Cambridge 1870 March 18

Dear March,

Will you, if you have not already done so, see that as soon as it is last in transmitting an official copy of the Association’s Resolution on Coinage, to the Hon. Mr. Benton, Chairman of the Committee on Coinage of the House of Representatives. A bill is pending, which involves the question at issue. Just stated that it was expected an amicable copy of the resolution to sign it as necessary from the Committee on Weight and Measures, Judge. General Secretary. I add a copy in case you have missed it.

I was very sorry not to find you in New Haven on the occasion of a very pleasant visit I made there a fortnight ago. Probably our own departure will not be before the middle of May.

Yours truly, in great haste

Prof. O. Marsh

B. A. Gould
Reported by Dr. Looney from the Committee on Weights & Measures, it is recommended for adoption by the Handsp Committee.

Resolved,

That this Association cordially approves the proposed adaptation of American Currency to the metric system, by making the value of the dollar precisely that of one and a half grams of fine gold; deeming this a new step toward the promotion of fraternity among nations by the unification of weights, measures, and currency, because all monetary units which have simple relations to the gram must have simple relations to each other.
Cambridge 1886 Feb. 11

Dear March,

I made for myself a delightful little plan: by which I should have gone on to New Haven yesterday afternoon, from there to New York tomorrow, Saturday, seeing my friends in both places. But a combination of weather and other mishaps has upset my schemes, and the present new one is to go to NY on Monday night making a short stay there, then visiting New Haven during the week or on my return from Washington.

A large part of my enjoyment in New Haven would be lost were I just to find you there; so as Gibbs says you lead a nomadic life I am much away. I follow his suggestion and write to ask whether you are likely to be at home.
during the latter portion of the coming week.

This is my first journey since arriving home, as I have been waiting to gain a little more strength before to begin it anew. But now I begin to feel as in the older days; or at least not like a totally different being any more.

Very sincerely yours,

P. N. Gould

It is evident that I have resumed my old nature—for I have left out the whole point of my epistle; which is to ask you for a line to the care of Mr. J. Flagg, Esq., 60 Madison Avenue, which shall arrive there not later than Tuesday.
My dear March

After considerable hesitation, I have at last decided to send for publication in the Nat Acad? Memoirs the two papers upon results of stellar photography presented in Aug. 1866 and April 1870. These were left in May 1870 with Mr. Rutherford, to be published as soon as he should have sent his own memoir to the press; whether in the Mem. of the Nat Acad. or in the Smith. Contributions, he was to decide. In the last no. of the Am. Journal Science is a little article of mine telling about the matter.

Various considerations, some of which I have discussed with you, have made me hesitate about sending these memoirs to you, but as I resolved last week to do this, I have given the original MS. to a copyist. I purpose mailing you the copy tomorrow, to New Haven. The original is
somewhat yellow with age; and as the date of preparation has a good deal of interest for me, I may hereafter have some for others also. I have preferred to transmit a copy and retain the original in my own keeping,—that it may be demonstrable at any future time that the memoirs have been printed without modification of any kind.

I have lately had more talks about the subject with Agassiz & with Gibbs,—and am feeling somewhat disheartened. Still I knew that all your influence will be exerted in the right direction, & that if the hopeful anticipations of the founders are to come to grief, it will be in spite of your best efforts. And I will not give up hope. Next April I shall try to attend the Washington meeting; if the experience of that will guide my future course.

Will you kindly send me a postal card when you receive the U.S. v. K.

Your faithfully,

T. N. Tuthill

Prof. O. C. Marsh
Cambridge 1889 March 20

My dear March,

Prof. Coffin writes me that the Water
"medal awarded to Prof. Schöpfel of Bonn
is already prepared. The die is handsome
and gives an excellent impression.

It will be proper of course to state
the grounds of the award, and I have
been giving what little time has been a
vailable for the purpose, to the collection
of the data. So I write to inquire
in what form you think it will be best
to put them, whether in a Report from the
Trustees of the Water Fund, or of mate
rials, for an address by the President.
I shall, of course gladly do what I can
to help along, in whatever way may seem
to you most desirable.

I have been much gratified at
learning from Gibbs that you will be
ready to serve another term as Pres.
of the Academy. Such a course might avert serious disasters.

What a melancholy sight is the new list of candidates, received from Hall a couple of days ago.

With kind regards

Yours faithfully

B. N. Gould
Cambridge 1889 March 21

My dear March,

Your note of yesterday is at hand. I will prepare a full report on the subject, submit it to the other two members, and hand it to you before the meeting. Would not the most appropriate course be to instruct the Foreign Secretary to deliver it to the German Minister for transmission?

Thus the proceeding will acquire a new official character, and become more publicly known abroad.

About the other matter I do not know what to say. It may not come to pass, but I am morally bound to accept if the appointment be again offered to me. Yet I am content with my quiet home and the opportunities for study that it affords, I have the dread of any change.

