

My dear Theo,

Once more I write to say that my health continues to be good, however I feel a bit exhausted by this long attack and I dare think that the projected change will refresh my ideas all the more.

I think the best thing will be for me to go myself to see this doctor in the country as soon as possible, then we can soon decide if I shall go to stay with him or temporarily at the inn; and thus we shall avoid too prolonged a stay in Paris, a thing I dread.

You remember that six months ago I said after an attack that if it was repeated I should ask you for a change. We have got to this – though I do not feel capable of passing judgment on the way they treat the patients, it is enough that I feel that what still remains of my wits and of the power to work is absolutely in danger, whereas on the contrary, I undertake to prove to this doctor of whom you speak that I can still work rationally, and he will treat me accordingly, and since he likes painting, there is really a chance that a lasting friendship will result. I do not think that M. Peyron will object to a very prompt departure; besides, I tell myself that the pleasure of spending some days with you will do me a lot of good.

And from that time on we can really count on a period of comparative health. So do not delay taking the necessary steps so that this does not keep dragging on.

Once there, I can send for my bed, which is in Arles.

Besides, I should make a change in any case, as I prefer being in an asylum where the patients work to this terrible idleness here, which really seems to me simply a crime. But then, you will tell me that one sees it practically everywhere, and that it even abounds in Paris. However that may be, I hope we shall see each other again shortly.

The etchings which you sent me are very fine. On the back of this page I have scribbled a sketch after a painting I have done of three figures which are in the background of the etching of “Lazarus”: the dead man and his two sisters. The cave and the corpse are white-yellow-violet. The woman who takes the handkerchief away from the face of the resurrected man has a green dress and orange hair, the other has black hair and a gown of striped green and pink. In the background a countryside of blue hills, a yellow sunrise [F 677, JH 1972].

Thus the combination of colours would itself suggest the same thing which the chiaroscuro of the etching expresses.

If I should still have at my disposal the model who posed for “La Berceuse,” and the other one whose portrait after Gauguin's drawing you have just received, I would certainly try to make a painting of it in large size, this canvas, as these persons are just what I would have dreamed as characters. But subjects of this kind aside, when I am back in the North, there will always be the study from nature of peasants and landscapes.

As for the order for paints, if I should have to stay here a few more days, then please send part of them at once.

If, however, I am leaving one of these days – which I hope – you can quite well keep them in Paris.

Write me soon in any case: I hope you will have received the canvases safely. I have done another one of a nook of greenery, which I think has some freshness. I have also tried a copy of the “Good Samaritan” by Delacroix [F 633, JH 1974].

I think, from a note in the Figaro, that father Quost must have a tremendous picture at the Salon.

Kind regards to your wife, I am looking forward to making her acquaintance with great pleasure, and a good handshake in thought.

Ever yours, Vincent