

The letters sent by Pablo Sarasate to Madame Amélie de Lassabathie, 1870-72

(Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, USA)

transcription, translation, commentary

Nicholas Sackman and Bastien Terraz

© 2020

Introduction

Pablo Sarasate (baptised Martín Melitón) was born 10th March 1844 in Pamplona (Spain).¹ Demonstrating an extraordinary facility for playing the violin, Pablo was sent for tuition at the Madrid Conservatoire. In 1855 it was decided that he should complete his studies at the Paris Conservatoire under the guidance of Jean-Delphin Alard² and in July of that year Pablo and his mother, Javiera Antonia, set off on the long journey to the French capital. In Bayonne Javiera contracted cholera, rapidly succumbed, and died.³ It was arranged that Pablo would be taken to Paris where he was welcomed into the home of Théodore de Lassabathie and his wife, Amélie; Théodore (d.1871) was the administrator of the Paris Conservatoire. The couple, being childless, treated Pablo as if he was the son they never had. In due course Pablo referred to Mme. de Lassabathie as his ‘mother’, and Amélie (d.1872), in turn, referred to Pablo as ‘the Baby’. In 1857 the Paris Conservatoire awarded Sarasate their *Premier Prix* for performance on the violin.

On 4th April 1870 Sarasate arrived in New York to begin a concert tour which would eventually encompass both north and south America; he did not return to Paris until May 1872, having given the first US performance, on 3rd February 1872 in New York, of Max Bruch’s Violin Concerto [no. 1].

While he was in the Americas Sarasate was part of a touring ensemble (managed by the impresario Max Strakosch) which was formed in order to enhance the farewell concerts of the soprano Carlotta Patti (c.1840-1889), elder sister of Adelina Patti (1843-1919). Other members of the ensemble included the pianists Henri Kowalski (1841-1916) and Théodore Ritter (1840-1886). Concerts of ‘light’ pieces of music were structured to provide Patti with the best environment in which she could display her vocal skills. Within two days of his arrival in New York Sarasate was performing in public at the first of Carlotta’s five ‘Farewell’ concerts; by the end of that first month Sarasate had performed in a total of twelve concerts, seven of which took place at the recently opened (1866) Steinway Hall. Subsequently there were concerts in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Detroit, Montreal, and Newport; in South America there were concerts in Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Valparaiso, and Lima.

During the years he spent in north and south America Sarasate wrote many letters to his adoptive mother, Amélie de Lassabathie, in Paris. Twenty-nine of these letters, dated between 7th April 1870 and 16th February 1872, are today archived at the Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, USA. The distribution of these letters is very uneven: there are seventeen letters dated between 7th April 1870 and 26th September 1870 but after the latter date there are no more letters until the middle of May(?) 1871 – eight months later; see [**Letter 18**].

¹ In later years ‘Pablo’ was a self-chosen replacement for ‘Martín’.

² Alard was the son-in-law of the violin-maker and dealer Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume.

³ Some accounts state that Javiera Antonia died of a heart attack.

The Sibley collection includes a small envelope on which Amélie de Lassabathie has written:

Pays parcourus par mon cher Enfant – ce sont les Seules N^{elles} [nouvelles] que j'aie de lui depuis sa lettre du 26 Sep^{bre}

Countries travelled by my dear child – these are the only news-letters that I received from him after the letter of the 26th September [1870].

Madame de Lassabathie's tone of voice – coloured by disappointment? – appears to confirm the eight-month cessation of communication (assuming that the Sibley collection is complete). The collection does not contain any of the letters written by Madame de Lassabathie to Sarasate; the whereabouts of these letters – at least eighteen in number (see [Letter 17]) – is unknown.

In the following pages the transcriptions of Sarasate's French-language texts replicate, as far as possible, the manner in which the letters were written. Curious features of Sarasate's writing style, e.g. his (inconsistent) habit of using upper-case letters at the start of words which have no such need, his multitudinous commas, the dashes which he frequently uses instead of full-stops, his misspellings, his omission of accents – all have been transcribed unaltered.

The present authors' translations have attempted to reflect Sarasate's informal voice rather than always translating in a literal manner. The punctuation is the responsibility of the present authors. Sarasate's letters are ordered chronologically.

[Letter 1]

New-Yorck Jeudi

Querida madre mia – C'est à ne pas croire! j'ai déjà débuté! ... à peine remis des fatigues d'une traversée qui a été très pénible quoique très prompte, arrivé Lundi soir, j'ai paru hier devant le Public américain dans l'immense Salle de Steinway, et j'ai été salué par les applaudissements de plus de 2,000 personnes. Rappels, Bis après mon morceau de Martha, j'ai du jouer la Gavotte de Mignon. Tout cela s'est fait si vite, on vit tellement à la vapeur ici, que je crois rêver. Les Journeaux parlent déjà aujourd'hui – Je t'envoie ce que j'ai pu trouver, cela ne me paraît très bienveillant pour moi, mais il paraît que je dois m'estimer très heureux d'avoir été traité avec autant de bienveillance pour une première fois – Je joue ce soir, demain, Samedi et Dimanche! Pendant la semaine sainte nous ne ferons rien, mais reprenons ensuite à Boston Philadelphie etc. mais M^r Max Strakosh est si mystérieux que je ne puis rien savoir de positif –

Si tu as quelque chose à me dire Everett House, Concert Patti on nous enverra les lettres –

Ritter père est au Brésil pour préparer nos Concerts

Je suis bien heureux d'avoir autant d'occupations, je serais mort de tristesse sans cela. Je ne dors plus, j'ai le mal du pays, je me souviens trop des amis que j'ai laissés, et surtout de vous deux, mais j'ai du Courage, bien du Courage

On vient me voir, (M^r Steinway) il y a un autre départ après demain Samedi, je t'écrirai de nouveau – nous jouons ce soir à 4 lieues d'ici nous partons tout à l'heure

à toi ma bien Chère Mère.

Et amigo, comment est il? Je l'embrasse de tout mon cœur – ton fils

Sarasate

7 avril

New York Thursday

My dearest mother – it's unbelievable! – I have already given my first concert! Barely recovered from the exhaustion brought about by the gruelling yet swift crossing [of the Atlantic], having arrived Monday evening [4th April], I performed yesterday in front of the American public in the enormous Steinway Hall and I was greeted by applause from more than 2,000 people. Curtain calls – demands for a repeat after my *Martha* piece – I had to play my *Gavotte de Mignon*. All this happened so quickly; life here is so fast-paced that it feels like a dream. I have already made it into today's papers; I will send you those that I have found. [The reviews] don't strike me as being very positive, but it seems I should consider myself very pleased to have been treated in such a kindly manner for a first performance. I am performing this evening, tomorrow, Saturday, and Sunday! During Holy Week we will not be giving any concerts but we will resume in Boston, then Philadelphia, and so on. Mr Max Strakosch is so secretive that I don't know anything for certain.

Address your letters to the [Carlotta] Patti Concert Ensemble, Everett House; the letters will be forwarded to us.

[Théodore] Ritter's father is in Brazil organising our concerts.

I am really pleased to have so much to do; I would die of sadness otherwise. I am not sleeping much – I am homesick – I think too often about the friends I have left behind, especially both of you, but I have strength – a lot of strength.

Mr Steinway is coming to see me; there is another departure after tomorrow (Saturday); I will write to you again; this evening we will be four leagues from here; we are leaving soon.

To you my most dear mother, and to my *amigo* – how is he? I embrace him with all my heart.

Your son,

Sarasate

7th April

NOTES

A calendar for 1870 confirms that 7th April was a Thursday.

The tour manager was Max Strakosch (1835-1892) the younger brother of Maurice Strakosch (1825-1887) who was also an impresario (and brother-in-law to Adelina Patti).

Pablo Sarasate, *Réminiscence de Martha de Flotow*, *Morceau de concert* for violin and piano.

Pablo Sarasate, *Romance et Gavotte de Mignon*, op. 16, for violin and piano.

Everett House was a high-class (and expensive) hotel situated opposite New York's Union Square.

See [Letter 15] for Sarasate's comments about the cost of the concert preparations organised by Mr Ritter (senior) in Rio de Janeiro.

Sarasate's *amigo* was Théodore de Lassabathie.

[Letter 2]

New Yorck Samedi

9 avril

Querida madre mia

Je Commence à m'habituer un peu à ma nouvelle existence, grâce à mes occupations qui ne me laissent pas le temps de penser une minute. Je bénis M^r Strakosh qui me fait jouer tous les soirs, et même dans le jour. Cela me fait un grand bien, j'échappe à mes idées qui sont bien tristes quand je me retrouve seul dans ma chambre, la nuit surtout. Je ne veux plus parler de cela, il me faut tant de Courage!

Je sors d'une grande Matinée à Steinway Hall où l'on m'a bissé mes deux morceaux. Demain soir Concert à Brukling (Le faubourg St Germain americain) Ce sera mon 5^{ème} Concert Pendant la Semaine Sainte, Repos, puis..... j'ignore absolument ce que M' Strakosh Compte faire. C'est l'homme le plus mystérieux de France, et de Navarre, et l'on ne Connait ses décisions qu'à la dernière minute – Cependant, j'ai cru deviner qu'il a l'intention de donner encore quelques soirées ici, puis à Boston, Philadelphie, etc, jusqu'à nouvel ordre, et si tu as quelque chose à me dire, envoie à Everett House, nous ferons suivre.

J'apprends que M^{lle} Patti t'a envoyé un Télégramme à mon arrivée, je l'ignorais mais je vais bien la remercier. C'est Vraiment une aimable personne. Elle me Comble d'attentions, et fait tout son possible pour que je ne m'ennuie pas trop.

Triste Ville que New-Yorck, et triste Peuple. Ici on ne vit que pour faire des affaires, et le reste n'est que passe temps – L'américain est l'être le plus maussade le plus désagréable qu'on puisse voir – Il n'est pas fréquentable – Nous ne voyons donc personne, et quand par hasard nous avons un moment de liberté, nous jouons au Whist chez M^{lle} Patti, qui nous permet de fumer la cigarette (notre plus grande Consolation) et alors je cause de Paris, je leur apprend des nouvelles, et il est très souvent question de toi, et de mon amigo. M^{lle} Patti sait bien que je vous aime plus que tout au monde, et sans vous Connaitre, elle éprouve pour vous deux une très grande sympathie. Elle m'a Chargé de vous le dire –

Parmi les petits papiers que je t'ai envoyés il y a un petit fragment du journal le Herald, qui se tire ici à 150,000 exemplaires – Tout le monde connaît déjà ma frimousse ici, et partout ou je vais ou sait mon nom. Il est vrai que depuis plusieurs jours je le vois dans tous les journeaux

Il tombe de la neige, il fait un froid énorme! Mauvais Climat, et Ville très triste. Nous allons ce soir voir frou-frou en Anglais, c'est le grand succès Théâtral du moment –

Mademoiselle Hélène a-t-elle été vous voir. Si oui, vous avez dû l'aimer tout de suite, elle est si bonne et si belle. Dites lui Combien je lui suis dévoué, et Combien je voudrais lui prouver que je suis de tout Cœur son meilleur ami et celui qui l'apprécie le mieux –

Embrassez bien mon Cher amigo, et Croyez moi

Votre fils bien affectionné

Sarasate

une bonne poignée de main à l'excellent Réty

New York Saturday

9th April [1870]

My dearest mother,

I am beginning to adjust to my new life, thanks to all my obligations which leave me no time to think, even for a minute. I bless Mr Strakosch who makes me perform every night and even during the day. It does me a world of good; I can get away from the sad thoughts which affect me when I am alone in my room, especially at night. I don't want to talk about that anymore. I need so much strength!

I have just finished a *matinée* at Steinway Hall where I had to repeat both of my pieces. Tomorrow evening I have a concert in Brooklyn (the American equivalent of *le faubourg St Germain*); this will be my fifth concert. During Holy Week, time off; then I have no idea what Mr Strakosch is planning; he is the most secretive man in France, and in Navarre, and one knows nothing until the last minute. However, I suspect that he wants me to give some more *soirées* here, then in Boston, Philadelphia etc. For the moment, if you have anything to tell me, send [your letter] to Everett House; it will be forwarded .

I understand that Carlotta sent you a telegram when I arrived; I didn't know about this; I will thank her. She is a really nice person. She looks after me and does everything possible so that I don't get too despondent.

New York is a miserable city, as are its people. Everyone lives only for business – anything else is just a hobby. The average American is the most sullen and unpleasant person that one can meet – not the kind of person one would wish to associate with. We therefore do not socialise with anyone and when we have a moment of freedom, we play whist at Carlotta's; she allows us to smoke a cigarette (our greatest consolation); then I talk about Paris. I give her news which, very often, is about you and my *amigo*. Carlotta is well aware that I love you more than anything in the world, and, even though she does not know you, she feels a great affinity for you both. She told me to tell you this.

Among the newspaper cuttings which I have sent you there is a small fragment from *The [New York] Herald* newspaper (which sells 150,000 copies a day). Everyone here already recognises my face and everywhere I go people know my name. It must be said that I have seen it [i.e. seen my name] in all the newspapers over the last few days.

It is snowing and terribly cold! – an awful climate and a miserable city. This evening we are going to see *frou-frou* in English; it is the big theatrical success of the moment.

Has Miss Hélène been to see you? If she has you must have loved her immediately; she is so good and so beautiful. Tell her that I am devoted to her and would like to demonstrate, without any reservation, that I am with all my heart her best friend and the person who appreciates her the most.

A big hug for my dear *amigo*, and believe me

Your most affectionate son

Sarasate

A firm handshake for the excellent Réty.

NOTES

Frou-Frou was the title of a play written by Ludovic Halévy (1834-1908) and Henri Meilhac (1831-1897) which was produced in New York between February and May 1870.

The identity of *Mademoiselle Hélène* has not been discovered.

Réty was Emile Réty (1833-1915), General Secretary to the Paris Conservatoire.

[Letter 3]

N° 3

New-Yorck, mardi 12 a^l

70

[written upside-down at the top of the page]: *Dites à mon amigo que je l'adore et qu'il faut qu'il se soigne pour mon retour.*

Chère Mère – Quel plaisir, ta lettre m'arrive à l'instant, quelle joie, je suis bien heureux, tu ne peux savoir Combien tes quelques lignes me font de bien, car vrai, je me trouve bien isolé en ce pays. Tu as vue ma bonne et Chère Hélène. Tu l'aimes déjà, j'étais sûr qu'elle te Capturerait, et Cependant j'avais besoin de le savoir, maintenant rien ne m'inquiète plus, avec une mère comme toi, et un idéal Comme elle, je dois réussir, et atteindre le but que je me propose, C'est-à-dire, Succès et profit – Quand reviendrai je? that is the question – faites provision toutes deux d'une bonne dose d'affection pour mon retour, voilà ce que je vous demande, j'en aurai bien besoin –

Tout va bien – Les Journaux parlent tellement de moi, et ils sont si nombreux, que je ne peux les attraper tous, mais je t'en envoie Cependant une bonne provision J'ai fait partir hier un journal en entier à ton adresse – C'est la feuille musicale de l'endroit, très répandue, et rédigée par un homme de talent et bon musicien.

Maintenant pendant la Semaine Sainte, je me repose en travaillant ferme pour la Semaine prochaine, ou je devrai jouer souvent à toutes sortes de Concerts sans Carlotta Patti ni Ritter – Voici ma position actuelle – M^r Strakosh monte La Flute Enchantée avec son étoile Patti pour la Reine de la nuit, et il Compte donner une bonne série de Représentations de l'Opéra de Mozart – Ritter dirigera l'Orchestre, et moi, on m'utilise ailleurs, en me vendant très cher à tous ceux qui me désirent – ainsi Lundi 18 je joue pour une grande œuvre de bienfaisance (je ne sais quoi, c'est en anglais) et Mercredi le Concerto de Mendelssohn avec Orchestre au 1^{er} Concert de Kowalski Pianiste, qui m'a payé 100 Dollars en or (500 francs) tu vois que mon Impressario ne fait pas de mauvaises affaires avec ton serviteur. Sans Compter bien d'autres choses qu'il prépare a mon intention. En un mot, je suis devenu une Chose, une marchandise, un Paquet, que l'on a le droit de trimballer d'un côté ou d'un autre, à volonté – Cela détruit un peu mes idées d'indépendance, je ne m'attendais pas à cette manière d'agir, mais ça y est, et d'ailleurs le Public me connaît et m'aime beaucoup déjà, et le succès que je trouve partout me Console –

M^{lle} Patti est malade – je l'ai salué de ta part par le trou de la serrure elle t'envoie mille Compliments.

Je n'écrirai jamais la bas qu'elle aille au diable cette femme, je l'exècre, elle n'entendra plus jamais parler de moi, et j'espère que son nom ne me poursuivra pas jusqu'ici – Triste souvenir! – Quelle leçon

Le Départ pour le Brésil n'aura lieu que le 23 mai ou 23 Juin – jusque là les Etats-Unis seront notre Residence.

La Diva Patti a reçu hier en notre présence la Visite d'une Indienne grande dame, fille d'un grand Chef de Tribut en Costume du Pays (toutes les Couleurs réunis). Elle venait lui remettre un billet qui nous servirait en cas d'attaque dans les Contrées de l'Amérique du Sud que nous explorerons un jour – C'est rassurant – Elle était en voiture, et avec une très nombreuse suite –

Mille bons Baisers

Votre fils

Sarasate

[written along the margin] *j'ai envoyé un journal à Heugel*

[written upside-down at the top of the last page] *le mot encore que tu dois trouver souvent dans les articles me Concernant veut dire bis – ici on me fait répéter chaque fois que je joue.*

No. 3 [Sarasate's numbering of his letters]

New York Tuesday 12th April

1870

[written upside-down at the top of the page]: Tell my *amigo* that I adore him and that he must look after himself until I return.

Dear Mother – what a pleasure – your letter has just arrived – what joy – I am so happy. I cannot tell you how much good those few lines have done me, as truly I find myself so very isolated in this country. You have met with my dear Helen and already you love her; I was certain you would be captivated but I needed to be sure. Now nothing can worry me, not when I have a mother like you, and an ideal like her. I must succeed; I must achieve the goal[s] which I have set myself, namely [artistic] success and [monetary] wealth. When will I return? – 'that is the question'. Prepare to shower me with affection when I do; that's what I ask; that's what I will need.

Everything is going well; the newspapers talk of me all the time. There are so many of them I can't collect them all, but I am sending you a good selection. Yesterday I sent an entire newspaper to your address; it's the local music paper, widely read, and is written by a talented man who is also a good musician.

At the moment, as it's Holy Week, I am resting (while working hard for next week when I will have to play all sorts of concerts without Carlotta and Ritter); this is my current situation. Mr Strakosch is promoting *Die Zauberflöte*, starring Carlotta as 'The Queen of the Night', and he intends to mount a series of performances of Mozart's opera. Ritter will be conducting the orchestra, so I will be employed elsewhere – sold, expensively, to those who want me. Thus, on Monday 18th [April], I am performing at a big charity event (I don't know what for – it's in English), and then on Wednesday [20th] I will perform the Mendelssohn *Concerto* [in D minor] with [string] orchestra at Kowalski's first concert, for which he is paying me 100 dollars in gold (500 francs). As you can see, my agent [Strakosch] does good business out of your servant, and there are many more commitments which he is arranging for me. In short I have become an object, a commodity, a package, which can be dragged around, here, there, and everywhere, as needed. This rather undermines my ideas of independence – I didn't expect this kind of behaviour – but that's how it is. No matter; my public knows me and already loves me a lot, and I am consoled by the success I encounter everywhere.

Carlotta is ill. I sent her your greetings through the keyhole of her room; in return she sends you a thousand best wishes.

I will never write there; that woman can go to hell; I loathe her; she will never hear from me again and I hope that her name will not follow me here. What painful memories! – what a lesson learned.

Our departure for Brazil is scheduled for either 23rd May or 23rd June; until then the United States will be where we stay.

Yesterday, Carlotta received, in our presence, a visit from an important indian lady, the daughter of a tribal chief; she was dressed in national costume (a multitude of colours). She came to deliver a letter [of safe passage?] which we can use if we are attacked while in the South American countries which, one day, we will be exploring; it is reassuring. She came in a car, and was accompanied by a sizeable entourage.

A thousand kisses

Your son

Sarasate

[written along the margin] I have sent a newspaper to Heugel.

[written upside-down at the top of the last page] The word 'encore' (which you will often find in the articles about me) is the same as 'bis'; here, in New York, I am called upon to play everything twice.

NOTES

For a newspaper review of Kowalski's first concert see the end of [Letter 6].

It is possible that the woman who 'can go to hell' was Gabrielle Elluini; see also [Letter 10] and [Letter 15].

Jacques Léopold Heugel (1811-1883) was a music publisher in Paris. Heugel had published Sarasate's *Hommage à Rossini* in 1866 and his *Romance et Gavotte de Mignon* in 1869.

[Letter 4]

N^o 4

New-Yorck 16 avril

Bonjour querida – Je croyais n’avoir rien à faire Cette semaine, et je ne sors pas des Répétitions – Je joue dans deux cérémonies Religieuses demain Dimanche – Le matin à l’Eglise S^{te} Anne, Messe à grand Orchestre, ou j’exécuterai la Romance en fa de Beethoven, et dans l’après-midi à Brukling, l’ave Maria de Gounod avec Patti Ritter et les Harpes – Lundi 18 Concert à l’académie avec Orchestre, et mercredi 20 Concert de Kowalski (qui mange un argent fou ici) toute la fortune de ca femme (le fruit de ses veilles) y passera –

Je te tiendrai au courant de mes faites et gestes –

La Patti va mieux – Moi je me porte très mal – Le Climat d’ici est mortel. Dans une même journée, nous passons d’une très grande chaleur au grand froid, et à la neige – nous changeons de Costume trois fois par jour – Toutes ces variations d’atmosphère m’ont beaucoup affaibli, et quand arrive le soir je suis mort de fatigue, et je saigne du nez comme un bœuf – C’est peu poétique, mais c’est comme ça – Il faut s’habituer à tout – Dans quelques jours les journeaux reparleront de ma petite personne, je t’enverrai ce que je pourrai – Je n’ai pu t’expédier des programmes Patti; ils sont tellement volumineux!

