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To Harry de Forest Smith - February 7, 1892

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

Harvard University.

Cambridge, Mass., Feb^a 7 1892^b

My dear Smith,--

I shall ask you to excuse the brevity of my letter to-night, as I have a heap of work to do in preparation for the French examination. Three of the mid-years are passed, thank God, and only one is left. That troubles me more than all the others did, but I hope to get through it in some way.

Nine of us, including Geo. Barstow and his friend Mansway [?], took a night off^c in town yesterday and had a very comfortable time^d. At twelve o'clock the treasury of the whole party amounted to about \$1.75, so we decided to make an inspection of Bostons^e houses of seclusion.¹ We inspected eight between

-2-

midnight and 4.00 AM.^f finding everything satisfactory but the prices. I enclose a souvenir of the trip. Etta will be overjoyed to see you at any time. She is a robust creature and her fold is intensely "chic". I have no interest in them myself, but such a journey as we made may be beneficial as a study of humanity—or inhumanity. When we left the eighth house the \$1.75 remained intact. This is where we showed our prudence.

This will have to do this time. Pray be lenient

^a WA adds a period here.

^b Everything in red here is part of the printed Harvard stationary. The month, date and "2" for the year were written in black.

^c It is debatable whether the mark in the holograph where the second "f" should be is indeed meant for an "f", or is simply a stray mark, in which case EAR would have mistakenly written "of" and not "off" (though the latter was obviously his intention.) I have followed WA in transcribing "off".

^d WA adds a period here.

^e WA has "Boston's".

^f WA has "A.M."

with me and do not let this affect the
length of your next.

Sincerely,
Robinson.

HCL Omitted from *US* along with several others concerned with EAR's visits during this period to "Boston's houses of seclusion." Chad^g Powers Smith has written a sensitive and understanding account of these episodes and their significance in EAR's life and poetry. See *Where the Light Falls*, pp. 115-117.^h

NOTES

1. I.e., brothels.

^g WA has "Chad."

^h WA's manuscript reads "Omitted from US along with six others concerned with EAR's visits during this period to "Boston's houses of seclusion."" However, in the margin of his manuscript here WA penciled a note, evidently to himself: "NB not all 6 are about visits. Change or delete 6."