

Catalogue of the Reginald J. Farrer Collection at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

GB 235 RJF

Title: The Reginald Farrer Collection

Dates of Creation: 1880 – present

Name of Creator: Reginald Farrer (1880-1920), Farrer family and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, et al.

Administrative / Biographical History:

Reginald John Farrer, traveller, plant collector, plantsman and writer, was born on the 17th February, 1880 at 3 Spanish Place, London, the eldest of two boys born to James Anson Farrer (1849-1925) and Elizabeth Georgina Ann, nee Reynell-Pack.

Farrer was born with a cleft palate and hare lip, the operation scars to correct this he later covered up with a thick moustache. Having to endure many childhood operations he was educated at home and also at Newnham Rectory. Spending much time by himself, Farrer enjoyed studying the flora in the hills surrounding his family's Yorkshire estate, Ingleborough in Clapham, which his father inherited in 1889. At the age of fourteen, Farrer redesigned its alpine garden.

In 1898 he attended Balliol College in Oxford, graduating in 1902. While there he helped H.J. Bidder construct the popular rock garden at St John's College.

Family holidays were often spent in Europe, but in 1903 Farrer went on his first long journey to Beijing / Peking, briefly visiting Korea before spending around 8 months in Japan. His first book, *The Garden of Asia* (1904) describes this stay. At this time, Farrer's plant and gardening interests were overtaken by his ambition to become a novelist, poet and playwright. Unfortunately, most of this work was not well regarded and is now forgotten.

In 1907 *My Rock Garden* was published which turned out to be his most popular and influential work, and was followed by "Alpines and Bog Plants" in 1908. Also in 1908, he and his friend Aubrey Herbert travelled to Ceylon, where Farrer became a Buddhist, publishing *In Old Ceylon* on his return.

Farrer then tried his hand at politics, and although being elected a Yorkshire County councillor, he lost a parliamentary contest at Ashford in Kent in 1910. He apparently spent much of the £1000 election expenses given to him by his father on orchids.

Farrer's European travels continued throughout 1903-1913, often travelling with fellow gardeners such as Edward Augustus Bowles to places like the Dolomites and the Maritime Alps, resulting in further books such as *Among the Hills* in 1911 and *The Dolomites* in 1913. By this time Farrer had set up the Craven Nursery Company (and Plant Club) in his home village of Clapham which won various awards, mainly from the Royal Horticultural Society.

In April 1914, Farrer and William Purdom, a gardener and plant collector trained at Kew, travelled to Kansu (Gansu), in north-west China, to spend two years collecting plant specimens and seeds, a brave achievement as the area was notoriously lawless at the time with Farrer having to avoid bandits such as the infamous 'White Wolf'. More books followed on his return, *On the Eaves of the World* in two volumes in 1917, and *The Rainbow Bridge*, published posthumously in 1921.

Farrer was back in England by the spring of 1916 and being declared unfit for war service he instead joined John Buchan's Ministry of Information until it was dissolved in 1918. Farrer's work here was ultimately published in *The Void of War* (1918).

In 1919, *The English Rock Garden* was published in two volumes and Farrer embarked upon his second plant collecting expedition, this time to Upper Burma accompanied by Euan H.M. Cox. Based at Hpimaw, Farrer explored the surrounding mountains, collected and painted plants and wrote many articles for the *Gardener's Chronicle*. Unfortunately, few of the plants they discovered proved suitable for cultivation in Britain, and despite going to great lengths to avoid other plant collectors working in the area, Farrer had encounters with George Forrest's collectors and with Frank Kingdon Ward. When you are evaluated by how many new and profitable plants you could introduce, this was all bad news for Farrer.

After a year, Cox returned home, and in 1920, Farrer continued on to Nyitadi, where after spending months alone with his local collectors / assistants, he became ill and died, probably of diphtheria, on the 17th October. He was buried six days later at Kawngglanghpu. His family were able to arrange for a headstone reading "He died for love and duty in search of rare plants". He was unmarried.

Farrer's flamboyant writing style irritated some of his more 'serious' colleagues, and today he is known more for his colourful descriptions rather than his plant knowledge. He was awarded the Gill memorial by the Royal Geographical Society in 1920 and is commemorated in a nature trail in the Yorkshire Dales

National Park which passes some of Farrer's own plants. His herbarium specimens, notable for the expressive detail of his field notes are at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, as are a notable proportion of his archives.

Much of the above information was gleaned from Basil Morgan's entry on Farrer in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, volume 19, 2004, pp.123-4.

Archival History: The Reginald Farrer collection comprises some material which has been generated or collected by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and some material which has been donated, lent or purchased in recent years (2000-2010). The collection was arranged in 2010 and catalogued in 2011 by Leonie Paterson. The watercolours were re-catalogued in 2014 by LP. The Ernest Gye and Celia Noble letters were summarized by library volunteer Maggie Stevenson in 2019. The RBGE boxes (RJF/1) were re-catalogued in 2020 by LP.

Scope and Content: The Reginald Farrer collection comprises correspondence between Reginald Farrer and his family (his mother in particular), E.A. Bowles, John Buchan, Sir Francis Younghusband, Ernest Gye, Sir Isaac Bayley Balfour and others as detailed below. It also includes paintings, photographs, 35mm slides, glass plate negatives and lantern slides covering mainly his two plant collecting expeditions to China in 1914-15 and Burma in 1919-1920, as well as scripts for plays written by Farrer.

System of Arrangement: The collection is split into 5 different provenances:

- The first comprises material from the Royal Botanic Garden Archives including two boxes of correspondence between Farrer and RBGE's Regius Keeper Sir Isaac Bayley Balfour and a photograph album.
- The second consists of the Farrer Family Collection which was donated to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh by Farrer's family in 2005; this collection consists mainly of Farrer's correspondence, photographic material, paintings and literature.
- The third consists of five photographic albums by Reginald Farrer and William Purdom and is at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on loan from the Lakeland Horticultural Society.
- The fourth is a set of correspondence from Reginald Farrer to Ernest Gye and was purchased at auction by RBGE in 2008.
- The fifth is a set of correspondence from Lady Celia Brunel Noble and was donated to the RBGE Archives in 2017.

Conditions governing access: The collection is open for access, with some photograph albums requiring permissions from an organisation other than the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh before reproduction and/or use.

The Listings (updated Nov. 2020):

GB 235 RJF The Reginald J. Farrer Collection

RJF/1 Reginald Farrer - Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh institutional archives

Two boxes of correspondence, seed lists and field notes to, from and relating to Reginald Farrer and his expeditions to Kansu (Gansu) in Northern China (1914-1915) and Upper Burma (1919-1920) and one box containing a photo album and letter. These records were likely brought together from various sources within the RBGE Archives so that items relating to Farrer were kept together. It has been decided to keep this collection together.

