

Santa Barbara, Cal., September 14th, 1911.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Esq.,

Brookline, Mass.

Dear Olmstead:

Though your brother has, I know, been bombarded with telegrams of late, and though you and I have exchanged several ourselves, I had not given up hope that your brother might be induced to withdraw his resignation until I went to San Diego day before yesterday.

As Blossom will tell you, I had some talk with him about it, even though he was on the edge of leaving, and the matter, of course, came up at the meeting of the committee. Every one at the meeting expressed his regret, each of course in varying degree, but Mr Marston and Mr Wangenheim of course, more strongly than the others. As for me, the state of affairs has caused me really great personal distress. I feel that so far as my having anything to do with the work is concerned, my personal reputation counted for practically nothing and your recommendation of me as everything. I would give anything to have been able to back up your brother's opinion with my own, but of course neither he nor you, nor any one else would expect me to do this in defiance of my own judgment. What I did do was to recognize that the final word lay with him. When I first arrived in San Diego with you and the site was shown me, you remember I raised no question as to its suitability, or suggested any other. When, however, Allen suggested the site now chosen, I at once stated that from my point of view it was far better. This

opinion, of course, I did reiterate, always, however, pointing out that the matter was one that in the present case could not be considered within my province. The final decision of the committee to change the site was made without any assistance from me, or indeed, any knowledge on my part of its possibility. In fact, only a few days before the meeting at which the change was decided upon was held, I had made and sent down a revision of Plan 53-C that I think was an improvement in several directions over any that had so far been submitted. With this plan I wrote a letter to Allen in which, I believe, I did state that it seemed to me about the best I could do on that location, but that it was evident to me that the Fair would slop over in several different directions, and that this opinion was correct is, it seems to me, proved by the fact that, if the permanent buildings and three or four others on the last plan be deleted, the Fair, even assuming its central features/^{to be} on the original site, would spread over until it covered almost the same ground that it is now expected to use.

As for the violation of principle upon which your brother took his stand, I have turned the matter over and over in my mind without being able to accept his, and your, point of view. If the first principle of park design is to produce the effect of a wilderness in the midst of a city,- in other words, to deceive those walking therein into the belief that they are somewhere where they are not,- then one could readily argue against the soundness of artistic principle involved, at least, so it seems to me.

However, All this is beside the remark. You and I have been friends for a great many years. I have enjoyed the friendship and we have worked together in perfect harmony. I cannot help feeling that your brother, and even possibly you, will feel me responsi-

ble for what has happened. Looking at the matter from a purely selfish standpoint, this is the one thing that counts. If I had known, or even suspected, that the thing would have come to such a pass, believe me, I would never have had anything to do with it, and I would resign now if I thought such a course would be of any value to your brother or to anyone else. Indeed, your brother will tell you that several times I have offered to do this in letters to him, though, of course, for very different reasons. If, however, you think there is any advantage in my resigning even now, I will gladly enough do so. What I value is your friendship, and this more, to quote from your last telegram, "than all the jobs in California" or anywhere else. When one gets to be past forty, the making of friends is not the easy matter it is in earlier years, and the losing of one ~~a~~ thing not to be permitted if it can be helped. For myself, I would let any number of questions of principle go by the board rather than to let one friend leave me. It may be that I am borrowing trouble, and that you comprehend and are allowing for everything I have been talking about. Assuming this is so, please give my best regards to your brother, to Dawson, and of course, to Mrs Elmsted, who I feel sure I can count upon to be my advocate,- the devil's advocate, if you please,- in the present case.

Always yours,

R. S. S.