

Anna Landau-Czajka

DIET PATTERNS IN 19TH–20TH C. SCHOOL MANUALS

School manuals are an underestimated source which can serve among other things to study customs and the patterns of behaviour. Many aspects of everyday life are perfectly revealed by these readers, frequently devoid of any literary ambition, but aimed at teaching children the right way to live.

The present article makes use of primers and stories addressed to Polish to children aged from 5–10. The analysis has been based on 300 manuals from 1785–2000, over 1/3 (about 120) of which come from partitioned Poland (1795–1914). Some manuals (about 20) were published during the First World War. About 75 manuals come from the inter-war period. The fewest — only 5 (one of which was published in the Polish lands) — come from the period of the Second World War, over 25 from 1945–56, nearly 20 from 1957–89, and about 40 from 1989–2000.

One should not be impressed by the number of manuals from particular periods. The fact that there were more titles does not mean that they were all equally popular. Many manuals — especially in the 19th c. — were published for the use of kinsfolk or acquaintances, thus one can hardly speak of their broader educational impact. In the period when the state was a monopolist publisher of manuals (1948–1989) there were few titles, but all the children used them; in result their influence was greater.

One should not forget that the majority of manuals were chrestomathies, i.e. selections of texts from the period preceding the year of publishing such a manual. This time-gap may run even into a hundred years. Therefore, save for the pieces written especially for those manuals, the children received a picture of the world “shifted” a few, a dozen-odd or even several dozen years

into the past. Manuals used also to have many editions. The end of an historical era usually meant that the usefulness of such a manual had ended, but there were exceptions to this rule.

As regards food, there are three essential threads in the manuals. The first concerns patterns of diet: how much, when and what should be eaten by children. This takes the form of instructions, and depending on the era, different behaviour is praised or condemned. Another thread is the description of dishes: what is eaten most frequently, what dishes are regarded as “delicacies”, and which are rejected. The last thread is the use of tobacco and alcohol.

The earliest manuals address the readers as if they were adults. The problems they deal with concern not only childhood but also the later years of life. Despite the continual call for obedience to the elders, young people are regarded as capable of making their own decisions, even in their choice of food. Moderation is recommended, especially for the sake of health: “Illness stems most often from excessive eating or drinking”¹. Children are instructed in what and how much to eat, now and later in life.

In 19th c. manuals there are no morally neutral questions. Each problem is analysed from the point of view of morals, religion, and obedience. This also applies to food. In manuals which lay emphasis on piety, eating seems to be almost a religious activity. Children are admonished: “When you eat and drink, do it to the Glory of God! (...) Remember these words well and when eating God’s gifts behave so that you do not offend in the least the Glory of the Highest Giver of all things”².

While in his 18th c. manual *Kopczyński* acknowledges the child’s right to spend its own money on tit-bits, in the 19th c. the decision what, how much and when a child should eat lies exclusively with its parents. A boy from the manual published in 1839 declares: “I will eat only as much as my parents allow me”³.

¹ [O. *Kopczyński*], *Elementarz dla szkół parafijalnych narodowych, zawierający naukę pisanja i czytania, katechizm, naukę obyczajową, naukę rachunków* (A Primer for National Parish Schools, Teaching Writing and Reading, Catechism, Morals and Arithmetic), Kraków 1785, vol. III, p. 36.

² *Nowy elementarz dla dzieci* (A New Primer for Children), Częstochowa, current year [about 1881], p. 16.

³ *Elementarz do używania w szkołach miejskich cesarsko-królewskich państw dziedzicznych* (A Primer for the Use of Urban Schools in Royal-Imperial Hereditary States), Wiedeń 1839, p. 17.

Throughout the 19th c. manuals present over and over again the motif of greediness as one of the children's major vices. Greediness was a threat to health, a sign of a lack of will and an act of disobedience. In an era which highly valued obedience, this was a major transgression. Excessive eating broke religious norms — gluttony is one of cardinal sins. In poor families a child taking food without permission, deprived of it the rest of the family. Any act of reaching for food in the larder, for sugar in a sugar-bowl, of picking fruit and eating it in secret, was treated as theft. For greediness children were usually punished by being deprived of their favourite food. Francis from a manual of 1887 was deprived of his portion of sweets and fruit (to the benefit of a caretaker's son). For "There is nothing worse than being greedy, a child like Francis usually grows into a lazy-bones and a guzzler"⁴.

Greediness, apart from inevitable punishment, had also more serious consequences — illness, and sometimes death. Moderation was regarded as an essential condition of health: "Be moderate in eating and drinking, and you will reach a ripe age and seldom fall ill. Excess is always harmful. We eat to live, but we do not live in order to eat"⁵. Gluttony was condemned as well. "This is a very bad habit. A glutton eats, despite his lack of appetite, and cares for nothing but to satisfy his gluttony"⁶. However, in view of the appeals for hearty eating at meal-times (i.e. regardless of appetite), and for not being choosy about the food, "gluttony" in such a sense could not really concern children. It seemed to be rather an admonition for the future, like warning against intemperance.

Although children were not in a position to decide what and when they should eat, they could, however, go without a meal. They were praised for giving it (usually breakfast or tea) to the poor⁷. At that time — as nowadays — there were two contradictory norms. The first said that food must not be wasted, the other —

⁴ W. L. A n c z y c, *ABC pierwsza nauka dla dzieci (The First Learning of ABC for Children)*, Warszawa 1887, p. 121.

⁵ *Elementarz do używania, op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁶ *Elementarz dla Dzieci Polskich (A Primer for Polish Children)*, Warszawa 1862, p. 80.

⁷ The motif of sharing food disappeared only after the Second World War, when the assumption was made that poverty did not exist and the differences in wealth had been levelled.

that you should only eat if you are hungry. The problem of disposing of the left-overs was solved in different ways. In 19th c. manuals children were not, unlike in later years, pressed to eat the whole portion. The authors of these pieces favourably view feeding dogs (even at table) or giving the remains of a portion to a domestic pet, both in rich middle-class homes and among the countryfolk. The motif of a dog at the table, begging for a part of the meal, reappears in manuals up to the 1920s⁸.

