

Gardner, Maine,  
May 6-1894.

My dear Smith,

This is a model day to read "Lifes Little  
Francis" and Melvins "La Mucumbra", as I shall probably do  
when I finish the letter. - Let me say, to begin with,  
that I have been so stoned up with spring work and other  
things during the past week that I have had no chance  
to go out to your house; and I doubt if I go to-day, unless  
it stops raining. I must go soon, however, and shall send  
you Matthew Arnolds counter the week, - probably Monday or  
Tuesday.

I am nothing else of me for the next three or four weeks  
but hard work - not with my fancy but with my hands;  
which, I suppose, is really better for my general economy.  
I think I need something of that kind in my present lone-  
liness. When you get back, everything will seem different; but  
until then I must live it out as best I can. The only  
thing to do is to keep busy at something, it does not matter  
much what. On Day week I shall take a journey trip to  
Cambridge, for steamer, and thus shake the dust of "this"

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my town of Vassalboro" from my feet for a few days. I  
cannot afford the trip, but I must do something. A week  
with Inya, Ford, and Butler would put new life into me,  
although the feeling that the best of my friends have turned  
their backs is not pleasant. That is the way of this life:  
we meet and get acquainted, and then we are scattered over the  
country - hundreds of miles apart. As long as you are in  
Maine and Butler in Boston and the others in Cambridge, I  
feel that I have someone near me; but when the time comes  
for you all to change your locations, God only knows how I  
shall feel. There is no prospect of my getting out of Maine  
for a long time to come, and I sometimes find myself almost  
wishing that you would find any better location than you now  
occupy, to get you into new fields. Of course there are not  
genius feelings, <sup>and</sup> but you will understand me well enough not  
to lay anything up against me for what I say. I have had  
a horrible case of the blues during the past fortnight and  
my feelings must be to some extent reflected in my words. So  
take them for what they are worth, and don't call me a  
jackass.

Yesterday morning I sent off my three sketches, but have hardly  
thought of them since. I am getting more and more convinced that

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that they do not amount to anything, and that they will soon come back with perhaps a little faint power, having me just when I was before I sent them. I am afraid I have made a faint blunder in this literary business. Now I am in my thirty-fifth year, with certainly no prospects, no money, and not much hope. Still, I lack the energy to upset the whole scheme of my life and face the world with benighted ideas. If I must do this someday, I can furnish the result - a head to mouth creature picked up by odd jobs during the rest of my days. However, when this droning of work is over, I shall wish down to hard work once more - harder work than I have ever yet done - and wait for the issue. I am one of those unfortunate souls who must have a little encouragement before they can put their heart into what they do. In my business, this encouragement is necessarily slow to come, and, even then, alarmingly uncertain.

Yesterday I received a long personal letter from John, who intended to sail for England in the middle of this month. It makes me feel queer to think he is going away, but that is the way of things. Good letters from you, Ford and Butler also made the last week marked with something pleasant, so I have not been so badly off, after all. A letter from a friend is an event in my life (did you say something like this, once or a time?) and without them I

should be where I can <sup>141</sup> once ~~take~~ have the front balcony of  
the Holly St. Theater ~~in front~~. He would be without his  
books - in hell. I. has a way of getting in public which  
is characteristic, and at times embarrassing to the man who asks  
him questions.

The Dial has not yet taken the trouble to send back my  
contribution. It seems to me a quite lack of courtesy, but I sup-  
pose editors have the right to do as they please. I have  
my shoes, though I have only known when they will be paid for.

As I look out of the window now, it seems to me that  
all the world needs the washing of a getting. Everything looks dirty,  
the sky most of all. I fancy I am dirty - myself, and a  
few but not make up a part of the day's progress. I can  
be clean if I cannot be contented.

Forgive me for thus making my life on you, and hope  
for something in a more cheerful vein with work. Just at  
present, I do not see much to make me laugh - so shall  
not try to.

Most sincerely

E. A. R.