

355 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Mass.

December 18th, 1923.

My dear Lankester:

A package of mailing-tubes came in yesterday afternoon. I have not attempted to locate the *Sobralia*, because flowers without herbarium material of the vegetative parts, are wholly inadequate. In this genus the surface of the stem, for example, is important, and one cannot describe a new species from incomplete specimens. I hope you have made herbarium records of everything sent and that I may have these records when they are ready. Your note promises the *Sobralia*. That makes me very happy.

There are one or two interesting remarks to make: Among the *Pleurothallis* specimens there are two which gave me real pleasure. These represent species of which the types are in the Kew collection, execrable specimens of herbarium technique. 523 is *Pleurothallis cerea* Ames; 530 is *P. crescentilabia* Ames. I am overjoyed to have these, as my records consist entirely of drawings made from the types. Please dry specimens for me. If you dip the vegetative parts in boiling water, they will be come pliable and when put in press will dry out quickly. Although illustrations of these species are ready for publication, I intend to make additional records from the liquid material.

I would bless you if you will experiment with *Fregea amabilis*. A clear photograph would be a wonderful aid in the herbarium. I would suggest drying the flowers before placing them in press. Perhaps it would be well to try drying them in hot sand, and then after removing them, if they were exposed to atmospheric moisture, they might dry in the press without breaking up. Flowers in alcohol would make possible a thorough study of several points which are now obscure. This species, as you know, is extremely rare in herbaria.

Schlechter adds 7 new genera and 249 species to the orchid flora of Costa Rica! I have compared the recent novelties that you have sent in (the nucleus of Sched. Orch. 7), with Schlechter's proposals and cannot match them with anything he has described from La Palma, San Jeronimo, and Tablzo. For example, Schlechter does not report *Epidendrum incomptum* Reichb. f. among the species sent to him by Werckle, Brenes, Brade or others. What this means, is a question that may well give rise to deep interest.

I realize that error is an insidious trespasser and that absolute accuracy where personal opinions are uppermost, is quite unattainable, but I begin to fear that Schlechter is really very careless! I reported to you that your 403 and 503, were *Maxillaria microphyton* Schltr. Among Werckle's specimens I have a plant that Schlechter has determined as *Ornithidium parvulum* Schltr. This is a spot match for your 503. Fearing that I

had made a blunder in my determination, I examined into the question and found that Schlechter's descriptions of Maxillaria microphyton and Ornithidium parvulum were almost word for word and measurement for measurement, the same. Then I discovered that the types were represented by the same Tonduz number and came from the same locality on the same day. I leave to you the pleasure of drawing your own conclusions. Maxillaria microphyton stands, as it is my opinion that it represents Maxillaria and was published prior to Ornithidium parvulum.

I reported to you that your 519 was a new species of Hexisea of the section Fractunguis. It would seem that Schlechter has beaten us to press with this. He has called it Fractiunguis euniculatus. I am not yet sure that it is wise, however, to take up this new genus.

Your letter dated November 30th, has just come in. I dislike to spin out this writing to extraordinary length, but I may as well take this opportunity to answer your questions. Iseanthus Bradei and L. micrantha are distinct species. My determinations are, I think reliable. The Telopogon situation is as follows: I have leaned toward the belief that T. Riolleyi and T. Endresianum, represented a single species. Recent studies have made me think that perhaps they are distinct. Your material represents T. Endresianum. Now, Pleurothallis Lankesteri Rolfe, is structurally the same as P. stenostachya Reichb. f. It is also the same as P. myriantha (I have a duplicate type in my herbarium). The purple lip of P. Lankesteri is, as Rolfe stated, different from the yellow lip of P. stenostachya. Schlechter has taken up P. dubia Rich. & Gal. for this species, but it was published in 1845 while P. stenostachya was published in 1844. Perhaps the Rolfean proposal might be kept as a variety. I have collected what I take to be the typical P. stenostachya and have always found the flowers pure yellow. I have studied the whole range of proposals from P. dubia to P. minutiflora Wats., and I agree with Schlechter that they represent a single species which ranges from Mexico to Panama.

These long drawn out notes may bore you. If they do, hesitate not to tell me so in plain terms. You realize, of course, that as the days of critical study pass, many discoveries are made that assume large proportions in the mind of the student. Unless he holds himself well in hand, he suggests the old barn-yard rooster who flaps his wings and crows outrageously loud when peaceful folk want silence, or at least uplifting noise.

"Otón" has not sent me a scrap. I think it will be wise if you remind him of my needs and accompany him to the post office with the package.

Loads of good wishes!



Ames, Oakes. 1923. "Ames, Oakes Dec. 18, 1923 [to C.H. Lankester]." *Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium correspondence files*

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