

Letter 300
The Hague, c. 13 July 1883

Dear Theo,

I want to chat with you before going to Scheveningen. I have gained my point with De Bock and have my pied-à-terre at his home; perhaps I shall also go to Blommers's occasionally. Now I intend to work principally in Scheveningen for some time, to go there early in the morning and stay there all day, or, if I must be at home, to be there at noon when it is too hot, and go back again in the evening. I trust this will give me new ideas and rest, not through idleness but through a change of surroundings and occupation. For the rest, I am up to my ears in work. Today the almshouse man again posed for a thing that I suddenly felt I had to make before I started anything else. I must tell you that I went to the almshouse again on a visiting day after all. Then I saw the little old gardener, and have drawn him from the window.

Well, I could not let that go, and I have got as much of it fixed on paper as I can remember.

Last evening I received a present which pleased me enormously (from those two land surveyors – for there has been a second one since), namely a very characteristic Scheveningen jacket with high turn-up collar, picturesque, faded and patched.

I arranged my painting materials as far as I could, added what was necessary and laid up a stock of streetcar tickets, etc.

This morning I saw the negatives of the three photographs. I long to see the prints and I hope that in this small size they will be useful when we approach the illustrated press. I think I will also have a photo taken of today's drawing of that little gardener, for that figure is much, much more elaborate than in this scratch, and the surroundings are much less tame than they are here. I hope to be able to send you the prints of the photographs next week.

But, boy, I must ask you to try your utmost to send me some money; I am already penniless because of those expenses that were absolutely necessary for starting work in Scheveningen.

It needn't be much, but a little to get through the days and not to sit in the dunes without a penny to bless myself with.

The photographs are "Sower," "Potato Diggers," and "Peat Cutters"; I think the last one is the best.

Don't you think it nice of those land surveyors? They are jolly, merry fellows, who have often been good company to me. They are really beginning to make nice sketches, but both have to take their final exams – one, for land surveyor, and the other, for civil engineer.

As soon as I have looked around Scheveningen a little, I shall take the woman with me occasionally, to pose or at least to indicate the place and the size of the figures.

I long so much for your coming, boy, I hope there will be a few things in my work which you will like, and that you will see some progress. De Bock saw some of last year's painted studies and liked them, but they please me less and less. I hope to make better ones this year.

The photographer will come to the studio next Sunday. I want to discuss with him which of the figures I have are most suitable for photographing. I should be at a complete loss if you absolutely could not send anything extra. I bought only the things strictly necessary for the paintbox, but hardly anything is left.

The Scheveningen jacket is a piece of good luck.

Some time ago I wrote you that perhaps it would be the same with me now as it was when I lived in The Hague years ago, that at first it was a miserable time but that later it became more pleasant; and now it has become better and more pleasant again. Now, adieu. Do what you can, and believe me, with a handshake,
Yours sincerely, Vincent