Mon Violon fait l’admiration de tous les Connaisseurs, et il y en a beaucoup ici, on vient très souvent le visiter, on le regarde, ou le caresse, on le flatte, absolument comme une jolie femme – le Voyage et le Changement de Climat l’ont éprouvé aussi, mais j’espère qu’avec le temps, de la patience, et de bons soins, il redeviendra ce qu’il était – Lui et moi nous te saluons, et t’envoyons en forme de Caresses, une jolie aureole de trilles et de baisers –

à mon amigo un abrazo muy afretado, y a la Señorita Helena, mil y mil Recuerdos de Todo Carazon - J’espère qu’elle Continue à aller te voir, et que tu l’aimes de plus en plus – ?

No. 4

New York 16th April [1870]

Hello my dearest. I thought that I had nothing to do this week; [instead] I am constantly in rehearsal. Tomorrow, Sunday, I am performing in two religious ceremonies: in the morning, at the church of Saint Anne – Mass with full orchestra – where I will be playing the *Romance in F* [Op. 50] by Beethoven; then, in the afternoon, in Brooklyn – the *Ave Maria* by Gounod, with Patti, Ritter, and the Harpes. On Monday 18th I will be at the Academy [of Music], performing with an orchestra, and on Wednesday 20th with Kowalski (who is losing money hand over fist); his wife’s entire fortune (a lifetime’s acquisition) will vanish.

I will keep you informed about my movements and whereabouts.

Carlotta is much better; I, however, am not well. The climate here is dreadful: in just one day it can change from very hot to very cold, and then to snow – we have to change our clothes three times a day. All these climatic changes are terribly debilitating, and by the time that evening comes I am exhausted and having copious nose-bleeds. It’s not pretty but that’s how it is; one has to adapt to every situation. In a few days the newspapers will once again be talking about little old me; I’ll send you what I can. I was unable to send you the programmes for Patti’s concerts – they’re too big!

My [1724 Stradivari] violin is admired by all the connoisseurs (and there are lots here) who often visit in order to look at it, caress it, flatter it – just as they would an attractive woman. The [Atlantic] voyage and the change in climate have taken their toll on it but I hope that time, patience, and some tender loving care will return it to its previous condition. He [the violin] and I greet you, and we send our embraces in a shower of trills and kisses.

To my *amigo* I send a very affectionate hug – and to Miss Helen a thousand regards from the bottom of my heart. I hope she continues to visit you and that you love her more and more – ?

NOTES

The upper half of the final sheet of letter paper appears to have been cut off (perhaps used for an *aide-memoire*).

The letter is not signed.

See the end of [Letter 5] for a newspaper report on the concert at St Ann's church.

The identity of the *Harpes* is unknown.

[Letter 5]

New-Yorck, 20 avril

70

Querida mia –

Je suis bien heureux – ma bonne, ma Chère Mademoiselle Hélène m'a écrit un petit billet si bon et si indulgent, que je ne sais vraiment Comment faire pour lui prouver toute ma reconnaissance, et lui faire croire à mon affection (car je l'aime bien, croyez le) Enfin j'espère la Convaincre avec le temps, elle verra bien que je ne l'oublierai pas – En attendant, gâtez la bien, ma bonne petite mère, et beaucoup de ma part, elle le mérite tant! Son petit souvenir m'est arrivé précisément au moment ou j'en avais bien besoin, car depuis ce matin je me sentais très indisposé et triste, et me voilà entièrement guéri – Quelle joie de recevoir des nouvelles de Paris et de quelqu'un que l'on aime! Me voilà en bon état, mon Public de ce soir en profitera –

Succès sur toute la ligne. Dans mes deux Séances religieuses de Dimanche dernier j'ai fait pleurer les assistants, et dans le Hérald de lundi on compare le son de mon Violon à la voix des anges - à l'académie de musique (avant-hier) grande sensation (mes 2 morceaux avec orchestre) et 2 bis – j'ai arrangé des melodies du pays très courtes que je joue pour les encore. Il faut voir l'enthousiasme des américains quand ils entendent leurs airs nationaux! Allez donc jouer aux français Partant pour la Syrie!

Beaucoup d'applaudissements hier pour la Patti dans la flûte Enchantée. Elle y a été Charmante. On donnera l'Opéra de Mozart toute la semaine – moi pendant ce temps là, je travaillerai d'un autre côté – La Semaine prochaine je me fera entendre dans 4 concerts (pour le compte de M' Strakosh.

Je suis ici pour un bon mois au moins, donnez moi donc de vos nouvelles, de celles de mon Cher Amigo, va-t-il mieux, est-il moins triste, je l'embrasse bien fort et pense toujours à lui.

à bientôt, je vais Répéter le Concerto pour ce soir, mille bons souvenirs, Querida Madre mia, je t'écrirai Souvent –

Ton enfant

Sarasate

au concert d'avant-hier on m'a jetté un Camélia!

mes meilleurs souvenirs à mon ami Emile Réty

New York
20th April 1870

My dearest,

I am so happy; my good, my dear Miss Helen has written me a note which is so nice and so understanding that I truly do not know how to show her my gratitude and to make her believe in my affection (for I do love her, I assure you). In time I hope to convince her; she will realise that I

will never forget her. In the meantime, my dear little mother, spoil her, especially on my behalf; she is so deserving! Her little souvenir arrived at just the moment when I most needed it – I have felt very depressed and sad this morning – but now I am entirely cured. What joy to receive news from Paris and news of her whom I love; I am invigorated, and my audience this evening will be the beneficiaries.

Success across the board. Last Sunday, in my two religious ceremonies, I brought the congregation to tears, and in Monday's [*New York*] *Herald*, the sound of my violin was compared to the voice of angels. At the Academy of Music (the day before yesterday) the two pieces which I played with the orchestra caused a sensation and there were two encores – short folk tunes which I have arranged for these occasions. You should see the enthusiasm of Americans when they hear their national songs! It's like playing *Partant pour la Syrie* to the French!

Lots of applause yesterday for Carlotta in *Die Zauberflöte*; she was delightful; performances will take place all week. Meanwhile I am performing elsewhere; next week I will be heard in four concerts arranged by Mr Strakosch.

I will be here in New York for at least another month. Send me your news – also news of my dear *amigo*: is he better? – happier? – I embrace him with all my strength and he is often in my thoughts.

Until next time; I am off to rehearse the concerto for this evening; a thousand best wishes to you my dearest mother; I will write often.

Your son

Sarasate

At the concert the day before yesterday someone threw me a camelia!

My best wishes to my friend Emile Réty.

NOTES

The programme for the concert at the Academy of Music was advertised in the *New York Daily Tribune* (18th April 1870, p. 7), listing Sarasate ('The new and distinguished violinist of the Patti Troupe') as performing a *Fantasia* "*Sur la Muette*" composed by [Delphin] Alard, and the *Andantino* by Pierre Baillot – 'over orchestra'.

During the Second Empire (the regime of Napoleon III, 1852-1870) *Partant pour la Syrie* was the unofficial national anthem in France. The song, chivalric in nature, had a text written by Alexandre de Laborde which was set to music by Hortense de Beauharnais.

Next to Sarasate's concluding salutation is a glued-in newspaper report:

ST. ANN'S CHURCH.

The beautiful little church of St. Ann's was handsomely decorated with choice exotics, and the attendance very large. The rather limited space of the organ-gallery was uncomfortably crowded by an orchestra of twenty-four pieces, in addition to full chorus and the soloists. [...] An unexpected treat was also afforded the lovers of music by the fine execution of an Adagio movement of Beethoven by the celebrated violinist, M. Sarasate.

[Letter 6]

New-Yorck, 22 avril

70

Chère mère – Reçu le numéro 2, merci, Continue à m'écrire de temps en temps, si tu savais le plaisir que cela me fait! – Grand succès au Concert de Kowalski, ou il m'a fallu jouer une petite pièce après le Concerto de Mendelssohn qui m'a valu un bis – très bien accompagné par l'orchestre – Un accident m'est arrivé à ce Concert, qui aurait pu me couter bien des larmes, mais heureusement le tout a fini pas des frictions – En montant l'escalier qui conduit à l'estrade, et sur la dernière marche mon pied gauche a faibli, et j'ai dégringolé jusqu'en bas (une vingtaine de marches) avec mon

Stradivarius que je n'ai pas lâché (plustôt la mort) et qui n'a eu que ses cordes cassées, et son Chevalet renversé – dans le premier moment j'ai cru qu'il était en morceaux, et je me sentais mourir, mais quelle joie après! ... on m'a frictionné au foyer, et après dix minutes d'entr'acte j'ai joué sur le Vuillaume un duo sur les Huguenots, ma jambe est enflée, et je boite, ce qui fait que la troupe Strakosh a deux Patti au lieu d'une – Kowalski a fait four, et a mangé de l'argent – 2,500 francs de perte! Ce qui ne l'a pas empêché de nous offrir un magnifique soupé ou j'ai du aller de force, et qui s'est prolongé jusqu'à 2^h du matin – Les journaux parleront sans doute de son Concert, en voilà un, le Hérald que se tire à 2,000,000 exemplaires, qui ne se montre pas très indulgent –

Je commence à parler l'anglais! Ô G[?] bonheur! et j'étonne tout le monde, Je m'ennuyais tant les premiers jours de ne pouvoir rien dire, que j'ai voulu parler, et je me fais déjà comprendre - On rit beaucoup à m'écoutant, et on me trouve drôle, mais je me suis si souvent moqué des autres, que l'on peut bien se ficher un peu de moi –

La flûte Enchantée a un succès énorme, cela va me donner un peu de repos en ne me faisant pas jouer tous les jours – J'en profiterai pour travailler –

Départ pour Rio-Janeiro le 23 mai, et arrivée en cette ville le 18 Juin, en plein hiver du Brésil. Ce qui fait, que nous trouverons très peu ou pas de fièvre jaune – Du reste je n'ai aucune crainte, je ne veux pas être malade, à cause de vous deux (les 2 amigos) et d'une troisième personne que j'aime bien fort, et qui a de beaux yeux noirs. Je tiens à vous revoir tous, et en bonne santé.

On va Diner, à bientôt,

ton Enfant qui t'adore,

Sarasate

à l'amigo mille baisers

No 6

New York
22nd April 1870

Dear Mother,

I have received your letter numbered '2'; thank-you. Continue writing to me from time to time; your letters give me so much pleasure. Great personal success at Kowalski's concert [20th April] – I played a small piece as an encore after the Mendelssohn [D minor] *Concerto* (which was very well accompanied by the [string] orchestra). I suffered an accident at this concert which could have caused me many tears but fortunately ended with only minor injuries: while climbing the staircase which leads to the stage – on the very last step – my left foot gave way underneath me and I tumbled to the bottom (about twenty steps) with my Stradivarius which I didn't let go of (death is preferable) and which suffered only broken strings and a collapsed bridge. At first I thought that the violin was broken in pieces and I felt myself dying, but what joy afterwards! After being attended to in the foyer, and after a delay of ten minutes, I performed a duo on [themes from] *Les Huguenots* using my Vuillaume violin. My leg is swollen, and I limp, which means that the Strakosch ensemble [now] has two Pattis instead of one. Kowalski has flopped and has incurred a loss of 2,500-francs! However, this did not stop him from offering us a magnificent supper, to which I was obliged to go, and which lasted until 2.00 in the morning. The newspapers will undoubtedly review his concert; here is one – *The [New York] Herald*, which prints 2 million copies each day – which is not very sympathetic [see newspaper review below].

I am starting to speak English! What joy! Everyone is surprised. I was so bored at first, not being able to say anything, that I wanted to speak and already I can make myself understood. People laugh a lot when listening to me, and find me odd, but I have so often laughed at others that I cannot complain when the tables are turned.

Die Zauberflöte has been a great success; it has allowed me to rest a little and not have to perform every day. I will be able to do some practice.

We leave for Rio de Janeiro on 23rd May and arrive there on 18th June, in the middle of the Brazilian winter, which means that we will find little or no yellow fever; I'm not frightened of anything else. I don't want to be ill; I want to see all of you again – the two *amigos* and the third person who I love very much and who has beautiful black eyes – and all of you in good health.

We are going to dinner; I will write again soon.

Your child who adores you,

Sarasate

A thousand kisses to the *amigo*

Number 6.

NOTES

Sarasate's comment regarding his being a second Patti might be viewed as a highly insensitive reference to Carlotta Patti's pronounced limp, an incurable disability which had developed during her childhood.

On the otherwise-blank *verso* of the last sheet of letter-paper there is a glued-in newspaper review of a concert:

MR. HENRI KOWALSKI

Mr. Henri Kowalski has appeared several times at miscellaneous concerts since his arrival in this country, but always in such a modest way as to give the public no opportunity to judge of his merit as a pianist. An opportunity was afforded, however, on Wednesday evening, when he gave a concert of his own at Steinway Hall, before an audience so small that it embarrassed one to belong to it. The first piece was Weber's *Concertstück*, with accompaniment by an orchestra. It was a very unfortunate selection, for nobody but a pianist of the first order can make an impression with it, and that Mr. Kowalski is not a pianist of the first order was soon apparent. He has a delicate and accurate touch, and his dexterity is admirable; but his style is cold and uninspired, and he lacks both brilliance and force. [...] Some of the other performers at the Wednesday concert were more pleasing than Mr. Kowalski himself. Sarasate played superbly the *andante* and *finale* from Mendelssohn's violin concerto in D, and joined Mr. Kowalski in a duet by Thalberg and De Beriot on themes from "Les Huguenots". For the effect of this duet the praise is due principally to the violinist.

Carl Maria von Weber, *Konzertstück* in F minor, Op. 79, for piano and orchestra.

Mendelssohn was just 13 years of age when he composed his *Concerto for Violin and Strings in D minor* (1822); there are three movements: *Allegro*, *Andante*, *Allegro*.

Sigismond Thalberg (with Charles de Bériot); *Grand duo concertant* for piano and violin on themes from Meyerbeer's 'Les Huguenots'.

[Letter 7]

New-Yorck 25 a[vril] 70

Chère Maman,

C'est décidé, nous partons pour le Brésil (Rio) le 23 mai à bord du South America et nous arrivons là bas là bas, tout près du Luxembourg le 18 Juin – J'ai hésité, et sans la parole que j'ai donné à la Patti de la Suivre, et le Chagrin que je lui ferais en la laissant partir sans son Violoniste, j'aurais accepté un engagement que m'offrait M^r Strakosh qui désirait vivement me retenir pour tout l'hiver prochain. Ce sera pour plus tard. J'ai tellement réussi ici, que j'ai promis de revenir, et M^r Strakosh et autres *impresarios* m'ont dit et redit qu'ils seraient toujours prêts à me faire de bonnes propositions, n'importe à quel moment. Il n'y a pas un seul bon Violoniste aux Etats-Unis, aussi il faut voir comme le Public me fait bon accueil partout on il me trouve – la Nilsson vient décidément l'hiver prochain; je pense que M^r Strakosh avait l'intention en m'offrant un engagement de me faire voyager avec elle – Mais je ne regrette rien. La Seule chose qui me faisait hésiter pour partir, c'est l'horreur profonde que j'éprouve pour la mer, je suis si malade, et j'ai tellement souffert pour venir! dix jours dans mon

lit, je ne me suis levé qu'en vue de New-Yorck, pas mangé, et m'évanouissant à chaque moment. C'était peut-être une punition!

Ne crains rien pour mes affaires au Brésil et au Pérou. On fera beaucoup d'argent bien certainement, et on m'a fait Comprendre que si les affaires allaient bien, on améliorerait ma position (je n'ai pas besoin de te dire que cette idée vient de la Patti) j'ai une Confiance sans limite en elle, et c'est pour cela que j'ai remis à plus tard les propositions de M^r Strakosh et C^{ie}.

Je travaille beaucoup, et je me suis fait adorer de la nombreuse Colonie allemande de New-Yorck, en jouant souvent du Classique, Mendelssohn Concerto, Romance de Beethoven, Andante Baillot (qui a plu énormément) et peut-être même le 1^{er} mouvement du Concerto de Beethoven dans un prochain Concert. On trouve tout ici, parties d'orchestre, morceaux, tout – Je me fais une réputation de Violon Sérieux, et les gens éclairés me remercient tous les jours de vouloir bien leur faire entendre de temps en temps de la vrai musique – Ah! si j'avais à Paris le même prestige que dans ce pays ici; c'est moi qui retournerais tout de suite vous voir! Ca viendra –

Tu dois faire tes préparatifs de départ pour la Campagne? Dis bonjour à ma petite maison de ma part. Assieds toi souvent sur le petit banc (au bout du Lac Baby) d'où le jardin parait si grand et dans ce petit coin, pense à ton petit étourdi qui t'aime bien fort, et qui ne t'oubliera jamais fut-il au bout du monde. Je ferai en sorte que Carbonan t'apporte souvent de mes nouvelles, et j'espère en recevoir des vôtres le plus possible –

Et ma bonne et Chère H. ira t-elle vous voir à la Campagne?

De bons baisers pour mon amigo adoré, et tout mon cœur à toi.

Le fils de la maison.

Et l'ami Rêty?

A Rio poste restante

N^o 7

New York,
25th April 1870

Dear Mother,

It is decided: we leave for Brazil (Rio) on 23rd May aboard the 'South America' and we arrive right by the Luxenbourg[?] on 18th June. I have hesitated, and if it wasn't for the promise which I made to Carlotta – to accompany her on this journey – and the upset I would have caused by letting her leave without her violinist – I would have accepted an engagement offered to me by Mr Strakosch who was desperate to retain me for the whole of the coming winter. I'll see about that later; I have been so successful here that I have promised to return. All the impresarios, including Mr Strakosch, have told me, repeatedly, that they will always be ready to offer me advantageous contracts, no matter when. There isn't one good violinist in the whole of the United States, so you should see how the public welcomes me everywhere I go. Christina Nilsson is definitely coming here next winter. I suspect that Mr Strakosch intended to offer me a contract to go on a concert tour with her, but I do not regret being unavailable. The only thing which makes me hesitate about leaving is the absolute horror I feel for the sea – I get so seasick – and I suffered so much in getting here! Ten days in my bed – I got up only when we arrived in New York. I had not eaten and was continually fainting. Perhaps it was a punishment!

Don't worry about my financial affairs while I am in Brazil and in Peru. We will certainly make lots of money, and I have been informed that should business go well the terms of my engagement could be improved (I need hardly say that this was Carlotta's idea). I have complete confidence in her and that's why I have postponed the proposals put to me by Mr Strakosch.

I am practising really hard and I am now adored by the extensive German colony in New York as a result of often playing the classics – the Mendelssohn *Concerto*, the Beethoven *Romance*, the

Andante by Baillot (which went down extremely well) and perhaps even the first movement of the Beethoven *Concerto* in an upcoming concert. One can find everything here – orchestral parts, pieces, everything. I am building a reputation as a serious violinist and enlightened people thank me constantly for giving them the opportunity to hear real music from time to time. Ah!, if only I had the same prestige in Paris as I have here; [if that was the case] I would return to see you immediately – the time will come.

You must be preparing to leave for the countryside? Say hello from me to my little house. Sit often on the small bench (at the end of ‘Lac Baby’) from where the garden always seems so big, and, in this corner, think about your little scatter-brain who loves you so much and who will never forget you even if he were at the end of the world. I will make sure that Carbonan [the local postman?] regularly brings you my news and I hope to receive yours as often as possible.

And my dear and beloved H[elen] – will she visit you in the countryside?

Heartfelt kisses for my adored *amigo*, and all my heart to you.

The son of the house

And my friend Réty?

At Rio de Janeiro, *poste restante*

Number 7.

NOTES

The reference to ‘Luxembourg’ resists explanation.

Christina Nilsson was a Swedish operatic soprano (1843-1921) who was considered the vocal equal to Adelina Patti. In a letter dated ‘1865’, sent from Paris to her mother, Lillie Moulton* writes of Nilsson:

Everyone is very much excited about a young Swedish girl called Christine Nilsson, who has walked right into the star-light, for she really is a star of the first magnitude. She has studied with Wachtel [see **[Letter 26]**] only one year, and behold her now singing at the Théâtre Lyrique to crowded audiences in the “Flûte Enchantée”. Her voice has a wonderful charm; she sings without the slightest effort, and naturally as a bird. She has some phenomenal high notes which are as clear as bells. [...] What luck for her to have blossomed like that into a fully-fledged prima-donna with so little effort. [...] Nilsson is tall, graceful, slight, and very attractive, without being actually handsome. [...] She has a regal future before her. A second Jenny Lind!

*Lillie Moulton was born in 1844 as Lillie Greenough. Possessing a fine singing voice she was taken to Paris and welcomed into the court of Napoleon III. At the age of seventeen she married Charles Moulton, the son of an American banker. In 1871 she and her husband returned to the US; Charles died in December of that year. Lillie subsequently married the Danish Minister to the US, by name Hegermann-Lindenchrone. In 1911 Lillie de Hegermann-Lindenchrone compiled a collection of youthful letters which she had written to her mother, and these were published as *In the Courts of Memory 1858-1875* (reprint by Da Capo Press, New York, 1980); Lillie died in 1928.

See **[Letter 19]** and **[Letter 23]** for the reality of Sarasate’s financial affairs during the tour of South America.

With respect to the lack of prestige experienced by Sarasate during the period when he lived in Paris see also **[Letter 24]**.

