

S. J. HICKSON.

35 Nighbury New Park  
London N.

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My dear Spencer

Let me commence by wishing you a very happy New Year. May your new year be a more happy & prosperous one than the year which is just past. For my own part I can think of no year in the whole course of my life which has been so disastrous to me or left me in such an unsatisfactory position. I thought when the year commenced that whatever might be my chances for the Oxford chair I was in a fair way to obtain some more or less permanent position but now I find myself ousted from Oxford & absolutely without prospect of any sort or description.

It is possible that you may have heard of the result of the election of Dec 28<sup>th</sup> but nevertheless would not take it unless I repeat my version of it.

At the beginning of last term the President's board decided that the Board of Electors to the Chair should be asked to elect a deputy for 1889 at £700 (I had only £500). Where there would have been no opposition to me I think had not thought that the new Deputy elected by the board would be in a very strong position for the chair & consequently ~~applied~~ applied for the post of deputy for 1889.

The result of ballot brought in other names & the candidates battled with testimonials, petitions etc as of course for a permanent post. The result of it all was that by a vote of 10 to 6 I was elected in preference to Jackson, & I think was rejected.

The feeling in Oxford generally was amb

- I think I must of the science Professor was undoubtedly not very sorry that he was rejected but a great deal of sympathy in believe felt for me at times is largely passed out of my place. I feel it very much for other workings so hard at Oxford in a post which I was invited to take by the V.C. & committee. I am superseded by a man whose name is hardly known either in Oxford or out of it. He has never published a single observation or opinion in his life, I would no word have any official to the effect that I have been replaced nor any recognition of the work I have done for the lab. during my year of office.

Do you ever see in other than our papers even in the dear old mother country. The way may be our libraries & societies. But our first-hand traditions & interpretations though influential in business are often enough to drive a nail into the wood of the cause. I am very much obliged to you for sending me the ~~illustration~~

I will work them up as soon as I possibly  
can & let you have a preliminary report  
at once. They have not yet arrived but  
I will let you know at once when they do.

Your letter of Oct 1. & your paper on the  
Earthworm arrived safely. Many thanks.  
What looks your Earthworm embryos must be.  
Work away at these things. I don't believe  
that people think so much nowa days of  
a complete & accurate bibliographical knowledge  
if there is really good observation & illustration.  
Your earth-worm papers ticks into fits all  
the work ~~in~~ that has been done by other  
worm men & is sure to have a right royal  
welcome here.

You might like to know what I intend to do  
now. Well of course) financially I am almost  
" broke" as the saying is but I shall stay at  
home with my people for the present & try  
to get out my book on helices before I seek  
for any other appointment. Prof. Kester has  
offered me a place in his laboratory so that  
I can go on with my research upon the

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Hydrocorallines & Alcyonarians.

It is exceedingly jolly to feel that I have plenty of interesting work to do & all my time my own although it may not be so pleasant to be obliged to look twice at every half-crown.

I am very much amused to hear about you Mueller & McCoy. I should think though that you would soon get the whip-hand of those old boys in Melbourne. I envy you your beautiful laboratory & your excursions into the unknown parts of Victoria. I hope you will land a new Monotrema or something exciting. What grand possibilities you ~~would~~ will have if you should chance to come across a good old cave.

Have you heard anything about Thomas since you have been out. I am afraid he is not the stamp of man to do anything without monographs, but I understand that he is very happy in Auckland.

There is nothing of any very great importance going on in England just now. Poulton's

translation of Newman's paper  
is likely to be very interesting & important.  
The English school has gone in very  
completely for Newmanism but the  
Americans stick to their Neo-Lamarckism.  
There is likely to be a great gulf between  
us sooner or later but so my own part  
I think the Neo-Lamarckians will not be  
most of it, & collapse pretty soon. There is a  
book by Loipe called "Between the Selection  
of the fittest" which explains the Neo-  
Lamarckian platform.

I am going on with my work on the  
development of egypto-corallines I am finding  
some very curious & interesting facts in  
Altopora but do not see my way to  
substantiating just yet.

My brother is coming to Melbourne in  
January or February I will let him to call  
on you but I am not quite sure of my  
time will reach him in time. He is a  
partner in a merchant firm at Calcutta  
& will be travelling in Australia on business

I am not sure how much time he will have at  
his disposal as he is hurrying to get home  
after 5 years absence.

I am very glad the "Fishes" has turned up  
I was afraid I had lost it. It was given to  
me by an old uncle & I have a curious  
affection for it.

I will write again to you about Carter to  
tell you how things are going on at Oxford  
& elsewhere. At present we are all standing  
on tip-toe & see what is going to happen  
with the States.

Remain  
Yours very sincerely  
Ophrey J. Stebbins

P.S. I haven't seen any of the old boys for  
some time so was unable to give you  
messages. William was obliged to your  
offer but does not think it sufficiently  
helpful. He has not yet abandoned the  
D.M.