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Actinocheita

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**Luzula effusa** Buchen. [Juncaceae].

(Sikkim, W. China).

Myitkyina District : Fengshuiling Pass, 2850 m., fls. April,  
*Kermode* 17226.

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**XLII—ACTINOCHEITA.** A. A. BULLOCK.

Dr. F. A. Barkley(1) has published a further article, in conjunction with Mr. Merton J. Reed, on *Actinocheita*, in which he still maintains that *Rhus filicina* DC. is conspecific with *Actinocheita potentillifolia* (Turcz.) Bullock. Detailed reasons for the rejection of this conclusion have already been given by the writer(2), but the following dogmatic sentence from Dr. Barkley's second paper cannot be allowed to pass without comment : "One cannot but wonder that anyone might seriously suggest either that the description (even excluding the reference to the fruit) or illustration as referring [sic] to *Bursera bipinnata* when compared to a series of specimens of that species."

(1) Messrs. Barkley and Reed do not seem to be fully acquainted with the history(3) of the Mociño and Sessé specimens and drawings. They state that De Candolle "had seen the specimen" (of *Rhus filicina*). Sessé and Mociño's herbarium specimens, however, were sent to Spain, and when Mociño took asylum in Montpellier in 1813, he took with him only the manuscripts and the coloured drawings. It was on these drawings that the new Sessé and Mociño species published in the *Prodromus* were based, as is clear from the following extract from the preface to Alphonse De Candolle's 'Calques des dessins'(4) : "Les botanistes qui font usage du *Prodromus*, en particulier ceux qui s'occupent des plantes du Mexique, ont sans doute remarqué combien il leur est difficile de reconnaître les espèces décrites d'après les *Icones florae mexicanae ineditae*." . . . . "On ne savait pas alors à quel point il est nécessaire de décrire les espèces nouvelles complètement au moyen d'échantillons qui restent dans les herbiers pour de futures explications ou vérifications." . . . . "à mesure que le *Prodromus* a avancé, l'emploi des dessins du Mexique est devenu de plus en plus rare." . . . . "Vers la fin du *Prodromus* les auteurs n'ont jamais employé ni même consulté ces dessins que les plantes sèches, recueillies dans les temps modernes, remplacent avec infirmité d'avantage."

As De Candolle had *not* seen a specimen of *Rhus filicina*, his statement, that it had imparipinnate leaves with pinnatifid leaflets, was based by him on examination of the drawing, and is not first-hand evidence as Barkley and Reed suppose.

(2) The statement that *Bursera bipinnata* has "a slender glabrous branch bearing bipinnate leaves with more or less alate rachi [sic], with leaflets remote and very sparsely pilose" suggests imperfect acquaintance with that species. The apical portions of the branchlets of *B. bipinnata* are frequently very pilose. The

uppermost part of the leaf is simply pinnate as depicted in De Candolle's copy of Sessé and Mociño's drawing. The leaflets are not "remote," indeed they very often touch or overlap at the middle, triangular spaces being left between their bases exactly as shown in the tracing (Calques, t. 189).

(3) The following sentence from Messrs. Barkley and Reed's paper shows confusion of ideas.—“While the author had in mind the biological entity including *Rhus potentillaefolia* Turcz. in the creation of the genus *Actinocheita*, it is necessary to point out that the type of the genotype is plate 189 of A. De Candolle's Calque[s] des Dessins . . . . (not specimens of *Rhus potentillaefolia* Turcz. as has been erroneously assumed) so that if plate 189 of the Calque[s] . . . . were to be proven other than conspecific with *Rhus potentillaefolia* . . . then the type of the genus would have been removed, so that it would seem a new name for the genus would have then been indicated rather than a new combination under the old genus name.”

