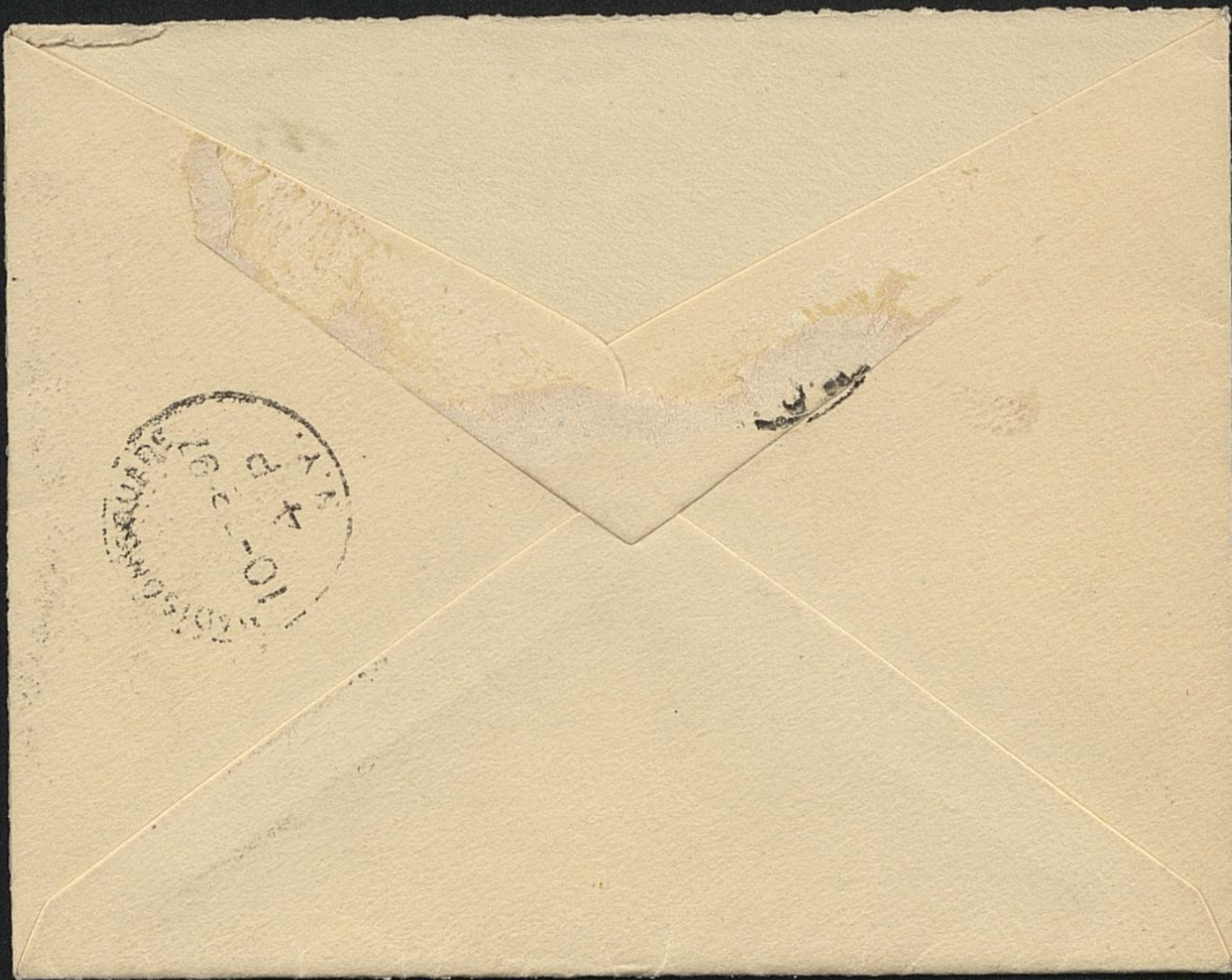


1897



E. D. Northey
of Scribners
153 Fifth Avenue
New York.
U. S. a.



I should certainly not attempt to prove that the publication was not calculated to have this effect - as all our experts here are agreed that it has. But I should find out what is the extreme market value of the letter unpublished, & offer this, or a fair proportion of it, to my tormentors solicitor, & if he would not accept it, pay it into Court & bring evidence to show that it was enough. Possibly you can't do this in America, & possibly costs are not as ruinous there as here. In England such an action would probably cost the defendant £50 if he won it, and about £250 if he lost, and as the letter can't be worth £25 I should certainly play for safety if your rules permit it. I gather from Plomer that the trade here would value the letter at less than a pound, but that seems to me an underestimate. ^{the 7 ans. agreed to Holland}
I am paying Plomer One Guinea on your behalf.

13 Chemiston Gardens.

October 18th, 1897

My dear North,

I am sorry indeed to hear of your trouble. I think it probable that your letter was part of either lot 455 or 456 of Thorpe's autograph sale of May 15th 1869. Lot 455 contained nine letters from Hor. Smith to Hill & fetched 5/- being bought by Montague, lot 456 contained five letters & fetched 3/-. I traced these from ^{13. Mrs. Smith} ~~my~~ index to Puttick's sale which unfortunately stops before 1860, but no extracts were given in the catalogue, and I have

been able to trace nothing later.
I put Plomer on at once, and
he has searched later Sale
Catalogues, the Index to the Attendium
as far as 1876 (when it ceases to
be easily consultable) & notes &
Inquiries. He has also been to
Pearson, Ellis & Elvey & all the
principal autograph dealers in
London. They agree in saying
that the pecuniary value of
the letter is too small (sic)
for it to be at all likely for

extracts to be given from it in a
sale-catalogue. By way of doing
all that is possible I will write
to Canon Amiger & ask him, if he
has ever heard of this letter (I have
already asked Garnett) & will let
Plomer on to hunt thro the rest of
the Attendium. I don't anticipate
any success, however. In England
I doubt if any such action would
stand, as the owner of a private
letter possesses no copyright in it.
But if the action were brought against
me for depreciating the value of
the letter without the owner's consent,