

BEATRIX FARRAND  
~~1650 ORLANDO ROAD~~ Reef Point  
~~SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA~~ Bar Harbor, Maine.

May 21, 1941

Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss  
Casa Dorinda  
Santa Barbara, California

Beloved Garden Twin:

You of course know deep in your heart how I stretch out to you across all these thousands of miles and think of you and Robert and hope the days get better with him.

When I reached here I sank in the bog of fatigue nearly up to my shoulders, but thanks to ten days of constant resting the bog has dropped away until now it is hardly higher than my knees! This means that I am hoping to go back to Oakdom in the early days of June for three or four days and want to report to you that Mr. Thacher was not quite "quick on the trigger" about notifying me of Mr. Root's official opinion about the Dumbarton Oaks Committee. Mr. Thacher had not gathered that you and I wanted this Committee in order to be able to carry out the changes in design which the Park will need as a result of being used by the public. Mr. Thacher wrote me a note which came yesterday saying that Mr. Root had called him up to say that:-

"his colleagues would be delighted to have a Dumbarton Oaks Park Committee to consist of: 1 Bliss, 1 Harvard, 1 Farrand, and himself. He suggested that we wait until the four of us are able to have a meeting before deciding on the fifth member, which sounds to me very sensible. He said that he would be delighted to have the services of the three old men to work in the park under the supervision of their foreman. I can quite understand that they would have to be responsible to the park foreman, but in actuality, they would be working under Bryce's guidance, as apparently the park foreman turns to Bryce constantly for guidance and advice."

I have tried to explain to Mr. Thacher that the real reason for carrying on the old men, entirely aside from your charity to them, was that our park walks could be designed the way you and I thought they should go. I think both he and Mr. Root now understand this and I have therefore written to Bryce to stake out the walk widening and the path across Clifton so that when I am next in Washington these can be decided upon, together with the possible fifth member of the Committee.

Perhaps you will let me do double duty when the Committee meets and represent you and Robert as well as B.F. and so make the four members.

In order not to burden you with too voluminous letters, the information on the different enterprises is being dealt out piece-meal.

Coles: The finials for the Museum gates were greatly improved. The tops of the finials were still too "dry" and I told Coles to make a more easy and graceful top, sort of a cross between the pineapple and the palm, instead of the rather stubby little blunted bud.

Coles had an extraordinarily good idea as to the placing of the historic tablet and all of us who have looked the ground over, Mr. Thacher, Bryce, Coles and I, think that his suggestion has so much merit that we approve it and send it on for your consideration. The dawdly Coles has not sent me the drawing for this suggested placing, but I expect to have it within a couple of days and will at once send it on to you so that we can "dummy" it if you two at all approve, and have a try to its appearance in early June.

You will also receive the photographs of the deeper cutting of the Museum tablet which seemed to me very promising as I saw it in Washington last month.

There is no question in my mind that the letters over the Museum tablet, *Qued severis metes*, are decidedly too small and too weak. In speaking of the re-cutting of this inscription Mr. Coles said he could easily patch this part of the entablature and re-cut the letters, the patch would only cost \$25.00 plus the cost of his lettering. It seems to me frankly well worth doing and I am asking Coles to go ahead with the preparation of the <sup>drawing for</sup> lettering in bigger size and more accent. It is possible also that the lettering over the entrance door might be a trifle more accented but the size looks right.

Probably the big Antioch capital can be at least temporarily left where it is north of the museum wing and west of the little loggia door. It certainly needs to be "calmed" in color and Coles has already been told to see what he can do with regard to this.

Miss Sweeney pegs on at the Catalogue House and as Mr. Thacher is not very clear in his mind about using Dumbarton for the school children I hope to be able to make this clearer to him, and possibly to interest him in some way so that she could be used as guide and her salary carried in part by Harvard. Perhaps I could save a little out of my salary to push her along at least for a time. We can see about this at the June meeting.

The inquiry as to the Institute of Horticulture at Columbia I should promptly dump into the waste basket as it is not supposed among my professional colleagues to amount to very much, and to be rather a half-baked affair. Mr. Hugh Findley who is the Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture is rather a sentimental creature and the whole scheme sounds to me rather commonplace.

Coles's idea is that the big tablet can be set approximately mid-way between the east and west R Street gates covering the open-work railing, and Mr. Thacher hopes it could be crowned with some sort of little ornament. On either side of the big tablet the two maps would be well placed and the whole make an interesting and visible and well-placed ornament and record.

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It was very definitely understood with Mr. Thacher that the two parts of the place which were to be undiminished in their horticultural beauty and elegance were the fountain terrace and the herbaceous border, and Bryce I think understands this and I think you and I would all be willing to cut down flowers in the house in order to keep up the flowers out-of-doors to their very best colors.

Is there any further progress with regard to your new houselet, and has the question of the entrance been solved. I looked quite carefully at the site when I was last in Washington and feel quite strongly that the extra land is fairly essential. It was rather a shock to see that the trees to the south of your south boundary will in summer cut off the view of Dumbarton unless the Park will let you poke vistas through them where you elect.

Naturally the last time I was at Dumbarton it would have been impossible to go to Meridian House as Bryce told me the news of Mr. Laughlin's death as I arrived in Washington. Poor Mrs. Laughlin what a lonely creature she will be, and how I mourn for you and Robert in the loss of another good friend.

Max had an interview with his repair surgeon in Boston which was extremely reassuring so that I think he is easier in mind than he has been for some months past, and as the various responsibilities drop off his shoulders he certainly improves both nervously and physically. The poor soul has had too heavy a burden for the last three or four years.

The next jotting is to warn you that if you use Postal Telegraph to reach me here in Bar Harbor that its nearest office is twenty miles away for most of the year and that it insists upon delivering its messages by telephone and often inaccurately, so that Western Union is by all odds the best bet for speed and accuracy.

Do forgive so absurd and scrappy a letter which at least I hope you will feel better than silence.

How I wish you could see our frill of daffodils around the east terrace, the great white Leedsii's are in full beauty and truly with a Chinese Almond in bloom, Daffodils and English Primroses, and the New England virginal spring it is hard to equal this place for loveliness.

Your always fonder

Trix