

1022. 11.13. To liven up my monotonous routine, I have been placed in charge of a transport to Cologne. I only regret that I'll have to miss your visit tomorrow, Tuesday, since I am leaving tonight from the freight station at Milbertshofen. But the business is amusing; I have been entrusted with airplanes for Fea Seven. I was given a fine chunk of bacon and money for the journey."

#### FIRST TRANSPORT

1022a. 11.13. (Monday). At four p.m., walked, loaded with food, to Milbertshofen; found three airplanes there almost loaded. At 10 p.m., left by freight train for Laim.

1023. 11.14. Left Laim at 2 a.m. Breakfasted in Treuchtlingen. In the afternoon, coffee and buns in Würzburg. Reached Aschaffenburg at 9:30 p.m., ate very well at the station. Stayed there until 3:45 a.m. Spent this time on the floor of the guard room, wrapped in a traveling blanket. I show naive enthusiasm, so I'll soon be sent on a transport trip again. I dream about a journey to the Balkans. I sit beside the engineer and often think of Felix and of the fun he would have here, since he is still hesitating between becoming a locomotive engineer and a painter.

1024. 11.15. Left Aschaffenburg in the morning, where I had rested a couple of hours in the waiting room of the station. To Grossgerau, Mainz; pause at Bingen, a very elegant place on the Rhine. A unique mixture of nature and culture. The mountains, the river, the harbor installations, the ships, the terraces. Mainz had made a great impression on me. But there, the artistic element outweighs all the others. If I could only stay for a while in Bingen as an artist! Tonight we'll be in Cologne. Unfortunately I have no money with me, except the twenty-five marks for my expenses.

1025. 11.16. Cologne-Eifeltor, Cologne-Gereon, Cologne-Nippes, Longerich. Delivered airplanes for 249 (Fea Seven). At 4:30 p.m., walked to Bickendorf, took the trolley from there to Cathedral Square, had my hair cut, and then went to the Hotel Kölner Hof. My mission is accomplished. It was a fantastic scherzo mixing the devilish and the luminous. A kind of misty drunkenness still surrounds me. When I was finally free, it was already Thursday evening. I once again spend a civilized night in a nice hotel room. Tomorrow I'll be on my own. Took a wonderful walk in the evening.

1026. 11.17. Slept magnificently at the hotel, after having led a dirty gypsy's life since last Sunday. Cologne is sensational, polished to a smoothness, and large. Particularly impressed by it last night! The affluence in the main streets, those people in uniform! The mad railroad station. Right in front of it, that more-than-lifesize museum piece, the cathedral. The Hohenzollern bridge, totally dark and heavily guarded. The river. The sharp beams of four wily searchlights. Far above the towers of the cathedral, the bright little bar of a Zeppelin, maneuvering gracefully, speared by one of the beams. I had never seen any city put on such a nocturnal spectacle, truly a solemn festival of evil.

Stroll over the bridges. Had coffee for breakfast. Museum: Bosch, Breughel, "Crucifixion" by the Master of the "Life of Mary." Cathedral. Lunched at the Red Cross by the main railroad station, then went to the Artists' Association, then to the Deutsche Ring, as a courtesy to Wildermann, and had a look at his sculptures on the children's playground. Strolled along the Rhine, pastry shop, dinner again at the station, left for Frankfurt at 8 p.m.

11.18. Arrived in Frankfurt-am-Main at night, idyllic welcome with dinner

and quarters for the night at the Hippodrom. Taken there and brought back in a special trolley car.

At eight a.m., left for Munich via Würzburg and Nürnberg. In Munich at 6 a.m. On to Schleissheim at 6:30; since there was no one in the office, I hastened away to save my Sunday leave. Walked home by way of Milbertshofen. Here, met a very pleasant company having tea: Hausmann and Dr. Keller (art dealings).

#### SECOND TRANSPORT

1026a. To Fighter Squadron 5 with two airplanes, cars 37090 Hanover and 24059 Königsberg, via Cologne-Gereon, staging area. Planes B.F.W. 3054/16 and 3053/16 with spare parts.

11.27. The transport won't begin until tonight, Monday. Perhaps I can get home for a moment from Milbertshofen to catch up on a few things.

11.28. In the morning, I'm off, completely equipped as if I were leaving for the front, including rifle. On arriving in Milbertshofen, I find that the airplanes are not yet ready to leave. The train will not leave until 9 p.m. I deposit my bags with the stationmaster and trot off home, where I am still able to have a comfortable lunch and tea.

