

Amice Rappard,

I haven't written you for quite a long time; first of all I waited for an answer to my last letter, but when it was not forthcoming I supposed this was because you had gone to Drenthe. Then I got a lot of work to do, as a result of which couldn't find the time to write these last weeks. But now please try to find a little time to let me know what you have been doing, and especially to tell me how your large picture of the "Fish Market" is progressing. Now I'll go on writing about myself. This summer I saw a house at Eindhoven which belongs to a retired goldsmith, who is rich now, and who has several times got together a collection of antiques which he resold. Now this man paints a little, and in his house (crowded again with beautiful and ugly antiques) he has a room whose walls he wants to paint himself. He has a plan for it. When I went to see him there were six panels, each one and a half meters long and sixty centimeters high [approx. 5' by 2'], which he wants to fill with something, and on which he intended to paint a Last Supper, among other things, according to a cartoon which was done, so to speak, in a modern Gothic style.¹

Then I told him that – as it was a dining room – the appetites of those sitting at the table there would be considerably more stimulated, in my opinion, if they saw scenes from the rural life of the district on the walls instead of mystical Last Suppers. The good man did not deny this. And, after he had visited my studio, I made six preliminary sketches for him of subjects from country life – "Sower," "Plougher," "Wheat Harvest," "Potato Planting," "Shepherd," "Winter Scene with Ox Wagon." And now I am working on them. But on condition that I paint the six canvases for myself but that I bear his dining room in mind, for instance with regard to their size; he will pay the expenses of models and paint, whereas the canvases remain my property, and will be returned to me after he has copied them. This enables me to do things that would get too expensive if I had to pay for everything. And it's a job I enjoy doing and which I'm working hard at. But on the other hand I must exert myself quite a bit to explain things to him while he is doing the copying. I have already finished painted sketches in the ultimate size of about five by two feet of the "Plougher" [F 1142, JH 512] and the "Sower" [F 1143, JH 509] and the "Shepherd." [F 0042, JH 517]. I have smaller ones of the "Wheat Harvest" [JH 508] and the "Ox Wagon in Winter." [F 1144, JH 511]. So I suppose you can imagine that I am not exactly sitting idle these days.

Have I told you that I have done another "Woman Spinning" and also another "Weaver"?

I have received an excellent book on J. F. Millet by Sensier, and I have bought myself a book by Blanc, *Grammaire des Arts du Dessin*, on the strength of a passage quoted from it in *Artistes de mon Temps*. This book treats of pretty much the same problems as the little book by Vosmaer, but I myself greatly prefer reading Blanc. You can read the book by Blanc, and the one about Millet too, if you like.

Regards – from my parents too – and believe me.

Ever yours, Vincent

1. See letter 374 to Theo of August 1884.