My dear Mummy,

Calculation illustrating the number of words written by J.C Beaglehole to his family to date.

A year two days ago since I left the bosom of my family, which means 26 – 30 letters written, at about 12 pp each = 360 pp; at conservative estimate of 250 words per page = 90,000 words, or about 90 columns of the Post. Henceforth I think I shall cut all letters down to a maximum of 6pp., thus saving much ink & paper. I have a dim sort of memory of writing last from Vienna, which seems a long time ago. Not much to see in Vienna — we got there the week after the Opera stopped, & since the war the life has gone out of the place. It has first-rate bookshops though, which stock books in at least three languages. I brought a swag of Tauchnitz editions there & arranged to have them sent to England by post, hoping they would get past the customs that way. Even if they don't, you don't miss much, as they are only about 1/6 each. Why the stupid English won't publish & buy books in paper covers I'm dashed if I know — you can get dozens of rate English novels & plays in Tauchnitz, while they cost [unclear: 7/6] – 10/6 in England. In France about the highest you need to pay for a big fat historical book is 8 or 6/- — most ordinary books you can get for about 1/- – 2/-.; very good editions for 3/6. Of course the franc is pretty low, about 124 to £ but even at that the difference is tremendous. The more I see of a good many foreign customs, the less I am attracted to the corresponding English ones. However the traffic cops here might take a few lessons from their brothers in London. You nearly get slaughtered here a dozen times a day. However, to get back to Vienna — what I shall chiefly remember it by is its bookshops & its coffee mit schlag, which is absolutely peerless. — You get ½ cup of whipped cream resting on top of your coffee. Try it. Certainly the English may be able to build battleships, but they can't turn out stuff like this. Even their beer is not to be mentioned in the same breath as the German beer. A dreadful place, England. We went for a charabanc ride at Vienna, & I swore I'd never do so again a more vulgarly depressing experience I've never had in my life. A bloke stands up in front with a megaphone & bawls alternate German & English at you The German being a good deal easier to understand than the English. We went out to Schonbrüm, among other places, which is interesting historically & for its park, now a public ; hub for sheer brutal oilpainting. You never saw anything like its interior decorations. You read a lot of sneers at the taste of the nouveaux riches — no aristocracy which could produce such a thing as Schonbrüm has the right to cast a stone — A good deal of it was done in the hey day of European civilization, too, in the 18th century. A disgusting & depressing spectacle, but very interesting as an index to the glories of arist regal & aristocratic culture, which brutal revolutionaries are said to smash up in their blind lust for destruction. The real trouble is, they don't smash up enough. However, as I said the gardens are very fine, & the day we had there was perfect. I signalised our stay in Vienna also by getting a pair of horn-rims, which I now wear, keeping my other goggles in reserve in case of accidents. I got the whole new outfit for 9/-, & they were finished the day after I ordered them. Contrast this for price & speed with our up to date oculists. They are best Zeiss glass too. has a lot to learn. I must get another picture of myself taken for you to judge the effect. Every body over here thinks it very classy. The only thing us that the Yanks take me for a Yank, & treat me with undue familiarity. This old bird in the Bibliothique Nationale said to me "I see you're an American too". I said "No, I'm a ". He said "I'm from Cleveland Ohio myself. You've got a bit of an English accent, but I could tell you were an American all right. What do you think of Paris?" At which I gave up discussing the question of nationality, & told him I admired the Germans very much, which rather shocked him.

We decided not to go to Buda-Pesth, as it would mean two days travelling & only one day there, & to go straight on to Minichen (i.e. Munich) which we did, & did not regret. We had a week there, & wished for a month. We liked what we saw of the people immensely. Generally speaking the women are pretty shapeless & most of the girls can't dress for nuts, but a more amiable crowd you never met. They are a good deal like the best of the Londoners. The cops are very good too & a lot more efficient at traffic-management than these French birds. If you get run down in Germany it's your own fault; if you don't get run down in Paris it's pure luck. How anyone manages to survive here beats me. This is probably the explanation of the stationary population; the kids get slaughtered before they can run fast enough.

