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55 West 55th. Street,
New York,
January 29th, 1935.

Mr. Charles R. Henschel,
Knoedler Art Galleries,
14 East 57th. Street.

Dear Mr. Henschel,

Contrary to my custom and only
because of a gross misquotation of an utterance I
am supposed to have made, I am sending you the
following declaration for you to make use of as you
see fit:

I repudiate as false any statement attributed
to me impugning the condition of the Portrait
of Giovanna Tornabuoni from the Morgan
Collection.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed)

RICHARD OFFNER

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Fogg Art Museum
Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.

January 28, 1935.

This is to certify that I worked in Mr. Durham's department at the time the Ghirlandaio was cradled at the Fogg Museum. There was nothing done to the panel but cradling while it was at the Fogg Museum. The picture was then sent to London for exhibition and returned to the Morgan Library and cleaned there by either Mr. Durham or Mr. Leser. Mr. Durham, upon his return from the Morgan Library after cleaning the painting, told me of its remarkable state of preservation, there being only a few small areas lost.

(Signed) Roger A. Lyon.

Director.

(The underlining is Miss Greene's, and in a pencilled note at the bottom of the page she says: "These were left in the condition found and not in any way restored.")

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January 29th, 1935.

THE PIERPONT MORGAN LIBRARY

At his 29-33 East 36th. Street came in to see the
New York City

"Portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni" by Ghirlandajo. As soon as he
came into the room, before Mr. Henschel said anything to him, he
looked at the picture which was standing on an easel and said,

30 January, 1935.

"This is much improved."

Mr. C. R. Henschel,
% M. Knoedler & Co., then asked him if he might speak perfectly
14 East 57th. Street,
New York City. on to say that the picture had been sold, and

Dear Mr. Henschel: lies, true or untrue, about statements which

were said to have been I enclose a statement from
Mr. Lyone, head of the Department at the Fogg
Museum for the investigation, cleaning, and if
necessary, the restoration of paintings. I presume
it is just as well to keep this confidential when it was at
until it is necessary to use it.

This is only one sheet of a large
dossier which Mr. Forbes sent me in answer to the crackle on
question raised.

the face. You can read what I said in an article in "The Arts" in
1934; that was all I ever said. It was not the condition I was
attacking. The picture looks much better."

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) BELLE da COSTA GREENE

Director.

Mr. Henschel told him that it had been reported to him
from a supposedly reliable source that Dr. Offner had seen the

picture while it was being cleaned at the Fogg Museum about two
y and had said that it was all repainted, that there was

BG:dlt

Enclosure

January 29th, 1935.

At his own request, Dr. Offner came in to see the "Portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni" by Ghirlandaijo. As soon as he came into the room, before Mr. Henschel said anything to him, he looked at the picture which was standing on an easel and said, "This is much improved."

Mr. Henschel then asked him if he might speak perfectly frankly, and went on to say that the picture had been sold, and that he had heard stories, true or untrue, about statements which were said to have been made by Dr. Offner relating to the picture and its condition.

"I saw it in 1924," Dr. Offner said, "when it was at Duveen's, and it was the first time I had an opportunity of studying it. It had a curious varnish on it, and a painted crackle on the face. You can read what I said in an article in "The Arts" in 1924; that was all I ever said. It was not the condition I was attacking. The picture looks much better."

Mr. Henschel told him that it had been reported to him from a supposedly reliable source that Dr. Offner had seen the picture while it was being cleaned at the Fogg Museum about two years ago, and had said that it was all repainted, that there was not a touch of Ghirlandaijo in it. Mr. Henschel felt that it was only natural that the purchaser of the picture, having paid a large

A line-engraving by Armand Mathey, 13x20½ in., of the "Giovanna Tornabuoni" portrait by Ghirlandaijo was published by Charles Sedelmeyer in 1897.

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price for it, would be very much upset on hearing this. He therefore wanted Dr. Offner to write him a note....At this point Dr. Offner interrupted him:

"I can't write a note regarding the condition of the picture, and if I were responsible for all the things I am reported to have said....!"

Mr. Henschel said that he did not want to stir up a tempest, or involve other people; he merely wanted a note from Dr. Offner, refuting the statement. He handed a glass to Dr. Offner, who spent some time in examining the picture with care. Mr. Henschel made one or two comments, and Dr. Offner broke in, "Oh, I know the picture. There are only a few small restorations here and there, nothing of any account." He examined it further. "Vastly improved," he said. "It has gained so much in light and three-dimensional quality. I think, though, that it ended where the brown line is. I don't think they could have made that inside line...but soon after. On the other hand, it gets more depth by the overlapping. It is a beautiful picture - vastly improved. It is a picture I never liked."

Again Mr. Henschel stressed the necessity of his refuting the statements which had been attributed to him, and he said he would see what he could do. He asked if the picture were going to be left in its present condition, and on learning that it was to be left so, he remarked that he considered that very wise. They talked further about the picture and about the Morgan Collection, and finally Dr. Offner agreed to write to Mr. Henschel as he requested.

Mr. Stevenson Scott came in to see the pictures and told Mr. Henschel a story about the Ghirlandajo. He said that when he was associated with Henry Graves, in England, Mr. Willetts, who formerly owned the picture, used to come to dine with Graves, and that Mr. Scott often met him there. Willetts told them how, in the '70s, he had bought the portrait for six hundred pounds. He proudly displayed his purchase to his brother, and told him the price, thinking it a great bargain. His brother was scornful, and called him a damn fool for spending six hundred pounds on the picture. Many years later, Rudolf Kann wanted to buy the painting from Willetts, who refused to sell. Kann was determined to have it, and finally said, "I don't know how much you paid for it, but I'll give you twenty times the price, if you'll sell it to me." At last Willetts let him have it for twelve thousand pounds. (This was in the 1890s.) He told his brother of the sale, and asked him if he thought now he was a damn fool to have paid six hundred pounds for the picture. His brother's answer was "I think you were a bigger damn fool to have sold it for twelve ~~thousand~~!"