Manuals which not only contain recommendations and instructions but also describe everyday life, can tell us much more about the meals. In wealthy homes, cooking for children and for adults is usually different, and the children long to eat what the adults do. A mother reprimands her daughter at breakfast: "Helen! Why are you standing next to Father and watching what he puts in his mouth?" The father, however, beckons the children and gives them a piece of a roll dipped in coffee, as well as some sugar⁹.

The eating of "delicacies" — white bread, sweets, coffee, was regarded as unhealthy and demoralizing. Irresponsible parents "fatten their darlings" with tit-bits, and thus wean them away from healthy food¹⁰. A boy treated to sweets by his aunt, not only loses appetite and health, but also becomes naughty and fussy. After coming back home "He did not want milk for breakfast, threw brown bread on the floor, and demanded coffee and biscuits. When it came to dinner he frowned at the bortsch, and potatoes with pork fat and a beef stew so offended him that he couldn't swallow them"¹¹. Fastidiousness characterizes bad children and is the cause of their failure¹².

⁸ *Moja książeczka. Nauka czytania i pisania. Ułożyło grono nauczycieli szkoły początkowej (My Book. Learning Reading and Writing. Compiled by a Group of Elementary School Teachers)*, Warszawa 1915 (the book was still published in 1925).

⁹ [K. z Tańskich Hoffm a n o w a], *Wiązanie Helenki. Książeczka dla małych dzieci uczących się czytać przez autorkę Pamiętki po dobrej matce (Helen's Birthday Present. A Booklet for Young Children Learning to Read by the Authoress of the Remembrance of a Good Mother)*, Warszawa 1828, p. 21.

¹⁰ E. Estkowski, *Książka do pierwszego czytania dla szkół publicznych i prywatnych przez... ułożona (A First Reader for Public and Private Schools)*, Warszawa 1862, p. 122.

¹¹ T. Dziekoński, *Wypisy polskie dla użytku uczniów klasy pierwszej (Polish Chrestomathy for the Use of First Grade Pupils)*, Warszawa 1841, p. 73.

¹² Br. D., *Nauka czytania i pisania czyli elementarz (Learning Reading and Writing that is a Primer)*, Częstochowa 1884, p. 160. This poem was still included in an inter-war manual; K. Kędziński, *Wypisy polskie "O Domu i Świecie" (Polish Chrestomathy "About Home and the World")*, vol. I, Łódź, Warszawa, Poznań, Toruń 1921.

Manuals from the period of the First World War and the beginning of the interwar period do not bring many changes. Greediness and gluttony are still condemned, with as much persistency as in the 19th c., although perhaps less frequently. The term "greediness" is in this period used in a way corresponding with the contemporary sense of this word — as the excessive consumption of sweets, a preference for delicacies over the usual meals. Greediness is less frequently a synonym of gluttony.

At the turn of the century the influence of food on health is brought more and more to the fore. Moralizing fragments occur, as if literally copied from the 19th c., where children are threatened with the deadly consequences of food excess. "Moderation in eating and drinking is the main condition of health. (...) when we eat more than we can digest, we lose our health: illness or frequently even death may occur"¹³. Thus we should fight greediness and maintain moderation, even at ordinary meals. "When you eat to excess on an evening, you won't be able to sleep well and would have unpleasant dreams, thus you should eat with moderation and not too late"¹⁴. Children are warned against improper diet, and above all against sweets. Children who eat to excess, although they no longer commit a sin, yet impair their health.

During the First World War and in the first post-war years we are struck by the number of mentions of hungry children in manuals; they are not only beggars and orphans, as in previous years, but also children of relatively wealthy families. A new phenomenon of free or cheap lunches at school appears. There is no place for fussing at the table, since many children would be happier if they could get a meal. Appeals are made to wealthier children and adults to take care of food for the poor. Greediness is no longer regarded as such a serious vice as before, although some manuals continue to warn against it. In others a wish to eat a cake or a sweet becomes a completely understandable and accepted need of a child.

¹³ Wł. Komische, *Czytanki Szkolne. Pierwsza książka do czytania (School Stories. A First Reader)*, Mikołów 1920, pp. 140–141.

¹⁴ A. Szyc, *Czytanki stopniowalne dla dzieci zaczynających naukę systematyczną. Stopień I. W domu i w szkole (A Graded Reader for the Children Beginning to Learn Systematically. Grade I. At Home and School)*, Warszawa 1901, p. 101.

The situation changes in later inter-war years. Although some manuals continue condemning greediness¹⁵ and threaten greedy children with death, nevertheless this is not so frequent. Reasons for fighting greediness change as well — it stops being treated as a breach of religious commandments, and becomes an expression of disobedience, or more frequently — lack of self-control. The notion of greediness acquires a slightly different sense. A simple, natural wish to eat is not condemned any more, but only secret taking out of the pots and eating the food designed for the whole family¹⁶.

Children sometimes have a right to their independent decision as to what and when to eat — this consists primarily in being allowed to buy rolls, sweets, and fruit on their own¹⁷. Peddlers bring to school fruit and sweets, willingly bought by schoolchildren¹⁸. Large meals do not meet with disapproval. “Joseph was hungry and ate a roll, but he still hadn’t enough, so he ate another roll, and he was still hungry. Thus his mother gave him a cracknel”¹⁹. Greediness becomes rather an object of good-natured jokes than the cause for a rebuke.

At the same time, manuals start to focus on encouraging “poor eaters” into eating more. In the 19th c. the essential condition of health was moderation, in the inter-war period it was large meals. A father persuades his son to eat the soup: “If you don’t eat, you’ll never be strong and healthy. And yet you want to work in a factory, don’t you?”²⁰ Parents get a letter from a child

¹⁵ S. Zaleski, *Elementarz Towarzystwa Szkoły Ludowej (A Primer of the Society for Popular Schools)*, Kraków 1920, p. 8.

