

Copy.

Summer Hill.

Dec. 23. 1887

Dear Sir Joseph Lee.

You will doubtless remember in a conversation we had many weeks ago during one of our strolls through the galleries of the Exhibition, my expressing an intense desire that in some way the Town should become possessed of one or more of the magnificent works of Mr G. F. Watts R.A. entrusted to our care and the circumstance on a subsequent occasion of your asking if I thought it might be possible to purchase the distinguished Artists great pictures - "Love and Death" remarking incidentally that probably a considerable sum of money would be placed in your hands that might be used for the acquisition of such a work.

Early last month I addressed a letter to my friend Mr Watts at Malta, asking if he would give favorable consideration to an appeal for an exchange of his a picture for the sum of £3000 adding that in such eventuality the work would become the property of the public of Manchester.

In due course I received a reply to the effect that whilst feeling greatly honoured by the wish that the "Love and death" should be a work chosen to commemorate

the Royal Jubilee Exhibition, Mr Watts could not persuade himself to sell it on such terms as I had been practically enabled to offer.

It would be improper on my part were I to give you a copy of Mr Watts letter of Nov: 20th; it illustrates so fully my distinguished friends nobility and delicacy of feeling that I must respect his known dislike to publicity.

In acknowledging this letter I expressed a disappointment at the non success of my tentative, and further I ventured to offer as an apology for troubling him the pardonable aspiration of myself and many friends that his grand work should find a resting place in Manchester in connection with the munificent offer of the Whitworth Trustees to the City.

With my letter I posted a Newspaper in which appeared the details of their offer and the reported proceedings of the Meeting held at the Town Hall in regard thereto.

I have just received a second letter from Mr Watts of which I enclose a copy. I refrain from that comment to which I incline for I have no power of language adequately to express my feelings about it: the letter tells its own story.

Copy.

Dec: 12. 1887.

Villa Micallef Malta.

"Dear Mr Agnew.

"I have concluded that the picture you desire shall be placed in your hands as a gift, to be bestowed as you think best as a proof of my "fellowship in the movement you and your colleagues are instituting in Manchester.

I gave you in my former letter the reasons.

"I felt for prudence with regard to the future.

I am asked to reconsider this though a
- puzzled sometimes between giving my work
and accepting the wherewithal that only can
make it possible to respond to the many appeals
to one's inclination to be generous.

We have concluded that the willingness to
give of one's own best, in such a case as this
may be more useful than gifts of money

Yours sincerely

G. F. Watts.

- I desire it to be recorded, that in my second
letter I used no word nor argument to
induce Mr Watts to reconsider his earlier
decision.

Doubtless the words which my friend
underlined as above refer alone to "home"
influences and considerations.

- This generous gift is I believe the first
practical outcome of the munificence of
the Whitworth Trustees. I believe it to be the
precursor of many to follow:-

It suggests an example and points a
moral not likely to be ignored by the
Citizens of Manchester.

Believe me.

Dear Sir Joseph.

Faithfully yours.

Will. Agnew.

To Sir Joseph G. Lee.
Chairman of
The Whitworth Committee.