[Letter 8]

New-Yorck 29 avril 70

Chère maman – Très grands succès hier et avant-hier dans deux Concerts à Steinway Hall – Rappels et bis. J’ai joué successivement ma nouvelle fantaisie sur Faust qui produit un effet inouï. Le tremolo de Bériot, les airs Russes de Wienawski, et la Valse de Roméo. Tu vois que je travaille. Au Concert d’hier au soir, j’ai fait la Connaissance de Ronconi, qui a fondé une école de Chant ici, et qui fait de très belles affaires. Il a été Charmant et m’a Conduit à mon hôtel dans sa voiture, après m’avoir fait promettre d’aller le voir! Je me suis fait énormément d’amis, et je t’assure que je quitterai les Etats-unis avec le cœur bien gros. Hier au soir encore, M’ Strakosh a fait une tentative auprès de la Patti pour me garder, mais ça n’a pas pris. Quant à moi, je me trouve dans une position très délicate, et

malgré la grande envie que j'ai de rester, je n'ose le demander, je me ferais une ennemie à tout jamais de mon aimable directrice. Je partirai donc pour le Brésil, sans aucun enthousiasme.

Notre tournée dans les provinces commencera la Semaine prochaine, et se prolongera probablement une quinzaine de jours – Je jouerai dans les entr'actes de la flûte Enchantée –

Ce soir Great attraction – festival Monstres de l'autre Côté de l'eau, Chez le duc d'en face, à Brooklyn – On entendra La Patti, avec la Kellogg (la plus grande Cantatrice américaine. Elles n'ont jamais parues ensemble, aussi la Curiosité est grande, et l'on payera Cinq dollars pour entrer (25 francs). Il y aura aussi grande lutte entre Ritter et Mills le Plus Célèbre Pianiste du Pays. moi seul, je triompherai sans gloire, puisque personne ne s'est présenté pour me disputer la palme. Il n'y aura donc qu'un seul et unique Violon, Baby 1^{er}, qui jouera avec accomp^t d'Orchestre le premier mov^t du Concerto de Beethoven – Qui aurait crû que je ferais de la meilleure musique ici qu'à Paris? .. Je ne me suis jamais autant lancé dans le Classique –

Il y a bien longtemps que je n'ai reçu de vos nouvelles. Pourquoi n'écrivez vous pas à votre Enfant, Vilaine méchante? Il vous embrasse bien tendrement, cet affreux Baby Hidalgo. Il vous aime profondément, et vous donnera souvent de ses nouvelles – Kisses au gros Amigo, une poignée de main à Emile Réty, et, à la Chère et Belle H ... Ce qu'elle voudra

ton fils

Sarasate

No 8

Est-ce Carbonan qui te portera cette lettre? pleine Eau?? ... te souviens-tu?

New York
29th April 1870

Dear Mother,

Huge success yesterday, and the day before, in two concerts at Steinway Hall – curtain calls and encores. I played my *Nouvelle fantaisie sur Faust* which was an incredible success, Bériot's 'tremolo', Wieniawski's *Russian Songs*, and the Waltz from *Roméo*. You see how hard I work. At last night's concert I met [Giorgio] Ronconi [b.1810] who has founded a singing school here and does very good business. He has been quite charming and took me back to my hotel in his car after making me promise that I would call on him! I have made so many friends and, believe me, I will leave the United States with a heavy heart. Yesterday evening Mr Strakosch once again approached Carlotta in an attempt to keep me here but he didn't succeed. I have to say that I find myself in a really delicate position. Although I would love to stay I dare not ask if I can; to do so would make an enemy, forever, of my kind director [Carlotta Patti]. I will therefore go to Brazil without any enthusiasm.

Our tour in the provinces starts next week and will probably last about two weeks; I will be performing in the intervals between the acts of *Die Zauberflöte*.

Tonight there is a *Great* attraction – an evening billed as 'giants from opposite sides of the water'. Hosted by the Duke[?] across the way, in Brooklyn. We will hear Patti alongside [Clara Louise] Kellogg (the most celebrated American prima donna; the two women have never appeared together in a concert so there is a lot of interest and tickets will cost five dollars (25 francs). There will also be a battle between Ritter and Mills (who is the most famous pianist in the US). My own triumph will be without any glory since no-one has come forward to challenge me; thus there will be just one solitary violinist – Baby 1st – performing the first movement of Beethoven's *Concerto*, with orchestral accompaniment. Who would have thought that I would make better music here than in Paris? I have never been so involved with the classics.

It has been a very long time since I last received any news from you. Why do you not write to your child, you mean girl? He embraces you most tenderly, this awful Baby Hidalgo. He loves

you deeply and will often send you his news. Kisses to the big *amigo*, a handshake to Emile Réty, and, to the dearest and most beautiful H ... whatever she wants.

Your son,
Sarasate
Number 8

Will Carbonan bring you this letter? open water?? ... do you remember?

NOTES

Charles-Auguste de Bériot's *Le trémolo, Caprice sur un thème de Beethoven*, Op. 30, is based on the second movement of Beethoven's *Kreutzer* Violin Sonata, Op. 47.

Sarasate's *Waltz* is the central section of his *Caprice* on themes from Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*; see also [Letter 13].

Clara Louise Kellogg (1842-1916). The Patti/Kellogg concert took place at the (New York) Academy of Music which was actually a Manhattan opera house located at the junction between East 14th Street and Irving Place; see the newspaper cutting at the end of [Letter 9].

Sebastian Bach Mills (1839-1898) was an English-born pianist who performed in the USA from 1856 onwards.

[Letter 9]

Pittsburgh 7 mai 70

Pas de nouvelles de Paris! ... Enfin, en voici des miennes – Succès d'enthousiasme à Philadelphie, ou j'ai eu un bis après le Concerto de Mendelssohn – le lendemain même ovation, et même bis – le Jeudi 5, en route pour Pittsburgh, ou nous sommes arrivés hier à une heure du Matin après 16 heures de trajet – Concert hier au soir, foule immense, j'ai eu pour ma part mes deux morceaux bissés – j'ai lancé pour un de mes bis, et pour la 1^{ère} fois, le St Patrick's day, une mélodie populaire, qui rend les américains absolument fous. 2^{ème} Concert ce soir, et départ demain à 10^h pour une petite ville que nous devons brûler en quelques heures, puis Chicago ou on donnera trois Concerts – Nous serons rentrés à New-Yorck le 20 pour nous embarquer le 23, car nous partons décidément. Je le regrette j'avais si bien réussi ici. Dans tous les cas, je reviendrai aux Etats Unis avec la Patti ou sans elle plus tard. J'espère trouver une foule de lettres de toi à Rio, je m'en fais une fête d'avance, il y a plus de 15 jours que je ne sais rien –

On parle de l'arrivée de la Nilsson et de l'Adelina Patti pour l'hiver prochain. Toutes les deux au même moment! Ce sera une ruine pour les deux Impresarios.

Je t'écrirai de Chicago, une bien belle ville à ce qu'il paraît, mais je te quitte, je n'ai pas dormi cette nuit et je vais m'étendre sur mon lit jusqu'à l'heure du Diner –

Je t'aime très fort, je t'embrasse de tout mon cœur ainsi que mon amigo, et j'adresse mes plus tendres souvenirs à mademoiselle Hélène

Votre fils,
Sarasate
N^o 10

Je t'envoie un spécimen de nos Programmes, qu'en dis-tu?

Pittsburgh
7th May 1870

No news from Paris! ... well, here is mine. Resounding success in Philadelphia where I had to play an encore after the Mendelssohn *Concerto* [in D minor?]; the next day the same ovation and the same encore. On Thursday 5th we travelled to Pittsburgh where we arrived yesterday at 1 o'clock in the morning after sixteen hours of travelling. A concert yesterday evening; huge crowd. I

played two pieces, both of which received calls for encores – for one of those I played, for the first time, *St Patrick's Day*, a popular tune which sends the Americans absolutely crazy. The second concert is this evening. Tomorrow we leave at 10 o'clock for a small town which we will pass through in a few hours, then on to Chicago where we will give three concerts. We will be back in New York on the 20th in order to depart [for South America] on the 23rd. We are definitely going – I wish we weren't – I have done so well here. Whatever happens, I will return to the United States with Carlotta – or, later, without her. I hope to find a huge pile of your letters in Rio. I am already looking forward to receiving them; I have been without news for fifteen days.

Everybody is talking about the arrival next winter of Nilsson and Adelina Patti – both at the same time! It will be a disaster for the two impresarios.

I will write to you from Chicago, which I am told is a really beautiful town. I am signing off now – I did not sleep last night and I am going to lie down until it's time for dinner. I love you enormously and embrace you with all my heart – likewise my *amigo* – and I send my most tender feelings to Miss Helen.

Your son,
Sarasate
Number 10

I am sending you a sample of our programmes; let me know what you think.

NOTES

It seems that Sarasate's ninth letter is lost; see p. 54 of this account.

A *St. Patrick's Day* composition by Henri Vieuxtemps, for violin and piano, appears as the second piece within his *Bouquet américain*, Op. 33 – a suite of six arrangements of popular tunes, arrangements which are little more than vehicles for virtuoso acrobatics on the violin. It is unclear whether it was this piece that Sarasate played or, perhaps, an arrangement of his own devising.

Glued to Sarasate's letter are two small newspaper cuttings; the second announces the Academy concert mentioned by Sarasate in [Letter 8]:

ACADEMY OF MUSIC, BROOKLYN
THE GREAT FESTIVAL
FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 29
MENDELSSOHN'S ATHALIE
[...]
KELLOGG, PATTI
RITTER, SARASATE, REMMERTZ
THE MUSICAL EVENT OF THE SEASON
TICKETS: Balcony – Five dollars; Parquet – Three dollars;
Dress Circle – Two dollars; Gallery – One dollar.

Franz Remmertz was a bass/baritone singer.

[Letter 10]

Detroit, 14 mai 1870 [written on letter-paper headed 'Biddle House; A. B. Taber, proprietor']

N^o 11 (*tu vois que je suis un homme d'ordre*)

Viva amiga! Viva la madre mia! ... N^{os} 3 et 4 m'ont été remis à Chicago d'ou j'aurais bien voulu t'écrire, mais un très fort rhume attrapé la nuit en Chemin-de-fer m'a forcé de garder le lit pendant 2 journées (Ce qui ne m'a pas empêché de me lever les deux soirs pour les deux Concerts) mais bast! j'ai bien peu pensé à mes fatigues, tes deux lettres m'ont consolé de tout. Il n'y a que les passages Concernant les Confidences de la Vieille folle qui m'ont un peu mis en Colère. Cette pauvre illuminée aura pris au sérieux en les exégérant (comme toujours) quelques unes de mes taquineries, et elle avait

Certainement l'intention de nous brouiller en te les racontant. Je l'ai donc pris en horreur plus que jamais, je ne puis te dire à quel point elle me dégoûte. C'est une tripoteuse et une Caffarde V'lan – Nous donnons Ce soir Concert à Detroit – Jolie Ville sur les bords de L'Erie – demain Toronto, puis Buffalo (d'où nous irons voir le Niagara) puis Montréal et New-Yorck. (dernier Concert avant notre départ) Nous parcourons un très beau pays en ce moment. Les Lacs surtout sont Splendides – En quittant Chicago le Chemin de fer à Côté le Michigan pendant près de deux heures, et cela me donnait des envies folles de me précipiter par la portière. La Crainte Seulement de ne plus revoir M^{me} de G. en empêché l'exécution de mon funeste projet –

Mais, Chère Maman, je crois que tu ne Comprends rien à nos affaires – M^r Max Strakosh (père de Maurice Strakosh de Paris) cesse d'être notre Impressario à partir du moment de notre embarquement. De l'autre Côté des mers, je n'aurai qu'a m'incliner devant la Royauté absolue de Miss Patti qui deviendra ma Souveraine. Ce voyage au long cours est son affaire (à demi avec les Ritters) mais mon engagement ne me donne à faire qu'a elle, je ne reconnais que son Sceptre (tu peux être tranquille) Nous passerons six mois à parcourir Le Brésil, Le Pérou, Montévidéo, Buenos aires, etc., et au mois de mars de l'année prochaine, nous serons en Californie, au moment ou la Nilsson aura quittée les Etats-Unis ce qui permettra à M^r Max Strakosh (son (Impressario) de reprendre ses affaires avec la Carlotta pour la Californie et ... mais nous verrons plus tard – En attendant, voilà tout ce que je sais – Une fois au Brésil, Chère Maman, tu n'auras de mes nouvelles qu'une fois par mois! Cela me fait bien de la peine, car en t'écrivant souvent, c'était la seule preuve d'affection que je pouvais te donner, mais je te promets que tu recevras chaque mois un gros paquet de mon écriture, une sorte de journal –

Kisses à mon amigo, amitiés à Réty, tendresses à M^{lle} H.

ton fils qui t'aime tout plein

Baby

Detroit [written on letter-paper headed 'Biddle House; A. B. Taber, proprietor']

14th May 1870

Number 11 (you see what an orderly person I am)

Long live *amiga*! Long live my mother! Your letters numbered 3 and 4 were given to me in Chicago from where I would have written had it not been for an awful cold, caught during the night on the train, which kept me in bed for two days (not that this stopped me from getting up on both evenings to perform in concerts) – but never mind! I have barely thought about my aches and pains; your two letters cheered me up enormously.

However, the passages [in your letters] regarding what the old bat said made me somewhat angry. The mad woman will have taken a few of my jokes too seriously and exaggerated them (as usual) and, by telling you, she certainly intended for us to fall out. More than ever she fills me with horror; I cannot tell you how much she disgusts me; she is a tell-tale and a gossip – there, I've said it.

This evening we are giving a concert in Detroit which is an attractive town on the banks of Lake Erie. Tomorrow we will be in Toronto, then Buffalo (from where we will go to see Niagara Falls), Montreal, and New York for our last concert before we depart for South America. At the moment we are passing through very beautiful countryside; the Lakes, especially, are splendid. When we left Chicago the train-track ran alongside Lake Michigan for almost two hours which gave me the mad idea of throwing myself out of the carriage door. It was only the thought of my never again seeing Madame de G. that made me desist from this fatal project.

But, dear mother, I don't think you understand anything of our affairs. Mr Max Strakosch (the father [actually the younger brother] of Maurice Strakosch, of Paris) will cease to be our impresario the moment we climb aboard the 'South America'. On the other side of the sea [i.e. in South America] I will have to submit to the absolute command of Miss Patti, who will become

my sovereign. This long trip is her responsibility (shared with the Ritters) but as per my engagement I will only deal with her; I will recognise only her authority (you may rest easy). We will spend six months travelling through Brazil, Peru, Montevideo [Uruguay], Buenos Aires [Argentina] etc. By March of next year we will be in California, by which point Nilsson will have left the United States, thus allowing Mr Max Strakosch (her agent) to resume his management of Carlotta in California, and ... but we will see later; at the moment this is all I know. Once we are in Brazil, dear mother, you will hear from me only once a month! This makes me very sad because my frequent letters have enabled me to demonstrate my affection for you. I promise that every month you will receive a big packet of my writings – a kind of diary.

Kisses to my *amigo*, greetings to Réty, tender feelings to Miss H.

Your son, who loves you lots.

Baby

NOTES

The 'old bat' is possibly Gabrielle Elluini; see also [Letter 3] and [Letter 15].

Madame de G. is identified as Marie Félicie Clémence de Reiset. In 1851 she married Charles Grégoire, Vicomte de Grandval (1813-1886) and became Vicomtesse de Grandval, also known as Marie Grandval. During her lifetime (1828-1907) her compositions were held in high regard within French musical circles; some were dedicated to fellow composers, e.g. Bizet, Gounod, Flotow, Saint-Saëns, and Pachelbel. It is not known why Sarasate's commitment to Marie was so emotional; see also [Letter 20].

[Letter 11]

Saint Thomas

30 mai

midi

Chère mère de mon Cœur – Notre bateau (parti le 23 de New-Yorck) s'arrête pour quelques heures à St Thomas (Colonie Danoise) et tous les passagers, même les plus malades (moi Compris) n'ont pu résister à la tentation de toucher un peu la terre – Nous avons beaucoup souffert ces trois derniers jours, un terrible Coup de vent est venu nous assaillir en pleine mer et j'ai cru mourir, mais j'ai tout oublié depuis un instant. Rien de Charmant comme ce petit pays ou nous sommes. Il n'a que 14,000 habitants dont 13,000 nègres. On y parle toutes en langues, mais principalement l'Espagnol. Ah! nous avons joliment besoin de nous refaire. On prépare notre déjeuner, et dans deux heures un Coup de Canon nous rappellera à bord du South America. J'ai la tête qui me tourne Chère maman bien aimée, j'ai tenu seulement à te tranquilliser, le tiers du voyage est fait, le reste ira tout seul. Nous ferons escale dans trois endroits encore avant d'arriver – à Paria, Pernambuco, et Bahia – le 19 du mois prochain nous serons à Rio.

Mille tendresses à vous deux, pensez bien à moi.

Votre fils

Sarasate

Saint Thomas,
30th May [1870]
Midday

Dear mother of my heart,

Our steamship (which left New York on the 23rd) has stopped for some hours at St Thomas (a Danish colony) and all the passengers, even the most unwell (myself included) could not resist the temptation to set foot on dry land, even if only for a short while. We have really suffered during

the past three days; a terrible gale battered us out at sea and I thought I was dying, but the storm has now been completely forgotten. This little country, where we are now, is charming. It has only 14,000 inhabitants, of which 13,000 are negroes. Lots of languages are spoken, but principally Spanish. Ah! we are in dire need of some recovery time. Our lunch is being prepared and in two hours a cannon will be fired to call us back onboard the 'South America'. I am feeling a bit dizzy, dear much-loved mother, I just wanted to put your mind at rest; one third of the journey is complete, the rest is plain sailing. We will stop three more times – at Paria, Pernambuco, and Bahia – before arriving at Rio de Janeiro on the 19th of next month.

A thousand embraces to you both; think well of me.

Your son

Sarasate

NOTES

Saint Thomas is one of the Virgin Islands.

[Letter 12]

Rio de Janeiro 22 Juin 70

Ne te désole pas, mère chérie, j'ai reçu toutes tes lettres, et tes deux dernières hier Poste Restante. Je suis bien heureux, il y a plusieurs départs par mois pour L'Europe, je pourrai donc t'écrire plus souvent que je ne l'espérais –

Accueil splendide ici, à notre arrivée, nous avons été reçus par une députation de la Ville, musique militaire en tête, qui nous a félicités de notre heureux voyage, et qui nous a exprimés au nom de la Ville toute la joie que l'on aurait à nous posséder – Nous avons été conduits à terre par un grand bateau de l'arsenal tout pavoisé, et les quais étaient remplis de monde accouru pour nous voir – On a tiré des fusées, et nous avons eu bien de la peine pour monter dans nos Voitures – Quoique malades, Cette Réception magnifique, et la gaieté des habitants nous a guéris du Coup. Depuis, ce ne sont que Sérénades sous les fenêtres de notre hôtel, feux d'artifices, fleurs, articles, Biographies, etc. – Cela doit te paraître exagéré j'en suis étonné moi-même, mais depuis notre arrivée on nous a donnés tant d'importance, que nous devons prendre des airs de prince quand nous allons dans la ville – Il y a plus de dix ans que les Brésiliens n'ont entendu un bon artiste, nous sommes au bout du monde.

En ce moment il n'y a absolument rien que nous, pas même une troupe nationale, nous absorbons toute l'attention, on sait ce que nous mangeons, ce que nous disons, à quelle heure nous avons été au lit, on ne parle que de nous, c'est surprenant – Tout est loué pour six Concerts au Grand Théâtre, juge un peu ce que nous devons faire – On ne voit que nous affiches, nos portraits, le premier jour que je suis sorti, tout le monde m'a reconnu et l'on me faisait entrer dans toutes les maisons de la grande Rue d'Ouvidor pour avoir le plaisir de m'offrir des Rafrachissements – Parmi les français, beaucoup m'ont entendu à Paris, et les marchands de musique ont de mes morceaux, surtout celui de faust –

Que te dirais-je de la beauté du pays! la où nous vivons (à la Campagne) afin d'éviter les fièvres) nous avons la mer que vient baigner les bords de notre jardin, et d'immenses montagnes nous entourent – les plus beaux oiseaux du monde, jusqu'aux oiseaux mouches aux ailes dorées, viennent se poser sur les branches de nos arbres, c'est à devenir fou de bonheur. Chaque matin en nous levant (vers les 6^h) nous prenons un bain de mer dans notre jardin, et nous remontons bien vite boire une tasse de Chocolat bien Chaud – Le soleil est éternel, et le Ciel Constamment bleu – On dort très peu, on mange moins, pas de fruits ni de vin pur, on sort avec d'immenses parapluies, et l'on ne s'expose

jamais à l'humidité, car la lune ici est aussi dangereuse que le Soleil. Mais la nature est si belle que c'est bien le moins que l'on s'impose quelques petites privations pour mériter ses faveurs.

Il y a dans ce pays des arbres qui ont des feuilles entièrement rouge, d'un rouge[e] Splendide qui reluit au Soleil. Je viens d'en faire arracher une pour te l'envoyer. Dieu Veuille qu'elle Conserve sa Couleur –

à bientôt, mère adorée, tu viens encore d'avoir une secousse que dieu te protège, et te Conserve pour mon retour.

Ton idée est excellente, vend mes meubles, ou fais les transporter cher [chez?] M' Hubert, je ne sais quand je reviendrai, il est donc inutile de payer un loyer Cher –

Mille million de baisers, Querida Mia, ecco ma biographie que l'on m'a demandée et que l'on a arrosée de mille Choses gracieuses –

ton fils qui t'adore et qui pense toujours à toi,

Sarasate

Mes plus tendres souvenirs à mon amigo, et mes amitiés à Réty.

Rio de Janeiro [Brazil]

22nd June 1870

Don't be upset, dear mother; I have received all your letters. Yesterday I collected the last two from the *Poste Restante*. I am really pleased: there are several ships leaving here each month for Europe and therefore I will be able to write to you more often than I anticipated.

We received a splendid welcome when we arrived. We were greeted by a delegation from the city council (led by a military band) who congratulated us on our successful voyage, and who, on behalf of the city, expressed their joy at our arrival. We were taken ashore on a large dockyard boat which was decorated with flags, and the quays were filled with crowds jostling to see us; rockets were fired and it was difficult for us to reach our cars. This magnificent reception, and the cheerfulness of the inhabitants, cured us immediately of our travel sickness. Since then it's been serenades under the windows of our hotel, fireworks, flowers, newspaper articles, biographies, etc. All this must seem to you to be exaggerated – I myself am astonished – but since our arrival we have been regarded as so important that we have to behave like princes when we go out into the town. The Brazilians have not heard a good musician for more than ten years; we are at the end of the world.

