

*Monsieur!*London, 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1764

You know that the further away something is, the smaller it appears to the eye. It is the same with my letters. The writing becomes smaller and smaller, the greater my distance from Salzburg. [5] If we should sail across to America, it would perhaps be entirely illegible. To send a plain letter without envelope from here to Germany costs a *shilling*,<sup>3</sup> but for the envelope it is a *shilling* again, so if the letter is covered, 2 *shillings* are to be paid. One *guinea* has 21 *shillings*, and a *guinea* stands at the same value as a *louis d'or*,<sup>4</sup> for in *Dover* the banker *Miné*, [10] who had been recommended to me in Paris, gave me 12 *guinea* pieces for 12 *louis d'or*, for no French money is accepted here. You can thus easily conclude what a *shilling* is worth.<sup>5</sup> Our venerated Frau Hagenauer chose to write the following in her letter to me in *Paris*: – – – – perhaps even to England and Holland? [15] At my departure from Salzburg, I was only half-decided on going to England. But since everybody, and people in *Paris* too, was emphatic that we should travel to *London*, I have effectively been forced to decide, and now, with God's help, we are there. But we are not going to Holland, I can assure her.<sup>6</sup> Although I have been assured that I would quickly take in, for example, 2 to 300 ducats<sup>7</sup> in the Hague, [20] I also know that the costs are quite exceptional. The people, and the Dutch in general, are somewhat coarse. And, to tell the truth, you ought to be everywhere in winter for all the rich takings, and this is plainly impossible, unless one wanted to spend 4, 5 and more years travelling. Otherwise, we have various recommendations for Hamburg<sup>8</sup> if we want to go there, [25] but it is too far for me and too far to the north. We could go to Copenhagen making the greatest profits in the world: both the Royal Danish Minister in Paris, *Baron de Gleichen*,<sup>9</sup> and the Danish Ambassador here, Count von Bodmer,<sup>10</sup> wish to guarantee us a certain *summa* in advance, [30] but this would never enter my mind. *Prince Gallizin*<sup>11</sup> had even less success in persuading me to give him some hope that we might decide to come to Russia.<sup>12</sup> These countries are too distant, and too cold. This country here is already distant enough, and, although it is one of the most beautiful and blessed countries as far as fruits of the fields and animal husbandry are concerned, [35] it is at the same time, because of the constant alternation of heat and cold, a perilous land. For, since it is an island, England suffers greatly because of the constant changing of the winds, which come from the sea. On some days there is uncommon warmth; the next moment a north wind arises, and in quarter of an hour it is uncommonly cold. [40] For this reason you see nothing here except garments made of wool. The food is uncommonly nutritious, substantial and strong. The beef, veal and lamb are better and more attractive than can be found anywhere else in the world. In the fields, one sees the finest cattle, and lambs which are almost as big as a calf, with thick and long wool.

---

<sup>1</sup> BD: Original lost. Copyist A; NissenB.

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

<sup>3</sup> BD: Approximately 24 kreuzers. Leopold did not normally use an envelope and wrote the address on a part of the letter still visible after folding.

<sup>4</sup> BD: Valued between 8 and 11 florins.

<sup>5</sup> BD: Approximately 24 kreuzers.

<sup>6</sup> BD: Ultimately, the urging of the Dutch ambassador and of Nannerl changed this intention.

<sup>7</sup> BD: = 900 to 1350 florins.

<sup>8</sup> BD: Cf. No. 1212/390 ff.

<sup>9</sup> BD: Heinrich Karl, Baron [Freiherr] von Gleichen, extraordinary Danish ambassador in Paris 1763-1770.

<sup>10</sup> "Graf von Bodmer". BD: Hans Kaspar, Graf Bothmer (Bothmar). In the manuscript Nissen corrected the name to Bothmer.

<sup>11</sup> BD: Dmitriy Alekseevich, Prince Golicyn (1720-1794), Russian ambassador in Paris 1763-1768.

<sup>12</sup> BD: This would not have been so unusual. Numerous foreign musicians, mainly Italians, worked at the Russian court for some time, e.g. Galuppi, Traetta, Paisiello, Sarti.

