

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE

*(Founded 1805, First Charter 1834, Supplemental Charter 1907)*TELEPHONE NO
MAYFAIR 37211, WIMPOLE STREET,
LONDON, W.
May 20th 1914.

SECTIONS

Anæsthetics
 Balneology and
 Climatology
 Disease in Children
 Clinical
 Dermatology
 Electro-Therapeutics
 Epidemiology and
 State Medicine
 History of Medicine
 Laryngology
 Medicine
 Neurology
 Obstetrics and
 Gynæcology
 Odontology
 Ophthalmology
 Otology
 Pathology
 Psychiatry
 Surgery
 Therapeutics and
 Pharmacology

Personal

My dear Mr. President-nominate,

Your telegram has given me a cruel shock, and I must earnestly beg, - I should say implore, - that you will reconsider your decision.

You were nominated yesterday by the absolute unanimous vote of the whole Council of the Society, and, unless you prevent it, your election follows as a matter of course. It is not for me perhaps to say anything about the honour this is, for you have achieved such honours in your brilliant career that there is practically nothing left that will enhance them; but if you knew the traditions here you would understand what a special honour the election to the Presidency of this Society in your case means. It is for the first time in its history an entire departure from tradition, which demands that the ~~Presidents~~ Presidents of the Society shall be the best of those who have served it longest. How strong this tradition is you will perhaps understand better if I tell you that some years ago a proposal to make Lord Lister ^{President} of the Society had to be withdrawn. It is in some ways even a greater honour than the Presidency of the College of Physicians, for the Society is more broadly

representative of the profession.

But I know that all that will count for nothing with you, but what I hope will count is the fact that many of the leading men of the Society have been looking to you for sometime as ~~the~~ future President, whose indomitable energy, progressiveness, and large mindedness would help to place the Society in the position that properly belongs to it, and it would be a bitter disappointment if now that the opportunity has come you hold back. The Society wants a man, who is above tradition, and who will make precedents for himself, and there is none other who can fulfil that need as you can. In saying this I am not disparaging others, for your really unique position in the profession, and in the public estimation gives you opportunities of doing things, which other men, however willing they might be, have not got.

I do not know if you have ever realised how much the Amalgamation owed to you. I remember, as vividly as if it were this morning, how at a time when I had practically given up hope you came into my room at Hanover Square, and I told you of my dreams, and you urged me to "go right ahead," that the time was ripe, and that I was not to worry about the old fogies." Your encouragement gave me just the stimulant that I needed at the time, - for I was physically as well as mentally ill, - and I went "right ahead," and even then hoped to see you President of the re-formed Society, and I cannot well express the bitter disappointment, and discouragement it will be to me personally if you refuse this opportunity, which may never come again.

Do not be afraid of the work, I will guarantee to save you all that, and you are so often in London that to preside at a monthly

Council Meeting (the times for which can be fixed to suit you) should be no tax upon you. To parody the posters, - "it is your inspiration we want."

Up to now the Presidencies have worked out in a perfectly rhythmical order, and this is the exact psychological moment for your Presidency. Church was the necessary Amalgamating President, as he had presided at all the Amalgamation Meetings, and the Sections had to learn what amalgamation meant; then began the move and the new building, for which Morris was the best man, and did yeoman service; settled in the new building, the next thing that had to be done was to break the stupid old tradition, which prevented a specialist from occupying the chair, and Champneys, as head of his speciality, has done his duty well, and now, having amalgamated, built, and got rid of its fetters, what the Society needs, and must have is a new and inspiring energy to give it a good start on the great work that lies before it.)

It is your clear duty to accept, and for duty's sake you must not refuse.

Yours sincerely, and very anxiously,

J. W. MacArthur

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RSW
Presidency
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