

12/11/46

BEATRIX FARRAND  
LANDSCAPE GARDENER  
REEF POINT  
BAR HARBOR, MAINE

Dictated in Boston Nov. 5, 1946

Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss  
1537 28th Street  
Washington, D. C.

Dearest Mildred:

You are indeed patient to deal so wisely and gently with your old friend. The reason I feared the Redon had not been exactly what you wanted was that Mr. Patterson reported he had given it you and there was what seemed to my impatient mind an interval before I heard that was rather unlike you. But Robert has told me that the little picture has already fitted in to the drawing room in Washington and that you both like it, not only for itself but for its association, so that you have accepted your bequest rather than waiting until you couldn't thank me.

The interview with Mr. Thacher was a difficult one for him and my respect for his ability and ~~tack~~ increased as he had rather a complicated situation to straighten out with regard to the relationship to Dumbarton of Mr. Patterson and myself. I think he has now made it quite clear to me that all the communications to Bryce should come from Mr. Patterson and that in a sense, as he expressed it, he and I become rather more "members of the garden committee" than actually active in the gardens. It is rather fun to become a veiled prophet after so many years of probably over-much responsibility.

It was also a great relief to hear from Mr. Thacher that he had definitely decided to keep Miss Sweeney on at full time, as it seems to me she is an absolutely essential part of the garden picture, especially as we shall in all likelihood want to increase the educational side of the garden rather than the side seen by the casual visitor.

Don't think Mr. Thacher and I skimped on our Dumbarton time as two appointments were available for him but at the end of an hour and a half he said he had finished his business and thought another appointment unnecessary.

It is my very great hope that next spring we can get started on the remodelling of the herbaceous border as it has long seemed to me to need overhauling and if we can begin planting some of the shrubs which will make a new background (and incidentally reduce the space which Bryce will have to plant with temporary displays) it would seem to Mr. Patterson, Mr. Thacher and me a wise proceeding. I hope with all my heart it will be possible to do away with the ragged yew hedges on the north and south sides of the border and possibly replace the yew hedges running north and south through the vegetable gardens with low walls, as we have long contemplated walls covered with the more delicate vines like Jasmine and Clematis which would be well displayed in this place and would be inexpensive to keep up and to plant. From what Mr.

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-2 Mrs. Bliss

Thacher said I think he would like to have Mr. Patterson come to Dumbarton some time during the winter for a visit and he said he particularly wanted me to come to Dumbarton even if only once more so that everyone on the place would realize that Mr. Patterson was taking my place and that things must go forward for him as they always have for me.

It puzzled me a little that you spoke of a site for the Director's house at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, as two or three years ago you doubtless remember that a report was sent you considering three different sites and the one chosen unanimously and approved by Mr. VanRensselaer was one at the northwest of the Garden on a knoll overlooking the whole picture. I wonder whether this is the same place or whether another site has been chosen. It will be interesting to see the plan for the house and the house site as Mr. Bullard has very wisely not sent these documents to me but I shall hope to see them as soon as I get settled in California.

You will be glad to hear that good Dr. Ragle has passed me with a clear bill and says that he thinks gradually strength will return and to continue working and resting as in the last few months as he sees a very distinct gain since last spring.

Who do you suppose the father is of B.F.'s daughter? Are you not interested? With fondest love and looking forward to writing you again after I get a little settled down in the cottage I so gratefully owe to you and Robert, I am always with fond love,

Beatrice Farrand  
5