At the moment there is absolutely no one other than us, not even a national ensemble. We are the focus of everyone's attention: people know what we eat, what we say, what time we go to bed – everyone talks only of us; it's amazing. Everything is organised for six concerts in the Grand Theatre; you can see for yourself what is involved. Our posters and portraits are everywhere. The first day I went out everybody recognised me and I was obliged to enter every house on the long Rue d'Ouvidor so that the owners could have the pleasure of offering me refreshments. Many of the French inhabitants have heard me play in Paris, and all the music publishers have my pieces, especially *Faust*.

How can I describe the beauty of the country? Where we are staying (in the countryside, to avoid fevers) the sea comes up to the edge of our garden and immense mountains surround us. The most beautiful birds in the whole world, even hummingbirds with golden wings, perch on the branches of our trees; it makes one deliriously happy. Each morning when we get up (around 6 o'clock) we swim in the sea by our garden and then hurry back to drink a cup of hot chocolate. The sun shines every day and the sky is always blue. We sleep very little, eat less than usual (no fruit or wine), we take huge umbrellas with us when we go out and we never go out when it is humid as the moon here is as dangerous as the sun – but the natural world is so beautiful that a few small sacrifices are the least one can do to enjoy its splendours.

There are trees which have leaves which are entirely red – a fantastic red which glistens in the sun; I have had one picked so I can send it to you; God willing it will retain its colour.

Until next time, adored mother. You have suffered another shock; may God protect you and keep you safe for my return.

Your idea is excellent: either sell my furniture or send it to Mr Hubert. I don't know when I will return so it's unnecessary to pay an expensive rent [?on Sarasate's Paris accommodation].

A thousand million kisses dearest mother. As requested, I enclose my biography, which has been brightened up with a thousand delightful niceties.

Your son, who adores you and is always thinking of you.

Sarasate

My most tender thoughts to my *amigo*, and my greetings to Réty.

NOTES

It seems likely that Sarasate had included with his letter a newspaper cutting advertising the six Grand Theatre concerts ('you can see for yourself ...').

Sarasate's reference to his composition *Faust* indicates either *Souvenirs de Faust* (1863) or *Nouvelle fantaisie sur Faust de Ch. Gounod* (1870) – probably the latter; first known performance 28th April 1870 – i.e. in New York.

Sarasate's comments about the dangers posed by the sun, moon, wine, and fruit are echoed by Lillie Moulton (Lillie de Hegermann-Lindencrone; see the **NOTES** to [Letter 7]) when she writes of the warnings she and her companions received when visiting Cuba in January 1873:

We had so many instructions given to us as to what to do and what not to do in this perfidious climate that we were quite bewildered. Never go out in the sun; result – malaria and sudden death. Never put your feet on the bare floors; result – centipedes. Never drink the water; result – yellow fever. Never eat fruit at night; result – typhoid fever. If you sleep too much, if you sit in a draught, if you let the moon shine on you; result – lockjaw and speedy annihilation.

The nature of the 'shock' experienced by Madame de Lassabathie is unknown but may relate to the health (ill-health?) of her husband, Théodore.

Monsieur Hubert is likely to have been Joseph Hubert (1810-?) who was the administrative successor to Bocquillon-Wilhem (Guillaume-Louis Bocquillon, 1781-1842) who founded the *Orphéon* choral societies in France. Hubert was a family friend to Théodore and Amélie de Lassabathie.

[Letter 13]

Rio de Janeiro 28 Juin 70

Mère adorée! – Encore une lettre de toi aujourd'hui! Merci – Je n'ai que 5 minutes à moi, je ne suis pas encore au fait pour les départs des Courriers, et je viens de me laisser surprendre. On me dit à l'instant qu'il y a un Courrier pour l'Europe demain. Je me hâte de t'envoyer ces quelques lignes, en t'annonçant une longue lettre par le bateau du 6 - -

Notre 1^{er} Concert aura lieu Lundi 4 Juin – On loue avec fureur pour les autres, nous en donnerons au moins douze! – L'Empereur du Brésil nous a reçus avant-hier d'une façon tellement Cordiale et sans façons, que nous en sommes tout à fait ravis – Son Gendre le Comte d'Eu nous a fait demander hier aimable au possible il se fait une fête de nous entendre ce soir chez son beau-père ou nous devons faire de la musique dans l'intimité – Dans quelques heures, nous paraîtrons de nouveau devant leurs Magestés Impériales, et à nous trois nous espérons bien ravir notre noble Auditoire – Nous sommes les Princes du Pays, des Personnages Importants, On se dispute l'honneur de nous Recevoir, ce sont des fêtes partout ou nous allons – Je t'écris chez Arthur Napoléon, grand Pianiste qui a un magasin de musique ici, et qui fait de Brillantes affaires – Je joue ton Roméo ce soir chez L'Empereur, je le joue pour toi, je désire que cela te porte bonheur –

M^r Hubert m'a écrit, je lui Répondrai le 6, et alors j'écrirai aussi à ma Chère Hélène. Je n'ai pu le faire encore, mais ce n'est pas ma faute –

Dans ma prochaine lettre, je te donnerai force détails sur notre Soirée Impériale – LL. M.M. m'ont trouvé très distingué, je l'ai appris par le 1^{er} Chambellan, et je n'en suis pas étonné, personne ne sait saluer ici et c'est mon grand triomphe –

Mille mille baisers bien tendres mère adorée, à bientôt une nouvelle lettre, je t'adore. Je te chérie, et te remercie pour t'a lettre Continue à aimer bien tendrement ton petit Enfant qui pense toujours à toi – à mon amigo, mes plus tendres Caresses.

Amitiés à Réty –

Je travaille beaucoup et je progresse – Constamment –

Le fils de la maison, le Petit Baby

Sarasate

[written along the margin] *Les Ritter et la Patti t'aiment beaucoup et veulent que je te le dise.*

Rio de Janeiro

28th June 1870

Adored mother!

Today, another letter from you! Thank you. I have only five minutes to myself; I am not yet familiar with the post collections and I have been caught by surprise. I have just been informed that there is a postal departure for Europe tomorrow. I will hurry to send these few lines. I'll send a much longer letter on the ship which leaves on the 6th [July].

Our first concert will be on Monday 4th June [July]. We are preparing furiously for the others; we will be giving at least twelve! The Emperor of Brazil received us the day before yesterday; he was so friendly and so unpretentious; we were utterly delighted. His son-in-law, Count d'Eu, asked for us yesterday, in the most obliging manner; he is greatly looking forward to hearing us tonight at his father-in-law's where we will perform in an intimate setting. In a few hours we will again appear in front of their Imperial Majesties and all three of us hope that we will delight our noble audience. We are the princes of this country – very important persons – people compete for the honour of receiving us; there are parties everywhere we go. I am writing [this letter] at the home of Arthur Napoléon, excellent pianist, who has a music shop here and does very well for himself. I am playing your *Roméo* this evening at the Emperor's residence; I will dedicate it to you; I hope it will bring you joy.

Mr Hubert has written to me; I will reply on the 6th, and then I will also write to my dear Helen. I wasn't able to write earlier; I am not to blame [for the delay].

In my next letter I will give you more details of our Imperial evening. Their Majesties have found me very distinguished; I learned this from the First Chamberlain. I am not surprised; no-one here knows how to greet each other and it is a great strength of mine.

A thousand thousand tender kisses, adored mother; soon there will be a new letter. I adore you. I cherish you and thank you for your letter. Continue to love, tenderly, your little boy who is always thinking about you. My most loving caresses to my *amigo*.

Greetings to Réty.

I am working hard and making progress – constantly.

The son of the house, the little Baby.

Sarasate

[written along the margin] The Ritters and Carlotta love you a lot and asked me to tell you this.

NOTES

The Emperor of Brazil was Pedro II (1825-1891), reigned 1831-1889.

Arthur Napoleão dos Santos (1843-1925) was a Portuguese composer, pianist, instrument dealer, and music publisher.

The *Roméo* piece is very likely Sarasate's *Caprice*, based on themes from Gounod's five-act opera *Roméo et Juliette*; the *Caprice* is dedicated to 'Madame A. de Lassabathie'.

[Letter 14]

Brésil, Rio, 5 Juillet 70

Tout plein de triomphes, rien que des triomphes, Chère Mère – Te dire le succès que nous avons obtenu hier à notre 1^{er} Concert, est chose impossible – Public délirant, Pluie de fleurs, Sérénade à l'Hôtel après le Concert, souper offert aux artistes, qui ont passé la nuit avec nous, après avoir porté de nombreux toast à nos future succès – Avec la mère on ne se gêne pas, je te dirai donc la Verité – On m'adore ici, et j'ai produit autant d'effet que la Patti – Le Violon est l'instrument favori des Brésiliens. Depuis Sivori (il y a plus de 15 ans, ils n'avaient entendu cet instrument bien joué, je les ai donc ravis, étonnés, tandis que mon Camarade Ritter avait à lutter contre les Souvenirs impérissables qu'a laissés ici le Célèbre Gottschalk (mort à Rio, il y a deux mois) et qu'on n'oubliera jamais – Cet artiste avait tout pour se faire aimer – talent, beauté, intelligence, amabilité, aussi il Continué à être (quoique n'étant plus) l'idole du pays – En dehors de cela, il y a ici deux Pianistes, et surtout Arthur Napoléon, qui ont des talents de premier Ordre, et qui sont très aimés, tu vois donc que Ritter n'a pas de Chance – En Reva[n]che, moi j'en ai beaucoup, car il n'y a pas un Violoniste Seulement médiocre. Et Viva la España! Et puis, on m'a pris en amitié, tout le monde m'adore. Les musiciens de l'Orchestre, à chacune de mes Sortises de Scène, poussaient par trois fois le formidable hip hip hurrah! des américains, en mon honneur. –

J'ai joué ton Roméo devant toute la famille Impériale – et puis La Berceuse de Reber. Charmante Soirée, nous sommes les favoris du Palais, et nous aurions L'Empereur à nos Concerts si ce n'était un deuil récent [qui] l'oblige à garder la Chambre jusqu'au 13 – Demain 2^{ème} Concert, et Samedi 3^{ème} – J'écris chez un ami M^r Ribeiro, amateur enragé, il y a dix personnes autour de moi (on ne me laisse jamais tranquille, heureusement que je pourrai t'écrire tranquillement bientôt –

J'ai écrit un mot à M^{lle} Hélène, salue la de ma part, je l'aime toujours, et Embrasse mon amigo bien tendrement –

Je t'adore Chère Mère de mon cœur,

Ton enfant

Sarasate

La Société Philharmonique nationale Brésilienne m'a fait parvenir le Diplôme de membre honoraire, magnifique Diplôme, ou l'on Chante mes succès et mon talent sur tous les Tons – Je garde cela pour mon Retour.

Brazil, Rio
5th July 1870

Everything is a triumph; nothing but triumphs, dear mother, To describe the success we had yesterday at our first concert is impossible – delirious audience, flowers raining down, a serenade at the hotel after the concert, a late-night dinner offered to [all] the performers who spent the night with us after having proposed numerous toasts to our future success. With one's mother one needn't be coy – I will therefore tell you the truth: here I am adored, and I have produced as great an effect as has Carlotta. The violin is the Brazilians' favourite instrument. Since Sivori was here (fifteen years ago) they have not heard the instrument played well; I have therefore delighted and astonished them. Meanwhile my good friend Ritter has had to fight against the reverence felt for the famous Gottschalk, who died in Rio two months ago and who will never be forgotten. He had all the qualities necessary to be loved – talent, looks, intelligence, kindness – and he remains

à propos, mon histoire est finie, Le Consul d'Espagne s'en est mêlé, et M^{lle} Gabrielle Elluini (très jolie femme) me laisse tranquille, mais que de peines! furieuse de ce que je l'ai lâchée, elle a essayé de me faire siffler, mais mon consul m'a sauvé en faisant placer des hommes de la police, près des personnes malveillantes, et d'un autre côté la présence de toute la famille Impériale dans la loge d'honneur, a fait avorter le mouvement – À propos d'Empereur, croirais-tu que celui du Brésil qui a assisté à presque tous nos Concerts, qui nous a reçus chez lui plusieurs fois pour y faire de la musique, qui nous a donné à tous trois sa photographie, n'a rien fait jusqu'à présent pour nous? ... nous attendons quelque chose d'autre, un Cadeau, un souvenir, que sais-je, cela viendra peut-être au dernier moment –

Les Journeaux d'Europe nous apportent de bien graves nouvelles, nous n'avons rien à craindre, nous sommes si loin! mais vous autres? ... Que Dieu protège la France, je n'oublierai jamais qu'elle a été pour moi une seconde Patrie – Tous mes vœux sont pour elle –

à partir du jour ou tu recevras cette lettre, écris à Lima – Si j'ai du nouveau à t'apprendre avant mon départ pour Montévidéo je t'écrirai –

Comme aux Etats Unis, au Brésil j'ai été le Roi de nos Concerts, et le favori des Populations –

Ma nouvelle fantaisie sur Faust, ainsi que le morceau de Martha (dédié à Diémer) m'ont été achetés et vont être gravés à Rio!!

Le Photographe de L'Empereur a fait aujourd'hui mon portrait – Je te l'enverrai – J'ai beaucoup maigri, plus de mollets, plus de Bottom, le néant – la Chaleur et les moustiques ont tous dévoré

Bonsoir, Mère Chérie, je vous embrasse tous deux, et vais prier Dieu pour qu'il vous maintiennent sains et sauf au milieu des bouleversements qui vous attendent –

Votre fils qui vous adore

Sarasate

[written in the margin] *La Patti te remercie elle est ravie de ton petit mot –*

Rio de Janeiro

2nd August 1870

10.00p.m.

received 12th September; replied 16th [Amélie de Lassabathie annotation]

My dear adored mother,

I received your letter numbered '15' two days ago. The motherly things you say go straight to my heart. You are the pearl of women, the most tender, the most loving; you have grown most dear to me, and you deserve all the love I can give you. I am no longer the temperamental and scatter-brained little boy I once was; this voyage has made me take our relationship much more seriously, and I [now] understand and appreciate you above all else.

Our concerts here are almost finished. We have three still to give in aid of several charitable organisations, after which we will leave for Montevideo and Buenos Aires. We will have given a total of twelve evening concerts in the Grand Lyric Theatre and despite very good takings I very much doubt that the administrative coffers have swelled. In preparing for our arrival [in Rio] Mr Ritter [Théodore Ritter's father] spent more than 35,000 francs on advertisements, announcements, preparations, and agents (there are eight!), and each of our orchestral concerts costs 5,000 francs in expenses. In addition Carlotta lives like a Queen, stately apartment, car, servants – not that any of this prevented her from buying jewellery costing 15,000 francs from the famous Rio jeweller, Farini. In short, to give you an idea of the financial situation in our ensemble, I am the most reasonable!

By the way, my troubles are over; the Spanish Consul got involved and Miss Gabrielle Elluini (a very attractive woman) will [now] leave me alone, but what trouble! Furious at having been jilted, she attempted to blackmail me, but my consul saved me by positioning policemen next to the troublemakers, and the added presence of the entire Imperial family in the royal box prevented the

attempt. Talking of Emperors, would you believe that the Brazilian emperor, having attended almost all our concerts, having received us at his residence several times for private concerts, having given all three of us his photograph, has at this time done nothing for us? We are waiting for something else, a present, a souvenir, whatever; perhaps it will arrive at the last moment.

The European newspapers bring us alarming news; *we* have nothing to fear, we are so far away! but as for all of you? May God protect France; I will never forget that she has been a second homeland for me; all my best wishes go to her.

From the day you receive this letter, send yours to Lima [Peru]. If I have any news for you before my departure for Montevideo I will write.

As was the case in the United States, I have been the King of our concerts here in Brazil and the public's favourite.

My *Nouvelle fantaisie sur Faust*, likewise the *Martha* piece (dedicated to Diémer), have been bought and will be engraved in Rio!!

The Emperor's photographer took my portrait today – I will send it to you – I am much thinner – no calves, no bottom, nothing; the heat and the mosquitos have eaten everything.

Goodnight Dearest Mother. I embrace you both and pray to God that he will keep you safe and sound in the middle of all the upheavals to come.

Your son who adores you.

Sarasate

[written in the margin] Carlotta thanks you for your note – she is delighted.

NOTES

Gabrielle Elluini (1849-1921?) was an actress and a famous prostitute – *une horizontale* – who, by the age of 30, had amassed a fortune from her wealthy customers in Paris. The relationship between Sarasate and Elluini is unclear.

Louis Diémer (1843-1919) was a French pianist and composer.

[Letter 16]

Buenos ayres 12 Sep^{bre} 70

Mère Chérie – Que d'événements, que de malheurs, nous sommes bouleversés – Le dernier Paquet d'Europe nous a appris la défaite des armées Françaises et l'invasion des Prussiens. Mais ce qui me préoccupe surtout, c'est Paris. S'ils y allaient! Nous ne vivons plus, et la Colonie Française d'ici est atterrée autant que surprise – Cependant, il se pourrait bien que le Courage de nos Soldats triomphe de l'imprévoyance de leurs Chefs, et obtient la Victoire finale n'est-ce pas? moi j'y crois j'ai besoin d'y croire – Nous donnerons un Splendide Concert au Grand Théâtre pour les Bléssés des deux Nations, car il y a ici autant de l'un que de l'autre et nous sommes Certains d'une Recette d'au moins 20,000 francs – Tu vois que nous contribuerons pour notre part au soulagement des malheureux qui souffrent –

Nous attendons avec anxiété l'arrivée du Bateau anglais qui doit être ici le 20 de ce mois, et j'espère bien que nos pleurs vont se changer en Chants d'allégresse –

Je vais mieux, Chère Maman – C'était décidément ce Brusque Changement de climat qui m'avait fait mal – Passer de la Grande Chaleur du Brésil aux grand froid de l'Uruguay n'est pas une petite chose – Mais nous entrons dans la bonne saison, le Printemps nous sourit, et nous aurons l'été à Valparaiso et Lima – Et dire que je n'ai pas manqué un Concert! Tout ecloppé que j'étais, j'ai fait mon devoir sans relâche, ah dam! je ne suis plus l'Enfant d'autrefois, qui se plaignait du moindre petit Bobo –

J'ai fait 3,000 mille lieues en mer, et dans quelques semaines j'aurai franchi le Cap Horn! ... pas Commode du tout, ce maudit Cap, j'aurai besoin de tout mon Courage de Vétéran.

Que dis-tu de nos Recettes?

*1^{er} Concert 12,000 francs
2^e Concert 10,000
3^e Concert 16,000
4^e Concert 17,000
5^e Concert 12,000
et 6^{ème} (hier) 8,000 Total 75,000 francs*

Est-ce beau! demain 7^{ème} Concert puis quantité de Bénéfices, puis notre Concert pour les Blessés – Ensuite voyage de 24 heures par la Rivière pour aller donner deux Concerts à Rosario (tout est déjà loué) Retour ici pour monter le Grand Bénéfice de la Patti, puis Montévidéo – J'ignorais que notre séjour serait aussi long ici, ce qui fait que je resterai bien longtemps sans avoir de tes nouvelles – Lima! C'est encore bien loin – Au Brésil, pas de Croix – Depuis que le pays est ruiné par sa gerre Contre le Paraguay, On fait de l'argent de tout, et il faut payer mille francs de frais de Chancellerie – Quand nous avons appris que l'on ne pouvait faire aucune exception nous avons préféré Ritter et moi garder notre argent, et attendre un meilleur moment – L'Empereur du Brésil est excellent, mais il est très timide, et ce n'est pas lui qui Commande mais ses moines – Il m'a envoyé une magnifique Épingle, (un Brillant) estimé 2,000 francs par les Bijoutiers d'ici – Il aura une plus grande valeur en Europe, car le Brésil est le pays des Brillants – Le Prince D'Eu m'a également envoyé une épingle en perles, très belle – J'ai reçu pas mal de Cadeaux, et surtout des Cannes (on connaît mes goûts) J'en ai deux magnifiques – Je t'écrirai par le prochain Paquet, je t'aime, Querida mia, je te mange de Baisers, et j'embrasse de toute mon âme mon amigo – Je serre la main à mon ami Réty, et je salue tous ceux qui ne m'ont pas oublié – ton fils bien dévoué

page N° 5

à propos – as-tu reçue une Caisse que j'ai fait expédier à Paris contenant des Bouquets en Plume d'oiseaux du Brésil que l'on ma jettés à Rio?

Tu Recevras la Visite de Cædès, l'ancien accompagnateur de Paris qui était depuis deux ans attaché au Casino de Montévidéo, et qui partait quand nous arrivions à cette ville – C'est la première personne de Connaissance qui j'ai rencontrée en débarquant – Je t'ai envoyé aussi M^r Soupay agent des Postes à bord du bateau le Suidh des messageries Impériale qui nous a menés à Buenos-ayres – C'est un homme charmant –

[written along the margin] Si tu n'as pas reçu la Caisse écris à Rio à M^r Mayall, Patron de l'Hôtel des Etrangers, ou nous étions. Botafogo c'est le nom du quartier – Reclame là –

Kisses

Kisses

Kisses

Page N° 6

Si je continue à maigrir comme je le fais tu ne me reconnaitras pas au retour – Je n'ai que la peau et les os – On ne me voit plus que les yeux – Une vraie tête de petit crevé – Plus nerveux que jamais, je prends la mouche pour un rien, mais je continue à être gâté par tout le monde, et l'on me passe tous mes Caprices – M^{lle} Patti t'a remplacée, elle est bien, bien, bien bonne pour moi – Elle prétend que puisque tu as été si indulgente pour l'affreux Baby, il faut bien qu'elle suive ton exemple – nous sommes comme frère et sœur, et maintenant je crois bien que nous ne pourrons jamais nous séparer – nous sympathisons beaucoup

Et Suzon? Elle a dû Vieillir – Envoi moi son dernier Portrait – Pauvre petite! Elle ne doit plus faire de Conquêtes maintenant – La Voilà a l'état de M^{me} de Grandval.

