

The Sheiling

Silverdale
February 15th, 1920.

near Arnforth.

Dear Monsieur Roerich,

Thank you very much for your letter and invitation, which gave me much pleasure on their arrival the other morning.

As soon as I find myself in London I shall certainly lose no time in asking you when I can conveniently call at your rooms and give myself the happiness of meeting you. I am delighted to know that your works will be exhibited in London; but if I am able to make the journey it will be before May, so I shall hope I may have the good fortune and privilege to see some at least of them ~~at~~ at your own home.

I shall be happy to send you introductions to my artistic friends in the South, if you do not already know them. Probably you do, however, as I know that my friends ~~the~~ the painters Mr. Charles Ricketts and Mr. Charles Shannon, are intimate friends of your compatriot the great finger Mr. V. Rosing; and possibly Mr. Bakshy knows my other friend Mr. Lawrence Binyon, the poet and art-critic, of the British Museum: but I should be happy to send you letters of introduction to any of these; and also to my friends the poets Mr. Sturge Moore and Mr. Robert Trevelyan, who live some distance South of London, but who are often in town and would, I am sure, be pleased to call upon you.

Pray believe that I reciprocate toward Russia with all my heart the friendliness you so kindly express toward England. Your great countrymen have long had our admiration in the past, and with that there now unites an ardent desire for your great country's happy future in the way that Russia itself desires that future to shape itself; and beyond that again is the feeling that all artists have one country and must stand together for it against the men and ideas that are its enemy, and in that conflict the Russian share is priceless and will be.

With kind regards, I am, dear M. Roerich,

Yours most truly

Gordon Bottomley.

January 16th 1920

The Sterling
Silverdale
Dr. Carforth

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My dear M. Roerich,

I am deeply ashamed to have been so long in acknowledging your welcome and delightful gift - a gift that was doubly delightful to receive because I did not know that it existed until it brought me the news itself. I have delayed thanking you in the hope of doing so with my own hand; but my bad lung is still no better, and my doctor forbids me to read or write; so at last I borrow my wife's hand again to tell you that I am not wholly ungracious and that I have thanked you many times for this great pleasure. It is particularly delightful to me and my wife to find in the book some of the works which you showed us, and thus to renew our remembrances of the memorable morning we spent with you. As I lie in bed I return every day to that house in the village of Berendey where I should so much like to live, and at the same time I can hear the bells in Petov ringing for me; I feel much affection for St. Procopius, and I feel it is very probable that I am in one of the unknown boats receiving his blessing. The far islands in "The Call of the Sun" and the sky in "The Treasure" recall to us the "Rain-Fairy" beside enchanting us anew.

with that same luminous and tender delicacy of aerial and ethereal distances which make ones mind feel lifted up and floating like a bird. I was hugely delighted too to find in the new "Fuenté Ovethra" a noble sky that brought back to me the daily pleasure I used to have from yourattle of the clouds when it lived in my house. And in your "Idols" I enjoyed anew your marvellous sympathetic invention of the circumstance of life in the early world, a quality which always makes me hope that some day an opportunity will occur for you to mount one of my plays about life in early Britain.

For indeed as I lie here and think about your roomful of marvellous inventions in Queengate Terrace I am happy that I am in the world at the same time as you; and, as I gather we were both born in the same year, I have every hope that I shall stay in it as long as you do, to see the wonderful things that you are going to do.

We are most happy too to learn from Dr. Tariintyov; illuminating and many sided article how fortunately you have escaped from the dreadful tyranny in your country. I know you will be longing to see that wonderful land again, but until that time can come I hope it will be my country that has the honour to entertain you.

I wonder if I might ask you, without putting you to much trouble or inconvenience, if you could obtain for me a catalogue of your present Exhibits at the Gonpit Gallery? The titles of the

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pictures would be of the greatest value & assistance to me in recalling to my memory, when I want to write about them, the canvases you showed us. The words very often help to re-enbody pictures for me when I see a great many in a short time.

We are delighted to know your exhibition has had such a good welcome and reception. The critics just now call everything Futurist - that they have not seen before; and they will have found it impossible to pigeon-hole your art as that - Futurism would be the first refuge that would occur to them; but it will not hurt you at all — it will bring people to the exhibition, and when they have arrived your own genius will keep them there.

