“that I had appealed to history for inspiration. My problem is whether or not I should consider giving in and taking a routine position on the U.S. Survey [Geological Survey]. Then it was that I read about Miltiades and the battle of Marathon, read of the one man’s voice raised against the power of the Persian Empire and the glory of Darius, read of the man voicing an ideal of liberty and freedom as opposed to the slavery which would result if he and his people were conquered. And though I knew I’d lose my position with Miss Farrell within a week I turned down David White’s offer and said I’d stick by my guns. Had I capitulated then I would not have been free to accept this wonderful offer from the Museum. Why it’s rare even for a man to be given full time and carte blanche for research! Everybody croaked over me and said I couldn’t hold out. Even Prof. Osborn said that of course I’d have to turn to teaching as a means of livelihood, and Prof. Schuchert said ditto and so did a lot of other folks. I received a regular wet blanket letter last week from Prof. S. in which he tried not to let me see how disappointed he was in me because I’d turned down all these beautiful jobs he has landed for me and he said dolefully that I was destined never to earn much money. He hasn’t yet gotten over my turning down $300 a month at Vassar and going to Wanamaker’s. In his well-ordered plan of life things like that weren’t supposed to happen; young ladies were not supposed to turn up their noses at professorships and send college presidents about their business. At heart I never was as flippant about my doings as I seemed to be; I was holding on to certain definite ideals and I was willing to go through a lot of hardships for the sake of abiding by them. Well, I have secured for the time being at least the two things I have been holding out for this past year – my home and a full time research position. Any of these other offers would have meant the loss of my home and no research. If one capitulates and gives in, accepting a makeshift, one will go on all through life capitulating. People will say “Oh yes, he wants to do so and so, but you can always get him to give in and so something less.” I had won a reputation for first rate work in palaeontology and I could afford to stipulate that I would do nothing but my best. There are few enough trained workers and if one who is trained stands out firmly and refuses to do anything but expert work, I believe that the powers that be will accept the terms. There is a Persian proverb: “A stone fit for the wall will not be left by the roadside.” It’s another way of saying you can’t keep a good man down. If you have within you the will to achieve there isn’t anything in the world that can keep you down.

Pal I’m wonderfully happy over this chance to work on the Cuban report. It’s been hard working on the fossils at night when I was tired and the job seemed to stretch out endlessly. I was in no condition to write because I was so worn out and I was having such a pesky time financially. But think what it will be to come to the work well in body and mind and soul, with nothing to worry me, with regular meals again and with perfect health. I do hope you’ll be home part of the time to work up your portion of the report. Won’t you work up the vertebrates and we’ll just make everybody sit up and take notice. I wish September was here so that I might start in. And I wish you were here so that – well, just so that I could have a look at you and talk with you. I’m somehow clever enough to be able to think of you no matter how busily occupied I am, so although I’m hard at work, it’s quite true when I said that I’m thinking of you always.

Boy Blue, once I promised you for your collection of curios a most wondrous little salamander that could be put on a blue background and not become blue. I think I’m about as near blue-proof as any mortal could be. I stood the acid test of three weeks of joblessness, no prospects and rapidly diminishing funds and I had the blues only twice and then just for a little while.

Good bye most precious Pal, take good care of Boy Blue for the sake of Marjorie Daw.

[There is a page with “13” written at the top, which has been cut into two pieces, but both pieces are included.]

Thursday, 22 July 1920

My very dear Boy Blue,

I intended to mail this letter today but the morning mail brought me a letter the contents of which you must know about. My morning mail is pretty lively of late and there no denying my life is kaleidoscopic.

My heart is singing and I feel that I have been most beautifully rewarded for abiding by my ideal. The letter was from Dr. Matthew offering me five months for the Cuban work at $150 a month. A full time research position in which nothing is asked but results. He wants the material done and a report prepared, but I won’t be nagged and quizzed and spied upon and ask how many specimens I’ve chipped out per day and I won’t have anyone hovering over me asking fool questions. I’ll be my own boss free to abide by my own standards of scientific accuracy. Pal isn’t it just wonderful? Did you have anything to do with it? I can hardly imagine the wheels of officialdom overcoming their inertia without some lively outside force to start them going. And I myself never said another word to anyone after I had that talk with Dr. Matthew last May. He wants me on Aug. 1st to Jan 1st.

NOTE: The inside of this piece of stationery has had much of it cut away, but it begins with the left margin.]

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even to your own disadvantage. [Full sentences starting here]. That how I’m feeling and I can’t fail [two lines redacted] like to feel that right to the very end I’d played a square game [word redacted] and that I was big enough to [words redacted] and to give him the assistance which every student owes to an honored teacher.

I believe you have the largeness of heart and breadth of view to appreciate my feeling in the matter. All through life we are constantly entering into various relations with our fellow beings and nearly always those relations entail certain responsibilities lay upon us certain duties [sic]. When we close one of these relations as so often time we must do for one reason or another, we should satisfactorily fulfill all the duties connected with the relation and assume the responsibilities completing all things to the best of our ability. There should be no loose ends, no unpaid debts, so to speak. In all relations in life we should “meet upon the level and part upon the square.”1 And when my duty to him is ended I shall turn with a light and happy heart to the task I shall really be wanting to undertake – the working up of your collection.

[NOTE: There is another paragraph written on the back of one of the fragmentary pieces (see below).]

Dear Pal doesn’t it seem as though I’ve been vindicated in the stand I made for pure research? I told everybody that I would take nothing but a research position because I wouldn’t lower my standards of service to my science and now see my reward. It was worth waiting for. In another letter I told you I had been confronted with a little problem and . . . . (“last of p. 14” written at the bottom).”

[NOTE: There are several fragmentary pieces of paper that do not include full sentences. The back of the piece transcribed above is the right hand 1.5” of a page of stationery.]

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[NOTE: Another fragment]

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The back of the above fragment includes these lines:

“say you understand why I don’t start in at once at . . . If I obeyed the dictates of my heart your ammonites . . . my first and undivided attention. But there is a duty . . . ahead of my own wishes. You know how you felt toward . . . . liston (sic) and that you would have done anything for him . . “

1. This is apparently an old Masonic saying.