

Phyllanthus Carolinianus, *Euphorbia polygonifolia*, *Ipomea Pes-capræ*, and *Batatas littoralis*. The last is in the same genus with the sweet potato which it closely resembles in flower and mode of growth. The leaves are thick but rather small, and probably present as great variety of form as any known plant. The daylight fails us ere we finish our search, the moon has risen, and the light-house fires begin to shine through the darkness. A parting stroll along the shore and we will bid it farewell. The sandy waste gleams white in the moonlight with a cold wintry aspect. Listening to the voices which arise from the dark abyss of waters, we hear tales of centuries past, when quaintly built ships from Spain and France sought these shores and upon them landed mailed warriors and adventurous cavaliers. For more than three centuries the armies of foreign nations fought for possession of the "flowery land," while the title of each was disputed by a warlike race of Indians. But they have all passed away, and of all scarcely a relic remains. This bloody epoch in the history of Florida is ended and this favored region, where so much of human life and energy has been wasted, has at last become, as designed by nature, an asylum for suffering humanity. Thousands do now resort to this land of perpetual verdure, seeking, not like De Leon, for a fountain of immortal youth but for renewed health and prolonged life.

ALTERNANTHERA LANUGINOSA IN KANSAS.—Among some collections made by Mr. I. C. Martindale and myself in Central Kansas last summer, I find *Alternanthera lanuginosa* of Torrey in the Mexican Boundary Survey. I am not quite sure of the location, but it was between Fort Harker and Fort Hayes. I have seen this enumerated in no list of Kansas Plants, and I suppose it has not been found anywhere near so far north before.—THOMAS MEEHAN, *Germantown, Pa.*

BENTHAM ON NOMENCLATURE.—In the *American Journal of Science and Arts* for April, Dr. Gray gives a review of Bentham's "Notes on *Euphorbiaceæ*," in which some remarks on nomenclature are made. They are so timely and interesting that we cannot refrain from publishing them.

The general laws of nomenclature of our day, and the principles on which they rest, are laid down in the code which was reported by Alphonse DeCandolle to the Paris International Convention, in the year 1867, and being approved, was published with a commentary in the autumn of that year, and in an English translation early in the following year. The laws, without the commentary, were printed in

this Journal for July, 1868. The ten years succeeding have tested, somewhat thoroughly, the questions (nearly all of minor moment) upon which differing usages prevailed; and though one or two points are still mooted, the great majority of phænogamous botanists are coming to be of one mind and practice. But, as Mr. Bentham remarks: "The result has not been quite effectual in checking the ever-increasing spread of confusion in synonymy. Besides the young liberal-minded botanists who scorn to submit to any rule but their own, there are others who differ materially in their interpretation of some of the laws, or who do not perceive that in following too strictly their letter instead of their spirit, they are only adding needlessly to the general disorder. In the application as well as the interpretation of these rules they do not sufficiently bear in mind two general principles: first, that the object of the Linnæan nomenclature is the ready identification of species, genera, or other groups for study or reference, not the glorification of botanists; and secondly, that changing an established name is very different from giving a new name to a new plant."

It is to the latter point that this most experienced and even-minded botanist addresses himself. "The rule that long-established custom amounts to prescription, and may justify the maintenance of names which form exceptions to those laws which should be strictly adhered to in naming new plants, is unfortunately now frequently ignored. The law of priority is an excellent one; and when a genus or species has been well defined by an early botanist in a generally accessible work, but has subsequently been neglected, and the plant became known under other names, it is well that the original one should be restored. On the other hand it creates nothing but confusion to suppress a generic name, well characterized and universally adopted by long custom, in favor of a long-forgotten one, vaguely designated in an obscure work, out of the reach of the great majority of botanists. The greater number of Necker's genera have been so imperfectly characterized, with so absurd a terminology, that they are quite indeterminable; and his names deserve to be absolutely ignored, except in the very few cases where Jussieu or other early French botanists have succeeded in identifying them, and corrected their characters; but even then it is doubtful whether these names should not bear the date of the correction, rather than of the original work. Adanson's "Familles," with all the inconveniences of its form and absurd orthography, is much more scientific, and many of his genera are well defined, and have therefore been properly adopted."

