

..... [p1]

6, Hereford Square,

London. S.W.

March 18th 1874.

My dear Father

I cannot tell you with what pleasure I recognized your handwriting and found that you had not forgotten us. It is very gratifying to be remembered by distant friends. On our part I can assure you that we often think of you, and I would have answered your kind letter by return of post, had I been able to send you the desired information at once. At present I have not obtained it, but begin my letter, in the hope of being enabled to make the necessary inquiries very soon. There is no Convent in our immediate neighbourhood (South Kensington) but there is one at Kensington,¹ about a mile and a quarter from here, one or two at Chelsea,² about the same

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distance, and a perfect nest of Convents at Bayswater³ and Notting Hill⁴ at about twice that distance further West. Then there is the Convent of Notre Dame, at Battersea⁵ of which M^r. Buckler was the Architect. You may perhaps know the Mother House⁶ at Namur. I think Battersea is about three miles from here. I will do what I

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- 1 Hiermee bedoelt ze wellicht het Convent of the Assumption, dat gelegen was op 20 Kensington Square.
- 2 In deze wijk bevonden zich de Daughters of the Cross, die in 1869 het klooster op 4, Stewarts Grove bewoonden. Sinds 1845 was hier ook een bijhuis van de Sisters of Mercy gevestigd; dit nieuwe St. Joseph's Convent was gelegen in Cadogan Street.
- 3 In Bayswater bevond zich de congregatie van de Sisters of Our Lady of Sion aan Colville Terrace.
- 4 In Notting Hill, op de hoek van Ladbrooke Grove en Westbourne Park Road, bevond zich het klooster van *de Poor Clares*. Op 296a Portobello Road bevond zich sinds 1869 het *St. Joseph's home*. Dit was een instelling voor ouderen en mindervaliden gerund door de *Little Sisters of the Poor*. Eveneens op Portobello Road was sinds 1868 *St. Elizabeth's Home* gevestigd.
- 5 In 1870 was deze orde naar Battersea gekomen, waar een klooster was gebouwd met geld van Laura Petre, wier religieuze naam Sister Mary of St. Francis was. Deze Laura Petre was geen onbekende bij de familie Buckler, want John Chessell Buckler, de vader van Charles Alban Buckler, had Costessey Hall gebouwd, het landhuis van Laura's vader, George Stafford-Jerningham, 8th Baron Stafford.

geboren als Laura-Maria Stafford-Jerningham

- 6 Het klooster in Namen was in 1807 gesticht en fungeerde vanaf 1809 als moederhuis.

can in making inquiries, and send you the result, but I fear it must be in English, for although I can translate easily, I speak French but very imperfectly, and write it still worse. You will be amused to hear the reason of this deficiency. My sisters⁷ and I were brought up at home by Papa and Mamma, and on the completion of their studies they were sent to a French school in Paris for a year, for the sake of gaining proficiency in the language. Dear Papa thought it not safe for me to go, lest

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I should become a Catholic, although in those days I am not aware that I gave any signs of the blessing that was in store for me. At that time one of my sisters⁸ was on the very threshold of the Church, but nothing ever came of it, she has become "evangelical"⁹ instead, and I am still the only Catholic of my own family. I have the Faith, and they the French language. At this moment the French would be more useful to you.

But I have such good news! I want every one to rejoice with us. There is joy with the Angels in Heaven, for another soul is safely sheltered in the one True Fold. My sister-in-law (the widow of my eldest Brother) was received into the Church last Monday by F^r Christie. I think she will be an excellent Catholic, for she seems to enjoy and appreciate our religion thoroughly. She is the same for whom I asked your prayers, and as she bids me give her warmest

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thanks to all those, who by their good prayers have helped her into the Church, I must give you your share. When we were last in Bruges,¹⁰ I left her inconsolable and full of desolation at the death of my Brother, and these three days past she is so full of happiness that she can scarcely realize it at present. She is here on a visit to us in

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7 Haar zussen uit het eerste huwelijk van haar vader met Mary Wheeler waren Charlotte Maria Farbrother en Julia Frances Farbrother. Ze had nog halfzussen uit het tweede huwelijk van haar vader met Mary Dibbin: Louisa Anne Farbrother (1836-1859) en Margaret Sophia Farbrother (1843-1934). (Ancestry)

8 Charlotte Maria Farbrother en Julia Frances Farbrother komen hier in aanmerking.

9 De term 'evangelical' kan zeer ruim geïnterpreteerd worden, maar kan hier gelinkt worden aan de 'Low Church', een meer conservatieve invulling van het protestantisme, minder gefocust op rituelen, in tegenstelling tot 'High Church', wat meer refereert aan Anglo-Catholicism. (Wikipedia)

