

Wm. Cecil Bosanquet to Professor Thomson,
January 20th 1904.

177a, Harley Street,
W.

Dear Professor Thomson,

I was sorry not to get a word with you after yesterday's meeting. In view of what you said there and what others tell me, I feel that I owe you an apology for believing you guilty of a plot to keep us in London in the dark as to your views in Oxford. There seems to have been some sort of misunderstanding in the matter. I am quite sure that our representatives, Church, Payne, and West, did not understand that you were on the point of bringing forward the scheme which has led to the present controversy. Whether this was due to the failure of an intermediary to do his part, or what, there is no need to enquire. I still, however, feel that there was some unexplained failure to let the world know of Burdon Sanderson's resignation, which contributed to set going the idea of a plot. Very likely this also is easily explainable. Fairbairn tells me that you did not realise that we in London took any interest in the welfare of the Oxford Medical School. Well, we juniors have no means of displaying our interest in the matter; but I think you might almost have given us a little credit without proof. I could not understand what Prof. Gotch was driving at last night. I gather, however, that you think we are pursuing a shadow - an impossibility - and that we are thereby preventing your realising a very definite and concrete good. For myself, I feel that in the past there has been a tendency for each scientific professor to endeavour to get his own speciality made into as big a bit of the medical course as possible, without any regard to the real interests of students. Thus, for instance, in my time the botany course was extended from one or two terms, although I am personally of opinion that it is sheer waste of time. Other preliminaries have been likewise made more and more difficult. For this reason I am keen on having someone (who should if possible preside) at the Board of Faculty who shall represent those practical objects to which all the scientific training should be subservient. In other words I want the policy of the Board to be intelligently directed to its real object, and not to be a casual resultant of opposing forces. It may be an ideal impossible of realisation: it is certainly difficult to find the right man. But I would not render it impossible of realisation for all time, as we would seem to be the result of your policy. As to the teaching of pathology in Oxford, please tell Prof. Gotch, if he cares to know, that I regard the question as a "chose jugée". I have not had any chance of hearing the pros. and cons. I have a general feeling that it is a pity to keep men from their clinical work longer than necessary, and that the preparatory part of the curriculum is sadly overweighted. But that does not enter into the present question. Please do not trouble to answer all this. My main object in writing was to find out whether you would be willing to take part in a universal appeal to Sir William Church to stand for the post. Such a solution seems almost the only way of bringing peace, since I gather that he had been in your minds as an acceptable but unattainable candidate before the vacancy occurred. Speaking confidentially (pro. tem.) Fairbairn and I are by way of endeavouring to get up an appeal to Church to make some personal sacrifice and accept the post. Of course one cannot tell whether such a request has any chance of succeeding, but it can do no harm to make it. It would evidently have far more weight

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if your party joined in it.

By the way, we never expressed any thanks to Moon for presiding the other day. Fairbairn and I are going to write and thank him. If you or someone in Oxford could find time to send him a line to the same effect, it might be appreciated, and was certainly, I think, deserved.

With kind regards,

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

Wm. Cecil Bosanquet.