

4 April 1919

I have received the most wonderful news! Ilsa is with child!

I gathered her up and danced her about the garden when she shared the news. She confessed to waiting several days before she gathered the courage to tell me. As though she worried how I might react. Oh, Ilsa. My silly, silly goose.

Already my head is spinning with ideas for the future. I have suggested to Ilsa that we move to Munich, to be closer to her parents. She was delighted. I am confident the local turmoil will subside quickly, and it would put my mind at ease to know that Ilsa will have ready help once the baby comes.

I will contact Herr Brückner immediately. He once asked me to consider taking a position at the Gymnasium there. With luck, he will still have room for another lecturer.

7 April 1919

Rumors of a Socialist revolution in Bavaria. Surely this must be a hoax? Ilsa's parents can't tell us the truth of the situation in Munich. They don't know.

30 April 1919

We can't possibly move to Munich while Bavaria is enveloped in such chaos. Ilsa agrees, though she is deeply saddened.

Devil take the Communists.

6 May 1919

Good news today. The Bayerische Räterepublik has collapsed, and faster than I had hoped -- barely a month after their ridiculous Socialist coup! Bavaria has returned to Germany, where it belongs.

The delight I feel for Germany is exceeded only by the joy of knowing that Ilsa and I can soon move to Munich to be near her parents. I know that Ilsa is greatly relieved, knowing she will have her mother and father on hand to help with the baby, even if she won't admit it to me, silly lieblich.

Still more good news from Herr Brückner. The Gymnasium will reopen soon. My new teaching position appears safe.

He mentioned an interesting völkisch group. Since its inception last summer, the Thule-Gesellschaft has gained over 200 local members. According to Brückner, they have fascinating ideas about Teutonic antiquity. That alone arouses my curiosity; Brückner

knows such is a hobby of my own. (And, I am pleased to say, does not look down upon it. I know I will be much happier at the Gymnasium than I ever was when trying to teach the dullards here in Hamburg.)

It seems that Thule Society has a strong nationalist identity. Apparently several members were taken into custody by authorities of the Bavarian Soviet Republic, on charges of attempting to infiltrate the government. I hope this is true! How welcome the thought of so many like-minded individuals in Munich. I am eager to move.

The Thule-Gesellschaft meets at the Hotel Vierjahreszeiten. A short streetcar ride from the Gymnasium, and not much farther from where Ilsa and I will be living.

2 June 1919

At last, after much delay, we've made our new home in Munich. I can only hope the Armistice sees a treaty soon so that the Republic may turn its attention to pressing matters. The roads are disgraceful. And the war has exacted its toll on every German family -- we saw ample evidence of this between Hamburg and Munich. People will starve, if the winter is harsh.

Ilsa's parents have been invaluable. I think I'd still be struggling to free our piano of the mud if not for Hans's assistance. A good man, Hans. I can see many pieces of my Ilsa in Hans and Dortje. It pleases me no end that my son or daughter will have such wonderful grandparents.

Ilsa and I still can't agree on a name for our baby. She leans toward the modern. But I can't help but press for something that will celebrate our child's German heritage. No matter. We have time to decide. Of course, I know that in the end I will agree to whatever makes Ilsa happy. Even if she is a goose at times!

On Wednesday I will meet Herr Brückner at the Gymnasium to receive my keys and sign papers for my stipend. I hope the books and papers have had an easier journey to my new office at the Gymnasium than our furniture did to our new home.

I did make it to the tail end of the Thule-Gesellschaft meeting last week. Found the Hotel V. without difficulty. The Thulists meet in the White Room, a grand location, though somewhat cold and damp, even in summer.

Less than two dozen had gathered, far less than the hundreds Brückner had suggested. I found that a bit disappointing, until I discovered that the socialists hadn't just captured but executed several Thule members during the short-lived Bayerische Räterepublik. The demons! A bit of reticence on part of the Thulists is understandable. I hope the others return.

Still, a worthwhile diversion. I would have liked to hear the entirety of von Sebottendorf's paper on the connection between List's Runic Circle and the bodily

humors, but was too tardy for that. Perhaps he will be kind enough to send it to me.

I intend to return. I took a pamphlet for Ilsa and her parents. I know they will find it interesting.

22 June 1919

Ilsa fell ill last week. I suspect the strain of moving has taken its toll on her.

She hates to be pampered, my liebchen, but her parents and I presented a united front. What good fortune that our Munich house has a solarium. That, and the garden, have done wonders for Ilsa. Already the color returns to her apple-blossom cheeks.

Her strength will, too, when she finally allows herself adequate rest.

29 June 1919

Treaty signed yesterday. Soon it will be ratified and the Great War will be over at long last.

