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To Harry de Forest Smith - November 7, 1891

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

Cambridge, Mass, Nov 7 - '1891

My Dear Smith,--

As I shall not have an opportunity to write to-morrow I will take the time now. Since writing last I have taken two examinations: Eng. Rhet. & Comp. and Shakespeare. The latter was positively awful. I probably made a failure of it, but that fact may not be vital. Exams are due in Eng. Prose Writers of the XIXth cent. and in French. The former comes next Friday, and I shall have to grind in order to meet it. I have an idea, in fact I know, it will be more of an historical than a literary test, and if there is any one thing that I cannot learn it is biography. If the questions were to be of an essentially aesthetic character I should have but little fear as to the result; but as

-2-

it is, I am a little nervous.

I have succeeded in dropping Anglo-Saxon at last, but it has taken me three weeks to do it. With the four studies I now have, I find but little time for outside work or diversion. The trouble is I have forgotten, if I ever knew, how to follow a system of prescribed study. I have not read a book outside of the prescribed work since I came. There are a few that I want to read very much; for instance, F Marion Crawford's Khaled, Witch of Prague, Cigarette-maker's Romance; Thomas Hardy's Laodicean, Group of Noble Dames; Andrew Lang's Helen of Troy (poems)¹ & his philosophical & religious books.

I rec'd a letter from Gledhill a while ago; he seems to be the leading spirit in Canton "University",
eight
is taking ~~twelve~~ courses & is a great club man.²

-3-

Well, Art always had the faculty of making himself popular. He is a good fellow and I wish him all success.

In the last Scribner you will see a poem by

William Vaughan Moody; he is a Junior here.³
 I am not acquainted with him, but as soon as
 I get fairly straightened out, if I ever do, I pur-
 pose to make a strong attempt to get in with the
literati of Harvard. My ballad may help me
 out a little, and it may not. I sent my
 "Villanelle of Change"⁴ into the Advocate a day
 or two ago, but have not yet heard from it.
 I have a long meter triolet in my mind dealing
 with passion & death (that is the stuff we need)
 and when it is materialized I shall try to get
 it published. I have an idea that it is a
 fairly good thing in its way.

-4-

I have not written those essays on Godwin & Jef-
 frey yet, but will have to before next Friday.
 I wrote one yesterday on "Miss Edgeworth & Sir W. Scott."
 English 9 is a splendid course, but it requires a
 good deal of time for preparation. Mr. Gates is a
 man to be envied. He is a proctor in Matthews
 Hall, and instructor in English. Only has one course.
 He may not get a princely salary, but the sur-
 roundings and the honor will easily make up for
 a good deal.

It is later than I thought. I have to go to
 lecture in eight minutes. Will have to jump.
 Excuse errors as I have no time to read it over

Your &^a
Robinson

HCL US, 36-38.

NOTES

1. Harvard College Library records show that EAR borrowed Lang's book in 1891.
2. Gledhill was studying at St. Lawrence University, Canton, N.Y.
3. Moody's poem "Dolorosa," *Scribner's Magazine*, X (November 1891), 620. William Vaughn Moody was to become both rival and friend a bit later. For further details, see Donaldson p.

^a WA reads "Yours truly" here.

186-92^b and EAR's letters to Moody.
4. Written in 1890.

^b WA has "see p." here, but did not include any page numbers, possibly not having the book at hand. Since I am not sure which text he had in mind, I have supplied these page numbers from Donaldson, the most recent biographer of EAR, as being the most relevant to the two poets' relationship.