

Letter 637
Auvers-sur-Oise, 25 May 1890

My dear Theo, my dear Jo,

Thank you for your letter, which I received this morning, and for the fifty francs which were in it.

Today I saw Dr. Gachet again and I am going to paint at his house on Tuesday morning, then I shall dine with him and afterwards he will come to look at my painting. He seems very sensible, but he is as discouraged about his job as a country doctor as I am about my painting. Then I said to him that I would gladly exchange job for job. Anyway I am ready to believe that I shall end up being friends with him. He said to me besides, that if the depression or anything else became too great for me to bear, he could quite well do something to diminish its intensity, and that I must not find it awkward to be frank with him. Well, the moment when I shall need him may certainly come, however up to now all is well. And things may yet get better, I still think that it is mostly a malady of the South that I have caught, and that the return here will be enough to dissipate the whole thing. Often, very often, I think of your little one and then I start wishing he was big enough to come to the country. For it is the best system to bring them up there. How I do wish that you, Jo and the little one would take a rest in the country instead of the customary journey to Holland.

Yes, I know quite well that Mother will insist on seeing the little one, and that is certainly a reason for going, but she would surely understand if it was really better for the baby.

Here one is far enough from Paris for it to be real country, but nevertheless how changed since Daubigny. Yet not changed in an unpleasant way, there are many villas and various modern bourgeois houses, very radiant and sunny and covered with flowers.

This in an almost lush country, just at the moment when a new society is developing in the old, is not at all displeasing; there is much well-being in the air. I see or think I see in it a quiet like that of Puvis de Chavannes, no factories, but lovely greenery in abundance and well kept.

Please tell me sometime, which is the picture that Mlle. Bock has bought? I must write to her brother to thank them and then I shall suggest exchanging two of my studies for one of each of theirs. I have a drawing of an old vine, from which I intend to make a canvas of size 30 [F 1624, JH 1085], and a study of pink chestnuts [F 752, JH 1991] and one of white chestnuts [F 751, JH 1992]. But if circumstances allow it, I hope to work a little at the figure. Some pictures present themselves vaguely to my mind, which it will take time to get clear, but that will come bit by bit. If I had not been ill, I should have written to Bock and Isaäcson long ago.

My trunk has not yet arrived, which annoys me. I sent a wire this morning.

I thank you in advance for the canvas and paper. Yesterday and today it has been wet and stormy, but it is not unpleasant to see these effects again. The beds have not arrived either. But in spite of these annoyances, I feel happy at not being far from you two and my friends any longer. I hope you are well. It seemed to me however that you had less appetite than formerly, and according to what the doctors say, constitutions like ours need very solid nourishment. So be sensible about this, especially Jo too, having her child to nurse. Really she ought to eat at least double, it would not at all be overdoing it when there are children to bring into the world and rear. Without that it is like a train going slowly where the line is straight. Time enough to reduce steam when the line is more uneven.

A handshake in thought from

Yours, Vincent