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To Harry de Forest Smith - June 15, 1895

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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Recommended Citation

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

Exeter, N.H.

June 15 – 1894.[=1895]

My dear Smith.

Ford has gone to a Faculty Meeting and so I am here alone in his room to pass the time as best I may. It has been a long time since I hav{e} written a letter in the evening but it seems to me that I ought to send you one more before you are married¹ so I shall run the risk of straining my eyes and tell you that I am somewhat taken aback by this visit. Ford is just the same and is obviously glad to see me; but his prosperity fills me with something between discouragement^a and dismay. I say this, but I must mean^b his and yours together.

A man who is earning his living to say nothing of holding a position of responsibility and respect has a peculiarly depressing effect upon me just now. It may make you laugh to think that you have often been the cause of such feelings in my mind, whe{n} you consider the relations we hav{e} had, but it is true all the same. I know I am a damned fool to be disturbed by the progress of others, but I can't seem to help it. I am beginning to get desperate, though there is perhaps no good reason why I should.

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Ford goes to France in a few days and wil{l} hav{e} I suppose, a good time. He has unusual advantages, among others a personal in invitation from Paul Bourget to all and see him, He made Bourget's aqua{in}tance last year at Harvard. The possibilities associated with such good fortune as that make me mightily glad for him, for he is a fellow

^a WA has "discomfort". US also has "discouragement".

^b This is underlined twice, in what looks like pencil. Also, there is an arrow in the left margin—also apparently in pencil—pointing to this line. WA omits the underline and the arrow. Could these be Smith's marks, made while reading the letter?

who deserves all he can get. Just now he seems to be getting considerable but it may not always last. His position here is much more pronounced than he ever gave me reason to supposed, but it is all through influence and almost phenomenal influence at that. Next year he he {sic} drops ~~this~~ History and takes German in its place. That language with French are the two things he cares for.

But you dont care about Ford, for you dont know him, so I wil{l} com{e} back to familiar ground. How do you feel about it any way? And how is your courage? If I were in your place I think I should be tempted to skip the state. But then, you are not troubled much with my uneasiness over small things, like getting married, so you wil{l} get through it all right.—Accept my best wishes, and read this stuff if you can. I shan't try it. To hav{e} written it with a pen so fine as this is all you can ask of me.

Most sincerely
E.A.R.

HCL *US*, 230-231.

EAR misdated this letter 1894. It was postmarked June 17, 1895.

NOTES

1. Smith was married the following Wednesday, June 19, 1895, to Adela Hill Wood.