

My dear Vincent,

I received your package containing your wheat field [F 737, JH 1862] and the two bedrooms [F 482, JH 1608; F 484, JH 1771]. I particularly like the last one, which is like a bouquet of flowers in its colouring. It has a very great intensity of colour. The wheat field has perhaps more poetry in it; it is like a memory of something one has once seen. Tanguis is framing it at the moment, and on January 3 everything will go to Brussels. Now there is something which gave me a lot of pleasure. Mr. Lauzet, the lithographer of Monticelli's pictures, came to see me at my home. He came to see ours, and he thought them very fine. As regards the flowers, he doesn't think he can reproduce them, for the slabs are monochrome, and he doesn't think he will be able to render the effect of that picture in a single colour. He will start with the "Italian Woman." But what pleased him most were your canvases and drawings; oh, my dear fellow, that man understands them!

A long time ago now he saw some of them at Tanguis's, and he was really glad to see everything I have here; while going through the drawings he came across a gatherer of fallen apples which he liked very much, and I made him a present of it, for I think you would have done the same. Next day he came to see me again at the shop to ask me whether it was not possible to have another drawing which you did at the very beginning of your stay at St. Rémy. On the left there is a small cluster of somber trees against a sky with a waxing moon, on the right a low wooden gate. He told me that he could not get this drawing out of his mind, that it was even finer than the drawings by V. Hugo, which he liked very much, and so on. I proposed to him to exchange it for a lithograph from his Monticelli album, and he accepted immediately. The album is still far from completed, but he will finish it. Cottier and Reid have subscribed for several copies, so that his printing expenses are covered. He has got ready sixteen of the twenty-five lithographs he intends to make.

I think he has been most successful in that head of a child which we saw at La Roquette's that time. The artist made a very sympathetic impression on me. He is from the South and has something of the Spaniard about him, a pale face with a black beard, but at the same time he has something gentle like an English poet. It is a great pity that he has not done any slabs in different colours, for now one can get no idea of the force of the colours, which Monticelli was one of the first to use, availing himself of a contrast in order to arrive at a strong effect while preserving harmony. The slabs I have seen are like etchings on stone, as Marvy made them.

You say that at times you think you would have done better to have remained a merchant, but do not say such things. Take Gauguin, for instance. I am fully aware of his talent, and I am fully aware of what he wants to do, but I have not seen my way to selling anything whatever for him, and yet I have all kinds of pictures of his. The public is most rebellious about things that are not made in "perfect order." It is obvious that Gauguin, who is half Inca, half European, superstitious like the former, and advanced in his ideas like a number of the latter, cannot work in the same manner every day. He is very unhappy because it has not been possible to find something for him on which he can live. His most recent pictures are less saleable than those of last year. Last week he wrote to tell me that one of his children fell out of a window, and was picked up nearly dead. And yet they hope to save him. He would do anything to get a little money, but I am unable to procure it. ¹ Pissarro too is at his wits end. He is working like a slave. He made a very pretty fan for Jo. Peasant women running about in the fields with a rainbow in the background. So far he has not seen that gentleman at Auvers, at least he does not write anything on the subject; the best thing for you would be to come and stay with us in the spring, and then go into the country yourself to see whether you can't find a boarding house to your liking. We certainly ought to be glad that you are so much better in comparison with the same period last year. At the time I was afraid you would not recover. We are expecting Wil on January 2; she is going to stay with us for a month. I agree with you that it would be delightful if she married, and the man who got her would find a charming wife.

Cor writes often from the Transvaal. Life over there can hardly be very amusing. There are no plants or flowers.

When there is not a torrid heat, it rains in such a way that the whole country is swamped. One day is absolutely like another, which is why, he says, he detests Sundays and other times of leisure.

Here the weather is abominable, cold and grey, and nearly everybody is ill. How are you? Is it as cold in your part of the country as it was at Arles? I am curious to see your olive trees; I expect they are beautiful. The sunflowers were on show at Tanguis's this week, and made a very good effect. Your pictures brighten Tanguis's shop; Father Tanguis is very fond of them, but he does not sell the other things any more than yours. I like the two drawings you sent me very much. Do you want me to send some of them to Brussels? Please let me have your reply by return mail, for there is no time to lose about the framing. Jo sends her kindest regards; she is very well, relatively speaking. I hope

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you will paint the portrait of the little one next spring. I shake your hand cordially, and I hope you will have a nice New Year's Eve.

Yours, Theo

I just received your postcard; the pictures will be ready in time.

1. See Vincent's letter 620.