

Letter 623a  
St. Rémy, c. 31 January 1890

My dear friend Russell,

Today I am sending you a little roll of photographs of pictures by Millet, which you may not know.

However this may be, the purpose is to remind you of myself and my brother.

Do you know that my brother has got married in the meantime, and that he is now expecting his first child?

Let's hope all goes well – he has a very nice Dutch wife.

How much it pleases me to write you after such a long silence! Do you remember when we met our friend Gauguin almost at the same time – I think you were the first, and I the second?

He is still struggling on – alone, or nearly alone, like the brave fellow he is. I feel sure you have not forgotten him.

I assure you that he and I are still friends, but perhaps you are not unaware that I am ill, and that I have had serious nervous crises and delirium more than once. This was the cause of our parting company, he and I, for I had to go into a lunatic asylum. But, before that, how many times we spoke of you!

At the moment Gauguin is still with one of my fellow countrymen by the name of De Haan, and De Haan praises him highly, and does not think it at all bad to be with him.

You will find [an] article about some canvases I have at the exhibition of the Vingtistes. I assure you that I owe much to the things Gauguin told me on the subject of drawing, and I have the highest respect for the way he loves nature. For in my opinion he is worth even more as a man than as an artist.

And is everything going well with you? And are you still working hard?

Though it is not pleasant to be ill, yet I have no right to complain, for it seems to me that nature sees to it that disease is a means of putting us on our legs again and of healing us, rather than an absolute evil.

If you should go to Paris, please go and take a canvas of mine at my brother's if you will stick to the idea of someday getting together a collection for your native country.

You will remember that I have already told you it is my great desire to give you one for this purpose. How is our friend MacKnight? If he is still with you, and if there are others with you whom I have had the pleasure of meeting, please remember me to them.

Above all give my kind regards to Mrs. Russell, and believe me, with a handshake in thought,

Sincerely yours,

Vincent van Gogh

[Unlike all the other letters to Russell, this letter is written in French.]