

WENDELL PHILLIPS DODGE

THE EXPLORERS CLUB

NEW YORK

Cables "INSHALLAH" New York

7 November, 1939.

Dear Elizabeth!

How glad I was to hear from you, my very Dear old Friend, a few days ago. Unfortunately, there was some little delay in getting your letter to me by "The Villager," as an office boy apologized for having carried it in his coat pocket for a couple of days - and, on top of this, I have been obliged to let almost three whole days go by before answering it.

Well, this is Election Day, and what splendid memories it stirs up within me - of the never-to-be-forgotten night in Cooper Union when I first was "lifted out of my seat," a reporter's chair, by your deeply appealing oratory proclaiming "Votes for Women," and by your great and magnetic personality and spiritual magnetism!!! You were glorious to behold, and to listen to, Dear Friend through the years!! And may God bless you on earth as He most certainly will do in Heaven!

I am not bothering to vote this year, not having registered, not having any home. My poor, good and Dear Wife and I are "camping out" more literally than may be imagined. For her it is hard, I know, and anything but pleasant. For me it is just another of life's experiences, and while uncomfortable and trying, my mind and soul rise above it and I keep on and on trying to accomplish something, even so.

Yes, I have announced my impending, I hope, and long-planned One-Act Play Theatre undertaking, this time going against my long adherence to the famous command given at the Battle of Bunker Hill to "fire only when you can see the whites of their eyes!" In that case it was to conserve ammunition, and in my own through the years it has been my Yankee desire to withhold making any newspaper announcements about productions until I had them sufficiently, at least, financed to "get under way." But, not having any success in any other way I decided to "take a chance" in the hope that, possibly, I might stir up some interest and perhaps "land" a prospective backer somehow, somewhere. That it is the situation, although I may yet be able to secure a good radio sponsor for the necessary financing of the enterprise. At any rate, I am working in this direction now.

Oh, for one of the wealthy Pasadena Widows!!!

You know, I have had, and still have the hunch that if I could "paddle my canoe" to Pasadena and also to San Francisco, and remain above water long enough - for a few

(over)

months, say - I might be able to "land" a real, "live" backer and financial associate for better things in the theatre. And, furthermore, I firmly believe that the ideal spot for a real, honest-to-God theatre by a "live" Broadway and Continental producer such as myself, is San Francisco. I feel very deeply that "Tha's gold in them thare hills" in a theatrical way!!

And I have a swell and thoroughly practical and feasible plan, but it would require about \$10,000. to launch it and put it over so that, through membership dues each year I would secure around \$100,000. annually for the "guaranteed" production of the world's best plays and chamber music offerings, etcetera.

But then, HOW am I going to get there, remain there, and accomplish the thing without a red cent?

Have you any ideas along this line? Do you know of a likely prospect among the famed Pasadena rich widows? Give it a thought, please. And, let me hear from you, will you?

I am, indeed, very sorry to hear of your own hard time, too. I wish to God I could do something for you, to reciprocate for your many fine past favors and aid, as well as to give myself very real spiritual pleasure in aiding my old and greatly cherished Friend of long standing!

Well, when I can, rest assured that I will seek you out in some way!!! I have often thought of you, and wondered! Only a few weeks ago, even, I mentioned your name to the woman who has a little antique shop in West Third Street under the name of "Camelia's." For, she happened to mention being for long in Provincetown. She has an old hand-carved silk damask-upholstered chair of mine, one of twenty such (old dining-room chairs) to see, along with others, if possible. But, there seems to be to demand for such things. X

And this makes me think of your fine old mahogany roll-top, special antique desk you so kindly loaned to me and which I used for several years in my little office in No. 110 West Forty-second Street, and which, unfortunately, literally "went up in smoke" along with all of my other things, including library and many of my Father's Bahai and other records, pictures, manuscripts, etc., etc., and letters galore of all sorts, in a theatrical storage warehouse fire, as you will recall. What a pity, and especially in the case of your fine old desk, which I prized, too!

