

Letter 421
Nuenen, 2nd half August 1885

Dear Theo,

To my letter of the day before yesterday I want to add that yesterday I had a letter from Rappard, and that our quarrel is completely made up, that he has sent me a sketch of a large picture of a brickyard which he is painting. It looks very original; if you wanted to mention other pictures in the same style, it would be, for instance, Meunier, whose miners you saw in Antwerp.

He has taken a small house outside Utrecht, close to the brickyard, nothing but a studio (with a skylight); he also intends to go back to Terschelling, so he is again quite absorbed in nature, and in my opinion that is better than working in the city.

But I want to tell you that I hope we two shall also come to a better understanding. Just as little as I could accept his criticism can I be satisfied with the present condition in which my financial difficulties hamper my work too much. I don't want you to be the only one to put this right, but I simply want that we together (and not I alone) do our best to improve the situation. I know that it costs trouble and is not easy for you either, and as such I readily appreciate it; but to take trouble for a certain aim is no misfortune, and having to fight is essential to every honest victory.

The expenses of painting cannot always be avoided, and not to make them is not always the best policy, for if one hesitated to take models or to buy the necessary painting materials, no serious work could result.

And as things are getting worse and worse for me instead of better, they have finally got so bad that I really must complain.

And I repeat, let's keep that little painting business of mine in good shape, for sooner or later we may need it badly. If a storm is threatening, one must keep the boats well trimmed.

That man in The Hague is Leurs; he no longer lives in Practizijnshoek, but in Molenstraat.

He begs me to send him more than one picture in order to have more than one chance, and he offers me his two show windows. And as he himself is very much in need of money, he will not spare any effort.

I sent him a few cottages, the old church tower and some smaller studies with figures.

And while these are on show, I shall make some new ones to keep things going.

There is some chance of getting a second man at The Hague. But the main thing for me is to be able to go on with my work. Since you left, I have made another little picture of the harvest, the size of those carrot diggers in the snow – a reaper, a woman binding sheaves, and the mill, like those drawings you saw. An evening effect after sunset.

I also made some studies on interiors.

Once more I beg you to talk it over with Portier and Serret, to tell them that I am rather hard up, to stimulate them to do their best, that I for my part shall try to send them new things.

And let us manage to send off the box.

I have painted 3 more studies of women in the potato fields, [F 097, JH 876; F 096, JH 878] of which you already saw the first one.

Rappard had seen Wenkebach, and in his letter there was no longer any trace of the tone which he had tried to adopt at first. And though he is going to Terschelling first, he writes about coming to paint some studies here.

Goodbye, and wishing you good luck,

Ever yours, Vincent