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THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Copied for Chesney 1943

October 5 - 1911

My dear Sir William -

Your note about the great discussion which has been disturbing us so much was received and appreciated. I am afraid that I do not wholly agree with your point of view and I am exceedingly sorry that you can not advocate the view that the majority of us believe in namely that it would be a great advantage to the science of medicine if the clinical teachers were relieved of the distractions of an outside practice. We laboratory men have taken I believe an entirely disinterested attitude in the whole discussion. Alternative 2 would have been greatly to our personal advantage, but alternative 1 seemed to us to promise more

for the advancement of medicine.
Moreover as I understand it there
is not a ghost of a chance that the
Rockefeller people will consider seriously
giving money to the laboratories. They
are interested in what they believe
is a great reform in clinical teaching
and if we do not agree with them
it is likely that they will try some
other place - possibly St. Louis. In
which event I fancy that we will
be performing on the second fiddle
ten years hence. We are all tired
of the discussion here and personally
I hope that they will make us
an offer in definite form which
we can accept or reject. They
are slow in making any concrete
proposition - for the reason I
suppose that they are not satisfied
with our attitude. I regret that
you sent your letter as it will
probably make them less willing
to take action and besides
you have introduced another
feature which does not

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commend itself to the laboratory men.
Your statement that the clinical men
have done better scientific work
than the laboratory men implies that
in your opinion we are a sorry lot.
If the clinical men have been
able to carry out a successful
private practice and earn handsome
incomes and in the little time
left have contributed to medical
science work of more value than
those who have given all their time
to such labors - why it is evident
that the laboratory men are a medicine
lot or the clinical men are a
set of geniuses. I don't accept
your statement myself and in
making it you have been I believe
as unjust as you accuse Flexner
of being toward the clinicians.
If you had contented yourself with
saying that their work on the whole
had been of more value I could
let it pass without comment - but

to say that their scientific work has been of more value is a horse of another color. Did you really look into the investigations from the laboratory side in a critical way? I hope not. for I should be sorry to have you entertain such a poor opinion of our productiveness. I will not attempt to present the arguments on our side as I know that you are familiar with them. In Man's redemption of man you have paid the highest tribute to investigative work in medicine and declared your belief that "The leaves of the tree of Science have availed for the healing of the nations." For my part I am convinced that the development taking place in consequence of the penetration of methods of experimental investigation into the clinical branches must inevitably lead to the formation of a new body of clinical teachers. We have the opportunity to lead the movement and my pride in the School has made me desire earnestly that we shall have this honor.

With best wishes and congratulations upon your new honors — Sincerely Yours

W. H. Howell