The type-method in botanical nomenclature is concerned with types of names, not with morphological (or other) types of groups, which fall under taxonomy. The expression “type of the genotype” (of *Actinocheita*) is equivalent to “type of the type-species of the generic name *Actinocheita*,” i.e., a taxonomic, not a nomenclatural concept. A generic name is based on one or more species, which may or may not have been correctly identified. Dr. Barkley's generic description of *Actinocheita* appears to have been drawn up from a number of herbarium specimens. His description of the ovary and fruit could not have been taken from pl. 189 of the *Calques des Dessins*, since the details given by him are not shown in it. It follows, therefore, that the type of the generic name (genotype) is the species represented by the specimens concerned and, as admitted by Dr. Barkley, this is undoubtedly *Rhus potentillifolia* Turcz. Dr. Barkley's adoption of the epithet *filicina* depends upon his identification of *Rhus filicina* DC. with *Rh. potentillifolia* Turcz., an identification which he admits is doubtful and with which Engler, Hemsley and Bullock disagree. The undisputed fact that Calq. Dess. Fl. Mex. t.189 is the type of the specific names *Rhus filicina* DC. and *Actinocheita filicina* (DC.) Barkley, does not make that drawing the type of the generic name *Actinocheita*. The type of a generic name is a species, not a specific name.

Regulations for determining types have not yet appeared, but most botanists would perhaps agree that the description of a group is very important in fixing the type of the name concerned. The description of *Actinocheita* applies in all respects to *Rhus potentillifolia*. Some weight may also be given to the origin of the name *Actinocheita* in fixing its application. It was derived (5) from “the ray-like pilosity of the fruit-coat,” characteristic of *Rhus potentillifolia*. Why it should be thought necessary to find a new name for a genus merely because the author of the generic name used an

erroneous specific epithet for the type-species is difficult to understand.

#### REFERENCES.

- (1) BARKLEY and REED, "Actinocheita," in *Amer. Midl. Nat.* **21**, 368–377 (1939).
- (2) BULLOCK, "On the identification of *Rhus filicina* Sessé et Moc. ex DC." in *Kew Bull.* 1937, 440–441.
- (3) SPRAGUE, "Sessé and Mociño's *Plantae Novae Hispaniae* and *Flora Mexicana*," in *Kew Bull.* 1926, 417–425, with bibliography.
- (4) ALPH. DE CANDOLLE, "Calques des Dessins de la Flore du Mexique, de Mociño et Sessé," introduction and plate 189 (1874).
- (5) BARKLEY, "A new genus of Anacardiaceae," in *Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard.* **24**, 1–10 (1937).

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#### XLIII—MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

**Miss E. A. Bruce.**—MISS E. A. BRUCE, B.Sc., has been appointed Temporary Assistant Botanist to fill the vacancy caused by the death of the late Dr. E. G. S. Brown.

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ARTHUR T. BOSCAWEN.—Kew mourns the loss of an old and valued correspondent and friend in the death of Canon A. T. Boscawen, Rector of Ludgvan, Cornwall, on 17th July, 1939.

The Rectory garden with its kindly owner was the Mecca to which many botanists and horticulturists turned when they wished to see new and unexpected plants, especially from New Zealand, flourishing under the skill and care of the Rector in the genial climate of S. Cornwall. Not only was the Canon a keen gardener, but he was also greatly interested in larger horticultural enterprises, for it was due to him that the cultivation of the *Anemone* was taken up in Cornwall, and he also played a prominent part in establishing the Broccoli industry in the county, both of which undertakings have been of great benefit to consumers and growers alike.

At Kew, however, we think of Arthur Boscawen's garden at Ludgvan as the place to which rare plants needing expert care and a favourable situation should be sent for trial. Among his many New Zealand plants *Nothopanax arborescens* was figured in the *Botanical Magazine*, t.9280 (1932). The results he achieved amply showed that our confidence in the Rector's skill was not misplaced. He always enjoyed visits from his horticultural friends to whom he delighted to show his treasures.

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**Botanical Magazine.**—The first part of volume 162 was published on July 8th, and contains the following plant portraits: *Nomocharis Farreri* (Evans) Harrow (t.9557), a member of the section *Eunomocharis* Balf. f. which comes from N. E. Upper Burma and possibly extends to Yunnan; a long account accompanies the