11.29. This time I have trouble getting out of Munich. I am stuck in Moosach.

I spend the night on a wooden bench in the waiting room. The line to Laim closed as the result of a minor accident. We have to wait until 3:30 p.m. We must remain on the train, for no one can predict exactly when it will move on. In Laim we wait some more, until 9:30 p.m., when train 1755 is ready at last. Fortunately I took along plenty of food; perhaps it will make getting away easier. The baggage car is relatively comfortable; I set up camp there and had an excellent sleep until Treuchtlingen. Here the baggage car was switched.

11.30. My better preparations come in handy to me. At 5 a.m., made coffee and had breakfast. At 8 a.m., Würzburg. Changed trains again. Then washed, felt fresh. My spirits notably better than at the construction yard. Wrote two postcards, but didn't drop them in the mailbox until Partenstein. My impressions of Spessart again very intense. Heiligenbrücken! Reached

port to its final destination. Please send further news to the main postal center in Brussels, since I'll go there on my way back, and perhaps also Hausenstein's exact address?" Got up at seven, repacked, went to the staging area. Here a clerk fills out a return ticket for me and informs me that my mission is completed. I am half disappointed, half relieved. But then the sergeant arrives and laughs at him, hands me a military ticket to Haumont (near Maubeuge) via Aachen and Lüttich, and orders me to turn up with my papers at 2 p.m. on platform sixty-three, to board the train. I make sure at once that my cars are there and that the time of departure is correct, leave my things at the station, and go to have lunch at the station canteen.

On my way to the station, a lieutenant stops me and sends me to a cigar store; I am to tell the salesgirl there that the lieutenant will not come today. In case I was questioned, I was to answer that I had seen the lieutenant at the Deutsche Ring, and that he was already wearing his helmet. For this, he gives me fifty pfennigs. I enter, the cat-faced blonde looks at me for a moment with furious comprehension. A customer present as a witness was more edified. Smiling, he gives me a cigar. From my clumsiness at accepting tips he concludes that I must be from the country: "From Bavaria, eh? Well, here's something good to smoke, a Sunday cigar. Here's a light; see here, this is how its works." I thank him and vanish. The Sunday cigar is poor, the joke all the funnier.

Departure at 2:40 p.m., platform sixty-three, with the military train Gereon-Haumont. Twenty escorts in a fourth-class carriage with benches and stove. Very picturesque, adventurous company. We cross the border beyond Aachen at 10:30 p.m.

Monday, 12.4. Everything comes off according to my wishes. We are deep in Belgium. The French station name Nesseaux. Terrain cut up by trenches; unfortunately it is not daylight. Liège, a magical night picture. Between Liège and Namur, we are forced to halt in the dark of night. Day breaks before Namur. Along the Meuse, where small steamers were struggling to pull scows on narrow canals. Charleroi, artistic mountains of slag, a fabulous place, coal, walls, African, a waking nightmare. Toward Thuin and Lobbes, nature becomes more beautiful again. The gentle tones of France begin softly to sound.

*La douce France.* What a way to meet again! Shattering. Coming from

the north along a sinister path and not toward the heart! Illegal. Poor, degraded country! The past, a ruthless line drawn under yesterday. A glittering blade striking deeply into the heart's core. Mild, sunny day. Cattle grazing peacefully, black and white cows. Carmine cows.

Zeppelin hangars. Maubeuge at 3:30 p.m. Right after, Haumont. A perfect example of a French provincial town. The poesy of sobriety, everyday life without makeup. Food? Sugar? Oil? Rice? Wool? Rubber? Little, barely more than we have, and already plundered, because it is a military station. Soldiers scouting for goods, hoarding merchants, the speculators! I too would like butter, but not for trading, only for me and my family to eat. The Satan of usury has no strength, he is too much of a bourgeois.

We go to the Soldiers' Home, where a sergeant serves us. My fellow convoy-leaders feel well there. Not one of them senses the fascination of the hopelessness of this French province. Movies are the supreme desire of my heroic colleagues. Some kind spirit separates me from them on the way there. Snow begins to fall thickly. I hurry to the station where I learn that the train will not leave at 11 p.m., as announced, but quite soon. We still have a half hour left. I return quickly to the high hill, night has fallen. At least I would like to get in touch with my colleague from Fighter Squadron 5. This fellow from Konstanz has experience in escorting shipments through enemy territory. But where shall I find the time to get to the movies? Instead, I grab a first-rate apricot tart and dash back to the station. The locomotive and a Belgian freight car defying all description are already on hand. Got the airplanes attached to the train. At 7:30, the mournful convoy leaves.

I manage to find a little place in the warm upper compartment; we sleep sitting, a blanket wrapped around our chilly legs. The hideous one with the ill-smelling dialect from Thuringia, such a hideous one! (Reached St. Quentin at 4 a.m.)

