

J. F. Allen, M. D.

St. Clair Smith, M. D.

10 East 36th Street,

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Prof. Lucius Watson

Dear Sir

Let me thank you for your interest in my marks on the Characeae - I have worked at them many years - formerly corresponded with Prof. A. Braun and have collected a large number from different parts of the country - At present I am writing up the Characeae of the Canadian surveys for Prof. Macoun; they are most interesting having some new and transitional species; one I have named C. evoluta.

More than 20 years ago Prof. A. Braun named a Tolypella Californica from the Pacific coast and several rare species are known from there, for example N. clavata from the San Francisco water works. It would give me great pleasure to write ^{up} the western species for you, or to name and return any you might like to send me & I am, naturally, desirous to obtain all the species of the continent for my work, which already embraces over fifty species and distinct varieties - Tolypella prolifera A. Br. from the upper Missouri (Hayden) I am anxious to obtain, can you put me in the way of it?

The late Prof. Braun wrought order in the Characeae which were in a chaotic state and his system of classification, based upon morphological characters seems to stand the test - I regret that Mr. Halsted in his brief

and imperfect account of our species saw fit to follow a trivial classification devoid of any principle. His work is deserving of severe criticism. The worst errors are as follows.

Nitella Capitata in Halsted should be N. glomerulifera Atn.

" gelatinosa var siguentia " " " N. prelonga Atn. 1852

" intertexta " " " " N. megacarpa Allen. (This species is a representative of the polyglochis series which characterize the Nitella of this continent, we have also of this series N. microcarpa Atn. and N. oligaspora var wrightii Atn. of the Mexican boundary survey and other varieties of the polyglochis series. These occur also in Asia but not in Europe)

Chara ceratophylla is doubtful the Florida ~~species~~ ^{form} belong to C. Hornemannii

" Rabenhairi Halsted is the old C. Hydrophilis which I knew from New Jersey and the west; Halsted thinks our forms are sufficiently distinct to be named var. septentrionalis (see my Exsiccatae). I visited Apopung purposely to identify the species there.

Several distinct varieties of C. gymnosopus named by Braun in Plantae Lindheimeri and elsewhere are entirely overlooked by Halsted.

The Gymnosopodae are strongly marked on this continent. Those of the Unistipulatae C. Hydrophilis (monocious) and C. Hornemannii (dioecious), are well represented. of the Bistipulatae C. gymnosopus with its varieties, and C. signata are widely known and diffused ~~at~~ these Gymnosopodae are also found in Asia but not in Europe.

So we are beginning to trace the distinguishing features of our American Characeae.

There still remains some points in the development and nutrition of these plants to be elucidated. I am trying to do something in this direction but shall not "rush into print" yet.

John -
J. Allen



Allen, Timothy Field. 1880. "Allen, Timothy F. Jan. 30, 1880 [to S. Watson]." *Asa Gray correspondence*

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