

..... [p1]

Brussels, 9, rue de la Régence,

Easter Sunday night. 1868.

My Own Dear Father,

I cannot let Easter pass without wishing you a very happy one, by writing as I cannot have the great pleasure of wishing it to you personally. I suppose you have been worked to death and I am almost afraid to write lest the sight of my writing should bring down on me the reverse of a blessing even from gentle you, as perhaps even reading this letter is like the last straw that breaketh the Camel's back. However I will chance it – you cannot do worse than not read me. So first of all I wish you - every grace and blessing during this time, which in a spiritual sense ought I believe, to be considered one of joy. I hope it is one to you, after all you are so good you work so hard for God, that in spite of all your trials and annoyances – and disappointments you must be a fit subject of envy to many who seem outwardly to have smoother & happier

..... [p2]

lives. No matter what work you may have on hands do find time to say a very fervent prayer for me for I want it more than I ever did before. Père Clément said to me the last time he was speaking to me – about a week ago – “what on earth came over you my poor child?” – and that is just what I do not know, but I have spent a wretched holy week and am afraid to make even my Easter Communion. It has come to a pretty pass with me, if I let the paschal time¹ go by without doing so. Perhaps if I was well excommunicated it would be the best thing that could happen [to] me However I will try not to be so. I have been reading a heap of awful trash that has upset me and I feel as if I never could get right again I am the slave just now of whatever I am reading as my life is so companionless and I have got myself into anything but a good vein of literature. Will you pray then that I may forget all these horrors & that God will forgive me the way I spent Holy Week. I have just now access to a heap of books some of which are good & calculated to do good

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1 Paastijd, de periode van 50 dagen tussen Pasen en Pinksteren.

others are – perhaps I am too particular scarcely fit for even a right minded man to read. Well I could hardly help smiling to see that the first class of books are uncut except for the first few pages – the others have been well read through.

Monsieur Koch went to Paris this morning Madame & her eldest daughter have been there some time Monsieur has left me the charge of not only my own two pupils² but of his two sons aged 15 & 13 home for the Easter vacation. He gave me most particular instructions about them and particularly that I was to surveiller the reading of the eldest “il faut que vous sachiez, Mad^{lle}, qu’il a la passion de lire qu’il ne doit pas lire.” That was this morning. We women can be such hypocrites sometimes – men are never so – that I looked like a saint & I do not think even changed color [*though*] certain shelves upstairs came vividly before my eyes. I even told Monsieur that there were under my hand many books that I thought his son ought not to see Monsieur said I could see to it. I know they think me old & tough enough to read anything

..... [p4]

Or perhaps they think that I have a conscience.

Monsieur & I got on splendidly we shall become quite good friends if that continue³ he is so thoroughly good I cannot but respect him & I am almost beginning to admit what I have been fighting against all my life – namely that man is a superior animal to woman, and I heartily wish I had been born one. One can be anything do anything as a man as a woman one is the mere plaything of fate. Are not these nice Easter sentiments? I am talking nonsense to deaden – a lot of things. I wish it was a hundred years hence & that I knew whether I was lost or saved. I suppose by that time it will be decided.

Now do not fret about me but pray for me. Do not despise me for writing so to you. you know it relieves me to talk or write to you. I wish I could be some comfort to you – I know you know how I care for you – [*though*] you cannot know it nor can I express it. Oh if I could only see you if it was only for five minutes. I fear you must wish you had never known me. I have so badly repaid all the trouble I have given you, my own dear patient father! When you get this

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2 Dit waren de twee jongste kinderen van het gezin: Marie Victoire Augustine Koch en Stephanie Marie Antoinette Koch.

3 Foutief voor ‘continues’.

pray that I may – if I have not already done so – get courage to go to confession & to Communion – as I did did not go to Communion after my last two confessions, which bad as I am is not usual with me. If you can & when you can write to me – it will do me good and I promise you I will read no more wicked books – they make me too wretched – it is too much to pray for a few minutes' amusement and after all one gets tired of that sort of thing – it become⁴ monstrous to read much of people whose [whole] code of morals consists as [Lord] Macaulay says “in hating their neighbour & loving their neighbour's wife.”

At your convenience will you let me have the [“]History of England” I lent you I have told my sisters⁵ if they see you to ask you for it. If you want it mind do not return it, but in a short time it may be useful to me. Send or give it to some of my people in Bruges, they will be sending me some other things & so I can get it. I forgot to take you your book – shall I send it to you

Do take care of yourself. Ever your own bad wicked horrible but truly attached

Kate

..... [p6]

Easter Monday

A letter this morning from Mme Koch imploring me above all to watch her eldest son and not let him at her or her husband's books – pleasant task to be the guardian of the innocence of a young gentleman of 13 & queer books all through the house. I have done my best in the way of looking up but I wish to heavens the boy was away or the parents back; pray it may all go right, for indeed it is of great bore to me I wish Monsieur & Madame would burn their books.

I wish I could go to confession & get all right my own account but alas! it is so hard – What is the use of always beginning & never ending.

Priez pour moi, mon père bien aimé

The père is not very legible but it is there

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4 Foutief voor 'becomes'.

5 Frances, Mary en Christine Woodlock.

n'ayez pas peur

Briefbeschrijving

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