

Letter 285
The Hague, c. 20 May 1883

Dear Theo,

I must tell you that Rappard has been here, and that I borrowed 25 guilders from him, promising to pay them back next autumn. I was very glad to see him – he came in the morning and stayed till the last train in the evening, and we spent the whole day looking at the studies, and drawings, and he also made a sketch in printer's ink and turpentine, just to see what it was like. Now I am going to him tomorrow, to see his work and his studio. It was a thoroughly pleasant day. He was rather changed both in appearance and in manner. I personally like him much better now than before. He has become broader in the shoulders, and I think broader in his views on many things too.

Well, the money he advanced me has helped me to get many things which I absolutely needed. Among other things, I ordered large sketching blocks for working out-of-doors. And I had to buy a pair of trousers, and tomorrow I shall have to pay the fare to Utrecht. But it has helped me a great deal. I was also surprised by a very short visit from Father. I think he rather liked the workmen's figures I am working on.

Among the blocks I ordered with Rappard's money is also one for watercolours; I tried it at once, a cottage in the dunes with a wheelbarrow, etc., in the foreground, and a small figure of a digger in the background. Oh, Theo, some day or other I shall surely get the knack of making watercolours.

These last days, or rather weeks, I have had the very pleasant company of a young land surveyor who tried his hand at drawing [Furnée]. He once showed me drawings, which I thought very bad, and I told him why I thought them so bad.

Of course I never expected to hear from him again after that; but one day he returned – he has more leisure now, might he come with me to work outdoors? Well, Theo, the fellow has got the knack of landscape drawing so well that at present he brings home really charming sketches of meadow, wood and dune. But he still has to pass an examination in October, and his father does not want him to spend so much time on drawing. But in my opinion he can very well combine his profession of land surveyor with drawing. He is the kind of fellow Rappard was when we first knew him.

The things he made before I knew him were horrible daubs, most of them hideous. I began by telling him that at first he had to confine himself to drawing for some time. I made him draw many things which he did not like at all, but he trusted me in this. Now this morning he asked me if he couldn't try his hand at painting again, and now it came off very well, and he has scraped off all his old things.

I am longing for a letter from you; Rappard sends you his best regards.

Are you well, and how is your patient doing? Father told me you had written something about coming this summer. I can hardly tell you how much I long for it.

In the Salon's illustrated catalogue I saw "La Moisson" [Harvest] by Lhermitte. That looks good. How thoroughly it expresses the action of the peasant figure!

Well, adieu, I hope your letter will arrive soon, for I have gone through my money again. I saw Arnold in town with somebody else, perhaps Trip¹, they were walking with Mauve, but I saw them only from a distance. As Mauve was in the middle, it reminded me of "Le Christ Entre Deux Larrons" [Christ between Two Thieves], or the group silhouetted against a sunny wall made me think of somebody arrested by two policemen.

However, these are merely imaginings, "things as they might be seen." Good luck, boy. A handshake,
Yours sincerely, Vincent

1. Arnold and Trip were art dealers.