

afford to do it. I was the most interested but least competent of the local botanists. I could think of but two at all likely to undertake the work, viz: Dr. Kellogg and Prof. Bolander. During the last three years I have frequently talked with the latter about it and he assured me that Kellogg would do nothing but held out the hope that he would himself prepare a botany when his term of office as Supt. of Schools should expire. Last December Bolander emigrated to Central America, and in sheer desperation I began the work of culling from the Report on California Botany all

last year. If you have any advice to give I shall be glad to follow it.

I have delayed apologizing for attempting a local flora — which act was confessed by sending you a little book — because I have felt that the first word of any working botanist would be, "Presumption!" I felt that I would rank as a very small Prof. Wood in your estimation, and I would prefer to be considered a small plant collector ^{who loves} nature and wilderness rather than cheap notoriety. I have each year over five hundred pupils studying botany — girls who, as a rule,

that I thought would be useful
to my classes. I did not
confer with Dr. K. because
he had expressed himself as
much displeased with me on
account of my sending plants
to you instead of giving them
to him for determination. I
have since learned that he
is assisting Dr. Gibbons in the
preparation of a California Bot.
any. I am, therefore, sorry that
I have undertaken the work,
But, as it is, I shall do the
best possible for my publishers.
I used the "Report" unhesitating-
ly, because any interest awaken-
ed by the use of the local work
must increase the sale of its



Rattan, Volney. 1879. "Rattan, Volney Apr. 24, 1879." *Asa Gray correspondence*

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