12.5. Somber mood, we are nearing the front. The drama of my journey is probably approaching its climax. St. Quentin. Arrived in total darkness. Barely managed to grope my way to the station commandant. Am told to seek shelter in a *salle à manger*. And who should be there? All my companions, arrived before or after me on the passenger train, among a heap of soldiers from the front. Am glad about my one colleague from the Fighter Squadron 5. There is coffee, sausage, and bread in the somewhat seedy can-

teen. At 8 a.m., waltzed ourselves to the staging area up in town; had a hard time finding it. No one knows exactly where it is. Someone guesses (rightly, as it turned out later) Essigny-le-petit. They end by telephoning the numskull in charge and are told: to Bussigny, and then to Air Base I, at Cambrai. We wonder and wonder: why? And all the traveling to be done only by night! By expending tremendous effort, we order, at the station (how lazy all these employees are!) that new stickers be pasted on and that the orders be changed for our freight. We end by doing the pasting ourselves. Toward noon our negotiations come to a head and we receive a promise that we will be sent on between two and three o'clock on train 7980. This gives us the courage to climb up to town another time and to have a warm meal at one of the soldiers' shelters. Sauerbraten with potatoes, just as in Schleissheim, then we buy loaves of bread and fine liverwurst, return to the station, and wait and wait in the train, which is all ready.

And once again night falls before we move on. No freight cars this time. Traveled with two horses in the compartment. Always just at night, otherwise the strains may be shelled. Took out my fur coat! A slanting board becomes my bed. A precious possession! Otherwise I would have to sleep in the dirt. Wrapped up as well as I could. Froze, but found it bearable. Let's not mention the feet.

12.6. In the morning, arrived at Cambrai-Annex. Pasted on new stickers to Cantimpré, Cambrai's other auxiliary station. Apparently our destination. We again have more time than we need and stroll off to town, a pitifully miserable, hungry village. Pleasant market. Plenty of endives. Lunch at the canteen in the station annex. Then back to the city, into a pastry shop with cakes and fruit. A battalion from the Somme marches up with music, an overwhelming sight. Everything yellow with mud. The unmilitary, matter-of-fact appearance, the steel helmets, the equipment. The trotting step. Nothing heroic, just like beasts of burden, like slaves. Against a background of circus music. The drummer outdoes himself. The worn faces convey only a distorted reflection, if any, of the joy of being replaced and sent off to rest.

Had a look at the airplanes below. Waited for a long time and then at last moved on to a little station. Again waited and waited in the waiting room of the main station, among a group of Saxons (brr!). And finally, moved on to another station, to Cantimpré. Here, out in the street at 3 a.m.

12.7. Nothing darker than such a night. Groped around for the way to the aviation barracks. Barged into a ground-floor room, grabbed a straw sack and lay down on it with all my gear! At dawn, detachments of soldiers in the courtyard of the camp. By and by, we get up, go to the administrative offices (saddlery) and discover that we are at Air Base I. They wire for us to the mysterious Fighter Squadron 5 to find out whether we are to leave our airplanes here or escort them farther. Are told to return at noon. Meanwhile, we are well taken care of and even fed there. Sensations aplenty!

At noon, the reply has not yet come in. We are to return at four. At last: "Escort the planes to Essigny-le-petit, the gasoline to Epéhy (separated from my colleague, who manages a hotel in Konstanz) Kagohl V." So reads the telegram.

I paste on new stickers and receive new freight orders. In the evening, I inquire again at the station, realize that the departure is uncertain, and decide to wait for the only certainty, namely, that the planes leave without me, and sleep another night on the straw sack.

12.8. Slept and breakfasted well; at 8:30, persuaded myself at station Cantimpré that the certainty had materialized at midnight. Calmly, in the rain, I strolled to the main railroad station of Cambrai at 7 o'clock; I at once sighted the airplanes and soon took the train to the annex. Safely returned to the old spot, again retraced the same steps, found a stove made by Russian prisoners ready in the waiting room. Ate at the canteen, had coffee at the Soldiers' Home, where I hear that Bucharest has fallen. The planes are to be shipped on to Bussigny at 8:30 p.m. I smile knowingly. Ate my last dinner at the canteen in the annex, filled my flask with coffee. Take a last nap near the large stove, the pride of the waiting room. Then I find my car next to a shipment of ammunition going to Bussigny. To be sure to leave, I board this car. Nest beside three fellows from northern Germany. A great deal of straw on the floor, candlelight. At first I freeze more than my usual quota, then I put on my waistcoat and sleep and dream until 5 a.m.

12.9. In Bussigny, again the familiar impossibility of obtaining any information about how I am to be shipped on. "Go to your car; in that way, you will know when you will be leaving." True enough. I keep my thoughts to myself and go to the night quarters, where I find a bunch of wild Bavarians. In spite of them, a mild slumber overtakes me. Then slight restlessness drives

me first into the brake cabin of my car, then to the shack reserved for the railroad workers, where I make coffee and jam sandwiches and eat sausage and apples. Now I wait peacefully in the warm room, through the window of which I have a partial view of my train. Outside, fog and storm, the best protection against air attacks.

