

Paris, the 4th Martii,³ 1764

My conclusion is unchanged: the French are thoroughly capable of tolerating the cold.⁴ On the 29th Feb., 1st, 2nd and 3rd Martii a vast amount of snow was suddenly hurled down, and the cold increased by the hour. It seems more penetrating to me because it only freezes for a short time in the morning, [5] but then it is always astonishingly cold and moist. All *boutiques*⁵ remain open as otherwise. The difference must be that they can hope it will not last long. Your letter reached me on the 3rd inst. Above all, I must tell you that the news of Herr Adlgasser's journey⁶ gave me the greatest pleasure. Long live our most gracious Prince!⁷ [10] Praise and thanks to God! Nothing can move me more than when I see that a great prince, into whose hands God has put the means and the strength to do this, fosters those talents that God, by special grace, has planted in many an honest soul. Now my only wish is that *Madlle.* Fesemayer,⁸ or the so-called Nannerl Hofstaller, may have a further year to stay in Venice, [15] causing Salzburg to become, if I had only a single wish to be fulfilled in due time, a court which, with its own people, will cause a great sensation in Germany. I dislike hearing news of musicians in their probationary period, for in such cases a miserable *subjectum*⁹, who suddenly makes an impression, often displaces the very best from his position. [20] And who suffers as result? – – – the Prince! One must look not at the quantity, but at the quality and utility. Current music and its performance call for people of a completely different kind. My God! These are people who can be used as *calcants* at the right time and who, if one is to perform an *opera* with honour, cannot participate at all and do not hit a single note. [25] If I were the Prince, it would be a requirement that each one should not only perform a *concerto* at table, but also accompany *prima vista*,¹⁰ completely on his own, at table with the 1st violin part of an *aria* set before him. This would initially give the Prince the opportunity to laugh, but after a time it would deter all the *minus habentes*¹¹ from asking for something they are not capable of. [30] Besides, these are people undertaking to serve such a great prince, and to provide musical services, who would not be taken by a common prelate for his servants or even by the master of the city watchmen¹² for his fiddling at weddings. Forgive me, my zeal for the honour of our most gracious Prince and for his interests carried me away completely. [35] Herr Neugebauer is a good *subjectum*. On the 3rd our servant, Sebastian Winter,¹³ left for Donaueschingen on the overland coach going via Strasbourg. He has taken a position as

¹ BD: Original lost. Copyist A; NissenB.

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

³ March.

⁴ BD: Cf. No. 0081/86 ff.

⁵ = shops in general, not "boutiques" in the sense of "up-market" or fashion shops.

⁶ BD: Cf. No. 0041/77 ff. (1729-1767), (1729-1767), Anton Cajetan Adlgasser, pupil of Eberlin. Salzburg court organist and composer. The Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg had given him a grant to travel in Italy.

⁷ "Fürst". BD VII: The Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, their employer. Between 1761 and 1764, he paid considerable sums out of his own private funds for the training of three female singers from Salzburg and Venice. One of them was Adlgasser's daughter, and he was allowed to accompany her on the journey.

⁸ BD: Likewise given a grant for studies in Italy, became court singer in Salzburg in 1765. Sang in performances of KV 35 in 1767 and of KV 51 (46a) in 1769. She married Adlgasser as his third wife; Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart were both witnesses at the wedding.

⁹ = "person".

¹⁰ = at sight.

¹¹ = "less well endowed".

¹² The Salzburg watchmen provided music in the church and at weddings and functions.

¹³ BD: Sebastian Winter (1743-1815) had worked for the Mozarts as servant and hairdresser. In 1764 he accepted a post as valet at the Fürstenberg court in Donaueschingen, his birthplace. Later, in 1786, he was an intermediary in the court's purchase of some of Mozart's compositions.

hairdresser in the service of the titled Serene Prince von Fürstenberg,¹⁴ and I have taken on another hairdresser by the name of *Jean Pierre Potivin*. He also speaks good German and French, [40] for he was born in *Saverne* in *Alsace*. Now I must have clothes made for him, once again a great expense! – – The titled Count van Eyck¹⁵ is somewhat worse again. I was with him just now. But I will not visit him again so hastily, for I see that my presence causes him a painful recollection of his blessedly departed wife, the Countess, for he started to weep astonishingly. [45] I do not like the look of it: he gets little sleep, yes, almost no sleep. He is constantly becoming leaner. His vomit is revolting, and the constant aggravation from the better to the worse promises nothing good.

