

November 13 1891

Dear Prof. Sargent,

I submit That it is not a question of scholarship that we have to decide but one of an author's right.

Brown wrote Notholaena when he established his genus and the Paris Code declares That no one has the authority to alter an author's name however ill-chosen it may be, and ^{I believe that always} it has ~~always~~ been ^{the rule} ~~the rule~~ that a name once written and established by proper publication, whether correctly or incorrectly written is unalterable.

In Brown's case it cannot be said that he either chose

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an improper name or mis-
-spelled ~~an~~ proper one since
The original Greek admits of
both renderings

Brown chose the simpler
form and it should remain
undisturbed.

We have no more right to
substitute a different orthogra-
-phy for Brown's than Fée
had to change the specific
name of *Polytrichum Robertianum*
, or than those botanists have
who persist in writing
Botrychium virginicum for *B.*
virginianum.

I know very well the custom
abroad, and the sanction which
it receives from some names
high in authority, but that
does not make it right.

Wrong does not become right
by ^{virtue of} ~~through~~ any author's ~~high~~ stand-

ing and knowledge, nor has any one a right to shelter behind such a plea.

American botanists are right in adopting Brown's orthography and writing Notholaena ..

It was so established by Brown in 1810, and the Ch does not appear until 1824, when Kaulfuss used it for the first time.

Sachs writes Nothochlaena, De Bary Notholaena and Goebel Nothochlaena; - why then should we go abroad where ^{absolute} uniformity does not exist when we have absolute uniformity at home based on what is right! It seems to me that the current should flow ^{all} in this direction and I am unwilling to be quoted ^{differently} as

favoring anything different -
Very truly yours

Gen. E. Davenport



Davenport, Geo. E. 1891. "Davenport, George E. Nov. 13, 1891 [to C. S. Sargent]." *Asa Gray correspondence*

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