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THE CONNECTICUT VALLEY BOTANICAL SOCIETY.¹

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THE sketch of the New England Botanical Club recalls a similar association, the Connecticut Valley Botanical Society, founded in June, 1873. I had then lived in Springfield twenty years and had hardly met a botanist in all that time. Of course, I longed for companionship. So at last I took pains to seek the acquaintance of Miss Shattuck, the teacher of botany at Mt. Holyoke Seminary, pulled the wires that got me invited there, and then laid before her my plan for stated gatherings of the botanists of the Valley. She approved and told me that the Rev. David Peck of Whately would be sure to help me. When I wrote to him he was interested, but said that the Rev. Henry G. Jesup of Amherst would be an invaluable helper, — and so he proved. Next I invited the three to meet at my house, June 10th, 1873. They came, stayed a day and a night, and we laid our plans, formed and adopted a constitution, and chose a president and secretary, leaving the other offices unfilled. The first article of the constitution was: "The undersigned, for the promotion of the study of botany, and for mutual improvement in that science, form an association, to be called the Connecticut Valley Botanical Society."

Now, no two clubs are exactly alike, but it seems to me that the aims of this society and yours are the same. In one respect, however, the New England Botanical Club can, if it insists upon the point, claim to be the first of its kind in New England, it is a club for gentlemen only, while ours was open to both sexes. I was secretary from the beginning, and have, as a valued perquisite (the only one that anybody ever had), the book which contains the complete records. It was a very success-

¹ This bit of botanical history, which is an extract from a personal letter to a member of the New England Botanical Club, is here published by the kind permission of its author.—ED.

ful association. Our meetings were held in Amherst, South Hadley, Hanover, N. H., and elsewhere, and in all places college officers, students, and the best people of the neighborhood who cared for our subject attended them. Dr. Gray came to our sixth meeting, which was held at the Seminary, and brought specimens of *Gloriosa*, which he made the theme of a pleasant and instructive talk. He spoke also of the fertilization of *Apios tuberosa*. President Clark of Amherst was the delight and pride of our local membership, — what a talker he was! — and he always came with his large botanical box full of choice specimens. Those happy times! Nothing less than our complete record can tell of them adequately, but I will give you a few of the best-known names from our list of signatures: C. H. Hitchcock of Dartmouth and his brother Edward of Amherst, William S. Clark of Amherst Agricultural College, Edward Tuckerman, D. P. Penhallow, a young man then, who has made a name for himself since; A. P. Morgan and his wife, Laura V. Morgan, both ardent students of fungi, and that, in 1873, was to be far ahead of the times; J. G. Scott of the Westfield Normal School, William Penn Brooks, who has also become widely known, and Warren Upham, then at Dartmouth; Mr. C. G. Pringle, the well-known collector, said he would come and authorized us to sign his name, but something prevented his attendance after all; Dr. Gray added his name to the list, — the only ceremony required for membership; we had no fees.

The members were so far apart that we had but two meetings a year and later only one; and though that diminished to none, I feel that the Society never *died*, though it slept. Some of its members died, however, and some moved far away. Botanists became more numerous in the Valley so that nobody was lonesome. We had a flourishing society in Springfield while the Valley Society was still holding its meetings, so these and some other causes led to the rest in its action which has not yet been broken.

I ought to say something about the members utterly unknown to fame, who were drawn out by the association, — people from little country towns, women and men both, hard workers in bread-winning occupations, who yet managed to find time for their beloved science and made progress in it. They were born botanists, and that is the only way you can account for such things. It is a long story, but I felt called upon to say something for the dear old Society and could not well say it in fewer words.



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