1-23-1893

To Harry de Forest Smith - January 23, 1893

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

Cambridge, Jana 22 [=23] - '92 -93
My dear Smith.

It is Monday noon and I will
write you something now while I have a good
chance. I have several minutes before lunch &
after that I must grind for Psychology. The mid-
year examinations will begin Wednesday, and my
first (French) comes Thursday. College shuts down
for about three weeks in which time the students
are supposed to be at work. I have made great
resolutions but do not expect they will amount to
much. They never do, as regards my studies. For in-
stance, in French I am supposed to be thoroughly ac-
quainted with the first book of La Fontaine's fables and
able to quote four of them from memory, Les Trois
Mousquetaires, Marianne (Geo. Sand)² "Les Freres Colombe"
(G. le Peyrebrune)¹ and some odd plays. But the
bulk of the exam. will be the translation of English
into French, and that is where I am generally at

sea. The German does not worry me—though I
shall probably make a botch of the composition.
I can get through the translation in some way or
other. --I am very happy to sayb that I am
at last able to send you a copy of the "Nation".
My first number came Saturday, so you may here-
after look for it with my letter—that is when
I send it. I will try to be reasonably regular
however, and hope you will find no cause for com-
plaint.--No, I don't quite understand the paragraph
in the "Critic" about Blackmore and Hardy.¹ I should
think that was enough to damn a paper of its char-
acter as a reliable sheet for reference. There is no
excuse for such a blunder. It may be a printer's
error, but I can hardly understand what the proof-
reader was doing. I doubt if you find the copy
of the "Nation" very entertaining; it is not a star
number, and for that matter I am sure that I

a WA adds a period here.
b WA has "to <to> say". In the holograph, the aborted "to" is written directly under the "s" of "say," which is why I
have transcribed it thus.
shall have to educate myself into reading it. Did

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you ever meet a fellow brought up on the New York Tribune? If you have you will understand what I mean.--I have not been doing much of any reading lately—except an occasional story in the magazines, which I am getting more and more disgusted with every day. I think Harpers is easily at the head now, and there is much in that that nobody but a scholar or a lunatic would care to read.--I am getting more and more soaked in Rudyard Kipling's poems, and I was glad to read of him in the "Athenaeum's" summary of English literature for the past year. In poetry they mention Tennyson first, William Watson, and then the Barrack room Ballads, mentioning in particular, "Tommy" and "Mandalay"--"on the road to Mandalay, where the flying fishes play, etc"--"Come you back you British soldier, come you back to Mandalay." And, by the way, did you ever think what a figure Kipling and his kid must cut among the Vermont farmers?

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especially when he (Kipling) goes to get his mail. I have been hoping that the English club here would get him to lecture, but have not heard it mentioned. After writing the "Rhyme of the Three Captains", it seems a little inconsistent for him to live in America, but it must be confessed this [=that] he writes a good deal for effect—and he generally succeeds.

Well, the hands of my clock have come together and there was a time when I could tell when they will be in that situation again, but I could not now to save my life. I can see occasional hungry men drifting into Memorial from my window, and I will put on my goloshes and and try to find something to be thankful for. Think I shall blow in five cents and have some fried hasty-pudding. That is about the only thing one can depend upon here. Hope to get a letter to-morrow morning.

Yours as ever,

\(^c\) WA adds a period here.
E.A.R.

HCL  US, 80-82.
   EAR misdated this letter January 22, 1893.

NOTES

1. Georges de Peyrebrune (1841-1917) was a highly popular French novelist of the day. Her novel, *Les Frères Colombe*, was published in 1880. (SL)
2. *Marianne*, a novella by George Sand (1804-1876), published in 1876, and her last work to be published in her lifetime. (SL)
4. See the anonymously written "English Literature in 1892" in *The Athenæum*, No. 3402 (January 7, 1893), 19-25. (SL)
5. Tennyson had died on October 6, 1892, and the literary world was naturally still in mourning. (SL)
7. Between 1892 and 1896 Kipling lived happily and in relative seclusion near Brattleboro, Vermont with his wife and two young daughters (both of whom were born there), at the cottage he named "Naulakha." (SL)

\[d\] This is WA's note 1.