

Friday, Feb 21. 1849 X
Paris
44 Bd Hausemann

My dear people, I shall tell you as soon as I am able to come over: and I can say no more. How can I? I hope it will be very soon; but it cannot be immediately. I did not answer my father's proposal by return of post, as he asked, simply because I hoped I should be able to give a more definite and satisfactory answer; but I cannot yet.

I am so glad to hear that Janie is better. What a pitiful thing about Chalmers! the bulletin looks bad. I hope he will pull round; for he is one of the best people going.

Do you know who is my favorite author just now? How are the mighty fallen! Anthony Trollope. I batter on him; he is so nearly wearying you, and yet he never does; or rather, he never does, until he gets near the end, when he begins to wear you from him so that you're as pleased to be done with him as you thought you would be sorry.

I wonder, if it's old age? It is a little, I am sure. A
young person would get sickened by the dead level of
meanness and cowardliness; you require to be a little
spoiled and cynical before you can enjoy it. I have just
finished the way of the world; there is only one person in it,
no there are 3 - who are nice: the wild American woman, and
two of the dissipated young men, Dolly and L^d Biddlebale. All
the heroes and heroines are just ghastly. But what a
triumph is Lady Carbury! What is real, sound, strong,
genuine work: the man who could do that if he had
had courage, might have written a fine book; he has
preferred to write any readable one. I meant to write
such a long, nice letter, but I cannot hold the pen

R. L. S.

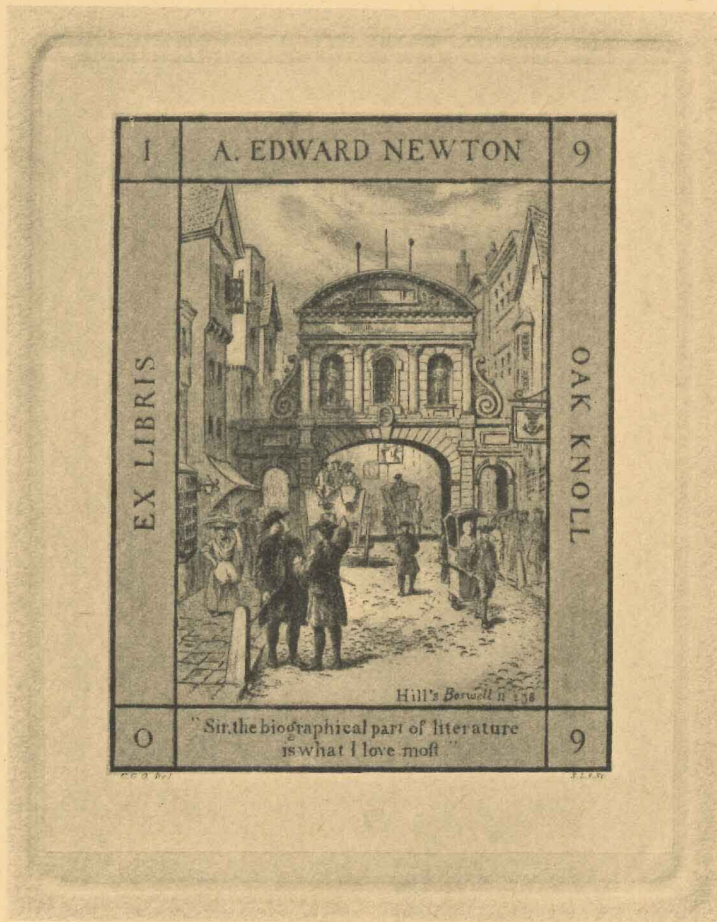
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COLLECTION OF
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317

R.L.S.



317

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, A. L. S., 21 February 1878,
to his parents, the Thomas S. Stevensons.

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44 B^d Haussmann^{Paris}

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R. L. S.

ALS, 2 pages. Single sheet, 21.7 x 13.5 cm.

Laid paper. No watermark.

Provenance: Anderson Galleries, 17 Feb 1916 (with sale slip for

lot 63); Newton sale, 30 Oct 1941 (no. 317). In a Newton manila folder, with loose Newton bookplate.

Unpublished first two paragraphs. The remainder of the letter has been published, for example (with 1 substantive and 8 accidental variations from the Lewis MS), in *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. Sidney Colvin (London: Methuen, 1921), I, 262–263.

Notes: 1. Stevenson's base of operations was France during most of 1878. He did not return to Edinburgh until 14 July 1879.

2. I cannot identify either Janie or Chalmers.

3. He should have given Trollope credit for writing *The Way We Live Now*.

4. Here published by permission of Methuen & Company, Ltd., 11 New Fetter Lane, London, E.C.4.

newborn, Nov. 14
» 317 « STEVENSON, ROBERT L. • A.L.s. "R.L.S." 2 pp., 8vo, [Paris] Friday, February 21, 1878. About 260 words addressed to his father and mother.

A FINE LETTER regarding Stevenson's literary tastes: "...Do you know who is my favorite author just now? How are the mighty fallen! Anthony Trollope. I batten on him; he is so nearly wearying you, and yet he never does; or rather he never does until he gets near the end, when he begins to wean you from him so that you're as pleased to be done with him as you thought you would be sorry... I have just finished the 'Way of the World'; there is only one person in it, no, there are 3—who are nice: the wild American woman, and two of the dissipated young men... But what a triumph is Lady Carbury! That is real, sound, strong, genuine work..."

63. A. L., signed with initials. 2 pp. 8vo [Paris, Feb. 21, 1878]. Partly unpublished.

* To his father and mother, "*My dear people.*" Fine literary letter, reading in part: "*Do you know who is my favorite author just now? How are the mighty fallen! Anthony Trollope. I batten on him; he is so nearly wearying you, and yet he never does; or rather he never does, until he gets near the end, when he begins to wean you from him so that you're as pleased to be done with him as you thought you would be sorry . . . I have just finished the 'Way of the World'; there is only one person in it, no, there are 3—who are nice: the wild American woman, and two of the dissipated young men . . . But what a triumph is Lady Carbury! That is real, sound, strong, genuine work: the man who could do that if he had the courage, might have written a fine book,*" etc.

Amerson!
July 17, 1916.

Ag.