

reading his letters. When she did include a phrase in French it was awkwardly expressed. Moriz writes with flowery ardor, Libussa with self-conscious restraint. "I feel only too clearly," she wrote on one occasion, "that I will not be able to follow your lofty and enthusiastic flights which keep you in the highest heights, in ever growing, enthusiastic distances. My wings are tied. I am too earthbound even to dare to dream of following you."

After their marriage in 1875 the couple settled in Deutsch-Kreutz. Here three children were born in quick succession: Emilie in 1876, Emanuel in 1877, and Sidonie in 1878. At some point, probably between the birth of Sidonie and the birth of Melanie on March 30, 1882, the family moved to Vienna,⁴ undoubtedly in the hope of improving their straitened financial circumstances. They could not have been so naïve as to harbor any expectation that a middle-aged Jewish doctor of Polish origin could achieve professional success.⁵ Dr. Reizes was forced to take on a dental practice (indeed, he seems at first to have been a dentist's assistant) and to supplement his income by acting as a medical consultant to a vaudeville theater.

Their difficult financial circumstances made it necessary for Libussa to open a shop—not only in itself a humiliation for a doctor's wife, but also personally distasteful because in addition to plants she sold reptiles, from which she cringed in horror. Melanie does not speculate on her mother's choice of a somewhat bizarre type of shop, but notes that such was the power of her mother's beauty that customers loved to drop in to chat with her. She adds that Libussa's customers "understood" that she was a "lady," not a common shopkeeper—a rather curious disclaimer for her to feel obliged to make. One of Melanie's earliest memories was of being taken to visit this place into which her mother disappeared every day. The shop was an integral part of their lives until 1907, when Libussa was finally relieved of this burden.

A change in their fortunes occurred with the appearance of Moriz Reizes' father in their midst (when, Klein does not say). Since the death of his wife he had been living with a daughter, who one day turned him out of the house. Melanie's mother "readily" agreed to take him in, and apparently he lived with them peacefully until his death—an event that changed their lives, for he not only left them with some savings, she says, but with a winning sweepstakes ticket worth 10,000 florins.

As far as Melanie was concerned, their new apartment in the middle-class Martinstrasse seemed luxurious. The Martinstrasse was in Waching, then a suburb of Vienna. She blocked out the details of the first, rather squalid fifth-floor flat in Borsegasse where they had been living,⁶ while she delighted in everything about the new one—the balcony, the gleaming silver, the fact that she had new clothes and that her father gave her mother diamond earrings to mark the occasion. At the same time, her father bought the house in which he conducted his dental practice. "It seemed to me an enormous thing that my parents should actually own a house. The pride and happiness that I felt about these changes made it clear to me that I had been worried