

DIARY OF THE JOURNEY – LIEGE TO NEW HALL

1794 – 1799

(Extracts from “Migration of the Canonesses Regular”)

1794

MAY 29th We said Matins in the Choir at 10 o'clock....had Mass a little after midnight.

The whole house during that night was one universal scene of confusion and distress –

MAY 29th About 3 o'clock in the morning we set out two by two in deep silence, all crying most bitterly....each one carrying her own little packet, consisting of night clothes, Breviary, etc and wearing a heavy black “falle” to conceal her religious habit.

It was a very wet morning –

At the riverside, instead of the large barge as promised, we found nothing but a coal boat.....so filthy and so small that only half of us could get into it.....we were detained until 6 o'clock.

We arrived at Maestricht about 1 o'clock. In the house we had taken we had no chairs to sit upon, nor could we get the bedding out of the boats....we sat down and laid down upon the floor.

MAY 30th Intensely hot. Slept in the garden! or in the cockloft! reached by a steep ladder.

Community life resumed: rose at 5 o'clock, Meditation and Matins together and also the greatest part of the Office; Compline and evening meditation at 5 o'clock as usual.

JUNE Hope of return to Liege receding –

Sent to Liege for organ, great clock, hangings of the Choir, etc. arrangements to leave –

JULY 8th Left Maestricht (4 am) after five weeks and four days in that delightful spot to take up our residence in the same old coal boats!

JULY 9th Reached RUREMONDE 12.00 noon – long wait in broiling sun and long walk to house, which we found quite unfurnished –

We had not been half an hour in the house before we swarmed with FLEAS! The quantity we caught is hardly credible!

JULY 11th 10.00 pm left the “FLEA House” and returned to our boats.

JULY 12TH Sailed in the morning – arrived VENLO in the evening – supper at the side of a very pleasant hill.

JULY13th Mass in the village – violent storm – we were all wet!

JULY 14th Left VENLO 4.00 pm – dangerous sailing owing to low water – our five boats all heavy laden.

JULY 16th Arrived at MOUCH – stared at by very rude people!

JULY 17th 2.00 pm arrived at MAEGHEN – a ‘respectable ecclesiastic’ told us, in Latin! how happy we were to suffer for so good a cause, quoting Scripture and the Psalms.

That night we got to RAVENSTEIN – many now lame with fatigue and inflammation in their legs – Some did walk and got lost! and got into trouble for spoiling a clover field – paid half-a-crown’s compensation, (later given back to the nuns!)

JULY 19th Arrived at WACKAM

JULY 20th Arrived at DORTRECHT, 5.30 am a Sunday, but afraid to go out to Mass, in case we were mobbed – it being 200 years since Religious in habits had been seen there!

People came out in pleasure boats to stare at us – we left that night.

JULY 22nd Arrived ROTTERDAM 7 am.

met nuns of Princenhoff in Bruges in secular dress – arrangements made to change our dress – we sent for stuffs and mantua-makers – crowds came to look at us from 4.00 am to very late at night!

Met the Captain of the “Smallbridge” – agreed to take us to London for 130 guineas!

JULY 22nd – 29th

ROTTERDAM – shopping, clothes, food and bad sea-biscuits~!

want of clean linen, etc.

Transfer of our effects from the boat and a Nun overboard! rescued by the Captain who jumped down from the top of the mast!

JULY 29th 4.00 pm left Rotterdam.

JULY 30th 7.00 am arrived BRIEL – contrary winds –

JULY 31st Stuck in the sands –

& following days - high winds and collision with American vessel – Captain gave up his cabin to the Nuns!

Fire! on board –

Second collision – near another wreck – all very frightened.

AUG. 2nd Arrived HELVOETSLUYS

Provisions scarce – no bread –

Third collision –

- Set out inspite of high winds – had to return for protection of Convoy.
- AUG. 12th 12.00 noon. Set out with Convoy – high winds – uncertainty
- AUG. 13th Proceeded with fairer weather – nb 3 Sisters had been up very early to dip a relic of S. Francis Xavier into the Sea, praying for fair winds!
- AUG. 14th ham and chickens (it was a fast day!) and wine brought from Liege, as the water undrinkable!
- AUG. 15th Land sighted – we put on our secular dress!
alarms! merchant ship ahead stuck in Sands, loud cannons.....
- AUG. 16th 3.00 am reached GRAVESEND – our Captain unable to steer the ship up the river – met with fishing boats and bought fish for a meal!
- AUG. 17th Another collision, the fourth!
 and another fire!
 2 unpleasant English commissaries came on board to check luggage –
 No one must appear with a Breviary!
 The ‘ponderous Cleophae’ with the help of a dozen or two hands came on deck and ‘rolled down with great devotion for Fr. Clifton’s blessing – he hurled her down the ladder!’
 4.00 pm arrived at WOOLWICH – another collision, the 5th when our vessel ran foul of a man-of-war!
 6.00 pm reached GREENWICH – stayed on board that night.
- AUG. 18th 2.00 am on land – breakfast in Greenwich –
 carriages waiting to take us to London.
 LONDON: Burlington Street and Dover Street –
 Inconveniences and delays over customs and our luggage –
 2 or 3 cases of books, breviaries lost and duty to pay £100.
- AUG. 28th Move to Bruton Street – Community life resumed as far as possible, with Office said – but London expensive and airless!
- AUG./SEPT. House-hunting – several offers from benefactors.
- SEPT. 12th M. Teresa Dennett died – buried at Pancras – we could not attend –
- OCT. 21st 6.00 am left by coach for HOLME HALL, YORKSHIRE.
 9.00 pm reached Bar Convent York, received by IBVM nuns.
- OCT. 22nd Left York 2.00 pm reached HOLME 6.00 pm.
 damp, no provisions! v. little water!
- OCT. 23rd. Shopping in the village – provisions in quantity arrived also!

NOV. 7th all had arrived at Holme –
unpopular in the village and caused alarm when thought to be
Frenchmen in disguise!
Regular community life established as at Liege, but religious habit not
worn –Office sung, etc. School re-opened, v. small.

1795

APRIL Had to consider 'Closing' the School – as accommodation unsuitable.

NOVEMBER House-hunting again – South for preference!

DEC 1795/

JAN 1796 Negotiations for suitable place – inconclusive

1796

JUNE 1st Death of M. Constantia Roper – a 'dwarf' and we were said to have
murdered her!

SEPT. 18th Dean House, Wiltshire available –

OCT. 30th Packing up for Dean and first arrivals

NOV. 12/15 All established at DEAN HOUSE
regularity resumed

1797

APRIL 26th We put on our religious habits, submitting after some disagreements, to
the Bishop's command!

JUNE 18TH Our first Pensioner came – Miss Goldie.

OCT. 17th Rev. Mother, Proc. & First Mistress took oath of allegiance required for
opening of a School.

1797/1798 Thoughts about leaving Dean House –
Clarence House under consideration – until
NEW HALL came on the market –

1798

NOV. 5th Rev. Mother proposed to the Chapter the purchase – all agreed
"this was the place Providence had destined for our establishment."

DEC. Purchase concluded and paid for my Mr. McEvoy - £4000

1799

JAN. 16th Possession date –

JAN. 25th 1st four nuns arrived –

The rest detained by snow, illness, etc., high winds.

MARCH 3rd ALL SAFELY ARRIVED AT NEW HALL –

School re-opened and rapidly developed.

AUG. 14th Chapel finished and blessed – and Mass there on 15th

1800

May 29th New cells finished – great celebrations! wine, punch, hot rolls!

Christmas night 1800 we sang Matins and Mass as we did at Liege