RJF/1/1 Reginald Farrer – correspondence with Isaac Bayley Balfour et al, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh 1913-1920

This box comprises mainly correspondence to and from Reginald Farrer and Sir Isaac Bayley Balfour, Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (1888-1922) but there is also correspondence to/from Sir/Colonel David Prain, Arthur W. Hill, W.R. Dykes, George Redman of the Craven Nursery, and Edward Arnold, S.R. Fasoms, Lionel de Rothschild and E. L'Estrange P. Thompson [?]

RJF/1/1/1/1-82 Farrer correspondence (82 letters in 2 folders) relating to Farrer and Purdom's expedition to Kansu [Gansu], north China between 1914 and 1915

RJF/1/1/2/1-41 Farrer correspondence (41 letters in 1 folder) relating to Farrer and Cox's expedition to Burma [Myanmar] between 1919 and 1920.

RJF/1/2/1-61 Reginald Farrer – correspondence with William Wright Smith et al, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh 1919-1920

Two folders relating to Farrer's second expedition to Upper Burma between 1919 and 1920 and his death there. Correspondence is mainly between Farrer and William Wright Smith, Regius Keeper and Deputy Regius Keeper at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, but also S.R. Fasoms, gardener at Craven Nursery/Ingleborough, and post Farrer's death, Claude Barton of the Ingleborough Estate Office, Colonel Stephenson Clarke, Euan H.M. Cox, H.M. Farrer of Farrer and Co. solicitors [dealing with Farrer's estate] and Farrer's mother, Bessie requesting coloured paintings of *Gentiana farreri* and *Lilium farreri* so that glass windows may be made up for the church in Clapham.

There are also seed and plant lists, identifications and distribution lists to subscribers [though no list of subscribers was found].

RJF/1/3/4-23 Reginald Farrer – correspondence with Douglas Henderson et al, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
1920,1987

Folder of mainly copy letters from Reginald Farrer and Euan H.M. Cox dating between February and September 1920, some typed transcripts, all copied by Cox's son Peter in 1987, alongside associated correspondence between Peter Cox and D.M. Henderson, then Regius Keeper at RBGE, arranging to have the letters copied and stored at RBGE.

RJF/1/4 Reginald Farrer - photograph album

1914-1984

Photograph Album donated to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in 1984 by Miss Gwen Hall, Cumbria. It was bequeathed to her in 1976 by Elsie Purdom, William's sister. There should have been 2 albums but only one was transferred. [It appears the other album went to the Lakeland Horticultural Society, and is now at RBGE on permanent loan - RJF/3/1]

RJF/1/5 Reginald Farrer – Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh provenance; articles and activities relating to the Farrer archive

2005-present

1/5/1: letter dated Dec 6 from Reginald Farrer to Mrs Parker found in a donated copy of 'English Rock Garden' by R. Farrer.

1/5/2: Historic England Report, 2016, on assessment of restoration of Farrer's rock garden at Clapham by Rebecca Pullan, HE Research Report Series no.7-2016

1/5/3: Articles by Graham Avery, yet to list

RJF/2 Reginald Farrer - the Farrer Family Collection

1880-2004

This collection was donated to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh Archives in 2005 by the Farrer family.

This collection has been split into four components;

- written material (arranged chronologically as far as possible),
- photographic material,
- Farrer's watercolour paintings and
- miscellaneous artifactual material.

RJF/2/1 Farrer Family Collection - written material

1880-2004

RJF/2/1/1 Box 1: 1880-1902; includes Farrer's birth announcement and certificates and four folders of correspondence, mainly to his mother from

Ingleborough, Newnham Rectory, Balliol College, Scarborough and Europe.

RJF/2/1/2 **Box 2: 1903-1913**; includes Royal Horticultural Society certificates, 1902-1913; correspondence relating to Japan trip 1903; general correspondence mainly to mother and E.A. Bowles, 1905-1913; correspondence from Kandy, Ceylon and Colombo, 1908; correspondence from Canada, 1908; correspondence from Europe, 1908; correspondence to and from the Herberts, mainly 1908; correspondence from European trip, family and E.A. Bowles, 1910; items relating to Farrer's Parliamentary campaign, Ashford, Kent, 1910; correspondence from European trip, 1912; and copy of *Primula Hybrids in Nature* by R. Farrer from the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, 1913.

RJF/2/1/3 **Box 3: 1914-1916**; includes letter from William Purdom outlining plans for 1914 China Expedition; correspondence from 1914-15 China expedition; some letters to and from Isaac Bayley Balfour, 1915; correspondence to parents from Japan, [1916?]; various maps of Kansu, China; Farrer's writings about Kansu - published reprints and manuscripts, 1916-18; Farrer's writings about Kansu - not known if published; newspaper cuttings including articles written about the 'White Wolf' of Kansu, c.1914, some written by Farrer; invoices from Kansu expedition; list of slides relating to Kansu expedition compiled in 1985; transcriptions of two photograph albums relating to Kansu expedition [RJF/2/2/3-4]; miscellaneous ephemera.

RJF/2/1/4 **Box 4: 1916-1918**; folder of correspondence, mainly to mother but correspondents also include Aubrey Herbert, E.A. Bowles, William Purdom, Nell Purdom [William's sister], Hugh Faulkener and Italian Legation, Beijing. Subjects include Farrer's operation, John Buchan, gardener's pay, London Air Raid, World War One and Edinburgh. Also, letter from John Buchan, Ministry of Information dated 12/12/1917 referring to Farrer's writing; and folder of documents relating to Farrer's time at the Ministry of Information, 1917-18.

RJF/2/1/5 **Box 5: 1919-1920**; includes correspondence to family and Aubrey Herbert, 1919 - includes references to Frank Kingdon Ward and George Forrest; telegrams from RJF to his mother, 1919; correspondence to family, 1920; letter from Farrer to Sir Francis Younghusband, 13/09/1920; correspondence from Isaac Bayley Balfour and William Wright Smith of the Royal Botanic Garden

Edinburgh to Farrer and family, 1917-1924; general correspondence, 1920, correspondents include Lionel de Rothschild, Postmaster Gye? J.T.O. Barnard, and William Purdom; folder of ephemera including telegram, ticket to Rangoon, diary entry and Burmese travelling times and Regulations for dealing with tribes; copy of Gardener's Chronicle including article by Farrer, 1921-22; notes written by Farrer's mother regarding instructions and dispatches from Farrer; plant / seed lists, including identifications from Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh; Farrer's supply lists; information relating to E.H.M. Cox, including, copies of few diary pages, maps and letters from Farrer to Cox; and various maps of various dates relating to Farrer's collecting localities.

