

maintained that the plants are of Silurian age. Could this claim be substantiated it would make this fossil flora of unparalleled interest, for not only are Silurian plants extremely rare, but those that have come to hand have all been of a very fragmentary and unsatisfactory nature, so that palaeontologists have but little reliable information about the plants of that epoch.

It is not, however, only to palaeontologists that the question of the age of these beds is a critical one. Local stratigraphy is still undetermined, after decades of arguments and work in the field.

Notwithstanding this double interest in the beds, there still is wanting a monograph on the plants themselves—a monograph with modern illustrations which shall disentangle the Little River plants from those of unquestioned Devonian age, and illustrate the various forms in such a manner that any palaeobotanist in whatever part of the world he lives, may be in a position to judge the facts for himself.

The feeling prevails among palaeobotanists in general that in his paper on Devonian and Upper Silurian Flora, Dawson described two quite distinct floras, though in his monograph they are inextricably mixed. This feeling is correct, and of Dawson's specimens one set represents a true Devonian flora and the other was composed of the plants from the St. John Little River group.

So long ago as 1899, Dr. Whiteaves in his address (Whiteaves, 1899, p. 216) quoted Dr. Kidston as saying in an unpublished report "a thorough revision of the work (on the St. John flora) especially in the light of subsequent collections and possible discovery of more perfectly preserved specimens, seems most desirable, and also that a better series of figures be published."

In the present paper, while I shall not omit mention of the geological bearing of the subject, from time to time, I am, as a palaeobotanist, submitting an account of the fossil flora of the Little River or "Fern Ledges" beds of St. John. It should be noticed further that the present work is definitely and deliberately confined to an account of the "Fern Ledges" flora, and, beyond casual mention, it will not discuss the question of the identity of these beds with others (those of Horton and Riversdale, for example), though it should here be pointed out that