Let us here interject a practical application. There is an old and well established genus *Smilacina*, of Desfontaines. There is a much older genus *Tovaria*, of Ruiz and Pavon, founded in 1794, ever since accepted, and without a synonym. Recently Mr. Baker of Kew, finding that Necker has a *Tovaria*, published in 1790, and therefore four years earlier than that of Ruiz and Pavon, takes up this name in place of *Smilacina*, and leaves a new name to be made for the long-established homonymous genus. It will be said that the rule of priority demands the sacrifice, and that the identification of Necker's genus is sure, because the three Linnæan species of *Convallaria* which properly constitute Desfontaines' *Smilacina* are referred to it by name; and that, though it be a case of *summum jus summa injuria*, the injurious consequence is a necessity. But Mr. Bentham's characterization of Necker's work applies even to this instance. Twice over Necker's *Tovaria* is described as having a perianth of five sepals, and the berry is said to be one-celled. Desfontaines' *Smilacina*, on the other hand, is correctly characterized. Moreover, if we do not include this among those names of Necker which, Mr. Bentham says, "deserve to be absolutely ignored," we may yet find that the law of priority has another claim on it. In 1763, a much better botanist than Necker, viz: Adanson, founded a genus *Tovara* (essentially the same name as *Tovaria*) on *Polygonum Virginianum*, L., which is not unlikely to be taken up as a genus; and the name would supersede Necker's by the same rule that Necker's supersedes Desfontaines' *Smilacina*. All things considered, then, this is a case for the application of the homely but useful rule *Quieta non movere*; and much of Mr. Bentham's pertinent advice may be condensed into this maxim. But there remain nice questions to settle with regard to the names and extent of the liliaceous genus.

"The representing the Greek aspirate by an *h* was generally neglected by early botanists; but now, ever since DeCandolle altered *Elichrysum* into *Helichrysum*, modern purists have insisted upon inserting the *h* in all cases; and this has been so far acquiesced in that it is difficult now to object to it, though it has the effect of removing so many generic names to a distant part of all indexes, alphabetical catalogues, etc. Admitting the propriety of adding the aspirate in new names, I had long declined to alter old names on this account; now, however, I find myself compelled to follow the current," which is, on the whole, regrettable, as Alph. DeCandolle would hold out with him. See the latter's comment on his Article 66, in which the remark is dropped that, "we do not see why we should be more

vigorous than the Greeks themselves." Oddly enough, these same writers who must supply the aspirate to the *e* omit it from the *r*, and write *rachis* and *raphe*, instead of *rhachis* and *rhaphe*,—which is exasperating to lovers of uniformity.

SOME NEW MUSCI, by C. F. AUSTIN.—NECKERA (ORTHOSTICHELLA) LUDOVICÆ, C. M.—Muller's diagnosis of this species was founded on depauperate sterile specimens. It was found in fine condition in East Florida two years ago, by Capt. J. Donnell Smith, where it appears to be abundant. It is *robust* and quite different in appearance from *N. cymbifolium*, the stems being longer and usually furnished with numerous short branches. Leaves fulvous green, abruptly acuminate, papillose; cells linear, flexuose. Perichæcial leaves with much elongated, abrupt hair-like eroded points. Some of the paraphyses leaf-like. Capsule elliptico-ovate, erect, tapering at the base, narrowed at the apex, solid, smooth, on a stout minutely roughened pedicel about 6 lines long; annulus 0; operculum convex or very shortly rostellate; peristomal teeth short and imperfect, linear, hyaline, subpapillose, incurved; calyptra with erect hairs.—*N. cymbifolium* is also abundant in East Florida, but has not yet been found in fruit.

HYPNUM (RHYNCHOSTEGIUM?) CALOOSIENSE, n. sp.—*Antoicum*, prostratum; caule intricato 2–3 uncias longo sat copiose subpinnatim ramoso paraphyllato, foliis sub-complanatis late suboblique ovatis subacuminatis, margine integerrima apicem versus obsolete serrulata plana vel inferiori versus basin late incurva, costa gemella pro more distincta longiuscula haud raro ad medium producta, cellulis per laxis rhomboideo-fusiformibus rectis; paraphylliis conspicuis longe subulatis subfasciculatis; capsula late ovali in pedicello lævi subunciali pendula siccitate sub ore lato valde constricta basi valde obtusa: flores cauligeni parvi; bracteis acuminatis, acumine recurvo; paraphysibus paucis brevibus.

Low hummocks, along the Caloosahatchie River, Florida, March, 1878. J. D. S. and C. F. A.

In some respects like both *H. deplanatum*, SCHIMP. and *H. micans*, SWARTZ; but it is readily distinguished from the former by its *antoi-* u/ cious inflorescence, shorter pointed entire leaves, and much longer entire paraphyllia; from the latter by its more obsoletely serrated leaves, and by the presence of paraphyllia on the stem; and from both by its darker green color, subpinnately and more copiously branched stems, much more loosely areolated leaves with the lower



Meehan, Thomas. 1879. "Alternanthera lanuginosa in Kansas." *Botanical bulletin* 4(5), 158–161. <https://doi.org/10.1086/325231>.

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