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4-20-1891

## To Arthur R. Gledhill - April 20, 1891

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO ARTHUR R. GLEDHILL

Gardiner, April 20, 1891.

Dear Friend Art:,-

I was very sorry to hear of your trouble mentioned in your letter and will ask you to try to believe me a human being when I say that I sincerely hope that everything will come out all right. I should like very much to see that engagement materialize and trust it will at no very distant date.

Now let me say a few words in explanation of that letter "indicative of a sort of mental depression or perhaps the expression of someone in love". To tell the truth I wrote [=wrote] that mess more to see what you would say in reply that [=than] for any other reason. As to its sincerity, of course the idea is ridiculous. I have these spells of moralizing occasionally, and considering the sentiment expressed from the standpoint of pschycological<sup>a</sup> affinity, there may be some chance for an argument in its favor. But I can assure you that I entertain no such notions; and as to your letters being dry and uninteresting of late, I have never thought of such a thing. So make your mind easy on that subject, and have no fear of my growling provided you write often enough. For that matter, the dry letters come from this end. I fear: I never was much of a hand at friendly correspondence, as you have undoubtedly discovered long before. this

When I first heard of your idea [of] coming down to Maine to preach this summer, I will confess that I was a little staggered; but upon a serious consideration (or sober afterthought) of the matter, I have concluded that it is quite an idea. I should judge that it might take some nerve, but as you are liberally supplied with that material, you will probably get along all <sup>b</sup> right.

Since last writing to you I have read three more of Thomas Hardy's novels, viz., "The Hand of Ethelberta", "Far From the Madding Crowd", and "Under the Greenwood Tree". The first mentioned is a poor thing considered as a story : it is altogether too long. to begin with, and unquestionably lacks interest. The most unsatisfactory part of it all is, that the author constantly displays the masters touch, falling like a summer sun upon a barren waste - where it fails in its mission. In reaging {=reading} the book one is continually thinking of what the author might have done with half

<sup>a</sup> WA corrects EAR's misspelling, and has "psychological".

<sup>b</sup> WA omits this mark, which appears to be a crossed-out "l".

as many words. The other two, and especially the second, are in every way successful. In short they are masterpieces; tales of country life in

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England, in which there is a marvelous mixture of pastoral humor and pathos. Tragedy is by no means forgotten, though Hardy is not so bloodthirsty as his contemporary Blackmore. Neither is he as great a novelist, all things considered; but in his own way it seems to me that he stand[s] without an equal. His books are sprinkled with short ~~passag~~<sup>c</sup> passages abounding in wit and wisdom: for example, take the following: " If penny oranges cost a pound apiece, all the House of Lords would sit sucking them" That is from the first mentioned book, The Hand of Ethelberta. The Greenwood Tree is shorter and written in a lighter vein. Better read it if you get a chance.

Well, as I am beginning to rave on the old subject, I guess it is about time for me to stop. Now drive all that nonsense out of your head about your writing dry letters, and let me hear from you as often as convenient

Yours very truly

E. A. R.

HCL Typewritten.

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<sup>c</sup> WA omits this crossed-out partial word.