TO HARPY DE FOREST SMITH

Cambridge, Jan. 22/92 - 93

My dear Smith,

It is Monday noon and I will write you something now while I have a good chance. I have several minutes before lunch & after that I must grind for Psychology. The mid-year examinations will begin Wednesday, and my first (French) comes Thursday. College shuts down for about three weeks in which time the students are supposed to be at work. I have made great resolutions but do not expect they will amount to much. They never do, as regards my studies. For instance, in French I am supposed to be thoroughly acquainted with the first book of La Fontaine's fables and able to quote four of them from memory, Les Trois Mousquetaires, Marianne (Geo. Sand) "Les Frères Colombe" (G. le Peyrebrune) and some odd plays. But the bulk of the exam. will be the translation of English into French, and that is where I am generally at sea. The German does not worry me—though I shall probably make a botch of the composition. I can get through the translation in some way or other. —I am very happy to say that I am at last able to send you a copy of the "Nation". My first number came Saturday, so you may hereafter look for it with my letter —that is when I send it. I will try to be reasonably
regular however, and hope you will find no cause for complaint.—No, I don't quite understand the paragraph in the "Critic" about Blackmore and Hardy. I should think that was enough to damn a paper of its character as a reliable sheet for reference. There is no excuse for such a blunder. It may be a printer's error, but I can hardly understand what the proofreader was doing. I doubt if you find the copy of the "Nation" very entertaining; it is not a star number, and for that matter I am sure that I shall have to educate myself into reading it. Did you ever meet a fellow brought up on the New York Tribune? If you have you will understand what I mean.—I have not been doing much of any reading lately—except an occasional story in the magazines, which I am getting more and more disgusted with every day. I think Harpers is easily at the head now, and there is much in that that nobody but a scholar or a lunatic would care to read.—I am getting more and more soaked in Rudyard Kipling's poems, and I was glad to read of him in the "Athenaeum's" summary of English literature for the past year. In poetry the[y] mention Tennyson first, William Watson, and then the Barrack room Ballads, mentioning in particular, "Tommy" and "Mandalay"—"on the road to Mandalay, where the flying fishes play, etc."—Come you back you British soldier, come you back to Mandalay." And, by the way, did you ever think what a figure Kipling and his
kid must cut among the Vermont farmers? especially when he (Kipling) goes to get his mail. I have been hoping that the English club here would get him to lecture, but have not heard it mentioned. After writing the "Rhyme of the Three Captains", it seems a little inconsistent for him to live in America, but it must be confessed this[=that] he writes a good deal for effect—and he generally succeeds.

Well, the hands of my clock have come together and there was a time when I could tell when they will be in that situation again, but I could not now to save my life. I can see occasional hungry men drifting into Memorial from my window, and I will put on my goloshes and and try to find something to be thankful for. Think I shall blow in five cents and have some fried hasty-pudding. That is about the only thing one can depend upon here. Hope to get a letter to-morrow morning.

Yours as ever,

E. A. R.