

10 May 1917

Dear Mr Bentall

I was very pleased to get a letter from you and in reply will tell you something of the rose prospects. There are no RHS shows this year; only the fortnightly shows at the old 'Drill Hall' close to Buckingham Palace. This was the place where the RHS used to hold its meetings before the Horticultural Hall was built, which has now been taken over by the Government. The Drill Hall is cramped and dark; small compared with the Vincent Square Hall, but large enough so far for the exhibits which are very few. Last Tuesday, the two Cants, Hicks, Prince and Wm. Paul stage small exhibits. No new roses except one or two from Hicks. NRS has given up the Spring Show in the Botanic, but they want to hold an autumn show at the Drill Hall on September 11<sup>th</sup> but I doubt if it will come off. The trade growers haven't any men left. George Prince told me last Tuesday he had only three old men and how he was to get the budding done he couldn't imagine.

I expect Mrs Bentall has told you we got the seedling briar and laxa stocks from France just before Christmas. I had a job to find them: they had been lying at Stepney Docks for 6 weeks with the label lost. They are larger than those we had from Holland. The long winter stopped planting, but we got them all in by April 25; the ground was moist and although the weather is harsh and is to bud them all! Red, the boy, and myself are pruning at Scotchers Clytemnestra, Q Alexander, as you know. It is late and some, I fear will have to be left, but all the Island and Dairy Beds are done. We have no forced roses in the 'Tucker' house this year and although we have one side filled with plants just budding up I don't expect they will be ready for fertilizing before June. There are about 300 seedlings in pots in the Tucker house, down the middle and at the far end, the left hand side being potatoes in boxes. Seedlings in boxes are in the melon ground house. They payments for the plants supplied in the autumn have come in fairly well and as soon as I have time to make out the total will hand Mrs Bentall her percentage. Mrs Bentall is a very great help and I do not know what I should have done without her. The boy is anxious to learn rose growing – his grandfather at Theydon Bois has 2 acres of roses – and he picked up the way to prune quickly. He is observant, but wants someone with him to hustle him a bit. As soon as the ground gets soft again the maidens must be staked; a good many already want tying. I accepted an invitation to judge the new roses new roses in Paris in June, but there now seems no chance of getting there this year. I enclose a press cutting which may interest you. Don't trouble to return it. I wish your CO would give you a month's leave in July to help in the budding. If you like, show him the paper.

Yours faithfully, Joseph H Pemberton

7 August 1917

Dear Mr Bentall

I had your letter of June 24 and was pleased to get it. Yes, the yellow rose, a row at Scotchers, flowered well at the tips of the long shoots, but nowhere else; that's the drawback and the old plants in the Dairy bed did just the same. Unless I can find out the way to treat it, the rose will be no good to the general public. However, Mrs Bentall has budded 500 of it a Scotchers, so perhaps by the year these will flower, 1919, we shall know its real value. We have a lot of heps in

the Tucker house fertilized from it. The rose for next year is 'Pax', the white spray. We showed a few stems of it at the RHS fortnightly meeting on July 3 and put up a pole and vases of it on July 17<sup>th</sup> RHS meeting, when the NRS judged seedling roses. It got a certificate, but was really worth a gold medal, as they will see in years to come. I am certain this rose has a future and will be in everybody's garden. It caught the public's fancy and we have taken addresses to let them know when it is sent out. If the War is over we will send it out in the autumn of 1918, but it will be useless to do so while the War lasts; there are no buyers now. We had budded 1,700 of it at Scotchers. It bids fair to be a good autumn rose, because after cutting down the old plants for buds, it has thrown up strong growth from the base, bearing large clusters of bud – good heads – which will be flowering in September.

Of the seedlings budded last year there is one especially promising, a bright red cluster, semi single with fine golden stamens. I budded 10 plants and from these I have budded 150 at Scotchers and the autumn growth is strong, bearing good buds. I think we can get at least another 100 buds from these few plants.

We are in a muddle for stocks for autumn and spring planting. I ordered a lot from Orleans as last year; they have booked the order, but the export of them to England is prohibited from anywhere and I hear they will stop all nursery stock from coming in for at least 12 months after the War. Added to this the severe winter killed all our cuttings and nearly everyone else's as well and until a week ago I could not get any. Then I found that there's some at Woking and went down to see. I got 4,000 manetti, but the price was more than double the usual figure. I am saving some of the stocks planted for budding this year. Shall lift them and lay in by heels until the spring in the hope they will not be too large. We will not bud ordinary roses now, but get a few plants from the trade. I do not expect many orders this year, so perhaps we shall tide over the difficulty. Irish growers are just as badly off for stocks as English growers. The stock we are budding this year, especially the briars at Scotchers are very good, the best we have had for years, not more than 2 in a 100 dead. I enclose a list of Scots budding; it may interest you. Now we are budding Meyer briars at Island. It is a job to get through it all; only Mrs B and myself.

Yours faithfully, J H Pemberton