

de Mare, Marie  
1946-52

*memo returned  
Sept 20th*

*de Mare*

TO: ER

FROM: HICK

SUBJECT: Marie de Mare's manuscript, "Healy, American Artist"

I think you should write her a note and congratulate her on a tremendous undertaking, exceedingly well done.

She has not completed the book - has still three chapters to go. I think she should be encouraged to finish it.

This book does for the early part of the 19th century what the motion picture did for the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. I refer to "Cavalcade." Remember?

The characters were, for the most part, people who sat for portraits by Healy. It's an awe-inspiring list, including most of the notables of that period both here and abroad. I believe he painted every president of the United States, from John Quincy Adams to and including Abraham Lincoln. He was at the Hermitage, just completing a portrait of Andrew Jackson on commission from Louis-Philippe of France, when Jackson died. From the Hermitage he went to Kentucky to do several portraits of Henry Clay - who hated Jackson so bitterly that Jackson wasn't mentioned in his presence. This just gives you an idea of how interesting the book is.

He was in London when Victoria became Queen - actually saw the coronation. He met most of the celebrities of France and England during that period and painted most of them.

Pretty good for an Irish-American boy from Boston (I seem to remember that he was actually born in Albany) who, mostly, taught himself to paint. For years, when he was a mere kid, he supported his mother and younger brothers and sister by painting portraits, here and abroad. Quite a lad, I should say.

Fascinatingly, the story begins with his boyhood memories of Lafayette laying the corner stone of Bunker Hill monument.

My criticisms of the book are two:

- 1 - It has a touch every now and then of Horatio Alger and a bit of Louisa M. Alcott. No serious fault.
- 2 - Toward the end it drags. Somehow he fails to make Abraham Lincoln, whom he painted several times, come alive as he certainly - I mean SHE - makes Andrew Jackson, Henry Clay, Audubon, Calhoun, Louis-Philippe and some of the others come alive. Toward the end, the book sounds as though she were getting tired!

2 -  
For further critical analysis, I suggest you read VanWyck Brooks' letter to her, which is attached to her letter to you.

All in all, I think the old lady - she MUST be an old lady - should be encouraged and congratulated on a magnificent job.

Your foreword will have to be rewritten. Apparently it was written during the depression. I think you might take the line that this book makes a very valuable contribution in that it presents so interesting and complete a picture of our country in its - well, I guess you might call it our adolescent period. It ought to be a marvelous book for school libraries. And certainly anyone with a liking for biography would love it - somewhat formless and at times a bit slow-moving as it is.

.....X.....

Dear Mme de Mère -

55<sup>th</sup> Street

Of course I will  
be glad to look over  
your manuscript if you  
will have it left at  
my apartment 37 West 42<sup>nd</sup> St  
then it is perfect -

101 West 55<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York City  
Thursday June 20<sup>th</sup> 1946

Dearest Mrs Roosevelt,

After a complete interruption of several months due to illness and home difficulties, I have at last taken up again the Healy biography. It took me years to write the twenty-nine chapters now completed and I was despairing of ever finishing the book... but a little while ago Mr. Van Wyck Brooks asked to see my manuscript, the first part of which he had read three years ago - and his letter (a copy of which I enclose) has given me the needed boost to tackle the six or seven last chapters!

Many times I thought of your lovely offer to see this new version and I was planning a clean copy of the finished work with your cherished foreword to send to you. But I know how fantastically busy you always are and feel that my own time is getting short - and I

would so like your opinion and advice for this last stretch that if you are willing to see it now I shall leave it - as it is - at your apartment or wherever you say. There are quantities of reproductions added since you saw the old manuscript and of course new data has come to light with letters and diaries lately given to libraries, universities, museum and historical societies. It ties in with my old research and personal memories so that, of course, the book must be richer than in ~~its~~ earlier form.

It is an imposition to again call upon your infinite kindness, but your judgment means so very much to me!

Ever affectionately and gratefully yours  
Marie de Mare

P.S. The "Aed" Mr Brooks mentions in his postscript is our wonderful friend Edward Sheldon, the playwright, who died two months ago. For 25 years, paralyzed and blind, he continued, a shining light and ever-inspiring friend and counsellor. How often we spoke together of you and the President - a great soul keenly conscious of your constant magnificence!

