

18th December 1805

To Mr G Van Crombrugghe, Brewer in Grammont, Dépt. Escaut
Boarding School, Amiens, 18th December 1805

Very dear Father and Mother.

It was with great joy that I received your letter of the 16th of this month in which you tell me that you are well; you ask me to let you know if I am happy; you cannot imagine the happiness that I enjoy. We are some 60 to 70 pupils, under the wise tutelage of eight tutors, whose goodness and affability are extreme. Fr Le Blanc, the Headmaster, is like a shared Father; each of us goes to him to open his heart and to ask for advice with the same confidence that one would have with his own Father. To tell you in few words how much this school is different to all the others, you should know that in all the time that I have been here I have never seen a serious punishment given. We rise at six o'clock in the morning and have study until seven thirty. We go to Mass, which is said in the School, after which we eat very high quality bread. At nine o'clock we have class until twelve thirty, then we have lunch where we could not ask for better food. We drink water mixed with wine and we also have beer but it is not worth much. At two fifteen we go to class until five, then we have tea. At five thirty we have study until seven thirty and after a quarter hour of reading we dine. After dinner we have a recreation of one hour during which we chat with the tutors or play; during the other recreations everybody is obliged to play, which makes us all very cheerful and healthy. You can judge for yourselves, but I will repeat that it would be impossible for me to be complimentary enough. I had not believed that it would be possible to find such an opportunity of being formed so well in the spiritual and the temporal domains and it is as you know, dear Father and Mother, a singular stroke of fortune that I have been accepted here. These Fathers have had a consideration for me that they would not have had for any other, because a School known as (and clearly is) one of the finest in France does not lack pupils.

Accept my good wishes and my thanks for all your kindness and believe that I will always strive to show you the greatest gratitude. Please, dear Parents, embrace my dear brothers and sisters for me and ask my brother Jean to write to me from time to time.

Your very devoted son

C Van Crombrugghe

PS: Please present my New Year wishes to my Aunt Huleu. In your letter I also learned of my Aunt Spitaels' illness; I hope that her recovery will continue

