

Asa Gray M.D.

Sir

I am authorized by the President and Fellows of Harvard College to express their wish to connect you with the institution under their care, as Professor in Natural History, on the foundation laid by Joshua Fisher M.D., provided the terms they deem themselves justified in offering and their prospective views meet your acceptance.

This Professorship embraces within its sphere, all the branches of Natural History and the duties of the Professor; when placed upon full salary, would include the obligation to lecture or instruct in all those branches, in which it might be deemed expedient to give instruction in the College. At present the incomes of the foundation do not authorize the Corporation to establish a Professor on full salary and of consequence to claim of a Professor ^{behavior} performance of the entire circle of duties embraced in that Professorship. The original foundation was but \$20,000. By careful management and the application of principal ² to interest, it now possesses a capital of \$30,000 the income of which is \$1500. This, however, not being adequate to constitute a full Professors salary, on a permanent foundation the Corporation deem it both their duty and the interest of the Professorship to continue, for a few years in a modified form, the policy they have hitherto pursued, and by applying one third of the income annually to the augmentation of the capital enable themselves to place the Professor of Natural History, at

no distant period on an equal footing, generally, with other Professors of the University.

To this end, they propose, to limit your duties in case, you are willing to accept the Professorship to instruction and lecturing in Botany and to the superintendence of the Botanic Garden; and for the present and until the sphere of your duties shall be enlarged, that your annual salary shall be limited to One thousand dollars. As this will enable you to confine your ~~attention~~ attention to the branch, in which you have already obtained great eminence and celebrity, and leave you time, to prosecute the important work, in which you are now engaged, they are not without hope that you will see your way clear to accept this appointment. An arrangement of this kind is not new, in our seminary; and is in point of amount and terms precisely similar to that, on which Professor Sparks now holds the Professorship of ancient and modern history. You will understand that the intention of the Corporation is, as soon as the funds of the professorship justify it, to raise the salary to that of a full Professorship.

As you may wish to know what the duties of superintendence of the Botanic ^{and} ~~garden~~ ^{garden} includes, I state, that it will extend only to general oversight & direction, to the recommending what is to be done - and to the introducing as much economy and efficiency into its management as circumstances permit. That garden has, since the decease of the former professor, ^{been maintained} in a state rather of preservation than progress; and the Corporation hope that under the influence you

may introduce it may become more productive and useful. They possess a capital of nearly \$20,000 the income of which, with the income of the garden and of the houses attached to it, is devoted to its support & improvement.

I have thus endeavoured to give you, Sir, a general view of the relations of the institution, with which it is desired you should connect yourself. Should you prefer, to visit this vicinity, personally and learn on the spot the exact state of things, before making up your mind on this proposal, we shall deem ourselves happy in an early interview and giving you every information you may require on the subject.

Very respectfully,

I am your obed^t. serv^t.

Josiah Quincy

Cambridge }
25. March 1842 }

It is hoped you will consider this communication as confidential, especially if it should be your determination to decline the offer.



Quincy, Josiah. 1842. "Quincy, Josiah Mar. 26, 1842." *Asa Gray correspondence with scientific societies, Harvard College, and University of Michigan*

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