This is where the splendid manufactures come from. [45] But precisely these foods are too strong; and the beer, of which different kinds are to be had, is quite astonishingly strong and good. The wine, in contrast, is indescribably expensive, because the beer is a native product, and the wine has an astonishing excise on it. It is the same with the coffee, which will cost you over 4 German guildens per small pound.<sup>13</sup> [50] One must furthermore buy it already roasted and ground, for which there are special shops: and whoever roasts a pound of coffee himself at home is fined 50 *guineas*. What kind of faces do you think my wife pulls in this state of affairs? Enough of that, the English gentlemen are trying to sell their tea and to prevent money leaving the country for coffee. [55] The tea kettle is on the fire the whole day, and when visitors call they are served with tea and bread-and-butter: that is, one brings them bread finely sliced and spread with butter. By the way, the midday meal is usually between 2 and 3 o'clock, and in the evening most people eat nothing, or perhaps only cheese, butter and bread, [60] and savour a good mug of strong beer along with it. No woman crosses the street without wearing a hat on her head, and these are various: completely round ones; tied together at the back; of *atlas* silk; of straw; of *taffeta* etc. In all cases exceptionally decorated with ribbons and trimmed with lace. Even an indifferent one costs half a *guinea*. [65] Initially, one thinks one is seeing nothing but maskers. No man goes down the street bareheaded, and few are powdered. When the street boys see someone well turned-out and dressed a little in the French style, they immediately loudly shout: Bugger French! meaning *French bougre!*<sup>14</sup> There the best response is to remain silent and to act as if one does not hear. [70] If anyone did take it into his head to stop on this account, rabble reinforcements would soon be on the scene, and one would have difficulty, and with at least sundry holes in one's head, in escaping. We, for our part, look entirely English. But to get a few clothes straight away for me and Wolfgang and to buy a couple of lady's hats, [75] the expenses were nothing less than 12 guineas.<sup>15</sup> The minimum cost for having a plain dress made is 14 *shillings*;<sup>16</sup> if a border is added, one pound *sterling* |: which is 20 *shillings* |: must be paid. – – Now, it does not surprise me that in Germany one encounters little or no English cloth, or one must pay astonishingly dearly; the superfine cloth, which is the most common sort for *honnête*<sup>17</sup> persons, [80] and which I have taken, costs 18 *shillings* per English ell or staff,<sup>18</sup> which is actually much narrower than the French one. The finest of all, however, comes in at 21 *shillings*. As one can easily imagine, everything here is exceptionally expensive. The reason for this is because a *guinea* here makes less impression than a ducat<sup>19</sup> does amongst us: but those people are mistaken [85] who believe that Englishmen throw their money away: there is no middle way among them. The majority are much too meticulous in their budgeting; a very few are exceptionally generous. We do not yet know how this will turn out for us. Again, we should have been here in winter.<sup>20</sup> On the 27<sup>th</sup> *Aprilis* we were guests of the Queen and King<sup>21</sup> in St. James's Park in the Queen's Palace.<sup>22</sup> [90] We were thus at court within only 5 days of our

<sup>13</sup> BD: Obviously the "small" English pound of approximately 450 and not 500 g.

<sup>14</sup> BD, p. 148, reads "Bugger French! französischer Bürger" in lines 68-69, which makes no clear sense. The footnote on the same page suggests the reading "Bürger" ["citizen"] for line 69, although this seems a surprisingly harmless interpretation of the street invective. BD V, p. 114, points to the possibility of errors by the copyist while trying to construe Leopold's phonetic spelling and proposes "bugger" in line 68. The latter has been adopted here, with added assumption that Leopold intended the word in line 69 as the French "bougre". It seems, however, that Leopold did not recognise that "Bugger French" is in fact plural.

<sup>15</sup> BD: ≈ 96 florins, taking 1 louis d'or = 8 florins.

<sup>16</sup> BD: ≈ 5 florins 36 kreuzers.

<sup>17</sup> = "respectable".

<sup>18</sup> BD: ≈ 114.2 cm.

<sup>19</sup> BD: 1 ducat ≈ 4 ½ florins.

<sup>20</sup> BD: Suggesting poor financial results from the London trip.

<sup>21</sup> BD: Charlotte Sophie, née von Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1744-1818). George III (1728-1820), reigned from 1760.

