

August 16th, 1923.

My dear Lankester:

Your good letter of May 15th, has just come to my attention. My dear wife had it tucked away among some papers that she daily promised herself to examine. Of course extra copies of Sched. Orch. will be sent to you. But I must wait until I go again to my Boston laboratory where the store of my reprints and publications is kept. I think the specimens referred to in your letter arrived during a short vacation. I remember, now, that I was told that some partly dry material had come in and that it was in press. Regarding Schlechter's treatment of E. laterale Rolfe, I am afraid that a few words I said to him last August in Berlin (after examining Rolfe's type), gave him the idea that E. Rousseanae was the holding name. If you will follow my rambling remarks in Sched. Orch. 5, you will find that I enjoy the courage needed to change one's mind when new light comes filtering into my poor brain. And here, let me say, that I find Central American orchids most perplexing because the material available for study is too scant.

I am most anxious to see the *Cryptophoranthus* species to which you drew my attention in your letter of July 16th, and to which you refer again in your letter of the 27th, July, just at hand. If it is new we can find a place for it in Sched. Orch 6 which is nearing completion.

I am expecting to hear from Maxon very soon. When he sends in the package of specimens entrusted to his care, you may sure that I will give it close and prompt attention. I am eager to

add some new Central American species to Sched. Orch. 6 . This number of the work is at present too much taken up with the Philippine novelties that have come to light during my work for Merrill's Enumeration of Philippine plants, Just think what it means to put into creditable shape a critical list of all the orchids that have been referred to the Philippine flora. This list must be my excuse, in part, for any neglect of specimens that have come in from Costa Rica. And now Merrill wants me to work up for the Sarawak Museum a collection of orchids taken on Mount Dulit, Borneo.

Your letter of August first came in this afternoon. What you say about the Epidendrum Laucheanum mix-up is most interesting. But until I see an abundance of material it will be impossible to arrive at satisfactory conclusions. In connection with this problem I have just received from Kew a flower of Rolfe's type of E. Laucheanum. Please help out in the solution of the problem. It may mean a little work to collect and press material that shows variation, but it is so well worth while to go deep into the perplexities of this orchid riddle. I have just finished a thorough revision of the Philippine species of Appendicula. To do this I had to work over specimens that have been accumulating for twenty years. In this case I was overwhelmed with material, but the results! I was able to put at rest some of those awful doubts that come sooner or later into the thoughts of one who works in a complex flora. Systematic studies are only delightful for a conscientious student when the material is abundant. Until I see additional material of some of those Lepanthes species of yours, the fear that I have, perhaps, muddled things,

will keep rising. It is only after we can begin to recognize our own species in fresh material that a feeling of joy comes, the reward of courage. Somebody has suggested that when systematists pass to another world, a fitting punishment would be to have them set at the task of determining their own species. The underlying conclusion is, that species-makers are destined, in any case, to suffer in that place to which bad souls are sent. And while we are on this subject, I may as well tell you that my friend Dr. Kraenzlin of Wolfenbuttel would have a sorry time of it, if he were to suffer the suggested punishment. He has just sent to me the types of some Philippine orchids that he published in Berlin. They consist in every case of mere scraps. I don't know what to do with them. I cannot recognize them. And I feel sure that they are simply old friends disguised.

The photographs are most welcome. These will find a very comfortable place in the herbarium and will, I hope, be joined soon, by ample pieces of the originals.

More mailing-tubes with bottles inside, will be forwarded to you from Boston. I am delighted to have you ask for more. Our good friend Powell simply hounds me for large bottles and tubes. He keeps a steady stream coming this way. How the alcohol gets by the frontier is a constant query with me. The alcoholic specimens accompanied by herbarium material ^{are} ~~is~~ a wonderful aid to determination and to the preparation of drawings.

Yours faithfully,



Ames, Oakes. 1923. "Ames, Oakes Aug. 16, 1923 [to C.H. Lankester]." *Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium correspondence files*

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