

Christmas, 25-12-61

Dear Nell,

Please excuse me to have raised a subject so painful to you. I had not the slightest presumption you were so intimately - and so sadly - involved in the subject of the book "Listen, Yankee". I requested you to read, so that, instead of a consolation, I caused you a torture.

How can I repair such a mistake?

I only can implore you to take in - to consideration my complete ignorance of the situation and to forgive me in name of our friendship.

The book is ^{as} you yourself, say very "effective" and, I have the impression, written with the sincere desire to bring about a reconciliation between the U.S. - government and the present Government of Cuba. Moreover it is an authoritative source (Columbia University). How to wonder then I believed it without reserve?



There is moreover a reason why we, conscious Europeans, are only too willing to believe it: the danger of a world-conflict if it should come to an open war between your two ~~people~~ countries - a world conflict which would wipe out for ever the human race off the face of the earth.

Believe me, dear Nell, the prospect of dying does not frighten me personally, and I shall not move a finger to escape my fate if it is not possible to save every member, even the poorest devil of my country.

I shudder at the idea of the monsters of immorality - and stupidity - building deep shelters under the ground to preserve their lives - and perhaps even their fortune - without thinking of the other members of the community!

The only way to escape ~~disasters~~ that fate is to refrain from feelings of revenge, were it only for the simple reason that all crimes are ever paid and paid with interests here on the earth, as was very ably shown by your Emerson in his unforgettable essay "Compensation".

I realize, this answer will not give you satisfaction after the twelve pages you took the trouble to write to me - to write to me with a generous and aching heart. But as it is, it took me ~~some~~ much thinking to write it down in a language which is, as I told you before, for me a fourth one. If I was a man with settled opinions it would be much easier. But I want not to be a man of black and white; I know the truth is not simple - one has to struggle for it every day, often and most against oneself.

I just received some days ago a letter from an Italian friend who went to the States and complains now of "the lack of culture and humanism." He found there: He is a man of black and white, at least in all matters outside his field of investigations. I prepare for him a letter to defend your country which I deeply like and admire - perhaps beyond reasonable proportions - and even more since



I know you.

And don't forget this, dear Nell, your
 letter was ^{also} a blow to me, be-
 cause I feel every failure to
 make even the slightest part
 of the world better, happier, more
 righteous and human is a failure
of us all. How remote that part
 of the world may be, you and
 I, all of us, are involved and
responsible.

This being said, I want to thank
 you for the kind wishes you sent
 us in spite of the pain I invol-
 untarily gave you.

I am afraid the wishes we sent
 you will not reach you in time.
 But you know enough our
 feelings towards you to be sure
 we deeply hope that your greatest
 desire, the complete recovery
 of your John, may be ful-
 filled so that you may have
 still many years to spend together
 in peace and happiness.

It is Christmas to day. Within
some minutes good, old, truest friends
and relatives will come to spend
with us a couple of days.

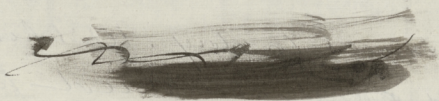
There will be music and
gentle talk, and, deep in us:
"the heart's crying".

Be blessed, dear Nell, you
and your noble John - and
forgive me!

Ever

Wernmans





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