It is difficult to talk to people in London just now about Romantic Art, as the very young men who are now writing about the arts in the London periodicals all look on it as if it had been superseded by their movements; but a few of them are beginning to realise that romance is the foundation of all great art, and that it is going to be the next movement. Thus Romance is always renewing itself; and I have the greatest hope that your presence among us will help its re-birth; your pictures being so much of the present and ^{of} the future in their vivid life — and there

Should be an especially good chance
of your influence being great in this
direction in the very welcome fact
that you have been making Stage-designs
for Covent Garden. All the recent
advances that art has made in
England have been through the
ability of Stage-design to influence
the largest number of people.
My wife joins me in many kind
regards and good wishes.

Yours always sincerely
Gordon Bottomley.

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The Sheiling
Silverdale
near
Carnforth.
England.

Sept. 23rd, 1920.

My dear M. Roerich,

Your letter of the 21st. has only reached me this morning, so to my great regret I am unable to send even a line of good wishes to reach you before you sail. I am much touched and gratified to know that I ~~haven~~ have been in your mind in such a busy and distracting hour, and that you have remembered me as you leave England; but your letter has made me sadder than I have been for a long time.

Your last letter and the catalogue have been by me ever since they came; I meant continually to write to thank you for them and to tell you of my keen pleasure both in remembering the enchantment of your paintings by their titles, and also in seeing that my dear friends Ricketts and Shannon were on your Comité d'Honneur; and I wanted to say also how sorry I was to have been unable to write about your work in time for your London exhibition, and how very much I hoped to do so for an exhibition at some other town this Autumn.

But no sooner had the nice weather in July made my lung better, ~~than~~ and let me begin to hope to catch up with all my arrears of friendship, than the cold weather of August laid me up again with a severe gastric catarrh; I had nothing to eat for three weeks!

and all my friends were neglected again.

And now that I am reviving once more you have been foremost in my thoughts and when your letter came I was just preparing to write to you with the double purpose of sending you a copy of my collected plays (which are just out, and which have been waiting for some days to be sent off to you), and to ask if you and Mme. Roerich could do us the honour and give us the delight of coming to spend a week or two with us here in the Lake Country.

And now your letter has dashed all my hopes and my wife's too; and I think with remorse of all the weeks I have missed, and that you are already far away by now.

I was deeply interested to know that you had once had trouble with your lungs, and that your beautiful Karelia had helped you to overcome it; and I was so grateful for your kind thought of my someday going there with you to see your home there — and to see also if it would help my lung too. It has been a bad lung for nearly 30 years, and has deprived me of many pleasures; but if now it is to bring me that great pleasure it will compensate me for much that I have lost. I shall hope it will come to pass, for that will also mean that this troublous time of exile is over for you and that you can be in your own beautiful home again with these terrible times safely past.

But before then I hope ardently that we shall meet in England again; do not stay in America too long, but come back here; and take your passage for Liverpool so that you can come straight here before you go to London (we are not far from Liverpool). I am so unhappy that you have gone and I have not seen you again; for I have long been glad that I am in the world at the same time as you, and I feel that we care for the same things and have much to say to each other. I trust that your visit to America will be a great success; but I hope it will leave you time to write to me, as I should so much like to hear from you now and then.

My wife joined me in friend remembrances and many good wishes, and we should like to offer our regards to
you. Believe me your sincere and devoted friend Gordon Bottomley. If you like me to do so, if it would
not inconvenience you. G.B.

26th. April
1926.

THE SHEILING,
SILVERDALE,
CARNFORTH.

TELEPHONE,
SILVERDALE
11.

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My dear Nicholas Roerich,

I have felt greatly honoured by your distinguishing me with your princely generosity. Your inclusion of me among your intimates and fellow artists to whom you have given this proud gift of great jewelled Tibetan rings has touched me greatly : the ring has arrived safely, and I wear it, and I seal my letters with the great shard of carved turquoise, and all my friends envy me and wonder what mystic charm has been thus set in power over my writings!

Please believe I am grateful ; and that I thank you with all my heart, and shall always preserve your gift and cherish it along with the thought of you that goes with it and makes it seven times precious.

I wish I had something precious to send you in return and tell you how happy you have made me.

But I must always sit at home, and never reach the places where strange beauty can be found and brought back to one's dear friends. Someday I shall find something and remember: and in the meantime when my new book is out next season I shall send you that to tell you I do not forget.

Indeed, my wife and I never do forget you; and that morning which we spent with you among the silent, glowing children of your creation.

There are moments in one's life when chance brings many felicities together, and, in doing so, strings one to the height of one's perceptions and apprehensions so that one can make the most of everything and for a moment live fully and richly

as the immortals do : and that morning was one of them. ~~My~~ look and tone of you is still vivid with us ; and both of us remember proudly how you praised my eyes — or, rather, not my eyes, but my use of them when pictures are before me!

