

Letter 199
The Hague, c. 16 May 1882

Dear Theo,

Because Christine suffered from cramps, etc., I thought it would be a good thing for her to go to Leyden once more to find out exactly how things are. She has been there and has come back already; thank God she is all right, but, as you know, in March she had an operation, and has now been examined again. She needs care and must continue to eat strengthening food and also have some more baths if possible; but there are no complications, and there is every chance she will pull through.

In March the professor could not tell exactly when she would be confined, but he thought it would be the end of May or the beginning of June. Now he says it will probably be late in June. This time he asked her many questions about whom she was living with, and from what he said about it, I now know for sure what I had guessed – that she would die if she had to walk the streets again, and when I met her this winter it was only just in time to give her the help she needed.

So, as I wrote you, I wouldn't think of leaving her – under the circumstances it would be a mean trick. The doctor found her better than in March; the child is alive and he has given her some instructions about food, etc., so that I do not have to act in the dark.

The baby's clothes are also ready, of course the very simplest. I am not living in a castle in the air or in a dream, but in plain reality, where one must act with firmness.

Under the circumstances I know no better way for either of us than marrying her. As I wrote you, the kind tone of your letter of May 13 was more than I expected. I had no illusions, and expected that you would quite disapprove of my behaviour and would withdraw your help. And even now I hardly dare hope that your help will continue, because I know that in the eyes of most people in your position such an act is a capital crime punishable by a sort of banishment. So I am longing very much for your next letter, also to hear if you have received the drawings. But I have no illusions about it. Only I would not be sincere if I said anything to you other than that it is my decided intention to marry her as soon as possible. The reasons you give are not strong enough to make me give it up, though there is a great deal of truth in some of your remarks, especially when considered by themselves.

And now, to tell you the truth, I really need some more money this month, though I paid for the bread up to the first of June and laid in some provisions like coffee, etc.

Of course, since you tell me nothing's wrong as I imagined, I will certainly finish the order for C. M.; I have already made the studies. However, it will take me about three weeks to get those six drawings, for in order to get six good ones, I shall have to make more than six in addition to the work I have already done. I do not know how much I shall get for them, but I shall do my best, so I hope I shall get the money in June. If there is some good in my behaviour toward Christine after all, it is more to your credit than to mine, as I was and am only the instrument – without your help I should have been powerless.

The money you sent has helped me on with my drawing, and moreover, up to now it has saved Christine's and the child's lives. But in a sense it would be my fault if you took it as a breach of confidence; I hope you won't.

Ever yours, Vincent