You of course thought the same as I did, with the death of the blessedly departed Herr von *Robini*¹⁶ coming vividly to my inner eye. [50] The esteemed Countess died on the evening of the 6th of February, around 7 o'clock and |: take note, my dear Frau Hagenauer |: was laid in the casket on the 7th, Tuesday, the following day, at 11 o'clock; it was nailed shut, and she was buried at 7:30 in the evening¹⁷ without anyone having taken the trouble to prick the soles of her feet to test if she was really dead. [55] Now I turn to Frau Hagenauer and say: *Madame!*

The French love nothing except what gives pleasure! A dead corpse in a house causes only sad remembrance of the death, and how easily it could happen that someone would be reminded that he, too, must pass this way and would therefore be led to live differently. [60] Away, therefore, with everything that impedes pleasure. Be gone, everything that brings no pleasure. Something else in its place, therefore, that brightens disconsolate spirits. You are right that *Paris* would not suit you. My wife commends herself to you. From the first moment up to the present, she did not like the French life-style, [65] and she is absolutely dissatisfied with French food. The days of Lent are enough to make one ill, as there are no flour dishes at all. Here one uses 4 times as much hair powder as flour, fish is expensive, and, since one has no household facilities of one's own, and has to get all food from the *traiteur*,¹⁸ [70] one finally has little hope other than to eat fish pancakes. This is also the greatest consternation that we have here. On some fast days we have to eat a meat soup, partly because the *traiteur* did not send any Lent soup, partly because my wife, along with the children, cannot eat anything else, for here they make no provision for fasting. If one eighth of *Parisians* eat according to fasting rules on Fridays, that would certainly be putting it too high, [75] and they cannot even make a proper Lent soup. I am not over-scrupulous, as you know, but I wish I had a dispensation, for I would simply like to have a peaceful conscience; it could be a hindrance for me when the time comes for my canonisation process, since we otherwise have nothing, thank God, [80] of which we can be accused. Perhaps you think we are attending quite extraordinary Carnival revelries? Oh, how wrong you are! It would not enter my mind to go to a ball which does not begin until after midnight. Here there are balls in every corner, but I must tell you that balls here are for 30, 40 persons, where 1 or 2, at most 3 violins play the *menuet* without a bass. [85] And what kind of *menuet*? – – – *menuets* which were already being danced in the days of *Henry IV*,¹⁹ and in the whole town there are around 2 or 3 favourite *menuets*, which always have to be played because the people cannot dance any except exactly the one that was played when they were learning to dance. [90] Predominantly,

¹⁴ “des t: d: Herrn Fürsten”.

¹⁵ “Graf Van Eyck”. BD: Cf. No. 0062/42. Count [Graf] van Eyck (1711-1777), Bavarian ambassador in Paris; the Mozart family stayed in his palace there. His wife had just died (cf. Nos. 0080/177; 0081/4).

¹⁶ BD: The Salzburg factory owner Georg Joseph Robinig von Rottenfeld (1710-1760).

¹⁷ BD VII: Leopold points out that not fully 24 hours had passed between death and burial. This period had been introduced in Vienna, and was no doubt intended to allay fears of being buried alive, a prevailing anxiety of the time.

¹⁸ = “caterer”.

¹⁹ BD: * 1553, reigned 1589-1610.

however, they dance *contredances*, or what we know as the so-called English dances! I know all of this only from what I have heard, for I have not yet seen anything.

Now I am very curious to know how Lent looks here. *Rorate*²⁰ is unknown here. Perhaps we will again have special devotions, [95] as the devotions from Christmas to Candlemas were, when all *Paris* eats meat on Saturday for the full 6 weeks in honour of the 6 weeks that Our Lady lay confined after giving birth.

Madame! This devotion will be held precisely and with great devotion. I have already been told of a certain very devout custom in Holy Lent here, [100] namely that in the middle of Lent certain balls are allowed, called the Maidens' Carnival Night. It is then all the same whether I speak of *à la moitié de Carême* or *au Carneval des pucelles*.²¹ Both mean halfway through Lent.

Very well! Conclude from this the high esteem in which the maidens are held, [105] and picture what kind of crowding and what a crush there will be at these chaste balls. How many well-behaved children will no doubt hide themselves in the forest and in the remotest nooks during the Carnival celebration proper with the one aim of not missing the *Carneval des pucelles*. What do you think? – – – I think – – – Whoever lacked time on Shrove Tuesday [110] *N.B.* for merriment – this has to be done during Lent *N.B. but still before Easter Week*, for how many are busy on that occasion serving their lords! These poor girls must also have an evening of entertainment. – – – But perhaps you will now say, *Madame*, that in Lent it would be better to go to the Holy Rosary than dances. [115] Yes indeed, Rosary. Here they do not know what the Rosary is. Even back in *Brussels*, I did not see anyone other than a couple of old women with a Rosary. Here, not only do you not see a Rosary, but you would hinder everyone at their devotions if you had a Rosary in your hand. At the moment, it is still going well, [120] we can have the Rosary in our muffs without provoking the people to prying wonderment and disturbing their great devotion. – In short, I must tell you all these things in person in due time, especially the style of the church services and the performance of ecclesiastical duties, as well as the clerical church vestments and many such things which differ greatly from our ways. [125] The whole tendency here is entirely towards the secular; very few beautiful churches but, conversely, all the more of the most beautiful *hôtels*, or palaces, where no costs have been spared on the interior decoration, and in each of which you find something special and generally everything anyone could ever think of for the comfort of the body and the recreation of the senses. [130] One thing which I wish Herr Hagenauer could see are the most beautiful coaches of different kinds. It is true, this is the only thing of beauty that one can see. Just imagine the most beautiful snuffbox in *lacque Martin* that you have ever seen in your life: that is how each coach is painted and lacquered. [135] You find paintings on the coaches which could hang in the leading art galleries, and most of the *claviers* are like this. I will perhaps soon send you all this in copper engravings, in order at least to show the unrivalled good taste shown in all the kinds of French coach and to make their precise construction known in Salzburg, since, for various reasons, [140] I am thinking of lightening my load by sending some of my baggage to Salzburg and also at the same time sending back one or two items which could be stolen from me or be lost, or also broken, on the journey, during which one namely has to pack and unpack so often. One more thing! – – – Have you ever heard anything about English – with your permission – privies? [145] – – You find these in almost all the *hôtels*²² here. On both sides there are water pipes, which one can turn round after the execution. One pipe directs the water downwards, one sprays the water, which can also be warm, upwards. I do not know how I can explain it to you in more detail in polite and respectable words, you must imagine the rest or ask me when the time comes. [150] These closets, by the way, are the most beautiful one can imagine. The walls and also the floors are

