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To Harry de Forest Smith - October 1, 1892

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

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#1716 Cambridge St.,
Cambridge, Oct 1, '92.

My dear Smith,

I suppose you are beginning to think that it is about time to hear from me, and I must confess that it is. But if you ~~half~~ have not already condemned me for a jay I will now^a try to make up for my negligence and hope that you will pardon me.--I am in new quarters now and am immeasurably better satisfied with them. Nature never intended Mrs. Fox and I to live in the same house for more than a year.

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My present room comes very near to my ideal. There is a first rate desk, a most seductive couch, window-seat, easy chair, open coal-grate, etc. The people are first-class but there is a quiet understanding that there will not be a great deal of celebrating and the like in the house. That does not interfere with my plans, however, as I am here this year to work and for no other reason, that is, primarily. And work enough there is for me to do: here is my program:--^b

	9	10	11	12		1.30	2.30	3.30
Mon	French	German				Phil.	Phil.	
Tues	"	F.A.	Frech					German
Wed	Frech ^c	German				Phil		
Thursday	Frech ^d	F.A.						German

^a WA reads "not".

^b WA omits the graphic.

^c WA reads "French".

^d WA reads "French".

Friday	"	German				Phil		Eng. Lit
Saturday		F.A.	Frch					

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I have mixed the hours a little but you can see the courses. Fine Arts III (Ancient Art) is under Prof. Norton & promises to be a great thing. At the opening the Professor waxed humorous. "Gentleman," he said, "this is a sad sight." You [see?] the course is immensely popular as a "snap" and Saturday morning over 500 men walked in to take it. A good many will be thrown out; I may be one of them, though I hope not. In Phil^e I, we begin with Logic under^f Prof. Palmer. I think you heard him read some of his Odyssey at Bowdoin. As a lecturer he is fine. The worst course I have is French 1a. It is nearly all composition and we have to commit one of La Fontaine's

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fables every month and deliver it before the class. That is bitter work for me, but we have to take things as they come. No man is obliged to take the course, so he cannot kick.

I have been ransacking the periodical shelves in the Library and have come to the conclusion that we do not want the Athenaeum. It is rather entertaining to look over a pile of them, but I am afraid we would be sorry if we subscribed for it. The Spectator, Observer, & Academy are much the same. Of course the e Critic is all right & by the way I will send you one with this containing a review of Prof. Hyde's book¹ which may interest you.

^e WA has a period here.

^f WA has "with"—probably an error rather than a misreading, since the holograph is relatively clear here.

I cannot suggest anything better to take the place of the Athenaeum than the Atlantic. It makes no difference to me

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which I keep at the end of the year, if you have any preference. Of course I only suggest this—shall expect to hear your views in your next letter. §I have "blown" myself on a fancy edition of Jules Verne's "L'Ile Mystérieuse".² Shall have it bound in half Levant with gilt top^h

I am feeling rather better than when I left home and trust I shall continue so. To tell the truth I was not in very good condition this summer. I am not smoking much now. Tomorrow I begin on the non-diurnal plan. Shall only smoke evenings. If I carry out my plans this year I shall read about thirty French books of various

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sizes and about twelve in German. In truth I am starting in onⁱ a kind of short-haired grind;^j but the long hair will come. Have been here a week and have drunk but one beer. Not very bad, that. But then it is not much to my credit as I care but little for the stuff.

Give me your opinion about the magazines as soon as possible and we will start the thing going. I can probably get quite a reduction—or you either, for that matter. Trusting that you have written to me to-day, I remain

[§] WA reads this as the beginning of a new paragraph.

^h WA adds a period here.

ⁱ WA reads "as".

^j WA reads a colon here.

Yours sincerely
Robinson

HCL US, 68-70.

NOTES

1. *Practical Ethics* (1892), by William de Witt Hyde (1858-1917), was given a mostly favorable review in *The Critic* XXVIII, No. 553 (Sept. 28, 1892), 163. Hyde was a Congregationalist minister, professor of moral philosophy, president of Bowdoin college from 1885-1917. (SL)
2. *The Mysterious Island*, first published in French in 1874. (SL)