

Letter 322
The Hague, 10 September 1883

Dear Theo,

I just received your letter with the enclosed 100 francs. And I shall start for Hoogeveen in Drenthe. I shall go farther from there, and I shall write you my address from there.

So in no case write to The Hague any more.

And I would ask you to let C. M. know that I am leaving here, because, as you say, he might write me. If he has done so already, it might be best for him to ask the post office for the letter back, because not knowing what my next address will be, I can only give it to the post office or to my landlord later on.

Friend Rappard has also started on his trip, has left Drenthe already, has almost reached Terschelling. He wrote to me from Drenthe: "The country has a very serious character, the figures often reminded me of studies of yours. As to the living there, one certainly can't live more cheaply anyplace else. And I think the southeast corner (the part I mentioned to you) the most original."

Theo, I certainly have a very melancholy feeling on leaving, much more than would be the case if I were convinced that the woman would show energy, and if her willingness were not so doubtful.

Well, you know the main facts now.

For my part, I must push on, otherwise I should break down under it, without benefiting her any further. Unless she becomes more active of her own accord, that is to say, steadily energetic and not doing things by fits and starts, she will stay on the same unsatisfactory level, and even if she had three friends to help her instead of just me, they would not be able to achieve anything unless she co-operated wholeheartedly.

But the children I am so fond of? I could not do all that was necessary for them – if only the woman had been willing.

However, I shall not bore you with it any longer, for I must go on, "quand même." Prudence compelled me not to risk taking a supply of colours with me, as out there I shall have to pay for my luggage immediately when it arrives, and for lodging and railway fare. But if we are lucky enough to get something from C. M., I shall have some things I have selected sent me by parcel post. The sooner this can be done, the better.

So if you hear anything, write to me as soon as you know my address, and of course I agree to the proposed arrangement of sending only part of the 100 francs if you are hard up, awaiting a more favourable moment. I cannot help thinking that perhaps C. M. will do nothing at all.

At all events, brother, it was very energetic and wise of you to send this at once, for now I can go there already and look around a bit, and even without help we shall certainly be able to manage there.

Therefore many thanks, and rest assured that it will prove to have been a good measure. My intention is to stay there, for instance, till you come to Holland next year. I should not like to miss your visit then. But in this way I should see all the seasons of the year and get a general impression of the character of things in that part.

I have provided myself with a home passport, valid for twelve months. With this I have the right to go where I want, and to stay in a place as long or as short a time as I like. I am very glad that I can hurry on now, for in this way we help ourselves. I reckon 50 francs for board and lodging there, and the rest for the work; that's a great difference from what I could do here. So even if we have no help from others, we shall not mark time.

Goodbye, I still have a lot to do today – so please drop a line to C. M. I shall send you my address soon, perhaps tomorrow night if all goes well.

Adieu, a handshake,

Yours sincerely, Vincent

Not long ago you wrote me, "Perhaps your duty will make you act differently." That is a thing I thought over at once, and because my work so indubitably demands my going away, my opinion is that my work is my duty, even more immediate than the woman, and that the former must not suffer because of the latter. Last year it was different, now I am quite ready for Drenthe, but one's feelings are divided and one would like to do both things, which is not possible under the circumstances because of the money and, more than that, because she is unreliable.