

Letter 323
Drenthe, 11-12 September 1883
Hoogeveen, Tuesday evening

Dear Theo,

I have just arrived here.

From the train I saw some beautiful bits of the Veluwe, but everything was dark by the time we arrived in these parts. So I do not know much about it yet. I am sitting in a large inn-parlour, like those in Brabant, where a woman is sitting peeling potatoes, rather a pretty little figure.

I have been talking to the people here, and one of these days I shall go by barge down the whole Hoogeveen canal, through the peat fields, straight across the southeastern corner of Drenthe.

From here to the north there seems to be a beautiful heath right up to Assen. You can imagine I am rather curious to see it all.

Everything came off well at The Hague. That land surveyor came to say goodbye at the station.

Of course the woman and her children were with me to the last, and when I left, the parting was not very easy.

I have provided her with all kinds of things as well as I could, but she will have a hard time.

I have taken only a very few colours with me, but nevertheless some, and I hope to begin the attack soon. The colour of the Veluwe was rich.

I shall wait here for your next letter. I am staying at a village inn quite near the station.

The address is: A. Hartsuiker, Innkeeper, Hoogeveen.

Later I may go farther into the heart of the country, but I must wait till I have some stock of colours.

I shall write more soon; for the moment I've seen nothing but what I tell you, the scene through the carriage window and the barroom here, which is nothing special.

I only want to tell you I am here.

Goodbye, tomorrow I am going out investigating. A handshake,

Yours sincerely, Vincent

When you receive this, be so kind as to mail a postcard at once to see whether it reaches me all right. I got up very early this morning because I was rather curious. The weather is splendid, the air is clear and bracing, as in Brabant. Here at the inn I saw a stable fitted up differently from those in Brabant. Perhaps I shall make something of it someday, at least if I stay here.

Well, the country around here is for the greater part meadowland, with little trees here and there. I think I did well to choose Hoogeveen as my starting point. At least it is rather curious that I already heard, on the very first evening, how I can travel through the whole peat district, as far as the Prussian frontier and the Black Lake on the barges. I shall soon write you more about it than I can today. As soon as I have more colours, I shall begin that excursion and will go from one village to another.

But my address will still be here, and I shall leave my things here even if I am absent for some time and do not know exactly where I shall be.

I have arranged to pay a guilder a day while I'm here, and I can leave my trunk, etc., in the garret while I'm away. In the village harbour I saw very quaint peat barges, and figures of bargemen's wives dressed as they are here in the hayfield – very picturesque.

Further into the country it will be even more beautiful; but for the present I see very good things even here. So drop me a line soon at the address: A. Hartsuiker, Innkeeper at Hoogeveen.

The village, or little town, is just a long row of houses along the harbour, many new houses and a few more beautiful old ones.