RJF/2/1/6 **Box 6: 1920-1984;** Farrer's death and post-death, including poem written by Farrer one week before his death 'found in the pencil copy of the Empty House' [Farrer's last unpublished novel]; telegram sent to Farrer after his death; correspondence relating to Farrer's death - correspondents include E.A. Bowles, Hugh Faulkener; F. Vivian Clerk, Bidder, Sir Francis Younghusband, Sepoy Jange Bhaju, E.H.M. Cox, J.T.O. Barnard, S.M. Frank, A.W. Porter, W.T. Stearn and Charles Graham and telegrams reporting death and letters about location and upkeep of the grave; photographs relating to Farrer's grave; undated correspondence - letter from William Purdom to Farrer; Rev. Henry Jardine Bidder to Farrer, and 4 undated letters from Farrer to his parents [mention of autocars in London]; postcard showing Edith Sitwell from Edith to Farrer's mother, March 1922, and photograph of Edith as a child [Sitwells are related to the Farrers] and collection of book reviews collected by Farrer, 1901-1920.

RJF/2/1/7 **Box 7: Retrospective articles in the media about Farrer and his plants, 1920-1989,** including articles in the press, Country Life, Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society, Quarterly Bulletin of the Alpine Garden Society, etc; various lists [see also plant lists in 2nd expedition box 5] including paintings, plant introductions, photographs and transparencies, all apparently drawn up in the 1970s-80s mainly by Charles Graham?; flyer from nurseries catalogue [W. Wells jnr, Surrey] showing *Gentiana farreri* c. 1921; newspaper cuttings relating to Gertrude Bell c. 1927; family correspondence regarding Farrer Conference,

1994 and Exhibition, 2003-4; captions and poster relating to 2003 Exhibition - 'The Father of Rock Gardening' held at the Folly, Settle, North Yorkshire.

RJF/2/1/8 **Box 8: Plays / Dramas by Reginald Farrer**, including 'La Reine des Perses' [in French], 20/03/1895, includes poem 'Hymn to Astarte Syriaca', 10/06/1895; 'The Martyr', 25/09/1903-05/10/1903; 'The House of Stark' - various drafts; 'Hearts and Diamonds' - just last Act, but includes Farrer's illustration of 'Lady C'; and 'The Spanish Duchess'.

RJF/2/2 **Farrer Family Collection - photographic material**

c.1890-2004

consists of 4 photograph albums; 2 albums of loose photographs; 3 boxes of lantern slides, 1 box of glass plate negatives and 1 box of 35mm slides.

Photograph Albums

RJF/2/2/1 **Album 1: 1900-1908**; includes Japan, 1902; China, 1903[?]; Ceylon, 1908; Japan, 1903 [photos by Gertrude Bell]; Canada, 1900 and St. Marten Lantosque Vesubie, 1902.

RJF/2/2/2 **Album 2: 1914-1915**, plants from Kansu expedition and some early shots of the Rock Garden at Ingleborough found amongst Reginald's things.

RJF/2/2/3 **Album 3: 1914-16**; China including people, places and itinerary - some photographs by William Purdom.

RJF/2/2/4 **Album 4: 1915**; China including people, places and itinerary - some photographs by William Purdom.

Loose photographs

RJF/2/2/5-6 **2 folders of loose photographs** (1xA4 – 2/2/5, 1xA3 – 2/2/6), some modern copies, of Farrer, his family, Ingleborough, and people, plants and locations in China.

Lantern slides

RJF/2/2/7-9 **3 boxes of lantern slides**, seemingly of people, plants and locations in Japan, and possibly also some taken in the European Alps[?] and Canada.

Glass Plate Negatives

RJF/2/2/10 **1 box of quarter glass plate negatives** mainly of plants taken in China[?] but also includes what appears to be [and what the Farrer family claim to

be] two of the first complete descent into 'Gaping Gill' near Ingleborough by Martel in 1895[?]

35mm slides

RJF/2/2/11 **Box of 35mm slides** - various photos taken from the collection to illustrate talks.

RJF/2/3 **Farrer Family Collection - watercolour paintings**

1914-1920

7 boxes/folders of paintings

The bulk of this collection was donated by Farrer's family in 2005, with six further watercolours being added to this collection in 2010 - these had previously been on loan to the Alpine Garden Society. A further painting was added to this collection in 2006 from a private individual who had been given the painting by Farrer's family.

RJF/2/3/1-7 **7 boxes comprising a collection of 58 watercolours** executed by Farrer in the field either on his first plant hunting expedition to China between 1914 and 1915, or on his second to Burma between 1919 and 1920. They are mostly of plants, rhododendrons in particular, but there are two of views.

Plant	Ref GB235 RJF/2/3/	Farrer number	Date	Location	Mount size	Box
<i>Cypripedium arietinum</i>	1	F868	25/04/1919	Hpimaw	11x14"	1
<i>Fritillaria</i> sp.	2	F883			11x14"	1
<i>Meconopsis lancifolia</i>	3				11x14"	1
<i>Primula</i> , <i>Androsace chamaejasme</i> [now <i>lutea</i>], <i>Cassiope myosuroides</i>	4	F1058 F1059 F1048	26/06/1919? [herb. Spec. coll. 24/06/1919]	Hpawshi Bum	11x14"	1
<i>Primula bryophila</i>	5	F880	06/05/1919	Hpimaw	11x14"	1
<i>Primula serratifolia</i>	6	F1054	26/06/1919	Hpawshi Bum	11x14"	1
<i>Primula silaensis</i>	7	F1695?	??/07/1920	Chawchi	11x14"	1
<i>Rhodeleia championi</i> , Hook	8	F1533	05/05/1920	Nyitadi	11x14"	1
<i>Rhod.</i> sp.	9		19/05/1920	Chaw-ji Camp	11x14"	2
<i>Rhod.</i> sp.	10		08/08/1920	Moku-ji	11x14"	2
<i>Rhod. aperatile</i>	11	F888	07/05/1919	Hpimaw	11x14"	2
<i>Rhod. dichroanthum</i>	12	F1024	14/06/1919	Hpimaw	11x14"	2
<i>Rhod. genestierianum</i> ser. <i>glaucum</i>	13		03/05/1920	Nyitadi	11x14"	2
<i>Rhod. heliolepis</i>	14	F1065	03/07/1919	Hpawshi Pass	11x14"	2
<i>Rhod. rubiginosum</i>	15	F875	07/05/1919	Hpimaw	11x14"	2
<i>Rhod. veriflorum</i>	16	F877	06/05/1919	Hpimaw	11x14"	2
City of Teongeangpi	17		22/04/1920	Teongeangpi	16x20"	3
Mountain view	18				16x20"	3
<i>Androsace tapete</i> *	19	F128*	13/06/1914	Siku	16x20"	3
<i>Androsace tibetica</i> , <i>Iris goniocarpa</i>	20		23/05/1915	Tien Tan Ssu*	16x20"	3
<i>Berneuxia thibetica</i>	21	F1528	18/05/1920		16x20"	3
<i>Cremanthodium farreri</i>	22	F1178	06/08/1919		16x20"	3
<i>Cypripedium luteum</i> (proud Margaret)	23	F138*	16/06/1914	Siku Alpine woods*	16x20"	3
<i>Lilium tenuifolium</i> , <i>Aster kansuensis</i>	24		25/06/1914	Siku*	16x20"	3
<i>Primula brachystoma</i>	25	F1635	06/08/1920	2m from camp	16x20"	3
<i>Primula kansuensis</i> / <i>Purdomia auria</i>	26	No.2, F39*	16/05/1914		16x20"	3
<i>Primula valentiniana</i>	27	F1723	15/07/1920		16x20"	3
<i>Primula viola-grandis</i> [<i>Omphalogramma vinciflorum</i> ?]	28	No.6			16x20"	3
<i>Rhod.</i> sp <i>Chitupa</i>	29	deframe	20/04/1920	Nyitadi	16x20"	4
<i>Rhod.</i> sp.	30		18/05/1920	Chaw-ji Camp	16x20"	4

