

Hawthorn Hill
Oakwood
Dayton, Ohio

February 25, 1924

Dear Harry:

It seems that you were monkeying with my typewriter for how else did this type get turned around to the printing side? Your sins have found you out!

I have survived and barring a mild thumping in the back of my head and a few other disabilities I am as fine as silk. But I wouldn't want the combination of Orv and Stef in the house very often!

I do not see that anything is a bit different from what it was before Stef came except that there is always a little relief from strain when you talk a thing over. The not pushing the relief harder in 1922 seems a little more excusable to me but it leaves me with a deep distrust of Stef's ideas of his obligations. Orv told him that he thought if the families of the young men knew he had six thousand dollars at his disposal and only used twelve hundred of it to try to get a boat up to Wrangel [Island], they would be astonished, to say the least. When Stef told me that he was "glad in a way", when he heard the boat had not got through the ice, because the Canadian government had not yet taken the responsibility of the occupation, I reminded him that he had said to Orv in his letter asking for the money that lives might be at stake. That embarrassed him for the first and only time I have ever seen him embarrassed.

As for his argument that the boys tried to get over to Siberia for other reasons than the necessity of relieving the demand upon the supplies on the Island, that is a fanciful argument. It is true that they had planned to go months before but they finally went because they saw there was not food for all if they staid. I think it is true they might have gone anyway and all that but the fact remains they THOUGHT they had to go when they did go.

I cannot worry over this business any longer. Stef defends everything he has done. From his point of view, which is that his schemes are very important both for his own ambition and for the advance of "science", he is justified in getting his plans through by any method that will get them through. I do not think his superiority in intellect gives him the right to everything he can get by the strength of his determination and the charm of his personality. His intellect is superior but his judgment and other faculties are not. He evidently honestly thinks that he is a special pet of the gods and has some special privileges. Stef is not all bad, by a long way. But as I think over the whole thing, it is not a natural friendship for me. Stef can't possibly enjoy companionship with me. I think he could enjoy Orv thoroughly. When there was nothing to disturb us we three could have a good time together. I could come in on the edge. But Stef's whole life is his ambition and that is absorbing him so completely that it gives the direction to all he does. For instance,

he is now cultivating Mr. Kettering. Mr. Kettering does not take to Stef for some reason and it was painful to me to see the things Stef did to get his favor. Mr. Kettering does admire Mr. Akeley very much and Stef knows that. He also knows that Mr. Kettering can give a good many favors, with his influence and his very large fortune. All this has finally given me a deep distrust of Stef and I can't reason it away though I have tried. I may be doing him some injustice but I can't see now how Stef can have any reason for being a friend of mine. I am sure he must find me insufferably stupid and we haven't other things in common to make up for that. It is a very great loss to me for, as he expressed it once himself, I had given him an "idealized friendship". I had thought he was something altogether different from what he was. I never in my life so misread anyone. I haven't "got it in" for Stef now. I just see that there is no substance to one of my dreams.

I hope I am through with trying to see my way out of this tangle. There is no way out except to cut the ties and they are very hard to cut. But I am done now with bothering you with it!!

Mrs. Kumler called me last night to say how much she had enjoyed you at the luncheon. She also told me that she took in a hundred and sixty dollars in cash so that she is out of the woods for the entire year. You were very polite to tell me that it was a nice luncheon. Except for the very nice people there it was the "darndest luncheon"! That was Col. Lahm's expression for the luncheon given at the Maryland Agricultural College in 1909 for Will and the Army officers he was training. An hour or so was consumed in drinking cocktails, in which none of the guests of honor indulged. Meanwhile they starved, having had breakfast very early. Hereafter I shall steer clear of the Woman's Club except when I have people who can't talk.

Please remember us to Mr. & Mrs. Lincoln and Miss Farmer and Dr. Frick and to any one else who remembers us. I had a letter from Doctor Dick Saturday morning.

I hope I shall never again be such a gump when you come. February 21 had been a nightmare to me for months. It is past now.

Katharine