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To Harry de Forest Smith - March 19, 1893

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

#1716 Cambridge St.,
March 19 - '93

My dear Smith,

I sent you the ~~n~~Nation^a and some Crimsons Saturday^b ~~w~~ which you have by this time, no doubt. In the Nation you will find a rather interesting piece on Taine.¹ There is a description of the new private dormitory in one of the Crimsons, and perhaps some other matter more or less interesting to you.--I am sorry to hear that you have given up the idea of taking your A.M. Are you sure you are not making the greatest mistake of your life? The work is of so definite a nature (I think you said it was translation) and the reward so large, that I hope you will reconsider the matter. I do not think you realize how easily you are getting, or have been on the way to get it.--It takes a year of mighty hard work here to do it—and more than that one must get A's & B's.--But then, I do not wish to get you disgusted with me, and I am probably talking of matters that I know nothing about. As to your health, of course that is another matter, but if I [had] the thing two-thirds done I should hate like the devil to give it up. I should

-2-

be tempted to throw up the school first—for the rest of the year. But that might be inconvenient, so I will shut up, and simply hope that you get the degree in some way. I am glad that you have the new school, though of course wish it was of a different grade;² but then, what difference does it make? The money is the main thing until we get where we want to be, if we ever do. I gave up that idea long ago; and upon the whole, I do not think I ever knew where I wanted to be. (That "to" was an accident, but I rather like the look of it—don't think I could do it again.)

This forenoon the the {sic} morning was glorious, and I took a walk out by Longfellows^c House to Elmwood. Now it is snowing and until a few minutes ago was dark and gray. Now it is sunny, but the snow keeps on falling. It looks the most like a flight of ants in September--or when-

^a In the holograph, the capital "N" is written directly over the lower-case "n".

^b WA has "Satur-".

^c WA has "Longfellow's".

ever they fly. Sometime about then—you've seen 'em.

Shall be home in two weeks. Will you be there then?

Sincerely.^d

Robinson^e

HCL US, 92.

NOTES

- ^f See "Taine and the Science of Criticism" in *The Nation* LVI, No. 1446 (March 16, 1893), 193-194. Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893) was an important French critic, a primary originator of historicism whose ideas had major influence on literary naturalism. (SL)
- Smith had recently been made principal of the new elementary school in Rockland, Maine.

^d WA reads a comma here.

^e WA omits the underline.

^f This was numbered but left blank by WA.