Tu Continues à être folle du Baby, n'est-ce pas? Ecris lui beaucoup à Lima – l'Enfant.

Buenos Aires

12th September 1870

Dearest Mother,

What events – what disasters – we are distraught. The last steamship from Europe brought us news of the defeat of the French armies and the invasion of the Prussians. But what concerns me most is Paris. What if they go there! Here we are merely existing, and the French community here is dismayed as much as it is astonished. However, [surely] it's possible that the bravery of our soldiers will overcome their leaders' lack of foresight and obtain the final victory – isn't it? This I believe; this I *need* to believe. We will give a splendid concert at the Grand Theatre for the casualties from both nations for here there are as many of one as there are of the other, and we are certain to take in at least 20,000 francs. You can see that we will do our bit to contribute to the relief effort for those who suffer.

We are anxiously waiting for the English steamship which should arrive on the 20th of this month; I really hope that our tears will change to cries of joy.

I am feeling better, dear mother; it was definitely the abrupt change in climate that made me ill. Going from the incredible heat of Brazil to the incredible cold of Uruguay is no small matter but we are heading into the good season, springtime smiles at us, and we will have summer in Valparaiso and in Lima. And to think that I have not missed a concert! In spite of my poor health, I discharged my obligations without fail. Ah damn! – I am no longer the child of old who complained about the slightest little scratch. I have travelled 3,000 thousand leagues by sea and in a few weeks I will have passed around Cape Horn! ... not easy at all, that cursed Cape; I will need all my veteran's courage.

What do you think of our earnings?

1 st Concert	12,000 francs
2 nd Concert	10,000
3 rd Concert	16,000
4 th Concert	17,000
5 th Concert	12,000
and 6 th (yesterday)	8,000 Total: 75,000 francs

Aren't they fantastic? Tomorrow will be our seventh concert, then several benefit concerts, then our concert for the casualties [of the war]. Then we will travel by river, for 24 hours, to give two concerts at Rosario [Uruguay] (everything is already arranged) returning here for Carlotta's Grand Benefit concert, then on to Montevideo. I didn't realise that we would be staying here so long, which means I will not receive any news from you for quite some time. Lima! We're not there yet. In Brazil, there are no crosses. Since the country was ruined by the war against Paraguay, everything is being used to make money, and the chancellery fee is one thousand francs. When we learned that there are no exceptions we preferred, Ritter and I, to keep our money and wait for a better opportunity. The Emperor of Brazil is excellent but very timid, and it is not him who is in charge but his monks. He has sent me a magnificent pin (a gemstone) worth 2,000 francs according to the jewellers here. It will have even greater value in Europe since Brazil is the land of gemstones. The Prince of Eu has also sent me a pin – in pearls – very beautiful. I have received many gifts, especially walking sticks (my tastes are known); I have two beautiful examples. I will write to you by the next steamship. I love you Dear Mother, I smother you with kisses, and I embrace my *amigo* with all my soul. I shake hands with my friend Réty and I greet all those who have not forgotten me. Your most devoted son.

Page 5

By the way – have you received a box which I sent to Paris containing bouquets that were thrown to me in Rio, the bouquets made of feathers from Brazilian birds?

You will receive a visit from Coedès, the former Parisian accompanist who for the past two years worked at the Montevideo Casino and who left as we arrived in that city; he was the first acquaintance I met when we landed. I am also sending you Mr Soupay, the post-office agent aboard the royal steamship *Suidh* which took us to Buenos Aires; he is a charming man.

[written along the margin] If you have not received the box write to Mr Mayall, manager of the *Hôtel des Étrangers*, which is where we stayed. *Botafogo* is the name of the area. Ask for it.

Kisses

Kisses

Kisses

Page 6

If I continue to lose weight as I have been doing you won't recognise me when I return – I am nothing but skin and bones – all that's left are my eyes – a real dead man's head. More on edge than ever before, I fly off the handle at the slightest provocation, but still everyone spoils me and all my whims are attended to. Carlotta has taken your place, she is so, so, so good to me. She claims that since you were so indulgent towards the awful Baby she must follow your example – we are like brother and sister, and I now believe that being separated will no longer be an option – we spend a lot of time together.

And Suzon? – she must be old by now – send me her last portrait – poor girl! – I can't see her breaking any more hearts now – she is now in the same situation as Madame de Grandval.

You're still crazy about the Baby, aren't you? Write to him often in Lima.

The child.

NOTES

The Carlotta ensemble had travelled from Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) to Buenos Aires (Argentina) in mid-August 1870.

In the summer of 1870 increasing political tensions between France and Prussia prompted preparations for war. In France these preparations were incompetent; in Prussia they were thorough and efficient. War was declared on 19th July. There were immediate setbacks for the French on the battlefields of Wissembourg, Spicheren, Wörth, Mars-La-Tour, Gravelotte, and at Metz. On 1st and 2nd September 1870, at the battle of Sedan (Ardennes area of north-east France), Emperor Napoleon III, Marshal Patrice de Mac-Mahon, and 100,000 French soldiers were trapped by the German forces and therefore surrendered; this national humiliation brought to an end the battlefield conflicts. The army of the North German Confederation then laid siege to the French capital. Paris capitulated at the end of January 1871 but the city's radical populace refused to disarm. The Commune of Paris was brutally quashed by French troops (commanded by Mac-Mahon) during April and May 1871.

Sarasate's comment about the chancellery fee of 1,000 francs is difficult to understand; perhaps it refers to Sarasate and Ritter wanting to change Brazilian *reals* into francs (or dollars, especially before the Carlotta ensemble returned to the US). The expense of the Paraguayan war (1864-1870) exceeded the Brazilian government's total annual budget by a factor of at least ten., so Sarasate's comment about there being 'no crosses in Brazil' and 'everything is being used to make money' might suggest that religious artefacts containing rare metals – silver and gold in particular – were being seized by the authorities and melted down in order to create reserves of bullion.

The 'magnificent pin' referred to by Sarasate suggests either a tie-pin or a lapel-pin; likewise the pin 'in pearls'.

The identity of *Suzon* is unknown, likewise the 'situation' of Madame de Grandval; see also [Letter 10] and [Letter 20].

[Letter 17]

Buenos ayres 26 Sep^{bre} 70

Mère bien aimée – Je suis encore à moitié fou d'émotion – J'ai de tes nouvelles! et quels nouvelles, elles me rendent bien fier de toi, cher maman, je ne t'ai jamais tant aimée – figure toi que par le plus grand des hasards, j'ai mis la main au Club français sur le figaro ou il est question de la Souscription

pour l'épée que l'on veut offrir à MacMahon. J'ai lu ta lettre, tu vois d'ici ma Surprise? – Je me suis sauvé immédiatement comme un Voleur avec le journal, que j'ai montré à la Patti, aux Ritter, et enfin à mon ami M^r Walls, Rédacteur en Chef du Courrier de la Plata, qui t'adressera certainement des remerciements dans sa feuille, au nom des français de Buenos ayres – Nous avons bu hier au soir à ta santé tous car on a le cœur français, et je te félicite Chaleureusement de ce que tu as fait – Toujours la même, cette bonne mère. En Vérité, tu es bien l'amie qu'il me fallait, et il faut Convenir qu'il y a une grande analogie dans nos deux organisations – Sous mon petit masque indifférent, il y a aussi un grand enthousiasme pour les grandes choses, et dans des moments comme ceux-ci, j'aurais agi comme toi si l'occasion s'était présentée – Bravo! petite maman au Baby, nous nous comprenons, je suis vraiment aussi heureux que si l'épée d'honneur était pour moi – Nous attendons des nouvelles demain par le Paquet du Pacifique – Puissent – elles être meilleurs que les précédentes! – Mon Imagination trotte, galope, je vis plus avec toi, du Côté de Maison, que par ici. Notre inquiétude est incessante, si les choses pouvaient changer, nous pousserions de fameux cris de joie! –

Quel joli petit pays nous venons de visiter, Chère Amiga – Rosario, tel est son nom, est une toute petite ville à 48 heures d'ici, ou nous venons de donner deux Concerts Combles, et ou nous retournerons probablement en passant jusqu'à Cordova, du Côté des Cordillères – à Rosario, enthousiasme indescriptible – Beaucoup de Navarrais dans ce pays et des Basques – Tout ce monde là émigre, et fait fortune de ce côté – Mon Succès a été immense, et mes Compatriotes m'ont attendu à la sortie, m'ont tiré des fusées, des Bombes, et m'ont porté en triomphe au Café où il a fallu boire force Champagne en l'honneur de la Jota Aragonesa (nouveau morceau de moi) qui fait littéralement fureur ici, et qui es toujours bissé – J'en finis un autre en ce moment sur des airs Charmants du Pays –

Notre voyage dans ces parages se prolonge bien plus que je ne le supposais, ce qui fait que nous arriverons à Lima avec un Retard de près de deux mois, (d'après notre ancien itinéraire) Je suis donc Condamné à rester sans nouvelles de toi jusqu'en Décembre, il me faut du Courage – Heureusement que ton numéro 18 m'est arrivé hier de Rio, et m'a donné un peu de Courage. Oui, tu es un amour de m'écrire aussi souvent, et tu as raison de croire que je t'aime – Ah que là oui donc –

Cette lettre doit partir demain, elle te portera un million de baisers de ton petit Enfant, qui t'adore, et qui te Consacre en pensée toute sa tendresse – J'embrasse mon amigo Chéri mille fois, et je lui tiré ses gros favoris comme au temps où je montais à l'assaut de Malakoff sous le Commandement du fameux général Chicalafio et de son ami le père Guimard –

Salut à Réty, et à tous ceux que m'aiment un peu – à toi Querida mia d'amour –

Baby

[written along the bottom of page 2: *as-tu reçu mon portrait, n'est ce pas que j'ai maigri?*]

Buenos Aires

26th September 1870

Much-loved mother,

I am still half mad with emotion; I have your latest news! – and what news! It makes me very proud of you, dear mother; I have never loved you so much. You see, quite by chance I was at the *Club français* where I picked up a copy of *Le Figaro* which mentions the collection to buy a sword to be presented to MacMahon. I have read your letter; you understand my surprise? I left immediately with the newspaper, like a thief, and showed it to Carlotta, to the Ritters, and lastly to my friend Mr Walls, editor of the *Le Courrier de la Plata* who, on behalf of the French community of Buenos Aires, will express his gratitude to you in the pages of his paper. Yesterday evening we *all* drank to your health because we have French hearts and I congratulate you warmly for what you did; always the same, this goodly mother. In truth, you are indeed the friend I needed, and it must be acknowledged that there is a great similarity between our two

organisations [personalities?]. Behind my veil of indifference there is nonetheless enormous interest in affairs of state, and in times like these I would have done the same as you had the opportunity presented itself – Bravo! little mother to the Baby, we understand each other. I am truly as happy as if the sword of honour was for me. We are awaiting further news with the arrival, tomorrow, of the Pacific steamship; may she bring better news than previously. My imagination runs away with me – I am living more with you, at home, than over here. Our anxiety is constant; if things could change [for the better] we would cry out with shrieks of joy!

Dear friend, we have just visited such a pretty part of the country; Rosario is its name – a tiny town which is 48 hours from here where we gave two sold-out concerts; we will probably pass through the town again en route for Cordova, at the foot of the Cordilleras. At Rosario the enthusiasm was indescribable. Lots of Navarrais and Basques here; all these people emigrate here and make their fortune on this side [of the Atlantic]. My success has been immense. My countrymen waited for me at the stage door with rockets and firecrackers and carried me in triumph to the café where much champagne was drunk in honour of the *Jota Aragonesa* (a new composition of mine) which literally causes a furore here and which always has to be repeated. I am currently finishing another composition which is based on charming popular tunes from this country.

Our journey in these parts is taking much longer than I had anticipated which means we will arrive in Lima almost two months later than originally planned. I am therefore condemned to wait until December before receiving your news; I need to be brave. Happily, your letter number 18 arrived yesterday from Rio and it has given me a little strength. Yes, you are so kind to write to me so often and you are right to believe that I love you – oh yes, you absolutely are.

This letter will leave tomorrow; it will carry to you a million kisses from your small child who adores you and who, in his thoughts, sends all his tenderness. I embrace my dear *amigo* a thousand times and I pull on his mutton chops just as I used to do when I led the charge against Malakoff under the command of the famous general Chicalafio and his friend Father Guimard.

Greetings to Réty and to all those who love me a little [and] to you, my most dear love.

Baby

NOTES

Sarasate's question, at the bottom of the second page of his letter – *as-tu reçu mon portrait, n'est ce pas que j'ai maigri?* ('have you received my portrait, haven't I lost weight?') – is very likely a post-script and entirely unrelated to the text which Sarasate had written in the line immediately above: *Rosario, tel est son nom, est une toute petite ville.*

The following article appeared on the front page of *Le Figaro*, dated *Dimanche 21 Août 1870*:

UNE ÉPÉE D'HONNEUR AU MARECHAL MAC-MAHON

Notre souscription prend des proportions inattendues. Les envois de province arrivent en nombre si considérable qu'il est impossible d'en opérer le dépouillement, au jour le jour. Quant à l'apport de Paris, il s'élève, pour la seule journée d'hier, à 2,500 fr. environ. [...]

Nous avons, dès aujourd'hui, la certitude de pouvoir offrir au maréchal Mac-Mahon un cadeau vraiment royal et digne de son héroïsme. Notre écriin s'est enrichi d'un nouveau bijou qu'on nous envoie enveloppé dans la lettre suivante:

*Cher Figaro,
Je serais bien fière, bien heureuse de savoir que ce diamant
ornera l'épée du maréchal Mac-Mahon.
Je garde le pareil pour celle du maréchal Bazaine.
Votre abonnée
AMÉLIE DE LASSABATHIE*

[...] Il nous est impossible de donner satisfaction à tous les artistes qui sollicitent l'honneur de ciseler gratuitement la poignée de l'épée. Nous les prévenons en les remerciant, qu'aussitôt la souscription close, une commission sera nommée pour faire un choix entre les divers pétitionnaires. [...]

Sunday, 21st August 1870 A SWORD OF HONOUR FOR MARSHAL MAC-MAHON.

The response to our proposed collection has exceeded our expectations. So much mail is arriving from the provinces that it is impossible to sort it on a daily basis. As for contributions from the citizens of Paris, yesterday alone we received approximately 2,500 francs. [...]

As of today we have the absolute certainty of being able to offer Marshal Mac-Mahon a truly royal gift which is worthy of his heroism; the presentation-case will be enhanced by a new jewel that has been sent to us enclosed within the following letter:

*Dear Figaro,
I will be very proud and happy to know that this diamond
will adorn Marshal Mac-Mahon's sword.
I am keeping a similar jewel for the sword for Marshal Bazaine.
Yours,
Amélie de Lassabathie*

[...] It is impossible for us to satisfy all the craftsmen who have requested the honour to carve, at no cost, the sword's handle. We have contacted them all to thank them and to advise that, as soon as the collection has closed, a commission will be appointed to choose between the various applicants.

Marshal Mac-Mahon's heroism in the battles prior to the terminal disaster at Sedan is presumably the reason why *Le Figaro* organised a collection to pay for a sword of honour. It is not known what happened to the collection (and the sword) after Mac-Mahon was wounded and captured, and his army forced to surrender, by the German forces on 2nd September 1870; see the NOTES to [Letter 16].

The 'Malakoff' battle, in which French troops, led by Mac-Mahon, were victorious, took place in September 1855 during the siege of Sevastopol (Crimean War). Sarasate's references to 'Chicalafio' and 'Guimard' resist explanation.

The Patti ensemble left Buenos Aires for Santiago (Chile) in November 1870. The group then travelled to Valparaiso and north to Lima (Peru). Increasing tensions between the musicians over monetary matters resulted in Sarasate abandoning the tour and returning to New York in April 1871.

[Letter 18]

[The urgency of Sarasate's request – 'Quickly, please, some news' – suggests that this undated letter (mid May 1871?) pre-dates the [Letter 19] of 5th July 1871: 'how pleased I am to know that you are out of danger.']

*Adresse M^r Sarasate chez M^r Louis Dachauer 147 East 16th Street
New-Yorck*

Mère Chérie

Je suppose que tu n'as rien reçu de moi, puisque je n'ai aucune nouvelle – Tu penses si je dois être inquiet! – Vite un mot de grâce – J'ai quitté les Ritter qui m'ont volé indignement – La Patti regrette beaucoup mon départ, mais tant pis, elle n'a pas su défendre mes intérêts, je suis enchanté de ce que j'ai fait. Je reste ici ou les engagements viennent déjà me trouver pour l'hiver prochain, avec la Nilsson et autres –

Vite je t'en prie, un mot si c'est possible je ne vis pas, je ne dors pas depuis que j'ai appris à mon arrivée toutes les horreurs qui se sont passées – heureusement il n'est pas question du Conservatoire.

Mille millions de baisers, le bateau part ce soir

Sarasate

Address: Mr Sarasate c/o Mr Louis Dachauer, 147 East 16th Street, New York

Dearest Mother,

I assume that you've not received anything from me since I do not have any news. Can you imagine how worried I am! Quickly, please, some news. I have left the Ritters who robbed me outrageously. Carlotta very much regrets my departure, but too bad, she did not know how to

defend my interests; I am very satisfied with my decision. I will remain here, where bookings for next winter, with Nilsson and others, are already being brought to my door.

Quickly, I beg you, send me some news if at all possible. I no longer live; I've not slept since arriving and learning of all the horrors which have occurred [in Paris]; thankfully the Conservatoire is unaffected.

A thousand million kisses, the ship leaves tonight.

Sarasate

NOTES

It seems that Sarasate's opening sentence was intended to indicate *I assume that you've not received my last letter[s] since I have received nothing from you by way of a reply.*

[Letter 19]

Montréal 5 Juillet 71

Chère Mère – On m'envoie ta lettre à l'instant, et je ne puis te dire comme je suis heureux de te savoir hors de danger – J'avais bien envie de t'aller voir cet été, j'éprouvais le besoin de me reposer un peu auprès de toi, et de revoir mon chez moi, ce Paris que j'aime tant, et qui doit être bien changé! mais après le voyage si long et fatigant que je viens de faire, après les succès que j'ai obtenus, et dont témoignent tous les journeaux espagnols que je t'enverrai bientôt à mon retour à New-Yorck, je me trouve, grâce aux bons procédés de M^r Ritter père, à la tête d'une misérable somme de quelques milliers de francs au lieu de tout ce qu'il me doit, et qu'il aurait été obligé de me payer, si j'avais eu un engagement écrit, ce qui m'aurait permis de lui faire un procès que j'aurais gagné grâce à tant d'amis que j'avais là bas, et qui m'auraient soutenu. Mais moi, toujours bête en affaires, je me suis contenté sur sa parole, et là dessus je suis parti pour le Brésil comme on allait au Bois de Boulogne – Encore une leçon! il faut espérer qu'à force d'en recevoir, je deviendrai Yankee – À Lima j'ai obtenu des triomphes, et j'espérais que le vieux Ritter au moment du départ, remplirait enfin ses engagements envers moi, mais la jalousie s'en est mêlé, et mes succès m'ont plutôt fait du tort auprès de lui, qu'autre chose – Je n'irai jamais plus en Compagnie, ou j'en formerai moi-même – C'est ce que je fais en ce moment, et je voyage en Canada avec Le Ténor Lefranc, français, Miss Philips, et autres artistes. Nous n'avons donné encore qu'un Concert, assez bon, à Québec, et ce soir et demain deux ici – Nous voyageons comme des princes, et je tâcherai au moins de travailler avec quelque profit pour attendre l'hiver ou j'espère faire de bonnes affaires grâce au nom que j'ai déjà ici – L'Été prochain, j'irai pour sûr te voir, Querida mia, mais quand à me fixer à Paris, tant que je n'aurai pas quelques rentes, je ne le ferai pas – Les Artistes seront bien misérables là bas, tandis qu'ici, avec du mérite, vous menez une grande et belle vie, et vous arrivez à un bon résultat beaucoup plutôt – Je suis à New-Yorck chez M^r et M^{me} Dachauer, que j'ai connu en 67 à Paris, et je fais ce que je veux dans sa maison – Je rentrerai dans huit jours, et j'organiserai quelques Concerts du Côté de New-port et Saratoga – Travailler, Travailler, voilà, ma devise maintenant. Je ne veux pas rentrer à Paris misérablement – De toutes façons, cependant, au mois de Juin de l'année prochaine j'irai t'embrasser Chère amiga, en Compagnie de M^r Dachauer, c'est complètement arrêté –

Si tu vois mes amis salue les de ma part surtout albert, et M^r Hubert – Mon amigo, je le mange de baisers, et toi, je t'adore amiga Querida. Ne te gênes pas avec moi, et fais ce que moi – même ai fait bien souvent – Ma bourse n'est pas grosse, mais j'en ai trop pour moi fais moi donc ta commande si tu as besoin de quelque chose. A charge de revanche, la vie est si drôle – ton meilleur ami et ton fils –

[written in the margin] Je t'écrirai souvent

Montreal
5th July 1871

Dear Mother,

Your letter has just been passed to me and I cannot tell you how pleased I am to know that you are out of danger. I really wanted to come and see you this summer; I was feeling the need to rest awhile with you and to see my home again – the Paris that I love so much and which must have changed so much! – but – after the long and tiring journey which I have just completed, after the success which I have achieved (as described in the Spanish newspapers which I will send you soon, once I have returned to New York) I find myself, thanks to the good business methods of Mr Ritter (senior), in possession of a miserable sum of a few thousand francs instead of all the money which he owes me and which he would have been required to pay me if I had had a written contract which would have allowed me to take him to court where I would have won thanks to the support of all the friends I had there [in Lima?] who would have supported me. But I – always so stupid in business affairs – I took him at his word and it was on that basis that I went to Brazil in much the same way as one goes to the Bois de Boulogne. Another lesson! Let's hope that I will eventually learn from them and become a Yankee [?more hard-headed, more American in attitude]. In Lima I had many triumphs and I hoped that Ritter (senior), when we came to leave the city, would finally fulfill his [financial?] obligations towards me, but jealousy reared its ugly head and my [artistic] success ended up hurting me more than helping me. Never again will I be part of a touring ensemble – or I will form my own. This is what I am doing at the moment and I am [now] travelling in Canada with the French tenor, Lefranc, Miss Phillipps, and other artistes. We have only given one concert so far, in Quebec, which was pretty good, and this evening and tomorrow we will give two here [in Montreal]. We are travelling in great style and I will aim to make a little profit to sustain me until the winter when I hope to do good business thanks to the reputation which I already have here. Next summer I will definitely come to visit you, dearest mother, but, as for settling in Paris, I will not do it until I have some sources of income. The artistes will be very miserable there, whereas here, with a little effort, one can lead a wonderful life and achieve good results more quickly. In New York I am staying with Mr and Mrs Dachauer whom I met in '67, in Paris, and I can come and go as I please in their house. I will return [to New York from Montreal] in eight days [actually 11th July – see **[Letter 20]**] and I will be organising some concerts in the Newport and Saratoga areas. Work, work, – that is now my motto. I do not want to return to Paris a poor man. In any case – nonetheless – next June [i.e. June 1872] I will come to kiss you my dear *amiga*. Mr Dachauer will be with me; it's all arranged.

