

The Botanical Gazette.

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Crawfordsville, Ind., Apr. 24 - '86

My dear Dr Gray:

I have your very kind letter of April 20, and have been thinking over it for several days. I want to say in the outset that it never has been & never will be a part of my plans to interfere in the slightest with any cherished plans of your own. My love for you personally (which is a feeling common among botanists), and my appreciation of your work, would at once check any such desire. My whole feeling in the matter is simply this: I am young and vigorous, eager to work, & if I have what you kindly call "a knack for putting things in shape", here I am at your service, to do for you whatever I can.

My reply to J. B. T. & Co., was made under a

misapprehension. I took for granted that they knew even more of your plans than I did, & that when they asked for a Manual of the Miss. Valley that they knew you had no intention of covering that ground, & that they were acting upon such information.

Your plan is by far the best one, & is of course the one to be carried out. The little book I referred to was one ^{by a Cincinnati firm} I was asked to prepare, & was to be merely a small & unpretentious thing for local use. But that I am more than willing to lay aside, in fact did not want to do it at all except for the "bread & butter" the firm promised me.

You speak of "breaching out paths that others can walk easily & profitably in", but that is both the fate & glory of such pioneers & masters as you represent, & that is really what you have wanted to do for us. There will never be any lack of appreciation of the work you have done for us, & no botanist would fail to subscribe to your statement about "younger & not better men". I am sure I only aspire to become one of your followers

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in the paths you have broken so well & made so easy for us.

Your plan for endowing the Harvard Herbarium is just the thing, & should not be interfered with, & I am ready to help you in it all I can. Let that plan stand, & simply let me help you put it into effect. The Herbarium is for us all.

It occurs to me that the proposed Manual should include Dr Chapman's "bailiwick," for it needs a manual sadly, & it is out of the question for Dr Chapman to undertake it. He told me when he put out his Supplement that he did it that way because he saw no chance of his rewriting the whole book. He is very old, over 90, & as the proposed Manual could not appear for 2 or 3 years, he would still occupy the field for that length of time.

I believe you understand now my feeling in the matter, & can act accordingly. I can arrange for an interview with you whenever

you wish it, & am ready to go to work at once upon ^{any} plan you propose.

I hope the beautiful spring weather that is now upon us will free you from your colds, & that you can not only "not lose a day's work", but can work comfortably -

Always yrs -

John M. Coulter.



Coulter, John Merle. 1886. "Coulter, John M. Apr. 24, 1886." *John Merle Coulter letters to Asa Gray*

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