

President's Room  
Columbia College

New York, Sept. 26. 1892.

My dear Mr. Bigelow:

I have read with much interest your article in Scribner's as to the use of the Tilden Trust. Naturally I should rejoice to see the proposed library in Bryant Park, and if I can be of service in helping you to realize that ideal you may command me.

I cannot express a doubt, however, as to the probability of such an outcome to your labors, in view of the fact that the Tilden Trust now commands only \$80,000 income. The appropriation for the Columbia College Library during the current year is upwards of \$40,000 independent of heating, lighting, and caretaking generally. Of this sum, \$24,000 represents the cost of <sup>administration</sup> ~~maintenance~~, and \$16,000 the sum

available for books. It is clear, therefore, that the income of the Tilden Trust would be largely consumed in meeting the basic operating expenses of a <sup>general</sup> public library on a scale adequate to meet the city's needs, if land and building both were to be provided by the city.

In connection with the alternatives you refer to, may I ask for the consideration of this one; that the Tilden fund be used in connection with Columbia College to make in New York the greatest scholar's library to be found in the country, and in connection with the Scientific Alliance and Columbia College to make New York a great scientific center. I assume that in the details of such a scheme it will be an easy matter to define the outcome satisfactorily as a memorial of Mr. Tilden.

Columbia College can contribute to such a scheme substantially as much as the Tilden Trust. The organ-

Sep. 26. '92

President's Room 2  
Columbia College

New York.

igation would save all administrative expenses to the Trust fund, when once paid over, while the fund would have the security of property already amounting to more than \$12,000,000 to ensure its perpetuity. There are no small advantages.

You will remember that when Prussia was reduced to the lowest extremity after the battle of Jena, the University of Berlin was established as part of a deliberate plan to build up the new Prussia. The services of the investigation of the Berlin university have made the world their debtors only less than Prussia and Germany. I refer to this, because I think it shows the advantage of including Columbia, as the nucleus of New York's university, in any arrangements you may make with the Scientific Alliance, if you thought it best to do so. Such an association would be a source of strength and not of

weakness. The absence of any university in London probably accounts for the Royal Institution and the like as a separate establishments. In the meanwhile it is the presence of the university at Oxford that has given such meaning <sup>and usefulness</sup> to the Bodleian and Radcliffe libraries.

The Pidden Fund, <sup>to enable you</sup> being too small to found a general library, I suggest that you use it in connection with Columbia's resources to make in New York the first university, or scholar's, library in the country. Columbia can furnish the ground and the maintenance - I am not sure that I could not even secure the building - leaving <sup>substantially</sup> the whole income of the Pidden fund to go into the purchase of books. The 150,000 volumes of Columbia's present library would not have to be duplicated. It is certain that such a course would secure for this city at once a great library and a great university.

So far as your fund goes into a library, I do hope they will take this course. There is nothing else in

Sep. 26. '90

President's Room 3  
Columbia College

New York.

the city that begins to offer the same amount of material cooperation as Columbia can, while we also hold out the promise of the human element that is needed to make a library useful, as in the case of the Radcliffe and the Bodleian.

I submit, also, that this is the best way to develop the library even if the desire be to promote the ascendancy of New York <sup>specifically</sup> as a scientific centre, in cooperation with the Scientific Alliance. If the Fildes fund is to put up a building adequate to house the Scientific Alliance, and to hold a really great scientific library, there will not be money enough left after this expenditure to make an institution that is really great. Some large foundations draw to themselves gifts; but if such institutions bear the donor's name, generations must pass before they

case to be looked upon as individual memorials.  
The Cooper Institute, the Pratt Institute, the Astor  
Library, the Lenox Library, all bear witness to this  
fact. On the other hand, if you will erect a build-  
ing <sup>in the heart of the city</sup> suitable for the occupancy of the societies of the  
scientific alliance, and which may be used  
also by Columbia College as a basis for  
such scientific <sup>public</sup> lectures as they may wish to give,  
there will still be margin enough left to devel-  
op an important library in connection with Co-  
lumbia upon the site of the university. Whether it would  
be best for you to divide forces in this way, or not,  
you could decide better than I. What I wish to em-  
phasize is that Columbia's cooperation would be  
of value in the effort to make New York a great  
scientific centre, as well as in the matter of  
the library. Of course your determination to cooperate  
with Columbia, would lead others in the same direction,  
and secure for New York such service as a great  
university compendium as well as the direct results aimed  
at by yourself. Mrs, sincerely, L. H. Coe.