

Brussels, 17th Oct., 1763Finished on the 4th Novb.*Monsieur mon tres cher ami!*

You will no doubt have received my astonishingly long letter from Coblenz. We took a ship of our own in Coblenz and [5] left at 10 o'clock and got to Bonn in good time in the evening. The Elector of Cologne was still in *Westphalia*. We saw the palace or residence Poppelsdorf and everything there is to be seen, and went by post-coach via Brühl to Cologne, where we arrived in good time in the evening, but on the way looked at all the beauties of the palaces Falkenlust,³ Brühl,⁴ the Pheasantry⁵, the Indian Houses, the so-called [10] Schneckenhaus⁶ etc. and everything. The treasures and rarities left in these places by the former Elector, *Clemens Augustus*, still praised by all his subjects to this very hour, are quite extraordinary, especially the jewels, paintings, statues and all manner of clock inventions. Amongst other things, there are tables in the [15] *concert* room |: which is astonishingly large :| which seem to be of the most beautiful black marble, but cannot be of marble, but of a stone composition, for on it there are engravings of various kinds, seemingly lying strewn around, so that one believes one could remove them. This seems to me [20] remarkable enough to mention because that certain old Hun⁷ woman etched in copper by His Excellency our Lord High Steward⁸ was also to be encountered there on the table; it was truly a pleasure for me to see it. We spent 2 days in Cologne, that old, not very populated, sad and astonishingly large town. We had the opportunity of seeing the treasure in the Minster along with all their sacred objects, [25] but here, too, along with my family and 2 canons from Bamberg and Mainz, I only found occasion to get angry over many things. The worthy guardian, who is amongst those who, along with the true cathedral canons, have a *votum activum* but not *passivum*⁹ in the chapter, all of these being common canons, [30] came drunk from vespers to show us the treasure etc. and this is what they call living in the good Cologne manner. I cannot possibly give as repugnant a description of the cathedral church as it actually looks on the inside here. You see perhaps 4 church pews; they are nailed together from 2 long, round pieces of wood or beams, as we have in our field chapels at the roadside. [35] In one corner, rattan chairs lie together in a heap and are brought to the people for money. In the middle of the church there is an abominable, ancient pulpit, painted nut-brown, standing on 4 feet, of which one is slightly broken off and consequently, since it is too short, has a brick under it, and can be carried around effortlessly by two men. [40] Luther is said to have preached from this pulpit, and there is constant preaching from it today. Beside it there are 2 similar old chests which lean against 2 columns. The chests are about to collapse any minute, the last remaining couple of battens are lying on top of them. This is the entire decoration of the rear and middle part of the church. The choir is closed off, [45] and one has to get to the high altar through a couple of side chapels or look in through the window if one wants to see from the middle. The psalmody is more like a Jewish school than Christian singing, and the boys who sing the antiphons should have their mouths stuffed with some – – –. It is unbelievable: they do not sing at all, [50] but scream with open throats like scruffy street ragamuffins, as if out of their

¹ BD VII: Original untraceable, not ISM. Copy: Bspk.

² BD: Johann Lorenz Hagenauer (1712-1792), Salzburg merchant. Friend of the Mozarts and their landlord 1747-1773.

³ ≈ “Falcon Delight”, a hunting lodge.

⁴ BD: For a time the residence of the Archbishop of Cologne.

⁵ “Fasanerey” = “fasanerie”, pheasantry.

⁶ ≈ “Snail-shell house”.

⁷ “Honnenweib”: BD: Presumably “Hunnenweib”.

⁸ “Obersthofmeister”. BD: Franz Lactanz, Count [Graf] Firmian, court official in Salzburg. Cf. No. 0016/22.

⁹ With the right to vote, but without being electable themselves.

minds. Tell me, would it not be more edifying if God's house were got into a splendid and clean condition rather than that so many jewels, gold and silver |: in which the bones of the saints are covered in great quantity and unusual thickness :| lie in iron chests and are displayed for money, [55] since the temple of the Lord has in the meantime taken on the appearance of a horse stable?

