

Gardner, Mass.  
Jan 20 - 1895

My dear Smith,

Here is another book gone by, and I wonder what  
I have to show for it. A lot of thinking - music for me if  
Riley poems - a little reading, and 3000 words (some meetings) of  
my misadventure story which I fancy we never trouble that I did  
not apprehend. - that of keeping the idea of destiny even present  
without saying much about it. The story is pretty stiff and ends  
with bullets and smoke - worthy enough, I fancy, but for all that,  
I expect to call it sensational. I hope you will be at better  
than you did the one I read you during your vacation, but  
I rather think you will call it strained. It is funny that you and  
I have such different ideas of human logic. What intending to  
depend my self at all. I must say that the two operations in  
Pembroke give my misadventure something of a stretch while the dis-  
appearance of my strong man is quite natural. Do not mistake my  
in this and think that I mean compare my story with Mrs  
Wickens's - that is not the idea.

Yesterday I fell upon to reckoning up how much stuff I shall  
put into my book (?). After cutting out all my nonsense I find  
that there will be anywhere from 350 to 400 pages, about #  
300 words to the page. This seems to me a little too large  
however, and I shall probably work it down.

I am now reading the Marx man again and am beginning to feel its proximity. All those chapters about the wedding are a waste of time and paper, but its so easy enough to see the cultural plan. Book the (Man + Wife) ought (from the point of view of paper) to have been over by this time and pretty well everything else met it. Cain is a first volume but not just enough to know his own intentions, and who is? Hardy surely isn't, but the Hardy will be just after Cain is totally forgotten. As to work to something in it that cannot be found in the Marx man - something that I cannot define if you are not quite willing to agree with me, and "The Form the Wedding Crowd" or "The Formless" - particularly the first named, then you will find something that you have never seen before and I am afraid, you will never see again - modernized Shakespeare comedy. The bulk of the book however, is something very different from that - mental tragedy, then it is like the Marx man but the Marx man, unfortunately, is not like that.

It is only when compared with the very few books of the year that excel it that this book is seen up with balance and that fact shows how good a thing it is, I am glad for the chance of reading it - but I cannot think of it as the "best" of "book of the year" - even after "The Old Time". Its size and elaboration are likely to dazzle one at first but one is conscious of a vast number of forgotten and unremembered chapters by its bulk to a large though it. The sheer ease and beauty of the prose is a pleasure to read.

Skinner makes me think of the Chap Book. A book that depicts a little of the life and work of a man's reading. I hope now to a little sketch of by Kenneth Johnson, called "The Secret Drawer". I do not know when I have seen a

little sketch that has interested me so much as that, or satisfied me half so much. It took an effort to see that of writing it. Mr Bradley's book plate is, according to my notion, well drawn, but I do not think I should care to put in my copy of DeForest's essays. People are going to my room day after day of the black + white business and demand something more tangible. Here is a book-plate which may please you.

H. DE FOREST SMITH,  
HIS  
BOOK  
Number 327.

I merely suggest this as an antidote for the modern craze. My only intention is to make you think a little of the things that sometimes are so simple.

On page xxii (advertising) of the Holiday Critic you had found an advertisement of book publisher of the Chap Book Co. If you have not already noticed it you may like to look it over. I have not yet heard from the Chap Book or from Diffenbach's so far as I know in my little corner of my collection of books. We please seem to have forgotten my request for papers and I have spoken to Briggs<sup>SS</sup>. I cannot make much excitement from the houses or see anything else but the one subject I am much up in. When I arrange I may collect birds eggs.

Very truly yours  
E.A.C.

HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

BOOK



*Robinson, Edwin*

*Mr. H. A. Smith*

*FX*