

Manhwy, N.Y. March 10. 1877.

Dear Sir.

The Physas are probably all one thing, and agree so well with figure & description of *P. Sayi* that I think they will pass for that. I have specimens of *heterostrophus* that amount to about the same thing — same number of whorls, black apex, brown color but lack the peculiar columella. That however is variable.

There are specimens among your shells more like *ancillaria*. If they were to grow an inch long they would pass as *P. Jordanii*. Species seems to be very poorly understood in this genus, and in fact there is not much foundation to work on.

Very likely we have over the whole continent a dozen or more good species, but one must have a great deal more acquaintance than I have to be able to do full justice to the nomenclature of the subject.

Yours
James Lewis.

P.S. I take half a dozen specimens for locality.
Return box by this mail.

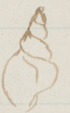
Albany N.Y. Feb. 14. 1875

Mr Ingersoll

Dear Sir.

I find a letter and a package of shells awaiting me on arriving home last evening, with acknowledgments due to you for them. I wish, very much, that I could comply with your requests in detail, but I fear my present engagements will delay matters so long that I should be too late to do you any good. As to new species in *Physa* & *Lymnaea*, I would suggest patience. They may prove to be synonyms, and it would be better not to add to synonymy.

I have recently had my ideas about the variability of species very much surprised in the direction of carrying me beyond my last stand point. Mr. R. P. Whitfield of Albany showed me *Lymnaea angustior* bred in confinement - fourth generation. He showed me first a single shell without comment. I thought it an unrecognized species. I have got my sketch reversed, but it will give you, approximately, the form and size of the shell. With this example in mind I am prepared to believe black is white.



I shall scarcely have time to day or to morrow to study your shells. I have a pile of letters accumulated in the last two weeks, business engagements deferred - and Tuesday I return to Albany on my fourth (perhaps also my last) week. When I get done there I return home to begin on the Smithsonian Unionidae, in 7 big boxes = 1200 lbs, the freight on which was \$19.49. Six months work for me at the very lowest guess, an assistant added. In the face of this big task I dare not give an hour to my own shells, as every hour is so much added to the fund I wish to devote to my family, if I am in a few years to leave them.

Perhaps when I get done at Albany I may look over your shells and letters again. But so far as relates to the *Lymnaea* I would hesitate to describe.

Since Lygon published his Catalogue in French. I fear he has come down. In letters he has written to me he admits that there are fewer species Physa & Lymnaea than the Books call for, and very frankly acknowledges his opinion that even some of his own cherished species are likely to be synonyms. It is entirely in accordance with my own opinion expressed to him in more general terms. Prime, several years ago, before condensing his synonymy in *Sphaerium* & *Pisidium* consulted me and adopted some of my suggestions sufficiently modified not to be readily recognized. The general tendency of my investigations is to diminish rather than to increase nominal species.

I don't think I have "much business" to describe species. I think the few efforts I have made in that direction have not invariably been satisfactory - inasmuch as I find later that with one or two not very prominent exceptions I have no claims out of synonymy!

I think if we could sit down together with types and records before us we could in a short time discover some of the identities involved in the cumulative synonymy of Lygon's Catalogue. At present I am not informed, and dare not offer suggestions beyond the one word patience. Some day when I can get a few moments to spare I will send you some shells as I proposed in a former letter.

Yours
James Lewis.