Plant	Ref GB235 RJF/2/3/	Farrer number	Date	Location	Mount size	Box
Rhod. sp.	31		31/05/1920	Camp Moku-ji	16x20"	4
Rhod. sp.	32		05/06/1920	Nyitadi	16x20"	4
Rhod. araiophyllum ser. irroratum	33	F811	15/04/1919	Hpimaw	16x20"	4
Rhod. araiophyllum ser. irroratum	34	F862	21/04/1919		16x20"	4
Rhod. arizelum	35	F863	22/04/1919		16x20"	4
Rhod. bullatum	36	F842			16x20"	4
Rhod. callimorphum	37		22-27/06/1920		16x20"	4
Rhod. campylocarpum ser. caloxanthum	38	F937	19/05/1914		16x20"	4
Rhod. cilicalyx	39	F1686?	15/04/1920		16x20"	5
Rhod. fulvum	40	F874	06/05/1919		16x20"	5
Rhod. habrotrichum / Rhod. sp.	41	F887	06-07/05/1919		16x20"	5
Rhod. mallotum	42		17/05/1920	Chaw-ji Camp	16x20"	5
Rhod. reginaldii / oreodoxa?	43	F63*	07/06/1915	Da Tung Alps*	16x20"	5
Rhod. sidereum	44	F872	29/04/1919		16x20"	5
Rhod. stewarteanum, ??? alpinex	45	F926			16x20"	5
Rhod. sulphureum	46	F813	22/04/1919		16x20"	5
Rhod. tanastylum ser. irroratum	47	F812	25/04/1919	Hpimaw	16x20"	5
Rhod. tanastylum ser. irroratum	48		04/05/1920	Nyitadi	16x20"	5
Lilium praecox	49	F911	09/06/1919		18x27"	6
Nomocharis farreri	50	F1031			18x27"	6
Rhod. basilicum	51	F873	07/05/1919	Hpimaw	18x27"	6
Additional deposit from Schilling Archive (RBGEA2006.21):						
Rhododendron sp. "green shooters"	52	F979	31/05/1919		16x20"	7
Additional deposit: from Farrers, 6 paintings previously held by the Alpine Garden Society (presumably purchased by Farrers in Sotheby's auction at some point? (RBGEA2010.05) As follows:						
Corydalis melanochlora	53		12/08/1914	With [last?] on highest ridges	16x20"	7
Incarvillea grandiflora	54		08/06/1915	Wolvesden	16x20"	7
Meconopsis psilonomma (ex.icon.orig?)	55		24/12/1915		16x20"	7
Primula farreri / Primula sp.	56	No.29	19/06/1915	Wolvesden Pass	16x20"	7
Stellera (stems should be stiffer and the plant forms a perfect domed bush)	57		04/06/1914	Above Siku	16x20"	7
Troliius pumilus and Geranium sp.	58		30/06/1915	Wolvesden	16x20"	7

*information derived from 'Kansu Paintings' in archives –Farrer Family Collection, 1st expedition box?

RJF/2/4 Reginald Farrer – miscellaneous 1902-1991

1 ledger, 2 boxes, 1 tube

RJF/2/4/1 Items relating to Craven Nursery

RJF/2/4/1/1-2

Ledger and wooden box relating to the Craven Nursery and Farrer's Plant Club. The contents of the box have been left as they were and include receipts, letters, plant lists and a metal key ring? The ledger records plants dispatched and covers 1914-1921.

RJF/2/4/2

1 box containing Farrer's 'chop' - a wooden stamp used to write his name in Chinese[?], and his medals as follows: 1902; silver Flora medal, RHS, for Alpine Plants at Temple Show; 1903, silver Flora medal, RHS, for Alpines at Temple Show; 1904, silver gilt Flora medal, RHS, for a Rock Garden at Temple Show; 1904, silver gilt Banksian medal, RHS, for Alpines at Holland House Show;

1905, silver gilt Flora medal, RHS, for Alpines at Chelsea Show; 1905, silver Banksian medal, RHS, for Alpines at Temple Show; 1913, silver medal, Shropshire Horticultural Society, for Rock Garden. Also 2 cassette tapes, 1991, in poor condition. [They seem to be a recording of a talk about Farrer given by Joan Farrer.]

RJF/2/4/3/1-2 **1 tube containing 2 certificates:** Gill Memorial, May 1920, from the Royal Geographical Society; and South Kent Liberal Association, certificate of condolence after Ashford election, 1910.

RJF/3 **Reginald Farrer - Lakeland Horticultural Society Photographic Albums**

1910-1920

5 albums

These 5 albums of photographs are at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on permanent loan from the Lakeland Horticultural Society. They appear to be from William Purdom who travelled and collected plants with Reginald Farrer in Kansu / Gansu, northern China in 1914-1915, but one was compiled by Reginald Farrer and three relate to their collecting trip, so all 5 albums have been stored within the Reginald Farrer collection.

Written permission must be acquired from the Lakeland Horticultural Society before any of the photographs in the albums can be reproduced or used. RBGE can assist with this.

William Purdom was born on the 10th of April at Heversham near Kendal but he spent most of his childhood at the Lodge, Brathay Hall in Ambleside, where his father, William, was head gardener. After leaving school at 14, Purdom's first four years of gardening training was under his father's tuition, before joining Low Nursery of Enfield, and then the Veitch Nursery of Coombe Wood.

