

DE LA MÊME, A MONSIEUR B. A. MONOD  
CHEZ M<sup>me</sup> DE COUTOULY<sup>1</sup>, A PLAINPALAIS, GENÈVE

December, 18th. (1820).

We fortunately heard yesterday from Mrs. Stapfer that you were still *alive*, my beloved children. I began to feel uneasy at your long silence. Thank God, you are both well, and comfortably settled in your new room about which I hope to hear more. Your letter gave our good friends remarkable pleasure... The only thing we have to reproach you with is that you dont speak more of yourselves, your pleasures and occupations, and how you feel in the midst of all that new world.

Here everything goes on... Papa goes to sleep over his *journal*. Mama bustles about without ceasing. Fred. smokes and spits and lets his beard grow half an inch long. Edward sleeps with his trousers to be sooner ready in the morning... Adèle swallows *jus d'herbes*, makes wry faces and complains of headaches now and then. The little squat Doctor (Gustave)... does all in his power to make the best of his time. Edmund<sup>2</sup> has not forgotten to chatter and grin, nor Valdemar to play monkey tricks... Mary, as usual, running down in the morning with her face half washed and her hair half combed. Short legged Horace as grave as a judge, and scanning his greek verses with uncommon grace. Squirrel Eliza making wry faces and applying with pleasure to her book; and fat Bess decked out with a little *bonheur de la vie* that Mrs. Bouffé has given her for her New Year's gift and which makes her look like a barrel. On their request I took the two little girls to church with me yesterday, they behaved as well as possible and I have promised them they shall go again.

I had spent the whole morning conversing with our friend Küster<sup>3</sup> about all the children. He is, thank God, perfectly satisfied with them all... Valdemar was named with particular interest. As to Mary, K. is in adoration of her, he seems to think that she will be quite a perfection... Good K. talked likewise a great deal about Eliza... He finds her, on the whole, much improved; ... she begins to read fluently, and forms her letters extremely well...

I have taken the habit since some days (and I hope to persevere),

1. Sœur de Jean Monod, née Élisabeth Monod (1769-1850).

2. Un écolier pensionnaire.

3. Le pasteur allemand Küster, précepteur qui dirigea, de 1811 jusqu'à 1829, les études des enfants Monod et des quelques écoliers pensionnaires qui leur étaient associés.

to get up at 7, which gives me a precious hour before breakfast. I employ it to read Reinhard<sup>1</sup> and establish myself in the *étude* where I find light and fire. Gustavus is a very exact and very early riser. In general they all get up early... Good night, the clock strikes 12 and, like Cendrillon, I must run to my bed, for fear of not being punctual to the rendez-vous to-morrow morning.

*Tuesday morning.* I behaved very well this morning having got up at half-past five..., by mistake, for I thought it was one hour later... but, remember, this is because I am an old woman and dont want much sleep, and that I insist upon your taking your full seven hours rest. We continue to have good news from Copenhagen and Fred. is disposing himself to set off the 9th of next month<sup>2</sup>, he has received a most gracious leave of absence<sup>3</sup> for five months. Papa would have preferred he should have put off his journey till spring, but *die Liebe, die Liebe* admits of no delay...

You will, my good children, remember in your prayers your poor mother, who like another Martha too often allows wordly cares to engross all her time and attention and who advances in age without enjoying the bliss of having conquered the faults she had to reproach herself with in her youth. I am not quite so much hurried this year as usually owing to the resolution I have taken to give no presents at New Year except to the three little ones... It would be folly in me... if I were to spend money to useless things or even in things which are not quite necessary; without being blamefully anxious for the future, we ought to consider economy as one of our first duties, for though we, at this time, are comfortably settled and able to allow ourselves a number of reasonable enjoyments, we must not forget that the source of this ease resides solely in your good father's existence, and that, should it please the Almighty to call him away, we should all, except the three eldest of you, be reduced to nothing, or at least to so little that we would not have as many hundreds as we have now thousands to spend...

... It is broad day and I must be off to my day's work. Farewell my dear, dear children; may God Almighty bless and protect you is the fervent prayer of your affectionate mother.

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1. Théologien et prédicateur allemand. « Lettres de F. V. Reinhard sur ses études et sa carrière. Traduit de l'allemand par Jean Monod..., avec une notice raisonnée sur les écrits de Reinhard, par Ph.-A. Stapfer, Ministre du Saint-Évangile, Paris, 1816. »

2. Pour épouser sa cousine, Constance de Coninck.

3. Il est, alors, suffragant de son père.