I am hoping to "land" a publicity job to keep soul and body alive better soon. And, hope to "put over" my One-Act Play Theatre.

So you have been out there in California - in Altadena, which I take it is close by Pasadena, since your letter was so postmarked - for two and a half years, and having a rotten spell of it, along with pneumonia and pleurisy. I am deeply sorry to hear it, my Sweet Elizabeth. And to hear that your heart is none too good. You poor, Dear One. To have to suffer so, and have such a hard and difficult time,

(7) 9 November, 1939.

AND after doing so much good all of your devotedly spiritual life!!!

I only wish I could send you something to add to your very meagre allowance, and to give you some little ray of sunshine in pleasure, etcetera - but, I don't know from days to day where anything in the way of cash is coming from, more's the pity. It seems strange, I know - but you, of ALL persons, can understand and appreciate such things.

If only I could help you to get back East, and to be so some slight service and help to you, it would give me the greatest pleasure, I assure you, my Dear and Sweet old Friend!

Yes, it is a queer sensation to feel one is not needed, as you say. And then, too, there is the topsy-turvy youth idea that has hit the world between the eyes. I would be the last one to hold youth back - but, youth today needs discipline and experience. Instead of that, youth is permitted to forge ahead of those even in middleage, let alone those who may be called old!! And people like Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt have done terrible harm in encouraging youth to disregard as well as to have no respect for their elders!! What is the world coming to? It is just part of the Sovietizing plan to tear down all that is good and decent in life on earth!!!

I, too, seem to be looked upon as "a has-been," an old-timer, one too old for many, if not most or virtually all jobs and work of any kind!! And, the funny part of it is, I am in far better health than I was twenty years ago, being just too thin, perhaps, from too little food, etcetera. I undergo a periodical stiff physical examination in the Navy as a Lieutenant-Commander in the United States Naval Reserve, and my heart is sounder than ever, and I am as fit as a fiddle, with all signs pointing to a ripe old age! And, I, too, even more mentally alert than ever - and yet I find it most difficult to land any kind of a job, being looked upon as too old! Can you beat it?

And the youth of today are always so tired. If they take a short walk they must lie down and rest. If they do a very little physical, or mental work, they are fatigued. They must have their rest. BOSH!!!

I wish the youth of today could have a taste of the long and hard hours I went through with all of my jobs from the very beginning, and right through my career!!

I am sorry to hear from you that you, yourself, admit to feeling twenty years older than when you went out there two and a half years ago. That is very bad, Dear Elizabeth. Do, please, "pull yourself together" mentally and spiritually, and do NOT let such a thought get hold of you!!! Kick it off, for that is the ONLY way to fight off growing old. Believe me, it is mostly a spiritual and mental point of view, plus the fact that RELAXATION - and I mean it

(over)

in a spiritual and mental way even more so than a physical one, for with the soul and mind relaxed and permitting the red corpuscles of the blood to pump more new life and vitality into the human system a complete build-up is accomplished, whereas the white corpuscles destroy life's tissues and bring on old age, so called - is virtually everything in life. I long ago discovered this for myself, and I always have tried to pass on my "discovery," but few persons will learn how to relax - the spiritual more than the mental and physical thought that induces real relaxation!

You, however, are a true spiritual Soul, and you CAN relax as I say. "Go to it," Elizabeth, my Beloved Friend! Chase away the "evil spirits."

My poor, Dear Wife never has been able to relax as I do, and, unfortunately, she holds fast to a poisonous negative thought and feeling always, thus denying the truth and a chance of the positive "thought waves," if you will, to furnish the life-giving current, just as the positive electrical wire carries the current that, contacted with the negative wire gives heat and light. There is no difference whatsoever. The human dynamo works along the self-same lines as the great physical electrical dynamo.

