

Amice Rappard,

Herewith some of Coppée's poems which I promised to send you. "Tristement" reminds me of a Poplar Avenue by Hippolyte Boulanger – I think it is called "La Vallée de Josaphat." How much of an autumn atmosphere there is in it! I thought you would admire them too. There are many more in the same little volume; I chose only a few at random.

These past few days I have made a number of studies in the open air; I am sending you a little sketch of one of them.

My mother is recovering steadily; the fracture is healed now, and the plaster cast has been taken off. But she will still have to keep her leg in a horizontal position for about six weeks. Yesterday, however, we carried her to the living room on a kind of litter as a trial, and later on we shall be able to carry her into the open air too once in a while.

I am adding to Coppée's poems an Arabian fable that I found this week in an article by De Lesseps, "Voyage dans le Soudan." I thought the idea subtle, and I believe it may be so. Seen from this point of view, human males do not play a very noble part – oh well, that may happen too sometimes. But in general it won't do, for after all... does the candle burn for the moth's sake? If one knew that for certain – well – it might be worth while to commit suicide in this way.

But what if the candle itself should snigger at the burned wings...?

I was struck by it, whatever the truth of it may be. And – I firmly believe that there are things like that in the depths of our souls – and that they would cut us to the quick if we knew about them. At times we are quite disenchanted by mankind – our own selves included, of course – and yet – seeing that we are going to pop off soon enough after all – it would hardly be worth while to stick to our displeasure, even if it were well founded. And in case our ideas about the worthlessness of mankind were unfounded, our mistake would be all the worse for us. In my opinion the worst evil of all evils is self-righteousness, and exterminating it in ourselves is an everlasting weeding job...all the more difficult for us Dutchmen, as so often our very education must induce us inevitably to become highly self-righteous. But let's stop harping on the subject.

I repeat that my idea about my drawings, and the reason I asked you to show them to people if you have a chance, is based on circumstances which are to a great extent not my fault – I am reproached quite often with "not selling anything." ¹ I am asked quite often, "Why do others sell and you don't?" I answer that I certainly hope to sell in the course of time, but that I think I shall be able to influence it most effectively by working steadily on, and that at the present moment making desperate "efforts" to force the work I am doing now upon the public would be pretty useless – and consequently that the problem leaves me rather cold, as I am concentrating on getting on. But all the same, because I am so often reproached with it, and because I am so often hard pressed to make both ends meet, I must not fail to do anything that gives me the slightest chance to sell something. But, I repeat, as a matter of course I am reconciled to the fact that it won't succeed all at once. But, speaking for myself, this showing of my work to others once in a while is something that stimulates me, now that I have started to do so (perhaps it is very foolish of me).

Goodbye, with a handshake,

Ever yours, Vincent

1. See letter 360 to Theo.