

Colby



Colby College
Digital Commons @ Colby

Edwin Arlington Robinson Letters and
Transcriptions

The Letters of Edwin Arlington Robinson: A
Digital Edition

2-21-1892

To Harry de Forest Smith - February 21, 1892

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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



Part of the [Literature in English, North America Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Robinson, Edwin Arlington, "To Harry de Forest Smith - February 21, 1892" (1892). *Edwin Arlington Robinson Letters and Transcriptions*. 59.

https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/robinson_transcriptions/59

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the The Letters of Edwin Arlington Robinson: A Digital Edition 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.

TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

1691 Cambridge St.,^a
 Cambridge Mass^b
 Feb^c 21-'92.

My dear Smith,

The weather is rather depressing outside, and I am afraid that it has affected my disposition; so if what I write be grouty¹ you must attribute it to the elements, not to me. I will start off, however, with Julia Marlowe², and so try to keep clear from any gloomy or complaining subject. Have seen her four times and like to see her in a dozen more pieces. The first piece was As You Like It. It was produced magnificently, and Jacques mimicking the Fool moralizing

-2-

on time was well worth the admission fee, which by the way is always fifty cents for me. The whole thing was about as fine as it could be, and was by far the finest acting that I have ever seen on any stage. I next saw her in Romeo & Juliet which was excellent but not so satisfactory. Then came ~~like~~ Twelfth Night which was simply "out of sight". Sir Andrew's duel was great, and Sir Toby was a fairy. Last Thursday evening I went in with the Kentuckian (Johnson) to see "Cymbeline". This play is something of a rarity nowadays and brought forth Bostons^d "culchaw"³ to the theatre's full capacity.⁴ The play was very large. You have read it, of course, and know the character of it; and you will doubtless wonder how it can be produced with anything like fidelity to the text.

^a WA reads "St.,".

^b WA has "Cambridge, Mass."

^c WA adds a period here.

^d WA has "Boson's".

-3-

The answer is this: they study their parts and recite them. Of course the most pointed passages are omitted, but enough is retained to answer all ordinary purpose. Yet with all the suggestiveness of the thing^e it is not really objectionable^f. Female virtue is displayed in such a glorious light that one forgets all about the other side. The bed-room scene created a little tittering on the part of some gallery gods and goddesses, but that soon quieted down. It must have been a little embarrassing for the fair lady in bed though. But that all goes in society, and they are devilish glad to get it.

There was quite a jovial time at Saben's³ room last night. There were nine of us, including Whitney & Barnard and two of the Cambridge police,^g who came around later and took quite an active part in the festivities. I retired about 1.30 A.M. and arose at eight, trying to decide whether to write a twenty-page thesis on Lamb and

-4-

Leigh Hunt. It will be something of a task but I have about concluded to do it, or try to. I shall also include Hazlitt, making the famous trio of essayists. This is how it came about.—Mr. Gates has offered to excuse anyone from the hour-examination in April who will ~~white~~ write a thesis on any subject coming under the course. That part (the excuse from the exam) does not amount to much, but I think it may be for my interest to write the thesis—both for getting into Gates's good graces, and for my own benefit. It means a heap of work, but I think I ^h can get through it after

^e WA has "things".

^f The holograph contains markings here which appear to be a single and a double quotation mark with a single line drawn through them. I have tried to suggest this here, as far as the limitations of this format allow, since it does seem part of EAR's text. His original intention was ostensibly to write "objectionable". In any case, WA omits this.

^g WA omits this comma.

^h WA reads "g".

a fashion. How about your coming up here in March. That month will soon be here, and you could not find a much better time to come. The theatres will be showing some of their best attractions then, and I think you will find Harvard a place worth seeing. Write and let me know what you think about it. Please note change of address. Sincerelyⁱ
Robinson.

HCL US, 54-55.

NOTES

1. That is, cross or surly. US reads "grunty."
2. Julia Marlowe (1865-1950) was a major English-American Shakespearean actress of the late 19th/early 20th centuries. This was still early in her career, which arguably hit its peak in the first two decades of the 20th century. (SL)
- 3.^j US reads "culchau."
4. See this letter's "additional files" for the relevant pages of the 1891-1892 programme of the Hollis St. Theatre in Boston (featuring Marlowe's company). (SL)
- 5.^k Israel Mowry Saben, iconoclastic friend of EAR and member of the Corn Cob Club. For further details, see Donaldson, pp. 79-81.^l

ⁱ WA starts the closing on the next line.

^j This is WA's note 2.

^k This is WA's note 3.

^l WA has "see p." without indicating either page numbers or title of text. I have supplied these relevant pages about Saben in this period from Donaldson.