Wife appreciated receiving your good wishes and thoughts, and sends her best to you. She has been in the real estate business in the Washington Square and Greenwich Village section of the City for the past three years, and such little income in the way of commissions from apartment rentals as she has been able to make has helped us greatly. In fact, except for a very few weeks when I presented the London Intimate Opera Company in grand operas in miniature of 200 years or so ago in Halifax and in The Little Theatre here two seasons ago, only to "lose my shirt" again, her little earnings are all that we have had to get along on.

Our younger son, Dick, was living with us until a year ago. when he got married, being head-over-heels in debt himself, and for no good reason, and with no money whatsoever saved up!!! But, what we could do about it? He, like the youth of today, had a queer idea. He thought, that because he was paying in a small amount each week toward his board and lodging with us, which was less than he had been able to live on away from us, when he tried living alone, he was "supporting" us!! And he got the idea that he might, as he said, "have us on his hands for the rest of our lives," and so he made up his mind to break away and marry - marry ANY girl foolish enough to marry a young fellow who had not saved a cent, and was spending a good income foolishly around bars, etc.!!!!!!! He proposed to several girls, who each in turn turned him down for this reason. And then he found one who was of the same happy-go-lucky nature, and off they went and got married. Then, he soon lost his job, largely on account of his wife, of whom we did not approve - but, again, what could we do? It was useless to try to pump reason into Dick's head. He wouldn't have it any other way, than that I was "through" and he might have to "support" us for the rest of our lives. And all he was doing was paying less than he would be obliged to pay for his board and lodging anywhere else - AND through my dear Wife's careful budgeting we all managed to get

3 - Elizabeth Freeman.

9 November, 1939.

along better, far better than he has been able to do since he married!!

Well, I mention this only to let an old and very Dear Friend know about our affairs, because I know you are interested, and sincerely so.

Our other son, "Junior," is in Boston. He had a temporary civil service job, having passed as high as anyone could, and he was planning to have us join him in Boston by this Thanksgiving and take a little apartment for us all there, which he would manage somehow to swing, and if and when I did get a job, so much the better! A very different spirit, eh? And "Junior," poor boy, was actually and truly in love with a girl, but wouldn't dream of proposing to her until he was working in a good job and had money saved up, besides earning a fairly substantial amount from his job.

But, I declare, "there's life in the 'old man' yet!" And I'll stage a come-back of some kind, and damned soon, too!! I never give up.

I have been trying like hell to get placed on active duty in the Navy - for two reasons, that I love it; and my pay and allowances would about equal most any salary I might earn in the theatre or in public relations or ordinary publicity. But, a new law was passed a few months ago aimed at cleaning out a lot of over-age reserve and other officers, but evidently not taking into consideration those officers of my class in the Navy and the Naval Reserve, though it covers us, too. I have been fighting being discharged or resigning, which I have been given the privilege of doing. My case is now in the hands of The President. I hope he will either order me to active duty immediately, or advance me to the rank of Commander, which would automatically take care of my being over-age in grade for two more years, anyway.

However, there is a lot of routine red tape, and I hardly know what will happen. I'm putting up a single-handed fight, anyway. And, should they decide that I must be discharged, or resign - and resign I will NOT do in the face of a near National emergency such as confronts us today! - I will, I think, offer my services to the British Navy. This I cannot do while still in the United States Naval Reserve, of course

I am writing another letter to President Roosevelt today, as well, also, as to my District Commandant here. At this end, however, they seem to be sticking to the "Letter of the law."

I really am well prepared for active duty in the navy, and would like nothing better.

And yet, I and always have been a strong advocate for Peace - International Peace, which cannot be had without fighting for it, what with the Soviet Russian threat to world peace following that of Hitler!!! We are in for a long-drawn-out world war, I firmly believe.

Well, Dear Elizabeth, my best, and "Thoughts" and Love
Sincerely,

Wendell "Wendy"

PS: Just need for 10 years! - in a month!