years old. . . . And nobody knows what will be. [The papers] write always that it is a European war, but we don't know. . . . I beg you, answer this letter as soon as possible. And perhaps we shall no longer be alive when your letter comes. . . .¹

And now I beg you, dear husband, and Józefka, Stasiek's wife, we begged you in some letters to write us about him, but you did not answer this. We heard from the T.'s that Stasiek has a sweetheart and won't come back any more, for he has a sweetheart and will remain in America. His mother weeps very much, and his wife also. Answer me, whether it is true, but answer me the truth. Then we

¹ This whole paragraph is a good illustration of the peasant's feeling of incomprehension and impotence with regard to the phenomena of the social world outside of his own community. Cf. Introduction: "Social Environment."

shall tell it to them. Write us the address of Stasiek. Only tell the truth, what is going on. We believe that it is true, for perhaps he had a very bad life and he attached himself to a sweetheart. . . .

Your truly loving wife,

ZOFIA STARKIEWICZ

526

November 1, 1914

. . . . DEAR HUSBAND: I inform you that I am in good health and our son is also in good health, and we wish you the same. Dear husband, I have sent you 3 letters, this is the fourth, and I have no answer. Are you no longer alive? I don't know myself what it means. It is not enough that I have grief here; I don't know anything about you. I will write you one letter after another, perhaps one of them will reach you, for I shall not live through this grief, thinking about you. And perhaps you are not there, so whoever opens this letter, please answer me at least a few words, whether he is alive or is no more there. . . . I give my address. . . .

ZOFIA STARKIEWICZ

527

November 7, 1914

DEAR HUSBAND: I received your letter. [Health; wishes.] Your son sends you bows and kisses your hands, saying that he is worried without his papa. Yes, dear husband, our son is already big enough and intelligent, he always remembers "Mamma, where is papa? Is it far? When shall we go to him? Perhaps tomorrow? Come, mamma, let us go!" Józefka thanks you heartily for the address which you sent her, and I thank you also for having written a few words about Stasiek. We are still curious to know what woman sits there with him, what is her name. Write me. What does it matter to you if I know who she is?

As to the war, there is now no battle near us. The nearest one was about Lublin, 3 versts away. Trawniki is burned, Janów destroyed, of Tomaszów only sky and earth are left. There was such a groan from shots here that the earth trembled. Now the battle is going on beyond the Vistula, toward Częstochowa. Radom is destroyed, but not totally, Pulawy destroyed, villages destroyed. There was such a roar at night that it was impossible to sleep. Now

no more shots are to be heard, for the German has been driven away. Only there is great misery in our country, everything expensive. . . . Few people are left, only women, for men have been taken, some to the war, others to digging trenches, others to transports; horses and carts are all taken. . . .

Your loving wife,

ZOFIA STARKIEWICZ

528

November 26, 1914

. . . . DEAR HUSBAND: Our son is healthy and rather big; he walks already in trousers. When I ask: "What is father doing in America?" he answers: "He cuts wood." I have a great distraction with him; he always talks to me. Were it not for the child I should perhaps not live through this sorrow. Dear husband, I inform you that I hired myself as a milk-woman, for both brothers-in-law are at the war. I have nowhere to live, and it is difficult to live in the village. And thus they will give me lodging and fuel, 1 cow to keep in the manorial stable, 3 bushels grain every quarter and 100 roods of field [for potatoes]. I take, it is true, a duty upon my head, for I must be there at every call, but at least I shan't have to work during the whole summer [for some neighbor]. For the keeping of one cow and for a few roods of field I had to work during the whole summer, while now I shall have peace with it. Whatever I earn [outside the milking hours] will be mine, and they will give me also 4 roubles a year. Yes, dear husband, it is painful for me, for I did not expect that I should have to serve.

Now I inform you that Józefka, Stasiek's [wife], went as a maid to a *pop* [Russian priest] to Kolechowicze. For the prices of everything are now very high; it is difficult to live in the village, when one cannot earn somewhere. First she had waited for a letter from her husband, but it is a year since she has had no letter from him; what should she expect from him any more? She went away on November 15. When she was leaving she cried very much; she simply could not say a word. She is so grieved, because she has a husband and must serve, while he works for some whore and lives with her. She is very much pained, she can hardly bear it. Yes, my husband, poor is her lot. I wept myself about her lot. . . .

[Describes who went to war and perished.] Brother-in-law bade us farewell by letter and begged everybody to forgive his sins. . . .



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KLUCH SERIES

Partial isolation of the marriage-group, resulting, not from a particularly close relation between husband and wife, but from a disintegration of the family, appears in this series of letters. Already one branch of the family has been spacially isolated from the rest. We find no mention of any other member living in Lublin except the father with his wife and the two daughters with their husbands. And even this small group is dissolved by the father's second marriage. Consequently there remain only three marriage-groups, partly solidary, partly opposed to one another. And again we find the men more conservative, willing to keep at least in a certain measure the old group-connection.

529-32, TO S. KLUCH, IN AMERICA, FROM HIS WIFE AND FAMILY-MEMBERS, IN POLAND; AND ONE LETTER FROM THE SISTER-IN-LAW OF KLUCH TO HER HUSBAND, IN AMERICA

529

[LUBLIN], May 21, 1914

DEAR SON-IN-LAW: You ask me to describe to you the success of your wife, but I can write you no news at all, for I have never any occasion to call upon her, although she is my child. How can I call upon her since she drove me away from her? And secondly, when I go she avoids me as if I had done her some evil. She moved from here to Wesola Street, there they live near each other, she and Pawlowa [Pawel's wife, the other daughter]. I send you only the news that *kuma* Staškowa [Stasiek's wife] went to borrow money from her, and she said that she had not a penny; so probably there is misery.

And now, dear son-in-law, I beg you very much, write letters to me oftener, for it is my only comfort, when you send me a letter. For I have no comfort at all from my daughters. I respect you more, both my sons-in-law, than my own children. My older son-in-law

wrote to me asking me whether I was not angry. Now probably he is angry with me because I have no news from him at all and I don't know what has become of him. And now I address myself to you, dear son-in-law Stanislaw. You ask me whether I am not afraid that you won't give me the money back. I am not afraid at all, for I understand what work means and what it means to be without work. [Conditions at home are bad.] Write letters to me, oftener, then I will also send you more interesting news, for it is my only diversion when you send me a letter. It is sad and painful to me that my daughters avoid me like some enemy [in return] for my education [of them], for my goodness, for my having fed them for some time when you went away.¹ . . .

J. Z.

530

March 22, 1914

[Usual greetings; letter and photographs received.] Dear husband, you wrote me to try to get Kocieba's address, so I went to his wife. But she did not want to give it at all. She said: "Perhaps he will go to him." I said: "I don't know." Then she said: "He has had no work himself for two months."² And now, dear husband, you wrote me to say to *kum* Pawel that you did not work for 4 months. But *kum* did not believe it at all; he said that it was impossible, that you were not without work for so long a time. Dear husband, people don't believe that there is misery in America; they want to go without reflecting. *Kum* does not earn badly where he is now; he did not tell it, but *kuma* [his wife] told me that he earned up to 20 roubles every two weeks. Perhaps even in America he would not earn more, for people think that in America everybody is filled with cakes [by the employers] while, as we see, even in America it is not so sweet. . . .

M. KLUCH

¹ The strength of the familial attitude is seen in the fact that the old man seeks in his sons-in-law a support when the relation with his daughters is broken off. He needs a sanction for his second marriage and his sons-in-law are a substitute for his daughters.

² Not professional jealousy, as this developed only among craftsmen and the persons here are from the peasant class. The unwillingness shown here is therefore the sign of a partial dissolution of the old solidarity and hospitality among peasants. The feeling of obligation cannot be shaken off, but the duty seems burdensome and unpleasant, because no longer adapted to the general conditions of modern life. Cf. No. 474.

531

September 4, 1914

. . . . And now, dear husband, you ask me how much money I have. I have not so much. In the bank I had only 50 roubles and I had left only a few roubles for myself to live upon, and then you sent 100. So there would have been 150 roubles in the bank, but I did not put them in the bank, for, as you know, nobody accepts money and nobody gives it back [because of war]. Those 100 roubles which I had to pay to my father, I did not pay them either, for my sister had also a few roubles at home which she put in the bank, and now the bank refuses to pay them. She cannot, evidently, die from hunger together with her children [so I lent her money]. The old man, I know, is not without money, and as soon as everything starts again our brother-in-law will send [money to my sister] and I will give [the money] back to the old man. And now, dear husband, perhaps I have spent somewhat too much money, so don't be angry with me, for I was—I don't mean to reproach God with it—in Częstochowa and I bought a few things for myself and for the children, so the money was spent. And now you wrote, why did I not inform you that I was in Częstochowa. How could I have informed you, since you forbade me to write at all, so I waited until all this is changed, and I did not know what was the matter. . . . But you listened to the absurdities of the old man [my father], and the old one avenges himself on me as much as he can. Surely he is so angry because I don't say "mother" to his linen-press [wife]. But you don't know the old one yet. The old one probably is trying to get us separated. As long as I worked I was good [in his opinion], and although he got married he wanted me to wash, to do everything, while his linen-press would lie and drink milk instead of water.¹ He would like his children to be wasted like salt upon boiling water, as he always said to our brother-in-law, "Well, you will be wasted like salt upon boiling water." Don't believe the old one, whatever he writes you about me, for he

¹ Before his second marriage the father had lived with his daughter and his claims to support and service were considered rightful. (Cf. Jabłkowska series.) But after his second marriage all his rights disappeared. He had not only to pay for his own and his wife's living, but his wife had to share the housework with his daughter. He complains of his daughter's ingratitude, but clearly his appeal is made rather in the name of an abstract morality than of a practically acknowledged social obligation. This is one of the clearest examples of familial dissociation resulting from a second marriage through the difficulty of assimilating the new family-member.



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STRUCIŃSKI SERIES

The case is interesting on account of the evolution which goes on in the conjugal relation. In the beginning this has evidently a familial character which it gradually drops, leaving only some community of interest, personal affection, and sexual impulse. This change is probably due to the emigration of the man, and not alone to his separation from the family-group, but also to the tendency to economic advance which is expressed in the emigration. We have seen that this tendency always acts more or less destructively upon the familial form of economic life; at the same time it creates a new and exclusive link within the marriage-group, since it affects, of course, this group as a whole. We shall see this very well illustrated in another (Jabłkowska) series. But in the present case the influence of emigration does not express itself in this way. The personal conjugal connection is not strong enough to subsist when its familial basis has been dissolved and without the help of the attachment brought by common life. Gradually, therefore, the relations between husband and wife become cooler and seem to tend to a definite break.

533-46, FROM ADAM STRUCIŃSKI, IN AMERICA, TO
HIS WIFE, IN POLAND

533

GLASSPORT, PA., June 9, 1910

In the first words of my letter, "Praised be Jesus Christus."

And now I inform you, beloved wife, that by the favor of God I am well, and the same I wish to you and the whole family. And now I ask whether you received the money, because on April 18 I sent to you 19 roubles and 43 copecks, and I have no information about it for 7 weeks. Now I send 25 roubles again, so when you receive it, then

write to me, because I am very much troubled. I do not know what happened. And now I do not have anything more to write, only I would ask you to send to me three little crosses, and one little medalion, because I need only one little cross, but I should like to give it to my colleague, and furthermore I would ask you to put in about 6 hog-bristles, because when sometime my shoe is torn then I do not have any means to mend it, and if I want to buy [bristles] then you cannot find a store that has hog-bristles. Give this letter to my parents, or send it by mail, for maybe you do not go there. And now I kiss you.¹

ADAM STRUCIŃSKI

534

July 13, 1910

. . . . And now I inform you, beloved wife, about my dear health and success. Thanks to God I am well and the same I wish to you. I received your letter July 4, for which I thank you heartily, and I reply to you at once. July 9 I sent you 50 roubles, so that when you receive it then answer me.

And now, beloved wife, you were writing that you want to come to America, so now I do not advise you to come. It is better if I send you a few roubles for your use and if you stay, for the election of president will be soon and it may even be that I will come back to the old country.² And if, after the elections, in America times are good then I can send you a steamship-ticket, and if they are bad, then it may be that next fall I will come back to the old country myself. I pray God to help you just as I pray Him to help me in America. So when I stay in America until next fall and then come back to the old country, we shall have good living just the same. When you reply to me write me whether you received those 19 roubles, 43 copecks. I bow to you, beloved wife, and to the whole family. I wish health, happiness, and good success.

ADAM STRUCIŃSKI

¹ The letter is much more business-like and less personal than the following ones; the request to give it to the parents proves that it is meant to be a purely familial letter.

² Probably a pretext for not bringing her to America; possibly he was misinformed about date of elections.

535

November 1, 1910

DEAR WIFE: I greet you at least through this dead paper, and I kiss you, my love, and I inform you that I received a letter from you from which I learned about your dear health and also your success, and therefore I am very glad my beloved Broncia. And I also inform you about my health and success. By the favor of God I am well and the same I wish to you, my love. And my success is pretty good, only this, that I am lonesome without you, for what is the use of this work and money if I do not have and do not see you. So, I ask you, beloved angel, to send me your little face, that is a photograph, just as I send [one] to you. Although we are on the inanimate paper, nevertheless we shall see [each other] and in our souls we shall have our tender kisses, my dear love. Beloved Broncia, I send you my photograph together with that of my cousin whom I want to engage with Wiktorya Dobrzyńska, and I ask you, beloved wife, to take your picture together with Wichta [Wiktorya] and to send it to me, because if you will not take it together with her, then I will be very angry with you, because he [the cousin] sends one of his, for he is very much pleased with my description, and therefore he desires it [the picture],¹ and we will come back together. Now I write to you that with a second letter I will send to you 60 roubles. I do not have anything more to write but to send a bow to your beloved mother, sisters, brothers-in-law, brother, and sister-in-law, in general to the whole family, and I send hearty wishes. Let God grant them everything the best. And I bid you farewell, beloved Broncia, embrace you and kiss you, I, your sincerely loving husband,

ADAM STRUCIŃSKI

You will give one photograph to my parents. There will be 5 altogether, 4 mine and one of my cousin.

I ask you for a quick reply and the photographs. Have photographs taken of both of you at once, and send them to me. I shall wait with impatience.

¹ The whole story of the matchmaking in this and the following letters is perfectly typical. The underlying attitudes are exactly in accordance with the tradition, only the means are new because of the new situation. This type of matchmaking is more conservative than the one which we find in the Butkowski series.



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marry someone else. Also he sends his low bows to Wichta and to her mother and father and to the whole family, and he asks for Wichta's hand. I do not have anything more to describe and I ask you, dearest wife, whether you received those 60 roubles which I sent; so write me about that. And I bid you farewell, beloved Broncia. I send you my heartiest husband's feelings, and sincere wishes and bows. I greet you affectionately and kiss you my little dove. I, your husband, sincerely loving you until the grave-board.

ADAM STRUCIŃSKI

And I send bows and hearty wishes to mother, sister, brother-in-law, Wichta, Stasia, and to the whole home, to brother, sister-in-law, and to the whole home. And I congratulate you for the New Year and new happiness, and God grant my wishes. I, pleasantly recollecting you, and wishing you well.

ADAM STRUCIŃSKI

537

February 12, 1911

. . . . DEAR WIFE: I inform you that I received your letter, from which I learned about your health as also about success, and that rejoiced me very much. Dear wife, you write to me if [that you wish] this year would pass in one moment, and I also should be glad, only I do not know how it will be further, because I should like to save the most money I can, then it would be better for me than everything, because if I had a great deal of money then I should know how to start farming. So I think of staying some two or three years, because I should like us to have a thousand roubles.¹ Well I do not know how it will be on account of present times, because it is the fifth month since we have worked only half days, and they don't even always allow us to work as much as half a day. Now it is very bad in America. Only in ax-shops the work is going better.

At New Year we did not work for two weeks, and now we receive small working payments. And in regard to winter it is neither winter nor warm, in a word, scabby, with us also. The 9th of January there was a terrible thunder, and hail fell almost like potatoes. I do not have anything more to write, but to send you, beloved wife, bows and my dear greetings, and hearty wishes, and I bid you farewell, beloved

¹ The desire to advance is here explicitly limited to the marriage-group, and nothing is left of the familial attitude.

wife. I embrace you and kiss you, I, your husband loving you until the grave-board.

ADAM STRUCIŃSKI

[Greetings for the whole family.] And I ask you kindly to send me your exact name and address, because when I send money, then I will send in brother's hands [name], because it is more convenient for brother than for wife, on this account that there are mistakes. I ask for a quick reply.

538

April 17 [1911]

DEAR WIFE: You write me to come on your account. So when the work goes worse, then it may be that I will come, but I will work as long as we have not a thousand roubles. I will live in the most economical way, and you also do as you can, because it would not pay me to come [here] for one year. I came in order to earn something. Write to me whether you received 80 roubles that I sent to you. I am very lonesome without you. I kiss you, I, your husband.

ADAM STRUCIŃSKI

539

May 21, 1911

DEAR WIFE: You write me to come. Well, I would come, but I cannot come because the work is going very weakly, and, secondly, I send you the money, and now it is difficult to earn. I will see later. When I am able to earn at least for a ship-ticket then after All Saints Day I will come back. It is true, my dear wife, that you must worry, but I also worry still more than you, and I have more troubles, because I have to think about myself and about you, but it is difficult if God manages us in this way, that we cannot live in abundance. If it were not for that then we would not separate even for one minute, but for the piece of bread it is necessary to bid farewell to the family. So let God help me to earn and to come back happily to my native country. So, I pray God and do you pray also to this Creator and the holiest Mother, that we may be united together and live together until death. I do not have anything else to write.

ADAM STRUCIŃSKI

540

August 21 [1911]

[Greetings; health; letters.] You write, "If I would come," and I think myself [it would be best] if I could come the soonest possible to my family, for I did not come to America to drink and lead a merry life, because I have a family in the old country. When I recall it then the tears run. But I will work as I am able, and when nothing is left for me [in America], then I will come back. I inform you that the 15 of August I sent 3 photographs and the 19, 100 roubles. Write whether you received it. I sent a handkerchief on your name-day, and because I do not know whether it will reach you or not, write to me. I sent two letters together, one with the handkerchief, and another without a handkerchief.

I do not have anything else to write.

[ADAM STRUCIŃSKI]

541

November 26, 1911

DEAR WIFE: I inform you that I received your two letters, and in both of them I heard nothing else but if I would come back. You see, my dear treasure, although you write to me that I love the money better than you, nevertheless you see that I love you and the money, because if without money then I should not like you either, and when I have a great deal of money then you also will like me still better than without money, because when we have a great deal of money then when we fill ourselves up by eating and drinking, and when we dress up, then it will be pleasant to look at each other; then we will love each other still better and we will put lips on lips, and the heart will beat, and then the love will be better than it was when we were hungry and ragged, because when a man is hungry then he does not like to love.¹ So you see, I want to work for some time yet because the work is going not the worst, and I may earn as I did not before. So I will stay some couple of weeks, and you, my dear, pray God for health, and this time will fly away for me and for you as one moment. So I send you 25 roubles for the holidays. Out of this money give 2½ roubles to each mother, and with 20 roubles procure what is necessary for you, and do not walk hungry and cold, because I attempt to provide so that there will not be any hardship. When

¹ This hedonistic attitude, rare among the peasants, shows a relatively far-going individualization.



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strong, because from [eating] rib pieces, potatoes, and cabbage the man is heavy, and if the bed were weak then it could break down. Only do not take this trick badly [do not be angry at my joke.]¹ Now in regard to this man about whom I wrote, I thought that he went to the [old] country, and he is still here, because in the spring, when there was a strike in our factory and he could not get work in the same city he went to another city. And now he wrote a letter to me and he was asking about Wichta, whether she got married. And he sends bows to her, and he wrote that he will soon come to Glassport, and we intend to go together to the old country. So let Wichta write something, and I will send [it] to him. I do not have anything more to write, only I send my bows to brother and sister-in-law, to brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law; and hearty wishes and a low bow to Wichta's mother and to the whole family, and especially a bow and hearty wishes to you, beloved wife. Remain with God. I, your husband,

ADAM STRUCIŃSKI

I ask for a quick reply. *Gut baj.*

544

October 28, 1912

DEAR WIFE: I was already starting to go to the old country, but I detained myself in order to earn some 100 roubles more, and because the war is going to be, so that if they should have to take me into the army then it is better to be in America. When there is peace then I will come at once, because I have worked enough. Answer me whether the reservists are taken already, because we read the papers and we know that Russia sent an army of 80,000 to the frontier of Asia. You see, beloved wife, I am afraid of being taken. Now I write you that in two weeks after the letter I will send you the money for "celebration." Beloved Broncia, when there is peace then we shall soon see each other. I do not have anything more to write.

ADAM STRUCIŃSKI

545

February 18, 1913

. . . . DEAR WIFE: I inform you that I received your letter and I am answering you at once and I inform you that we shall not see each other before my brother Andrzej comes to me. I should be

¹ Sexual allusions are completely avoided as long as marriage is a familial matter. Here we find only a vestige of the familial attitude in his asking pardon for his joke.

gone already, but I received a letter from my brother to send him a ship-ticket, and he asks about that. He says that he has to work very heavily, and apparently he does not have any possibility of helping our parents. I sent him therefore a ship-ticket and I expect him to come to me in the holidays, and so when he comes then I will be going back to my country at once. Dear wife, you make yourself so mournful that you must suffer. I suffer more, because I must work like a mule, and I do not have any comfort either. So it is not as we want, only it must be as we can. It is true that I promised you too much about my coming, but what could I do if it did not come out as I thought. But I hope that in May I shall be in my home, if not sooner. I beg your pardon, dear Broncia. Do not be angry with me, forgive me, and when I come then we will reconcile. I am ending. I send to you my kiss and embrace. Will it do? Bows to the whole family. I remain sincerely your husband, brother, brother-in-law,

ADAM STRUCIŃSKI

546

[No date]

DEAR WIFE: [Greetings; health and success good.] Don't worry about me, because when I work then I do not want to bring you to America, because here in America it is very difficult for a peasant [man], because as long as he is well then he always works like a mule, and therefore he has something, but if he becomes sick then it is a trouble, because everybody is looking only for money in order to get some of it, and during the sickness the most will be spent, and in old age, when one has not health or money, then there is trouble again. So when I have money today, then if something bad happens, I take a train and go ahead there where I came from, but it is not so with a woman. Now the work will go 2 months at most, because there are elections of the president. As is known, there will be very hard times and want. The fight is seen already among those who run for president of the Republican side. I will not stay and I will run away for the winter to you under the feather bed. I have the money, so that I shall not worry about anything, and as to what you write about what you think, I do not know. So, do not write me that at all unless you think of doing as you did when I was in Prussia. But also about Prussia do not write anything nor about my parents either, for when I received your letter, and I did not have a colleague who would

write me a letter, then I answered myself, though with pencil, and you think—God knows what. And if you want money then I will send you a few roubles, because not long ago you were saying that you had [money]. Now you say that you have none. Write me how much money you have. And I did not send to you for such a long time because I wanted to save something. I do not have anything more to write.¹

[ADAM STRUCIŃSKI]

¹ The last letters are filled with excuses and delays. The man apparently likes to be in America and prefers to be there alone. We are not to assume any definite interest in another woman, but possibly he is sexually demoralized. It is not the character of the peasant to prepare a break with his wife and lead gradually up to it, or to deceive her and at the same time write affectionately. Desertions of wives in Poland by husbands in America are not infrequent. Perhaps usually, as in this case, the desertion (if it comes to that) is not planned, but the moment does not come when the stimulation to go is stronger than the stimulation to stay.



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There is also nothing that could take the place of the community which we find in the country or in small towns. To be sure, everyone has a circle of acquaintances within which there is gossip—a poor imitation of social opinion—but there is nothing like the continuous relationship between the inhabitants of a village, and no periodical meetings. Social opinion has therefore little power, consistency, or vitality.

Clearly in these conditions marriage becomes a mere individual matter; its social side is limited to the religious sanction, to the few uncomplicated relations between the marriage-group and the loose social environment, and to an exceptional intervention of this environment and of the state in the rare cases of criminal behavior. Within the large limits marked by these few social forms there is place enough for all the varieties which the relation between two individuals of different sex may assume. The nature of this relation will, of course, depend upon the personalities of the members and the sphere of their common interests. In the actual case, where the personalities of husband and wife are poor in traditions and poor in culture, their connection must be rather weak. When the first sensual attraction has disappeared, habit and the common interests of everyday life are the only links. But the emigration of the husband interrupted both of these, and a gradual dissolution of the conjugal bond became a psychological necessity.

We do not know the evolution through which the husband has passed, but we can easily guess it from the woman's letters. He evidently found a new sphere of interests in America; being a relatively intelligent, although not educated, man, he adapted himself successfully to the new conditions, and his life in Warsaw, where he did the same work but earned less and had less opportunity to

express himself, must have appeared to him rather narrow—much more so, indeed, than in the case of a peasant, with the variety of work and the many concrete social interests which village life can give. Further, he seems to have felt rejuvenated in America, away from his wife, who was probably older than he (cf. No. 563). He dresses better, shaves his beard, and, as his wife expresses it, looks ten years younger. Probably, almost certainly, he has here a relation with another woman. Hence after a certain time there is nothing more left of the old affection toward his wife, and though for almost twenty years he writes from time to time and sends some money, he does it partly from pity, partly from a feeling of moral obligation. He does not make any great sacrifice; during the whole time he has sent her less than five hundred dollars, i.e., less than twenty-five dollars a year. But we must remember that he lacks any really strong motive to help her, for the feeling of obligation, not backed by the sanction of social opinion, cannot be strong in a man on this level of culture. And he feels more and more that his wife is a useless burden to him—not only on account of money, but also as the only link with a past life which he evidently wants to forget, and perhaps also as a hindrance to marrying someone else.

As to the influence of social opinion, there is an interesting difference between his behavior and that of a peasant, expressed by the fact that for so long a time he keeps up his relations with old friends of himself and his wife and still does not help her enough to prevent her becoming a pauper. Manifestly he does not care much for the opinion of the people at home, the demands of this opinion on him are neither strong nor consistent (cf. No. 586), and he does not at all identify the social position of his wife with his own. Now, a peasant would either send his wife money enough to satisfy the opinion of the community and to enable her

to maintain a social position in accord with his own, or would break off all relations with her, with his friends, and with his family in order to avoid all touch with the opinion and condemnation of his community.

The letters give us a very good insight into the evolution of the woman. Without the backing of a family-group she never feels that she has a right to claim her husband's fidelity, help, and protection. The higher moral view with regard to the conjugal relation is clearly not more strongly developed in her than in her husband and cannot be a substitute for the absent social norms. In the beginning, she assumes implicitly that he will care for her after his emigration, since he cared for her at home. Later, when she realizes that things have changed, she appeals, not to his conjugal duty, but to his promise to help her and to his generosity. Still later, appeals to pity become her only resource, and when even this proves insufficient, she uses additional arguments—promises of God's reward, threats of suicide, etc. Love is at no time appealed to. The nature of her claims changes also. First, she wants and expects her husband to come back rather than to take her to America; later, she would be glad if he let her go to him, under someone's care (her affection is not strong enough to overcome her fear of the journey); still later, she ceases to expect to live with him and hopes only to see him once more; finally, it is enough for her to have from time to time his letters and money.

Another interesting point is her relation to her environment. As she has no social standing as a member of a family-group her social position is based exclusively on her marriage, i.e., upon the position of her husband, upon his attitude toward her, upon their having a home, etc. As soon as her husband leaves, her position is immediately lowered; she has no home and she does not represent much



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547-86, TO WŁADYSŁAW BORKOWSKI, IN AMERICA, FROM
HIS WIFE, IN POLAND, AND SOME LETTERS (578-86)
FROM ACQUAINTANCES

547

WARSAW, July 21, 1893

DEAR HUSBAND: I received your letter on July 4, which found me in usual health. Up to the present I live with the Rybickis. I am not very well satisfied, perhaps because I was accustomed to live for so many years quietly, with you alone.¹ And today you are at one end of the world and I at the other, so when I look at strange corners [surroundings], I don't know what to do from longing and regret. I comfort myself only that you won't forget me, that you will remain noble [generous] as you have been. You wanted me to go to the Borkowskis [his brother]. I was there. If they had only asked about you themselves! But nobody said a word, only I related.² Stasiak asked, but nobody else. Borkowski's wife said that you took 27 roubles for the wardrobe and 15 roubles for the chest of drawers, and she refused to add anything. She said to Stanislaw that you had taken enough. The small altar and the clock were taken by Filip from Praga and he gave 20 roubles. I have nothing more to write, only I beg you, my dear, write to me as often as you can about yourself, whether you are in good health and how you succeed, for this is my only pleasure; I have no other. I have only the sort of friends who think that I own thousands and from time to time someone comes to me, asking me to lend her a dozen roubles. And everyone would borrow for eternity; I know them already.

And now I bid you goodbye and wish you health and every good. Only don't forget me.

Your sincerely well-wishing wife,

[TEOFILA BORKOWSKA]

¹ Isolation has become habitual and desired. We do not find this in the peasant family. Of course some privacy is always sought by the marriage-group, but only for matters which, like the sexual relation, are more or less reserved by tradition as beyond the reach of other people's intrusion. And the amount of privacy claimed by the marriage-group from the family is much smaller than that which it requires from the community. In short, privacy for the peasant is nothing but a certain socially sanctioned limitation of the social character of individual life. Here, on the contrary, it becomes a voluntary individual seclusion from the social life in general.

² The disintegration of the family is certainly real, even if in the given case the writer puts a particular emphasis upon the indifference of her husband's relatives, in accordance with her tendency to keep him exclusively for herself.

548

April 12, 1894

DEAR HUSBAND: I received your letter on April 2, which found me in the best of health, and I wish you the same with my whole heart. Up to the present I thought and rejoiced that you would still come back to Warsaw, but since you write that you won't come, I comply with the will of God and with your will. I shall now count the days and weeks [until you take me to America]. May our Lord God grant it to happen as soon as possible, for I am terribly worried. Such a sad life! I go almost to nobody, for as long as you were in Warsaw everything was different. Formerly we had friends, and everybody was glad to see us, while now, if I go to anybody, they are afraid I need something from them and they show me beforehand an indifferent face. . . . They all do it, even those who were so good formerly. Now they show themselves, as they are.¹ You write me to try to earn something with Władzia. But I have not earned yet a grosz from her. She says that people beg her to give them work for living alone, while I must pay 2 roubles for lodging, besides board.² So, my dear, I beg you, describe to me everything in detail, what I can take with me, what clothes, whether it is worth taking the fur, the [photographs in] frames and other trifles. I will take the image and the cross, but I have heard that it was forbidden to take the chest. So please describe everything to me exactly. You write to the Lukas that I write so seldom, but always when the Lukas write I ask them to write something from me. Evidently they don't do it. . . .

Your loving wife,

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

¹ As we have stated in the introduction, Teofila, not being a member of a family-group, can have no other social recognition than that which results from her own or her husband's position. Her husband being away, the recognition which she had as his wife is reduced to almost nothing as is shown by the behavior of her environment and of which she complains. There are still two chances for her to keep at least some social standing. One is her husband's fidelity—sending of money, writing of letters, etc.—in a word, proofs that he remains solidary with her in spite of the separation and that the separation is only temporary, that he will either come back or take her to 'America. The second chance is to acquire a personal position by her own work.

² Władzia is a cousin who has a millinery or dressmaking shop, in which Borkowski wants his wife to work as a seamstress.

549

August 8, 1895

DEAR HUSBAND: You won't believe how much I suffered when you did not write for some months. I thought that I should not live long enough to read your letter, but when I received the letter from you I wept with joy. But after reading it sadness overwhelmed me again. I thought that you had forgotten and would not write your address. But, thanks to God, it seems to me that my heavy sorrow and my terrible want are over. There is no work this year with Dobska at all, so I don't sew there at all. I earn sometimes a few zloty, but what does it mean when I must pay 3 roubles rent a month [in a room with three or four others]. In one place I had no money to pay for the lodging, and they took my bed. Now I sleep upon a borrowed bed. Moreover, they have levied hospital taxes in Warsaw, 1 rouble for a person yearly, so I must pay, for if you do not pay you must pay later 4 roubles of fine.

Before I received your letter, I went to the consul more than once, begging him to find you, what is going on with you. But he did not want to search for you until I paid him 5 roubles. But I did not have them and I had to remain in sadness. My dear, you ask for my photograph, but I can send it only when you send me a few roubles. But I beg you, send me yours as soon as possible.

[TEOFILA]

550

October 2, 1895

DEAR HUSBAND: To the last letter which you wrote on July 13, I answered at once with great joy, for I thought that after so many months of my sorrow and crying and different other troubles the sun shone for me. But I see that it only joked, that I must suffer so up to my death. Up to the present I have never annoyed you [about money], for I knew that when you could, you would send me a few roubles. So I beg you, if you can, send me a few roubles as soon as possible, for I am in a situation without issue.

Your loving wife,

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

551

January 28, 1896

DEAR HUSBAND: You reproach me for not answering you at once. My dear, I evidently did not do it through negligence, for you won't believe, I have not words enough to tell you, how much



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be for me to start quite alone on such a far journey. You know that I am not very bold, nor very talkative either, so it would be very difficult for me to find my way alone.¹ For as to Rafalski, he won't go now; his plans are changed. He is offended with you for having written him about land instead of writing how much you earn and what work is there. He says: "Does he do any favor to me? He will send me a ship-ticket when I send him 20 roubles. But if I wish I can buy a ticket myself." My dear, you ask me why do I not write you about Karol and his wife. I have nothing to write about them, for I know nothing. They don't come to me at all, they are afraid I might want something from them, so I don't go to them either. Since you left they have not invited me to any holidays or little parties which they arrange often. You know, Wladek, I pray to God continually that He may inspire you with the wish to come back to Warsaw. After the crowning there will be amnesty, so you can come back, and you would certainly have work, for in the factory they are working on holidays and nights, and everybody says that it will last for some years still. So, my dear, perhaps you will change your mind and long for your native country. I heard that you promised it to Rafalski. I would wait patiently; I have suffered for 3 years, I would bear it for one year more. . . . I have kept the box, the image of God's Mother, and the photographs as tokens. I did not sell your fur coat either; I keep it, for I think that you will perhaps walk in it about Warsaw. Although I was already in a hard need, I did not sell it. . . .²

My dear, don't forget what I asked you for, because I need it very much and very soon. . . .

[TEOFILA]

553

July 10, 1896

DEAR WLADEK: I don't know what it means that you don't answer the letter in which I thanked you for the photographs and the money which you sent me, 10, 11, and 12 roubles, the last

¹ Her helplessness, in contrast with the energy of country girls who undertake the journey to America even to marry unknown men (cf. Butkowski series) is perhaps partly constitutional.

² The woman's desire to see her husband back in Warsaw rather than to go to America is probably conditioned by other factors than her fear of traveling alone. She can imagine future happiness only in the same familiar conditions and environment in which she had lived happily before. Perhaps there is also some desire to get restitution for all the humiliations which she has to suffer, to have the same people who now neglect her be the witnesses of her triumph.

before Easter. I sent you a letter on May 13, almost begging for a few roubles, for I spent these on medicines and the doctor, but not only you did not send me anything, you did not even answer, so I don't know what it means, whether you are offended with me for having asked you for these few roubles. But you have written yourself that you will send me [money] every month, and therefore I was more bold in asking you for it.¹ So please answer me whether you received that letter and the books which I sent you before. The letter was registered, so it must have reached you, and if it did not reach you write me and I will take a complaint to the post-office.

Your always loving wife,

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

554

December 2, 1896

DEAR HUSBAND: I inform you that I have already left the hospital and I am healthy enough, and I wish you the same. I received in the hospital the letter which you wrote on August 31. I rejoiced very much, for every letter from you is a day of joy for me, and I have no other joy now. Only I am very much pained that you reproach me for writing only about myself and nothing about any relatives or acquaintances. But what can I write about them, since they are all *państwo* [originally "lord and lady," then in general, "gentle people" or "rich people?"] as compared with me, while I am quite alone, without husband, without home. When I left the hospital I did not know what to do with myself, without money and almost without roof, for I did not know what to do and what to pay for the lodging with. I remained for 2 months in the hospital and had to pay 6 roubles of rent. She remitted one rouble, 5 were left. So I begged her, and promised I would pay her when you send some money. But nobody cares for me, nobody helps me, for they know that I have no chance to pay them back. And you reproach me for not informing you about them. Why, he is your own brother, he could ask sometimes what is going on with you, once at least, send one of the children to me or write to you. And my family is the same; they are afraid I will ask them for something. Czab. came to me once, to the hospital, and I know that they are all in good health.

¹ She does not consider it her husband's duty to maintain her, as a peasant woman would do, but appeals merely to his promise.

My Władzio, don't be angry that I send registered letters, but you see you write so seldom I should think that my letter did not reach you and I could not learn, while so I am certain that you received it and I live at least with some hope that you will answer me. And now I am waiting for an answer to that letter which I wrote you when I was in the hospital, and I know that it reached you for it was registered. Evidently, dear Władek, you are so angry with me that you have not written for some months, while I sent you almost not a letter but a petition. So don't be angry with me, my dear husband, for to whom shall I appeal? And you made me bold yourself, for you promised me to send me a little, and I don't ask much, anything [a little] at least. And I beg your pardon once more, Władek, don't be angry with me, but answer me as soon as possible. As to the photograph, perhaps I shall earn a little, but only in the spring; then I would send you one, for now I have no money to go to the photograph[er]. . . .¹

[TEOFILA BORKOWSKA]

555

May 19, 1897

DEAR HUSBAND: I received your letter together with the money, i.e., with 12 roubles for which I thank you heartily, dear Władek. After receiving those 20 roubles, which you sent me last year, I wrote you 3 letters, two registered, the last with a single stamp, so I beg you much, answer me whether you received them all, particularly that non-registered one, for it seems to me that letters often don't reach you. Now, dear Władek, you write me that you are not sure whether I receive your money, because I don't write myself [with my own hand], only Mrs. Sliwińska [the woman from whom she rents] does. But you can be as sure as if I wrote with my own hand. She gives me every letter as soon as she receives it from the post, whether with money or not, and address them as always, because they are sure people. I intentionally begged somebody else to write this letter in order that you might believe that I receive your letters and money. I beg you, dear Władek, write to me more often, for now you have not written for so long a time. My dear, write me whether you intend ever to come back to Warsaw? I often hear that some husband comes back to his family, and even whole families return. When I hear it my heart almost bursts open, because

¹ The absolute and painful dependence of the wife could hardly be better illustrated than by this letter.



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be angry with me for writing to you so decidedly, but I have almost nobody except you. Although I have many relatives it is as if I had none, for you remember also what you got from your relatives when you were in need. Although you were only a child. . . .

And now I bid you goodbye, dear husband. Be healthy, and don't forget me.

Your loving wife,

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

557

May 24, 1898

DEAR WŁADEK: I received your letter on May 1, i.e., 15 roubles of money. They had searched for me for some weeks and could not find me, because you almost never address to Jan Sliwiński, but to Teofila Borkowska. I should not have received this money . . . only Sliwińska wondered why you had not written for almost a year. She found the postman and asked him whether he had never had a letter from America to Borkowska, and he said that he had one some weeks ago, but could not find [the person] and gave it back to the post-office. There were two money-orders, one of 15 roubles for Teofila Borkowska, and the other of 25 roubles for Teofila Bartowska [misaddressed]. They refused to give me the second, saying that it was not for me, and kept it at the office. And as you sent no letter, I don't know myself whether these 25 roubles are for me or not. So I beg you, dear Władek, answer me the soonest possible whether you sent me these 25 roubles, and if you did, you must correct the name yourself. . . . Perhaps I suspect you, dear husband, and grieve that you have forgotten me, while it is perhaps unjust. You have written perhaps, but not to the address of the Sliwińskis, but to mine, and the letter did not reach me. I thank you, dear Władek, for your remembrance and for these 15 roubles with which you have saved me from a great misery. May our Lord God in reward help you in all

would fall at once to the lowest degree in the social scale—to that of a *wyrobnik*, having no home and working by the day. Therefore they defend themselves to the last against plain physical work, and often prefer pauperism. The class of city paupers recruits itself mainly, if not exclusively, from these people. The peasant, particularly the farmer, despises heartily this class of people, even if envying sometimes their few external refinements of dress and manners. But this class of people, by real culture hardly superior to the country peasant, forgets every prepossession and works as hard as possible when in America.

your intentions. I pray to Him every day for you. . . . I greet you heartily.

Your always loving wife,

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

Good by [in English; imitated from his letter].

558

September 12, 1898

DEAR HUSBAND: First I must thank you heartily for having helped me so much. I did not expect it at all, only I always thought that perhaps you had no money yourself and you could send me none. I only prayed to our Lord God to give you health and to bless you in all your intentions, for I knew that you would not desert me. And so it happened, for which I thank you heartily once more, and may our Lord God help you further in everything.

First I received the 15 roubles about which I wrote you. Then I received 25 roubles, when you corrected the name. And now I received 28 roubles through the Commercial Bank, for which I made some purchases, because for a long time I had bought nothing [no clothes, etc.] for myself. I am very happy through all this, but I should be still more happy if we could see each other some day, and if it were in Warsaw.

You ask me what is the news in Warsaw. You would not recognize Warsaw—such movement and work, hundreds of big new houses. On Marszałkowska Street a score of very splendid houses, and a very beautiful church on Dzielna Street, and in the neighborhood of the Jesus Hospital they begin to build a church, and on Czerniakowska Street a church, and a politechnical school is opened in Warsaw, such as up to the present have been only abroad. Therefore there is movement and in factories everywhere much work. They built a new railway to Wilanów, another is being built to Grójec, many nice small parks are added, before the All-Saints Church and the St. Alexander Church. Where the Ujazdowski place was there is now a very beautiful park. On Krakowskie Przedmieście will stand a monument of Mickiewicz; there will be a consecration on Christmas eve, an enormous meeting; all the windows are already hired. Only you won't be here! And perhaps you will still come back to Warsaw some day? May God grant it.¹ All my brothers came here, some

¹ By the description of Warsaw she evidently wishes to attract him home. At the same time we have a manifestation of attachment to the city.

of them to Warsaw, to work at the railway-works, others in Wola, others in Brudno. . . . The Borkowskis are no longer here. They rented a buffet at a railway-station. [Indifferent news about friends.]