If you see my friends say hullo to them from me, especially Albert and Mr Hubert. My *amigo* I smother him in kisses, and you I adore dearest *amiga*. Don't stand on ceremony with me and do what I myself have done many times. My pockets are not deep but I have more than enough for myself so let me know if you need anything. You can return the favour later; life is so strange.

Your best friend and your son.

[written in the margin] I will write often.

NOTES

Sarasate's relief that Amélie de Lassabathie is 'out of danger' probably refers to the quashing of the Paris Commune.

For Sarasate's financial situation see also **[Letter 22]** and **[Letter 23]**, especially the final paragraph of **[Letter 23]** where Sarasate reiterates his concerns about returning to Paris.

Adelaide Phillipps (1833-1882) was a UK-born contralto whose family emigrated to the US when she was seven years of age; she is mentioned by Lillie Moulton (Lillie de Hegermann-Lindenchrone – see **[Letter 7]**) in a letter dated January 1864:

Miss Adelaide Philips [*sic*] is here singing, but, alas! without the success she deserves. She appeared at Les Italiens twice; once as Azucena in "Trovatore" and then as the page in "Lucrezia Borgia". If it had not been for her clothes, I think that her efforts would have been more appreciated. The moment she appeared as the page in "Lucrezia" there was a general titter in the audience. Her make-up was so extraordinary, Parisian taste rose up in arms. And as for the Borgias, they would have poisoned her on the spot had they seen her! Her extraordinarily fat legs (whether padded or not, I don't know)

were covered with black-velvet trousers, ending at the knee and trimmed with lace. [...] Poor Miss Philips! I felt so sorry for her. I thought of when I had seen her in America, where she had such success in the same rôles. But why did she get herself up so? There is nothing like ridicule for killing an artist in France, and any one who knew the French could have foreseen what her success would be the moment she came on the stage. She became ill after these two performances and left Paris.

(*In the Courts of Memory, 1858-1875*, pp. 43-44)

Louis Dachauer was an organist and composer. The identity of 'Albert' is unknown.

[Letter 20]

New-York, 11 Juillet

Maman – Je suis furieux – Comment! Tu te trouves dans la dèche, comment je m'y suis trouvé si souvent, et tu rougis de demander un petit service à ton fils? J'arrive à l'instant du Canada et je lis tes deux dernières lettres. Oui – je suis paresseux pour écrire, appelle moi drôle, polisson, petit horreur voyoux, mais ne doutes jamais de moi, et ne t'adresse jamais à d'autres dans des situations critiques. Quant on aime vraiment, c'est aussi bien de loin que de près – Donc, si par la prochain courrier, tu n'es pas gentille, et ne me parles pas franchement, comme une aimable petite maman, à son méchant diable de fils, nous nous fâchons – Comment tu n'as seulement pas une servante! Toi, accoutumée à vivre en fine et Spirituelle Parisienne tu mettrais la main au fricot, n'oublies jamais que ce que j'aurai peu ou beaucoup, sera à nous deux, comme ce que tu as ou auras, faisons donc la dinette, comme deux bons baby, et partageons – J'ai 8,000 francs d'économie, beaucoup de belles espérances pour l'hiver, je t'en offre la moitié en attendant, Cela ne me gêne en rien, ma position est et sera ici cent fois meilleur qu'à Paris – De bons amis (M^r et M^{me} Dachauer, jeunes et bons tous deux, ainsi que beaux) (qui t'aiment sans te connaître) m'hébergent à de très modestes conditions, leur maison est magnifique, et c'est moi qui ai exigé de payer pension (toujours Espagnol) Tu vois que cela n'est pas triste, mets donc tout orgueil de côté, et ne fais pas ta Sophie (ou n'oublie pas son boulevard) L'été prochain, j'irai te demander à déjeuner et à dîner pendant deux mois, et j'admurerai ton petit nid. Je te présenterai mon cher ami Dachauer qui est un frère pour moi (aije de la chance?) et nous rirons si c'est possible – Au prochain départ je t'enverrai un tas de journeaux qui parlent de moi en termes tellement enthousiastes que tu en sera épatée – Maintenant je tenais seulement à te dire ce que j'avais sur le Cœur –

J'adore M^{me} de Grandval, je ne le dis qu'à toi, et je me mettrais au feu pour elle – Je me tuerais pour ce que j'ai fais, mais c'est un cœur d'or, et si je ne lui ai pas écrit, rappelle toi si tu as bonne mémoire, que tu me l'avais défendu, ainsi qu'Hélène, et que vous m'aviez menacé de me retirer votre amitié si je le faisais –

[written along the margin] *Kisses mille fois de l'enfant.*

New York,
11th July [1871]

Mother – I am furious – What! You find yourself to be broke, as I have been so often, and you are embarrassed to ask for a little help from your son? I have just arrived from Canada and have read your last two letters. Yes – I am a lazy letter-writer; yes – call me a scamp – a mischievous child – a small, loutish, horror – but never doubt me, and never turn to others in critical situations. True love is just as valid from afar as it is up close. So, if in your next letter you are unkind and do not speak frankly (as a good little mother should speak to her naughty devil of a son) then we will fall out with each other. How can it be that you don't even have one servant! You, who are accustomed to living as a fine and intellectual Parisian, you would put your shoulder to the wheel. Never forget that all that I have, however little or much, will belong to us both, and the same goes

for what is yours. Let us therefore gather around the table, like two good babies, and share. I have 8,000 francs in savings and lots of good opportunities for the forthcoming winter season; to tide you over I offer you half. Such a payment does not bother me at all; my position here is, and will be, one hundred times better than it would be in Paris. My good friends, Mr and Mrs Dachauer (both fine young people, and attractive too) (who love you even without having met you) are putting me up under very reasonable terms; their house is magnificent and I insisted on paying for my keep (my Spanish upbringing!). As you can see, it's not all doom and gloom, so swallow your pride and put aside your airs and graces [...?]. Next summer [1872] I will invite you to come to lunch and to dinner for two months and I will admire your little nest. I will introduce you to my dear friend Mr Dachauer who is like a brother to me (aren't I lucky?) and, if possible, we will laugh. By the next [steamship] departure I will send you a heap of newspapers which talk about me in such enthusiastic terms that you will be amazed. For now I just wanted to tell you what was on my mind.

I adore Madame de Grandval – only you know this – I would throw myself in the fire for her – I would kill myself for what I have done, but she has a heart of gold, and, if I have not written to her, remember (if your memory serves) that you and Miss Héléne forbade me from doing so, and that you threatened to end your friendship with me if I did.

[written along the margin] A thousand kisses from the child.

NOTES

The financial predicament facing Amélie de Lassabathie may have been caused by the cost of her husband's medical care during the final months of his life; see the **NOTES** to **[Letter 28]**. Amélie may also have had to spend a lot of money protecting herself, and her position, during the marauding carnage and terror of the Commune uprising. Nonetheless, a considerable monetary legacy was provided for Sarasate; see the **NOTES** to **[Letter 23]**.

The French expression *faire sa Sophie* means 'to put on airs and graces'. Sarasate then follows this with a parenthetical phrase that translates as 'or do not forget her boulevard'. It has not been possible to translate this phrase in any meaningful way.

The basis for Sarasate's passionate admiration of Madame de Grandval is unknown (see also **[Letter 10]**); his earlier love for Mademoiselle Héléne seems to have evaporated.

[Letter 21]

New-port 28 Juillet 71

Mère Chérie,

J'ai été malade des fièvres du pays, avec frissons, perte d'appétit, et le reste. Au lit pendant près d'une semaine, mais je suis mieux maintenant et j'espère prendre des bains bientôt – New-port est le Trouville des Etats-Unis, c'est là ou l'on rencontre pendant l'été tous les fashionables américains qui viennent se délasser de leurs nombreuses affaires de l'hiver. C'est ici que nous sommes tous en ce moment avec les Dachauer, etc, pour un mois. Tes lettres me seront remises de New-Yorck, et j'attends avec impatience la réponse à la dernière que je t'ai écrite en revenant du Canada –

Tu serais étonnée de voir combien ce petit pays ressemble à Maisons-Lafitte Les mêmes avenues ombragées, les mêmes Cottages ou Villas, Squares, pièces d'eau, et ... la mer!! Juger un peu comme ce doit être beau, et comme j'ai dû être émotionné. Hier soir surtout, au clair de lune, il me semblait être dans ce beau Parck que j'ai habité pendant si longtemps. Quand le reverrai-je? .. l'été prochain, si toute fois tu juges à propos de garder ton petit at home. J'espère que tu ne le vendras pas. Il y a plus, si tu te trouvais dans l'impossibilité de suffire à son entretien, je serais bien heureux de t'aider en cela, car il me serait très pénible Un jour, quand je retournerai, et que je voudrai revoir ce cher

petit nid, d'apercevoir des étrangers, des Blancards, ou autres épice-mards, là ou nous avons vécu ensemble, et ou mon Violon à raisonné si souvent (Peut-être pas autant que son maître, mais mieux)

Et le petit Belvédère ou je te jouais mes doubles Cordes, ou j'imitais les fameux joueurs de Cor de M^r Talon, (et ou j'ai embrassé une fois Alice) et ma petite chambre, qui me rappelle tant de choses, y compris la petite cuisine que j'y faisais du temps de M^e Audouard (Olympe) Te souviens tu de tous ces bruits de petits pots et de boubouille que tu entendais la nuit, et qui te paraissaient si étranger? – Et sans compter le lac Baby, qui ne doit pas porter d'autre nom etc. etc. Tu me répondras là-dessus – Ecco quelques extraits de journaux de ma tournée au Canada –

Je t'enverrai des journaux Espagnols du Pérou plus tard, j'en ai tant, tant, que je ne sais qu'en faire – je t'en fourrerai dans mes lettres de temps en temps –

Je travaille comme un enragé, et (entre nous) je serai bientôt le premier Violino de l'époque. Mes progrès en mécanisme sont inouïs, et je n'aurais jamais pu jouer mes nouvelles Compositions il y a quelques années. J'espère que je ferai pas mal de bruit quand je ferai ma rentrée là bas plus tard.

C'est maintenant que j'ai une drôle de tête! ... les Cheveux en brosse (à cause de la chaleur) et l'impériale! je t'enverrai mon portrait quand ma Chevelure sera revenue. Mais L'Impériale je la garde, on me dit qu'elle me va très bien, cela me donne un petit air de sous-officier. Pour le reste, je continue d'avoir l'apparence d'un jeune homme de 18 ans, je n'ai pas Changé, les mêmes quenottes, que je Contemple avec amour toutes les fois que j'en trouve l'occasion, les mêmes Coquards, que tu ne détestais pas, et le même défaut de me ronger les doigts jusqu'au sang – Ni engraisé ni maigri, toujours le gentil petit Baby d'autrefois –

Ton Vuillaume a subi une grande amélioration. C'est aujourd'hui un très beau Violon qui a eu l'honneur de combattre avec son maître, déjà plusieurs fois devant des auditoires magnifiques – J'ai fait débiter ce monsieur à Lima, au Bénéfice de la Patti. Maintenant il n'a plus peur.

Ton archet à bout de rubis se porte bien, ainsi que la mèche de cheveux que je reçus à Rio, et que j'ai placée dans le médaillon LS que je porte toujours sur moi –

Au Revoir Chère Maman, je vous embrasse et vous aime mille fois, tous les deux

Newport
28th July 1871

Dearest Mother,

I have been ill with a fever, shivering, loss of appetite, and so on; in bed for almost a week, but I am now feeling better and I hope to take some baths soon. Newport is the Trouville of the United States; it is here that, during the summer, one can meet all the fashionable Americans who come to relax from their numerous business affairs of the winter period. All of us are here with the Dachauers, etc., for one month. Your letters will be forwarded to me from New York and I am anxiously waiting for your response to my last letter which I wrote after returning from Canada.

You would be surprised to see how this small country [state; Rhode Island] resembles Maisons-Lafitte. The same shady avenues, the same cottages, villas, squares, lakes, and ... the sea!! Imagine how beautiful it must be and how emotional I was. Last night especially, in the moonlight, it seemed like I was in that beautiful park where I lived for so long. When will I see it again? .. next summer, if you consider it appropriate to keep your little home. I hope you will not sell it. What's more, if you found yourself unable to afford its upkeep I would gladly help you out with this as it would be very upsetting for me, one day, when I return and want to re-visit this dear little sanctuary, to find strangers – common people – tradesmen – where we [used to] live together, and where my violin resonated so often (maybe not as much as its master, but better).

And the little belvedere where I played my double-stops for you, where I imitated the famous Horn players of Mr Talon (and where I once kissed Alice), and my little room which contains so

many memories including the cooking I used to do when Madame Audouard (Olympe) was there. Do you remember the sounds of the pots and pans you used to hear at night and which seemed to you so strange? – not to mention the ‘Baby’ lake which must never bear any other name, etc. etc. Let me know what you think on this subject.

Enclosed are some newspaper cuttings from my tour of Canada.

I will send you some Spanish newspapers from Peru later; I have so many, so many that I do not know what to do with them; I’ll stuff some in with my letters every now and then.

I practise the violin like a madman, and, between us, I will soon be the finest violinist of the period. My technical progress is incredible; even just a few years ago I would not have been able to play my new compositions. I hope to make quite an impact when I return later on.

I’m currently quite a sight for sore eyes! I have a crew-cut (because of the heat) and an imperial! I will send you my portrait when my hair has re-grown but I am keeping the Imperial; I am told that it suits me very well and gives me the air of a non-commissioned officer. As for the rest I continue to look like a young man of 18. I have not changed: the same teeth (which I regard with admiration at every opportunity), the same dark eyes (that you didn’t dislike), and the same fault of biting my fingernails down to the quick. Neither fatter nor thinner I remain the nice little Baby of old.

Your Vuillaume [violin] has undergone a profound improvement. It is now a very beautiful violin that has had the honour of going into [musical] battle with its master, several times already, in front of magnificent audiences. I baptised this gentleman [i.e. the violin] in Lima, at Carlotta’s benefit concert. He no longer has any fear.

Your bow, with the tip made of ruby, is doing very well, likewise the lock of hair which I received in Rio and which I have placed in the ‘LS’ locket which I wear at all times.

Goodbye dear mother; I embrace you and love you both a thousand times.

NOTES

On 12th November 1869 the Paris violin-dealers, Gand & Bernardel, inspected and cleaned a J-B Vuillaume violin owned by Sarasate. Given that the date is just four months before Sarasate left Paris for New York perhaps this ‘inspected and cleaned’ violin was that which, at an unknown earlier date, had been bought for Sarasate by Amélie de Lassabathie and which he took with him to the US as a ‘back-up’ to his 1724 Stradivari violin; see [Letter 6]. The Vuillaume violin was not bought from G&B since there is no entry in the relevant business ledgers (Musée de la Musique, Paris) which records the sale of either a violin or a bow. If, instead, the violin was bought directly from Vuillaume then it is curious that Sarasate patronised G&B rather than returning the violin to Vuillaume (d.1875) for his inspection:

Grand Livre, 1866-1876

M^r Sarrasate [sic]

1869 Novembre 12 Visité, nettoyé etc. le violon Wuillaume, 3 francs

Strictly speaking, Sarasate ‘baptised’ his Vuillaume violin in April 1870; see [Letter 6]. The violin is today exhibited at the Sarasate museum in Pamplona.

An ‘Imperial’ was a type of tufted beard popularised by Emperor Napoleon III.

[Letter 22]

Newport 11 août 71

Amiga mia –

J’ai reçu tes deux lettres en réponse à mes deux dernières. Je crois que les Ritter ont dû passer par là, et qu’ils t’ont conté mes affaires à leur manière, à moins qu’ils n’aient employé des intermédiaires – Hors comme toutes les fois que je me rappelle d’eux (des Ritter) et de leurs affreux procédés je suis d’une humeur terrible, je préfère n’en plus parler – Je te prierai seulement de réduire d’une vingtième partie les faits, et de ne pas croire à mon entière putréfaction. Si ce n’était horrible, cela

me ferait rire – Je t’enverrai de New-Yorck le portrait d’un jeune docteur de beaucoup de talent, mon ami au Brésil, son nom est Domingo D’Almeida, médecin en Chef de l’hôpital portugais à Rio, lequel m’a fait boire pendant une dizaine de jours des Tisanes rafraichissantes, après quoi ma grande maladie avait disparu. Seulement, j’ai eu le malheur de tomber assez malade à Buenos-aires, pour cause de Changement de climat, après la grande Chaleur les grands froids (toutes la Compagnie s’en est ressenti) et les Charmants Ritter n’ont pas manqué l’Occasion de faire courir des bruits sur mon Compte. J’ai continué cependant mon service, et n’ai pas manqué un seul Concert – Donc, pour que tu ne sois pas inquiète, aussitôt que mes Cheveux seront à leur ancienne longueur je m’empresserai de t’envoyer mon portrait afin que tu puisses juger des ravages causés par mon horrible accident – parlons d’autre choses.

J’ai trois propositions d’engagement pour cet hiver – l’un avec M^{lle} Phillipps, une fameuse Cantatrice américaine, l’autre avec M^{lle} Kellogg, idem et enfin avec M^r Thomas, le Padeloup des Etats Unis qui voyage chaque hiver avec son Orchestre – Je n’ai encore rien signé, parce que j’ai promis à M^r Strakosh (maintenant en Europe) d’attendre son retour avant de rien Conclure. Je choisirai entre les Quatre. La Saison des Concerts commence ici fin Septembre et jusqu’à maintenant il est à supposer que je serai le seul Violoniste pour la saison prochaine, tandis qu’il y a quantité de bons pianistes –

Certes, j’aurai bien voulu aller en Europe mais de mon voyage à Newport dépendait une grande partie de mes futurs Succès. C’est ici que l’on fait la Connaissance de toutes les grandes familles américaines, et qu’un artiste se fait des amis, quand il a ce qu’il faut pour se faire aimer – Or un ami en Amérique est chose importante pour un artiste, surtout quand il a comme moi, l’intention de donner un grand Concert à la fin de la saison, à L’académie de musique, ce qui peut me rapporter plus que ce que les Ritter m’ont donné dans toute la saison –

Quant à la tournée au Canada, je me suis mal expliqué. J’ai formé la troupe, c’est vrai, car c’est moi qui ai proposé à la Phillipps et à Lefranc de faire ce voyage, mais les frais étaient en commun, et nous avons gagné 2,000 francs chacun – tout payé – Tu Comprends que je sais fort bien que je ne suis pas un homme d’affaires

La Monbelli est engagé pour cet hiver par Strakosh, ainsi que Capoil – Il est probable que nous voyagerons ensemble – Oh! la la!

De mes aventures, je ne te dis rien, il y en aurait trop à te Compter – On Croirait vraiment que dame nature m’a rendu plus séduisant après m’avoir si rudement éprouvé – L’Espagnol est en grande faveur auprès des blondes américaines et il y en a plus d’une qui l’embrasse sur ses quenottes blanches –

Allons Chère Maman, je t’aime bien fort, et pense bien à toi. J’embrasse mon Cher gros amigo, et mes dis.

Ton enfant bien affectionné

à toi sincèrement

Sarasate

Ton Roméo a un immense succès dans les Salons

J’ai rasé mon Imperiale j’ai le pressentiment que tu m’aimeras mieux avec mon petit menton pointu – Je te le dédie

Newport 11th August 1871

My friend,

I have received your two letters in reply to the last two which I sent. I think that the Ritters must have passed through [Paris] and recounted my business dealings to you from their point of view (unless they used intermediaries). Given that every time I think about them and their appalling

behaviour it puts me in a dreadful mood, I prefer not to talk about it. I would only ask that you take their information with a large grain of salt, and not to believe in my complete putrefaction. If it wasn't so awful it would make me laugh. I will send you, from New York, the portrait of a very talented young doctor, a friend of mine in Brazil: his name is Domingo d'Almeida and he is the most senior doctor at the Portuguese hospital in Rio. He made me drink refreshing tisanes for ten days, after which my great illness had disappeared. Unfortunately, I became quite ill in Buenos Aires, due to the change in climate – after the incredible heat the incredible cold (all the members of the ensemble were affected). The charming Ritters did not miss the opportunity to spread rumours about me. Nonetheless, I did not fail in my obligations and I did not miss a single concert. So that you do not worry about me, as soon as my hair has re-grown to its original length I will immediately send you my portrait so you can judge for yourself the ravages caused by my terrible accident. Let's talk about something else.

