

My dear Vincent,

I have something to tell you which I think will give you pleasure. In the first place I went to the Salon with De Bock yesterday; he came to lunch with us, and then we looked at your pictures. He likes them very much, and he gives me the impression of understanding them. As you told me that you would be glad to exchange a picture with him, when I saw that he preferred the canvas you did after reading the book by Rod [F 622, JH 1766], I told him he could take that one in exchange for a picture of his. He seemed to be enraptured, and put everything he had at your disposal. I went with him to see what he had at home, and among his pictures there was a size 20 canvas or thereabouts made at Frameries in the Borinage, representing the Crachet and Pecry Works, which you may remember; the whole factory looms in a fog of smoke and steam, and stands out gloomily against the green wheat, with vivid reflections of sunlight on one side. The sky is very luminous. Above all I think that the subject and the intention of what he wanted to do are remarkable<sup>1</sup>. It is not very skillfully done, nor is it vigorous, but it is very truthful, like the young fellow himself.

If you should not like this canvas, he will be pleased to exchange it for something else, but I should be surprised if you didn't like it at all. The Salon is deplorably wretched, there is hardly anything there which is not profoundly boring. But let me tell you that you judged rightly in the matter of Quost. If I had to choose, I'd take him. They are primroses. It is very mild, harmonious, but for all that there is colour in it. The Jeannins are good too, but they are blustering.

I met Quost the other day, and I spoke with him about you. I told him that you greatly admire his talent, which pleased him very much, he said. If you should come to Paris, you must not fail to look him up – he will be very happy when you come to see him, either at the garden or at home.

And now I must tell you something about your etching [F 1664, JH 2028]. It is actually an etching done by a painter. There is no refinement of process, but it is a drawing on metal. I like that drawing very much – De Bock liked it too. It's funny that Dr. Gachet has that printing press; the others are forever complaining that they have to go to a printer to get proofs.

I think Auvers has a lot of good, and I should like you to share this opinion. We are looking forward with a great deal of pleasure to going to you. For different reasons: (1) to see you, (2) to see your work, (3) on account of the fine scenery, and (4) because I hope that seeing the countryside will give me the strength to do a lot of work. The Raffaelli exhibition is over, now everybody is going to the country, and I shan't lose much by not being there. Enclosed I send you 50 francs. Last week Jo had to stay in bed all the time, but fortunately that is over now. The little one is well.

Kindest regards from Jo and the little one.

Yours, Theo

1. See Vincent's letter 644.