6 July 1919

Finally made it to a full meeting of the Thule-Gesellschaft last night. A fascinating group! Though I was sorry to learn that von Sebottendorf has departed Munich. His colleagues blame him for the deaths of several Thule members at the hands of the Bavarian Socialists -- a bit of carelessness with the member roster, if I understand correctly. Perhaps it is for the best. Still, I would have liked to hear more of his thoughts on the Hyperborean underpinnings of Aryanism.

I did meet many others at the meeting, however, including von Westarp, Drexler, and Harrer. The latter two are active within the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, a political offshoot of the Thule-Gesellschaft. Von Westarp is a quiet one, though I gather he gets impatient with the political rhetoric. I suspect his interests lie closer to the achievements of the ancient Teutons than with the creation of new political parties.

I share his interest, although my enthusiasm for the Thulists would be much weaker were this group less dedicated to völkisch issues. Especially in light of the preposterous terms of the Versailles Treaty, which have been published widely in the newspapers this week. The Entente powers would seek to cripple us with concessions and reparations! Germany's only crime in this damnable war took place in a railway carriage, when we signed that ridiculous armistice treaty. Surely we wouldn't have conceded to peace if we'd known the cost to us. Britain and France won't be happy until we are overrun with starving orphans.

I doubt very much the treaty will be ratified. What kind of fools would accept such terms?

But enough of that, lest I become feverish.

The most important news of recent days, of course, is that Ilsa is back to full health. And! My darling lieblich has begun to show signs of the baby. I can hardly wait to meet our child! I wish I could converse with it now, the homunculus growing in her womb.

If only we could agree on a name.

10 July 1919

Once again I am proved wrong. The National Assembly has ratified the Versailles Treaty. I am deeply disappointed in my countrymen today.

18 August 1919

At last, my first stipend payment from the Gymnasium arrived today. Herr Brückner was most apologetic about the delay. I celebrated the good fortune with a bouquet for my Ilsa, and gifts of appreciation to her parents. Tonight, I will insist upon flavored ices on the Odeonsplatz.

Interesting debate at the Thule-Gesellschaft last Friday. One of the more Theosophically inclined members suggested holding a séance to contacting the departed souls of the "ancient Aryans of Lost Atlantis". This evoked an outburst from Herr Doktor Von Westarp (whom I gather is a very well-educated fellow, and a medical doctor as well). He railed at the "intellectual slothfulness" of those who would choose, in his own words, "Ouija boards over microscopes, baseless speculation over rigorous deduction." And he decried their tendency to lament lost greatness rather than seek to reclaim it. They, in turn, accused him of fancifulness. Von Westarp countered that only those who lacked the courage of their convictions would allow human greatness to molder in the past.

Though I have more patience with our Thulist companions -- not only for their tendency toward political demagoguery, but also for their obsession with unsubstantiated speculations on mystical matters -- than the doctor, I find myself quite impressed by his dedication to rationality. He is without doubt the most fascinating fellow at these meetings.

10 September 1919

Ilsa and I attended an excellent concert at the Nationaltheater München last night. I've not heard Mahler played with such passion before! The Bayerisches Staatsorchester is blessed to have such a skillful conductor. I truly believe that last night was the first time I heard Mahler's Sixth as the composer intended.

And, whom did I spy in the lobby afterwards but Herr Doktor von Westarp. I think he was taken aback by my forwardness, but the music was in me and I couldn't pass up the

opportunity to introduce myself (again) and Ilsa.

I'm quite certain he didn't remember me from the Thule Society. But, to his credit, he did not pretend to. Very forthright, that fellow. He was reserved, perhaps a bit brusque, until I told him how much I enjoyed his arguments at the Thule Society last month. He warmed immediately, of course. (He sneered about those who would seek ancient wisdom by sending "postcards to the beyond".) A very intelligent man. Quite impressive. And a fellow devotee of Mahler! He, too, felt the performance was excellent.

I took the occasion to invite him to dinner, in spite of the warning squeeze Ilsa gave my elbow. I do hope my she isn't too cross with me.

15 September 1919

I am most pleased with my students at the Gymnasium. A very industrious group. Better, overall, than their peers in Hamburg, though it embarrasses me to admit it. More appreciative of literature, and more serious about their heritage as well.

Good boys. Perhaps they are ready for Schiller. I'm tempted to try.

Ilsa looked a bit pale today. I pleaded with her to spend the day off her feet. She relented, my darling, but not without protest.

16 September 1919

Ilsa still ill. Had to postpone dinner with Herr Doktor von Westarp.

19 September 1919

Wonderful dinner with Herr Doktor von Westarp last night. I am grateful to Dortje for baking fresh Mandel-halbmonde for the occasion. If the doctor warmed to us, it was perhaps more to do with Ilsa and her parents than any charm I could muster. Though he and I do have many shared interests.