I have had three offers of employment for this coming winter. The first is with Miss Phillipps, a famous American singer; the second is with Miss Kellogg (ditto); the third is with Mr Thomas – 'the Padeloup of the United States' – who tours every winter with his orchestra. I have not yet signed anything because I have promised Mr Strakosch (who is currently in Europe) that I would wait until he returns before concluding any contract. I will choose between the four options. The concert season here begins at the end of September; at the moment it seems very likely that I will be the only violinist for the forthcoming season, while there are a great many good pianists.

I admit that I really would have liked to go to Europe, but a large part of my future success depended on this trip to Newport. It is here one meets all the great American families and where an artiste makes friends (when he has what it takes to be loved) – and a friend in America is important for an artiste, especially if he intends, as I do, to give a big concert at the end of the season at the Academy of Music, where I would earn more than the Ritters gave me for the whole season.

As for the Canadian tour, I did not make myself clear. I formed the troupe, that's true, as it was I who recommended to Miss Phillipps and Mr Lefranc that they should make this trip, but the costs were split between all of us and we have each profited by 2,000 francs – all settled. As you know, I am well aware that I am not a businessman.

Monbelli has been engaged for the winter by Strakosch, likewise Capoil; it's likely that we will travel together – Oh la la!

I will say nothing of my love life – there would be too much to tell. One might conclude that Mother Nature has made me more attractive after putting me through so many trials. The Spaniard is much admired by American blondes and more than one kisses him on his white teeth.

Dear Mother, I love you with all my heart, and look after yourself. I embrace my dear big *amigo* and [...?].

Your most affectionate child
Sincerely yours
Sarasate

Your *Roméo* is a huge success in the salons.

I have shaved off my Imperial; I suspect that you will prefer me with my little pointed chin; I dedicate it to you.

NOTES

Sarasate's references to the 'great illness' which he suffered whilst in Rio de Janeiro, and the 'ravages caused by my terrible accident', resist explanation; there is no mention of these events within the four extant letters (see Letters [12-15]) which Sarasate sent to Paris during the summer months of 1870.

Monbelli was Marie Monbelli (1845-1913); *Capoil* was Joseph Victor Capoul (1839-1924).

[Letter 23]

Pittsburgh 27 Sep^{bre} 71

Nous allons finir notre tournée Chère Mère, et le 1^{er} Octobre je serai rentré à New-York, et m'occuperai d'arranger mes affaires pour l'hiver – Le succès et le Programme sont les mêmes partout –

Je t'ai déjà écrit de cette ville, il y a plus d'une année, et cette pensée me rend tout triste. Que faire? il me prend quelquefois des envies folles de t'aller embrasser, mais je dois forcément attendre jusqu'au printemps prochain, à moins de perdre tout mon hiver – Cet été j'aurais certainement fait le voyage, mais il serait arrivé un Scandale entre moi et les Ritter, car je n'aurais certainement pas permis toutes leurs farces dans les journeaux, et j'aurais prouvé par une certaine Correspondance qu'il a eu à Lima, et dans laquelle le Vieux Ritter a été obligé de faire des excuses, j'aurais prouvé que toute cette famille n'est qu'un ramassis de voleurs et d'intrigants – J'ai tous ces journaux Espagnols en main, et je sais que les Ritter avec la Patti, ont quitté Lima au plus vite, car le vieux était menacé de la prison, et personne ne les a accompagnés au bateau. Dans ce voyage, j'ai perdu plus de 2,000 francs au change des monnaies (à Rio plus de 800 francs) et jamais cela ne m'a été remboursé. La Patti (bonne et faible) se disputait avec eux devant moi, pour se faire payer, et je crois qu'elle les aurait quittes pour venir ici, sans la Nilsson qui accapare tout en ce moment. Bref, quand il se sera passé un peu de temps, au prochain mois de juin, je serai plus calme, et pourrai aller à Paris et même les rencontrer sans faire de l'esclandre. Je te montrerai tous mes périodicos de Lima, et tu verras que j'ai été en affaires comme toujours, trop honnête, et trop bête –

La Carlotta m'a écrit, et j'ai eu sa lettre hier. elle m'annonce son voyage en Espagne avec les mêmes, et moi je leur prédis une veste de première qualité –

J'ai enfin vu le fameux Niagara, une des merveilles du monde, et j'y ai passé une journée. J'en suis encore tout assourdi – ma petite photographie ne te donnera qu'une faible idée des fameuses Chutes – D'un Côté du Niagara on est aux Etats-unis, et de l'autre au Canada –

La Carlotta me dit que Paris sera dorénavant plus mauvais pour les artistes que jamais – Comment ferais-je si j'avais la pensée de m'y fixer quelque temps? Faudrait il me Contenter de n'y gagner que 3 ou 4,000 francs par an? je peux gagner cette somme ici eu un mois – Sais-tu que cette pensée n'est pas réjouissante? – à moins de n'y avoir qu'un petit pied à terre, et de toujours voyager. Nous y aviserons l'année prochaine –

Mille Baisers à mon ami Cher, et un million à toi Chère Maman

J'ai écrit aux S^t Hubert –

Baby

Pittsburgh 27th September 1871

Dear Mother,

We are about to finish our tour; on 1st October I will be back in New York and will set about arranging my affairs for the winter. Our success, like our programme, has been the same everywhere.

I wrote to you from this city more than a year ago, and this thought saddens me. What can I do? I sometimes have mad urges to return to Paris to embrace you, but I must wait until the spring of next year, otherwise I would lose my entire winter's work. I would certainly have made the voyage this summer but there would have been a great scandal involving the Ritters and myself, as I certainly would not have let them get away with their farcical claims in the newspapers, and I would have proven, with a particular correspondence he [Ritter?] received in Lima, in which [?as a result of which] Ritter senior was forced to apologise, I would have proven that the entire family is nothing but a bunch of thieves and schemers. I have all these Spanish newspapers with me, and

I know that the Ritters, together with Carlotta, left Lima in a great hurry because Ritter senior was threatened with prison; nobody accompanied them to the steamship. During this tour I lost more than 2,000 francs when changing currencies (more than 800 francs when we were in Rio) and these amounts have never been reimbursed to me. Carlotta (a good but weak woman) would argue with them in my presence, demanding to be paid, and I think she would have left them to come here, without [Christina] Nilsson who is now monopolising everything. In short, once some time has passed – by June of next year – I will be calmer and able to come to Paris, and maybe even meet with them without making a scene. I'll show you all my documents from Lima and you will see that when it comes to financial affairs I was, as always, too honest and too stupid.

Carlotta has written to me; I received her letter yesterday. She is going to travel to Spain with them, and I predict it will be a monumental flop.

I have at last visited the famous Niagara, one of the wonders of the world; I spent a day there and am still deafened. My little photograph will give you only a poor idea of the famous Falls; on one side you are in the United States – on the other side you are in Canada.

Carlotta reports that, from now on, Paris will be even worse than before for artistes. How would I get on if I thought of settling there for some time? Should I be satisfied with earning only 3-4,000 francs in a year? I can earn that amount here in a single month. This is not a reassuring thought, unless I take a small *pied-à-terre* and travel constantly. We will decide next year.

A thousand kisses to my dear friend and a million to you, dear Mother.

I have written to St. Hubert.

Baby

NOTES

Sarasate's lack of financial commonsense is illustrated by the following account:

Under the direction of Max Strakosch, Sarasate essentially began his career with a trip to the United States with Carlotta Patti and the late [Théodore] Ritter. At that time Sarasate was earning 3000 francs a month and was very satisfied with this modest income.

The [artistic] success he achieved during this journey was indicative of the heights to which the young master, currently the finest violinist of the romantic style, would rise. However, in Rio de Janeiro a bellboy predicted an altogether different fate.

Sarasate, like many artistes, was a disorganised person. One day, when leaving Rio, he left behind in his hotel room a travel bag which contained all his money – 10,000 francs. The steamship which he had boarded had already pulled up its anchor when a small rowing boat managed to reach it; the bellboy, having found Sarasate's bag, and checked its contents, was returning it to him; he only had time to throw the bag onto the deck of the steamer, shouting to Sarasate: 'Here! You, you will die penniless!'

This bellboy might well have been right for Sarasate never keeps proper accounts, he is generous to a fault, he never refuses to do a favour, and financial matters do not interest him in the slightest.

Heir to a considerable sum of money Sarasate failed to respond for months to the notary who had informed him of this inheritance and did not even send him the documents requested to allow him to take ownership of his assets. It was by chance that Sarasate decided to visit this notary and thus received his portion of the inheritance. The inheritance consisted of a sum of 150,000 francs, of which Sarasate could access only the interest. The capital would only be passed to him on his wedding day, but a strange condition had been imposed by the testator: Sarasate's fiancée would have to be approved by the two testamentary executors.

MAURICE STRAKOSCH, *Souvenirs d'un impresario*, 3rd ed., Ollendorff, Paris, 1887; pp. 222-224; present authors' translation.

Sarasate never married.

Maria Nagore Ferrer (*Sarasate: El violín de Europa*, Ediciones del ICCMU, Madrid, p. 166) indicates that the inheritance left by Madame de Lassabathie to Sarasate amounted to 60,000 francs.

[Letter 24]

New-Yorck 2 Novembre

Maman Chérie –

Enfin j'ai une lettre de toi. Tu as raison de m'écrire froidement. J'ai toujours fait du Chagrin à tout le monde, et je continue malgré moi, comme si j'y étais poussé par une force invisible – Il y a en ce moment une jeune et Charmante fille à Lima qui fait une maladie grave à cause de moi, parce que je n'ai pas répondu une seule fois à ses lettres. Je sais la nouvelle par un ami qui m'a écrit du Perou – Je n'ose plus écrire maintenant, il est trop tard, et quand je pense à cette affaire et à bien d'autres, je me prends en horreur moi-même – Que deviendrais-je si je ne Change pas?

Oui, je t'embrasserai au prochain mois de juin. Tu m'aimeras encore un peu, autrement, que veux-tu que j'aie à faire à Paris? On dit que le cœur d'une mère pardonne toujours, quand tu m'écriras, parle moi encore comme autre fois, appelle moi ton Baby, que veux-tu que je devienne sans quelques bonnes paroles de toi de temps en temps –

Le 1^{er} Concert Moulton à Boston à été splendide – J'ai profité de deux jours d'intervalle pour venir à New-Yorck, et demain matin je repars pour Boston –

Il y a eu une Polémique dans les journaux à cause de moi. Il y en a un, Le World qui a inséré une lettre anonyme très insolente adressée à ma personne, et dans laquelle on m'appelle Sarsaparilla. Ce journal s'est vu attaqué à son tour par la Société (Le journal de la fashion, rien que cela!) et je t'envoie l'article – Je su cela trop tard pour m'en mêler, et c'est peut-être heureux – Tu vois que j'ai des amis qui me défendent, et que je ne connais pas –

Ecco Madame Moulton, jolie femme, et tout à fait gentille pour le Baby –

Eugène Vatel est venir me voir, ainsi que Clément Auffm Ordt – Ces Messieurs qui me dédaignaient à Paris, sont tous fiers de me donner la main à New-Yorck, parce qu'ici tout le monde parle de moi – Un de ces jours j'irai chez un photographe, et je t'enverrai mon image.

Je n'ai pas trouvé le journal qui m'éreinte. J'étais à Boston quand l'affaire a eu lieu –

Je t'aime, mère Chérie, et je suis bien heureux que tu m'aimes toujours

Embrasse mon amigo –

ton Enfant

Je t'écrirai de Boston –

New York

2nd November [1871]

Dearest Mother,

At last – a letter from you. You are perfectly justified in addressing me so coldly. I have always upset everyone, and I carry on, in spite of myself, as if driven by an invisible force. Right now there is a charming young girl in Lima who is distraught because of me, because I have not replied to a single one of her letters. I was told this by a friend who has written to me from Peru. I dare not write back now; it's too late. When I think about this situation – and many others – I am horrified at my own behaviour. What will happen to me if I do not change?

Yes, I will embrace you next June. You will [surely?] still love me a little; otherwise, what reason would I have to go [return?] to Paris? It is said that a mother's heart will always forgive. When you next write, talk to me as you used to; call me your Baby. What would become of me without some kind words from you from time to time?

The first [Lillie] Moulton concert, in Boston, was splendid. I had two free days so I came back to New York; tomorrow morning I will return to Boston.

There was a controversy in the newspapers which concerns me. One of the papers, *The World*, printed a very disrespectful anonymous letter addressed to me and in which my name is given as 'Sarsaparilla'. The newspaper, in turn, was attacked [in the pages of] *The Society* (the 'a la mode' magazine, no less!) – I will send you the article. I learned of this too late to get involved, and it's probably for the best. As you can see, I have friends who will stand up for me, even though I do not know them. Take Mrs Moulton [for example]: [an] attractive woman, and very kind to the Baby.

Eugène Vatel is coming to see me, as is Clément [Arnold] Auffm'Ordt [1847-1903]. These men, who treated me with contempt in Paris, are more than happy to shake my hand in New York since here I am the talk of the town. One of these days I will go and see a photographer and will send you my portrait.

I did not find a copy of the newspaper which published the controversy; I was in Boston when it happened.

I love you dearest mother and I am really happy that you still love me.

Embrace my *amigo*.

Your child

I will write from Boston.

NOTES

With respect to Sarasate's professed horror at his own behaviour, cf. Grange Woolley, in *Pablo de Sarasate: his historical significance* (Music & Letters, Vol. 36. No. 3, July 1955, p. 238): 'As a man Sarasate was proud and aloof towards strangers, sometimes condescending and sarcastic with his friends [...].' See also Sarasate's jibe regarding Carlotta Patti's limp (**Letter 6**).

In a letter dated 18th June 1871 Lillie Moulton writes:

When I wrote of Strakosch persisting in his idea of my singing in concerts I did not dream that I should be telling you that I have succumbed to his tempting and stupendous proposition. It is true that I have said *yes*, and *vogue la galère* ['come what may']. [...] We leave [France] for America in September. Strakosch goes before "to work it up" he says.

Lillie's next letter is headed 'New York, October', in which she quotes Strakosch as saying 'I am glad I secured Sarasate to supplement [you]'; i.e. Sarasate was contracted to be one of Lillie's supporting performers (the same strategy as had been used for Carlotta Patti's concerts); see *In the Courts of Memory*, pp. 335-336.

[Letter 25]

New-Yorck, 13 Décembre^{bre}

Chère mère,

Pourquoi dis-tu que nous ne devons pas nous revoir? Je t'assure cependant que cet été, j'irai de l'autre côté, et que t'embrasserai – Quel Empêchement vois-tu à ce projet, tu parles de Raisons trop longues à m'expliquer, je n'en vois aucune –

Une jolie histoire – Il y a ici un millionnaire américain (Fisk) c'est son nom, Directeur de la plupart des Chemins-de fer des Etats unis, ainsi que des Bateaux à Vapeur qui sillonnent tous les lacs et rivières, et tellement Riche, qu'il s'est fait bâtir un magnifique Théâtre (Opéra house) l'un des plus beaux de la Capitale – C'est lui qui a fait venir ici La Silly, Montalant, aimée, etc pour interpréter à son Théâtre le Répertoire Offenbachique – Il a de plus, équipé à ses frais un Régiment dont il est le Colonel, et la musique de ce dit Régiment est la meilleur d'ici – Ce M^r Fisk est un Charmant homme, mais il a une vanité telle, qu'il faut que chaque artiste qu'il engage quand il paraît en public, porte un insigne quelconque qui prouve que cet un homme au service de Fisk – Ainsi, en ce moment on joue à son Théâtre pendant la semaine un grand drame, excepté les Dimanches qui sont consacrés à des

Concerts donnés par sa musique militaire, avec des intermèdes par d'autres artistes, de troisième ordre, mais qui portent une espèce d'uniforme, avec un f au collet de l'habit – Et bien, il a voulu m'engager pour tous les Dimanches jusqu'à la fin de la saison, et m'a fait offrir 2,000 francs par mois, ce qui est joli pour ne jouer que quatre fois en 30 jours, mais malheureusement la Condition première était que je devais revêtir un uniforme bleu, les soirs des Concerts, avec Collet de Velours grenat, boutons dorés et le malheureux F au collet cela veut dire Fisk – Il voulait se donner le Chic de me marquer – Comme j'ai dû refuser (il n'y a pas voulu céder, il a engagé à ma place le Cornet à piston Lévy qui a revêtu l'uniforme immédiatement et deux Cantatrices, qui Chantent en Costume Napolitain – Est-ce stupide qu'une affaire manque pour de telles raisons!

On continue à faire banqueroute de tous côtés par suite de l'incendie de Chicago, Hier, cinq maisons de Banque ont fait faillite, et la petite Vérole fait rage à Philadelphie – Strakosh devait partir hier avec sa troupe, et il est obligé de Rester à New-York –

Mille Baisers Maman Chérie, aussi qu'au gros –

[written along the margin] *J'ai eu beaucoup de success hier au soir dans un concert à Steinway Hall*

New York,
13th December [1871]

Dear Mother,

Why do you say we should not see each other again? I can assure you that this summer [i.e. summer 1872] I will cross to the other side [of the Atlantic] and will embrace you. What obstacle do you see in this plan? You speak of reasons which are too long to explain; I cannot see any.

Here's an amusing story: here there is an American millionaire – 'Fisk' is his name. He is the Director of most of the railways in this country as well as the steamboats which criss-cross all the lakes and rivers, and so rich that he has had built a magnificent theatre – an opera house – one of the most beautiful in the capital. He had La Silly, Montalant, aimée, etc. brought over to perform Offenbach-style works at his theatre. In addition, at his own expense, he has equipped an [infantry] regiment – for which he is the Colonel – and the music performed by this regiment is the best around. Mr Fisk is a charming man but he is so vain that every artist who is engaged by him, when they appear in public, has to wear an insignia which demonstrates that he is in Fisk's employ. Right now, during the week, there is a big drama production being staged at his theatre, but Sundays are reserved for concerts of his military music, these musical items being interspersed with other, third-class, artistes who have to wear a sort-of uniform which has the letter 'f' sewn into the collar. Well, Mr Fisk wanted to engage me to perform every Sunday until the end of the season and offered me 2,000 francs per month – which is pretty good for playing just four times in 30 days. Unfortunately, the most important contractual requirement was that when playing at the evening concerts I should wear a blue uniform with a dark-red velvet collar, golden buttons, and the awful 'F' in the collar to indicate 'Fisk'. He wanted to flatter his ego by branding me. I declined his offer. Fisk then went and booked the cornet player, [Jules] Levy [1838-1903] (who had no problem with wearing the uniform) and two singers who dress up in Neapolitan costumes. How stupid that a business opportunity should fall through for such a reason!

Following the fire in Chicago there have been many bankruptcies; yesterday, five banking houses collapsed, and smallpox is rife in Philadelphia. Strakosch had intended to leave yesterday with his troupe; he now has to stay in New York.

A thousand kisses, dearest Mother; likewise to the big man.

[written along the margin] I had a great success yesterday evening in a concert at Steinway Hall.

NOTES

James Fisk (1835-1872) was one of the so-called 'robber barons'. He controlled the Erie Railroad, bribed judges and politicians, led an amoral life, and was murdered in 1872 by Edward Stokes when the latter's attempt to extort money from Fisk failed. Fisk was the nominal commander of the 9th New York National Guard Infantry Regiment.

La Silly is Léa Silly who sang the part of Orestes at the first performance of Offenbach's *La belle Hélène* in Paris in 1864. *Montalant* is Céline Montaland (1843-1891), actress, dancer, and singer. *Aimée* is Marie Aimée Tronchon (1852-1887), actress and light-opera soprano.

The 'Great Chicago fire' burned between 8th and 10th October 1871; more than three square miles of the city was destroyed.

[Letter 26]

[It seems that this undated letter was written in either November or December 1871.]

Maman Chérie

J'ai reçu ta dernière lettre hier, et je te répons au lit, ou je suis depuis huit jours, pour m'être permis de tomber en descendant d'Omnibus – Je ne savais ce que c'était qu'une entorse, et je l'apprends maintenant. J'ai eu toute la jambe enflée, mais cela ne paraît plus, et à la rigueur je pourrais marcher déjà – Cela m'a fait manquer quelques Concerts avec Strakosh mais je n'en mourrai pas –

J'ai bien ri hier – Tu auras appris par les journeaux que le grand Duc Alexis de Russie (un des fils du Czar) est ici. Et bien, on lui offre un grand Concert jeudi prochain en même temps qu'un banquet et on est venu m'offrir mille francs pour jouer un morceau de Violon pendant que le prince et sa suite se gorgent de truffes – J'ai demandé à réfléchir jusqu'au lendemain qui était hier, et tous mes amis y compris Strakosh, m'ont conseillé de refuser, ce que j'ai fait, ainsi que tous les autres artistes qui ne se soucient pas de faire de la musique avec accompagnement de verres et de fourchettes – Du reste, le Concert est râté, il n'y aura qu'un Orchestre qui jouera des Valses et des Polka –

Chère Maman, l'année qui s'annonçait si bonne pour les artistes, sera la plus mauvaise que l'on a vue en Amérique à cause de l'Incendie de Chicago qui ruine des milliers des plus riches Commerçants des Etats –

La Moulton est revenue, et la Kellog qui semblait vouloir s'aventurer quand même, ne partira pas – Wachtel de même – Toutes les dépêches que l'on envoie de L'Ouest aux agences de musique disent qu'il ne faut pas s'aventurer par là cet hiver – L'Opéra fait ses frais, Strakosh enrage, et ne veut plus en faire de sa vie –

Heureusement que le pays est richissime et que les souscriptions se sont élevées à un taux tellement fabuleux, que le commerce de ce pays aidant dans six mois il n'y paraîtra plus – Il faudra donc se contenter de parcourir quelques grandes villes, et exploiter tous les Concerts détachés – Pas une Compagnie de longue durée ne s'organisera cette année –

Je vais être engagé pour des Concerts que la Philharmonique va donner tous les dimanches, et j'ai une série de cinq Concerts à la fin de ce mois dans ma fidèle ville de Boston – Je donnerai des matinées à Steinway Hall, et un grand Concert à la fin de la saison – L'année prochaine je voyagerai avec Max Strakosh à des meilleurs que par le passé, et pendant toute la saison, il a ma parole –

Ecco ma nouvelle binette?? –

Kisses tout plein, Chère Mère, ainsi qu'au gros Cher amigo

Ton fils

Sarasate

Dearest Mother,

I received your last letter yesterday; I am replying to you from my bed where I have been for the past eight days having fallen from an omnibus. I did not know what a sprain was, but I do now. My leg was swollen from top to bottom but the swelling has now reduced and I could, at a push, walk again. I had to cancel some of my Strakosch concerts but it's not the end of the world.

