

Colby



Colby College
Digital Commons @ Colby

Edwin Arlington Robinson Letters and
Transcriptions

Edwin Arlington Robinson Community

11-7-1891

To Harry de Forest Smith - November 7, 1891

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.colby.edu/robinson_transcriptions

Recommended Citation

Robinson, Edwin Arlington, "To Harry de Forest Smith - November 7, 1891" (1891). *Edwin Arlington Robinson Letters and Transcriptions*. 45.

http://digitalcommons.colby.edu/robinson_transcriptions/45

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Edwin Arlington Robinson Community at Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Edwin Arlington Robinson Letters and Transcriptions by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Colby. For more information, please contact mfkelly@colby.edu.

TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

Cambridge, Mass^a, Nov^b 7 – '1891^c

My Dear Smith,--

As I shall not have an opportunity to write to-morrow I will take the time now. Since writing last I have taken two examinations: Eng. Rhet. & Comp. and Shakespeare. The latter was positively awful. I probably made a failure of it, but that fact may not be vital. Exams are due in Eng. Prose Writers of the XIXth cent. and in French. The former comes next Friday, and I shall have to grind in order to meet it. I have an idea, in fact I know, it will be more of an historical than a literary test, and if there is any one thing that I cannot learn it is biography. If the questions were to be of an essentially aesthetic character I should have but little fear as to the result; but as

-2-

it is, I am a little nervous.

I have succeeded in dropping Anglo-Saxon at last, but it has taken me three weeks to do it. With the four studies I now have, I find but little time for outside work or diversion. The trouble is I have forgotten, if I ever knew, how to follow a system of prescribed study. I have not read a book outside of the prescribed work since I came. There are a few that I want to read very much; for instance, F^d Marion Crawford's Khaled, Witch of Prague, Cigarette-maker's Romance; Thomas Hardy's Laodicean, Group of Noble Dames; Andrew Lang's Helen of Troy (poems)¹ & his philosophical & religious books.

I rec'd a letter from Gledhill a while ago; he seems to be the leading spirit in Canton "University",^e
 eight
 is taking ~~twelve~~ courses & is a great club man.²

^a WA adds a period here.

^b WA adds a period here.

^c WA omits the mark that looks like an single quotation mark at the beginning of the year.

^d WA adds a period here.

^e WA places the comma within the quotation mark.

-3-

Well, Art always had the faculty of making himself popular. He is a good fellow and I wish him all success.

In the last Scribner you will see a poem by William Vaughan Moody; he is a Junior here.³ I am not acquainted with him, but as soon as I get fairly straightened out, if I ever do, I purpose to make a strong attempt to get in with the literati of Harvard. My ballad may help me out a little, and it may not. I sent my "Villanelle of Change"⁴ into the Advocate a day or two ago, but have not yet heard from it. I have a long meter triolet in my mind dealing with passion & death (that is the stuff we need) and when it is materialized I shall try to get it published. I have an idea that it is a fairly good thing in its way.

-4-

¶ I have not written those essays on Godwin & Jeffrey yet, but will have to before next Friday. I wrote one yesterday on "Miss Edgeworth & Sir W. Scott." English 9 is a splendid course, but it requires a good deal of time for preparation. Mr. Gates is a man to be envied. He is a proctor in Matthews Hall, and instructor in English. Only has one course. He may not get a princely salary, but the surroundings and the honor will easily make up for a good deal.

It is later than I thought. I have to go to lecture in eight minutes. Will have to jump. Excuse errors as I have no time to read it over^g

Your &^h

Robinsonⁱ

HCL US, 36-38.

^f WA indents this line, though it is not indented in the holograph.

^g WA adds a period here.

^h WA reads "Yours truly" here.

ⁱ WA omits the underline.

NOTES

1. Harvard College Library records show that EAR borrowed Lang's book in 1891.
2. Gledhill was studying at St. Lawrence University, Canton, N.Y.
3. Moody's poem "Dolorosa," *Scribner's Magazine*, X (November 1891), 620. William Vaughn Moody was to become both rival and friend a bit later. For further details, see Donaldson p. 186-92^j and EAR's letters to Moody.
4. Written in 1890.

^j WA has "see p." here, but did not include any page numbers, possibly not having the book at hand. Since I am not sure which text he had in mind, I have supplied these page numbers from Donaldson, the most recent biographer of EAR, as being the most relevant to the two poets' relationship.