<sup>22</sup> BD: Buckingham House, later Buckingham Palace.

arrival. The present may have been only 24 *guineas*,<sup>23</sup> which we received immediately on leaving the King's room, but the graciousness with which both His Majesty the King and the Queen met us is indescribable. In short: [95] the affability of both and the friendly character of both even caused us to forget that these were the King and Queen of England; we have been quite extraordinarily courteously received at all courts so far, but the manner we have experienced here surpasses all the others: a week after that, we went walking in St. James's Park; the King came by in a coach with the Queen: [100] and although we all had other clothes on, they still recognised us, not only greeting us, but the King also opened the window and leaned his head out and greeted us, particularly our Master<sup>24</sup> Wolfgang, smilingly with head and hands as they drove past. As we are now speaking of driving, I wish you could be here for only a couple of days to see the beautiful horses and the most execrable coaches. [105] The coaches are as execrable as the horses are beautiful, and are low and broad. The coachman's seat is completely level with the coach roof, so if he falls it is equivalent to falling from the first floor of a low house. But the horses! The beautiful horses! If I had a hundred English horses belonging to me at *Calais*, [110] I would certainly have enough. Seeing Englishmen in Germany is nothing special; but to see them in their country and as one chooses: this is completely different. The sea, and especially its *Fluxu et Refluxu*<sup>25</sup> in the harbour at *Calais* and *Dover*, then the ships, and seeing the fish during the crossing, which are called porpoises, rising and sinking in the water, [115] then, as soon as we had landed in *Dover*, to be driven away with the most beautiful English horses, which ran so fast that the servants on the wagon seat could hardly breathe because of the force of the air: all this was something quite strange and pleasing to us. Strange as it was, on the other hand, to see in *Paris* a woodcutter, [120] a carpenter etc. with his axe or saw under his arm, a torn coat round his body and a snow-white powdered *allonge* periwig with three buttons on his head, it seemed equally astounding to us to see the common market wives in *London* with their tobacco pipes in their mouths. There is too little room here for a description of the city, which is very beautiful. [125] They build in a completely different way from the French. In front of the houses, the pathway is plastered with large flat square stones, making it very comfortable to walk; on the other hand, the road in the middle is likely to break your neck when you drive. All houses have the first dwelling below ground level, the 2<sup>nd</sup> at ground level and then rooms 1 and 2, at most 3 stairs up. [130] The dwelling below ground level is well-lit, has the largest of windows, and smiths and locksmiths, like most other workers, usually have their workshops down there. This is why all houses have grids of metal or wood along their sides so that no-one falls in. My letter to His High Princely Grace, our most gracious Prince and Lord etc.<sup>26</sup> will hopefully have reached you safely in its envelope, [135] which I sent off immediately after our arrival in London. My latest request, however, is for the following Masses to be read as soon as possible, namely: 3 Holy Masses at the Holy Child at Loreto, 3 Holy Masses at Maria Plain, 2 Holy Masses at St. Francisco de Paula on the Bergel, and 2 Holy Masses at St. Johann von Nepomuk [140] in the parish or wherever you want, then also 2 at St. Antonio in the parish.<sup>27</sup> We have, incidentally, left most of our baggage with the banker Hummel<sup>28</sup> in Paris. In particular, we have left there all our snuffboxes, and 2 watches and other costly things, along with 2 beautiful new clothes of atlas silk, one ruby-coloured with white ornamentation belonging to my wife, [145] and a blue one with white ornamentation belonging to my daughter, besides all pertinent accessories and many other

---

<sup>23</sup> BD: ≈ 192 florins.

<sup>24</sup> Leopold uses the English word "Master".

<sup>25</sup> BD: = Ebb and flow.

<sup>26</sup> "S:<sup>er</sup> hochfürstlichen Gnaden unsern grändigsten Fürsten und Herrn etc.". The letter (lost) is No. 0087.

<sup>27</sup> BD: Regarding the first three churches cf. Nos. 0036/47-48; 0032/39; 0036/48. "Saint Nepomuk", "Saint Antonio": side altars in the Franciscan church in Salzburg.

<sup>28</sup> BD: Cf. Nos. 0073/135; 0074/11; 0084/24.

things. I took the opulent one which I got for my daughter in Paris with us to England, a very beautiful one with *Isabelline*<sup>29</sup> ground, flowers and broad golden stripes.

