

**5 October 1929**

Visit by Philippe Smit, Dien and Loty; invitation to Recloses.  
Anton will have a second baby and Maryke her third.  
The Pitcairns are in South Africa.

**10 November 1929**

Recloses.

In the station of Fontainebleau, Philippe picks us up by car. Line, Matilda, Eliane and me. We head towards Recloses, cross Fontainebleau, take the charming road of Recloses, a marvel of colours. We arrive rue Sainte-Reine to their peasant's cottage whose exterior has not been touched.

Having bought an adjacent house ([FRF] 100.000), there is a charming paved courtyard, in the center a well full of flowers – yews and heather.

Both houses overlook the valley.

As always, there are surprises. We enter the new house, what a magnificent sight, a large bay window, taking up the full length, overlooks the valley and what a valley! In this time of year, the varied colours of autumn, the range of yellows, and what to say about the sun lighting up all those trees in golden brown shades! It's ecstasy, pure joy, everyone is deeply moved by this spectacular nature.

Sitting in comfortable Louis XIII armchairs in front of this bay, inside some geraniums - a calm day providing an intimate atmosphere for chatting.

A large fireplace where beautiful logs crackle.

On a table a huge bouquet with sloes and forest plants.

The arrival of a cunning and suave peasant girl gives a cheerful note. They are in negotiations to buy the house next door, whose field runs down to the valley, in order not to have a blocked view!

New surprise!

We go into the studio, newly converted, where  
the cattle used to be.

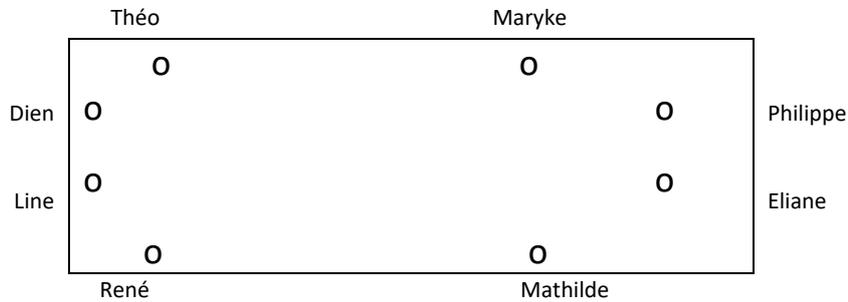
Very Dutch studio, a large fireplace with a mantel  
up to the ceiling.

Exposed beams, the gallery hung with beautiful fabrics  
including a chasuble; the Spanish chest  
that used to store linen.

Many reproductions of the great masters.

The small window is a marvel of intimacy in this  
studio, the sun shines through.

The back of the fireplace is covered with blue faience,  
tiles with subjects.



We eat lunch, generous, cheerful, exquisite Saint-Emilion,  
plenty of hors d'oeuvres, huge cake.

Most entertaining cook.

The huge Havana cigar.

We go by car to Thoury-Ferrottes.

Philippe and I in a "Fiat" - funny, the cake  
(charlotte) and the famous herrings!! uncontrollable laughter, departure  
with the dishes in our hands, Philippe religiously carries  
the herrings!

We are in the forest, we take the road  
that leads to the "Mare aux fées"; the colours of this  
serpentine road are extraordinary, on the left "the Mare  
aux fées". Lyricism is at its height.

We go through Marlotte, the Loing, Episy.

Villecerf, Dormelles and Thoury.

The view is lovely on arrival of Thoury and that one can see the little church.

We had passed by the "Chateau St. Ange" built under Francis I<sup>st</sup>, this chateau has many memories. The sunken road is wonderful.

Arrival at the Chateau de "La Motte".

Philippe's father, a handsome 80 year old man with a white beard, happy to see us.

We have tea, introduction to the nanny, beautiful woman with a pure profile and white hair.

Maryke's little girl, kind and full of health, the dark spot is the little boy that we see, Theo looks at him in his cradle, he moves but that's all!!

The works of Philippe:

- The portrait in pastel of Philippe's father, in profile, sitting in an armchair, posed beautifully.

- The portrait of Theo, with wonderful hands of mystical expression.

- A very beautiful work is the portrait of Marijke in pastel, sitting on a garden bench painted in green, a large hat, beautiful laces, a dress with an extraordinary range of pink, a bouquet tossed carelessly on the bench, trees in the background, meditation, wealth and distinction. This huge pastel is a remarkable work.

- Loty in a boat and water lilies in the foreground, the white note and the reflection in the water, the depth of the water.

In the living room, there is still the Christ by El Greco, the grand piano, the harp, the flower bouquets, sumptuousness.

- The moonlight in the forest, broom shrubs to the left, the drama of the sky (pink and purplish)

At five o'clock, the visit of three doctors for Maryke's boy, a painful moment.

We go to Philippe's new studio.

On the outside looking like a chapel, an old wooden front door. A very small vestibule where we leave our coats.

Then the big surprise of the studio.