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

559

May 12, 1899

DEAR HUSBAND: I received your letter with 20 roubles and three photographs on April 4, for which I send you a hearty "God reward." I bear it always in my heart and thought and I always repeat it to everybody, that you were good and generous and you are so up to the present. I can be proud before everybody that you don't forget me¹ for which once more may our Lord God reward you. I beg only our Lord God that we may yet see each other once more. Write me, dear Wladek, can I hope it? When I saw you in a cyclist dress in the photograph, I could hardly recognize you, you have got about 10 years younger, particularly because you had your beard shaved. But did you not regret your beard? Kawecki thanks you much for the photograph and will send you his own soon, together with his wife's. They even wish to give you a surprise and to send you a group of all [the members] of the fraternity [a half-religious fraternity to which he belonged; see Kawecki letters]. And as to me, if God comforts me still on your behalf [if you still send me money], I will send you also my photograph. Don't be angry, dear Wladek, for my counting upon you alone. Perhaps now your condition is still difficult, but I beg our Lord God in every prayer that He may help you in all your intentions, and I always feel a comfort and hope, that you are very happy and in a very good condition.² And I think that if our Lord God helps you, for me it will also be better. . . .

Your loving wife,

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

¹ We see how her social standing depends exclusively upon her husband's good will toward her. She does not succeed in getting position personally, hardly even tries, but clings desperately to the only thread which keeps her from falling definitely into the class of paupers and outcasts.

² We find here a proof that praying to God for the sake of anyone is not a merely formal expression of gratitude, but that the prayer, as well as the blessing, is supposed to be really efficient and a real reward for a benefit received. The existence of beggars is based upon this idea. Cf. Wróblewski series, No. 31, note.



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wanted to wheedle me out of the money which you had sent me. And as I could not give it to them they don't speak to me any more. I don't know whether it is possible, but when he goes to America, he wants to marry there his sweetheart with whom he lives and has 5 children. So, dear husband, if it is possible, when he takes her, perhaps I could go with them to you. I desire it very much, even only to see you, my dear! If it is possible, write to him yourself, for he is like a wasp to me now because of my not having given them this money.¹ I thank you once more heartily for the money and I beg you, my dear, although with a great timidity, don't forget about me and send me soon a little at least, for it is already difficult for me to earn anything. They require now machine-sewing. Moreover my eyes ache from crying and from work in these small corners, in the kitchen where I live, because for 3 roubles nobody would receive me into a dwelling-room. And even these 3 roubles I can scarcely pay, and often I suffer hunger, since the rent must be paid. . . .

Your always loving wife,

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

562

March 27, 1903

DEAR HUSBAND: Mr. Rupiński called upon me on March 11, and left me 40 roubles, for which may our Lord God reward you. I wanted to answer you at once but I had yet to see Mr. R. before his departure. Meanwhile he probably had some business and could not see me, for during a whole week I went every day to the Karols to see him, for they always told me that he was not yet leaving. . . . And perhaps they simply deceived me, for they have a pleasure in annoying me in any way. Now, dear Władek, Mr. R. said that you would probably come back to Warsaw. O, dear Władek, a new life entered into me, the whole world appeared to me more gay. Now I shall pray to our Lord God to shorten these months, for you won't believe how happy I am now. I shall live with this idea, that I may see you yet before dying. Now, dear Władek, I will try to find the man who bought the altar, for he said that if we want it he will give it back at any moment. Dear husband, perhaps you will send me an authorization to get back from Stanisław the rest of the money which he owes you. . . .

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

¹ Compare this whole story with the letters of Stanisław R.

563

April 23, 1904

DEAR HUSBAND: I received your letter with 60 roubles. . . . It rejoiced me on the one hand, but on the other hand grieved me very much. Believe me, dear Władek, that I had such a foreboding. When I divided the [Easter] egg with anybody, I wept, for I imagined always that you are so far away, alone, without family, and more than once you must feel very sad, as I do, and perhaps even sick, and there is nobody to care for you of your own people. And so it seemed to me continually, and suddenly Sliwińska brings me a letter. Really, my foreboding proved true. Believe me, dear Władek, that I even was not so glad to receive this money as grieved in learning that you are sick. You are often sick there, probably the climate is bad for you. But I pray and beg our Lord God every day to give you health and to make you still happy in your life. You are still young, and up to the present you have not yet experienced any good in your life. So may our Lord God give you every good, whatever you wish from Him, for your good heart.¹ God reward you for the money which you sent me! Besides you, I had still another sorrow, for my brother Ignacy is dead. . . . I don't know even whether you remember him. So people of my family begin to die. . . .

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

564

August 8, 1904

DEAR HUSBAND: For God's sake answer, what is going on with you. This is the fourth letter which I send you, begging you for an answer, and you don't answer me even a word. I believe, dear husband, that perhaps you are tired already with writing always and sending money. But perhaps our Lord God will make you free soon. I wish it myself, for I am also tired with worrying myself so in this world and worrying you besides. Although you do not let me feel it, because you are good, yet I feel it myself, and whenever I receive money from you I weep, for I am a burden to you and I can repay you with nothing except by praying God for your health and for happiness in your life. . . .²

Your sincerely loving wife,

Good by.

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

¹ This is apparently a resignation to the idea of a perpetual separation and perhaps to the possibility of his being happy with another woman.

² Her conviction is more outspoken than in the preceding letter. A few words from time to time and a little money to enable her to continue to live is all she can claim.

565

October 16, 1905

DEAR HUSBAND: I wrote you a letter on August 10, asking you to answer with at least a few words, whether you are in good health and whether you received my letter with thanks for the money. But up to the present I have no answer. It is true, dear Władek, that you have not so much time, but, my dear, write me sometimes a few words; you will cause me a great comfort. For I read your letter like a prayer, because for me, dear Władek, our Lord God is the first and you the second. Don't be angry, if perhaps I bore you with my letters, but it is for me a great comfort to be able to speak with you at least through this paper. Write me, Władek, whether you will come some day to Warsaw. Good by. May our Lord God keep you in His care.

Your loving wife,

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

566

February 12, 1906

DEAR HUSBAND: Don't be angry with me for writing to you in such an importunate way and asking always for money, but what can I do, poor woman, when I have no other way except to stretch out my hand on the street and beg. It is quite difficult for me to earn enough for my whole living, because not everybody wants [clothes] sewn by hand but only some poor servant maid, who pays then very little. So, my dear husband, send me what you can, for I have nothing to live on. I even made debts for my rent and a few roubles which I borrowed from Sliwińska on account of the money which you will send me. I wrote you some letters begging you so much to answer me a few words, whether you are in good health, but you wrote me no letter except that one with money.

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

567

November 25, 1906

DEAR HUSBAND: First, may God the Great reward you for your good heart and your care for me, for truly it is nothing else but the Divine Providence which through your person guards me. I had not a whole rouble left, and moreover I got so sick that I was taken unconscious to the hospital; nobody even among my acquaintances knew it. Only when I came back a little to health I asked the nun to telephone to Sliwińska, and the latter when coming to me met the



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his brother on Hoża Street, so I go there very often and ask, but there is never any letter. So, dear Władek, don't be angry for my registering this letter, but from sorrow I don't know what to do. Dear husband, if you send money, send it as before to the address of Mrs. Sliwińska. . . . And I beg you, dear husband, don't be angry, but I beg you, send as soon as possible, what you can. Dear Władek, I know that you are worth some thousands, for Mr. K. told me so. You could therefore do to yourself and to me and to all your friends this pleasure, and come at least on a visit to Warsaw. Now in Warsaw it is very quiet.

Good by, dear husband, and may God give you everything the best.

Your loving wife,

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

570

January 20, 1910

DEAR HUSBAND, MY BELOVED WŁADEK: I don't know why you do not want to write to me. Evidently you don't want to, for I have sent you 4 letters and begged and implored you to write at least a few words, but you don't write at all. Never yet, during so many years, has it been so. Now, toward the end of my life, for a year and 8 months you have not written a letter. Why, you could find a little time to write a few words! You sent money a year and two months ago and even then you did not write a word. Evidently you don't wish to care for me any more. And what can I do now, unhappy woman, since I cannot earn enough for my living. Here thousands of young people walk without work, and for me, in my advanced age, it is still more difficult. So I don't know what I shall do with myself, miserable woman, if you cease to care for me and don't send me money any more. Nothing more is left for me except to stretch out my hand and beg on the street, or to take my life away. But I, miserable woman, have not courage enough to do either the one or the other, only I worry and suffer hunger, for I lack a bit of bread. So have pity, dear husband! You have cared for me so many years, don't abandon me in the last years of my life. Send me a little money, and perhaps our Lord God will listen to my prayer—and increase your fortune, your happiness, and your health. . . .¹

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

¹ An unimportant letter follows from which it is evident that he sent her some money before this letter reached him.

571

August 6, 1910

DEAR HUSBAND: I write to you with great timidity, but despair obliges me to write so openly. I beg you, dear Władek, I beg you for God's sake, have pity and send me a little money, for I can find no way out. I tried to get from the Philanthropic Association at least a few tickets for a few pounds of bread and a few pints of gruel monthly, but they refused me, for they learned that I have a husband. They say that it is for them all the same whether this husband is in Warsaw or in America, but I have a husband. So I don't know what to do with myself. I have no work, for now even a poor servant maid wants [her dresses] to be sewn on a machine with different adornments, for such is the fashion. And, to tell the truth, I begin to lose my eyes with sewing and crying. So I only implore first our Lord God, then you for mercy upon me. Have pity, dear husband, send me [money] as soon as possible, because I owe for rent, I owe to Sliwińska, and I have no possibility of paying them, while every day I must nourish myself, and I have nothing. Although I economize every grosz from you and nourish myself with anything in order only to live through the day, yet everything is so expensive, particularly rent. I live in a basement, my bed in a corner, a box and a small table before the bed, and I pay for it 3 roubles and 2 zloty [3 roubles, 30] a month, and they hardly permit me sometimes to cook a little with my own fuel, and so it is everywhere. . . .

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

Dear husband, write me whether you will come some day to Warsaw? It is true that you have put aside some money, but on the other hand you are far away from your family and from your land. And after so many years you would have had better conditions even here, and more than one pain would be spared to you. For it seems to me that sometimes it is not very pleasant for you there, and more than once perhaps you long for your people. Write me, dear Władek; let me at least have some illusion that I shall still see you.

572

October 13, 1910

DEAR HUSBAND: A few weeks ago I sent you a letter, or rather a supplication, asking you to have pity and to send me some money. But you, Władek, did not answer me a word. I don't know what to

think. I think that you are tired perhaps with having cared for me for so long a time. But have pity and send me something and don't forget me. Perhaps soon things will come to an end with me and I shall go aside from your way. Write me, dear Władek, what is the news with you. Perhaps you are sick and therefore don't answer. Answer, my beloved, my dear benefactor, and send me some money.

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

573

November 11, 1910

DEAR HUSBAND: You write that I have not answered after receiving your money. But I sent you at once a letter with thanks when I received 75 roubles from the post-office. You sent this money a year ago, in November, while I received it only in February 1910. Of the money which you have sent me not a penny was ever lost. If we see each other some day—and I pray always to our Lord God for it, and I hope that it will come—I shall show you all your letters and orders, for I keep them like holy things. Dear Władek, you make reproaches for my calling on you for money. Look through the letters [you will see] that I beg you and implore you with great timidity, and only because great need forces me. Dear Władek, you won't believe how I beg our Lord God that I may see you still before my death. My dear, write me whether it will ever happen. And write me, my dear, whether you know there everything, which happened here upon Jasna Góra [Częstochowa; a monk killed his cousin and robbed the cloister].

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

574

December 18, 1910

DEAR HUSBAND: I received your letter and 38 roubles. [Details and thanks.]

Dear Władek, are you angry when I write you and ask you to write me a few words, whether you will ever come to Warsaw? For you never answer my begging. Answer at least a few words to my begging, my dear!

TEOFILA BORKOWSKA

575

April 20, 1911

DEAR HUSBAND: I wrote you four letters and in every one I implored you to write me at least a few words, and I cannot prevail upon you. So, my dear husband, have pity upon me, I implore you,



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578

September 5, 1912

RESPECTED SIR: Your wife is sick, she lies in the St. Roch's Hospital since August 20. She received the money which you sent, 20 roubles, in August; she was already so sick that she scarcely dragged herself to the post-office. She is not so dangerously sick, but suffering very much and in general the whole organism is very weak because of bad nutrition and continuous sorrow. She is so alone and deserted almost by everybody, for the family never comes to see her. Even to the hospital nobody goes except me, who go to her once in a week. Even the Czs. do not, although I informed them. In the hospital she has at least some care, while at home she remained quite alone, for the people with whom she lived left for some weeks. The doctor advised sending her to the hospital that she might have at least a little comfort and care. So please write to her at once. You will thus comfort her a little, for she longs continually for you and your letters. I shall answer you at once, how she is in her health. And please be so good and send her a few roubles when she leaves the hospital, for of those 20 roubles only a few zloty are left, and she must pay the rent for the time during which she remains in the hospital. And please, be so kind, send her [money] regularly every month or every 2 months, for your wife is horribly tormented by this lack of a few zloty and of a letter from you, when you don't write for so long a time. And please, write a little more affectionately. Only do it soon, for it will be the best medicine for your wife, at least for her heart.

ALEKSANDRA SLIWIŃSKA

579

September 27,* 1893

"Praised be Jesus Christus."

RESPECTED MR. BORKOWSKI: I have received your letter, for which I send you the most hearty "God's reward." I was very glad that you deigned to describe the customs of that country and that you are in good health, for which infinite praise be to God who deigns to keep you in His omnipotent guardianship on your long journey. And now, Resp. Sir, in Warsaw there is no news. Food has got cheaper, except sugar and meat. For instance, 2 lbs. of bread cost now 6 copecks, a korzec [250 lbs.] of potatoes 1 rouble, and so on.

As to our singing, all those are there who were there during your presence. We have not learned any new song except this one which we send you. I, my children, and all our brothers and sisters from the choir of the Holy Rosary, are in good health, by the favor of our Lord God, and we wish you the same with our soul and heart. We send up a profound and sincere sigh to the Great Lord of Hosts, that He may bless you in that far and remote country. I send you my photograph and that of the priest S., for remembrance. All your acquaintances greet you, such as [enumeration].

And now, Resp. Mr. Borkowski nothing remains, except to kiss you, my kindest friend, heartily. I greet you and bid you goodbye in the name of the Holy Trinity, from whose care may you never be removed. And I exhort you to worship this Holy Trinity ceaselessly, and be sure that you won't be deceived. And acting thus, we can secure for ourselves our soul's salvation. I wish it to you, my kindest friend and brother in Christ, and to myself with all my heart.¹

P. KAWECKI

580

November 24, 1896

RESPECTED MR. WŁADYSŁAW BORKOWSKI: I received your photograph, for which I send you most hearty thanks. I took it to the church and showed it to all your friends, who were very much satisfied, and particularly myself, for it is made very originally. I married Mrs. Józefa P. last year, and now God has given us a third daughter [two from the first marriage]. We are in good health, by the favor of our Lord God, and we wish you the same. Here in Warsaw everything is the same, except [news about priests who died or were transferred]. As to the Rosary-choir, nobody among the priests cares for us, only I teach [the members] to sing, as best I can. From our Rosary-circle died [enumeration]. Your wife longs very much for you, she would like to see you as soon as possible. From this grief

¹ The religious fraternities to one of which the writer and Borkowski belonged are very old in Warsaw. They have developed an artificial kind of devotion and a religious jargon of which the first letter of Kaweckı is a good example. Outside of the traditional atmosphere of these circles, this way of addressing a friend by a man would be hardly possible in Poland, except perhaps on some very important occasions, in great sorrow, etc. The religiosity is, moreover, hardly connected with a higher morality; Kaweckı himself becomes later a habitual drunkard. On the fraternities in general, cf. Osiński series, No. 78, note.

she was very sick, and was obliged to go to the hospital, but now she is already in good health, and implores you for pity's sake to come back to Warsaw ["and implores" added later]. And now I commend your person to the Providence of God. May He guard you against any bad accidents and grant you the best health and every good. [Christmas wishes and greetings from friends.]

P. KAWECKI

581

November 25, 1894

"Praised be" [etc.].

DEAR FRIEND: [News about the death of the tsar Alexander III, description of the funeral-ceremonies, etc.; news about friends.] In the iron-factories and on the railways there is enormous work. In Sosnowiec lives one of your friends, I forget his name. He says always that you should come, that there is a sure place for you on the railway. So come back to Warsaw now. Because of his ascending the throne the emperor has reduced the punishment of prisoners and offenders, so there will be amnesty for you. And you will revive your wife again from this sorrow, for she torments herself continually. That which you lost you will earn again with the help of our Lord God. And as to the shame, throw it away from you and let it be ended. For people do worse things and they come off easily.¹ So I am persuaded that you will come back soon, and I beg you to answer whether you will come back. And I assure you with all my heart that you won't be deceived at all.

Your loving and sincere friend,

EMILIAN L.

582

October 28, 1900

DEAR WŁADYSŁAW BORKOWSKI: Praised be God. You praise God and I praise him also. But you did not keep the word which you gave me and you did not write me where you are to be found. Only after much begging I received your address [from your wife], and there must be some jealousy, for your wife begged me very much not

¹ We do not know his offense. Possibly some small peculation.



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583

April 6, 1902

DEAR COMPANION: My work is very bad. You wrote me to come, and then I had still some money, but now I have none. But I would go to you at once if you sent me a ship-ticket. Only I have now a large family, another wife [illegal] who is worthy of respect. So we are two, and 5 children, the oldest 15, the youngest 2 years old. At the same time your wife assures me that if I go she will go with me, but with nobody else. Reflect whether you may help me, for I should risk everything. Warsaw is building up rapidly, but among the middle [really lower] class the misery is awful. If I sell my tools I can get about 400 roubles. Now, dear companion, your wife suffers terribly without money, for she cannot earn much. The money which you sent is spent long ago, and it is very difficult for her to earn. She wrote to you long ago for some help, for she has nothing to live on and to pay the rent. This letter is written in the presence of your wife. [News about friends.] P. Kawecki is in the customs-office, as formerly. He drinks very much.

Your truly well-wishing,

STANISŁAW R.

584

May 14, 1902

DEAR COMPANION WLADYSŁAW: I don't know what is going on with you, why do you not give any news about yourself. This is the 4th letter which I send you and have no answer. In my last letter I asked you for a ship-ticket for myself and your wife, for your wife has absolutely nothing to live on and to pay for her lodging. Those 50 roubles which you sent so long ago are spent, for more than a year has passed since you sent them. So I don't know whether you don't receive my letters or don't wish to answer your countryman from Warsaw, a Pole and a companion. Dear Wladyslaw, my companion, perhaps you have read in my letters that I want to go to you at any moment, for in Warsaw, even if I worked my hands away, I could earn only for my living and some clothes, while it does not suffice for the schooling of my children. Many people here in Warsaw walk without work. As to my character and my disposition, you know well that I have never cheated anybody for a grosz. In the same way I would give you back with thanks the money for the ship-ticket.

Perhaps I have offended you in some way in my letters and therefore you don't answer me. Pardon me, for I have loved you much because of your devotion. . . .

Your wife comes every day to me and asks whether you have not given any news about yourself. She wonders whether perhaps somebody has written some false letters to you [slandering her] and therefore you remember her so little. For it is difficult for her to live. She says with great crying that now, were it not for the sea, she would go afoot to you. So she begs you also to send her a ship-ticket. . . .

STANISŁAW R.

585

May 30, 1902

DEAR COMPANION WŁADYSŁAW: I received your letter on May 29, and I rejoiced much at your good advice. I am therefore selling my whole business and waiting for your answer and the ship-ticket which you promised me, for I believe that it will be cheaper. Dear Władzio, could you not send a ticket for me and for my oldest son, 15 years old, for he would perhaps become a loafer during this year of my absence. And if you think that it is difficult, so I beg you to send a ticket for me alone. I will take more money with me than 50 roubles [required from every immigrant]. I should like to work together with you as long as I still have some health, by the favor of God. . . . Your wife received the money, 60 roubles and 1 copeck. Now I inform you that in Warsaw handworkers are very badly situated. When I see you, I will tell you everything. So, dear companion, send me a ship-ticket. I should prefer a more expensive one, for I should not like to go so long through the water. With your advice and help, God will help me also. . . .

STANISŁAW R.

586

February 8, 1903

DEAR COMPANION WŁADYSŁAW: . . . I received your ship-ticket last year . . . and I am not sure whether it will be valid for this year. I asked and was informed that it was valid but I don't know whether you did not withdraw it, so I beg you, inform me about it. This year I am going to see you and to greet you like a brother and companion. Poland is a country which gets poorer and poorer. Now I inform you why I could not go last year. I counted that I

should finish in time a work for which 275 roubles were due to me, but the bronze-maker did not make the bronzes [for furniture] in time. Moreover, I had an apprentice-boy, for whose learning the parents had paid. So all this hindered my going. Dear companion, answer me what happened with that ship-ticket? I regret having wasted this year in Warsaw. If my ship-ticket is valid this year it would be a great help to me, because I would take my wife and children; I should have money enough. Then we would live merrily, for my wife loves me too much and does not want to let me go alone. Dear Władzio, help me in whatever you think it advisable. Jan K. came here from America and told me that it was the best to go together with one's wife, that there such good housewives are lacking, because the women don't want to work. Now, dear companion, I have very good children, who would love you much. Jan K. said that a woman who wants to work and cooks or bakes well gets on pretty well. And I can boast that I have a wife who is good in this work, and laborious, and affectionate in the case—God forbid!—of a sickness. With my children you would have a distraction, for everybody envies me because of them, they are so pretty and attached.

And now, dear companion, I should like to inform you about your wife, but I don't know what is going on with her, for she does not call upon us any more. Last year she came almost every day. I don't say it as a reproach [boast], but I always asked her to share our dinner and invited her to stay over the supper. I don't know why [she does not come], perhaps because she is angry with me for your having sent me the ship-ticket, for I heard so. I write you the truth. I inform you only that I don't know where she lives now, for Klimek's wife [with whom she lived] told me that nobody wants to lodge her, because she is awfully boresome, and already gray-headed like a mushroom [usual comparison].

STANISŁAW R.



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relation with her husband or with her social environment. And, moreover, she is a neuraesthenic. In short, it seems that the history of this marriage-group should be a repetition of that of the Borkowskis, and of many others from among the lower city class. But it is not so, owing to the children. The children are, first of all, objects of common care, and thus the sphere of interest of husband and wife remains partly the same in spite of their separation. Further, the common obligation toward the children forces the parents to keep their obligations toward each other. Consequently, the situation of the wife is quite different from that in the Borkowski case. She is not an isolated and passive individual toward whom any attitude is possible from the husband, but an active member of a larger group to which her husband belongs; she performs a function which nobody else could perform, and her husband must be interested in her, if not personally, at least as in a member of the marriage-group. The children themselves grow into active members of the marriage-group and exert a conscious influence on their parents. See particularly the letters of Romek.

With regard to the social environment, the situation of the woman is here also quite different from that in the preceding case. We see that she has sometimes economic difficulties, but there is not a single complaint about any humiliation. The woman is and will always be treated by the environment with some consideration as a member and provisional head of the small group, even if her personality should not command respect. Sympathy with the children, expectation that the children will grow up and possibly become important members of the community, certainty that the husband, even if absent, will never completely break the relation of solidarity, because the ties which unite him with the rest of the marriage-group are too strong—all these considerations, to which may be added the fact that

she has a profession, keep the social standing of Porzycka from ever falling even approximately so low as that of Borkowska. Certainly her social standing still depends upon her husband's success and his fidelity to her, but not absolutely, as in the preceding case.

The Porzyckis are thus an example of a relatively solidary family-group of the modern type, in which the solidarity does not result alone from tradition and pressure of social opinion, but from relations between individuals as determined by mere natural bonds. However, the group is neither perfectly solidary nor very harmonious. Common interests have to fight against individual interests, and there are frequent misunderstandings and quarrels. In comparing this case with the peasant families, we see what a powerful factor of harmony is the traditional familial organization.

587-629, TO STANISŁAW PORZYCKI, IN AMERICA, FROM HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN, IN POLAND. THE LAST LETTER IS HIS REPLY TO A REQUEST FOR FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT HIS FAMILY

587

[MŁAWA, autumn, 1910]

DEAR FATHER: I inform you that we are all in good health, thanks to our Lord God. . . . Don't believe in those dreams, for they only deceive everybody. . . . Mother must always cry, sometimes even be sick, for when Hela merits a punishment and mother beats her, grandmother at once takes her part, and they both gossip [outside] about mother. This [contemptible] Hela now goes to the teaching in the church,¹ and instead of being better she is still worse. Please, father, advise us, at least in a letter, what to do with this Hela, for mother can no longer hold out with her. . . .²

ROMUALD [ROMEK] P.

¹ Instruction before confession.

² It is the familial duty of the son to take the part of the mother against the daughter, but in the whole series the attachment of the son to the mother and of the daughter to the father is so marked as to suggest the Freudian theory. Perhaps the attitude of protector of the family assumed by the boy in the absence of the father is here, as in many of the following letters, merely an objective and conscious form in which the subconscious preference for the mother finds its expression.

588

November 3 [1910]

DEAR HUSBAND: In the first words of my letter, "Praised be Jesus Christus. . . ."¹

I received the money, 50 roubles, for which I thank you heartily, for I was almost in despair. During the whole of October I earned nothing, and there were always expenses. Were it not for the Rzaps, who lent us a few roubles, I don't know how we should have lived. Thanks to God that at least they are our friends, for it would be hard. . . . These 50 roubles which you sent will be spent at once—15 roubles to Pawlowska, 10 to the Rzaps . . . shoes for us all, a few wagons of turf, potatoes. Believe me, my dear, I should prefer to have you rather than this money, for I had not so much trouble when you were here. Now you write that you won't come back until you pay your debt. But it will soon be a year and there is almost nothing paid of it. . . . I inform you about Romek, that he is getting awfully spoiled; he does not listen at all, he is worse and worse. Please send him an admonition, but so as if you wrote of yourself, for he does not even want to go to church.² Pawlowski writes to his family that he will come back, will sell his property and will take them all to America, for it is so well there. I have nothing more to write, only I wish you, dearest love, good health and success, and may the Lord God help you to pay that debt back.

Your loving wife and children,

WŁADYSŁAWA PORZYCKA

Only, I beg you, write more often.

589

January 7, 1911

And although we cannot be together, yet we can be united in our hearts and thoughts [probably quotation from his letter]. It is true, dear husband, that we are united in our hearts and thoughts, but tell me why does this unity of thoughts not suffice for me? Tell me, why does my heart, although united, long for yours? Oh, it is ter-

¹ The only letter which begins in the typical peasant way, with the greeting, "Praised be," etc. In the following letters the greeting is dropped, probably in imitation of the husband's letters. The omission is itself a sign of the loosening of old traditions.

² It is interesting to note that the children rapidly outgrow these childish attitudes, naughtiness, disobedience, etc.; the common difficulties, the common fight with poverty, etc., make of them rather the associates of the mother.



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you hearty thanks. We received your letter with the wafer on December 17.

Your loving, longing, and true-to-death wife, with children,

WŁADYSŁAWA PORZYCKA

590

February 11, 1911

DEAR FATHER: I inform you that I received your letter with wishes and 3 roubles for my name-day on my name-day itself. I thank you very much, father, for the wishes and for these 3 roubles, which came in the worst time, for mother had no money at all, so I took half a rouble for myself and gave $2\frac{1}{2}$ to mother. Mother scarcely saves our life. We paid Pawlowska for the last quarter [rent], and not yet for this quarter. Dear father, take either all of us there or at least me alone. Then we could both earn more than you alone. Dear father, I want to go to school only this year, and then to become a tailor's apprentice, for tailor's work pleases me most, because of the wages and because the work is not hard to learn. I have nothing more to write, only I wish you good health and success.

Your truly loving son,

ROMUALD P.

591

March 15, 1911

DEAR FATHER: I inform you that we are in good health. . . . Pawlowska rented our lodging, for somebody gave her 70 roubles, and we have not yet rented another. And Rzezuski went to America in the autumn, set up a shoemaker's shop and is getting on pretty well. He has now taken her [his wife] and they left their children with the grandmother. You wrote that Osiecki is to come back. So I would beg you to send me through him a few books, and if you have some old suit send it to me. Mother will have it cut down and I shall have something to walk in. If you went to Pawlowski you would perhaps have better work, for Pawlowski sent 1,000 roubles in all. You wrote us that he perhaps borrowed them, but he answered that he did not borrow a penny. He has paid already 200 roubles to Mr. Tański. Dear father, we still owe Pawlowska for half a year. . . .¹

ROMUALD P.

¹ The letter is probably partly dictated by the mother.

592

April 29, 1911

DEAR FATHER: First I inform you that I am in good health, by the grace of Lord God, and I wish you the same with my whole heart. And as to the school, we are going on May 1, and the summer vacation will begin on June 1. And we have no lodging as yet, for all are rented, so we must perhaps take this one after the Kirszenbaums. But it is 80 roubles. Do you allow us to take it or not?

If Mr. Osiecki has not left yet, please father, send me through him an accordeon with bells.

Wishes for name-day: I wish you, father, health, happiness, success, long life, and to see one another soon.

Your truly loving son,

ROMUALD PORZYCKI

DEAR FATHER: If Mr. Osiecki comes back, and if you can, send me through him a ball in a net. [Adds wishes for name-day, copied from a book.]

HELENA P.

593

May 3, 1911

DEAR HUSBAND: First I beg your pardon, Staś dear, that I have so neglected [writing], but, believe me, not from pleasure. It seems to you that I did not write for a long time. Well, but say yourself, what could I write so often? If I had any merry news surely I would hasten with the good tidings, but this monotonous uniformity is always here. Now I have a little more, not merry, but natural news. My dear husband, I received the first 25 roubles in the last week before Easter, and the second 10 roubles only today. . . . May God reward you. But I must describe to you, what I spent this money on. Well, I bought a suit for Romek, and shoes. This cost me 10 roubles. For Hela I bought a dress, shoes, and a hat, for you know that her nature already claims its own; so I spent for her 11 roubles. I gave 8 roubles to Pawlowska, and what is left? Moreover, I paid some other small debts, so we did not have very merry holidays—sad and modest. If we were together at least, and shared our good or bad fortune, surely it would be merrier. But now, my dear, you are there and I am here, bad fortune separated us. But let us hope in God that we shall once more live together. You ask my advice, dear Stach, what you shall do with your person, come back or not. Oh, if it were

in my power, I would add wings that you might return to us. But say, dear, what awaits us here? My dear husband, I don't advise you either so or so, for you know better yourself what to do. You know what we had in our country, and you know what you have there. Do as your reason advises you, and I agree perfectly. As to this debt, it will be as you do it. If you send it partly, I will pay it back; if you put money aside [and send the whole at once], it will be well also. You ask me how much I can spend monthly. I think you know yourself, for we are not more and not less now [than formerly], and we don't spend money for any luxuries. I shall have as much as you send.

So, dear husband, you deceived me, you let me wait 2 months. I waited obediently till at last you wrote me that you could not take me. Thereby I have no lodging now; the lodging we had is rented long ago. I don't know how it will end. . . . My health is very bad, my strength is leaving me. For a year I have intended to go to a physician, but always something is lacking, either time or money. . . . And now, dear Staś, I intend to insure myself, for I am afraid for my life, and therefore I intend to insure myself for some hundred roubles. You don't expect to be there long, and cannot, and here we shall not be able to put money aside . . . and if a black hour comes or if I die, what will be the future of my children? So advise me, dear Staś, what should I do. In my opinion it would be the best if you took us to you. You write that you are anxious about the children, lest they become American [illegible word]. But even in America it cannot be worse than in this accursed Mława. You know yourself that I have nobody here, I am alone, an orphan in the world. I don't go to Piotr [her brother] at all, for you know yourself how good he is. I went once to him, and he was quarreling with her. I could not bear it and said a few words—why does he swear so? When he began to bark against me and you, I thought that I should die from all this. The matter was particularly about you. But don't write him anything.

Dear Staś, believe me that as the fish thirsts for fresh water, so we thirst to be united with you, but not here, only in America. I should prefer to work heavily, and to get away from this hell. . . . Calculate only what all this costs—living, lodging, fuel, dress. Surely we could live there together. My success is bad, for two more midwives came here, and there is almost nothing to do. So I beg you,



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less better. I don't wish to suffer any more as I do; I have lost my health already. Answer at once, what you intend, for every day is important to me. . . .

*Well-wishing,*¹

WŁADYSŁAWA P.

595

August 17, 1911

DEAR FATHER: I inform you . . . that the vacation is ending. On September 1 we go to school, and mother does not earn any money now, so when we go to school we need for books and for fees. So I beg you, father, send a few roubles at least for me and for Romuś, so perhaps mother will get somewhere [money for other expenses]. As to these 35 roubles which you sent, mother did not even see them well. Mother owed 12 roubles to Pawłowska from the other quarter and gave her 4 roubles for this quarter and some lesser debts. And mother owes 10 roubles to the Osieckis.² Dear father . . . if you had much money, it would be better to come back to our country, for here it is also well for one who has much money. It is bad only for us, for we have nothing. Write us, is it true that it is so hot in America, for Mania, Mrs. Pawłowska's daughter, writes that it is so hot that people fall down upon the streets. . . .

Your loving daughter,

HELENA

596

September 23, 1911

DEAR FATHER: I inform you that we received your letters and 20 roubles. You wrote mother to pay my fee from this money . . . but here is a more necessary debt, that of Pawłowska; she is the first. I shall probably not go to school any more, dear father, for it is too difficult for mother. I must help mother at home. Formerly at least grandmother was in her bed, and it was possible to leave the house, but now [since grandmother is dead] if mother goes somewhere to a sick woman she shuts the house and takes the key with her, and when we come from the school, we must sometimes sit outside till

¹ "Well-wishing" (doubly underscored), instead of "Your loving and true wife," as previously. In contrast with the humble and pleading letters of Teofila Borkowska, Porzycka demands to be united with her husband as her *right*, and this right is based on the fact that they have children, and common duties toward them.

² Enumeration of expenses probably dictated by the mother.

evening. Romuś passed into the fifth division [grade], but on the condition that he will take private lessons for three months at 3 roubles a month. He is a bad comfort to us, for he is sickly and looks very bad. Mother grieves, for it will probably be consumption. Up to the present he did not cough, but now he coughes terribly. Mother intends to go to the doctor with him. Mother also looks bad; sometimes she groans during the whole night. I alone am in good health, and even I was ill for more than a week. Probably you won't find us all here when you come. But perhaps I write letters too often; if you mind the cost, I won't write letters so often. But these letters don't cost me, for I won the paper at a lottery during the exhibition. I thank you heartily for your wishes, but you were mistaken, for my name-day is on March 2, or on May 22. . . . But even so it is well.

Your loving daughter,

HELENA

We and uncle sent together a letter to the other uncle in America. Perhaps it did not arrive, so please inform him about grandmother's death].

597

October 30, 1911

DEAR HUSBAND: First I inform you that we are in good health. . . . Michalina T. married a Sudzieński, cooper from Mława. . . . They came to live with us but they won't pay any money; they say that it will be on account of the debt. . . . Dear Staś, I have earned nothing for 5 weeks already, and here you tell me to drink milk. But a quart costs 12 grosz . . . and there are so many other expenses. . . . Helcia, thanks to God, is better, and is going to school, for this is all her dowry, so it is impossible to keep her at home. She learns well, better than Romek. I chose for him such a profession [of barber], I think that it is the best for him, not very hard, and healthy, for he is always in movement. I don't know how you think. He likes it, for it is not heavy and is well paid, and he will be able to do it. Rakoski [the employer] praises him. . . .

Your sincerely loving wife,

WŁADYSŁAWA P.

DEAR FATHER: . . . I inform you that after the lessons I go to the barber and learn barber's work. You wrote to send you a photograph, but I have no [Sunday] clothes. So please, father, send me

money for the clothes. . . . Dear father, I cannot die, for I must keep you and feed you in your old days, and if I died who would feed you? Don't grieve about me, I am healthy, better than before this illness.

ROMUALD P.

598

November 3 [1911]

DEAR HUSBAND: First I inform you that I received your letter on All-Souls Day. I thank you for it heartily. I am very much pained that you grieve so. We are, thanks to God, in good health, and Romek looks much better. In the summer he bathed too often and this must have done him harm. Now I treat him myself with medical herbs, and he is quite well already, only he requires very good living, and I have not enough for all this. I don't know myself what to do; my practice has ceased totally. I accepted these Sudzieńskis on the condition that I was to receive a few roubles, but the Tańskis arranged that this money might go on account of the debt. They agreed upon 30 roubles. O, dear Staś, may God unite us as soon as possible, for our whole life is only a torture. We are always separated, the one here, the other there, and always in this longing. You think about us, and we about you. Dear Staś, you wrote in your last letter that I ought to pull away from my head this longing and to occupy myself with my duties and with prayer. O, dear Staś, were it not for the prayer and the hope in God, I don't know how I should bear all this. I hope that our Lord God will change it into a better happiness, but meanwhile we must suffer, for such is the will of God. Dear Staś, I beg you, don't grieve, but have confidence in God, and God will comfort us in everything.

Your truly loving *wife*, with children,

WŁADYSŁAWA P.

599

November 20 [1911]

DEAR HUSBAND: You write about Romek, that if you were here everything would be better. That is true, but even 10 fathers cannot take the place of one mother, particularly with our Romek. He is so delicate and exacting in his constitution that it is not only necessary but indispensable to have always something good for him, for he won't take into his mouth anything not perfect. He cannot eat at all, he is so tired with learning. He must sit till mid-



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got still worse after reading this letter. In a few days the holidays will come, but these holidays, instead of bringing us joy, cause us a still greater pain when we look upon this gay world. Everybody is merry, only we must cry. During the whole of Lent we have fasted truly, and during Easter we shall fast still better, for perhaps we shan't have even a bit of dry bread. You tell us to borrow money from somebody. But why don't you borrow there from somebody? Perhaps somebody there will sooner lend you, for here we are so in debt. We have taken so much on credit in all the shops that nobody wants either to lend us or to give us credit any more, but everybody asks us to pay our debts. You told us not to rent an apartment, and we did not rent any; and now they drive us away from here, for we did not pay the rent for half a year. You travel from town to town and enjoy pleasures, while we die from hunger. It would be better if you sent us the money which you spend on traveling, or if you put it aside. Pawlowski went to Chicago and he stays there and sends her money, though she does not need it as we do, for to whomever she goes among her tenants everybody must give her. Dear father, for the holidays even a beggar clothes his children, while we are like the poorest orphans; we are even ashamed to go out upon the street, for everybody laughs at us. If you could imagine how we look today, as if we had arisen from the tomb, and all this from sorrow. Nothing grieves me so much, even if I were dying from hunger, as the pain and sorrow of my mother, upon which I must look, and already in youth poison my life. As long as I live, I don't remember such a sad time as these holidays which approach for us. I have nothing more to write, only I wish you health and merry holidays.

Your loving son,

ROMUALD PORZYCKI

Don't be angry with me for having described so much misery, but you think perhaps that we are well off here.¹

¹ The letter is exceptionally hard. A peasant boy would never dare to write to his father in this way. He would have a certain right of control over his father's behavior, but only in matters which constituted a direct breach of the familial solidarity and to the extent proportionate to their respective importance in the family-group. As the father is the actual, while the son only the prospective, head of the family, this right of control could only find its expression in some humble request addressed by the son to the father. In extraordinary cases the son could appeal to the rest of the family, who would then exert an active control. But here the situation is different. The marriage-group is isolated and the respective positions of its members are no longer determined by social tradition, but by the

Unhappy the hour of my wedding! I pity these orphans, for I am ready to take my life away. I cannot overcome all this any more! Could my tears torment you as much as the pain which you cause me! How have you had the conscience to send such a letter!

Your sorrowful wife

602

April 24, 1912

DEAR HUSBAND: First I inform you that I received the letter with money more than a week ago, I cannot [write further.]

Dear father, I announce to you very sad news: Romuś is severely sick. Three illnesses came upon him at once. His heart is bad, his lungs and stomach have caught cold; we don't know how it will turn out. One doctor said that he must go to Warsaw, and Dr. Korzybski tells us to take him to the country. But first, it is difficult for us, and then he has terrible fever and vomits. Mother has almost lost her senses. She began to write this letter, but she cannot do it from grief. If you could appear today in our home and comfort us! For it is worse here today than in a tomb. We thought that we should soon go to America, and Romuś rejoiced that he would visit such a far world, and then suddenly it happened so. Now he says that even if our Lord God gives him his health back he won't go. Write at least letters more often to us, dear father. Now help is needed, and here we have no money. Please write us, father, whether you had foreboding of our grief. Dear father, Mr. Korzybski said that Romek needed this cure long ago, but as long as he could walk we did not notice it, for he said nothing to mother; only now, when he could walk no more [he spoke]. We should like not to grieve you, father, but we have grieved already for some days. If this letter could come to you the soonest possible! I have nothing more to write, only we wish you health and good success.

Your loving daughter,

HELENA P.

Only don't grieve, father, perhaps our Lord God will grant him to recover. Pray, father, our Lord God for his health.

individual characteristics of the members themselves. The father's authority is based upon his physical, moral, and intellectual superiority and upon the fact that he is the support of the family; it decreases as these factors decrease. In the present case it is precisely his moral superiority and his willingness to support the family which are in question. Probably the mother's talk has influenced the boy and undermined the father's authority.

603

May 13, 1912

DEAR HUSBAND: First I inform you that we are in good health, and Romek, thanks to God, walks already, but he is still feeble. He lay more than 2 weeks and was severely ill, he had typhoid and his heart was bad. We doubted whether he would live, but God the Merciful comforted us. I did not know any more what to do with all this; for 2 weeks I neither slept nor ate, for he had great fever and I had always to sit with him, and there was nobody here to take my place in anything. It cost me much, the drugs alone, some roubles. None of the doctors accepted any money from me. Dear Staś, I inform you that I received two letters and 25 roubles, for which I thank you heartily. Don't turn your head about [don't trouble yourself about] taking us to America, and leading yourself into still worse debts. If you have good work, stay there until you pay the debt and come back. . . .

Your loving wife,

WŁADYSŁAWA P.