¹⁶ A. Stala, *Nasza pierwsza książka. Część I na klasę II-gą szkół powszechnych (Our First Book. Part I for Grade II of Elementary Schools)*, Warszawa 1936, p. 11.

¹⁷ Mikułski, Wójcik, Kozera, *Elementarz powszechny (A Popular Primer)*, Lwów, Warszawa, Kraków 1928, p. 107.

¹⁸ J. Wajngarten, *Pierwsze czytanki dla dzieci miejskich. Drugi rok nauki (Stories for Urban Children. Second Year of Learning)*, Warszawa 1932.

¹⁹ R. Dobrzyński, *Praca i zabawa. Czytanki polskie dla szkół powszechnych. Drugi rok nauki (Work and Play. Polish Stories for Elementary Schools. Second Year of Learning)*, Warszawa 1932, p. 50.

²⁰ B. Kubski, S. Dobraniecki, *Na zagonie. Czytanki polskie dla III klasy szkół powszechnych I stopnia. Kurs B (In the Field. Polish Stories for Elementary Schools of the First Degree. Grade III. Course B)*, Lwów 1937, p. 73. This piece had been reprinted many times in manuals after World War II, among others: S. Dobraniecki, M. Kotarbiński, St. Aleksandrzak, *Nasza gromada. Czytanki dla szkoły powszechnej na kl. 3 (Our Group. Stories for Primary Schools Grade 3)*, Warszawa 1946.

in a holiday camp: “I want to tell you that this camp is very good, I eat and drink a lot”²¹.

During the crisis of the 1930s the topic of school meals recurs again. A new phenomenon is a meal called “breakfast”, but resembling a lunch — for soup is served²². Supplementary meals at school are given to all pupils, and these meals are free²³. Only wealthier families from time to time go to visit a confectionery shop²⁴.

Right after the Second World War children in manuals happen to be under-nourished. Families try to economize on food²⁵. Adults are glad when the children have enough to eat, they want them to eat as much as possible. Children are sent to the countryside or to holiday camps, so as to eat their fill and get fatter²⁶. Children are not condemned for “sneaking” — e.g. plums while preserve is being prepared, which in the previous era would be considered a serious transgression²⁷.

In the Stalinist period food is seldom prepared at home, more often at school, in a day-room, or canteen. Schools hand out tid-bits to children on various occasions. In one manual children get parcels from Grandfather Frost, fruit and sweets on the first day of a school-year and fruit from the headmaster for their trip to Warsaw²⁸.

In the years 1956–90 little attention is paid to food. Manuals of that era assume that society is relatively wealthy, and the differences in the material conditions of life do not exist. There is no question of under-nourishment, of sharing the food with poor

²¹ J. Wajngarten, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

²² S. Tync, J. Gołabek, J. Duszyńska, *Nasze miasto. Czytanka polska dla II klasy szkół powszechnych miejskich (Our Town. A Polish Reader for Urban Elementary Schools. Grade II)*, Lwów, Warszawa 1937, pp. 8–9.

²³ J. Żłobicka, *Czytania (Readings)*, vol. I. For the 2nd grade, Lwów 1932, p. 18.

²⁴ K. Buzek, J. Kubisz, *Elementarz i pierwsza książka do czytania (A Primer and First Reader)*, Bytom 1931, p. 175.

²⁵ S. Dobraniecki, M. Kotarbiński, St. Aleksandrzak, *op. cit.*

²⁶ S. Dobraniecki, M. Kotarbiński, St. Aleksandrzak, *Razem. Czytanka dla szkoły podstawowej na kl. 2 (Together. Stories for Primary School Grade 2)*, Warszawa 1946, p. 81.

²⁷ S. Baczyńska, A. Kowalczevska, H. Woyciechowska, *Wśród dzieci. Czytanki dla II klasy szkół powszechnych na wsi i w mieście (Among Children. Stories for Urban and Rural Primary Schools. Grade II)*, Warszawa 1948.

²⁸ Z. Parnowski, Z. Latałowa, N. Kuczyńska, *Czytanki dla klasy II (Stories for Grade II)*, Warszawa 1956.

children or differences in meals they obtain. The sense of the word “hungry” changes. A pupil may be hungry because lunch is late, but never because there is no lunch. One should also bear in mind the lack of supplies in the shops in those years. The authors who propagated some kind of diet would have to reckon with the unrealistic character of their recommendations. Children from those manuals seem not to eat, but only “bite” something (apples, bread) while waiting for a meal. The motif of greedy children or poor eaters emerges only sporadically. Rather children who do not want to eat are a problem. An older brother, in charge of his 7-year-old sister, worries that “she should eat well, but she doesn’t want to”²⁹. Parents are glad when children eat a lot. Meals are described as plentiful, and asking for another helping is not a sign of greediness, but of a healthy appetite³⁰. Home dinners are complete, consisting of three courses, although in fact many families stopped preparing them in those years. Meals in manuals are prepared by a mother or grandmother. Only siblings abandoned by their mother eat outside home, in a cheap bar³¹.

Contemporary manuals (from the years 1990–2000) seem to be less concerned with food. Of great importance is health, a diet conforming to medical recommendations. Problems connected with greediness and poor eating disappear. One cannot detect differences in the menu depending on the financial status of the home, although in other respects the differences in wealth are evidently described.

Children are taught moderation, especially in eating sweets. Adults — frequently dentists — instruct them to eat vegetables and fruit, since sweets are bad for their teeth. Against the background of generally care-free stories, the dietetic recommendations usually strike us by their moralizing tone. In this case, quite exceptionally, manuals address children in official language. Very young children are told: “Do you know that a proper diet largely bears upon your health? — an out-of-date food product may cause serious illness (...)”³²

²⁹ M. Cackowska, K. Kazanowska, W. Wąsakowa, *Razem młodzi przyjaciele. Podręcznik do nauki języka polskiego dla klasy IV (Together, Young Friends. A Polish Language Manual for Grade IV)*, Warszawa 1975, p. 140.

