

October 30th, 1941

Mrs. Beatrix Farrand,
Reef Point, Bar Harbor, Maine.

Dear Mrs. Farrand:

Your letter of the 21st arrived on a day when I was besieged by visitors and was laid aside until I could get my breath but it seems now when the visitors depart I am 'all in' so far as desk work is concerned, consequently everything has been neglected in the way of correspondence, &c. I finally got Bryce pinned down where he said he would write you in answer to your letters. He tells me he wrote you yesterday.

I must have made a mistake in saying we had a two hour walk for the children - it was two walks of an hour each. The children have been coming in - two classes in an afternoon - on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Last Wednesday inadvertently the newspapers printed a notice to the effect that the Dumbarton Oaks gardens would be open to visitors whereas we had intended making Saturday the first day for adults; however, only eight ladies appeared and I marshaled them around and through the place but could hardly shoo them out at 11:45. We have ~~not~~ decided to open, not the main gates, but the exit on the corner of 32 and R Streets, as in this way the children will not be tempted to make a short-cut across the grass path between the walks leading to the Orangery.

Last week our visitors totaled 230 - 77 of them adults - So far this week we have had but 29 children and 55 adults. Somehow no children showed up yesterday but 52 grownups did yesterday morning. All of them seemed delighted at the idea of having open days every week and some were making a return visit. This afternoon 12 or 14 teachers are coming at 4:00 from the Woodrow Wilson High School.

I must tell you about one of the highlights of last Thursday: Twenty adults of the Americanization school came - representing 12 different countries and while their command of English was practically nil, they were a most appreciative group and very interested. Their teacher came with them and during the tour we were trailed by two columnists from the Washington Post who wanted to write up a story for the paper. You would have been touched by the sight of these 'foreigners' standing on Catalogue House knoll singing "God Bless America".

Saturday's visitors numbered 67 but there were about 30 more outside who were too late. The gatekeeper said they were protesting loud and long but he had orders to admit no one after the tour started. I was unable to give them any kind of talk as my voice couldn't carry to the rear and trying to keep up with both ends but there were plenty of questions, most of which I was able to answer after a fashion. It's hard to keep such a group together; they have the idea they want to wander off and see for themselves and feel they don't enjoy being 'herded'. And what impudent questions some of them ask. I am acquiring quite a stone face already!

Miss Cary Milholland of the American Horticultural Society came to see me one afternoon after her request to know what her group could do to help, in showing their appreciation of being permitted to hold their annual meetings here in the Drawing Room. She suggested perhaps some of their garden club ladies might assist as guides on open days but I am a bit pessimistic about such a plan as I've had some experience with 'volunteers' and how undependable they can be. I have not as yet had an opportunity to speak to Mr. Thacher about it - anyway it was just a bit vague and I imagine she will broach the matter at their meeting to see if anyone else has something to suggest.

I have not yet got the blackboard in the Orangery but have placed on the tables some extra panels of things now to be seen; also some birds and a few Nature Magazines and Bird Lore for the children to look at and they seem to be very popular. I am now combing through some N.Y. Botanical Journals for a grouping of types of leaves and winter buds for extra material.

Thank you for your comments on the display panels. You are right, Zanthorrhiza is Z not X though in some places both spellings are given.

Washington is at last getting a taste of the coming Winter. Maple trees are about the only color we have, except dogwoods, but the weather has been so dry I keep scuffing leaves on my way to the office every morning and enjoy the lovely dogwood berries so brilliantly colored, but the Ginkgos have not yet started to turn yellow nor the oaks. We had a very little rain on Tuesday but hardly enough to do more than wet the surface. Everyone is praying for rain while a friend of mine who is traveling in the middle west says she is held up everywhere by floods.

I am very sorry to hear Mr. Farrad is not getting along as well as you had hoped and I know how anxious it makes you feel and how uncertain your movement must be. I judge from the last paragraph of your letter that there will be no visit to Dumbarton Oaks before your departure for California. I know you will want to stay at Reef Point just as long as possible,

It's characteristically kind and considerate of you to be solicitous after my health - so far I feel fine though I must confess to being a bit footsore after two and three tours are over but on the whole I am in excellent condition and only hope I can continue to be "on foot" as long as there is a need. However, I am rather looking forward to a lull in the tours so that I may get down to assembling new things for the Spring besides catching up on the lists &c.

With many kind greetings to you and Mr. Farrand and a special message to nice Miss Walters and the household, and Mrs. Stover.

Very sincerely,