

Laura the 9th August 1900

Grace and peace to greet you!

Dear Sister and Brother-in-law

At long last I really must write you a few lines, for I haven't written for a long time. I wanted to write you long ago but I couldn't because of my hands. For my hand joints were so stiff – all the finger joints were so stiff and painful that I just could not write. Though much better now it is still bad enough. It is rheumatism of the joints (rheumatoid arthritis) in the feet and hands elbows and shoulders and is always worse at night than by day.

I had it so bad that at night I could not even pull up the bed-cover to cover myself. It was as if my arms were dead, except that I had great pain in them and likewise in the feet. And when the joints became inflamed the pains were simply unbearable, worse than if the bones had been broken. There was so little strength in the leg that the foot had to be laid in the bed as if it had been broken off.

The following week when Richard had returned from visiting you, I had it in the right foot so badly that I was bedfast for three days. Whenever the pains became too great it went to my heart. Then it was as if I must suffocate. Twice it was so bad that I thought I could no longer live and Gustav also thought I was dying. But that was not yet God's will, for I am getting markedly better now.

Dear Bertha, how are you getting on? You have surely suffered a lot, for I have heard from several people who had the same sickness, that it is a very painful ailment. I would so gladly have come to nurse you if I had been well. Then I would have been with you all long ago. But since I was plagued by a similar ailment that was not possible.

And how are you all otherwise? What is little Gerhard doing; I guess he will soon be starting to walk. Our little Bernhard is just starting to play; he already sits up nicely in the pram. He is very plump and weighs 22 lbs. He is pretty good now.

We all had a horrible hacking cough. Richard and Meta still have it rather bad. Brother-in-law Winter was also very sick; he had pleurisy/pneumonia, but is better again now to the extent that he can get up, but not work yet. He had to take on a labourer.

How do the harvest prospects look in your district this year? Here the wheat is stretching up nicely and greenfeed is also plentiful. We have always had nice rains.

I want to close now, with the hope that this reaches you in good health and that Bertha too will soon become strong and healthy again. But take care of yourself, dear sister, that you don't catch cold again. Especially for cold feet, always put on dry socks straight away whenever you get wet. Especially take care to keep the feet quite dry. So we remain, with many heartfelt greetings to you, with love

Your Sister and Brother-in-law

Lydia and Gustav Saegenschnitter

Also greet your dear parents from us, also any others who are known to us.

Dear Bertha, I must add a comment for you about Mr McCormick (?) of Laura who died so suddenly. For our dear papa was his guest for many a meal. These folk were always very good to our dear Papa. Now, scarcely 8 months later this strong man also became a corpse. I am very sorry for the poor wife and her children. He was just 51 years old.

(End of the double fold. The following was written on a single sheet.)

Dear Bertha, about Anna and her children, please don't upset yourself. I'm not at all surprised that she was worried about her children. I am only surprised that she was able to let them stay away for so long. For here she can't let them be away from her for a single night, because some harm could come to them. For Anna has always been a bit strange, as you well know.

What Richard is supposed to have said about Gustav in Laura is an untruth. For I heard what Gustav did say to her. Anna was just so pleased to have Sara home again. But what she would have loved most of all was to have seen Gustav come along with them too. I didn't notice that Sarah was sick in any way. Even if she had a little headache, the reason for that was not far to seek. She looked quite contented to me.

And about what you wrote in answer to Matilda, Edel seems to have let it out; its not true that she (Anna) heard it at church.

Up till now they (Winters) haven't told us anything about Henry's being in Adelaide. Neither has he told us that he failed to ask about how you are getting on. So let's just comfort each other, for Gotthold's wife Emma has not treated me any better either. But the Notice that he was going to shoot all our poultry, that she was able to bring me!

Just wait a bit, maybe things will catch up with her soon. For she is due to become a mother in September, then she too will find out what it's all like. No doubt Richard will have told you the whole story. I just don't understand Emma and Gotthold any more.

The English Translation

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