

March 28, 1938

My very dearest Mildred:

Your letter of the 16th has come and as usual has crossed one from me to you. The last months have indeed been pretty crowded but everything has gone well and it has been possible to do the nicest thing that comes to you or me, and that is to help our companions in their work.

The new piece of work which has come to me in this last winter is one that you will like to hear about as it is the permanent sort of enterprise which you and I like. The Council for Dr. Hale's great 200-inch telescope has asked for help in the planting and surroundings to the great dome, and the beauty of the situation, the majesty of the construction and the real inspiration of what it implies are as stimulating as the site itself.

Naturally I was much interested to hear that it required restraint on your part not to plunge heavily in orchids and that you felt that the Flower Show plants of *Platyclinis* were not as good as you left at home. Our own orchids here have kept the blue room in flower all through the winter, and now a yellow *Oncidium*, an Easter present from dear Clemmy last year, is in full bloom and a couple of *Cypripediums* are following a pretty white *Cattleya* which nobly came out for Founder's Day on the 27th of February.

It is really curious how closely our minds jump in parallel lines as I have known subconsciously that you were worried at not hearing from me and yet there never seemed to have been a time for a really intimate letter.

Dumbarton's future is most exciting; the sculpture gallery, the Princeton-Harvard interest and the Christian and Byzantine census. All things that tend to build an enduring structure seem worth while in these days of shadow and the quiet of Dumbarton's trees and the serenity and beauty of the house must stay as long as people need rest.

The inscription to Gray is just right. I am keeping a copy of it and have an idea that possibly you might like to mention the length of his service at Dumbarton and what its development gained from his wise supervision. The finish — "the dignity of his spirit is gathered in the shadows of these gardens he loved so well" — is perfect. Perhaps when we meet, whether at Dumbarton or elsewhere, we can speak of this and I will work over it on my way east.

As to your letter of the 10th of February, so long unanswered:

Catalogue House.

It might be of use to all of us to give a day to Miss Sweeney at Dumbarton. What think you?

Orangerie.

Agreed that the dracaeneas should be suppressed.

Colours for Iron Work.

I trust the patterns of these, at least some of them, were approved.

Dummies.

North Bay of the Herb Garden. These have been criticized and returned to you. They seem to me excellent.

Forsythia Gate. The one that seems to me superior to the others is the one marked "1" as to the size of the gate; possibly the one marked "2" for the top of the gate, or conceivably "3." "4" would loose its side dolphins in the shrubs; "5" would be too clumsy bordering the walk, and "6" would also loose its "ears" in the shrubs. After all, my "1" and your "most promising one" are fairly alike as to bases and my "2" is exactly like your "promising one". I question the width of the consoles at the base and think possibly a simpler treatment would be better, but again possibly a day's dummying at Dumbarton would help. And by all means let us get this gate done and decide definitely whether it is to be an arch or dear Gray's preferred gate posts.

Survey

What good news that the new survey is done, the north boundary straightened and that we may now all depart in peace if we must.

Terrior.

Obviously the seat for this must be ready for this spring and summer. You-will-perhaps

You will perhaps forgive the scrappiness of this note as I am running through your letters and interjecting my own ideas as you stimulate them.

By all means look at the Virginia gardens between April 25 and April 30, and my ears are already pricked for your musical afternoon

Please do not go to Paris for the Iranian Congress but stay for the Swedish Tercentenary, and let us all play and work at Dumbarton.

It seems as though you had done a really wise thing in keeping on Bryce. He is conscientious, steady and loyal. You and I know the difference between him and dear Gray and when you and I meet we must speak of a talk with Gray that I had about Bryce and just this possibility.

The news about the replacement of the miserable box hedge at the front door with a stone wall is just right. The stone wall is

going to be not too easy because it is going to show how out of level it is; but again the faithful dummy will help us not to make more mistakes than usual.

I have known how much Lucie's death meant to you but not quite how deep a wound it would make, as I had not known until you told me how closely you and she moved along the same line. You have the power of giving affection in the way it is most needed, and while it was hardest for you to stay away from Lucie during the last quiet weeks, you unquestionably did it when Robert and Ernest decided against the journey. What a glorious mercy it is to have a life work in which one may submerge oneself.

It is very good news to hear that Royal is coming to this country in May. One wonders what his future plans will be and how Hungary can get along without him. There is little news from Elisina, for which at the moment I am grateful as legal matters are so complicated and the whole background so stupidly involved that it is impossible to write about and yet I know you and Robert feel the situation without words being needed.

As you undoubtedly know, Arthur Salter came out here for a degree I suppose. He had intended to stay several days but decided to turn around and leave almost at once. Max said a talk with him at the University of California with him was most interesting, clear, frank and informing. In all this strain and distress I can not tell you what an anchor it is to have great Palomar and its future to tie to. It makes all the little things of life seem so temporary ---

Please thank dear Dorothy for her nice letter and tell her that Dumbarton and she are linked in my affectionate thoughts. As the days go on the tie between you and me grows instead of lessnes in spite of separation and silence, but I do chafe at the separation and long for an end to silence. Let us hope it may come within ten days. My heart is ever with you.

WILLIAM JAMES GRAY

September 14, 1881 - December 31, 1937

Superintendent of Dumbarton Oaks

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The trees and the plants responded to his care. His

Subordinates followed him gladly because he was just

(and patient). His Employers ^{trusted}esteemed him for his

fair-mindedness, loyalty and common-sense. Unfailingly

courteous and humourously philisophical, he won the

regard of all who knew him and an enduring place in

their memory.

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The dignity of his spirit is gathered into

the shadows of these Gardens he loved so well.

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