From Cologne, we went to Aachen by post-coach. This is the most abominable of roads. In Cologne and the whole *Treves* area, we had to learn another way of counting money. For there our Imperial coins stopped, [60] and one had to come to terms with *petermenger*¹⁰ and so-called heavy and light *kreuzers*. In Cologne and Bonn, none of this applied, and there the *stübers* and the *fettmännchen* began. In Aachen there came the Aachen *stübers*, *busches* and *marks*, and, as large units, the Imperial *thalers* and *patagons*, also the *shillings* etc. In *Liège*, the *sous* came on top of that. And here all of that is again of no value; instead, [65] one has to become familiar with other *sous*, the *escalins*, the *Brabant guldens*, and *plaquettes*, one of these coins being worth 3 and a ½ *escalins* etc. It is impossible to say how much money one loses here in one place or another. And as soon as one leaves here via *Valenciennes*, there is yet another change of currency, with nothing in use but *louis d'or*, feather *thalers* and French *sous*, [70] so that sometimes I have not known how I should keep track of my expenses. Now comes my misfortune. I was not thinking of staying in Aachen longer than it takes to have my letters of credit altered; but in the night I felt my otherwise usual pains, and the next day a real *sciatica* started. The only thing to do was to sit upright and remain so. [75] Now, since Aachen is the most expensive place I have encountered on my journey, I had to pay, *nolens volens*,¹¹ over 75 florins. Although the Princess *Amalia*,¹² the sister of the King of Prussia, was in Aachen, she did not have any money herself and her entire equipage and household resembled the retinue of a physician as one water-drop resembles another. [80] If the kisses she gave my children, particularly Master Wolfgang, were a heap of new *louis d'or*, we would have been happy enough, but neither the landlord nor the postmaster are prepared to settle for kisses. For me, the most ridiculous thing was that she wanted to use every means to persuade me not to go to Paris, but to Berlin, indeed making propositions which I do not wish to write down here [85] because one would not believe me, for I myself did not believe her, especially the proposition that she made for my person. *Vestigia terrent*,¹³ said the fox. From Aachen, we went to *Liège*, where we did not arrive until 9 o'clock at night, because, on the way, the iron tyre came off a front wheel. [90] *Liège* is large, well-populated and industrious, where everything is in motion. Early in the morning, before 7:30, we left *Liège*. It was the most beautiful day, but we had the misfortune that, before we were gone barely 3 short hours, half of the tyre split off from the 2nd front wheel. But you should not be surprised, for between *Liège* and Paris [95] |: bear in mind the astonishing distance :| the post route is paved as in a town, and with trees planted on both sides as in an garden avenue. But now also just imagine how such a long paved road assaults the coach, wheels and especially the ironwork and wreaks destruction on them. We therefore had to take our midday meal 2 hours earlier until the wheel was put right again, [100] but the place was so basic, in an inn where only coachmen ate, that we sat there in Dutch style on rattan chairs at the fireplace, where, hanging on a long chain, there was a pot in which meat, turnips, etc. and all kinds of things had to stew *en compagnie*¹⁴ together. There we were given a miserable little table, [105] and soup and meat was served to us from the big pot, and a bottle of red champagne was brought. During

¹⁰ In BD: 1 *petermenger* = 4 pence; 20 *stüber* = 1 florin; *fettmännchen* ["little fat man"] = 0.5 *stüber*; 324 *busch*, 1 *reichsthaler* = 54 *mark* à 6 *busch* (2.5 florins); *patagon* = silver *thaler*; 1 *escalin* = 15 *kreuzers*; 1 *plaquette* (14 *liard* piece) = 2.5 *Brabant shillings*; 1 *louis d'or* = 24 *livres* = 20 *sous*.

¹¹ "whether I liked it or not".

¹² "Prinzesin". BD: Princess *Amalia* of Prussia (1723-1787), sister of Frederick II, Abbess of Quedlinburg.

¹³ "The traces are terrifying". Horace, *Epistulae I*, 1, 74.

