

'Ross, Sir Ronald'

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ROSS, SIR RONALD

'12/'13

Mr. Thompson,

Mr. Wellcome wished you to see this
correspondence with Sir Ronald Ross, and Mr. Pearson
suggests it should be filed at Wigmore Street

10th October, 1913

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FROM
SIR RONALD ROSS, K.C.B., F.R.S.

TELEPHONE & TELEGRAMS
6328 MAYFAIR.

Private.

18, CAVENDISH SQUARE,
LONDON, W.

6th Oct., 1913.

H. S. Wellcome Esq.,
54a Wigmore Street, W.

Dear Mr. Wellcome,

Thanks for your letter. I certainly spoke to Dr. Sambon three, if not four, times about my portrait, and he perfectly understood that I wished to have it removed from its present place. I am quite sure that it was put in that place on purpose to convey a definite idea regarding associations of my work, and that is precisely why I object. When one man by hard work and persistent effort makes a discovery, there are always a large number of hangers on who profit by it. Personally I would prefer that my name and my work should drop out of memory altogether rather than it should be utilised in this way. Very many thanks therefore for removing my portrait, and also for troubling to write to me at such length. Needless to say I do not accept your apologies, simply because I do not think that you have anything whatever to apologise for. Please accept my compliments and,

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

Ronald Ross

duplicate

S.H.B.

4th October, 1913

Dear Sir Ronald,

I have received your letter of the 30th September, and have investigated the matter referred to as best I can in the absence of Dr. Sambon. To the best of my remembrance, your letter of the 30th September is the first intimation I have had that any question had been raised in regard to your portrait, and Mr. Thompson, the curator of the Museum, assures me that he is not aware of your verbal or written request ever having been brought before him by Dr. Sambon or by anyone. If he had been informed he would have immediately carried out your wishes.

A member of my staff who assisted Dr. Sambon at the Museum informs me that some time in July (he thinks it was after you visited the Museum) Dr. Sambon told him that you were not pleased that your portrait should be placed on the wall in association with a certain other portrait, and Dr. Sambon instructed him to remove the other portrait. This instruction he immediately carried out, but the assistant says he had no knowledge that you desired your portrait to be removed from the wall.

Unfortunately Dr. Sambon is now away in the West Indies and is not expected to return for some months, so that I cannot pursue my investigation further in that direction, nor get his explanation at the present time. In the absence of Dr. Sambon I can only conjecture that working as he was at that time under very great pressure in assisting in the preparation of the Museum

and at the same time engaged in the Pellagra work which was occupying much of his attention, he did not, in the verbal interview, fully grasp your wishes in regard to the removal of your portrait, and even when you wrote him on the 14th July, I believe he could not have read your letter carefully and that he was under the impression that he had already fully dealt with your request in giving the directions to his assistant to remove the other portrait. I cannot conceive that Lamborn would intentionally have disregarded your wishes.

I offer you my sincere apologies for the oversight and beg to assure you that nothing can be further from my desire than to disregard your wishes in respect to such a matter. I hold you and your work in such high esteem that it would be impossible for me to intentionally show you such a discourtesy.

As regards the arrangement of the portraits, this was done in my absence from England and was carried out by some of the assistants on the staff of the curator, and I am well assured that neither the curator nor the assistants who made the arrangements had any motive in placing the pictures in a manner that would indicate any partisanship or attempt in any way to classify the position of the various workers in tropical diseases.

It is particularly my desire in this Museum to give credit to whom credit is due and to place each author, discoverer, originator and inventor on his own merits as far as it is in my power to do so, to be equitable, and to be free from any bias. I am sure you will recognise that

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in some cases it is exceedingly difficult if there are any issues or controversies arising as to claims of priority etc. and the curator has my very strict instructions to carefully avoid at all times taking up issues which may imply partiality.

Immediately on receipt of your letter I ordered the portrait to be removed as per your request, and again I offer you my sincere apologies for the annoyance which has occurred.

I remain,

Yours very truly,

H.SW

To
Sir Ronald Ross, K.C.B., F.R.S.
18, Cavendish Square,
W.

FROM
SIR RONALD ROSS, K.C.B., F.R.S.

TELEPHONE & TELEGRAMS
6328 MAYFAIR.

18, CAVENDISH SQUARE,
LONDON, W.

30th Sep., 1913.

Henry S. Wellcome Esq.,
C/o The Historical Medical Museum,
54a Wigmore Street. W.

Dear Mr. Wellcome,

Before your great museum was opened I spoke to Dr. Sambon regarding my portrait which is hung on the wall there and told him that I did not like the position of it. As he took no notice I wrote to him on the 14th July the letter of which I enclose a copy. He did not reply, but when I went to the museum a few days later he promised me faithfully that he would remove my portrait before the recent Medical Congress was held. Relying upon his word, I took no further action in the matter; but a few days ago, a scientific friend told me that the portrait was still there. Consequently I looked in at the museum yesterday and found it to be in exactly the same position as when I had previously seen it.

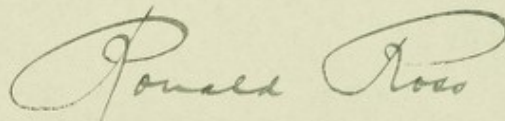
I am therefore now obliged to write to you to ask whether you will not be so kind as to remove the portrait. I think it had better be taken away entirely, more especially

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because there is a photograph of myself and plenty of evidence of my work in the floor-cases. The fact is that the arrangement of these portraits has been made on purpose in order to perpetuate what I, and most scientific men, consider to be a series of falsities regarding my work, which have been assiduously propagated for the last fourteen years. The intention is evidently to lead visitors to the museum to suppose that the connotation referred to is generally accepted in this country, and has also been accepted by me in allowing my portrait to appear in that position. On the contrary it has not been accepted by me and I must protest against the said inference. It is with no little disgust that I feel myself obliged to write on this matter, and I think, if there had been any difficulty about removing my portrait, Dr. Sambon should have written to me on the subject, instead of simply breaking his word as he has done.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ronald Ross". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Encl.

Copy.

18 Cavendish Square, W.

14th July, 1913.

Dr. L. Sambon,
Historical Medical Museum,
54a Wigmore Street, W.

My dear Sambon,

I am not much impressed with the portrait of my humble self put up in your museum. I like neither the portrait nor the association, and shall be obliged if the former can be removed. You have put up most excellent drawings of all my work, together with a photograph of my laboratory in Calcutta, and I think that this is quite sufficient.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) Ronald Ross.

Ross (Sir Ronald)

54 Wigmore Street.

London. W.

Sept. 2nd. 1912.

Dear Sir Ronald,

As you are probably aware, I am organising an Historical Medical Exhibition in connection with the International Medical Congress which will be held in London next Summer. I should be glad to know if you could give me any assistance by loaning some cases of specimens illustrating the work done by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

I feel that the Liverpool School should be well represented at this Exhibition which will be one of great importance, and if you can promise the loan of a suitable exhibit for the section on Tropical Medicine I should appreciate your kindness.

Thanking you in anticipation,

I am,

Yours very truly,

Wm. Dr. Newham

Sir Ronald Ross.
Director.
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.
Liverpool.