Note: Continuation of previous letter begun the week before, “8”at top.

“Sunday evening, 10 October, 1920.

Boy Blue, you couldn’t begin to imagine how hard I’ve worked so as to have this evening with you. I’m so rushed now that evenings are very scarce. I’m in the full swing of the editorial work, carrying two page proofs along at the same time, putting in four hours a day at it and working till twelve or later every night. But I made up my mind that nothing should deprive me of Sunday evening with you. So yesterday afternoon I did my washing (which I usually do on Sunday) and then I worked till 12:30 A.M. on proof. ‘Twas some jump from the wash-board in the afternoon to scientific editor of a college text in the evening, but when it comes to skipping around I’m a regular little Ornitholestes1. This morning I did the ironing & cleaned house; this afternoon I finished up all the proof I had on hand and then cooked dinner for mother and me, so that now at last I’m free to talk to you, all my tasks being finished.

Pal dear I’m working like a steam-engine these days but I’m enjoying it. No matter how late I go to bed I wake up at six, rise at 6:30 and then keep on the go till midnight or later. I have no recreation except a two mile walk each day and the housework. When I get home from the Museum I prepare dinner or supper and usually ask mother to join me. It would be restful if she could have a meal ready for me, but I cannot stand her cooking and do not like to eat in her apartment. Immediately after dinner I start in at the editorial work and give the entire evening to it. (I also read proof on my subway trips). I am working too hard I know, but it will have to go on like this for at least two months. It gives me great satisfaction to find that I am completely over that debilitating period of inertia which lasted for so many, many months and that I can concentrate on my work for hours at a time. I don’t waste a minute and I don’t sit around moping anymore, feeling sorry for myself. I feel so gloriously, electrically alive. In the morning I usually lie in bed for half an hour after I wake up and my thoughts are so joyous and jolly that I frequently find myself bubbling over with laughter. It’s good to begin the day with laughter and song.

I am still doing the heavy work on your large concretions, but my right arm has grown used to the weight of the hammer so that I no longer feel particularly fatigued after seven hours of hammering. One of the preparators expressed his surprise at a woman being able to use a hammer without pounding her hand. Now why shouldn’t a woman be able to wield a hammer as well as a man? I might say that I practically never miss a stroke and I don’t keep my eye on the chisel head, either, for I have to watch the rock to be on the look-out for fossils. I simply have a feeling of where I should strike and I seldom go wrong. I have also learned how to make my strokes so that the chips don’t fly into my eyes which is a great relief. I think that about ten days more will see all the nodules broken up.

Pal, this past week I had occasion to talk to Miss Dickerson for the first time. She’s all my fancy painted her – and a whole lot more. Isn’t she weird? And her voice! It sounds as though she had swallowed a mouthful of pussy-willows and they had stuck in her throat. That night I put a postscript to my prayer, saying: “Please God see to it that I don’t grow up to be like Miss Dickerson.”

But in spite of my joking it looks as though I might yet develop into a deep-dyed scientific woman. The Doctor is coming back to her own and monopolizing most of my time. Tomorrow night I am going to the N.Y. Acad. Of Sci. meeting just as I used to. It’s the first meeting of the Biological Section and you know that I was appointed by the Council last year because of my activity at meetings and my accomplishments in research etc. etc. to be on the program committee and also to enter into the discussions and bring to the fore new researches in Invertebrate Palaentology. So I think I ought to attend the meetings. I didn’t go at all last year. Wouldn’t it be a joke if I should turn out to be a great scientist after all? I had such a complimentary letter from the editor of D.C. Heath & Co.2 speaking of my competency, etc. Don’t you imagine that he pictures me as a serious-minded, reliable old Ph.D. of about fifty? After the book is all published and I have no further need of playing the lofty role of scientific critic and editor, Marmo thinks she’ll pay a visit to friend editor and give him a joggle.

