

translation by a Teacher
Moriaulme, 12th Jy. 1919

Dear Mr & Mrs Hains,

I received yesterday your letter of the 8th of May - it arrived on the 6th of July - I suppose that you are in possession of the letter which I wrote to you about the 1st May giving you all the details about about the death of your well beloved son.

Here are the exact details: - There was an ^{Australian} ammunition depot at the railway station of Moriaulme - whilst we were having our lunch about 11 o'clock with your son on Monday the 14th of April an explosion took place at this railway station. The Doctor wished to betake himself to the spot where the accident took place in spite of my husband & myself, thinking that his duty as an officer called him thither. He had promised us not to approach the railway station too closely. In spite of that he went into a house opposite to the depot in order to give attention to a sick person (a civilian). When coming out of this house in spite of the entreaties of the soldiers he wished to take a photograph - at this moment a great explosion took place, & unhappily it was at the same moment that our dear friend the Doctor was mortally wounded, and

afterwards brought ~~to~~ back to my home.
Be sure, dear Mr & Mrs Hains, that he was well
looked after & surrounded with the greatest
possible affection during his stay with us, and
especially during his last moments my brother
& I ~~to~~ never left him for a single moment.
He was fixed up, put to bed by us, moreover when
the military authorities came to take him away,
my brother & I accompanied him to ~~the~~ ^{red cross} automobile
in order to see if he were properly stretched out
& covered, which was unnecessary, for
great attention had been paid to him —
he died half an hour after leaving us,
but without having regained consciousness.
However, I repeat it to you, he understood me
for I held his hands & from time to time
I felt a pressure when I spoke to him.
He had a religious burial, and all military
honours were paid to him, as was his due.
My brother, a Belgian doctor, a friend of your
son, & the Burgomaster of Moriaulme were
present at ~~the~~ his funeral. I have had a photo
taken of the grave & of the cemetery where
your well beloved son is at rest.

I intend to send it to you, for I believe that it will be a good Souvenir for you.

I will care for his grave by putting flowers on it & if I can I will have a marble cross put up in place of the wooden one which is actually there. I will apply to the military authorities to get permission - I shall go very often to pray at his grave. I shall take care also of the photograph of the neighbourhood of the accident. I shall send you from here, some time, the last souvenirs which I have in my possession. I suppose that you have received the things which he had at his cantonment [military headquarters?] - an officer in his regiment told me that it was the custom to forward them immediately to the parents. Be so kind as to let me know if you have received various parcels containing albums, postcard views, of the principal buildings of Belgium, he had packed up & sent that by me to his ^{chère} ~~dear~~ ~~mother~~ ^{as he called her,} for ~~it~~ I must tell you that ~~soon~~ since his arrival it ~~was his custom~~ he had accustomed himself to speak French, & he had succeeded in speaking it

as fluently as a Belgian.

I have great difficulty in consoling myself for the loss of our dear Doctor - he was more than a friend to us - he was a member of our family. I must tell you that he on his side felt the same towards us, he showed a great affection for us - I must tell you that I live with a young brother of 45 yrs, & I have been a widow for 19 yrs without children. If I give you these explanations it is in order that you may not think it strange with that my brother's name is Wilmar & that my signature is different.

My brother went for a few days to Brussels with the Doctor to show him the most interesting things in the capital. He had been very happy in his trip - it had refreshed & delighted him immensely - He was so good - Be sure, dear Mr & Mrs Hains that each day his thoughts went out towards you - he used to speak to me so often about his dear parents & his home.

He gave me the photograph where Mr Hains is in the garden & Mrs Hains on the verandah, as well as his younger brother

as he used to say. I have also the photographs of his dog & the flower (a white carnation) that you sent him - I will keep them as a Souvenir. I have asked his assistant a man name Arthur Beveridge, a corporal, for whom the Doctor had a great friendship, to go as soon as he arrives back in Australia & to give you the details about his life spent with us as well as about his terrible accident. Besides this an officer Mr Golding has also promised to go & see you on his return about September or October. This gentleman spent the last evening with the Doctor & us. I hope to ~~see~~ hear from you from time to time - that will give great pleasure to my brother & myself in memory of the great affection which we had for our dear friend the Dr.

I am always entirely at your disposal for all you wish to know from Belgium. My cousin Miss Mornel about whom Mr Arthur & Mr Golding will speak to you is in very deep grief. Accept, dear Mr & Mrs Hains, a very kind remembrances from my brother & myself -
J. Verbockhaven