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To Harry de Forest Smith - May 2, 1892

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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Recommended Citation

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

1691 Cambridge St.,
Camb. May 2 – 1892.^a

My dear Smith,

I have received your letter and the picture. The latter seems to me a jag idealized. If you have kept a copy for yourself, destroy it for God's sake and mine. Do not think that I am finding fault with you—nothing of the kind. Besides the under-development of the negative I remember that I was looking into the sun. The natural consequence was that I squinted. Hence that diseased droop about the under eye-lids. At least that is a part of it. If I had that look naturally upon the day the thing was taken, you ought to [be] shot for not saying so. There is ~~an~~ [?] an appearance of a painful attempt to look very tough, also, which I never anticipated. I showed it to Johnson and he said, "Good God, Rob, you must have had a hell of a good time in

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Maine." I have always regretted that you did not photograph those cows. Then there would have been no insinuations.

I have been reading Fielding's "Amelia"¹ lately. It is rather startling at times, but undeniably tedious. More than that, the type is criminal. I shall have to read "Middlemarch"^{2b} right away to prepare myself for the Finals. I expect that Gates will require a liberal spew upon the work of that talented woman, and I had better be ready. I also have a big mess of Carlyle to read; likewise Matthew Arnold—and W. H. Mallock. Have you ever seen his (Mallock's) "New Republic".³ I do not know just what it is like but have [heard] it spoken of a good deal since I came here. By the way, have you read any of Hamlin Garland's stories. He has two running now—one in the Arena and one in the

^a WA omits the period.

^b WA did not mark this note in the text.

century.⁴ I hear that they are very good things

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in their line. There is a book just out by the author of "Dead Man's Rock"--published by Cassell. The title is "I Saw Three Ships, and other Winter Tales," by "Q."⁵ Dead Man's Rock is a roarer, and I think I shall buy this to see what it is like.

I have just written four pages on the character of Silas Marner,⁶ and seem to have exhausted my abilities in that direction. You will have to excuse this thing, but as I have said a score of times, will try to do better next Sunday. I don't quite understand what is the matter with me. I never could write a letter, but lately I cannot write an apology for one. Expect to find one from you to-morrow morning.

Very truly yours,
Robinson.^c

HCL US, 61-62.

NOTES

1. A sentimental domestic novel published by Henry Fielding (1707-1754) in 1751. (SL)
- 2.^d By George Eliot, published 1871-72.
3. William Hurreli Mallock (1849-1923), English author of philosophical and sociological works. *The New Republic* (1877) is a satirical commentary on English ideas and society, using contemporary figures, thinly disguised, including Matthew Arnold. See EAR's letter to Smith, June 5, 1892.
4. *A Spoil of Office* was running in the *Arena*; *Ol' Pap's Flaxen* in the *Century*. {Garland (1860-1940) is particularly remembered for his realist novels and stories of midwestern agrarian life.}
5. Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch (1863-1944).
6. George Eliot's novel, published in 1861.

^c WA omits the underline.

^d This and the following four notes are WA's numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.