10 Dat moet dan augustus 1872 geweest zijn (zie de [brief van Mary Louisa Farbrother aan Guido Gezelle van augustus 1872](#)). Haar broer was eind 1871 overleden.

order to settle her spiritual affairs quietly. She will receive her First Communion on Maundy Thursday.¹¹ What a beautiful time for coming into the Church! And now her Crosses will come more thickly than ever, we converts have a good share of suffering but "beati qui durant";¹² we must think of that, when discouraged. I have not told her what is likely to be in store for her, lest she should lose courage; she will find it out quite soon enough, and then it is not the destiny of all converts to make the same sacrifices. If we could only have our Crosses

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so covered with Heartsease as yours, and the Sacred Heart in the midst, they would not chafe our shoulders so much as they often do.

Thank you very much for the charming little Card which I admire much. It is now in my "Golden Manual" marking the Litany of the Blessed Sacrament, which is I think one of your favourite Litanies. I have never heard whether the intention you asked me to pray for has been gained yet. We put it into the Confraternity of the Precious Blood, and I scarcely ever leave the Lady Chapel or Chapel of the Sacred Heart without remembering it. Dear Father will you help me again with your prayers for the conversion of one of my Brothers? I am determined he shall come into the Church if any prayers I can obtain for that object will bring him. He is so good, so kind, so gentle, and so clever. But he is a High Church

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clergyman; fortunately unmarried at present. I have been told that he was almost ready to come, when the definition of the Infallibility of the Pope¹³ kept him back; let us hope it may be only for a time, it shows that he was not ready, although he thought he was.

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11 Witte donderdag.

12 Vertaling Paul Thoen (Latijn): "zalig zij die volharden" of: "gelukkig zij die volhouden". Een 'zaligheid' in de lijn van de 'zaligsprekingen' uit de Bergrede (Matteüs 5.3-12) en geïnspireerd door Matteüs 10.22 en 24.13, waar telkens gezegd wordt: "Wie echter ten einde toe volhardt, hij zal gered worden."

13 De onfeilbaarheid van de paus werd uitgesproken tijdens het eerste Vaticaans concilie (1869-1870) onder Pius IX. (Wikipedia)

Last year we were disappointed of our usual continental trip which was a great disappointment after having made all our arrangements for leaving home, I hope we may be more fortunate this summer. With the exception of a few days of very severe weather from time to time this has been so mild a winter that I have got through it much better than usual, and have not missed one single Mass of obligation, which is a great comfort. All the Autumn was a time of suffering; it is wonderful what influence the mind has over the

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body. M^r. Buckler is very well and busily engaged in making his design for a new Catholic church in the country which will soon be begun.¹⁴ He says do you not think it would be a good plan to write to the Sisters of Notre Dame at Namur? they would be able to tell you the arrangements of their Convent at Battersea. We spent a very happy day at the Convent at Namur¹⁵ two or three years ago.

March 20th How strangely joy & sorrow are mingled! In the midst of our rejoicing comes a very unexpected grief. This morning's post brought me a letter written in an unknown hand, announcing the distressing intelligence of the death of a very dear old friend, after a few days illness! Dear, kind Lady Fellows! What a sudden termination to our ancient friendship. She wrote to me so lately saying that she was looking forward with great pleasure to another visit from us, and I had already directed

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an envelope ready for my answer to her letter. It is a sad, sad loss to us, and I cannot bear to think that she was not a Catholic. she was so well disposed that we hoped she might come in time, but now all is over.

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14 Behalve de private kapel van *Our Lady of Mount Carmel Chapel* op het domein van Lilystone Hall (1875), werd de eerstvolgende jaren de kerk van *St Edward the Confessor* in Sutton Park (1875) gebouwd naar ontwerp van Charles Buckler.