Yours faithfully,

B. A. Gould
Cambridge 1892 March 28

Dear March,

A friend of the National Academy, who desires to contribute to its welfare without being known, has the idea of making a large donation, sufficient to afford at least $1500 a year, for the purpose of defraying a portion of the expenses to which members are subjected in attending the meetings. He has given me his views freely, and wishes me to act as his organ of communication with the Academy, which I gladly do.

I believe that I fully comprehend his motives, which are of the highest, and now write you informally to ask your opinion of the likelihood that the Academy would be disposed to act in accordance with his views.

Being well acquainted with European Academies of Science, and ambitions that a similar policy should be carried out in ours, he feels that there is danger if the number of our members being too large for the best attainment of the influence which the National Academy ought to exert in scientific affairs, and that a smaller number, even though above the original fifty, would for many reasons be desirable, provided a larger proportion were able
to attend the meetings.

It is unwilling to encounter the gift with any conditions which might appear
renunciation, or to advice any regulations
which it is the province of the Academy
itself to prescribe; yet a controlling element
in this notice is that the gift may be a
means of gradually reducing the number of
members in such a way as to insure a
high standard in future elections.

Of course, I have been giving a good deal
of thought to the subject, and it seems to me
that the end may be attainable without any
violent change. So I write to inquire how
the idea strikes you.

The recent losses which the Academy has
suffered have reduced the number of members to 90. Past experience shows that we
ought to be prepared for an annual diminu-
tion of 3 or 4, upon the average. And as the
scientific growth of the country seems not
likely to offer, for some years to come, an
equal number of persons who can be regarded
de leaders in their respective sciences, the
present time appears very favorable for any
action by the Academy, in the direction hoped
for by the intending donor.

There seem to be various practical ways
of reducing the number of elections without
the stringent action. For instance, if it were
provided that only two members should be
elected annually, or if the minimum num-
ber of affirmative ballots requisite were placed
at 60 instead of 20, as now, or if the limit
above which four-fifths of the vote must be given for the candidate were placed
at 75 instead of 100, the desired end
would probably be attained before the lapse
of many years.

As to whether such action would be accep-
able to the Academy, I could not express
any confident opinion. You can judge better
than I. But I am persuaded that any
definite policy which would tend to reduce
the membership to the vicinity of 90, within
a few years, and to keep it there, would be
followed at once by the gift of a sum ade-
quate to provide an income of $1,000 a year,
to be divided among members attending the
annual meetings, in partial reimbursement
of the expenses to which they would thereby
be subjected.

Will you let me know what you think of
the idea, and how you think it would
please the Academy, and whether it is
worth while for me to take any steps in
the matter. The donor is diligent as to
appearing to urge his views upon the
Academy in any way which might appear
presuming; but the very statement of the proposition shows how nearly he has the usefulness and prosperity of the Academy at heart.

Very sincerely yours,

A. J. Gould
Cambridge 1872 March 31

My dear March,

A week ago yesterday, I wrote you about a proposition which a friend of the Academy wished to make. But before writing anything formal or official I wanted to get your counsel in the premises.

As I have no answer, I fear you must be absent from home; so have decided to act as best I can today. Send you an official letter of similar purport. — Changing a few phrases in the former one, to make it an official character.

It seems to me a grand offer, and one which cannot fail to work for the immense advantage of the Academy in every way; but we never know what unlooked-for motives may come into play in such cases. — I am very apt to have had your advice in the matter.

Yours sincerely,

B. N. Euclid
Prof. O. C. Marsh,

President National Academy of Sciences

Dear Sir,

A friend of the National Academy who desire to contribute to its welfare and influence, yet wishes that his name shall not be known, has the idea of making a large donation, sufficient to afford at least $1500 a year, for the purpose of defraying a portion of the expenses to which members are subjected in attending the meetings. He has given me his views freely, and wishes me to act as his organ of communication with the Academy,—which I gladly do.

I believe that I fully comprehend his motives, which are of the highest, and now write to inform the Academy of his idea.

Being well acquainted with European Academies of Science, and hopeful that ours may follow a similar line of usefulness, he feels that there is danger of the number of our members being too large for the best attainment of the influence which the National Academy ought to exert in scientific affairs; believing that a smaller number, even though above the original fifty, would for many reasons be desirable, provided a larger proportion than in recent years could attend the meetings.

He is indisposed to accept this gift with any conditions which might appear presumptuous, or to advise regulations which it is the province of the Academy itself to prescribe; yet a controlling element in his motives, is that the gift may be a means of gradually reducing the number of members, in such a way as to secure a high standard in future elections, and at the same time increase the participation of members in the Academy’s work.
I have not been giving a good deal of thought to the subject; and it seems to me that the end may be attainable without any violent change.

The losses, which the Academy has recently suffered, have reduced the number of its members to 90. Past experience shows that we ought to be prepared for an annual diminution of at least three, on the average. And as the scientific growth of the country seems not likely to offer, for some years to come, an equal number of persons who can be regarded as leaders in their respective sciences, the present time appears favorable for any action by the Academy, in the direction hoped for by the intending donor.

