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March 24, 1947

Darling Trix:

Your February 28th letter came March 7th and so puzzled me I asked Mr. Thacher if I might see his copy of Mr. Patterson's report that you mentioned. With great interest I read it and thought it a meticulously accurate resume of "thinking aloud" discussions, which is just what we all feel is due you and what you would expect of his loyalty.

But long it is, and full of detail and consequently tiring, the more so as you have not been at Dumbarton Oaks for so long and as Time and Distance do blur outlines.

From your paragraph 2, page 2, you seem to have misread the temper of Mr. Patterson's Report. We were musing, groping, wondering, interrogating and only that - not a decision - or even a near one - was reached, even in principle, regarding the Orangery, which, as it happens, we all want to keep! Also, dear, in your second paragraph page one you say that Patterson's and my letters "together proposed so many problems" etc., and on re-reading my letter I find I only mentioned one subject regarding Dumbarton Oaks - the Herbaceous Border - and at that, in only one short paragraph of speculative musing!

But, my dear, if this so "bewilders" and wearies you and you feel it too straining to keep on trying to see through the eyes and words of others at long range, you alone can judge whether the moment you foresaw two years ago has come. As you say rightly, Mr. Patterson will, I feel sure, "counsel wisely and sensibly and has feeling and training" and cannot help but "grow more and more to understand and love the place".

You and I were privileged to enjoy that rarest of delights - cooperative creativeness, and the quiet beauty which your knowledge and taste and my day-dreaming brought to life, has been a definite contribution to the total of loveliness in the world. It has stimulated a love of trees and flowers and proportion in thousands of grey lives and quickened the imagination of some who didn't know they had any. So you may well be glad at heart for the many *happy* years of intimacy with every phase of its livingness, as I am.

If you have decided irrevocably that you must retire, then of course, you must write Mr. Thacher, who felt very real personal regret when I read him bits of your letter to me. Of my own feelings I will not speak because the closing of this chapter makes the step we took in 1940 an even heavier load to carry.

You also wrote you "must give up the idea of advising and counselling and probably of further visits". Now that, Trix Dear, we cannot accept, any of us. You owe it to Dumbarton Oaks, to Harvard and to Thacher to bring your professional relationship to a graceful



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close. And what of us? Of Robert and of me? I simply refuse to believe that you would so deeply hurt our affection.

So I hope you will arrange to spend two spring days in your third floor room, where meals can be brought to you and where no one will intrude work upon you.

Thacher, Robert, Bryce, Sweeney and I will limit our little visits with you as strictly as you wish. Though you may wish to sleep and be alone most of your "waking" hours, you will have done the right thing by Dumbarton Oaks and all of us and I cannot believe that such a short visit, devoid of responsibilities, decisions, lists and pressure could be over-taxing for you. Indeed, I should think that to see Dumbarton Oaks once more and get the feel of it would be a pleasure to you, as well as an ache! When do you plan to come East? We shall all be hors de combat the week of April 21 - 26th and Robert and I attend the Association of Museums Meeting in Canada the last of May. When you write Thacher you had best ask him for his dates of absence. He has a full schedule and sails May 6th, I think it is.

It is a long time now since you have told me of the official future of Reef Point. Mr. Patterson gave me to understand you were having difficulties with the Legislation. How nerve-racking to have these postponements. I am full of concern for you. What is the present status? Has the Reef Point Bill a name or a number, and is it in the Upper or Lower House? Would you like Robert to beg Senator White of Maine to urge speed upon his State Legislators? He would be very happy to be useful to you, dear.

Of course we count on the "Record Notes". They are vital for the future of Dumbarton Oaks. But do, I beg of you, work in such short periods that they cannot "drain" you. I understand perfectly what you mean by the use of that verb for I have experienced the process; but one can learn one's own dosage.

I shan't weary you with any mention of North Vista or Herbaceous Border except to say, we shall keep before our minds' eyes and in our files what you have written in your February 28th letter, page 1, last paragraph, and page 2, paragraph 1 & 2.

But the Cathedral I must mention for you have clarified a perplexity. "A great high crypt or further basements" with "nothing between the Cathedral and the road so that it would soar up from its ravine" as Laon towers over the countryside". That would have been dramatic and beautiful. Ah! me .....

This letter has been delayed because I went to New York and than spent one and a half hours with Elizabeth. She looked natural - not ill - and her colour was not at all poor: i.e. not the grey we all used to dread. The interior healing process is painful because the cicatricial tissue pinches the nerves. But as a "case" she is entirely satisfactory and moved into Isabella's house last



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Tuesday. This assures freedom from intrusion and the relief from monotony. She loves to hear from her friends.

Good night Trix darling. Let me hear from you before too long. My devoted affection enfolds you.