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The West-American Scientist.

Vol. I. San Diego, California, February, 1885. No. 3.

A popular review and record for the Pacific Coast. } PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY C. R. ORCUTT. } Entered as second-class matter at San Diego Post-office

[Written for the SCIENTIST.]

Seekers from age to age, have found,
 In nature's ways, delight,
 And doubtless now, in depths profound,
 Awaits some wondrous light.
 Or better still, just close at hand,
 Unseen, because unsought,
 Rewards, in patient waiting stand,
 For careful, loving thought.
 And nature has so many gifts,
 Her students to repay,
 With something that the mind uplifts
 None empty go away.

NEW GENUS OF EUPHORBIACEÆ

From Lower California.

BY C. C. PARRY.

Among the manuscript notes left by Dr. Engelmann at his decease, is an incomplete description of a new genus of Euphorbiaceæ for which he proposed the name of *Tetracoccus*. The material then being imperfect, the notes remained unfinished. Since then complete specimens having been collected by C. R. Orcutt of San Diego the following detailed description is herewith submitted.

TETRACOCCLUS, Engel., ined..

Tetracoccus dioicus, n. sp.

Shrubby, dioecius; staminate flowers involucre on slender pedicels in the axils of the upper leaves of recent shoots; inflorescence with a prolonged central axis a little shorter than the leaves, and usually two or more

unequally developed opposite branches, bracteate at base; involucre in a double series, persistent, with 7-9 short, rounded segments; stamens 7-9, long exsert, inserted at the base of the involucre scales, encircling an irregular lobed, central disk; filaments densely ciliate-pubescent at base, anthers extrorse, broadly two-celled. Pistillate flowers in the axils of lower leaves on recent shoots, single pedicellate, pedicels thickening upwards, and bracteate near the middle; involucre of 7-9 oblong, unequal segments in two series with 4 glandular scales on the inner surface, segments fragile at maturity.

Ovary 4 lobed, densely tawny-hispid, with 4 long, recurved stigmas. Capsule orbicular, broadly 4 lobed and 4 celled, the thin epicarp separating in valves from rigid cocci which part at maturity, the separate cells dehiscing at both sutures.

Ovules 2 to each cell, pendant from the upper placental column which persists as a rigid central axis after the rupture of the cells. Seeds by abortion one to each cell, smooth, oblong, conspicuously carunculate. Embryo with broad cotyledons and short, straight radicle immersed in copious albumen.

Leaves narrowly lanceolate, nearly sessile with a somewhat decurrent midrib, smooth, rather

rigid and inclined to curve on the upper face, mostly opposite or in ternate whorles, often fasciculate in the lower axils, and with short reduced branches on the lower shoots.

Habitat;—Dry, sandy or rocky plains and hills of Lower California, flowering irregularly after sufficient rain; foliage dull green with reddish branches; 2 to 5 feet in height, irregularly branched. Staminate plants more slender.

C. C. Parry, February, 1883 near Table mountain, imperfect fruiting specimens from which Dr. Engelmann determined the generic character. C. R. Orcutt, Sept. 1884, near Santo Thomas, with complete flowering specimens.

Kew, England, Jan'y, 1885.

A REMARKABLE PHENOMENON.

A party returning from a picnic at La Jolla a little before sunset, the evening of the 4th instant, report having seen a very beautiful and unusual phenomenon. When near the northeast city limits a large meteor shot athwart their course in a direction a little north of east, and continued at a leisurely pace until it faded from sight in the glowing horizon. The meteor looked much like an electric light, with perhaps a slight bluish tinge. Sparks were emitted from it at intervals, giving it the appearance of a rocket. The phenomenon was one of rare beauty and its occurrence in daylight was certainly unusual.—[San Diego Union.

MIGRATION OF BIRDS.

We take the following notes from a preliminary report of the committee on bird migration, by C. Hart Merriam, M. D., of the American Ornithological Union:

Over 1000 sets of blank schedules and circulars have been distributed to lighthouses, lightships and beacons of the United States and British America. In consequence a large number of the heads and wings of birds which dash themselves against the lights were received, together with an exceptionally valuable amount of data. In South America and the West Indies great numbers of birds destroy themselves against the lights and five to six hundred birds have been reported as picked up in a single morning.

The committee has now established observation stations in every State except Nevada, and returns have already been received from nearly 1000 persons, comparatively few of whom are ornithologists or even bird collectors, the great bulk being intelligent farmers, tradesmen and light keepers. Those who know only the commonest birds can contribute data of great value, and their services are eagerly sought.

Though there were only forty observers on this coast, the most valuable report yet received is that of Mr. L. Belding, Superintendent of the Pacific District. It contained notes on no less than 280 species, and is such an important contribution to the ornithology of our western coast that the committee hopes to publish it in full at an early date.

OPHIOGLOSSUM NUDICAULE.

BY D. CLEVELAND.

This little fern, "dwarf adder's tongue," closely resembles the common adder's tongue, *O. vulgatum* of the Atlantic states and Europe. Indeed, when first sent to Prof. Eaton of Yale College and Mr. Geo. E. Davenport from this coast, they were inclined to consider it a form of the latter.

