

My beloved sister,

It is with inexpressable pleasure that I have just received the letter you wrote to our dear sister Anna. You are surprised at my long silence and you perhaps often say think that I have forgotten you, but, my dear, do not believe it!... Can one forget a far-away sister and only think of oneself? How hard and selfish one would be! What is the reason for this silence? if not the fatal habit of putting off till tomorrow what one should do today. On the other hand, when one has little children one is always busy, and often, when a free moment does come along, one is tired, indolent, unable to produce a single thought, let alone write it down. My dear sister, I count on your goodness and tell myself that you will forget all my wrongs in this respect.

I was greatly surprised to hear of your change of address, for I thought you were settled for ever at Stieglitz. This, and our own moves, reminds me of this word of the Scriptures: "We have no permanent city on earth, but we seek that which is to come." Happy are we if, living on earth as strangers and travellers, we attach ourselves more and more to the things which belong to Heaven where Christ is seated on the right of the Father and where our dear, good parents have preceded us for a time. I trust that you are perfectly happy in your new sphere of activity, in any case I offer my sincere wishes that your undertaking may be to your greatest advantage in all respects. May the Lord ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ lay his blessing on you all, on your home, on your work, so that all your wishes may be fulfilled. I am especially pleased to hear that the state of your health is as you wish it. Here, also, I pray our heavenly Father to continue to fill you with strength and ~~kaxrxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xwxyxfraxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xmyxaxarx&ustraxixnxxxxixxxxx~~ ward off from you all, my dear Australian relatives, illnesses and trials, according to His will.

As for us, who on Thursday 15th July celebrate our sixth wedding anniversary, we are peacefully treading the path of life, happy in our love, happy in our children. Of course we also have our troubles, our ~~xxxx~~ trials, our cares, but however at the end of each day we can exclaim with the psalmist: "My soul, bless the Lord and forget none of his benefits, my soul, bless the Lord and let everything within me bless the name of his Holiness for it is He who forgives all iniquities, who cures all infirmities, who raises your life up from the grave, who surrounds you with kindness and compassion, who ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ so fills your mouth with good things that your youth is renewed like that of the eagle." [103] My dear husband makes life easy for me and, certainly, in spite of our children who arrive one after the other, I would not change my position for another. After spending more than four years at Morat [Murtin], where my husband taught French in ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the secondary school, we decided, or rather my husband decided, to accept the position of Headmaster of the Neuvevill Girls' Secondary School, since it was the third time that such an offer had been made to him by the authorities of that town. Besides at Morat he did not find teaching at Morat very pleasant, for above all else he likes mathematics and the natural sciences. In addition, our children were becoming more German than French, so that we are pleased with the change. At Morat we had some boarders, almost all young French lads learning German. We have had a lot of trouble and a lot of worry with them. With one whose mother lives in Paris we lost a large amount of money; another was sick in our house for 7 weeks and then died at his parents' place a fortnight after leaving us. This ~~xaxrxxx~~ bereavement which happened at the same time as that of our beloved father made us exceedingly depressed. Now we are left with only a young ~~xxxx~~ orphan ~~xxxxxx~~ boy of French origin whom we already had at Morat, and a ~~kaxxxxxxxxx~~ very healthy housemaid. Our little Helen who turned 5 on 17th May is a big plump ~~xxxx~~ blue-eyed girl who is active and practical. She is sweet and obedient and already does little jobs for me. I have not yet sent her to school because she is the constant companion of her brother Edouard, a year younger than her and who is also her very opposite. He is extremely lively, long and thin, with black eyes, he chats away like a magpie and has to be held in check like a flighty horse. He seems to be very intelligent but is not very robust, I must always handle him carefully. Their little sister Alice who ~~xaxrxxx~~ was a year old in May is also plump, she looks like Helene, but she has the eyes and the liveliness of her brother. She is developing rapidly ~~xxxx~~ at the moment, although her teething is ~~xaxxxxxxxxx~~ holding her back for walking. Between Edouard

and Alice we had a little girl whom God took back again after three days of painful existence. Our moving was not ~~hazz~~ favourable to the children, but they are well now, for which I thank the Lord from the bottom of my heart. They were all more or less ill, and I had to get the doctor to each of them. ~~Our house looked like a hospital~~  
No doubt when one has children one must expect dark days when illness is under one's roof. The Lord punishes those he loves and His hand which wounds is also that which heals. As for myself, I am well, with regard to likeness I am almost a second Marie, although less thin than her.

In the 6 years since I left the Vallon (Valley), I have only been back once to St. Imier, two years ago; accordingly, I cannot tell you much about our brothers and sisters, and moreover what I do ~~xxxx~~ is by hearsay. A month ago our dear Anna visited us after spending a week at St. Imier, and she said our relatives were in good health, apart from Fritz who is very close to passing away. The docteurs themselves are astonished that he has lived so long. Last year we had this dear brother for 4 months with us at Morat. He was very happy with us, and felt a little better, but his lungs are too diseased to hope for a cure. We must therefor expect a bereavement; ~~ixxix~~ the last link of a long chain ~~xxxx~~ is about to break. It is sad for his wife and 4 sons, of whom the second, Hermann, aged 15 to 16, seems to be going badly astray. May the Lord have pity on him. As your letters are read by everyone, do not mention this when you write.

We have promised Marie to go and spend a Sunday with her with our children. Perhaps it will be next Sunday. I greatly look forward to seeing our brothers and sister again with all their little ones. We shall also try to make them come one Sunday, it is so easy with the train. You would be astonished if you saw all the changes which have occurred in our valley; you would be quite lost. If we leave Neuveville at 7 a.m. we are at St. Imier by 9.20, is not that wonderful? All the villages are becoming unfortunately evil is making its ravages everywhere, luxury is spreading in a frightening manner, homes are often eaten away inside by the worm of discord. I believe that watchmaking is far from prosperous, and yet man runs after pleasure as if he were on earth only to enjoy himself. There is so little seriousness, so much worldliness, that we must not be surprised if the Rod which strikes so many countries for once visits us.

I am very pleased that you have received a letter from Hermann. He seems to have completely forgotten us. I thought that Dad's death would strengthen the bonds which should unite us, but Hermann did not answer either the telegramme telling him this sad news or the letter giving him details of the last moments and death of our beloved father.

Oscar is sorely tried in his children. So far he has had 3 who cannot walk, one is 4 and a half. It seems they have a disease or weakness of the bones.

My husband and children send you a thousand/greetings. My dear ~~ixix~~ sister, write me soon and may our letters arrive safely.

My letter is very long, and so I shall finish by commending you all to the Protection of our good heavenly Father and sending you all, you my dear sister, my dear brother-in-law, my dear nephews and nieces, my most loving kisses and our most affectionate greetings.

Albertine Germiquet

Neuveville, 13th July 1875