

your modesty had permitted you to give  
conside specific characters to all your species  
you give a sort of a description which is  
very good, but scarcely enough."

Now Mr D. I do not know if my modesty  
had much to do with it, all I aimed  
at was to give a popular description  
that would be understood with a little  
thinking on the part of the student.

If I had it to do over again I do not  
think I would change my plan.

I thought the illustrations would make up  
for lack of descriptive terms. I would like  
your opinion on that. Prof Estlin did not  
allude to the *Spermulone* question I  
suppose he forgot all about it. I received

The Boston Advertiser notice, yours I suppose  
was too long for this. Well you know

Botanical Questions are only interesting to  
a small minority of their readers. I am  
perfectly satisfied. I send you by Circular  
lots of inclosures. I got an advance  
notice from Walter. I am going to push  
the book a little more. I may send you  
a few circulars with the etchings. if it is  
not too much trouble for you. I do hope you are in better

63 Market St

Lowell, 13

July 20th

My Dear Mr Davenport

We have had a very trying  
week especially on those who have a  
weak constitution. The weather has  
just been terrible, however  
I must say I can stand it very  
well & I have a good deal of out  
door business.

I have managed to get your  
set of plates printed. Printing I told  
you once before was very difficult.  
at least I find it so, but you know  
I am not a printer. Therefore I had  
just to learn. I printed about  
a doz this evening after business.  
& I think they are decidedly the best.  
The ink was just in fine condition.  
Now when you get those, I do not want  
you to speak too hard about my  
book. to tell you the truth there  
is no comparison. When I say in my preface



that the plates are as sharp & well  
defined as the originals, I was not aware  
then that I could get so good impressions  
as I do now, and in fact I was  
well pleased with the lithographic  
impressions, I think they struck you  
as creditable. The conclusion I have  
come to is this, that with great  
care and only printing 6 at a time  
a good impression can be got ~~not~~  
~~by~~ by the lithographic process, but  
you never can get as good work  
as printing direct from the plate.  
There is a softness and delicacy  
about the real etching that you  
cannot get by any other art.

Just take the C. tomentum and see what  
a wood engraver would make out of it.  
The tall frond has a mustiness about  
it that would be difficult to get  
except by the etching needle.  
You must excuse me Mr Davenport  
but I would like to say one word  
more, you have observed that I  
have treated some ferns very different

from others. you mentioned that in one of  
your criticisms, but this point is not  
so observable until you have the  
complete set altogether. I noticed this  
of course when I was doing the work.  
but I was not so impressed with it  
until I commenced to print and  
examine. A gentleman who had  
received the Boston Transcript (and who  
is a connoisseur in art matters &  
who has a very fine collection) called  
to see me one evening this week.  
I was busy printing when he called.  
He was very enthusiastic about the  
work. he pronounced the B. ternatum  
and the Magnificent ferns of Woodward  
the best of the series.

If I had kept the most of them in the  
acid 10 minutes longer they would have  
been improved. You must think them a  
very personal letter, I will promise not  
to say so much about my work again.

I had a letter from Prof Eaton  
yesterday. he speaks in a kindly  
way and think I have carried out  
faithfully what I set out to do  
He also says, "I could have wished that



Williamson, John. 07-20. "Williamson, John Jul 20 [no year]." *George Edward Davenport correspondence*

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