4-2-1895

To Arthur R. Gledhill - April 2, 1895

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO ARTHUR R. GLEDHILL

[Gardiner, Maine]
My dear Gledhill,

I am ashamed of myself for not having answered your letter before this, and the only excuse that I can give is that I have been most damnably down at the hell heel (there was no particular need of making this a correction) all winter. I have done a lot of work however such as it is, and I shall keep on with it through the summer. In the fall, or as soon as may be, I shall try to place a volume somewhere, but have no great hope of any success. The thing is a good deal harder than it seems to one not interested and there are a thousand obstacles in the way. My courage is pretty good, however, but I do not mean to "give in" until I positively have to. My great trouble is that I have so many things to contend with outside my regular work that that is really the smallest part of the strain that comes on my poor gray matter. Sometimes I am half afraid it will go back on me some day and leave me a damned fool or something worse. But that. I fancy, is a notion that we all have at times, especially when we have a fit of the blues for three months running and have to work like the devil through it all to keep our consciences unruffled. I do not pretend that I succeed in keeping mine that way, but I try to bring enough to pass every day to feel that I earn my right to breathe and live another. That right isn't much, as far as I can see, but it is life, and life is not a thing for us to laugh at. If we do, it is sure to have the laugh back on us with a punch in the neck to boot.

You may be tempted to think that I am getting to be a pessimist, but I am not—nothing of the kind. The universe is a great

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a WA has "the".
thing and the power of evil never put it
together. Of that I am certain and I am just as certain
that this life is but one little scene in the big show. I may be
something of a fatalist, but I cannot help that. It is a misfortune
though, when a fellow does a good thing and knows it, not to be able
(on Poe)
to take any credit home to himself. The sonnet ^ which is going
to appear some time in Lippincott's Magazine is, I honestly think, a
very good thing, but I could no more help making it than
I can help feeling vermin in my hair when anyone mentions the
subject in my presence. When I was a kid I had lock-
jaw, lupus, leprosy, cancer, elephantiasis, Brights Disease &
swear falling of the womb, and all at once; and I swear (?) that I could
not help it. It all came from looking over Dean's medical
books and so getting worked up. I can see some of those
infernal pictures now—one in particular where a lupus had
left nothing of a man's face but his right eye and a piece of his
forehead. I had leprosy for nearly seven years and won't
swear that I haven't got it still.

"The Manxman" is a great book, but Daudet's "Jack" is greater.
The one great trouble with the first named is its prolixity as you doubt-
less noticed. And the first hundred pages of Trilby are very good.
Just now I am reading "L'Impérieuse Bonté (The Good that must be done)
by J.-H. Rosny. Ouida ranks it with the world's great novels, but I am
not yet ready to agree with her. But it is a strong thing and bids fair
to warrant the opinion—to some extent, at any rate.

Smith gets married in June and that means the last of my
in Maine
last friend ^ whose minds at all after my fancy. Sic transit &c.
Write when you feel like it and be sure that what you
send will be welcome. I may go to Boston this June in self-defense
self-defense. I am "rotting for a little human companionship"
Most sincerely.
2 April, 1895

E.A.R.

HCL