

Mr. H. C. Watson has marked for me
the British Flora, & the same results
is given. I know how vague all
such results must be & these
[should the fallacy be apparent to you, I will be most grateful
may be some fallacy in the
result, but I cannot detect
it; & am inclined to believe
that the above proposition may
be true; but I shall I
nevertheless try to test it &
other means. - Pray accept
of true & cordial thanks for
all your very great kindness,
& believe me, your very truly

(L. Darwin)

Have you seen DeCandolle's new
great work on Geograph. Distrib.
Hooker thinks very well
of it. -

10

Green Farm, Bromley Heath
Aug. 24th

My dear R. Gray

I received your letter about a fortnight
ago & immediately forwarded it
on to Hooker. He since then has
started for - I was in Germany with
Dr. Lindley's eldest son. -

I am sorry you sh. have had such
trouble about the *Oxycoccus*, but it
was not my causing.

And now I really hardly know how
to thank you enough for the very
great trouble which the list of
"close species" must have caused
you. - What knowledge & labour &
judgment is condensed in that
little sheet of note-paper! I fear
the you will think the Biot not
at all worth the labour; but I

can only say that if I could have done
it myself, I would have done it, had
it caused me ten times the labour
which it must have caused you.
I had met with a remark by Fries
that the species of large genera are
more closely related to each other,
than are the species of small
genera. I consulted a very good
entomologist, & Hortal & Bertham, &
they did not at all believe in
this. But several facts & considerations,
nevertheless, made me think that there
might be some truth in it; and
all general statements of such kind
it is my duty in my collection, settling
sort of work to test. It occurred to
me that if I could get some good
systematists, not species-splitters, to
mark (without the need being known)

the close species in a list; then if I counted
the average number of the species in
such genera, & compared it with
the general average [for this end
all the genera with single species
have to be omitted; & I have omitted
Salix & Carex also] of the species to
the genera in the same country; it
would, to a certain extent, tell
whether or not the close species
occurred in the larger genera.
Now in your No. 3 list (Salix & Carex
being omitted) there are 115 genera, &
there have 6.87 species to genera;
whereas in your Manual (omitting Salix
& Carex & all genera with single species)
the average is 4.67. So that it
seems that when many ~~the~~ species
forms are allied, making what is
called a genus, some of them are
apt to be more closely allied
than ^{are the species} ~~are~~ in the smaller genera.

P.S. Gray 10

As it is ten to one you will
not be able to give me any
facts on the following head, I
venture to put it before
you for the chance. -

I have met several (chiefly amongst
animals) cases, so many that I can
hardly think it purely accidental,
in which, when ~~an organ~~
~~character~~ The species of a genus
differed in some organ or
part, which is usually constant
in the species of the same genus,
that one or more of the
species individually varied in
some degree in this same
organ or character. Thus to
give a very bad example, I

remembers seeing it somewhere
opened the position of
the embryos differed in a very
unusual manner in the species
of *Helianthemum*; & hence,
if there be any truth in
the above rule, some of the
species ~~might~~ might be
expected to vary in this

same respect. —

I can find examples in animal kingdom
in *Pygmaea* (a unipede) the opercular valves
(usually ^{very} constant) differ wonderfully in the
different species, & in some of the
species, ~~these~~ valves, (usually so constant)
vary in the most perplexing manner,
so that they differ more in the same
species, than often in different species
of different genera. —



Darwin, Charles. 1855. "Darwin, Charles Aug. 24, 1855." *Charles Darwin letters to Asa Gray*

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