Huge room, large bay window with two very large crimson velvet curtains - the polished oak paneled ceiling - the squared beams of the 2<sup>nd</sup> room, the fireplace with columns surmounted by Romanesque capitals.

The third room with tiny Dutch windows, the remarkable small Tanagra, the head of a woman (Greek art), the wooden statue of a saint of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, we feel the arrival of Romanesque art.

A very beautiful female bust.

- Pastel Portrait of the 'Zulu' with a huge Bible in ivory tones, the colour of the dark cloth which serves as his costume, the background a range of muted purple - figure with great character.

- The portrait of Dien, full of kindness.

- The synthesis of autumn, the valley and the golden ferns, it is sublime, the paint, the combination of Indian Yellows and the medium cadmium.

- [The pastel of] The courtyard of Recloses, in the old well there are geraniums, this red touch is very beautiful amid the heather.

Talk by Philippe.

"To know how to turn a piece into something interesting and to render the entire soul of things"

he tells me that in front of a reproduction of a drawing by Millet " A Dead tree"

His great admiration for Millet and Puvis de Chavanne.

Millet's peasants fit in with the landscape, they are part of it.

The drawings by Puvis de Chavanne, by Leonardo da Vinci, by Goya.

Loves Rodin, his book about "Art" and about "Cathedrals".

Doesn't like much Bourdelle much, but admires Despiau.

Likes Picasso, who has very beautiful drawings.

Van Dongen has talents for a colourist as well as Dunoyer de Segonzac.

Dislikes Marquet, finds some works by Dufrenoy very beautiful.

Van Gogh, a great artist and when the patina of time will have done its work, it will be remarkable.

Regrets that Delacroix does not have his museum in his former studio.

Finds that museums do harm to works which compete with one another.

Does not like the new halls in the Louvre Museum, too harsh a light, the "Olympia" did better where she was.

Philippe, who at first wanted to be the pupil of Claude Monet, had sought to get away from Impressionism. Picasso always fondly remembers Philippe's room, rue de la Pépinière.

The time we spent in Holland was an ideal time for them and never again they found this again - "the musical hours of Anton Zelling"

Jean Zondag came to spend three days in Thoury, he does not make sculptures any longer in order to get started in painting, lived in Grosrouvre and had Noël Tinayre for a friend, son of the woman writer Marcelle Tinayre.

Philippe shows us a volume of Dutch architecture, the simple interiors where chimneys play a decorative role.

Philippe shows us beautiful fabrics and an embroidery of the 14<sup>th</sup>C, beautiful interpretation of carnations. In the evening, the studio is lit by candles, there are two big candles whose candle holders, purchased in America, were offered by Dien to Philippe. The oil lamp on the table. This chat is taking place comfortably seated in wooden chairs, around the large fireplace, it is pleasant to caress the arm rests, well made for hands. At this hour, at nightfall, in this tranquillity, one finds himself truly transported into an abbey. The gentleness of Philippe's movements when he caresses his artwork. Oh ! Delicious moments when we are around the table looking at the beautiful books and listening to Philip's explanations. But we must leave! leave this charm, the bell just rang for dinner. We leave the studio, the big low wooden door closes, it is dark, a small lamp on the side lights up the path, we can hear the music of the wind. We enter the dining room full of charm, but one can feel that the doctors' visit was not very positive. Loty, being unwell, does not attend dinner, two more guests, Philippe's father and the American nanny. The conversation revolves around the mistakes which one can commit when speaking a foreign language. "The axles of the car" Could you please arrange the spring! "Marijke at the butcher's" give me calf skeletons instead of veal cutlets. Dien wanting Vittel water at the pharmacist's give me a liter of brandy! When I was in Holland, Dien made cauliflowers. There were two, there was a worm in one of them, she did not serve it on the table.

As there was not enough left, she told the guests in Dutch not to take too much, she made a mistake and told me in French "René, do not take much"

Philippe's father asks me a lot of details about Paris.

Theo, who is certainly not for the sober America, serves white wine from Alsace copiously, very good but makes you legless. We have Dutch bread, made in Thoury, crackers are also served.

If all the Americans have not come to France, it's because they are too irritable !

We go to the living room, chat.

Anton, still in Gretz, has two children, they are very depressed not knowing anything about domestic life, Dien and Philippe are trying to bring them closer to Thoury in order to have a bigger house.

Philippe misses Anton's musical effluvium, in his room a portrait of Chopin by Delacroix, Debussy, several of Maurice Rollinat.

Mussorgsky - Van Gogh.

The legend of St. Genevieve and the poor fisherman by Puvis de Chavannes.

By Millet, two cows drinking at the edge of a river "while they skim the water" the peasant treated like a sculpture.

In his studio, Philippe shows us several early works, including a portrait of his sister Emma slightly influenced by Lautrec.

"You have to have faith and this is what is missing today"

"He does not want to make noise about his work"

"When you think that Gothic and Romanesque artists did not sign their works"



Alas! We have to go, the train in Montereau is at 10:23. Theo and Philippe take us there by car.