604

May 14, 1912

DEAR FATHER: I inform you that I am better already, thanks to our Lord God. I have not yet come to my full strength, but I walk already. . . . I don't go to the school, for the doctor forbade me to go. Dear father, we inform you that the bishop was here and myself and Hela were at confirmation on May 10. Dear father, don't turn your head about taking us to America, rather pay the debt and then come here. It will be better, for Łączyński doubts whether we shall pay him. . . . Dear father, I wish to go to school next year, but I have no money. It is not indispensable to pay 100 roubles. Whoever is poorer pays as he can, 50 or 25. Some go without paying. Help me only for the first fee, later I will try to earn for myself with lessons [helping the younger students]. Rzap has come already from America and brought many different things for his wife—a gold watch, a ring, a bracelet, and many other things. I have nothing more to write, only I wish you health, and to see one another soon *in our fatherland*. May God grant it. Amen.

Your truly loving son,

ROMUALD ANTONI PORZYCKI

Dear father, please pay first the debt and then come back to us yourself, for now I will never and for nothing go to a foreign country. Here is my fatherland, here I want to live and to die. I joined a



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606

June 24, 1912

DEAR FATHER: I inform you that I am in good health. . . . I cannot describe the joy which you caused me by your letter, and I don't know how to thank you for your goodness and the sacrifice which you make for my sake. Dear father, I will prepare myself for the 3d class, but it is not sure whether I shall pass the examination or not. But I shall surely get into the 2d. When I have any certain news, I will inform you. . . . Dear father, only don't deceive me, for you would then probably cause my early death; I am so given up with my whole life to this learning. Dear father, do your best, for the time is short, and the candidates will be examined on August 20. Dear father, the whole preparation will cost 24 roubles, if I learn 2 hours a day, and 14 roubles if one hour a day. How much the fee will cost I don't know yet. I will write you in a second letter. Dear father, we received your letter and 40 roubles, for which we thank you heartily. . . .

Your, remaining in uncertainty, truly loving son,

ROMUALD P.

607

[September 16, 1912]

DEAR HUSBAND: I thank you heartily for your kind feelings toward us. May God grant your intentions to be fulfilled, may God give us comfort in our children. They both joined a temperance association. They don't drink even ordinary beer. Romek does not smoke any cigarettes and does not do any silly things. He is always occupied with serious things and learning. In that circle they have their own treasure and library. Romek keeps the library, so he has enough to read and acquires very much knowledge. Dear Staś, you would have much to speak with him; probably you would wonder at his ideas. They have a priest in their association who leads them. Romek always goes to him and receives different national books, and the priest has no secrets from him, talks with him openly about everything [national and moral questions]. And Hela is in the fourth division. She learns well also. I should be glad if she finished at least this school; in any case it would be better for her. Dear Staś, we have begun, but I don't know whether we shall be able to go on, for all this costs very much. The books alone and the clothes take much money—the overcoat of Romek alone 18 roubles, and the shoes and summer clothes. Dear Staś, from this

money which you sent 50 roubles must be kept for Romek [for the fee], and the remaining 60 roubles will be spent soon. [Enumerates the expenses.]

Your truly loving wife,

WŁADYSŁAWA PORZYCKA

608

September 16, 1912

DEAR FATHER: I go to school, I am in the fourth division. Mother did not want to send me to school this year, but I was stubborn and mother at last agreed. I thank you a thousand times for remembering me. We don't need anything more, we lack only you, dearest father. I inform you that I joined a circle of temperance. It means not to drink not to play cards and not to smoke during your whole life. You ask about Romek. He is admitted to the second class of the commercial school and learns well enough. And in the new lodging it is very good for us. Mother has patients. Directly after we moved, the next day, they did not give mother any rest, but she was called to a patient. All would be well, if only our Lord God gave us all health.

HELENA P.

609

May 22, 1913

DEAR FATHER: I inform you that we received your letter and 50 roubles. From these 50 roubles we gave to Mr. Tański the interest. Now mother bought for Romek shoes and for herself a dress, and hats for mother and for me. You think perhaps that we spend money here on some unnecessary things, but no, dear father, we spend only on what we need absolutely. Dear father, I am no longer so little, and mother must spend some money on me also, for I cannot walk dressed worse than everybody. I go to a singing-class, and every Sunday and holiday we sing in the church. Dear father, Romek teaches four boys and gets from every one of them 1 rouble a month; this money which he earns goes for his school wants. Romek will soon pass an examination, so he must even now worry. Sometimes when he comes from the school he is quite sweating. Thanks to God, he recovers, he can eat more and has color on his cheeks. He has grown so big that he is already somewhat taller than mother, and I am a little smaller than mother.

Your sincerely loving daughter,

HELA

610

June 16 [1913]

DEAR AND BELOVED HUSBAND: I don't know what it means that you don't receive our letters. We wrote you 3 letters and received an answer to none. I had begun to think that you had followed Osiecki in search for pleasures. But excuse me for writing you such silly things. And as to the money, don't worry. If you send it it will come. Only send soon and plenty, for we need it. I paid Łączyński 65 roubles, for he wants money most; Łączyński is sick with consumption. You write that you will take me and Hela to America, and Romek can be left. But where? With him it is still worse than with a small child, for he has no health and has a very delicate nature. He can by no means be left alone. So if we are to go we will go all together, and if not, then none.

Your truly loving wife with children,

W. PORZYCKA

DEAR FATHER: You wrote that mother and Hela might go, and I might remain here. I agree with it, and I can remain in the pension. But for vacation where shall I go? Perhaps to you, for here they all leave for vacation. As to the money, dear father, don't trouble yourself whether we shall get it, whether there is not somebody ill; even if so, for a sick person money is useful.¹ Our lessons end on Saturday, June 21, and on Sunday we shall receive the certificates with promotion or not. So if I am promoted to the 3d class, I will inform you.

ROMUALD

611

June 25, 1913

DEAR FATHER: I have been promoted to the 3d class, without a second examination. Dear father, you do ill in postponing the sending of money. You wrote that you would send us 50 roubles monthly, and we believed it. So we gave out most of the money which you had sent before, in paying the debts. The rest was spent

¹ There is irony at this point. The father has made some *stupid* excuse for not sending money—that the money might not reach them on account of the probable war, that if the mother was ill there would be no one to go to the post-office for the letter. The remark about vacation above is also ironical. In comparison with No. 601 the moralizing attitude of this and the following letter is more objective and superior. The boy is more under the influence of the patriotic society and of his reading and less under the influence of his mother.



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some debts, and I must pay these first of all. . . . Dear Staś, don't be angry with us if the children have described to you too much of our misery in that last letter, but I was not at home. And you know, my dear, that here if one has no money he does not know what to do, for it is even difficult to borrow, because here everybody has scarcely enough to live. . . .

Dearest Staś, write me how do you live there. Are you not worried with this solitary life? For I, when I pass this time in mind, it seems very, very long. Three years and a half we have led such a martyr life! For there is nothing worse than longing. And you are so indifferent, you don't even deign to send us your photograph! Send it, I beg you, at least on a postcard; it will cost cheaper. . . .

Your truly loving wife,

WŁADYSŁAWA PORZYCKA

My condition is very bad.

614

July 23, 1913

DEAR FATHER: I inform you that we received 40 roubles, from which we gave 25 to Mr. Łączyński. [Enumerates all the expenses.] Dear father, believe now everything that we write you, for we write you the sincere truth. Even if we wished to add anything, we could not, for you look always at us and see everything, and we can hide nothing at all. Dear father, we have your picture. Although you did not deign to send us your photograph, we had a larger copy made of an old one. Dear father, now it is at least a little more gay, we have somebody to speak to. But what! We speak, and you don't wish to answer us.¹ So it would be the best if you earned much money and came to our country, or if we went to you. And if not, then take me to you. I could at least cook for you, and you would not have to pay me, and it would be better for us. . . .

And Romcio always does nothing but go to the forest and read books. He is already a hundred times fatter than I, and as you know, bigger than mother.

Your truly loving daughter with her mother and

Romciuchno [affectionate diminutive of Romuald]

¹ An example of the primitive attitude toward photographs and pictures. The photograph of the dear person seems for the peasant as well as for the child to mean much more than to a sophisticated man, to convey much more feeling of life and reality. In *all* the series of peasant letters this is manifested.

615

August 18, 1913

DEAR FATHER: As to that America, we discussed and decided either to go all together or to remain and not to take upon us the burden of a new debt. This would be still better than to go. Mr. Nowakowski asks you whether work is good and whether it is worth while to go to America. It is also hard for them to live, and the priest [a brother or uncle] cannot suffice for everything.¹ Dear father, when we saw your photograph we were awfully pained that you look so bad, but later we comforted ourselves that the photograph is bad.

ROMUALD

616

August 18, 1913

DEAR FATHER: I received one rouble from you, for which I thank you heartily. I am somewhat pained that you always make a difference between us two. We are never equally treated, but he always gets more than I do, as if I were not your daughter. But nothing can be done. Dear father, if you love Romek more than me, what can I do? Dear father, I lent this rouble to mother, for she had no money, but soon we shall go to school; then mother will give it back. I shall have it for the fee, if you are so gracious as to send me 2 roubles more. For books perhaps mother will give me, if she earns.

HELENA

617

September 10, 1913

DEAR FATHER: I am in the 3d class and am learning well enough, for I cannot say very well. To Mr. Łączyński we owe still 15 roubles of the sum, and the interest, 28 roubles, together 43. Mr. L. is a very good man for he counted the interest only for 3 years, at 8 per cent. Dear father, Mr. Pawlowski came back [from America], but he intends soon to go there again, for he has nothing to do here. He acquired a higher culture [irony]. I send you my photograph and, I beg you, send me yours, but a better one, for I was only grieved in receiving the former one.

ROMUALD

618

October 20, 1913

DEAR FATHER: I inform you that Romek was very ill and now, although he walks, it is with difficulty. . . . Dear father, he is a bad comfort for us, for he is always sick, only

¹ For the rôle of a priest in the family cf. Rzepkowski series.

seldom a little better. Mother grieves terribly and weeps continually. Mother weeps from sorrow and sings at the same time. It would be better if you were at home. [Money received; expenses.] Dear father, there would be no misery in our home any more, if only Romcio were in good health. We inform you that Uncle Piotr wrote to Yonkers, to Uncle Jan [both mother's brothers] asking him for a ship-ticket, and he intends to go to America, for his affairs are very bad; he does not keep his shop any more. . . .

HELENA

619

November 5, 1913

DEAR HUSBAND: Romek was seriously ill but, thanks to God, it passed, although he is never very well, for his disease remains for his whole life. He suffers with heart-disease, and this cannot be healed. Hard is the life of such a man, for he is unable to work, except with his head so learning is indispensable to him. Dear Staś, I inform you about my success. My success is so bad that I earn almost nothing. We live only on what you send. Dear Staś, you write that you will come on Christmas. Oh, how glad I should be if this lonely life of ours came to an end! But if you come here and we have not a rouble with us, how shall we live, since this year everything is so dear? Prices were never so high. Do as you think best, my dear, but may you not wish to go for the fifth time [keep going]. Piotr has failed so utterly that he does not even keep his shop. He has many debts, and even 500 roubles mortgage. Janek refused to send him a ship-ticket. He justified himself saying that Piotr won't be admitted, because he lacks fingers on one hand. Now he does not know himself what to begin. And the cause of all this is liquor. . . .

WŁADYSŁAWA P.

620

January 29, 1914

DEAR FATHER: We don't know now what to do with this lodging, whether we should remain or not, for it is very small, and if you come, it would be too crowded. So tell us positively whether you will come or not. Then we shall know what to do. Dear father, did you receive our letter for Christmas with a wafer, in which we informed you about the death of F. Łączyński and the illness of Pawlowski? Did Uncle Bogorski from Chicago write to you? He



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more pains than you, for I am a woman, and still—and still I accept my lot. Yes, dear, let us sacrifice ourselves for our children, because we live only for them. Were it not for them I should have been with you long ago. Dear Staś, you reflect whether Romek cannot be left alone. This is totally impossible. He needs continuous care, for he has no health. How often it is necessary to rise at night when he has a heart attack, and to help him. He is weak like a small child. He is a good boy and I love him strongly, but unhappily there is no great hope for his future. He learns well. Now we must pay 25 roubles for his second quarter. [Usual ending.]

WŁADYSŁAWA P.

623

April 20, 1914

DEAR FATHER: [Health; money and letter received.] We were very glad when we received your letter on Good Friday, particularly Romek. He ordered us to go at once, before the holidays, saying that he would be alone [for Easter]. Dear father, you write for me and mother to come. Oh, how glad we should be to go at once! But, dear father, it would be difficult for us to part with our sickly fellow Romek. Although he troubles me [teases or beats a little] sometimes, yet I love him and it would be difficult for me to go away from him, and mother also cannot reconcile herself with leaving him alone. . . .

Your truly loving daughter,

HELENA

624

April 24, 1914

DEAR FATHER: We received today your letter, in which you write about having sent 53 roubles and in which was a silk handkerchief. I thank you with my whole heart for this handkerchief. I have not even words enough to thank you. Everybody wanted to have this handkerchief, Romek, and even mother. Romek wanted me absolutely to give it to him, but I would not give it even for a thousand roubles, for it is a token from my dear beloved father, and such a token should not be given to anybody, even to the emperor himself. Dear father, you send me always something, and what shall I send to you? Now I cannot yet, but when I grow big, I will try to reward you perhaps, if only with a trifle. . . .

Just now we received those 53 roubles. We thank you, father, for this money, which will be very useful to us. Now I shall enumerate what we shall spend it for. First we must pay the rent for a quarter, interest to Tański, mother and Hela [I] have no shoes, Hela has no overcoat. Don't be angry, father, for it is obligatory; I have nothing to wear. Oh! And I have no hat! So calculate please, how much I alone will cost: shoes at least 4 roubles, overcoat some 10 roubles, a hat about 2 roubles, together 16 for me alone. And mother and Romek? Really it is worth crying that you have such spongers who only spend your earnings. And I am the worst. Now they croak against me at home, that they must spend so much for me. But judge yourself, father, can I be the worst [dressed] of all? And now mother is against me for this handkerchief [saying] that you did not send anything to her [favorite] child, but only to your [favorite] child.

HELENA

625

July 6, 1914

DEAR FATHER: I have passed to the 4th class with a small second examination in German, but it is no matter, for during the vacation I will learn and later it will be more easy for me with the German. Dear father, aunt [Piotr's wife] died on June 30, and already people are recommending another wife to uncle. Hela has finished her school already, but we don't know what to do with her now, and where to place her. Dear father, we have not had any letter from you for a long time, so we are grieved, for we don't know whether you are healthy or sick, or perhaps you have no work. We expected a letter from you at least for mother's name-day, but you did not send any even for the name-day, so we make the supposition that something bad happened to you, or perhaps you forgot about us. But this latter supposition is impossible.

ROMUALD

626

July 29, 1914

DEAR FATHER: First I inform you that we received your letter and 40 roubles in our new apartment. They were just enough for the apartment, for we had to pay 40 roubles for half a year. The apartment is expensive, but what can we do if all the apartments are now expensive. We should perhaps have found a cheaper one, but

we learned too late that Rzezuska had rented [our old one]. But, never mind, here we have at least comfort, and even if you came you would have room enough to work, and mother perhaps will have better success than there, in that hole. Dear father, inform us what is the news in America, for here a terrible war is probable. They wanted to take Romek to prison, for he went beyond the town with some companions. The border is now open, and soldiers keep guard in the fields. Even the farmers who bring their crops in must have papers from the mayor that they have the right to go. Perhaps we shall be killed here, so please send us, father, some money, 1,000 roubles at least, so we shall be able to fly somewhere before this war, for it is impossible to remain so. And if with you there is also such misery [as you wrote?] come rather to us; we will put these miseries together. We live on Niborska Street, facing the hospital; our house is surrounded with a garden. Romek is so healthy here that we can hardly give him enough to eat, and we eat also rather well; a loaf and a half of bread is used every day, while formerly we took half a loaf for two days.

HELENA

627

August 10, 1914

DEAR FATHER: We find ourselves now in a very critical situation, because we are in the midst of the greatest war. Mlawa is near the frontier and therefore it is most disturbed. We received your letter with the handkerchief and 3 roubles on the day before the war, for the next day communication was interrupted and trains no longer come to Mlawa nor leave it. The telegraphs [wires] are broken, the post abandoned, the [governmental] bank abandoned, all the officers and all the officials have gone away. The army has been mobilized, and uncle [Piotr] was also taken, but then set free because of his hand. The Russian army was in Iłowo and Działdowo and tried to take Nyborg, but was checked for they had no infantry. On the very first day the Prussian station in Wólka and the bridges were blown up, and now larger or smaller battles are fought around Mlawa. The Russian army is camping now in Mlawa and in its neighborhood. German aeroplanes fly every day above our Mlawa, and just now one of them went away; they are still shooting at it from guns. This morning, when a German aeroplane flew over Mlawa and they began to shoot at it from cannons and machine-



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father, you can easily guess that there is now great misery here. . . . We live only on what anybody lends or gives us. . . . So we beg you, if you can, send us at least a few roubles, or else we shall die from hunger. We send this letter through Japan, but whether it will reach you, we don't know. But a drowning man grasps even a razor. . . .

ROMUALD PORZYCKI

629

January 5, 1915

RESPECTED SIR: . . . You ask for details concerning my family. I give them to you. My wife is now 36 years old, my son Romek 17, my daughter Hela 15. As to my wife, you are not mistaken in saying that she is very nervous. Any insuccess influences her much, she gets sick and does not eat for a day or two. As to Romek, he was not so sick when a child . . . he had no heart-disease. While I was still at home, I soothed and softened everything. When I was leaving, my wife asked me to bring them as soon as possible to America. During the first and second year I could not do it, for I had no steady work; I could scarcely send them from time to time a few roubles. I had borrowed money for my journey to America, so there were more than 200 roubles of debt left. Thus my wife was obliged to pay the interest and from time to time a few roubles of the sum out of my small wages. Even today there are more than 100 roubles to pay back. Thus, during three years I was unable to send a ship-ticket. After 3 years Romek finished the governmental [town-] school and wrote me that he wanted more instruction. I permitted him; I could not refuse to the child the permission to learn. But the expenses increased, and it was really as bad as they wrote. With my small earnings I could not send them much. And thus Romek, seeing his mother always crying from longing and despair, might have got his heart-illness even through this, for he is very sentimental, like his mother, while Hela has my iron nature. My wife wished at first to come to America, because she would have come with them both. But later Romek did not want for anything in the world to leave off learning, and his mother did not want to leave him alone with strangers, for, as she mentions to me, he needs care like a small child. And I agreed and was glad that he did not want to come to America, only wants to live in his own country, for I don't like the American education of children. Here the child is not morally educated, it knows no respect for its elders. It knows only how to throw snow or

stones at the passengers. As to me, I cannot become Americanized, for in the old country I had easier work. There I was a shoemaker, while here I must work in an iron-foundry, and even this goes on feebly. For the last few months I have worked scarcely two or three days in a week. So I sit here as upon sharp nails and wait for the incidents of the war in Poland. I am longing for my family, because I have had no news for more than two months. I don't know whether they are alive or not. Wishing to save my family from hunger, I sent on October 24, 80 roubles, but I have no certitude whether they received them. Probably they did not, for the governmental post-office in Mława is abandoned, and my family may not be there, for Mława, as it seems, has changed her proprietors 4 times already. As to my verses [a humoristic piece, printed in the Polish paper *Zgoda*], I thank you very much for your praise. I have never been a man of letters. Perhaps if I had studied in that line I should have some aptitude. This one I composed in free moments and I doubted whether the editors would deign to print it.

STANISŁAW PORZYCKI

JABŁKOWSKI SERIES

In the present case we have the only example of a perfectly solidary and harmonious "natural family," as the result of an evolution which has substituted individual bonds between the members of a marriage-group for traditional social bonds between the members of the "large family."

We see also an important social consequence of this evolution—the particularly marked isolation of the marriage-group from the rest of the community, even from the relatives who in the old organization would be the most important members of the group, namely, the parents of the man and the woman and the brothers and sisters. On the one hand, the marriage-group, perfectly solidary within itself, acts in economic and social matters toward the rest of the community as toward strangers, sometimes even with a marked hostility; on the other hand, any action from outside is received as affecting the marriage-group as a whole. In this respect the reactions to external influences tending to disaggregate the group—gossip, efforts to compel the husband or the wife to act in economic matters in a personal way—are significant. These influences themselves, the more or less unfriendly acts of neighbors, acquaintances, relatives, which Jabłkowska attributes to "jealousy," are perhaps better understood if we take into consideration the very natural hostile attitude of the social environment toward so isolated and impenetrable a familial group. The old type of family, at least in Poland, has no place for such an isolation. Under these conditions it is obvious that when for any reason the marriage-group tends to separate itself sharply from the family-group the latter not only shows



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your letters, for I was in very great sorrow during the whole holidays, because I had no letters. I wondered much why, and I thought so, that perhaps you were sick from all this sorrow. So when I received the letter, I cried from joy. . . . You write me not to answer this last letter of yours but I do answer, for some days have passed since I have written you a postcard, and you would have no letter from me for a long time. When I receive another letter from you I shall have also something to write, for now I shall be a little calmer and I will calculate all the money which I spent and what I spent it for. For I tell you, dear husband, I was so grieved after the letter which you wrote me before that I thought I should never calm myself. And after that I had no letter for almost 2 weeks. And moreover I got a letter from Stasiak on December 23, and . . . I did not send him that letter back, for you told me not to write letters to anybody. Answer me whether you speak [are on speaking terms] with Stasiak, for he wrote me that he is not guilty of the offense against me in Koźlak's letter to his wife. He excused himself that he wrote whatever Koźlak told him to write [dictated], and he said that it was exclusively Koźlak's fault; he [Stasiak] could not go into a cellar and write the letter so that nobody might see it [*scil.*, somebody has read or heard what Koźlak dictated and thus gossip arose]. He wrote many more words, but I don't repeat everything for it would take too much time to write. But he begged my pardon very much and said that he did not [intend to] offend me in that letter in any way. He wrote that he was not a traitor to you and never had been. He is only very pained that Janek [the writer's son] called him in his letter a rascal and a Ham [for having offended Janek's mother], and he wrote a few words to Janek saying that he would remember it. . . . Finally he wrote thus: "I won't write you any more news; you will learn from your friend [husband?] who is a rascal toward us." And to Janek he wrote: "Don't ever write such letters to anybody, for if I were really such a rascal as you write, this letter would have cost you dear. If you don't believe me, ask your father." And he wished us a Merry Christmas and New Year. So I beg you, dear husband, very much, don't quarrel with these swine. I beg you once more, don't quarrel. Forget your wrong; why should you waste your health in vain? . . .

MARCYANNA JABŁKOWSKA

631

February 17, 1914

MOST BELOVED FATHER: I thank you very nicely for the scrap upon which you wrote a few words for me. Dear father, you tell me to learn to be an iron-moulder. But I won't learn to be an iron-moulder, for it is a hard speciality. One earns a few roubles more, but he must work like an ox. And here if a moulder is kept anywhere, he is, but if they throw him away he cannot find work, but must work as a simple laborer. Thus it happened with Hojnacki. You write me that any peasant can do the work which I do. But you don't know yet what work it is. Myka wanted to work at the light and said that he had worked at the light in the cement-factory, but they refused to admit him for they were afraid he would spoil something. . . . I learned for almost half a year in helping an electro-technician, and as he liked me he explained to me everything . . . so that now if I got a plan, I could instal the light myself, and I can decompose and recompose a dynamo machine. . . . And if the factory stops I can do locksmith's work. . . . I earn now almost 25 roubles, and later I shall have almost 35 roubles, or even more. Now, dear father, don't trouble about me. I shall find my way and even help you.¹ Now, dear father, I need a suit for Easter, for this one which I have is quite spoilt . . . and I need also shoes, for these which I have are torn. . . . Besides this, dear father, send me some neckties . . . and if they reach me I shall beg you to send me perhaps 2 stiff shirts, for I have only one such . . . and it is not enough. I must take it to the laundry too often. . . .

JAN JABŁKOWSKI

632

February 21, 1914

MOST BELOVED AND DEAREST HUSBAND: I received your letter . . . written on February 8. . . . As to lending money, you may be calm, for I am not so silly as to lend money or to warrant for anybody. You know that I am not very eager to do such things. I won't lend to my brother either, for I know how eager he is in paying back. . . .² Now you ask about my overcoat. It is a little worn

¹ We have here the new attitude toward work—appreciation of skill and efficiency—as stated in the Introduction: "Economic Attitudes."

² A sign of the degree to which the old solidarity is dissolved. In peasant life money should be lent, not only to so near a relative, but to any member of the community, and the question of his paying the debt would hardly be raised as self-evident. So the solidarity between members of the family is here weaker than the traditional solidarity between members of the community.

on the front side, about the pockets and sleeves, but it does not look so bad yet. You write me, dear husband, to buy a fur collar, but now I don't want to buy any, for spring is near. Since I did not buy in the beginning of the winter I won't buy now, for immediately some persons would be found ready to say that I did not buy it for winter, only for summer. . . . And I shall put this whole 100 roubles into the savings-bank; I won't divide it. As to the debts, I owe 8 roubles to my father, which I lacked to live, for I have not worked for almost a month and Janek's salary does not suffice for our household, because I spend now on everything one rouble a day. Yes, my dear husband. So I took 7 roubles for living and 1 rouble for your mother, together 8 roubles. I have not yet paid these 2 roubles to your mother which I owed her, but I gave her this 1 rouble, for she was at the wedding of your foster-daughter. Tomaszewski came to invite me and mother to that wedding, but what was the need to them of my going there.¹ And now, dear husband, I owe still 10 roubles to Gelblum [Jewish shopkeeper] on the booklet [in which goods taken on credit are inscribed]. So I write you, dear husband, that I shall put these 100 roubles into the bank and I won't pay these debts.² Father does not need money much so I will pay him 1 rouble on my pay day and 1 rouble on Janek's pay day and thus I shall pay it back gradually. And from Gelblum I won't take now on the booklet, but as far as possible for cash, until you send me money for the children's clothing; then perhaps a few roubles will remain from the clothing, and these I shall pay to Gelblum. For the children need clothes absolutely. Janek must have another suit for going out, and Oleś has only one which has been repaired already and he has nothing to put on when he goes to church. Now, as to the Jałozos [husband's sister and brother-in-law], I shall write you what a *bryndza* [literally sheep-cheese; slang for "bad condition," "misery" or "disorderly life"] there is now, only in another letter, for now I am not particularly healthy. I have toothache and my arm pains me. . . . Goodbye, my dear Kostuś, for I long very much without you. I kiss you heartily innumerable times.

Your wife,

MARCYANNA JABŁKOWSKA

Now I kiss you once more strongly. Now, dear husband, Oleś was a little angry, because you did not send kisses for him in your letter.

¹ Another attitude which would be quite incomprehensible in a peasant group.

² In order not to destroy the round number. A vestige of the qualitative character of economic quantities. Cf. Introduction: "Economic Attitudes."



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told her that I would write to you, but she does not know that I write really. So don't write to her all this that I tell you, for she always says that she will improve, and it would be very painful for her. For she is very good and obedient when I send her to do anything, only she is so hasty and wrathful. You may always admonish her in your letter to learn well, to be good, not to fight with boys at home and in the school. [Details about health of the family; page and a half about the clock which is out of order; two pages about floors, windows, and humidity in the apartment.] But perhaps all this will hold until you come back, for I don't want to occupy myself [with repairing]. I have already the whole house upon my head, for although, my dear husband, you keep all our home in your memory, yet it is not as if you

for any undesirable familiarity to arise, either between the parents or between the children when they grow up. It is the same principle which allows the country nobleman to be on much more familiar terms with the peasant or the Jew than with anyone of the middle class, and which gives the members of the highest aristocratic families the greatest freedom in selecting friends. But in towns, where social distinctions are very minute and there is a continuous passage from the lowest to the highest class, the task of keeping these distinctions up is a very difficult one, the more so, the lower the given class and the more insignificant the basis of distinction. And as the intimacy of children may lead to an intimacy of parents, and the friendship made in childhood may last in later days, the parents are very careful to select for their children playmates of the same or of a higher social standing and to keep them far from any connection with those of a lower level. A second factor acts here also and compels parents to make the selection. It is the importance of manners. In this respect the country nobility relies upon tradition, heredity, and the general home atmosphere and is not afraid that the children would lose their good manners in playing with peasant children. The same does not hold in towns, particularly in the lower-middle class, where good manners are an artificial and imitated product and can be easily lost. Finally, the moral consideration plays in towns a more important part than in the country, as town-children are generally more spoiled, and it is more difficult to avoid undesirable contact.

The result of all this is, that no child of a "self-respecting" family can select its companions without the control of its parents, not even in school; and particularly no playing upon the street is permitted. And as only those who have little or nothing to lose in social standing let their children play upon the street, the street-children constitute really a dangerous element for the others, from the moral point of view.

Evidently, there is an incalculable but very strong influence of this whole system of control upon the psychology of the young generation. It must be noted, however, that a movement of democratization in the higher classes began some 20 or 30 years ago and is growing. The control of the children in this respect still exists, but is based more and more upon merely moral considerations. But this movement has not yet reached the lower classes, who remain as rigid in their distinctions as formerly.

were at home. . . . Janek and Oleś exchanged their watches, Oleś himself wanted to change. . . .

Now, my dear husband, I want to tell you a few words about the Jałozos. Kasia [the wife] does not come to us; Michal came once, but I was not at home. [Your] mother goes sometimes to them. Once, when she came back, she cried so much, saying that they are in such misery. They did not pay the rent and a complaint against them was made. The police wanted to levy on their furniture, but they carried it to another house and have only a bed of boards, while the children sleep upon the floor. And they quarrel among themselves. Michal tells her to go to work, but she says that she had a fortune [dowry] and won't go to work. But he says that he has her fortune in his buttock [despises it]. What [he says] is a fortune worth when she does not know how to manage the household? A woman is worth more who knows how to manage everything, although she is poor.¹ And mother told him to try to get a janitor's job. She [Kasia] has sent a boy twice already asking me to lend them money, but let her wait till I do it. But your mother would carry everything to Kasia. Your mother is just like my father, who would carry everything to——[probably another daughter] and would not say, "You ought not to give." There was a little poppy which they brought from Wola; I don't even know when mother carried it out. But never mind the poppy. She asked me to give her the old shoes of Mania, and I gave them.² I shall describe more in another letter. . . . Goodbye, dear husband, I kiss you heartily.

Your always well-wishing and loving wife,

MARCYANNA JABŁKOWSKA

I kiss you once more strongly, dear husband, and goodbye. Work happily with God.

634

March 17, 1914

MOST BELOVED HUSBAND: [Letters received and written; description of her sickness.] Now I tell you, I was so worried when I lay in bed, you have no idea, and it is impossible to describe, because you

¹ An appreciation more adapted to the conditions of town-workmen than to those of farmers, for in the first case fortune has merely an additional value as compared with the salary, while in the second it is absolutely fundamental for the whole life-organization.

² In this connection the older generation is simply carrying out the ideas of familial solidarity.

were not at home. For it seemed to me that if you said to me even a single word I should be healthier. Moreover, letters are now so late from you; they don't arrive normally. . . . Now, dear husband, as to the good heart, whether I have a good heart toward you or not, I tell you only this, that as I love God and want my soul's salvation after my death, I always love you and always have a good and constant heart toward you. Yes, my dear husband. And I would never write any testy things in my letters, but yourself, dear husband, you lead [incite] me to do it. And I shall write you, my dear, a few words from a good heart. My dear, when you learn anything about me and it does not please you, you ought to write me at once, "So and so, my dear (or however else, in your manner), and I hear that you have been where I don't wish you to go." For I even acknowledge that you are right when you write that it is not a fit company for me, and I regretted myself that I was there and I said to myself that I will never more go anywhere. And you write me about it after a year, as if you had waited for something more to make a conviction against me. Yes, my dear husband, I shall never be angry with you, even if you write me something like this in every letter and if you make any remarks to me, for you have the right and you ought to make remarks to me without any fear, if you are displeased with anything, and I shall listen to you at any time. Yes, my dearest husband.

[Calculation of income and expenses.] My dear husband, once more I make this remark, for you write precisely that you did not intend to answer my letter. It was very bad of you to think so, and to have written only after listening to the advice of *Kum* Wierzba. My dear husband, I write to you with a good intention, without any wrath, and it seems to me that you will agree with me. Answer me whether I don't write the truth, my dear husband, that you ought to answer without hesitation every letter, good or bad . . . and that you ought to accept everything from me, whether it is written good or bad [praise or blame], and I must also accept from you good and bad writing. We must listen to each other in order that it may be well, until we are united with each other, for I wish our life to be happy as long as we live upon the world. And don't listen to any Hams whatever they may tell you against me, or to any apes, whatever they may write you in their letters about me. And if anything comes to your ears about me, write me at once and I will listen to you and won't be angry at all if you make any remark to me. For I don't



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mending shoes. . . . You would laugh to see how he mends and quarrels with his grandfather. For now your father is here and always interferes with Oleś, as he likes to interfere with everything, but Oleś does not allow him to tell him anything, saying, "How much do you know about it? I know myself what to do." Now, dear husband, as to the carbolic acid, you can be perfectly sure, for I have poured it out already. I give you my word of honor that I tell the truth; I used it only sometimes for my teeth. [Two pages describing her sickness; concern for her husband's health; hygienic advice.] So please care for yourself that you may come back in good health and looking well. I beg you once more, dear husband, care for your health, for I look bad now also after my sickness, and thus we might both get overworked, my dear husband, and during our work the grave might cover us and we might not rejoice with each other upon this white world. Yes, my dear and beloved husband.

Now as to Rafałowa, about my going there with my children. When I am there nobody else is there except Rafałowa and Mateusz and their children. She buys a small bottle of vodka and a bottle of beer, we put our money together [to buy it]. Oleś plays the accordion a little; the children dance, we laugh at them, and thus a little time passes. Sometimes they come to me, also alone. But we don't meet so often; during the whole summer I was there 3 times and they were in my house 2 times. They are very polite toward us. This is the only defect, that they are not married and live so. They intend to marry, but they postpone it thus from day to day. . . .

MARCYANNA JABŁKOWSKA

636

[March 22, 1914]

DEAREST AND MOST BELOVED FATHER: I beg you very much, send me a cream-white ribbon of the same breadth as that one which you sent me for the holidays. Then I shall have a scarf for my dress for the first communion. I beg you very much, be so gracious and buy it and send it to me as soon as possible after you receive this letter. I beg you very much, and I kiss your hands, each finger, and each eye, and each ear, and your nose, and your chin, and your cheeks, and your neck [all the words in diminutive form], everywhere and everywhere, my diamond little father, who loves me. I am in good health, thanks to God, and then goodbye. Written by your loving daughter,

MARYSIA JABŁKOWSKA [10 years old]

Gud baj.

DEAREST AND MOST BELOVED FATHER: I am in good health, thanks to God, and I wish you the same with my whole heart and my whole soul. Now, dear father, I have mended everybody's shoes, and after calculation it amounts to 1 rouble, 50 copecks, and I have calculated everything twice cheaper than a shoemaker would take. So I beg you, dear father, send me either in a letter 2 dollar-notes, then mother would go to the bank and change them, give me 1 rouble 50 copecks and take the rest herself; or when you send money, send also these 1 r. 50 c. for me. . . . I have nothing more to write only I kiss your dear hands and your dear head and your dear face heartily innumerable times, and once more I kiss you innumerable times. Goodbye, most beloved and dearest father. Written by your son, loving and never forgetting you, and wanting to see you and to kiss you as many times,

ALEKSANDER [OLEŚ] JABŁKOWSKI [12 or 13 years old]

637

April 18, 1914

DEAR HUSBAND: [Long account of renovation of house and furniture.] As to Easter, I was in Rafałowa's home on Good Sunday, for she sent a girl asking us to come. On Monday I stayed at home and slept the whole afternoon, for now there are no holidays for me, nothing rejoices me at all. . . . On Tuesday the Rafałs called on me, but I was going to night-work and they stayed only one hour and a half. I brought 5 bottles of beer and that was all. . . . Nobody else comes to us and I go nowhere.¹ [Calculation of income and expenses.] Now again I must buy shoes for your mother, because she has already some patches upon hers and she begins to talk that she won't walk now any more in shoes with patches. I shall describe to you some day what she says, for she does not like to be with us. She wants us to give her the money back and she would rather be free. Yes, my dear husband. [Details about health.] Dear husband, you write me to go sometimes with the children to the high mass. In winter I never went, neither with them nor alone, for it was too cold. Now it is warmer, but I have not much to wear, and Mania has no summer overcoat, and now the weather is cold. . . . My summer overcoat is quite worn and not nice enough to go to the church. Instead of putting anything whatever on myself, I prefer to stay at home, for

¹ Evidently the husband does not like her to have many social relations. The egotism of the marriage-group asserts itself even in this matter.

at once some people would be found who would say that Jabłkowska walks in such a worn and out-of-fashion overcoat. So I prefer to stay at home, for we are everywhere talked about, that both the Jabłkowskis are clever and laborious people, that you are working in America and sending money which we put into the bank, that I am working, and Janek also, that we dress well and the children are nicely dressed. Thus, they say, clever people do.¹ Now, dear husband, I should like to buy a summer dress and a nice skirt and a nice overcoat, and also an overcoat for Mania. Now I must buy for Mania a white dress and slippers for Pentecost, because she is going to her first confession. My head aches with all this, that always something is needed. So, my dear husband, when you send money some day, if you send me 100 roubles and some more, I will buy something, but if you send only 100, I won't buy anything; I will sit at home and put those 100 roubles into the bank, because I want you to come back as soon as possible, for I worry much without you. Yes, my dear husband. . . .

Dear husband, I ask you whether it is true that you have killed, in company with Wierzba, a pig, that Wierzba wrote thus. For once Kozak came to me when I was in the factory and asked: "Has *Kum* [your husband] written a letter now?" I say: "Why do you ask? He has." And he laughs: "And what does he write?" I say: "Nothing in particular. He is in good health, thanks to God. And what is the matter?" He says: "Nothing, only mine [my wife] said that Wierzba's wife said that Wierzba wrote that they killed a pig together." So I am curious, whether it is true, for even if you did it it is all right. [Usual ending.]

MARCYANNA JABŁKOWSKA

638

May 8, 1914

DEAR HUSBAND: I received your postcard for which I thank you heartily. . . . Now, dear husband, to this postcard I answer you by a letter, not by a postcard, because I wrote you a postcard on May 1, and I cannot send you thus one postcard after another, for it ought not to be done so. A postcard ought to be sent after a letter, and not

¹ Compare the high social standing of Jabłkowska with the case of Borkowska. The community dislikes and opposes the isolation and egotism of the marriage-group but must respect and acknowledge the superiority which solidarity and efficiency give to this group. The position of the latter is weaker than that of the large family-group, but incomparably stronger than that of an isolated individual.



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and he cannot offend me in any other way, for I have my honor and I don't care about any conversations. So he was very loud-mouthed and said that I was too great a lady, that such a lady ought not to work in such a black factory room but to sit in her apartments. Yes, my dear husband. And I tell you that I will work only until you come, for it is a pity for [me to lose] my health working with such Hams. [Health details.] Now I write you a few words more about Oleś. He finished the school and we ought to think of his having some occupation. So decide, please, and write me . . . what to do. He always dreams either about going to a drug-store and learning to be a salesman, or to a press, to be a printer. . . .

[MARCYANNA]

639

May 26, 1914

DEAR HUSBAND: . . . I received 100 roubles and put them into the bank, so now there are 700 roubles in the bank. . . . And for my expenses I took a loan from the bank,¹ but I am not very much satisfied for I have taken the loan and have not bought everything which I needed. . . . I only got angry in the worst way, nothing more. For if both of us had been here, we should sooner have given good advice to each other, what to do. So I took a loan of 40 roubles. . . . And there was more trouble than money. It is happy that I know how to write and it makes no difference to me, because I had to sign 6 times. . . . And those who cannot sign—what a shame it is! The official and the doorkeeper laugh at him. [Enumerates the expenses and describes the clothing bought, upon 4 pages; adds a detailed account.] Now, dear husband, this small bottle of vodka and the *zakąska* [relishes] which you find written upon the scrap, we drank it with Syroka's wife. I shall describe to you in what way. When I had no letter from you for so long a time . . . I imagined God

¹ It would be less troublesome and less expensive to spend a part of these 100 roubles instead of taking a loan, for the interest, taxes, etc., on a loan amount to twice as much as the interest which she can get on her own money. But there is evidently a remainder of the old distinction between property as a fundamental, not purely economic category, and incomes and expenses. The loan is classed with the latter, and not related to the property. It is an exact parallel with the distinction between mortgage and ordinary debt. The latter, in the peasant's eyes, does not harm the property as such, only the income-and-expense system. The other point here is the predilection for a round sum; a hundred is an entity which would be damaged by subtracting anything from it. Cf. note 2, p. 410.

knows what! That you were sick, or that you had got so indifferent. And I went to Syroka and said so: "Tell me my fortune from cards, *kuma*, whether my husband is healthy, for I have had no letter for a long time." And she laid the cards and said: "*Kum* is healthy and works, and during this week you will receive a letter with good news, and a big sum of money is on the way, so don't grieve for on Sunday you will go [to the post-office] for money." And I said: "If your words prove true, *kuma*, I will treat you when the money comes." And thus it happened. I received your letter on Thursday and the post-notification about money on Monday, and I had to treat her. So when I returned from the town with Mania and Oleś, I brought a small bottle of spirits and *zakąska*, and we went to Syroka and drank it. . . . And please answer me whether you are angry with me or not for having drunk this bottle with Syroka.

Dear husband, I write you a few words about this Wierzba's money. It is so, my dear husband: I don't wish *Kum* Wierzba to send money to my address. First, I don't wish to be at the service of Wierzba. Second, she will bear a savage claim, why Wierzba sends money to my address, not to hers. For even if I talk with her whenever it is necessary, I shall always remember those words which she threw against me unjustly. God is witness whether she was right! And so to speak, I don't wish to cause Wierzba this pain, for you live well with each other and it would not be suitable to offend him, for he is a very fine man. But she is an accomplished swine, although my *kuma*. So when this money comes, I shall draw it from the post-office and immediately there I shall give it to her. And I do it for you, dear husband, and for the *kum*, for he asks me politely. [Church-going; asks for prayer-books.]

