

11th December 1808

To Mr G Van Crombrugge in Grammont, Department of the Escaut

My very dear Parents

I have just received the bill for Rosalie's treatment. I thought I should send it to you immediately so that you can arrange to send me some money. First I ask you to notice that the two journeys and my term's fees deducted from the sum that I received in Lille will not leave me with very much. The bill frightened me, but however I see that it would amount to little if one deducts everything which is not to do with my School fees, which proves that the Sisters did not charge much for their expenses. The apothecary's account is well detailed, but the surgeon's bill surprises me; there is no detail and it is very brief. As Sister Beaudemont notes, it is true that these men are well paid.

Charlotte is very well; I am very happy about that and she gives great hope for her study of the sciences and of virtue; I found her changed for the better the last time I saw her. She is modest, gracious and extremely affable; she only wants what I want and always accepts my reasons for what might be useful or useless to her. Finally, my dear Parents, she makes me happy and is increasingly pleasing to the Good Lord. She will be a consolation to you one day and will make you forget the pain that so dear an education caused you, given the circumstances of the past few months. As for me, I will strive, in gratitude for God's grace, to benefit from this year, while taking advantage of every moment whose price I know and which passes always too quickly. Up to now all goes well for my Rhetoric; I would not do better even in the best School. I find advantages here that I would not find if I followed the courses in a School, in that here I can adapt the objects of my studies to my state.¹

François wrote to me that he is not making as much progress as he would wish because he is not strong enough in principles of the French language; Fr Simple even advised him to drop a class in French; I answered him that he should tell you, and that I didn't doubt that you would agreed to him applying himself especially in French. This was based on your decision, my dear Father, that he should concentrate on French if he was not to benefit from Latin.

If you have not yet received Rosalie's trunk it must be in Gent at the place where you get off the coach.

I am very happy at my dear sister's recovery and her desire to continue her education; this is beyond all my hopes. I hope she will do well in Gent; she had already received the crown of the School in Amiens. I am sure that this new school is so well ordered (surely it could not be otherwise) that she will lose little by the move, certainly less than others who have not been there all the time. It is incredible to see the love that these Sisters have for her; her return would give them true pleasure, as it would to me, but I see the impossibility of bringing her back here. Besides her teachers are in Gent, and therefore she naturally prefers this last city.

I have not yet received the mirror and I am keen to have it. Mr Langevin must be astonished that so long after my journey it still hasn't arrived.

A letter was to be sent to you from Sister De Beaudemont, but to save the postage I am sending it in my letter which will only be a little bit more full.

Please assure my dear sisters and especially my dear brother Jean of my friendship; tell them that I do not forget them in my prayers and that I ask the same thing of them. I hope that Rosalie and Cecile will write to Charlotte who would be happy to learn their news.

Please receive my very sincere respects and remember me in your prayers. I call myself with the sweetest feeling of the filial love, my very dear Father and Mother

Your very-loving and submissive son

C Van Crombrugge

Amiens, 11th December 1808

PS: I ask my brother Jean to remember me to my friend J. Verhaeghe.



¹ If he is not at a school, then where is he?