

Letter 351a
Nuenen, 3 – 16 January 1884

[Letter to his friend ‘the land surveyor’]

Amice Furnée,

This morning I received your letter informing me of your departure for the East Indies, which is to take place soon.

Little had I thought it would happen so soon. From the bottom of my heart I hope that you will acclimatize yourself successfully in the Indies. Perhaps this will be easier now than if you had stayed in Holland for a long time, and had done a lot of painting here. In such a case, if one had lost oneself in the grey gloom of this country, it might be difficult to enter into the character of the Indian scenery. But under the circumstances, if you try hard to enter completely into the character of the scenery there, I think you will succeed yet. And who knows what curiously picturesque scenes you may find over there?

Many French painters and others have felt the advantage of going to Algeria or Egypt, and I have the impression that the Indies will present similar effects to a certain extent.

Similarly, some painters went to China and Japan, and I have seen excellent things from these countries.

It pleases me very much that you go on being warmly attached to painting, and I believe that, provided you persevere, you will go a long way. Especially as you will have to be outdoors a good deal professionally.

With me things are going fairly well here in Brabant, at least I find nature here very stimulating.

Now the last few weeks I have done four watercolours of weavers. And some others of a lumber auction [F 1113, JH 438] and an interior with a little seamstress and a gardener, all watercolours. Herewith some sketches of them.

[Sketch “Gardener with Wheelbarrow, JH 440]

Enclosed another order for your father. I hope you will be kind enough to select the watercolour brushes yourself, not too thin and not too thick; the same as are generally used. Something like this:

Well, amice, I shall always remember with great pleasure many a walk we took together last summer.

And be assured I shall never forget you, and you will greatly oblige me by letting me hear something from you as soon as you are over there. On my part I am going to send you a few sketches of things I am working on.

And now I wish you a pleasant voyage and prosperity in your enterprises, and particularly prosperity in your painting too.

With a handshake in thought,

Yours sincerely, Vincent

Kindly tell your father that I shall send him the money for the bill outstanding and this order by January 20.

[Sketch “Interior with Woman Sewing, JH 441]

[Sketch “Weaver facing Left” JH 442]