July 5, 1978

Dear Nell,

Helen and I loved our visit with you last week. It was wonderful being with you, and we enjoyed having another opportunity to explore the Octagonal bookee. I love your description of the way it looks when the fire is lit and the glow creeps from the heart of the house into the corners of all the rooms.

We have been concerned about your son-in-law, and we're hoping that you have heard favorable news from Texas.

We've also been thinking of possible people to stay in your house, as you mentioned to us, but so far have not been able to come up with someone who would be just right.

I hope you like this Boutet de Monvel illustration as much as I do. It reminds me of your justified concern about

the way our Great Dane, Pinkerton, might have been tempted to behave, if we were not careful how we got in and out of the car for our short drive to the octagonal house! As a matter of fact, I have just written a book about Pinkerton and submitted it to my publisher. It's called Pinkerton Behave!

Right now I am busily illustrating a very nice manuscript for E. P. Dutton that was written by William Skeaton and is entitled Once, Said Darlene. I've also been doing quite a lot of traveling to speak to groups of children, librarians and teachers. Last week, after we visited you, I was down in Florida. The weather down there was abominable and, even though the program went well, I was very happy to get back to New England. Tomorrow I'm going to Appalachian College in North Carolina, and I'm hoping the climate will be less dismal than Orlando, because it is in the mountains.

I'm so glad that you were able to go through Helen's photographs and hear about her project. (2
She really appreciated your encouragement, and, like me, she loved seeing the octagonal house again. It was wonderful to see the bed from Sweden — that, along with the photograph at the bottom of the stairs — was one of the things in the house that I loved when I went through it eleven years ago, and which I never forgot. The settle in the living room is also a piece with character and special magic. We were very interested to see the portraits upstairs and liked them very much — particularly the pair that seem earlier and are in somewhat better condition. We agree with you that it is sad to see them propped in the closet when they could be hanging somewhere.

We have been doing a lot of gardening in preparation for the wedding, & we are looking forward to getting together with you there some time very soon. We will keep in touch about it, and, in the meantime, lots of love to you, dear friend, from Steve and Helen.

