

0881. LEOPOLD MOZART TO HIS DAUGHTER,¹ ST. GILGEN

a / Madame / Madame de Sonnenbourg / à / St. Gilgen

Salzb., 22nd Sept.,
1785

I am very sad. Just as we thought the apthous ulceration should be waning, [5] it re-emerged anew in his mouth, so that large horizontal protuberances developed on both sides. As a result, the whole throat was infected as well, and I have already written about how acidic his² urine and stool was, so this acidity must have irritated the child's bowels so much that at 10 o'clock on the morning of the 20th, just when *Dr. Prex*³ and Herr von *D'Ippold*⁴ were standing beside him, cramps broke out unexpectedly. I cannot describe to you the astonishment and horror felt by all of us. So, since *Dr. Prex* was present at that moment, all necessary precautionary measures were naturally taken. – At 2 o'clock in the afternoon it assailed him again, – and then at 9 o'clock at night. – Yet it was never very sustained. On the morning of the 21st he had it at 7 and already before daybreak a little, [15] and during the whole of the 21st the child remained fairly peaceful, allowing us to think that the pernicious sickness had subsided. But towards evening, as we were changing him, we noticed everything was not well with him, and that the cramps were only hidden, – we furthermore noticed that the child had a cramp protuberance on the left side of his stomach, [20] although he had a warm poultice on his stomach, and the whole time his little stomach was neither rigid nor hard nor enlarged; young Regerl,⁵ *Dr. Prex* and Nanndl⁶ examined him repeatedly. – We were therefore worried about the night. – Although he was slightly restless, the cramps did not break out again until 4 o'clock in the morning; on the other hand, it came all the more frequently during the whole day today. [25] For all this, the poor child is in the end not deformed, but exhausted, and has got his bright eyes back again as usual. One must simply always try to make him do his duty, so that he gets rid of the acid, since the wind and the cramps themselves break down his stool; when less urine comes, one helps him with warm cloths, at which he promptly urinates. [30] The whole medicine consists essentially of camomile and marshmallow in order to mitigate the acid and expel it. To counter the cramps, spirit of harthorn poultices are put on the soles of his feet to draw it down. We have by no means lost hope of bringing little Leopold⁷ through this; unless God wishes it, – then, of course, the cramps can come back so frequently and persistently, despite all our efforts, [35] that his frail constitution will no longer be able to withstand it. This we must await from God's Goodness, since I pray daily that God should only preserve him for his own blessedness, and that not my will, but God's will should be done.

[40] Do not think that the child is in an even worse state than I am describing. No! There is more hope of recovery, since there are few people alive who have not had cramps as children, only one must consider a child as a treasure on loan and always prepare oneself in advance for

¹ BD: Maria Anna Walburga Ignatia (“Nannerl”), née Mozart, (1751-1829). After her marriage in 1784 her name was Maria Anna von Berchtold zu Sonnenburg. In all letters to Nannerl after her marriage Leopold refers to her as “Frau Tochter” [madam daughter] and to his son-in-law as “Herr Sohn” [esteemed son].

² BD: girl (“child nurse”).

³ BD: Nannerl's son Leopold (born in Salzburg on 27th July, 1785) had remained with Leopold since the birth; Nannerl returned to St. Gilgen at the beginning of September.

⁴ BD: Dr. med. Johann Nepomuk Prex (1733-1809), Landschaftsphysicus [= “physician to the parliament of the three estates”]. The Mozarts encountered him in Paris in 1766. In 1778 he offered Wolfgang his “fine nag” if he should return to Salzburg.

⁵ BD: Franz Armand d'Ippold: Imperial and Royal Captain, supervisor of page training in Salzburg. He added the “de” (in the Viennese style) himself. Sometime suitor of Nannerl.

⁶ BD: Regina, daughter of Gottlieb von Weyrother from his first marriage.

⁷ BD: Maria Anna Pietschner (1732-1805), Leopold's servant girl (“child nurse”).

⁸ BD: Leopold's grandson by Nannerl.

its loss, since a child has to overcome a great number of deadly dangers. [45] At birth one is already half-way to death. So let us be patient! – Since this began, *Dr. Prex* has come every day, morning and afternoon.

