Public Library,

Cambridge, Mass., Dec. 29, 1891

Dear Mr. Alger

When I wrote you about Mr. Barnes, I did not know (& do not even now) whether the new Charter has yet taken effect. If it has, I think you fill the vacancies & make appointments, assuming that Mr. Barnes will take Mr. Gilmore's place. I wish to say that I have had grave doubts about consenting to go on the Board again, on account of impaired health; & the fact that our affairs are less important & interesting than last year, when so much of the reconstruction was necessarily my work. We are now well

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launched on all our new methods;
the Citizens' Fund is nearly spent;
& with Mr. Barnes there I am
not essential, as I then deemed.
So I shall not take it at all
if you make a change, for I
cared little as much as an advisor
& to retire from some drudgery.

As to Mr. Montague,
there was a time when ~~he~~ I
wished he would resign from both
the Library & the M.I.T. school;
but since he retired from business
he has taken hold of the Latter
with much interest, and as he
is in a manner one of the fathers
of the Library, I think he should
be reappointed.

Let me say in a
general way that our Board of

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trustee, while in itself as good a board as I ever acted with, is now too strong in the direction of business men & not strong enough in the direction of bookish men of whom I am really the only representative, except as Mr. Barnes unites the two. We need a few more men who use the library a good deal personally and take an interest in finding out its weak points & making sure that they are filled. Such a man as Wm J. Rolfe, for instance, would be a perfect treasure & the library & do much that goes undone simply because I have no time to attend to it. I think

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it very desirable that every city
board should have a distinct
majority of business men who can
command the entire confidence of
the Mayor & Treasurer & Finance
Committee — but the School Committee
& Library Trustees should always have
a strong minority at least of the
bookish ~~or profes~~ (or at least
the professional) class; & there
should also be a fair proportion
of women on both.

I know you will
excuse these suggestions. You have
done all things as well as mayor
that I know you will take
them as they are meant.

Cordially yours

T. W. Higginson

T. Wentworth Higginson

Dec 29/91.

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