

February 9, 1939

Dearest Garden Twin:

The great event of Casa Orlando was Elizabeth's far too brief visit last week. She seemed both to Max and me incredibly well and in good form. She said she liked it here and was far more active than either of Maxtrix; rushed about to the Library, saw the stack and the pictures, a little of the garden and delighted our little bridge party. We went to see the 200" mirror and the lovely Isabella picked her up, to our great regret, after only thirty-six hours here. She leaves tonight from Santa Barbara after sandwiching in a lightning journey to see the coast redwoods at Santa Cruze. It seemed to both Max and me that she was better than she had been for some years past and only you know what a joy it was to have her here. She said she had not seen you and Robert very recently but that your telephone voice showed your usual energy and gaiety of heart. How I wish I could see you and give you the hug that I gave her by proxy!

The Blaksley Garden matters seem to be advancing. Mr. Van Rensselaer, while in Pasadena a few days ago, came to see me and rather suggested it might be of help to General Lassiter and him to have a talk with them if I could come to Santa Barbara before certain rather critical meetings. Therefore I went on last Sunday and had a long talk with General Lassiter, Mr. McCoy (the new owner of the El Encanto Hotel and a promising recruit for Garden support), and Mr. Van Rensselaer. General Lassiter took the articles of incorporation and change of garden name quite flying in his stride. Mr. McCoy and I both felt that the separation from the Santa Barbara Museum essential, and while both Mr. Van Rensselaer and I deplored the change of name from the Blaksley Botanic Garden to the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, the consensus of opinion seemed to be that the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden title will be more likely to bring in subscriptions than a name associated with a family which perhaps by indirection might be supposed to be responsible for its endowment and support. The Blaksley Botanic Garden executive committee was to meet on the following day and General Lassiter gave Mr. Van Rensselaer and me the impression that the committee would act favorably on the suggestion to separate and to incorporate and that the results would be given at the important meeting of the Santa Barbara Museum trustees, which is to be held next Monday. As you will have doubtless noticed, the Blaksley funds are to be held by the Santa Barbara Museum (for the present at least) with a written understanding that the Museum pay over to the Botanic Garden the revenue from these endowments for the Garden's whole and exclusive use. While no promises or even definite suggestions have been made, one or two of the Santa Barbara people seem to feel that it is likely that Major Fleishmann will be so pleased to get rid of the Botanic Garden from the Museum that he will add to the endowment of the Garden as a sort of "alimony." Mr. Van Rensselaer said that thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Gould they had been able to finish their fiscal year of 1938 with a ten cent credit balance!

They were full of gratitude to you for your splendid Thousand Dollar cheque which helped them over the worst of the hill. The luncheon at General Lassiter's afterwards was very pleasant with Mrs. Sloane, Mr. Duane and two or three other of your friends in Santa Barbara, all of whom were in a twitter of excitement as to whether or not you were going to be there next summer for a good long "spell."

It seemed wise to go to Casa Dorinda for a brief visit before coming home on Monday afternoon and I was glad I did so because good Lucking and even the energetic Johnny tend to tread water when the directing mind is not immediately available.

The gutter situation on the house is a serious one and is not improving. Quite definitely the old lead gutters are powdery and can not be repaired. As there had been further leaks and as the canvas in your bedroom had loosened as a result of the leaks of early this winter, it seemed as though it would be wise to order the repair made to the roof outside your east windows, which will at any rate be permanently valid. This will mean plugging over the old lead gutter and replacing the tile without gutters of any kind. You will doubtless remember we discussed and decided on this. If at this point no gutter is needed and the splash of the water on the pavement outside the music room is not annoying we can go on and repair such parts of the roof as absolutely require repair this winter and leave for later consideration the question of whether or not to install outside hanging gutters and outside downspouts. The outside hanging gutter will not be pretty, neither will the downspouts, but it is definitely dangerous to the house to have the roof water running through its walls in pipes that may give away at any moment. This repair work on the gutter outside your room is to be finished before my return to Casa Dorinda, which will be in the early days of March.

The dracaena given by Mrs. Kennerly to Casa Dorinda has been moved to a position chosen for it against the west side of the service wing and looks grand!!! As a result one does not miss the little oak which was taken out close to the front door. It is a vast improvement.

Johnny Weeks's arm has quite recovered from the spider bite and he said proudly he was finishing his painting this week.

More will be sent you after the official visit.

Your fonder than ever

Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss
Dumbarton Oaks
Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Farrand arranged with Johnny Weeks that the H. & H. Roofing Company was to make the repairs on the roof outside Mrs. Bliss's bedroom.

The H. & H. Roofing Company on October 19, 1938 gave an estimate for the line over the front door of \$320. The cost of the repairs over Mrs. Bliss's bedroom will be decidedly less as Johnny has already removed the tile and done much of the preliminary work and the distance is shorter.

If any metal work is required the Ott Hardware Company is to do it under Johnny's supervision.

These two firms are the ones who have done the roofing and metal work on the house in the past.

Mrs. Bliss - February 9, 1939

Miss Havey was away for a long holiday which I thought she needed as she seemed to me very tired this late autumn. The holiday has apparently rested her so much that she has sent on some promising "cortile" sketches which are sent on to you for your inspection. The old sketches are also added so that you will have the full record of the various possibilities even though some were rejected.

I shall be keenly eager to know what is happening to the space at the east end of the new big museum room and whether it is to be the curved wall that you and I do not particularly like, or a simulated loggia which Robert particularly dislikes! Also has the placing of the Apolausiss lady been decided?

In the five newest plans sent the proportions remain approximately the same of the general plot and its surrounding walks. There are things I like in plan A with its designed Aquia paving for the western loggia and the simplicity of the central space.

Plan B shows the curved corners for the music room steps which I think we considered desirable and a circular motif in the paving, which give the reason for the corners of the grass or green plot.

Plan C changes the design slightly in the ends of the space outside of the exhibition room windows and in the end of the space next to the music room. The reflecting pool might be pretty in the summer but I dread its empty dryness in winter unless it is needed for showing Apolausiss.

Plan C-a shows variations in the corner spaces.

Plan E seems to me good in some of its design for the grass plot but I dislike the complication of the wide spaces of paving at the east end of the central green plot.