

Henryk Sienkiewicz¹ to Julian Horain²



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¹ Polish journalist and author; awarded a Nobel prize for literature in 1905; see: <http://culture.pl/en/artist/henryk-sienkiewicz>.

² Julian Florian Horain, Polish journalist; see: <http://www.polishclubsf.org/Horain.pdf>.

February – Sunday – God knows what the date is; I don't. 1877³

Dear and respected friend!

I see that you're a true Lithuanian, the kind of whom Wincenty Pol⁴ says:⁵

He's as soft as wax, when people treat him right
But if people ever start a fight,
He won't forgive, though sunk in death's long night



Wincenty Pol

What the devil! What did I step into over there? Didn't I write a compliment in your album, addressing you as an old "man of letters," not just as a fellow man? Didn't I regularly lose all of those many newspapers sent to me, thereby demonstrating that I am indeed a literary man, unconcerned about creating an impression that I'm better organized than anybody else? Didn't I stand in for Ludek's⁶ father [i.e., "you", Horain] here, taking him to the girls in Anaheim, which Ludek himself can speak to you about? Finally, did my second-to-most-recent letter make you angry? *Unde irae?* as Tacit says.⁷ Could some backbiter have done *iniuria*⁸ to me in your estimation?

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Horain family, 1871 (Julian, Thaddeus, **Ludwig [Ludek]**, Michael [Michał], Władysław, Paweł [Paul])

If it was the letter – you, especially, as a literary man, should know how to judge another who, for style's sake – for some metaphor, metonymy or synecdoche⁹ – would make a butt of his own father. In the

³ Written in Anaheim, California and sent to San Francisco, California.

⁴ Wincenty Pol (20 April 1807 – 2 December 1872); Polish poet and geographer.

⁵ Cited from *Song of Our Land*, playfully drawn from the original: "He melts like wax... But when somebody confronts him..."

⁶ Ludek (Ludwig or Louis); Horain's son; he died in 1888 on board the steamer, *Granada*.

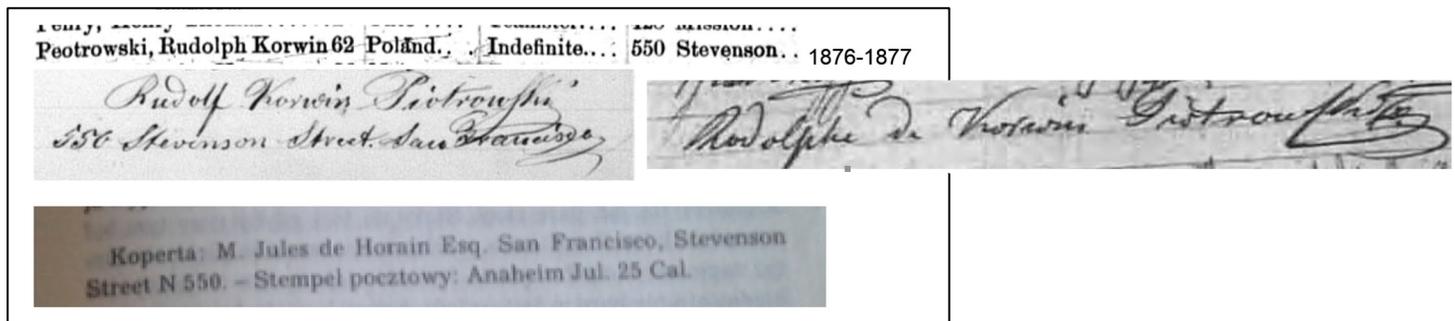
⁷ Latin: "Whence this ire?," cited from the *Annals* of Tacitus.

⁸ Latin: An injustice/slander.

