

Ingo Weidenbach:

Copy of a letter written by **Berta Weidenbach**, born ...?, wife of Richard Weidenbach, and addressed to Paul Weidenbach, the younger brother of her husband and father of Oswald Weidenbach, who is my father.

North Brighton / Melbourne, June 20, 1906, 5 Lewis street

My dear Paul, dear Johanna (Weidenbach, born Schaffrath)

Why haven't you written in such a long, long time and why haven't you answered my last letter? In these difficult times that I am going through a note from you would have been a real comfort to me. I have been in poor health for 14 weeks and am considerably worried. Unfortunately I had dragged myself along for some time without consulting a doctor, because they charge you 10sh 6d for a visit. But then I realised I could not carry on any longer and went to see the doctor who looked quite concerned. He diagnosed me a total nervous breakdown and a stomach disorder. These symptoms cause such pain that I do not find any rest at night without the help of sleeping pills. I wish you could see me – I am only mere shadow of my former self and just skin and bones. The day before yesterday the doctor examined me again and told me that the strain on my nerves would kill me if I did not get rid of my worries. Presently we live only on charity. Every week I am given 5sh through the intercession of our preacher which I use for expensive medicine. Richard cannot find a job, and if my old aunt should decide to let me down altogether and refuse to help me on my way to a new start we will be lost. As long as I was in good health and was able to work I put up with my fate. But since I have been feeling miserable and have not received any news from my aunt I am consumed with worry. We had to leave our house 3 weeks ago because we could no longer afford to pay the rent. We moved into more modest house but still do not know how to pay the expenses, even though Richard tries now and then to earn a few shillings. I am now so weak that I am not able to do anything and mostly stay in bed. To have had something to read in this situation would have been a real pleasure, but even that was unsuccessful work. Your last letter, dear Paul, only contained a newspaper clipping. What a letdown! Here I am, day in and day out, brooding over my problems and how it all should end and that surely will not cure my illness. Dear Paul, could you once again approach my aunt a good word for me?

I hope you are well and that we will hear from you soon. Meanwhile all of us send you our best wishes, especially from your poor

Berta

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