July 29, 1920

NOTE: This letter has “9” written at the top and begins the morning after the previous letter.

Dear Pal, I was so sleepy last night that I couldn’t get to the end of the last page; I dropped right over in a heap in my chair. ‘Twas only eleven o’clock and I don’t usually feel very sleepy by that time, but I’d had a hard day and was utterly worn out.

Pal you’re a plague! I’m far, far too busy these days to spend any time writing to you and besides I don’t even know where to send my letters, for I’m sure you won’t be in Africa a month hence. Each day I say to myself that I won’t write anymore, but evening comes and I drop into my Morris chair with the force of old habit and start in again just as I’m doing now. And I shouldn’t, indeed I shouldn’t, because I ought to be doing my housework in the evenings. Yet I squander my evenings on you and then I have to do my housework in the mornings before I go out. This morning, for instance, I arose at six, ironed for an hour before breakfast and then left home at eight to spend the day as the Doctor. Now I’m Marjorie Daw again. Don’t you like her better than the Doctor? I do.

Pal dear, I’ve been thinking that now that I am soon to be at the Museum you’d better stay away a long, long time. It’s so jolly when you’re away. I may write you long letters whenever I wish to and tell you everything I do and think and feel and dream. I may call you Sphinxie and Boy Blue and many other special names; I may be Marjorie Daw all the time, may be just an informal, chattering marmoset. But if you return, particularly now in the capacity of my chief, you’ll be just like any other horrid old curator and I’ll be the Doctor. Marjorie Daw will be so lonesome with no one to talk to. It would be perfectly silly for her to write to Boy Blue when the Doctor is seeing Curator BB every day. So don’t you want to be an absent boss and stay away till my five months at the Mus. are up?

I told you that Dr. Matthew hopes to keep me on as a regular research associate to work up problems for various members of the Dept. I’m not saying anything now but I don’t like the idea. I accepted the five months’ appointment because it fell in exactly with my plans. I want to work up your Cuban material for you. I would do it at my own expense if I possibly could, and indeed I did make quite a bit of progress on the specimens by working at night in my own time. But I realized that it would be an almost interminable job to write the report at the rate I was going. Dr. Matthew’s offer to give me full time for the Cuban paper met my wishes in the matter. So I accepted. But to work up problems for Mr. Granger and other members of the Dept. as Dr. Matthew plans for the future – that doesn’t suit me at all. If I could work for you always, I might consider letting the Doctor hold a research position, but to work for others – jamais de la ne! [“never” something]. I shall work for myself as an independent scientist as I have in the past but not for anyone else unless it just exactly pleases me to do so. My intellectual output is my own and I don’t care to give it or sell it to anyone else. If I make an exception for you, it is for reasons which you well understand. There is nothing under the sun that I wouldn’t do for you, my one regret being that I have it in my power to do so little.

Dear Pal I don’t ever forget that I owe my life to you just as truly as if you have saved me from drowning or had snatched me from the path of an onrushing express train. You saved me from a spiritual and moral death that would have been worse than physical death. I realize fully how much indebted I am to you. I can’t ever pay you back, nor indeed do I care to – I don’t believe in bartering services. But I do wish that I could do things for you. Yet I am poor in all save gratitude, loyalty and devotion, and the ever-present desire to be of service to you. It is for these reasons – and one other which is a secret – that I am willing to return to the career again for a little while. The Doctor is richer in many ways than Marjorie Daw; she can do valuable things which people prize, while M.D. is only a chattering, affectionate marmoset with a large heart and few brains.

Dear Boy Blue it seems long ages since I heard from you, yet it’s only sixteen days since your Aden letter arrived. But so much has happened to me since then that it seems like months. I suppose that you too are living a concentrated existence and I only hope that your trip is proving successful in every way and that you are keeping well. I miss you more than tongue can tell.

Your gentle, timid and affectionate

Marmo