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December 9, 1941

Dear Mrs. Farrand,

Yesterday afternoon I had a talk with Mrs. Bliss, and it was such a pleasure to hear her voice again. I only wish that you had been there at the same time so that we could also have exchanged messages.

Please do not think that, after reading what I am about to say, I have lost my balance completely over the grim news which continues to pour in over the radio. However, now that we are actually in the war it seems to me that we must do all we can to put this place on a war basis, while still trying to keep the place and the work as normal as possible, preserving all our latent possibilities for the days when we may have peace again.

In this connection (it occurred to me that possibly some definite steps should be taken in regard to curtailing the greenhouses. My reason for this you can appreciate without my going into great detail. I have talked with Mr. Bryce and he tells me that it would be perfectly feasible to move the orchids into the orangery where the creeper is. He said that they could be well looked after there and would not require any more heat than the creeper itself. If this is done the rest of the greenhouses could be closed without loss of any irreplaceable material.

Bryce also tells me that the gardens have already been prepared for the spring blooms so that that work is well behind us. Therefore, the only change I would suggest making in the garden picture at the moment is the closing of the greenhouses.

Will you let me know what your views are on this and please, as always, be completely frank with me. If you approve, would you be good enough to discuss the matter with Mrs. Bliss so that your answer may contain both your views.

I have no doubt but what many of the men will want to join some branch of the service or will now be wanted for them.

At the moment I am busy working on plans for the safe keeping of all of our objects. There are two steps which have to be taken; - one of providing proper packing materials and containers for the objects, and second, making arrangements for their final destination. In this regard I am going into the matter of an air raid shelter, a question which was taken up in some detail last spring.

Mr. Bryce pointed out that owing to the excavations and foundations under the greenhouses it might be possible to put our shelter there thereby avoiding a great deal of excavation and expense. This would not interfere with the future use of the greenhouses when we are able to reopen them. I am, of course, speaking of the main greenhouse, and in particular the west end of it.

It was such a pleasure to have seen you here, and I do hope that the long journey west did not tire you too greatly.

With kind regards to Mr. Farrand and many messages from Dumbarton Oaks to you,

Ever/yours sincerely,

Mrs. Beatrice Farrand
Valley Club of Montecito,
Santa Barbara, California.