

Cambridge August 5th 1845.

My Dear Sir

very early

It gives me pleasure to reply, as far as I am able to your favor of July 30th. This I may best do by stating generally the footing upon which my department is placed in our College. The instruction is divided into two

parts. 1st is a course of recitations from a Text Book on Natural History, which is a prescribed study for the whole Sophomore class (up to this time it has been the Freshmen, but is now changed) during the 2nd term, 3 recitations a week, making actually about 50 recitations. As Mineralogy is taught in another department (viz. by Prof. Webster) I devote this course one-half to Vegetable Physiology & Structural Botany, using the new ed. of my Text Book (part 1) for the purpose; the 2nd half to Zoology and Animal Physiology, for which I have as yet no fit Text Book (and therefore have this year devoted the whole term to the Botanical department) but one is now preparing for me by Dr. Gould of Boston.

2^d. A Course of Lectures on Botany given during the 2^d term twice a week (actually, about 30 lectures). This is one of the elective studies of our college course, and is eligible to the three higher classes. The course is usually elected by about 30 students. Undergraduates, and is attended by a number of Divinity and Law students, to whom all the College

lectures are given without fee.

No charge is made to any student for instruction in my department.

As respects your third enquiry I can give you very little information. At Princeton a short course of Botanical lectures is given by Dr. Torrey, I believe about 15 lectures, to the Junior class, - for which no separate fee is charged.

In my view, considering the little time that can be spent for these studies in college, and the greater importance of a knowledge of the principles and laws over mere details, - the instruction should be chiefly devoted to Physiological Botany, and to the general principles of Philosophy of Natural History, Classification. This is a fruitful subject. I have planned a three years course, of which the two seasons past have been devoted to the structural and physiological part, while the next will be given to Geographical and Systematic Botany. The latter may enter more largely into college instruction when we shall have a Flora of New England, or of the whole United States, in a cheap and compact form, arranged according to the Natural System.

The plant enclosed is Splachnum ampullaceum, a moss that I never had the fortune to find growing. It is remarkable for its enormous apophyses. The sterile tuft part in the specimen however does not belong to it, but to some Hypnum.

I remain, with great
Respect
Yours truly
A. Gray

Aug. 5, 1845
Chas. A. Gray.
Boston

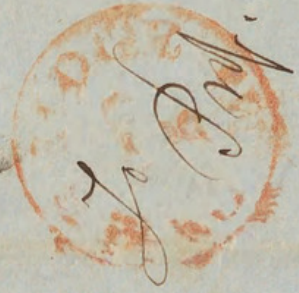
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Bowdoin College

P. Cleveland, President





Gray, Asa. 1845. "Gray, Asa Aug. 5, 1845 [to Parker Cleaveland]." *Asa Gray correspondence : letters from Asa Gray to various individuals*

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