Various practical ways have suggested themselves for reducing the number of elections, without too stringent action. For instance, if it were provided that only two members should be elected annually, — or if the minimum number of affirmative ballots required for an election were placed at 30, instead of 20, as now, — or if the limit of members, above which four-fifths of the votes cast must be given for any candidate, were placed at 75 instead of 100, — the desired end would probably be attained before the lapse of many years.

As to whether such action would be acceptable to the Academy, I could not express any confident opinion. But I am persuaded that the adoption of any definite policy which would be likely to reduce the membership to the vicinity of 70, within a few years, and to keep it there, would be followed at once by the gift of a sum adequate to provide an income of $15,000 a year, to be divided among members attending the annual meeting, in partial reimbursement of the expenses to which they would thereby be subjected.
Will you present this statement to the National Academy, that the intending donor may learn whether it is advisable for him to take any action. He is diffident as to appearing to urge his views upon the Academy in any way which might appear meddlesome or presuming; yet the very statement of the proposition shows how nearly he has the usefulness and prosperity of the Academy at heart.

Very sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Cambridge, Mass.  
1892 March 31
Prof. O. G. Marsh:

President National Academy of Sciences

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A friend of the National Academy who desires to contribute to its welfare and influence, yet wishes that his name shall not be known, has the idea of making a large donation, sufficient to afford at least $1500 a year, for the purpose of defraying a portion of the expenses to which members are subjected in attending the meetings. He has given me his views freely, and wishes me to act as his organ of communication with the Academy,—which I gladly do.

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dent as to appearing to urge his views upon the Academy in any way which might
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how nearly he has the usefulness and prosperity of the Academy at heart.

Very sincerely yours,

( Signed ) B. A. Gould.

Cambridge, Mass.

1892, March 31.
SEC. 5. Elections for membership shall be held in the following manner: Each member may inscribe on a ballot not more than [five] two names of noninees selected from the list. Absent members may send such ballots to the home secretary. From the [seven] four names receiving the highest number of votes in this preference ballot, the members present may proceed to elect new members in the following manner: At each ballot, each member present may vote for not exceeding three persons, and the person receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected, provided that he received two-thirds of the votes cast and that his name appear on not less than twenty ballots; and provided further, that the number of members of the Academy be not already [one hundred] seventy-five or over, in which case to be declared to be elected he must receive [four-fifths] three-quarters of the votes cast, and his name must appear on at least twenty-five ballots.

Should several candidates have the same minimum number of votes on the preference list, the requisite number for completing the list shall be selected from them by a two-thirds vote of the members present.

Election of members shall be held only at the regular stated session of each year held in Washington, and not more than [five] two members shall be elected [at that session] in any one year.
Cambridge 1894 Oct. 18

My dear Marsh,

I thank you very much for your kind invitation to stay with you during the session of the Academy, and wish I could accept it. But Newton wrote to me some time ago, asking me to come to his house, and I replied that I would do so with pleasure, if able to come to New Haven at all.

Last Friday I reached home again, and for a day or two feared that I should be unable to get away at all. But on Tuesday I wrote to Newton that I would come.

I know how good a time I should have in your luxurious house, and with such company, but perhaps I shall gain admittance now and then, for a time.

In haste, sincerely yours,

B. A. Gould
Cambridge 1895 Jan. 24

My dear Marsh,

This morning comes a note from Hall, saying that you have decided to call the special meeting of the Natl Academy for Feb. 9. I am fearful that you may not find it easy to secure a quorum and shall certainly attend unless it should prove too inconvenient for reasons not connected with my personal comfort. But yet I am not sure that I can well get away from duties here. Let me know if you can whether the absence of a single person is likely to spoil the quorum.

Gibbs is, I grieve to say, far from well, and I fear that it may not be within his power to attend. He is quite an invalid, unhappily for all who rely upon his uprightnes
and good influence.

Let me make a suggestion, in case I should not be present to make it in person. Between ourselves, I have an idea that the outlay for traveling expenses we may be a serious one for Hall. Not as Home Secretary, it is his duty to be present. If he is not a man to shrink. Might not the Academy to pass a vote, instructing the Treasurer to refund the expenses entailed upon him by the attendance on the meeting?

Always truly yours

P. A. Gould
Cambridge 1895 June 6

My dear Marsh,

Prof. E. F. Chandler, as Chairman of the Committee on the Barnard Medal has written me on the offer of the Trustees of Columbia College to provide a second medal for Prof. Ramsay.

This seems to me a very happy solution of the affair, and removes what I have always felt to be a flaw in the Academy's action.

If a vote of the Council is desired please communicate as in favor of assenting to the proposed action.

Yours ever truly,

B. A. Gould

Prof. O. C. Marsh
President, Nat. Acad. Sciences