

Letter R07
The Hague, 3 December 1881

Dear Rappard,

I received your letter from Brussels. I do not like it at all, but no matter, for as you said yourself, you wrote it at a moment when you were somewhat abnormal. There is nothing, or hardly anything, in your letter that holds water. However, I am glad you are back from Brussels. In my opinion you do not belong there, and as for the “technical proficiency” you hope to acquire at the academy, I am much afraid your hopes will be deceived. Not even fellows like Stallaert can teach one.

Now I am busy with all kinds of work, for I have rented a small studio that I shall move into by January 1, so I have to arrange a lot of things.

When I have quieted down a bit later on, I shall write you again about all sorts of things in a calmer vein, but don't take it ill of me if at present I have more serious things to do than write letters.

Of course my letters don't pretend to be invariably right, always to explain things correctly – oh no, I am often mistaken. But when I tell you, Rappard, that those academic fellows you are making so much of aren't worth a cent – and when I say this, I mean Stallaert and Severdonk – I am in dead earnest, and I tell you, if I were you, I'd let them go. But I have already told you so several times, and I won't repeat it. I won't hear another syllable about the whole academy, nor will I say another syllable about it – it really isn't worth the trouble. Herewith I send you my greetings – what kind of fellows are those artists with whom you drank a glass of lambiek¹ – why don't you mention the names of some of them? Are they fellows who might be important to you? I hope so, but I doubt it very much – goodbye, old fellow, I have no more time to spare, nor do I feel inclined to write a longer letter. When you are back in your studio, be sure to work regularly with models; it will give you more satisfaction in the long run.

Well, well – cheerio.

Vincent

In case you want to write me again, you can send your letters to Etten; they will send them on to me. I am wavering between two or three studios, and before January 1st I shall decide which one to take, but for the moment I have no fixed address; you will get it later on.

I left Etten because I had too much botheration with my father about all kinds of things that really are not worth while talking about – about going to church and such things, which, even though I was working hard and much, got me into a mood of boredom and chilliness that was all wrong. Therefore I have settled down here, and I am glad I am in different surroundings. Of course, now I have rather a lot of financial worries, but after all it is better than those everlasting bickerings and squabbles.

1. A kind of very strong, twice-fermented, rather sour-tasting beer, a specialty of Flanders.