O. nudicaule, L. f. was first discovered at San Diego, near Old Town, by Dr. Parry when botanist of the Mexican Boundary Commission, in Jan'y, 1850, but the specimens then collected and shipped with other collections by sea to New York were lost on the passage.

It was rediscovered by Dr. C. C. Parry at San Diego in March, 1882 after several days of diligent search.

During all the intermediate time—thirty-two years,—though botanists had carefully searched the country about San Diego, *O. nudicaule* had not been seen, nor its presence suspected. Dr. Parry might also have overlooked it, if he had not previously found it here. It is not strange that this fern should have escaped so many sharp-eyed collectors when we consider its diminutive size, the few weeks that the fronds are visible, and the failure of the plant to send up its leaves in dry years, when it is kept alive by its perennial root. This fern is most conspicuous about March, after a wet winter and is then abundant on the mesa in proximity to Dodecatheon Meadia—shooting star,

Selaginella and grass. Before its discovery at San Diego, this fern was confined in this country to Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas, where it is rare.

BOTANICAL NOTES.

The check-list of the known plants of this region, giving the local distribution, common names and other notes is now out. Price 25 cts., free to botanical patrons. The following species were inadvertently omitted.

Polygala Fishiæ, Parry,
Oenothera micrantha, Horner,
Collomia heterophylla, Hooker,
glutinosa, Gray,
Phacelia ciliata, Bentham,
Fritillaria biflora, Lindl..

Mimulus Parishii, Greene, is a new species recently collected at Los Angeles and also found near San Rafael, L. Cal.

The delicate *Woodsia* of Lower Cal. is *W. Mexicana*.

About two years ago, a wild potato was found in the mountain region of Arizona, and specimens brought to San Francisco for distribution. From the little tubers sent to San Diego, two crops have been harvested—each showing an increase in size upon its predecessor. Owing, perhaps, to the abundant rain of last season, this increase in size is more marked this season than last, some of the potatoes being at least three times as large as any in the original stock. Mrs. Z. R. Cronyn.

Herbarium specimens offered for books or cash.

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SAN DIEGO, CAL., FEBRUARY, 1885.

That man is certainly the happiest, who is able to find out the great-number of reasonable and useful amusements, easily attainable and within his power; and, if so, he that is delighted with the works of Nature, and makes them his study, must undoubtedly be happy; since every animal, flower, fruit or insect, nay, almost every particle of matter affords him an entertainment. Such a man never can feel his time hang heavy in his hands, or be weary of himself, for want of knowing how to employ his thoughts. Each garden or field is to him a cabinet of curiosities, every one of which he longs to examine fully; and he considers the whole universe as a magazine of wonders, which infinite ages are scarce sufficient to contemplate and admire enough. —[Henry Baker, in the Microscope Made Easy, published at London in 1742, and re-published in the Journal of the New York Microscopical Society, January, 1885, just received.

CRUSTACEA OF SAN DIEGO

(The following list of the marine crustacea of this place has been prepared from determinations received of W.N. Lockington. They have all been collected by myself during the past few years.)

Pinnixa fuba, Dana, parasitic in *Modiola capax*.

Hippa analoga, St.

Xanthodes Taylori, St., holes in rocks.

Daira Americana, St.

Pleuroncodes planipes, St.

Cancer antennarius, St., under rocks common.

Callianassa longimana, under rocks abundant.

Pelia Pacifica, A. M. Ed., spider crab.

Epialtus productus, Dana, common.

Xantho bella, St., under rocks, small red crab.

Xantho leucomanus, Lck., white headed crab.

Xantho vittata, St.

Randalia ornata, St., a large crab.

Inachus tuberculatus, Lck, a spider crab.

Idotea rectilinea, Lck.

Panulirus interruptus, Randall, craw fish.

Pilumuns spin-hirsutus, Lck., under rocks.

Alpheus Harfordi, Kingsley, under mantle of *Haliotis*.

Lygia occidentalis, Dana, common "14-footer."

Petrolisthes rupicola, St.

Pugettia richii, Dana, a spider crab.

Eupagurus hersuticusculus, (?)

This list will be continued as often as new determinations of crustacea collected allows.

BOOKS AND PAPERS

Those desiring a more intimate knowledge of the development theory, more popularly known as Darwinism or the theory of evolution, are referred to a brief simple statement for general readers by Prof. J. Y. Bergen, Jr., and Fanny Bergen, published by Lee & Shepard, Boston. 16 mo. cloth, ill. 1884, \$1.25.

The first number of the Journal of Mycology has appeared, containing descriptions of many new fungi, edited by Prof. A. Kellerman, Manhattan, Kansas, monthly, \$1 per year.

Mining and Scientific Press; a paper devoted mainly to mining affairs. Published by Dewey & Co., S. F., at \$3 per year.

The Naturalists' Leisure Hour: published monthly by A. E. Foote 1223 Belmont avenue, Phila., at 75 cents per year is invaluable to the book buyer and contains much of interest to anyone.