In 1902 Purdom applied for a student position at the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew where he stayed for six years before being chosen to lead a plant collecting expedition to China in 1909 planned by Veitch and the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts. He returned to England in 1912.

Reginald Farrer heard of Purdom's achievements and determined to travel to China to collect plants with Purdom as his assistant. He chose Kansu / Gansu in northern China as it was hoped that this area would yield alpine plants suitable for the British climate. The dangerous and difficult expedition took place between 1914 and 1915 and was funded by Charles Hough of White Craggs, Ambleside and William Groves of Holehird.

Farrer returned to England in 1915, but Purdom elected to remain in China to become a forestry advisor to the Chinese

Government. He died in November 1921 in Peking / Beijing after a short illness at the age of 41 while working on a comprehensive forestry survey for the Chinese Railways.

Biographical information on William Purdom was compiled by Margaret I. Perkins, Hon. Archivist for the Lakeland Horticultural Society.

- RJF/3/1** **Volume 1: 1914-1915**; Inscription to 'My dear Bill, from RF', 07/02/1917. Photographs by Farrer. Starts in Peking in 1914 and progresses to Mei S'an, Gwang Hui Ssu, Mien Chi Hsien, Hwa S'an, Lin Tung, Satanee, Siku, 'Thundercrown', Jo-ni, then in 1915, Lanchow, Sining, Wei-Yuan, 'Wolvesden Pass', Tien Tang Ssu, Chebson Ssu, 'Creda Rossa' and 'Clear Lake'. Many shots of villages and mountain scenery, including the locations where various plants were found. There are also photographs from Farrer's lone journey south from Lanchow, before he was reunited with Purdom to travel down the Ja-ling-Jang, through the Yangtze Gorges to Ichang.
- RJF/3/2** **Volume 2: 1912**; Inscribed 'J. Purdom, from C.H. Hough, Xmas 1912. This appears to be from Purdom's first expedition to China between 1909 and 1912 and covers Peking, Amdo and River Tow in Tibet, Jehol, Peling Range, Kansu, Choni, and pictures of people and places, including one of Purdom himself.
- RJF/3/3** **Volume 3**: A compilation of photographs of Tibetan and Kansu people and scenery from both of Purdom's Chinese expeditions, 1909 - 1915. Many of these photographs appear in other albums.
- RJF/3/4** **Volume 4**: Photographs recording Purdom's work as Advisor of the State Forests for the Railways. It shows Kwang Shan Po Forest Station, Chi Kung Shan, the selection of a site for establishment of forestry nurseries, the Hsi Ling tombs, Li Kia Chia, the survey of the Kalgan Railroad for afforestation, and ends with some shots at the railway station during the 1920 famine.
- RJF/3/5** **Volume 5**: A small collection of photographs, some dated 1912, many taken in Peking. They include Purdom with the Commercial Attache to the British Legation, Sir Alexander Hosie, and include images of W. Christie with Mission children. There are many undated photographs of Purdom on expedition in Kokonor, Shansi and Honan.

RJF/4/1-13 Reginald Farrer - correspondence to Ernest Gye

1919-1920

A collection of 13 letters purchased at auction in 2008, written by Reginald Farrer and most likely sent to the British Diplomat Ernest Frederick Gye C.M.G., though Farrer tends to refer to him as his "Poison", "Viper" or "Venom".

Gye's mother was the singer Dame Emma Albani and his father was Ernest Gye, the lessee of Covent Garden theatre. Gye entered the Foreign Office in 1903, became Second Secretary in 1908 and Councillor in 1924. He served for some years in Tehran in the earlier part of his career (and where he was when these letters were written) before being appointed Minister and Consul General in Tangier in 1933. Three years later he was made Minister Plenipotentiary in Venezuela, retiring in 1939.

The 13 letters were written in Upper Burma (now Myanmar), mainly from Hpimaw and Nyitadi, and date between May 1919 and September 1920, the last being written only five weeks before his death. The letters are liberally peppered with nicknames and gossip, and the identity of everyone mentioned may never be known; for example, his 1919 travelling companion, fellow plant collector Euan Cox, is often referred to by the name "Jumps". In amongst intimate information and personal references are descriptions of the country, people met and plants collected.

The below descriptions were summarised by library volunteer Maggie Stevenson and contain Farrer's language, spellings and attitudes which may be deemed offensive now.

- RJF/4/01 letter dated 29/05/1919 from Farrer, Hpimaw Fort, to Ernest Gye; Pleased to get letter from Ernest Gye, nickname Poison - shared letter with Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox]. Speaks of the restless desire to impress & seeks gossip of English friends. Ernest writing of going to Tangiers. Describes at length he and Jumps picking raspberries to make jam, concoction insipid. Then reverted to making better jam with wild white strawberries. Writes of Jumps as youthful, unlike him who is becoming of crabbed age. Describes how a brace of young boys, Gurkhas have joined their camp. Painting primula in a tent, through a dense fog of midges and smoke. Requests from Ernest to purchase 2 or 3 Everyman volumes of Floris's Montaigne, delights in the first one. This letter is signed your loving Poppet. Jumps cooking until the Chinese cook has recovered from his cliff fall. ps Gossipy enquiries and comments. Encouraging E. Gye when writing, to be thoroughly indiscreet and viscous. Speaks of his own return to a de-Poisoned London. [Poison = E. Gye] Describes the place abounding in the most preposterous brambles - titanic wilderness of thorns, beset with raspberries in almost every colour & degree of

nastiness. Wondering if Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox] is like all Scotch lower (or middle) class minds, are alike in a sort of Jackdawish unassimilating appetitiveness.

RJF/04/02 letter dated 26/07/1919 from Farrer, Hpimaw Fort, to Ernest Gye; writing to "Sweet Poison" [Ernest Gye] as resting after a ten days' trek searching for a hypothetical Rhododendron during which it rained relentlessly. Feels rudderless and needing the anchor of wedlock then swings away from this idea. Fed up with some Captain staying with Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox] and him who talks endlessly -Farrer states his ages makes him less tolerant, loses patience and ridicules him for being five-foot-nothing. Soon to go down to Htawgaw then a month's camping in a high-alpine valley which he hopes will be profitable and amusing. Complains of lack of art, architecture and antiquity in this country. Writes of the beauty of *Nomocharis pardanthina*, like a pink lily with a spotted *Odontoglossum* all over the alpine meadows, asks Ernest Gye to experiment with its seed.

