

926 Grand Ave
Rockford Ills
Jan 14 /11

Mr, dear Mr Watson

In handing you the
list of Salis for the new ed of the Manual
I wish to say a few words about what I
have done - with the understanding right at
the start that this letter is not to be
tucked away somewhere in the Museum
as a kind of personal commentary on the
whole performance - I would like to write too
freely for that. There is no person upon
whose criticism I should so readily feel
like doubting and revising my own opinions
as your own - certainly no one to whom
I can trust so much to correct any
imperfections in literary style - In a
matter of fact you would not have had
me write the Salis if you did not trust
my judgment - in a matter of treatment
I have by no means the experience of a
constant writer like yourself - All this
is a long prelude to my few words -

The two main sections are briefly and
yet fully defined - I would leave

adopted Fries name Amerina for the
first if I could have found another
equally good, for the second but
undersome Diandrae won't work -
- there are too many diandrous species
in the other group -

My first division under § 1 dominates
S. longifolia - by a good tangible character
- at the same time leaving all the other
species with capsules glabrous -

The next subdivision by the number of
stamens I do not like but it is the
best that can be hit upon to separate
our native species from the introduced
fragilis - It is best to avoid sectional
characters drawn from the male but in
this case it is unavoidable - as I imagine
it also must have appeared to Mr. Carey

Don't be dismayed when you strike my
first description S. nigra - it has given
lots of bother and is as good now as I
can make it: - The forms are so variable
and so difficult to define in a few
words - The remark about V. Hardi is
not wholly superfluous - it gives emphasis
to the fact that the leaves bear a close
enough likeness to S. cordata to deceive

even Andersson! Let me beg of you
to admit the way in which I have
given authors names after reduced
species - following in this respect
Hookers Student Flora - Among the
Willows I do not see what else I can
do. There are some reduced species where it
is not certainly known to whom the credit
of a first reduction really belongs. Besides
it saves space

S. alba var vitellina L. (sp.)

S. alba var vitellina, Koch. - (*S. vitellina* L.)

I think I have the species in a nice
natural - linear - arrangement
nigra - among *Dalman* - *lucida* - *fragilis* - *alba* -
longifolia - *Longifolia* really belongs
to this section - but deserves a separate
group - Now about the note after
S. fragilis - it is the briefest and seems
to me the best way to dispose of
Russelliana - *fragilis viridis* &c. - instead
of attempting separate descriptions - would
you write Note before or let it stand
as a paragraph under the last species of
the group?

Notwithstanding the fact that we have
only one spec of *S. Babylonica* I think

it should be regarded as a deviation -
I am assured that when a stream in
Pennsylvania runs 9 or miles through
a trackless mountain forest. its banks
are lined with *S. Babylonica* -

Order 2 Caprales Tormentosa - Caprales
glabrous seems at a glance very artificial
- but it divides our species decemally -
without doing violence to the natural
sequence - brings the alpines where
they belong &c. - It wouldn't work at all
in Europe - with us it works first rate
seems to me - Style short or none as
against style elongated - is not likely to
be misleading - The first section
following brings discolor and rostratus
together (as they should be) - and places
rostratus of all our species next the
Americana which is also as it should
be -

The next section (to save repetition) combines
the characters as far as possible of *S. humilis*
and *S. tristis* -

The next group (Argentae) fits *S. argyrocampa*
where it belongs - After defining the
subgroup there seems to be little left
of *S. sericea* and *S. futeolarius* but the

differentiating characters - and this
wings me the way why I have marked
these in pencil - Will it look well
- as in the present instance the station
the whole description - You can deepen
the lines if you think yes - or rub out
some if you think no.

16. *S. phyllifolia*, L. This will appear in
the Journey Bulletin for February on my reasons
in extenso for restoring the old Linnæan
name for the White Alder plant - I shall
also restore *S. Uva ursi* for good reasons
which meet Dr. Gray's approval.

The cordatae group owing to the number
of additions is necessarily expanded
beyond the old limits - You will see I
have combined characters in defining
groups as far as I could. *S. myricoides*
Muhl. is such a common hybrid - has been
so long in the books - has created so
much confusion and been so little
understood I thought a brief description
would be better than the mere mention
given the newer (but not less interesting) hybrid.

It was not until I received the volumes
of the Harvard last week that it

dawned upon me when Carey got his
S. angustata with "Cottinis resembling
S. discolor in size and aspect" The
specimens were collected by D. Lapham
at Milwaukee - and belong to my
S. glaucopletha which is - I am more
and more convinced - a good species -
- I therefore best to add the names *angustifolia*
and *brevifolia*, before left out reluctantly
on the score of economizing space -

If I have made the descriptions of
the Alpine species a little fuller than
they appeared before it has only been
because so much misapprehension has
hitherto existed as to make the
discrimination of these little willows a
big word for expressing the ability of
the ~~human~~ - cultivated intellect to do
what the savage instinct could not -

Nobody - not even fairly good botanists
seemed to get the names straight

I had better stop right here and whatever
I else I may have to say - say it another
time - I hope / I can not deny this / that
my work will be approved - but now that it
is done I am in no mood to regard it
myself as satisfactory - Cordially Bell

P.S. Section including *S. lucida*. one species
must you use the singular as I
have written it on say shrubs or
small bushy trees instead? Top of page 2

3. *S. lucida* - Dudley first observed the persistence
of the fertile aments - Bailey afterwards
went off at half-cock and described this
as a new var. - not giving Dudley a word
of credit - I was glad to find deliverance
from the whole business - 4/5 of my specimens
exhibit persistent fruit

On some accounts - with my little experience - I
do not altogether like eliminating from the
description of the species - characters before
mentioned in the group - The average botanist
will not - (the average student such as will
use the Manual I mean) - go back and combine
the synoptical group with the species
description - You have ~~seen~~ noticed this
no doubt in the quotations that are often
made from the "Synoptical Flora" which
giving more than merely ^{what} follows the name
of the species - But then it saves space -



Bebb, M. S. 1888. "Bebb, Michael S. Jan. 14, 1888 [to S. Watson]." *Michael Schuck Bebb letters to Asa Gray*

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