

355 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Mass.

May 2d, 1923.

My dear Dr. Standley:

My reaction to your letter of the first May is simply this: the battle ground at present is in Costa Rica. We have simply got to get material from there in order to hold our own. Lankester is doing a good job and his letters and specimens are telling, but I fear he misses much and simply goes afield when his work eases up. Costa Rica from present indications is by no means exhausted. Lankester's sets have been running, I should say, off hand, about 50% new species. I am just pushing through a paper with over thirty new species and I have another paper in preparation. Some of his specimens are puzzles generically and some of his species are extraordinary in their genera. I have just finished the work on his Kew material received from Captain Hill since my return from Honduras. He has more material in press that ought to reach me this summer.

Panama, as you know, has come to us through Powell. I have really got him on a botanical basis and his specimens are good. He is no longer sending material to Berlin. Just at present he is making ready his Chiriqui set. From that I expect many interesting species as he is now using field presses and gathering in things in quantity.

Honduras is a practically untouched field, but to collect there is difficult and in many ways impracticable unless one has pretty substantial backing. The flora on the east coast is very much Guatemalan from the orchid point of view. I have just had a small set come in from El Dorado that simply duplicates species that I got at Tela and Truxillo. Honduras is arid when compared with

Costa Rica. From my point of view aridity is an evil condition.

Whatever you decide to do you may count on me for assistance. But I hope you will select Costa Rica.

I am working at the Central American orchid flora to the exclusion of everything else. In fact I have only been to the Bussey once since my return from Honduras. It is astonishing the amount of effort necessary to assimilate the material that has come in and that has accumulated in years past. Since I began work on the orchids for you there have been over three hundred species added to the flora of Guatemala, Costa Rica and Panama. To get records of all of this material has taken time and patience. But I have got them. Now I am waiting for Schlechter's big drive on Costa Rica. In the meantime I am working up my material with that speed which prudence allows of. It is an even bet that my forthcoming paper will be too late to head him off and force him to review his novelties in the light of my proposals.

It will be extremely wise to put off any idea of publishing an orchid flora of Central America until next winter. This summer I intend to push ahead with monographic treatment of the larger genera and to make a general key to the genera that will be something more than an old fashioned front door key with which the public is requested to open a Yale lock! Kränzlin's ^{monograph} of *Oncidium* is awful. The key is a philosophical abomination. I have simply got to ^ueat blood over this group.

As I have already said, I am interested in whatever plans you make. If I can be of use to you let me know what You think you can produce and what you think it will be worth. Also excuse this hasty oncoherent ^{at}tempt to express myself.

Yours faithfully,

*See for sample of H. ...
to B. ...*



Ames, Oakes. 1923. "Ames, Oakes May 2, 1923 [to P.C. Standley]." *Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium correspondence files*

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