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Gardiner, Feb. 4 '94

My dear Smith,

I find that I misjudged things in telling you that I should have my study of "the reflexion of self-denial" finished by to-day. The fact is it is only a little over half done, but I think I can say my say out of it. I have to get a good deal in a few words and there is a great danger of a general effect of "roughness". When the thing is smoothed out and refined it will be the best piece of work I have done yet, which I suppose, is not saying a great deal. It is "do 4" in my usual conditions of mind, and, as I said in my last, a little too complex for a short sketch in the hands of a novice. I am anxious to read it to you and get your candid opinion of its merits or faults, as the case may be. My next work will be in a lighter vein - the sketch of a philosophical tramp ("Anxious Handicaps," probably) looking for rest. Much an experiment in a new field. - Thank you for saying so much about myself in this and my last letters, but you see what a hold the actions has upon me. If it fails totally, I think I shall get drunk and then hunt for a "job". "Let the dream go!" says the poet. Good advice, perhaps, but like all good advice, hard to follow.

I have only worked for a few hours during the past week. I had an
itch for making and tried my eyes in consequence. I finished "Ivete and Jovine"
by Coppie, and done a lot of browsing through various books of poems and essays. To-
morrow I hope to settle down in earnest and bring something to press before next
Sunday. When the fair starts we all finish up to the best of my ability, I
intend to copy them on the machine, and start them somewhere. The expectation
of a returned manuscript is better than no excitement at all.

I have thinking up a little scheme for the summer, but shall make
no promises, even if it is agreeable to you. I think you first suggested something
of the kind. My scheme is to make a mutual translation of the Antigone. You
might find pleasure and profit in wanting out a version from your version
of the play, keeping the Greek spirit as much as possible, and in finding me
in the choice of words and suggestions as to the character effect of my verses. My
choice would be to make it in the main unrhymed depending upon soundness and
pretentiousness for the effect. If the thing should prove anything like a success
we might have a small edition printed at the cost of an ordinary indulgence
in the whole pleasure. A title page something like the one sent to you:

"The Antigone of Sophocles: A Translation by Harry de Forest Smith and Edwin
Arlyton Robinson. — An edition of fifty copies printed for private circulation.
Gadara, Maine. REPORTER-JOURNAL JOB PRESS (!) MOCCEXCIV."

This will probably end up like the stone house on the hill, but we have
a right to build castles in Spain or where we please. This is a kind of a
Rampart Castle in Greece. I wonder if the shade of Sophocles is growing over
my shoulder as it were this? If he is, I suppose to know how the

thing is coming out. The one great objection to this performance is the time it would take. The question is, would the time be well spent? Somehow all my schemes center the spending of money instead of the making of it. If time is money, I make every week a fortune every week. I suppose I shall keep on doing this and live from hand to mouth all the days of my life. Sometimes the realization of my non-success does for me in my life what a bottle of arsenic does for a man. The it clears away and I am full of hope again. The hope that I am doing it right - no matter how much labor it may require as the step that keeps me from getting on in the world, is the practical one say. You, who are making a living, cannot imagine how cutting it is for a man of thirty-four to depend upon his mother for any cent he has and very thankful he swallows. But I won't dwell long upon this, - I hope to hear the dog in the manger.

I have my French lessons with Lelike & Martin's for comedy "Le Poudre aux yeux". This volume will give me considerable pleasure, not to a good thing from an educational point of view. A change now of the elements of the language will be a good thing for me.

Well, my papers are getting shabby, and my writing correspondingly illegible; so I will stop here and await your opinion of the "hexagonal" business. I shall probably be the one to throw up the sponge, but still it is worth trying over. Hoping for a letter to-morrow, I remain,

Your servant,
E. A. 17.