

COPY

CAIRO, February 28th, 1929.

Address until
Sept. 1st 1929
c/o Brown Shipley & Co
123, Pall Mall London.

Dear Dr. Welch,

Like all your friends I have been delighted by the William H. Welch Professorship of the History of Medicine and the William H. Welch Medical Library of the Johns Hopkins Medical School. Even public services like yours rarely receive such splendid recognition after death, and for it to come in your lifetime is a truly wonderful tribute.

How I wish that Dr. Halsted could have lived to see it. He often used to talk of the ways and means of raising a fund to build and endow a great medical library to be named after you. I do not know whether he ever told you that when he operated for the last time, in 1919, on the burned scar tissue of my lame leg, and as usual refused to send me a bill, he allowed me to make a gift in his name to the building fund. I am very proud that through his generosity I was one of the early contributors.

I often think that it must give you great satisfaction to realize, and to have all your friends realize, how much more you have been able to do for medical science and hygiene and for scientific research in general by your extra curricula activities, your work on committees, and above all on the Rockefeller Boards, and your many addresses, than if you had confined your work to your professorship of pathology.

The original organization of the Johns Hopkins Medical School by you and your colleagues, which reformed medical teaching in the United States, has been perfected and completed by the establishment of many new, admirably equipped, departments of medicine at the Hopkins and elsewhere.

Your own special work in pathology has been enlarged and perpetuated by the foundation of Rockefeller Institute, with Simon as Director and all the money heart can desire, and by many other centres of preventive medical research, including schools of hygiene, and (almost the most important of all in its far reaching effect on medical science and teaching) by the introduction of the full time teaching system into the Hopkins and other medical schools.

It is about this full time teaching system that I want to write you. I am convinced that there is one more bahnbrechendes thing to do to ensure its success and its permanence - and only you can do it. And unless it is done - and done now - I am absolutely sure that the full time professors of medicine will go the way of the academic professors in our ~~schools and~~ colleges and universities, and the splendid success hoped for from the full time medical teaching system will never be realized.

For forty years I have been living among college and university professors and I am sure that I am right in the conclusions I have reached. The disappointing results of the teaching in our schools and colleges is due not to the quality of our students (who would be quite satisfactory under more favourable conditions) but to the narrow intellectual and cultural outlook, lack of vitality and initiative, and meagre brains of our underpaid teachers and professors. The present academic situation is intolerable. Our thousands of second rate professors, who are failing to hold the attention and win the admiration of our millions of college students, past and present, are just what we should expect them to be. We deserve exactly what we are getting. The results are devastating. Real ability has been driven out of the teaching profession. Even women of A plus intellect are turning from teaching and going into business or the professions of law and medicine.

We have outrageously underpaid our teachers. It is not a question of whether they are willing to make financial sacrifices for the sake of research and teaching it is a question rather of whether they can do their best work under sordid conditions, whether they can bear the unhappiness of depriving their wives and children of advantages that the wives and children of their friends who are business, or professional, men enjoy.

You and I have never married so we are scarcely able to realize what a disastrous effect such domestic worries may have on the highest kind of intellectual development.

How often have I seen promising scholars at Bryn Mawr go under - unable to keep their vitality and enthusiasm under the misery of trying to support a wife and even two children on an ordinary professor's salary of \$5000. Instead of doing research they have to do pot-boilers to add to their income. Their wives become domestic servants and in addition must earn what they can outside. Their children have to go to public schools, which in Pennsylvania are very inferior. The hardships are too great to cope with. Gradually they drop into the ranks of the second or third class teachers and professors who fill our universities.

although, of course, there are brilliant exceptions.

The more ambitious members of our faculty, and their friends in other universities, say openly that they cannot afford to marry and, if as sometimes happens, they fall in love and must marry, they say that they cannot afford to have children. Indeed even without children their wives (sometimes able college graduates) have to do all the housework. And yet Bryn Mawr salaries rank high in the comparative groups of salaries (in the biggest salary group after the five or six largest Eastern universities) paid by the universities of the United States.

