TO GEORGE W. LATHAM

Gardiner, Maine--
20 June - 1895--

My dear Latham,

I have got myself into a little "mess" with "Im Paradiese", but the way out of it is not hard so no great harm is done. When you wrote me that you had read the book but thanked me all the same for my offer, I had not much enthusiasm for the idea of sending [it] to you even though I thought you might like it as a gift from a friend; so I have given the novel to Ford with the intention of sending you something in its place. So when a package comes to you from Maine, you will know well enough what is in it. Just when it will come, I cannot say.

I spent Sunday (the 16th) with Ford at Exeter and found him in most flourishing circumstances--popular and holding a far more prominent position than I had supposed probable--considering his age and the standing of the school. Not that I doubted his ability to fill the position, but you know there is a popular prejudice against our young instructors. The kids call him "Little Joey" and seem to like him he says because he makes them think that they know more than they do. That is the first thing for a man to do in a place like Exeter--or any other place for that matter: get the boys to like you. If they don't you had better be in hell and done with it. Ford is going to France
in about a week to stay all summer. He has an invitation from Paul Bourget & will doubtless have a "little glass" with Daudet and the rest of them. He tells me that he would give dollars to talk an hour with Zola. By the way, the girls are reading *La Debacle* at Radcliffe. Old things seem to be passing away from Cambridge.

I entertained vague hopes that I might manage to see you somehow this summer, but I fear it will be impossible unless you happen to come down this way—which I suppose, is hardly possible. I shall not go to Boston this spring, for some very good reasons, and one in particular. But if you go there—you wrote in your last letter that you think of it—do not forget to call upon Butler. He is not enjoying himself over much just a[t] present and I know that a call from you would put new life into him. He hasn't a single friend in the city whom he cares for—at least he had none a year ago—and I know what he thinks of you. As to his father's failure, he did not write me much—only told me that the business would go right on and the balance would be returned to the firm when the creditors had fixed things to suit themselves. So I suppose it was not a total smash—like DeQuincey's trunk. Or was that a "grand smash?" I know it was one or the other—it struck me as one of the best things in the Opium-Eater.

I rather fancy that you ask me those questions concerning Meredith to see what you can draw<of> out of me;
but I will take them in earnest and say this: Read one novel for the style and nothing else. Read every word and repeat the reading of very striking paragraphs and above all--take your time. To read Meredith in a hurry is to drink Pommery from the bottle. More than that, it is intellectual waste. No good can come from it and it is a rank injustice to a man who works like the devil with his pen. If "The Egoist"--the "hardest" by all odds of them all--seems to much for a process like that, take Rhonda Fleming--but no, don't take that, either,--for you would forget all about the style, which is only half Meredithian. Diana of the Crossways is about midway and contains the damnedest opening chapter in the world. But whatever you take, try to forget that you are reading a novel and I think you will have no more trouble; for Meredith is real[ly] great and intensely entertaining when once you "get onto him". I remember my battle with "The Egoist", however, and am inclined to think you would do better to take up Diana--which, along with Daudet's Jack, I hold to be a proper book for all men and women to read; particularly women, perhaps. I have never read Lord Ormont, [by] but judging from Gates' criticism and others that it must be a good thing. The morality--has been questioned--something after "The Woman Who Did" in plot, isn't it?--I should like to have seen that article in the Nation--and, speaking of articles, be sure to send me yours when it appears. I will
[be] the next thing to a talk with you.

Yours most sincerely,

E. A. R.

I suppose you know of Hubbell's engagement to a Miss Slade. He has taken her home for inspection.

P.S. (Copy)

William Butler Jr. Tremont Street Boston
Saben destitute Will you cable hundred dollars for return to America Wallace Jones Reply Lithophyl London.

What is going to be the future of this man? Of course one can have no feeling for him but that of honest pity. If he isn't a genius he is lost and I must confess that I have yet to discover the spark. There was a time when I thought him gifted with a tremendous intellect but but during the second year of his acquaintance I went through many disillusionments. I am generous enough, however to hope that I was all wrong and that he may ultimately be greater than Herbert Spencer. In the meantime let us thank God—or whatever it is—that we can work and wait.

Butler writes me a letter in which he tells me that he has worn away 30 pounds by riding a bicycle—a bit of graveyard humor which fits beautifully to the four long pages that go before it. He wants me to tell him what I know about you, but I think it better for you to tell him
your own story. Someday, when things are straightened out, we will have a "feed" together and talk it over—Saben too, if he is around.

                               Sincerely,
                               R.

P.P.S.
Hubbell's engagement is not yet announced but Ford said nothing about keeping still so I suppose it is all right for me to tell you. It seems to me that some girl has done confoundedly well.

                               R.