³⁰ E. i F. Przyłubscy, *Litery. Nauka czytania (Letters. A Reader)*, Warszawa 1975, pp. 54–56. This manual had still been published in 1997.

³¹ M. Cackowska, K. Kazanowska, W. Wąsakowa, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

The threat of death is not mentioned directly, but it is clearly given to understand. A manual advises the seven-year-old children to take care of their hearts: “Do not eat too much, but not too little, either. Replace hot-dogs, fat and smoked meat with vegetables and fruit. They are very healthy. Don’t gorge yourself with chocolate, sweets and cakes. When you want to eat something sweet, eat fruit or delicious raw carrots”³³. The person who gives these instructions does not notice that apart from small purchases in a school shop (generally trading exclusively in sweets) seven-year-olds do not decide the composition of their own meals and cannot replace a fat sausage with fruit or vegetables. The more recent a manual, the more emphasis it places on a healthy diet, though there occur some exceptions: a dinner to celebrate a grandfather’s birthday e.g., consists of food that should not be recommended to the elderly: cauliflower soup, pork chop, cream cake and fruit icecream³⁴.

It should be added that despite many mentions about the danger of sweets, the children presented in the illustrations of manuals eat icecream, they reach for sweets from the shelves in a supermarket, and Santa Claus treats them to candy³⁵. Eating is often presented not as a regular meal, but as “snacking” icecream, sweets and cakes.

The health of greedy children may in the future suffer, but excessive eating at the most make them feel unwell³⁶. Manuals show indulgence to greediness. A child explains: “When a lesson seems to have no end and I have to have a bite of a roll, and a tell-tale sitting next to me begins his ‘Miss X., Miss X., Kuba is eating again’, thus I do not like going to school at all”³⁷. Kuba,

³² M. Lorek, *Słońce na stole. Podręcznik do kształcenia zintegrowanego. Klasa III (Sun on the Table. A Manual for Integrated Learning. Grade III)*, Warszawa 2000, vol. I, p. 86.

³³ R. Laskowska, *Świat literek. Podręcznik do kształcenia zintegrowanego, klasa I, semestr II (The World of Letters. A Manual for Integrated Learning, Grade I, Term II)*, current year [1999], p. 40.

³⁴ K. Benczkowska, *Program nauczania blokowego. Blok humanistyczny. Zeszyt podręcznikowy (The Programme for Block Instruction. Humanities Block. A Text-Book)*, Warszawa current year [1999], unnumbered pages.

³⁵ R. Laskowska, H. Małkowska-Zegadło, *Elementarz zintegrowany (An Integrated Primer)*, Warszawa 1999, p. 56.

³⁶ Z. Rejniałk, *Świat drugiej klasy (The World of Grade II)*, Kielce 1994, p. 122.

³⁷ H. Dobrowolska, *Moja pierwsza czytanka. Klasa I (My First Reader. Grade I)*, Warszawa 1993, p. 87.

who breaks one of the principal school prohibitions, arouses sympathy and compassion. In another manual a father takes his family for cream cakes as a reward for good school records, disregarding the remark that they are bad for teeth³⁸.

Despite advice as to what and how much to eat, children cannot decide it on their own. There is a rule to eat everything that you have on your plate. Andrew is to get a hiding for refusing to eat hard meat, a knife and a fork boast: "We shall do our task/ and not be late/ in clearing everything/ from your plate"³⁹.

The family has usually dinner together, although sometimes in the absence of parents the children must prepare or warm their meal up on their own⁴⁰. A striking thing is that apart from icecream and lollipops nobody eats out. There are no mentions of cafés, restaurants, McDonald's. School canteens hardly exist, and if they do, they do not serve food, but are used for other purposes (e.g. a production of a school play). Only one primer mentions lunch served in a school canteen⁴¹.

From soup to salad

In the earliest manuals the menu depended chiefly on the wealth of the family, although some kinds of food were always recommended or regarded as undesirable. Bread was valued. "Bread gives one strength, but even if made from coarser flour, it should be without bran or husks" — recommended Onufry Kopczyński in the 18th century⁴².

In the 19th century the most frequent kinds of food were: "bread, rolls, potatoes, groats, noodles, ravioli, peas, cabbage, cucumbers, beets, sour milk, cheese, butter, eggs, scrambled eggs, pork fat, sausages and meat. As drinks: water, milk, bortsch, coffee, tea, beer, mead, vodka and wine. The best delicacies were: honey, poppy-seeds, nuts, various berries (...)

³⁸ M. Lorek, *Czarodziejski dywan. Język polski, kl. II, Wypisy. Gramatyka. Ortografia (The Magic Carpet. Polish Language, Grade II. Chrestomathy. Grammar. Spelling)*, Katowice 1994, vol. I, pp. 146–147.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁴⁰ A. Czochra, I. Tarkowska, *Mój pierwszy elementarz (My First Primer)*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 74–75.

⁴¹ H. Czerniawska, J. Malczewski, *Elementarz. Język polski klasa I — semestr I i II (A Polish Language Primer. Grade I — Terms I and II)*, Warszawa 1999, p. 39.

⁴² [O. Kopczyński], *op. cit.*, vol. III, pp. 31–32.

various fruits; various cakes, gingerbread and sweets"⁴³. It's worth citing a longish quotation which enumerates advisable and inadvisable kinds of food: "Simple dishes, well prepared, are nourishing, they give strength, robustness and corpulence; elaborate ones slime the stomach, cause nausea and heaviness (...). Simple and wholesome food includes all the native vegetables dressed with moderation, fruits of trees, brown bread, milk and meat eaten not too often; fancy but less wholesome are cakes, any fat or sugar, foreign spices, especially if used too profusely, and all the various tid-bits. (...) Too much grease causes a cough, from too much meat the blood rots, gums decay and a bad smell comes from the mouth; therefore meat should be eaten with vegetables. (...) Eating too much cheese, especially old, creates stones in the bladder (...) Any too hot food is bad for your entrails and teeth"⁴⁴.

