
[p1]

chez M^{me} Iwan Simonis,

rue de Limbourg

Verviers.

My dear Father Gezelle,

I enclose you a postoffice order for ten francs. I beg of you to have the charity to say two masses at your earliest convenience for the repose of the soul of an old aunt of mine who has been haunting me this age. I ought to have got those masses said long ago, but was always prevented by pecuniary reasons – reasons which alas! creep into everything spiritual & temporal.

Need I say how very heartily I wish you a very very happy New Year. Indeed I do hope that '69 will bring you every blessing your heart can desire. Does it not seem like the other day that last year commenced? I have thought that perhaps at the end of our days life will appear to us as the Old year does at the commencement of the New one.

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I was sorry to hear that you were so knocked up by the Christmas work. Have you been able to have any rest since? Do try to take some care of yourself, and try and be very strong and well when next I see you which will be – God knows when I feel as if I had settled down in this place for a long time – That is at times – there are of course unsettled moments when I lose patience and heart. But really the people are all very good, I only hope I shall be able to please them; there are certain difficulties which make me at moments not too sure of that.

Will you forgive me for making one reflection about your fellow country-men & country-women. It is that they ought to be always very pious and very good – there is no tolerating them when they are not. French people with their life and esprit are pleasant to live with no matter what the inside may be – Irish, I think pretty much the same, *[though]* perhaps I am no fair judge of my own dear country men & women. English have a certain natural distinction &

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depth that makes one bear with their drawbacks, but I do not know what Belgians have pleasant unless they are very good – holily good That gives them feeling and tact that they certainly do not possess naturally. I often think too of your saying that want of education is a great cause of much that is wrong in this country, I am afraid you must acknowledge that there is little real taste for education in the better classes. Here they know nothing but business & how to be really good and charitable. That of course is the best knowledge of all, but it is startling to see ladies and gentlemen ignorant of everything in the way of bookish knowledge

I wish I knew Flemish and could hear you teaching catechism. I have been helping to “cram” an unfortunate little girl with rather slow brains, through a perfect small course of theology We attend the class four times a week, where the catechism is given by one of the Vicaires who comes here too, to give the child extra lessons He teaches wells enough – certainly not heresy – but he drives

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me distracted by want of exactness whenever he quotes scripture of any kind. I was in a real “fix” after one of his lessons the other day. The child was writing it all out & appealed to me if M^r le Vicaire had not said so & so. I saved myself jesuitically by saying “yes M^r le Vicaire had said so & so”, but I was longing to read over the whole scene in the New testament with the child. The same vicaire is the only one to whom I can manage to go to confession, and I felt very queer at first, as I really could not help thinking of him more as a master than a priest – however he is a very good holy priest He said “Mademoiselle[”] in the beginning, but that soon changed. He coughs a little like my old French curé when perhaps he would rather not hear However it is all of little consequence. I must learn to walk alone

Imagine a part of my duty now is to serve a lot of poor children at dinner¹ My pupil does it to make her good but she spilled a plate of soup over me one day & I blow her up before the children & have taken matters into my own

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hands. I make them gobble as fast as possible to get done with them – what a beautiful spirit of charity! I never cared for “good works”. The nuns I like ever so much & they are ever so kind and friendly to me – and think me ever so good! I must say good-night I wish I could see you. I would like much to speak to you about something that has been a great trouble to me, even in this quiet simple place. Nothing that concerns myself directly, but

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1 Mogelijk doet ze dit in het weeshuis waarover ze schrijft in haar eerdere [brief aan Guido Gezelle van 25/11/1868](#).

something very sad and dreadful told me by another and which has shaken my faith in a matter for which I think I should have laid down my life. Nothing nothing is secure in this world – in Heaven we may have security, but not until then, Everything here is “of the earth earthy”² I will tell you about it some other time, but you must not be angry

You see I am your own especial child as much as ever – no other guidance no other influence has supplanted yours. And indeed your memory has often

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saved me. I was so strongly tempted the other day to do – rather to say – something that might have caused great wrong and it was something you once said to me that made me strong, and made me prefer making myself disagreeable rather than risk tempting a soul perhaps to sin. So pray for me. I do hope the new year will be one of grace if not of happiness to me My love to your sister and all the best wishes of the season.

Try to write soon. Pray for me sometimes at Benediction and forgive me if I have written anything in this that annoys you. And oh, my dear dear Father, bury with the old year all remembrance of my badness & wickedness towards you during its course. Looking back on it all I see how wrong it was, and regret it with all my heart and most humbly entreat your entire forgiveness.

Your attached child who loves and respects you with all her heart

Kate M. W.

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2 Verwijst naar 1 Korintiërs 15:47: “De eerste mens is uit de aarde, aards; de tweede Mens is de Heere uit den Hemel.” of “De eerste mens kwam voort uit het stof, uit de aarde, de tweede mens is hemels”.

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