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June 5, 1916

Professor Lanson

The Sorbonne

Paris, France

My dear Professor Lanson:

We have all been made very happy by the receipt this morning of a cable from M. Liard saying that you would accept for one year appointment as Professor of French Literature at Columbia University. To say that this is the happiest possible solution of the problem that has confronted us is to speak the literal truth. Your primacy as a scholar in French and your wide repute here in the United States unite to make your coming to Columbia next year an event of the greatest importance. It will be possible for you to organize and to direct our advanced studies in French literature and in French civilization as they should be organized and directed. Your personal counsel too will be invaluable in guiding us in the selection of a permanent occupant of this chair.

If you are to come alone, I trust you will find the apartment in the Maison Francaise comfortable enough for your occupancy. There is no arrangement there for meals, but it will be perfectly possible for you to have your morning coffee served in your apartment. Should you not think this comfortable enough, then we can make some arrangement for you at the Hotel Marseilles or elsewhere in order that you may feel quite at home and perfectly comfortable. At your convenience perhaps

you would send the subject of your academic lectures and the topic of your Seminar or private conferences with advanced students. There will be many eager inquiries for these as soon as your appointment is announced to the public.

As the time approaches for your coming, be kind enough to let us know the name of the ship and the date of your sailing, as we shall want a representative of the University to meet you at the dock and to do whatever can be done to promote your comfort and well-being.

Mlle. Doby, the Secretary of the Maison Francaise sailed for France last Saturday. I will ask the Secretary of the University to write her by this post, in order that she may know of your coming and call upon you for a conference as to any matters of detail that ought to be settled. In particular you may be able to advise her in the selection of some of the books which she is to purchase for the Maison Francaise. We have commissioned her to purchase not more than 5,000 francs worth of books dealing with contemporary France, that is France since 1870.

With warm regard and every good wish, I am,
Faithfully yours,

Richard Henry Butler