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Dear Mr. Thacher,

This will be a letter of scraps and details in extremely tardy reply to our conversation in Boston in early November and your letters since then. Our talk and your last letters will be more less answered in the course of this long screed to you.

The situation as to Miss Sweeney and the garden tours seems in the main satisfactory. She is sturdy and interested, entirely trustworthy and appears to manage her job well. The Orangerie as a garden center should work satisfactorily for the next few years until it may have to be engulfed in library space, in which case a new building would have to be built for a garden center, if the gardens are to remain a feature of the whole as they now are. Perhaps you are right in thinking that the Evergreen Creeper should be taken out of the Orangerie but, frankly, I should hesitate to do it. The walls may be so stained and unsightly that they might need a completely new treatment. Therefore I should suggest taking all of the creeper off the roof and its beams and possibly off the east end but I would keep it at least in part on the west walls, while leaving space for picture hanging and card display. I should think the west wall might be solid with creeper on either side of the west entrance doors, and a few creepers could be allowed to spread over the top of the wall on the north and south sides. Undoubtedly the green vase should be removed from the center and the lead medallions which were charming ornaments to the Orangerie when it was used as a conservatory for the drawingroom at Dumbarton Oaks. Room would have to be found for the medallions elsewhere: perhaps they could go in one of the arcades which I remember Mrs. Bliss considered as part of the new house on Clifton Hill. The Orangerie must be arranged so that a considerable number of people could circulate easily within it and see its exhibits and look at such cut flowers as might be part of the table exhibit. There should also be a desk and some arrangement for the sale of postcards and leaflets. These should be part of the establishment if it is to be a really working concern. It might even be that a part of the cupboard outside of the Orangerie, which is now partly used as a flower room, could be used as a store closet. Could some removal of the creeper be tried during the winter so that you could see what the condition of the walls is underneath the smothering of leaves which have covered them far too heavily and far too long?

As to the question of the replacement of the furniture: it would seem to me that some sort of inexpensive rattan or such material would be suitable and possibly even light metal - something which should be both moveable and reasonably comfortable. Should you think a dozen chairs, of which, perhaps, four arm chairs and eight straight chairs, would be sufficient?

It would seem to me fairly clear that room should be made for the crowds which besiege the garden house. I should think the Orangerie platform could easily be widened on the south side, and on the north side. The green garden might well be encroached upon with paving so that a crowd of thirty or forty people could have a place to sit and wait while groups were forming to go around the gardens.

Leaflets, maps, postcards and the kodachromes are all part of the selling department of the gardens and this whole question seems to me rather a job for my shoulders to undertake and to leave certain of the detailed inspections and reports and the visits in other hands.

The Bryce situation is of course a difficult one and I have wondered whether a letter somewhat on the line of the one which is enclosed to you would be worth sending to Mr. Bryce so that he may see the point of view which is being due him, with as much delicacy and tact as I am capable of. In the tentative letter to Bryce you will see that it seems to me a tactical mistake to have gone to Mr. and Mrs. Bliss to ask for extra funds for supplements to the garden. The director was the proper person to have spoken to rather than the former owners.

My own point of view is that if there could be a reserve fund, perhaps made from savings of the garden department, kept separately in an AGENT ACCOUNT, these savings could be applied to the replenishment of trees, shrubs whereas now they automatically return to the Harvard treasurer. I am by no means sure that a five hundred dollar fund is needed and should not care to recommend it until we see more clearly how the garden monies are expended.

It is good news that you agree to the replanting of azaleas around the Star. These should not have been allowed to grow so large in their present position, as they should have been watched and transplanted and pruned when they were of manageable size. Now they require replacement and space must be found for the big old plants.

Your second question was with regard to the removal and replanting of the box on the beech terrace: individually I should like to see much smaller box in this position, in fact, taking some of the rose garden hedges and using them on the beech terrace. You will agree that the whole box question of the double entrances from R Street and possibly the entrance from 32nd Street is linked to many of the box hedges now on the place. Just for instance, it seems to me quite possible that if the two R entrances are eventually discontinued, a large open space in front of the house would be needed. From the point of view of the designer, the whole south facade of the house seems happily set with the present two approach roads. If they were eliminated it would tend to make the south front of the house rather monumental with its heavy front door and wide steps. I think it is altogether possible that the parking space, or court as we call it, could be managed so that groups of people and even seats could be used for the crowds of people as they approach from the 32nd Street entrance.

