5-2-1892

To Harry de Forest Smith - May 2, 1892

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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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 your-
self, 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-develop-
ment 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
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

-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 te-
dious. 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 Car-
lyle 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 run-
ning 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. I hear that they are very good things

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." 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, 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.

NOTES

1. A sentimental domestic novel published by Henry Fielding (1707-1754) in 1751. (SL)
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.}

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* WA omits the underline.
* This and the following four notes are WA's numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.