

MRS. ROBERT WOODS BLISS
EL MIRASOL
Santa Barbara, California

July 26, 1946

Dearest, dear Trix:

A need to sleep has put every other desire on a second plane, so forgive this long-overdue letter. I have been wanting to talk with you daily as plant and scent have delighted us in our little prowl to the gate where we pass a shrub bearing long thorns ~~and~~ (the habit *at its* growth very similar to that of the little Chinese oranges at Dumbarton Oaks. Enclosed is one leaf and a blossom whose scent is insidiously delicious. No one seems to know its name. Perhaps you can tell me.

I went up to the Garden for the meeting of this month, and was happy to find the beauty of the situation more satisfying than ever, and the aliveness and the spirit of the Board so encouraging and agreeable. Van Rensselaer's long indisposition is certainly unfortunate for him and for the Garden. Nobody seems to know just why he became a victim of insomnia with such disastrous results for his nervous system. Mr. Lancaster saw him recently and found him looking very well, and thinks he is making headway. My guess is that he was badgered to the point of desperation by some of the personal equations which made the Board meetings a trial until recently, and it may take him a long time to come around. I shall know more about it within a few weeks, and certainly try to see him before going East in September. Obviously the Garden cannot afford to keep him on the payroll for two or three years and simultaneously employ someone else to do his work, which cannot go by default. On the other hand, I have a feeling that he will recover and return and that the attitude towards the problem on the part of the Board could not be more kindly and considerate.

Thank you for your telegram. It was nice of you to send it, but I am sorry not to have had the pleasure of telling you myself. I suppose that Thatcher in discussing D.O. problems with Mr. Patterson thought he should know of the little financial easement. Some way has obviously got to be found to prevent ~~supervising~~ the grounds to the Research Library and Collection, and Robert and I have concentrated on preparing the phraseology so that I hope the letters making the gift official are fool-proof.

Sacrificing

Sorry Mr. Patterson did not get back to D. O. before I left, as he planned to. I went over your June 11th letter with Thatcher, and would like to take up the following points with you:

Paragraph 3: Agreed that Orchard, Star and Crabapple Hill planting should be thinned. In regard to the Orangery, I do not agree that because it is used as much it should be more "impersonal", as you suggest. It is precisely the "personal" characteristic which makes Dumbarton Oaks what it is, and wherever that element can be combined with practical workableness it should in our opinion be retained. I discussed the Ficus with Bryce and he tells me that the coarse, big leaf part is the female plant, and obviously it cannot all be eliminated. ~~and~~ I think that the garlands over the rafters should not be allowed to thicken unduly ~~and~~ that the windows should never be covered by the drooping, looping, waving tufts of green leaves, but beyond that I am not prepared to go, ~~and that a~~ slight detached spray of the Ficus appearing here and there over the upper part of the glazing mellows the light and is pretty, but it should not be too long, too coarse, nor too thick.

Paragraph 4: You say "If herbaceous borders are altered according to the suggestions made". What "suggestions"? We don't agree that the little brick ribbon running down Melisande's Allée should be widened, but we do completely agree that the Goat Trail should be made safe for elderly knees and careless ankles; for this problem Bryce has, I think, a good solution. I hope Mr. Patterson will go over it thoroughly with him before he talks with you.

Can't the overgrown white Azalea from the Star garden be used north of the swimming pool, west of the path which runs parallel to the north vista on the Crab Hill, and scattered about near the northwest end of the tennis court?

Reverting now to your notes, page 1, May 27-8-9, paragraph 1, I am not at all sure that added paved space is necessary south and north of the middle doors of the Orangery. That is not where people congregate. I think Bryce and Sweeney know more about the public habits than you, Mr. Patterson, Robert or I, and I would go very piano indeed on changing the design of that part, but there is definitely an inadequacy of paved space between the front door of the house and

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the Orangery, and there a suitable line should be found and bricks added.

Paragraph 2: Agreed west end of the Orangery should have more paving. Pruning is a question of degree. Bryce insists that the Ficus grows south, then east, then North and that not a great deal more can come off it with safety.

Paragraph 3: Yes.

Paragraph 4: The Toreyas went to Thatcher, as I understand it. Bryce insists on replacing it by "Aquarius." There is Ilex on the west side of Aquarius now, and the freeing of the pink brick wall from the over-planted Yew Box is a pleasant simplification ~~in~~ relief. I thought the record of all this planting was done in the big report? By the way, when do you think ~~it~~ it will be finished?

Page 2: I now see what you meant by the "suggested changes" at the herbaceous border. This is such a long subject about which I feel so strongly that I must take it up in a separate note, as I cannot today go into it as thoroughly as I shall want to, but roughly speaking, Robert and I stand firm that the Yew hedge and pyramidal piers should be kept around Mr. Yew. I don't approve of the Yew hedge at the foot of the orchard where I personally would prefer a grey stone dry retaining wall.* The rest of it must wait another day.* Would it be practical to contemplate removing the last (northern) row of
Paragraph 3: Right. apple trees?)

Paragraph 4: Yes.

Page 3: Paragraph 1: Yes.

Paragraph 2: Agreed the creepers should be restrained.

I really do regret very much that Mr. Patterson's projected trip for the end of June did not take place. I had written at the foot of your notes the following to discuss with him: Crabapple Hill. Take off heavy branches, fill the pool before placing Azaleas from the Star; Console, ~~Inf~~ Infinitals for north end of north vista; the removal of big boxwood from rose garden will be very expensive. The North gate ones would have joined

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in order to make a fine clump, but where could they be used, and how cut out? Could some of the overgrown box be sold?

Suggest removal of the four ailing haystack boxwood from the corner base, and plant entirely to roses.

I hope you are so happy over the Arnold Arboretum that your recent trip there probably stimulated you no end.

Don't think of taking time and strength to write me ~~proper~~ letters, but do send a line if only a post card to let me know how you are after stepping out.

Robert spent Monday night on Mt. Wilson, having dined in company of the Millikins whom he found in first-rate form, inquiring for you and sending messages.

Goodby, Trix dear, for today. You will be hearing from me again before too long. Robert sends you his best love, that you know, and my greetings to Clemmy, always,

Your devoted,

*Max's little Palgrave is shingled
and with 1 end each day - lovingly.*

Mrs. Max Farrand
Reef Point
Bar Harbor
Maine