3-13-1893

To Harry de Forest Smith - March 13, 1893

Edwin Arlington Robinson
TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.
CAMBRIDGE.

March 13 '93

My dear Smith,

To quote from you, it is now
the witching hour of eleven PM. and I will
try to write you a little something before going
to bed. I have been hammering away at French
and loafing all the evening, by turns. (Another
one of my lose (=loose?) sentences, but please excuse it).

I sent you a Nation and some Crimsons
this morning. I must confess that I am sorry
that I ever subscribed for that paper. It is a
kind of feeble imitation of the English reviews,
and the pedantry of its book-reviews is amusing
rather than entertaining. The Athenaeum would
have been far better, and the Specker or Spec-
tator better still. Of course the political
part of the Nation is all well enough, but the
party spirit runs too high—if possible, worse
than the Boston Journal. The Jb is getting
to be a creditable rival to the Globe, and is
rather a sad spectacle upon the whole. The
Boston daily papers are decidedly second-class. I
wonder why it is?--Irishmen?

I am reading About’s La Mère de la Mar-
quise1 and find it rather dull. I am coming home
on the 5th or 6th of April and during my stay shall
read Balzac’s Eugenie Grandet, which I suppose is
one of the world’s great novels. I am totally ig-
norant of Balzac, which is hardly a good thing for
a man to say in these days. This summer I
intend to fill up some gaps in my reading.
By the way, it may interest you to know that
I have bought a full set of Lowell’s writings—

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1 WA has "P. M."
2 WA has "J."
prose and poetry, including the Later Literary Essays and the Old English Dramatists. If you have any leisure through the summer months we can have several symposii (?) and good ones too. Have you seen Thomas Hardy’s “Pursuit of the Well-Beloved?” I am told it is quite a thing—rather fatalistic and the decidedly human—perhaps too much so, for Harpers, to publish-- Blackmore’s "Perlycross"² and Black’s "Wolfenberg"³ are also interesting to anticipate.

Well, you must excuse me this time: I am about ready to turn in, so will close. I hope you will come to-morrow.

Sincerely.

E.A.R.

HCL US, 91.

NOTES

1. French novelist, dramatist and journalist Edmond François Valentin About’s (1828-1885) short novel La Mère de la Marquise was published in 1856, in the collection Les Mariages de Paris. (SL)

2. That is, James Russell Lowell (1819-1891), the important American poet. (SL)

3. Published serially in the Illustrated London News, October-December 1892.

4. Perlycross, A Tale of the Western Hills, was not published until 1894.

5. Published in 1892.

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c WA omits this space.
d WA reads this dash as a period.
e WA reads a period here.
f WA has a comma here.
g WA omits the underline.
h This and the following two notes are WA’s notes 1, 2, and 3, respectively.