

January 20, 1955

Professor I. B. Cohen
Department of the History of Science
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.

Dear Professor Cohen:

If you could still furnish a copy, I would be obliged to you for a reprint of your discussion of "The authenticity of scientific anecdotes" which appeared in NATURE, 1946, 157:196-197.

As it happens, I rather foolishly challenged Professor Otto Loewi last summer for having attributed this anecdotal remark to Franklin, when "everyone knows" that it came from Faraday. I spent a few minutes in the library, but could find only Gregory's book. Professor Loewi eventually was reminded of your contribution and referred me to it. I would appreciate a reprint, if you can still dig one up, as a reminder of the incident and my own incaution.

It would be quite a task to dig out all these traditions. For example, could you, off hand, give me a citation for the "well-known" remark by an eminent physicist of the 1890's who was assured that nothing remained to be done in physics but measurements of the universal constants to a few more decimal places? Lord Rutherford's name is somehow connected with this, but can hardly have made such a remark except to scorn it.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

CC: Professor Loewi
Prof. M. Gabriel