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To Harry de Forest Smith - February 7, 1892

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

Harvard University.

Cambridge, Mass., Feb 7 1892

My dear Smith,—

I shall ask you to excuse the brevity of my letter to-night, as I have a heap of work to do in preparation for the French examination. Three of the mid-years are passed, thank God, and only one is left. That troubles me more than all the others did, but I hope to get through it in some way.

Nine of us, including Geo. Barstow and his friend Mansway [], took a night off in town yesterday and had a very comfortable time. At twelve o'clock the treasury of the whole party amounted to about $1.75, so we decided to make an inspection of Boston's houses of seclusion. We inspected eight between midnight and 4.00 A.M. finding everything satisfactory but the prices. I enclose a souvenir of the trip. Etta will be overjoyed to see you at any time. She is a robust creature and her fold is intensely "chic". I have no interest in them myself, but such a journey as we made may be beneficial as a study of humanity—or inhumanity. When we left the eighth house the $1.75 remained intact. This is where we showed our prudence.

This will have to do this time. Pray be lenient.
with me and do not let this affect the length of your next.

    Sincerely,
    Robinson.

HCL    Omitted from US along with several others concerned with EAR’s visits during this period to "Boston’s houses of seclusion." Chard⁸ Powers Smith has written a sensitive and understanding account of these episodes and their significance in EAR’s life and poetry. See Where the Light Falls, pp. 115-117.⁹

NOTES

1. I.e., brothels.

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⁸ WA has "Chad."
⁹ WA’s manuscript reads "Omitted from US along with six others concerned with EAR’s visits during this period to "Boston’s houses of seclusion." However, in the margin of his manuscript here WA penciled a note, evidently to himself: "NB not all 6 are about visits. Change or delete 6."