

Riksmusei  
Botaniskt-Paleontologiska  
Afdelning.

Adress:  
Vetenskaps-Akademien, Stockholm.

Nathorst

11 Augt 1886

Dear Sir William,

Very many thanks for your kind letter which I will reply at once. Are you quite sure that the thin film, which ~~is~~ covers some specimens of Spirophyton is really of organic origin? I possess beautiful flat specimens from a white Tertiary sandstone at Vienna, which ~~seem~~ are dark-coloured, but this colour is not due to organic matters but to a dark-greyish argillaceous film. These same specimens do also traverse the rock in a spirally position, but there exists certainly no stem. I have not yet been able

To get a corresponding spiral  
structure through the rock, but  
the other <sup>externally</sup> structures will radi-  
ally be produced on true mecha-  
nical way.

I have discussed the  
question concerning ~~the~~ <sup>Prototaxites</sup>  
~~and~~ ~~Stromatolites~~ and Stromatolites with  
the well known algologist  
Dr V. Wittrock. He seems in-  
clined to believe that the  
former should be an alga  
belonging to the fucean  
or laminarian groups. At  
all events he does not believe  
that it can belong to any  
other class of plants. But  
as we have only had access  
to figures it will be well  
to wait with any conclusive



opinion until we have seen the specimens, which you have so kindly promised to forward to me.

Are you quite sure that *Prototaxites* is a land plant? I am informed from your "Fossil plants of the Devonian and upper Silurian of Canada" that you consider the stems as drifted, and, as you know, the stems of the great algae of the Southern Pacific do really be met with as drift-wood.

Now it seems not impossible that such stems should be carried from the sea in some ~~dry~~ estuary, where they could be embedded together with the remains of true

land-plants. This is only a  
question, which no one will  
be more able to ascertain  
than yourself.

I will be most thankful  
indeed for an abstract of  
what you may say on the  
subject trails versus algae  
at Birmingham, and I am  
most obliged to you for  
your kindly mentioning my  
works.

Yours very truly  
Al. S. Hitchcock.