I had a good laugh yesterday: you will have learned from the newspapers that the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia (one of the Czar's sons) is here. Well, a grand concert is being organised in his honour, with a banquet at the same time, and I was offered one thousand francs to play a piece on my violin while the Prince and his entourage gorged themselves on truffles. I asked to think about it overnight (which was yesterday) and all my friends, including Strakosch, advised me to refuse, which I did, as did all the other artistes who do not care to perform music to the accompaniment of glasses and forks. As it stands, the concert is a failure; there will just be an orchestra performing waltzes and polkas.

Dear Mother, this year, which began so well for us artistes, will be the worst that we have experienced in America; the huge fire in Chicago has ruined many of the richest businessmen in the United States.

[Lillie] Moulton has returned; [Clara Louise] Kellogg, who seemed to want to travel, will not be leaving – likewise Wachtel. All the telegrams being sent from the West to agencies are saying not to venture there this winter. [The] Opera is breaking even, which enrages Strakosch, who never wants to do any of it again.

Fortunately, this country is very rich, and the incredibly generous [public] donations, helped by the country's business community, means that all will be back to normal in six months. We will therefore have to rely on travelling to a few large cities and presenting our own, self-promoted, concerts; no-one is organising lengthy tours this year.

I will be engaged to perform at the Philharmonic's forthcoming Sunday concerts – all of them – and I have a series of five concerts scheduled for the end of this month in my loyal city of Boston. I will give matinée concerts at Steinway Hall and a grand concert at the end of the season. Next year [1872?] I will travel with Max Strakosch under better [conditions] than in the past, and for the whole season; I have given him my word.

What do you think of my new look?

Big kisses, dear Mother, likewise to my dearest *amigo*.

Your son,

Sarasate.

NOTES

Théodore Wachtel (1823-1893) was a German tenor.

[Letter 27]

Chère Mère,

Je ne puis te dire à quel point chacune de tes lettres m'émotionne, et me fais battre le cœur – Toute question me semble bien petite et insignifiante à Côté de cette grande Catastrophe qui est venu t'assaillir et dont j'ai ressenti le Contre-Coup – Il faut donc que je sois sûr de l'intérêt que tu me portes, pour que je vienne te parler de ce que je fais, et te dire ce que l'artiste devient – Car nous-autres, il faut que nous allions, que nous avancions, et que nous fassions parler le public de nous quand-même, sous peine d'oubli.

Notre 1^{ère} Matinée, (à Mills et à moi) a été Splendide. Les plus belles familles de New-Yorck s'y étaient données rendez-vous, et ce qu'il y a de plus curieux, c'est qu'il n'y avait presque que des

dames – *Quel beau parterre! Et puis, comme c'est flatteur, un succès pareil! La Salle était Comble, et ne crois pas qu'il faut ici s'occuper du placement des billets, on fait annoncer dans les journaux l'endroit ou l'on en trouve, et, ... Si vous êtes connu et aimé, cela va tout seul, Si non ...*

Or, il faut croire que le beau sexe m'a apprécié à mon juste valeur, car tout a été enlevé, et le Concert du 10 février a l'air de prendre la même tournure – Je t'envverrai le programme. Je joue demain et après demain, à l'académie de musique, mais après-demain surtout, je m'attends à un grand succès avec le Max Bruch accompagné par 100 musiciens de la Société philharmonique – Je t'envverrai les papiers qui parleront, car ce sont des Concerts très suivis – J'attends encore des articles sur ma 1^{ère} Matinée, je te les adresserai – Veux-tu m'envoyer le Certificat de Wuillaume qui Spécifié que mon Stradivarius à appartenu à Paganini? Je ne puis te dire quel service tu me rendrais en me l'adressant ou en m'en faisant avoir un autre par le dit M^e Wuillaume –

Tu me dis que tu désire ne pas te donner l'émotion de me revoir, Cependant, j'irai en Europe cet été, non pas pour y rester car j'aurai un engagement signé ici avant mon départ, mais parce que j'ai besoin d'aller de l'autre Côté de l'eau pour me rappatrier un peu

L'Enfant t'aime et t'embrasse un million de fois –

[Thursday 1st February 1872]

Dear Mother,

I cannot tell you how much each of your letters upsets me and makes my heart thump. Everything else pales into insignificance when juxtaposed against this great catastrophe which has assailed you and of which I have felt the after-effects. Therefore I must be certain of your affection if I am to talk to you about what I do, and tell you what I've been up to. For we, the artistes, have to be continuously on the move, making progress, making sure the public is always talking about us, for fear of our being forgotten.

Our first *matinée* concert (Mills and I) was splendid. The most prestigious families of New York had made a date of it, and, what was most curious was that the audience was almost entirely female – the stalls looked so beautiful! And so, how flattering to have such success! The concert hall was sold out, and don't think that it's necessary to organise the ticket sales – one simply puts an advertisement in the newspapers as to where they can be bought and ... if one is known, and loved, that's all that's needed; if not ...

So, it would seem that the fair sex properly appreciates my true value since all the tickets were snapped up, and things are heading in the same direction for the concert on 10th February. I will send you the programme. I am performing tomorrow, and the day after, at the Academy of Music. At the latter concert I am anticipating a huge success with the Max Bruch [*Violin Concerto*] accompanied by 100 musicians of the Philharmonic Society; I will send you the newspaper reviews because these are concerts which are very well attended. I am still waiting for the reviews of my first *matinée*; I will send them to you. Would you send me the Vuillaume certificate which states that my Stradivari [violin previously] belonged to Paganini? You would be doing me a huge favour by sending it to me or by obtaining another from the aforementioned M. Vuillaume.

You say [in your letter?] that you do not want to put yourself through the emotion of seeing me again. However, I will travel to Europe this summer, not to return (since, before leaving New York, I will have signed a contract of engagement here) but because I need to cross the ocean and see my homeland.

The child who loves you and embraces you a million times.

NOTES

It is probable that the *grand Catastrophe* was the death of Théodore de Lassabathie on 5th December 1871.

The first *matinée* concert at Steinway Hall took place on 27th January; the pianist was Sebastian Bach Mills. Further concerts took place on 10th, 18th, 24th February, and 14th March.

Sarasate's request for Vuillaume's certificate, or an authorised copy thereof, suggests that someone in New York had queried Sarasate's claim that his 1724 Stradivari violin was previously owned by Niccolò Paganini. For a full examination of this claimed provenance see N Sackman, *Pablo Sarasate and his Stradivari violins* (www.themessiahviolin.uk).

[Letter 28]

9 février

Mère chérie

Les Journeaux parlent tant, mais tant de moi, que je ne sais comment te les envoyer tous – D'abord de mes matinées (la seconde a lieu demain) puis, du succès écrasant que j'ai obtenu à la philharmonique Vendredi et Samedi dernier – deux Rappels, et on voulait que je joue encore un petite chose Comme bis après le Concerto de Bruch! Entre nous, je l'ai joué comme jamais – Si Padeloup avait été là, il aurait changé de sentiment pour le morceau – L'Orchestre applaudissait avec furie, et il est question, (c'est un secret que l'on m'a confié) la prochaine fois que je me ferai entendre dans la même société, de me décerner une Couronne (offerte par l'Orchestre). On n'a accordé cet honneur qu'à Ole Bull et Vieuxtemps – tu vois que c'est de l'enthousiasme, car j'étais payé cinq cent francs en or, pour un morceau –

Ce soir j'ai une soirée privée, je joue deux morceaux, et l'on me donne 500 frs c'est plus qu'à Paris. Et demain, j'espère faire une bonne Recette, il y a beaucoup de billets pris – à la première nous avons encaissé (les frais payés), Bénéfice net – 2,400 frs et quelque chose – D'après la location, demain sera mieux, car le succès à été immense la 1^{ère} fois –

Mon père m'a écrit une charmante lettre sur notre toujours regretté et aimé amigo – une lettre bien sincère, et remplie de cœur, cela m'a fait un bien grand plaisir! ma sœur se marie en juin, à un charmant garçon, qui a une excellente position dans l'armée me dit-on, et d'une conduite exemplaire – Elle m'implore pour que j'assiste au mariage dans le Cas où j'irais en Europe, et je lui ai répondu, que c'était mon intention – malheureusement, il faut que je sois de retour ici en Septembre, on m'offre deux Engagements – quand l'un des deux sera signé, je te l'annoncerai –

Maintenant, réfléchis bien et dis-moi si c'est ton intention que je n'aille pas te voir. Je Comprends que tu ne désire plus avoir d'émotion, après tout ce que tu as vu et ressenti, je n'ai même pas le droit, d'après mes apperences d'égoïsme de te dire la peine que j'aurais de ne pas t'embrasser et te serrer sur mon cœur, je ferai donc ce que tu décideras, mais ce serait tous de même bien étonnant d'être si près de toi, de traverser la france, et de ne pas te voir!

Ton Enfant t'aime et t'embrasse de toute son âme.

S –

[New York]

9th February [1872]

Beloved mother,

There's so much, oh so much, talk of me in the newspapers that I won't be able to send you all of them. Firstly, of my *matinée* concerts (the second of which is tomorrow), then of my stunning success with the Philharmonic last Friday and Saturday. Two curtain calls, and I had to play a little something as an encore after the Bruch *Concerto*! Between you and me, I played it as never before. If [Jules] Padeloup [conductor] had been there he would have changed his mind about the piece. The orchestra applauded very enthusiastically, and it is rumoured (this is a secret which has been confided to me) that the next time I perform with this Society a crown [a laurel wreath?] will be presented [to me] (by the orchestra). This honour has been granted only to Ole Bull and to

[Henri] Vieuxtemps. You can gauge the level of enthusiasm as I was paid 500 francs, in gold, for [playing] a single piece.

This evening I have a private concert; I am playing two pieces and earning 500 francs which is more than [I would earn] in Paris. Tomorrow [10th – the second *matinée*] I hope the receipts will be substantial; lots of tickets have been sold. From the first [*matinée*] we banked 2,400-plus francs (after paying fees). Based on the ticket sales, tomorrow will be better, since the success was huge the first time.

My father has written me a charming letter regarding our much missed and much loved *amigo* – a very sincere letter and from the heart; it gave me much pleasure. My sister is getting married in June to a charming young man who, I am told, has an excellent position in the army and who conducts himself in an exemplary manner. She is begging me to attend the marriage if I am in Europe at the time and I have replied that it was [is?] my intention to do so. Unfortunately, I must be back here by September. I have been offered two contracts; I will let you know when I have decided which one to sign.

Now, think carefully and let me know if you would prefer it if I didn't come to see you. I quite understand that you do not want any more upsets after all that you have been through. I do not even have the right, given my apparent selfishness, to tell you of the pain that I would suffer if I could not kiss you and hug you to my heart. I will therefore do whatever you decide. Nonetheless, it would be quite peculiar to be so close to you, travelling across France, and yet not see you!

Your child loves you and embraces you with all his soul.

S

NOTES

The *Violin Concerto* [no. 1] by Max Bruch received its first performance (in Europe) in 1866 but was then withdrawn for extensive revision. Joseph Joachim contributed to the revision process and it was he, as soloist, who presented the final version in 1868. Sarasate gave the first performance of the concerto in the USA on Saturday 3rd February 1872. Sarasate's reference to 'last Friday' (i.e. 2nd February) probably indicates his first rehearsal of the concerto with the Philharmonic Society orchestra; the archives of the New York Philharmonic do not contain any concert information for that date.

Sarasate's brief one-sentence reference to the death of Théodore de Lassabathie suggests, perhaps, that he sent Amélie a separate letter of condolence (a letter which is now lost). Théodore's death was reported in *Le Ménestrel* (Sunday 10th December 1871, p. 15):

[...] *Esprit sûr, cultivé, rigide, M. de Lassabathie avait toujours sollicité les réformes actuelles. [...] M. de Lassabathie meurt, hélas! Au moment même où le Conservatoire se régénère. Comme il eût joui de ces sages réformes qui furent la seule ambition des derniers jours de sa vie! Mais cette douce satisfaction ne devait pas lui être donnée. Retiré dans une maison de santé, il était, depuis quelques temps déjà, étranger à nos luttes artistiques, mais il n'eut pas le bonheur de l'être aussi à nos grandes douleurs publiques. Il en souffrit cruellement et l'on sait tout le généreux dévouement de M^{me} de Lassabathie pendant le siège de Paris. D'anciens amis, peu nombreux mais choisis, l'ont accompagné à sa dernière demeure.*

A sound, cultured, and rigid mind, M. de Lassabathie had always sought the current reforms. [...] M. de Lassabathie has died, alas! at the very moment the Conservatoire is being revived. How he would have been delighted by these sound reforms, which were the sole ambition of his final days! But he was not to be given this sweet satisfaction. Having retired to a care home, he had, for some time already, been a stranger to our artistic struggles [?at the Conservatoire] but he did not have the joy of remaining a stranger to our great public hardships. This was a source of great suffering for him, and we all know of Madame de Lassabathie's generous devotion during the siege of Paris. He was accompanied to his final resting place by a select, if small, number of old friends.

Pablo's sisters were Micaela (1845-1936) and Francisca (1849-1922); a third sister, Maria (b.1853), seemingly died after just a few months.

It would seem that, in one of her letters, Madame de Lassabathie had chastised Sarasate for being selfish, a criticism which prompts his somewhat prickly rejoinder.

Sarasate's last paragraph is presumably referring to Amélie de Lassabathie's period of mourning after the death of Théodore. By the time Sarasate's letter reached Paris Amélie had also died. News of her death did not reach Sarasate until after he had sent his letter of 16th February (below).

[Letter 29]

New York 16 février

Mère chérie

Il y a longtemps que tu ne m'as écrits – J'espère que je recevrai bientôt quelques lignes qui me donneront de tes nouvelles – Dans les circonstances où tu te trouves, un long silence de ta part m'inquiète bien plus qu'avant, et quoique tu puisses penser, je t'aime, et tu es toujours dans ma pensée, à chaque heure du jour, et surtout la nuit, quand avant de m'endormir je me mets à réfléchir sur mon passé, et mes meilleures années qui se sont écoulés sous ton toit, à Paris et à Maisons-Lafitte. Tu seras condamnée toute ta vie à entendre parler de moi, car n'importe où je me trouve, j'éprouverai toujours un grand Contentement de Cœur à ta raconter les mille et un événements qui pourront m'arriver, et je t'assure qu'il m'est bien doux de penser que s'il me survient quelque chose d'heureux, il y a un écho sympathique qui me répondra de loin pour se réjouira avec moi – Bien des artistes en souhaiteraient autant!

La Seconde de nos matinées a été aussi belle que la première, malgré une tempête de neige qui a éclaté la veille au soir, et qui a duré près de 24 heures. Ce qui a empêché la recette de dépasser celle du premier Concert – Mais, beaucoup de monde, joli Bénéfice, et immense succès – Les Journeaux ont beaucoup parlé, mais il y en a tant, et tant, et il faut aller si loin pour les avoir, que si l'on ne s'y prend de suite, quand on arrivé à l'office il n'y en a plus – Je sais qu'il y [a] eu des articles Splendides, même dans les journeaux illustrés, on les a lus, mais pas moi. Sache que New-York consomme Six fois plus de journeaux que Paris – Le Service de la presse pour nos matinées nous prend 150 places, et ils viennent tous avec des dames, au dernier moment, et il faut placer tout cela, c'est une vraie fureur. Tous les Chanteurs petits et grands nous poursuivent, Mills et moi, et viennent nous trouver pour nous prier de les faire chanter pour rien – Notre public est si fashionable, ce sont les premières familles de New-Yorck, que l'on n'a jamais rien vu de pareil, et que c'est considéré comme un très grand honneur de paraître à nos matinées – La 3^{ème} a lieu le 24 de ce mois, le programme n'est pas encore imprimée – Je te l'enverrai – Jusqu'au Journeaux allemands qui me détestent parce que j'ai fait mes études à Paris, et que j'ai écrasé les Violonistes allemands d'ici qui ne peuvent plus rien faire, tandis qu'avant mon arrivée ils jouaient d'une certaine notoriété, jusqu'à ces journeaux daignent dire quelque bien de moi On me remet à l'instant une lettre signée ... Great admirer, pour me prier de rejouer La Mélancolie de Prume à l'une de mes prochaines matinées – D'autres me prient (par Correspondance) de jouer dorénavant sans accompagnement, le Piano les embête – Est-ce drôle?

allons bon! j'avais découpé des articles de journeaux, que j'avais dans une des poches de mon pantalon depuis hier, je ne trouve plus rien et c'était pour toi – Je suis furieux. Je ne Comprends pas comment j'ai pu les perdre. Enfin, je t'en e[n]verrai d'autres, ou ceux là si je les trouve – Je Viens de les trouver! on m'éreinte, je te les envoie tout de même, en honnête artiste que je suis –

[written along the margin] *Kisses, kisses, kisses.*

New York

16th February [1872]

Beloved mother,

It has been a long time since I heard from you; I hope I will soon receive your news. Given the circumstances in which you find yourself a long silence on your part worries me much more than it would have done previously. Whatever your thoughts may be, remember that I love you and you are always in my thoughts at every hour of the day, and especially at night when, before falling asleep, I reflect on the events of my life, the best years of which were spent under your roof in Paris, and at Maisons Lafitte. You will forever have to put up with hearing about me because no matter where I am I will always derive great satisfaction from telling you about the thousand-and-one things that happen to me. It is very comforting for me to think that when something nice happens there is a sympathetic echo which will answer from afar and rejoice with me – many artistes would like as much!

Our second *matinée* concert was as brilliant as the first in spite of a snowstorm which started the night before and lasted almost 24 hours; this prevented the box-office receipts from being even better than at the first concert. Nonetheless, a big audience, good profit, and a great success. The newspapers have written a lot [about the *matinées*] but there are so many [papers], *so* many, and one has to go so far to obtain them that unless you attend to it immediately there are none left by the time you get to the newsagents. I know that there have [been] some splendid articles, even in the illustrated newspapers; others have read them, but not me. You should know that New York publishes six times as many newspapers as Paris. We have to put aside 150 seats for the reporters, and they all turn up with their ladies at the last moment, and we must accommodate all of them; it is really infuriating. Singers of every stripe harass Mills and myself, begging us to let them sing without pay. Our audience is so fashionable; it includes the most important families in New York; we've never seen anything like it; to be at one of our *matinées* is a social imperative. The third *matinée* is scheduled for the 24th of this month; the programme is not yet printed; I'll send you a copy. Even the German newspapers – who detest me because I studied in Paris and because I have demolished the German violinists here who, whilst they enjoyed *some* reputation before I arrived, cannot compete with me – even these newspapers deign to say something nice about me ... I have just received a letter signed 'Great admirer' asking me to repeat *La Mélancolie* by Prume at one of my remaining *matinées*; others have written requesting that in future I should play without a piano accompaniment; the piano annoys them – isn't that funny?

Well, now! I cut out some newspaper articles and had them in my trouser pocket since yesterday; now I can't find them. They were for you – I am so cross – I don't understand how I lost them. Oh well, I will send you others – or those, if I ever find them.

I have just found them! – they are very critical but I will send them anyway, as I am such an honest *artiste*.

[written along the margin] Kisses, kisses, kisses.

NOTES

Maisons-Laffitte is a commune within the Yvelines département, 20kms north-west of Paris.

François Prume (1816-1849) was a Belgian violinist and composer.

Text written by Amélie de Lassabathie on the back of the aforementioned envelope (see Introduction):

Documents du voyage en Amérique de mon Baby. parti de Paris le 26 mars et de Brest le 27

Documents from the journey in America of my Baby who left Paris on 26th March [1870] and left Brest on 27th.

reçu 2 lettres du 7 et 9 avril le 25

received two letters, dated 7th and 9th April, on 25th

1 “ du 12 avril — 27

[received] one letter dated 12th April on 27th

répondu le même jour a Tout Hasard

replied on the same day on the off chance

“ le ——— 29

[received a letter dated] 29th

“ le 2 mai voie anglaise 15 Mai

[received a letter dated] 2nd May, via England, 15th May

Écrit à Rio le 15 Mai

wrote to Rio on 15th May

deux autres fois en Mai et juin

wrote twice more during May and June

et le 24 juin ——— a dû arriver le 18 juillet

and on 24th June; should have arrived on 18th July

8 juillet ——— a dû arriver le 24 “

[and on] 8th July; should have arrived on 24th July

24 “ ——— arrivera le 18 aout

[and on] 24th July; will arrive on 18th August

28 “ arrivera je ne sais quand!!

[and on] 28th July; will arrive I know not when!!

NOTES

Madame de Lassabathie has inadvertently created confusion with her positioning of her *ditto* marks. The letters dated 7th, 9th, and 12th April are Sarasate's letters [1], [2], and [3]. Perhaps Amélie replied to Sarasate's 12th April letter on the same day that she received it (i.e. 27th April) 'on the off chance' that her letter would be delivered to the steamship before it set sail once more from Brest to New York. The letter dated 29th April is Sarasate's letter [8]. His ninth letter is missing from the Sibley collection; it is all but certain that this letter was dated 2nd May and arrived in Paris on the 15th, having apparently been diverted through the English postal system.

Sarasate eventually returned to Paris in May 1872; an inheritance of 60,000 francs had been left for him by Amélie de Lassabathie.

© Nicholas Sackman and Bastien Terraz, 2020

nicholas@sackman.co.uk

basterraz@me.com