

were familiar to me. Yet I may have a few
new species. I left San Fr. with my friends, Fille
& Agnew on the 20th inst. & reached Empire City in Nevada
on Friday night. We were cooped up in a stage, with 9 inside
& half a dozen outside nearly 24 hrs. riding over ugly places on
the mountains, with frightful charms at our feet - the
horses dashing at full speed. The drivers are said to be
unequelled. It was very startling at first - but we
got familiar with the danger - which is more apparent
than real. We spent Saturday at Empire looking at
the mills, & botany - & we had a comfortable Sunday at
the Superintendent's house - where we were his guests. The
San Fr. promoters of the Mills telegraphed that I was coming
with two friends - but the message was misinterpreted, & the
Supt. (Mr. MacDonald - a real English gentleman) understood that
Miss Agnew, & another young lady, whose name he could not
make out, were to accompany me. So he immediately telegraphed
back for a quantity of champagne! He was a little disap-
pointed when three travellers emerged from the stage!
We were in elbow room, as the guests of the Co. The mine
officers have excellent quarters & good pay. Mr. MacDonald
dined as to Carson (4 m. off) twice on Sunday, where we
heard excellent Episcopal services - & Monday he took us,
in a splendid horse wagon to the Quartz mill, at Dayton -
& then to the famous Mills of the Gould & Curry Co. (Costing
\$1,200,000!) near Virginia City. On reaching the latter
place we found ourselves the guests of the Bank of California
- wh. has a Branch here - This is the 8th day since we ar-
rived in this wonderful town - wh. though greatly reduced since
last July, is still a very busy City of more than 5000 inhabitants
with long streets of handsome houses & stores, gas lights, &
every convenience & luxury to be found in San Fr. itself
or even in N. York. But every thing is very dear - having
to be ~~carried~~ brought in wagons (which carry 4 to 7 tons - with 5 to 8
hike & even a pair of horses -) at a cost of 50 cts. a ft. in ^{in winter} ~~in summer~~

I have no time to read this letter now
all blunders

Virginia City
July 3

My dear friend

Although I have not a
since I reached the Pacific
a day that you have not been
my thoughts. Oh how often
your company, to share with me
have enjoyed in visiting this
dry time has been so consol-
selling, examining mines, vis-
collecting the numerous plants
my notice (which, of course I
serving, both for myself & for
never worked harder than since
Francisco. I try & collect
plant of the least interest - ~~of~~
yourself, the Smithsonian & the
for the New Herb. & the 5th

I have visited the country
around San Francisco pretty
went down the Coast to Sta
of the Treas. having kindly per-
Shubick at my disposal.
of the paper - & one or two gen-

accompany me furnished all kind of creature
comforts for the voyage & also for the land exped-
-so that I was at no expense whatever. The outfit
of horses & wagons was quite formidable. Where
the wagons could not be used (as on the steep mountain
paths) they were sent a long distance round to the place
where we intended to encamp. - They carried our shoes,
blankets, provisions & cooking utensils. The Dragoon
packmen were excellent cooks, & we had good living
all the way. I got plants whenever we stopped, &
- not a few on the road - some one of the party would
gladly dismount & bring such specimens as I pointed
out to be laid in the collecting book, which was slung
over the shoulder by a strap. It was difficult to dry
the paper & dry them - but I managed to get along - &
the air is so free from moisture that in three or four
days, all but the succulent specimens are dry. The
bundles of paper that I am obliged to take with me
are no slight "impediments" to our little party. My friend
Chapman, & Faile, of New York, who arrived a few days after
me are by my side wherever I go. They are kind to
me as if I were their father, & watch all my movements
with the greatest solicitude. They are noble young Chris-
tian gentlemen. They went with me to the grand
Yosemite valley, where I hoped, some hour for your son
Harry. Horace Mann (whom I had seen before in San Fran-
cisco) has probably reached Cambridge by this time) has
probably told you how we met in the Yosemite, where he was,

riding about & looking for the hotel
to have him with us three or four
that saw me the morning after our
a little plant that you remember
XII. Cell - a Rubiac. to rub. I gave
It is quite common in the Valley, &
as well as in the Mariposa Grove
- ty of specimens. The Calif. botanist
Des is sure that Brewster did not co-
are worth a voyage & journey to
of the wood - enough to frame
- & a small bag of the fruit
use some of them for setting
frame. To see the Sarcodes in
- ing. Did Maggie write to you the
I saw in S. Fr. the morning after my
Sarcodes - which was in a English
flower pot? It was tickled "Snow"
was it grows in close proximity
was incorrect. for the plant grows
snow - even in the Valley of Yo-
of specimens, & have determined
The Libocedrus decurrens grows
& replaces the Thuja gigantea
of Yosemite. It is sometimes 80
A grand new paper through the
Hotel. & my bed was under it
that we have only bits or poor spec-
- are so common that I have not
Until I crossed the Sierras, nearly

The alkaline water, of which there is such general complaint in Calif. & Nevada, don't trouble me at all, as I am seldom troubled with any ailment but a slight acidity when I eat too much sweet - so that the water keeps me all right -

I have taken only two professional jobs since I came here - Indeed only one - for the other was engaged before I left New York. For one of these I have been paid \$500 in gold - of wh. (DV) I shall save \$400. Agnew pays my expenses from San Fr. to Humboldt, & back - & will give me at least \$500, when I return to N.Y. He represents some stockholders of Mining shares - & frauds in N.Y. I may get a little more from a bunch of the Petroleum Co. owned in N.Y. whose lands I examined while I was in Sta Barbara - All other applications I have declined, as I don't wish to run any risk of giving an opinion that will cause loss to company or individual - & I take warning by the case of Sullivan who has obtained throughout the country that I have visited, a very unenviable reputation - I must here close, as my friend Fails is waiting to take my letter - the mail here about to close. Give much love to your dear Dave - Yours ever & affectionately
John Torrey

I have been down in all the
I have formed my opinion about
- as well as many other places
down. I hope to relate to you
What would Fremont & Kit
if it had been predicted when
Valley, at the head of wh. Virg
they were told that in a few
be established here, in which a
east would be plenty - that
elegantly furnished, carpeted
with gas - & champagne
daily! Indeed all this has
six years. It is a constant
town is built on a gentle slope
Davidson, wh. rises to the Mt.
abt 8000 above the sea. All
of the town are most of the m
ated in the famous "Comstock"
a mile & a half in length - &
which is but a suburb of
Lode proved to be unprecedented
ded into numerous portions, of
each portion made the basis of
the richest of these sold for \$500
within a year or two it has been
present it is sold at a little over
mines have been badly managed



Torrey, John. 1865. "Torrey, John July 31, 1865." *Asa Gray correspondence*

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