RJF/04/03 letter dated 04/09/1919 from Farrer, Hpimaw Fort, to Ernest Gye; Living in the Fort, having spent a month of really wonderful camp-life in a high alpine valley. Had good weather there and had collected 45 Rhododendrons and will return in October to collect their seeds. Bought a horse, Ma in Chinese, which has got fat and will only carry him, the Master. States how Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox] is highly companionable, shall miss him when he leaves, but looks forward to the Scottish Derrick joining him in the winter. Jumps writing a novel. Recounts scenes of the coolies from the alpine village doing their folk-dances & songs by the camp-fire - views them as the real thing, real art. The Cook has another drunken bout, and R. Farrer administered justice on the verandah, docking some of his wages, the rupees were thrown away and he, R. Farrer almost collapsed in tears. Speaks of letters from home in the aftermath of the War being sad and glad he had decided wisely to get away. Hopes E. Gye will get away, suggests Peking 1921 to attain care-free-ness. Requests him to supervise Mr Bain to send out useful books, seeks two sets of Winchester Edition of the Divine One, for himself and Jumps.

Camp was in a high-alpine valley, in a beautiful open glade, filled with golden Anemones, beside a babbling beck, with gaunt hungry-looking granite peaks aspiring overhead all round. Derrick [Milner] he describes as 10 feet high, and you want a flight of steps to see his large rosy face! From the batches of letters, he gets a uniform impression of utter failure, of fatigue so acute that it can't find rest, of disappointment, old age, & general failure.

RJF/04/04 letter dated 24/09/1919 from Farrer, Hpimaw Fort, to Ernest Gye; Writes fondly of the past and E. Gye's pet expressions. Of his life, he recounts how a Dep. Comm. from the Indian Government, a Kingdon Ward (a rural botanist), Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox] and he, all played Auction as it rained incessantly outdoors for weeks. Unsettled by the company and pleased to be living just with Jumps again. Jumps still writing his novel which R. Farrer offers many literary comments with candour. Notes kites are being seen flying over India, an immemorial sign that the Monsoon is nearing its end. Plans to go to Chimili to collect seeds of his treasures. He states he has written up about this in the Gardener's Chronicle, read by thousands, he says. Sending *Nomocharis pardanthina* seeds for E. Gye to grow, hopes that it will open. Initial expedition plans to Putau authorities refused but he has readjusted these and his plans are now accepted to visit the wildernesses of Akhyang. Planning a further one for 1922-3. Writes of the Watsons living at Ingleborough, happy he is planning more travel. Waiting for the main rush of seeds of the *Rhododendrons* to come. Hopes to go down to Rangoon with Jumps for Christmas, Jumps is then required to return home. Enquires why E. Gye and some chums going to Jamaica. May go to live alone in Mandalay for a while. '*Nomocharis pardanthina* will open the amazed and amusing loveliness of her eyes upon a London fog.'

RJF/04/05 letter dated 12/11/1919 from Farrer, Hpimaw Fort, to Ernest Gye; Fond banter between R. Farrer and E. Gye and saying he will seek his company when he returns from the dripping Aquarium, Burma in 1921. Likes the colours of the landscape but not much else here. Using mules to transport and has had a successful season of collecting. Has been injured by the scrub and bamboo and these injuries have taken a long time to heal. Describes how a red panda, a tiny bear with a banded ginger & orange bottle-brush tail has joined their camp and has become tame. He is going down to Myitkyina in a fortnight, by cargo boat slowly to Bhamo, Mandalay and Rangoon where he and Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox] will spend Christmas. Will say farewell to Jumps then and welcome the Beautiful Boy [Milner]. Sends his and Jump's love to Ernest and other friends. Signed the Master. 'I've cut or scratched myself (as one is forever doing in the scrub & the bamboos) my sumptuous flesh, instead of promptly healing as its habit is, has developed large & perpetually pussiferous sores till now, I'm a perfect Lazarus, with my lovely legs like a professional beggar's.' (this letter, 3 pages long in foolscap polypockets)

- RJF/04/06 letter dated 19/12/1919 from Farrer, Upper Burma Club, Mandalay, to Ernest Gye; States he has lost Ernest's last letter and is in low spirits, refers again to his age, 40 years & lack of being anchored by marriage. Discusses merits of English literature - unsettled by the Times' review of his book, 'The English Rock Garden'. Describes his relationship with Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox], 25 years, as not intimate just cordially pleasant. When Jumps has left, he is going to rest in Mandalay until February. Speaks of a possible conflagration between the Chinese & aborigines which would close the frontier to further expeditions. 'In low spirits these days, what with windings up & endings with a crushing sense of my own worthlessness & inadequacy. His book, The Rock Garden, 6 years old, wears its vast erudition (2nd hand) with an affectation of jocosity or preciousness that nowadays would make me feel quite sick. Of Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox], especially when 40 & 25 have not quite a common ground of breeding, training & traditions.'
- RJF/04/07 letter dated 23/12/1919 from Farrer, Upper Burma Club, Mandalay, to Ernest Gye; Has sent seeds of *Nomocharis pardanthina* to Ernest which the cat [the red panda?] has defecated on, which they are both are certain will affect its germination & describes at length its beauty. Reports Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox] has left and the Beautiful Boy [Milner] has slain his sister and is not coming to join him. Rented a bungalow in Maymyo to have a place of his own. Proposes to visit pagodas, but unrest with a new Burma movement may affect this. Intends to visit the Buddha's relics the Arakan Pagoda. Had some firework celebrations & received books from Bain. Describes the beauties of *Nomocharis pardanthina*, as 'quite singular, being those of a little pink Lily that has had an affair with a naughty spotted *Odontoglossum*, & produced a child that bears several shamefaced flat pendant flowers of softest pink, which have an eye of deep chocolate, surrounded by a ring of yellow in three crested fringes, while three of the segments are very broadly oval, fringed & spotted with deep purple.'
- RJF/04/08 letter dated 26/02/1920 from Farrer, The Oaks, Maymyo, to Ernest Gye; States he disliked Mandalay & its Club - too hot & its many Pagodas, roofs covered with red corrugated iron on the hill dominating the city. Mandalay, a holy place where in awe, he held the mortal remains of Gautama Buddha in his own hands. Writes warmly of his friendship with E. Gye and describes the Oaks being like Ascot but sad as he is living alone. Hopes to go North in 2 days, concerned if mules will be available, states he will be alone without Derrick [Milner] and his money. Long rambling gossipy section regarding different women?

