

Edinburgh 5 July 1852, ^{depen-} ^{cal}

My dear Sir

I have received your letter of the 19th June with
 Irish note enclosed. As I have much to tell you I shall
 make no further introduction. About 14 days ago having
 learned from a reliable source that a day was fixed for the appoint-
 ment being made to the Secy: Chair, I was all anxiety - the day
 arrived, and no appointment was made, on the contrary the matter was
postponed indefinitely as appeared from the public papers, but I was also
 assured privately that the statement was substantially correct. I
 immediately wrote to Sir Charles Lyell (28 June) in which I said "I have
 learned that the appointment has not been made, as was confidently
 expected last week, but has been postponed indefinitely. And, after
 maturely weighing the matter, and consulting some persons here competent
 to give an opinion, I have resolved to stay before Mr Dawson by first mail
 or (if Lady) my reasons for thinking he ought to be on the spot, and advise
 or him to come over to Britain without delay - leaving it of course to his own
 judgment to decide yes or nay. If, however, you are in possession of
 information as to Dawson's small chance of success, or, as to the probability of the vacancy
 being filled up before he could reach this country (which would be the end
 of August) as should lead you to give a decidedly contrary opinion, I
 would certainly pause before incurring the responsibility of advising him
 to risk the expense of coming here, but, at all events, I shall feel par-
 ticularly obliged if you will give me your deliberate opinion on the
 matter as it stands now". I received a reply from Sir Charles, dated 29th
 and subsequently other two letters dated respectively 30th June and 2 July. I
 shall not transcribe them entirely, but give you the principal portions. In
 his first letter Sir C. says "I am in active correspondence about the affair
 and have hoped daily to hear definitely about it, probably in two or
 three days I may send you word. I had myself hesitated about the step
 you allude to of advising Dawson to come here but my last news

damped my hopes a little as in one influential quarter the scheme
of having a Zoologist to treat the Chair professionally as a Medical
Chair prevails, and it is thought or hoped that, at some later period
the Government might endow a Zoological Chair. I have
argued and will continue to protest against this plan as it ought
not to be a professional or medical chair but till I learn by a per-
sonal interview that the scheme is not adopted in two other quarters I cannot
undertake the responsibility of recommending P. to come here. Could
I have foreseen all the delay it might have been best to have been here
but as you may properly say the affair may be settled before our letters
reach him. Undoubtedly the not being personally known to any here
but myself is a natural & unavoidable ^{weight} against his chance.

(signed) Lyell

I ought to have prefaced my letter by telling you that Jane and
I have latterly become convinced that we erred in not insisting on your coming
here earlier; and it was ^{my} feeling so much responsibility, trying on me to advise
you rightly together with my anxiety for your interests, that led me to write to
Mr Lyell as I have done. Within the last few days I have conversed with
several gentlemen who have all said you ought to be here. Some of them, while
there was any hope of ~~Agassiz~~ would not look at the claims of any other can-
didate, but now that he is certainly off the field they begin to think, who next?
Most is tabooed by almost every one, and as to Allman, I cannot find that he has
very influential support excepting 3 or 4 Professors. All things considered, I
decidedly think that if you can come ~~without~~ you ought to do so without an
hour's delay. There is a strong probability that you would find the Chair still
vacant, and your presence I fondly hope would turn the scale in your
favour. But I shall now let Mr Lyell speak for himself and may
wind up with a few words of my own. In his letter of the 30th June he says
I have had a long interview today with those members of the Government who
are officially most concerned with the selection of candidates from the numerary
list who aspire to the Edin Chair. When I say that it appeared pretty clear
that the choice lay between Mr Dawson & one other & that if two professors had
been determined upon he seemed clearly to be the one who stood the best chance
of being the representative of the Geological division you will admit that our

of friends & many have been highly and duly estimated. But nothing was definitively settled - within as to whether there should be 2 chairs or only one, or if two whether some portion of the compulsory lectures attended by the Medical students should not be claimed by the geological teacher, or whether the zoologist should have all of these to himself.

If the chair is not divided I think it most probable that the zoologist will carry the day & this may happen in the course of the next 10 days with the hope and intention of adding a geological Professorship by & by. What after all may not take place, for the zoologist may lay himself out to embrace paleontology & some geology. It is therefore very difficult to advise as to Dawson's candidacy here - I felt during the discussion, which indeed was openly avowed that it was a serious matter weight against Dawson that he was not personally known to more persons for the officials said "We take your word for him but the Edinburgh people may say to us 'who is he?' We do not know him tho' we have heard he has written some good memoirs"

"It will be for you to consider whether our friend had not better come over at least to the Glasgow meeting of the Brit. Assn. or sooner to Edinburgh. He might find the chair not filled - he might find it filled with a proviso that a geological chair was to be added and the zoologist to give up that field. It would then be an advantage to Dawson as a candidate for the chair still open to appear and be personally introduced to persons of influence here.

Of the amount of sacrifice implied by the expense of time and money in such a speculation you are a better judge than I am. I have done all I can and almost more than I expected for an absentee unless perhaps that of advising him earlier in the day to come to Glasgow.

In a note Sir C says "you will consider the above strictly confidential, more especially any allusion to such topics as the division of the medical fees which would require an arrangement between the Board and the Secretary Academics of a difficult nature to bring about and which it might require some address to negotiate" - further he says "I shall not write to Mr Dawson as he will appear to me seeing that I have struck yesterday and today as his concave looking case that his certificates were in the proper hands &c."

In his letter of 2 July, which he has marked private he says "I have told the Lord Advocate that in consequence of my communicating to a relative of Mr Dawson that the fact that on Saturday last the Anti-Misc. Chm."

had not been filled up (although the appointment might be made
any day) I thought it more than probable from what had previously
passed that Mr Dawson would be recommended to start for England
& possibly be here in some 5 weeks or go to the Glasgow meeting and
communicate some irregular paper to the Brit: Ass: and to become
personally known to a larger circle. "This note of mine may
have no effect, but on the other hand it may delay any step of rejecting
or raising less highly Mr Dawson's claims on the ground of his being
personally so little known, or if two Professorships are made and only
one selected now, it may prepare the way for our friend having the choice
of the other chair should he find it to be worth while. We must
be content to wait in the dark for the Home Sec: knows as little as we
do whether when economy is the order of the day at the Treasury, in consequence
of the war any grant could be got for a new chair. Tell
next year it would be out of the question as the accounts are "made up"
you will see by the Scotsman of yesterday that a discussion took
place on the Council on Tuesday as to the chair and that they have reported the
to the Provost and Rector Morrison to go to London and urge on the Gov: the
necessity of making the appointment immediately. I wanted Mr Rector
Morrison yesterday and urged his attention to your Certificates which
I had sent to him - he promised to look into them particularly, but said it
was no part of their duty to indicate a preference for any candidate. I said I
quite understood that, but in case he should hear your name mentioned I
thought it might be should know all I could tell him of you, and further
I told him I expected you in Britain in about four weeks, he sent me
approval of your candidacy as he said "it was natural the Gov: should
wish to see the gentleman they might appoint." I had spoken to the Provost several
times before so that I did not trouble Mr Bishop again, besides, I know that
seeing Rector Morrison was of much more importance, and he will make known my
views to the Provost. I have written a note to the L: Ass: stating my
intentions to write to you by this mail requesting you to come over, and
it serves to remind him that you are still a candidate.
I learned yesterday from Dr George Wilson, Lecturer in Chemistry, that it was he
who urged the Council to take some steps in the matter. Dr W's appointment as
Superintendent of the Museum is in abeyance till the Nat: Hist: Chair is filled.