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Gardner, Feb 25. '94.

My dear Smith

There is a kid asleep in the next room
so to-day I shall use a few instead of the machine,
hoping you may be able to make out what I write
after a little struggle. - In the first place, what are you
having for dinner down in Rockland? This morning
at seven o'clock our thermometer stood -20° in New Sun.
I like cold weather but this is a little too much even for
me. I shiver, shiver, in fact rather at such a time.

The past week has been a rather dull one for
me and pretty much wasted. I have not been able to
do much of my work, for some reason I cannot explain.
I have felt well enough bodily but I have been in a bad
mood. Yesterday I partially drove it off by making a
round-trip to the lake and a rickshaw. The latter is a little
mystical perhaps and is an attempt to show the

feeling of the commonplace. As it is, - you may judge
for yourself. Will you read your letter of it and do not
be afraid of hurting my feelings.

The House on the Hill.
(Villanelle of Departure.)

They are all gone away,
The house is shut and still:
There is nothing more to say.

What else is there to say,
We cannot do them ill:
They are all gone away.

Are we more fit than they
To meet the Master's will? -
There is nothing more to say.

What matters it who stray
Around the sunken sick? -
They are all gone away,

And we for fancy play
For there is wanted skill:
There is nothing more to say.

There is ruin and decay
In the House on the Hill:
They are all gone away,
There is nothing more to say.

This kind of thing may not interest you much, and
I have no doubt to say so if that be the case. Then
all French forms always had a fascination for me which I
never expect to outgrow. I don't know that I can do out-
grow it, but still it interferes with my own serious work
to a considerable extent. When one of the things began to
run in my mind there is little left for me until it is
out. Fortunately this one was made very quickly (in about
half an hour) so did not waste much of my time.

I have been studying a good deal lately about the
"Antiquary" scheme. I like it and would like to carry it out;
but I am half afraid that the double bond of that and my
own work will be quite too much. On the other hand,
the time and trouble might be a good investment for the practice
it would give me in the choice and arrangement of words. Per-
haps one had better try it and see how fast one progresses.
I cannot hardly hope to average more than ten lines a day,
at that rate the thing would be done in about a year if
I had the usual idea of the length of the drama. Isn't it
somewhat like the thousand lines. I should not expect
hardly to be able to manage myself with the work and
the few lines and see you remain - a little at a time.

At this rate we ought to do a thousand lines during your
vacation which would be a fine start. I am inclined
to look up the whole, but the time would be well
spent. I am now situated it is a question
of convenience rather than labor. When I have one day
into which to work out, I have a moral right to
let such a laborious announcement interfere with it? that
is the trouble. It is a little difficult with you, as you
are making a living and have the room to improve as well
you may. I have recently seen the Latin version in a
part of the kind from my past exposure in translating
Virgil and an ode from Horace. In the "day of my youth"
about eight years ago I put the whole of Cicero's post-
ulcari great lecture into blank verse. I kept it for
you and came to think to some extent the delay of
giving the thing to. I remember I am glad it would be the
same with Antigone, except of course I should go into the
work with much more earnestness. I have a firm belief
that the thing will be done, and that we shall be
really glad that we have done it. It is no small
undertaking, and must reflect some credit upon the man who
does it right - in thought it is a questionable success.

In your letter we could take look upon the business
and feel that we had left the common sense of men and
at least strive for higher things. When the thing is completed
(if it can be) it would be a good plan for you to submit it
to some Brussels men whom you think well qualified to test
its merits for all points of view - that is, if you are upon
sufficiently familiar terms with any of them to warrant your
asking so much. If it were sent for anything it would be
folly not to presume it is fruit. I should prefer to do
the natural work without having seen any printed translation
whatever - the I could feel that I was not imitating. I
should not expect text to follow the form of the lines (a
knowledge of the alphabet would be enough for that) and I
think it would be a good plan for you to try the text
you mentioned in your letter. I do not mean that I in-
tend to attempt anything like a reproduction of the Greek notes -
my idea is merely to suggest a little of the original form to
the American eye - thus forming an easier resemblance
between the translation and the Greek text.

I trust your letter of last Monday will well
interfere with your writing to-day.

Yours sincerely
E. A. Robinson