

about the financial difficulties, I would say poverty, which preceded the move."

Now at this point Klein seems to have enmeshed herself totally within the family romance. The money was actually lent to them by Libussa's younger brother Hermann, a successful lawyer who had lived with them while a student.⁷ In a letter of September 9, 1906, Libussa wrote to Melanie and Arthur Klein that Uncle Hermann "considered it the best deed in his life that he had stepped in for us and thus enabled us to live free of any worries about rent for nineteen years—which at the end brought us even into the possession of property. On that occasion he reminded me of his having to raise money before each time the rent was due; he did not at all profit from it. At that time, he said, he had got 20,000 gulden,⁸ of which he invested 9,000 in the house. The furniture had cost him another few thousands, and the remaining thousands he needed for his business. If he had at the time bought that house in Brigittenau, it would by now have trebled in value. Yet he did not wish to burden me with all this now, he said, he was just indulging in melancholy thoughts. Now he really cares very much that he will be paid—for our sake as well as his."

Hermann never let them forget their indebtedness to him, and in a letter of October 10, 1902, written from Venice, Melanie's brother, Emanuel, voiced his resentment at the news that Libussa had to borrow the money from Hermann to pay for Melanie's trousseau: "That Uncle had to help out once again is very disagreeable to me! To the devil with him for that! Whenever I hear the name of this good, weak, and conceited man I have to think of those twelve years of my childhood and youth which he darkened and destroyed irreparably for me—and each time I feel something that chokes me rising up in my throat, and my heart gets black with gall." Klein, on the other hand, is disinclined to say anything disagreeable about him because she basked in the knowledge of being her uncle's favorite. In her Autobiography she recalls: "I was very fond of him and he too spoilt me very much. I heard him say many things, among them that, being so beautiful, a young Rothschild would come to marry me. He also had a lovely big dog, on which I rode."

Melanie was five at the time of the change in the family fortunes, and the move coincided with her starting at the local state school in the Alsenstrasse. From the beginning she was very happy there. Until then there had been no children of her own age with whom to play, and she enjoyed their company immensely. She had also inherited the family passion for knowledge and soon became an ambitious student, very conscious of her marks; it was particularly important for her to receive a report with the words *wurde belobt* (commended).

An early photograph of Melanie aged about six shows her standing confidently beside Emanuel and her older sister Emilie. Her whole demeanor exhibits a remarkable self-assurance. In old age she told people, "I absolutely was not shy." She was fond of telling friends about an incident that occurred on her first day at school. The teacher, in order to draw out the shy children,