

355 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Mass

January 29th, 1921.

My dear Dr. Schlechter:

Your manuscript of the System and Orchid Groups arrived yesterday. I have hardly had a chance to look at the work carefully, but I noted the number of genera included and felt a bit discouraged at the task it will be to define these so that future generations can tell where one leaves off and the other begins. You have omitted Spathiger Small based on *Epidendrum rigidum*, *Auliza Salisb.* which Small recognizes, *Epicladium* used by Small for *Encyc.* *Boothianum*, *Anacheilium Hoffmg.* and *Nidema Britton* for *Encyc.* *Ottonis*. Surely you do not wish these added to your list of genera, and yet, if we are to be consistent I cannot see how we can pass over the work of Britton and Small. I also note your use of the "l" form of the genera of the *Cypripedilinae*. I was discussing this matter of genera, poorly conceived orthographically by their authors, with Dr. E. L. Robinson, for whose opinion with regard to the niceties of usage I have a very deep respect. He was emphatic in holding that we have no botanical right to make changes in the spelling of these genera. I also note that you retain *Paphiopedilum*. For this group should we not take up *Cordula Raf.*? And what about *Fissipes* for *Cypripedium acaule*? I saw the other day a publication with regard to the soil conditions that prevail in the homes of our native orchids of New England and the author found justification for *Fissipes* as a genus because it differs in its soil requirements from the other *Cypripedia* of our local flora! I have a strong feeling that the literary sources of the genera should be given. If you will agree to this I can have my assistant add the references.

I hope that you have



I note that you have not picked up *Kingiella* for *Doritis*.

I have felt for a long time that the *Cyrtipediinae*, or rather the *Diandreae*, should be regarded as a distinct family but I have hesitated about proposing this as I have been of the opinion that tribal worth perhaps gave us a wide enough separation to emphasize taxonomic differentiation. Surely if we take out *Apostasia* et al. we ought not to hesitate about the *Cyps*. If the recognition of groups is to help toward a simplification of classification, then the removal of the *Cyrtipediinae* will be a help. There is a tremendous jump from the *Cyps* to the grand alliance of orchid genera that we refer to the *Monandreae*, and I always felt this very keenly in my orchid houses. Aside from structural characters there is what I call an aura, or subtle emanation, from the true orchids that sets them aside from the *Cyrtipediinae*. I would rather recognize the *Cyps* as a family than take up *Platanthera* as distinct from *Habenaria*. And here again: what about *Limnorchis*, *Piperia*, *Calceorchis* and similar conceptions?

I note that you keep up *Microstylis* as a generic name. If we follow the Vienna rules, and that we surely should do, *Malaxis* should come up for *Microstylis* and *Habenaria* be used for the species formerly referred to *Malaxis*. I know that Smith thinks otherwise because of the numerous changes that are involved, but we have no right to go contrary to rules that were created to make nomenclature an international language. Rendle has adopted *Malaxis* for *Microstylis* so has Britton. *Physurus* was published as a genus ~~and~~ and should be replaced by *Erythrodes*. I realize that you separate the former *Physurus* species of the eastern tropics from those of the western tropics. Whether or not this distinction holds the nomenclotical details must have attention.

These are just a few of the observations that a very



hasty perusal of your manuscript has brought to my attention. I intend to have the whole thing transcribed and I shall then have time to go over it in detail. I know we won't agree on many things, but it will be amusing to thrash out our opinions as we go along. It would be queer, indeed, if we failed to profit from a frank exchange of our views.

You might take up the points raised in this letter and let me have a few lines from you with regard to them.

Just at present I have been working on mycorrhiza in our native orchids and I expect to have several papers ready before the end of the winter. (If you can pick up a copy of Reissek's *Endophyten der Pflanzenzelle* in any of the second hand bookshops I would like to add this work to my library.) *Aplettrum*, *Hexalectris* and *Corallorrhiza* come into my studies and I will work these genera for the *Folia* if you have no prior claim to them. I have been much interested in the winter stages of *Aplettrum*. I had several fine specimens brought in that were collected in December. The leaves are very beautiful in the fresh condition. They ought to make interesting subjects for anatomical studies.

*Pogonia mexicana* of Watson appears to be conspecific with *Isotria trianthophora*.

I realize that this letter would have been easier to digest had I thought out what I intended to say before I sat down to the typewriter. However, when I began I really intended to stop after informing you of the safe arrival of your manuscript.

I sincerely hope that the draft got to you and that it brought with it a ray of sunshine.

Please accept all good wishes for yourself and your family.

Yours sincerely,

Oakes

P.S. I have been thinking seriously about the title of our book. Do you not think that it leads to confusion? I am going to think up another name and submit it to you. Perhaps you will consider a change of title if you agree with me.

O.A.





Ames, Oakes. 1921. "Ames, Oakes Jan. 29, 1921 [to R. Schlechter]." *Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium correspondence files*

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