

The Bungalow,
Baldrine,
Isle of Man,
Britain.

2.5.84.

Dear Mr Pierce,

My apologies for being unable to reply more quickly to your letter; I've just got home after three months abroad.

You're very kind about MR AMERICAN and the Flashman stories, and I do thank you. If they have given you some amusement, I'm delighted, and I'm glad that in them you have detected my affection for America, which is very real.

Re-reading your letter, I realise that you will probably have left for England by the time this reaches your address. However, I wouldn't have been making any speech or appearance between May 12 and 23 anyway; I used to give occasional talks, but have given them up a) because I found that my work didn't leave me enough time, and b) because I've never been easy talking in public. Writing is my game, I realise. Also, I'm leaving for Italy shortly, and will probably be engaged on film work for several weeks. I'm just sorry we shan't be able to meet up, because I'd have enjoyed that.

You may well be right about Flashman; many people have written to me protesting that he wasn't a coward at all. On the whole, I'm more inclined to agree with them than with those who tell me that they like Flashman because he reflects their own cowardice. I think they're wrong; most people are much braver than they think they are.

However, that's by the way. You're quite right, incidentally, about his last ride to the Palace. I intend to write other stories about him, but chronologically speaking, that was his last public appearance.

I do hope you have an enjoyable stay in

England, and once again, thank you very much
for the kind things you wrote; I can't believe
I made you laugh as much as Mark Twain did, but
even to be mentioned in the same sentence is
good enough for me.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

George Fraser.

George MacDonald Fraser.