

Letter 412
Nuenen, 2nd. Half June 1885

Dear Theo,

I think you will have received the box by now.

I must tell you that I have another similar subject, a white clay cottage, the size more in the breadth.

Yesterday I witnessed a large forest fire on a blazing hot afternoon. It was a wood in the middle of a bare stretch of moor, and those enormous masses of black-and-white smoke that went straight up into the air were a peculiar sight. The fire was limited to the heath, the fir needles and dry twigs. The stems remained standing.

I am very busy drawing figures, but I shall have to make a hundred of them before I paint them, as this will save me time and money.

I think they are getting rounder and fuller than at first.

But I am absolutely without money, and hardly know how to get to the end of the month.

At times it makes me quite melancholy that the result is always "unsaleable."

But I go on, and harden myself against it.

Others have had to bear it too. Goodbye,

Ever yours, Vincent

Hasn't there been a Lhermitte number this May?

I repeat – work in spite of all indifference is not easy to keep up, but what is easy isn't worth much.

Painting rural life is a thing that will keep its value, and the fight won by others continues all the same. And one can win it anew. Far from there being too many painters of rural life – in my opinion it would be better to have some hundreds more.

It is no bad idea that in France they are decorating the town halls with scenes from rural life, like a number of pictures at the Salon. I suppose they will carry it still further.

But – it is even better that the pictures of peasants get into houses in magazines and other reproductions, directly among the people.

And so my being discouraged is only a passing mood.

At home I heard that you had written them something about Serret, his having said that I could count on his sympathy, etc. Is Serret a painter, a dealer or an art lover? Up to now I'd never heard of him. I wanted to put *Germinal* into the box with the pictures, but in the end I was afraid it would get shoved in between the pictures and damage them. But I shall put it in the next box or return it by post; I think it is splendid.