At our departure, *Msr. Grimm*,<sup>30</sup> our sworn friend, [150] who did everything for us in *Paris*, in addition to all his other kindnesses, furthermore honoured Nannerl with a golden watch and Wolfgang with a fruit knife such as one usually uses in Paris for *confectionery*, with a mother-of-pearl handle set in gold, and which has 2 blades, namely one of gold and the second of silver. I also left there in a golden snuffbox 7 double *louis d'or*,<sup>31</sup> [155] and for the 200 *louis d'or*<sup>32</sup> which I entrusted to Herr *Turton* and Herr *Baur*<sup>33</sup> I have a letter of credit for 4000 8 hundred *livres*<sup>34</sup> in my hand. I have been wanting to send off the present letter for a week now, but I was hindered, and part of that was that I wanted to wait for some new developments. But I can report nothing more than that we were once again guests of the King and Queen on the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> May,<sup>35</sup> [160] from 6 to 10 o'clock, where no-one except the two Princes<sup>36</sup> – the King's brothers – and the Prince, the Queen's brother, were present. On leaving the room, 24 *guineas* were again passed to me: if the same happens every 3 or 4 weeks, it will be bearable. Now we will have a so-called *Benefit*, [165] or *concerto al nostro profito*,<sup>37</sup> on the 5<sup>th</sup> June. This is really no longer the season to hold a *concert* of this kind, and one can promise oneself little return from it, since it is outside the season, and because the expenses of such a *concert* amount to 40 *guineas*:<sup>38</sup> but since the 4<sup>th</sup> is the King's birthday, and consequently much of the nobility will come into town from the country, [170] one must risk it and profit from this moment to make oneself known. Each person pays half a *guinea* and, if it were in winter, I could be sure of 600 persons and consequently count on 300 *guineas*:<sup>39</sup> at this time, however, everyone is going to their gardens and into the country. Enough! It will all turn out well somehow, if only we can remain well with God's help, [175] and if God only keeps our invincible Wolfgang well! The King put down in front of him not only pieces by Wagenseil, but also by Bach, Abel and Handel;<sup>40</sup> he played it all off *prima vista*.<sup>41</sup> His playing on the King's *organ* was such that everyone there praised his *organ* playing above his *clavier* playing. Then he accompanied the Queen in an *aria* which she sang and a *traverse flute* player in a solo. [180] Finally, he picked up the *violone* part of the Handel

---

<sup>29</sup> BD: A light yellow to grey-yellow colour, supposedly that of a blouse worn by Isabel, the daughter of Philip II of Spain and wife of Archduke [Erzherzog] Albrecht of Austria (1559-1621).

<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> BD: ≈ 112 florins.

<sup>32</sup> BD: ≈ 1600 florins.

<sup>33</sup> BD: Tourton & Baur, cf. No. 007/33.

<sup>34</sup> BD: ≈ 1600 florins.

<sup>35</sup> BD: Cf. No. 1212/88-91.

<sup>36</sup> BD: Probably Frederick Louis, Duke of York (1739-1767), and William Henry, Duke of Gloucester (1743-1805).

<sup>37</sup> Concert for our profit. BD: Cf. No. 1212/91-92. Wolfgang was due to perform on 17th May 1764 as part of a concert given by Carlo Graziani, but was prevented by illness. It took place on the 22nd May without Wolfgang.

<sup>38</sup> ≈ 215 florins.

<sup>39</sup> BD: ≈ 1600 florins.

<sup>40</sup> BD: Georg Christoph Wagenseil (1715-1775), music teacher to the Empress Maria Theresia and her children. His compositions for keyboard were familiar to Mozart from the notebook Leopold compiled for Nannerl; he learned to play two scherzos by Wagenseil in a short time on 24<sup>th</sup> January and on 6<sup>th</sup> February, 1761. Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782), Johann Sebastian's youngest son, in London since 1762. Karl Friedrich Abel (1725-1785), in London since 1759. Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759). No. 1212/102 also mentions compositions by Domenico Paradies (c. 1710-1791).

<sup>41</sup> At sight.

*arias* |: which were lying there by chance :| and played the most beautiful melodies over the plain bass so that everyone was most greatly astonished. In a word: what he knew when we left Salzburg is a mere shadow compared with what he now knows. [185] It surpasses all imagination. He sends his compliments, as do we all, from the *clavier* at which he is now sitting, playing through the *trio* by Music Director Bach<sup>42</sup>, and not a day passes without his speaking at least 30 times of Salzburg and of his and our friends and patrons. Now he constantly has an *opera* in his head, which he wants to perform with a whole lot of young people in Salzburg. [190] I have often had to count up for him all the young people he writes down for the orchestra, amongst whom Herr Kolb and Herr Ranftl<sup>43</sup> are frequently mentioned.

---

<sup>42</sup> BD: Probably a trio from Johann Christian Bach's *Six Sonates pour le clavecin, accompagnées d'un violon ou flute traversière*, op. 2 (London, 1763).

<sup>43</sup> BD: The families of Salzburg merchants with these names included a number of sons. The "Ranftl" son mentioned here is identical with the one who played in Count [Graf] Czernin's amateur orchestra in 1778 (cf. No. 446/42, 43).