

Letter from M.L. Bisland to A.P. Watt
New York

9th January 1905

Dear Mr Watt

Mr Robert McClure writes me this morning that his firm is preparing to bring out some cheap cloth bound editions of their more successful books by famous authors published last year and the year before and among the English books he would like to handle in this way are Merryman's Parlash of the Guard, Wayman's The long night and Doyle's Adventures of Gerrard. He says those books are nominally published at 50 cents, but that they are actually retailed at from 35 to 45 cents and as the dealers have to make a profit on this the publishers must figure closely to make any money.

He says the royalty on books of this class vary from 2 to 5 cents a copy and on the three books mentioned he is prepared to pay the maximum royalty of 5 cents a copy provided you will on behalf of the authors will agree to accept this. As to the size of the editions Mr McClure says he cannot give exact figures but in each case he would guarantee a minimum of 10,000 copies or a minimum payment of \$500 on each book. The figures might run to 20,000 or 30,000 or even 40,000 and of course it would be in the McClure's interest to sell the greatest possible number, but he would not under any circumstances care to guarantee for more than 10,000 copies.

Mr McClure asks me to state very definitely that this is the best offer he can make and that he would not care under any conditions to consider a counter proposal. He says, if you feel it is not wise to agree to these terms, to please simply decline and begs that you will let me know as promptly as possible, so that I may cable him this week. He says there are a great many books of this kind coming into America, and that if he is to produce editions of these English books, the sooner we can get them out, the better for everyone concerned. One reason that Mr McClure thinks it is wise to try and bring out cheap editions of these books in order to stimulate sales is that in the 6 shilling form, the sales of these are practically at an end.

very sincerely yours
ML Bisland.