4-24-1892

To Harry de Forest Smith - April 24, 1892

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

Harvard University,
Cambridge,
Apr 24 – '92

My dear Smith.--

I have had a visitor
to-day in the person of C.E. Longfellow.¹
I have considerable admiration for Chas,⁴ and am convinced that he will make
something of himself. He dazzled me a
little when he told me he was
engaged but I soon got over it. When
you tell me the same thing, I shall beg-
in to feel lonesome. As long as Barstow
holds off, though, I shall have com-
pany. I have more than half an idea
that there is some damsel or other (I
beg Prof² Hill's pardon) down where you
are who is slowly winding her coils

about your manly frame. I may
be wrong, but if I am it will not
be the first time. If it were not
for the mistakes we make life would
not be worth the living. Contrast is
a necessity. Without it there would be
no variety and without variety there
would not be much of anything. You may
think that my last statement has no
bearing upon my first, but⁵ am I am well
convinced that a life with no expectation
would be a damned dull affair. My
chief occupation nowadays is expecting.
I expect from seven o'clock in the morn-
ing until midnight. Just what I ex-
pect I cannot tell, but it is something.
Sometimes I have visions of a comfortable

¹ WA adds a period here.
² WA omits the period after "Smith".
³ WA reads a period here.
⁴ WA has a period here.
⁵ WA omits "but".
home with a wife, pipe, books, cat,

and all that sort of thing and again
I see myself in a garret without anything to keep the furnace of my stomach from growing cold. I may be put into a pauper's lot, or I may be stowed away with a respectable slab at my head with a pretty little lying epitaph telling how I loved my fellow-men and fed the poor. One thing is certain, I shall go somewhere. I do not worry much about it, though, as far as I am concerned personally, but I should like to do a little something on mother's account. Father never lived (I may as well say that) to see me anything but a parasite, and I have enough manhood in me to feel rather mean over it. Perhaps he could not ex-[pect me?]

do[=to] do much yet, but I am afraid that I have never showed much inclination to do anything. I know that he felt it when he had his reason, though he never said much. But then, this never can interest you and I had better stop before I go any farther. I am not in the blues, but merely realizing things a little. The French Club is going to put on Moliere's "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" May 9th and I have been reading it. Read two acts and do not think I shall have much trouble. I have to skip the choruses but that will not make much difference. Trusting I shall get a letter from you on Tuesday, I am,

Yours as ever,
Robinson

HCL Omitted from US.

f WA starts a new paragraph here.
NOTES

1. From Gardiner.