

My dear Vincent,

I cannot tell you how glad I was of your letter, or rather your two letters; on the eve of my birthday I said to Jo, If a letter should arrive from Vincent! ¹ – I should be hard put to it to mention anything I need to be completely happy.

And look, there was your letter. Please understand that I should like you to feel better, and your fits of sadness to disappear. Your consignment of pictures arrived too, and there are very beautiful ones among them.

The guard [F 629, JH 1774] and the other fellow with his swollen face are extraordinary; the branch of almond blossoms shows that for these themes you have missed the time of blooming of the trees and flowers. Let's hope that this will not be the case next time. The copies after Millet are perhaps the best things you have done yet, and induce me to believe that on the day you turn to painting compositions of figures, we may look forward to great surprises.

The consignment of paints from Tasset and Tanguy has been sent off. I hadn't received your second letter, and I said to myself that you might have use for half the quantity extra. The picture for Aurier is one of the finest you have done so far; it has the richness of a peacock's tail [F 620, JH 1748]. I am going to take it to him very soon; I had the frame made according to your description, for that much I certainly owe him, and he is not rich.

And now what is most important is your second letter in your telling me of your intention to come here. I am very happy that you feel strong enough to attempt a change, and I approve absolutely of your coming as soon as possible, to make a decision, for, after taking Dr. Peyron's advice, only you can bear the responsibility. Your trip to Arles was definitely disastrous; is it certain that travelling will do you no harm this time? If I were in your place I should only act in conformity with Dr. Peyron's views, and in any case as soon as you have decided to come here, it will be absolutely necessary for you to get somebody you trust to accompany you during the whole journey. The exertion of travelling and the sensations awakened by the sight of well-known spots may have an effect on your malady. If it should be possible I should so much like to have you with us for some time at least, and if you do everything to take care of yourself, it is very probable that all will go well.

You say that people down there understand nothing of painting, but it is absolutely the same here, and don't think that you will find things different anywhere else, exceptions apart.

We have held intercourse with one category of people who have made painting their principal occupation, but if you don't count these, it is Hebrew to the general public, and the simple things are even less understood than those whose subject gives them something to puzzle over, etc.

I hope you will soon be able to tell me that your health is improving more and more, and that you will be able to carry out your plans. Please don't have too many illusions about life in the North; after all, every country has its advantages and disadvantages. I shall write you another letter before long, and I shall look for lithographs of the masters. I shall send them at the same time as the drawings from Brabant. Have courage, and a cordial handshake! Once again thanks for your letters and pictures. If you should want anything, please say so. Business is good, and I have everything I want. Kindest regards from Jo and the little one. Their portrait enclosed.

Yours, Theo

1. See Vincent's letter 629.