

24th February 1806

To Mr G Van Crombrugghe, Grammont, Escaut
Suburb of Noyon, Amiens, 24th February 1806

My very dear Father and Mother.

I am writing to you through the good offices of Miss Langevin who was kind enough to take it upon herself to tell you, better than I know how to express in writing, the happiness which I enjoy, and the goodness of this School. I was overjoyed to receive the letter that you wrote to me. As for the bass, I did not learn it as others of my companions were asked to learn it. I am quite happy about this, because this is strictly speaking an sideline to the knowledge that you want me to acquire, and for the time that I stay here I will strive to fulfil your wishes in all things. I also learned from your letter the good health which you are enjoying; that is probably the one piece of news which gives me the most pleasure, because what could I wish for more than the protection of the Parents who have been so good to their son who, in truth, has not always given proof of his gratitude. But please believe that I recognise my mistakes; and I won't stop asking from the All-Powerful the grace and the means to show you by my conduct that it is not for nothing that you have sent me to this School. I hope that God will grant me this, because after all the goodness that I have received from Him and especially that he has convinced me that it is from Him in his infinite mercy that we have everything, He will grant me this request. Permit me, my very dear Parents, to tell you again that never will I be able to convince you enough of the happiness that you have given me by sending me to this School. I am learning to know my religion here, and if that is all I learn this would be the greatest good you could have given me; I am sure it is certainly this goal that you had in mind. However, with this knowledge we are supposed to acquire others, less precious probably, but in spite of that necessary for the world. So that you can judge my progress, I will tell you to what I am learning now with Fr Sellier who is the Tutor of the Rhetoric. I continue to learn mathematics, and soon I will learn rhetoric; I have a second master who teaches me précis. What I do most is to strive after my goals and in that I am following your wishes. I am making much more progress than I would have done in a School like the one in Lille. I do not have to wait for my companions to catch up with me – this could have happened quite often.

Please send me some coloured handkerchiefs, I do not have enough. I end by embracing you and I have the honour of calling myself

Your very devoted and submissive son

C Van Crombrugghe

