

WOLMER WOOD,

MARLOW COMMON,

MARLOW, BUCKS.

May 3rd 1930.

My dear Philip

I will bring the article on Wednesday as I think we had better go through it again to see if it wants anything added or taken out and between now and Wednesday I can possibly touch it up a little. With regard to the biography I very much wish you would tell Marriott that you cannot consent to the sort of book he suggests. To write a book of 50,000 words, with the idea that it would have a sale of 5000 to 10,000 copies, it would be unnecessary to draw very largely upon the material you want to keep for your own autobiography, because to make the book saleable it would have to include a good number of personal anecdotes and tell the story of your life in considerable detail. I do not at all see why you should put this material at the disposal of a publisher who merely wants you to keep him to make a profit out of you on his own benefit. If you had

no idea of doing a book yourself the position would, of course, be different; but, as matters stand, I think you would run a great risk of spoiling your own book without getting anything worth accepting out of the one which Marriott would publish. I do not like the way he talks about going into the matter of the book when he sees me again; he ought to lay before you a fully detailed scheme, saying exactly what sort of biography he wants, what he thinks should be included in it, and how it should be treated to make it saleable, and he should say, also, ~~what~~ what payments he proposes to make to you for the material which he is asking you to put at his disposal. All this ought to be in writing; I would not at all like ^{him} to make a business proposition, which very definitely concerns you, merely in a conversation with me — that is certainly not the way things should be done, if they are to be done at all. I have an idea, from things he said, that he wants to pay you for the material and me for writing the text & a royalty of so much per cent on each copy of the book that is sold so that you and I should share in the

risk of there being a small return if the book did not sell well. This is a possible arrangement if a publisher is honest but I do not know in the least what sort of business reputation Marriott has and, anyhow, such a way of paying is troublesome, as it involves enquiry into the amount of sales so as to see that the proper proportion is being paid and it is always very difficult to ~~prove~~ find out whether a dishonest publisher has or has not falsified his record of sales. Still, even if Marriott is perfectly trustworthy and even if the arrangement he proposes is quite all right, there still remains the objection that if you let him publish a fairly long biography of you now you are likely to ~~interfere~~ interfere with the chances of a success for your own book. As, however, the question of the book is not urgent we can talk it over again and see what would be the best reply for you to send to Marriott.

I had read the Nevinson article in Wednesday's "Express" and, frankly, I did not think much of it. These attacks on the Academy — I have seen a host of them during the last fifty years — are journalistic stunts which crop up periodically when editors think they would like to have a bit of a sensation. I have written a good many myself at different times and I do not take this sort of thing very seriously. Nevinson is the son of a

journalist and knows the tricks, he is only a second-rate artist but he is a persistent self-advertiser, very much of the Sickert type, and he is always adopting new poses to attract attention. What he, and others like him, fail to see is that the Academy owes its social position to the fact that it gives the public what the public wants and that the more it is attacked the more it is advertised. Moreover, as the Academy draws its material for its exhibitions from all over the country these exhibitions do run up fairly well the art of the country and therefore the blame for bad exhibitions must be laid upon the artists who contribute rather than upon the Academy which depends upon them for material — and upon the public which crowds the exhibitions whether they are good or bad.

Did you go to the private view today and if so, did you see John's portrait of Lord Spencer? I dare say Nevins would call it a masterpiece; I think it is the filthiest thing I have ever seen and a disgrace to John and to the people who got him into the Academy, but I am quite sure that Flight and Miss Asher would say it is much better than anything you could do — Nevins may agree with them, I do not.

We remain then till Wednesday and our love to you all

Always yours H.K.S.