

Cologne  
July 5<sup>th</sup> 1886

Dearest Love,

You see I am at last fairly on to the continent. As I expected to do when last I wrote, I left London on Wednesday evening (July 1<sup>st</sup>) & crossed by boat from Harwich to Antwerp. It was a lovely moonlight night and it was pleasant to get a good whiff of sea air again after enduring London smogs for two days. Oddly enough the first person I saw after going on board the steamer was a Mr Hamel of Quebec who crossed the Atlantic with me. Though not a man whom I would have selected as a travelling companion had the choice been large, under the circumstances I was very glad to meet him, & we spent three days together very pleasantly. We did not reach Antwerp till about 9.30 in the morning, and the sail up the Schelde in the cool morning air was quite invigorating. The country was rather flat, but still pretty, being dotted with picturesque little farm houses. From the river we had a fine view of the town and its Cathedral. The custom house officers boarded the steamer to examine our luggage, but it was a mere form & they opened nothing of mine. We got into the omnibus of the Hotel de l'Europe & there were kept waiting ever so long, owing to the fact that an American family going to the same hotel had more than fifteen trunks which had to be hoisted to the top of the vehicle. The poor omnibus creaked & squeaked beneath the load & the poor horses were obliged to go at a snail's pace. After breakfasting we inspected the cathedral where there are some very large

2

paintings by Rubens, The Descent from the Cross, The Elevation of the Cross, and the Assumption. Leaving the Cathedral we wended or rather tramped our way to the International Exhibition which was opened lately.

There of course there was much to interest one & much to fatigue one. The collection of machinery is large & good; the China & glass from Belgium, Italy, France & elsewhere is also fine, and there is a good display of paintings from various countries. The Belgian Colonies have a special building devoted to them and in it is a marvellous collection of everything from heathen gods down to dried fish. It is indeed a regular curiosity shop. [The next morning we again went to the Exhibition & there spent most of the afternoon at the zoological gardens which are in every respect finer than those at London, of more artistic & better kept. What a vital place these zoological gardens are for the instruction & amusement of children - & for that matter of big people too. One can see in them more of the animals of the world in an afternoon than he could by travelling for years. At the same time, however, one cannot help feeling sorry for the poor brutes.

Antwerp is quaint & interesting old place & I am very glad that I went there. At the Exhibition and occasionally in the streets we met Dutch peasants dressed in very remarkable styles which I shall not now attempt to describe. How such "rips" ever come to be worn it is hard to understand.

On Friday evening we left Antwerp and came on to Brussels, which, as you know,

is a charming city. After leaving our luggage at the "Windsor Hotel" we went out for a stroll and saw a good deal of the city before bedtime - that is to say before midnight. In our wandering we came upon the market-place which was brilliantly lighted with electric lights. The old Hotel-de-Ville, which I suppose you saw when at Brussels is on the market place and looked very grand by electric lights.

In the morning we went for a drive and saw the new Palais de Justice the Cathedral &c. The Palais-de-Justice is a gigantic building completed only a short time ago and now occupied by the various law courts. We went into one of the rooms where a case was being tried and the jangling of the lawyers was exactly like what one might hear in the Montreal Court house any day.

I should not forget to tell you that we saw a little of the manufacture of lace and were amazed very strongly by the young women in charge to make some purchases, which, however, for various reasons we declined to do.

One girl was at work upon a piece of lace for the production of 1 yard of which 4 months are necessary. The design of a bridal veil made for one of the Belgian prin-

cases was also shown to us. In making the veil 400 women were occupied for 6 months.

The price paid for it was 35000 francs. From the lace manufactory we went to the Royal Museum, and there I sent up my card to Abbé Renard, a fruit and well known mineralogist. Fortunately he was in, and I was very glad to have an opportunity of meeting him. He showed me his laboratory, minerals, &c., and asked me to spend part of the afternoon with him. At ~~said~~ <sup>said</sup> <sup>one</sup> o'clock Mr Hamel left for Paris, and after lunch I returned to the museum & spent a pleasant hour with the abbé. He is a genial, kindly man and is doing good scientific work.

At 5 o'clock I left for Cologne where I now am, and to-morrow morning I hope to leave for Bonn. To-day it has been raining almost continually, but I must not complain, as I have on the whole had very good weather for my travels.

I was heartily glad to get away from London & now am enjoying myself much better than when there. Everything is so new to me, and the people alone give me ever-varying subjects of thought & study. At the same time travelling is hard work and I am not nearly so stout as when I left home. Perhaps after I get more accustomed to the work it will agree with me better. It seems as if I had been away 6 months at least.

There are numbers of English & American people here, but none of them seem particularly attractive. I rather prefer to cultivate the acquaintance of the natives who have at least the charm of novelty. It is a long time since I have heard from you but I hope to get letters while at Bonn.

How the children would enjoy seeing all the animals that I have been riding! I shall have many things to tell them about. Though so early in the week I shall post this so that it may be sure to go by this week's steamer. Love from husband & Bernard.