The principle was adopted that the less diversified and simpler the food, the better. Children: "Do not know what illness is, for they eat only bread and vegetables and drink water and milk; they eat very little other food"⁴⁵. However, some manuals recommended a little diversification: "Vegetables are healthier, but meat is more nourishing; meat alone would make the blood rot, and he who would like to eat vegetables only, would have no strength"⁴⁶. Vegetables were considered to be healthy, while fruits were treated with suspicion. They were "tid-bits", like sweets, to be eaten with moderation and under control⁴⁷.

Breakfasts did not depend on wealth to such an extent as dinners. Children in wealthy and poor homes were given similar food in the morning, however, rich children ate breakfast at the table, while peasant children — outdoors⁴⁸. A frequently recur-

⁴³ J. Elsenberg, *Książka do Czytania zawierająca Przedmioty Dla Dzieciom Najpotrzebniejsze* (A Reader containing the Most Necessary Subjects for Children), Warszawa 1882, p. 9.

⁴⁴ *Nauka czytania dla szkół początkowych w Wolnem Mieście Krakowie* (A Reader for Elementary Schools in the Free City of Cracow), Kraków 1841, vol. II, pp. 71–73.

⁴⁵ E. Estkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁴⁶ L. Sumiński, *Książka czytania i rachunków do użytku początkujących* (A Book of Reading and Arithmetic for Beginners), Warszawa 1871, p. 64.

⁴⁷ *Pierwsza książka do czytania i nauki języka polskiego dla szkół początkowych* (A First Reader for Learning the Polish Language in Elementary Schools), Wiedeń 1878, p. 60.

⁴⁸ *Nauka czytania dla szkół katolickich i ewangelickich* (A Reader for Catholic and Protestant Schools), Poznań 1837, p. 69.

ring motif is a roll for breakfast, as especially desirable food. It seems that it was part of the children's festive, Sunday meal. In a manual from 1862 for breakfast "Mother gives us gruel, noodles, milk or panada (bread soup), and sometimes tea with a roll on Sunday"⁴⁹.

In one of 19th century manuals we find the description of a dinner in some wealthy home. Chicken soup, a piece of boiled beef with a pickled cucumber and cabbage, beer, roast-beef and gruel with raisins. The eldest, four-year-old Helen can already eat boiled beef (her younger brothers won't get any meat), but not roast-beef, prepared only for adults. However, she can drink beer. Holiday meals are very elegant. On the daughter's name-day "Mother ordered a better dinner to be cooked, there was pudding, asparagus shoots, chicken with cream. (...) the afternoon tea was fantastic: apples, oranges, a roll with jam"⁵⁰. Dinners in other wealthy homes are similar⁵¹. It is hard to establish what was eaten for supper, the least frequently described meal, regardless of the era.

The menu differed depending on the wealth and social class of the family. Sometimes it was stressed that some dishes were suitable only for people from a concrete social stratum. A peasant returns to the shop the samovar bought by his wife: "what's the use of it? do we have to drink tea? weren't we brought up on bortsch?"⁵² This difference is emphasized as late as in 1922⁵³.

The period of the First World War and post-war years bring some restrictions to the composition of the menu. In a manual from 1917 a peasant family eats milk with potatoes, even on Sunday. A description of "a good dinner", which enchanted a newcomer to the orphanage runs: "tasty pea-soup was brought with a little piece of pork meat and millet porridge, with some grease"⁵⁴. Of course, wealthy families continue to eat better. A

⁴⁹ *Elementarz dla Dzieci Polskich, op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁵⁰ [K. z Tańskich Hoffmanowa], *Druga ksiąteczka Helenki, Powieści dla dzieci zaczynających już czytać gładko, przez autorkę "Pamiętki po dobrej matce" (Helen's Second Book. Stories for Children Beginning Fluent Reading, by the Authoress of "The Remembrance of a Good Mother")*, Warszawa 1825, p. 19.

⁵¹ *Elementarz do używania w szkołach miejskich, op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁵² A. Gr., *Elementarz większy (A Larger Primer)*, Żytomierz 1860, p. 32.

⁵³ A. Jeske, *ABC. Nauka czytania i pisanie (ABC. Learning Reading and Writing)*, Warszawa current year [1922], p. 63.

⁵⁴ A. Stala, *Nasza druga książka. Na klasę III-cią szkół powszechnych (Our Second Book. For Elementary Schools Grade III)*, Warszawa 1930, p. 12.

sign of wealth is tea with cakes and fruit at tea-time. It is much harder to establish what foods were considered healthy, since moralizing stories, earlier so popular, are now scarce. Certainly, fruit and milk are considered advisable for children⁵⁵. Raw carrots and cracknels bought in the market are mentioned as treats for poor children.

The simplest dishes were still highly rated in the inter-war period. "Bread is wholesome, nourishing and tasty. No other food can replace bread"⁵⁶. In another manual potatoes were praised in rhyme⁵⁷. The same author who praised the advantages of potatoes, warns: "Do not eat many sweet things, for they are not nourishing, spoil your appetite for bread and meat, and weaken you stomach"⁵⁸. Some manuals, however, admitted that not all the simple and healthy kinds of food were in children's favour⁵⁹.

Nevertheless in the 1920s the range of dishes eaten by children widens. They more and more often eat sweets, not only occasionally, as a present or reward, but also on week days. In one manual in a country family of small means the mother makes icecream⁶⁰. Lunches (sandwiches) brought to school become an everyday occurrence⁶¹. The composition of such a lunch depends on wealth: "And what do the children bring for lunch? (...) A roll, buttered or unbuttered, a piece of cake, an apple. Mostly, however, it is a slice of bread with or without butter and cheese"⁶².

Dinners, even in wealthy homes, become more modest — they consist of soup (frequently mentioned is chicken-soup), roast meat, a dessert⁶³. On the other hand, afternoon teas are richer.

⁵⁵ C. Niewiadomska, *Elementarz. Nauka czytania i pisania z obrazkami i wzorami pisma (A Primer. A Manual for Reading and Writing with Pictures and Examples of Writing)*, Warszawa current year [about 1916], p. 71.

