

Gray Herbarium



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CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.A.

Jan. 19, 1929.

Dear Weatherby:

As you of course know, our thoughts are very often with you and Mrs. Weatherby and we are all praying that everything may go right. I have seen three cases of pneumonia in my own family, all of them coming out favorably; the last one, my mother's, when she was 78 years old and threw off the attack, thanks to serum treatment. The first one, Henry's, was when he was an infant and given up as a hopeless case. But he is now on the school football team and hockey team, - so that we have great hopes that everything is coming out right for you.

I don't know how much you want to be bothered with outside things, but I imagine that you may have been occupying your mind with some writing. If by any chance the Thelypteris paper is sufficiently well in form so that I can have it, I shall be glad, for the simple reason that it was to be the leading article in the February number of Rhodora. If it is not sufficiently along so that I can put it into final shape, do not trouble about it and I will run in something different.

Incidentally, you may be interested or disgusted to know that in checking off the Newfoundland identities I have unfortunately stumbled into Pteridium latiusculam again and find Desvaux's species was wholly misinterpreted by Maxon through lack of knowledge of the distribution of the two plants. Desvaux explicitly states that his thing is the P. caudata of Schkuhr's plate, the P. aquilina of Michaux, Fl. Bor. Am. (which Gray noted was "caudata") and the P. aquilina β of Willdenow's species which was based on the Schkuhr plate. In other words, Desvaux's species was a substitute for P. caudata of Schkuhr not L. He had a specimen of that plant (pseudocaudata) and of the common northern thing which he, like every one else, was treating as typical P. aquilina. The latter plant was collected in Newfoundland by LaPylaie, the former has the label in Desvaux's own hand, "Habitat in America boreali", and on that label alone Desvaux has written P. latiusculam. The pseudocaudata element exactly accords with Desvaux's description, and when Maxon states that Desvaux's plant came from Newfoundland and St. Pierre, he makes a gratuitous assumption, since Desvaux had the Newfoundland plant before him and didn't cite it, neither did he mark that specimen as anything unusual, for to him it was nothing but P. aquilina. Incidentally, the first name for the common plant of the interior is P. ciliata Willd. and it has several varietal names of Lawson and others scattered along. I am naturally grieved to have to differ from Maxon again, but it seems to me he has done a very slipshod, superficial job and with the Desvaux sheet (photograph) right before him has misstated the facts, chiefly because he didn't understand the two plants and their ranges, and having made up his mind what he wanted to be P. latiusculam, characterized Desvaux's description as "unsatisfactory",

(palate & smell, I trust)

I have the thing written up, but before putting the blast into print I naturally want to be checked on it, although Dr. Robinson, Johnston and Svenson all seem to agree with my interpretation.

As I said, if the Thelypteris thing is not done, do not bother about it, only let me know please, so that I can tell what to do next.

Bowie has made a beautiful photograph of the analytical detail of Thelypteris, the photograph being, if possible, very much sharper than the original ~~hand~~-colored plate! This I propose to run in as a plate in the discussion of the question of publication of Thelypteris.

With kindest regards from all, and again assuring you of our deepest sympathy and anxiety,

Very sincerely yours,

M. L. Fernald

CAW/FMG



Fernald, Merritt Lyndon. 1929. "Fernald, Merritt Lyndon Jan. 19, 1929 [Fernald to C.A. Weatherby]." *Merritt Lyndon Fernald correspondence*

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