

McGILL UNIVERSITY
ARCHIVES
ACC. NO. 976/26
REF. 1

British Association for the Advancement of Science.

Manchester Meeting, 1887.

Williamson

Wed 1880 (?)

RECEPTION ROOM

THE OWENS COLLEGE

Friday Afternoon 1887
September 2nd.

My dear Lady Dawson.

This is such an appallingly large paper, that I am almost afraid to attack it; & now I have ventured can hardly travel from one side to another - but some how, it came handy, & I wanted a chat with you, comfortably. We have reached Friday Afternoon of our great meeting quite successfully; every day speaking of Sir William & every hour thinking of you & Eva; & how you looked, & what you were doing last year at this time. I thought perhaps you would like to hear what was going on now - We are located here in the new College building - which are very handsomely fitted for the week. The business part of the Reception Room is on the low Geological floor, this is of course crowded; but the reading & writing arrangements are upstairs, in the very artistic & airy Botanical Museum. Comfortable chairs, plants, writing table, & newspapers from the order of the day below; In surrounding galleries are specimens of every thing not profiting a model of the Manchester Ship Canal. A Lady's Drawing room opens from this writing room below

and is very little used,, A gentlemen's Smoke room, supplied
with Coffee &c, opens from the gallery, & is very much used.-

The sections are somewhat near, though in the very
wet weather that has come upon us, not so near as
many friends would like. The first large evening meeting

The President's address was a success in every point
but one - We should like to have seen our "Retiring
President" - I think spoke well, & not too technically,
at least he softened the technicalities by many artistic
touches, which all of us could understand, the statement of
so popular a vigorous man, Presiding over so large a meeting,
in the town in which he himself had helped to make the
meeting large, by years of scientific training, took the
popular fancy immensely. Last evening the great
Lodge was given, in the Great Exhibition, & was greeted by
a very great Company, it was altogether too great.

The evening was awfully wet - the Line of Carriages long,
& the arrangements for admission simply nonexistent -
Consequently we were an hour waiting before we could
enter, - an hour late, an hour's delay there & two hours
in finding our Carriage coming home - In spite of
all this, & of the very unusual padding of third class
rooms people, I believe the evening was considered
a success - Our being so late in entering, spoiled it for
us - Still our hosts were kind enough to say

they felt it to be a "spectacle" & very enjoyable -
the Garden Parties which formed so large a feature
in Birmingham last year, are not much considered here - few
have been given, & the extreme wet is just now preventing
people going - water proof umbrellas are being carried about -
the windows are being peered through, & omnibuses are
waiting at the doors, but all to little purpose - the rain
pours miserably -

Our home arrangements I think are all right for our
very precious guests - Your friends, Dr & Mrs Lisa Gray are
our very delightful English; because English they are, whatever
they may call themselves; help towards the entertainment of
Dr de Barry - Professor of Botany in Strasburg, & the heroic
inspiration that has fired almost all our present British
Professors - One of the most pleasant sights I have ever seen
was the clustering welcome these young men gave
the man in whose Strasburg Laboratory they had all worked

He is very sensitive, & somewhat delicate, but most
true & tender hearted, full of his people - devoted to his
wife & sons, of whom there are four - & full also of something
more than interest in those other boys to whom he has
done so much - Our remaining guests are the
Marquis de Sapoli & his son - the Marquis himself member
of a good old French family, is an unusual example of
an Aristocrat devoting time & brain to the cultivation
of a deep Science - but of course Sir William will
know all about him publicly, probably he is a little

difficult to manage by reason of absolut' ignorance of any
language except French - & absolut' carelessness of any subject
except Moral Botany - Still he, even, is very delightful when
one can have him alone - His son has come as interpreter
but he is just as full of literary & artistic subjects as the
father is not, & trots off to a library where he is quite happy -

These are the drawbacks which appear for the moment;
behind them, is in both men ^a remarkably high tone of
character both moral & intellectual & a peculiar depth
of affection for home & all home ties - They are both
specimens of Frenchmen we shall be glad & proud to have
known - & they show us, by conduct only, how sure would

be the improvement of France itself, if some of its older sons
I mean the sons of its older families, were allowed more
say - So much for the meeting, your friend; how home

We are all well - Dr Williamson much better & stronger than
than last year, the boy better & I think also stronger. His
eyes have not been so troublesome. He has not been allowed
any ^{in the} ^{vegetables} but has enjoyed helping the arrangement of plants &
other amusements in which Dr Williamson is interested - He has
had exquisite pleasure in outlinging a Christmas Card to you - which
you will receive in due time - His anxiety to choose a subject -

"Lady Dawson would like" from his Lucia number of *Seasider's*
was quite pretty - Edith was very well & bright until just now
but she is pathetically aside in any rush of paper & this week
looks quite sad - However when her work begins again she
will be all right - Good bye for the present - I write by &

send you a second volume as time goes on - Prof. Hors
Amusements have just come in & send much love to you
Much love also from us all to you, Edith & her William
Believe me sincerely yours Annie C. Williamson