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A Notable Botanical Career

Charles E. Bessey

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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A NOTABLE BOTANICAL CAREER

I HAVE before me the "Report of the Botanist" to the Regents of the University of the State of New York, bearing date of January 1, 1868, covering less than two pages, and signed by Charles H. Peck. There is internal evidence that his services began July 1, 1867, the writer reporting what he had accomplished in the half year since that date. A year later the "Report of the Botanist" covered about 80 pages and included a short general statement followed by (A) List of Species of Which Specimens Have Been Mounted; (B) Plants Collected; (C) List of Species of Which Seeds Have Been Collected; (D) Specimens Obtained by Contribution and Exchange; (E) Edible Fungi; (F) Species Growing Spontaneously in the State and Not Before Reported. This general sequence of topics has been characteristic of the long line of annual reports that followed these made forty-six years ago.

The latest report in this series was issued September 1, 1913, and was entitled the "Report of the State Botanist for 1912." Like its predecessors in recent years it contains an introductory general statement followed by (A) Plants Added to the Herbarium; (B) Contributors and Their Contributions; (C) Species not Before Reported; (D) Remarks and Observations; (E) New Species of Extralimital Fungi; (F) Edible Fungi; (G) Poisonous Fungi; (H) *Crataegus* in New York. Four plates (of fungi) and an index complete the pamphlet of one hundred and thirty-seven octavo pages.

As one looks back over this long series of reports, all from the hand of one man, Dr. Peck, he is powerfully impressed with the thought of what such a life of scientific activity has meant for the development of one branch of knowledge in North America. I was a young teacher just entering upon the work of enumerating the plants of Iowa when these reports began to appear, and remember with gratitude the help they gave me, and the still more helpful correspondence which begin-

ning then has continued to the present. And this is not an individual experience, as may be seen by running over the lists of those who sent their difficult specimens to him for determination, and reported by him under the heading of "Contributors and their Contributions." The younger botanists of to-day have grown up with an abundance of books on the fungi, and with competent mycologists in so many of the colleges and universities that it has been as easy for them to learn the names of the fungi as of the flowering plants. They have not found it necessary to send their specimens to a far-away specialist for determination. So we should not expect them to have the same feeling with regard to a career like Dr. Peck's, as those of us have whose work began half a century ago. Yet for their sakes we may well pause here to enumerate some of the principal things in this man's life.

Charles Horton Peck was born March 30, 1833, at Sand Lake, N. Y. He graduated from Union College in 1859, with the degree of bachelor of arts, and later he was given the degrees of A.M. and D.Sc. by the same institution. For several years (1859 to 1867) he followed the teacher's profession, first in the Sand Lake Collegiate Institute, and later the Albany Classical Institute. Then he began his real life work as botanist for the New York State Museum, at Albany, and this has continued until the present time.

And now while we write the saddening word comes of such increasing physical infirmities due to advancing years as may well require him to rest from his long years of labor. There are to-day many botanists all over the country who will read this latest report with old-time interest, added to a personal regard for the veteran who has long occupied so prominent a place in the botanical field. It is given to few men to prepare such a report as this latest one at the age of four score years. It is the fortune of few to have erected so notable a monument as he has in the series everywhere known as "Peck's Reports."

CHARLES E. BESSEY
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA