

Sussex Gardens
W.2

21 - 11 - 32

Dear Mr de Laszlo,

I apologise at the outset for troubling ^{you} with a rather long, personal letter, but if circumstances force me to part with the beautiful portrait of Phyllis you gave me in 1913, I prefer that you should hear of it from me direct than that the news should reach you through some third party. I am telling you because I know you hate your work being sold and like to know in whose possession it is and I am under an added obligation to tell you because the picture was a very generous gift and a souvenir of a lot of hard and unlucky work that made me value it more than any other of my possessions.

Since I was ~~con~~ deprived of my Government job three years ago and my salary was cut off at a month's notice (after 12 years in Government service) I have had a very difficult time and lost a lot of money in consequence of having to get rid of my

house in Bank Place at short notice and
(at my age) become dependent on literary
work again. For the last year things have
gone from bad to worse, mainly owing to bad
times all round, and my literary work has
diminished away to nothing. I need not bother
you with particulars of these troubles, but the
net result is that I have got into debt and my
solicitor tells me that if my creditors press
me, as they are beginning to, they will be in
a position to bankrupt me when all my per-
sonal possessions, including the portrait will
be seized and put up to compulsory sale.
He is therefore urging me to endeavor to sell
the picture while I can, because if it were
put up to a forced sale, it might easily in these
bad times be sold to the first comer at a
fraction of its value and I should be power-
less to prevent it. I am afraid this advice is
absolutely sound and that I have no choice
except to try to find a buyer at once.

It is, as I know you will understand, very

humiliating to have to tell you this, but I prefer to do so myself than that you should hear of it later on through some other source. If I have to part with the picture, I should, of course, prefer it to go to a public gallery than into private possession. You may remember it was very nearly going to the Luxembourg after the Salon of '13. If you know of any public gallery or collection that wants and exemplifies your work and where it would not be distasteful to you to know it is housed, I will enter into communication with them at once. I hate doing it, but it is better than to risk losing control of it.

This, you will appreciate, has not been an easy letter to write and, if I have expressed myself "kein Sachlich", you will believe me, it is not because I do not feel as grateful as ever for your generosity and for the pleasure the portrait has given me and a lot of other people for so many years. Yours ever Sincerely
Oakley Williams