

30th October 1808

To Mr G Van Crombrughe, Brewer in Grammont, Dept of the Escaut

Very dear Father and Mother

I saw in the letter that you wrote to my dear sister that you are well; I give thanks to the Lord; I wish could tell you that we are well, but God, whose intentions are impenetrable, has not granted this wish; the day before yesterday I saw my sister and I found her unable to speak; she recognised me, heard me, but could not answer me. Yesterday she was better; she spoke and even walked in the garden. I went to see her again today, and found her in a worse state than that of the preceding days. She is being looked after, not without pain, and the doctor who sees her two or three times a day wants us to make her make a lot of movement as soon as she comes out of her present state. I will be going to see her tomorrow and will see what the doctor wants. As for coffee, the doctor is not of your opinion, and you should accept his decision. It would be useless for me to describe the care that these respectable Sisters lavish on her; you know it, you have witnessed it. I can only tell you that this care does not decrease; today like the first day of her illness, the Sisters are around her bed as assiduously as the most tender mother. This must comfort you a lot in the pain that my sister's illness necessarily causes you. As soon as there is any change I will tell you, unless she remains some days in the same state, and I will also inform you if this is the case.

Please, dear Parents, do not let yourselves be too shaken by this test which wise Providence is inflicting on you; what do we have, after all, to complain about? Is it not better to obey what God who is our Father wants, than to become bitter and to increase, by our useless complaints, the pain that we feel? I know, very dear Parents, that it is very natural that you should suffer when your child suffers, but doesn't Religion come to your help in these moments of distress? Does not God himself tell us "happy those who mourn for they will be comforted"? Let us therefore see these tribulations with eyes of faith, but let us pray to God through the intercession of the Holy Virgin who is never invoked in vain. Yes, Mary is all-powerful next to her Son. Fr De Sambucy preached a sermon on the Holy Virgin; I have never heard anything more touching, more likely to inspire love for and confidence in God's Mother! What a man is Fr De Sambucy! What a pity that you have not seen him, as you would be greatly re-assured.

Finally I ask you to give me your news as soon as possible and to assure my brother Jean of the friendship that I have for him. I also embrace my dear sisters. I end by asking you to give me and Rosalie your blessing and to remember us in your prayers. Please accept these signs of my filial love and please believe that I am forever, very dear Father and Mother

Your very devoted and submissive son

Amiens, 30th October 1808

C Van Crombrughe