[MARCYANNA]

DEAREST AND MOST BELOVED HUSBAND: [Easter wishes; money received and spent.] Now, dear husband, I write you a few words about Lucek [husband's brother] and his wife, for I was with them just now. Lucek began to abuse us, saying that we lacked confidence in them and were afraid to lend them some money. He was offended with you for not having written the letter to him, but having sent it in my letter, for I gave them this letter without the envelope, because I did not notice the inscription, "To be forwarded to Lucek" and tore the envelope. I did not give them the envelope therefore, but

said that the letter was inclosed in mine. And why should we turn our heads [trouble ourselves] about the Luceks? We have enough of our own troubles. We should never come to an end with them. Lucek began at once to worry me, asking me to lend him 100 roubles nevertheless, even without your knowing it. I said that I positively would not lend without your knowing it. Lucek began to laugh at me, saying that I was afraid of you. And I said: "Yes, it is true, I am afraid. My husband wrote me that he confided everything to me but on the condition that I would not lend money to anybody, either of my family or of his own. I write to my husband about every rouble which I spend. I must listen to my husband and nobody else." I had to find an excuse for he worried me about this loan. He said that he will write a letter to you some day, but I don't know what about. He said that we shall still beg his favor some day. Is he our father or what else? Stupid Lucek! . . .

MARCYANNA JABŁKOWSKA

641

April 7, 1914

BELOVED AND DEAR HUSBAND: I have already bought suits for the boys. But I feared to do it myself and Janek also. Janek said, "If some man were with us it would be better, for he would see how this suit looks, and whether it fits me well, for you, mother, won't know it as well." We had nobody to ask to go with us except Adam Jabłkowski. So we went to him and I said to him a few words and we went at once to the Jew, and Janek selected a suit which pleased him. The Jew asked 22 roubles for this suit; Adam offered him 10. The Jew said, "You are joking," and said, "21 roubles." Adam offered 11. The Jew bargained, saying that he could not give it away at such a price and asked 20. Then Adam told him to select another suit for Oleś, then we would come to an agreement on both together. So we selected a suit for Oleś from black cloth. It pleased Oleś and is nice enough. The Jew asked 20 roubles for both, and Adam offered 18. I did not bargain, for I did not feel quite well, only Adam. They agreed upon 20 roubles and I paid 20 roubles, 14 for Janek's and 6 for Oleś' suit. I did not expect that we should buy at such a price, for the stuff is better than in the old ones, although they cost more. [Enumerates other expenses.] Now, dear husband, when we bought the suit, Janek said, "Now, mother, let us take a drink on this occasion." Though I



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June 7, 1914

DEAREST AND MOST BELOVED HUSBAND: [Letters delayed.] I write you a few words precisely about this christening in Adam's house. I am not satisfied with it at all, for I grudge these 6 roubles which we have spent, for each rouble is awfully necessary to me. But it was impossible to act otherwise for there would be more talking than all this is worth. For if he had said to Janek that it was a christening we should not have gone at all. But I cannot say that they have treated us badly—God forbid! They behaved very politely, for the christening was on Sunday, and on Monday *poprawiny* and we returned rather late on both evenings, about midnight, and he brought us home in a cab both times. I was there and Janek and Mania, while Oleś was in the country with his companion. [Describes with whom and how long he stayed; why she permitted him to go, etc.] And these Majewskis [Adam's friends] admired [wondered] that I am still so young and have such big and handsome and good children. And they wondered that Janek was going out with me; they said that another boy would not be willing. [Money-matters; choice of career for Oleś.]

Now, dear husband, I write you a few words, that Golasiowa has asked my pardon, for she was in Częstochowa [on a pilgrimage], and after this she came to me and began to cry and to beg my pardon, and she wanted to kiss my hand, but I did not allow her, and we kissed each other in the face. And she asked me to beg your pardon, that you might not be angry with her. Now I inform you, dear husband, what a misfortune befell Brzozowski. He went also to America and his wife died here and 4 small children remained. People wrote for him to come. Only don't be impressed with it, my dear husband, for we are in good health, thanks to God. If I am a little unwell, never mind, for I am not very sick either; I walk, I work, perhaps gradually this sickness will pass. I write you on a separate scrap what is the matter with me. [The scrap was probably destroyed by the sender of the letters.] And if I write you that she is dead, why, you don't need to grieve about anybody else except yourself and your family. So don't mind it much. I write you this news that you may know, for I am also curious when you write me anything like this. Now, dear husband, I write you about this sickness of mine, since what time I have not felt well. My dear husband [it has been] since you wrote me disagreeable letters about

this whole trouble. When Wierzba's wife told us nothing, and you were in such a wrath against me unjustly. Only don't be angry with me again for mentioning this, for I don't remember it any more [I have forgiven]. But when you ask me since what time I have been unwell, I write you the positive truth. If you had not asked me I would not have written at all. So it was, my dear husband, that I cried very much and could not eat and could not sleep, only grieved that you had so little confidence in me and listened to gossip. And I worked more than ever. [Describes her work; writes what the factory-doctor prescribed.] And the doctor told me that if I don't feel better, I must go to a specialist for women's diseases, and I should go and should not grudge the money, but, to tell the truth, dear husband, I am ashamed. . . .

[MARCYANNA]

644

June 17, 1914

DEAREST AND MOST BELOVED HUSBAND: [Two pages describing receipt of a letter in a torn envelope and asking him not to send such thick letters because the post-officials think they contain money. Three pages itemizing expenditures, etc.] I write you a few words about Mania. Write a sheet to her and admonish her to be more polite and not to fight with Janek, for when he makes any remark to her and pushes her a little, she begins at once to cry awfully and jumps at him. Once he told her not to eat in the courtyard, for I worked at night, and she went into the courtyard with a pot [of food]. She did not listen, and he struck her a little on the face. She came immediately to me to the factory, weeping, and said that Janek had beaten her on the face. I got angry, went home and asked who was guilty. They told me so and so. Thus she had merited to be struck a little. I got angry and said that by the love of God I would write to you. And I must write because I have said so. Now write her not to cry thus about any trifle, for I tell you, dear husband, that she is such a weeper that it is awful. She cries about anything. When I have worked over night, I am unwilling to go anywhere, I lay down and tell her, "Mania, don't go anywhere into the field alone." Then she begins to weep at once saying that she is worried, and sometimes she listens, sometimes not, and does not tell me where she is going. And I am afraid, for now different accidents happen; I read in the paper what is going on in the world. Therefore I don't allow her to

go alone into the field. But she says: "When the boys go out you are not angry." And I say: "It is permitted to the boys, for they are boys, and you are a girl, you ought not to walk alone." So, my dear husband, admonish her always, perhaps then she will sooner listen, for this crying of hers angers me awfully. More than once I got so angry that I had to strike her, but I should prefer to have her listen to me when I tell her anything, rather than to beat her, for it is not a pleasure to beat a child. . . .

Now, dear husband, I write you about Oleś, that he finished his school and received a very good certificate . . . nothing but fives and two fours [5 is the highest mark]. He received a book as reward for having learned well. This book costs perhaps 2 roubles, but unhappily it is Russian. When he was leaving the teacher kissed him on the head and said that he would try perhaps to get a job for him. And Oleś came home and said: "Well, mother, give me a few copecks for having passed the examination." And he was so glad that he had passed it! I kissed him and gave him only 15 copecks, for I had little money, but he was glad even thus, went at once and hired a bicycle and took a ride. And you, dear husband, when you send money, set aside a rouble or a half for him, for his having passed the examination; then he will be glad. . . . He wants to go to the country for a week. I permit him; let him rest a little. [Relates how she tried to get a job for him at once.] Now, dear husband, I write you a few words about *Kum* Wierzba and this pig. You ought to have known yourself that you are not in your own home but with strangers, and that this does not pay; for you write that it did not pay. Nowadays nobody is ever to be believed. When I hear [read] what you write I say [to myself] that I did not expect anything like this from Wierzba—that you would not come to an understanding. But such are the times today. Describe to me everything you had between yourselves [the whole quarrel]. But I would beg you, dear husband, not to quarrel. Let him manage his own pocket and not profit from you. And don't ever hasten to such common undertakings. Yes, my dear husband. But it is always more pleasant to have somebody to talk with. Manage things as your reason advises you, that it may be well. Don't have any common undertakings and don't quarrel with each other. . . . Now, dear husband, as to Syroka, don't fear that I tell anything there. I only listen to what she tells me and I laugh, for she says that those two [women] are very angry because you send 100 roubles every two months, and they write to their husbands, and



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and the doorkeeper who took his place may have opened and read it from curiosity. . . . For some people lie in wait for these letters like dogs, because they can learn nothing from me. Other men who are in America don't send so much money, so they are curious why you send so often. Parzuch has sent only 200 roubles, a watch and a pin during a year. . . . Now, dear husband, I inform you what I did with this money for I have no letter and I don't know your decision. . . . I asked you for 120, but evidently you could not; nothing can be done. . . . I put 100 roubles into the bank, and we have there already 800. . . .

Oleś is still working in the factory. . . . I shall write you when he gets some other job. Only I beg you, dear husband, write Oleś a few words and tell him to listen to me, for when he goes to the town and I tell him to be back at such a time for dinner, he does not listen; twice already he has not been in time for dinner. And he smokes cigarettes secretly. He kept company with Lutek. I abused him, and he got a little away from Lutek, but now again he walks [associates] with Stadolak. I am not satisfied with it, for the boy is not orderly; I don't need to explain much, but [the fact is that] he is not orderly and everything pleases him. Therefore I don't want Oleś to walk with him. [Oleś] had a good companion, but he is now with his father in the country. [News about poultry; 2 pages about her health.] So I must go to a specialist for women's diseases, but for me it is a great shame, for, as you know, up to the present I have never known such a doctor, and it makes a terrible impression upon me. Stanisławowa was sick and went to such a doctor, and she told me that there is a sofa and he orders to lie down and puts his hand inside, for he must inspect. . . . But you know me [and you understand] that it is for me fearful and disgusting. . . .¹

MARCYANNA JABŁKOWSKA

647

July 22, 1914

DEAREST AND MOST BELOVED HUSBAND: [Letter received; thanks for a prayer-book; health.] As to my not going to work, don't write me anything about it and don't stir up Janek still more, for even now I must dispute with him. He does not want me to work,

¹ The attitude of the peasant woman on this point is even more extreme. Not only is the idea of medical inspection revolting, but she would not venture to write of it to her husband.

he says that he is ashamed that I am working. He has talked so for a year. And more than once he gets angry, particularly if I am sick. Now also he has talked much when he read this letter saying that you don't allow me to go to work. I did not want him to read this letter and I hid it in a drawer, but he found it. And they all began to clamor: "Mother won't work any more, father writes well; enough of this work." And Janek said: "Father writes you not to work, and you don't listen." And he talked much, and said that if I work he won't give me all his money, only 4 roubles [on each pay day]. But he has said so more than once, and still I work and he gives me his money. So I write you thus, dear husband. I should like myself not to work any more, for you know that people often abuse those women who work in the factory. Even now more than one tell [bad things] about Parzuchowa and Piotrowska, because they are so hot tempered. And people say: "Jabłkowska alone is an orderly [good] woman, and it is a pity for her to work here with them." But I should like to help you still to put these 1,000 roubles aside, as you desire yourself. So if I work for some time still it is some help for you, because I have fuel and a few roubles for living, and the expense is big, for everybody wants to dress and to eat well, and here everything is expensive. Yes, my dear husband. You see, we still lack 200 roubles. So I will work for some time still, we shall put it aside sooner. And I should like you to come back at last, for I am tired already with all this. I don't promise you to work for a long time, only till you come back. Yes, my dear husband. Now you write me not to go to work and not to do anything [at home], for there are people to do the work for me. Well, bad is my "ladyship" now. When you come, then I shall be a lady [do no housework]. But now grandmothers want to be ladies. Well, my mother may be excused sometimes, for she is right when she complains that [your mother] does not want to help her to do anything in the kitchen.¹ When we drink tea in the evening your mother takes her own pot and washes it, but leaves the glasses from which I and the children drank. And it is always so. I don't say anything until you come back; let all this go on, for it is nearer than farther [nearer to the end than to the beginning]. And she always holds up her nose saying that she gave her money here, that she is not here from pity. If there is sometimes

¹ Both the grandmothers are kept in the home, the wife's in return for doing the housework, and the husband's in return for money lent. The latter, therefore, does not feel obliged to help with the work.

something worse at dinner, they all know how to be squeamish—the children, particularly Janek and Oleś, and your mother also lets her nose fall. I don't wonder at the children . . . but your mother wants to be a lady. Now she does not know herself how to walk [she is so proud]. If you were at home you would laugh. And she always reproaches us about this money, saying that we have risen to our feet for her money. And she says that she ought to have interest on these 300 roubles. And she does not like to be with us; she wants only to have those 300 roubles back, and she does not know herself how to tear this money away. For once she said that Tomaszewski wanted her to lend him 300 roubles and promised her to take her to his home. Then again she said that Antek wants to borrow this money and will give a big interest. But I say so: I won't lend until you come back, and then it will be as you do. And she is tired of staying with us, she wants to go to Józef. She was always calling on Kasia, until once they almost fought about this money. For she [your mother] said that she had lost her money. And she [Kasia] said: "Where do you have your money? Why have you given me nothing." And so always. Once she began to reproach me about this money, and I told her to be silent, when you come, you will give her these 300 roubles back and let her go wherever she will be better off. And she said: "What does it matter if I have 300 roubles? And where is my interest?" And she said that you went to America on her money, and that money makes money.¹ And thus, dear husband. But she has got calmer since I told her that you will pay her back and now she says nothing, only that if she doesn't stay with us she will go to Józef. Only I beg you very much, don't be angry, for I write to you as to my husband, for I have nobody to talk to. [Four pages about Oleś' apprenticeship in a jeweler's shop.]

MARCYANNA JABŁKOWSKA

648

August 28, 1914

DEAREST AND MOST BELOVED HUSBAND: . . . I thank you once more [for the letters] for I don't know what will be our further destiny. Perhaps because of this trouble [war] it will be difficult to

¹ She gets her living instead of interest and this is three or four times as much as the money would bring in cash. But the mother retains the attitude of the peasant, with whom the lending of money is not considered as a purely economic investment but as a personal help to be subjectively appreciated.



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and health, and I must be patient here also with our children. . . .
Goodbye, my dear and beloved husband. Be calm about us, I beg
you very much, dear husband. Don't lose your courage, comply
with God's will, and I and our children we must also comply with
God's will, since we have lived to see such things.¹ I kiss you and I
press you in my embrace, and I kiss your face, the dearest one for
me. And once more I kiss you heartily, my dear husband.

Your wife, always well-wishing and loving you,

MARCYANNA JABŁKOWSKA

¹ Compare the fortitude of this letter with that in Starkiewicz series, No. 525, Kluch series, No. 532, and Porzycki series, No. 627.

PERSONAL RELATIONS OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

We have seen that the familial and communal system of life does not leave much place for relations of individual friendship and love. The closeness of friendship is determined by the strength of social, objective bonds which exist between the individuals, and not by their personal affinity. Friends are, first of all, members of the family, then any inhabitants of the village, parish, community. Of course there is some liberty of individual selection, but only in so far as it does not interfere with the recognized objective bonds. The subject can be in a closer friendship with one inhabitant of his village than with another, or with one cousin than with another, but he has no right to prefer a cousin to a brother, an unrelated inhabitant of his village to a cousin, a member of another community to a member of his own community, a foreigner to a Pole. Since, evidently, such norms seldom completely determined the real conduct, we find the interesting fact that in all cases where individual preference is not based upon the objective bonds certain other social bonds are substituted to justify it, and assume thus a social importance which they would hardly attain otherwise. Here belongs, first of all, the god-relation. A *kum* is equivalent to a relative, under the pretext that it is spiritual relationship. Therefore, a man who has a close friend sanctions this friendship by asking him to be his *kum* or by holding his child at baptism. He then has the right to prefer him to his real relatives. Another objective bond used to justify friendship is that between a *swat* (matchmaker) and the bride, the groom, or their parents. If neither of these social bonds is available, there remains the

weakest and least recognized one, companionship in some social activity—school, military service, work. Perhaps the frequent endeavor to have a friend marry one's relative is in a large measure due to the desire to sanction the friendship by a familial relation.

Naturally, when the family dissolves, personal friendship assumes a greater independence. But again, as we have seen, the constitution of a strong marriage-group puts new hindrances in its way. (Cf. Jabłkowski series.) Thus it seems that free friendship is limited socially to the intermediary period between the dissolution of the old family and the constitution of the independent marriage-group. Individually the only favorable time for it is the time before marriage, and sometimes there are friendships in old age, after retiring from the active family life.

As to love, we know that it is always, in the traditional organization, related to the question of marriage, and since marriage is a familial matter, love remains subordinated to familial considerations and to the control of the community. Here again a partial dissolution of the family and, moreover, a disintegration of the forms of social control are necessary in order to make place for a free individual relation which may last for a certain time before culminating in marriage. And, of course, a certain degree of individual culture is also indispensable to make this relation interesting in itself.

The following series do not lend themselves to a systematic arrangement, but we place first the cases in which the personal relations are still somewhat under the influence of the traditional attitudes.



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I don't have anything more to write you, dear Wojtuś, because I don't want to write you lies and don't want to invent, and I don't know anything bad. When I don't know anything with certainty, I don't believe anybody; but here I did not even hear anything from anybody. . . .¹

FRANCISZEK WITKOWSKI

650

December 28, 1913

"Praised be Jesus Christus!"

Now, dear brother, I thank you for the letter and for these 100 crowns which you sent us. We were very glad because they will be very useful to us now. This year was very wet and all the grain got rotten in the field and there is a great misery among us. And now we inform you, dear brother, that on Christmas we had a nice young man from America! He came with our father when he was returning from Nowy Sącz, and he said that he married Kaśka in New York, that she came with him and is now in Stary Sącz, and brings a big trunk which they cannot lift, and there are 60 crowns to be paid for it, and she has no change, only a whole 3,000, and nobody in the town can change it. But our father did not want to give him [money] nor to believe him, but said: "Come here both of you. Then we will go for this trunk and pay for it." Then he went, saying that he would bring Kaśka. But he did not go to Sącz, only to the house of Paszon in Osowo, and there told him the same—that he married Paszon's daughter Halka in Cleveland in America, that he is his son-in-law. Paszon drew the money out and gave it him. He took it and went. Paszon waited one day, two days, three days—

¹ The friendship between Hejmej and Witkowski is certainly based upon some kind of relationship, probably cousinship; the allusions to common work prove that there was also some business-partnership, perhaps renting of land. The relation is close enough to involve some sacrifice and interference with the marriage-group. The control which Hejmej exerts upon his wife through his relatives and friends is not an isolated case; we have seen other instances of it. It does not mean that the relation between the husband and the controlling friend is closer than that between the husband and the wife, but merely that since marriage is a familial and social matter, the conjugal relation can be controlled by any member of the family or community, even spontaneously, the more so when in the name of the husband. The friend acts as substitute of the husband and representative of the group. And accordingly the husband never asks that the side of his wife's life be controlled which is reserved for conjugal privacy and has not a social character, i.e., sexual fidelity. There is gossip, of course, when a break of fidelity is suspected, but only because such a break brings the sexual problem out of the sphere of conjugal privacy.

neither son-in-law nor daughter! It was some thief. Only he must have learned somewhere what he knew—that our Kaśka is in New York and Paszon's Halka in Cleveland. Paszon did not even have the money but borrowed it and gave it to such a thief. . . .¹

And now the price of vodka has gone up here to 1 crown 20 hellers for a liter, and formerly, as you know, it was 40 cents [80 hellers]. And there are much fewer taverns than formerly, and now it is no longer called a tavern, but a *consens*, as formerly *propinacya*. And therefore they have imposed higher taxes, and whoever makes anything, either tailor or shoemaker or blacksmith or potter, when he wants to work must have a trade-permission which costs up to 30 gulden or 60 crowns. And whoever does not pay, all his tools are taken away from him, and a constable with a mayor goes to him and he can make nothing until he has paid the tax. Such a misery is now here, in this poor Galicia. . . .

Your sister,

ROZALIA HEJMEJ

651

January 22, 1914

RESPECTED WOJCIECH: We speak to you these words: "Praised be Jesus Christus, born of the Holiest Virgin Mary" [rhymed].

Dear Wojciech, we write to you this letter and we ask you about your dear health and success. As to us all in the commune, we are in good health, except Michal Bodziony who is ill, and our success is as usual in Mokrawieś.

Now we inform you that we received your letter for which we are very glad in the whole community, and we thank you for writing to us. Dear Wojciech, we inform you that winter is severe in our country, severe cold and enough of snow-hills, for we cannot go through by any way. Now we inform you that we divided the birchwood near

¹ The credulity of the old man, so contrary to the usual suspiciousness of the peasant, is due to the revolution which American emigration has brought into the peasant life. While in normal condition a marriage of the daughter without the parents' knowledge and with a man absolutely unknown would be impossible, everything seems possible in America. As we have said elsewhere, the peasant's ideas and prepossessions are so completely adapted to his normal conditions of life, that once outside of these conditions he loses all feeling of proportion, all appreciation of probability and improbability. Extremely difficult to cheat within the sphere of his habitual acts and conceptions, he becomes the prey of any stupid combination when he can no longer apply his usual criteria.

Wrzary, but not the pinewood, because winter interrupted us. As to Franek, up to the present, he manages well enough, and we don't know how it will be further. Now we inform you that Józek Hejmej is getting married in Gostwina, in the house of Plata, and Wojtek Stawczak married Kubalanka, that one in the house of Jasiek Bodziony.

Dear Wojciech, we are glad that you intend to stay only long enough to pay back your worst debts. We all wish you it with our whole heart, may God the Holiest help you and grant you happiness, health and good success, that you may return sound to your native village, because although it seems that there is misery in the village, at least it is gay.

We end our words and we all, farmers and friends, greet you, together with our wives, most heartily innumerable times, and we wish you for this New Year happiness, health, fortune and after leaving this world a Heavenly crown [rhymed].

Now I greet you, Wojciech, I, son of Maciuś from Rogi, i.e., the Mayor, and I greet you also heartily, I, the Mayor's wife, i.e., Zwolińska. Now I greet you, Wojtuś, I, Jan Hejmej, very heartily. Be healthy, dear Wojciech, until we see you again. May God grant it.¹

Yours forever well-wishing,

JAN ZWOLIŃSKI, *Mayor*

I signed,

J[AN] H[EJMJ]

Our [J. H.'s?] grandmother greets you.

[Communal seal.]

DEAR WOJCIECH: First I thank you for your letter which I received on July 2, and I thank you for remembering us. As to our health, about which you ask, it is as usual, and our success, as in Galicia; it cannot be praised, because in Galicia there has been always misery and there will be further misery. Money is always lacking.

¹ The letter is written in the name of the whole commune. In Galicia, where the commune is autonomous, it plays a much greater rôle than in Russian Poland, where it is controlled by the Russian government. We have no other example of such a letter, and probably in this case the fact that it was written is due to the familial relation between the secretary of the commune and Wojciech Hejmej. It is a very good manifestation of the attitude of the social community toward its individual member.



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inform you that she died on August 23, but don't grieve, dear son, for all this comes from God. When somebody said that your arm was torn away this poor girl wept so much because of you that we could not appease her in any way. When she was dying she asked about you, where you were, because she had already forgotten herself [her mind wandered]. So she asked where you were, and when we told her that you were in America, she said: "Then we shall not see each other any more." She kept her reason up to her death. But don't grieve, dear son, because she is happy already, since she died, for she won't have any more terror, while we don't know of what a death we shall perish [because of the war]. I don't write you any more about it, for you know better than we do, only I inform you that there is no man among us except the old ones; all the others went to the army. . . . Now we beg you, answer us at once when you receive this letter, because we are curious where you find yourself. If you are getting on well, thank God, if badly, then it is the same as here.

We greet you, all of us, dear brother. Answer us at once in order that we may still read a letter from you. Don't be angry, dear brother, with me for having not written nicely, but all this is from grief. Amen.

[Your father,
HEJMEJ]¹

¹ Dictated by the father to the daughter.

PEDEWSKI SERIES

A typical situation, showing the persistence of the old attitudes in courtship. The girls in question evidently do not lack suitors, as they have two proposals within a short time from America. This, upon the ground of the familial psychology, explains the lack of encouragement of which Pedewski complains in his letters. At the same time Pedewski's own attitude is also characteristic. He wants to marry into the family, and it is for him a secondary matter which one of the sisters accepts him, though he shows a marked preference for one of them. His rival, although he asks explicitly for the favor of one of the sisters, puts the matter upon a familial basis.

654-56, FROM STANISŁAW PEDEWSKI AND BRONISŁAW KOWALSKI, IN AMERICA, TO THE FAMILY JAZOSKI AND TO OTHERS, IN POLAND

654

. TITUSVILLE, PA., April 27, 1913

In the first words of my letter I speak to you, Julcia and Kostusia, with those godly words: "Praised be Jesus Christus."

Now I inform you about my success. Thanks to God, I am doing very well because there is sufficient work, and it will continue so in America, and bosses will go out to Castle Garden seeking workmen. Now I beg you to write me what is to be heard in the old country. And now I ask you what I am [what you take me for] and what is this you are speaking against me. I do not think that I have merited so badly. I never did you any harm. When I was at home, I would have given everything to you, even if you had asked for my blood. And now, when I wrote you a letter, you go about the village and you tell everybody that if it were not for your dislike of making something of nothing you would send it back to America. Was there something disagreeable in that letter? I do not know. See here, you know that I am such a man that if somebody turns me in any way, I go

there. You asked me to write. I wrote. But if you ladies are not quite satisfied with it, then I can do nothing more. I shall still find a girl for me. The reason of my writing is only the fact that I called so often upon you, Kostusia, that I considered your parents like my own. I always said that I must be a son-in-law of the Jazoskis. Although Julcia did not care for me, I said that if not her, I should marry Kostusia. But clearly you despise me, because Julcia turned up her nose at me too, when I was in the old country. [Unintelligible sentence.] But I do not care what people are saying and I do what I wish. And now, dear Julcia and Kostusia, don't mind about what I wrote; you answered me and so I write this letter. But as to the Michalskis [the girls who did the gossiping], I wish that as they have already become old they may further become public women, as a reward for this barking of theirs, for it is the Michalskis who barked all this. When Siembozak left they told him that you spoke badly about me, and Siembozak, when he came here, repeated it to me. And now, if you have the wish to come to me, write, but not directly, only after I send you a second letter, because I am going to another city and your letter will possibly not find me. I have nothing more to write, only I salute you and your parents. I hope to see you soon and happy in America.

STANISŁAW PE[DEWSKI]

[An unintelligible sentence follows.]

655

September 2, 1913

[Usual greetings to his friends Franciszek and Juliusz.] I got your letter for which I thank you heartily. And now, dear companion, you ask me about my success in America. Well, let God help you in our country, that you may do as well; then you would not lack anything. I do very well. In the beginning I was a little homesick, but now I have already forgotten about it. I have very good and easy work; I can say that I don't work at all, I only stand in an iron-foundry. I am working in a bolersap [boiler-shop]. I have 26 roubles wages weekly, counting in our country's money. Time goes on very quickly in America, you don't notice when the week is passed, and of money we have our pockets full. Three of us are here from one village, Siembozak, and Wojteczek Zegleniak. We have music every day. Wojteczek organized a quartet, taking besides himself a clarinet, an accordeon and a trumpet, and they play



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And now I speak to your daughters and sons and in general [*sic*] to Miss Konstancya. Very politely I beg you to excuse me for not writing for so long a time, but it was because I have the intention of returning to our country and then we shall speak together by words. And now I announce to Miss Konstancya and to Mr. and Mrs. Jazoski that I should be glad to live in the family Jazoski, but I do not know sufficiently if I can beg very politely Miss Konstancya to give me a good word, and also Mr. and Mrs. Jazoski, because I think now of returning soon to my country. That is the end of my letter. What more I have to write I shall do it in another letter, only I request you to answer me quickly. And now I have nothing more to write. [Usual greetings.]

BRONISŁAW KOWALSKI

KAZIMIERZ F. SERIES

This is the only case we have in which a girl plans to bring her betrothed to America, and we have never heard of a similar case. At any rate, a manor-servant like Kazimierz F., lacking strong familial consciousness and having the habit of dependence, would lend himself more readily to a situation of this kind than the farming peasant, with his characteristic pride in money matters. The girl who sent us the letters evidently felt some shame in doing so, as she had attempted to erase the phrases relating to the marriage question, as well as everything indicating a familiar relation. But the erasures are not complete and not systematic. A remnant of this feeling is left in the man also, but rather in the form of yielding to social opinion. (Cf. Nos. 659, 660.)

The girl married another man two years later, and Kazimierz came to America helped by his relatives. The girl's husband has read the letters, as it was he who sent them in her name. Clearly there is no retrospective jealousy, since he allowed her to keep them after the marriage.

657-60, FROM KAZIMIERZ F., IN POLAND, TO HIS
BETROTHED, IN AMERICA

657

LAZY, October 10, 1910

DEAR MANIECZKA: I received the postcards from you on the way and also one from America. Pardon me, dear Manieczka for not having answered you at once, but I expected soon to have a letter [from you], but I have none and I am obliged to write. Dear Manieczka, don't believe that I forgot about you, or anything like this. No, I don't expect ever to forget you. If you knew how I am longing without you! Not a single hour passes without my thinking of you,

not an evening passes without my remembering those moments which we spent in the garden every evening ["which evening" erased by the owner of the letters]. Don't forget about me, don't allow anybody to turn your head. Be true to me in America as [you were] in our country ["as country" erased]. You are for me ["You me" erased] the only one, and I ["and I" erased] ought to be also [the only one] for you. Dear Manieczka, such is my love for you ["such you" erased], that wherever I am, whether at some entertainment or in some conversation, I am always thinking ["always thinking" erased] about you. Yes, dear Manieczka, nothing interests me now any more. I think only of you, my thoughts fled with you. Dear Manieczka, on the following Sunday, October 23, I shall go to Turek [military call]. What will be the result for me, I don't know yet. As soon as I learn I will write you at once. I beg you for an answer. Write me how do you like America. Are you merry, have you already any job and how much do you earn ["job earn" erased]? Please write me about your journey, how long did you both go? Send me your photograph, only the soonest possible. I have now nothing more to write, only I send you salutations from [your?] parents. I send also salutations for your brother and sister-in-law, and for you, Manieczka, hearty greeting, a low bow, a kiss ["low kiss" erased] and a hearty hand shake. . . . I wish you good success and [I add] the old Polish "God make you happy."

With respect,

I, your ["I, your" erased]

KAZIMIERZ

658

November 20, 1910

DEAR MERKA: [erased; probably because pet name for "Marya," "Manieczka."] I received your letter and I answer you at once. First I must write you about my military service, how I succeeded. I can now be happy. I don't know whether our Lord God guarded me or what else, but I was exempted. . . . Don't be angry, dear Merka [erased], for my not having written to you anything from Turek, but I was not sure of your first address only now I can write to you more often ["I can often" erased]. I am very glad that you arrived so happily and that you got work at once. Dear Manieczka, I was about a month in Turek, but



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it will be good for us both some day. You know well my thoughts, my dear Mania, I don't need to write you much, for I think always one and the same. I would write you more, but I leave it for another time. . . .

KAZIMIERZ

660

March 1, 1911

DEAR MANIECZKA: I received both your letters. . . . After receiving the first I was somewhat grieved, but when I got the second I was relieved and very glad. Evidently you wanted only to frighten me with that first letter. But I did not lose hope even so, because I knew that you only feigned, that you wanted to convince yourself what thoughts I have. Dear Manieczka, don't think that I am also feigning like some clown. No, it is not so bad! I remember up to the present what we so often spoke about, and up to the present I keep the same line of conduct. Dear Manieczka, you write me that you intend to send me \$50. I thank you very much. My father here will give me the rest. \$50 would not be enough but I will try to get the remainder ["to send . . . remainder" erased], so that I may have money enough for the journey and something left in America. Dear Manieczka, I beg you also, as soon as you get this letter, write me at once, that I may be sure how to manage. As to sending money [home], why are you so much disturbed, while I don't hear your father murmuring at all. If you are afraid people will talk too much about us in Lazy, I advise you to send the money to Lotka's address. She will go to Slupca to the post-office, will get it and nobody will know. I beg you, dear Manieczka, don't disappoint me, for I confide in you totally and I think that I can do so, that I don't err in this. . . . Dear Manieczka, I won't write you any love-words about this. We will talk when we see each other in America. What is the use of scribbling this upon the paper? Nothing can result from it. But I give you my word of honor that all will be well. I beg you, dear Manieczka, for a speedy and good answer, that we may see each other the soonest possible. . . .

KAZIMIERZ

ARCISZEWSKI SERIES

These letters, written by and addressed to various persons, have one common feature. They show a very general type of friendly relation among young boys of the present generation who have already dropped most of the traditional attitudes and feel rather free from familial rigorism, who are in a period of life when practical interests do not yet constitute the main aim of life, and who have neither tendencies to self-development nor social ideals. In these conditions, their main interest is amusement—dancing, flirting, merry conversations, etc. And this is also the basis of their friendship. An interesting point is that all three, at the period when these letters were written, have confronted for the first time different serious problems of life—Stefan, the problem of adaptation to American conditions; J. Wiater, that of military service; Borowski, the problems which the revolution of 1905 put before the Polish youth. And, as should be expected, all three of them react negatively. Wiater's reaction is rather normal, but Stefan shows a more than normal inaptitude for sentimental adaptation, while Borowski remains almost completely passive in the midst of powerful national and social movements.

The love-relation, which constituted so important a part of the content of the letters, has also the character of play. It is no longer a mere preparation for marriage, and not yet a serious matter in itself.

661-65, FROM STEFAN ARCISZEWSKI, IN AMERICA, TO FRIENDS, IN POLAND, AND TWO LETTERS (664, 665) REPRESENTING THE SAME TYPE OF ATTITUDES IN OTHER BOYS

661

BREMEN, November 28 [1913]

[Greetings and wishes.]

DEAR COMPANION: I inform you about my health and success. I am in good health, which I wish to you also with all my heart. Now, dear companion, Czesio, I am now near the sea, in Bremen; the city is so called. I got over the frontier all right, and from Błowo also I got on well enough, and I don't know how it will be from now on. Dear companion Czesio, please write me the news about yourself. As to me, I am very sad here. And I request you, dear companion, learn how my betrothed, Miss Helena is behaving, whether she is pining or not. I beg you, my companion, write me about her, because I am very sad without her. You know well that I love her. But no matter, the dog may have her. [I don't care.] When you write to me, get her address, and I request you, dear companion, send me the address of Miss Zaleska. I beg you once more, dear companion, let me know how Helena is behaving. I request you, Czesio, write to me whether she wept or not after my departure. I have nothing more to write, but only I send you, dear companion, and to all my acquaintances, the lowest bow.

I, truly well-wishing,

STEFAN ARCISZEWSKI

662

AMSTERDAM, N.Y., March 2, 1914

RESPECTED COMPANION: Since the moment we parted, I have received one letter and have no tidings since. I came to this massive, golden whore [America], but I feel terribly sad, because here if you have no money, "Don't put your nose" [anywhere]. I am sitting without work and I don't know what will happen, whether things will get better or not. A terribly great number of people walk about without work. Now, before *Zapusty* [last six days before Lent] they go and break railway-cars, because they have nothing to eat. Michal works a little, but I cannot get work. What is the news in our country? Is there any probability of war? For here it is heard that in our country there will be war. If only there were a change



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what will happen; bad times are coming. Now, dear Czesio, I beg you, describe what is the news about yourself, because I am curious. If I had not listened to my mother I should have earned more. Mother wanted me to go to America, and I didn't want to go. If I had not come, I should have done better. I didn't intend to come to America before spring and now here it is very bad. Factories are stopped, there is no work. Now, dear companion Czesio, write to me about the girls, whether they long for me or not, because I am very curious. Tell me about them, and particularly about Miss Sobierajska. Is she longing for me or not? I beg you with all my heart. My best companion, I beg you now once more, Czesio, what success does my old girl have now in the carnival? If there are to be weddings, please inform me who has got married either near the barracks or in the town, or in the village among our acquaintances. Here I have no acquaintance, and therefore I am very sad and I long terribly for my native country.

Now, dear companion Czesio, I beg you, send me, if you can, some nice Polish recitals [poems for recital] and some new waltzes.

Lowest bow to you, Czesio. Lowest bow from Michal.

I, truly well-wishing,

STEFAN

Now, dear companion Czesio, please salute from me Miss Bronislawa Piotroska, and all the girls with whom we are acquainted. Now, dear companion Czesio, you have no idea what a longing got me. I don't regret anything else, but only the carnival. Now in our country they will amuse and rejoice themselves, and myself, I am sitting here, as in a prison. If I had known it, I would never in the world have sacrificed myself and come to America.

Now, dear companion Czesio, lowest bow to yourself and to your sister and parents, and to Wladyslaw and Franuś, and to all our acquaintances.

I, truly well-wishing, and loving you,

STEV ARTER

DEAREST COMPANION: First I thank you for your memory. . . . I got your address from your brother Stanislaw and I answer you. . . . I have been at home for 6 weeks after coming from America.

As to the lots, I drew No. 51 and I am received into the army. . . . Know it, dear companion, that if I had not to go to the army I should not hold out at home; there are no companions, nowhere to go. Our Gorzków has quite declined.¹ But what a girl I have found now! I will write you in another letter, for I don't know yet whether she will wait for me [until my return from the army].

[Enumerates those taken into the army and those exempted.] We shall have still 9 days for revelry at home, and then to Chelm. [Enumerates the marriages and betrothals.] People marry, dog's blood! [*Psiakrew*, popular oath.] And I shall also have a wedding in Chelm, but with the accursed *Kacap* [nickname for "Russian"]. Send me to the army 10 gallons of whiskey. I will feed these Moscovites so that cholera will take them! Pardon me, dear companion, for writing you in such an ugly way, but the devils almost take me [I am furious]. Why should I serve these whores' sons? Dam it.²

I wish you every good with my whole heart.

Yours,

JAN WIATER

665

PRZASNYSZ, October 12, 1906

DEAR STAŚ: I begin this letter with the words, "Praised be Jesus Christus," and surely, were it not for the far space which does not let me hear your answer, I should hear, "In centuries of centuries. Amen."

I have been working for two months in a notary's office. I have had not much work up to the present, but although I have a little free time I cannot enjoy evening walks as during your presence here, for there is a state of war and it is forbidden to walk without a lantern and a passport. There are patrols upon the street who arrest those who walk without lanterns. . . . I do it and I succeed. Terrible things are going on in our country, beyond description. In Warsaw nothing but bombs and brownings. . . . Constables are

¹ It is an evident sign of the decline of the old territorial group when young people need the attraction of companionship and amusements in order to stay at home. This decline is one of the factors making emigration so easy and is itself hastened by emigration.

² The hate of the Russians is particularly strong among the peasants of this province, which suffered a very violent religious persecution during the second half of the nineteenth century. It was mainly inhabited by Uniates.

killed, as well as the bigger fishes. . . . Not long ago our military governor was killed. In Łódź there is a general strike and court-martial. Every day a few men are hung or shot. The prisons are overfilled. . . . In our town a school-association has been organized, but the Sokols have been dissolved by the government. . . .

The girls look very well, particularly Walercia. Boleś K. preaches morals to her in a way which seems very pleasant for her. . . . Polcia looks as you have never seen her—a dress two yards and a half, a hat three yards in circumference, and herself grown up, a yard and a half tall, and she dreams already about everything that is suitable. In general the girls are nice, but they will probably be obliged to hire us for talking, for they are eager to talk, and the boys won't. . . . Walercia feels a terrible sympathy for you. And how is the matter with you? Inform me, for if you feel anything toward her I will try, for my friend's sake, to send Boleś away in some way; why should he spoil the matter? It seems to me that the thing ought to be taken up at once, for he tramples much around her. May he not succeed at last. . . .

Your truly loving companion,

BOROWSKI



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nowhere and speaks with nobody, so nobody knows; but perhaps somebody will yet happen [to buy them]. When anything new happens I will write. I urged Kazimierz to write, but the lazy fellow did not wish to do it; he preferred to read papers and told me to write. . . .¹

KAZIMIERZ and WŁADYSŁAWA [KOWALSKI]

667

March 15, 1914

DEAR BROTHER: Before all I must answer about this contract. You say that it is our own fault, for renting it. It is true. But if Kazimierz had looked into it himself and had relied upon nobody else, it would not be so bad. But he relied upon our uncle; he took uncle with him and was sure that everything was all right. But it is not as when you were here, Antoni, because you did [for us] as for yourself, and our uncle cannot know how it will fall out for us, whether good or bad. And then, all this was done without any reflection, because it was so: One afternoon Nowicki came with the Neumanns and asked whether we would not rent [the property], but [said] that they wanted absolutely to live in it themselves. But as the Maślińskis intended to move away we said to each other that it would be very well, since it happened that one person wanted to take it all [the whole place] and at least there would be no trouble with the lodgers. We were to reflect how to do, and they went away. In the evening they came back and said that it would be well to make the contract at once. Kazimierz went directly to our uncle in order to ask his advice, and took uncle with him and relied upon him entirely, thinking that when he looked into it everything would be all right. But with uncle it is not as with you; uncle does not mind much what is better and what worse for us. He knows only how to say [after the thing is done] what somebody did bad and what good. If Kazimierz had more thought about everything himself instead of looking to and relying upon other people, everything would have turned out differently, because nobody can advise him [properly] in everything; he alone can know everything himself, since he knows all his own conditions the best. He complains that you told him always to ask uncle's advice, and that uncle did not

¹ The complaint in this and the following letter of the negligent behavior of the husband is to be qualified by the fact that she addresses herself to the husband's brother and not to an outsider. Even so, it is not in accordance with the tradition.

advise him. . . . We had no time to ask your advice, and we did not think that the contract was already valid; we thought that it must still be approved by the court, and that up to that time it was possible to draw back. . . . Since you went away we have been in a worse situation than in the year when we got married, because we had to pay all the expenses alone, and Kazimierz did not work in the winter and worked badly in the summer, . . . and there is no other income. If I only could earn something! But in Miloslaw there is nothing to be done; I will not go and steal from the forest. . . .