⁵⁶ B. Smolińska, *Książeczka polskiego dziecka. Drugi rok nauczania w szkole powszechnej (A Polish Child's Book. The Second Year of Learning in Elementary School)*, vol. I, Warszawa [1923], p. 68.

⁵⁷ Wł. Komische, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁵⁹ R. Olszewski, *Elementarz polski dla szkół początkowych (A Polish Primer for Elementary Schools)*, vol. I b, Warszawa, Kraków, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań current year [after 1918].

⁶⁰ A. Dargielowa, A. Oderfeldówna, *Chcę czytać (I Want to Read)*, Warszawa 1920, p. 15.

⁶¹ B. Smolińska, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁶² M. Falski, *Pierwsza czytanka dla dzieci (A First Reader for Children)*, Lwów, Warszawa 1922, p. 28.

⁶³ H. Galle, *Wypisy polskie na klasę podwstępną (Polish Chrestomathy for the Pre-Introductory Grade)*, Warszawa current year [about 1917], pp. 16, 51–52.

Instead of bread and butter there is tea (with various additions — milk, lemon, juice) and cakes⁶⁴. One can also find descriptions of parties (coffee with cake) for school-mates⁶⁵.

Differences depending on the wealth of the family come into prominence especially during the crisis of the 1930s. A peasant woman buys meat only for Sunday, while in a gentry house "(...) roast meat was prepared on the stove, bread and meat were standing on the table, the cook was beating the cream up to a froth for coffee"⁶⁶. In the countryside, in a family that was not poor, potatoes were boiled three times a day, to go with bread soup, peas and cabbage, and only on a big holiday "(...) a bit of meat"⁶⁷. Poor children dream of simple food — sausages and rolls⁶⁸. In families of limited means meals continue to be simple. A family brings milk with noodles to the reapers in the field⁶⁹. Soup and porridge are prepared for the mid-day meal⁷⁰. The staple food is bread soup, potatoes and noodles⁷¹.

It is impossible to reconstruct the menu of children in the period right after the Second World War. Not till the beginning of the 1950s do descriptions of meals come back to the manuals. Then one can see that the everyday menu becomes more and more diversified. In 1952 a family has bortsch with pork fat for dinner⁷². In a manual from 1956 a boy buys eggs, cheese and bread for breakfast, cutlets and ravioli with cheese (treated as a delicacy) are eaten for dinner⁷³. A breakfast in 1975: "Zenon has a roll and hot milk in the morning. (...) And for Sophie there is

⁶⁴ A. Dargielowa, A. Oderfeldówna, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁶⁵ J. Żłobicka, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁶⁶ K. Buzek, J. Kubisz, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

⁶⁷ S. Karpowicz, *Nasz świat. Druga książka do czytania w domu i w szkole (Our World. The Second Book for Reading at Home and School)*, Warszawa 1920, p. 159.

⁶⁸ H. Galle, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁶⁹ A. Dargielowa, A. Oderfeldówna, *op. cit.*, p. 43; E. Chodak, *Moja pierwsza książeczka (My First Book)*, Warszawa 1930.

⁷⁰ St. Tync, J. Gołąbek, J. Duszyńska, *Czytanki polskie dla trzeciej klasy szkół powszechnych I stopnia. Kurs B (A Polish Reader for First Degree Elementary Schools. Grade III. Course B)*, Lwów, Warszawa 1937.

⁷¹ J. Porazińska, S. Rossowski, *Pierwsze czytania dla szkół powszechnych, część trzecia dla oddziału czwartego (A First Reader for Elementary Schools, Part III, Grade IV)*, Lwów 1927, pp. 135–137.

⁷² St. Aleksandrzak, H. Koszutska, *Czytanki dla klasy III (A Reader for Grade III)*, Warszawa 1952.

⁷³ Z. Parnowski, Z. Latałowa, N. Kuczyńska, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

fruit juice”⁷⁴. In 1976 a dinner consists of mushroom soup, cutlets, noodles, lettuce, and cakes for dessert⁷⁵. A few years later a boy composes a poem about his favourite dinner, consisting of tomato soup, pork chop and pudding⁷⁶.

In the years 1990–2000, when much attention is attached to a change in eating habits, the most desirable products consist of raw vegetables and fruit⁷⁷. There is much propagation of salads, sometimes as the main dish for supper⁷⁸. Manuals even provide recipes. Other kinds of healthy food are also recommended⁷⁹. Instead of milk children often drink yoghurts⁸⁰. Advice and recommendations expressed straightforwardly do not hinder another model of diet, conveyed to children in illustrations and less didactic stories. Both diet norms sometimes appear in the same manual⁸¹. In a manual which warns against heart diseases, a lot of sweets are prepared for Fathers’ Day, and the child addresses its father: “And if you feel you are unable / to eat all this chocolate / icecream, cake and gingerbread / I can help you well with that”⁸².

The main meals undergo a reduction. In some manuals there still appears the traditional, three-course dinner⁸³, but it is more and more often replaced by one course (however, with the obligatory meat!)⁸⁴. There is no question of the simplicity of meals, they are prepared in an elaborate way, e.g. halves of eggs in the

⁷⁴ H. Metera, *Naucz się czytać. Klasa I (I Will Learn to Read. Grade I)*, Warszawa 1975, p. 57.

⁷⁵ J. Papuzińska, *Umiemy czytać (We Know How to Read)*, Warszawa 1976, p. 9.

⁷⁶ W. Badalska, *Bliskie i najbliższe. Wypisy dla klasy 3 (Near and Nearest. A Chrestomathy for Grade 3)*, Warszawa 1980, p. 181. This manual was still published in 1992.

⁷⁷ M. Lorek, *Czarodziejski dywan*, vol. II, p. 66.

⁷⁸ M. Lorek, *Ele mele. Podręcznik integracyjny na II półrocze do kl. I (Ele mele. An Integrated Manual for the 2nd Term of Grade I)*, vol. 1–5, Warszawa, Katowice 1994, p. 52, 53.

