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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

Breston 4th August 1868.

Sir!

A long time has passed since I had the honour to write my last letter, although during that time it often was my intention to write. Such was particularly my intention after the completion of the Permian flora, three years ago, which has appeared in the *Paleogeographia* of Mr. Duerer and Meyer. In this work I spoke among other things on the right demands for the fossil flora, to be judge in the dispute existing at present between the followers of Duvrion and his opponents, particularly against Mr. Hooker, who wanted to deprive it of that right. All results of the fossil flora are yet too precarious, on account of the imperfect state of preservation in which the fossil remains of the plants are found. It is only relatively I agree with it, viz. in the only case in which the opinions are founded on the similarity of the exterior form. But if to this the most accurate details of the interior structure are added, this science, although numbering not more than forty years of age, may step forth, to be heard at least. Mr. Hooker does himself wrong by uttering that opinion, for who, after his excellent researches concerning the

Lepidodendron, would ^{express} ~~maintain~~ a doubt, that we are perfectly informed of the nature of the same, and the relation it has to the fruits of the ^{kindred} families of plants. In the above mentioned treatise I have ^{endeavored to show} from all known families of the fossil flora, chiefly from the wonderful genera of the Permian formation (for instance *Modiolaria* and *Calamites*), first in outline made known by Henry Cotton in the year 1832, by a possibly most accurate anatomical detail - ~~shown~~ ^{written}, that not only these families of the present time, which, like the large tribe of the firs, are found in the first terrestrial flora, perfectly correspond to those of the present time, but that as well others, like the *Calamagrostis* and *Cyperaceae*, appear in their oldest strata, which contain terrestrial plants, even in a higher developed state than they are met with at this day. The existence of signs of a transformation taking place by degrees, as is presumed by the theory of the eminent Mr Darwin, can therefore not be proven, and for this reason the fossil flora is ^{incapable} ~~unable~~ of to support his theory in any way. Continued researches have in a yet higher degree confirmed these results, and to this must be added the assertions I have made already in the year 1833 in a review of the flora contained in the Amber: that many plants of the tertiary flora remain quite unchanged, what, with regard to the animal world, has long since been proven. In the tertiary flora of Tschouditz, which I have ^{described} ~~published~~ in 1834, I ~~had~~ already proved these assertions, for instance for *Toxodendron distichum* and *Platanus occidentalis*, and in the Borestein flora (flora contained in ~~the~~ Amber ^{by} ~~me~~ I intend to publish in short a time, I will prove this furthermore, by accurate drawings of the originals, for a far greater number of plants, of the lower orders as well as of the higher: for Fungi, Lichens, Musci hepatici, frondosi, Coniferous trees (*Thuja occidentalis*, *Cupressus* etc.), and even for a plant of the Ericineae (*Andromeda encicoides*). In consequence of this the ^{conclusion is} ~~it must~~ be a matter of course,

is, that the existence of unchangeable kinds can not yet be doubted. But there
are not wanting proofs in the paleozoic flora. I will ^{not} refer to the differ-
ent species, ^{which} the Culmbed (Carboniferous or Mountain. Semetaria, Youngest Grauwacke, Rued.)
had in common with the Carboniferous formation, but only to the Neuropteris Lachii, a
plant of an infinitely old geological age, which is found quite unchanged, not only in the
Culmbed ~~and~~ Carboniferous formation, but also as ^{large as} ~~large as~~ in the Permian formations.

Thus it was of the highest interest to me, that You and ^{John} ~~the~~ Crawford, ^{as a meeting} ~~in~~ ^{at a meeting}
y^e the ~~Elkholms~~ ^{London} ~~London~~ ^{in which you refer} ~~referring~~ to the oldest fauna, which ~~you held~~ ^{you held} in the ~~scientific society~~ ^{scientific society}, expressed the
same opinions as ^{myself} ~~myself~~; for which reason I think fit to ^{make} ~~make~~ the communication above
if perchance You ^{we} ~~have~~ not taken notice of them. In the above mentioned work (Born
stein flora) I will amply explain my opinions by entering into all anatomical details, upon
which ~~the~~ more stress is to be laid, than on the mere external form. I intend also to set in
an other treatise ^{an} ~~an~~ ^{advocate} ~~advocate~~ ^{for} the fossil flora, which by the followers of Mr Darwin is
almost ignored, and to challenge the latter, not to ignore but to refute those facts, in
order that truth or error may come to light.

I ^{you} ~~hope~~ ^{to} accept these communications favourably and to reply, if possible, by a few lines. At
the same time I take the liberty of transmitting as well the printed catalogue of my paleozo-
logical collections and writings, as the account of the present state of the Botanical garden
at Breslau, which is already known to You, and leave it to You, to make any use whatever
You may think fit of my communications. Sincerely I regret ^{not being} ~~not~~ able to make my ap-
pearance at the next meeting of the British ~~naturalists~~ ^{Association} and
I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours

most obedient servant
H. R. Poppe Dr.