

Amice Rappard,

I had a talk with Wenkebach today – and as you had said a few words to him about it and he seemed to know something about the affair, I spoke about it – without going into details, however; but I said this much, that I would gladly consider it a misunderstanding, but that I should never admit the justice of your reproaches about my work. What I am quite willing to admit is that often – which will be the case with most of us – very often, if you like – I do things wrong before I manage to do them better. All right.

Details of your remarks are very accurate; all of it – no!

In point of fact Wenkebach thought you would reverse your judgment. I particularly pointed out to him that, if my figures have changed, I have done this in order to give them more form and fullness, and that, when I formerly put down a firmer line, the result of this very thing was that the figure remained flat – something I have come to hate more and more.

But perhaps it's just as well that this has happened, for I don't think there's much chance of your getting to such a point "that your belief," as you called it, "is shaken" a second time.

I have had the very same kind of trouble for a great number of years with a great number of people. When I protested against it once in a while and said that I didn't deserve it, things got worse and worse, and they wouldn't listen to another word about it. My parents and my whole family. Tersteeg, and along with him a lot of fellows who knew me when I was with Goupil & Co., went so far in their disapproval of all my doings that these last years, instead of wasting any more time on attempts to convince them, I, who have no time to waste, have simply given them the cold shoulder in my turn – and let them say, think, do whatever they like without minding it the least little bit.

This disagreement with you is not exceptional, though you may think so. You have let yourself be overawed by public opinion in this. And if you now feel this a little yourself, and think it over, then I repeat, it is quite a good thing that we have quarreled.

But I am a bit obstinate in this matter, for I don't want this thing to go on rankling, and I don't want a dragging friendship.

Either cordial and sincere or finished.

So this is my last word: I want you to take back, frankly and without reservation, what you wrote in your last letters – beginning with the one I sent back to you.

This is not only to my interest, but also to yours, for by doing so you will erase an action which, though it may be understandable, was not quite manly. By doing so you will erase a misunderstanding which you cannot stick to in good faith, and your continuing to cling to it would be obdurate spitefulness; so, on the condition that you withdraw those letters unreservedly, we'll renew our friendship, which may well become firmer and better as a result of this quarrel.

Please reply to this.

As regards my family – on the occasion of my father's death, realizing that my difference of opinion with him would probably have been perpetual, I simply said – for the sake of clarity – that my views about practical matters and my way of life differed too much from theirs to enable us to come to a lasting agreement. That I absolutely insisted on behaving according to my own views, however strictly on my own. And that I relinquished my share in the inheritance; inasmuch as during the last years I had lived in great discord with my father, I felt I did not have a right to anything that was his, and for that matter I did not covet it. You will agree with me that this puts a definite stop to all disagreements with my family. So there is an end of them, and otherwise I am on quite good terms with those at home. If I took such vigorous measures in one matter, then please remember that, however gladly I shall make up with you, I am very far from admitting the justice of your grievances, and my condition remains: withdrawal of your letters without reservation, for though some of the details in them are right, I don't deserve their general contents.

Greetings.

Vincent