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310 Riverside Drive,
New York City.
June 71, 1933.

Dear Madame Roerich:

Your words were most timely and I want to take this opportunity to tell you how much they meant to me. You spoke so simply and with such straightforwardness that I feel as though I have found a new friend.

It is true that these times are difficult for me, as they are for most everyone, and I have tried to look upon them as a test. The most difficult of all, however, is not the financial struggle. I feel that is the least important. But the worst is my own inability to determine the kind of work in which I can feel that I might accomplish something is the most disheartening factor.

When I first came to the Roerich Museum I studied journalism under Miss Grant and at that time wrote the enclosed article. Mrs. Lichtmann suggested I send you a copy. I have written several articles and a few short stories, but my attention has been so divided the last two years that I have not given full thought to any one thing - scattered my energies - until I have actually accomplished nothing and am still undecided what path to follow. Of one thing, however, I am certain - that my present occupation, music, is not the one for me.

Again I want to mention, as I have written before to Professor Roerich, how greatly I value my association with you coworkers here, especially Mrs. Lichtmann. She has been a constant source of encouragement, and I cannot help but wonder what would have happened had I not the help of such friends as she has been and still is.

I will greatly value any word from you and hope that you will have an opportunity to write.

Please accept my deepest love and devotion.

sincerely,

Donn Kimmell

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Ascribed to the curse which is said to be connected with the opening of the tomb of King Tut-Ankh-Amen, the ~~recent~~ death of Lord Westbury in London, in 1929, again opens the question as to whether the ancient Egyptians possessed powers with which we are unacquainted today. Shortly after the family of Lord Westbury received a collection of mementos from the tomb, he leaped to his death from the window of his home, leaving a note saying he could not stand any more horrors.

It is not unusual for excavators to find curses when they open tombs. Sometimes they are inscribed on the walls and are often found written on papyrus placed in the coffin and on amulets which the mummy wears.

Howard Carter, who opened the tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amen, is contemptuous of the idea that these curses are anything more than legends or myths, and says that "all sane people should dismiss such superstitions with contempt. There is no place more free of risk than a tomb."

However, tragedies have so often followed those who have molested the dead Egyptians that opinion as to whether the mummies are protected by strange powers is more or less divided, ~~an~~ even among Egyptologists. There is the case of the son of Sir William Ingram, intimate friend of Sir Conan Doyle. The young man dug up a mummy with an amulet ^{upon} which was inscribed "May the person who unwraps me die rapidly and may his bones never be buried." This malediction was carried out with gruesome thoroughness some time later, when young Ingram, while on a big-game hunting expedition, was gored to pieces by a charging buffalo.

The instances are often accounted for by attributing them to coincidence. But the fate of the four young men who brought the mummy-case of the Princess Amen-Ra from Egypt hardly permits that explanation. Two of the young men were dead within the year. Another lost his entire fortune and the fourth had his right arm blown off.

Professor George Beneditte, noted Egyptologist and director of the Egyptian antique section of the Louvre Museum ridiculed the idea of Lord Carnarvon's death being the result of any magical powers of the Egyptians. "I have spent my life among mummies," he said, "and they never harmed me. The fact is that a number of our young Egyptologists engaged in excavation ~~have~~ have been killed or injured - usually through falls ^{or} of the release of poisonous gases. The superstitious have

attributed these occurrences to some punishment inflicted by forces surrounding the mummies, but science and reason refuse the possibility of such occult vengeance." Shortly after, Professor Benedite died, the sixth victim of the curse of the Pharaohs.

Dr. J. C. Mardrus, Oriental Scholar and one of the foremost living authorities on the Near East made the following comment on the tragedies which followed the opening of the tomb. Altho he disclaimed any occult or prophetic powers, his work has led him to make a close study of the esoteric and secret sciences.

"I am, unfortunately," said Dr. Mardrus, "not at all surprised at the sad death of Professor Benedite. About the same time as he died, there died another no less prominent savant, Professor Casanover, who also occupied himself with excavations in the Valley of the Kings. They continue the list of names which I wrote about two years ago. Since the opening of the ~~human~~ tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amen a number of dramatic events have occurred which I foresaw and announced one month previously in a newspaper.

"The mysterious series of deaths commenced with that of Lord Carnarvon and was followed by those of George J. Gould, Wolf Joel and Sir Archibald Douglas Reid, all of whom succumbed to an inexplicable malady. This is no childish superstition which can be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulder. We must remember that the Egyptians during a period of 7,000 years in order to (maintain) the calm of subterranean existence, which was supposed to delight their mummies and even prevent all attempts to disturb their rest, practiced magical rites, the powers of which held no doubts for them."

"I am absolutely convinced that they knew how to concentrate upon and around a mummy certain dynamic powers of which we possess very incomplete notions."

"Remember the Ark which the Jews dragged along on their flight from Egypt. They had stolen it from an Egyptian temple and it was no other than the ark of the god Amon. Now according to the Bible's own version that ark struck down dead hundreds of priests and Levites who dared to approach it too closely. It must surely have been charged with an accumulation of forces unknown to us today."

"It is a deep mystery, which it is all too easy to dismiss by skepticism."

