

380
TELEGRAMS: DUBLIN
TELEPHONE: DUBLIN 77

THE THISTLES
MONADNOCK, NEW HAMPSHIRE

15/7/14.

My dear Duneka

Very many thanks for your kind note, and for the assurance that you will try the experiment I have at heart, by not sending out The Letter of the Contract for review.

I am most happy to add as a postscript to my letter that, as book-notices go, I have no complaint of a personal nature to make. It is true that for some years past I have not read any such notices at all, so that my report is based on what reviewers said of my earlier publications. I had certainly no complaint to make then - though I was driven to give up reading newspaper comments on my work in order to preserve my sanity. In days when I took the critics reverentially I read and collated their remarks about what I did, in the hope of discovering my own short-comings and ~~learning~~^{learning} some new secret of my craft. But not a bit! One said black and another said white and another said Blue - while I saw red. Still, in the matter of treatment, I am willing to believe that I have fared no worse than others, and perhaps better than some. Since the law of life is à la guerre comme à la guerre I should never ~~?~~ shrink from blows - if they did any good; my dissatisfaction with the present system is because all the fun is on one ~~side~~ side.

But, after all, that is not my real point. If the critics helped us to see ~~el~~ books I would take anything lying down. As it is, they rifle that by which you and I have to live, as a cat rifles a bird's-nest. What the poor bird has brooded on for weeks serves the cat only for a

TELEGRAMS: DUBLIN
TELEPHONE: DUBLIN 77

THE THISTLES
MONADNOCK, NEW HAMPSHIRE

meal - and the mischief is done. If it were not for that I should gladly ~~suffer~~ ^{suffer} in silence - or persuade myself that I ~~can't~~ ^{didn't} suffer at all.

You say that while the evil is great, how it is to be met is beyond you. But I don't quite see that. I certainly think it can't be met all at once - but we might feel the way to doing so. What is at the root of it is - partially at any rate - the perfectly comprehensible desire of the author to hear what people will say of his bit of work. Well, he does hear - very often more than he wants to. But when he begins to realize that his bread isn't buttered on this side - and that the less he gives away of his thunder to the papers the more money it will be in his pocket - he will begin to ask as I do that his work should not be sent out. It seems to me that it is for the author to take the first step rather than the publisher. It is for authors in general to get the idea by degrees - and act on it. If they won't they will only have themselves to blame. But this much is certain - that the bird can't invite the cat into the nest, and still profit by its eggs.

But all this is what I have said before. When you start me on it I can't stop. Let me answer your question as to the moving picture rights. Those to the Wild Olive are disposed of to Oliver Moresco. Those to The Inner Shrine are involved - I think ~~in~~ in my contract dealing with the dramatic rights, but this I must find out. Those to The Street Called Straight are free. Do I understand the offer of \$1000 advanced royalties to be for anyone of them, or for a combination of the

TELEGRAMS: DUBLIN
TELEPHONE: DUBLIN 77

THE THISTLES
MONADNOCK, NEW HAMPSHIRE

three?

Will you kindly tell Wells that I hope to send him 24 chapters of the new book next week? I am at the twenty-eighth, but I will send him what I can conveniently get re-typed. As you see my own typing is after the schole of Stratforde-atte-Bowe - and my stenographer is having a two months holiday. I hope to finish the book by the end of September, so as to have plenty of time for revision.

Again thanking you for your kind note, and repeating that I am not at all disgruntled over anything the critics may have said of me, believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

Basil King

I see that I have not said that I should be glad to dispose of the moving picture rights of the Set. Called Str. if they go alone.