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SYSTEMATIC BOTANY.

W. J. BEAL.

Many years ago, I gave living grasses to several colleges. One professor of agriculture made some experiments and wrote reports. He afterwards told me that he had made a mistake or had taken one grass for the other.

After his death, I bought for the herbarium about 2,500 fungi that G. H. Hicks had collected. He had large numbers of single leaves or parts of leaves as hosts for some fungi, quantities of parts of leaves of many species of *Carex*, apparently all of them not correctly named—he was mistaken in supposing that all were the hosts of *Puccinia Caricis*. I threw all that lot away as worthless.

The student of parasitic fungi must know for sure the names of the hosts. In many cases this knowledge means a lot of systematic botany. The person who looks after the lists of weeds and grasses, trees and shrubs for an agricultural college is helpless without systematic botany. The same is true of the student of ecology. I could give the name of a professor who once showed me specimens which he had collected and written about, some of which he named wrong.

In another case a student had written a thesis for a second degree on Bermuda grass, while his plant was *Sisyrinchium Bermudianum* (?), a plant of the Iris family, a horrid blunder. His committee did not consult a botanist.

I presume other botanists have adopted a scheme which I have followed in collecting parasitic fungi, viz., in starting out to collect have one or more lists of hosts to look for and then look for the parasite.

In this short paper I have said enough to show the mistakes in ignoring the ability to identify seed-plants with certainty.

Amherst, Mass.