

(Letter to Dr. Osler from Dr. Chittenden)

COS417/101.104
January 17, 1905.

My dear Osler:-

I am in receipt of your letter of January 13th, and have been thinking since then very seriously about my Contribution to your System of Medicine. You will recall that when you first wrote me on the matter, I replied that I could not well undertake the work, as I had so much on hand. You replied prior to your sailing that the manuscript would not be needed before some time in June, and I responded that I would undertake the work. I fully intended to do so, and indeed have expected to all along, but my conversation with your associate and your own letter, emphasizing the importance of having the manuscript ready at as early a date as possible after April first, tend to convince me that it would be a mistake for me, with the many things that I have on hand, to attempt to write this article; and, further, that it would be unjust to you, since I really do not see how I can hope to do the work in question in time to come anywhere near your date. When you wrote me first that the manuscript would be needed some time in June, I naturally thought the last of June, or perhaps even early in July, the season of the year when I have more freedom, and so I concluded I would not have any great difficulty in coming to time. It is, however, hardly fair to me, and I think hardly fair to you, for me to try and do the work at a date convenient for your publishers.

I must, therefore, ask you to release me from keeping this engagement, for, frankly, I do not see how I can write the article in time for your needs. I hope you will not think I am trying to avoid doing what I consented to undertake through any desire to avoid a little extra work, but now as the time draws on and I find so many things accumulating for me that my position here demands that I give attention to, I realize more fully than before how difficult it would be for me to meet this engagement, and I am afraid that it would inevitably result in a great delay for you. I must therefore withdraw my promise. You should have no difficulty in securing some one equally good, or better than myself, to do this work, and I am sure you appreciate how much pressure of work there is in connection with my laboratory and in connection with my duties to the Sheffield Scientific School. I only regret that I did not last summer realize more fully the difficulties liable to accumulate that would stand in the way of my writing the article in question.

Yours sincerely,

RUSSELL H. CHITTENDEN