(p. 9) Dear Pal of mine, one day last week Mr. Granger said that he had had a letter from you written at the end of August stating that you were going off on a month’s caravan trip and did not expect to be in London til the end of October. I was very blue for two whole days – ‘twas the first cloud to cross the sunshine in nearly three weeks. The blues came not so much because I saw your return indefinitely postponed – though I felt badly about that – but because I was overwhelmed by all sorts of doubts and questions. I had supposed that you hadn’t written because you were homeward bound but when I found that you were still in Africa and had been there for months I wondered why you hadn’t sent me even a line. I felt that your long silence – it’s four months now since I’ve heard from you – must indicate disapproval or annoyance or lack of interest in your Pal. I was most unhappy for two days; the world seemed cold and empty; I was disconsolate. Then my wonderful faith in you reasserted itself, driving away all doubts and fears. My faith in you is the strongest, sweetest thing in my life. I count on you as one relies on the rock of Gibraltar. I realized how foolish it was of me to think that six months absence could change you anymore that it could change me. Even if you were gone for six years you’d still be my same Pal when you returned. I have found from experience that you are true blue, like your name, and always to be counted upon. I had a great deal of spontaneous faith in you in the very beginning; everything during these two years has gone toward strengthening that faith.

Tuesday, 12 October, 1920

Dear Boy Blue, how often in this life do we defeat the very ends for which we strive. I worked so hard and continuously Saturday afternoon and evening as well as all day Sunday in order to win for myself leisure time on Sunday evening to write to you that when at last the evening came I was simply worn our and after I’d been writing a little while I just fell over asleep in my chair right in the middle of sentence, which accounts for my abrupt ending above. Of course I went to bed and took the rest I so sorely needed, but I was terribly disappointed at being done out of my evening with you, for I did not anticipate any free time this week. But just see how good the gods have been to me. Yesterday at the Museum I learned that Columbus Day, Oct. 12, is observed as a holiday, so here I am with an entirely unexpected day of freedom on my hands. There is no proof to do and I had done my domestic jobs so far in advance that there is nothing around the house to require my attention so I am just loafing all day which is altogether unprecedented for me. I really do need a day of complete rest once in a while, for when I’m working at top notch I do consume a tremendous amount of energy because of my habit of doing things quickly and all at one stretch, I seldom rest in the middle of a job. If I’m doing something in the evening, read proof, ironing, enameling my kitchen furniture, or what not, and I find it growing late, I never think of leaving off the job and finishing next day. There is no mañana in my lexicon.

Well, anyway, here I am with almost unlimited time at my disposal to talk to you and I cannot think of a happier way to spend a holiday unless it were to have you actually here in person. When I so inappropriately fell asleep on Sunday in the middle of a sentence, I was speaking of my faith in you. I speak of it often because I think of it often. It brings to mind the following scene:

Early one spring I went off for a walk through the woods all by my lonesome. I came to a stretch of moist, rather swampy, ground which looked peculiarly barren and desolate, for a fire had swept across it, burning all the brown carpet of dead leaves from the preceding year and leaving in its path nothing but the gloomy blackness of charred twigs, burnt vegetation and soot-covered boulders. The trees reared their naked trunks toward the cold, leaden sky seeming to stretch out their bare arms in piteous supplication to God to relieve the sepulchral stillness and lifelessness of their surroundings. In more favored spots buds were bursting their winter coats, showing forth the tender green leaves within, while underfoot ferns were beginning to unfurl their fronds and all the fairy wind-flowers were peeping forth. One could imagine that in years gone by the barren and charred swamp had looked as freshly green and lovely as any of the neighboring fields and glades. But this spring death, not life, had touched it – cruel, uncompromising, hopeless, devastating Death! There seemed to be no sign of life anywhere, not even a blade of grass – nothing but blackness. The fire had done its work well; it had seared and scorched and shriveled (p. 10) up every living thing, turning beauty into ugliness, light into darkness, sweet sights into hideous spectres. God must have sighed to see his handiwork so despoiled; but it is God alone who does not despair. For as I walked idly across that stretch of swampy woodland, thinking how like unto it was my life, I happened to kick aside a mass of charred leaves. There at my feet was the symbol of God’s eternal faith and hope which knows not death. From the lifeless blackness of the soil there had sprung a cluster of pure, undefiled, snow-white Indian pipes, delicate, wax-like little flowers, startling in their unexpectedness and chaste whiteness. Out of the ashes of all the dead flowers of those woods had sprung the beautiful and lovely Indian pipes. The very suddeness of their appearance where one would never-more look for signs of life and their exquisite beauty, so strongly emphasized by contrast with their surroundings, made that cluster of flowers in the lonely, black swamp look infinitely more beautiful than whole fields of violets, anemones and hepaticas. For the latter were symbols of God’s bounty and profusion, but the Indian pipes stood apart, unique, different, symbolic of the wonder of life which may arise even from death.

