

March 11, 1946

Dear Sumner:

Let's talk first about Mother. When Dr. Sachs examined her last December, he found part of the retina of her left eye detached, and as you know, he prescribed rest before an operation. Then he operated upon her and she went through ~~the~~ ten day period of complete immobility. Then he permitted her to leave the hospital and go to Aunt Sarah's where she was to lie in bed until he gave her permission to come home. Before she left for home he examined her, found the operation successful and had high hopes that he would soon be able to prescribe glasses for her. Mother went down a little over a week ago to have him fit her for glasses and at that time he discovered that the rest of the retina of that eye had become detached since he last saw her. We understand now that that is not an uncommon occurrence after such an operation; but Dr. Sachs was hopeful that this would not happen to Mother. Naturally he was disappointed in what he found and he hesitated to suggest another operation until he had had a consultation with another top-flight eye surgeon. So Mother remained on at Aunt Sarah's and last Friday Dr. Dunphy, who is at the head of the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, examined Mother and found the condition to be as Dr. Sachs had found it. He told Mother that, considering her age and her physical condition, he would advise her to go through with the second operation, since there was a 50-50 chance of her regaining a good part of her sight. Later Uncle Archie talked with Dr. Sachs and he said the same thing, so Mother decided to go through with this second operation. You know, son, that she has the courage of a lion in addition to all her other extraordinary abilities and character. The next thing was to get a bed at the Beth Israel and that we finally accomplished yesterday at 3:30 when we took Mother up to Room 715, which is very near the room she occupied the last time. Helen and I stayed with her until a little after five when we took the train back to Portland, but we had arranged before-hand that Aunt Ann and Uncle Harold would spend the evening with her. I plan, of course, to spend the better part of each week with her. To tell you the truth, son, she buoys me up rather than I her. That is how noble spirited a person she is. At this particular writing I do not know when Dr. Sachs will operate, but it no doubt will be within a few days. As soon as I know I will let you know.

Now both Mother and I want you to carry on your regular program. The situation today, insofar as you are concerned, is not the same as it was last December, when you were 9000 miles from home and the strain on Mother was terrific. Now that you are here and she knows where you are and you can get here for a day or two, her attitude is one of calm. Of course, you will want to come down either this week-end or the next week-end. My suggestion would be that you take a plane both ways and make reservations as early as possible. For you to take time out of the school to which you have been sent for a special training of four weeks might upset all the plans so far as you are concerned. So stick to your task and fly down here next Saturday or the Saturday following. I have told you the full truth and the only reason I do



not want to say that I am hopeful of the results of this second operation is that we had such a terrible let-down when we learned of what had happened after the first operation that we dare not build our hopes too high. All we can do is pray to the Almighty God that He will be kind to her and give her vision in that eye.

Now a word about yourself. After your telephone call yesterday morning Mother and I both asked ourselves again the question: Where could you find a better opportunity to spend your time until the opening of the Law School in October, and at better pay, and ~~at~~ more cheerful surroundings than right where you are ~~where you are~~, to do the work you like. Certainly, since it has been determined that you cannot enter Law School until October you should be happy in your surroundings. I am sure that you will make very fine social contacts as you have in the past, for fortunately you possess your Mother's sense of sociability and that is a priceless asset.

Helen-Barbara is well and cheerful and she is an unusually able person. Coming back on the train last night she scribbled a story on her reflections of the passing scenery that even in its rough stage is a beautiful piece of work. Some of her expressions are truly poetic. After she has put it in shape I will send you a copy and I know you will agree with me.

Tomorrow, as I told you, I shall be with Mother and if she is not to be operated on until Thursday I will be back Wednesday for a day in the office and I will, of course, immediately write to you.

Be of good cheer and follow your Mother's pattern. If you can be like her, you will be a really important and attractive person.

Affectionately,