



Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
5th Floor, Hunt Library
Carnegie Mellon University
4909 Frew Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890
Contact: Archives
Telephone: 412-268-2434
Email: huntinst@andrew.cmu.edu
Web site: www.huntbotanical.org

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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.

A Monsieur
Monsieur Le Chevalier
Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire
Professeur au Muséum, au
Jardin du Roi, &c.
à Paris.

New York, 5 March 1821

To the Chevalier Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Professor in
the Museum of Natural History, at the Luxembourg-garden, &c.

For our friend Mr. J. Berthet, did me the honour
of presenting with your Philosophie anatomique,
containing a description of the respiratory organs
in relation to the determination and identity of their
bony pieces. This was accompanied by the analysis
of Doctor Flourens, wherein he considers particularly
the influence your work may have upon Anatomy
and Physiology, in their present state.

The doctrine is entirely new to me, that in
fishes, heretofore considered as quite mute, or at most
very dull of hearing, the auditory organ should be
more expanded and complete than in any other
class of animals; and that the gill-covers should
answer the double purpose of collecting
sounds, and of aiding respiration.

My pursuits having been particularly
devoted to Ichthyology, I was highly pleased with
the ingenuity and beauty of your discovery, that
in *Salmo* the operculum corresponds to the Sta-
tes

of mammiferous animals; the inter-operculum to the malleus; the sub-operculum to the os orbiculare; another portion of the sub-operculum to the incus; and the pre-operculum to the symphysis.

I beg you to accept the assurance of the agreeable surprise with which I have learned, that the four bones of hearing forming the gill-cover, are carried to the highest degree of development in fishes only; and descend from that elevation in the other classes of vertebrated animals, until in those which breathe atmospheric air, they become imperfect and rudimental.

I thank you for the gratification and instruction I have received from the perusal of the latter Memoirs.

These several communications hold a distinguished place among my scientific books; and have been seen by a number of my friends who have researched into the

I avail myself of the present opportunity
to convey to you, my profound and
entire respect

Samuel L. Mitchell

Professor of Botany and Materia Medica
in the University of New York; Surgeon
-General of the Militia; President of
the Central State - Medical Society; Pre-
sident of the Lyceum of Natural His-
tory, &c, &c. —