My faith in you, dear Pal, is like the cluster of Indian pipes. From the desolate, devastated wastes [line blacked out] sprang up a faith more beautiful and marvelous than any that had grown there before. It was a though God, to make up for ravages brought by the searing flames, had given life to a particularly rare and wonderful flower that the spot which had been so desolately barren might rejoice in the exceptional beauty of its heaven-sent gift.

At first my faith was timid and questioning. I [two lines blacked out] in all respects. I had friends, some of them old and trusted. But I trusted them with reservations; I did not have absolute faith in anyone. I could calculate almost mathematically just how far I could trust each friend and I knew that there [six lines blacked out] virtuous, or those who haven’t been found out [line blacked out]. My friends and acquaintances were numerous symbols of God’s beauty – like the violets, anemones and hepaticas which grow in profusion everywhere. But I longed for something more – not that I ever hoped to find it. Then suddenly one day out of the blackness of despair sprang faith, glorious, radiant, life-giving. And day by day, month by month, it grew. At times doubts and questionings and fears sprang up around it like evil weeds, trying to strangle it, but one after another they shriveled up and died away, leaving faith to grow strong and beautiful.

And now, Boy Blue, my faith in you is deep-rooted and without reservations. It must be obvious to you as it is to me that my faith could never have been of just this quality if it had not arisen in exactly the way it did; it could never have been so strong had it not been tempered in the flame; nor could it ever have been so tender and soothing had it not been bathed in the dew of forgiveness.

