

October 18th, 1941

Mrs. Beatrix Farrand,  
Reef Point, Bar Harbor, Maine.

Dear Mrs. Farrand:

You don't know how pleased I was to get your most helpful letter of October 11th, with the re-written short talk, or rather with new and more descriptive phrases. Please don't ever think twice of criticising my stuff for what in the world would I be like without your guiding and so helpful aid. I knew the talk was stilted and yet I wasn't able to do any more with it, so rather than wait for inspiration, I sent it off, not intending to add more work, but because I knew you were the only one who could guide me in the right direction.

I thoroughly agree with you that I must be most careful in my remarks as no doubt many garden visitors will be only too anxious to spread any reports, especially unfavorable ones, so I shall do my best to avoid the pitfalls. I have started to re-write the talk but before I could get it ready I have been besieged with people who had to be guided around the gardens. So while my office is not yet in working order, I am, and have been going every day through the gardens with some one or two until Thursday when the first horde of children descended on us. Two schools came Thursday afternoon from Georgetown public schools with their teachers and while they were perhaps a little young to imbibe much garden lore, they seemed to have a grand time withal and especially the Catalogue House. The second group was a little older and more interested in the names of things. It gave me an opportunity to show off a little in the rose garden anyway and with practice I think I can acquire more confidence in my ability to speak to the multitude.

Yesterday we had 75 women and one lone man from the Twentieth Century Club's Nature group - a great many of the ladies belong to the garden clubs so I was on my toes. It was very hard to keep in touch with such a large number and I had to fall back at times to keep the tail-enders from feeling neglected. They stayed an hour and three quarters and were very appreciative of the opportunity to visit the grounds again. Many thought now that the Blisses were gone they would never be invited again to Dumbarton Oaks and when I told them of the plans for open days on Saturdays and Wednesday mornings, they all seemed so pleased at the prospect.

Mr. Thacher has tried to work out a schedule giving three afternoons a week to school children, with two hours visit, i.e. two classes of one hour each; then on Wednesday morning from perhaps 10:30 to 12:00 and on Saturdays from 2:15 to 4:00. I expect when the news is published there will be a mob the first day and I really feel it will be impossible for one person to lead them around for they all want to stray off on their own, but I'm willing to try it and see if it will work. After the first day we can tell better how to handle them.

I am still without a desk mostly because I haven't had time to get out and buy one but am having Monday off instead of today so will go downtown and see what I can find second-hand. The underworld is more comfortable so far as washroom arrangements, light and heat are concerned and I will eventually have more

Mrs. Farrand (2)

October 18, 1941

shelf room and space to lay out material.

The Secretary of the American Horticultural Society called on Mr. Thacher and asked if they might hold their annual meeting here in November and he has offered them the use of the Drawing Room for their afternoon and evening meetings. As was always offered by Mrs. Bliss in previous years, the members will be permitted to go around the grounds in the afternoon. Miss Milholland, called me yesterday to see if we could let her have some idea of our future plans so that she might communicate them to their President in advance of the November meeting, and also asked in what way they might be of use to use. I am going to see Miss M. one day this week and see what they have in mind to do. If they can give the gardens some publicity through their garden clubs I think it will help a lot. Anyway, I'm anxious to see what they propose to do to cooperate.

I find I am gaining much useful knowledge as I go along and the future looks interesting.

This morning I received your letter in re Bryce and will do what I can to get him around to writing. He is busy doing all kinds of jobs in addition to his regular work and they've even tried to get him to take charge of the housemen and maids at the Quarters! This between ourselves.

Tomorrow the Potomac Rose Society in addition to the Baltimore and northern Virginia branches of the N. A. G. are coming to see the chrysanthemums and Bryce has asked me to 'take over' the Potomac Rose Society to help him out, which I'm glad to do and perhaps I may be able to make some contacts and get some useful information for my own work in the gardens.

I can't tell you how grateful I am now and always for your solicitude and your helpful suggestions. I hate to add one more burden to your already overcrowded schedule but I hope this is not too garrulous and that it will convey my sincere appreciation for your kindly interest and friendliness.

I hope Mr. Farrand continues to improve in the healthful Maine air and that everything is peaceful in your lovely home which remains to me a beautiful memory.

Very sincerely yours,