My Dear Will

It would really seem as if your wishes realised themselves, for last Monday when Pennington went to bring home the Donkey & cart, the donkey refused to come actually kicking and biting, so that he saw it would not do, & brought back the money! So we have given up the donkey, & must fall back upon the men, but hitherto they have all been so busy at the building that I have not been able to get one to do my work. But now that plants are coming from Italy (a handsome present from Sir Thomas Hanbury) & it is time to move vines, & plant waterlilies (& no pond made!) I must really get on without more delay. This last week stopped at Thursday, & not being very well, and the weather being wet & changeable I have not been to Broadstone, but all has been going on fairly well.

The alteration I told you I had made, & Mr. Donkin had agreed to, was to alter the construction of the drawing-room chimney, which was to have been carried over about 4 or 5 ft. thus: [sketch of chimney inserted here]

requiring a girder (steel) at A. and a buttress outside at B.

I did not like all this complication & expense, & some amount of risk, (though Mr. D.[onkin] denies both the expense & risk) and I decided on having the chimney carried straight up, which would give a fire-place in a recess in the bedroom over, & Mr. D.[onkin] admitted, [[3]] improve that room; while the East
Elevation will also be improved by enlarging the balcony. roof so as to include the chimney forming a distinct Gable, & giving the balcony the shelter of the chimney on the North.

We have decided to have a **solid** wood-floor to the Dining Room, on the concrete. This uses up some of the clay heap in filling up, and it is the room where there will be most traffic, and all the summer will require no carpets, & in the winter only a rug or two. The Vestibule & offices will be tiled, all the rest boarded with narrow tongued boards.

If it is quite fine tomorrow we hope to go to the Broadstone with a lady visitor & spend most of the day there. Pennington has put a 2 ft. small-mesh wire-netting [[4]] round the whole boundary fence to keep the rabbits out, so that our vegetables & shrubs & flowers will I hope now be safe.

I am beginning to sow seeds of choice shrubs to adorn " the orchard," & must have an outdoor seed-bed made for the hardy flowers &c.

I have bought a stove from Jennings (his patent ) for my study. It is a solid mass of fire clay, with chambers for air to enter under floor, and come out warmed at a grating above the fire-opening. I think it will do first rate - with the fire made on the hearth on the national principle. For the dining room & dr.[awing] room I shall have I think " Rationals " which are improved " Wells. " --

Hoping you will have decent weather tomorrow & enjoy your holiday--

Your affectionate Pa | Alfred R. Wallace [signature]

ENDNOTES

1. Wallace, William, 1871-1951, Wallace ’s son
2. Hanbury, Sir Thomas, 1832-1907

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