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To Harry de Forest Smith - January 12, 1895

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

Gardiner, Maine

Jan^a 12 - 1895

My dear Smith,

This is a very "soft" day, and perhaps that is the reason that I am feeling rather slouchy. I have just played pitch with J.C.¹ and beaten by a small margin, but that doesn't seem to invigorate me to any great extent. He has now taken up *The Phantom Ship*² so I will take this time to let you know, among other things, that I have just seen an announcement in the back part of Burke's speeches that may possibly interest you. It reads, "Essays of Michael, Lord of Montaigne, parchment back (which you do not want) in card board box 5s.—Also 3s. 6d. in cloth." If this is Cottons^b translation, it is probably as good an edition as you will care for. (George Routledge & Sons, N.Y.) In the Chandos Classics I notice Popes^c Homer with Flaxmans^d designs.^e and Grimm's Fairy Tales. I did not know that either of them were in that collection. B. Franklin's Autobiography and Kinglakes^{3f} "Eothen" are in the Knickerbocker Nuggets.

I have not been feeling particularly fine during the past week but hav{e}^g managed to do some work. Have almost {?} finished the professor's story and have done the first chorus in "AEgeus"⁴—about fifty lines, which seem to me to have a little swing to them. I shall have no trouble whatever in getting my book ready—as far as quantity is concerned, but I am in much doubt as to the quality. However, I shall not permit myself to get discouraged, but shall hack away at it and hope for the best. The sonnet came back all right from the "Century" and the Chap Book people hav{e}^h sent me a little notice saying that "Aaron Stark"⁵ will receive their consideration, which means, I suppose, a little delay in its return. I am beginning a collection of declination blanks and hope to have one worth showing by the time you come to Gardiner again.

-2-

The other day I took up McCluresⁱ and tried {?} to read Kiplings^j

^a WA adds a period here.

^b WA has "Cotton's".

^c WA has "Pope's".

^d WA has "Flaxman's".

^e WA has a comma here instead.

^f WA has "Kinglake's".

^g WA transcribes the "e".

^h WA transcribes the "e".

ⁱ WA has "McClure's".

^j WA has "Kipling's".

Jungle Story.⁶ Couldn't do it. Then I tried Doyles^k Green Flag & met with no better success. Threw up the sponge ~~on~~ over both. Is the fault with me or with them? I see by "Munsey's"^l that Sherlock Holmes is the bane of Doyles^m existence—that he is ashamed of creating him. I hope it is true, and still I have no right to as I have never read one of the S.H. stories. This morning I fell to thinking how it was possible for the America[n] people to take Munsysⁿ seriously. The article on The Novel⁷ in the last number is a fair sample of its literature. There is a pretty good thing however, by Frank Chaffee⁸ (who was in the last Chap-Book) though it does not amount to any thing beyond its brightness. If I ever publish any thing I shall pray that I may never be called bright or clever. One might as well damn a man and be done with it.

With this I send you a Critic which I have ~~mark~~ marked in a way that I shall not mark another. It is a very good number—as good as I ever saw. I also send the comedies by De Musset which you cannot but like.—And while I think of it you can get the Ingoldsby Legends⁹ (with Cruikshanks^o pictures) in one volume of the Chandos.^p

I have been chewing too much tobacco to-day and my hand trembles a little^q I am^r going^f to stop the business soon and renounce the weed in every form.

Saltus writes me that his son's life of Donizetti will be published some time during the next two years and will be placed on sale. The next issue of F.H.S^s F.S.S's^{10t} poetry will be a volume of humorous verse. He has sent me the Witch of Endor,¹¹ but I have not yet received it. I suppose it is in the office now.

Please excuse the rambling nature of this letter—and the more rambling nature of my chirography and let me know what you are doing for yourself in the way of editing, book buying &c^u.

Yours very truly
E.A.R.

J. send^v you his love & hop^w you are leading a correct life.

^k WA has "Doyle's."

^l WA has "Munsey's".

^m WA has "Doyle's".

ⁿ WA has "Munsey's".

^o WA has "Cruikshank's".

^p This is the last word of the previous line.

^q WA has a period here.

^r WA has "am going" but I have tried to approximate my impression of holograph.

^s WA has a period here.

^t WA has "F.S.S's".

^u WA has "etc".

^v WA transcribes the "s".

^w WA transcribes the "e".

HCL US, 194-195.

NOTES

1. J.C. Barstow.
2. By Frederick Marryat (1792-1848), English naval officer and novelist, known for his sea stories, especially *Mr. Midshipman Easy*, 1836. *The Phantom Ship*, 1839.
3. *Eothen; or Traces of Travel Brought Home from the East*, by Alexander William Kinglake. Published in 1844. (SL)
- 4.^x "The Chorus of Old Men in 'Aegeus'," TNB, 16-17.
5. EAR was not successful in placing "Aaron Stark." It was first published in TNB, 5-6.
6. "Letting in the Jungle," *McClure's*, January 1895.
7. Margaret Field, "The Novel," *Munsey's* (January 1895), 371.
8. A short story, "So Runs the World," *Ibid.*, 389.
9. *The Ingoldsby Legends, or Mirth and Marvels*, by Thomas Ingoldsby, Esquire, pen name of R.H.D. Barham (1788-1845); illustrated by G. Cruikshank, J. Leech and J. Tenniel, 1864.
10. Francis Saltus Saltus (1849-1889). (SL)
11. *The Witch of En-dor and Other Poems*, Francis' volume of poetry from 1891. (SL)

^x Notes 4-9 are WA's notes 3-8, respectively.