Woodrow Wilson's letters (published in the first volume of Baker's biography of Wilson), written while he was teaching at Bryn Mawr on the then usual young instructor's salary of \$1500, equivalent in purchasing power now to about \$3250, are convincing proof that a scholar so beset with money worries, compelled to work far into the night and all summer long, trying to earn extra money, cannot do his best college work - and it was for this reason, I believe, that Woodrow Wilson more or less failed as a teacher at Bryn Mawr.

President Eliot told me once that as a result of watching such sordid financial struggles in the Harvard faculty it had become his practice not to appoint married men to any but the highest positions at Harvard if bachelors were available.

When full time medical salaries were first fixed (the scale being then as now, as I remember, \$10,000 for Full Professors; \$5000 to \$7500 for Associate Professors and \$3000 to \$4000 for Associates) it was recognized that they must be proportionately higher than academic salaries because, unlike academic teachers, physicians and surgeons of the great ability needed for successful medical teaching and research can make large incomes by their private practice.

I calculated at the time that full time medical salaries were planned to be about twice as much as academic salaries of corresponding grade which seemed fairly satisfactory. But owing to the scandalous under payment of university professors full time medical salaries were fixed far too low as soon became evident.

It was certainly intended to pay enough for full time Professors and Associate Professors to be able to live in the same way socially as other men of light and leading, and give ~~them~~ their wives the same kind of homes, and their children the same advantages, as the wives and children of their friends who were engaged in professional work or business. This is not the case.

Dr. Halsted told me that when he went on the full time Hopkins salary of \$10,000 he had to economize in many ~~un-~~ accustomed ways. He had no children and owing to Mrs. Halsted's ill health, as you know, they entertained not at all. I tried to persuade him to employ a college bred stenographer who would have saved much of his invaluable time but he said that he could not afford it. As you perhaps do not know (Mrs. Halsted told Zoe after his death) he left her barely enough to live on, and if she had not died within a year or two she would have had to face real poverty.

When my brother Harry had to give up his private practice on account of illness (which he ~~did~~ ^{has} several years before giving up his nervous clinic and teaching in the medical schools, which he so dearly loved) he and Zoe had great difficulty in keeping their expenses within \$10,000 a year (the regular full time medical salary). Zoe is a splendid manager, and both of their sons, Hal and Trudean ~~u~~ were self-supporting, and owing to Harry's illness they could not entertain at all, and so spent practically nothing on clothes, or ~~in~~ going about. If Harry had not owned his town house, and a country place in the Blue Ridge and if they had had to pay house rent, \$10,000 could not possibly have covered their necessary expenses. Yet Baltimore is one of the cheapest places to live in the United States.

All the physicians that I know, or know of, ~~those~~ who have refused full time positions very unwillingly because they could not live on the present salaries without too much financial anxiety, as well as those who have accepted them, are discontented because they feel that they have been asked to make unnecessary financial sacrifices. To be contented under present conditions a full time professor must have either a considerable private fortune, or a very modest estimate of his capacity (probably fully justified) for research and teaching.

Since we talked over the full time salary situation at Simon's Sixtieth Birthday Dinner, when I had the great pleasure of sitting next to you, the whole salary situation has changed. You said then that, although you recognised that very great financial sacrifices were required of eminent physicians under the full time system, you believed that they would receive "an exceeding great reward" in other ways. This is, of course, true but a study of the general insufficiency of school and university teaching seems to show that such sacrifices have a disastrous effect on the intellectual progress and vitality of teachers.

You also said that you feared that an increase in the scale of full time medical salaries would make academic professors discontented and would tend to throw the present university salary scale out of gear.

