

Williamson

43 Elms Road

Clapham Common S.W.

My dear Lady Dawson -

The sight of your writing on my breakfast table the other day was a great delight - No I had not for one second doubted your true friendship & if even during your silence, I had needed your help, I should unhesitatingly have asked for it, which is to me, the highest proof of trust possible.

Now, your letter has arrived it touches sympathy so keenly I am bound to answer at once - Well you forgive severe egotism, as I can best answer your enquiries by telling you our struggles & successes.

Of course we had exactly the same anxieties in breaking long standing relations, very close <sup>that you have</sup> ties - G. D. Williamson's part of fifty years - on my own nobility, which I think gave the courage needed - For long, my husband felt

that whether he gave up work or no  
 he could not leave his old neighbourhood -  
 but Dr Greenwood's experience convinced him  
 of the falsity of this idea. Dr Greenwood  
 retired 100 years before Dr Williamson, & he  
 went away to Eastbourne. He was himself  
 the first to say - he knew his own work  
 must go on, & the better he had laid the  
 foundation the better would his successor  
 prosper. Yet he was himself only human,  
 he would not enjoy to stand aside &  
 be at most only a spectator when formerly he  
 had been the inspiring centre. When  
 Dr Greenwood by his own beautiful good sense  
 allowed us, his oldest & best friends, the  
 freedom of our opinion we were compelled  
 to acknowledge the wisdom of his move.  
 The present Principle Dr Ward works very  
 differently from Dr Greenwood, & down in  
 Eastbourne receives full detailed accounts  
 of every functioning & rejoices in every  
 improvement. Whereas if he had stayed  
 in Manchester, he must have felt neglected.

D Greenwood's experience convinced my husband that retirement must mean removal - & where - not like D G - is a quiet country life, he must have association with his fellows - & if possible must have a better climate than Manchester could offer - London appeared to be the only steady attraction though he thought of many things, most of all of Basel in exile - but the more tired my husband became, the more he longed for a settled home -

Just at the last we were driven by sudden & very decided failure in health & his Resignation was sent in without, on his own part, even a days consideration - I & his children thought for him - Perhaps fortunately though unexpectedly the College refused him any Pension - It has no funds for pensioning Professors, & even fifty years service could not tempt them to make a precedent. This pained him, & certainly made the immediate break less difficult - This also necessitated a decided change

in our style of life - We are here in a small but very cleanly & well planned house, with only one maid - & living perfectly quietly so far as entertainment is concerned. This I presume is a change not to be thought of in your case - D Greenwood as retired Principle receives £750 per year - However we were no sooner here, than our many old friends & many scientific acquaintances hastened to show us how warmly they welcomed us here. We are compelled to swallow one very big pill - viz that of ~~seeing~~ seeing our friends more in their houses than in our own - but that is all - We have had quite a brilliant season in a quiet way - & what is much more to the point can never, even in this big London be lonely or unamused as to scientific work - It began with the <sup>or Williamson</sup> health has steadily improved since March last - D Williamson is

Much stronger - much less nervous  
has far better appetite, & looks years  
younger than in some years past.

He has never for one hour missed his  
old teaching, has indeed, never been  
other than unboundedly glad to be free  
from the strain. We have a music  
garden in which he takes delight, & which  
gives him out door air & exercise.

All this you see helps the science  
he brought - all his cabinets - & a large  
surrounding of working material, & thoroughly  
reels in the freedom in calmer scientific  
thought, & severe scientific production.

His own social reception has been  
delightful - Many of the "societies" have  
not only opened their doors to him, but  
have incidentally themselves thoroughly  
enjoyed hearing something of the  
experiences of a past generation.

He of course attends the chatty parts  
of the Royal Society meetings, & where

many of the members approach  
 his own age - so he finds himself  
 in touch all round with friends of  
 whom he said for his little whilst  
 in the north - In all these things  
 our change has been an unbounded  
 success - it has been so indeed in  
 every thing - except the money which I  
 don't mind - or "not much" I am  
 growing more certain each week, that  
 my husband could not have retained  
 life & reason through another year,  
 & a far smaller amount of success would  
 have satisfied me - As it is I am only  
 sorry he did not make the <sup>change</sup> sooner, that a  
 little more strength might have been there  
 for he well earned enjoyment.

The climate of London, as compared  
 with Manchester never ceases to delight  
 & astonish us - Waterproofs & umbrellas are  
 never needed & the air in Clapham is  
 filled with flower scents instead of  
 those of coal smoke & chemicals -

In leaving Manchester my husband left his 7 his children Robert & Edith behind - but we came to Sophie - Mrs. Lucas you know she cherishes her as a pleasure to us - One thing above all others pleased me when we began to go about in London, that is the courtesy paid to elderly gentlemen - Every man who has done something in what ever part of the English speaking world his work may have been done retires to London, consequently in London such men are particularly well treated -

As to your own fatigue dear Lady Dawson I do indeed sympathise if you should be able to persuade Sir William, & you will take a flat in London, think with what exquisite delight I would look out for the very nicest for me. He did not take one because my husband could not live without some pretence of garden, & he cannot endure streets - My limited experience suggests, a suburban house gives freedom & space but sacrifices entirely the

possibility of association with ones neighbours, - where as a flat or chambers gains <sup>it is fashionable</sup> Cudos, the fellowship of your equals, but sacrifices space - The domestic servant difficultly grows in Ireland every year - Thanks for your kind mention of Herbert. he is a dear, dear boy, so different from other boys that some times, indeed always, I tremble at the responsibility of the care of so much goodness & talent. He is working in a Studio in S. Kensington - so fearfully enthusiastic. You will be much pleased with him when you see him again -

We send your son & Dawson in some by meeting I forget - where - but he was not able to come out to us - perhaps I was kind in pressing a visit. He has just the beautiful face I expected him to have - from your account of his character - How much Edith & the others must have enjoyed their visit -

Now dear Lady Dawson I fear you will be tired before reaching the end of my story - but in all love & in closest sympathy with every one  
Yours ever  
Anne C. Williamson