



[Letter to Robert D. Clark,
February 9, 1921.](#)

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Conceded ass! says Bob.

and I don't blame ^{you} ~~you~~ for saying so, neither do I blame anybody much for anything. The only lesson I've learned from life is that there's no lesson to be learned from life.

Have you read Main Street? It's a great book. Had a letter from Sinclair Lewis telling me we must ^{at} expect our books to sell in St. Paul. I expect my new one, just completed, "The Beautiful and Damned" to be barred from the St. Paul library — by the wives of Mr. Frost and Mr. Kitchy — and Mr. Severance.

Don Stewart owing he can stand business no longer has come to N.Y. to take up writing. He's a knock out, I think.

But really Bob, fond as I am of you, I do think that was a silly letter to write me.

Come on next time look us up when you do.

Faithfully

W. D. Howells

petty politicians and jibney messiahs of their
day that real people wouldn't stand it.
And the merchants and messiahs, the
shrewd & the dull, are dust — and the
others live on.

Just occasionally a man like Shaw
who was called an immoralist 50 times worse
than me back in the 90 ties, lives
on long enough so that the world grows
up to him. What he believed in 1890
was heresy then — by by now it's
almost respectable. It seems to me I've
let myself be dominated by "authorities" for
too long — The headmaster of Newman, S. P. A,
Princeton, my regiment, my business boss —
who knew no more than me, in fact I should
say these 5 were all distinctly my
mental inferiors. And that's all that counts!
The Rousseaus, Marxes, Tolstois. — men of
thought, mind you, "unpractical" men, "idealists"
have done more to decide the food you eat

and the things you think & do than all the millions of Roosevelts and Rockefellers that strut for 20 yrs. or so mouthing such phrases as 100% American (which means 99% village idiot), and die with a little pleasing flattery to the silly and cruel old God. They've set up in their hearts.

A letter

Stratford-on-Avon
June 8th 1895

Dear Will:

Your ~~parents~~ family here are much ashamed that you could write such a bawdy play as *Troilus* and *Cressida*. All the real people here (Mr. Reef, the butcher and Mr. Strunk, the village undertaker) say they will not be satisfied with a brilliant mind and a pleasant manner. If you really ~~can~~ want to comment to something you've got to be respected for yourself as well as your work.

affectionately
your mother, Mrs. Shakespear

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J. Scott Fitzgerald



Mr. Robert D. Clark
Virginia Ave near Summit
St. Paul, Minn

*Miss Johnson
St. Paul, Minn*

#12,021

38 W 59th St.
New York City
Feb 9th 1920

Dear Bob:

Your letter riled me to such an extent that I'm answering immediately. Who are all these "real people" who "create business and politics"? and of whose approval I should be so covetous? Do you mean grafters who keep sugar in their warehouses so that people have to go without or the cheapies who by bribery and high-school sentiment manage to control elections. I can't pick up a paper here without finding that some of these "real people" who will not be satisfied only with "a brilliant mind" (I quote you) have just gone up to Sing Sing for a stay - Brindell and Bergerman, two pillars of society, went this morning.

Who in hell ever respected Shelley, Whitman, Poe, O'Henry, Verlaine, Swinburne, Villon, Shakespeare and when they were alive. Shelley & Swinburne were forced from college; Verlaine & O'Henry were in jail. The rest were drunkards or wastrels and told generally by the merchants and

petty politicians and jibney messiahs of their day that real people wouldn't stand it and the merchants and messiahs, the shrewd & the dull, are dust — and the others live on.

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