

Dear Theo,

At the moment that all my money is gone, absolutely gone, I write you once again.

If you can send anything, even if it's only 5 fr., do so. There are still ten days left in the month, and how am I to get through them? For I have absolutely nothing left. Even at the baker's, nothing.

I know only one thing, that everything decidedly points to my not acting otherwise than as I wrote you – namely – to my not postponing going to Paris.

For the rest, you will notice from the last work, which you have not seen, that when I let painting rest for a short while, I do this in all confidence, for I shall not easily get out of the practice of working with the brush. I will also send you the drawings from the works of the ancients; that is unusual work for me, and I shall improve.

Like the torso of a woman that I finished today; it is more distinguished in modelling and less brusque than the first ones, in which the figures remind one involuntarily of peasants or woodcutters.

If I had not been sick, I should have been able to do more here.

What we have to do is to go quietly on, but that period of drawing cannot be avoided, and it is most pressing.

And I am so sure that my spending the time between on nothing but drawing will help me at Cormon's.

Whatever sort of man Cormon may be, he will be like the rest in that he will not have much time.

And whoever wants to learn from those people must start by bringing along as much positive knowledge as possible. And it is almost certain that all those who are at his studio have drawn a good deal from the plaster casts, and that no matter how free and liberal the studio may be otherwise, this is the basis of everything.

So let's act wisely. They care a little for outdoor studies, but not much. And the people who have been in Paris all say the same thing.

At Cormon's I suppose I shall have to paint a nude figure from nature, as a test, and the better I know the structure by heart, the more and the better he will be able and willing to tell me things.

For the rest, we must see how we can get along together. I hope we shall, but if not, then we should know something more about it if we had had a few months' trial.

And as to my going straight to Paris, I tell you it will be less expensive for you, for what with traveling to and from, and starting relatively expensive work in Brabant, we should not be able to manage with the usual allowance, and in Paris we can.

And if we can manage with the money, so much the better, then we shall not be so hard up and might stock up on painting materials before summer, so that everything will not come at once.

Don't be offended if I too calculate for once what is possible and what is not.

I am rereading Bracquemond's book, and I find it more beautiful each time.

I feel that you do not approve of my going straight to Paris, otherwise you would already have answered me.

And yet it is better to do it at once. Here I have the opportunity to consult people who work quite seriously, and I am fully convinced it will be the best thing to do. In fact, we ought to have done it long ago.

But don't worry too much about it, we shall not fail, but what I tell you is true – from the moment that I send this letter off till I get your answer, which I hope, however, will cross mine, I shall be without a cent, and it will mean fasting again.

Well, let's hope we shall be together soon, and that the worst will be over. Goodbye, with a handshake,

Ever yours, Vincent

I do not trust the people whom I live with, so if you send a letter with money in it, as you did recently, it is safer to have the letter registered.

I have just read La Dame aux Camelias by Dumas. It is very good. Do you know it?