Your third question about the new path from the south drive to the Orangerie was taken up with Bryce and as you know the preliminary sketch seemed to me unwise. I would rather see the walk starting closer to the front door than he has shown it, possible some day the entrance roads will be changed to wide paths.

Your fourth question as to the development of the north vista is of great interest to me. Frankly, I have been disappointed to see how mistaken I was to keep the wall down to the height which was thought likely to be proper in the talk we had together and with Mr. and Mrs. Bliss. I feel the whole scale of the walls is too small and also the north wall and its pediment. I am interested to hear that you suggest the possibility of taking out the whole north wall and opening up the vista to the far hills. It is distinctly worth considering and I feel should be made a more ornamental part of the garden than you have in mind.

Question #5: Hooray that there to be no vegetables.

Question #6: The whole terrior group ought, to my mind, to disappear, as the space is really not of any use for the crowds who come. I agree with you that the furniture is impossibly heavy. Perhaps it could be brought somewhere into the copse north of the music room where it could stay until it falls to pieces.

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Question # 7: The bath tub. We agreed with enthusiasm that this could be disposed of. As to the price, I know it was not expensive and that its main cost to the establishment was in its transportation therefore I should think three or four hundred dollars would easily cover its cost.

Question #8: Who is bold enough to ask Mrs. Bliss whether she would be willing to give the lead lady and the unicorn to a museum?

Question \$ 9: I wonder if the lead fountain you are speaking of is the one under the wistaria arbor on the herb terrace. It is the one which particularly annoys me, with the so called "lead book shelf" in it. Again this should be eliminated by consulting Mrs. Bliss.

Question #10: By all means some of the rose plants need replacement in the rose garden.

Question #11: The list of little oaks, as you know, have been ordered through Mr. Thompson at a cost of approximately \$125.00. I am hoping to get more and smaller trees either this spring or in time to come.

Question #12: The whole question of the greenhouses has got to be faced and judged from the point rather of Harvard than from that of the individual taste of the former owners. Personally I think it would be a tactical mistake to do away with the orchids or to house them in such a fashion that they die and, as you say, they give distinction to the drawingroom and to the music room which is part of the whole composition. I should, individually, be quite willing to talk the question over with Bryce as to where the orchids could be most satisfactorily housed if Harvard decides to close them. The four lower houses, north of the group, in the service court. I am not a skilled orchid grower therefore I cannot tell you whether the orchids could be safely and wisely grown in the Orangerie on the west side of the court, or whether there is room enough for them in the pretty but entirely useless maiden hair fern compartment in the south side of the Orangerie - (the cool house.) If the orchids could be grown in this cool house - and properly shaded for the summer - it might be possible to use the two lean-tos north of the main house adjoining the big green house, for the late autumn and early winter before winter made heating necessary. Personally I entirely agree with you that too many chrysanthemums are grown by every gardener. I think it would be possible to cut in half the quantity grown at Dumbarton Oaks. I also agree with you that ivy plants on the tall stands in the drawingroom are wiser for the present use of the room than the lovely groups of orchids which were part of the distinguished lady's distinguished drawingroom.

I should be interested to know what you think about the guide book sent you, of the Huntington Gardens. It was not in the least meant as a model but rather as a possibility from which to depart.

You may like to know that work on the Dumbarton Oaks report is again started and it seems likely that the report as a whole will be useful more to show the "temperament" of the place than the actual position of each tree and shrub. When Bryce said that he wanted the book so that he could abide by it, it made my blood run cold as nothing will so quickly kill the spirit of any place than to have planting slavishly repeated in certain places because it was originally put there. The reason I was so excited about the removal of the Torreya in the north court was that they were especially set there in a conspicuous position in order to force a curve in the walk which would otherwise have been rigidly straight. It happened that these two rare plants were available and were used for that purpose.

Forgive such
long sentences.

Yours ever sincerely, Beatrix Tamm