15 De connectie tussen de families Buckler en de Sisters de Notre Dame gaat terug op het feit dat suster Mary of St Francis (Laura-Maria Stafford-Jerningham) de familie Buckler kende van vroeger. De vader van Charles A. Buckler was de architect van Costessey Hall, de residentie van de familie Stafford-Jerningham. Na de dood van haar man, Edward Petre, was Laura-Maria in het klooster te Namen ingetreden waar ze in 1875 overste werd. (B.De Leeuw, P.De Wilde, K.Verbeke,e.a., *De briefwisseling van Guido Gezelle met de Engelsen. 1854-1899*. Gent: KANTL, 1991, dl.III, pp.219-220)

I have been making the inquiries you wished for, but cannot procure much information. There seem to be few Convents in which Ladies are received as boarders. The pension at the Convent at Kensington is £ 200 a year.
+¹⁶ I do not quite understand in what capacity the Lady you mention wishes to enter. If she intends to be a Nun would not the choice of a Convent depend upon her vocation? You ask me if there are any Religious Orders in our neighbourhood where Belgian novices would be admitted. The Sisters of Notre Dame have also a Convent at Clapham, also in the diocese of Southwark.¹⁷ The others you will perceive are in the diocese of Westminster.

Adieu, dear Father, do not hesitate to let me know if I can be of any further use in this matter. Pray for your English Child,

Mary Aloysia Buckler,

Enfant de Marie.¹⁸

M^r: Buckler desires to be most kindly remembered to you.

+ for Lady Boarders.

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16 Verwijzing naar meer informatie onderaan de brief.

17 Zowel Clapham als het eerder vermelde klooster in Battersea bevonden zich in het bisdom Southwark. Verder kan nog vermeld worden dat de *Sisters of the Notre Dame* in 1855 een school opgericht hadden in Southwark, die in 1870 uitgebreid werd met een opleiding voor leerkrachten.

18 Door zich 'kind van Maria' te noemen, toont Mary een speciale devotie voor Maria en/of een bijzondere deugdzaamheid, vroomheid en vriendelijkheid na te streven. De titel wordt ook gebruikt door leden van Mariacongregaties, maar het is niet geweten of Mary hiertoe behoorde.

Briefbeschrijving

Verzender	Farbrother, Mary Louisa
Ontvanger	[Gezelle, Guido]
Verzendingsdatum	18/03/1874
Verzendingsplaats	Londen
Annotatie	De brief is gestart op 18/03/1874 er volgde een aanvulling op 20/03/187 adressaat gereconstrueerd op basis van toegevoegde notitie.
Annotatie	De brief is gestart op 18/03/1874 er volgde een aanvulling op 20/03/187 adressaat gereconstrueerd op basis van toegevoegde notitie.
Gepubliceerd in	De briefwisseling van Guido Gezelle met de Engelsen 1854-1899 / door B. De Leeuw, P. De Wilde, K. Verbeke, (o.l.v.) A. Deprez. - Gent : Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde, 1991, dl.II, p.152-154

Documentbeschrijving

Fysieke bijzonderheden

Drager	2 dubbele vellen, 206 mm x 131 mm papier, wit papiersoort: 8 zijden beschreven, inkt
Staat	volledig
Toevoegingen	op zijde 1 links in de bovenrand: Aan G. Gezelle (inkt, hand P.A.)

Bewaargegevens

Land	België
Plaats	Brugge
Bewaarplaats	Guido Gezellearchief
ID Gezellearchief	4999
Bibliotheekrecord	https://anet.be/desktop/gga/nl/opacgga/nr=tg:gga_6.11316

Inhoud

Incipit	I cannot tell you with what
Tekstsoort	brief
Talen	Engels

Gevolgde codeerpraktijk

De tekst werd diplomatisch getranscribeerd, en aangevuld met een editoriale laag.

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Colofon

Titel	18/03/1874, Londen, Mary Louisa Farbrother (= Mary Louisa Buckler) aan [Guido Gezelle]
Editeur	Guido Spyns; Marc Carlier (research); Universiteit Antwerpen
Wetenschappelijke leiding	Els Depuydt
Partners	Openbare Bibliotheek Brugge (Guido Gezellearchief); Centrum voor Teksteditie en Bronnenstudie (Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal en Letteren); Instituut voor de Studie van de Letterkunde in de Lage Landen (ISLN) (Piet Couettenier, Universiteit Antwerpen); Guido Gezellegenootschap
Uitgever	Guido Gezellearchief, KANTL/CTB
Plaats van uitgave	Brugge, Gent
Publicatiedatum	2023
Beschikbaarheid	Teksten en afbeeldingen beschikbaar onder een Creative Commons Naamsvermelding - Niet Commercieel licentie.

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Citeren

Een brief kan worden geciteerd als: [Naam van editeur(s)], [brieffschrijver aan briefontvanger, plaats, datum]. In: GezelleBrOn, Wetenschappelijke editie van de correspondentie van Guido Gezelle. [publicatiedatum] Available from World Wide Web: [link]
