

Gen. Elym. Esq., March 11th, 1881.

My dear Mr. Deane:—

You remarked so pleasantly, in regard to my little effort with the Am. Rehearsal, I feel very much ashamed of myself for having allowed the occasion to pass unnoticed so long!

It might also be said that the writer is somewhat in arrears in other respects, your letter of October last having reached him while a field.

In my opinion it would have been far better to have acknowledged it then, rather than to have waited, for delays are sometimes dangerous as you doubtless know. Particularly so do I find this to be the case when wishing to recall to mind some of the experiences of any trip of last fall.

The Cairo District of Illinois, by which it is intended in this connection to include all of the bluff country of that section of the State as well, is, from a botanical point of view, a decidedly interesting field to visit. Though it is feared that an observer like myself may not possess the requisite knowledge, of its plant-life in general, to interest an advanced student like yourself. And whether I shall ever go so far as to include the herbaceous growth of the entire State its hard to say.

However, with respect to my own home county (DuPage) I have about concluded to study and collect everything of a plant nature - excepting possibly the fungi - that is found within its borders.

You perhaps are fully aware that my interest while south was centered on the trees & shrubs of that section - more particularly the former.

So then, what little there is to be said in regard to our Egyptian flora has especial reference to its trees.

On my way down I stopped off at Champagne, meeting there several of our prominent University men - Prof. Burdill, Blair, Forbes & Smith, whose names are doubtless familiar to you. The Museum and University Herbarium were inspected, but in the latter I found that many of the specimens were not as nicely prepared as I would like to see them.

From there I went direct to Cairo, & thence to Vienna, the seat of Johnson County, where headquarters were established practically for the next four weeks. During this time, however, a side trip of some weeks duration was made to Tunnel Hill on the divide between the headwaters of the Cache & Saline Rivers and another for the space of 10 days to Almustad on the Ohio River 20 miles southwest of Vienna.

In speaking of Cairo, it may be said that I took

advantage of a little time while there & walked down onto the "Point", being desirous of going to the extreme end of the state. The "Point" is, as you know, a low alluvial stretch of land which is subject to inundation by the periodical rises of the Ohio & Miss. Rivers, almost entirely worthless, so to speak, & clothed principally with cottonwood and Black willows, an occasional small Honey Locust is seen, while the undergrowth is a rank production of weeds, the Ambrosia standing very high in places.

A capital place for bird-migrants as I should judge though the list made during my short stay did not show up very well, & the following constitute I think about all that were seen: - Flicker (3); P.T. Hawk "P.T. Hummer"; Bronzed Grackle (2); Blue Jay "1"; Tufted Tit "1"; Yellowthroat "1"; Carolina Wren, & possibly a Redbird. At that time (Sept 29th) Geese & Ducks were flying southward.

The ride from Cairo to Vienna takes one up through much low country, many Pecan trees being observed from the car windows shortly after leaving Cairo. At Belknap we pass into & along side a cypress swamp & finally land on higher ground at Vienna, though there are quite a few small cypress brakes even in that vicinity.

The country is quite hilly & broken, but the greater part of its original timber growth has been cut away. The hillsides are bare in many places.

The town itself is not much to brag on being rather old & dilapidated, but there appears to be a growing tendency to spruce up a little.

Its streets, however, are excellent and during wet weather, of a protracted duration, must be well nigh impassable. A novelty there is in its sidewalks which are constructed entirely of oak & being raised well above the ground, so as to allow free circulation of air, they do not decay rapidly.

Still I met with many interesting tree forms in that locality as you may judge from the following list, quite a few of them being new to me for the first time, viz:—*Taxodium distichum*; *Juglans cinerea* & *nigra*; *Hicoria minima*, *ovata*, *laciniata* & *alba*; *Salix nigra*; *Betula nigra*; *Carpinus Caroliniana*; *Quercus alba*, *minor*, *macrocarpa*, *fla tan sides*, *emichauxii*, *rubra*, *velutina*, *falcata*, *palustris*, *macrocarpa*, *cinerea*; *Ulmus pubescens*, *americana* & *alata*; *Celtis occidentalis* and *mississippiensis*; *Prunus rubra*; *Liriodendron tulipifera*; *Asimina triloba*; *Sassafras sassafras*; *Liquidambar styraciflua*; *Platanus occidentalis*; *Crataegus crus-galli*; *Pomus serotina*; *Cercis canadensis*; *Rhus glabra* & *copallina*; *Evangium atropurpureum*; *Acer saccharum*, *saccharinum*, *rubra* & *negundo*.

Cornus florida; Nyssa sylvatica; Aspidyros virginiana;
Fragaria americana Hamamelis virginica & Ulmus americana.

