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153. TO THEODORE DWIGHT WOOLSEY

Smithsonian Institution.
Aug 8th 1862

My Dear Sir

Your letter¹ was received in time to make the correction in the Edition of the Eulogy which forms a part of the Smithsonian Report² and I have directed that the correction shall be made with a pen in all the copies of the other edition that may be sent from the Institution. The printing was done in Philadelphia and a revise of the proof was not sent to us—

The weather in this city is so exceedingly oppressive that I would immediately leave with my family for a few weeks were I not obliged to remain until the printing of our Report is finished. Professor Baird and Mr. Rhees the principal assistants have been obliged to go into the country to recruit from the effects of the heat.

All the affairs of the Institution are still in a prosperous condition. Congress made the usual appropriation for the support of the museum and ordered the printing of ten thousand copies of the Annual Report—four thousand of which are given to the Institution and the remainder to the members of the two houses. The Report is a very popular document and is much called for by the intelligent public. The preparation of the general appendix to the report cost me considerable labour since it consists either of original matter or of translations from foreign Languages principally made by persons unacquainted with the subjects of the articles they translate and which consequently require much correction.

After the adjournment of the Board of Regents, and the society to which the Lecture Room had been granted had completed their course of Lectures I concluded, after consultation with the members of the Executive Committee, to refuse the use of the Lecture Room to all applicants except the directors of the public schools. To carry out this resolution gave me considerable difficulty and has subjected^A me to some newspaper attacks. I gave offence especially to Parson Brownlow³ and his friends which has called forth from the former an article in one of the New-York papers denouncing the Institution⁴—

Without asking permission or giving beforehand any intimation of their wishes they published in the city papers that the parson would lecture at^B the Institution on an evening mentioned the price of admission being twenty five cents⁵— I called on Mr. Brownlow and explained to him the condition of affairs—that the refusal had no reference to him personally but was on account of the impropriety of granting the use of the

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room for political purposes. He appeared satisfied with the explanation and afterwards lectured in the ~~Institution~~ ↑Theatre↓. Since then he appears to have taken another view of the matter and is now apparently disposed to attack the Institution.⁶

The existence of the Lecture Room in the Smithsonian building has been during the last two years a source of much trouble and I hope at the next meeting of the Regents some definite rules will be adopted for my guidance in the intervals between the sessions of the Board.⁷

I feel very anxious as to the future of our political condition—the next few weeks will be a time in which we must look forward to as pregnant with important events. The divided war councils of the past have thrown a shade over the future. I am informed by a general who took an important part in the battles before Richmond that he considers McClellan in a very critical condition and that Washington is by no means safe from an attack—although I can scarcely realize the truth of this state of things the opinion has given me some uneasiness.⁸

I shall endeavour to obtain accomodation for my family at some place on the line of the Baltimore and Ohio road so as to be able to reach Washington in the course of a few hours.

I remain verry truly with
much respect your
friend & servt
Joseph Henry

Dr Woolsey

Woolsey Family Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

1. Not found.

2. Woolsey's eulogy of Cornelius C. Felton, his predecessor on the Board of Regents, appeared in the *Smithsonian Report for 1861*, pp. 109-116.

3. William Gannaway Brownlow (1805-1877) was a preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church and a Tennessee newspaper editor. A Unionist despite owning slaves himself, Brownlow criticized the Confederacy even after Tennessee seceded. He was briefly imprisoned by the Confederacy at the beginning of the war. After leaving the state, he began a lucrative speaking tour in the North. *ANB*.

4. The July 2, 1862, issue of the *New York Evening Post* reported on Brownlow's lecture of June 30. It announced that Brownlow had decided not to lecture at the Smithsonian "owing to the conduct of Prof. Henry." Brownlow had announced that "he would not go where he was not wanted."

5. The *National Intelligencer* of June 28 announced that "Parson Brownlow, the eccentric preacher and Union refugee from Tennessee, will lecture in the hall of the Smithsonian Institute." Proceeds from the June 30 lecture would aid "the sick and wounded soldiers about Washington."

6. Brownlow had originally decided to cancel his lecture because it conflicted with a concert at Willard's Hall that was raising funds for the same cause. He agreed to be present at the concert. Organizers of the concert attempted to use the Smithsonian lecture hall, a much larger venue, but were turned down by Henry. Brownlow ended up speaking, after all, at Ford's Athenaeum. *Washington Star*, June 28, 1862; *National Intelligencer*, June 30, 1862; Michael F. Conlin, "The Smithsonian Abolition Lecture Controversy: The Clash of Antislavery Politics with American Science in Wartime Washington," *Civil War History*, 2000, 46:321.

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7. No formal action was taken by the regents. Instead, they implicitly accepted the new policy announced by Henry in his report to them: the use of the lecture hall would be restricted "to the lectures given under the immediate auspices of the Institution." *Smithsonian Report for 1862*, pp. 43-44 (quotation on p. 44).

8. On August 3, McClellan's Army of the Potomac had been ordered to leave the vicinity

of Richmond and return to help defend Washington, bringing that campaign to a close. On August 9, John Pope's Army of Virginia was attacked by Confederate forces at Cedar Mountain, the first blow in a campaign that culminated in the defeat of Pope's troops at the Second Battle of Bull Run near Washington at the end of the month. Long, *Civil War Day by Day*, pp. 247-258.

154. TO SPENCER FULLERTON BAIRD

Washington Saturday
Aug 16th 1862

My Dear B

I gave special directions in moving the cases in the room occupied by Mr. Gill¹ that the one in which Stimpson's shells are in should be handled with great care since a direction to that effect was written on a label attached to the out side. The case was merely transferred from one side of the room ↑to the other↓ and I do not think that the contents suffered the least derangement.

The changes in the room to which you allude will I think render it much more commodious and the access to the main building far more convenient. The changes were proposed by myself to Alexander² when he had charge of the completion of the building but I ↑the↓ would not assume the responsibility of making a door way through the wall of the main building. I have directed that the stair way be removed from the little tower and the space to be occupied by a table for the support of the microscope. The communication with the apparatus room above will be cut off by a brick floor so as to prevent the extension of fire. I think it will be well to erect a stud partition through the room in which Mr Meek works so as more thoroughly to separate it from the passage between the entry and the museum. In making this change the little room in the tower occupied by Solomon³ ought in like manner to be devoted to microscopical examinations.

I directed that the bird cases which have so long been in the room above stairs should be placed in the museum for which they were intended. The present good appearance grouped in two sets of four each on the main floor of the great Hall. I propose that shallow cases be placed on them for the exhibition of the organic remains.

I do not think you need be under any uneasiness as to being drafted. The proclamation of the President in regard to drafting has had the