

Letter 020  
London, July 31 1874

Dear Theo,

I am glad you've been reading Michelet and that you understand him so well. If that kind of book teaches us anything it is that there is much more to love than people generally suppose. To me, that book has been both a revelation and a Gospel.

'Il n'y a pas de vieille femme!' [There are no old women.] (That does not mean that there are no old women, only that a woman does not grow old as long as she loves and is loved.) And then a chapter like "The Aspirations of Autumn," how rich that is ... That a woman is a 'quite different being' from a man, and a being that we do not yet know, or at best only superficially, as you put it, yes, that I am sure of. And that a man and a woman can become one, that is to say, one whole and not two halves, I believe that too.

Anna is bearing up well, we go on marvellous walks together. It is so beautiful here, if one just has a good and single eye without too many beams in it. And if one does have that eye, then it is beautiful everywhere. Father is far from well, although he and Mother say that he's better. Yesterday we received a letter with all sorts of plans (wouldn't we just try this and that) which will prove to be unworkable and certainly useless and at the end Father said once again that he leaves it all to us, etc., etc. Rather petty and disagreeable, Theo, and it reminded me so much of Grandfather's letters, but qu'y faire [What can you do?]. Our beloved Aunts are staying there now and are no doubt doing much good! Things are as they are and what can a person do about it, as Jong Jochem said.

Anna and I look at the newspaper faithfully every day and reply to whatever advertisements there are. On top of that we have already registered with a Governess agency. So we are doing what we can. More haste less speed.

I'm glad that you go round to see the Haanebeeks so often, give them all my kindest regards and tell them some of my news.

The painting by Thijs Maris that Mr. Tersteeg has bought must be beautiful, I had already heard about it and have myself bought and sold one quite similar.

My interest in drawing has died down here in England, but maybe I'll be in the mood again some day or other. Right now I am doing a great deal of reading

On 1st of January 1875 we shall probably be moving to another, larger shop. Mr. Obach is in Paris at the moment deciding whether or not we should take that other firm over. Don't mention it to anybody for the time being.

Best wishes and write to us again soon. Anna is learning to appreciate paintings and has quite a good eye, admiring Boughton, Maris and Jacquet already, for instance, so that is a good start. Entre nous, I think we are going to have a difficult time finding something for her, they say everywhere that she is too young, and they required German, too, but be that as it may, she certainly has a better chances here than in Holland.

Goodbye,

Vincent

You can imagine how delighted I am to be here together with Anna. Tell H. T. [Herman Tersteeg] that the pictures have duly arrived and that I shall be writing to him soon.