

February 22, 1947

Dearest Trix:

Before me are your letters of November 5th, 21st and 23rd and your note of December 1st and letters of January 8th and two of the 10th.

November 5th: The HERBACEOUS BORDER is more of a problem to me every time I study it and I am not at all sure that the yew hedges should be removed at present. Simply because I do not see the alternative. I recognize, of course, that sooner or later the yew hedges must be altered and obviously, ^{the} sooner the better while we are all alive to supervise the change, but I do not quite "see" it and the more I study the north vista the more afraid I am of a treatment by walls. Do, I beg of you, mull over this whole unit very thoroughly this winter and as you will, I feel sure, - barring illness - make Dumbarton Oaks a visit in the Spring, we should then be able to decide definitively what is to be done.

By now you, of course, know what site has been selected for the Director's house at the Botanic Garden. Mr. Bullard wrote that you had been of the greatest possible help and he was greatly interested and steadied by your counsel.

Is your strength returning as prophesied by Dr. Rag^lie?
I want very much to know just how you are feeling my dear.

November 21st: This letter was a particular pleasure to read; - all the news of economies - increased enthusiasm on the part of the workers - master plans - authorization of the survey - and your own confidence in the value of the Garden as a whole. Bless you for that!

November 23rd - This little note brought with it the notes which you read to the Board and which should be on file, incorporated in the Garden records as well as circularized to the Board members. Probably it has been done long since. At any rate I must tell you that I have used both it and your recommendation to the Arboretum (published in *Arnoldia* of November 1st) to great advantage in talking with the Dean of the Cathedral. Perhaps it was foolish but at least you will understand that I found it irresistible to collaborate with the Committee which is now being formed to get on with the work of Mount St. Alban. When the appeal came from the Cathedral I suggested to Robert that as the Church itself would unquestionably be finished it would be more constructive to start a Fund by contributing to the exterior landscape problem of the Mount itself. This novel procedure has achieved so far two of my many desiderata: - 1 - the creation of a small Committee which will deal with the Council and - 2 - the creation of a master plan; and - 3 - the making of a three dimensional map of the sixty acres.

Many of the buildings are badly placed; but that is water over the dam. One or two of the schools should probably be moved across the road eventually but at least the construction and placing of the new buildings can be ~~situated~~ *studied* de novo. Some of the badly laid out roads can be changed and the parking problem attacked at the start. Those dreadful pilgrim Steps will always be with us and nothing can alter the grotesque fact that the Cathedral has a ravine for a base on its south side. However, much can be done and it is a great challenge - which makes me wish that you and I were thirty years younger and could burn the midnight oil together in trying to do justice to Mount St. Alban.

December 1st - This little note was particularly welcome as it is always a delight to heart and eye to see your hand-writing.

January 8th - Of course you must go ahead with the grading and not have the delays and possible mis-reading that would result from forwarding the profiles to me. I am much interested that you found the new approach walk and parking space more favorable than anticipated.

When you next write, tell me frankly how Van Rensselaer is getting on physically and nervously. He is so happy to be back at the Garden that it would be as pathetic for him as unfortunate for the Garden were he to overdo. We all know how slow nature is to regain her normal base after a nervous breakdown, so I have no illusions about his complete recovery being rapid; but I do think that his point of view last summer argued well for eventual success. He certainly has ideal conditions in the lack of pressure put upon him by the Board and in living in Mrs. Gould's little cottage. Let us hope he doesn't tie himself into bowknots because of planned destruction in the new layout. John Tucker should be a help - and Moran too?

Have you any idea when the Commissioners will have their filling material ready for use by the Garden or when it will be wise to ~~fill~~ *build* the Ceanothus trail.

Jack is back after nearly a month's absence, feeling better and with the pain decreasing. His recent check-up was entirely satisfactory and the mechanical devices to prevent the painful rubbing have proved efficacious. Unquestionably he has over-taxed even his superb health by carrying more than anyone humanly could ~~do~~ during the war years; and pressure last summer was gruelling. However, things have shaped so well that he can consider the results ~~with~~ *worth* the cost. The morale, scholarship, public relations and Collection are all moving in the right direction and when the Spring Semester comes to an end I think that we shall feel 1947 was an auspicious year. It is interesting to find so many tourists visiting the Collection on Sundays - 50 or 75 - and on week days always some 12 to 20.

You will be sorry to hear that my darling Vicky has had a most dreadful blow. Lawrie Coolidge had a yardage of intestine removed on short notice for unsuspected malignancy, but is now at home having made an unusual convalescence that the doctors consider almost unprecedently good; and as the extirpation was complete and no ramifications

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in any vital organ, I have a feeling that he may be one of the few lucky people who recover completely and die thirty years later of some other disease, never having thought of this nightmare again. The morale of both Lawrie and Vicky has been beyond praise.

Whether or not you know of Elizabeth's ordeal, I am sure you will want the latest news which is wholly good. In her case it was the left breast and the incision went from the shoulder to the waist! But the drastic length of it was precautionary. She can put her left hand to the back of her head; kidneys and heart have behaved perfectly, and surgeons, doctors and nurses feel she has shown a magnificent spirit and that the eradication is complete in this case as well. But at her age and with her physical disabilities one cannot have the same optimism as for Lawrie.

Irene went to her for final arrangements, took her to the hospital and stayed with her two weeks. She has just returned to her desk and shows the strain. But all is well and if you want to write Elizabeth she is at the Doctors Hospital, (East End Avenue & 87th Street) New York. When she finally leaves it, it will be to go to Olivia. She, poor woman, was under frightful tension because she had an infectious flu and was not allowed to see Elizabeth before the operation, naturally enough, nor for some time afterwards. To finish my chronical of grimness - poor William is definitely going down hill. The pain is re-commencing, also the bleeding and nothing more can be done. His courage has been fantastic - both doctors and surgeon expressed the highest admiration for his morale, but the writing is on the wall and one can only hope that it will come quickly ~~with~~ perhaps uremia, coma and the final sleep.

January 10th - Thank you dear for your little long-hand note and the gentian book-mark which is in daily use. The B.F. Agent's accounts have gone to Mr. Russell with the authorization to send \$50.- to replenish Miss Sweeney's book fund.

To follow your good example, I shall get you off a long-hand note myself to tell you of one or two books ~~which~~ I think you will want to read. When you write do tell me more of Anne Fithian and give my love to Helen Thorne, too.

Robert's best love with mine and we always miss you and find the separation too long.

Always affectionately

Mrs. Max Farrand

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