

intermediate part disk-hypochaerites
etc in a few cases can only be justified
if applied to all - and it is as difficult
to say how much of the expansion
beyond the ordinary thickness of the axis
before it divides into separate petals etc
or this lobe, or both is disk-hypochaerites
etc as distinguished from true calypso
on the one side or from a thickened axis on
the other. If no one settles all these points
satisfactorily I intend trying my hand
at it apropos of some Rosaceae.

I certainly mean Ovary to be the ovule
bearing portion of the pistil - but when
we talk of a compound Ovary we mean
an Ovary of several carpels the same
as when we speak of a compound
fruit - In general works the Ovary
of Ranunculaceae ^{like the fruit} is said to be apocarpous
the one and the other is used in two
senses a general and a partial one. This
perhaps is not right and I should have
said "sometimes ~~hermaphrodite~~" instead of
"in general" the word ovary is used to
designate all the ovaries of a flower. I
do not see how you can well avoid doing
so in familiar like Apocynum where the
carpels are either distinct or more or less
combined.

I am reading a very long paper on the
Siamese which I hope you will criticize
without mercy.

With kindest regards to Mr. Gray and
many thanks for his letter believe me
Ever yours most sincerely
George Donnell

91 Victoria Street 80
Westminster
Nov 20 1858

My dear Gray

I have to thank you for one
or two letters received since I returned
to town - together with determination
of Hong Kong etc Rubiaceae & Compositae
I shall be very happy to send you
my paper on Hong Kong plants
as soon as I can finish it. For the
present I am forced to lay it aside
to finish the Brazilian Papilionaceae
for Martius - A first part to
the end of Phaseolus is printed and
I believe will be out very shortly
^{the plates are prepared & I think I have no hand in them}
The text has taken me much more
time than any I had any idea of as
I have had to work up at the same
time almost all South American
Leguminosae and most Asiatic and
African ones in order to acquire some
fixed ideas as to the genera and species
I find one gets quite wrong in establishing
genera on the plants of one country
without close comparison with others
I have had to suppress or remodel many

of the American genera I made at
Vienna in 1836 - and you will readily
see that Benth's American Myrtaceous
genera clash very unharmoniously
with Plumier & Wright's Australian
and subgenera - Benth has enormously
multiplied species but he has worked
better than some - and the forms of
S. American Myrtles are really so
numerous and so difficult to define
that it will be a long while before
any one comes to improve upon Benth.
- Grisebach seems to be working now
upon much better principles.

I am now hard at work at Dalman
and hope to finish them and Copson
in the course of January. I shall then
take the Hong Kong Flora and finish
that before I commence the
Australian Flora.

For. Hooker has shown me your
review of my Handbook and I am
much flattered by the compliments you
pay me. I admit some of your
criticisms but not all. The English
Nomenclature is I know in many
respects very unsatisfactory although
I bestowed more time and thought

about it than the thing is worth -
I would answer some of your why not
Melfoid is Achillea millefolium Cotton-
thistle will not make one word like
Rock-rose - I cannot bring myself to
call Myrothia verrucosa a Forget-me-not
which applies to one species only in this
country - Gardeners never call the
cultivated M. sylvatica etc Forget-
me-nots - but I had better have left
Myrothia. I thought it worth while
to shorten Crataegum as being very
common but perhaps not - certainly
not Holortum as it is thousand to
one of any persons picking it up in
England. I really want to shorten many
more Latin names - others pick up
the whole thing and I do not much like it

My definitions of peregrinus and
epigynus are not good but the whole
nomenclature of inferior and superior
hypogynous peregrinus epigynus etc
requires revision - I was going to say
something on the subject in my paper
now reading at the Linn. Soc. but I have
not yet matured my views and reserve
them for another occasion - the difficulty
is to settle what is peduncle and receptacle
(that is axis) and what is calyx petal stam
etc. that is where does one begin & the
other end - for the reverse of calling the



Bentham, George. 1858. "Bentham, George Nov. 28, 1858." *George Bentham letters to Asa Gray*

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/226393>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/261128>

Holding Institution

Harvard University Botany Libraries

Sponsored by

Arcadia 19th Century Collections Digitization/Harvard Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The Library considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection

License: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.