COPY OF LETTER FROM MR. VAN WYCK BROOKS

May 18th 1946

Westport, Connecticut

Dear Mrs. de Mare,

You must have thought it very strange for me to return the manuscript without at the same time sending you a line, and I must explain in any case my very long delay in reading your most interesting book. I was obliged at short notice to write a paper on Ellen Glasgow and read her twenty novels in preparation for this and this completely occupied me until the last few days and left me no margin of time for other matters. But let me say now, without further apologies, that I have delighted in your manuscript, after reading and rereading it ~~and~~ all from the beginning, and I do most seriously hope that you will be able to complete it, for I think you should find no difficulty in having it published. Such an array of famous names and usually with something fresh about them, facts I mean that are fresh and freshly stated, - with all this you cover so much of the nineteenth-century art-world and history that you can't scarcely fail to find many readers. You abound with entertaining anecdotes and comments, and your narrative is flowing and vivacious, and I know how difficult it is to compose a work like this and what a large measure of skill you have brought to the task. Your opening is delightful too and the long section about Grant & Sherman is only one of several that are contributions to history in their way. I have found it very good reading, the better because you are always concrete and hew very close to the line of your subject. For this reason it might be difficult to cut,

though you may find this necessary a little, when the whole book is completed, in case the book proves to be somewhat too large. But that remains to be seen; -- it is nothing to think about now, for these questions of proportion can only be settled when you have a finished manuscript. The main thing is to get it all down, to get everything on paper: the question of editing will be very simple then. And I should say that if anything has to be omitted, it might be a few pages about the Civil War, for instance, whose bearing on the subject is rather indirect. I found only one statement in the book that might be questioned. You mention on ~~page 349~~ page 349, the "great unitarian preacher recently converted to Catholicism" -- Edward Tyrrel Channing! The only man of this name who was "great", <sup>was</sup> the E.T.C. who taught at Harvard, a brother of the great Wm. Ellery Channing, neither of whom was converted to Catholicism. There were other well known members of the family but I have not heard of one who answers to your description. But this is a trifle. I have so much enjoyed your manuscript and I look forward eagerly to seeing it finished and in print. - It was a great pleasure to see you the other day. My kindest regards to to you and all of your house

Always sincerely yours

Van Wyck Brooks

P.S. Just as I was writing this your letter came. I am glad the manuscript reached you safely but more ashamed than ever that it came without my note. But I was suddenly called upon to write a brief speech two days ago and this delayed me further. Now I hope you can read my very illegible handwriting. I shall indeed write about Ned, but in another way, later, when I have a freer mind than I can have at present.

I think perhaps  
the last part of  
the biography lags  
a bit & I can well  
understand the  
difficulties under  
which you have worked.

When will you  
have the new  
foreword?

101 West 55th Street

de More

*de more*

101 West 55th Street  
New York 19, New York

*When will she want the new foreword*

September 21, 1946

Dearest Mrs. Roosevelt:

Need I tell you how very happy your letter makes me? I had hoped very much that you would like the new manuscript! And I am infinitely grateful for your generous offer to rewrite the foreword... That you, who ~~do~~ do so much and are always active in great causes should have given me the time to read this later version of my book is just the sort of wonderful thing one comes to expect of you and yet to find overwhelming!

We follow ardently all the news we can read about you, and if we refrain from writing -- even at the time we felt so concerned over your accident -- it is only because we do not want to add to the burden of the avalanches of mail that no doubt constantly reach you...

If at any time you could let me know where, about, the biography begins to lag, I would appreciate it tremendously and start working over those parts before tackling the final bits. Unexpected difficulties, anguish and heartaches that filled this last year made it impossible for me to concentrate or to have the secretarial help I need to complete what has come to seem my life work.... Agnes' babies are still with us -- adorable, lively and altogether absorbing if somewhat exhausting!

*Just to the book*

We hope, however, that soon Agnes can take up her new job at the Polyclinic Hospital and that Fred will at last find a suitable home for himself and the children near enough to his work in New Jersey, where they can have country air and Agnes can go <sup>to</sup> them on her free time, while we too can go and see them. They loved it when Agnes had them with Jehanne and Bob and Chris and Holly near Kingston, but Fred could see them only on week-ends and found that even too far. So they have been with us all winter and summer. They are big, lovely and well -- but still need country air.

Did you see that Jehanne had several of her poems taken by the Ladies Home Journal? She is now writing a story which she hopes they will accept, since Mr. Margolies who has published a number of her things told her she was now definitely ready for the "slicks"!... We are naturally partial to the Ladies Home Journal because we always open it first at "If you Ask Me"... and often become furiously angry at some of the questions while we marvel at the perfect way in which you answer them!

I forgot to say that a great many reproductions of Healy portraits I did not know have come to me of late years and are still coming. There is a re-awakening of interest in Healy and his work which gladdens our hearts.

Ever so much love, dear, wonderful Mrs. Roosevelt from each and every one of us .

Always gratefully and admiringly and affectionately yours

Marie de Marse

It was more than kind <sup>dearest</sup>  
you to send me the  
piece of amethyst quartz  
I shall be <sup>glad</sup> to  
have these mementos of our  
meeting.

With many thanks +  
every good wish

Embajada del Uruguay

New York.

December 15, 1946.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

How truly glad I am  
of ~~be~~ able to attend the  
meetings on third commiti  
during the Assembly - You  
have been always the  
leader of womanhood and  
that made me very happy.  
I also want to give you a  
remembrance of my country  
which may be of use as  
a paper weight - It is

---

an amethyst quartz from  
the Uruguay.

Thanking you so much  
for the pleasant moments  
I spent at your home  
last week,

Believe me most  
cordially

Susana M. de Mora