⁹ Figures of speech: calling a thing by the name of something else or something that it's associated with. [Polish equivalents, with native Polish roots, are given in the original footnote for these English words having Greek roots].

interest of our guild,¹⁰ we shouldn't judge such things by the common measure. If someone in San Francisco has been defaming me – Good heavens! – go to Warsaw, where the most respected people will say that: 1) I'm a spy, who's paid in Russian rubles; 2) I'm an arsonist; 3) (nearest to the truth) I violated underage girls, from two-years-old to fifty; 4) I'm either a pickpocket or a bank robber; 5) I'm an habitual drunk, suffering from *delirium tremens*;¹¹ 6) (*Well . . .*) I'm addicted to gambling at cards . . . and all of the other *et caeteras* that crop up with the lovely particulars above.

Many of my devotees and supporters, especially the old maids, who *extra ordinario modo*¹² fall in love with my creations, will speak again to the contrary. Don't worry, there'll be those from whom you'll hear either of these versions or both. As far as I'm concerned, I'll say this much: that each side has half of the truth – and in the meantime, I see no cause for our relations to be agitated. If you don't want to live with me as a semi-arsonist, half-drunk, etc., I call out with Holy Severyn the Apostle, *Noricum: vide caeteros amicos tuos et omniam societatem*.¹³ Who are you going to live with besides the captain¹⁴ – whose virtue regarding women is also dubious?



Captain Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski and Julian Horain shared an address in 1876-1877 in San Francisco

But I doubt it could have been any *preca lingua*¹⁵ that brought my virtue into question – so probably it was anger – *ira*, of which I think, in *tirocinium linguae latinae*,¹⁶ it says that *ira furor brevis est*.¹⁷ Give yourself a break with all of this. As God is my witness, I always looked, and still look on you with half of that hatred and half the wishes for grave illness, a host of devils, a rotten liver, death by choking, and worse luck at *preferans*¹⁸ than I'd wish for other literary men. This means something. As I see it, my response has always expressed the very ideal of beauty, genius, talent: these are lofty attributes. – How is it possible to become

¹⁰ Both Sienkiewicz and Horain were journalists and authors.

¹¹ The DTs. Delirium tremens. A syndrome associated with alcoholism distinguished by muscular delusions and trembling, from which it gets its Latin name.

¹² Latin: "Beyond the usual measure."

¹³ Latin: "Look at some of your friends, and at the whole society;"

St. Severyn (died 482) was an abbot, founder of many cloisters, and an apostle of the Norici, who lived along the Danube

¹⁴ Captain Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski; born in Poland; lived in the former mining town, Sebastopol, Sacramento County and in San Francisco; co-founder of the Polish Society of California; served as Commissioner of Immigration; see: <http://www.polishclubsf.org/Piotrowski%20in%20City%20Directories.pdf>.

¹⁵ Latin: "Impertinent, shameless language."

¹⁶ Latin: "A handbook of the Latin language."

¹⁷ Latin: "Anger is a short-lived frenzy."

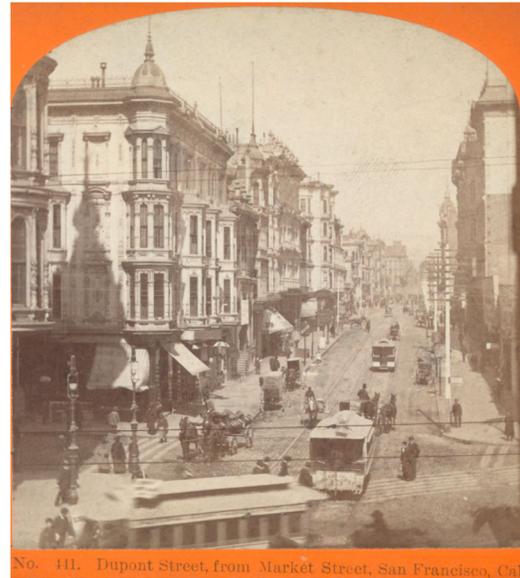
¹⁸ *Preferans* is a Russian card game that became popular in the 1830s. Here, Sienkiewicz uses technical jargon from the game to express his ill wishes towards all literary hangers-on. The footnote in the original explains the meaning of the underlined word: *Nazwa totus określa się w preferansie zebranie wszystkich dziesięciu lew,* "to wit, Sienkiewicz condemns these people "to never take all ten tricks" at *preferans*.

embittered against me like this? – and where? – in San Fr[ancisco], Cal. – [and] from whom? – a stationer, with whom I went to Mount Diablo¹⁹ or the general²⁰ on Dupont-street,²¹ etc.?