Pal my life lies before you now like an open book every page of which you have read. I no longer feel any hesitancy in confiding to you everything, good and bad alike, which takes place or has taken place in my life. If I can think a thing, I can tell it to my Pal. You know me, I suppose, as well as any one human being can know another, as well, in fact, as you know yourself. I may give you surprises now and then, but after all they won’t be any worse than the surprises you give yourself occasionally. I might easily have hoodwinked you, Pal, have pretended to be a lot of things I wasn’t, but I had no wish to; indeed, I was too altogether delighted to discover someone with whom I could be absolutely natural; to whom I could speak without reserve. I could have deceived you, but some day you would have been disillusioned and it is always very painful to be disillusioned. In accepting your companionship I had two courses open to me: [two lines blacked out]. I could let you build up a fanciful picture of me, let you imagine that I was many things which I wasn’t, and then someday – it might not be till years later – something would happen and I’d have to tell you the truth. For I did not fool myself by thinking that we could be pals, could correspond and be real friends without your some (p. 11) time discovering at least part of the truth. The only way I had been able to deceive folks was by having no close friends and by not letting anyone know very much about me. The Doctor’s devotion to science was an easy cloak behind which to hide and could be used to account for my general aloofness and failure to have time for social life, etc. The second course open to me in accepting your companionship was to tell you about myself as soon as possible and let you decide for yourself whether you wished me for a pal. I gave you some hints in my very first letter and made a beginning at confession in my second letter. I chose this second course, dear Pal, because I felt that it would cause you less pain to know the truth right in the beginning than to wait two or three years and let you imagine me other than I was and have to tell you or perchance have you find out from some one else. I had suffered so much myself for so many years that my first thought in accepting your companionship, which I wanted very, very much, was to see to it that I didn’t make you suffer any more than was necessary. So it was that I preferred to undergo the humiliation of self-revelation rather than let you suffer disillusionment later on. Perhaps my course wasn’t wise or sensible, perhaps, even, it wasn’t very understandable to you, but I pursued it with the best of intentions. I wanted your friendship and help more than I have ever wanted anything before [several lines blacked out]. In playing the game of life I usually stake much on a single throw and stand ready to lose or gain much at one fell swoop. If I feel that I have to do a thing I go ahead and do it, burning my bridges behind me, and then after it is all over I accept the consequences, but I never let the thought of the consequences deter me from doing what I feel I ought to do. As a result of running my life on that plan I often get myself into tight and uncomfortable places but I could run things on no other plan. [Several lines blacked out]. I ran the risk of losing my Pal, but I also had the hope of a greater, better, stronger friendship if the companionship [words blacked out]. It did stand the test, much to my joy, and it is because our friendship has stood so many tests, weathered so many storms, that it means so much to me. The world is full of the “friends” whom you can count upon as long as you don’t need them, full of “friends” who stick closer than a postage stamp so long as you can do something for them, but a friend who sticks through thick and thin, when there is nothing to be gained, who gives unquestioning faith and who knows how really to forgive as Christ forgave – such a friend is very, very rare and I consider myself unusually blessed to have such a one. For I believe that the majority of persons pass through life without having anything more than the ordinary friendships, if one may so speak of them. They are the friends whom you see from time to time, at whose homes you dine occasionally, and who come to your home, but you never penetrate beneath their masks anymore than they penetrate beneath yours. Polite fictions are exchanged, pretenses of all sorts are mutually fostered; you pretend to happiness which you don’t feel, prosperity which does not exist, knowledge which you don’t have, interest which you don’t feel. The majority of “friendships” are shams and you know that they wouldn’t stand a single test. Friendships, real, genuine friendships, are so rare that they are the subject for comment when they do exist. In all of human history only a few great friendships have been recorded. And where among our immediate acquaintances do we see a Damon and Pythias, an Orestes and Pylades? One does not expect to have a friend who will risk life or reputation or fortune in one’s behalf. You don’t even expect, as a rule, to have a friend to whom you can talk freely on all subjects, to whom you can tell your joys and sorrows, confident that he will rejoice with you in the former and sympathize with you in the latter.

Have you ever read Cicero’s essay on Friendship? It is over two thousand years old, but human nature was the same then as it is now and true friendships as rare. He says:

“Friendship is nothing else that a complete union of feeling on all subjects, divine and human, accompanied by kindly feeling and attachment; than which, indeed, I am not aware whether, with the exception of wisdom, anything better has been bestowed on man by the immortal gods . . . . To whom can life be ‘worth living’ who does not (p. 12) repose on the mutual kind feeling of some friend? What can be more delightful than to have one to whom you can speak on all subjects just as to yourself? Where would be the great enjoyment in prosperity, if you had not one to rejoice in it equally with yourself? And adversity would indeed be difficult to endure without someone who would bear it even with greater regret than yourself. In short, all other objects that are sought after are severally suited to some one single purpose: riches, that you may spend them; power, that you may be courted; honors, that you may be extolled; pleasures, that you may enjoy them; good health, that you may be exempt from harm, and perform the functions of the body. Whereas friendship comprises the greatest number of objects possible: wherever you turn yourself, it is at hand; shut out of no place, never out of season, never irksome; and therefore we do not use fire and water, as they say, on more occasions than we do friendship. And I am not now speaking of common place or ordinary friendship (though even that brings delight and benefit), but of real and true friendship, such as belonged to those of whom very few are recorded; for prosperity friendship renders more brilliant; and adversity more supportable, by dividing and communicating it.”

