

Smithsonian Institution
Washington May 2^d 1872

Prof Dawson

Dear Sir —

Your letter of the 20th Ap. came to hand in due time. I thank you for the suggestions in regard to the fossil plants, which will be very useful to me. I have packed up to be sent to you by express, some of the best duplicates I found, of the fern frond which the photograph I sent to you was taken. The largest specimen, you will observe, does not show the inner pinnae so distinctly divided as the one represented by the photograph. The specimens I have here, however, seem to me to show that this is due to variation, or to the specimens belonging to different parts of the frond, as there are all gradations in this character. The package will go to you free of charge, and you can retain the specimens for your own cabinet, if you wish to do so. I regret that I have no duplicates of the others for you.

If these specimens should afford you any additional light in regard to the affinities of the species, I would be much obliged to you for a brief note ~~reporting~~ on this point, at your earliest convenience.

It may be of some interest to you to know, that I had a letter from Mr. Lesquereux recently, in which he mentions having received a note from Schimper in reply to a letter Lesquereux had written to him about ^{the name} Palaeopterus. He says Schimper seems to regret very much the occurrence of the errors you have pointed out in his work respecting American Devonian species &c. Sch. also adds that he did not consider giving Palaeopterus a well founded genus, but that he should not seriously object to the substitution of your name Archaeopterus for the form he (Schimper) had proposed to call Palaeopterus. Schimper says, that the species Halliana (= Sphenopt. laxa, Hall) may be a good species, and may be called Archaeopterus or Palaeopterus Halliana. But why not retain its original specific name laxa in that case, if there is no other species of that name in that genus?

Very truly yours, in haste
J. B. Meek

Mark
May 192

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