

Porrentruy, 22nd March, 1871

My very dear sister,
I am told that I have not written you for more than a year; I believe it, for writing, giving news of myself, has never been my strong point; and besides, since my last letter so many things have happened in ~~zix~~ ~~zix~~ our old Europe, close to our Switzerland, our Switzerland itself had so greatly felt the repercussions of the events taking place on our frontiers, that it was difficult to find the peace of mind necessary for writing long letters. So please forgive my long silence, remembering the circumstances in which we have been, and above all please do not think that because I have not written for so long I had forgotten you or your dear family. No I think, or rather we think often of you, we speak of you often also; and there is not a day, in our family worship, when we do not commend you, at the same time as all our dear ones, to the Heavenly Father so that He may keep you and bless you bountifully in Jesus Christ with all the blessings which He has for those who believe Him. And it is also ~~ix~~ with this prayer that I begin my letter today; may it please God to grant it in His mercy!

Anna, who will send off a letter along with this, has given you all the details concerning the family which she thought would interest you. Amongst the news you will receive, you will find a sad, very sad item, that concerns our dear father. Add your prayers to ours so that the Lord may restore his mind to health and get him peace. He is all-powerful, and against all hope we must hope. In a word He can cure him; He has cured others more ill than he. Why could He not do as much for him? Let us continue to hope therefore and let us not tire in besieging the throne of grace and asking that the Lord may make some good come out of this sore trial for the glory of His Holy Name.

So as not to repeat what Anna has already told you, I shall not talk to you of Fritz, Oscar, Hermann, Marie, Albertine or their respective families, I shall only speak of my family and myself, about whom Anna says nothing. Well then, thanks be to God, we are all well. Since I wrote you, none of us has been ill; our little boy, now aged 15 months, has grown a little, although he is still only a tiny little tot; he is very well and has never been ill, to tell the truth, and for this we cannot sufficiently thank the good God; and probably within a few days or weeks he will be able to trot around the room, without having to be held up by his aunt, or mother, or by his dad, who will not be displeased. My dear wife has also always been fairly well, very well indeed, in view of all the work she has had to ~~ix~~ do, work which the wall between France and Prussia has doubled and even tripled. Just imagine what she has to do! Apart from our six boarders, lads from 13 to 18 who go to the Porrentruy cantonal school, the weeks we lodged four young ladies who were fugitives from Mont-Celiard, and we fed them as well as two old people from the same town who had also taken refuge at Porrentruy and who lived, if not in our home, at least in the house which we live in. In addition to that on several occasions we had to lodge two of our Swiss soldiers, whom we ~~ix~~ ~~ix~~ usually invited, in view of the severe season, to share our table, although we were not obliged to do so as they did their own cooking. In this way there was sometimes 15 to 18 at table, without counting the child, and the same number sleeping in our home. Think what work this meant for my wife! Fortunately our dear sister could give her help and our maid did her very best. Now, thanks to God, we are back in our normal state. Our town which swarmed with fugitives and for a few months with soldiers has now resumed its normal aspect since, the peace preliminaries having been signed, the fugitives have been able to return to their ~~ix~~ home land and the soldiers have left us and have gone back to their homes.

You would perhaps like me to tell you something of this war. What shall I say? It was suddenly declared at a time when it was least expected, from one day, from one hour, from one moment to the next. It was a thunder-clap in a limpid, serene sky, without a cloud to warn of its approach. Overnight Switzerland raised an army of 30 to 40 thousand men to safeguard the frontier from Porrentruy to Basle and Schaffouse. A fortnight after the declaration of war, that is at the beginning of August, the French had been beaten at Woerth, Wissemburg and Forbach and were in retreat on the whole line. On 18th August, further German victories around Metz; an army of 250,000 was encircled within this city and its surroundings and a few weeks later was obliged to surrender. But already prior to this another army of almost as many men had laid down arms at Sedan and Napoleon ~~ix~~ had become a prisoner in the hands of the King of Prussia. Accordingly, the theatre of war had rapidly moved away from our frontiers; towards the end of August most of our troops were able to return to their homes. But it was

only for a few months. By October we had once more 2 to 3 thousand men in our district. Their number was increased around New Year to 6 to 8 thousand in our district of Porrentruy. The war had once more come close to our country. Belfort, which is only 7 leagues (21 miles) from Porrentruy, was besieged by the Germans, and furthermore a French army of 150,000 men ~~xxx~~ gathered at Besancon to free Belfort. From the beginning of January vanguard fighting took place almost every day 3, 4 or 5 leagues (9 to 15 miles) from here. On 15th January a great battle took place in the vicinity of ~~Montceliard~~ Montceliard; it lasted 3 days; from here we could hear not only the sound of canon-fire but of rifle-fire. Once more the French were forced to retreat to Besancon; encircled by the Germans, they had no choice but to surrender or to seek refuge on Swiss territory by laying down their arms. They choose the second alternative, and our soil was invaded by 30,000 French soldiers, dying of ~~xxx~~ hunger, cold and misery. This was in the beginning of February. Now that peace has been established, they are being sent back to their homeland; in two or three days the last will have left Switzerland.

So you see that our little country has also had to suffer from this war more murderous than any which went before it. And yet, thanks be to God, we can only bless Him. He has protected and guarded us; he gave ^{us} the opportunity to help, at least slightly, the unfortunate victims of this horrible war. We did a lot; we could have done a lot more, if only to show our gratitude to God who spared us, whilst so many beautiful and rich districts ~~xxxxxxx~~ have been laid waste and so many families, in both Germany and France, been plunged into grief.

Now peace has been made. Will it last? It is not thought so generally. The conditions of the Germans are so exorbitant that the French will not rest until they have had their revenge. And so it is that in ten or twenty years, there are some people who say only five years, we could have a ~~xxxxxxx~~ repetition of the horrible massacres of which we have been as it were the spectators. Will Switzerland then be spared as it has been this time? We hope so; but it is God who directs events, and who knows what He is reserving for us to punish us, to detach us from the world, to test our faith and to save our souls? And so more than ever I know that it is necessary to be ready for everything, to place all our trust in God and to ~~xxx~~ rely only on Him. May I, may we not be content with feeling this only, but let us act accordingly, seek the Lord whilst He can be found, call upon him whilst He is near, so that on the day of trial distress we may know where He is and can look to Him in all trust and confidence.

My dear sister, is there need that I tell you, before I end, that we always pray for you, for your husband and for your children, that we anxiously wait for your news and that we shall bless the Lord if ~~xxx~~ any news you give us is good, very good? Yes, ^{write} ~~xxxxxx~~ us soon, very long letter. God willing I shall not take as long ~~xx~~ to reply to it as to the last.

All best wishes from my dear wife for you, your ~~xxxxxx~~ husband and children; best wishes and kisses for you all from me, and you, and you dear sister, believe always in the undying affection of

Your brother who loves you

C. Jung

Pastor