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To Harry de Forest Smith - April 24, 1892

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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Recommended Citation

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

**Harvard University,
Cambridge,**

Apr^a 24 – '92

My dear Smith.--^b

I have had a visitor to-day in the person of C.E. Longfellow.¹ I have considerable admiration for Chas,^c 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 begin to feel lonesome. As long as Barstow holds off, though, I shall have company. I have more than half an idea that there is some damsel or other (I beg Prof^d Hill's pardon) down where you are who is slowly winding her coils

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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, but^e 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 morning until midnight. Just what I expect I cannot tell, but it is something. Sometimes I have visions of a comfortable

^a WA adds a period here.

^b WA omits the period after "Smith".

^c WA reads a period here.

^d WA has a period here.

^e WA omits "but".

home with a wife, pipe, books, cat,

-3-

and all that sort of thing and again
I see myself in a garret without any-
thing to keep the furnace of my stom-
ach 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 tel-
ling 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?]

-4-

do[=to] do much yet, but I am afraid
that I ~~h~~ 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. ^fThe 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.