

Letter R 01
Etten, 12 October 1881

Dear Rappard,

Just now I received Gavarni, *L'homme et l'oeuvre*; thanks for returning it. In my opinion Gavarni is a very great artist, and certainly also very interesting as a man. Undoubtedly he now and then did things that were not right, as for instance his behaviour toward Thackeray and Dickens, but such things are in the nature of all men.

Besides, he seems to have regretted it, for later on he sent drawings to people whom he had not treated kindly enough at first. And Thackeray himself behaved in a similar way toward Balzac, and went even further, I think; but this does not alter the fact that at bottom they were kindred spirits, even if this was not always clear to themselves.

When I received the book this morning, I thought, "Now Rappard will certainly not come himself, otherwise he would have kept it until he arrived." I hardly think it necessary to assure you again that we should all be very happy to have you with us once more, and that we sincerely hope that, even if you do not stay long, you will not stay away altogether.

I am eager to hear something about your plans for the winter. In case you go to Antwerp, Brussels or Paris, be sure to look us up on your way there, and if you remain in Holland, I shall not give up hope; in winter too it is beautiful here, and surely we should be able to do something, if not outside, then we could work with a model indoors, for instance in the house of some peasant or other.

Recently I have been drawing from the model a good deal, for I have found a number of models who are willing enough. And I have all kinds of studies of diggers, sowers, etc., men and women. At present I am working a good deal with charcoal and black crayon, and I have also tried sepia and watercolour. Well, I do not venture to say that you will see progress in my drawings, but most certainly you will see a change. Before long I hope to be able to pay another visit to Mauve to discuss with him the question of whether I should start painting or not. Once started, I shall carry it through. But I want to talk it over with some people before starting. More and more I am glad that I have specially set my mind on drawing figures. For most certainly it indirectly influences landscape drawing, because one learns to concentrate.

I should have liked to send you a few sketches, if I'd had time, but I am busy with all kinds of things; later on, however, you will get some. In case you do not stay in Holland, please be sure to let me know your address, for in any case I shall have quite a few things to write about during the winter. Do you mind very much if I keep Karl Robert's *Le fusain* a little while longer, because, you know, I need it so much, as I am working with charcoal now; but when I go to The Hague I shall try to get it myself. I should be very much surprised if I did not stay quietly in Etten this winter – at least that is my intention; in no case shall I go abroad. For I have made rather good progress since I came back to Holland, not only in drawing but also in other things. Well, I am going to toil on here for a bit longer; I have been abroad for so many years, in England as well as in France and Belgium, that it is high time for me to stay here again for a while. Do you know what is so superb these days? – the road to the railway station and to De Leur with those old pollard willows; you have a sepia of it yourself [F 995, JH 056]. I can't tell you how beautiful those trees are just now. I made about 7 large studies of some trunks.

I know for sure that, if you could come one of these days while the leaves are falling, even if it were for only a week, you would make something beautiful of it. If you care to come, we shall all be delighted.

Kind regards from my parents and a handshake in thought from me, and believe me
Ever yours, Vincent