

Dear Theo,

Your letter and the enclosure were as welcome as ever. And as always, many thanks.

And I appreciate it the more for knowing how many cares you have yourself.

In some ways what you write about your patient isn't news, but in other ways it is. That you have written our parents about it, or rather, that you are going to, is something which will set your own mind at rest, and it is the right thing to do. Of course I never breathed a word of the affair, and you may rest assured that neither at home nor anywhere else shall I hint that I knew something about it in the past, nor that I am acquainted with intimate details. I think I shall act as though I heard about it only the other day, and then only superficially. But it is unlikely that anybody will discuss it with me.

So you may be easy in your mind about this.

Well, from the bottom of my heart I hope that things will turn out the way you planned them, toward October, and I am glad things have been carried so far, heartily glad for your sake as well as for hers. I think it is well as it is – especially because I know all the details – if two persons meet in this way they should not part company again.

And I sincerely hope you will be able to come to Holland with her next summer. Who knows whether it might not help to set right certain things concerning my own woman.

And so the Salon has opened. I suppose you will have a visit from Mr. Tersteeg and C. M. one of these days. It is now almost a year since I had differences with him, that is to say, with Tersteeg. I will not cross his path again; he must have noticed that, I think; and he may be sure that I hardly ever think of what has happened.

If Tersteeg begins talking to you about me, you might cut it short by saying, "Has Vincent ever troubled you or crossed your path since then? He hasn't, so don't you bother him either." It is rather unpleasant for me that, because of that quarrel with Tersteeg, I must always avoid the Goupil gallery out of discretion. You remember what Tersteeg wrote Father about me at the time – his opinion that I had made it impossible for him to have anything to do with me; he has not taken it back up to now.

Of course, as long as he has that opinion of me, I will not enter his place again. Not because I am afraid of meeting Tersteeg, not because I want to hide myself from him or anything like that, but because I do not want to give any offense. If somebody wants to cut me, I myself will lend him a helping hand, and try to avoid the rare occasions when we might happen to meet. For the rest, I shall never contradict his opinion. From a certain point of view, Tersteeg is not wrong – but things may be looked at from another angle – they might be viewed in a way different from his – but that is his own business.

For my part, I have expressed my opinion of him to you – but as far as I know, to nobody else – influenced by various very disagreeable circumstances, differences with Mauve, etc. I readily agree that because of all these things, my judgement of him was not correct either, and provided that Tersteeg takes back what he wrote Father about me – that I had made it impossible for him to have anything to do with me in the future – I retract my opinion that Tersteeg was the cause of the unpleasant things which happened to me.

If I express myself clearly enough, you will perhaps find in this acknowledgement something which may lead to more peace or to a better understanding, to which I would be far from indifferent.

When I think back to May of last year, Theo, the year has not been exactly easy or free from care for me, has it? But that doesn't matter. To be without care or trouble has indeed never been my ideal or intention. But things have not been exactly easy for me.

What you send me is not little but much; but though it was perhaps much more than you could really spare yourself, I assure you that going on and making progress with my work, and keeping the household going, is not child's play for the woman and me. Now it is sometimes very hard on me that because of such strained relations, I must avoid the very persons with whom, for my work, I ought to be directly or indirectly in touch. And I wish it were peacefully settled.

Well – for the moment I cannot change it.

I am working on several things just now which I must carry through; but really I am very hard up. You write about Rappard – I am so sorry that he did not come when he wrote he would. If I asked him to advance me something, I am sure he would not refuse. For he himself proposed it this winter, but then he fell ill and we could not correspond about the matter for which the money was intended – that is, lithographs, and drawings connected with it. I remember his father wrote: "My son is ill, but I know about it; if you are perhaps in difficulties, I will advance you the money."

I thought that so nice of Rappard's father that it would have been indelicate of me to have accepted it at that moment. So I wrote him, "Thank you, let us wait for the recovery of your son."

Rappard recovered, but I heard nothing more about it, and he became absorbed in other work. So that is still hanging, and again and again there are obstacles which prevent carrying this thing through. But I personally did go on with it, namely making drawings in printer's ink, lithographic crayon, etc., and I have had a lot of expenses too. Of course he is not in the least responsible for that: but what I want to say is, it is that much more reason, I think, for his not refusing to advance me something.

Therefore I will ask him to do so, but I am expecting a letter from him: and before I have described the whole thing and have got an answer, some time may elapse, for he is lazy about his correspondence sometimes.

When your money arrived this morning, I had been without money – absolutely without a penny – for about a week. Besides, all my drawing material was used up. I was negotiating with Smulders about a lot of drawing paper and took it, though I cannot really afford it right now; but I absolutely needed it, together with other materials, for instance, the printer's ink of the engravers, and lithographic crayon. And I had to pay for several household things and to lay in provisions. And had to pay the models, whom I had had meanwhile, in order to be able to work on.

I am very, very sorry I have to ask for it, but if there is the slightest possibility, send me another 10 francs. A week's work depends on it, for I cannot expect an answer from Rappard right away. I am already hard up, and have made arrangements with models. After Rappard sends me the money, the time will come when things will run smoothly again. If you can send it, this week will pass without a hitch; if not, the damage will be unpleasant. But do not be angry with me; it was a combination of expenses, all strictly necessary, which I could not avoid. And if you cannot send it – well, it will not kill us. The difficulties in small matters, even when small sums of money are involved, are often really brain-wracking, and this is such a case. I hope Rappard will be able to help me a little, for I need it as much as a meadow needs the rain after a long drought.

Well, once more my best wishes for your patient; the weather is delightful here at times – in your country it will be beautiful too, and will do her good.

Adieu,

Yours sincerely, Vincent