¹⁴ "in company".

this, not a word of German, but only *Walloon*, a poor French, was spoken. The door was open all the time, so we often had the honour of being visited by the pigs, which grunted around us. You cannot imagine anything more natural [110] than if you imagine our midday meal as a piece of Dutch painting. We said to each other a number of times that we wished Frau Hagenauer could see us in our situation there. You can no doubt picture it: we had to pay for the meal and work on the wheels in good *Liège* or *Walloon* money. For these are the most malicious people in the world, particularly towards foreigners. [115] We stayed overnight in *Tirlemont*, where we sat by the open fire again. *Tirlemont* must have been a splendid fortress in its day.¹⁵ One still sees the destroyed fortifications, walls, towers and the finest barbican, which is all most regrettable to behold. There is a beautiful square in the middle of this place, such as one will not find in many bigger towns. [120] The next morning we reached *Leuven* in good time. We stayed there at midday in order to see a little of the town. We were treated and looked after well in *Leuven*. The main church was the first place we went into and we received Holy Mass. This is the point where the most beautiful and most splendid marble altars [125] and the precious paintings of the famous painters of the Netherlands begin. I cannot dwell on a description of these, otherwise my fingers would become twisted and I would run out of time. In front of one piece, which represented Christ's last supper,¹⁶ I remained motionless. One sees a lot of brass here and throughout the entire Netherlands, not only in candle-holders etc. pillars, pedestals etc. and other things, [130] but even in the music-stands in the choir, cast in one piece with the most beautiful casting.¹⁷

The town hall is beautiful because of its antiquity, the town is well populated, a strong university of secular priests, and everyone is busily active in this rather large town. We lodged at the Wild Man¹⁸. This is where the women start to wear coats with hoods of *camelot* over their heads, [135] and likewise in the whole of *Brabant*. The common people wear wooden shoes etc. One hears not a word of anything except *Brabantian*¹⁹ and French. The prayers in the church, the decrees of church and state, whatever appears indeed on the notices in church and public places, is all in *Brabantian*. [140] In the evening we reached Brussels in good time. Brussels²⁰ is truly a quite beautiful town, although it is not level, that is, with gradients up and down. But the paving cannot be surpassed, it is like walking in a room. The houses are mostly attractive, the lanes long and wide, the town is lit at night, and everything set up as in Vienna, the coaches as well. We are lodging at the *Hotel d'Angleterre*. [145] The canal, which goes to Holland via Mechelen and Antwerp, causes trade to flourish here, and it is remarkable to see a canal in the city, filled with a host of large Dutch ships, which have 2 or 3 of the largest of masts and sails, and where the whole canal is enclosed by a stone wall throughout, [150] with lanterns on pillars on both sides which burn at night. Just now, the market is taking place here, called the *Commes* by the *Brabantians*. It is uncommonly beautiful, and you can get anything. The most pleasant thing is that the best wares are displayed in the corridors reached via one and 2 flights of stairs, in the large rooms and chambers in the uncommonly large town hall, [155] and also in the courtyard, with the result that both wares and purchasers are protected from the weather, and business is also done at night, when everything is lit up as if it were daytime, which is uncommonly beautiful to look at in the case of certain wares, such as silver, gold, mirrors, rich materials etc. White and black marble and brass, then the paintings of the most famous men, are to be seen in plenty in the churches here. [160] Day and night, I have the picture by Rubens before my eyes, the one

¹⁵ BD: Destroyed in the so-called War of Devolution between France and Spain, 1667-68.

¹⁶ BD: Dirk Bouts (c. 1420-1475), city painter in Liège from 1468.

¹⁷ BD: The brass casting work in this area was famous in the Middle Ages, especially in the town of Dinant until its destruction in 1446.

¹⁸ "Wildenmann". BD: Cf. No. 0065/158.

¹⁹ BD: = Flemish.