Toward noon I cover the last portion of this voyage, a few stations beyond St. Quentin. Having reached Essigny-le-petit, I inquire and wander along the track for a few hundred yards, turn right onto the road at the next bridge, walk as far as some large farm installations, inquire and—have reached my destination, drenched by a rainstorm. My goal is attained. I am in the office of Kagohl V.

The reception is warm and friendly; the sergeant brings me immediately to the rustic kitchen, where I am given meat, coffee, bread, and a great deal of butter—wonderful northern French, golden butter. Then a corporal came to inquire about the planes' serial numbers. My mission will be officially over only after they have been unloaded.

I stay in one of the barracks. The stove that they dug in the chimney is my friend. I wash and wait until the men return from work at night.

They are in good spirits. The word "crash" is not a part of their vocabulary. They are from Cologne, Bremen, and Hamburg. Dinner: bread, jam, and again butter. Afterward, they are at first a bit noisy and unbridled; then everybody sits down at the table, around the kerosene lamp. Everyone reads by himself. Quiet and deep peace. They give me a batch of copies of *Motor*, a handsome illustrated sports magazine. I soon feel drawn to a bed with a spread and many blankets.

12.10. The planes are unloaded. Awoke at 7 a.m., went to have coffee. I wipe the table. Then I go up to the track to have a look. Six men for each plane. The weather is clearing. After lunch, I felt like leaving. I inquire about it at the office; my release slip and travel orders are ready, but the lieutenant must come and sign them first. Soon the clerk brings me the papers and I march off contentedly to the station. There a freight train stands waiting, as I had hoped; I hop on and travel to Bussigny in the heated baggage car.

Here I wait for the express train to Brussels, where I arrive at 9:30 a.m. I find a dead metropolis, whose inhabitants are being penalized and must be in bed by 8 p.m.



To a hotel near the Gare du Nord, eat somewhere or other, not badly at all, and go to bed at 11 o'clock.

## BRUSSELS

12.11. Lovely mild day. Breakfast at the hotel, at 7.30, many cups of coffee and a few slices of French bread. Then to the cathedral; inside, remarkably colorful stained-glass windows; otherwise, run-of-the-mill. Then to the Royal Palace and to the Palais de Justice, and back by way of an avenue circling behind. Soldiers come along, with fifes. Just as noon strikes I find myself in front of the Soldiers' Home, where a sign saying "Food like Mother Used to Cook" induces me to make a real pause. The food was quite good; in an adjoining room I had coffee and cake. I find the small, old picture gallery closed; only *jeudi*, is the rather unfriendly greeting. I walk away, furious. Down to the Town Hall and the Flower Market, too rich, too bourgeois. Then to the railroad station to buy lard and to the hotel to pack and pay my bill. After that, a buying splurge in the shops and at the market. The officer with the wicker trunk which he drags away himself. Dinner, somewhere or other, is not so good. Hunger doesn't yield an inch. Very attractive nightlife, thoroughly Latin. Tarts with steep hats and thin legs. At the station I had to wait a long time for the train from Antwerp, which arrived considerably late.

12.12. Return trip by way of Namur, Luxemburg at dawn, Metz, Saarburg, Strassburg, Karlsruhe. Here, pretty nursing sisters with weak coffee. Between Karlsruhe and Stuttgart, ugly sisters with excellent coffee and good sausage. In Metz, they wanted to put me off the train because the word "not" had not been struck from my travel papers. I ignored it, pretended to be asleep, and reached Stuttgart. From there on, there were no more controls. Stuttgart, a marvelous city. Unfortunately, night fell; the Alb must be especially beautiful. Via Ulm to Munich, where I arrived at 8 p.m. Home at 8:30 after successfully slipping through the hands of the station commandant. We had heard in Stuttgart about the Kaiser's peace offer.

12.13. to 12.16. Self-granted convalescent furlough in Munich.

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1039. 12.18. The stove in my room at Schleissheim smokes. Bought a broom and a shovel. Called a chimney sweep. (Found a rag stuck in the pipe.)

1040. 12.20. My name is down on the Christmas-leave list. I begged the private first-class in charge not to put me on guard duty.

Now that the rag has been removed, my stove is working well. The family can again visit me. Perhaps even in the second half of the Christmas holidays.

SCHLEISSHEIM 1917

1041. 1.2. Arrived safely. Successfully killed the second day of the week. In the evening, talked to Wildermann for a few seconds. Asked about my family. Afterward collected ten marks and fifty pfennigs, earned by being on leave. The army has its pleasant moments.

Started on the Chinese short stories.