

The specimens he sends me confirm my investigations in every particular, and although I shall probably withdraw A. Americum as a species I want to make such additional examinations as will enable me to publish data enough to show that the principal points in my paper were well taken.

Prof. Eaton saw fit to treat my paper rather cavalierly - almost ignoring its importance and the effect it has had in clearing away the confusion so long resting on the subject - and which had been acknowledged to me by our best Pteridologists - thus placing me on the defensive.

I do not propose to let it rest ~~until~~ here, though I am debarred from presenting my strongest points as I cannot consent to be placed in open opposition to Prof. Eaton.

But I can easily trace from my correspondence ^{and from} my specimens the influence my paper had on his

MIDDLESEX SCIENTIFIC FIELD CLUB.

Bedford, Mass, June 24/
80

Mrs. Meyers,

Yours of May 30th remains too long unanswered. The kindest words of encouragement and sympathy touched me deeply. I know the value of every word and thank you. Your womanly instincts guessed aright, but you need not fear for me. My love for God grows with my love for nature, and though I have prosecuted my fern studies under difficulties that none of my friends know of, or suspect, I am bound by the laws of my nature to keep on - and will do so. I will send you shortly a copy of the introduction to my fern paper which I read to the Social Club of Bedford. I had a very select audience - The Minister & his wife,

- The local Editor and the Teachers
of the Schools. Close to Concord,
the atmosphere is all literary
and I hesitated long before
venturing to respond to their
invitation to talk ferns to
them & only went as a duty
to our own Club. At the last
moment I penciled a hurried
essay to introduce my subject
& relied upon a full set of
New England ferns which I
took out of the herbarium for
explanations. The result was
better than I dared to hope
for. The company was an
exceedingly pleasant one in
its influence & soon made me
feel so much at home that

I kept them interested for
over two hours, receiving a hearty
vote of thanks at the close. I
have learned since that the
Club considered it the best
entertainment that they had
met to since its formation.
My essay was particularly com-

-plimented & copies of it have
been solicited. Ella will
have her school vacation next
week & I will have her write
off two or three copies of it, but
you must bear in mind that
my hearers knew scarcely
anything about ferns and the
essay will be interesting to you
only as showing my love for
her & nature.

I am going now to ask a
favor of my Syracuse friends.
I would like 50 fronds of
each of the two forms of A.
spinulosum - or you will
understand more clearly if
I say of A. spinulosum and A.
Americanum. Mr. Williamson
has been making further
examinations of the plants in
Kentucky & sends me both
forms from there. He reports
the two forms as very distinct
with him. He can tell them
now at a glance & will endorse
every word that I have said.

5
Talk with him over the ferns
before he left Boston. I was
much disappointed in not
seeing you again for I hoped
to have been able to show
you the Herbarium. It is
now in good order & I ~~hope~~
have added Aspid. contortum
-num Miller - var. strigosum Eaton
from Capt. Smith. If you fail
to secure a specimen of it let
me know & you shall have
one of mine. My eyes are
giving out and I must close.
Very Respectfully Yours
Geo. E. Davenport

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own position, for he completely
changed his views; held by him
up to the time I placed my
paper in his hands - and adopted
one more nearly in conformity to
that of my paper. Now why could
he not have given my paper
some credit for its work even
though he did - as I expected he
would - reject A. americanum as
a species. Mr Redfield declined
to accept of A. americanum, but he
said my paper presented the
different forms in the clearest
possible light. I was without
exception the best thing on the
subject he had ever seen. Others
have told me the same & Mr
Robinson still believes in A.
Americanum. I shall prepare
further notes but I shall word
them carefully & try to cover all
of the points without appearing
to reflect on the judgment of our
Authorities. Will you not kindly
aid me now in getting ^{for me} a goodly

number of ponds - 50 or more - of
each kind from the vicinity of
Syracuse?

I sometimes think it a great
misfortune for me to be placed
so often in apparent antagonism
with Prof. Eaton, and sometimes
hesitate about going on in direc-
-ions that lead me away from
him, because I entertain for
him the greatest admiration
& regard him with more than
ordinary feelings of personal
esteem, but if I work at
all I must be true to myself,
and as I have been led without
intending it, but from the nature
of my work, into a front position
I must go forward and
maintain it.

I have been working over the
scaly Cheilanthes until I have
almost got tired of them. Though
not half through with them yet,
But I cannot as yet bring myself
into Prof. Eaton's position, and

now I find myself obliged to
take exceptions to Mr Baker's
apparent position in part, although
that eminent authority agrees
with me so far as I have
gone. The difference between
us being that I am inclined to
stop where I be, while he is
inclined to go further and
give up Cheilanthes Fendleri
altogether as a species.
He however regards all of the
California plants now referred by
Prof Eaton to Myriophylla as
the same species as Fendleri
specimens on which Dr Hooker
founded the species and this
is exactly what I have
been contending for. If I had
time to go into the whole
matter I could give you
some interesting fern history,
but I shall probably throw it
all into the form of notes for
publication. Mr Redfield writes
me to day so that sent to me
all of his doubtful specimens
for a revision. I had a pleasant



Davenport, Geo. E. 1880. "Davenport, George E. Jun. 24, 1880 [to F.J. Myers]."
George Edward Davenport correspondence

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