

2<sup>nd</sup> September 1806

To Mr G Van Crombrugghe, Businessman in Grammont, Dept of the Escaut.  
Mondidier, the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1806

Very dear Father and Mother,

The transfer of our School went well; the place that we now occupy is big, beautiful, comfortable, and situated in a very healthy locality. I should tell you how the exercises went.<sup>1</sup> They lasted two days and attracted a lot of applause: the Sub-Prefect, the mayor and other the dignitaries that were there were very satisfied with the manner in which my schoolmates answered the questions. The Sub-Prefect gave witness to this in a speech that he gave at the opening of the prize distribution two days after. He showed how the study of Latin is useful for all situations; he also indicated how laudable the method that the Fathers follow for the education of their pupils is.

After him Fr Sellier gave a speech in which he has what progress was made in the exercises, and on the utility of religion for the happiness of society; he made the Parents see what difference there was between a child educated in religion and another educated without religion. Next came the distribution of prizes. I am sure that you received a list of prizes. It was the Sub-Prefect who distributed crowns and prizes to those who had earned them. The following day we went to the accompaniment of instruments to put the prize-winners' crowns at the foot of the altar of the God of Light and the Author of all good, who had deigned to give us the means of winning prizes.

Please, very dear Father and Mother, give my good wishes to my brother Jean. I would be obliged to him if he would take it upon himself to present my respects to Mr Jacques Verhaeghe, and to tell to him that I regret not being able to speak to him directly, but that I hope to do so next year.

Believing that my sister Rosalie is at home on holiday, I ask you to embrace her for me. I would like to know if she is happy at Mons and if she is making progress. Please tell her that she occupies a large part of my heart, and that I expect her to remember me in her prayers, because it is thus that she will prove that she loves me.

Permit me, very dear Parents, to ask you one other thing. It is to Charlotte and Cecile that I have something to say. I hope that they are always very cheerful, and very well-behaved. Please embrace them for me and say that I am sad not to see them this year, but that it is also a cause of their brother's happiness because the good Lord wills it so. They should pray for me and we will always love each other, and I hope that we will love each other more, and for ever, in Heaven. Ah! dear Parents, I cannot express to you the pain that our separation causes me! But I am comforted to know that it is to accomplish the will of the Lord that I am deprived of a so natural a pleasure to all hearts, that of seeing one's Parents. I embrace you, oh my very dear Father and Mother; give me, I pray, your blessing; my greatest trial is not to be able to show you my gratitude as much as I should.

At the beginning of the next academic year I hope to go up to the fourth class; that means that I will have completed the normal course of three years. I am waiting with impatience for your answer concerning the business of my dear brother François. You will never regret the money that you will pay for the education that he will receive here; money perishes but education remains. If he comes here I could give him a half dozen cravats, two or three white waistcoats, socks, and as many pocket handkerchiefs as are necessary and which I do not need.

Farewell, my very dear Father and Mother. Oh please God this business of François succeeds!

Your very devoted and submissive son

C. Van Crombrugghe



---

<sup>1</sup> Public academic exercises.