

Philadelphia June 21th 1854

Prof. Asa Gray, Cambridge. M.^t

My dear Sir,

Our friend Th. P. James, starting tomorrow for the North and stopping at Cambridge purposely to see you, I do not hesitate to trouble him with a package of California plants, which I desire to submit to you. They have been brought by Dr. Heermann of this city, who has entrusted me with the care of ascertaining their names. Although I do feel incompetent to the task, on account of my poor eyes that are not capable of using lenses, and also for the want of books of reference, still I decided to try what I could do.

I have found it more difficult than I expected, especially to distinguish the minute and delicate points of dissemblance between certain genera of *Corymbiferae*, and I had to call the assistance of young Dr. Holgund, nephew of Dr. Engelman, a very clever young Botanist. My intention was not to send you these plants before having studied them thoroughly and given them all the names which, in my judgement, belong to them; but the opportunity offered by James' visit to Cambridge is too favorable not to take it up. Consequently I have packed them in a hurry with simple pencil marks on the papers. My notes and descriptions of the specimens I consider as new, are not in a condition to be transmitted to you.

You will find half a dozen or more of these plants marked new. So far as my references go, they appear so to me; but I fear

They will all be familiar to you who have seen so much and are so well provided with books.

The first is an Argemone with a 3 sepal calix, bearing 3 stamens and as spinous as your A. hispida. Should it be the grandiflora of Lindl. whose calix you say is not spinose? The leaves are somewhat similar to the Mexicana. If new, I call it Thermansii.

The second is a Malvastrum? which I call maritimum from its resemblance to the maritimum.

The third is a Hosackia, I believe, which I do not find described. It looks much like a Lathyrus. The H. decumbens, var. glabrescens L. is the same plant as Spalding's specimen, labelled by you, H. (Syrmatium) decumbens. I do not recollect in what it differs from the description of Endlicher's Syrmatium. I find it very dissimilar to Nuttall's plant labelled Hosackia decumbens - and if Nuttall's plant is the tridacum bens, certainly this, my plant and Spalding's, are a distinct species. The legumes are generally unisec'd, sometimes 2 sec'd.

The fourth is a Lambinus which I do not see described.

The specimen labelled Galatella has given me much trouble. I have handed it to Dr Hilgard who thinks it is a Galatella. I find no species answering to it in Decandole, nor in your publication. The Aster, I have not examined as yet - nor other Compositae, belonging mostly to the genus Paccharis - all of which are now in the hands of Dr H. The plant labelled Eriacaria, is not, I think. There are four species of Heimizonia or congeners, which I have not sufficiently examined.

The fifth is a new? Navarretia which I call vestita from

the tomentum covering the calix, &c.

The antennarium and maroccanum I have not looked yet whether they are described or not. I think they are new.

The Cordylanthus filifolius was found out by Dr Hilgard, as well as what he considers a new genus which, on account of its habitus he has named Cerastodium. spec. Thermansii.

Trichostema lanceolatum has been a puzzle - if it is not lanceolatum, let it be called Oporanthium - see what Strong and Pleasant think it has.

Now, am I right in obviating occidentalis? I had seen ^{this plant} in all the collections from California and New Mexico, but I had never been able to make it out. The Strocarya lanescens of Nutt. has put me on the scent, but Strocarya of Dr. belongs to the family Polygaleae and it was a great jump to look for it in Sagolana.

What is the plant marked croton? it is evidently a euphorbiaceae which I have not yet examined. I have marked it croton as I have the same plant from Nuttall thus marked (R. M. 5).

The 5 or 6 erigonum, I have not examined. I think two of them are illustrated in Fremont's report by Dr. Torrey.

I write to you in a great hurry, my dear Sir, so excuse my bad English and recollect that a Frenchman and not an American, is writing to you. Oblige me to investigate those plants as soon as possible, so as to return them to me by our friend Luxen, who will return in a few weeks - they are wanted by Dr. Therman who has a report to make. With the expectation of seeing you during your vacation, at 116 South 9th St., I remain very respectfully yours.

E. Durand

Professor A. A. Gray

For

of Th. P. James, Esq.

Cambridge

Mar 26/89



Durand, Elias. 1854. "Durand, Elias M. June 21, 1854." *Elias Durand letters to Asa Gray*

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/226408>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/256179>

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>.