3 Rue St Jacques

Bruges

Reverend and dear Sir –

As I have not been to Confession since the death of my poor Boy I should be glad to do so as soon as possible - and if Dr Ledbitter does not return - I hope you will be able to hear mine always because I require a Director as much as a Confessor you already know a little of my family matters it would be much easier for me to explain the rest to you than to a Stranger - and being in a foreign country separated from all my friends & with so many Boys to educate & manage &, whose temporal & whose eternal welfare perhaps depends on judicious management it is very important that I should have a Director who thoroughly understands English - It is one of my impressions that you are to be my Director, and as neither my Childrens Protestant Guardians or even the Protestant Lawyer ever thwart my impressions now I am sure you will undertake the burden - I have had a great deal of trouble in my time - Ever since I married my life has been one continued penance - brought up without any religion I married early to escape a disagreeable home my first Husband drank very very much, and died an emaciated old man at 38 - leaving me with 3 little children & not very well provided for I then married his Brother which by the Laws of England was illegal - & after some little time I had a scruple about it, and became very ill from anxiety of mind - and insisted upon seeing a Priest, and having a dispensation or else separating As we were both Protestants of course my Husband would not allow that - but called in an army of doctors, and they decided that I was deranged and I was placed in a Lunatic Asylum near Bristol, where I remained 3 Months, at the end of that time after suffering more than I can tell you I was taken home again and I was frightened out of it for a time - but 3 years afterwards my Husband died from diseased heart - and when he was upon his death bed he asked my pardon - and said he would rather his right hand had been chopped off than that he had ever signed the certificate to have taken me to such a place but of course I never repeated what he said to the Guardians For some 2 or 3 years after his death my health was so fearfully bad - & the charge of the business so great that the wish to be a Catholic seemed in Abeyance - but then I began to study again & eventually became one 7 years since - but then I became ill again & as I disturbed the people by praying for the souls in Purgatory at unseasonable hours - My Trustees adopted the same remedy but they removed me at the end of a fortnight – but during that fortnight one of my Sons had incurred debts to a considerable amount - & it ended by his going to Australia - At the time I became a Catholic 7 years since. I was engaged to be married to a Protestant - & in spite of my change of religion and my illness he wished to fulfil the engagement - but of course everything appeared then in a different light - And I broke it off - although even now I have a letter now & then - which I never answer unless it is about the Brewery or business matters - In the 1st place it would be absurd for a person at my age to marry a 3rd time And in the next place I have no faith in his caring about me - If I had no income it is not likely he would - when he dislikes Catholicism bitterly - not only so - I want to form no ties of the Kind It is quite as much as I can do to think of saving my soul - and if my health were to become better I should like to do a great deal more for God than I can do now - When one has lost 2 children & 2 Husbands one must be made of very hardened stuff - if it does not lead you to God And I assure you although the shock of my poor Boy’s death has passed off so quietly at present - I have suffered far more anguish from it than the loss of both my Husbands - I have explained it all by letter that you may more completely understand my case - I wish I could abstain from such abstinence days - Perhaps I may after a time - I rise now to breakfast and for 18 years I did not I am not afraid that you will not be patient with me - but I require rather a firm Director - Hoping you will excuse this long letter

I remain

Yours very Truly in Christ

Jemima Hazeland