

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

September 22, 1941

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Mildred dear:

It couldn't possibly have done you as much heart good as it did me to hear your dear voice and to feel your telephonic 3000 mile long arms around me today. How carefully one keeps ones menfolk from remembering these days which mean so much in the way of turning a page, although they are not as important in ones life as the record of the days and years before the end. Every day, not once but a dozen or more times, Mrs. Mudsky seems to be there, either a book of hers comes to hand out of the shelves, some quick flash of how she would have looked at a problem, some memory of her voice or laugh, and underlying all of each day the remembrance of courage, humor and insatiable interest in life. Perhaps you have not been as hungry as I just to hear your voice or to have that long promised and long waited for hug. It has made the day entirely different and while there never has been regret that Mrs. Mudsky is no longer here you have given me the memory of the deep joy she had in this place, its beauty and the interest of the world in general. Some day when we are together in the East you must see this morning room from which I write, her furniture and prints and water colors are here and I hope there is a little of feeling of her and of the "Eleventh Street" which was home to all of us for so many years.

You know the most recent news of Max so I won't repeat it except to tell you that the doctor finds his color is improving and Dr. Weymouth said to me today "He is better than he thinks he is and some day he will realize it."

It happens that this morning with your letter of the 19th there came a letter from Mr. Van Rensselaer rather talking himself out as to his difficulties. It seems that General Lassiter with the spirit of the true pioneer and woodsman is very much interested in opening up and constructing one trail after another, which as Mr. Van Rensselaer says does add enormously to the interest and accessibility of the Canon, but he said the work goes on without the slightest provision for the upkeep of these paths which adds work to an already over-burdened staff. He is evidently concerned because the making of the trails and their upkeep have so taken the time of his men that several plants in good collections have died from neglect.

At some meeting it might come your way to ask about the trails innocently and ask if there were any endowment or upkeep funds set aside for them and how this work affected the general upkeep work of the Garden. The less I tell you about the whole situation the more effective your innocence will be.

You shall have word with regard to Mme. Cantacuzene after I see her sister-in-law tomorrow, but as I told you telephonically Mrs. Palmer definitely told me more than a month ago that her sister's sight was better and was expected to be better still, as time went on.

You will chortle when you hear that after spending much time and labor over the historic tablet I managed to shorten it by two words, and I think added five! The revision of the placing of the words was made partly at Max's suggestion as he felt that certain dates and names should be made more conspicuous than others and picked out the names of certain owners and the important transfer dates and emphasized these, thereby putting the "reading" part of the tablet in a less prominent and space-taking place. A copy of the revision has gone to Miss Havey and will go to you air-mail tomorrow. You will see that there is hardly a difference of a word but there is a difference in emphasis. You will I know not like the fact that your two names are brought forward but frankly it seems to me a place in which ones own feeling has got to be made more or less subordinate to the historic importance of the different transfers, and certainly the Rock of Dumbarton, Ninian Beall, your ownership and the transfer to Harvard are (to my mind) the salient points to be brought out. Also the fact that a date begins and ends the inscription will make it more manageable in design. In writing to Havey I have asked her to give me an idea of what the small sketch of the possible tablet will cost and what a more fully worked out one will entail.

It was interesting to have Miss Sweeney here. She is full of enthusiasm and keen to go on and give the best she has in her, and her effort to train herself to the position she hopes to fill is both touching and reassuring. You will I know understand that she will have difficulties in meeting the academic mind, just as Bryce will. For example, the whole guide's route had been planned and asked for from Mr. Thacher, also the stop at the Catalogue House, and the general system to be used in connection with the different groups, and Miss Sweeney's alcove office in Bryce's quarters office, but as soon as the two untrained enthusiasts got together they gaily suggested an entirely different route, a different system of addressing and a totally different office arrangement! Of course this is a good

Mrs. Bliss 9/22/41 -3

sign in one way but it is going to take sandpaper and tact to make them both realize that the academic machine moves rather slowly and is a big and complicated ~~machine~~ SM which must be treated gently and led rather than rapidly changed from full speed ahead to reverse. Don't allow this comment to make you anxious as I am not uneasy but feel that a good deal of directing and piloting is going to be needed during the next year.

Bless you my lamb, the Vanda coerulea is one of the most enchantingly lovely flowers that even the tropics ever produced but it is grumpy to a degree and would take more room in the orchid house than one ought to allow it, as four or five plants might possibly produce one flower in the year. It is not for us who must watch our crop of orchids as carefully as a Canadian watches his wheat.

What a sad blow for Barbara Sessions to have lost her father in just that heart-rending way, to her a sickening grief, but to him a merciful way to meet the end.

Thank you for sending me the Breck matter which I will go into and over after this has gone to you by flying post.

It seems long to wait until the end of November. How I long to see you and to be near you.

Yours —

Yours *Trix* —

(How inadequate words are, so I'm just