Karl Heinrich (as the doctor insists we call him) is a scholar of Nietzsche, and grew quite excited when he learned I cover Nietzsche in my German Literature classes. We had a long discussion of Zarathustra and The Gay Science. I suspect Karl Heinrich takes a more literal interpretation of Zarathustra than is warranted, and has no patience for Eternal Recurrence, but it was a pleasure to debate such unconventional readings.

I pointed out that his notion of reclaiming the greatness of our Aryan ancestors, if successful, would be the perfect example of Recurrence. He was quick to correct me on one point; he tends to think that the capacity for greatness is a human quality, not just of the Aryans. But with regard to my point, Karl Heinrich has little patience for anything that cannot be quantified. Indeed, I teased him about that. If the Will to Power is a real

thing, I said, surely there must be an experiment to prove it. I expected a quick and cutting reply, but instead he fell quiet, and looked thoughtful.

His medical education took place in England, and it is easy to see how strongly the Victorian mindset has influenced him. I admire his humanistic tendencies. I think above all other things, even nationalism or politics, Karl Heinrich von Westarp believes in science and human potential.

An invigorating debate. I fear we bored Ilsa.

3 October 1919

Ilsa is down again, slight fever and hydropsy in the legs. My poor goose. But today she received a card in the post from her sister in Vienna, and I think it did much to lift her spirits.

But! We have reached a compromise regarding names for the baby. I have suggested Jurgen for a boy. If we have a daughter instead, she will be named Katrin, as Ilsa suggests.

19 October 1919

Grading exams this past week. I may have overestimated my students at the Gymnasium. Their grasp of Nietzsche is not what I'd hoped. Perhaps I was too influenced by my debate with Dr. von Westarp?

Speaking of whom, another animated meeting of the Thule Society last night. The Society of late has been more preoccupied with activities in its offshoot, the DAP. That frustrates the doctor greatly. He presented a fascinating paper -- drawn largely from his undergraduate thesis -- suggesting evidence for ancient greatness may be found in Nietzsche.

Most particularly, he pointed to the concept of the Will to Power as the conscious manifestation of something latent in the human psyche. He was shouted down, of course, when he suggested this latent greatness could be common to all men, not just those descended from the Hyperboreans. (And in fact, I know from my dinner debate with the doctor that he has no patience for such notions as the Theosophists' insistence on sunken continents and lost civilizations. The data do not support such conclusions, he would say!)

But von Westarp had already lost the room before he reached his main point. A great shame, though perhaps it is vain of me to say so. For I do believe my suggestion over dinner last month has spurred the good doctor to new considerations. I wish the other Thulists would have allowed him to continue -- I would have enjoyed hearing the layout of his proposal for applying the scientific method to the quest for the Übermensch.

He stormed out of the hotel before I had a chance to tell him. I think he is quite disgusted with the Thule Society.

24 October 1919

Ilsa gave me a terrible scare this morning. She complained of heartburn, and her skin had a feverish warmth to it. She insisted it was just the course of her pregnancy, my lieblich, and blamed the strain of getting to her feet when her belly swells daily. But then she swooned, and nearly took a tumble down the stairs. She would have, had I not been there to catch her. Thank Providence for that!

I carried her back to bed. She sleeps fitfully as I write this. I will take another cool compress to her brow in a few minutes.

I have given my students the day off, and notified Herr Brückner that I won't be in my office at the Gymnasium for the rest of the week. He wasn't pleased, but he did understand.

25 October 1919

Ilsa is stronger today. Almost her regular stubborn self, though I still detect fever when I kiss her brow. But I have forbidden her from anything other than bed rest. She complains, though I think secretly she is relieved. The pregnancy is taking its toll on her.

My poor goose.

4 November 1919

Ilsa had another relapse this morning. She isn't able to eat, so terrible is the heartburn. I imposed upon our friend, Herr Doktor von Westarp, to come to the house and attend her. But he was most accommodating.

It became clear at once that the doctor is a superb diagnostician. His bedside manner is minimal and not entirely gentle -- as evidenced by the way Ilsa rolled her eyes at me -- but his mind is first-rate. His dedication to the Victorian mindset and the scientific method has served us well. He identified Ilsa's condition for us. Pre-eclampsia, he called it, and said it is not entirely uncommon to first pregnancies. He prescribed bed rest, which of course she did not welcome.

And! The good doctor had a surprise for us: Ilsa is carrying twins. Twins! I asked if he thought they would be fraternal or identical, but he could not say.

We'll have to revive our debate over baby names, now that we seek a pair of names. Ilsa will have plenty of time to think during her bed rest. I'm just happy to know that she will be well again. And grateful to our good friend K. H.

26 November 1919

Doctor von Westarp wasn't present at last night's meeting of the Thule Society. A shame. I wanted to thank him again for attending to Ilsa.

