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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.

26 July, 1948 ~

from Oliver

Dear Miss Curtis,

^{Egypt}

According to my records I wrote you last quite 12 mos. ago, so its up to me to keep the correspondence alive! In your last there was mention of an imported professor of botany about to arrive. However that may be, I fancy overseas settlements, etc. are just a bit too prone to appoint outsiders instead of taking what lies on their doorstep: thus V.J. Chapman to Knoxville, N.Z. 2 years ago -

- Lately I turned up among a lot of miscellaneas in. bluish the encl. letter & "galleus" from one Maurice Weston, dating back more than 50 years, fr. your island. I remembered nothing whatever of this contact - the address, for all I know, may be that of the local lunatic asylum. Appaerly he had got hold of a copy of my 2nd of 1897! It may amuse you before consigning to the waste-paper-basket.

- I had 5 months in England, last year (Aug-Dec) Christmas eve. I lived getting back here on Limpsfield & was delighted mainly in my ho. at Limpsfield & was delighted with both the country & the bearing of the local people. It happened also to be a wonderful autumn for colour I left her no autumn colour! The house was a bit grimy after to a more years letting. So I got a local builder to make an estimate for redecorating. This was £125, but the

Gov^t office involved wd. Grant no license to proceed - beyond \$10 - wh. was of course useless. However with the New Zeal they relented, but by that time (owing to rise in wages) the charges had mounted to \$150. Thankfully apart from that all was ready for the next tenants, who appeared well satisfied & say it's the only clean house they have seen for ages. Also - I got my garden back - he has been doing extensive food production for the war office - & this makes a great difference.

The greatest outrage committed by a former tenant was to fell ~~an~~ a "Bramley seedling" apple tree in full bearing, just because he wanted to raise a few more cabbages. That tree, in a good year, wd. carry 1000 sizeable apples. A lesser outrage was due to another tenant (who later emigrated to the U.S.A. & became inaccessible) who fearing bombs might scatter pictures & endanger his (or her) life, shipped the lot & heaved them into the attic, anyhow. I found abt. 25% with broken glasses.

A cook has been secured from "Universal Nuts", in advance. She was a school-marm by profession; she was highly strong, could's cook at all, & always complained if left alone. Otherwise, she has the merit of being tidy & clean. After 6 wks. she rejoined her school, & I took no more risks & just did for myself - thanks to ~~the~~ Blaney Point training. I have a comfortable double

store, & when used to it, cd. cook quickly & comfortably without wasting too much current. There was a standing threat that current wd. be cut fr. 8 to 10 a.m., so I always had breakfast ready before 8. However, no cut came in my time. My sons now live at Haslemere & Kelsch (to Saxmundham), respectively. At Kelsch Phil has a matter of 12 acres, with a cow ("Miranda"), pigs, & lastings of milk. His wife, Audrey, has become an expert milker & sells in the local who is on the Bd. of Admiralty, has been appointed President of the R.N. College, Greenwich, as from 1st Oct. This I expect means that, for the period, the whole family will migrate to B. & that a temporary tenant for the house at Haslemere will have to be found. His 3 sons are all at school, the eldest now at Rugby. Early in the spring my sister sold their house at 1st Wood & bought one at Haslemere with 30 yds. of unexpired lease. Winifred celebrated the occasion by tumbling over in the snow posting a letter, breaking the l. femur bone just below the socket. It was a long illness, but she is about again & was able to pay a visit in the country in July. Prof Weiss alt. the same time broke an arm falling off the raised canopy at the entrance of his house. I was there in the autumn & thought it an absolute death-trap. Lots of oldish people I see know broke themselves up in this sort of way. There's nothing really in old age except that one has to be careful to restrain ones

is too much to know abt. insects. He is not prepared to estimate at 10 mil. specimens, & understands are far more common with their system.

Yardful around, & if possible make it a habit without veering on paleontologicalism - You w. deal of our recent botanical losses - J. J. Blackman last year, & now Potter & Bower; also Nancy Thompson, at St. Andrews, still in harness at 88 - At U.C. & most other places professors are evacuated at the age of 65.

Live a lot of little things in London here: on insect suits etc. I think of sending to the U.S.A., as England isn't particularly interested, whilst the U.S.A. has a few insects - Also a little study of Psyche - a small moth - the larvae of which

battles around itself a sort of 4-sided, pyramidal "log hut" - It feeds on *Atriplex Halimifera*, & alternately, *Petasma Ractan*, but in captivity will take other things - even *Ephedra* - The head of the larva is but level with the broad base of its



snout in length adds as sticks to its case. The head of the larva is beautifully marked - exactly like the h.d. of a kitten in miniature, whilst the post-oral somite is decorated with white lines just like Chinese ideographs. When several are being fed on a single branch in a glass of water they are apt to interfere with each other leading to most amusing battles (*Druckdruck* & *Druckdruck*). Tactics are complicated, as the larvae are vulnerable only at the unprotected head-end (i.e. at the base of the pyramid), but they can extrude 3 pairs of very sharp hook-shaped claws & know how to use them. Although lateral progression is limited to 1 mm. per second, they

can travel great distances (1 mm. per sec. = 12 ft. per hour). They sometimes stray & have to be captured again, as they are here too common in the field. Apart from ants, bees & wasps,

J. S. Oliver