

written to Melanie who was staying in a resort on the Baltic, quoted their new Slovakian housemaid: "You will see what a loyal maid you will have in me, for only a Slovak girl can be so loyal and devoted when she gets such good treatment as I do. The Hungarians are all treacherous, slovenly, thievish, and irresponsible."

Melanie was much attracted to the cultural ambience of Libussa's family, in which both the father and grandfather were widely respected for their scholarship and tolerance. (Libussa's brother, Hermann, who was to play an important part in their lives, attended a Jesuit school.) Melanie's great-grandfather, Rabbi Mandel Deutsch, was noted for his gentle disposition. One of the longings of Melanie's childhood was to have known her maternal grandmother: "I longed for her to be living, because I never had a grandmother, and I knew this was a nice, kind and pleasant woman." This is an interesting statement from a woman who herself was apparently far more successful as a grandmother than as a mother. It is also interesting that she never knew or showed any interest in her maternal grandfather. Perhaps she imbibed this lack of interest from her own mother. There was certainly a pattern of matriarchy in the family. But she never formed even an image of her father's mother, and was patently scornful of all of his family. She says of the Deutsch family: "The whole impression I got, in contrast to my father's family, was one of a good family life, very simple, in restricted circumstances but full of knowledge and education." Seventy years later, Klein still shuddered at the memory of her revulsion towards her father's sister and her husband on the occasions when they appeared, dressed in the ritual kaftan that Polish Jews had adopted from eighteenth-century aristocrats.

According to Klein, Libussa and her two sisters were consumed with a passion for learning, and these determined young autodidacts gained knowledge by reading and discussions with their father. Melanie admired the way her mother had taught herself to play the piano. She had a vivid recollection of Libussa pacing up and down the wide veranda of a summer flat they rented in Dornbach, on the outskirts of Vienna, totally absorbed in a book of French idioms she was memorizing. For Klein this was a demonstration of intellectual passion, since opportunities for her mother to put these idioms to practical use were almost nonexistent. There is evidence that as a young woman Libussa did have some respect for learning: she was attracted to her future husband partly because of his command of ten languages. Other relatives recalled Karoline as the clever sister, while Libussa was known as the beauty of the family. In any event, Libussa's later letters are written in German that indicates the language did not come easily to her.

The letters exchanged between the engaged couple in 1874 put a slightly different emphasis on Melanie's image of her mother. Libussa freely admits in her letters to her fiancé that she composed them very carefully, sometimes writing them out twice. Moriz was very eager for them to exchange letters in French—a suggestion Libussa stubbornly resisted, giving as an excuse that she did not want to deprive the other members of her family of the pleasure of