POISON
Kelch George, barkeeper W. Krzyzanowski, dwl N s Mar-
ket nr Dupont



Mount Diablo



No. 41. Dupont Street, from Market Street, San Francisco, Cal

¹⁹ Mount Diablo is a peak east of San Francisco. Sienkiewicz and Horain visited Mt. Diablo in May of 1876.

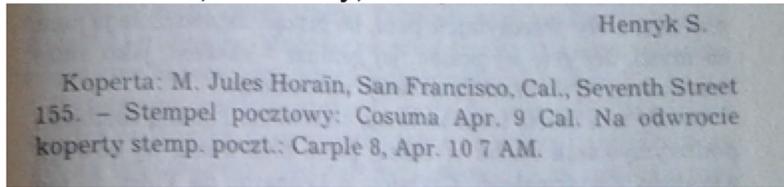
²⁰ Włodzimierz Krzyżanowski (1824–1887) arrived in the United States in 1846. He joined the Northern side in the American Civil War, and because of his notable contributions, a year later he was promoted to the rank of general by President Lincoln. He founded The Society for the Assistance of Polish Immigrants [*Towarzystwo Pomocy dla Polskich Imigrantów*]. He was the author of *Memories from a Sojourn in America: 1861–1864*, published in Warsaw, 1883 [*Wspomnień z pobytu w Ameryce*].

²¹ Krzyżanowski reportedly stiffed his Polish friends when his San Francisco saloons (The New York Casino and The Louver) went bankrupt. He lived, for a time, in San Francisco on Market Street near Dupont Street, now Grant Avenue.

1877

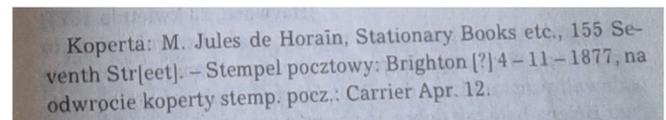
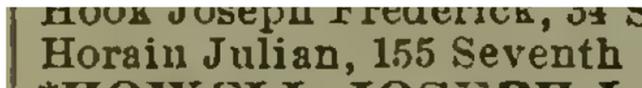
Horain Julian, 155 Seventh

Horain Julian, stationery, 155 Seventh



San Francisco *City Directory*, Booksellers and Stationers

Were I not a philosopher, I would turn this over to a "jury" (the word's pronounced, *dziury* ["holes" in Polish]), for example, Sara or Henriette.²² The guilty are called upon to mend their ways.



I no longer want "The Newspaper,"²³ even though *The Ram's Head*, an outstanding work by my favorite author Litwos,²⁴ is supposedly published there.²⁵ I don't want it first of all because I just don't, and second because I, together with my one-handed trunk, my travel bag strapped across one shoulder, a sheepskin cap, etc., etc., will probably soon make a sunset exit from the San Francisco firmament.²⁶ I'll tell you a little secret: farming, hauling manure, cleaning George's stall (that's our team horse), partridges, bumpy rabbits,²⁷ and various other idyllic pleasures beginning (in theory) with getting up to meet the day, and ending with the use of burdock²⁸ leaves in that place where others use [toilet] paper – all of this has brought me to such a state of boredom that *vomitandus sum*,²⁹ or to put it differently, " simple REVULSION,"³⁰ as the Polish girls in Saint Petersburg say – naturally-ROOTED Polish women who can be RELIED

²² A reference to Henriette, a fictional character in the French historical drama *The Two Orphans* (a romantic play). Alice Dunning Lingard (July 29, 1847 - June 25, 1897) played Henriette. M'lle Sara (Sarah Wright, active late 1860s-early 1880s), was an English dancer who joined the Emily Soldene comic opera company.