Zosia Kupś got married in the winter. . . . And Marynia is getting ready to go to the convent. She sends greetings to you and said that you caused her much grief . . . but she is no longer angry. Perhaps you want to see the last of her; I have her photograph, taken not long ago . . . so I send it to you . . . but please send it back, because if I don't have it she can be angry with me for having sent it so far away. In a year she will certainly [she says], go to the convent, but I don't know whether it is not feigned. A man courted her lately, but she refused him. . . . If you wish, write some words to Marynia; she will be glad, I think.¹

KAZIMIERZ and WŁADYSŁAWA

668

PALCZYN, January 5, 1913

DEAR ANTONI: . . . I ask you now whether you spent the holidays happily and gaily, and what served for amusement, cards or dances. But that is perhaps not fashionable in America. We played cards during both holidays, for what could we do? It rained and snowed—impossible to go anywhere. On the first day we could hardly get to Mr. Przybysz's to amuse ourselves a little there. It is a pity, dear Antoni, that you are not here. But nothing can be done. Perhaps we shall yet live together and amuse ourselves, as we did formerly. Lucyan came also for the holidays, but for 3 days only. We have amused ourselves for the last time in the house of the Przybyszs, because I must also inform you that poor Mr. Przybysz is very unfortunate. He has convulsions, and therefore he ceased to

¹ The romantic attachment here is completely different from what we find normally among peasants. No peasant girl would be heartbroken through the failure of the man for whom she cared to marry her, because no strong love can grow out of mere acquaintance on the basis of the traditional peasant attitude, unless it has terminated in sexual relations, and we have no ground to assume that this is the case here.

perform his [government?] service and must move away from here. So after the holidays I went with him to the house of Drzewiecki. He lives now quietly there. He is not so bad, but after these attacks he speaks wanderingly. It is a pity, because he was a good man; he wished nobody any wrong. Miss Bronia was also with the Przybyszs until Christmas, so I went there often and we amused ourselves nicely. But now all this has come to an end; Mr. Przybysz is in Miloslaw, Bronia in Jaworów. It is a pity, for all is over.

Yesterday I was also with Kazimierz and his wife, and I saw at last that they had decided to answer your four letters—so they said. Isn't that a villany! When they want something they know how to write but when they have got what they want it is difficult for them to send you their note [promise to pay]. As if you did not figure in it at all! I told them it was not nice of them. Władzia answered that it was the affair of Kazimierz. But I said that they both deserved a good beating, because Kazimierz is an exceedingly negligent fellow, and she is such a bad "muzzle." But you know yourself, my dear, how it was; it is the same now. She read me your letter, and they said that you want a note from them but according to their calculation you still owe them 300 marks. But what is the need of those other expenses besides the new building? A nice administration is it not? Do as you will, but I tell you that you will never come to an understanding with them. When you were here you had trouble and grief more than once, and now they do as they please. If I were you, after receiving that note I would send them nothing, but I would demand the interest, and then we should see how it would go with them. As long as you associate with them you will never have money; you will work for the benefit of others. Evidently, it is not my affair, but as I promised you, I inform you. But please don't betray me, because Janczak lives in good friendship with them. . . .

Your true and well-wishing friend,

STANISŁAW R.

October 10, 1913

[Greetings; generalities about health; letters written and received; harvest was good.] Now I write you about Kazimierz and his wife. As you know already, they rented that farm. For 10 years he [the tenant] will pay 700 marks yearly. My father assisted, so I inform you more exactly about it, because from what you wrote to them and



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. . . . I live like Adam driven away from Paradise. I have few friends, so I don't know where to go. Sometimes I go to Janczak and we play the violin a little. As to those tenants, they are getting on badly. It seems to me that they will not remain for a long time. He paid little to Kazimierz, because his situation is bad. . . . Now I ask you, dear Antoni, whether that gun has been of any use to you . . . and whether that suit is fashionable now in America. . . . Here it rains continually . . . mud up to the knees. Frost and snow would be preferable; one could kill some game more easily. But the hares have all been shot, and there are very few deer. My shooting is bad this year. I have a bad gun. I miss yours. . . .

STANISŁAW R.

671

April 6, 1914

DEAR FRIEND: First of all I wish you, dear friend, healthy and merry holidays. Perhaps you will spend better holidays than I here, and particularly Kazimierz, for an accident happened to him, because he is too good, and moreover a fool. On the first of the month he needed money. He went to his tenant, who owed him 350 marks of rent for half a year. But Neumann was not at home. He went on the 2d. Neumann was eating dinner and said that he must finish it. All this because he had no money. On the third day at 7 o'clock P.M. [Neumann] sent his servant-girl asking Kazimierz to come for the money. Kazimierz, as you know, is good natured. Though it was the duty of Neumann to bring him money, because the law is so, Kazimierz went for the money. Neumann put the money on the table and told him to take it. Kazimierz said: "I must first count it, whether there is enough." . . . And K. counted the money. Suddenly N. seized him and pushed him away from the table. They began to push each other and suddenly N. seized a stick and wounded K. on the head badly enough. K. went bleeding to the doctor, and the next day also he wanted the doctor to come. So Władzia came here and related all this to my father. And father said: "You see, that is what you get for your kindness. Why did not Kazimierz take a chair and split his head? Moreover, what do you want? You wished to go to America, and now you complain [you were in a hurry to rent the house and to leave]." Then Władzia said: "You were present when we made the contract. Why did you not say

anything?" Father got so angry that he cursed her and swore at her, for you know how he can do it. Władzia fled. . . . The next day K. went to a lawyer and told the whole matter. Neumann had already entered a suit on the ground of the invasion of his home. I don't know how it will end. I will write you more later. Neumann is a strong antagonist and it is a pity that you are not here; you would perhaps defeat him. . . .¹ I called yesterday on Kazimierz, but I did not find him or his wife at home, but my aunt [mother of Antoni and Kazimierz] told me the whole affair and asked me to inform you. She said that she herself took the money for the holy mass [to the priest]. She said that with you she had it much better and that she does not like very much [to live with Kazimierz].

STANISŁAW R.

¹ This whole quarrel has probably also a racial background. Neumann is a German or of German extraction.

FRYZOWICZ SERIES

Type of sentimental friendship, rare among country people but found sometimes among town people of the handworker class. This form of sentimentality is probably due to the influence of religious life in towns—bigotry, ceremoniousness, fraternities with their superficial humanitarianism, complicated devotion, and lack of practical interests. At the same time the sedentary occupation favors reflective attitudes. Consequently among this class of people sentiment as such assumes a value which it never has among peasants, where it is immediately converted into a motive of action. The same can be said about intellectual life. An impersonal interest in the same phenomena is sufficient to create a communion between individuals, while among peasants there must be always a certain solidarity of personal interests to give rise to a friendship.

In the present case the type is not perfectly pure. Fryzowicz is indeed a small handworker and a typical town inhabitant, but his correspondent, Wojciech, besides his handwork has a farm, as frequently happens in small towns. These townsmen-farmers are the natural intermediary class between the peasants and the lower bourgeoisie, although they are not numerous enough to play an important part in social organization.



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may our Lord God give you health for a hundred years, since you treat me so nicely. . . .¹

Now I inform you . . . that the winter here is very good . . . nice weather during the whole carnival; so beautiful that it is a joy to live in the world!

And then I inform you who got married. [Enumerates 10 weddings.] And Józek Hejmejak [son of Hejmej] was to marry in Gostwica, in the house of [the daughter of] the former mayor Plata; the wedding was to be on Wednesday before the end of the carnival. But it got spoiled because they could not come to an understanding, for Hejmej refused to will [to his son] the whole *pólrolek* [ancient division of land; literally "half a field"; now it means a farm of a certain size].

And then I inform you who died. [Enumerates seven persons. Greetings and wishes.]

JAKÓB FRYZOWICZ

673

April 19, 1913

. . . . Go, little letter, on the journey, because I cannot go myself. Fly, little letter, across mountains and valleys to the distant country, fly across waters and rivers as far as America. When you find the house of my brother, stand at the threshold and praise our Lord God. When you are near, bow low to my brother, and when you are nearer, bow still lower, and stand in a corner and say in a low voice into my brother's ear that you come from Little Kubina [contemptful form of Kuba, itself diminutive form of Jakób] from Łyskownice, from the one who sews *górnice* [kind of clothes] and beg him, little letter, to accept you, beg my brother to take you in his hands, and tell him that Kuba wrote below whatever [news] he heard.²

First of all, my heartily beloved brother I greet you. . . . My legs are not yet quite well, but perhaps I shall recover slowly. May God reward you a hundred fold for your advice, what to do in order to recover sooner. And [I wish] heartily that God may reward you for your letter. . . . And I thank you very nicely for the snuff-tobacco

¹ Accepting the gifts in this case puts the man in a certain situation of inferiority. He is a *komornik*, without land, while his friend is a farmer. The gifts belong to the class of property, not of income, and the reason for giving them is not social solidarity, but personal friendship.

² The whole of the preceding introduction is in verse.

which you sent me in the letter. I laughed that you are such a frolicsome fellow and knew how to rejoice me. And I thank you for answering me at once.

And now I must speak with you and have an explanation. Why are you not satisfied when I speak or write to you *wy* and not *ty* ["you" and not "thou"]. I think it [W.] is a very nice letter. Why do you not like it? You cannot do without it at any rate, because how can anybody omit it in speaking to you, either "Wojciech" [more reverential, full form of the name] or "Wojtek" [more familiar form]. But I cannot agree with you [about speaking "thou" instead of "you"], unless—if our Lord God gives health to us both and we live long enough—when you return from America we shall both tend hornless animals [pigs]. Then I shall have more boldness and I will say "thou" to you.¹ So now I love you with my heart and I respect you with my love, and I wish you every good. [More wishes.] Now I inform you that in Kalwarya † Priest Podworski is dead, the same who sent us images and in Lwów † is dead Priest Adam Weszolicki, editor of *Gazeta Niedzielną*. [Four more priests who died.] And now in Podegrodzie we have another priest-vicar. . . . And in Nowy Sącz a student tried to drown himself on a fair-day. . . . And in Stary Sącz a thief stole 400 crowns from a shoemaker. . . . And the weather is very beautiful. . . . And the watches which you repaired keep going. . . . And the highway is made now near Józek Duda[’s farm]. [Wishes and greetings.]

KUBA FRYZOWICZ

674

June 12, 1914

[General introduction in very bad verse; greetings; health; etc.]. I love you heartily, so I ought to write more often to you, but I am so hindered, because I must sew the whole day, and when Sunday comes I have also occupation; some come to speak about work, others to take the clothes. So I write you down whatever I heard from other people. In Podegrodzie there will be a cloister [a church] founded, on the spot where Mrs. Stroska has a small shop. . . . They will pay her as much as she asks, but she must move away from that place and field, because at that place was born Jan Papczyński,

¹ "Did he tend pigs with you?" is a proverbial saying, used when an inferior assumes undue familiarity with his superior. The whole paragraph is, of course, a manifestation of the writer's humility.

and he is a saint. He was born 213 years ago, he founded a cloister of Marians under the Muscovite, and now two are left from this congregation. The Muscovite drove them away from his land, and they came to Cracow and they are in Cracow, and on St. Jakób's Day they will come to Podegrodzie, and one of them will preach, and they will settle in Podegrodzie forever. . . . And this I inform you, that our priest went with pilgrims from Cracow to Jerusalem, to Bethlehem, to Nazareth, to the mountain of St. John. The land Palestina is in Turkey. . . . And further I inform you that in Podegrodzie there is an orchestra of twenty musicians. . . . And further I inform you that 7 men have been called to the army from Gostwica. . . . And our Jasiek lost his watch; they went for birchwood . . . and he lost it in the bushes. He went twice to search for it, but he did not find it, and he promised the people who gather wood money for finding it . . . and he went to a fortune-teller in Sącz that she might foretell whether he would find it or not, and she told him that he would find it, and indeed 3 weeks later . . . a man found it and Józef gave him 2 *szóstki* and got the watch. . . . And Błasiak Michal . . . sits in prison. . . . He is to sit 4 months for having wounded the hands of Plata with a knife, and he is also to pay him 150 gulden for cutting his hands. [Describes in two pages how the man was arrested.]

JAKÓB FRYZOWICZ

675

August 2, 1914

MY DEARLY BELOVED BROTHER . . . : I was very glad when I received your letter and I read it with joy, but when I came to the passage about your accident, your misfortune, that your leg has been so injured, then I wept. But nobody saw it except our Lord God alone, because nobody was looking when I read the letter; nobody knows and nobody will know what you wrote to me, because not everybody ought to know what your condition is.¹ I love you heartily and I pity you because your strength is so weakened for how can you walk and work when your legs are aching. But nothing can be done.

¹ We find here the implicit admission that sickness, and misfortune in general, are things to be ashamed of and not to be spoken of before strangers. This attitude may be perhaps explained by individual psychology, but it is possible that it points back to the more primitive social identification of physical and moral evil in a unique magical evil principle.



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and went to the church, to confession, and on Sunday to the army and to the war!

And so, dear brother, it looks in our country. What will follow, God only knows—how it will end. The priests and the papers say that people ought not to care about it, because such is the will of God, and everybody must agree with the will of God.

And now you write me not to pay for my letters. But I should be ashamed to do it; even if the postage cost a crown, what does it mean in comparison with brotherly love. You pay also when you write to me, and surely you don't regret it, because it is done willingly and freely, without any compulsion.

JAKÓB FRYZOWICZ

OSINIAK SERIES

The letters of Osiniak, with the introductory letter of his friend, Leon Mazanek, present in an isolated and magnified form two attitudes which, while seldom quite conscious, play an important part in the life of the Polish country-people, particularly when it comes to an adjustment to modern conditions. Those attitudes are love of nature and love of personal independence.

The aesthetic love of nature arises when for some reason the utilitarian and the mythical attitudes disappear. One example of this evolution is shown in the peasant literary production. Here the imitation of existing literary models develops an aesthetic attitude, and immediately we find a very intense productivity in the line of descriptions of nature. Another example is the life of which Osiniak's letters give us a description—the life of poachers, foresters, bee-keepers, etc., whose utilitarian attitude toward nature finds a much narrower field than that of a farmer, and in whom some instruction has destroyed the mythical beliefs without destroying the feelings which accompanied them. In the case of Osiniak and his friend the aesthetic attitude could develop particularly easily because they are sons of town inhabitants and had not the traditional utilitarianism of the farmer to overcome.

As to the love of personal independence, it is perfectly natural among handworkers of a small town, who have for many generations worked at their own risk and profit in their own small shops. It would seem, on the contrary, that this feature could hardly have developed among peasants under conditions of serfdom. But this is not the

case, and for the following reasons: (1) Serfdom had innumerable degrees, from the absolute subordination, amounting to slavery, of the landless personal servant of the lord, up to the almost complete liberty of the crown and church peasants. (2) In the normal type of serfdom the peasant-farmer had only to give a part of his time to the lord, while he disposed freely of the rest, and this continual contrast between compulsory work and free work must have helped to originate and to keep alive a conscious appreciation of independence. (3) The interference of the lord or the government with the peasant's personal life was limited to important and rare occasions, while in his everyday life the peasant was bound only by the social opinion of his equals. This explains the fact that the peasant appreciates much more this liberty of the everyday life than more important social and political liberties, and at the same time the seeming paradox that he hates the detailed organization and limitation of individual life in modern industrial cities, while he complies with it almost without opposition. He hates it because he sees no equivalent in free citizenship for the lost independence of everyday life, and he complies with it because he is accustomed to comply with any authority, for during centuries the authority had exerted itself only on important occasions and inspired a hereditary awe.

So in this respect, as well as in the attitude toward nature, Osiniak and Mazanek, although of the handworker class, are good representatives also of the peasants. The usually less marked misadaptation of Polish country-people to city life is, however, magnified in their case almost to a tragical degree. Osiniak never became adapted at all, while Mazanek, through his marriage, seems forced to bear it. And certainly, in many of the non-specified complaints which we find in letters from America, as well as in the longing of Polish city-workers for country and land, the two



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these letters, Wladyslaw Osiniak, as well as myself, signed below, was born in Glogów, Galicia, $1\frac{1}{2}$ [Polish] miles from Rzeszów. Glogów is a small town inhabited by poor but independent handworkers, who have not even an idea of the slavery of an American factory workman. The town is situated in a very beautiful country, groves and pine forests surround it with a green and black ring, ponds overflowing with fish glisten in some places. Streams and rivulets flow from the forests into the ponds and out of them, gathering themselves into a river, Szlachciana. (This river is called "Szlachciana" [noble girl] because the daughter of a nobleman, proprietor of a manor, was drowned in it—so says the legend.)

Wladek (so I briefly called my friend) was the son of a shoemaker, I was the son of a tailor. We lived in the same street, our houses faced each other. Our parents lived in great friendship. My father and Wladek's father were seated every summer evening in the garden under an old widespreading lime tree (near every house in the town there is a smaller or larger orchard, even the public roads are planted with fruit trees) smoking their pipes. My father took part in the last Polish revolution [1863] and he related his adventures during this revolution and his 12 years of service in the Austrian army. Wladek, a great dreamer, as a boy 14–15 years old roamed with me around the neighboring forests. Often we slept in the forest. In the morning, about sunrise, we arose, awakened by the morning cold, we admired the sunrise, sitting upon big oak trunks on the highest hillock, situated above a pond. In the east cultivated fields are seen and a rising sun which is reflected in the pond; in a half-circle a glade planted with young pines, about 6 years old, and farther another half-circle, all this inclosed by a great mixed forest of oaks, pines, firs, alders, full of big game. In the brushwood are hidden hundreds of hares, foxes, martens. Oh, what a delightful impression one felt in walking during the night, by the light of the moon, along the hills, with a true friend at one's side who adored nature—playing flute and ocarina! The moon reflected itself in the pond; the echo of the flute flowed far away up the dew. Sometimes we could hear the barking of foxes, or the bleating of roes who called one another, or the hooting of an owl. We dreamed about far countries, about travels among American prairies, African deserts, and the jungles of India. These dreams drew me here, where bad fortune torments me, penury annoys me, 3 children cry for bread, a wife complains, and I myself have lost all shame to such

a degree that for the vain profit of a few cents I send those letters from my best and only friend, which I have kept in a good hiding-place for many years and read hundreds of times. But I hope that I shall receive them back. . . .

LEON M.

677

GŁOGÓW, May 26, 1903

DEAR FRIEND: You ask what is the news in Glogów. Everything is as it has been from old; one can say, "Old misery." [Letters written and received; general news about acquaintances.] As I see, you want to fill your pocket at once with dollars, for when you had easy work you kept it for a short time, and now you remain longer in the factories, which, I believe, must be like hell. Perhaps you have now more money; it ought to be so. But perhaps not? It is also true that writing is tiresome enough, particularly for the eyes. I don't even want to read books any more, and I marvel how you could read so much when you were writing [as a clerk] in Glogów. When I arise from this paper I go home in the evening like a blind hen. Oh, there is no better, more joyous moment than to go with a stick [a gun; poachers' jargon] to the forest. But they guard it well! I shall write you below about different adventures, because now I should like to find something to say about Glogów, but I can find nothing; without joking, I cannot. [Some news about people who intend to go to America.] In your home all are in good health. This winter we celebrated in Glogów the 40th anniversary of the insurrection of 1863. In the town there is no news at all. If you write soon, use numbers in some words. And now I will tell you something about shooting [the word ciphered]. First I tell you the fate of Fr. Morarski, like that which happened to us. Somebody from Glogów, probably W. M., killed a deer [cipher] in January and the gamekeeper [cipher] drove him away, so that he had to throw the gun away, or he hid it after shooting, and the keeper saw this and found it later. It was a double-barreled gun. He imagined that it was Fr. Mor. And moreover, the deer disappeared, because another companion of the man fled and carried it away while the keeper was pursuing the first one. . . . The keeper took the gun to the chief forester and drew up a complaint against Morarski, who proved that he was in Rzeszów at the time, and the keeper will probably sit [in prison for false complaint]. Then he drew up a complaint against Bartuzel, but this also

resulted in nothing. Then against the man who was there really. But who can prove it? The only result is that they now guard the forest of Glogów better. The second thing will be interesting enough. Listen. St. Zaj. and Wl. Zaj. killed a roe about 5 o'clock in the evening and, as they like to do, wanted to take it home right then. They came to the meadow near the spring. . . . Suddenly about 20 paces back of them somebody called: "Hello, thieves!" and so on. What could they do? It was not very dark, so they could only leave [the roe] and fly, before he recognized them. And so they did. He [the keeper] could indeed have tried the plan: "Stop, or I will shoot," but he did not think of it. Only later we learned that it was [not the keeper but] Józef Jaroński and Jan Domański who were setting traps for martens. They took the roe and ate it, but at least everything was quiet. Now another [story] still. On Sunday evening after 10 o'clock we went to the forest on the other side of the fields, by the light of the moon. We were 4: two had to drive [the game], two to stand [and shoot]. When we came to the fields there was fog. You could not see another man at 5 paces. So we walked close to one another in order not to get lost. . . . We came to the forest, but in the fog we did not see much; it was cold—snow up to the knees. If I had not remembered to take the compass we should not have found the way to the forest. After $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours of driving, those who stood were frozen and moved, intending to go home, and only then we came, having driven nothing. We hastened then to our house as to a friend. As to the gamekeeper, with whom we are acquainted, probably you don't know him. He often comes to Mr. R's with a cart; he is keeper in his forest. He was a good fellow more than once with us. I shot only once at the deer, and it was so: I walked a long time about the forest, I went beyond the last hill ; they were there. I moved toward them for half an hour perhaps, and it was difficult, because there were 5 of them, 2 lying down and the others loafing around. It was necessary to conceal myself carefully and to advance cautiously, lest they notice me. I came to 45 paces, I leaned against a tree and shot. I missed, as it proved afterward—about 10 inches too high, for the bullet was in the tree under which the deer lay. But nothing could be done, I had to be reconciled to my fate. At other times it was different. Once we ran through the whole forest of Glogów following the traces of a bleeding deer which did not fall. Then it stopped bleeding, and that was the end of our



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even be at home for Christmas, although it is only 12 [Polish] miles from home. I am in a storehouse, delivering parcels, because I read well; so sitting in the lawyer's office has proved of some use. Besides, I have learned to read Ruthenian. I do nothing but deliver parcels, sometimes 1,000,000 crowns worth. After New Year I hope to deliver letters in Przemyśl. Evidently I have no time now to amuse myself like a nobleman [to poach]. On the day before going to Przemyśl we got horns [killed a hart]. It was on Easter, in the thicket where hazel-shrubs grow, with St. Zając. Since then nothing more; he is in the army in Rzeszów, and I am here. . . . You see that I know how it tastes to be alone in a strange town; how much worse it must be in a foreign country! But I hope that you are getting on better now, because you can speak more easily. Describe what vicissitudes of fortune you have passed through during this time. Are you not married perhaps, like Józef Podo and Dragulski? I should not wish it so soon to you, as to a friend. But don't conclude that I experienced it upon my own skin; I am still free as a bird in the sky. I don't know what to write further, nor what you want to know. . . . I wait for a big letter. . . .

WŁADYSŁAW

679

June 9, 1906

DEAR FRIEND: . . . Don't despise writing; force yourself to do it. To me you can write with a pencil upon any bit of paper. . . . I won't be angry, and it will cost you much less trouble. It happens sometimes that you sit somewhere in a garden, you are bored, you have nothing to do and nobody to speak with; there is a pencil and paper—because you don't wear ink with you. You compose a letter, you come home and either copy it with ink or put the same writing into a cover, address it with ink and on the first occasion put it into a mail box. I perform this duty in this way even in writing to my people in Glogów. I don't lose my free moments on your letter, I write it during the time I am on duty in the post-office. Even now a salesman is interrupting me. The devil brought him to annoy me, but I must be patient.

You are right in not thinking of returning home for military service and wasting the precious time in putting your mouth under the fist of Mr. Sergeant. Something can still happen during your pursuit of happiness [e.g., you might become crippled], and then they must

free you from this honor of serving the "fatherland"; and if not, you will still have time to receive such dainties. Even the dog does not put his back under the stick; how much less the man who is not menaced by the honorable authorities [who is out of reach]. Think of it as if a trap had been set here, and be careful not to step into it, at least not at once. I don't find anything interesting around me, as in service one always tries to rise above the others. I have been beaten enough in my youth [disciplined by the rough life of a poacher] so that I don't need to take much pains in competition with an old gendarme or an ex-corporal. . . . You ask what I am doing now. Well, it is enough to say, as in any post-office. I don't know what I shall do in the future, I live without any aim and I don't try to find any—if only for that reason that I missed once. You can't imagine perhaps how hard it is to resign a thing about which one has thought for a long time. I kill my free time going on a bicycle around the neighboring villages and towns. Up to the present I could not believe that Lajos Dragulski is bound [married] already, but I must believe your words. Perhaps he will regret it some day—or perhaps not; it cannot be foreseen. My sister Bronka got married also . . . and I could not even be at the wedding because it was difficult to get leave. . . . I can go home very seldom, though it is only 12 miles and the fare is 5 crowns there and back. I am quite bound—free time only on Sunday afternoon—and every day I must rise at 5 in the morning; two hours for dinner; till 6 in the evening. It is perhaps better than to do handwork, but one is not free. I am paid 1 gulden 15 kreuzer a day and the uniform; on the side I get only a few crowns a month [tips]. But here everything is so expensive that almost nothing is left, and when holidays come, Christ our Lord! one becomes almost enraged. Other people amuse themselves, and the post-officials labor in the sweat of their brow, so that one does not want to eat when he comes home for half an hour at noon. I think that you don't work there much more heavily in your factory. Well, in a mine evidently one must labor hard. . . .

W. OSINIAK

DEAR FRIEND: I received your letter for which I thank you most heartily. I am glad that you did not begrudge the time or paper, as before, to your old friend. But perhaps we shall yet see one another

once more. What do you think? It seems improbable indeed, but nothing in the world is impossible; so perhaps even here the government will change some day, and then perhaps it won't be so difficult to live as it is now. Well, and perhaps the Polish girl [you are to marry] in America won't be able finally to bear the wandering in a strange land. Take this also into account, because you would be badly off if she sweetened your free moments with dreams about returning home. And I should not advise you either to marry one who is born there, because it would be like fastening one's self with a nail to that world there. Again as to character and birth there are great difficulties; the man ought to know the woman well before marrying her. Well, I think that you won't bind yourself so soon, because it was only a hasty thought, a consequence of your longing for your country. But you must persevere. And perhaps you want to deceive me? For a year or three, since people say that it is possible there [to marry for so short a time] I should like to try such delights, in spite of the Christian principles. I ought not to be afraid, because in your preceding letters you wrote that at least you don't think of doing this foolish thing just now. It is also not right [to object], because the world could not exist if all those [who marry] were fools. But one ought to look soberly at such questions.

In Glogów there is not much news. Dragula, Balaban, Grodecki . . . and other men of my age have already come back from the army, having served three years each. . . . Władek Grodecki plans only now to marry Kościuszkówna; he ought to know her well enough, even from under. This year big rains have fallen, the pond in Stykow overflowed its banks, so that water ran through the road. The beech tree upon which you cut your name for the last time stands safe, the spring is in the same place, only we are farther away from it than before. I have not forgotten the last day either. Don't drop the thought of returning just because you don't know any trade. You can set up a shop or a tavern if you have a few ten-gulden pieces, and you can live freely, as, for example, Sokolowski, Żywiec, Pado, and many others in Glogów. It is easier than handwork and does not need protection. Only look into this American citizenship, so that it may not be anything like a mousetrap [whether American citizenship frees from the duties of an Austrian subject]. So you could come back, and I say it is worth while, though I don't try to persuade you to do it. [You say] "Learn! learn!" We cannot take all the fault



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is also difficult to find such a friend as I want. Here I think frequently about myself, whether I am so fit for nothing, or why I have such a bad opinion of this world, and I can find no other reason except that I have a feeling of beauty and a love of beautiful views of nature too strongly implanted in my soul. We spent too much time in the forest, dear friend, when we were young, and it is difficult to tear these memories out. I see here well-instructed men who have not one hundredth part of such aspirations [love of nature], and how much more difficult is it to find a desirable friend among the "paupers" [intellectually poor] or how else do you call them? And I don't expect to find any, except I meet somebody, for example, and say, "Let us go outside of the town." "Why," he answers "isn't it all right here?" "Well," I answer, "if you are suited, then good-bye." And the devils take him! Let thunder strike such a life, since you wish it also! I no longer expect to find happiness, it is not suitable to dream about it. To see the world? At present it is an unrealizable wish for me, so I did not even mention it to you. There is only one reason why I hope that it won't be too late, that is if only I don't marry, I shall have free will, and then we shall see. I don't want to work up to my death either, I don't even think of it. Some years ago I should have clung to such words without reflection [probably to the invitation to come], but just then there was no money. Now money is more easy to get, but the conditions are such that I must consider everything well. It is true that I did not bind myself, but what of that? We are matched, it is true; we suffer through it; this is also true. And what will happen later on—I am stupid and I don't know, as I don't know what I shall be in the other world, a horse or a dog. You speak about getting sickly [in order to become free from military service]. It seems to me also that I got too sickly, I am not quite well now with my breast, perhaps it will pass away; I don't know. This call to military service made me suffer much. I did not spare my health, I thought: "Either [I will be free]—or [I will risk my life?]." I walked during severe cold at night, my toes froze, and who knows whether I had not inflammation of the lungs, but did not lie in bed. The military examination passed happily, but I can no longer believe in my health. Well, but I don't mind it much, perhaps in this way I shall reach the end, because why should I live? If it were only for this reason, I cannot say "Yes" or "No" [to your proposal to come to America]. Don't be angry or

discouraged from living because of this, and at least don't stop writing, because I should like to have at least your address from time to time, because nobody can guess the future. So I don't need to write you more clearly. At present I cannot answer or undertake anything positive. You ought to forgive me and to understand why I am a little too lazy. I hope that it will pass. Finally, I wish you happiness and good luck in 1907.

Your true friend,

WŁADEK

682

February 2, 1907

DEAR FRIEND: I received such a letter as I did not even expect, and I am very grateful to you for it. I am doubly sad that I disappointed your expectation, but in spite of my best wish I cannot fulfil our old promises at the present time. Perhaps God will grant that it will be possible later on. Don't imagine that I have changed completely. I have only passed, or rather experienced, some disappointments, and therefore it is possible that I am somewhat more peevish than during my youth, but I hope that you will forgive me such a sin. I wrote that I don't think of marrying, and you need not suspect me of falling in love with an inhabitant of Przemyśl, although it is not a crime and I would confess it to you, my most tender friend, at the first occasion. As to carrying letters [becoming postman] it is also very doubtful. I don't see anything ahead. I stand as before a cross-way. I believe it will be necessary to do any silly thing in order to end this uncertainty. . . . And don't forget me entirely even in California. I thank you for the photograph. I will perhaps put it into a frame and will wear it hanging with my watch; it is suitable for that. You have changed hardly at all in these 2 or 3 years, but as you say yourself, it was made 2 years ago. I expected rather to see big whiskers, and I see a young American. Well, may fortune favor you. I can inform you also that our Milka [probably younger sister] has also got married. Here in Galicia there is nothing new, only at the university [of Lemberg] Ruthenian students, *hajdamaki* [=robbers; old nickname of Ruthenian insurgents] beat the professors, broke and tore valuable pictures, and now sit [in prison]. There is even the son of an usher from Przemyśl, a Ruthenian, who sits on account of the Polish university in Lemberg. His father does not mind it very much, but he will probably be driven

away from Lemberg. Well, in the devil's name, this won't cost me anything.

I am tired of such a life under an ax [like a slave]. Neither holiday nor freedom. Let the clear lightning strike it! When holidays come, other people breathe [rest], even a horse, even a Jewish one, has holidays sometimes, and here in this post-office one goes almost mad. For example, I have not been in a church at mass for almost a year. Well, I shall get to heaven! I have nothing more to write, especially since I have written six letters this evening—home sending wishes for the wedding at which I was not present, to Jaslo, etc. I greet you most heartily.

Your friend,

WŁADEK



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to Kruszynek there has been a long struggle, while the parents of Karolcia S. [a cousin] refuse to send her at all. As to the national idea, in the old Krupas there is a passive clinging to the Polish nationality, but not a trace of any thought of contributing actively to Poland's progress or to Poland's liberty.

On the contrary, the young people show a real enthusiasm for both ideals. In Józia this enthusiasm is already equilibrated and self-conscious; she is the oldest and best instructed. The advice and the occasional scolding which she gives to her brother show her eagerness to see him become an educated man and an active patriot. In Stanislaw (Stasia) the enthusiasm is still naïve. Her admiration of the country between Cracow and Warsaw (aesthetically the ugliest part of Poland), the pride with which she enumerates the subjects she is beginning to study (whose names she cannot even record without error), her plans as quickly formed as dropped, show that the desire to attain some superior ends is formed before the ends themselves are clearly conceived. Finally, in the brother there is evidently a great vitality and enthusiasm, but connected with an adventurous spirit and an insufficient determination of his own attitudes with regard to various possible ends.

These three individuals are typical, each in his own way, for the development of this kind of idealistic attitudes, both in the lower classes under the influence of the higher classes and in young people of any class under the influence of their elders. The simplest case is that in which the individual by his previous life has been prepared to accept consciously a determined end—intellectual or moral self-development, realization of certain social and political desiderata—and gradually subordinates to it his lower egotistic tendencies and his traditional attitudes. This case seems to be realized exactly in Józia, whose moral and social ideals are

such that they could be fully adopted by any individual of the peasant class as soon as he understood the necessity of substituting conscious efforts toward individual and social development for passivity and tradition. Her intellectual and patriotic ideals are limited and determined by a strong religiosity (of a more profound and personal character than the usual peasant religiosity). The qualities which she wants to see her brother develop are those most useful in a peasant community—laboriousness, parsimony, sobriety, practical energy, and wisdom. Aesthetically she enjoys most, in full consciousness, those phenomena which appeal the most to the half-conscious aesthetic sense of the peasant—nature and religious ceremonies.

The second typical way in which idealistic attitudes are developed (most frequent in women) is represented by Stanislaw. The individual becomes conscious of the existence of a certain sphere of interests and aspirations higher than his own. He understands at first only its superiority, without really understanding its content, without discriminating between various ideals. A desire to rise to this higher sphere develops, and with it the consciousness (often exaggerated) of his own imperfection in comparison with the superior men who are at home in this higher sphere. Then come strenuous efforts toward self-development, always accompanied by the feeling of humility. The nature of the ideals which the individual will make his own depends in this case, not upon the individual's past, but almost exclusively upon the content of the set of ideal interests and tendencies which he has first begun to understand, i.e., ultimately upon the group of intellectual, aesthetic, moral, or religious workers which he happened to encounter and which first introduced him into this new world. Of course it may happen later that the individual meets a different set of men and ideals which seem to

him again superior, and then the same process is repeated, but it is the first awakening of ideal interests as we find it here which is particularly important for further development.

The third type (more frequent among men) is given in the brother to whom the letters are written. Here the attitudes are determined, not with regard to the higher sphere of idealistic interests, but with regard to the lower sphere above which the individual rises. Any new and higher idealistic attitude acquired appears as the ground of an attitude of superiority assumed toward the materialistic tendencies, the apparent meanness of everyday life, the traditional customs and beliefs, etc., and toward the men who are their representatives. Sometimes a mere theoretical or verbal acknowledgment of a higher end, without any effort toward its practical realization, satisfies the individual and suffices in his own eyes to justify his superiority. There is in the beginning hardly any selection of the idealistic attitudes; any attitude may be accepted which fulfils the condition of being a basis of superiority in any regard, and frequent and apparently illogical changes may occur, determined often by the fact that the influence of a given attitude has been exhausted, that it has ceased to provoke admiration or to make the individual feel his superiority—as every emotional reaction is weakened by habit. If the individual finally selects a definite end, it is, consciously or not, the end which seems best to justify the permanent attitude of a superior man, a reformer, a prophet, etc. Evidently, there may be more or less sincerity mixed with vanity, and frequently an evolution toward a greater sincerity is noticeable as the individual progresses in age.

The solidarity among the young people upon the basis of their new ideals as against the old generation is well expressed in its evolution. Józia is first alone. Then she



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your confession in turn. I hope that you won't refuse my request and that this letter will be the beginning of our understanding. Do you agree?

Time has flown already since we saw each other. When you were going to America we could not even bid goodbye to each other. When I learned from our parents that you had gone away I was very much grieved, for knowing your hot nature I was afraid some misfortune might befall you, which is not difficult in a strange country for a young and inexperienced man. But, thanks to God, I hear that everything is going on well with you, and I pray always the Holiest Mother to keep you under her protection. Meanwhile, thanks to the help of God, I passed my examination happily and am working now for the second year as a teacher. I teach in the district of Nowy Targ; so it is among mountaineers. I am alone in a small mountain village. The work is rather difficult and tedious, but the people and the children are very well-disposed toward me. And so we are both working independently for our piece of bread, we are thinking of our future. We are both far away from the native home but I am at least among my own people while you are far away beyond the ocean, surrounded by people who speak to you a strange language, and often pray to a different God. So don't wonder, brother, if I feel often anxious lest you forget that you are a Pole and a Catholic. But this will never happen. You will always remember our native village and the small church, our old house and our parents. Stasia wrote to me just now that you have joined the Polish "sokols." This is precisely a proof that you remember that you are a Pole. I hear also that you learn English. Evidently this will make your stay in America easier, but don't forget to read Polish books also. Dear Wojtuś, I hope that you will answer me at once. I shall wait impatiently for your letter. Write me at length, how and where you work, and how you are succeeding. Are you in good health? What do you do on Sundays? Whom do you visit there? And in general everything about yourself. In our country there is trouble now; everybody speaks of war which may come. The Christmas holidays, so dear to us, are approaching. I wish you to spend them in the merriest possible manner, and remember how they are spent in our country. I wish you so, as if I broke the wafer with you at Christmas eve dinner. . . . I embrace you and greet you heartily.

Your loving sister,

JÓZEFA

684

February 17, 1913

DEAR LITTLE BROTHER: I inform you that your letter rejoiced me very much, for I see from your words that although in a foreign country and among so many dangers, you have still remained true to all that you took with you from your native home. I am glad that you always feel a Pole and a Catholic, that you work and economize in the thought of your fatherland and family, that you avoid bad society and try to instruct yourself and to develop intellectually. We need precisely such men today, who are not only able to work hard, but also to economize and to use their money properly. And this will come as soon as our people get at least enlightenment enough to understand that a man ought not to work simply in order to drink and to waste his money later. Unhappily today it is usually so, both here in our country and there in foreign countries. So nothing more is left for me than to encourage you to go farther on the way which you have chosen. Read and learn as much as you can, particularly in your native language, though the English may be useful to you there. And then, put aside as much money as you can, of course not being too parsimonious about your food or any honest amusement. And God preserve you from the idea that you might remain in America forever! How many of the strongest and healthiest men our fatherland loses every year! Oh, may nobody make this already large number still larger, but after earning some money and getting more experience may everyone return speedily to his native threshold and use them here in an intelligent work for the good of his fatherland!

Probably they have written you from home that Stasia went to an agricultural school in the Kingdom [Russian Poland]. It is of course very happy news to us, for our Stasia will be able to learn farming and housekeeping. And today everybody is proclaiming that an agricultural school is indispensable for country girls. But I was quite astonished that our parents, particularly father, agreed to it. At any rate it leads to expenses, and we both know that when money is mentioned in our home the question goes as upon clods. [Proverbial.] Well, thanks to God, that it ended so. May she only happily finish this school, then the three of us could talk among ourselves about everything and understand one another. Aunt Grabowska will perhaps come to me in the spring, for now I am very lonely among the mountaineers. I live alone in the school, but I am not bored, for there is always work. I have 80 children, so my head

scarcely holds out. We have now severe winter; sledging is very good. If you knew how pleasant it is to go thus with sledges on Sunday to church in the midst of these white fields of ours, and then to kneel down before our Lord Jesus and to sing with one's full voice, *Gorzkie żale!* ["Bitter Regrets," a religious hymn for Lent]. Do you, Wojtuś, ever hear there our beautiful *Gorzkie żale*? Probably not, for where should you? [Rumors about Balkan war.]

JÓZEFA

685

May 19, 1913

MY DEAR LITTLE BROTHER: Accept for your letter a hearty "God reward." Every one of your letters causes me an enormous joy, and makes me still nearer to you, if it is possible. I am still more thankful to you because, though not having much time, you nevertheless write me such long letters and confide to me everything so willingly. I wait impatiently for each letter, and when I receive it, I read it more than once. I am very glad that your health serves you well. Still I would advise you to change your occupation and, if possible, to work somewhere in the fresh air, the more so as, according to your own words, you intend to visit America a little; so perhaps you will find somewhere such an occupation, even if for smaller wages. For, you see, nothing spoils health so much as staying in a sultry place. . . . And remember that you are still a young boy and that our fatherland needs healthy and strong sons. I not only do not blame your [intention of] visiting America and becoming better acquainted with it, that is with the United States, but on the contrary, I encourage you. Trips and changes of this sort are very instructive. So if there is no difficulty about it, do it. Probably you will regret leaving your *drużyny sokole* [friendly sokol associations],¹ but it seems to me likely that there are also branches of the sokols in other localities. As to the English language, certainly, since you are there and have the opportunity to learn, it is worth while to profit by it, for everything you learn may be useful at an opportune moment. How glad I am that my brother is a *druh sokół*, for our whole hope today is in these "friendly associations." I would beg you also very earnestly to send me your photograph in a sokol's uniform—for probably you are having yourselves photographed. Or if you have

¹ The word *sokół* means "falcon," and under the name are organized societies, mainly of young men, for athletic and patriotic purposes. *Druh* is an old Polish word meaning "friend"; *drużyna*, "associations of friends."



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celebrate there the anniversary of the constitution of May 3?¹ Here it was everywhere solemnly celebrated. . . .