⁷⁹ M. Lorek, *Słońce na stole. Podręcznik do kształcenia zintegrowanego. Klasa II (Sun on the Table. An Integrated Manual. Grade II)*, Warszawa 2000, vol. I, pp. 64–67.

⁸⁰ H. Czerniawska, J. Malczewski, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁸¹ Z. Rejniak, *Świat liter. Elementarz (The World of Letters. A Primer)*, Kielce 1999, p. 69.

⁸² R. Laskowska, *Świat liter*, p. 105.

⁸³ M. Lorek, *Czarodziejski dywan*, vol. I, p. 66.

⁸⁴ A. Czochra, I. Tarkowska, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–75.

form of mice⁸⁵, sandwiches in the form of letters or clocks⁸⁶. If one is to believe the manuals, contemporary families eat mainly salads, eggs, fruit and sweets.

Alcohol and other bad habits

Since 19th c. manuals were to serve children not only for learning, but also as moral guides for the rest of their lives, they discussed problems concerning behaviour in adult life. Among them were certainly the questions of drinking alcohol and smoking tobacco.

Drinking vodka and the abuse of alcohol were disapproved. In the earliest, 18th c. manual, we read: "(...) more people die at a young age because of drinking than for any other reason"⁸⁷. A slightly later manual warns against tobacco and vodka. In comparison to later times, admonitions are moderate and mainly concern youngsters: "(...) smoking tobacco right before and after a meal is harmful. Young people should not smoke at all. (...) Beware of the excessive consumption of vodka. Children should not drink it at all"⁸⁸.

Until the close of the 19th c. light alcoholic drinks, used with moderation, were regarded as suitable for children. Especially beer was recommended as a healthy and nourishing drink, however, not to be abused⁸⁹. "Apart from water, beer if not strong, but well brewed, is the best"⁹⁰. It is drunk by the above-mentioned four-year-old Helen. Children learn to read the sentences: "Daddy drinks beer, uncle drinks beer too"⁹¹, "A gentleman drinks wine, a driver drinks beer"⁹². Wine was also highly valued. One manual says: "Wine was created by God so as to cheer up and reinvigorate man"⁹³. Vodka is one of the everyday drinks,

⁸⁵ M. Lorek, *Elementarz pierwszej klasy (A First Grade Primer)*, Warszawa 1995, p. 18.

⁸⁶ M. Lorek, *Słońce na stole. Klasa III*, vol. I, p. 111.

⁸⁷ [O. K o p c z y ń s k i], *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 36.

⁸⁸ *Xstążka do czytania dla szkół elementarnych (A Reader for Elementary Schools)*, vol. I-II, Warszawa 1802, p. 63.

⁸⁹ [K. W o l s k i], *Nauka czytania, pisania i rachunków na klasę pierwszą Języka Polskiego (A Manual for Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, Polish Language Grade I)*, Warszawa 1819, p. 55.

⁹⁰ *Nauka czytania dla szkół początkowych w Wolnem Mieście Krakowie, op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁹¹ W. L. Anczyc, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁹² G. K o w n a c k i, *Elementarz (A Primer)*, Włocławek 1894, p. 27.

⁹³ J. K a s i ń s k i, *Książka do czytania dla katolickich szkół elementarnych (A Reader for Elementary Catholic Schools)*, Poznań 1868, p. 22.

consumed by grown up men. In a manual designed for children from good homes, mother takes vodka to a picnic, and serves it to father at meal-time⁹⁴. Smoking or the taking of snuff by adults did not meet with condemnation. Men smoked, men and elderly women took snuff⁹⁵.

In the course of time admonitions concerning strong alcohol become more radical. Not only youngsters but also adults are warned against the fatal influence of vodka. While drinking with moderation is not condemned, drunkards, figures dangerous for themselves and others, appear in primers and reading-pieces.

Many slogans directed against the abuse of alcohol may be found in the popular manuals written by K. P r o m y k; they were designed not only for children, but — perhaps primarily — for the adults involved in the process of self-education. One of the first sentences in the manual is: “A drunkard likes vodka. Nobody likes a drunkard”⁹⁶. Similar sentences were also inserted in books designed for children in orphanages and primary schools. Children learnt that “Drunkards do not go to heaven”, “Drunkards happen to be cranks”⁹⁷.

Addiction to drink is both a vice and a sin⁹⁸. Not only health but also religious concerns are the reasons cited in explaining why alcohol should be avoided. People who use alcohol excessively do not deserve any respect and even salvation. Instructions run: “A drunkard offends God/ and covered with blame/ will be punished in heaven/ scorned by people in shame”⁹⁹.

At the beginning of the 20th c. some manuals, especially those designed for the countryside, condemn all the alcoholic drinks. This relates especially to the manuals by T. B. W o c a -

⁹⁴ [K. z Tańskich Hoffmanna], *Druga xstążeczka*, p. 54.

⁹⁵ L. M. [L. Mieroszowska], *Nauka czytania ułatwiona. Nowy elementarz dla szkółek i ochronek polskich (Learning to Read the Easter Way. A New Primer for Polish Schools and Orphanages)*, Warszawa 1862, pp. 33, 96.

⁹⁶ K. P r o m y k, *Nauka Poprawnego Pisania do użytku szkolnego i dla samouków (Learning Correct Writing for Schools and Self-Education)*, Warszawa 1891, p. 7.

⁹⁷ L. M. [L. Mieroszowska], *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 36, 55.

⁹⁸ *Toruński Elementarz polski z obrazkami zastosowany do potrzeb dzieci uczących się w szkołach tylko po niemiecku (A Toruń Polish Primer with Pictures Adjusted to the Needs of Children Learning Only in German at School)*, Toruń current year [about 1907], p. 48.

⁹⁹ A. Celichowski, *Przyjaciel dzieci, czyli druga część nauki czytania i pisanie dla starszej dziatwy (The Children's Friend, or Part II of Teaching Reading and Writing to Older Children)*, Warszawa 1897, p. 50.

lewski. Children learn of the sad consequences of drinking, beginning with the loss of the drunkard's abilities and property, through the cases of maiming of his own children, forcing the mother to beg and driving all family into ruin up to the death without a priest's consolation.

