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To Harry de Forest Smith - May 14, 1893

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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Recommended Citation

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

Cambridge,
May 14 - '93

My dear Smith,

I am glad to hear that you think of coming this way. I shall be very glad to meet you next Saturday if you will kindly tell me what wharf or station I am to go to find you. I think it would do me good in more ways than one to have you here for [a] time, and I have no doubt you could enjoy yourself. There are pretty fair attractions at the theatres now and we have our tongues. There is

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good tobacco in Boston and beverage, if you want it, of many kinds and colors. The last thing I drank was a pint of claret, it made me sick but I shall doubtless drink more of it before I go home. I do not care anything about the stuff, but there is a kind of pleasure in sitting at a table with a friend with something in front of you. I know we could pass a glorious afternoon or the latter part of one in some such place and finish up with "Shore Acres"¹ or The "Ticket of Leave Man",² and not feel that we had broken any moral laws. I do not care to break any moral laws myself and see no necessity for it; but then, I won't try to speak for people

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at large. At any rate, you come up and I do not think you will have any cause to regret it. If it rains all the time, there will be nothing lost except the fact that the college yard will not look at its best. I should like you to see it on a sunny morning, but you can doubtless supply the sun to some extent if the weather proves bad. I mention this

to let you feel perfectly safe in starting away in the rain, if rain comes at that time. Personally, I rath^a hope it will rain part of the time you are here,--I want you to realize what our Cambridge sidewalks are in wet weather.

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I have just finished Bulwer's "Kenelm Chillingly" and have found it rather entertaining. There is a good deal of "E.L.B.L".³ in it, but not as much as in some—the "Disowned"⁴--for example. It is intended to be a perfectly wholesome book, and it is is {sic} if the reader can forgive the occasional bursts of Bulweresque rant that characterizes all the author ever wrote. ~~As~~ Unless circumstances force me to it, I do not think I shall ever read another one of his novels. It is not worth while. Everyone ought to read the LastDays {sic} of Pompeii⁵ & "What will he do with it?"⁶ and one or two others, but beyond that, Bulwer is unnecessary—except for his plays.

Sincerely R.^b

HCL US, 97-98.

NOTES

1. See the letter to Smith of February 27, 1893, along with note 4 of that latter. (SL)
2. *The Ticket-of-Leave Man*, a popular melodramatic play by Tom Taylor, first produced in London in 1863. (SL)
3. I.e. Edward Lytton Bulwer-Lytton. (SL)
4. Bulwer-Lytton's novel, published 1829. (SL)
5. Published in 1834. (SL)
6. Published in 1858. (SL)

^a WA has "rather".

^b WA places the initial on the next line.

