

St Louis Febr 15th 1848

My dear Doctor,

I have quite a number of letters here for you, which have not been answered. During November and December I was very busy in examining Wislizenus Plants and make a report on them. I am well aware of the weak points of my production, but I hope that some parts at least are good, especially my examination of Cactaceae, arrangement of genera according to the shape of the embryo etc. N.B. Your "Melocactus" from Valparaiso has undoubtedly the embryo of an Echinocactus! This true I have not seen a seed of Melocactus, but as the genus is said to be hardly distinct from Mammillaria, I suppose the seed can not differ much. — Could you procure me a few seeds for analysis of Melocactus, Pilocereus, Echinopsis, Ahispalis, Phyllocactus & Pereskia? I have not seen any of those genera, and should like to complete my analysis by their examination. — Also seeds of any species of Cactaceae not seen by me. — I repeat here nothing of the result of my examination, because I expect you will see it in print very shortly; I will say only that Cactacea form two great tribes 1, cotyledons parallel with the flat compressed side, of the seed or directed with their edges toward the umbilicus, I suspect that all these produce flowers from the same years growth. I have examined Mammillaria & Echinocacti = Cotyledons off curved, and then incumbent 2, cotyledons contrary to the compressed side of the seed, or directed with their faces toward the umbilicus — off curved, and then incumbent — flowers from the growth of former years — Cereus, Echinocereus (a new genus) and Opuntia. — Opuntia are beautifully distinguished

of these orders: 1. *Elipsopterae*, with spiral embryos and very little albumen
2. *Cylindriace*, with circular embryos and much more albumen. — *Spizella*
fulvica from Texas belongs here, and my *Chalcid* from Mexico etc. etc.
S. papilio. I have not yet been able to compare, but must probably belong
to the first class. — — —

I have myself compared Torrey's report of Vermont plants and
seen that his *Crataegus* is very near my *Wrightia*, but I thought
that I could discover sufficient characters to distinguish it —
I am afraid I was mistaken in that. — My genus *Boltonia*
of which I sent you an account ^(but different species) must be identified with Torrey's
Dithyrea of California figured in Hooker's journal, and I have
corrected it accordingly. — What will become of my *Najas*
species I do not know.

I have had Maj. Emory's figures of *Cacti* for examination
but can not make much of them; some of them were
known to me before by specimens for *Wrightia*, and
there the figure is a good assistance; but the others, which
may all be new species, to describe from such incomplete
data, is rather a violent undertaking; still I have ventured
on it, though conditionally. I don't know what use
the Emory will make of my account — but will he
would submit it to Prof. Torrey before he ventures
to embody it in his report. —

Only think of it, a few weeks ago I accidentally learn that
two boxes sent by Lindler in April, one with live *Perla*,
arrived here in June last; they are most probably in
a warehouse in this city, but the boat that brought
them is lost, the Captain not here, so we are

agents not to be found — and so the boxes are lost to me!
The *Perla* certainly dead long since!

Now the main point. Lindler lives here from money
advanced by me from time to time, he has nothing at all,
having spent his all in the expedition to Santa Fe, together
with the money advanced by Lowell and others. He is very
anxious to distribute his plants as soon as possible; and
I have to ask you to assist him as much as you
can — namely by arranging his collection so that they can
be numbered systematically. I have done that as far as
Compositae, but I would not undertake that family and
gather on without more study than I now can bestow on
it. I must therefore beg you to do it and ~~the~~ make
your labor lighter I will include in the box of plants
which I shall send in a few days, a complete list with
of the present numbers to which I beg you to add the numbers
as they ought to be, and return it by mail. About
these things however I shall write more fully with the
plants.