And we often tell each other of the pictures we saw — of Princess Maleine in her bed, of the rain spirit in the sky, of the wonderful enchanted house in Russia ; and regret that we could not have kept one of them in England.

But most of all we regret that England did not give you such welcome as would have kept you with us. England, always unkind and indifferent to the arts, and to its own children who love and follow the arts. How splendid if you had your home here instead of far America : for when you were here I was always ill, and never in London except when a journey to some place of health required me to stay a night on the way : while now I am somewhat better than I was, and (though not strong) able to go about and enjoy my friends. And how

eagerly and vividly I would enjoy you and the
works of your hand if you were in England.

Please go on bearing us so kindly and warmly
in your thoughts, as we shall you. We shall
go on thinking that someday we shall meet you again
and in the meantime your ring, and ~~a~~ a French
reproduction in colour of your "Chant du Viking"
that is our daily joy. Keep you present with us.
And believe me yours with affectionate regard

Gordon Bottomley.

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29th. December
1926.

THE SHEILING,
SILVERDALE,
CARNFORTH.

TELEPHONE,
SILVERDALE
11.

My dear friend Nicholas Roerich,
Your beautiful and most welcome
greeting from India came across the world to me from
India in the Autumn, and brought delight for me
within its folds.

I have meant to tell you so for days, but
just as it came I was going awhile from home again;
and on my return the short days and long nights
were suddenly filled by tasks flowing in on me on every
hand, so that I seemed scarcely ever able to do what I
most wanted to do. And this although we live
far from the world, in a lonely place, on a hill-top
all rock and pine-trees and little old gnome-ish oaks
that cannot grow big because they grow out of rock.

But I thank you and bless you for
your letter, with its sudden sound of music borne on
moving air from afar; and I feel newly grateful for
that morning in London nine years ago that brought

my wife and me into your company and shewed us the world your spirit lives in — the world so unlike anything we had known before, and yet at the same time seeming to be a region we had always lived in.

And so with your book of the Himalaya. While I was wanting to write to you I often turned again to your letter and the fragrance that always emanates from it — and then to your book, and most particularly that part of it in which you have written such a wonderful record of your sojourn in the wonderful mountains and the ~~unexploit~~ peoples — a record that seems almost as if you had not noticed you were making it as you traced your reflections and sensations ^{upon} ~~upon~~ the paper.

And then I turn to the enchanted world of the plates, the beautiful marvels that interpret the country rather than merely represent it. Sergius The Builder, Moses the Leader, Higher than the Mountains, The One Who Hastens, White Horses, Pemaionchi, The Bamboo: these, and indeed all their companions, delight my wife and me, and we turn to them often as we do to poems that become new acts of creation before our eyes as we read them.

What grief that my country did not know the

wisdom of keeping you here, when the treasure-house
that has been built in America might have been in
England and accessible every year.

My wife and I often go over in our recollections
the array of charmed and spiritually energetic
designs of which you made a pageant for us in your
room in London — La Princesse Maline, The
Rain Spirit, the life of old Russia, Le Sacre du
Printemps — and regret that we cannot see them again.

When I look at your pictures of the Himalayas
and Tibet I feel I know why you are happy there,
why you must sojourn and linger there — and
record the spiritual balance and stillness that life has
not only found there but known how to preserve.

In the North of my own island there are rocky
and commercially unproductive regions that are
farmed (in so far as rich men have not polluted them
by making of them sporting-grounds) by a race of
untameable and spiritually minded men who until
lately have preserved themselves untouched by mod-
ernity and in possession of the long traditions and
stories and music of their people. They too "can tell
of many wonderful things that exist in the world", as
you tell me that you can. We go back there every

year — and, when possible, into the places where the tourists do not reach — and we find there just such a spirit of life as your book and you tell of, that tells us in its turn what other things you find in that greater and far-away region.

Indeed your picture of Nag Lake very closely resembles in its larger way a lake of terror and mysterious history ~~and~~ called Cormisk and lying among the feet of mountains in the island of Skye.

I have lately composed a series of poetic dramas upon subjects belonging to these places — dramas that cannot be performed in a commercial theatre and can be performed anywhere else, in which there is no realism of representation but everything is done in a pattern and a rhythm ~~as~~ as if in a ritual.

When they are printed I shall send the book to you. In the meantime my wife and I send you our homage and our regard : and I am yours in the sympathy of creative art

Gordon Bottomley.

It is a great joy to find the portraits of you in the book and to be able to know how like they are to you, and to learn by them that you are well and ready to go on living a long, long time! ☺