

Range among foot Snowy Range
Cabin in the Rocky Mts foot Snowy Range

Dr Gray.

My Dear Sir:

When I first reached the Mts now more than 6 weeks ago. I did not think so long time would elapse without writing or hearing from you. But my time has been so much engrossed in making collections and observations that I have had little leisure for correspondence of any kind and when I had the time and inclination it was generally out of the line of P.O. Now to make up some arrears I must give you a brief outline of my botanical doings in this most interesting region. After making a somewhat rapid collection of plants lower down in the mountains mostly along South Clear Cr. I finally made my head quarters at this point about a month ago. My cabin is situated at the farthest settled point near the foot of the dividing ridge. at the head waters of South Clear Cr. From this point, a few hours' walk brings me into the true alpine region, where trees disappear and patches of perpetual snow are scattered along the edges of ravines, while the numerous tributaries of Clear Cr. having their sources in ice lakes, pour down their torrents of melted snow into the valley below.

Please see brief description of *P. flavipes*

The dividing ridge at this point is an irregular rocky crest, inclining considerably to the west, with an average altitude of 10,000 to 12,000 ft. Its western slope leading by numerous deep valleys to Middle Park, which collects the head waters of Grand River one of the main tributaries of the Colorado of the west. This then including the various irregular ridges, valleys & parks is the field of my principal botanical collections, which I hope will ere long speak for themselves, I find not only a greater variety of plants than I expected to find in such a limited district, but also new direction I take still add something new. & striking. I recognize on the summit ridge most of the plants which Dr. James collected on Pikes Peak and I feel satisfied that few if any of his plants will escape my observation besides several which I feel confident will prove novelties. I sent to Dr. Engelman a sketch of a remarkable *Claytonia* growing abundantly in rock crevices on the summit forming dense tufts composed of a rosette of spatulate leaves in the center encircled by numerous flower stalks resembling in appearance but larger than our common *Claytonia*. The root is a deep fleshy tap root nearly an inch in diameter, besides this I also found a sp. of *Syntherisma* quite different from *S. Houghii* & there are quite a number of tufted mounded plants, probably well known but which I have not the means of determining. lately several *Campobas*

have been making their appearance. Dr. E. has written me to look out for *Chimaphila* but does not give me much of a clue to identify it, please send me a more full description, size, color of flower, general habit & location. I shall make a few slips before mailing this of plants not identified or supposed to be of special interest or new. A few days since in one of the upper valleys I met with a *Thalictrum* looking plant having deciduous petals, and styles resembling *Isopyrum*. It grows from one to 2 ft. high in wet shady places, looking very much like *Thalictrum* *decaisnei* but the leaves are more deeply what can you make of it? What is the specific name of the scarlet flowered *Pimula*? which I find quite abundant near the snow line, rooting in the icy brooks of that district. It is quite showy & somewhat fragrant. I have also collected on the head waters of Glen on *Verbena paniculata* answering well to the description in N. & E. Fl. I have 3 sp. *Plantanthera* collected, perhaps none of them peculiar but I have no means of determining. I have also found quite abundant what I take to be the *Calypso*, a charming plant found at considerable elevation. *Calthea leptosepala* is quite abundant taking the place & habit of *C. palustris* with you also numerous sp. of *Ranunculus* and *Plantilla*. I am collecting several alpine willows, one of them prostrate & creeping. I only

collect such as I can certainly identify in the
two sexes, including leaves. The only deciduous
trees met with in this part of the mountains are
species of poplar: besides the well known *Sp*
P. angustifolia & *P. tremuloides*. There are two
other species, which may possibly be undescribed
one is near *P. tremuloides*, but differs in habit
mode of growth, leaves, and color of bark &c. I
have fruiting specimens to compare with. It is
more alpine in its location and distinguished at
once by its peculiar smooth greenish yellow bark
resembling the beech in texture. The other *Populus*
I only lately met with and have not seen in
fruit - it has ~~cordate~~^{ovate} leaves, veiny underneath
young buds covered with viscid gum. very different
however from the balsam poplar of the States. I
am going to collect full notes & if possible fruit
of this species, when I visit the locality again.
The Coniferae include *P. rigida* (*resinosa*)?, *Banksia*
flexilis, *Abies alba*, *balsamea* (*Douglasii*)?,
and an *Abies* with long pendent cones (3 inch.) and
pointed scales. (what *Sp*)?. I have written a very
rambling hasty letter, but I trust it will prove
interesting especially if I succeed in enclosing
some scraps of novelties. I hope to hear from you
at your earliest convenience & get posted in desirable
address me at Denver city, for we have no mails
this far, and there are chances of sending down every
week, any news except war will be acceptable

Sincerely yours C. C. Parry



Parry, C. C. 1861. "Parry, C. C. July 10, 1861." *Charles Christopher Parry letters to Asa Gray*

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