Ans. Feby 5th 1833.

Nov. 19th

Dear Sir,

I have just found in looking into my attic, a fragment shoot of the Ficus Indica,

— "not that kind for fruit renowned,
But such as at this day to Indians known
In Western Ind. or Deccan spreads her arms,
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bending twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillar'd shade, —
High over-arch'd, and echoing walks between:
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loop-holes cut through thickest shade." —

The specimen wh. accompanies this, — I cut from a tree growing upon a plain in Lr. Egypt; one is more attracted by the strangeness of the sister grove, than by any beauty either in outline or foliage; — but I wish I could have transported to you a bread-fruit-tree, — wh. I think boasts the most beautiful structure of leaf I have ever noticed — I do

with remember to have seen any representation wh. seemed to do any justice to the grace, colouring, and whole appearance of this elegant vegetable production. —

Natural History wh. I so much delight in, has the past few months been so excluded from my thoughts, that I hardly presume to take her name upon my lips. I still hope better things of the future. —

After such an acknowledgment of defection from the cause of Natural science, I must not expect favor from one of her faithful devotees — so that I am constrained to make my communication brief & confine to very foreign topics. —

Respectfully — Sir,

D. L. Dix.

Professor —
John Torrey —
New York —
N. Y. —

Steamer – River Delaware –

Dr. Torrey –

Dear Sir – I this morning received from the marshes below Philadelphia some specimens of the Lotus – in bud – the flowers being too large to take with these I forward to you <u>note</u> in the order I wish but accommodating myself to circumstances. As you doubtless are aware, the plants were originally brought by the elder Bartram from Florida and planted on the marshes south of Philadelphia – where they now flourish admirably. Thousands are now in flower. I cut one the Corolla of which measured 13 inches in circumference – and a leaf rising on a stem seven feet measured <u>6</u> feet in circumference,

beautiful flowers. I have ordered seeds collected in September when they will be fully ripe — and will send a parcel to St. John — I regret my inability to secure fine specimens of this very beautiful floral production.

The Mother of the Bowl

permits my using the pen advantageously, and I only add the hope that you may have pleasure in getting the birds which I forward — when I have found will expand in water if placed in a cool and rather dark place —

Respectfully, D. L. Dix.

Nelumbium Luteum — Sacred Bean, — Water Chinquapin.

Leaf varies in size, measuring from two and a half to seven feet in circumference; of a fine green; veined, peltate, resting upon a ligneous stem, from two thirds to an inch in diameter when fully grown. Leaves rise singly five or six from each root, ascending through and above the water, usually floating; usually two or three feet above the surface. When plucked and exposed but short time to the sun and air they shrink rapidly, and assume a yellowish dull color. In texture they resemble those of the Arum Esculentum.

Flowers of a pale straw color, of a most exquisite fragrance, resembling those of the Nymphaeaceæ or Water Lilies of New England, but much larger: I have measured many ten inches in diameter; and commonly seen eight inches. Buds from four to five inches long before unfolding. ~~at all.~~ Seed vessel three and four inches in diameter, and contains an acorn-shaped fruit; from ten to thirty in each pericarp. In taste the fruit resembles the chestnut, especially when roasted, — and like the large roots or tubers, abound in farina.

The tubers bind with a vast quantity of numerous fibres which form a sort of network beneath the water in the deep land. They are easily transplanted, and have been established in several localities adjacent to Philadelphia as Chester, Burlington, &c, and in New Jersey, where they thrive well.

Mr. Townsend Sharpless, Merchant, of Philadelphia first called my attention to this really magnificent and stately plant and flower. It is found in the creeks and pools below the city, upon the estate owned by Lord Ashburton. It is not indigenous, but I have been unable to account for its first growth there in a wholly satisfactory manner. Some assert that Bartram, more than sixty years since, brought it from Florida — and planted here both the roots and the seeds. Again others assert traditionary knowledge quite different, attempting to convince the eager inquirer that it originated in ballast thrown out from a vessel which arrived at an equally remote period from Calcutta: others again declare that a vessel from the West bore the seeds and cast them with other refuse at chance upon the shores of the Delaware near its present habitat.

I have not leisure to bestow time upon clearing up this mooted point which I think capable of elucidation through searching inquiry. —

In the Lands, in the western part of Ohio, is a smaller variety of the Nelumbium; flowers of a pure white. In the Lakes of Western Illinois, opening laterally into the Mississippi — specimens may be collected of a fine variety; — flowers deep straw color. In the Bayous of Western Tennessee and Mississippi it is found affording flowers of a dull red color. Size of corolla, leaf, and fruit about the same as those produced in Eastern Pennsylvania. It is found near Cuvotton, Kentucky, of a pure white. — Besides the above localities I am not acquainted with the growth of the Nelumbium in North America. —

D. L. Dix.

Communicated
J. Pepper Henry and
Pepper Torrey.