The theory that Doctor Mardrus offers is in accordance with the writings of the odd Hebrew, Greek and Roman historians, who refer to the Egyptians as a people who were well versed in occult sciences and possessing strange powers. It is actually known that books of magic were in the Royal Egyptian Libraries. These volumes were not merely speculative treatises, but gave very definite directions as to how to perform the ~~magical~~ ceremonies that were necessary to make the formulae

and words of power efficacious.

One of the most common magical practices of the Egyptians was the making of wax images of their enemies, believing that whatever injuries were inflicted on the image would be suffered by the person whom it represented. Recently a group of doctors conducted a series of experiments along the same lines, in an attempt to ascertain whether or not there was any foundation for such a belief. Startling results that nearly ended tragically convinced the doctors that the practice was not based on superstitions or suggestion, but on natural laws of which they had but scant knowledge.

Bearing in mind Dr. Mardrus' statement that for seven thousand years certain groups of Egyptian occupied themselves with the pursuit of these forces, it is not hard to see that they must have attained a high degree of perfection in the use of them. The last ruler of Egypt, Nectanebus, was a most skillful magician and used the higher laws to protect his country against invasion.

When he received word that a hostile force was about to attack him either by land or sea, he would retire to a chamber which was set aside for such occasions. There he made two sets of wax images of ships and men, one set to represent his enemy and the other his own forces. These were set afloat in a bowl of water and the two fleets opposing one another.

Emerging from the chamber, Nectanebus put on the garb of an Egyptian prophet, and taking up his ebony wand, would utter powerful invocations to summon the gods who helped men with such undertakings. The wax images in the bowls of water became animated, but always the invaders were conquered. The hostile ships sank to the bottom of the bowl of water and in such a manner the real ships of the enemy sunk to the bottom of the sea.

Through judicious use of these powers Nectanebus was enabled to rule Egypt for a number of years in peace. One day a messenger came running and informed him that a number of nations had allied against him and were about to launch an attack.

Unworried, the king entered his chamber and prepared to work his magic. After speaking the necessary words, he was amazed to see the gods manœvering the ships of his enemy and destroying his own. He knew his reign was at an end, and fled from the chamber. After shaving off his beard and hair, he clothed himself in the ordinary manner and immediately left for Pella in Macedonia. There he spent the remainder of his days as a physician and prophet.

441 West End Ave., 5
New York City,
March 21, 1934.

My Dear Mme. Roerich:

Please accept my gratitude for your wonderfully strong and gentle letter. I value it all the more since I realize that to write it, you took time from ~~my~~ more important undertakings.

During the past few days I have had the pleasure and privilege of meeting Professor Roerich and Dr. George Roerich. I am looking forward to tomorrow, when I hope to have a talk with Professor Roerich. Up to now his time has been so occupied that I have not felt that I could ask him to see me, but tonight I learned that he might be able to see me tomorrow.

I have had more opportunity to be with Dr. Roerich, as I have been spending most of my time of late in Brusvati Office. Since Dr. Roerich's arrival, I feel that there will be much greater activity in that department.

Your letter made me realize that it was wrong to abuse my music; it is due to this mistaken attitude that my work has dropped off to such an extent. It was difficult for me to understand that, although when one works directly in and for the Museum the effort works directly for the Teaching, still any labor may be performed in the name of the Teaching.

Your letter has made me realize that no one but myself should determine my future path. When I look back on the various subjects which have interested me since coming to the Teaching, I feel ashamed that I have not chosen and followed at least one of them. But so many things offer interest that I previously felt that to follow one would be to lose the rest.

When I first wrote Prof. Reisch I was tremendously interested in narrative writing, believing then as I still do, that it is a powerful medium for impregnating the minds of readers. But I weakened. It seemed that everything worth saying had been said and much better than I could say it. (In this country we grow up in such an atmosphere of "success" and "originality" that we seldom come to know the real meaning of these words.) However I know now that I was wrong and probably used this as an excuse to go on to something else which looked more alluring when the actual work and obstacles of writing confronted me.

One of the most impressive happenings I have thus far experienced took place one evening this winter in Mrs. Lichtman's apartment. We had been discussing the Teachers of the Middle Ages in Europe and I asked her, rather faintly, if she knew whether Paracelsus had reincarnated and was at present on earth in a physical body. Before she could answer we were interrupted by a series of very distinct raps, rapid and rhythmic, and lasting about a minute.

Again please accept my heartiest thanks and deepest appreciation for your letter and all that it represents.

With my deepest love,

Donn Kimmell

July 2, 1936.

My dear Ume. Roerich:

I am writing to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for the Purple Sign which was transmitted to me by Mrs. Lichtmann.

During the past year I have been surrounded by the manifestations of treachery and have had an opportunity to witness the courageous attitude and actions of the loyal trustees of the Museum. The tempo is similar to that of the attack of the bondholders' committee some time ago, when the opposition was allowed to gain its full growth before it was eliminated. It seems to me, though, that the three treacherous ones have gone their limit in malice and slander, and I feel confident that when our case comes to trial it will result in a clean-cut decisive victory for the loyal trustees, and for the principles which they have been fighting to maintain.

During this time it has been my privilege to be very close to Mrs. Lichtmann and she has been a source of courage to me. She has a strong heart and withstands all attacks firmly. Her co-workers do likewise, I know, and I mention Mrs. Lichtmann only because of my closeness to her.

Please accept my sincerest wishes for your good health and well-being.

Yours

Donn Kimmell