²⁰ BD: An early morning Mass in the days before Christmas.

²¹ = "In the middle of Lent or at the Maidens' Carnival".

²² BD: Palace or townhouse.

commonly of *maiolica*, in Dutch style. On some surfaces, set up for the purpose and either lacquered or of white marble or even *alabaster*, stand chamber pots made of the most beautifully painted *porcelain* with gilded rims; [155] on other such surfaces, some people place glasses with sweet-smelling waters, or else large *porcelain* pots filled with sweet-smelling herbs. Here you will commonly find a pretty *canapé*²³ – for sudden faintness, I believe. I must close. The space is growing smaller and smaller. There are still 1000 things I would tell you. I should have closed this letter long ago, [160] but I have been roundly hindered by the tasks I have had to perform in the last few days, and will have to until the 10th inst.²⁴ to make sure that I see 75 *louis d'or*²⁵ in my hands between 6 and 9 o'clock on the evening of the 10th. I ask you to address the next letter which I will have the honour of receiving not to the van Eyck's *hôtel*, but chez Msr. Grimm,²⁶ Secrétaire de S.A. Monsgr. Le Duc d'Orleans, Rue Neuve de Luxembourg.²⁷ [165] In short, I may just not be in Paris.²⁸ Pass on heartfelt compliments to all good friends, both gentlemen and ladies, and I am your

P.S.

Paris, the 9th Martii²⁹

The *Place de Grève* is the place here where wrong-doers are despatched into the other world. [170] Anyone partial to these executions has something to see almost every day. Recently, a chambermaid, the cook and the coachman were hanged alongside each other *en compagnie*.³⁰ They served a blind, rich widow from whom they had taken 30000 *louis d'or*³¹ when she had just had her paid-out capital sent to her home. The lady noticed it too soon, [175] and the 3 thieves in league were too clumsy. They do not waste time, I hear, and if a house servant steals 15 *sols*,³² he is hanged. But this is how it must be here, otherwise no-one would be safe. But it is common knowledge that all servants here surcharge the wares when they buy anything; this is called the *profit*, and is not stealing. [180] Last week, an effigy of a *notarius publicus* from the *Chatelet*,³³ a man of 70, was hanged. Since he had a very good reputation, and consequently many wards and other monies etc. to take care of and invest, he had created a fraud and bankruptcy worth an unpayable *summa* of money. It really was a pity that he was not there *in persona*, [185] but even here they do not hang anyone if they have not got him.

My wife and children, who are all, praise God, in good health, commend themselves along with their father.

²³ = “couch”.

²⁴ BD: The first concert given by the children. Cf. No. 0083/41, 42.

²⁵ BD: The first concert actually brought in 112 *louis d'or* (= 896 florins). Cf. No. 0083/43.

²⁶ BD: Cf. No. 0074/15. Friedrich Melchior von Grimm (1723-1807), 1748 private secretary to the Saxon Graf Friese, with whom he moved to Paris, where he was in contact with the Encyclopaedists. Subsequently employed by the Crown Prince of Saxony-Gotha as personal reader; he then entered the service of the Duke of Orleans; represented the Imperial city of Frankfurt in Paris; ambassador to Saxony-Gotha; in 1795 he returned to the court in Saxony-Gotha with the title of minister of the Russian court. Various publications, one of which, in 1763, mentioned the Mozart children. He initially supported them, but his relationship with Mozart broke down in 1778 during the latter's stay in Paris.

²⁷ c/o Mr. Grimm, secretary to His Highness My Lord the Duke of Orleans, Rue Neuve de Luxembourg.

²⁸ BD: Perhaps because of the intended (second) journey to Versailles, cf. No. 0081/55.

²⁹ = “March”.

³⁰ = “as a group”.

³¹ BD: = 240 000 florins.

³² BD: = 15 kreuzers.

³³ BD: At that time a palace in Paris, demolished 1802.