

Letter 488
Arles, c. 15 May 1888

My dear Theo,

Thank you for your letter enclosing 100 Fr. I am very glad to have left those people, and since then I have been feeling much better. It was mainly their bad food which kept me down, and their wine, which was regular poison. I get a very good meal now for 1 franc or for 1.50.

Tasset's absorbent canvas would suit me much better if the canvas itself were three times as rough.

If you meet the man, try to find out what he uses for plaster. I should not be surprised if he prepared his canvas with pipe clay. If I could find out about this, I think that I could prepare the canvas myself. There is no hurry, but try to find out. I still have 4 meters of canvas 1.20 m. wide, which I bought here, but it is not prepared.

Next time I have paints sent, he could put some plaster in the same lot, enough to prepare 4 meters. But there is no hurry yet.

When you got back, did our gentlemen say anything to you about making you travel for them?

One of these days you will see the Danish painter who was here turning up in Paris, I don't know how to spell his name (Mories?). He is going to see the Salon, and then return home, and perhaps come back to the South after a year.

His last three studies were better and more full of colour than what he had done before.

I do not know what he will do in the future. But he is good-natured, and I am sorry he is going away. I told him that a Dutch painter was staying with you, and if Koning would take him to the Butte Montmartre, he would probably make some studies there.

I talked to him a lot about the impressionists; he knew them all by name or from having seen their pictures, and he is very much interested. He has an introduction to Russell. His health has improved here, and he is very well now; he will be all right for two years, but after that it will do him good to come back here for his health's sake.

What is the new book on Daumier, *L'Homme et l'Oeuvre*? Have you seen the exhibition of the caricaturists?

I have done two new studies, a bridge and the side of a high road [F 570, JH 1421; F 567, JH 1419]. Many subjects here are exactly like Holland in character, the difference is in the colour. There is that sulphur-yellow everywhere the sun lights.

You will remember that we saw a magnificent garden of roses by Renoir. I was expecting to find subjects like that here, and indeed, it was that way while the orchards were in bloom. Now the appearance of things has changed and become much harsher. But the green, and the blue! I must say several landscapes of Cezanne's which I know render this very well, and I am sorry not to have seen more of them. The other day I saw a subject exactly like the lovely Monticelli landscape with the poplars which we saw at Reid's. You would probably have to go to Nice to find Renoir's gardens again. I have seen very few roses here, though there are some, among them the big red roses called Rose de Provence.

Perhaps it is already something to have found plenty of subjects – provided the pictures are worth what they cost. If the impressionists go up in value, it may happen. And at the end of several years' work we may be able to make up a bit for the past. And at the end of a year I shall have a quiet home of my own. I am anxious to know what you will say of what I have sent, I think it will take ten days by goods train from here to Paris. If there are any really too bad ones among them, don't show them! I only sent the lot to give you an idea of the things I have seen. I must go and look for a new subject, so, thanking you again very heartily for writing so soon, with a handshake for you and Koning,

Ever yours, Vincent