

In sending specimens of plants for investigation it is desirable to have the leaves, flowers, and fruit; and, in the case of bulbous plants, the bulbs, also. When they are sent from a distance it is best to prepare the specimens by drying them under pressure between folds of absorbent paper, otherwise the parts shrink and break so as to be hardly recognizable. When the dried plants are sent they should be protected from breakage in the mail by being inclosed between pieces of stiff pasteboard. Packages weighing less than four pounds can be sent by mail at the rate of one cent per ounce. Write the name of the sender on the outside. In the letter accompanying the specimens state where collected, the date, and any other particulars of the plant, whether reputed poisonous, pestiferous, medicinal, or useful.

U. S. Department of Agriculture,

DIVISION OF BOTANY,

Washington, D. C., May 3^d 1888.

Prof. S. Watson

My dear Sir,

Your letter of the 1st inst. is received. I am very glad you have written, though I am much surprised at the contents of the letter. The copy of Rules I sent to you as to the other members of the Committee for your approval or correction. I expected of course, that if the paper was objectionable to you in any way you would say so. Perhaps you are right that it is not the Committee's duty to "pretend" to organize the Club - but strange that the other members had not thought the same.

I was taken aback also by your copy of the article for the Gazette. I think it would have been more friendly on your part if you had first written to me. Mr. Crozier showed me the article before he sent it to the Gazette, but I was very busy and perhaps did not give it proper consideration - One or two sentences are somewhat ambiguous and perhaps require some explanation - which I will try to give.

We have for many years made extensive distributions through the mails, free, chiefly to the Agr. Colleges, but also to Scientific Societies and to Specialists, without any question as to the rightfulness of the matter, and have sometimes furnished parties with the means of sending packages to us free also, when it was an advantage to the Herbarium to do so. It was Mr.

Crozier's idea that if the exchanges could be made advantageous to the Herbarium suitable packages could be transmitted in the same way. But the matter had not been determined upon and is referred to as possible "in this case". Of course there would be a proper limit to such a measure.

Your statement that such a use of the frank of the Department would be dishonorable and dishonest, is a pretty strong one and I think made without due consideration - The Department has a right to send and does send to all parts of the country frank for various things which it wants in the performance of its legitimate functions, and one of these functions as I conceive it is the building up and improvement of the Herbarium. This is no private business - the Herbarium belongs to the Government of the United States and is a valuable property - and I hold that it is the duty of the Government to foster it, just as it fosters other Scientific interests at Washington. But it is not my purpose to do anything in this matter to compromise the "Botanical Club". The Club shall have the chance to speak for itself.

To show you that I have no personal interest in this matter I will say that I turned ⁱⁿ ~~to~~ to the Herbarium, when I came here, and since, thousands of my botanical specimens, and do not now own a single one and do not expect to. I am glad that you wrote your mind plainly and freely to me, but I hope that upon reviewing the matter you may feel that some imputations were hardly deserved.

Truly Yours Geo. Vasey



Vasey, George. 1888. "Vasey, George May 3, 1888 [to S. Watson]." *George Vasey letters to Asa Gray*

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