

Halifax March 1850

Dear Sir

I duly received yours of July 2, and am much obliged by your kindness in the matter of my paper, as well as for your instructions respecting transmission of future ones.

I have just read with much pleasure your second visit. I do not know if I sent you a copy of a paper which Garrison printed for me, on the Reproduction of burned forests. I shall enclose one in a newspaper. I have since made some new notes on the same subject. One of them may perhaps interest you. You have likely observed or read of the curious structure of the spores of Equisetum. They have four filaments which, when dry, spread out and serve as wings, supporting the spore till it touches water or damp ground, when they instantly cling closely round the spore, and do not again expand unless they are again dried. By means of this curious structure, I have seen acres of recently burned ground in damp situations, sown with young equiseta almost as regularly as if

done by hand. May not the Calamites have been provided with similar means for occupying the recently elevated mud flats of the Carboniferous period.

I observed this summer that much of the silt of the Bay of Fundy marsh, had lost its red colour, and contains sulphuret instead of peroxide of Iron; like the red mud of Piton which I referred in the paper on the Colouring matter of Sandstones. Most of what is called "Blue marsh" owes its colour to this change.

I have for the last two months been giving a course of lectures on Natural History in Dalhousie College Halifax, to an audience partly of the college boys, and partly of the people of the city. The class is not large, the taste for Nat History here not being very strong. I shall however I hope be able to increase the desire for such information.

I have not seen Mr Brown for some time, but have read his paper on the Lepidodendria, which I like very much. De Jussieu has invented a new method of making gas for illumination from bitumen, and is now exhibiting it here.

Yours
G. M. S. Zell

With sincere good wishes to you
I am yours respectfully
W. Dawson

done by
them
the
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Copy
Letter to Syell
March/50

Sir Charles Syell, F.R.S.
11 Harley St
London

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