

the fetching. (Probably she transposed her facts because she wanted to suggest that her father had his office in a separate location.¹⁰) She fails to mention whether this strange, shut-away man ever said anything to her on these daily walks. On only one occasion was he moved to strike her, an incident she clearly provoked. When she refused some food, he remarked that in his day children ate what was given to them. Melanie replied cheekily that what was done a hundred years ago did not apply today — knowing full well what the consequences would be. On the other hand, when she was thirteen she overheard him boast to a patient¹¹ that his youngest daughter would go to the gymnasium, an assertion that awakened her resolve to do just that. Who knows if her ambition was stimulated by her anxiety to have her father pay her some notice? In retrospect, she believed that she did not sufficiently understand him. Perhaps, she rationalized, he did not pay much attention to her because he was so old when she was born.

The family's good fortune did not continue long. Certainly before the end of the century they had fallen on bad times again — this Melanie largely attributes to her father's "senility" — and her mother assumed responsibility for holding things together. They even had to take in a permanent boarder.

With her mother it is a different story. "Up to the present day," Klein recalls, "I still think a great deal about her, wondering what she would have said or thought, and particularly regretting that she was not able to see some of my achievements." According to Klein, Libussa was a gentle, unassuming woman. "She has in many ways remained my example and I remember the tolerance she had towards people and how she did not like it when my brother and I, being intellectual and therefore arrogant, criticized people." This is an astounding description in light of the tough, domineering woman who emerges from Libussa's letters. At the age at which Klein was writing, it was particularly painful for her to write about a mother-daughter relationship, so it is difficult to know — even after the passage of time — to what degree she was indulging in remorse or idealization. She seemed, too, to continue to be troubled by the nature of her parents' marriage.

Moriz Reizes was obviously in love with his wife and extremely jealous of her, but Melanie, while aware that her mother was completely devoted to her family, suspected that she still pined for a young student in her hometown who had died of tuberculosis. Certainly Melanie often detected dissatisfaction in her mother — and possibly contempt. "I have never been able to get to the bottom of this," Klein muses, "whether she was simply not passionate or not passionate as far as my father was concerned, but I do believe that occasionally I saw a slight aversion against sexual passion in her, which might have been the expression of her own feeling or upbringing, etc." She says nothing about whether she was an affectionate, loving mother; and the correspondence reveals that Libussa found it very difficult to express her feelings.

Klein could never recall an occasion when her parents went out alone together. She evokes a united Jewish family; while not rigidly orthodox,