

Letter 246
The Hague, 22 November 1882
Wednesday morning

Dear Theo,

Along with this letter you will receive the first proofs of a lithograph, "A Digger," [F 1656, JH 262] and of a lithograph of a "Man Drinking Coffee." [F 1682, JH 263] I should like to hear as soon as possible what you think of them. I still intend to retouch them on the stone, but I want your opinion about them first. The drawings were better. I had worked hard on them, especially on the digger; now several things have been lost in transferring them to the stone and in the printing. But I think there is something rough and audacious in these prints that I wanted there, and this partially reconciles me to losing things which were in the drawing.

The drawing was not done with lithographic crayon only, but was touched up with autographic ink. Now the stone has only partly caught that autographic ink, and we do not know what to ascribe it to, probably my diluting it with water.

At all events, it shows that the ink gave strong black tones where it caught; I hope to get better results with it later. Then when the printer has more time, we shall make experiments by bringing a kind of wash over it during the printing, and we will try different kinds of paper and different kinds of printing ink.

I hope these two stones will improve even more by retouching in accordance with the two studies made directly from the model, which I still have.

At last a painter has come to see me, namely Van der Weele, who stopped me on the street, and I have also been to see him. I hope he will also try this process of lithography. I wish he would try it with two ploughs which he has – painted studies (a morning and evening effect) and an oxcart on the heath.

That fellow has many fine things in his studio.

He wanted me to make a composition of my many studies of old men, but I feel I am not ready yet.

You know, I wrote you about the series of diggers; now you can see a print of them, too.

No news about the letter. Here at the post office they know nothing about it, and put all the blame on Paris. When your last letter came, after having had to wait so long, I had to pay so much at once that little was left. However, I have made those two experiments in lithography again, notwithstanding the expense, because especially in hard times I see in work the only safety, and I will fight to get ahead.

But today or tomorrow all my money will be gone. If it is possible for you to send something, do so, if not, it is neither your fault nor mine – but the days will be hard. Well, quand même, we must keep heart as long as we can, and not give away to melancholy or weakness.

There is a popular paper here called *The Swallow*, published by Elsevier in Rotterdam, backed by the Society for General Welfare. I have been wondering whether they could use such a digger, for instance. An edition is published monthly. But it would cost me a trip to Rotterdam, and I am so afraid I should have to go home with the answer: Business is too slack, we cannot take anything, etc. Besides, I should prefer not doing so – I would much rather work longer, until I have put a good series together. But as I am so frequently hard up for money, I often think of trying to earn something. *Que faire?*

Even if you don't have the money, boy, do write, for I need your sympathy, which is not worth less to me than the money. I hope you received the roll with lithographs containing "Sorrow" and the letter which accompanied it. I mention it again to make sure, not because I had already expected an answer.

The weather has been very cold here; today it is quite dark, grey and gloomy, but it gives a rough aspect of non ébarbé to everything.

Adieu, with best wishes and a handshake in thought, believe me,

Always yours, Vincent

In the drawing of the "Man Drinking Coffee," the black has been much more broken by the direction of the hatching. Unfortunately, it has become dull now, but perhaps that can be fixed.