

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

June 19, 1944

Miss Anne Sweeney
3101 R Street,
Dumbarton Oaks
Washington, D. C.

Dear Miss Sweeney:

Your letter of the 15th of June was really most helpful as you can quite appreciate that in arriving at Dumbarton there are usually so many different and complex questions put before me that if I can know in advance what the various matters are it helps me to arrange my disorderly mind into some sort of connected thought.

In any organization such as D.O. there are bound to be crossed wires and peculiarly so in these days when people are under a heavy strain and when both Mrs. Bliss and Mr. Thacher are so occupied with other work that D.O. frankly does not get the attention it deserves. So I think you and I have just got to see what we think the wisest way out and to use such angelic patience as we can muster in dealing with the different annoyances and difficulties.

Certainly your report of the Garden Guide for the month ending the 31st of May and also for the April and winter months is most excellent. I had no notion that your visitors ran up into the thousands as they now seem to, as the totals for April and May run well toward 3500. This in itself is a real achievement and whether or not you feel that you deserve the credit for it I know in many instances you have helped to grease the wheels and you have helped the whole publicity end of the garden service. I really am immensely pleased with these three sheets of report and congratulate you on what you have accomplished.

In looking over my photographs of D.O. I will try and see whether I have copies of any of the old prints of the house before the alterations were made. If so I will bring the photographs on with me.

The quotation on the Wisteria arbor in the herbaceous garden terrace as I make it out is not exactly what Mrs. Clark has written but this which I add on another paper. I also copy the quotation as the last word is not correct as it is "sognaro" and not "fognaro".

Please get ready for me all the other inscriptions on which you need translations so that I can bring them back with me and work them out here. As I remember it the quotation on the "STAR" next to the Green Garden comes from Chaucer and I think is from one of the very early editions. This I will put on my memorandum to ask Mrs. Bliss. In the meantime will you please get the lettering of this quotation so that I shall have this correctly for the planting notes.

The question as to the terrior column is a very simple one to answer as this is a copy of one seen many many years ago in a garden outside of Palermo which used to belong to the Kings of Naples of Nelson's time. Evidently the villa was much used by British people as there were a considerable number of English colored prints hanging in the basement of the villa and outside of the villa in the garden there was this little memorial complete with its vase with an inscription obviously carved by an Italian who knew no English, saying that the column and vase were set up in memory of a beloved terrier, which was Italianized into "terrior", hence this name. The simplicity of the form of the vase and the curious inscription both took the imagination of Mrs. Bliss and myself so it has always been known as the "terrior".

The iron swing I think has no story at all as it merely is an adaptation of some French Rococo designs and its figures were largely chosen after some engravings in an 18th century book on the Zoo at Versailles where the Aesop's fables were used in the iron work grills which surrounded the cages of the animals, so that the fables shown on the uprights to the iron swing are all from Aesop. As I remember it there is the Fox and the Grapes, and the Stork who tries to feed from the very narrow necked bottle. If I were you I should look up the Aesop's fables and see what trace you can find as I think your tourists would enjoy hearing about the subjects.

I am also putting on my agenda for Mrs. Bliss the request for the origin of the quotation in the Catalogue House.

As to picture postcards of the garden, probably both you and I are to blame about the lack of these as I think it has been really our duty to prepare an agenda showing the possibilities of postcards, what they will cost and how much they can be sold for, so that we shall have some concrete suggestion to make to Mr. Thacher and Miss Carpenter. I have been looking over the postcards which are sold here (2 cards for 5 cents) and find that they were made by the Albert Type Company in Brooklyn New York, or the American Art Postcard Company in Boston. Undoubtedly there must be for Washington much more convenient local postcard makers and what I would suggest your doing immediately is to find out from the photographer, Stewart, who has the plates and whether he could make postcards and if so in what quantity and for what price. Then also you might go to some of the places where tourists buy Washington postcards, find the names of the makers of the postcards and write them as to whether they can make cards for us, and if so how much by the hundred or the thousand. It would seem to me that if we had about twenty cards there should be at least enough to start with. Perhaps we should be more modest and start with ten - but at least I think we shall have to provide all the information cut and dried to Mr. Thacher and Miss Carpenter before we can expect an answer. This really is our job rather than theirs!

As to the crossed wires between you and Mrs. Clark, it is very unfortunate that she seems so difficult a person with whom to deal as so much could be done if she would willingly co-operate, but it seems to me quite absurd to have so good a growing library of garden books as there are at Dumbarton and have them out of your reach, so I will take up the question and see what can be done as it is something which must be

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not

decided on/by you or me but by one of the two heads, Mr. Thacher or Mrs. Bliss. As far as getting a few books from Harvard, again I am sure that unless there has been a distinct change of mind on Mr. Thacher's part he will be willing to let us buy an occasional inexpensive book.

Indeed I see the difficulties of your job as I see the difficulties of many others but these days if nothing else teach one patience and to accept circumstances as they are and try to make the best of them. You and I have always got on so well together and we have always spoken our thoughts so clearly and freely to each other that it has been a real help to me and I hope to you, and please believe that in every way possible I will help you even though it may mean showing you ways in which you may have to see things from a different point of view in order to help on the general progress.

Please also let me know who gets the Garden Club bulletin as this certainly should be passed on to you or we must have a separate subscription for you.

Thank you too for telling me about the interest that you have in the plates on display in the Orangery. After all the question of education of visitors is one of the slowest that has to be faced and the very fact that you may not have so many destructive hooligans is all to the good.

Also remember that with the two different enterprises which Mr. Thacher is now carrying on of course Dumbarton does not get the time it deserves, so often there is little opportunity for discussing things and for making of long-range decisions. In this way I can see how the decision was made perhaps impulsively to stop the Sunday tours and will find out more about this when I am at D.O.

Thank you too for letting me have the planting of the Museum Court. Even though it does not reach me before I leave this week it will be incorporated in the massive notes you have helped me so much to compile.

It is all to the good that you are making the alphabetized list of the plates as this will be useful and must be a part of your detailed inventory.

You have no idea how much your frank statement of your difficulties is helping to clear my mind and how much it would help me if from time to time I could hear from you as to the various little hitches and difficulties which are inevitable in every enterprise and peculiarly in these days.

You speak about taking your holiday in August. Have you ever thought of whether or not it would suit the general establishment better if you were to take your holiday in the winter and also whether or not this arrangement would be likely to suit you, perhaps over the Christmas and New Year holidays? This is just thrown in as a suggestion to be spoken of when we meet. How nice it is to think that we are so soon to see each other.

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As I get in on Saturday morning I don't quite know when you and I had better plan to have our talk. Perhaps you had better find out from Irene and tell her to let me know what your hours are on Saturday when you are on duty with visitors, and in this way you and I can dovetail our arrangements with Bryce, Mrs. Bliss and Mr. Thatcher. They are going to be two heavy days and as I am no longer as strong as I used to be I have to go rather slowly and take things in rather small bites, but the main thing is that Mr. Farrand has gained his twentieth pound since leaving the hospital not quite a year ago and that makes all the difference in the world. Mr. Farrand, Mrs. Stover and Miss Walter all send their best to you and wish they might see you.

Yours ever sincerely,

Betty Farrand

Have I got the planting list for the inside of the tennis court walls?

P.S. A telephone message from Mrs. Bliss tells me of the serious and terrible illness of poor Mrs. Kearney. How anxious you must all have been, and Mrs. Bliss further adds that you have with your usual competence and good will taken charge of the cooking and house management in Mrs. Bryce's absence. What a grand group you are.