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3-21-1893

## To Arthur R. Gledhill - March 21, 1893

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO ARTHUR R. GLEDHILL

1716 Cambridge St.,  
March 21 - '93

My dear Art,

Do not be frightened—or for that matter, encouraged—at my unusual promptness in answering your letter; but I felt the spirit moving and came to the conclusion that I had better obey my inclinations and write something, though God knows what it will be. My clock points to twenty five minutes after ten and I may count on an hour and a half before feeling very sleepy. I go to bed at twelve and get up at seven or half-past. Perhaps I should be better off if I got more sleep, but somehow I do not get it, and, as far as I can see, do not need it. I fancy you sleep rather more than that and I am sure that you have more flesh on your bones—you always had. I have visions of being a fat man in the far future, but am in no hurry for the time to come, though fifteen or even twenty pounds would not be unwelcome.

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I have just finished a German composition and two pipes. This noon I finished Miss Burney's "Evelina".<sup>1</sup> If time is dragging heavily on your hands you might read it. It is very significant in the history of the British novel. It shows very strongly the influence of Richardson and in a way anticipates Jane Austen who came not long after. This is the first novel, excepting "Tom Jones" that I have read for months—the last one before that I think was Blackmore's "Alice Lorraine". By the way, have you read Black's new book, "Wolfenberg?"--It is spoken of very highly, though some of the reviews are inclined to "smash" it slightly. I like Black myself and hate to hear him slandered; I do not think I ever heard you give your opinion of him; though of course you have read some of his novels. He is not great, and does not pretend to be:<sup>a</sup> but he is infinitely pleasant and wholesome, as ~~ar~~<sup>b</sup> rule. Some object to "Macleod of Dare" on general principles, but the tragic end improves it for me.

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<sup>a</sup> WA reads a semicolon here.

<sup>b</sup> WA omits the deleted letter.

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Have you ever read it? If not, do so now you have so much leisure and I think you will agree with me. This Easter vacation, I shall try to read Balzac's<sup>c</sup> Eugene Grandet and finish up about four hundred pages of Maspero's "Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient."<sup>d</sup> I rather like reading French, now I can do it with something like ease, but German is another matter. I have discovered that it is worse than useless to take these studies unless one means to keep them until they are mastered, or at least sufficiently<sup>e</sup> learned to make them of use. The man who takes a year of French and then drops it, is offending himself and the language. I will not say too much of German and<sup>f</sup> I am not sure how I shall come out. What has your experience been with it? You have given me to understand that you can learn Logic; if so, you are of a different clay from myself. It is well nigh<sup>g</sup> unintelligible to me. It "soured" me on the whole course and now I find Psychology about as bad. I do

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not think I was born for a philosopher even in so limited sense as elementary psychology implies. We are to study Royce's "Spirit of Modern Philosophy" for the rest of the year. It ought to be interesting but I have not much courage.<sup>2</sup> Well, I haven't much of an idea of what I have been writing about and will not read it over to see. If I did so I might not send it and then I should feel that my time had been wasted. You will probably feel the same after reading it—if you ever do.

Good night.<sup>h</sup>

E.A.R.<sup>i</sup>

P.S. I wish you all success with your "cell"<sup>j</sup>--If

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<sup>c</sup> WA has "Balzac's".

<sup>d</sup> WA places the period after the quotation mark.

<sup>e</sup> WA has "sufficiently".

<sup>f</sup> WA transcribes "and".

<sup>g</sup> WA has "night".

<sup>h</sup> WA reads this as a comma.

<sup>i</sup> WA omits the underline.

<sup>j</sup> WA adds a period here.

it turns out to be spelled with an "s" you can still be thankful that you have tried. Remember what Aldrich says: "They fail, and they alone, who have not striven."<sup>3</sup> No charge.

R.

HCL

#### NOTES

1. Fanny Burney's first novel, published anonymously in 1778.
- 2.<sup>k</sup> *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, by Josiah Royce, was published in 1892. (SL)
3. From Thomas Bailey Aldrich's sonnet "Enamoured Architect of Airy Rhyme."

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<sup>k</sup> WA numbered this note and simply typed "Royce?" in its space. It is unclear what he was questioning.