- friendships and more, of Amelia with E. Gye. Speaks of a fiction book he is writing, he wants E. Gye to make comment. Speaks negatively of Russian literature and Virginia Woolf's first book. Mentions letter written after a good bottle of Hock. 'Going North, away over the Back of Beyond, out across the last lone edge of Nowhere.'
- RJF/4/09 letter dated 06/05/1920 from Farrer, The Residency, Nyitadi, to Ernest Gye; Describes being somewhere very remote, like Eden. It takes 9 days to reach an outpost where letters can arrive. Hopes this Arcadian state will continue and glad he is alone, writes negatively about Jumps's [Euan H.M. Cox's] presence when he was in camp with him previously. Doing some painting of flowers and landscape, using the Chinese and Japanese convention as there are trailing rolls of white cloud around. A minute fly a nuisance. He notes there is the possible vendetta locally but he will await events and he has raised the Union Jack, which he thinks people find vastly reassuring. 'I am gone down to the bedrock existence unadorned, & there, never thinking of the lovely fluffs & frills of life, achieve a bare and barbarous glory of contentment.'
- RJF/4/10 letter dated 25/06/1920 from Farrer, Nyitadi, to Ernest Gye; Yesterday, a coolie brought three letters from E. Gye, and 90 others from friends, all sopping wet and these were dried over the kitchen hearth. Pleased to get them, gives advice about E. Gye's life although aware it is likely to be out of date - surprised E. Gye going off to Tehran and sad he will not be in London when he returns. Writes again that he is enjoying his solitude without Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox] as he felt responsible for his enjoyment - in camp it has been raining solidly for 3 weeks. Rewriting his book called Empty House about which he begs E. Gye to comment. Writes of Amelia, a friend again, thanks E. Gye for a book. Notes he has received money from R.G.S. (The Gill Award) £36 & royalties of £24 from the Eaves, which he views as windfalls. 'All letters were sopping wet, caked into a pie. Sadness can't be allowed to mean shirking: one may cry over the broken eggs but the omelette of life has to go on being made all the same. Indeed I'm an egg myself: appreciate me please.'
- RJF/4/11 letter dated 25/07/1920 from Farrer, Nyitadi, to Ernest Gye; Writes of friends in London, writes of being positively happy in the mountains in the rain - painting & writing. Complains of paints being too slow drying and having to be baked by a bonfire. Now down in Capua, hoping for post and going in a fortnight to Moku-ji pass. Enjoying reading La Trompeuse and other books. Also rewriting

- Empty House, cutting out large sections - again not sure it will pass the agent, reader or censor.
- RJF/4/12 letter dated 10/08/1920 from Farrer, Nyitadi, to Ernest Gye; Writes of long descent from Moku-ji, stung by bees-wearrying and enjoying relaxing reading his new books and letters he has received. Concerned about Ingleborough and asking if the seeds he sent are growing? The book, Empty House, he has been writing, he intends to send to Ernest Gye, instructing where to get two copies of the manuscript typed, one to be taken to A.S. Watt, agent and other to be read by E. Gye and Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox] then sent out to Peking where R. Farrer will amend it further - proposes a timescale for this process. The book is about his last 3 years of travelling. Pleased Jumps is going to start a literary career in London and will have his company.
- RJF/4/13 letter dated 11/09/1920 from Farrer, Nyitadi, to Ernest Gye; Responds to Ernest's sense of being slighted, not receiving as many letters as others, saying that his gaps in letter writing due to being in camp and nothing of interest happening. He gives advice regarding Amelia, a possible liason of Ernest's, to forget her. Looks forward to having parties with Ernest, maybe at Ingleborough with him and Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox] unpacking items he's brought from Peking. Although wonders if Ernest may be in Britain as talking of going to Persia. Tells Ernest he has written to Jumps regarding weeds & weather which he is sure he will get to read. Suggests that this country is rather boring and does not generate a creative impulse. Spent one last fortnight in the Alps, seed collecting and now resting for a month in Nyitadi. Rambles about Greek and other characters and of his own writings. Again remonstrates that he has been a regular correspondent to E. Gye as regular as to his Mommer.

RJF/5/1-21

Reginald Farrer - correspondence to Lady Celia Brunel Noble

1912-1920

A collection of 21 letters donated to the RBGE Archives in 2017, written by Reginald Farrer and sent to Lady Celia Brunel Noble. The below descriptions were summarised by library volunteer Maggie Stevenson and contain Farrer's language, spellings and attitudes which may be deemed offensive now.

- RJF/5/01 letter dated 01/11/1912 from Ananda [Farrer], Kensington, London to Vasanta [Celia]; Invitation to a Bhuddist meeting in response to her request, empathy to her suffering, of her hands.
- RJF/5/02 letter dated 31 December from Farrer, Ingleborough, Yorkshire to Celia Noble; Flowery expressions of Celia's loveliness & friendship.
- RJF/5/03 letter dated 1914 from Farrer, Hotel Wagonlits, Peking, to Celia Noble; Business letter regarding silks, hangings/pieces/ coats purchased from Imperial Palace. List, costs of each item, used his own money to buy as her banker's draft not arrived. Suggests to bake, disinfect and clean items to rid of infectious germs. In ps suggestions of other items to purchase.
- RJF/5/04 letter dated 16/07/1914 from Farrer, Jo-ni to Celia Noble; Escape from murderous monks from Sian, retreated to temple, further threats to safety, at Siku stayed with the military Governor - raids and violence so moved to Thibet where no fewer than 5 Living Bhuddas, gives thanks for her letters adoringly, moving to Kansu.
- RJF/5/05 letter dated 06/10/1914 from Farrer, Taschow Old City, Kansu to Celia Noble; Description of his time in mountains of Thibet, present of umbrella and food for Chief Mandarin's birthday, go to Badman's land, disguised as coolies at night to collect seed, hide in woods by day and creep back into China. 'A grey day & a grey heart can only be lightened with the roseate vision of Celia.'
- RJF/5/06 letter dated 14/03/1914 from Farrer, Lanchow, to Celia Noble; Expressing distress at not receiving any letters from Celia. In Thibet, bought some huge copper vats - heirlooms, 12 silk panels, jade for her. Spent winter in Lanchow: describes as charming Chinese capital surrounded by orchards, pagodas and immemorial tombs, so old & tranquil in dazzling blue golden air. 'I live in fat peace ensconced in a big many-yarded palace while all Europe is a devil's cauldron of blood and fire.'
- RJF/5/07 letter dated 19/12/1915 from Farrer, Hotel Wagonlits, Peking, to Celia Noble; Has spent the summer in the mountains in Valley of Rocks & Wolves. Describes sward of dancing lavender-blue poppies by tarns higher up.