Tidings from Nature is a monthly published at Rutland Vt., at 25 cents per year, devoted to young naturalists.

Drugs and Medicines of North America: a quarterly devoted to the complete discussion of the medicinal plants of North America, by J. U. and C. G. Loyd, and is a most thorough work, highly creditable to the publishers and authors and should be in the hands of every physician. Medicinal plants will be illustrated with full-page engravings. Price \$1 per year, 30 cents per number. Sample pages with prospectus on application.

The Microscopical Bulletin, a bi-monthly, published by Jas. W. Queen & Co., opticians, 924 Chestnut street, Philadelphia, contains much matter of interest to microscopists and well worth the 25 cents a year charged.

Editors are respectfully invited to exchange. We would ask publishers, authors, and societies to send us their publications, especially those referring to the Pacific coast or of general interest to biologists.

GENERAL NOTES.

A course of popular lectures under the auspices of the Society of Natural History has been commenced at San Diego. The first of the series was delivered on the 3rd instant by Mrs. Elizabeth Surr, recently from London, England. Her subject, "The Beautiful," was treated in a combined practical and poetic manner which gave general satisfaction to her hearers.

The crisis in the grain trade and the American and Indian competition in this commodity, are the topics of the day in Russia, and are being discussed in no less than three societies in St. Petersburg, each devoting more than one session to these topics.—[Science.

Quarter sections of our native woods, five inches in length, 25 cents each, by mail. Smaller specimens ($\frac{1}{4} \times 1 \times 5$ inches) 60c. per dozen varieties by mail.

Sample packets of native seeds 25 cents.

SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY.

The regular meeting was held Friday evening, Feb. 9th, the president, Dr. G. W. Barnes, in the chair. The formation of a section adjunct to the Society, composed of the San Diego Historical Society, was consummated. The following publications were received: Proceedings and Transactions of the Nova Scotia Institute of Natural Sciences of Halifax, by Mr. Simon D. McDonald; also by the same, a pamphlet by himself on Sable Island and its attendant phenomena; Meteorology of Oakland, by J. D. Trembley M. D.; Transactions of Vassar Brothers Institute and its Scientific section, Poughkeepsie, N. Y., 1883-1884; Bulletin of the Minnesota Academy of Sciences, January 1882; official document—engrossed on parchment—of the Hawaiian Council in 1864, by E. W. Hendrick; a check-list of the flowering plants and ferns of Southern and Lower California, by C. R. Orcutt; Revision of the Stenini of America north of Mexico, from the author, Thos. L. Casey. Miss Rosa Smith exhibited the egg and young of a Swell Shark—*Scylliorhinus ventriosus*. Dr. Barnes exhibited a specimen of turquoise—the sacred stone of the Aztecs—from the mine near Cerillos, New Mexico, stating historical and scientific facts connected with it. Four new members were elected.

Specimens of the fruit of all our manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos*) can now be had with many other seeds of botanical interest.

INQUIRIES.

Mr. Geo. F. Kunz desires to learn of any mention made of pearls in any paper—either as a newspaper item, or in a popular or scientific work.

Lovers of flowers are requested to note the first appearance of blossoms in their immediate neighborhood of all the varieties they can; also duration of the time of blossoming, peculiar conditions, etc.

California *Erythrææ* wanted by the publisher—30 or more fine specimens of every species except *E. venusta* and *E. Douglasii*; will give liberal exchange.

MONTHLY BULLETIN.

Some fine specimens of *Laevicardium elatum*, Sby. are now on hand at prices from 50 cents to \$3 each.

Two or three specimens of *Chlamydoconcha orcutti*, Dall. can be had at \$1 each.

Dr. Frank Cowan a member of the Philadelphia Academy of Science, gave an entertaining and instructive lecture on India, the evening of the 9th instant, under the auspices of the San Diego Society of Natural History. He was a guest on the U. S. surveying steamer, Carlisle P. Patterson on her voyage from the east on her way to Alaska where she is ordered. Dr. Thos. H. Streets and Messrs. Niblock and Marsh are stationed on this vessel and attend to the Natural History department, Lieut. Clover commanding.

A few fine examples of *Cypraea spadicea*, Sby., at 25 cents to \$1.

Fine herbarium representations of Southern and Lower California plants at \$10 per century for selections, postpaid in the U. S. \$8 per century by the set.

The American Naturalist: A large \$4.00 monthly magazine devoted to the natural sciences in their widest sense, and published by McCally & Stavely, 237-9 Dock street, Philadelphia, contains extensive and interesting notes on geography, travels, geology, palæontology, botany, entomology, embryology, psychology, anthropology, microscopy, and various other subjects. It gives in the February number nine very fine plates, illustrating the various subjects treated upon.

Vick's Illustrated Monthly Magazine, which needs no description, will be sent one year with THE WEST-AMERICAN SCIENTIST for the price of the one, \$1.25.

Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club (price \$1.00) with THE WEST-AMERICAN SCIENTIST, \$1.25.

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Respectfully asking such encouragement, financial and otherwise, as we may seem to deserve, the publisher remains, sincerely,

C. R. ORCUTT,

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