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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.

29 Jan. 48

from Oliver

Dear Miss Curtis,

~~Egypt~~

After some interval "I take up my pen once more!" In other words I am back here after 5 months & excursion to England. Of 6 grandchildren I had seen only 2 as babies, so I risked becoming legendary. A Kennedy of Ballinacorney was sailing considerably, so I found myself once more in residence by the 2nd week of August 1848. Direct passages, Alexandria-England, are relatively rare, but I had the luck to discover a new Swedish freighter - the *Alida Gollhorn* - making the trip. The diversion to London arose from his intention to touch at Candia (Candia) to load up 2000 tons of grapes for Covent Garden market. The town itself (Candia) is a poor place, though its population may rival that of Stockholm. Its spacious harbor remains just as the war left it, with many dangerous wrecks still in situ. Connected to such quays movements at sea on the grey side is a perilous adventure, taking hours, & moving at about the rate of the minute-hand of a clock! In 3 days this cargo was loaded, & we headed for London. I, & 2 other passengers, dined with the Capt. & chief engineer, so the 1st meals were a revelation, as I have never visited Sweden. Thus, the midday dinner. A table carrying perhaps 30 dishes of hors d'oeuvres: for 1/2 an hour one flits from dish to dish - till everything has been consumed. This is a mere preface to the actual meal - a hot roast joint with background of vegetables, potatoes, cheese & dessert, the whole washed down with excellent red wine. Sweets, as I saw them, were great big men, & living near the Arctic Circle, regard such banquets as the minimum necessary for existence. My baggage was swelled out with quantities of contraband for Stockholm & to my families at home. 25 lbs. of saags, & the like; shoes

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A shipper parcelled the parcel - The mother
had sent me parcels of all kind of things: also, lastly
of bags & leather goods for the Grovers. At Rother-
hithe a customs-man climbed over the side and
made a faithful declaration of what I had. "Let's see
these leather goods", & he marched off to his temporary
office with an air of authority. On returning, he flung them
down on my cabin table, with the remark - "Please
forget about it, Sir, forget about it." - It must have
been the gradual accumulation of shoes that had touched
his heart! Anyway, I got everything as free as air.
We tied up at 7 am., in the Pool, right under London
Bridge, opposite Fishmongers Hall. After breakfast
Geoff arrived in his car: I had told him in advance
only the ship's name, & being himself a sailor-man
he had discerned all about her, and where she
would tie up. We drove out to his home at Hester-
more - It was a Sunday morning, with cloud bells
on, as we passed through the Surrey village. ---
Later I heard fr. V.C. that T.G.'s car was found & removed,
near his home at Hamstead (Lancs) for an operation, to the
County branch of St. Thomas' Hospital - stated to be at Godalming.
So off I went early one morning to Godalming, but this hope
was at Hydestich, 6 or 7 miles away. People said "went there &
was passing near the stile go over an hour." But those lines
had been with me, as I started off to track it. On the road,
enquiring the way (I had no map), a passer-by said "it's a
terrible long way & you'll never arrive." Of course I persisted
& reached the hospital in the late forenoon. I found that "T.G." had
been evacuated 3 days earlier & was returned to his home.
However, they gave me a friendly tea, & as it was too late to
dig him out, I chartered a car & reached Geoff's in time for
dinner. Next day (Sunday) I got motorised only to D.G.'s
& found him fatal. But pursuing, hobbling about with a stick,
cheery & optimistic; he carried on the right road to recovery
- but I've heard nothing since & must accept his record
in relating this incident is that well - Godalming to the Hospital -

3 Oliver to Curtis 27.1.1908

was for me history. The summer's sombre mantle had given place to the most wonderful autumnal colour pageant I had ever beheld. This broad obvious country in my Hampshire country, but the settings of the earlier road I followed from Gosolming, traversing high country, with its haps & downs, presented an ever-changing colour picture such as I could never have imagined. The whole landscape was aflame, & the still-green lush valleys, running up to my course with vistas of distance, gave a picture which was known level terrain on Hampshire chalk cannot present - although the ingredients were the same. Especially at this moment the Great trees were in their glory, though all the others were contributing to the chromatic Kaleidoscope. To me, after years in Egypt where there is no autumn, as we northerners understand it, this display is unforgettable.

After I visited Phil who has recently (& unexpectedly) acquired a little property (Helsale me) near Saxmundenham in Suffolk. Some 200 yds. fr. the residence is the mill, dismantled but not obliterated. The whole extending perhaps to 12 acres. The idea is to do a bit of farming - later when he retires from the service: a few pigs & a cow at two ---- His wife, coming here, enjoys it, & for the children - who were living in tents at the time - it was paradise. This part with a week's pump

(I continue)

of Blakeney Point. It was quite beautiful as I ever saw it & it was pleasant to find myself not entirely forgotten, in spite of my long absence & relinquishment of directions - I have a picture by Jeff - one, a nocturne of the interior of the O.D. with lighted lamps on the table - from the end where stands the ladder to the "Dove-Kennel"; the other, a topographical picture in the bright A.M. from the other end, wh. displays a fitting & ultimate object perfectly made the same as I knew it - even an ancient parchment with a few modelly papers of 1910 vintage!