I was uncomfortable about leaving her, but she insisted. I have been unwilling to leave Ilsa alone any longer than I must. Bad enough that I must leave her to deal with my teaching obligations at the Gymnasium, though of course we need the stipend. Her parents have been a godsend.

15 December 1919

Examinations at the Gymnasium this week. So many papers to grade. But I am glad for the Christmas holiday. It gives me more time to spend with Ilsa.

Our twins will be born early in the New Year!

22 December 1919

I stopped by von Westarp's flat on my way to deliver my students' grades to the Gymnasium. I brought him more of Dortje's wonderful Mandel-halbmonde, which I know he enjoys. My way of thanking him for taking such care of my darling.

(I fear the package had been a bit flattened by virtue of my streetcar ride. I'd tucked the box in my coat to protect it from the worst of the December winds. Unfortunately for me, I caught a particularly crowded streetcar! Where do these people come from? In the middle of the day, no less.)

He was delighted by the gift. He didn't notice the box had been pressed into an unflattering shape. The pastries were still warm. And he surprised me by saying that he was thankful to me and Ilsa. To me, he said, because our dinner debate about Nietzsche had motivated him to think more seriously about the Will to Power and human enlightenment.

"And Ilsa?" I asked.

He said that attending to Ilsa in her pregnancy spurred his thinking into new directions. he intends to open a foundling home next spring! He already has a site: his family owns land outside Weimar, but the farm has been unoccupied for many years.

Quite an undertaking, I told him. The Great War has broken many families, he pointed out. What will become of those children? If ever I needed proof of his humane and humanistic tendencies, this was it. What an honorable man. I am proud to know him.

1 January 1920

The Earth completes another circuit of the celestial clockwork.

A new year dawns. May it be a better year for Germany.

8 January 1920

I am a father! Ilsa gave birth early this morning.

And so quickly! After all the difficulties Ilsa suffered in the final months of her pregnancy I had worried that the delivery would be long and difficult. Quite the opposite! Ilsa's midwife called it "precipitous", though I think "stormy" might have been a more apt description.

No matter. Ilsa rests now. We have twin girls! Identical, tiny and perfect!

Our daughters are Katrin and Alise. May they grow to be pure and noble as their names suggest.

16 January 1920

Our twins are strong and healthy. And what lungs they have! A pair of future opera stars. I confess to daydreaming about one day seeing my girls perform at the Nationaltheater. All fathers dream of greatness for their children. But I am convinced my daughters have a special destiny.

Ilsa is not recovering as quickly as I'd like. She has been plagued by a lingering fever since the delivery. She denies it, the stubborn thing, but I suspect she feels worse than she will admit to her husband or parents. I've caught her wincing at pain when she thinks nobody is watching. My poor love.

19 January 1920

I've imposed upon Herr Doktor von Westarp to visit Ilsa again.

She suffers from puerperal fever, and must adhere to a stringent course of bed rest until the fevers pass. Our friend the doctor said something quite strange. He said that she could easily conquer the illness if only she wills it so.

I fear my concern for Ilsa made me terrible company. But the doctor seemed not to mind. If anything he was quite pleased at the opportunity to meet our daughters. Full of questions he was, peppering me with questions about their care and feeding! And I could swear he was fascinated with their tiny heads. But I suppose such is to be expected, if he still intends to open his kinderheim this spring.

29 January 1920

I cannot wake Ilsa. Her skin burns with fever.

3 February 1920

Oh, Ilsa.

My goose.

My love.

Mother of my children.

How can I go on without you? How will I raise our daughters alone?

5 February 1920

Buried Ilsa today.

Snow on her coffin.

8 February 1920

I have resigned my position at the Gymnasium. Herr Brückner pleaded with me to reconsider. I struck him.

9 February 1920

Hans and Dortje blame me for their daughter's death. They accuse me of murdering their daughter with negligence! They say it was my fault, trusting Herr Doctor von Westarp's diagnosis.

I have banned them from visiting their granddaughters. They are not welcome in this house.

This large, empty house.

15 February 1920

The twins scream night and day. I have hired a wetnurse for each, but still they scream. I've never heard such noise.

Everything reminds me of Ilsa.

21 February 1920

I can't stand the wailing. Alise and Katrin killed my wife, and now they seek to drive me

mad.

Letter from K. H. today. His foundling home is nearing completion.

2 March 1920

Took the twins to Weimar today.

Von Westarp is a kind man. He will treat the girls better than I could ever do. He bears them no ill will.

Perhaps someday I will hear them sing.

... ..

I cannot bear to revisit this. Rereading is reliving. Never again.

I have torn the offending pages from my journal. I am already tortured by these memories. Why keep a chronicle of my sorrows?

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