We had a pretty cheap joint in Munchen to stay at, but what made it a lean week was the price of food & the opera. About the cheapest place I have struck for food is Paris — You can get well padded out, even to the point of discomfort here for a bob, but we used to get stung for 3/- or 3/6 in Germany. What you got was
generally first-rate. I must admit, but the price remained. However the beer was cheap enough, & we drank gallons of it. In France you get the same quantity of wine; but of course there is no need at all to give you all this doke, with your wide literary travelling. The opera was also first-rate. But we had been assured that it cost nothing at all to see in Germany, that there was no need to book seats ahead, & so on & so forth. Then lo' & behold! we got to Munich & found that a festival of Wagner & Mozart was on, that the cheapest seats for Wagner were 10/- & for Mozart 6/-, & that they had been booking them since March last. No wonder they can make opera pay in Germany under these conditions. Even allowing for the presence of Yanks, it shows a certain devotion to music. Adelaide shouted the party to Parsifal, to signify her having got a £400 [unclear: year] job at Toronto; we shouted ourselves to Tristan, & two each died went to the Marriage of Figaro & the Magic Flute. Parsifal was magnificently done, but it gets pretty farcical at times, with a climax as the Holy Ghost descends at the end in the form of a stuffed [unclear: dove] coming down on wires — you never saw a more side-splitting sight in your life; & of course it is no wonder the Micks go mad at the way Wagner infringed their patent of exploiting Jesus Christ. The whole thing wants speeding up. Tristan was fine too, except for the soprano & tenor; who were not as good as those I heard at Convent Garden; but the orchestra was about the best I have ever heard in an opera. The Magic Flute, to which I went, is a very disappointing thing, surviving only because written by Mozart, I should say, because of the overture & about three good songs. The rest is just pantomime, revue, & machine-made recitative. I was sorry I didn't go to the Marriage of Figaro, but I had seen that in London & wanted to enlarge my acquaintance with opera as much as possible. Don Juan was on the day after we left, much to our sorrow.

Besides music, Munich has some good (I am getting sick of superlatives) pictures, a few good bits of classical sculpture & some jolly good museums, but we didn't have time for most of these. What gets me down about the picture galleries in Europe is the vast wall space they devote to Rubens. Wherever you go you find acres & acres of canvas & miles on miles of rooms devoted to his perfectly maddening facility. The man didn't paint, he spawned monsters. If there's one thing you get sick to death of, it's his fat females, [unclear: Sahuis] & victories, & nymphs & tearful saints & Magdalens & so forth ad infinitum & nauseam. It's about time some public-spirited curator rolled up his sleeves & had a bonfire. Munich would be an admirable place to start. Then you wouldn't have to waste so much time looking for the rooms which contained the good things. You can see I am absorbing art like a sponge. I will be a pretty fair highbrow by the time I have finished. After the Course I reckon I will have about reached saturation point for a few weeks. I got some good prints in München, of Rembrandts etchings & Durer woodcuts — , & some good albums of colour reproductions a-[unclear: A] made in Germany, for which they charge 50% more in London. Also I brought the scores of Tristan & Parsifal & the Mastersingers (we couldn't get into this) which weigh down my bag a good deal. Also a few little German books, to give me a financial interest in learning the language. The bookshops here are very good indeed; Munich being one of the chief bookselling and publishing centres of Germany. The Germans are turning out good stuff, & turning it out cheap. Ludwig's books cost 21/- in England. You get them in Germany just as well printed & bound, for 14 or 15 marks. 1 mark = 1 shilling about. It seems to me that there's a lot of either dirty work or incompetence going on in English publishing or it may be high wages. But as Sir Ernest Beum says, he pays very high wages, & high wages are an economy, & his books are the most expensive & give the least value of any now published, there seems something funny somewhere. However Sir is an Individualist, that may account for it. Another place we went to in Munchen was an exhibition of each trade or firm running a workshop of its own; so that you could see pottery & organs & woodcarving & violins & stained-glass & printing & book- binding & mosaic & tapestry & so on & so forth all in process of manufacture; which was all very interesting & impressive. It strikes me the Germans are working tremendously hard & tremendously keenly & know their business & that Made in Germany isn't such a bad sign after all. Certainly in comparison with Austria they're an eye-opener. Of course we didn't meet any Prussians, but everybody I know who has been to Germany has the same tale to tell & the same admiration for them. Of course the poor cows are crushed by taxation, & have to fork out about 60% of their income for war debts — it makes you sick to hear the wails of the French over their taxation after the way Germany & England are getting down to it. Another thing I like about the Germans is the life they live — there seemed to be dozens of sports shops, i.e. shops which sold swags & ice axes & rope & tramping boots & shoes & leather shorts & wind-jackets. I would have brought a lot of this stuff if I had had the cash. Half the population of Munchen seemed to wear shorts & shirt & a little coat for its summer costume. And you were always running into coves & girls on their way to or from the station. Of course Munchen is only 20 or 30 miles from the Barvarian Alps; but you wouldn't see the same thing in an English town or a French one of the same size. As for other impressions of München I have said the beer is very good & plentiful, the town has plenty of trees & parks; the windows of our pension had geraniums growing outside in window-boxes; we had a most magnificent thunderstorm there; & it was during our stay there that I read the New Machiavelli. We left it last Monday by a train at 8.30 am. & got to Paris at 11.30 the same night, after a very dirty, racketey, hot, & comfortless
journey, the last part in company with very ugly & impolite fat Frenchwomen who kicked shins because he happened to be reading a life of Bismarck in Germany, & turned the light out on me because their brat wanted to go to sleep, or rather was already asleep; so that I had to go out into the passage to read till I could pinch seat. Perhaps it was as well that we left Germany though, reluctant as we were to do so; as I seem to remember breaking the law there pretty consistently. My passport was not in order to begin with, owing to our cutting out Pesth & thus altering our dates; & we lay on the grass in one of the parks, & I inadvertently failed to pay for some salad at the opera (where you go out & feed & stroll in the garden in between the acts), & crossed the street in the wrong place & did something else pretty awkward in its consequences which I have forgotten. However, we all escaped jail.

