

My dear Inde: NEW YORK, Apr. 23 1887

We have settled with Mr. Cuming to print your "Black Ice" for him at 12 1/2% copyright say, all a retail price. He wanted 15% & we offered that if he would pay for the plates or wait till we had got their cost back. Then he offered 12 1/2%; we didn't want to haggle over one of your books, so we accepted it. As you know, it is not one of your "big" books and therefore it was that we were disposed to be on the safe side of much outlay - especially as we haven't much to lay out, & don't want to get laid out ourselves! See?

One of the weak points of one of the strongest books ever penned is the rather sentimental opening of "Fool's Errand". The book stands it because we soon forget it. But "Black Ice", as I recall it, has a similar lack of verve in its opening; and it occurred

to me that you might transpose
to the front one of the spirited
scenes that come a little later
in the story — perhaps the horses
or some other. I don't remember
the course of it all, but do
have a distinct recollection
of that impression, of a lack
of fibre, in the very opening.

Moreover, it perhaps
you can put a little of the
soul into that somehow. A summer
book (it's late to begin one,
at best!) must lay hold on
the languid attention at the
first go or there's no use.

Faithfully Yours,
J.P.H.