

Rudolf Korwin-Piotrowski¹ to Karol Bodzenta Chłapowski²

April 16, 1878
San Francisco

Dear *Pan* Karol,³



¹ Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski; co-founder in 1863 of the Polish Society of California in San Francisco (with Kazimierz Bielawski); see: <http://www.PolishClubSF.org/150%20Years%20Polish%20Society%20of%20California.pdf>; and <http://www.polishclubsf.org/Piotrowski%20in%20City%20Directories.pdf>

² Husband of renowned Polish actress Helena Modjeska (aka Modrzejewska), Karol Bodzenta Chłapowski

³ *Pan* = Sir (Polish title of respect)



Yesterday I saw Miss Jo⁴ and her uncle, who told me you'd written them about your books. They are ready for the word from you, and [are] in the same condition that you saw them. But some time after I wrote you, I had a thought, which I shall now propose to you. Of course Madame,⁵ given over to art and money, cannot get involved (which, God forbid, amen) with any reading (excepting the artistic). Your Excellency⁶ is occupied with literature and political correspondence, so that more or less you will be traveling, and the books that you have for the most part read cannot be carried with you, nor should you incur such a great encumbrance and expense.

After consulting with Mr. Bielawski,⁷ we propose the following. Given that our poor Association,⁸ of which you are already a founder (for I contributed the works of J. Kraszewski⁹ and Korzeniowski¹⁰ in your name), a uniquely Polish library could not be obtained more economically. We propose that you select for yourself the works that you wish, your wife all the souvenirs and works of art that will be necessary or advantageous for her. We will send all of them to you in the best condition, most cheaply, but put your own price on the rest and if our funds suffice, that is mine and Bielawski's (albeit we are doing this for the Association[]), we will pay in gold at once and send our thanks. For you see, respected *Pan* Karol,

⁴ Josephine Tucholsky; Pomeranian-born elocutionist; taught English to Helena Modjeska; had bit-parts in Modjeska's plays and remained a life-long friend of Modjeska; see: <http://www.PolishClubSF.org/Tucholsky.pdf>

⁵ Helena Modjeska, also known as "Madame Modjeska," "The Countess Modjeska," the "Countess Bodzenta" and "Our Lady"; see: <http://culture.pl/en/artist/helena-modrzejewska-modjeska>

⁶ The Polish term of respect used here has implications of philanthropy, literally of "doing good"

⁷ See footnote #1

⁸ "Association": The Polish Society of California in San Francisco

⁹ Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, author; see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C3%B3zef_Ignacy_Kraszewski

¹⁰ Józef Korzeniowski (1797-1863); poet, novelist and playwright

that if you return to Poland (Oh, but to see each other!) you'll purchase new works far more cheaply, nor will it cost you anything for shipment on this end. But *sapienti verbum satis* [a word to the wise is sufficient]. Do as you like and write back or telegraph, and your orders will be carried out.

I kiss the hands of your wife and commend myself, with true and deep respect, to be remembered always as your sincere friend and servant,

Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski

All here bow to you, and wish [you] good health and success.

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Translated from the Polish by **Bob Lamming** with **Elżbieta Kieszczyńska** (Clifton, New Jersey) and edited by **Maureen Mroczek Morris** (San Francisco) with **Roman Włodek** (Kraków) and **Lynn Ludlow** (San Francisco). Translation commissioned by Maureen Mroczek Morris.

Also see "The Korwin Letters" (other letters written by Polish Society of California co-founder, Rudolf Korwin Piotrowski)

<http://cosmopolitanreview.com/the-korwin-letters/>