Addiction to drink was a serious problem in the countryside since, as many stories show, peasants regarded alcohol as an invigorating drink. "Some people have a very bad habit of drinking vodka on an empty stomach in the morning, before work. (...) And yet everybody understands that a warm meal (...) sustains the work of the heart much better than a glass of vodka"¹⁰⁰.

Later manuals pay less attention to alcohol and tobacco and adjust their recommendations to their readers' age. It is assumed as a matter of course that children do not drink or smoke. The years of the First World War are the last period in which alcoholic drinks, or strictly speaking beer, are not yet proscribed in the manuals. On Harvest Home Festival "The schoolmistress (...) and girls were treated to fruit and beer"¹⁰¹. Children were also taught that "uncle drinks domestic wine"¹⁰².

In the inter-war period manuals are already decidedly against drinking and smoking, and in 1931 they include even a abstainers' hymn¹⁰³. Manuals fight now against what they propagated throughout the last hundred years — a conviction that beer is nourishing. Religious and moral arguments are replaced by health concerns: "Children who drink grow slower and do worse at school, (...) they easily fall ill. (...) Children who drink grow into irritable, consumptive people, often with a bad heart, frequently addicted to alcohol"¹⁰⁴. However, in one of the stories the Magi give sweets, cigars and wine to a wounded soldier in hospital¹⁰⁵,

¹⁰⁰ T. B. Wocalewski, *Strzecha rodzinna. Książka do czytania i ćwiczeń (The Family Thatch. A Reader with Exercises)*, vol. II, Łódź 1912, p. 14; *Strzecha rodzinna, Książka do czytania i ćwiczeń*, vol. IV, Łódź current year. Stories concerning alcohol clearly differ in the level of advancement from the rest and are rather addressed to adults than children.

¹⁰¹ E. Słodowska, *Wojtuś i Jagusta. Czytanki po elementarzu (Berty and Aggy. A Post-Primer Reader)*, Warszawa [1917], p. 112.

¹⁰² R. M. Brzezińska, *Mały elementarz (A Little Primer)*, Warszawa 1918, p. 31.

¹⁰³ *Szkółka dla młodzieży. Część IV (A School for the Young. Part IV)*, Lwów 1931.

¹⁰⁴ J. Poprawski, *Książka do czytania (A Reader)*, vol. II, Poznań 1927, p. 100.

¹⁰⁵ A. Dargielowa, L. Rygiel, *Umlem czytać. Czytanki i ćwiczenia na trzeci rok nauki (I Can Read. A Reader with Exercises for the Third Year)*, Kraków, Poznań 1921, p. 87.

which testifies to the fact that adults were not condemned either for moderate drinking, or smoking.

Drunkards appear less frequently than before. A poor girl leaves her sledge in a stranger's care, and he drinks it away together with its load. When he comes to, he realizes that "He had committed such a shameful crime that he did not even himself try to find an apology for it"¹⁰⁶. Troubled with pangs of conscience he runs away from a pub and freezes to death. Thus an alcoholic is presented as a victim of his bad habit, actually a good man, but unable to control himself.

In manuals in the period following the Second World War nobody drinks alcohol, but up till the 1990s fathers (not mothers!) smoke cigarettes, which is neither emphasized, nor appraised. In contemporary manuals abstinence reigns. Nobody smokes or drinks, and apart from some odd cases, there are no alcoholics¹⁰⁷. Although the authors of manuals inculcate on children the principles of healthy diet, they give no warning against alcohol, smoking cigarettes or drugs. Probably this is considered premature as an admonition to young children.

Evidently, the problem of food has been a subject constantly discussed in manuals for over two hundred years. It is still topical, since eating is one of the few actions over which pedagogues have no full control. Children reach to the larder, pick fruits, buy sweets, refuse to eat meals. Therefore the manuals of all eras devote a lot of space to self-control, and warn against behaviour that can be harmful to health.

Regardless of the period, people in these manuals eat frequently, and the problem of eating concerns both adults and children. Nutrition is always treated as a health concern, but depending on the era it can be bound up with other problems — morals, obedience, hunger and charity.

There can be no doubt that the main bulk of manuals try to inculcate on children the recent findings in the field of dietetics, hence, e.g. resentment to meat in 19th c. manuals (physicians and pedagogues advised against it, afraid of the increase of

¹⁰⁶ J. Porazińska, S. Rossowski, *Pierwsze czytania dla szkół powszechnych, część trzecia dla oddziału czwartego* (*A First Reader for Primary Schools, Part Three for Grade Four*), Lwów 1927, p. 126.

¹⁰⁷ *Język polski, klasa III. Słońce na stole* (*The Polish Language, Grade III. Sun on the Table*), vol. II, comp. by M. Lorek, Katowice 1995, p. 116.

childrens' aggressiveness) or the current propagation of raw salads.

It is much more difficult to estimate the influence of economic situation on the presentation of consumption in manuals. It seems that in the 19th c. this problem did not exist, since the composition of meals presented in the manuals was connected with the wealth of the families and not with the general economic situation. This was all the more natural, because the manuals were addressed to concrete social milieus. Only three events, presented in the manuals, had a considerable effect on the diet of children — both World Wars as well as the crisis of the 1930s. Apart from these periods the social and economic reality did not influence considerably the presentation of consumption. The composition of meals in the manuals seems to be independent of shop supplies, of unemployment, of economic and political situation of the country.

Evolution is clearly visible in the attitude to the children's independence. Its scope evidently widens. The choice of eating-style is, at any rate, only one of the many fields where decision is increasingly left to the children. This does not mean that less attention is attached to a proper diet; however, children themselves should be responsible for the choice of it. This attitude is linked to the descending emphasis on obedience to adults. It should also be noted that over the years religious and moral arguments, as well as those resulting from customs, disappeared one by one, to be replaced by health concerns.

(Translated by Agnieszka Kreczmar)