JÓZEFA

686

August 1, 1913

DEAR LITTLE BROTHER . . . : I received your letter and photograph. . . . Judging by the photograph you are a nice boy, but very childish. I thought that you were already more serious. And see here, such a child wants to consider himself already as a citizen of the United States, and dreams I don't know what projects. You will think probably, what do I want from you? Nothing more, dear brother, than that you may not forget there, in this exile, about our holy faith and our mother-country, that you may be always a true Catholic and Pole. For, O my dear, whoever is not a good Catholic will not be a good Pole. Without God there is no fatherland, and even if we bring I don't know what offerings to this fatherland, we shall not get our liberty back without God's blessing. Dear Wojtuś, I was very much pained to learn that you do not fulfil there in the foreign country our religious practices and duties, which every Christian Catholic ought to fulfil. But it is really impossible! I cannot believe that my brother has forgotten his prayers, which his mother taught him. It is true that you are young and inexperienced and bad society can do much evil, but I don't believe that you went so far as to lose your faith. Oh, this would be worse than anything! And another question, no less disagreeable. I learn that you intend to become an American subject [*sic*], and then again to join the American army. It would mean the same as to renounce your fatherland. My dear, in America only the men can settle who have here nothing to lose, but you have, I think, your whole future here. There is work enough and honest earning in our country, only people don't know how to take care of their money. And if you want to serve in the army, here you won't escape that pleasure either. I think so: earn as much as you can, learn as much as possible; in a word, profit well from your stay there, and then back to us, and don't

¹ The constitution of May 3, 1791, was an endeavor to reorganize Poland upon a new basis. It failed because of the subsequent division of Poland. The anniversary is always celebrated in Poland as a claim that (after a century of decay) the nation gave proof of its capacity for self-government (by the provision of a more democratic and centralized organization) and that the partition was contrived by hostile states precisely because Poland had demonstrated that capacity.

look again at America. For it is not worth regretting. And I think it is more gay here, in spite of our misery, than there, with their riches. You guess probably that I got the news about you from Kasia W., whom I met in Podgórze. Well, she is quite fit for America! I beg you very much, Wojtuś, don't give her my letters to read and don't tell her what I write you, particularly about her, for there would be only useless anger. It is true that they are our family, but they belong to those who don't care about their native country and see their happiness only in America. We cannot improve them, so let us rather be silent and do what is our duty without listening to their principles, often erroneous. And I should prefer if you kept far from them, though politely. Were it not true, what I heard about you! I shall wait impatiently for your answer to this letter. And I beg you very much, as your loving sister, write me the sincere truth, confide in me everything, as a good brother to his sister, for I am very much grieved. . . .

JÓZEFA

687

GOŁOTCZYŻNA, March 2 [1913]

DEAR LITTLE BROTHER: How happy I am that I can at last write to you. You don't know how I was pained that in such an important change of my life I could neither talk with you nor even write to you. . . . I took your address from home . . . but unhappily I lost it . . . and only now that Józia sends it to me I hasten to write and to describe to you everything, and also to learn how you get on, how you succeed. . . . Dear brother, how do you like my going to this school? Are you perhaps very dissatisfied? For on the one hand the fee in this school costs somewhat too much, and a year of time will be wasted. But I think that I shan't regret it. For now learning gives the means to live and is everywhere the best foundation, particularly when this enlightenment is lacking among our women in the country. Now, when people begin to think about learning, it begins to get better and better in this world. But unhappily there is still very little of this learning. And then, I did not decide alone about myself. I wanted very much to go and I begged [my parents] for a long time to be permitted. And they did not wish to give their consent, but only when Karolka's betrothed began to persuade them. Perhaps you remember him, Franciszek, who was farm-manager in Czasław. He had been himself in such a school, and he held out very

much for Karolka and me to go to the school, and he made different efforts to this effect. And our uncle and aunt from Kamienice praised [the plan] much and advised us to go. And when Józia wrote a letter, that if I went her [greatest] wish would be accomplished, and that she would help me all in her power [they agreed]. But we were to go and then again not, from fear of the war which might break out from moment to moment. As things became quieter, we went, but what of it, since that war was not settled finally, but it can still break out, and will almost certainly do so in March. Oh, it is horrible. In Galicia they begin to take [to the army] boys from 18 years up. May God the Good keep this war far from us, for it never brings happiness, even if it is the best. Were it at least a war for our country, for our Poland! But for the sake of some ports, etc., it is not very pleasant to go to war. But you are probably more curious about other things, so I will describe my journey, the surroundings here, and whatever I can.

Perhaps you received my letter in which I wrote you that I go to an agricultural school in the Kingdom. I wrote you that we were going to Kruszynek, but in Kruszynek there was no more room, so we came to Golotczyzna. We left on January 15, amid leave-taking and crying, so losing our heads that we did not know which way to take, whether to go or not. Some people began to dissuade, others frightened us with war, others still that it is hard to cross the frontier. Well, but we went, and upon the frontier there was no big terror at all, we were treated politely. We went through Częstochowa and Warsaw, for Golotczyzna is in the province of Plock, and the province of Plock is still far enough beyond Warsaw. If you knew, dear brother, what a beautiful country it is, such plains that you cannot see the end, big villages, a multitude of brick houses, one village far enough from another, and exceedingly many of the most various mills, windmills, factories. The farmers are richer than in Galicia. In some houses the order is quite exemplary. In a word, we were well pleased here. We saw the cloister of Częstochowa, and we were in Warsaw for some hours, and saw many things. It is a very beautiful city, this Warsaw, situated in a splendid lowland and the Vistula flows near it as a wonderful wide girdle. Dear brother! How happy I should be if you could come to me, visit this country. But alas! these are dreams which will turn into nothing. Józia wrote me that she wished greatly to come to the Kingdom, but that she cannot, for you know



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this year there is to be a general excursion of the students to Galicia, and this will cost about 20 crowns. So I am afraid to ask our parents, for indeed there might be too much of all this for them. If you are so kind, dear brother, as to fulfil my request, I shall be very, very grateful to you. For I want very much to be on that trip, and I reflected to whom I might address my humble request, and I mentioned it in my first letter to you. When you expressed the readiness to do it I rejoiced very much that I can beg you and not be disappointed.

Dear brother, how is your life going on, whether sad or gay, or simply monotonous and indifferent? Have you got accustomed to your life? For up to the present I had no idea of any other life than that which I led at home. Well, and now I have got a little acquainted with a different life. For some people it may be splendid, for others merry, for others indifferent, for still others sad. My life here is various; sometimes merry in a group of companions, satisfied while I am studying, and at other moments if not sad, then indifferent. And the days pass with a mad rapidity; I don't know whether yours also? I have not any pains here; we live in rather good concord. I have only some contrarities about religion, for here some subversive spirit prevails. I shall describe it more exactly another time. As to my study about God [of theology], it goes on well enough. I have nothing more of interest to write you, only I embrace you heartily. . . .

[STANISŁAWA]

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June 3, 1913

DEAR LITTLE BROTHER: Hiding myself in the garden (for if I did not I should have to work in the garden and there would be no time to write), holding the letter upon my knee, I begin to write. Pardon me, if it is so scribbled. . . . I am very glad that you are healthy and that you succeed well, for, as I see from your letter, God the Merciful does not desert you, and though you must work heavily the fruits of your labor are to be seen. And the work did not make you a light-headed man nor a spendthrift, for when one has to work hard for his money he learns better how to manage it. It seems to me that you don't look upon this question in a different way, for it manifests itself in many things. You don't act as other emigrants, our acquaintances, do, but on the contrary, you remember your fatherland, for you joined the sokols. I like it very, very much, and surely it won't

have bad results for you, for it makes your life more various, gives you various knowledge and develops your spirit and your courage. Moreover you remember to learn, and in these times it is perhaps still more important than the preceding thing, for now the struggle by means of knowledge is easier than with the fists. At any rate, knowledge is indispensable. And then, dear brother, you remember about your parents and send them money, for perhaps now they need it, and when you return they will give it back with interest. I heard something like this, that you intend to remain in America, but I don't believe it, for what would then be the use of sending money home? And moreover should you not long for your country, would it not be hard to work during your whole life and never to breathe any more the free air of your fatherland? No, dear brother, it cannot and ought not to be so. I think that you work there heavily only in order to enrich your country, your family and yourself, but not to leave this money in the foreign land. Well, I will give you here a plan. Perhaps it will seem ridiculous to you, but I consider it very suitable. Save, dear brother, as soon and as much money as you can; then come back and we will go to Lithuania and buy land there, for there is land enough and cheap—no more than 150 gulden a morg. I have here a few companions from Lithuania. They are very rich and honest girls. They tell me everything and persuade me to go with them to Lithuania. I should like to persuade our parents also to do it, but it would be difficult, for they are no more in the strength of their age and cannot so easily leave their country. And it seems to me that for us it would be very well, for there in Galicia, particularly in our district, the land is expensive and there is very little of it, so that farming is not splendid there at all; one must continually add one penny to another in order to defend one's self against misery. It is difficult even to think about enlarging one's farm. For me therefore nothing is left except to choose some career, to study a little more after leaving the school and to work in my chosen career, for there is not much at home to return for, while thus, by putting our strength and our fortunes together, we could buy something. But more about it later; we have time enough. Meanwhile I would learn whether it is true that Władek W. got married? They have written it to me from home. We will not go on a trip to Galicia, but we will travel about the Kingdom, but this is good, that we shall learn to know the Kingdom well.

I have here such religious contrarities, because there is too great a subversion. Some of my companions, though not all of them, believe that man is created from the ape. Besides this, they consider different prayers useless, etc. And it troubles me much, for it is not so. But now things are greatly changed, and when they learn better then such absurdities will evaporate from their heads. I did not write anything home about it. I wrote only to Józia, and don't you write either. You wonder perhaps why I don't mention anything about money up to the end of my letter, but I knew nothing yet up to the last moment, till the post came and brought the money, for which I thank you most heartily, my golden little brother.

Your loving sister,

S[TANISŁAWA]

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July 14, 1913

DEAR LITTLE BROTHER: What lies upon our heart, we write it first. So you did, and I will do the same. As you, dear brother, cared most about cleaning yourself from the reproaches which people made to you, even so I must present to you more clearly the conclusion which you drew from my own letter.

My dear brother, don't think at all that the thought of leaving my native roof, my native home, the parents, etc., is so pleasant to me. If you knew how hard a struggle I must fight [with myself when I think] that this will happen really some day and that I must go away—if you knew all this, surely you would not think that I don't want to return home.

But I don't wonder at all at your thinking that my head is turned and therefore I don't wish to come back home, for from my letter this was clearly to be seen, and you don't know the conditions well enough on the basis of which I came to this school, so I will explain them a little better.

As you know, our parents don't get on easily [alone] and surely they would prefer if I remained at home, but the economic conditions don't permit it. Our parents have reflected enough about it even before my departure to the school, and they were convinced beforehand that it won't be worth while for me to come back home after finishing this school. Mother advised me to choose some career, and our parents almost agreed that I shall not return home, except for a short time. Then I wished more to be somewhere in the world, but



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691

RADZIECHOWICE, July 12, 1914

DEAR WOJTUŚ: Why don't you write? Have you really forgotten us? Perhaps you are angry with us. But I consider it impossible. What should you be angry for? Such trifles as, for example, that we don't answer your letter soon? Perhaps I have expressed myself a little inconsiderately, for such things may be very unpleasant, even painful. But even to strangers such things can be forgiven to some extent, and it is so unjustified to be angry with one's parents or sisters for such things that I cannot believe that you would do it.

But I suppose another cause of anger, which I don't know even, only guess. It may be possibly our home conditions, magnified by human talking and presented to you in a colored light. I don't write it clearly, do I? But it is only because, first, it is simply difficult to explain it clearly in a letter. Secondly, I don't know whether this letter will fall at once into proper hands (i.e., yours). So you must remember and guess many things, and ask for others in a letter, and then I will explain them better.

I came from the school in January and will return to the Kingdom in August. This time I shall go to Warsaw, to the Teachers' Seminary. If I finish this course, which lasts 3 years, I shall receive a place in the Kingdom as a teacher. All this business will cost me about 500 gulden. It is a big sum indeed, but what can I do? I shall have at least a secure existence and shall be able to help our parents at some moments.

You have heard perhaps that Karolka Stoyka is getting married in two weeks. . . . She marries Franciszek, the man whom you knew, I think, and who sent her to that school.

STANISŁAWA

692

January 1, 1912

. . . . DEAR SON: [Letters received and written.] Józia is already a teacher; she is in the mountains, 3 miles beyond Nowy Targ and 12 miles from us. She did not come for the holidays to us, but to your aunt in Podgórze [either because it was nearer, or because of disharmony between her and her parents]. We heard that she has 30 reński of salary [a month], but she did not write how she succeeds there, she wrote only a small card, "Merry holidays," and nothing more. Now your uncle from Biezanow is selling that cabin with that piece of land and we are buying it. So if you can earn some

money, dear son, send it to us, then I would buy it at once in your name. Even if you don't send, we shall buy it, but it would be better if you sent us something, for your uncle wants 225 [gulden] for it and we have only a little more than a hundred, and we must borrow the rest. I don't write anything more of interest. Thanks to God, nobody among your relatives and acquaintances died. At home we are in good health, thanks to God, only Józiek was a little sick. He caught cold when he went to church on Sunday. . . . Now I ask you still about one thing. When you write to us, tell us whether you have seen anywhere Władek Wolski, or heard about him, where he is, for your aunt Wolska begs you very much. He has not written to them since last spring, and people send various news about him that he is getting on [or: behaving?] very badly there. They had informed us in the same way about you when you did not write to us for so long a time, having lost your work. They said that Jędrek, your uncle's [son] pushed you down from a tramway, that you lay sick in a hospital. Was it true? We are very curious. I asked you about the same in the preceding letter, but you write that you have not received any letter. . . . I wonder very much who devours or holds up all those letters. . . .

JAKÓB and FRANCISZKA KRUPA

693

October 20 [1912]

. . . . DEAR SON: [Letters sent and received; farm-work; weather.] Now, dear son, I beg you, if you can put aside some money, send it to me. I would buy a colt, for now we have gathered hay and clover enough at the second harvest, only I lack money, for we have spent on that piece of land which we bought from your uncle, and we spent those 100 reński which you sent also on this. We had borrowed about that much money, and we paid the debt as soon as you sent it. And if you send some money now, even if not for the horse, we may put it into the bank, for your uncle wanted us absolutely to put those 200 crowns of yours [100 reński] also into the bank, and if our Lord God grants it, we shall put them yet. For when you went away people said that it was a pity that we had sent you, that you won't pay us back even the journey. So now, when you send money, everybody wonders. And we need much for our farming, as it usually happens. Moreover, this year the crops are bad. The grain is not very bad, but we did not dig more than 20 korcy of potatoes. As to Józia, she does not need any more money. She sent a

nice gift on mother's name-day and asked us now to give Basia to the school, promising to help her. So we gave her, and this will also cost. And now I also [Stanislawa] prepare to go to an agricultural school. We both, I and Karolka Stoyka, will go to Kruszynek. . . . If we can and if my parents allow me, we shall go perhaps on New Year. It will cost us 150 crowns each. Karolka's father won't allow her to go and won't give her any money, but her sister-in-law's brother, who is a post-official in Biala, advises her to go and will send her money. And I have hope in you. [Family news; marriages.] Dear brother, mother is glad that you are learning, and does not blame you at all for having inscribed yourself [in a school?], only she is still curious whether you read any Polish books and go sometimes to the church and hear sermons. Our parents request you to go to the church as much as possible, for without God all your efforts will be of no avail. . . .

[PARENTS]

694

May 11 [1913]

DEAR SON: We received your letter . . . and the money, 410 [written: 400 10] crowns for which we thank you. . . . Now, dear son, we think about it, how to use this money, whether to put it into the savings bank or to pay our useless debt back. For if I put this money into the bank, I should have only 20 crowns of interest in a year, while I must pay 26 crowns on 400 crowns, so in this way 6 crowns a year would be saved. For you I can put money into the bank in partial payments, or to buy a piece of land if there is some opportunity, for this is most secure. Last year, when we bought this half a morg from your uncle it cost 250 reński and, thanks to God, we have paid it already and now we have a wider lot in a single piece. But there is now no opportunity to buy a small piece of land, and for a large one we have no money. Antek and Józiek thank you for that money which you sent [for them]. We bought clothes and shoes for them. Zośka and Stefka thank you also and rejoice that mother will buy for them some nice stuff for dresses. [Weather; farm-work.] We greet you heartily, we your parents and all your sisters and brothers, and the grandmother from near the forest and the [paternal] uncle from near the forest and the [paternal] uncle and aunt from the field and the [maternal] uncle and aunt from the big house, and all your relatives and acquaintances. . . .

JAKÓB and FRANCISZKA KRUPA



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were lacking until half a century ago. These are, particularly, intellectual and artistic interest (to a certain extent present among the peasants, but without the tendency to develop along these lines); social idealism (nationalistic and also recently socialistic ideals); romantic love; and, finally, the general attitude of superiority toward the lower classes, based upon the preceding attitudes. Now, whenever an individual of a lower class tries to get into a higher class he has not only to rise economically and intellectually and to imitate the external forms of the life of the higher class, but he must also assimilate the attitudes of this class. And this always gives rise to a certain amount of cabotinism. Sometimes the attitudes are assimilated really and easily (Zygmunt and Hanka in this series) because of a natural or social preadaptation in the individual, or the assimilation of some attitudes may be real and sincere, while in others the individual becomes a *cabotin*.

But Walenty P., as he appears in this correspondence, is a perfect *cabotin* along all lines. First, he imitates the intellectual interest; he writes about general problems; he probably reads a little. But in comparison with Zygmunt it is evident that this interest exerts no real influence upon his life. In spite of Zygmunt's advice and the example of his enthusiasm for knowledge and intellectual self-development, it does not seem that Walenty tries seriously to develop himself. His work, amusements, and excessive letter-writing leave him hardly any time for this. His own letters show a much lower degree of culture than those of Zygmunt, who is younger. His display of interest in this line is evidently artificial. Nor is there more of sincerity and depth in his aesthetic interests. He takes part in amateur plays, but without real interest, as Zygmunt points out. He shows off in the literary line and sends poetical letters to everybody. But we have a good proof

of the lack of originality of his literary composition, for we find among his papers a rough draft of a letter in verse which he sent, or planned to send, to his parents, and it is nothing but a copy of one of the schematic poetic addresses to parents printed upon the sheets of letter-paper sold in America. Walenty, instead of sending a letter with such a printed introduction, evidently copied the latter in order to pass it off as his own composition.

Again, in the line of social idealism, he pretends to be interested in the socialistic idea. But he does nothing for this; he does not even belong to a party, for this requires some sacrifice. He is satisfied with occupying in form the attitude of an enlightened and self-conscious workman, and he does not even try to rise higher in the workman class, nor to exert any positive influence upon others.

The attitude of romantic love, sincere with Hanka, half-sincere with Stasia (who seems to be much of a female *cabotin*), is clearly imitated and insincere with Walenty, who is continually playing before the girls, his friends, and himself the fine rôle of lover. Flirting with both girls at the same time, he affects heartbreak, first, after the marriage of Stasia, and then after the death of Hanka.

We have no data as to his imitation of the refined manners of the higher classes. But there are many hints about the attitude of superiority which he occupies toward his fellow-workmen in America and of the isolation in which he pretends to find himself because of the low cultural level of his environment.

Finally, there is one general feature of the *cabotin* which Walenty has to the highest degree. It is the interest—the only sincere one—which the *cabotin* naïvely takes in himself and in his various attitudes. It is the necessary accompaniment of the whole process of conscious imitation of a higher type of life.

The situation found in the letters of Stasia and Hanka is peculiar. Each of the girls knows of Walenty's flirtation with the other; both are in love with him, Stasia more superficially, Hanka more profoundly. There is jealousy between them, but neither dares to claim the man exclusively for herself; each accepts his indecision as a matter of fact. And the man hesitates to the end. He does not seem to be very much in love with either of the girls, and still he is serious with both. His relation with Hanka is closer and more friendly; his attitude toward Stasia more romantic. And while he makes declarations of love to both, he proposes to neither.

This situation can be fully understood only if we consider the social background upon which it developed. The persons involved are of the working class, passing into the lower middle class. Now the traditional set of attitudes in the working class is drawn from two sources—the peasant life and the life of the crafts-corporations. Into this mixture is here infused the ideology of the upper classes, partly through books, partly through the medium of the lower middle class. And it is this mixture of heterogeneous elements which explains the present situation.

As we know from the peasant letters, love, as idealization and individualization of sexual attraction, does not exist in peasant life in the form of a socially acknowledged and sanctioned attitude—though this does not mean that it does not exist as individual fact. The fundamentally sanctioned attitude before marriage is “liking” (friendship); after marriage “respect.” The sexual life before marriage is socially condemned, after marriage ignored. (Incidentally, this may also explain to a certain extent why the loss of virginity is not so definite an obstacle to marriage as in social groups where sexual life itself is socially acknowledged as a basis of marriage.)



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Marriage itself is here more an individual than a familial matter—at least more so than in peasant life. The economic basis of marriage is also different; work and craftsmanship count more in comparison with property than in peasant life, and in general the personal life has much more importance. These, and perhaps other factors, have contributed to the result that in the lower bourgeoisie sexual relations with girls are much more frequent than among peasants, and engagement and betrothal have a much less definite character. Nevertheless, while the relation—courtship, betrothal, sexual intercourse—lasts it is exclusive; it may be broken off, but not shared with another. Thus the situation which we find in the present case would be scarcely possible if the traditions of the lower bourgeoisie were acting alone, not in combination with the peasant traditions.

Finally, we have a third element—the expression of romantic love, imitated from the upper classes. And it is curious how insufficiently assimilated this form is. There is a peculiar lack of harmony and of adequate expression in every letter, and judging from certain statements the same feature must have characterized the letters of the man. A perfectly cold and formal letter may be followed by another in which love is expressly declared. Or in a single letter a quite ceremonious form of address may be followed by declarations which would require the dropping of all formalities (particularly in Stasia's letters). Or, again, phrases of love may alternate with others which seem to exclude any love-relation. Phrases which express confidence in the man's reciprocity are found along with others in which the contrary opinion is stated, and without any adequate transition. Or the most burning expressions of gratitude and devotion are wasted upon such trifles as receiving cards, photographs, or a ribbon, while constraint and coldness characterize many phrases which should be written

in a totally different way. In short, the real situation would require letters intermediary between more or less ceremonious friendship- and acquaintance-letters and open love-letters—a type which in the upper classes would characterize the beginning of a love-relation. But here no intermediary form is found. Instead, there is a most unharmonious mixture of isolated expressions, each of which would be adequate only in either a love-letter or a ceremonious letter. It seems as if there were in the girls and in the man a strange alternation of contrary attitudes following one another immediately and without transition, while in reality we see here only the result of the inadequacy of the form, imitated from the upper classes, to the content, originating in the attitudes of the lower classes.

Curiously enough, both girls attain finally a more or less adequate expression and in quite contrary ways. Stasia finds it by eliminating the element of love and by dropping into an attitude of cold acquaintance. Hanka, on the contrary, finds it by rising above all the traditional attitudes of her class and by developing really and unreservedly the attitude of romantic love characteristic of the higher classes. Her evolution is due to two factors—book-culture and an isolation from her usual milieu, which in the beginning may have been affected but finally becomes real. Perhaps her sickness has contributed also, for we notice more than once a higher refinement developing in sick girls, precisely because they are more isolated and live a more intense sentimental and intellectual life.

The main interest of the letters of Zygmunt lies, (1) in the kind of relation which unites the two men; (2) in the type of Zygmunt as a “climber” in the better sense of the word.

1. The relation is one of close friendship, with a background of homosexual affection on the part of the older

Walenty which Zygmunt evidently does not share. As far as he is conscious of the other man's tendencies he tries to check them at once and to give to their relation a character of normal friendship. The relation as we find it here is typical. (Compare the Osiniak series.) Perhaps, indeed, there is a little of homosexual affection in every close friendship which is not based essentially upon a community of interests. A mediate proof of it seems to be that marriage usually either interrupts friendship or changes its character, makes it more like a business friendship. On the other hand, a proof that the homosexual tendency almost never passes into act is that the closest friendship does not interfere with normal relations with girls. The existence of this homosexual element is more easily detected in Poland than elsewhere because, particularly in the lower classes, there is no inhibition imposed upon the expression of a man's feelings in general. In this respect it is interesting to compare Zygmunt and Walenty. The first begins to develop such inhibitions owing to the influence of a higher intellectual milieu, of his social ideals, and mainly of his aspirations to self-development, and he tries to impart the same inhibitions to his friend—not very successfully, as it seems. Walenty appears here, as well as in his correspondence with the girls, as an effeminate, vain, impressionable person, devoid of self-control, and living for show.

2. Zygmunt is not a peasant, but a workman. It is therefore not strange if very few of the typical peasant attitudes are found in him. But it seems strange that not even the workman psychology can characterize him. He has indeed workman ideas, explicitly socialistic, and a few attitudes which could hardly be found in another class, but his stock of traditional characters is very limited. This is the fundamental difference between him and such men as Maks or Wacław Markiewicz, who in order to climb the



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given to letter-writing and to the photographs—all this is purely peasant. Even the closeness of the familial relation is so.

Jula's letters are the only example we have of a mere friendly correspondence between girl and boy. In all other cases there is either family-relation or flirtation, or at least a relation preliminary to an eventual engagement. None of all these relations exists here. Such a correspondence as we find here would be hardly possible in a pure peasant milieu.

695-747, TO WALENTY PIOTROWSKI, IN AMERICA, FROM VARIOUS PERSONS IN POLAND. 695-705, FROM STASIA G.; 706-17, FROM HANKA; 718-36, FROM ZYGMUNT; 737-40, FROM HENRYK; 741-42, FROM A. P.; 743-45, FROM JULA; 746-47, FROM THE PARENTS OF WALENTY

695

ZAGŁOBA, June 9, 1912

RESPECTED SIR: I thank you very, very much for the card. For indeed I don't know how I merited your remembrance. There is no news with me, except that I long for Rytwiany, and still more for your society, in which my time was spent so pleasantly and agreeably as it never can be spent in Zagloba.

Andzia [Hanka] intends to go to Rytwiany for a church festival. I should be glad to go, but alas! my duties don't allow me to take this pleasure.

I should like to write more, but I must be satisfied with this until we get better acquainted, or rather until you know me better, for I know already very well your upright character from the representation of Andzia, and also a little personally. *Then* I shall write you very much, though I don't know whether it will give you any pleasure. . . .

STASIA G.

696

August 2, 1912

RESPECTED SIR: In the introduction to my letter I beg your pardon very much for daring to delay my answer for so long a time.

But please forgive me this fault, for I could not answer because of lack of time.

Respected sir! I send you my hearty thanks for your letter, so dear to my heart. Sir! You wrote so wonderfully and charmingly about love that your letter may be read with a true satisfaction. I tell you that more than one renowned poet could envy you this faculty. For who, who would represent to himself love so attractively? (Perhaps only the man who has already once loved.) But as to myself, I do not believe much in it, for love is often deceitful and without reciprocity, though it happens that it is also holy and innocent; yet in these times that is very seldom. Respected sir! You write me precisely that you feel unhappy to the highest degree because of not possessing the reciprocity of Miss ——. Sir! You ought not to lose hope, you ought not to give yourself up to despair. Only you ought to try with all your power that everything might be again as it was before. And because you are a man, all this will come easily. Respected sir! The greatest burden fell from my heart at the moment when I learned from your letter that you have not yet a betrothed. In that case I won't be afraid lest——

Respected sir! I never thought that your heart and your reciprocal love must be conquered with such difficulty as you write. If so, it seems to me that nobody will conquer your heart, for a woman has not strength enough for such a heroic effort, while a man—— Please tell me with what weapons can your heart be conquered? Whether with humility, or with jealousy, or with flattery, or with kindness, etc.? Or with the most dangerous arms of a woman—tears? Please write me, with what? Perhaps I will adapt myself. Respected, sir! You ask whether “I have at least a spark of love?” Sir! If I knew how to give love such a charming shape, how to make it so beautiful, it is possible that you would—— Alas! The gracious Heaven did not grant me any poetical faculty. So I can tell you only one word—that I [“love you” omitted, but marked by as many points as there are letters in the respective Polish words] more than my life. But these words are not cold although breathing simplicity. Although they are short, yet for a lov[er] they contain very, very much. Respected sir, I beg you very much, answer me kindly by a letter soon. For I shall wait for it with an enormous impatience and lon[ging]. Your letter is the only medicine against my lon[ging]. Oh, blessed be the hour in which I knew you. I owe this happiness

to Andzia and I am infinitely grateful to her for having made me acquainted with you. I commend myself to your kind memory.

Respectfully yours,

STASIA G.

More news about you, respected sir, A[ndzia] will furnish me, for I don't yet know anything certain. I will write her a letter on Sunday.

And perhaps there is no woman who is worthy of possessing your heart? In such a case—— I beg your pardon. [Irony.]

697

September 9, 1912

RESPECTED SIR: I received your letter and your cards, for which I thank you much. I beg your pardon for having let you wait so long for my letters. But I hope that you won't take it in bad part, for it was difficult for me to answer, having such a terrible sorrow, about which you heard probably from Miss Anna [Hanka].

Respected sir! Your letter before the last one grieved me much, for you wrote it with a terrible irony; every word in this letter wounds my heart profoundly. But what can I do? I tried to be sincere and open-hearted, and you took all this for false money. But now I will calculate my words, in order surely not to offend you for the second time.

Again, with your last letter you comforted me much. Respected sir! You write me not to mind that you did not inform me about your leaving Wil——. I did not mind it at all, for I understand and know the proverb, "The heart is not a servant" But at any rate it would be more agreeable for me if I had received the news also. And so I learned only by accident, from Andzia, that you had left.

It is painful to me that you have so bad an opinion of me, that you believe me deceitful. Oh, no! I am completely constant, inconstancy is unknown to me. In order to make you sure of it I should like to give you a proof, but unhappily I don't know in what way to do it, and for that very reason you can be sure. For if I knew it would be a sign that I have spoken already with somebody about things like this.

How do you spend your time? I think very pleasantly, because in the presence of your beloved. With my whole heart I wish you amusement and a pleasant passage of your time. I have no further



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so very much. Is it true? I don't send you Christmas wishes yet, for surely you will write again before the holidays.

I have nothing more of interest to communicate. I wish you success and merry distraction with my whole heart. I beg you for a kind answer as soon as possible. I shall wait with long[ing] both for your letter and for your photograph. I send you a hearty handshake.

I remain always one and the same,

STASIA G.

699

December 4, 1912

INFLUENTIAL [WIELMOŻNY] SIR: I inform you that I had the honor of receiving from you a few days ago a new letter from America. [Letters sent; asks for answer.] Please describe to me everything. How do you succeed in America? Do you amuse yourself merrily? And then, when do you intend to come back to our country? And perhaps you think of remaining there forever? It would be a pity if you settled there. Rather come back to our country.

Please be so kind and send me your photograph. You asked whether I correspond with Miss Anna [Hanka]. Well, I must tell you that since you left Rytwiany, I sent her no less and no more, but eight letters. But she did not even begin to answer any of them. Then I ceased writing to her. And now I don't know at all what is going on with her. With me there is no news either. Mortal tediousness. Your letters are the only distraction for me. So I beg you very much, be so kind and write to me as soon as possible. With great longing I shall wait for your letter. And I beg you, don't refuse me this grace. Probably you will receive this letter before Christmas. So I send you my best wishes for the approaching holidays. I have nothing more to write, only I commend myself to your kind memory.

I remain always the same,

STASIA G.

P.S. I remind you about the photograph.

700

January 9, 1913

RESPECTED SIR: I inform you that I received your letter, for which I give you hearty thanks. Sir! I am very grateful to you for this letter. But while on the one hand you gave me much pleasure with it, on the other hand it was very painful to me. For how could

you have suspected me of anything like this, that I am so indelicate as not to answer your letters. You offended me much, for I did not even think about anything like this, much less realize it. I inform you that I send answers at once after receiving every one of your letters. Why you did not receive the former remains a puzzle to me. To your letter before the last I sent answers twice, but having no news from you I did not write any more. I thought that you were occupied with somebody and I did not want to interrupt a pleasant idyl with my tedious letters. In a word, I did not wish you to suspect me of importunity. This was the reason why I did not dare to send you wishes for New Year. Now please accept my late wishes. And I wish you to get as soon as possible renown and millions in America and to come as soon as possible back to our country.

I was pained when for so many months I had no letter from you. I thought that you had already forgotten. You ask me whether I wish to stop my correspondence with you. Sir! If it were possible, I would correspond with you steadily. But this evidently depends only upon you. I count my correspondence with you among the greatest pleasures. So I hope that you won't refuse me this pleasure, but that you will reciprocate by correspondence.

With me there is no news. I have not married yet, unfortunately, and it is not likely to happen soon, for it is now more and more difficult to find a husband.

What is the news with you? Do you remain a bachelor up to the present? I beg you once more, send me your photograph. In the name of my parents I thank you for the greetings which you sent. They reciprocate in the same way.

I commend myself to your kind memory.

With respect,

STASIA G.

P.S. I wish you to amuse yourself merrily during the whole carnival.

701

January 29, 1913

SIR: A month has passed and I have no news from you. Don't forget that a month has many, many more days when they are counted with impatience and anxiety. So I will still wait and deceive myself that perhaps I don't wait in vain.

STASIA G.

702

March 14, 1913

RESPECTED SIR: [Letters received.] I beg your pardon for not having answered your letters for so long a time. But please forgive me this momentary inconsistency. I could not answer sooner because I was very sick for almost a month, and in spite of my wish I was unable to answer sooner. But now, when I am in health, my first act is to take a pen in order to excuse myself to you. . . . How do you spend your time? Certainly more merrily than I do, for in a city one can amuse himself better than in the country. With me everything is as formerly. I am bored, nothing more. And the time passes so monotonously. I have nothing more to write. . . . I take the liberty of bidding you goodbye. . . . I send you a hearty handshake.

With respect,

STASIA G.

703

May 14, 1913

RESPECTED SIR: I inform you that I received your letter, your cards, a photograph, and ribbons. . . . Answer me please, how did I merit to be remembered by you so particularly? For besides the letters and the photograph, these ribbons have confused me, for I don't know, in fact, under what pretext I may accept them. They will be for me a very dear remembrance. I don't think that you will be angry.¹ As to the photograph, I thank you very much. It was a very pleasant surprise for me. I have asked for it so often, and nevertheless I did not receive it, and I thought already that I should not have the honor of owning your photograph; meanwhile, I received it on my name-day. I must confess that you look very well upon it.

. . . With me there is no news at all; always the old story. . . .

I thank you once more for your kind remembrance . . . and for all these objects, which caused me an incomparable pleasure.

With respect,

STACHA G.

704

[Without date]

RESPECTED SIR: I have the honor to inform you that I received your postcard a few days ago and your letter, for which I send you hearty thanks.

¹ She will treat them as a gift too precious to be used. Cf. the behavior of Hanka under similar circumstances (No. 716).



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[July or August 1913]

RESPECTED SIR: You ask me what is the news with me. Well, first I must inform you that I am getting married. This information will not be news to you, for from your letter I learned that you are very well informed about it. I wonder who was so serviceable and saved me the trouble of informing you about this fact. Excuse me for not informing you about it sooner, but I did not believe myself that it would happen. My banns have only just been published, and the wedding will be on August 10. You wonder that I am getting married so young. But I believe, on the contrary, that it is time for me to get married. I have begun my eighteenth year already, twenty is not so far, and I am very much afraid of remaining an old maid. Moreover, I don't marry because forced to, only from love. I get an ideal husband, who satisfies all my demands—modest enough, evidently. You are interested to know whence my future husband comes? He was born in the province of Radom, and educated in Warsaw. We have known each other more than a year and a half, for he now works in Zagloba. He is a railway engineer and locksmith. We will not remain here long. I think that we shall go to Warsaw. I regret very much that you are not in our country. I hope that you would not have refused me the pleasure and would have been at my wedding. While now, unhappily, too wide a space divides us.

I intended to go to Rytwiany, but now I will not go, for Andzia will come.

I have nothing more to write you. I want only to beg your pardon if I ever caused you any pain, and to ask your forgiveness. Write me that you are not angry with me. But I believe that I have not merited your anger.

Perhaps this is the last letter which I shall write you. For now of what use would my letters be to you? Surely they would give you no pleasure, for as long as I was a girl it was different, but now my

the receptions in private houses (outside of ceremonial festivals), of all dances, walks, etc. Therefore a girl or a boy "amusing" himself is always understood to be in search of a match, and therefore a girl or a boy engaged or half-engaged ought never to "go into society" or to seek "amusement" when the other is absent. Stacha's explicit acknowledgment that she amuses herself means therefore that she no longer expects a proposal from Walenty, but is in search of another match or even already engaged.

rôle is completely changed. So I must be satisfied with one thing. I have no more news. I bid you farewell, respected sir.

With respect,

STASIA G.

I beg you, do not refuse me this grace, and destroy all my letters.

706

RYTWIANY, November 8, 1912

RESPECTED SIR: Oh, how happy I feel after receiving your letter, for which I waited with much longing, but with uncertainty. I imagined that when you went to America, I should have to bid you farewell forever, so this day of separation was for me as [illegible; terrible?] a day as if I bade farewell to everything that was dear to me upon the earth, as if I were at the funeral of my happiness and nothing were left for me except to put on mourning and to wear it the rest of my life upon the earth.

Dear sir, I have no words to describe and I cannot even express all that I feel, so terrible is your departure for me. So whenever I met your brother, I always asked him to give me your address if you wrote first to your parents. I intended to write the first, but since I received a letter myself, I have your address. Dear *kum*,¹ you wrote me about those strikes, and while nobody knew yet that you wrote to me, on the same day I learned that you wrote to your parents also, and that your parents grieve very much about your being in such misery. It would be the best if you could refrain from writing to your parents [such things], for when you write you cause only grief, weeping, and nothing more. This is perfectly useless and your parents grieve enormously about you. But as to me, you can be sure that nobody will learn [that you have written] anything bad; if I tell anybody that you wrote I will always say that it is all right. For not even my parents know what you write to me. As to the money, you may not trouble yourself, for we don't need it. You will give it back when you can. You may keep it with you, for in the case of some accident it may always be useful. Don't send it back until you think that you are in such a good condition as no longer to be afraid of misery. [Send it] only then, or else I would be ready to send it back. Dear friend, you ask about Miss Stanisława

¹ Probably the god-relation exists, if at all, only between the parents of the boy and girl, and she transfers it half jokingly to their relation.

[Stasia]. I don't know anything, for since she wrote me that letter which you saw, she afterward wrote only one postcard. After your departure I wrote her a letter, registered, and she did not answer. Then I wrote 2 cards, and she did not answer either. Sister-in-law has written me two letters already, and she [Stasia] did not. So I don't write to her any more and don't intend to unless she writes to me. Then I will inform you about anything. If you want me to be the intermediary [between you] further I will sacrifice myself [half ironical?] with pleasure. Dear sir, please excuse me for not having answered at once, but you understand that I desire so much to answer you immediately, on the same day on which I receive your letter. But everything was so unfavorable that I could not answer at once, and now I have answered you, but not to everything. My mother has been sick with inflammation of the kidneys for 5 weeks, and I am so occupied with the household and with sewing that really it is difficult for me to afford writing a letter. You must comply with it, and you will kindly forgive me. In the next [letter] I will write more and I will try [to write] a little better, for I wrote this one so badly that I am ashamed to send it. Really I don't know what is the fault, whether the pen is bad, or the ink, or the one who wrote. Probably it is my fault, that I don't know how to write [nicely], but I will try some day. We thank you heartily for having sent the photograph, for from sister we had a letter in which they wrote that they received your photograph and letter, and asked me to come.

Greetings from my parents, and from me hearty embraces. [The Polish word for "shake" (hands) and "embrace" is the same—from *ściskać*, "to press." Here it means formally "handshake," really "embrace."] I beg you for a kind answer.

[Your] l [oving],

ANNA [HANKA]

707

January 30, 1913

DEAR SIR: I inform you that I received on January 16 the letter for which I had waited with great impatience and uncertainty. I send you a hearty "God reward" for it, and for the good wishes. Dear sir, that letter comforted me very much, so I thank you very much for the reciprocal feelings expressed in it, and about which I doubted much, for you did not give any sign for so long a time. Dear sir, I am really very pained and I regret very much that I sent you a



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written to you. I don't know yet what she will answer. As to Miss N., we are not angry with each other, but we don't keep company since I came from Zagloba. Only when we meet, we have to talk with each other. Since you left I have spoken only 3 times with her. She is [pretends to be] a lady, and I cannot bear such people. [Information about acquaintances.]

Your lov[ing],

ANNA

708

February 18, 1913

WORTHY FRIEND: I inform you that I received 2 letters and a card. [One page about writing letters and answering.] Your brother is very anxious lest you marry some pretty American girl, and I think also much about it, that perhaps you will fall in love and get into a marriage bond there in America. [News about marriages and acquaintances]. T. Sz. wrote that she does not wish to her worst enemy to make the journey to America. She was very seasick upon the ship, and in America she is immeasurably homesick. My brother wrote now that if I wanted to see America he would take me in the spring. But I would decide to go solely in order to see more often my beloved, i.e., my *kum*, but my parents don't allow me to dream about America, and mother faints at the mention of it. So it seems that I shan't see America. As long as my parents are alive I must remain nearer to them. [Repeats the news about Miss N. playing a lady; news about other friends.]

[HANKA]

709

March 2, 1913

DEAR SIR: I inform you that I answered your letters very long ago, and I am sure that you must have received them. And you don't deign to answer me.

Dear! In spite of not receiving any answer, I cannot wait longer, for my heart which is wounded since the moment of your departure shows me itself the way to pen a few words far away beyond the sea, where the man is who could heal it. [Evidently imitated.] But when, when? Alas!

Now I sit musing alone and I think how often I had the pleasure of spending such evenings as this one in talking with you. Oh, how pleasant it was to live then! Today the tediousness is beyond

description. I am tortured. Wherever I look—emptiness everywhere. Always I feel the lack of someone. Nothing can make me cheerful. Nothing except this one thought, when I remember that perhaps sometime we shall see each other. But this will not come soon probably, will it? And I do not know how I shall be able to live thus any longer. I imagine it will not be very cheerful. But nothing can be done. I must accept my fate.

Then I want to know of your health. I am in good health, thanks to our Lord God, and I wish you the same, with a true heart. I beg you, deign to inform me how you are succeeding, how you spend your moments, whether merrily, surrounded by pretty foreigners or acquaintances. I am curious what influence [impression] the American girls have made upon you? I think not a bad one, for there all the women are elegant, though I should not envy them, for perhaps I could also be in their company. My sister in America and her husband wrote me. I received their letter this week. They ask me to come without fail. They almost implore me. Moreover, my sir, they wrote me that they had there for me a boy who knew me from my photograph, and is so rich, for he has \$2,000, and when I came, he would marry me at once. But I answered them that if he had so many thousands let him search for a wife more worthy of him, for I will not marry for the sake of thousands, but of love. I always repeat it to myself, that happiness is only in love, not in any amount of money, for money is a thing which may be acquired, while nothing will change me. I asked them where he got his assurance that I would marry him at once, since he let them write so? It is not enough that I pleased him, for I don't know him, and I don't know whether he would please me. Well, I don't know what they will answer to this. In this way, dear sir, I could have seen America. But I don't know whether this nice gentleman who is so sure of himself will still want me after what I answered them, and so I have a fresh grief. [Irony.]