²³ *Gazeta Polska* (*Polish Gazette*).

²⁴ Byline/pen name of Sienkiewicz.

²⁵ In *the Polish Gazette*, Numbers 5–17 (1877), *Charcoal Sketches: An epic collection entitled, What Happened at the Ram's Head* was being printed at this time. [This is Sienkiewicz at his best – a satire on village life in Russian-occupied Poland – first published in California under his pen name, Litwos].

²⁶ The San Francisco Bay Area.

²⁷ What this alludes to was made clear by Sienkiewicz in *Travel Letters* [*Listy z podróży*], where he wrote, "The rabbits prick themselves constantly on the cactus plants, flies lay their eggs in the wounds, and then blisters arise, filled with water and pus" (*Works*, vol. XLII, pp. 233-234).

²⁸ A stout handsome plant, with large, wavy leaves and round heads of purple flowers. It is enclosed in a globular involucre of long stiff scales with hooked tips, the scales being also often interwoven with a white, cottony substance.

²⁹ Latin: "I want to vomit."

³⁰ Sienkiewicz is playing with words. In the original text, the Polish *prosto odwrócenie* ("a simple reversal") sounds a lot like the Russian *просто отвращение* ("simply revulsion," which in Polish would be, *po prostu obrzydzenie*). This is an example of how Poles who'd been living in Russia would mix up the meanings of certain false cognates between the two languages – using a Polish word to mean what a Russian word that sounds just like it meant: i.e., not in the actual sense of the Polish word itself. Sienkiewicz's bilingual wordplay here underscores, with a different sort of flourish, his REVULSION towards the communal scene in Anaheim. Because the interplay of cognates between Polish and Russian is impossible to duplicate in English, SMALL CAPS have been used to mark the words in this passage that Sienkiewicz plays with in this manner. The INTENDED MEANING has been translated in every case, not the ironically employed, dictionary sense of the Polish word.

SOURCE:

Letter #11. Henryk Sienkiewicz. *Listy*, Tom 1, Cześć 2. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1977.
Online: <http://www.henryk-sienkiewicz.pl/index.php?d=dzial&id=listy>; referenced online:
<http://www.henryk-sienkiewicz.pl/index.php?d=dzial&id=listy>.

NOTE: The editors and translator have revised or augmented some of Maria Bokszczyńska's original footnotes. Some footnotes are our own.

Translated from Polish to English by **Bob Lamming**, with **Elżbieta Kieszczyńska** (Clifton, New Jersey) and edited by Bob Lamming and **Maureen Mroczek Morris** (San Francisco) with **Roman Włodek** (Kraków) and Lynn Ludlow (San Francisco). English summary translation kindly proffered by **Anna Samborska** (San Francisco). Translation commissioned by Maureen Mroczek Morris.

1876

Family name HORAIN	Given name or names Julian
Address	
Certificate no. (or vol. and page) Vol. 14, P-292	Title and location of court US CC SF
Country of birth or allegiance Russia	When born (or age)
Date and port of arrival in U. S.	Date of naturalization Nov. 1, 1876
Names and addresses of witnesses Rudolph K. Piotrowski Wladimir Krzyzanowski	

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, Immigration and Naturalization Service. Form No. 1-IP. 16-2000
National Archives

Witnesses: **Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski** and **Włodzimierz Krzyżanowski**
Naturalization of Julian Horain

US CC SF = United States Circuit Court, San Francisco

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BARTON HILL..... Acting Manager

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AND
GENEVIEVE DE BRABANT.

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Strentzel-Muir House Near Mount Diablo

<http://www.mdia.org/site/history/john-muir-slept-nearby>

