

THE GRAY HERBARIUM OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Extent of the Collection.—The Herbarium, now including more than 625,000 specimens of plants, was founded and largely developed through the untiring efforts of Dr. Asa Gray. It has for many years been the most valuable collection of its kind in America, and has contributed, through the publications of its staff, more than any other establishment to the knowledge of American plants.

Scientific Services.—It is one of the regular duties of the Herbarium staff to answer gratuitously botanical questions received, and to give an expert opinion upon the identity of plants submitted to it. In this way the Herbarium renders valuable service in the various branches of economic and applied botany, such as pharmacy, horticulture, agriculture, and forestry, since in all these branches an accurate classification of plants is of great importance.

Constant Growth of the Collection.—In order to keep abreast with the present rapid advance of botanical exploration it is necessary to add annually a large number of carefully classified specimens to the Herbarium. Each year new regions are explored botanically and important sets of specimens are sold by the collectors. These sets, including the types of many new species, must be acquired when offered for sale, if at all, since they are quickly taken up by large herbaria. Should the Gray Herbarium be unable to secure such sets of specimens, it would suffer the same irreparable loss as a library which is obliged temporarily to suspend its purchases of restricted editions.

Research and Exploration.—Investigations of the Gray Herbarium staff have in recent years extended from Labrador to Brazil and included such diverse regions as Newfoundland, Sable Island, the Magdalens, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Idaho, Southern California, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Curaçao, British, Dutch and French Guiana, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru, all of which have yielded their quota of plants new to science and other discoveries of practical as well as

theoretical importance. Intensive work on regions near at hand has resulted in discoveries even more striking since in fields which had been thought exhausted. Thus a single season's close examination of Cape Cod by one of the most skilled of the Herbarium staff brought to light about 180 plants new to the region, 42 not previously known to occur in Massachusetts, and no less than 15 entirely new to science.

Publications.—The publications range from floras, technical monographs and extended bibliographies of high excellence to semi-popular accounts of discoveries of surprising diversity, such as the soil-preferences of plants, the historic development of floras, botanical evidence as to the site of the early Norse settlements in America, and proofs of post-glacial land-bridges along now submerged portions of the Atlantic coastal shelf.

Relations.—As one of the major botanical establishments of the world the Gray Herbarium stands in relations of mutual helpfulness to such well-known institutions as the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, the British Museum, the Museum of Natural History at Paris, as well as similar establishments at Geneva and elsewhere. In recent years it has been coöperating particularly with the New York Botanical Garden and the U. S. National Museum in various enterprises of tropical exploration. It should be remarked that of all these great botanical establishments the Gray Herbarium is almost the only one which does not enjoy governmental, state, or municipal aid.

To the Patrons of the Gray Herbarium.—The new endowment fund, recently and very gratefully received by Harvard University, while of the utmost importance in permitting an increase in the salaries of the teaching staff, does not supplement in any way the capital of the scientific establishments except in the case of a few specially restricted gifts. The income of the Herbarium is still essentially on the pre-war basis, while its expenses for specimens, instruments and other equipment, mounting paper, chemicals, and all supplies, books, periodicals, and printing have advanced from 30 to more than 100 per cent. Under these circumstances it will be readily understood that in spite of cautious management the un-

avoidable expenses of the establishment have now reached a point at which it will be needful to curtail the normal growth of the collections and restrict in important ways the undertakings of the staff unless its work can have somewhat increased support. Many persons have in the past aided the Herbarium by annual contributions. Without this assistance it would have been impossible for the Herbarium to have undertaken many scientific enterprises in exploration and publication which have been, with such aid, brought to successful and gratifying completion.

At this time scientific investigation in Europe is seriously crippled. This brings to American establishments an exceptional opportunity for important service in carrying forward work on problems of much interest and in many of their aspects of considerable importance to human welfare. From these considerations it is believed that the patrons who have in the past aided the Gray Herbarium will feel willing to continue and where possible *increase such assistance* during the present year, and that others may be inclined to contribute to maintain at its highest efficiency the work of this notable establishment.

NATHANIEL T. KIDDER, *Chairman.*
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*Members of the Visiting Committee
of the Gray Herbarium.*

Boston, March 20, 1922.

*Remittances should be addressed and checks drawn to the Gray Herbarium,
Cambridge, Mass.*

*Gifts to the Gray Herbarium are acknowledged in the Annual Reports of the
President and the Treasurer of Harvard College.*



Harvard University. 1922. "Gray Herbarium Mar. 20, 1922." *Walter Deane correspondence* –.

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