With the approaching Easter holidays I wish you the fulfilment of your dearest wishes and merry amusement in the most numerous society possible.¹ But please do not forget your truly l[oving]

HANKA

¹ This paragraph shows clearly the modesty of Hanka's claims. A girl claiming exclusive rights to the man would never wish him "merry amusement in a numerous society," because of the meaning of social entertainments, explained above.

710 [Probably end of March or beginning of April 1913]

DEAR *Kum*: You write that I have forgotten you already, for I don't write to you. Oh, it never was so and I am sure that it never can happen, for it is not permitted to forget about such a true friend as you are to me. You suspect me of getting married perhaps, and that therefore I don't write. It is awful to tease in so terrible a way one who can love nobody besides you and who certainly would never decide to marry some man whom she could never love! And even if I married, I could not always feign that I love him, while thinking about someone else. This would not be right. It is much better to suffer now instead of suffering later, making somebody else suffer besides, and betraying him—which would be more probable than the contrary. Therefore I promised myself to marry no sooner than you come from America, and perhaps not at all. Since you went to this unhappy America, I prepare myself seriously for the life of an old maid, and as far as it seems, I shan't be deceived. . . .

Please don't forget me and write as soon as possible. Your letters are my only comfort and distraction. . . . And don't write me any more that you bore me with your letters, for it offends me much. I wait for your letters as for salvation, and you write such taunts. . . .

Your loving,

HANKA

711 [April] 30, 1913

DEAR SIR: I have the honor to inform you that before the holidays, on Good Thursday, I received your letter with the wishes, and 3 cards. Today I received another letter and I am very much pleased. After reading these letters I feel very happy. Because your letters, dear *kum*, make upon me a very kind impression. I read them with great pleasure every evening, for they alone can calm my heart. For these letters, so dear to me, and for your reciprocal feelings expressed in them, I have the honor to thank you heartily, dear *kum*. For the cards I give you also a hearty "God reward." I should be glad to thank you in a more hearty manner, but really I don't know how to express how grateful I feel to you, dear *kum*, for these cards, for they have a great value for me and I will keep them in remembrance. I am very much pained that I cannot reciprocate in the same way, but it seems to me that our Kingdom has no cards like these.



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American, i.e., daughter-in-law, and she will feel happy by the side of your wife. I see that your mother has nothing against it; on the contrary, she says that she would like to see you happy, and to have a daughter-in-law. Dear Mr. Walenty, I thank you much for the money which you sent back, but I am much astonished that you were so anxious about these few roubles and sent them so hurriedly. You hurried quite uselessly. It would be better if you had kept them until I go to America; then you could send them for my journey.

Dear Mr. Walenty, I won't write any more today, but in the next letter. I have been sitting too long already. It is night, one o'clock, and if my mother awakes she will scold me for not sleeping. My parents send you greetings and salutations, and I a hot kiss.

Thy truly loving,

HANKA

712

May 20, 1913

RESPECTED SIR: I have the honor to inform you that I received your letter and your photograph, for which I give you a hearty "God reward."

Dear Mr. Walenty! How glad I am that at every moment I can look at least upon a picture of a person so dear to my heart. Dear Walek! I lack the words to express how happy I felt after receiving those photographs and also after reading your letter, for this letter, written by you,¹ my Walek, is my only comfort. Perhaps you are offended with me for having postponed the answer, but if you knew, my Walek, how sad it is to live without you, you would not wait for an answer, but would come yourself. Then I am sure that I could send a letter to you to Rytwiany every day, while now, when I sit down to write a letter to you, my dear, I first read all your letters, and before I think what to write a late hour approaches and so a day passes after another. Today I at last decided to pen a few words which might assure you that I love you more than life. But what of it, since God the Merciless separated us and condemned to long sufferings? Though this which happened, my Walek, is your fault only, for I did whatever I could; it was not suitable for me to do more. But you did not mind anything. You believed that if you went to America you would forget there your country and your friends and

¹ At this point Hanka uses the form "thee" (used also at the end of the preceding letter), and continues to use "thee" and "thou" to the end.

would be happy then. Though perhaps it is so, I think that still if you come back and the persons whom you know stand before your eyes, then you will be obliged to live as we do now, my Walek. Dear Walek, you ask me what is the use of my longing for you. I see that you don't like it much, since you advise me to gather society [about me]. Well, I will try to do it as I can, for up to the present I have still none. And to you, my Walek, I won't describe any more my feelings, even if I am mad with despair. Now I will only describe what is the news in Rytwiany, and in general about acquaintances. Do you agree to it? I must still mention about that unknown American. As to this, you can be calm, my Walek, that you won't have any rival. The matter is not about some marvel of beauty that there might be rivalry. The one from America does not write since I answered them, and here in Rytwiany and the neighborhood nobody gives any attention to me.

Your truly loving,

HANKA

713

June 4 [1913]

DEAR WALEK: I see from your letters and you also write me on these postcards some reproaches about something. I see that for some time you are very nervous. I don't understand why. You write to me with so great "respect" that really it causes me great pain. If you think, my Walek, that it is not suitable for us to write "thou" to one another, say so, for it was I who began it, and I can change it. I will write you in the same way as you write on the cards. Listen, my Walek! You are offended because I did not write you what you asked—what people say about you. Well, my dear, I tried to do it. I saw Mr. M. and Mr. Dz. and in general the others, and I began to speak with them about different subjects, and I did not notice anything. Everybody expressed himself so well about you that there is no suspicion whatever [of their thinking anything bad]. So I noticed, at least. As to Mr. M. who lives near the main road, I have spoken with him more than once, and I hear also from Hela P., who always tells me what she knows about you from M. As far as I know, M. always expresses himself in a very flattering manner; he does not find words enough to praise you and he speaks always of you as of a progressive man. And what other people say, never mind. Let them talk. You cannot be an exception, my Walek. They have

something to say about everybody, so what does it matter if they talk a little about you also? And you, my Walek, be a little less sensitive about these things. It will be better for you. Don't be impressed with such things, for it is not worth while.¹ You ask me, my Walek, whether I will go to Zagloba. Well, be calm, for if it matters anything to you, perhaps I won't go, for I am not very anxious to go there and my parents don't allow me either, only Stacha always asks me to come, and my sister-in-law wants me also to come and to see her new son, who will be only 3 months old on June 8. I did not want to go as a *kuma* [of the sister=godmother of the baby], so they want me to come now to them, and only then they will come to Rytwiany with all their children, and Stasia also intends to come. But probably I won't go. Dear Walek! I am curious why you do not want me to go to Zagloba. Surely you have nothing to fear, for I am not a man and I won't fall in love with Stasia, and if I read the letters which you wrote to her it would be nothing, for I know even now what you write to her and still I don't mind it. On the contrary, I am pleased that you correspond with each other. So be calm about this, for nothing bad will result from it. Don't be angry, my dear, for I feel that there is something the matter with you, but really I don't know what. I should be very grateful to you for kindly informing me. Dear Walek! You write me something about burning of photographs, so I beg you very much, don't write such things any more, for they cause me great pain unless you want to tease me, then do. . . . So, my dear Walek, if you burn my photograph, I will do then as you advise me to do. Then you ask me whether I have well-suited company. Up to the present I have none and I don't know what will be further on. What does it mean, this well-suited company? For, so to speak, I am too stupid, I cannot understand what it means. And I am also at a guess to know why you asked me to answer you during this season. I don't know what is the matter at this point, for I have written more than once during this summer and before the season ends you will receive more than one letter from me, and you will even not want to answer me any more, for you will certainly be bored if I begin to write too much. There is no news at all, everything is the same. Only this is new, that Miss Nowak is married.

¹ The fellow is exceptionally vain, but his interest in public opinion is perfectly normal and typical for his class. Its origin lies in peasant life, not in town life. The attitude of the girl is above the normal, in this respect as in others, and even she is later most profoundly affected by the gossip about herself.



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my Walek, I won't describe it to you so exactly, for I should have to write for a whole week and there is not time enough. And I am sure that you know already everything, for probably somebody has written to you. First I inform you that I was in Cracow. I should never have gone, the idea would not even have come to my head to go to Cracow, were it not for this, that Mrs. Rog. went to bring her daughter Stasia and they persuaded me and I went with her. I wished to see whether it is possible to live in the farther world, not in Rytwiany only. Well, and it seems to me that it is better to live anywhere than in Rytwiany. On this occasion I called on a doctor in Cracow, for I caught cold in the winter, and I did not care for being cured; I did not believe in it. Then I went to the wedding of Staśka N. and I fixed myself better still [I got worse] through dancing, for I had to dance more than the other girls. I did not mind it either until my side began to ache severely. Only then a doctor was called. He frightened me by saying there would be inflammation of the lungs, and talked a great deal, but gave me no medicine at all, only some powders and cupping-glasses. But this helped little. So the doctor in Cracow, after examining me, told me that it was a very [illegible word] cold and gave me medicines, and now I am getting much better. But since I came back whoever meets me asks why I was in Cracow. When I tell them that I called on a doctor, they say everywhere that I am sick with consumption. And I don't say anything, for what shall I say to stupid people who think that since I went to Cracow there can be nothing else but consumption? I only laugh at it and say, let them blame me, so that no boy will want to marry me.¹ I should be very glad, for I don't want anybody to call on me or to court me. And Stasia Rog. is sick with a nervous disease, so everybody says already that she has gone mad. But she does not even dream of going mad, for this needs some time, while she is already so bad that for three days she has been in convulsions. The doctors say that if she lives until the ninth day, this can pass, but if not, she will die on one of these days. I sit with her continually, for she does not allow anybody to be with her except me and Kazia, and she does not want to take any medicine from anybody except me. I tell you, Walek, people say that nobody has yet seen such a disease. When she sleeps she

¹ The attitude toward sickness seems to be exactly the same as toward some moral fault or sin (cf. Fryzowicz series). This evidently goes back to the peasant life, and still further back to the identification of sickness with possession by the evil principle, of which we find numerous traces in the peasant language and magic.

is quiet, but she sleeps only if they make her sleep with powders. But when she has slept for these hours, she awakes and has convulsions so constantly that three persons have to hold her in bed. She asks herself to be held for she would kill herself if she hit her head. She is quite conscious and knows everything. She knows that her nerves and heart torment her so, and when anyone comes she asks him to pray that she may die and suffer no longer. Yesterday, when she could still speak, she called me and told me everything, how she wanted to be dressed for death and how I was to sew her dress. She wants me to do everything. Do you know, Walek, that I am already so afraid of her that instead of going to Zagloba later I shall go perhaps this week. I am so tired with her that I am even afraid of her, for she calls me continually, and therefore perhaps later she will come to me.¹ Then I inform you, my Walek, that Stasia writes me one letter after another, asking me to come to her wedding. The banns have been proclaimed already, and the marriage-ceremony will be on August 10. My brother and his wife write also, asking me to come and stay for a longer time, and have some vacation. I intend to go this week and will remain there about a month. You wrote, my Walek, making a supposition about falling in love. Well, you can be perfectly calm, for I love only you and I am not going there to hunt for a husband, but only to get some rest, and to give Stasia the pleasure of being at her wedding. I will not dance much, for mother wrote already to my brother to take care of me and not let me amuse myself too wildly and catch cold again. So even if I wished it they won't allow me. I foresee that you will be offended, dear W., with my going to this wedding, but you see that I cannot excuse myself. If I had not my brother's home there I would not go, but since they write also, why should I not, if they give me to eat?

I am sure, my Walek, that you won't be satisfied with this letter, for I only worry you. But I must describe to you what pains me the most. It is this, dear Walek, that you could believe some finished [absolute] fool about my having walked with Kawal. and Kacz.! I don't say that I am above them, but I tell you, my Walek, that no friendship unites me with these boys. I have never in my life spoken with Kawal. and I am not acquainted with him at all. As to Kacz.,

¹ After her death, as a ghost, because in her last moments she has been particularly attached to Hanka, and because this attachment itself in a person sick with such a strange disease must have had some abnormal, "uncanny" character.

once he was in our house in the winter with your brother, and they accompanied the girls who sew with me. Since then I have not spoken with him at all. I only want to know who wrote you this tale. I would not treat him very politely, for it disparages me greatly when it is said that a band of boys is walking after me and moreover throwing dirty words. Really, Walek, I cannot live through it. I am in such a mood that sometimes I rage with anger, sometimes again cry. How can people speak badly about me when nobody ever sees me? If I am so lightly treated in Rytwiany, I ought not to live at all, for why should I? If a poor girl loses her opinion [good name] it is almost as much as if she killed herself.¹

I kiss you.

HANKA

I have not seen your mother, but my parents and yours were together at a fair and treated themselves so well that my father got quite drunk.

716

September 10 [1913]

MY DEAR WALEK: I will mention first your preceding letter in which you sent me a ribbon. I thank you for it heartily, my Walek.

¹ It is an interesting problem whether the origin of the enormous importance which any bad gossip assumes in the eyes of the person gossiped about does not lie in the primitive magical belief in the real influence of words. We have an analogy in the importance ascribed to the curse. The expression of any bad wish provokes the utmost wrath, and bad gossip seems to be (in addition to its ordinary social meaning) a weaker and less explicit form of the curse. This supposition seems to be corroborated by two facts. First, there is always an apparent disproportion between the content of the gossip and the reaction which it provokes in the wronged person. Even if we take into account the fear of ridicule which makes the sting of trifling gossip particularly sharp, there remains the fact that the reaction is always too strong if judged from the objective standpoint. The most vain-glorious man of the intelligent class will hardly react to a bit of gossip which would exasperate a not at all conceited peasant. Again, some old proverbs and customary sayings, show a tendency to neutralize the magical influence of bad words by denying them any meaning, by treating them as mere noise, likening them to the blowing of the wind, by assimilating them to the voices of animals of good omen (the dog, the magpie), and by denying that they can reach heaven or God—just as a curse is neutralized. Evidently this neutralization is quite different from a negation of the fact itself stated in the gossip.

All this does not mean that the reaction toward gossip is not now mainly determined by the purely social attitude, only that this social attitude may have been preceded by a more primitive magical one and that the traces of this magical attitude linger still unconsciously behind the explicit desire for social appreciation.



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but my thoughts are always directed to the place where you are, my W. But what could I write upon a card? Moreover, my sister-in-law could not live without my giving her to read what I write to anybody. Therefore I did not write a letter to you, for as soon as I began to write she read it. Well, what could I do? I did not want to offend her, but I don't want them to know either what I write to anybody, for then she would laugh at me and remind me always of what I wrote.

As to nice boys whom you mentioned, they were numberless! *Nice* boys flirted with *nice* girls, while I behaved as usual. I must boast that if you come you won't know me, I have grown so very serious. I was left behind all the others. I even avoided the honor of being the older [first] "best girl," but was the younger [second] one. I did not want to have a "best man" [accompanying me], but to be only a guest. Well, I succeeded in the house, but not in the church, for one of these "nice" boys came to me and said that the whole wedding group would not allow me, dressed in wedding-clothes, not to belong to them. So I had him as a "best man." This man is the second engineer, a friend of Stacha's husband. But I did not amuse myself much, although it only depended upon myself. Whenever I could I ran home for awhile, and on the second night I slept, while everybody danced till 7 o'clock in the morning. It was no novelty for me; have I been at few weddings? So it was enough for me to have been there [for a relatively short time], because now no parties amuse me any more, they only annoy me.

I will tell you about your photographs also. I asked Stacha to give them to me, but she said that she wouldn't give them up at all, and she did not. She keeps them hidden. And I will write you this also, that Stacha's husband, ten days after the wedding, went to [military] drill for 6 weeks [as a reservist], and she went to him once, for it was not far away, in Pulawy. She stayed there for 3 days in a hotel. She did not want to go, but the old people [parents] drove her out.¹

I remain, your truly loving,

HANKA

¹ Hanka has apparently throughout no reservations and no subtlety of calculation. Otherwise she would have recognized that this information would turn Walek's head again toward Stasia.

717

October 8, 1913

DEAR WALEK: I inform you that I received your card for which—for which I thank you heartily, and and [kiss you]. My dear Walek! I should really prefer if you came. Then I could explain [express] myself once, and I think that you would believe in my feelings, while as it is, notwithstanding my effusions, you always imagine something, that I betray you, and you always suspect me. The same about that card I sent you from Zagloba. I could not have written otherwise, for Stacha was there, and I would not let her know what relations our correspondence includes, for I told her always that nothing but friendship unites us, and therefore I did not wish to betray myself. And even if I had confessed, what could I boast of, unless something of which I am not sure? Even if I had told her that I “love” you, she would surely have asked me, “And does he reciprocate?” What could I have answered her, since I don’t know myself?

For in truth, my Walek, you must agree with me that—I don’t say now, but formerly—when you were still in Rytwiany, certainly not the smallest spark of love for me glowed in your heart. I say it from my own conviction. When I could suffer no more, I resolved to confess to you what had tormented me for so long a time. Well, and probably from pity, you have tried to reciprocate. I love you madly for it, for not having trampled my feelings, for having a little pity on me. And I will write you something more; I hope that you will not be offended with me, as once with Stacha, do you remember? Well, long ago I wanted to ask you, my Walek, but I had no courage to do it sooner. When do you think of coming back to our country?

You want me, dear Walek, to tell you something about Zagloba. [News without importance.] I don’t know what more to write. If you come some day, I will perhaps tell you something fresh, for now in Rytwiany I don’t see anything worth communicating. The eyes ache to look at this stupidity, therefore I don’t go for any walks, but I sit of evenings and read. Even so I hear enough of this gaiety through the window. I wait for an answer.

Your loving,

HANKA

718

April 22 [1915]

INFLUENTIAL [WIELMOŻNY] SIR: Wishing to satisfy your desire, I hasten to express my feelings. . . .

Miss Anna [Hanka] was an ideal girl. She loved me madly, but she was not left without reciprocity on my part. I loved her with my whole heart. She was for me a balm, healing the wounds of my heart. In a word, she was everything to me.

Miss Anna had an unbowed character. She surmounted everything, she knew how to provide against everything, and therefore I loved her. She was given up to me with her whole heart and soul, but during all this time I never provoked a blush upon her pretty face, I never tried to do it.

As to proposing, you know that it is a big question! Without having a position suitable to give one's wife a more or less good support it would be useless to propose. And in spite of all, I have parents far advanced in years, and I must endeavor to help them in their old age and to assure existence for myself. I am not so many years old, and she was also young, so we could come to an understanding, for she felt instinctively that I loved her, that I would not leave her, and everything would come in right time!

And now I must mention that I have a companion with whom I lived in one and the same idea and one aspiration. He had also Miss Anna in his eye, but as he came from a richer family and had a higher instruction than I, she had in mind that it would not be an equal love, and she kept far from him. Her maxim was to have a husband of her own social position. . . . And I . . . have temperance and limited myself always to words, personally or in correspondence, for I knew and I know that whatever was for me was not for anybody else. I was always sure of myself.

But, alas! The beginning is gay, but the end is sad. For on February 13, 1914, my dearest being bade farewell to this world and evidently to me also. The news about the death of Miss Anna made upon me the impression of a thunderstroke. I lost everything, nothing is left for me. I am now *alone*.

You can see also from these letters which I send you now how my companions write to me, how they express themselves about Miss Anna and how they regret her, how they persuade me not to grieve. But all this is because of that "tomorrow" [probable meaning: 'because I left the country under the influence of social ideals']. I felt particularly bound by the lack of [liberty of] "word," I aspired for a "free" word, and therefore I left my native country. But I felt deeply this American loneliness.



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idiotic, not at all a logical, attitude [*sic*]! I have not met in America a single girl to be compared with those in the old country. I feel [the lack of] the pleasant life in the old country as compared with America, but I hope that this pleasant life will come back. Perhaps I shall merit that friends will surround me, as formerly. I hope that in the old country I shall still find a companion by the side of whom I shall lead a more pleasant life than now. I have been already long enough in America, but I cannot find, even for a few minutes, the pleasure of social conversation or flirtation. I don't know how it is in Chicago, Detroit, or other cities, but I think that there is no difference, for I can conclude from papers and understand. Here I finish, although I could write much, very much, more, but I fear importuning you too much. If you wish something more, all right. I won't remain deaf or lazy. I would ask you to correspond with me from time to time, for it would be a great pleasure for me, if it is not too difficult for you and if it does not occupy too much of your time. I receive correspondence from the old country, written on various subjects. I will be able therefore to inform you, as far as you wish.

I had some other letters, very important ones, kept hidden, but one of the boarders stole them. Why? What for? I don't understand what they mattered for him. I have still over 100 letters, but they have very little content which could interest you, so I do not send them. I have a girl in the old country with whom I only began to correspond, but now the post functions so lazily that I don't even wish to write!

WALENTY PIOTROWSKI

719

SICHOW, December 22, 1912

DEAR WALENTY: I received your letter, but it is rather late, so that you won't receive my answer until after the holidays. But since I write it before the holidays, I wish you first a Merry Christmas, a gay and pleasant amusement in an agreeable company, then health and every good, light work, big pay, and at last a big capital and a pretty American girl. You asked me to write you how I succeed. Well, I succeed pretty well. I was already a few times in Warsaw [as chauffeur-assistant]. Only, you know, one becomes so muddy and sometimes so cold. When we come to Warsaw, particularly if there is rain and mud, people look at us as at fools, for we are hardly to be seen from behind the mud, our automobile is so

spattered. During the holidays I shall be at home, and afterward I shall go to Warsaw and stay there during the winter in an automobile garage, and sometime in the spring I hope to get a place somewhere and to drive alone [probably as a cab-driver]. If you write [advise] me so, as soon as I come to Warsaw I will try to take lessons somewhere in German, or I will learn alone. . . . You ask what is the news in Rytwiany. Well, nothing except that many people have left for America since you went. . . . The turbine upon the dam is already working. In the place of that machine at which you were there is an electric motor, and in general motors are put in instead of all the machines. . . . But how silly, I am! Why do I talk about the turbine? What do you care there about any turbine? Well, but listen. Going once by this electric machine I forgot entirely that I should not meet you there, and only when I saw Nowak and some other boy there with him, I remembered. . . . I ask you also whether you receive any correspondence from Rytwiany? Ah, yes, from Miss G. [Hanka], don't you? . . .

Well, what more? I have nothing to write you at this moment, only I send you greetings from my parents, my sister, and my brother-in-law.

Your loving and sincerely well-wishing friend,

ZYGMUNT

720

February 10, 1913

DEAR WALENTY: Having now nothing to do because of bad roads, I sit at home. I am in good health and I wish to you the same. Everything is all right with me, only I am a little offended with your reproaches. If I felt guilty I would admit it, but since I don't feel guilty of anything like this it is very painful to me. I received 3 letters and 3 cards from you, and I sent you also 3 letters and one card, and in none I made any such reproaches as you did. Is it my fault that you must write first a letter to me, and a few days later, writing another letter, you make reproaches already for my not writing to you, while your first letter to me was still on the way? Only when, after more than 20 days, I received your first letter, i.e., the one which you wrote on November 25, I sent you an answer which you received in the beginning of January. So during this time you wrote [as you say] these 6 letters and 7 cards, each full of reproaches about my not writing, as if I got these letters in a week's time. And now in this

fourth letter you write that you have sent already 6 letters. I received only 4 and 3 cards, and I have sent you also 4 letters and 1 card, but whether these letters follow one another every week or not, I don't count. I know only that I answer every one of your letters. So why do you fly out, why are you angry and suspect me about things of which I don't feel guilty?

Your companion,

ZYGMUNT

721

January 22, 1913

DEAR COMPANION: [Letters received and written.] I am in good health and I wish you the same with my whole heart. Now, having no other occupation, we drive beets from Lubnice to Rytwiany with that big automobile day and night. In our factory there was a wedding and in Rytwiany also; people amuse themselves, profiting from the short carnival.

I want to answer more or less your letter. Well, being working people, oppressed with exploitation in their fatherland, harassed in their native village by the uncertainty of tomorrow, and hearing about this gold-flowing America of their dreams, sure of an improvement of their existence, they go there. But what befalls them? The same, even a still harder labor, sometimes complete lack of work, and then again appears this specter of uncertainty of tomorrow, harassing the man. And such people, being in such a condition, commit often unheard-of things; some of them poison and kill themselves in different ways, others attack and rob merchants and other rich people, and most often they commit robbery and murder upon their own working companions. Such people have still an ineffaceable animality in themselves. But we young men, we ought not to look with cold blood upon the wasting of our bloody labor by these exploiters. Don't think that we alone, the Poles, work hard and are exploited. How many working people are there of English, or German, or of other nationalities! They all have their capitalists, their squanderers, and all this working people constitutes a single invincible power. Only now this working people begins to know this power which it possesses, and by the means of trade-unions it provides itself with capital, in order to be able to begin a struggle with the exploitation.

Your, always the same, loving companion,

Z.



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But alas! I am a poor man who knows nothing, so I hastened at least to comfort you by written words. Meanwhile a second letter comes, then a card, then a third letter, then two more cards, and all these on one subject: "You don't write, and I love you." I give you my word that at last I was even angry, for when I sent you the answer after receiving your first letter, before this first letter reached you I had already 3 letters and some cards, all of them full of reproaches about my not writing. Who will not agree with me that even enchanted lovers would be angry? So you see what results from too frequent writing. And now let us come back to this loving. I tell you sincerely, when I read that letter in which you wrote that you would put all the crowns of the world at my feet, I threw the letter away and did not read further. I thought: "How is it possible to write anything like this?" But after reading all that letter and reflecting, I forgive you, for I let myself often be transported also by feeling, but mostly I prevail over such feelings. So you see, dear companion, after this sharp letter, and you understand it very well; you know even already my idea, for I want you to know it; by the power of my will I want you to understand my idea.¹ And precisely by it you see that I am various [in variable moods?] and why I am various I will describe to you in another letter which I will send you within a short time after this one. So, dear companion, let it be the first letter of our real, progressive correspondence, for this past correspondence was some strain which must have broken in a short time. I finish this letter, for I have no place to write more, but even so you will have much to think over, although it is so short.

Your (*variously*)² loving and true companion and friend,

ZYGMUNT

¹ The sense is clear. Zygmunt understands the background of the other's "love-letters" and wants him to understand that those feelings should be suppressed. He confesses having had them himself in a slight degree. All this, nevertheless, should not be taken too radically; most certainly there has never been an actual homosexual relation, and Zygmunt does not allude to the possibility of such a relation, but merely to the *type of feelings* of the other man. Probably the reason of his condemning and controlling those feelings is much more their effeminating influence and the weakening of the power of will which they cause and denote than any moral judgment of the homosexual relation to which they may lead and which is probably not even explicitly thought of.

² "Variously" here, as well as above, may mean either that his feelings are not yet quite determined, that sometimes he yields to the sentimental friendship, sometimes again feels more manly and intellectual; or that he is ready to be Walenty's friend only in so far as the sentimental affection is excluded. As he never wrote the promised explanatory letter, we do not know which interpretation is the true one.

724

March 17, 1913

DEAR COMPANION: I ask you whether you received my letter of March 15. This letter is very important, although not finished yet, so if you receive it inform me at once, and I will send you the continuation of this letter, and if you don't receive it try to get it, for it won't be withheld at the post, as it is well addressed and has a stamp. You won't receive any news from me until you inform me that you received the letter of March 15. They wrote me from home that you have sent me a view of a drowning ship [evidently symbolic], but they did not send it to me, they sent me only 2 of your letters and a card. Remember about this letter, for it is very important. I compose already the continuation.

ZYGMENT

725

RYTWIANY, April 21, 1913

DEAR COMPANION: I will write you about one question which is worth being considered by you. Don't hinder your brother from going to America, for in this way you will be the cause of his bad future. You have no idea how many people went to America and are going still. If you don't take him, he will remain almost alone in Rytwiany, for all his companions will leave soon. You ought to take him, if it were only for this reason, that so many people go to America this spring and everybody gets work, even not bad work, so he would not perish either. I don't know whether it is true, whether you know really all the cities and even all the localities of North America or you only write so. Please don't be angry, but it is only my conclusion from the letters which you write me, criticizing America in every regard.¹ You ask me whether Stach [a common friend who is in America] is working or not. My word! I am really ashamed of you both; being so near to one another, in comparison with the distance which separates me from you, you want me to inform you about each other! Really, something extraordinary must have happened between you, since you are so angry that you do not even write to each other.² And now I inform you that Miss G. [Hanka], according to your wish, saw me, but I don't understand what for. . . .³ I resent your

¹ Another example of the difference between the impressionable, sentimental, and unreflective character of Walenty and the more intellectual and equilibrated nature of Zygmunt.

² Probably some petty quarrel, easily leading to the breaking of relations with natures such as Walenty's.

³ Apparently connected with Hanka's conscientious effort to report to Walenty the opinions current about him.

absence in different respects, particularly now in one, i.e., that I am loafing awfully after girls. If you were here you would certainly dissuade me from it.¹ You ask me to send you my photograph. What can I do, if I have no money to have myself photographed? This is one [reason], and the second is that I have more important things to buy [books?] than to spend money on photographs. Excuse me for expressing myself in so hard a way, but man is often obliged to accept even the most painful things.² Your brother told me that you intended to send him photographs. Be so kind and put in one for me. And he told me that you have sent already \$50, i.e., 100 roubles. This made me reflect, and I was pained, for you write such monotonous letters and never even mention what you do, what work you have, how much you earn. You omit the things which are the most important at the present time.

Always the same, your loving companion,

ZYGMUNT

But there are moments when he is different.

726

May 14, 1913

DEAR COMPANION: Since Easter I have had no news from you.³ I waited for a long time for an answer to my last letter from Warsaw, written rather at length. Evidently it did not reach you. For two weeks already I have waited for your wishes [for my name-day]. But you could not guess what news I will give you. Well, you see, I intend to go to America, evidently not immediately, but after some time, when I get more exact information with regard to this. During this time could you try to get for me, if possible, work in some automobile factory?

ZYGMUNT

727

Warsaw, May 29, 1913

DEAR COMPANION: I beg your pardon very much for not having informed you about anything. It was because of different reasons

¹ The homosexual background of the friendship is evidently strong in Walenty, but this passage probably means no more than that the sentimental friendship of the two men would exclude other sentimental relations.

² Knowing the importance of the photograph in the psychology of the peasant and the working man, this is an indication of the degree to which Zygmunt is emancipated from the traditions of his class.

³ The effect of letter 723, which evidently offended Walenty.



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you how I am living you will surely say that you are better off in America than I am in Warsaw. Certainly, I earn enough to live [to board], I have a place to lodge. Well, but I need clothes, and I won't give myself totally up to this work alone; I want to study, and nobody will give me books gratis. I won't sit [at home?] like a man who knows neither how to write nor how to read. Well, and then I must change my heart into a stone and write: "Dear parents, send me money," while I know that it is my duty and it is time for me to help my parents, instead. . . . So don't be angry, dear companion, if I teased you sometimes, for you know what it means to be forced against one's [will]. Let us then stop mutual complaints, for it does not suit us. Instead of writing bad things only, rather let us inform one another about good ones. Describe to me this theater in which you played a part. . . .

ZYGMUNT

729

August 8, 1913

DEAR COMPANION: I beg your pardon very much for having offended you during these last times in writing you nothing, but excuse me, for I don't depend yet upon myself, but I must still be subject to these stupid laws and absurd institutions for some time, because I am in training. I should wish nobody to be in training in such conditions as I find myself at present. It would need much writing if I wished to describe all this, while I, my dear Walek, have as little time as you can ever imagine. Some day when we meet we shall relate to each other the impressions and troubles experienced during this time. And now we ought not to let our hands fall impotently, commending ourselves to destiny, we ought not to lose hope, and we ought to keep a strong will, for if we lose all this and doubt everything, then it will be still worse. We must think that we are not alone in bad conditions. How many people suffer a hundred times worse than we do, and nevertheless there are many among them who defend themselves with energy against this bad lot. Should we, young men, ever doubt about carrying out our plans? No, we have never doubted and won't doubt that youth is strength, the more so if it is organized and unified; then it is a power which yields before nothing.

And now, dear companion, I shall at last describe to you my conditions, how I spend my time and what company I have. As you

know already, when we were still in Rytwiany we all three wrote, I, Stach, and Henryk, to Uncle Wincenty. You know him probably from our talk—the same who learned in Belgium and who is forbidden to come back to Russia. So we wrote to him asking him to help us, by correspondence, in self-education. He had a job and probably no time, but he sent us the address of a lady, his good friend and companion from old times, who is now a private teacher. The lady showed a great readiness to give us advice and information; she even sent us to Rytwiany a few very good books. But although I knew her by letters for more than half a year, I never had any occasion to see her; when I was in Warsaw, she was abroad. Now she is also abroad occupying the place of a teacher. Not long ago she made me acquainted by letter with one of her friends here in Warsaw. It is a young man of 20, son of an official; his father is no longer alive, only the mother is left and receives the pension. This young man has two younger brothers, they are all studying, and he, although so young, has finished 8 classes already [a gymnasium]. But I got acquainted with him before he went away for the summer to the country, and now we only correspond with each other. After so short an acquaintance we are already “companions.” And if you are curious in what way we became companions, write to Stach and let him send you a letter—the first which I got from this companion—in which he expresses himself for the first time as my companion, and at the same time informs me about different questions.¹ I had no time to describe to Stasiek my acquaintance with this companion and sent him that letter, but I don’t know whether he received it or not, for I send him letters without stamps, in the same way as to you. So, as you see, I have relations with good men. For think of it, how should such a highly educated man enter into relations with such a dirty and moreover ignorant boy as I am? And nevertheless he, being such a man and coming from a higher family, was not ashamed, but came to the shop and in getting acquainted with me shook my dirty hand. So it is possible to conclude that there are still good men in the world, since such a man became more generous through his studies. For usually men now get instruction for business, in order to exploit the ignorant ones, which is ignoble. . . .

¹ The importance attached to these apparently trifling facts—the use of the term “companion,” and the condescension of the student in shaking hands—by a young man of Zygmunt’s solid character shows how profound is the difference between even the middle class and the workman class.

You ask me how I spend my moments. If I only had as much of these moments as I need! You can guess that if I had more of them I would write to you more often. . . . And now excuse me for making a small remonstrance. But don't be angry. You write me that you belong to an amateur theater, but that you don't find in it good company [amusement?] because of some feeling. This reminds me of romantic novels from old times, when men did not know yet how to govern their feelings; but men who are in such conditions as ours ought to govern any feeling, particularly for such a good thing as an amateur theater. All associations, amateur theaters as well, are useful for our end; it is our duty to give them as much good will and energy as we can. You see I receive advice like this from my new companion who does not spare it to me. . . .

I remain your loving companion,

ZYGMUNT

How about your romance with Miss Stasia or Miss Hanka?

730

August 15, 1913

DEAR WALEK: I cannot take part in the solemnity of our parish-festival. I wish at least to write a few words home on this day of August 15. How painful it is to spend the time far away from our native country, and still more painful on a day which is solemnly celebrated in our native country.¹

And precisely while writing these few words to my parents I received your card, in which you inform me about the wedding of Miss Stasia. But probably the wedding is already over, for it was to be on August 10. You guess probably that this news made upon me not a small impression. But precisely on that account write me what she could have written you. I am very curious.

You ask me to write you something about Warsaw. I can write you only this, that Warsaw is full of various kinds of revelry and drinking. If a woman's body can be bought, well, then you can get everything for roubles. But besides all this Warsaw has also good men and good things, as, for example, this companion . . . about whom I wrote you already. . . .

Your loving companion,

Zygmunt

¹ This paragraph discloses Zygmunt's attitude toward religion, as stated in the introduction. A socialist like S. Jasiński (cf. that series) would certainly profit from the occasion of this parish-festival to write a declamatory invective against the stupidity of the people—the priests keeping them in "darkness" etc.



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I send greetings for all our acquaintances from Rytwiany, our native nest, but still dark enough. The function of spreading our enlightenment in our native nest belongs to us, as to its sons, who look upon the wider world. . . . I send you a hearty handshake.

Your loving companion,

ZYGMUNT

732

October 27, 1913

DEAR COMPANION: I received your letter in which you express [relate] to me your secret. I was very grieved, dear companion, and I sympathize with you. Forgive me, please, if I recall something from the past. Do you remember at one of our meetings upon the dam I said to you something in this sense about your romance, which had only begun then, while you assured me that nothing like this would happen—that I should not even think of it? And still my guesses were just, though I never guessed that anything might happen like this which has happened now. I did not guess it, for I counted more upon her. Who could indeed have suspected anything like this from such a serious young person? But, dear companion, I confess that I don't wonder. Knowing already life more or less and human relations, it does not seem to me strange at all. But in any case notice how weak in spirit are these women. Only consider it well and you will see that any of them is as weak as any other. Oh, excuse me, dear companion, but I express myself like some conservative critic of *love*, of these youthful impulses, of this beauty of youth. But, on the contrary, I am a partisan of it. How beautiful, how simple it is! Should I be a persecutor of love? Oh, no, I am not this! And do you know, dear companion, that when I received that letter from you I had such a wish to write her a letter that would give her back the past assurance which now has fled away, a letter which would render her more firm, more strong in love, a letter which would incite her to confront the greatest impediments and dangers in order to reach the point where the heart beats warmer.¹ But after considering it reasonably I could not do it. And you consider it also reasonably and act as you think the best.

¹ The whole paragraph refers to the marriage of Stasia. We may be sure that Walenty in appealing to Zygmunt for sympathy did not represent the incident frankly. To him, indeed, any preference of another man would seem in Stasia infamous.

As to myself, besides the usual work, all the evenings of the week are occupied with study, so I have often not even time enough to satisfy the indispensable needs. Forgive me, therefore, if I don't answer your letters at once. Do you know, dear companion, how attractive science is, how great, how much it forces us to think about ourselves? Great things, simply miracles, can be seen in science, things which in the future will be of ordinary use to men. But evidently it must be first more or less known.

As to my environment and society, I have a good, intelligent, and instructed society, which I imitate and benefit much from, for I receive from those generous men scientific help. But bad environment is not lacking either; I find myself in it during whole days. . . .

[Your] l[oving] c[ompanion],

ZYGMUNT

733

December 7, 1913

DEAR COMPANION: [Excuses himself for not writing.] You will wonder probably why I complain so continually about lack of time. I must inform you at least partly about all this. You know already that we have a [maternal] uncle who finished the university while he was a simple locksmith. He read many books, knew intelligent men, he benefited much, understood the necessity of learning, and decided to go on in this direction. Really he undertook great labors, but with the help of very generous and instructed men he attained his aim. And now, as a licensed engineer, he advises me and wishes me, since I want to learn, not to wear myself out working for my bread and at the same time learning of evenings, as I do now. He was able to finish the university although he began to learn when he was already about 30 years old, and only with the help of strangers who lent him money for living and instruction and to whom he now pays back, in parts, the debt contracted. And I am still so young, and I don't need the help of strangers, since I have so rich a [paternal] uncle. So why should I weary myself so, while I could go to some technical school and after finishing it be an instructed and intelligent proletarian? I should really not even be a proletarian any longer, but being from proletarian extraction, I would not be ashamed even then of proletarians. But you see, my uncle refused me this. I am even ashamed to confess that I have such an uncle. Although we know how much he has he was able to say that he had only enough to give

instruction to his son and to live in his old days. And I did not want any gift from him; I wanted only as much as I need for studying and for living during my studies. After finishing the studies I would have paid back the debt either to himself or to his son. And would it not have been very profitable for me and a noble act of citizenship from him? I am very pained, not so much because he does not want to help me as because he does not understand it; he is still so dark and backward. Therefore I must weary on now in this way. The studies take my time until 12 or 1 o'clock in the night and in the morning I must rise at 6:30, for although my work begins at 8, I have so far to go that I must rise sooner.

Well, enough of these complaints and these contrarities of which our life is composed. . . . The Christmas holidays are not far away, holidays which awaken in all of us children, far away from their families, dear remembrances of the past years, of the moments spent in the family circle. But things are now taking such a turn in the world that not all children can spend the holidays in their native homes. I am very pained to think that you and Stach belong to these. And so on the approach of the holidays I wish you to spend them merrily, and also I wish you that thought which comforts you when you remember that you are so far away from your home. Excuse me for expressing my wishes upon ordinary paper, but be sure that they are warmer and more sincere than others, written upon showy material. . . .

Your loving companion,

ZYGMUNT

734

March 5, 1914

DEAR COMPANION: . . . I am now in Warsaw, I am working as before, only in another shop. The conditions are somewhat better and the work much nearer. . . .

I think you know already that Miss G. [Hanka] is dead. I was leaving for Warsaw on the very day of her funeral. It was very painful for me not to be at the funeral, but nothing can be done; duties and conditions oblige a man to act. . . . I regret Miss Anna very, very much, for she was one of the good, model girls. Well, but nothing can be done, we must persuade ourselves of it in some way. And now I will mention to you something about Kalina. As I wrote you, we met once accidentally at Rytwiany. We walked for a long



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correspondence were exhausted, as if our correspondence were declining. It happens thus with most friends who after separating for some time, get accustomed to it and finally forget about each other, about the friendship which united them formerly. But this happens only between friends who are not conscious of themselves, who gave themselves too much up to fate and fate precisely tears the bonds of their friendship. But you, dear companion, don't suppose that this should ever happen between us. You see, I was silent because just now is the time of my great effort to understand, i.e., I am reflecting about all the phenomena which are found in the course of the day and which interest me very much. Up to the present I am able to explain many things to myself, to judge many things and to appreciate those which are good.

I am only pained that whenever I receive a letter from you it is always full of some sadness, always full of a great longing. It is therefore not strange if every such letter influences me painfully. So it is my duty to provide against it, realizing that I am your friend but one whom fortune set upon a different way.

Well, dear Walek, give an account to yourself, of what circumstances obliged you to emigrate. Did you go of your own wish or were you really forced to it? Then reflect well what was the difference between your home and your new system of life, and if you suffered because of it was it not possible to remedy it, and in what way. You see, you can draw a lesson from your own life. Meanwhile you grieve and complain so endlessly that even a man burdened with a wife and children would complain less. I know, my dear, that you are pained by the actual relations between men and by all this arrangement. But you can persuade yourself that it is a powerful strain due to the development of everything, and without this development nothing could be done. Capitalism develops, immorality and degeneration develop also, but at the same time science develops on a great scale, a great self-consciousness develops among workmen, and in general everything develops. Should we stand with broken hands and grieve? It would be absolutely unsuitable. It is time to shake off these old prejudices. Why, you are young, and true youth is not subject to these prepossessions. . . . If you can, read some day Mickiewicz's "Ode to Youth" and reflect well about it, for it serves as a watchword for the young people of lower and higher schools in Warsaw. . . .

