

19<sup>th</sup> June 1807

To Mr G Van Crombrugghe, Businessman in Grammont, Dept of the Escaut.  
Mondidier, 19<sup>th</sup> June 1807

Very dear Father

I am replying to the letter that you had the goodness to write to me about my brother. I give thanks to the Good Lord God who has seen the matter well resolved; it is a loss, dear Father, as you say, but a loss that is infinitely less than the loss of a child, because I would call it a loss to see a son leaving the parents that he loves and who know that he is not doing the right thing. Besides this is not extremely expensive; it costs much more here; one of my schoolmates from Tours has a brother whose replacement cost ten thousand livres<sup>1</sup>. I believe that if it is necessary to pay for a replacement it is often not easy. I hope with God's help that you will not have the same problem with me, or at least that it will cost less. But let us leave that for the holidays. I read your letter from beginning to end in the presence of François; he appeared to be touched by your remonstrations. That is obviously the best way of dealing with him, as is proven by the fact that he is applying himself better, his teacher is more satisfied with him and has said that his next report will be a lot better if he perseveres until the end of the month. He now speaks French quite well now but it is by using it that he will learn since as for the principles of the language he doesn't give them much thought. I hope that will also come. He doesn't have as much perception as one could hope for at his age. Generally he has a good character and a noble heart.

I see in my dear mother's letter that you are worried that it is a long time since I wrote to you. I wrote a fortnight ago, and I put back answering your letter to the middle of this month. I read there, and I am very appreciative, that you want to see us both as much as I want to see you. Oh! what joy I feel already when I think that in about two months I will see our dear family again! But it seems to me that I am prolonging the time that remains by thinking too much about it; for it's true that there are no roses without thorns. The memory of what is dearest to me in the world serves only to sadden me; the more I think about it, the longer it seems I have to spend away from you. The Good Lord requires it of me, you also require it, and I submit with pleasure to the such sacred wishes.

I also see in my dear Mother's letter that she is thinking of going to see her daughter; I would be very happy if you would tell me the result of her journey.

Please, very dear Father, tell my dear Mother of my close feelings towards her, my dear brother and my dear sisters to whom I ask you to say that I pray to the Good Lord God for them, so that he might condescend to keep the nuptial dress of their First Communion pure and without spot. Ah! if they knew how precious this dress is how well they would avoid soiling it! Would it not be right that they should do everything they can to respond as much as possible to the love that Good Lord shows them!

I finish, very dear Father, in commending myself to your prayers and to those of my dear sisters. Ah! What are they not able to achieve being so close to such a good Spouse as Jesus Christ! May they ask this dear Spouse for forgiveness for a brother who is indeed ungrateful towards the God who does so much good for him. How happy I would be if I had kept the promise that I made to Him on my First Communion, to be all His! I embrace you with all my heart, as does François.

Your very devoted and submissive son

*C Van Crombrugghe*

PS: I see on rereading my letter that it is filled with careless errors but please ignore the style and find only my heart.



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<sup>1</sup> This would seem to indicate that the matter under discussion is paying to have a person replaced in the militia.