This very real objection has now been answered by the discussions and agitation of the past few years. The scandalous underpayment of college and university professors has now become a burning question. Various investigations have shown the bad effects on both teachers and pupils of such underpayment. I enclose you an abstract of the Yale Investigation from the New York Times, and one of the California investigation from Science, Nov. 23rd, 1928.

There has been a surprising change of public opinion. The Trustees of Columbia, Princeton, and, I think, Yale, have voted substantial salary increases - and this is only the beginning of a general reform.

In the new Columbia scale, as I remember it, full professors' salaries will in future range from \$10,000 (minimum) to \$12,000 (maximum), rising for special excellence in research, or teaching, or both, to \$15,000, and all the lower grades are increased proportionately. From now on academic salaries may be trusted to rise steadily in the smaller as well as in the larger colleges and universities. Also the Trades Union lockstep of university faculties which has encouraged medium work is being broken up by special financial rewards.

Will you not consider whether this is not the psychological moment to readjust full time medical salaries and at least double them, so that they may be in the same proportion to these new academic salaries that they were to the old academic salaries.

If really adequate salaries could be adopted now in the few great medical schools into which the Rockefeller Foundation has introduced full time teaching a tremendous impetus would be given to adequate full time medical salaries, whenever introduced; and also to the general movement to increase all academic salaries, which is one of the most hopeful of modern social developments.

The full time medical teaching system contains the promise of great advances in medical and social science. Its introduction into medical schools is one of ~~the~~ most brilliant achievements *of the Rockefeller Foundation.*

Would it not be possible for you now, when the whole teaching salary situation is being reconsidered, and when the Rockefeller Boards are making great gifts to architecture, archaeology, medicine and hygiene all over the world, to ask Mr. John D. Rockefeller Jr. for a large

enough additional appropriation to ensure the success and permanence of the full time system in the few great medical schools in which it has been introduced by the Rockefeller grants, or, if this is impossible, at least in the Johns Hopkins Medical School where it was first tried?

I have not a catalogue of the Hopkins Medical School here but I should suppose that a gift of about \$7,000,000 (Seven Millions) would raise the full professors' salaries to \$20,000 (double what they now are, which would make them twice as large as the new academic full professorships, just as now they are double the old average full professors' salary); the Associate Professors' salaries to \$15,000, instead of \$7500 as at present; and the Associates' salaries to \$8000, instead of \$4000 as at present; and would allow the income of one million to be used to reward exceptional eminence.

It sounds Utopian, written out in this way, but what could be more worth while! A few great gifts like this to really progressive splendid medical centres would surely do more for medical science than many smaller separate gifts to backward medical schools abroad, if it were, as it probably is not, a choice.

The combination of great qualities required for the highest success in full time medical teaching is so unusual as to be found in only a few men (and women) in any generation - a genius for scientific medical research joined to the very rare ability to direct the research of students; a gift for teaching, which is also very rare; an inspiring personality that will attract and influence students, which is still more unusual; and an abounding vitality to put one's teaching across; and, most unusual of all, the marked executive ability to plan and conduct a great teaching and research department in a great medical school. And it must never be lost sight of that such supreme qualities can command equally supreme financial rewards in the open market of private practice. Yet the joy of such full time work is so great that, I believe, the increases that I have suggested would be sufficient to attract and keep men of this exceptional endowment. A salary of \$20,000 now is not equal in purchasing power to \$10,000 before the war so it would not be excessive.

I know that you will forgive this long letter because of the great importance of the subject. I thought that it might be easier for you to consider the subject as a whole if I wrote it out for you as I see it.

I am enclosing also a carbon copy in case you may think it worth while to send a copy to Simon for his judgment which I hope would be sympathetic but I do not know certainly.

I have been very anxious about the full time system but now that I have put the situation before you I shall feel satisfied that you will deal with it with the same wisdom with which you have brought to completion so many other great things.

With kindest regards and sincerest admiration,
Yours very sincerely,

(Sgd) M. Carey Thomas.