ZYGMUNT

736

May 4, 1914

DEAR COMPANION: I inform you that I received two of your letters which I answer only now, for they were at a short interval. . . . In the first you write me about your trouble, your loneliness, and every letter is full of some sorrow, some doubt in your force and your intentions. Is it not time to leave this sorrow? It is of no benefit to us at all, but on the contrary, we lose much through it. I repeat, dear companion, we lose much through it, for even if our tendency were realizable it would never come to an effect through our doubts of its realization. In the same way, you remember perhaps, when Moses led the Israelites and, wanting to do a miracle before the Israelites, struck three times a rock from which water gushed out. Why did he need to strike three times, since the water could have gushed out the first time? If you have learned it you remember probably that Moses doubted the first and the second time that the water could gush on his order. This comparison will appear strange to you, for Moses was an envoy of God to liberate the people from slavery (I suppose you will think so). I don't deny it, but does slavery not exist now? Still worse, for there exists a spiritual slavery of whole masses of people, and thus a man conscious of this slavery has to wait for this mission. The main cause of our sorrow is that we always think and complain about our own distress. But if we saw not only our distress but also that of other people and if we tried to help them, we should forget absolutely our own. In that case we should say that we think socially. O dear companion, it is very beautiful and lofty to think socially. The people who think socially and give themselves up to social problems, forgetting about their own, reach great things. I should like very much, dear companion, to make you understand as well as possible, so that you might think differently and not grieve, but one is not always able to express what he wishes. . . .

ZYGMENT

737

RYTWIANY, February 14, 1913

DEAR WALEK: . . . I thank you for not forgetting me. . . . I beg you, dear W., be so kind and write me a letter and describe the news there in America . . . and whether it seems to you better than in Rytwiany, for I am tired of staying in Rytwiany. . . . I work in the same shop, but it is very boresome, for you know that old beggar [his superior], how he is; so there is not a single quiet day. I

must bear all this for some time still, and next month . . . I will ask for an advance. I don't know how I shall succeed, but it seems to me that they will give whatever I ask, for in winter good work opens up, and they have no men. And now you know perhaps that Władek M. got married. . . . The wedding was first rate, people of higher class alone, few friends, for that Hela of his wanted it so. . . . The music was the kind we had a better variety of sometimes years ago. Three musicians played, two violins and a drum. I don't write you any more about it, for I don't know; they got married, they embrace, and it goes on well up to the present; what the future will be we don't know. I don't know whether you received the cards which I sent you, two of them. In one I wrote you that I intended to marry during carnival, but it was only because I had nothing to write upon such a small card where there is not even space, and I wrote you this in order that you might have something to laugh at, for I know how you talked to me about my intentions. But up to the present I still remain the same. If I go away I don't know what will happen with us both, for up to the present we love each other madly and when we meet we give a kiss. But now we don't meet often, and I don't go to her home; we meet only upon the street, or when she goes to the church. And all this because many misunderstandings happened with her mother, and my sister does not go there and she says that she probably won't ever go again. . . .

Now I inform you about the illness of Rog. She was very sick because she wanted to poison in herself a small engineer who is to come into the world. The younger of those two who were in Rytwiany in your times made it. He promised to marry her and did whatever he wished with her. At last, when he could not get rid of her after this, he had to go to Warsaw and calmed himself ["gave no news" or "died"?] and so she was left a widow.

And now I inform you that we both, I and Zygmunt, will receive books from my brother, who was in a school in Belgium. These books are to be instructive in our specialities. So now I think more about studying a little, and later perhaps I will go to him, or if not, then to you to America. We haven't the books yet, but we expect them from day to day, and if I receive them I will begin again to love books and will think about them more than about my girl. But I won't leave her as long as I am in Rytwiany. . . .

HENRYK



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739

[April, 1913]

DEAR WALEK: I received your card and letter. I inform you now about my success. I work as before. I received an advance on April 1; I have now 20 roubles instead of 16. I asked for 25, but they gave me only 20 for the present. I must still push my misery before me for some time in Rytwiany.

As to you, dear Walek, you tell me that you have already heard there that people here speak badly about you. I am astonished, how you know immediately in America what is going on in our country. I won't write you much, for you would think that I laugh at you, but it is true that I myself heard people saying that you are nowhere satisfied, when you were in Rytwiany you only looked for easy bread, and just so they think that if you are in bad conditions there it is because you don't wish to work. They say that you do nothing there, that you loaf about and think that it will drop from heaven. But excuse me if I dare to write so about you. I won't say any more, for you would be very angry. But don't mind at all what they say about you, for now you can whistle at them and they can do nothing against you there.

As to me I was a little angry with my betrothed, as you call her. For a month we did not speak, but during the holidays we made apologies and now everything goes on well, as before. But we see each other very seldom, only on holidays, for, as you know already, Zygmunt brought books from Warsaw, and now I don't loaf about any more of evenings, but read. I don't go to her house, but when we meet on the street we talk a little, and nothing more. Her older sister is marrying that German engineer who was here when you were still at home, and if I don't leave Rytwiany my wedding will be next spring, and only then I shall live with a wife. But if I leave, then everything will be lost, like a stone in water, for I hope to go to my brother abroad.

Your loving,

HENRYK

740

April 16, 1914

DEAR COMPANION WALEK: You say that it is painful for you that I don't write, but I wrote 2 letters, so certainly letters don't reach you. In my first letter there was much news, among other things that Miss G. was dead, and in the second various local

news. . . . I don't forget either what we talked before separating. Don't think that I am forgetting you. I considered you my first companion when you were in Rytwiany, for as to these companions whom I have now, I don't care much for them, except Miciek. I keep very little company with them. I stay mostly at home, and if not in my own home, then with my girl. But things go on very badly with us; every short time some anger comes. Just tonight, when I am writing this letter to you, there is again some misunderstanding with her. But I don't know how it will be further. Sometimes, when it is all right with us she arouses in me so much love that I should be glad to give my life for her. I don't understand whether she only excites me thus or it is a fact [that she loves me]. But, as it seems to me, she has fallen very much in love with me, for if I go anywhere or talk with any other girl, I don't know what becomes of her and then she gets angry. I won't write any more about her, for I don't know how it will turn out. [Indifferent news.]

And now I beg you, tell me about America in general, everything. How do the workmen stand there, how do our Poles behave in America, what girls are there, whether they are worth something or nothing. . . . I have heard here that you have there very good [pleasant] society. . . . And inform me whether it is calm there or they are thinking about some trouble, for there is always something new. . . .

HENRYK

741

October 26 [1913]

I begin my letter with these godly words "P[raised] b[e] J. Ch."
 I sit to the table,
 I unfold the paper,
 And I write a letter.
 I don't write it with pen and ink alone,
 But with a sweet heart, a dear diamond.
 My pen wrote
 My heart wept
 For it has not seen you since long ago.

[Generalities about health and success.] We wish you also health and good success from God's Mother of Sulislawice, whom you did not see—how she was crowned. May this God's Mother help you in that America. We received your letter on October 24, for which we thank you heartily. . . . When I read this letter I wept so that I hardly

could read it, and father and mother also, for [we were touched that you don't forget us. [News about family and friends.]

I describe to you what a church festival we saw, such as perhaps nobody will live to see any more. Our Lord God allowed you to live at this time, but nothing can be done, since you did not see it. But I was there and I will describe everything to you, as to my dear brother. There were 250 priests, two bishops, and so many people that it was impossible to see over them. They conducted the Holiest Mother, and four orchestras played behind the procession when they brought her to a pavilion beyond Sulislawice. And the pavilion was so beautifully adorned that the heart burst open with regret [emotion]. The priests sang alone and the bishop crowned God's Mother, and the whole people lay crosswise [arms extended] upon the earth. Priests carried this image, and lords and peasants, everybody a little. I am unable to describe to you, dear brother, this miraculous festival.¹ Our vicar was with the company [of pilgrims from the village]. We lead him, in a crown. We have now such a nice [handsome] vicar. Priest Kow. went away. He said a mass for the whole parish and asked us to greet all you who are in America. He wept during the mass, and the people in the church wept so and were so crowded around him that he could hardly leave us.²

Remember, dear brother, don't marry in America, for I should like to be at your wedding, for I rejoice about you as about my own brother, and still more. I should be glad if you were at my wedding, but I don't know, for mine will be probably during the carnival. And to your brother girls come themselves—such luck he has among girls. We were at his name-day in his house, but we said to ourselves: "It is not the same as with Waluś." There were guests enough, but he is not the same as you are. . . .

[A. P.]

¹ This part of the letter is one of the best expressions of religious feelings which we have. Particularly the influence of the ceremonial and that of the crowd, leading almost to ecstasis, is most naïvely manifested. It shows the extent to which the influence of religion in peasant life depends upon aesthetic and social factors.

² The personality of the priest plays an important rôle in religious life. We have seen in other series the influence of the personal factor upon the attitude of the peasant toward church and religion; this influence is still more manifest in the letters to the newspapers, for it grows with the modern religious evolution.



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[I have] no beauty, no money, it is difficult to get married, but may thy will, O Lord, be done. . . .

Describe to us everything in detail after receiving this letter, what is the news, did you marry, and who got married there. [Greetings and wishes.]

JULA

744

July 12, 1913

DEAR WALENTY: [Beginning as in the preceding letter; health, wishes.] Praise be to God for your good success. As to the longing [homesickness] about which you complain, this longing will leave you soon, for people say that wherever is bread and well-being there the man has delight. [Weather; crops.] I am always equally bored in this Rytwiany. I should like also to go to America, but they [the parents] won't permit me. . . . You promised us to describe exactly the conditions in America, but you don't seem to be in a hurry. You did not deign to write us either in what sort of factory you work and what your work is at present. Excuse me, dear *swat*, for requiring too much, but all this is because if one is not somewhere one would like to do everything. I am very curious why Marylka does not write to me, for I have had no letter from her since long ago. Surely she has a big society. You must also have a large society, and it is very praiseworthy. . . .

[Greetings from the whole family.] Greet Marylka also from us all, embrace her and kiss her in my name as many times as she will let you. . . .

JULA

745

September 12, 1913

DEAR FRIEND: [Beginning as before.] We inform you, dear friend, that there is a papal jubilee appointed for a whole month, from August 15 till September 15, and in the diocese of Sandomierz full absolution is granted for being 6 times in a church and confessing. And then, on the solemn day of birth of God's Mother [September 8] a crowning of the image of God's Mother in Sulislawice has been performed. The weather was splendid, and the meeting numerous. There were 3 bishops, 150 priests who took part in the crowning, and 180 companies [of pilgrims] came from all the sides of the world. The crowning of the image was performed in the field, a pavilion was built $1\frac{1}{2}$ versts from the cloister. The image was taken away from the altar, and with great solemnity and ceremony they proceeded to

the pavilion—the whole train of clergy, princes, nobility, and all. The bishop of Sandomierz celebrated the full service and delivered the sermon in that pavilion, and after the ceremony of crowning the image was taken back to the cloister. We send you a small image [photograph] in the new crown; you will learn better details about this crowning from the papers. And then, dear Walenty, our friend, we inform you that Rytwiany will be scattered, for they are making “colonies” already and they are very much against us, the *komorniks*; they want absolutely to drive us away from these sands and from Rytwiany in general, so we don’t know what will happen with us. You say that I have a boy and don’t write you anything about it. Well, I know nothing, and I am very curious whence you got the news. As to Marylka, I answer every letter, but she is now occupied with her boy and does not deign to write me. Please congratulate her privately from me about her [future] marriage. . . .

JULA

746

June 18, 1913

. . . . “Praised be” [etc., usual beginning; health; wishes.]

DEAR SON: We inform you that we received 2 letters, for which we thank you heartily, for we learned many curious things from these letters. Dear son, you write us that you have no money. How could you have money, since on the letters alone which you write about the world you spend perhaps 3 or 4 dollars a week. Write to us as often as possible, but don’t send letters everywhere about the world. Only think how much money has gone already on these letters. Dear son, you grieved us in writing that you had no money. It is bad, dear son. As it seems, therefore, you won’t send your debt back in time, for the end of the year [since you borrowed it] is not far, and you write that you have no money. We are glad that you are in good health and that you earn more now, but this grieves us, that you have no money. For if you put a few dollars aside and instead of keeping them, send them here, you would have more. Having \$50, if you send them here, you would have 100 [roubles]. Dear son, you write that your boss likes you. Surely you must treat him with drink very much, and therefore he likes you. Whatever you earn, you pour out [liquor] for this money into him, and therefore he likes you, and therefore you have no money. You tell me not to send you either a pillow or tea. I should have a great pleasure in sending them to you, I should like to gratify you, but what can I do when there

is nobody through whom [I can send]. Mańka and Stefan S. intend to go, but they prepare themselves for the journey like Jews for a war [proverb: slowly and unwillingly]. And even if I sent it through her she would do the same as Szym. did, for she is a terrible idiot, totally stupid.

Dear brother, you write me to leave my work here. But if I leave this work who will work? Father is old, and he works hard. Everybody tells him: "You ought not to work so hard, you have two sons, one here, the other in America. You ought to sit at home."

Dear son, don't be openhearted [generous], for openhearted people have empty pockets. You write us, dear son, about your dream, but I don't know what I dream and I don't describe it to you, for it is not to be described. Once already I opened the door [in a dream], for you called through the window, but you did not want to come in. Then I cried till the morning.

[Your mother],

W. P.

747

November 9, 1913

DEAR SON: You write that the food does not taste good to you. But from this consumption may seize you in a short time, so put some money aside and come back to our country. You write us that you are in good conditions. What is the goodness if you cannot eat? We inform you, dear son, that from America there came back [enumeration], and that on November 3 at noon 2 houses were burned, Chmiel's and Jastrząb's. On Monday they were burned down, and on Tuesday Chmiel got his son married. They baked cakes and smoked sausage during the whole night, and probably from this the fire arose.

But if you knew, dear brother, how much groaning and weeping there was! You have no idea. The hair stood upon one's head. The people of whole Piaski knelt and begged for a change, that our Lord God might stop the calamity. But nothing helped, what was to burn was burned, and we saved the other houses, for I am now in the fire-guard. Three days later a man died who had been frightened by the cries of the wailing people.

Wojtuś wrote that \$30 has been stolen from him in America, so be on your guard lest somebody circumvent you. If you have money, hide it; let nobody know about it, not even your companion.

W. P.



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could not find even the stamp. Only a few weeks ago we received 7 cards from you from Baltimore. . . .

You write that in October you will go to school. All right, learn, for learning is always useful. But your project to join the army does not seem good to me. First, the time spent in the army is lost. Then, in the United States military service does not pay, they consider the army to be a throng of sluggards and spongers. Finally, in a few years a war between the United States and Japan will surely break out, as a result of commercial rivalry, so you may lay down your head [perish] for a foreign business. [Death of the writer's friend and neighbor.]

In our neighborhood things are more quiet, although in the Kingdom and in Warsaw attacks still happen. Every town is full of constables. In Michów there are 12, in Kamionka 12, in Firlej 8. The suit about Kalużyński is not yet settled. I hear that [the accused] excuse themselves by saying that it was you who made most of the trouble in Firlej.¹ You are searched for by [advertisements in] papers. Near Lublin there are still attacks of bandits. A week ago, during a fair, a dozen farmers were robbed and one killed.

Stanislaw has sold a part of your clothes for about 40 roubles, and lent the money at interest. He still has the rest. People say that he asks too much, and don't buy. In your home everything is well. [Describes his sickness.] Now, after 4 months, it is better, but I cannot stand; two men raise me and seat upon a rolling-chair. . . . My fingers are quite cramped . . . but I can still hold a pen or a spoon. . . . But probably all this will end soon. . . .

G. T.

749

August 13, 1908

MR. JAN: I received your letter yesterday and I answer you at once. . . . As to "Kazio," I would not advise you to write about him for two reasons. First, I have no possibility of ascertaining whether it was he or somebody else among this company who talked about you, and what was said about you in general. What I heard comes from different persons who may for some reasons tell untruth, but there is a great probability that [the prisoners], wishing to defend themselves and counting upon it that the government can do nothing against you and that you won't come back to this country, put their

¹ It was usual in political trials to put the blame on any one of the number who succeeded in escaping the authorities.

own guilt upon you. . . . And then, it seems to me that ["Kazio"] in particular has some favors from the authorities, for his affair stuck in some strange way and nothing is to be heard about it, and there are also other things which show that he belongs to the s[pies]. People say so; perhaps it is not true.

In the beginning of July there appeared in Firlej 5 young men two of whom killed a police officer and a constable, . . . the third killed the lawyer M., and the last two fired at other constables in the town, but without result. . . . Some dozens of men have been arrested in Michów and the neighborhood, and all of them have been taken to Warsaw in irons. Probably they won't return any more, at least not soon.

If people say here different absurd things about you it can be explained by two causes. First, your going to America makes them think that you ran away from some punishment, and again, you have quarrelled with many people, so they speak absurdities from anger. There is one man, and of the intelligent class, who says that all these who have served with me [on my estate] became bandits.¹ Whence such an opinion? He has been no more than a year in this country.

In your home there is no news. Your father was here and asked about you. I told him you had written that everything was well with you. Your friend, the locksmith Zdunek, is dead of consumption. You ought also to be careful, for remember that in your family two persons died of consumption. . . .

I greet you heartily,

G. T.

750

October 17, 1908

MR. JAN: . . . I have sent you 60 roubles. There was not so much money got for your clothes, but I sent more, supposing that slowly more will be gathered. . . . After this card which you wrote about the slaughter in Firlej a new police officer came to us and asked Stanislaw who wrote it. Stanislaw answered that he did not get any such letter and did not know who wrote it. But the policeman said that they knew that you had written it. What wrong had these men who were killed done to you? Why did you rejoice in their death? So be more careful in the future. You wrote it without thinking, and

¹ During and after the revolution of 1905-6 many plain robbers assumed the rôle of revolutionists and many revolutionists (especially after the execution of their leaders) dropped into banditism. This situation will be treated in Vol. IV.

here they annoy the persons to whom you wrote. The information of the papers about the murderers in Firlej was false. In two houses near Lublin some bandits were killed, some arrested, and among the latter, two confessed that they had killed the constables in Firlej; the revolver of a dead constable was found with them. . . . Lately there was an attack upon the manor in Krasinin. They stole some money and jewelry and wounded the proprietor with his own gun. The attacks upon governmental liquor-shops and upon inhabitants in their houses, and highway-robberies do not cease. . . .

Why do you spend money in subscribing to a paper for Stanislaw? Probably you have not much money to spend yourself, and Stanislaw cannot demand such gifts from you. [Weather; crops and harvest; cholera in Russia; farming news.]

Jaś Górnik [a manor-servant] became stubborn and went away for the second time. Later on he wanted to come back, but I thanked him [refused]. Now he is marrying a widow of 36 and will have at once a boy 6 years old (there were more, but they are dead). But the widow has 600 roubles, people say. Well, may he only not be deceived, and get the money of which he is so greedy. The woman, I hear, is a loafer and in spite of her 36 years runs to musics [dancing parties] and after boys. But he seems not to mind it if only she has money.¹ May he not be deceived like Kozik, who was to get 500 roubles with his wife, got nothing, and now beats his wife for it. [Enumerates his house-servants; news about neighbors.]

The new priest in Rudno, Tel., is very kind, and people like him. They decided to give money for repairing the two houses and building a new one for him. . . .

I greet you,

G. T.

751

January 11, 1909

MR. JAN: Being in bed for three months, I have had no possibility of answering you. Now, sitting again in the rolling-chair, I take my pen to thank you for your last long letter in which you describe the farming in America. Well, the customs change from land to land, but evidently the people work better than in our country. [Describes new murders and robberies.]

¹ As a farm-servant, particularly a teamster like this one, has little chance to put enough money aside to buy land, and as land-hunger is a prevalent feature of the true peasant, such a marriage does not prove that the man is avaricious, for the idea of land-property is not a purely economic factor.



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753

May 2, 1909

MR. JAN: Stanislaw will buy the books for which you asked when he goes to Lublin. But why do you need the book *Bezwyznaniowość* ["Freethinking"; literally, "being without a confession"]. Whoever does not believe does not need the book, and I think it is not you, for since you ask the priest in Firlej for a mass, you must belong to the believers.

For a month there has been a new judge in Michów, sent by the government, a Russian, Mr. Trabuchow, elder of the Don-Cossacks. He walks dressed like a Cossack, with a sword at his side. He punishes severely. He fined Okoń [a peasant] 20 roubles for having taken a piece of wood from the governmental forest in Lubartów, besides the value of the wood. A peasant said, "Thief" to another. He got a month of prison, etc. But as it is a Russian judge, and moreover a soldier, the peasants sit quiet and say nothing. He called on me and said that he would keep the court in order. He forbids the assistants to go to beerhouses with the parties, he dismisses constables when they don't keep order. In short, he is full of energy. The peasants now regret the deceased Mr. Zaleski. As long as he lived they did with him whatever they wanted. Only now they understand what they have lost.

Katarzyna, our cook, whom you certainly remember, was often sick and wished to leave. Stanislaw searched for another in her place. When Mr. K. called once upon me Stanislaw asked him about Marcela, whether she was in Jawidz. He answered that she had found a boy and must leave, because she expected an addition [child]. I tried to learn what became of her, according to your wish. I heard that she went to Kock, where she is now, and whether there was or will be something [immoral], people don't know. At any rate, whatever has been, such things are usual.

I greet you,

G. T.

he marries, he tries to get an advance and to become a farm-manager) and being in a superior position and better dressed and educated than the simple teamster has a good chance with the farm-girls. He wears clothes and ties of the most extraordinary colors, uses very strong perfumes, has always a stiff collar, which the peasant wears only on Sundays, uses pomade on his hair and beard, copies pretentious love-letters from special handbooks, etc., and by these means exerts a great influence upon girls.

[The following, No. 754, is composed of passages selected from letters of various dates.]

754

October 18, 1909

MR. JAN: I have been in bed again until yesterday, and therefore I did not write to you. . . . What was the reason of the bluff about your coming back? If you wished to make a joke with other people, never mind; but why did you lead me into error? I was troubled, thinking that after your return you might be arrested. I don't say that you are guilty.¹ But you emigrated to America, and people immediately concluded that you must have taken part in something. And as you did not lack various enemies, who pretended to be your friends as long as you were here but attacked you as soon as you left, you might have been arrested and kept in prison for a few or for many months, until the matter was cleared, for although the state of war is abolished, there is still a state of "strengthened protection," which is almost the same.

[June 25, 1910]

Although you are already a grown-up man and you have your own reason, don't be angry if I warn you about your matrimonial intentions. Remember that you may easily wander alone, in case of necessity, from place to place, but with a wife and children it is difficult, often quite impossible. And then one does not know what to do with this pawn. It is easy to get married, but it is very difficult, if not impossible, to get unmarried again.

[February 8, 1911]

Your preceding cards informed us laconically that you traveled, but you did not write what for. It is very agreeable to travel for the pleasure of it, but I know from my own experience that it costs very much. Did your financial position allow you to do it? We are not curious to investigate your mysteries, but if it is not a secret we should be glad to learn where you have been and why.

Different people ask here sometimes for your address. We answer that we don't know. Shall we give it or not?

Among the people who are serving with us probably you don't know many now. . . . Perhaps you remember that small boy Konrad who came to Marysia from Łukowiec. Now he is 18 and is

¹ He evidently was so in political matters, but the writer pretends to be ignorant or writes in this way fearing the letter will be opened by the police.

my waiter, together with another man. He is a good and clever boy. Wójtowiczówna married Koziol from Baran [pun: the man's name means "buck," the village's, "ram"] and they get on miserably, for they are both poor. Andzia launches herself powerfully [is dissolute]. Her younger sister Felka is serving here since New Year, but surely she will go home, for she is in a very romantic mood and I am afraid it will happen as with Kukrzycka, who left on January 1, thick [pregnant]. . . .¹

G. T.

755

June 5, 1909

RESPECTED SIR: There is nothing new and nothing good with us. The judge [the manor-owner] is very bad; he coughs worse and worse, he complains about pain in the lungs, and in general he is downhearted and dissatisfied. For, indeed, everything is going on so badly. The spring is awful. Nobody remembers such an other. The flowers and tomatoes froze on May 24, there was such a frost. My bees are almost wasted through this accursed cold. Now it is a little warmer, but what of it since there is no rain and the wind blows and dries everything, and it is to be expected that the whole summer will be awful. But what can we do against it? We are not strong enough, and we must wait for God's mercy.

Your father is in good health. I hear that he is plowing the new land. I see him seldom. Sometimes he comes to learn whether you wrote to me. He asked for your address, but I could not give it to him for I did not know myself, and I think that even now I won't tell him, for perhaps you don't wish it.

Mr. Zaborski lived in the winter in Oziora's house. He complains much, the poor man, about his wife; he says that he is the most unhappy man in the world. Well, he chose her himself and had known her perfectly, and he was caught in this way. He has bought a place in Sobolew built a rather nice house, fenced the garden, moved the beehives. Sobolew looks now very nice from far away, for seen from near, there is enormous misery, stupidity, and ignorance. It does not go forward, but backward, to the oldest savage customs.

STANISŁAW L.

¹ Dissolute sexual life in manors is much greater than in villages, partly because the opinion of the community is not so strong, since the community is unstable, partly because the girls are more independent of their families, and, in general, because the opportunity is greater and the control looser.



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JASIŃSKI SERIES

The particular interest of these letters is connected with the fact that their author is a peasant who through his instruction and his social and political ideals has gotten completely outside of the peasant class and has degenerated, physically and morally, the double strain of intellectual life and of a complete change of social and moral attitudes having proved too much for him. The question whether a peasant will be able to keep his equilibrium upon a new basis of life depends, of course, upon the rapidity and the character of the change. A peasant like Waclaw Markiewicz has indeed an entirely new sphere of intellectual interests and convictions, but through his occupation and his family-relations he retains enough connection with the peasant life to preserve his balance. A man like Maks Markiewicz, or any peasant who by his culture and occupation passes into a higher class, even if he loses his connection with the peasant life, gets into an environment which has a moral and social organization different from that of the peasant class but still strong enough to keep the new member from degenerating. (See Markiewicz series.) Zygmunt, the friend of Walenty Piotrowski, was already prepared to accept to some extent many of the new ideals which were given to him, and continued to adapt himself gradually. (See Piotrowski series.) And again in other cases there are elements in the new environment which were already latent in the old. Thus, for example, peasants and workmen do not lose their moral self-control when belonging to revolutionary parties with a patriotic character, because patriotism is always latent in the lower classes. But in the case of Jasiński none of the factors which are able to preserve equilibrium

in a new sphere of intellectual and moral life was present. Unlike Waclaw, he has no connection with the peasant life; unlike most of the climbers, he did not get into a class with a strong traditional organization to which he could adapt himself, but into a circle of socialist-revolutionaries whose norms of conduct are still somewhat fluid and whose set of ideas is not elaborated thoroughly enough to organize intellectual life as completely as it is organized by religion among the peasants. Jasiński was a country teacher, and as the schools provide no preparation for change he was probably introduced into a new sphere of life without the proper preadaptation. In this respect he differs from Zygmunt, who introduced himself into a new sphere informally, and through the selection of his personal relations. Finally, the system of Polish national ideals does not seem to influence Jasiński strongly. Note his relation to the Russian socialists.

The matter is quite different with a man of a higher social class who becomes a socialist. He is accustomed to a greater individual autonomy in intellectual and moral problems and is therefore much more able to keep his equilibrium upon the slippery ground of revolutionism. But the peasant's intellectual and moral life has always been so absolutely controlled by public opinion that individual autonomy cannot take the place of social control if the latter is lacking. And Jasiński in this respect is in a worse position than most of the socialists, for he is for long periods isolated from his companions.

It is interesting to observe how the peasant, in a kind of half-conscious moral self-defense, endeavors in every new environment to find some substitute, however imperfect, for the lost system of social traditions; how he tries to have some kind of social opinion upon which he can lean. In the present case Jasiński is in his socialistic ideas a perfect

echo of his party. His very words are typical formulae, repeated identically innumerable times by socialists from the lower classes, particularly by women, who share with the peasants this imitative tendency. Not a single personal note rings in them. It seems as if the peasant wished to extract and to assimilate from socialism everything that is fixed, determined, commonplace, traditional—as if he sought in this fluid milieu the greatest possible stability. And at the same time he adapts himself rapidly to a new socialistic group (to the Russian socialists during his exile), which shows precisely that the choice of his ideas is not determined by rational consideration, but merely by his environment.

757-64, FROM S. JASIŃSKI, IN POLAND AND RUSSIA, TO WACŁAW MARKIEWICZ, IN AMERICA. NO. 764 IS A LETTER TO MARKIEWICZ FROM ANOTHER SOURCE, COMPLETING THE CHARACTERIZATION OF JASIŃSKI

757

ZDWÓRZ, May 17, 1906

DEAR MR. WACŁAW: I don't know what it means. Have you forgotten about me or what? Neither letter nor even greeting. One sees at once that you are changed into an American, occupied only with calculations about your business. . . . But never mind, I like it. We all ought to break the stupid and simply idiotic European ice and [stop] lying, because no honest understanding can be reached by formalities, only empty lying to one another, and imbecility.¹

And now I describe to you my lot.

I left the prison of Mokotów after 3 months, on April 20. I have suffered since then real torments. First, I was obliged, against my convictions, to send a petition that my place might be restored to me, for people gave me no job.² It is true that they had none. Then

¹ This ideal of absolute sincerity and abandonment of formalities was developed among Polish socialists under the influence of Russian socialism, which was rather strong during the revolution of 1905-6. American life is here viewed through the prism of this ideal.

² The sending of the petition was "against his conviction" as a socialist, for the position depended either upon the government, or, more probably, upon the National Democratic and Conservative parties, for it seems that the school was supported by the Polish School Association, which was controlled by these parties.



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Russian revolutionists and parties. On June 30, I was transported to Vologda. Here I was at first designated to live in Solwyczegradsk [far to the north], but I made a petition and the governor sent me instead to Kadnikow, 47 versts from Vologda. Here I have lived for 8 months, without any occupation, like all the political exiles. There are 170 of us here and 70 more escaped. I should have done it long ago if I had money. In the beginning we got from the police 2 roubles 70 copecks monthly for living, but after a demonstration from all the colonies of the province of Vologda they began to give us 8 roubles, then 7 roubles 70 copecks, and today only 7 roubles 40 copecks. Live, as you can, upon this. . . .

It is difficult to describe what I passed through during this time. I mention that I was near to sending a bullet through my head to end this once for all and to get peace. . . . But slowly all this cleared up a little, and now I live, giving myself quite up to the study of social and political sciences and of Esperanto. I already read novels and newspapers in this language. I sit the whole day in the cabin, for the cold here, falling to 40° R. below the freezing-point, no longer permits even walking, for the feet and ears freeze. I expect to remain here not longer than 2 months. We shall see what the new duma does, and then I shall give myself amnesty. Even if we get it I could by no means live in our country, for I cannot even earn enough for black bread. I have Paranà still in view, but to go there one must have at least 300 roubles, while I haven't even a single spare rouble. . . .

Your condition there is now probably good enough, for the strikes have passed and the factories are going full speed. Moreover you are better acquainted with the conditions and you belong to the socialist club. . . . Could you not do as the Russian proverb says: "Take a thread from everybody in the community, and the naked man has a shirt," and send me a ship-ticket to my old address?

You will say that it is not noble of me to fly from the battlefield. But I answer that the field for activity is as wide there as here, and I can do much more there than here, being half-legal or illegal [under suspicion]. Think and answer me the soonest possible. . . .

ST. J.

P.S. You complain of capitalistic oppression and religious and national separatism. It is true. And therefore the Russian revolution won't limit itself to taking only the liberty of which you know the consequences, but will have the people take all the land, the factories,

the capital, and will introduce, first in the east, holy socialism. After it the other nations will follow. A near future will show it to us, and we, the proletarians, shall yet admire and live in a socialist society, which for tens and hundreds of years has been screened from us by all the religions with their gods, and the states with their laws and armies.¹ I am very much astonished that the people there [in America] are still so religious and on the side of the *pops*,² at the mention of whom I think of the middle ages and the holy inquisition. Is it so difficult to overcome this with the liberty you have? I don't think so. It is true that English people are very religious, but today this ardor, I believe, is subdued even among them. I should like to write you very much here, but unhappily the lack of space does not permit me, so I limit myself to what I can put here. Do you correspond with anybody? Do you learn? Did anybody write you about me as about a heretic, a godless man, a socialist-revolutionist or even anarchist, whom in the name of God the base old Paliwoda and Bala delivered into the hands of justice?³ So it goes on in the world, my dear. Not long ago we were almost all together, and today Mil. is in W[arsaw], Zal. and Zold. in Argentine, you in the United States, I in Vologda, etc. What a fate! Does there not stick one general cause of all behind this—liberty and bread!

Yours,

ST. J.

759

March 16, 1907

DEAR WACŁAW: I received your letter just now. . . . I thank you heartily for having . . . offered me your help in such a difficult moment of my life. I did not write to you sooner, . . . first because I did not know your address . . . and then I believed that upon American soil you had become an idealist of the dollar, as most of the Americans . . . and I thought that it was not worth while writing. I was very much mistaken; I got a lesson, never to judge anybody beforehand. . . . It would be better to send money instead of a ticket, for if I should not go I could easily later send the

¹ Socialism became in Poland (still more in Russia) a new and perfectly typical religion. Here this is quite naïvely expressed.

² *Pop* is the Russian popular name for an orthodox priest. In Poland it is now an extremely contemptuous word for priests in general.

³ Here, as in the quarrel in the last letter, we have a trace of the mania of persecution.

money back to your parents, and if I should go, I could choose the ship I wanted. . . . Then write whether I could get some job there, manual or intellectual, be for example, a teacher, a clerk, or perhaps an agitator, a reporter. . . . If not, I shall direct my eyes toward Paranà, New Zealand, or Australia. . . . I should advise you to get acquainted with some Russian colony in America and to study the last works of Tolstoi, and many other things. . . . About any amnesty and in general any peaceful negotiations with the government there is no question at all. . . . Soon the judgment of the people on the bureaucratic and bourgeois order of things will begin. . . . Now a moment, a great moment is coming for Russia. . . .

STANISŁAW JAS[IŃSKI]

760

PETERSBURG, July 21, 1907

DEAR COMPANION: I write this letter to you, but you don't know what is going on at this moment with me. You see, I am in Petersburg. I came here hoping to go abroad, but as far as matters have cleared up during my journey, I cannot go further. I see it myself. I have entirely given up the plan of going to America, for I see myself that there is no place for me either there or in South America. I am totally "out of tune" nervously, my memory does not act at all, I cannot work, I am quite unfit for the struggle for life.¹

As you know, I was accustomed to live in a different manner, and today I am obliged to adapt myself bitterly. It is painful indeed, but never mind, I count this as life's experience. I am looking for an occupation. It is a question whether I shall find it, and even if I find it there is the other question of the passport.² I am lying, but I don't know how long I shall succeed. I have still 10 days' time, and I have some hope, though very small, that I shall get something by lying. If I don't succeed, I shall be obliged to return and to sit quietly [in exile].

Almost one-half of the money which you sent me will be spent. What shall I do if I don't find a place? Will you abuse me very much if I cannot give it back? Say, I don't want to wrong you, but what can I do? I am convinced that if I dare to go to you there will

¹ The breakdown is rather sudden, and the explanation seems to be that however miserable the conditions of life in exile, he did not in fact have to struggle for life, but when suddenly faced by the problem of work he collapses.

² A political exile has a passport which permits him to live only in a designated place, and he must report to the police on appointed days.



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slave for a few poor grosz—it does not conform with my character. And whose servant? Some exploiter's.¹

I will see what can be done, but please don't consider it a crime in me if it happens that I cannot give you [the money] back. I did not wish to cheat you, I intended to do without begging anybody, but unhappily I cannot get on any further. You know me, that I never wished and don't wish any wrong to anybody. Write me, please, how you are succeeding. I am pained. I have paid back the whole amount of money borrowed from the priest. Perhaps I shall pay back yours also. . . .

ST. J.

761

August 3, 1907

DEAR FRIEND AND COMPANION: Two weeks ago I sent you a letter with news of the breaking up of my plans. Now I have received your letter. . . . My health does not improve, I live in a "black melancholy" or neurasthenia, which expresses itself in a physical weakness of the organism. I am terribly nervous, I get easily tired and every trifle annoys me. When I am in such a state nothing interests me; I can do nothing. Even writing a letter is difficult. . . . I consulted a physician, he advised me to nourish myself well, but alas! He said that it came from abnormal conditions. I expected to change my conditions by leaving Kadnikow, but it proved that I cannot go further than Petersburg. I have been here for 2 weeks waiting for my passport. I got it by lying, but what is the benefit if I have no job and cannot get any. There are hopes for some 15 to 20 roubles [a month], but imagine whether it is possible to exist upon it, when lodging alone, a corner [in a room with others] costs 5 roubles. I was at the teachers' association. They told me it was possible to get a place as teacher, but near the [North] sea-shore, in the province

¹ It is a peculiar feature of many men with high social ideals in Poland—and not alone in Poland—that while talking and even acting most sincerely in the interest of a high social end, and while making sacrifices for it, they neglect simple duties of honesty in everyday life. They seem to feel exempted from the common morality by the fact of their superior morality. In Russia the same feature can be observed in an exaggerated degree. The source of this discrepancy seems to lie in the loss of moral equilibrium which new ideals, particularly revolutionary ideals, brings to an unprepared and insufficiently preadapted consciousness. The radical and drastic expression of the loss of this equilibrium is found in the conversion of revolutionism into banditism—a situation treated in Vol. IV.

of Archangel among Samoyeds, or in the province of Vologda, among Zyrians, for 12 roubles a month. And what a place! I did not even thank them for such a proposal. I will still appeal for protection to one place which is not very promising. If I don't succeed I think of going back to Kadnikow, adding something to the governmental expenses and living there for some time. In the Kingdom [of Poland] it is very difficult to earn one's living, and I don't think at all of going back. As to Galicia, it is a good place to learn, but only for those who have money. And so, dear Wacław here it is bad, there it is not good. Were it not for your money, I would have taken to stealing long ago. I cannot "expropriate" [rob], for I don't know how to shoot. It is bad to be a man good for nothing. As to Petersburg, it is a colossus glittering with gold, but on the other hand terrifying with its misery and drunkenness. There are good things, schools, libraries, but [the influence of] all this is not to be noticed among the public. Everything governmental smells of militarism, everything private of exploitation, cynicism, and frantic enjoyment of life. I don't wish to insult the Russian civilization and culture, but except the samovar and the *rysak* [Russian breed of trotting-horses] nothing else pleased me. These two things merit attention. Well, yes, and the singing. The song about Stenka Razin lives up to the present among the people, as well as about Pugaczow.¹ The revolution of today waits for precisely a hero like these two. We hope that moment will soon come, for time feeds the masses with hate which grows at every moment and which must express itself at last in terror and destruction. And then, although many will fall, a new world will blossom, and there will be bread enough for everybody, no more misery upon the streets, fewer weak and sick people. I believe in it; this is my religion. I believe in science, the leader of mankind. I believe in the brotherhood of peoples. Let us work as long as we can.

Yours,

St. J.

Don't be angry and don't abuse me if I spent one-half the money without your permission. If I live, I will give it back, and if not, then, although you won't speak well of me, don't speak badly. I kiss you and embrace you.

¹ Leaders of popular Russian revolutions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

762

KADNIKOW, March 10, 1908

DEAR FRIEND AND COMPANION: I received your letter which was for me a true surprise, for I thought that you were angry with me for life and death. All this [friendship] is very well, but up to some time [to a certain point] particularly when the question is a material one. Then friends become enemies, and states make wars. I thought it likely that you occupied the same standpoint with regard to me, for I got no answer to two of my letters from Petersburg, except this letter, in which you don't mention whether you received those letters or not. You must know that this question is not yet settled, and even today I am delaying about sending this money back, for in the spring I think of going away from here. . . . My health is much improved, and one of these days I will go to Vologda and ask the physician . . . whether I shall be able to go to Brazil, to Paranà. In that case I will go in the beginning of May or at the end of April. . . . You sit there, silly people in North America, groaning. Go to South America. You will be better off immediately. The Brazilian government . . . is beginning to colonize, the Poles are very much wanted. A special office is even organized in Warsaw to this end, and our press speaks much about it and even advises [going], although the gentlemen of the National Democratic party shed crocodile tears that our fatherland will remain without working hands. Vive Brazil! You have only to go with a woman and you will get a ready farm with a house and farm-buildings. . . . The *Macierz* [Polish school-association] has been closed; you know it certainly. As to myself, even if I returned to our country I could get no place, for I remain here under the "special care" of the police. . . .

ST. J.

763

WOLA SEROCKA, July 29, 1913

DEAR MR. WACŁAW, COMPANION AND FRIEND: A few days ago I received your letter from which I understand that it is bad with you. I guess you must be seriously wounded, since you lost the ability to work and you lie in the hospital for some months, without knowing whether you will ever recover. . . . Something like this has been going on with me for 4 years already. At the end of my exile and on the way back I caught cold, I began to cough, but I did not heed it. They called me to the army, I served for 5 months, but I came back so ill that I did not expect to recover. It was in 1910. But during



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764

March 8, 1907

DEAR MR. WACŁAW: I am in Ojców. I don't know what will be further. Jasiński writes to me sometimes, but whether he is crazy or something else, I don't understand. Once he wrote me a letter advising me to get from Moscow or Petersburg Russian papers and books—as he says, very good ones. What do I want with them? I am not even yet perfectly well acquainted with the Polish literature. . . . I try to avoid any mention of politics in my letters to him, for I know that if anybody does not agree with him he is furious at once. Not long ago I got a postcard from him, full of dirty calumnies. In this postcard he calls me a denouncer.

I don't know why. He says that I, together with some society whose activity he conjectures, betrayed him. It fell upon me like thunder from a clear sky. I, who correspond with him and send him a few roubles from time to time, I—to denounce him? And to denounce—what? A few days afterward he writes another postcard in which he does not mention that affair at all. . . .

W. GOSZEWSKI

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