

13th March 1807

To Mr G Van Crombrughe, Businessman in Grammont, Dept of the Escaut.
Mondidier, 13th March 1807

Very dear Father and Mother

The term being close to finishing I thought I should tell Fr Michel not to send you the account seeing that it is settled in Amiens; however I don't know if it will be sufficient to send it to Mr Langevin; please let me know before the end of the month.

Although our expenses are not large, for some time our funds have been depleted. I have therefore, in accordance with what you allowed me, asked for a Louis from Fr Michel.

You tell me in your last letter that you were not satisfied with François' report, and that you would like to have some details of this. This is what I can tell you for certain: for some time François has been overtaken by his schoolmates; this can be attributed to the advantage that they have over him from the point of view of the language. Also, his temperament being weak will have influenced his application; whatever the case, I have noticed that he has not been entirely at ease, and I have tried to discover the reason. Finally I discovered what I am now going to tell you: I knew full well, and his teacher also remarked on it to me, that one only wins him over by gentleness. Consequently I took him aside and asked him how things were in class. He told me rather sadly that it was very much more difficult now in class. I noted that this was the reasoning of a discouraged schoolchild! I tried to encourage him and told him: (I knew that he likes the game of "top" a lot): if beginning today you learn your lessons well, on Sunday I will buy you a top; that is what he wanted, and he promised me, and kept his promise and I did the same. It remains to be seen if he continues to apply himself. I would like to think so and I pray the Good Lord to help him and I ask you as very dear Parents to join your prayers to mine. He was very happy with the letter that you wrote to him and he told me that he will do everything possible to satisfy you in the future. As for his character: he is well liked by his masters and his schoolmates; this will prove to you sufficiently that he is not insensible to the good advice of our teachers. Some time ago he had won a lot of walnuts; I told him not to eat them all, that he would become sick; "I won't eat them," he said, "I will sell them and the money will be for the poor."

As for what you told me, that you would want me to send you our two reports in one letter, I will try to get them from my teacher.

I embrace you with all my heart and am forever

Your very devoted and submissive son.

C Van Crombrughe

PS: Please present my respects to my brother Jean. Mr Jacques Verhaeghe asked me to thank Jean and B. Ruyter (?) for the memories that they have of him.

[The following was written in Flemish]

Dear Charlotte and Cécile,

What happiness will be yours in a few weeks when you will receive the One who made the heaven and the earth! It is necessary for you to prepare to receive so a worthy a Guest. Oh! how many new graces you will receive! Please, my dear little sisters, prepare your little hearts; if a great king were to come to lodge at home, what preparations would you not make? The King whom you are going to receive is greater than all kings of the world. The best preparation that you can make is to be obedient your parents, to be charitable towards your neighbour, and to flee any danger of even the smallest sins, and to read some Christian books. Please, my sisters Charlotte and Cécile, pray to God for me and François now that you will have the happiness of receiving Him. Oh! God's goodness is excellent; this food that He gives to such young children as you seems to me capable of moving the most hardened hearts. Prepare yourselves well, my dear sisters, it is the greatest moment of your life.

I am forever

Your loving and submissive brother

C Van Crombrughe