At Hampshire I was delighted to find all services, public & private, punctual, efficient & cheerful. If this is a sample of the country as a whole, England should make it. Also, fraternizing between classes much more general.

At home, I received my former (or best) gardener, now
3 described, with direct wages to ^{be paid} ~~be paid~~ before I left.
The interior of the house had suffered much dilapidation
at the hands of a succession of tenants. I had no estimate
for reconditioning (£120), but the B. of Trade wd. not
saction more than £10 worth of repairs in 6 months.
That means it wd. take 6 years for their completion so
the matter had to be postponed. ^{Probably I was}
joined by a cook-housekeeper from an establishment
in Knightsbridge called "Useful Agents" at £3.3.0
a week "all round". A widow with no encumbrances -
I found her very highly strong, somewhat untidy -
no cook. On the other hand clean, tidy & ed. being some
order into the chaos I discovered - One day I happened
to use the word "damned" in a familiar context -
she burst forth with - "Is that what a gentleman like
you should, or no?" I said - "If it's a pulpiti you want, I'm
afraid you must look elsewhere" - so there was no more of that.
Professionally - In ordinary life she was a school-
teacher, at Gosport, I understood & was using the vacation
to make a little more money. When stationed at the fleet ar-
m H.A. home from school appeared but sent Patience
a young girl to this same school as daughter
part-time attendance. Mentioning this, she replied "How,
that would be the funniest school" So after a month
she pressed on to her school job & I said her no more.
But I was still going 3 months. At the outbreak I had in-
sults for the rest of its existence. When a lot of
stilled an electric lamp & its astonishing. When a lot of
can do on it & have given it is on its job. Within 3 weeks
two 1 ed. even entertained 2 or 3 people for the weekend, or
without serious scandal. That the man ignorant of electric
cookers & could be helpful in their department, but they
so the washing up - ch. in common to all types of cooking.
which I fancy may have upset the woman from the start. What
when she acquired four daughters, in law whether she should meal with me
the former, during her marriage she was painted a picture of me
as an awful old woman's head, & that perhaps, under the circumstances
she is better off in the "old" than in the "new" - I am, cap. in old spits - to I
a threat to cut of current of 8 to 10 am. cap. in old spits - to I
took care to cut the bread but could not cut.

At home, I received my former (or best) gardener, now 3 described, with direct wages to be paid before I left. The interior of the house had suffered much dilapidation at the hands of a succession of tenants. I had no estimate for reconditioning (£120), but the B. of Trade wd. not saction more than £10 worth of repairs in 6 months. That means it wd. take 6 years for their completion so the matter had to be postponed. Probably I was joined by a cook-housekeeper from an establishment in Knightsbridge called "Useful Agents" at £3.3.0 a week "all round". A widow with no encumbrances - I found her very highly strong, somewhat untidy - no cook. On the other hand clean, tidy & ed. being some order into the chaos I discovered - One day I happened to use the word "damned" in a familiar context - she burst forth with - "Is that what a gentleman like you should, or no?" I said - "If it's a pulpiti you want, I'm afraid you must look elsewhere" - so there was no more of that. Professionally - In ordinary life she was a school-teacher, at Gosport, I understood & was using the vacation to make a little more money. When stationed at the fleet arm H.A. home from school appeared but sent Patience a young girl to this same school as daughter part-time attendance. Mentioning this, she replied "How, that would be the funniest school" So after a month she pressed on to her school job & I said her no more. But I was still going 3 months. At the outbreak I had insults for the rest of its existence. When a lot of stilled an electric lamp & its astonishing. When a lot of can do on it & have given it is on its job. Within 3 weeks two 1 ed. even entertained 2 or 3 people for the weekend, or without serious scandal. That the man ignorant of electric cookers & could be helpful in their department, but they so the washing up - ch. in common to all types of cooking. which I fancy may have upset the woman from the start. What when she acquired four daughters, in law whether she should meal with me the former, during her marriage she was painted a picture of me as an awful old woman's head, & that perhaps, under the circumstances she is better off in the "old" than in the "new" - I am, cap. in old spits - to I a threat to cut of current of 8 to 10 am. cap. in old spits - to I took care to cut the bread but could not cut.

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5- Oliver to Curtis 29-X-1948

Here's a little extra bit but
that may amuse you -
In the present trouble in Palestine
the Egyptian Govt wants to help the
Arabs, but is unlikely to contribute
actual troops. So distributions of
ration [sugar is still rationed] are
about to collect 2 piastres
from ~~each~~ ^{on} ~~each~~ ^{receiving} one of
sugar distributed. The monthly
sugar ration is $1\frac{1}{2}$ other for head.
Price 12 piastres. Govt. 3 pt. w. his
aid as a "Tax" to help Palestine
Arabs. Abdul attends to all this
& buys his sugar in the village with
his own. Anticipating the
sugar men took the new enhanced
price, for both our sugars, but

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H.W.H. said "no" - my master is
not an Egyptian & takes no
sides in the Palestine affair:
if you want return this ex-
action I shall report you to
the Maronite Lieut. in the chief
magnitude } - & he returned
the 3rd. exacted, - so that a
precedent!

Of course we (outside) have
residents support many village
funds voluntarily, but its quite a
different matter to contribute to
an alleged feeding fund in a
matter in which we are definitely
neutral. I don't know what other
British are doing in the matter.