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To Harry de Forest Smith - May 9, 1892

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

1691 Cambridge St.

Cambridge, May 9 - '92.

My dear Smith,

I wrote you a letter Sunday but I was feeling so generally "out of sorts" that I concluded not to send the stuff that I wrote. I may not do much better to-day, but at least I hope to write in a little better vein than I did before. There is great excitement here now on account of the class games. '94 & '95 have each won two games and I expect the finishing one will be great sport for those who enjoy that kind of thing. One of the games I saw had something like the following mechanical aid for rattling the players. For the Sophs. there were two or three cornets, a trombone, three or four drums,^a

guns, cannons, revolvers &c.^b The Freshmen had eight drums, four bugles or something of the kind, seven or eight fish horns, guns, pistols, etc.,^c {sic} six pairs of kettle-covers, two dagos with hurdy-gurdies, and a German band. It was good fun at first, but I soon sickened of [it]. Men like W.V. Moody & R.M. Lovett seemed to enjoy it however, so I am probably at fault. I suppose the great trouble [is that] my sympathies are not strong enough with either side. Of course it makes no difference to me which wins. I am working up quite an excitement of {over?}^d the coming games with Yale, and wish you could be here to see one of them. The general impression is that we are going to "do" them.

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I will enclose with this a clipping from the Sunday Herald describing the Princeton game. From what the fellows say who saw the game, the action of the Princeton men ~~who saw the game~~ was painfully suggestive of that upon the part of the classes here. Of course these class games are made as wild as they can be; but it seems to me that in an inter-collegiate contest such demonstrations are not particularly edifying. It did not amount to anything, either. ~~Yaled~~ Yale was downed again by Holy Cross as you will see by to-day's paper.

Last evening I attended the French play given in Brattle Hall. It was put on in very good shape and was rather a pleasant affair. It was intended to ~~me~~ be exceptionally funny, but did not always succeed. The parts were all taken by men, and per-

^a This is the last word of the previous line.

^b WA reads "etc."

^c WA reads "etc.,".

^d WA reads "<of> over".

haps the most successful burlesque of the evening was the skirt-dancing. The Turkers ceremony in the 4th act (*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*) was altogether successful, and a good point was made by slowly changing the weird music with which the scene opens into *Annie Rooney*¹ and concluding with "ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay^e."²

It is perfect torture for me to write with this pen and I guess I had better not try to cover another sheet. These fountain pens are at the best rather uncertain things, though I think the "Wirt" is the best of all of them. I rec'd your letter Monday night.

Very truly yours.^f

Robinson.

HCL US, 62-63.

NOTES

1. "Little Annie Rooney" was a popular 1889 music-hall song by Michael Nolan. (SL)
2. "Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-de-ay" was a popular vaudeville song of disputed authorship, first performed in Edward Marble's (1846-1900) variety show *Tuxedo*, which had opened in Boston in August, 1891, before moving on to success on Broadway and elsewhere. (SL)

^e WA reads "-ray."

^f WA reads a comma here.