

BEATRIX FARRAND
LANDSCAPE GARDENER
REEF POINT
BAR HARBOR
MAINE

May 30, 1945

Dearest Mildred:

It may have seemed to you very ungracious to ask you not to telephone when I know you and I want so much to hear each others voice, but the telephone is in a somewhat difficult spot in the pantry next to the kitchen so that any kind of private conversation is impossible, and as my hours are totally irregular in order to be regular for Max I never know whether I shall be available or with him or in the garden.

The last months in Santa Barbara were a pretty heavy strain on him as he lost weight and strength to such a degree that the only sensible thing was to move him to the Cottage Hospital where good Dr. Wills looked after him for the eight weeks before we left for home. We had to delay coming home for a month as he was really so exhausted that he could not have stood the journey until he had picked up some strength. Now that the journey is over I think it is an immense relief to him as it is to me to know that he could make it and that we are actually at home in the place we love as you do Dumbarton. He has been checked over by his surgeon in Boston and he very sensibly decided that no treatment was necessary or advisable, and the doctor here has had charge of him last year and like everyone else is attached to him and will do everything he can to help us both.

It is of course quite clear to anyone that the deep X-Rays which were given him last autumn were hard to endure and the results are staggering to the nerves, so that it was nearly February before the result of the November treatments wore off and he had any kind of comfort. One difficulty is that his digestion is so out of order that appetite is almost totally lacking and as is invariably the case with a digestion that does not work, gas pains are severe and exhausting. You will I know be glad and relieved to hear that we were able to get in Boston a nurse who was with Max during two of his former illnesses and who is deeply attached to him and who is not only a splendid nurse but a splendid woman. So she is making him as comfortable as only professional skill can achieve and you know without my underlining it how much responsibility this has shifted from my shoulders.

Under the present circumstances it is not possible to plan any journey to Dumbarton, as although I am not of much use still there are cogs in the machine that I like to think work more smoothly when I am here than if I were to be away for a few days, and the very fact that I can look in and out of his room a dozen times a day while not of any real use does make the time pass for him and he gets news of the garden and its performances at first hand. So Dumbarton must wait until the skies look a little clearer.

We came through the journey rather better than I had dared to hope as Dr. Wills was none too encouraging about the risk of the long trek, but we are here and are settling down at home with pathetic satisfaction on Max's part as his roots are very deep in the ground here. What I should have done without Clemmy during the last months I really don't know, as her courage, her efficiency and her devotion have been given with a generosity that have made the difference between an almost impossible and a tolerable situation. She like all of us is tired but is carrying on with her usual gallant courage.

