

*Henry*

22nd. December, 1930.

It is not due to negligence on my part that I have delayed replying sooner to your friendly letter, but to the incessant work which keeps me so fully occupied and which prevents me from doing what I so often long to do for myself. In addition to my heavy duties in connection with my Studio I am kept very busy with the responsible work as President of The Royal Society of British Artists. Also, since I last wrote to you, our son Stephen has become engaged and the wedding takes place on January 14th, to which day we are much looking forward, as we are going to have a very nice and attractive daughter-in-law. I shall not fail to send you some photographs of it.

I have not yet been able to settle down to paint for my own pleasure and to start on my long-deaired big composition of which I spoke to you, but I greatly hope that the New Year will see the picture born. I have been trying to get out to America since last Spring to paint the President and have postponed my visit there three times, so I am afraid they will not wait any longer for me. I have, therefore, promised to go definitely during the second half of January, but whether my visit will come off is another matter. If I do go it will be for about five or six weeks only, as I must be back here as early as possible to prepare for my forthcoming Exhibition in Paris in June. This will be my first collective Exhibition and will be a very important one, and I much hope I shall be able to greet you there on the Opening Day; you must come to Paris! Moreover, it may interest you to know that I have been asked to write a book on portrait painting, which will deal for the most part with my life and experience; the Firm who will publish it is Seeley, Service & Co. Ltd., and they hope to bring it

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out next Christmas. They have in mind to have it translated into various languages for publication.

I was in Venice at the end of September for a few days as I was invited to be present when the King of Italy visited the International Art Exhibition there where my portrait of the Prince of Piemonte was exhibited.

In our family things are moving like plants grow in gardens, and according to the manner in which the gardeners, like parents, look after their plants, so the plants grow. Henry, as you know, is at the London University; Stephen, for a change, is going to be married; Paul is already at the Bar; Patrick is in America for a few months studying American economics at the Harvard University; we expect him back by Easter. In addition to taking second in Honours he has to write an essay on economics in order to qualify for a higher degree. John is preparing for Balliol, Oxford. Meanwhile I am going down the hill and beginning to decay!

I must thank you for the book you sent me on Von Bellow which, I must confess, I have not yet had time to read, but which I hope to soon. I am sure there will be no other books on that great statesman which will compare with yours, as you know him so well both in his political and social life.

We are spending a quiet Christmas at home, and I suppose you will be staying with one of your many friends during the festive days. Before I close I must tell you that I sent a telegram to King Ferdinand of Bulgaria on Boris's wedding day, to which I received a most delightful reply.

My whole family joins me in sending you heartiest best wishes for a happy New Year. I do hope we shall meet in 1931; it is four years since we were together in Venice.