

“I Want to be Alone

No, Not All the Time—But Some of the Time”

Says GRACIE FIELDS

WHEN I was a little girl and tried singing to the occupants of a theatrical lodging house, I found my audience so unsympathetic that it told me to “run away and shoot oop!” and slammed the door in my face.

I remember still the abashed feeling creeping over me of being alone and unwanted by the Great Public . . . the sense of solitude that came upon me.

Nowadays there are times when that solitude would be rather welcome!

Please don't imagine for one moment that I am ungrateful for all the astounding love and affection of my “fans.” Far from it; I couldn't live without it.

I realize, too, that anyone who lives in the limelight—a stage or screen star, politician, gangster or a popular airman—must pay the penalty of fame . . . *but at least politicians and gangsters do not have their well-earned sleep disturbed by eager autograph hunters!*

Frankly, I can't understand this strange thing we call success. It comes when you least expect it, although you have probably been

trying to achieve it for years and years, and when it comes, so I've discovered, one's life no longer belongs to one's self.

I'm not grumbling. I'm what is called a “servant of the public” . . . if only the public would remember that even servants get their day off! (But there's no union to insist on “off-duty days” for over-worked actresses).

Sometimes, when I consider my colossal postbag, I am struck by the thought, “Am I a film actress? Or an all-inquiry bureau?” It's a grand thought that so many people want your help and sympathy . . . but to be able to satisfy all my hundreds of correspondents I would have to be not only a superwoman (which I'm not), but also a multi-millionaire (which, again, I'm not).

There's been a lot of talk about that “two-pounds-a-minute” story. Well, believe me, two pounds a minute wouldn't cover all the things I'd like to do . . . not if it were ten, twenty, or even thirty times as much!

I'd love to attend all the charity concerts at which I am asked to appear; but I'm only *one* person, not sixteen; I can be in only one place at a time. There is a limit to