The second point is: Lindler is willing to return to
Santa Fe and perhaps further south (he says that in
the climate of N. Mexico nearly 6 months of every year are
lost for botanical collections on account of the rigors, and
long winters), if some generous friend of botany can be
induced to advance him a sufficient sum, which
he would partly repay by the returns for his present
collections, and fully and finally by the collections

he is going to make, if he should not be so unfortunate as to lose them or have other mishap. — He had about \$400 with him last time, which lasted him one year, with the most vigorous economy, and he thinks he must have \$500 now, of which however at least 300, perhaps the whole could be refunded in the course of this year by the sale of his present collection. What does Mr. Lowell say? —

We could perhaps adopt another plan in future collections of this kind. To arrange the collections and distribute the sets requires rather more labor (and for a great part mechanical labor) than I can bestow on it. — How would it do to let the collector himself during the winter season arrange and distribute his sets. — It would be probable that many duplicates would be distributed in this way, but if that was the case, we ought to be at liberty to deduct some thing of the price.

I will examine a few families of Tenders plants, the *Cruci*, *Cuscutae*, *Asclepiadaceae*, *Euphorbiaceae* and perhaps one or the other besides, but that is all which I shall be able to do. I can therefore not claim that my name should be mentioned with yours as you are going to do the principal scientific work on them. Torrey is right when he says in his letter to you, that I will not have time to give even a hasty examination of these collections. —

I now go over to your several letters not answered. I proposed Tenders to give the first and fullest set (513 without the mosses) to Hooker, the 2^d to Lowell and then Greene, Sullivan and so forth. — I believe that 35 sets will be engaged right away. — The sets fall off rapidly, 6 contain 400, 14 300 sp
20 250 sp. 28 200 sp. 37 150 sp. 53 100 sp. etc

and 73 50 sp. — for Tandler has very injudiciously collected a great many specimens of some plants. But among those he has collected numerous are very few common plants. You will find that almost all from Santa Fe are very rare. His common plants have been collected on the road and only in very few specimens, not for distribution.

I have numbered all your specimens with Tandler's present numbers in pencil, so that you can alter them with ink to the permanent numbers.

Many of Tandler's plants were only in one or 2 specimens; they are left out of your proper set, but sent along now with their labels for your examination. The labels are each marked E and I request you to return these ^{specimens}, when you are done with them, but you may divide them, and retain part, if it is possible.

A few common plants only contained in Tandler's own set, were not sent, but I have named them in Tandler's List, so that they can be introduced in their proper place.

I propose to follow Hooker's plan in the plantae pyrenaeae, namely to mention in the printed Catalogue every plant collected, whether there are specimens enough for distribution or not. Even the commoner plants ~~there~~ are interesting in a geographical point of view and the rare or new ones ought not be passed by, even if they can not be distributed.

On that account I have sent you specimens of almost every number, and the name at least where the specimen was not sent. — You will find Tandler

account of the habitat etc pretty full. —

I forget to say that Vender only brought here what he carried along himself. He ~~very~~ imprudently left a box with seeds and another one with Calaceae behind to be sent after him. That has not arrived. All what I have of seeds I have picked out of some specimens, and a few seeds of Castoree he happened to have brought with him. All those will be sent to you together with seeds from Texas and from Drilgens in due time. I have not yet arranged them. —

I have done absolutely nothing for Lindheimer's plants; lately I got a small box with some interesting specimens, and several other boxes are now on their way. The collection of 47 was not as rich as that of 46, and I think will be best distributed with it. I shall make a preliminary arrangement as soon as I get it, and send specimens.

I have done nothing in Curcutoria but shall devote some weeks to a hasty study of the specimens and then return Hooker's Collection, I am ashamed to think of it.

I have lost some weeks by moving to another house, but I have now a little more room and a great deal more convenience, so that I shall gain a good deal of time in that manner.

I ought to have found out *Artemopsis* myself; I studied the family in Parlatore, but neglected to look in the appendix where this genus is described.

I see that Benten has succeeded in getting the Report of Dr Wislizenus printed by the Senate. You will find some parts of it, but especially the sections quite interesting as they show the elevation of that Country very plain. I am anxious to hear your opinion of my "hasty" appendix to it.

And now I have written more perhaps than you care to read. More in the box and again, when I get the collection of Lindheimer.

very truly

young

Engelmann



Prof. Wm. Gray
10
20
Cambridge
Mass



Engelmann, George. 1848. "Engelmann, George Feb. 15, 1848." *George Engelmann letters to Asa Gray*

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