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To Harry de Forest Smith - May 9, 1892

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

1691 Cambridge St.
Cambridge, May 9 – '92.

My dear Smith,

I wrote you a letter Sunday but I was feeling so generally "out of sorts" that I concluded not to send the stuff that I wrote. I may not do much better to-day, but at least I hope to write in a little better vein than I did before. There is great excitement here now on account of the class games. '94 & '95 have each won two games and I expect the finishing one will be great sport for those who enjoy that kind of thing. One of the games I saw had something like the following mechanical aid for rattling the players. For the Sophs. there were two or three cornets, a trombone, three or four drums,\(^a\) guns, cannons, revolvers &c.\(^b\) The Freshmen had eight drums, four bugles or something of the kind, seven or eight fish horns, guns, pistols, etc.,\(^c\) six pairs of kettle-covers, two dagos with hurdy-gurdies, and a German band. It was good fun at first, but I soon sickened of [it]. Men like W.V. Moody & R.M. Lovett seemed to enjoy it however, so I am pro\(^{-}\) bably at fault. I suppose the great trouble [is that] my sympathies are not strong enough with either side. Of course it makes no difference to me which wins. I am working up quite an excitement of \(^d\) the coming games with Yale, and wish you could be here to see one of them. The general impression is that we are going to "do" them.

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I will enclose with this a clipping from the Sunday Herald describing the Princeton game. From what the fellows say who saw the game, the action of the Princeton men was painfully suggestive of that upon the part of the classes here. Of course these class games are made as wild as they can be; but it seems to me that in an inter-collegiate contest such demonstrations are not particularly edifying. It did not amount to anything, either. Yale was downed again by Holy Cross as you will see by to-day's paper.

Last evening I attended the French play given in Brattle Hall. It was put on in very good shape and was rather a pleasant affair. It was intended to me be exceptionally funny, but did not always succeed. The parts were all taken by men, and per-

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\(^a\) This is the last word of the previous line.
\(^b\) WA reads "etc."
\(^c\) WA reads "etc.,".
\(^d\) WA reads "<of> over".
haps the most successful burlesque of the evening was the skirt-dancing. The Turkers ceremony in the 4th act (Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme) was altogether successful, and a good point was made by slowly changing the weird music with which the scene opens into Annie Rooney\(^1\) and concluding with "ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay\(^2\)."

It is perfect torture for me to write with this pen and I guess I had better not try to cover another sheet. These fountain pens are at the best rather uncertain things, though I think the "Wirt" is the best of all of them. I rec'd your letter Monday night.

Very truly yours.\(^f\)

Robinson.

HCL  US, 62-63.

NOTES

1. "Little Annie Rooney" was a popular 1889 music-hall song by Michael Nolan. (SL)
2. "Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-de-ay" was a popular vaudeville song of disputed authorship, first performed in Edward Marble's (1846-1900) variety show *Tuxedo*, which had opened in Boston in August, 1891, before moving on to success on Broadway and elsewhere. (SL)

\(^e\) WA reads "-ray."

\(^f\) WA reads a comma here.