Jean-Baptiste André Godin à Marie Howland, 5 janvier 1878

Auteur·e : Godin, Jean-Baptiste André (1817-1888)

Les folios

En passant la souris sur une vignette, le titre de l'image apparaît.

4 Fichier(s)

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Présentation

Auteur·eGodin, Jean-Baptiste André (1817-1888)
Date de rédaction5 janvier 1878
Lieu de rédactionGuise (Aisne) – Familistère
DestinataireHowland, Marie (1836-1921)
Lieu de destinationHammonton (New Jersey, États-Unis)
Scripteur / ScriptriceMoret, Marie (1840-1908)

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Description

RésuméGodin accuse réception du livre *Papa's Own Girl* de Marie Howland, qu'il n'a pu lire en anglais mais dont il s'est fait traduire des passages et qu'il estime du meilleur esprit. Il explique qu'il est incompris en France comme Marie Howland l'est en Amérique et que deux de ses éditeurs et son imprimeur ont été victimes de la réaction monarchique ; il regrette de ne pas avoir d'imitateur. Godin signale à Marie Howland qu'en mars 1877, débarrassé des ennuis de famille, il a entrepris la construction de la dernière aile du Familistère qui sera meublée l'année prochaine et qui portera la population du Familistère à 1 200 personnes. Il indique qu'il a depuis la même époque donné des conférences hebdomadaires et provoqué la formation de groupes et unions de travailleurs et travailleuses qui discuteront bientôt des statuts de l'association du capital et du travail. Il explique que l'association existe de fait et que ceux qui en acceptent les principes sont sociétaires participants aux bénéfices industriels et commerciaux dans les proportions des services rendus représentées par les appointements ou émoluments annuels. Il annonce qu'un journal va être fondé pour être l'organe non d'une doctrine mais des intérêts matériels de l'association. Il l'informe enfin qu'il ne peut lui promettre de rédiger l'article qu'elle demande. Le post-scriptum indique que la lettre est traduite en anglais par « mon secrétaire » [Antoine Massoulard ?].
NotesLa lettre est la traduction en anglais de la lettre de Godin à Marie Howland du 2 janvier 1878.

Mots-clés

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Guise January the 5th 1878

Dear Madam,

In the last days of December, I received your undated letter, and I have been pleased to see that you often take pains to occupy yourself about the Familistère.

Yes, I received "Papa's own girl". I had only a summary idea of its contain by what was related to me, but for the advice of readers, this work proceed out of the best spirit and by what has been translated for me I can endorse this opinion.

The troubles you experienced in the publication of your work is a proof that there is a common destiny for all who write about the Familistère. We, in France, met with such misfortunes. My printer and two of my editors have failed among the difficulties which the monarchist reaction, in order to hinder the progress of ideas, has created in this country to the publishers of the republican party.

We are not yet out of the troubles inherent to the actual order of industry. The future has certainly many vicissitudes in store for us, before we are able to accomplish this evolution, and it should be difficult to prevail upon the owners of power and wealth, that to consecrate the interest of the different classes of society. – I mean the poors and the riches, the

c. Marie Moulard.

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workingmen and the employers, — ought to be their work.

You say you did not meet a fondator of Familistère in America, but such a follower of mine is yet to be found in Europe, and I fear I shall die without an imitator.

As to your asking if the Familistère is always prosperous; I have the satisfaction to inform you that the family troubles by which my progress was hindered are now at an end.

As soon as this affair was settled, I resumed the work, and, last March, I commenced building the right wing of the Familistère. It is possible to say that the inner work shall be made next year, so that the Familistère will be quite completed and capable to lodge at least 1200 people.

From this same day, I gave weekly lectures to the inhabitants, and I have caused a series of groups and unions to be organised, which are composed of the whole population and embrace the general functions and divisions of the work both in the Familistère and the shops, for the purpose of giving to every one a part of initiative adequate to his aptitudes.

The constitution of the groups and unions is to day issued; I am studying the general statutes of the association since a long time, and they shall be soon opened to discussion in the general council.

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of the unions.

From this moment, the association is a matter of fact, and all those who willingly accept its principles are associates and shall partake in the benefit of the manufacturing business and in those of the Familistère & stores, proportionally to the yearly amount of wages earned by them.

The Familistère is about to start a newspaper; I shall send you the numbers, but in the beginning do not look for many doctrinal articles. It shall be a simple country newspaper endeavouring to get readers and chiefly to serve the interests of the association — I mean business.

As you are I do not remain idle, but alas! notwithstanding all my endeavours, I will not impose upon you that there are in this country many passionated followers of my doctrine.

You are slow to understand things that contradict their habits, and it is not without great trouble that they let down feelings of egoism and individualism to keep up the love of other people's goods and to practise solidarity among men.

I cannot write the article you ask me for your newspapers. I have so many occupations here that I cannot find time to think of America; but I will consider as a duty to send you all the things of interest which undoubtedly shall soon exposed about

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Mme Familistère.

Please accept, dear Madam, for you and your husband, the hommage of my best feelings.

Godin

PS. This letter is translated by my secretary.

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