

Letter 202
The Hague, 27 May 1882

Dear Theo,

Today, Saturday, I had a visit from Rappard, and I am glad he has been here. He asked after you many times. Among other things he saw the drawings I am doing for C. M., and they seemed to please him, especially a large one of the court or yard where Sien's mother lives [F 941, JH 146]. I wish you could see that one too, as well as another of a carpenter's shop and yard where little figures are busy [F 939, JH 150]. It is a great deal more complicated as to the perspective than the "Laan van Meerdervoort" I sent you, and it has given me trouble enough. You should know that at present I am working out-of-doors as early as four o'clock in the morning – in the daytime it is too difficult to work in the street because of the passers-by and the street urchins; this is also the finest moment to see the main outlines, when everything is in tone. But, brother, it has been a hard fortnight for me. When I wrote you about the middle of May, I had only 3 or 3.50 guilders left after I had paid the baker; and I have had hardly anything to eat but dry black bread with some coffee, and Sien too. Because we had bought some things for the baby and she had been to Leyden, etc.

Now I have to pay the house rent on the first of June, and I have nothing, literally nothing. I hope you will send something.

A week ago I felt very faint from continuous sleeplessness. Now that I have had some luck with a few drawings and the order for C. M. is almost finished, I have new courage and am a little calmer.

But, brother, do write to me soon and deliver me from the landlord, for you know he won't be put off. Rappard's visit has cheered me up; he seems to work very hard.

I have received 2.50 guilders from him because he saw a tear in one of the drawings and said, You must have that repaired.

That's true, I said, but I haven't the money, and the drawing must be sent off.

Then he readily said that he would be pleased to give me it; he would have given even more, but I wouldn't take it, and gave him a whole lot of wood engravings and a drawing in exchange. It was one for C. M., and as it was the best of them all, the money to have it repaired was very welcome. That same drawing will perhaps be sold afterward for 50 guilders or so, and I didn't have the money to have a tear in it repaired.

Well, I do hope, brother, that you do not think evil of Sien and me; she has learned to put up with my disagreeable side, and in many ways she understands me better than others. She is so willing to help me in everything – I can't tell you how useful she is to me. If I go into a rage once in a while either about the posing or something else, she knows how to take it, and has seen that it soon passes. Similarly, when I worry or grumble about something that does not succeed, she often knows how to quiet me, and that is something I am not able to do for myself.

And she is very thrifty, and contents herself with a piece of black bread without getting disheartened. And I do the same, if only we can make both ends meet.

I hope you have received the drawings I sent I think about May 10. There were twenty-five of them in a portfolio; I have not heard from you about them.

I do wish there were a few other people for whom I could do something on the same conditions as C. M.'s. And especially that C. M. continues to order, for these drawings are much better than the first, and by and by I shall do them even better. And at that price he certainly isn't getting a bad bargain.

You know how it is: if you do not forsake me because of Sien, then I shall be full of courage. And at four in the morning I am already at my work, so I shall get through with a little sympathy from those who know me. I am longing for your letter, a handshake in thought, but do write soon and deliver me from the landlord.

Yours sincerely, Vincent