

BEATRIX FARRAND
THE VALLEY CLUB OF MONTECITO
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SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

February 28, 1947
hand 7 "

Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss
1537 28th Street
Washington, D. C.

My very dear Mildred:

Your encyclopedic letter of February 21 and 22 arrived hand in hand with Mr. Patterson's full report (posted also on the 22nd) of his visit to Dumbarton of February 3rd to 6th.

The two together propound so many problems that I find myself overwhelmed, and because of this sense of bewilderment and lack of strength, a long latent decision seems wise to make at once. It is perfectly clear that while physically better, there is no likelihood of ever really being strong again, and that is to be expected as in a few months the 75th milestone will have been passed. And as you have repeatedly told me, there have long been heavy overdrafts. So it will be kinder to Dumbarton and wiser for the rest of us to face the fact that after a happy association with its loveliness, I must give up the idea of advising and counselling and probably further visits.

Making this decision is a good deal like tearing off an arm or a leg or cutting out one's heart, but the change has got to come some day and Dumbarton develop on lines I might not be able to approve or follow. There is no chance that Dumbarton can be as intimately and personally lovely as it was when you and Robert lived there. Quite naturally Mr. Thacher's instinct leads him away from gardening and into the Library and collections, and Bryce has not the artistic background and technique which would make him a good adviser. Mr. Patterson will counsel wisely and sensibly and has feeling and training and is growing more and more to understand and love the place.

Naturally I'll slowly work on with the record notes, and hope to finish them gradually, but even they "drain" me and a visit would be still harder.

Now as to one or two of your problems - I know the herbaceous border and its hedges is wrong. The dimensions of border and walks are too nearly alike. Eventually walls will be needed, but in the meantime shrubs should be added and the hedges on the slope taken out and the herbaceous material reduced in its width and bulk. If the walk could be narrowed a little so much the better. Max always said I could not reason, but instinctively I know that this pronouncement is right from my personal point of view as a designer.