I also found the Woodbine (Celastrus scandens) at Vienna but only in shrub form.

The additions to this list in the Tunnel Hill district, a rough & hilly locality, were Pyrus angustifolia;
Crataegus cordata; Prunus americana; Ulmus pennsylvanicus;
Gleditsia triacanthos; Asclepias tuberosa; Asalia speciosa
 (common); Vaccinium asporium; Myrica aspera
caroliniana; Ficus lutea & prunifolia; Ulmus
racemosa (?); Quercus acuminata; Fagus americana;
Ostrya virginiana; Aulus serrulata; Salix fragilis
Asplenium virginicum, the latter common 2 miles
 west of T. Hill station. I also found the Cornus and
Spice wood bushes quite plentiful along the little runs
 in that locality. A novel experience was the finding
 of the Button-bush (Cephalanthus) growing between boulders
 in a rocky ravine. I had heretofore regarded it as a
 longground species altogether.

Ulmus has been referred to previously, the Chestnut
 being the special desiderata that took me there.

Despite its great scarcity in this locality there is a question
 about its being a native of the state, but from the size of some
 of the trees, their manner of growth, & the places where found,
 there seems to be little grounds for not believing that it is indigenous.

in this one isolated locality.

For the botanist this is an exceptionally fine place. Nearly everything that has been mentioned thus far was found growing there with the addition of several other species. Of these the Blower Tree, White basswood, Pecan & Black Locust might be mentioned, the latter two no doubt of native growth. To give an idea of the richness of its tree flora, in kinds, let me state that in following down a ravine, from the house where I stopped, to the Ohio River, 52 species were found in going $1/4$ mile, making the largest list I have ever recorded within ~~so~~ ^{an} ~~so~~ limited area.

The Beech is common there, while the low bottoms on the Kentucky side give us several additional species, one or two of which I did not succeed in finding in Illinois.

Leaving Chestnut a brief stop was made at Vienna, thence on to Gorvick, in the Ozark range again, ^{for} a place by the way which is also noted for its scenic attractions, where I succeeded in finding the Shad bark, to Thermo on the Miss. River & finally to Mlin a saw mill town at the crossing of the I.C. & C.V. & L.R.R. in Pulaski County. Although strictly a business town, the latter settlement is surrounded by a country that possesses great attractions for the botanist, & possibly for the

ornithologist in season.

In that locality, where I established myself for a little over two weeks, several worthy additions were made to my list of trees, as for example the Swamp or Over-cup Oak (*Q. lyrata*) the Swamp and Thornless Locusts, Coffee bean, Privet, Swamp Tupelo, *Catalpa speciosa*, Willow Oak (a hybrid, by the way) and Swamp Cottonwood. We have here a great diversity of surroundings ranging in character from the low & almost continuously wet over-flowed lands, and swamps, to the steep and rocky hillsides.

Much of the neighboring country is yet a wilderness, while on the other hand large tracts of the original timber lands have been cleared & converted into extensive farms. Several days could have been spent very profitably at Gorwick & Thebes, but as the icy hand of winter already had begun to show itself, leaving a wreck wherever its death-dealing touch had been felt, I was forced to take my departure from Illin a few days before Thanksgiving, choosing my route homeward via St. Louis.

At Carbondale a stop of one night was made during which time I called on Prof. French of the Southern Normal School. His name is probably familiar to you through the bluff pen of the shooting star

(Dodgeath can) named in his 'Lovers'.

He is an authority on the plants of that section & regards the region round about Grand Tower on the Miss River as possibly the finest point for the botanist in the state. His herbarium work is most excellent, & perhaps the finest I have seen.

A visit of four days was made with Mr. Widmann at Old Orchard, Mo. An interesting half day was spent at Shaw's Garden, where we had the pleasure of meeting Prof. Trelease & at whose house we dined. He is truly an interesting man, well up in all lines of botanical research work. I wished to have him solve for me a hickory puzzle which he did very good naturally. He had some good stories to tell about the Harriman Alaskan Expedition of the members who constituted the party.

This outline, as you will notice, has but skimmed over the botanical features of the trip, with birds left out almost entirely, though I think you may gain possibly some idea of what was seen.

I should like to append some notes on the *Spartan* show, now being held in Chicago, but believe I've said enough. I must say, however, that the first intimation of Spring is here: 3 Bluebirds today. By the way, the *Trillium* fly-catching correction appeared in the *Wilson Bulletin* some months ago, the June number I think. With regards very sincerely, Very Truly Yours,



Gault, Benjamin T. 1901. "Gault(?), Benj. Mar. 11, 1901." *Walter Deane correspondence* –.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/159797>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/326594>

Holding Institution

Harvard University Botany Libraries

Sponsored by

IMLS

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.