

Dear Sir:

I send you the accompanying volume as a long deferred acknowledgement of indebtedness. Of course every American writer is indebted in no slight degree to the history of American literature but perhaps no other in a greater degree than myself. France as it may seem the bias of heredity and environment so graphically depicted as the most important elements of each life - the key of each one's character - in the Autocrat and Elsie Venner, became shaping forces in my literary life. Following sharp upon the publication of Elsie Venner came the work of Stollenwerk, now that I know something of each in France, that it must have hurt the sale and consequent ranking of the book in popular favor. It did not in mine, I own almost he said to have enlisted with it in my pocket, and on the shelf near me ~~are~~ now the same ~~time~~ covered to volumes I then bought.

Following close upon the reading of <sup>these</sup> ~~the~~ ~~work~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~in~~ ~~camp~~ ~~and~~ ~~Prison~~ a work of enforced study of Victor Hugo, ~~of~~ ~~deep~~ ~~impressions~~ ~~and~~ ~~leading~~ ~~me~~ ~~to~~ ~~apply~~ ~~the~~ ~~system~~ ~~of~~ ~~estimate~~ ~~which~~ ~~you~~ ~~so~~ ~~deftly~~ ~~fitted~~ ~~to~~ ~~in~~ ~~individual~~ ~~lives~~ ~~much~~ ~~more~~ ~~closely~~ ~~but~~ ~~not~~ ~~less~~ ~~conscientiously~~ ~~to~~ ~~nations~~ ~~and~~ ~~peoples~~ ~~and~~ ~~to~~ ~~general~~ ~~sentiments~~ ~~and~~ ~~ideas~~.

As you have come to estimate the man  
by his ~~inherited~~ ~~as man~~ as affected by his <sup>own</sup> ~~inherent~~  
physical and mental attributes, I have come  
always to regard him as flexed and colored by  
his inheritance of moral bias and political  
environment. I have ~~come~~ see men and women  
against the background of public sentiment  
<sup>affected for good or evil by</sup> ~~with the bias of justice~~  
~~with the measurement of~~ inherited ideals. It has given me a field in  
which I have wrought with constantly  
increasing pleasure and glory back to  
think of the forces that have shaped my own  
Karma. A chance expression in the "Leaves"  
set me to tracing this subtle thread of influ-  
ence.

As an author I have not ~~been~~ ~~large~~ ~~has~~ ~~many~~ ~~such~~ ~~debts~~  
to pay. In common with all who think and feel I am the debtor  
~~from~~ ~~writers~~ ~~seem~~ ~~to~~ ~~have~~ ~~thought~~ ~~of~~ ~~having~~  
of all who have thought and felt before; but those writers were  
the effect of general conditions in particular like  
many who have ~~thought~~ ~~of~~ ~~attempted~~ ~~to~~ ~~trace~~ ~~the~~ ~~threads~~ ~~of~~ ~~that~~  
or of looking for the causes of great events in  
back to the causes from which they sprang ~~and~~ ~~of~~ ~~defining~~ ~~included~~,  
the inherited tendencies of succeeding generations. To  
those you are among who have ~~been~~ ~~shown~~ ~~to~~ ~~you~~ ~~seem~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~acted~~  
this I was no doubt pre-<sup>disposed</sup> ~~disposed~~ by your works and  
irresistibly compelled by the grandeur, intimacy and  
apparently unaccountable character of the great

creations which any young eyes looked and  
<sup>sublimely</sup> long half-awakened faces faculties strive to meas-  
ure.

These facts ~~as~~ with others have perhaps compelled  
a sort of solitariness in ~~of~~ my literary life and  
the tendency however, derived has perhaps tended to  
a loss of accepted artistic form but it brought me  
at least to paint the background carefully and  
to ~~be~~ ~~always~~ ~~present~~ at all times an abiding  
sense of the central fact that humanity is  
greater than man and that every today is the ~~beginning~~

~~of~~ fated child of all the yesterdays. It is this quality  
no doubt which has given my works a shell of their own and a  
distinctive flavor <sup>which whether good or bad represents my intellectual</sup>  
aimed - the flickering spark which the future will call by my name. <sup>Believe that</sup>  
when the greatest novelist shall come - that long expected <sup>successor</sup>  
common debt of love and admiration  
literature - he will see and do feel life more in its environment  
and its inheritance, projected against its present and its past <sup>rather</sup>  
than to thrust your and trust that the fact will  
come by introspection and morbid self-analysis <sup>partly</sup>  
bring you pleasure enough to excuse this

intrusion upon the golden moments which no one  
has a right to appropriate to himself since they are  
~~the~~ ~~rich~~ ~~the~~ ~~rich~~ inheritance of a world already ~~unhappy~~  
resentful that they are not self-renewing.

Please do not feel compelled to make any  
acknowledgement of this. I realize how great a

burden such necessity must be to you and  
only have wished to convey to you a knowledge  
of this evident and yet singular obligation.

You will pardon my employment of the type = writer  
since my health, presently, I trust not permanently, forbids  
that I should do otherwise.

With sincerest congratulations on your  
latest <sup>work and</sup> ~~and abiding gratitude for all the joy~~  
~~you have~~ ~~gratitude~~ grateful that the fountain still  
apparently exhumeth fountain still sends  
forth sweet waters, I remain

~~Kennedy Grows~~