That’s what Cicero says; Marmo wishes to state that she knows just as much about it as Cicero even though she doesn’t express herself so grandiloquently. Marmo misses you morning, noon and night, and in between times, and also in her dreams. She’s suffering from a terrible case of lonesomeness which every once in a while gives her an attack of Boy Blue Blues – some blues! She was sworn a solemn vow to the immortal gods that the next time she sees you packing your trunk for a “six weeks” trip, she is going to curl herself up into a weeny teeny little bit of a ball and snuggle down somewhere way out of sight in some corner of the trunk or maybe hide herself inside one of your 3000 league boots – I think one of them would just comfortably hold a marmoset – and she won’t let out a squeak till you’re out in the field in India or Australia by which time it will be too late for scoldings and chastisements to be of any avail. You’ll just have to take her along. But really Pal, how do you suppose a nice, tame, docile, affectionate, gentle and devoted marmo manages to live so long without the monkey keeper? Sometime you’ll come home after one of those long absences and find nothing but a skeleton, a wad of fur and a broken heart. Marmo will have died of loneliness. Then won’t you be sorry? I suppose you’re feeling very independent being in the land where monkeys grow on trees, but this kind of a tame, devoted marmo doesn’t grow on every tree; indeed, I know you won’t find one like her in all Abyssinia.

Pal dear, if your understanding was quite as perfect as I have thought it was you would know how hard it is for me to go four months without a word from you. I am not foolishly apprehensive but you are in a strange, wild country; you are not immune from fevers, nor the treachery of natives, nor the attack of wild animals. I cannot be your Pal and not think of these things, not be anxious about your welfare. Would you want me not to care? Yet if I care, and you know that I do, is it not cruel to keep me in total ignorance? I have not asked you for letters – I have no right to – and I realize that you have many persons to write to and little time for that purpose. I do not even ask that you tell me where you are or anything about your plans – I am not making a bid for confidence or information – but, Pal dear, just a postal card, once in a while, in your own handwriting. That would let me know that you were alive and well. It would be such an infinitesimally small thing for you to do and it would mean so infinitely much to me. This is the fourth long trip you have been on since I’ve known you and every time it’s been the same – three or four months without a word from you. I have had to suffer much during these last two years, endure many hardships, bear many heartaches, but always the hardest thing to bear was the uncertainly about your welfare. I could forget when I was hungry, I could be philosophical about finding a job, I could put other worries out of my mind but I couldn’t ease the heartache that I had when I didn’t know whether you were safe and well or not. Can’t you, with your wonderful powers of understanding, realize what a strain four months of suspense is? I do not want to make a nuisance of myself nor ask for anything you cannot grant, but surely no woman ever asked less of you than a postal card once in a while.

I think I should stop. I’ll try not to write again because for some reason you may not care to have me use the London address. I shall register this letter also because if it doesn’t reach you I’d like to have it come back to me not fall into strange hands as some of my letters have. I shall miss writing to you but I shall work hard every minute; work is my one stand-by. I am so anxious to hear of all your successes and adventures – I know that they will rival the Thousand and One Nights Tales and I could wish you’d devote a Thousand and Two Nights to telling me about them. Good luck and best of wishes! Always your same devoted Pal, Marjorie Daw.

1. Ornitholestes was “a small [theropod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theropod) [dinosaur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dinosaur) of the late [Jurassic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jurassic) . . . it is known only from a single partial skeleton with a badly crushed skull found . . . near [Medicine Bow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicine_Bow,_Wyoming), [Wyoming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wyoming), in 1900. It was described by [Henry Fairfield Osborn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Fairfield_Osborn) in 1903.” Wikipedia.
2. D.C. Heath & Co. was “an American publishing company located at 125 Spring Street in Lexington, Massachusetts, specializing in textbooks.” Wikipedia.