

Letter 107
Amsterdam, 27 August 1877

Dear Theo,

It will soon be Mother's birthday, therefore I am enclosing a money order for 1.25 guilders; I should like it if you and I could give her something together. It is not much, but it is all I have; if you contribute the same amount we can buy a good photograph. You must choose one yourself; "Christ Walking on the Sea" by Jalabert is more expensive, otherwise I should have liked that; and "The Men of Emmaus" by Rembrandt is considerably more expensive. Well, you know what to get as well as I do and will make a good choice, but just write a postcard with the title of what you have chosen. Thanks for your letter, which made me happy, as did a cheerful letter from home I received yesterday.

Yesterday was a rainy morning, so I had to put on my overcoat to go to early service in the North Church. The Reverend Mr. Posthumus Meyes, Jr., preached there on Acts 4:11, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner."

His son came here yesterday and spent some time in my little study; he came to invite me to spend this evening with them, which I readily accepted. Last week I visited the old clergyman, his father. Yesterday morning I was also in the Island Church, where Uncle Stricker preached on Luke 11:28. The afternoon and part of the evening I spent at Uncle Stricker's, so I had a pleasant Sunday; I often thought of what you would be doing.

Will you be going on a business trip this autumn, and will you come to Amsterdam then? I certainly hope so; write as soon as you know anything about it. And we must arrange things so that you come and stay here; there is room enough at the house, and it will cost us only one word to Uncle. We must make the most of our chance to be together. I still have a great deal of work to do today, are you very busy at the office? Last week a ship was launched in the yard (a monitor The Dragon); it was an interesting sight and a joyous occasion for the workmen. Bicker's Island also has many shipyards, but for smaller vessels. When I go there, I look at them carefully; he who must learn to work must watch the workers, especially if he has a little study right among the workshops; for just as large and small ships are under construction in a shipyard, gradually finished and then launched, so in a study, large and small works are planned, carried on by "patient continuance in well doing," and finished with God's help.

I am longing so much to see you again, boy; come soon and try to arrange for us to spend some time together. Would it be possible for you to stay here over a Sunday? I should like so much to show you the Oudezijds Chapel and have you hear someone preach there, Uncle Stricker, for instance. Do try to arrange it.

I do not know the book by Daudet you mentioned. Well, I must write my Greek exercises; my regards to the Rooses and to Mauve and Jet when you go there. À Dieu, brother dear, a warm handshake in thought, I wish I could have sent you more for Mother's birthday, but it is impossible. Have a good time, believe me always,

Your loving brother, Vincent

Uncle Jan intends to go to Helvoirt on the first of September for a week; I hope to take advantage of it by staying up late in the sitting room to write. I can do it now, but Uncle's bedroom is quite near, so I have to be careful; I can sit in my bedroom, but there the temptation to go to bed when it is getting late is too strong, and there is no gas in my little study.