Now I don't suppose I need to say anything about Paris. I have been here a week & think I'll stay another. I just arrived too late to meet the lads who had been having a most hilarious fortnight, so I heard from Arnold Holt, whom I met in the Louvre. I am staying with Espiner, who seems pretty well, & is to be married at the end of the year to a Scotch girl doing research work here on the origins of the English sonnet. He is taking me down to Rouen to see her later on in the week. He sends his kind regards to all. It was pretty good to see him again — 5 years since he left. He hopes to get his French doctorate at the end of the next year. B-W has offered him a job at, but he will be a fool if he goes back, as he says himself. The only reason any I have met over here, bar Yeates & Holt, wants to go back is to see his people; & even Holt is succumbing to the attractions of civilisation. We are hoping Espiner will be able to get a job at Toronto & so be able to come over here to research in the vacations. I hear Miss Duggan is doing pretty well at my old job; so I suppose that cuts me out in the future, & anyhow, what's the good of a dead-end assistantship in with no earthly prospects of a rise. I think I'll have a go at the States or Canada myself, or try to get a Guggenheim grant to stay in London another year. If I must say something about Paris, it is very interesting, but no so much so as London. Napoleon rebuilt it & ruined it. The century really was a terrible period, in spite of all that the highbrows say against it. Notre Dame is wonderful outside, less so inside, though two of the rose-windows are very beautiful. You can get all sorts of junk down on the leftbank of the Seine besides books (I enclose a couple of bookstalls for Daddy) from horse pistols & German helmets & medals & probably forged pewter; maps, pictures & brass candlesticks included. Of course the place lays itself out at this season to take it out of the Yank invasion, with a good deal of success. No concerts on, just vaudeville at the Folies & the Casino & such-like, which I may go to if cheap enough; supposed to be pretty good as a spectacle, though turned on for the benefit of tourists. I have brought a little bust of Voltaire for 5 francs, to which I play every night. And so on.

I have two letters of yours to reply to. It wasn't me who called on A. Wilkie, but Daddy; but I was the cove who got a letter out of the ravishing Hunter Watts. You'd better tell A. that Shakepeare's hand in Henry was very small anyhow, so that it is rather tactless to head his bill with that. I have not been to any services at the Aeolian Hall, life is too real & earnest & full of purpose to waste any of it on curch, let alone a Unitarian church. I hear by the way that Father Johnson has had a pretty stiff time in the jaws of death, but has now been safely hauled back. I am glad to see you are getting on to books by Eileen Power, — she is rate. Rather disillusioning though, to think that you were not satisfied with Mendhal; of course what you really wallow in with delight is P.G. Wodehouse or yarns borrowed from Alan. The last thing I read was Joan. I am buying a few French books. A. France & history, Voltaire. V.U.C. seems to be going to pot; what's wrong with the blithering council, anyhow? I hear that was a big hand in the stupid business, the silly goat. I wouldn't mind being back home for 2 or 3 weeks to put the boot into some of these solemn fatuous cows. They give me the pip. I thought Daddy being a practical business man, was keeping account of the books I have sent him, I'm dashed if I know what they come to, but I will fake up a bill some day. So Frannie thinks Jack is rather cynical about marriage! — well, well, this is a blow, & her a married lady too. I showed your Jane Austin letter to Adelaide, who is about as dippy on Jane as you are, & and she thought it very fine. She asked if you had come across a thing called The Janeites in Kipling's last book; I said of course you had, so I hope you have, as I shouldn't like to commit perjury, even on behalf of a mother.

Thanks for all & sundry

writings. I shall be back in dirty old London next time
I write. Cheers.

Love to all,

yourself

Jack