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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

[Nov. 1916]



My dear Christine,

You must indeed think it very strange that I could let all the attention which I have received from your family go so long with no expressed appreciation.

I will take them up in their order. It was indeed most kind and thoughtful of Mr. Robbins to write and extend to me the courtesies of his laboratory - & for I shall not be able to accept, tho I should be delighted to do so.

Then came your beautifully framed letter. I was much interested in your description of your home. I had no idea you were living so near the country. Your home must be very attractive and it would seem to me very large for your family. I expect you have a negro servant. It was most generous and very lovely of you to give me such a cordial invitation to come and use your guest room.

And now last but not least the card announcing the arrival of little Fordwick. I am so glad for you and I am sure you are both very happy in his arrival. He is now about ten weeks old and must

be coming and talking to your hearts
content.

Now as to myself. Well I have been
behaving very badly. I kept at work but
kept running down. During June and July
I lost over twenty pounds, for no reason
that was apparent.

Alice took matters into her hands and
said I must come here. I am glad she
did so for I am sure it was wise. I
came expecting to stay not more than
four weeks at the longest. I am leaving
on Friday Nov. 17, which will be right-
weeks for my arrival. My doctor
objects very much to my leaving now but
thinks I should stay ^{at least} 12 weeks. I am told
by the various doctors here that I have been
a truly sick woman for several years. They
think as long as ten, and that only a
strong will and power of endurance could
keep me at my work. I confess
that it has not always been easy, but I
was determined that I would not give up
and where one loves one's work one
can overcome much. I am sure they
are right when they say ten years for I
can remember the struggle it has taken
as far back as that to hide my feelings.
And also I often succeeded very badly
and would go home at night determined to do



have been so impatient - and fully that - I do not know how my teacher could have gone on being so long - and considerate.

I wonder if you would be interested in the Freshman lectures for this year? Dr. Riddle writes that there are 455 freshmen. Their science elective course thus: Chemistry 63, Zoology 60, Physics 33, Geology 29, Astronomy 23, Botany 174. What surprises me most is that we have more than Eng. Lit. which has 171. So you see we are holding our own at Wellesley, even in old Stone Hall.

You know of course that Abbie is studying at Harvard Stanford. Alice is at home with her grandmother who you know has been ill for the past year. She is trying to get a paper published but with all the responsibility of the house and all the work to do, besides much church work, she has not a great deal of time for writing or making plates.

I was going to close when I repeated my thanks to you but I seem to keep

better the next-day. It is simply what they call a bad case of auto-intoxication from colitis, with other complications.

I am beginning to feel better and have gained back six pounds. They say I must take at least six months of rest, that means that research must be put off until late spring, and that you see is not the time to go South. I am going for her to friends in New York when I can have absolute rest and can continue certain treatments at the diet. Then by Jan. 1. I hope to start South, going to Florida, to the islands and then through the canal to California. This cuts out Alabama you see. Then I hope to come home for the research work in late spring or summer.

They have kept me very busy with treatments ever since I came here. There is little time for rest now.

I want once more to tell you how very happy it made me that you and Mr. Robbins should both have been so kind in writing as you have. Had I been ordinarily well I should have answered the letter long ago. I am not only going to be made physically much better but I expect to go back to the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation.



right-on.

I was at Thaca two days in August. -
Happened to be there for the last botany picnic.
It seems to me that Dr. Meigs now has
a very fine lot of young ones and certainly
some fine ones. So far as I could judge
everything seemed to be in a most sat-
isfactory condition.

There are many changes in our depart-
ment - this year as three of us are away
and those (Emma Luke, Eliza Anderson
and Eliza DeMott) do not return.

I must not write more.

With very much love and the
best of wishes,

Margaret C. Ferguson.

Please give my thanks and kindest
regards to Professor Robbins.