

Reverend Mother Clothilde

I have examined your plan of a new prospectus a little and sent it to Mme Vicar. I do not approve at all of your taste for imitating what others say. That sort of mania for copying the Ladies of the Sacred Heart and even the Sisters of Notre Dame, would have made you sacrifice expressions that were obviously better than those you wanted to substitute for them. You do not realize, dear Child, that every copy pales in the presence of its original; that, in following your plan, you would deprive your prospectus of its natural appearance, its distinctive character, and would give it a borrowed look while proving your-self guilty of being an imitator or even a plagiarist. It was that very inclination, if my memory does not fail me, and not by any means economy, that led you to have the first prospectus printed at Malines rather than Alost. We will be careful to have the present work carried out better than the earlier one.

Do not upset yourself uselessly, dear Lady, by uselessly going back over things. It is much less due to your inexperience than to certain oddities on the part of your doctor, that I attribute the accidental causes that may have hastened the worsening of the health of Mme Bathilde. I think that we will be obliged to change doctors, as soon as we have the opportunity. I cannot give my confidence to a man whose method is in opposition to what is practiced elsewhere. It seems to me that there is no talk either at Berlaymont, or at Lille, of sending the Ladies or their pupils on a journey; not even of sending them to the country for an outing. Mr. Van Wymelbeke was very worried about the health of his daughter when I read him a charming letter from our young Mme Marie Charlotte that proved she is in good health and was going to take the country air with some pupils. At the word "country" the father imagined she was speaking of the garden, and I saw myself obliged to say that this remedy came from a doctor with 'systematic' ideas, so he showed surprise by such a remedy as soon as he understood that she was not speaking figuratively. Indeed the country air is better than that of the towns, but in this respect, Malines is as good as the country. So be at rest and bless the Lord for the graces he grants us in spite even of our defects and faults. That is the real way to please God. Is not that the way that Mme Bathilde ended her career, a reassuring and happy one?

I like to think that this month will obtain for us fresh proofs of the love of Mary for her Children. Let us open our souls and receive with joy what the mercy of her son will give us through the mediation of his Mother who is also ours.

Your ever devoted Father in Jesus Christ

C. G. Van Crombrugghe

Ghent, 3rd August 1839