

My dear Theo,

Yesterday I was agreeably surprised by a visit from M. Salles, who, I think, had had a letter from you. I was quite well when he came, so we were able to talk calmly. But I am quite upset by the fact that he put himself out for me, the more so because I hope that for a time I have recovered my clarity of mind.

For the moment it seems to me the best thing will be to stay here. I shall see what M. Peyron says when I have the opportunity to speak to him; he will probably say that he can guarantee absolutely nothing in advance, which seems quite right to me.

Today I sent off some canvases, as follows:

“Ploughed Field” [F 617, JH 1753] with background of mountains – it is the same field as the reapers of last summer and can be a pendant to it; I think that one will set off the other.

“The Ravine” – it is the study done during a mistral – I had secured my easel with big stones – the picture of this is not dry; it has a closer drawing and there is more controlled passion and more colour in it [F 662, JH 1804].

That can go with another study of mountains, summer effect with a road in the foreground and a black cottage [F 622, JH 1766].

“The Women Gathering Olives” – I had intended this picture for Mother and sister, so that they should have something a little studied.

I also have a copy of it for you, and the study (more coloured, with deeper tones) from nature.

“The Fields.” Fields of young wheat with background of lilac mountains and yellowish sky.

“Olive Trees” – sunset sky of orange and green [F 586, JH 1854] (there is also a variant with figures here). [F 587, JH 1853]

Ditto. Neutral effect.

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The big plane trees – the chief street or boulevard of St. Rémy, study from nature [F 657, JH 1860] – I have a repetition of it here which is perhaps more finished [F 658, JH 1862].

Copy after Millet: “The Diggers.” [F 648, JH 1833]

“La Veillée.” [F 647, JH 1834]

I must not forget “Rain.” [F 650, JH 1839]

Please don't look at them without putting them on stretchers and framing them in white, that is to say you must take down other canvases and mount these on the stretchers one by one – if you like – to get an idea of the effect. For the colourings absolutely need to be set off by the white frame for you to judge the whole. For instance, you can hardly see “Rain” and the grey olive trees without the frame. That will somewhat fill the gap left by the canvases gone to the Vingtistes – you must ask Tanguy to take down some other canvases and mount these on the stretchers so that they can dry all the way through.

In your previous letter you speak of drawings by Hugo – I have just seen a volume of the *Histoire de France* (illustrated) by Michelet. I saw admirable drawings by Vierge in it, which were just like Victor Hugo's, astonishing things. Do you know it? When you see M. Lauzet, ask him if he knows them, they remind me of Hervier's talent too, but more complete, with figures and more dramatic effects – again they are like Menzel's illustrations for the *Life of Frederick the Great*. Very curious. I think that Vierge has also gone to Charenton, but how that fellow has worked; at the time Boggs had a magnificent wood engraving by him, probably published in *L'Illustration*: “Sea Bathing” – a crowd of men and women – drawn like Doré, who once did exactly the same subject beautifully in a plate republished in *L'Illustration* – but then in Vierge you get Daumier's rich execution full.

I hope you and Jo are well and that you aren't worried on my account.

Write me – if you can – soon, when you have received the canvases. A good handshake in thought for you and your wife.

Ever yours, Vincent