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9, rue de la Régence

Bruxelles.

Sunday night.

My Own Dear Father,

You will say it is very soon to plague you, but as I know the end of the week is your busy time, and as I cannot help longing to have a chat with you, and hearing from you, I have no choice but to write soon. I have been fretting my heart out since I left, but I know that evil time will pass, but it will pass the sooner and better if you help me by a few words of encouragement. Every change in my life seems to me harder to bear than the preceding ones – in fact “the longer the way the wearier” explains my state very well. I find it so hard to find myself

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after all my fine daydreams of long ago, a governess of thirty years of age. I so hate being old. I find it impossible almost, à en prendre mon parti, and yet what else remains. I must only try and become very very good, through all difficulties, and perhaps a settled state of peace may be accorded to me. I can understand that a state of utter wretchedness, of blank dreary despair, such as no one can believe in who has not experienced, may be of use to the soul, as, unless the state itself be one of sin, it excludes every other sin. One has not the courage even to get into a passion about anything. I wonder when I get out of this, and by degrees I feel it going, shall I really begin in earnest to make some atonement for the past. I wonder do you know how fearfully I suffer from remorse. I sometimes feel as if Judas & Cain were saints to me – they certainly did not abuse so many graces. Wicked wretch that I am even the last few days' being

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at my old work brought up old feelings that ought to be forgotten – I have such a memory I remember nothing good or useful, and everything wrong seems to stamp itself indelibly¹ on my brain. However, I bid good bye to all that. I went to Communion this morning without going to Confession I could not think I had committed any grievous sin. Pray God that I may stay so. “Keep me only from sin and I shall fear neither death nor hell” that is a verse of the Imitation often in my heart.

Only think I am to go to Confession to Père Clément! I declare I cannot think seriously on it. He is very kind. I went to see him to-day and I said I could not make up my mind what to do, but that I thought I would not go to Confession at all. He volunteered very simply to take me back – you know I left him in Bruges. The convent is only ten minutes’ walk from this & every Friday morning early, he will look for me in the church where he has no settled confessional as yet. As matters so presented themselves I thought it

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better to leave them so. I know Père Clément is not “upsetting” & I dreaded falling into any unskilful hands. But remember you are my own father above all – if I turn out any good it is thanks to you. No priest has ever done me the good you have, and I can never never forget it.

It is very late I am falling asleep over this so forgive all sorts of epistolary crimes. I must be up tomorrow at 7. I told that to P. Clément to make him pity me, he only thought me very lazy! I am in comfortable quarters here, but I foresee I shall have a fair share of work. I only hope I shall be equal to it. The children² are remarkably nice and bright – spoiled a little, but very affectionate and truthful. They speak English with more facility than French – The eldest daughter with whom I am a good deal, is a nice good girl. We became great friends this evening which we spent together Monsieur & Madame dining out. She loves music & thinking, and thanks we have a great many ideas in common

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1 Foutief voor 'indelibly'.

2 Deze kinderen waren Guilielmus Julianus Mauritius, Francis Vincent Alexandere, Marie Victoire Augustine en Stephanie Marie Antoinette. Uit de brieven blijkt dat ze zich vooral over Marie en Stephanie, de twee jongsten, moest ontfermen, maar dat ze occasioneel ook moest letten op Guilielmus en Francis.

God help her if we have. We had a most sentimental talk in French – it is comical the amount of things one can say in French that we cannot in English. We began on the beauty of the Lives of the Saints,³ and we finished on the most becoming way of wearing the hair! What an idea I must give you of the depths of the female intellect!

Oh goodbye! – when I write to you as when I go see you I forget “Times happy swiftness” and that he must in spite of all the poets be brought to “sober measurement even” when his sands are golden strands

That sparkle as they pass. How is your sister? I hope she is stronger than when I last saw her. Make her take care of herself, you cannot think how often I envy her – she is so good & nice and simple and so clever – not a good for nothing, wicked, horrible complicated piece of bad machinery like me. Do write soon – at once I will not torment you after the first And will not you pray I may be

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able to do my work well. I feel my head often so queer & weak it frightens me. If I can work satisfactorily I may be well enough here.

Again good-night. I wish I could kneel at your feet and get your blessing. [your] own child for ever,

Kate M.W.

Mind tell me how you are yourself – is any thing annoying you. I know so well when I see you when there is.

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3 Mogelijk verwijst ze naar een boek, maar het is niet zeker hetwelk want er bestonden meerdere boeken over heiligenlevens, en zelfs met de titel 'Lives of the Saints'.

Briefbeschrijving

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