0933.[1] Mozart to his father, Salzburg

Lost[2]   [Vienna, before 19th February, 1786]

Enclosure (leaflet)[3]:

One can have me, without seeing me.
One can wear me, without feeling me.
One can give me, without having me.
D. e. e. h. i. n. ö. r. r.[4]

[5]   1) Speak much – and speak badly; yet the last thing results automatically: all eyes and ears
will be fixed on you. 4) I prefer an obvious vice to an ambiguous virtue; at least I know what
course I should steer. 5) A hypocrite who wishes to imitate virtue can only imitate it in
[10]   watercolours. 10) It is not seemly for everyone to be modest: only for great men is it fitting to
be so. 11) If you are poor, but skilful, arm yourself with patience; work. If you do not become
rich, you do at least remain a skilful man. – If you are a donkey, but rich, make use of your
merits; be lazy; if you do not become poor, you do at least remain a donkey. 12) The surest
[15]   and most delicate way of praising a woman is if one speaks badly of her rivals in love. How
many men are women in this respect? 14) If you are a poor idiot – become a c – – man.[5] If
you are a rich idiot, become a tenant.

If you are an aristocratic but poor idiot – become whatever you can to earn bread. But if you
are a rich aristocratic idiot, become whatever you like, [20] only not a man of understanding;
– I beg to be granted that.

[6]We are many sisters; it costs us pain to come together – as it does for us to separate. – We
live in a palace – yet we could better call it a prison, since we sit securely locked up [?][7] and
have to work to feed mankind. – The most peculiar thing is that the doors are opened for us
very often, day and night, [5] and yet we do not go out, unless someone pulls us out by force.

I am a very patient thing, I let anyone make use of me. – Through me, truth, lies, learning and
stupidity are proclaimed to the world. – Whoever would like to know everything need only
come and ask me for I know everything. – [10] For since everyone makes use of me,
everything is communicated to me too. – The moneychangers can make very good use of me
indeed; – I am also of service to the hairdressers from time to time. For [...] and [...][8] I am
absolutely necessary. – Through me, the most important state business is agreed, war is
conducted, and countries conquered. [15] The sick receive health through my patience, and
frequently death too. – In a word, fortune, misfortune, life and death depend on me. – One
would have thought that I should be happy with my many choice qualities; on the contrary! –

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[1] BD: Original lost. Edition R. von Lewicki, MM Nov. 1919.
[2] BD VI, p. 713-715 contains five of seven further handwritten riddles found on a leaf fragment in the Sammlung
Hermann Härtel; two of the seven were rendered illegible by Nissen. These follow here after line 20.
[3] BD: Published in the *Oberdeutschen Staatszeitung* ["Upper German State Newspaper"] of 23rd March, 1786;
the original leaflet contained eight riddles and at least 14 fragments. Cf. No. 0943, lines 81-87. The leaflet,
which Mozart had printed for a masked ball in Vienna, consisted of eight riddles and fourteen fragments to
ponder over, supposedly by the Iranian philosopher Zoroaster, but actually thought up by Mozart himself.
[4] BD: Anagram of "Die Hörner" = "horns" [traditional description of the deceived husband].
[5] "K – – r". BD suggests "Kleriker" = "clergyman".
[6] In BD VI, p. 713.
[7] BD's question mark.
[8] BD: Two words indecipherable.

My end is usually terrifying – painful, and if it turns out mildly – vile – contemptible. – Yet in the latter manner I die at the hand of one of beauty, [20] and in this way I still take to the grave the consolation that I have seen some things [?] which not everyone has the chance to see. –

I am a peculiar thing; I have no soul and no body; one cannot see me, but can hear me; – I do not exist of myself, only a human being can give me life, as often as he chooses; – and my life is of only short duration – [25] for I die almost the moment that I am born. – And thus I can live and die countless times every day, as it pleases man. – To the person who gives me life I do nothing – but I cause the person for whose sake I am born, however, to feel the short duration of my life with pains until my demise. – [30] even though I certainly bring into the world with me the passions which that person feels when he gives me life [?] Women usually create me gently and lovably; in this way, some have confessed their love. Some have also preserved their virtue through me; – but in this case my life certainly cannot last quarter of an hour. – [35] In one single event I <u>must</u> see the light of day, otherwise there is no hope – the person is disfigured. –

For some, I serve only to decorate – for some to mutilate. – Yet everyone needs me most urgently – sometimes it would be better if I were not there – sometimes it is a blessing that I am there. – Through me, entire [...][9] have already been discovered. – Many a person has already been delivered from [...] illness by me. For men, I am a good recommendation to the ladies. – For old people, I serve beyond the call of duty too – therefore [...][10] those who are becoming old [should?] pay attention to me so that I do not deteriorate or even die before my time. –

We were created for the pleasure of man, – what fault is it of ours if events take place in which we cause him the opposite? If anyone has to do without even one of us, he is – imperfect. – [11]

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[9] BD: Word indecipherable.

[10] BD: Two words indecipherable.

[11] BD VI, p. 715: Probable solutions to the last five riddles: teeth; paper; a slap in the face (which would be the eighth riddle on the leaflet, cf. Nos. 0943/82; 0946/28-29; 0947/16; 0959/4); money; the five senses.