When the messenger came after 3 o'clock, I had still not even dressed because I had had no time at all. I first of all put on shoes and stockings and quickly dashed round the market, but did not find the kind of hat you want, [50] and for such fine hats they take 9 florins. That is certainly worth the trouble! – and in addition, how am I to know the size? – or how is the Hubers' Nannerl⁸ to trim a *chapeau bas*,⁹ since you took the old hat out with you? – – Amid all the major business, one does of course forget such small details! – – Why doesn't my esteemed son write to Lintz? – these hats are available in Austria. [55] The Huebers' Nannerl will make the Polish bonnet; today she did not come to me until evening, for she was ill and had lain down. In this, then, we will have to guess at the size ourselves. The messenger, I hope, will take it with him this coming weekend. It is ridiculous about the singer Lange,¹⁰ I can now believe she is not dead, [60] because in the Regensburg newspaper there was this report from Vienna: – we almost had the misfortune of losing the most outstanding singer, – then it went on about her husband etc. etc. and she was given a public attestation of the best and most immaculate performance etc. – As far as the *fortepiano* is concerned, it must on no account be placed near the heating oven.¹¹ – What, you are already speaking about heating the house soon? [65] Everyone here acknowledges that we are now having August's weather. Egedacher¹² will come out to you as soon as he is finished with the little organ that he has to set up in his house; in the meantime it is not so severely cold that the instrument would feel it if it is left in the old place where it used to stand, especially once the heating starts. If the cold is intense, [70] one can afterwards reposition it more on the oven side, only the instrument must not feel the heat of the oven too much. If the heating had always been started at once, nothing would have happened to the instrument, but you were both here, the room was shut, and the oven was cold or a bit of a fire was started once or twice for appearances, from which the oven did not even become lukewarm. [75] At least one saves oneself the trouble of having to fetch an additional load or 2 of wood. – Tresel¹³ will buy peas, lentils and string beans. – The ribbons will come with this. – Even if I had found a hat, and then had to wait for the decision about whether I may buy it, it would have been sold 10 times in the meantime. The cook will tell me, she is coming to me tomorrow. [80] Nandl, *Monica*¹⁴ and Tresel commend themselves, as does the Hubers' Nannerl. From all of them their compliments to your daughter¹⁵ as well. Nandl and the Hubers' Nannerl send thanks for the letters they have received from her, they were quite amazed and astonished, and could hardly believe that a young lady¹⁶ von Sonnenburg, who is furthermore only 14 years old, can

⁸ BD: (Maria) Anna Huber, daughter of a Salzburg antechamber servant.

⁹ BD: A flat ladies' hat.

¹⁰ BD: Aloisia Lange was ill and did not perform again until 25th November, in the *Abduction*. Aloisia Lange, neé Weber, an outstanding soprano whom Mozart met in Mannheim. Aroused his romantic ambitions; as he admitted on 25th Dec., 1780 (No. 0596/27), she was "not yet a matter of indifference" to him. From August, 1782, Mozart's sister-in-law.

¹¹ Some sticking in the action of Nannerl's *fortepiano* and the best treatment were frequent topics in recent letters.

¹² BD: Johann Rochus Egedacher, cathedral vicar, son of the "old man", as the court organ builder was often called.

¹³ BD: Therese Pänckl, servant in the Mozart household in Salzburg for many years.

¹⁴ BD: Leopold's daily household help.

¹⁵ "Freyle Nanerl", "Freule Nannerl", = Fräulein Nannerl = Little Madame Nannerl. BD: Leopold's daughter's (Nannerl's) step daughter, Anna Margarete (also known as Marianne), at this time 13 years old. Received keyboard teaching from Nannerl and was later godmother to Nannerl's daughters Johanna and Marie Babette, who both died young. Leopold now addresses his daughter as "Frau Tochter" ["Madame Daughter"] in correspondence.

¹⁶ "Freule", a dialect form.

already write so beautifully, [85] can lay it out so nicely, and understand the art of spelling so outstandingly that they could hardly read it, let alone understand it. For example: Dee Nanntl¹⁷ |: for Dear etc. :|. I cannot send the master glazier any measurements until I have put the glass in the frames so that I see what has to be removed. Of the narrow ribbons there is only 1 little piece left, [90] because Tresele¹⁸ had misunderstood: I will send the 2nd soon. When you write again, write something separate for Nandl in the letter, this servant goes to the most astonishing trouble. Yesterday we did not get to bed until half past midnight. During the night everything went so well that little Leopoldl did not have any cramps at all, and this morning had a very little, so we are holding onto the highest hopes that everything will turn out well again. Everyone commends themselves and I kiss my esteemed son¹⁹ and you, and sent hearty greetings to the children and am

as ever your sincere father Mozart mp²⁰

My thanks for the fish. Should I have forgotten to tell you something, it is no wonder, since I have many other things to do, and there is constantly someone bursting in on me; [100] to one I should give advice, to the next a letter of recommendation, to the next some help. In God's name! I do what I can.

¹⁷ "Lie Nantel" for "liebe Nanndl".

¹⁸ BD: Therese Pänckl, servant in the Mozart household in Salzburg for many years.

¹⁹ BD: Leopold's customary form of address for his son-in-law.

²⁰ mp = *manu propria* = in his own hand.