²⁰ BD: At that time capital of the Austrian Netherlands.

in the big church, in which Christ hands over the keys to Peter in the presence of other apostles. The figures are life-size. The most famous painters whose artistic works are to be seen in *Brabantian* parts are Hubert and Hans van Eyck, [165] Peter Paul Rubens, Gerhard Honthorst, Jacob Jordans, Lucas Gassel, Jacob Grimmer, Paul Brill, Wilhelm Bommel, Aegydius Mostart, who was born in Hulst, Martin de Voss, Hieronymus de Wingen, Cornelius Kettel, Michael Janson, Mereveld, Antonius Van Dyck, Rembrandt van Ryn, Bartholomaeus Spranger and Lucas van Leiden.²¹ In Prince Charles' rooms I saw not only beautiful Netherlandish tapestries and paintings, [170] but also a room with original Chinese statues, porcelain, figures and various curiosities, yet in particular I came across a room in which an indescribable number of kinds of natural rarities are kept. I have seen many such natural history cabinets, [175] but one will not readily see such quantities and so many kinds. *N.B.* Prince Charles' diversion at the moment is lacquer work, brushwork and varnish making, eating, drinking, and laughing so energetically that one hears it 3 or 4 rooms away.

Ecclesiastical duties are still carried out fairly reverently here. It is indeed immediately apparent that this is a country that belongs to Her Majesty the Empress.²² [180] Only Rosaries are not very common here, you do not see anyone in the churches praying the Rosary. Everyone prays from books here, and at the moment of consecration no-one at all beats their breast. In all churches there are chairs for money, but no pews. One pays one *liard*, which is 2 pfennigs in our money. Now we have read enough. As I come to a close, [185] I still have not received any reply from you to the letter which I dispatched to you from Koblenz. When you write, send it to Paris at this address: Rue St. Honoré chez Msr. le Noir, Notaire, vis-à-vis de la Rue de l'Échelle.²³

I will soon set off from here, and consequently soon write to you from Paris. [190] But not before I am in a position to give you some news. At *Mons*, I will meet, in passing through, a certain Herr von Lidelsheim, who married that certain Anna Justina Freysauf²⁴ and in his day had substantial means. He was too good-natured, and his wife too grand, and so he was parted from all his goods and chattels in Vienna, so that he has found himself, for 5 years now, to be on an income of, at most, 400 florins as auditor to the Deutschmeister Regiment,²⁵ [195] which is stationed at Mons.

You will be able to give the Freysauf family news of this, as young Fräulein Freysauf will often have wanted to hear about it. Along with my wife and children, who, God be praised, are always in good health, I commend myself to you, [200] your good wife and all members of the family and am as always

P.S. My compliments to the so-titled most holy Father Confessor, *Madame von Robini*²⁶ and Fräulein *Josepha*²⁷ etc., everyone within and outside the house. *Sine fine dicentes*²⁸ etc. [...] sends his compliments.

²¹ BD: Hubert and Jan van Eyck, Peter Paul Rubens, Gerrit van Honthorst, Jacob Jordaens, Lucas van Gassel, Jacob Grimmer, Paulus Brill, Wilhelm von Bommel, Gillis Mostaert, who was born in Hulst, Maerten de Vos the Elder, Joos van Winghe, Cornelis Ketel, Michael Janssens, Mierevelt, Antonis van Dyck, Rembrandt van Ryn, Bartholomaeus Spranger and Lucas van Leyden.

²² "Ihrer Majestät der Kayserin".

²³ BD: The Mozarts had reserved this apartment by a third person (cf. No. 0073/44-47), but did not take it. Instead, they stayed with the Bavarian ambassador van Eyck, whom they contacted via Rosalie Joly (cf. No. 0073/39-40).

²⁴ BD: Anna Justina, daughter of Joseph Anton Freysauf(f) von Neudegg (* 1680), a brother of the Johann Sebastian Freysauf(f) mentioned in No. 0075/7.

²⁵ BD: A post at a military court he had occupied since 1758. The regiment was famous, existed until 1918.

²⁶ BD: Viktoria Robinig (1716-1783), wife of the factory owner Georg Joseph Robinig von Rottenfeld (1710-1760), member of the air-rifle club and frequent guest at the Mozarts'.

²⁷ BD: Daughter of Viktoria Robinig. She died young.

²⁸ "Saying without end."

²⁹ Page cut.