

Letter 146  
Etten, June 1881

Dear Theo,

It is time that you heard from me again.

You must know that Rappard has been here for about twelve days, and now he has gone. Of course, he sends his best regards. We have taken many long walks together – have been, for instance, several times to the heath, near Seppe, to the so-called Passievaart, a big swamp. There Rappard painted a large study (1 meter by 50cm.) in which there was much that was good. Beside that, he did about ten small sepias, also in the Liesbosch.

While he was painting, I made a drawing in pen and ink of another spot in the swamp [JH0007, F0845], where all the water lilies grow (near the road to Roozendaal). We also went to Prinsenhage together, but Uncle was ill in bed again. I think Rappard makes progress in his work. From what he told me, he has got a nicely furnished studio at home. Now this week he is going to Loosdrecht, where he intends to stay a month. He too works regularly and hard.

I bought Cassagne's *Traité d'Aquarelle* and am studying it; even if I should not make any watercolours, I shall probably find many things in it, for instance, about sepia and ink. For until now I have drawn exclusively in pencil accented and worked up by the pen, sometimes a reed pen, which has a broader stroke. What I have been doing lately demanded that way of working, because the subjects required much drawing – drawing in perspective, too, for instance, a few workshops in the village here, a forge, a carpenter's shop and the workshop of a maker of wooden shoes.

Willemien has left now, and I am sorry; she poses very well – I made a drawing of her and of another girl who stayed here. [JH0011] I put a sewing machine into that drawing. Nowadays there are no more spinning wheels, and it is a great pity for painters and draughtsmen; but something has come in its place that is no less picturesque, and that is the sewing machine.

What about your coming here this summer, is there any chance of its really happening? I hope so.

Rappard seems to have a boat of his own there at Loosdrecht; that must be fine.

From Loosdrecht he intends to go to Gelderland.

He would very much like to meet you, and I promised him that if you came and I knew it beforehand, I should let him know, because he would then try to arrange to meet you.

I do not know whether he intends to go back to Paris; he did not speak of it at all. Nor do I know if this is a sign that he does not think about it, or that, on the contrary, *il couve son projet* [he hatches his plans]. When I think that he is only twenty-three years old, and more things of that sort, I should not be surprised if the latter were the case.

I hope you will write me if you can spare a moment. If you could by any chance send me the Salon's catalogue, I should be greatly obliged to you.

Rappard told me he was going to buy all Cassagne's books. He has trouble with his perspective, and I know of no better remedy for this ailment; at least, if I am quite cured of it, I shall have those books to thank for it – that is to say, I put into practice the theory they contain. However, practice is a thing one cannot buy along with books; if that were so, there would be a larger sale of them, I suppose.

And now adieu, with a handshake,

Yours sincerely, Vincent