

My dear Vincent,

I was greatly touched by your letter, which we received yesterday¹; really, you are making far too much of something which is entirely natural, without taking into account that you have repaid me many times over, by your work as well as by your friendship, which is of greater value than all the money I shall ever possess. It is very painful for me to know that you are still in an imperfect state of health. Though it seems to me that nothing in your letter betrays a weakness of the mind – on the contrary – the fact that you deem it necessary to go to a sanatorium is in itself rather serious. Let's hope that this is meant only as a preventative measure. Seeing that I know you well enough to consider you capable of all imaginable sacrifices, I have been contemplating the possibility that you have thought of this solution in order to inconvenience less those who know you. If this should be the case, I implore you not to do it, for life in such an establishment can hardly be pleasant. So you should know well what you are going to do, and I think you ought to consider whether you should perhaps try something else first. Either you might come here for some time, or you might go to Port-Aven during the summer, or again you might go and board with people who would take care of you.

If, however, there was no hidden meaning in what you said when you wrote me, I think that you are quite right in going to St. Rémy. By staying there for some time you will be able to regain confidence in your strength, and nothing will prevent you from returning to Arles after a certain lapse of time, if you should feel the inclination. Mr. Salles sent me some prospectuses of the St. Rémy establishment, and it says that a third person should apply for admission. So I enclose the letter to the director of the establishment, which you may use as you think fit. As soon as you have decided in going away, I shall let you have the necessary money.

Now I only want to add that we have been here since Saturday. By Monday we had more or less installed ourselves, and the apartment looks more lived in every day, thanks to all sorts of inventions of Jo's. We thoroughly understand each other, so we feel such a complete mutual satisfaction that we feel happier than I should say. We left Mother and the sisters in perfect health. Mother seems to be growing younger. She has now returned to Breda after an absence of about a month.

My wedding gave her a lot of pleasure, particularly because Jo and she and Wil got on perfectly with each other; besides, she has something so sincere in her ways that there are quite a number of persons on whom she makes a very pleasant impression.

Although there are many things in life which she knows nothing of, and which she will have to form an opinion about, she has such a foundation of good will and of zeal for doing the right thing that I am no longer afraid of the disillusionings which I feared before our marriage. Up till now all goes better than I have been able to imagine, and I never dared hope for so much happiness.

In Holland I lacked the time to see many pictures; notwithstanding this I saw the "Jewish Bride" and the other Rembrandts again, the Frans Halses at Haarlem which I thought more beautiful than ever before, and the portrait of an old woman by Rembrandt in the Museum at Brussels. How beautiful the last-named picture is. There is really nothing more remarkable and characteristic in Holland than those old portraits. One feels far removed from this epoch when one looks at the follows of today. There was an exhibition at C.M.'s of charcoal sketches by Mauve, leaves out of his sketchbooks. Very touching things. Jet gave us one of these drawings as a present, which I am very, very glad of.

Write us soon what you have definitely decided, and do not despair, for assuredly better days will come to you. I shake both your hands.

Theo

1. See Vincent's letter 585.