- Received letter from friends regarding the War, death of one. Feels calmer, states he's taken a house to write book, begs her to visit, Bhuddhas around. Restoration of Imperial residences, killed the Republic and Yuan - being enthroned in New Year ambiguously President and Emperor. Further pleading to Celia to come.
- RJF/5/08 letter dated 25/08/1917 from Farrer, Belgrave Road, London, to Celia Noble; Not well, overdosed on arsenic taken himself, found funny, well again. Pleased off to the English & French front from Foreign Office for 5 weeks to write about it. Beautiful Young Man [Milner?] and Saxton's attitude to sham marriage.
- RJF/5/09 letter dated 12/10/1917 from Farrer, Hotel Ritz, Paris, to Celia Noble; Writes of the contrast of the splendours of Paris & the Western Front, feels there is a rising wave of human sacrifice & aspiration. Personal intrigues - difficult to make sense of. Pleads Celia to visit him in Paris.
- RJF/5/10 letter dated 08/01/1919 from Farrer, Ennismore Gardens, London, to Celia Noble; Convalescing, Celia had sent him pheasants, no substitute for her presence. His book, Void of War - she regards well, as do others - he likes the praise.
- RJF/5/11 letter dated 22/01/1919 from Farrer, Ingleborough, Yorkshire, to Celia Noble; Very proud of her comments on his book, needs constant reassurance of its value. Off on 31st January to Glasgow to sail to Myitkyina, Upper Burma. Invites her to join him in Ceylon next winter. 'Beloved Celia, I tried with all my blood and tears, to say only the truth.'
- RJF/5/12 letter dated 29/01/1919 from Farrer, Ingleborough, Yorkshire, to Celia Noble; Impassioned letter to Celia, acknowledging her prior attachment, makes out this is his reason to flee to Burma-Tibet. 'Now must flee for a perilous safety into the Alps of Burma-Tibet where whatever claws of tigers or bears...'
- RJF/5/13 letter dated 11/05/1919 from Farrer, Hpimaw Fort, Upper Burma, to Celia Noble; Not heard from Celia. Describes being in no man's land, a wild sparse wilderness and the overmastering romance of China & Tibet. Going to spend the winter in the golden palaces of Mandalay - invites her to join him there. 'Stand as it were in exile, looking out over the infinite smiling distances of Szechuan. The freedom is divine.'
- RJF/5/14 letter dated 29/05/1919 from Farrer, Hpimaw Fort, Upper Burma, to Celia Noble; Delighted with receiving letter from Celia and hearing her homely gossip. Goes touring and camping in the mountains. On return, describes trying to paint a primula in his tent-door, holding an umbrella with a dense fog of midges and smoke around. Saw great snowy trumpet-lilies on steep brackened hillsides when tramping

the long leagues back. Describes the cook getting drunk, falling over a cliff, injuring himself & a pleasant Scotch youth with the staggers, called Jumps [Euan H.M. Cox] taking over- making astonishing concoctions with the jam of little wild white strawberries. 'And yet it was delightful, the solemn enormous loneliness of the heights, & the silence & the invariable alpine feeling of clean peace & remoteness.'

RJF/5/15 letter dated 01/09/1919 from Farrer, Hpimaw Fort, Upper Burma, to Celia Noble; Celia's letters awaiting him on return from camping where he saw golden anemones beside a babbling beck & hearing black mother bears roaring after their babies among the bamboos. Writes of Celia's daughters marrying, suggests Cynthia one of them, might become his wife, Mrs Me. Suggests Celia will be free to visit him in Peking or Rangoon in late 1920, 1921 to view various sites and shopping together, aware these are lovely fantasies. Enquires about the Beautiful Young Man? [Milner?] Describes how the coolie-porters danced and sang folksongs by the campfire, a genuine art of wild hill people.

RJF/5/16 letter dated 05/12/1919 from Farrer, In Camp, Wind-c-Water Pass, to Celia Noble; Describes about to leave his camp to winter in Mandalay. Accepts Cynthia might marry another not him. Enthuses about the merits of women but no understanding at all of men. 'Men, they are a perpetual puzzle, contradiction & delight.'

RJF/5/17 letter dated 23/12/1919 from Farrer, Upper Burma Club, Mandalay, to Celia Noble; Receives her letter, sweet smelling, which confirms she will join him in Rangoon next winter. He describes possible sights to see when travelling to Peking or other places, such as where the Dalai Lama has his visiting Vicarage or Japan. Plan to return home by sea with Celia. Speaks of the War, her visit there to the Land of Agony & pleased with his book The Void of War being recognised as an interpretation of such a vast tragedy. Comments on the merits of laughter, religion and ridicules marriage. Prefers to believe in the permanent association of alliance between kindred beings. 'I must come by sea, to act as a chaperone to my 36 great wooden cases of treasures, including, above all, my dear Celia's.'

RJF/5/18 letter dated 22/02/1920 from Farrer, The Oaks, Maymyo, to Celia Noble; Replies to Celia's letter expressing concern about her being taken to pieces on Freudian lines will change her. Writes how he is about to go somewhere remote for eight months, alone, unlikely to get post often and sees it as heroic. Writes of firming up plans to meet Celia & Cynthia in Rangoon. Comments about Marjorie's marriage. At end of letter, writes of his money troubles, his

- allowance of £1000 having halved in value due to rise in Rupee - notes cost of mules up country will be £300. Needs more shareholders for seeds and asks her to find any wealthy acquaintances who might be interested in a share in seeds of new trees, shrubs & flowers.
- RJF/5/19 letter dated 18/04/1920 from Farrer, P.O. Myitkyina, Ridam Ferry, to Celia Noble; Describes the rain, 4 days of forested mountain passes, then needing to cross a raging torrent on a bamboo raft. He, his pony and goods safely crossed to a dry shelter. The mules of his procession fled at the sight of the river crossing, hopes the treacherous mulemen in the forests suffering with leeches & ticks. 'After miraculous paddlings, inshore among the boulders all a-blossom with scarlet Azaleas.'
- RJF/5/20 letter dated 26/06/1920 from Farrer, Nyitadi via Konglu, via Fort Hertz, via Myitkyina, Upper Burma, to Celia Noble; Describes being happy living between a bamboo shack and a tent in the mountains. Returns to a hundred letters from Celia, his Mamma & others giving him a panoramic view of his life & people back home. Expresses disappointment that Celia & Cynthia not joining him but accepts he is coming straight home in January. Reads her letters little by little when falling asleep.
- RJF/5/21 letter dated 18/08/1920 from Farrer, Nyitadi, etc. c/o T. Cook & Sons, Rangoon, to Celia Noble; Writes of his uncertainty of their friendship, returning to life in London, parties, insufficient money to live in London (plans to come up to London to judge at the RHS, a few days a fortnight) Speaks of being happy and viewing this year as period of wonderful growth & realisation and refreshment. Enquires about Celia's re-constructions with Freud's representative, hopes he still remains present. 'My happiness remains waterproof.'

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