

Cambridge, 20th Sept. 1854

My Dear Wright.

The last time but one that I wrote to you, as far as I know, was in Feb. last, - when I sent a goodly letter for you to Prof. Baird to be forwarded; and about the same time I sent thro' the Smithsonian a parcel containing some botanical pamphlets, - among them Torrey's 3 memoirs - which he might forget to send.

Then, late in July, I wrote you a letter, via England & Ireland mail to Hong Kong (paid through) - which I trust has reached you safely. Since then I have not heard from you, but have seen a later letter at Torrey's, and have heard indirectly of you from your brother. In my last, I was mistaken in saying that young Storer had got home. He has now arrived, however, and I hear his health is very delicate.

In my last I told you I had got the books you wanted, as far as possible - and I sent a regular bill, so that you could get the money from the Navy, as a requisition. The books, well packed, were put into the Smithsonian hands early in August; and Prof. Henry duly wrote me that they had been given into the proper hands at the Navy Department to be forwarded to you. So I hope they will come all right. The delay, as I explained, was owing to my waiting from June to August for Putnam to get a few copies of text of Botany of Exploring Expedition

bound. Now let me see for news since then. The least pleasant first. I told you I suppose that I had sold the greater part of the copies of my Nat. Expl. Exped. (vol. 1, with refusal of the rest) to Putnam & Co - for just about enough to pay what they cost me - & I took Putnam's notes for 4 to 6 months, for \$400 in payments.

Well, now, just as the first of them is coming due. Putnam & Co - in a piece of hard times, up and stop payment. - leaving me to pay printer & paper - man any way I can. - so I shall be very much straightened this winter when every thing is dear (coal at \$9.00), when I expect to be rather comfortable. Putnam is trying to arrange with his creditors to go on. - but I fear I shall get nothing this winter or fall, and perhaps little hereafter. If he makes fairly, I shall lose some 500 or 600 dollars or more by him. - which is hard.

As to Nat. Expl. Exped. vol. 1, not yet ready. I suppose not having yet finished the drawings - so slow is his

At the 1st of this month, I made a little visit to Torrey at New York. - he only at home: family all up in the country, and Mrs Torrey in very poor state of health. I fear she will not get up strong again.

I looked over Bigelow's collection made in Whipple's survey - all the best plants Californian, especially on eastern border of California.

Some new & very curious things. I am now printing a little memoir on Thurber's new plants at whole under Badtlett, in New. Scenery -

On Monday I got a proof back from him - from Providence - and the next day I learn from the newspaper - that, while printing, "Mr. George Thurber" (I fear our friend) had one head blowing to pieces by the accidental discharge of a gun. I do hope he will not lose the member!

We have got from Mexico a new strip of land in Sonora - and Emory is appointed the Commissioner to run the new boundary. He takes not botanist (which is mean) but Schott is to collect all he can.

I told you Parry is married. He & his wife were lately at N.Y. Torrey saw them, and says she is a very nice body.

William's Journal is sent you regularly from New Haven, to care of Com. Knigge. I hope you get it.

I am distributing, as I get spare hours, in the barn - the great mass of Berlandier's collection of plants (bought by him) into sets. They are mostly the regular Texan things - gathered 20 years ago. It is a great job.

I am working hard to get copy of rest of vol. 2 of Flora N. America ready for printer - I hope to begin to print it at the beginning of winter. - I am getting on with Pl. Mex. pt. 3. at the same time, making it a sort of commentary of the Flora N. But it is very slow & tedious work.

I am alone, my wife at Beverly, helping to nurse a sick niece Kitty Loring (whose father is in Europe) who has been sick nigh unto death; but now seems likely to get well.

When you get into the Pacific, & on to the field where good work is to be done, I hardly doubt but that you will be put back to the steam — when you will do better, and will enjoy yourself very much more. I dare say your patience is ~~now~~ sorely tried now; but don't give up, — and hereafter you will have better times. At China, if near him (Canton, or Macao) you will know S. Wells Williams, Ed. of Chinese Repository — a fine man & once a very fair botanist. He will remember me well.

I hope you will have a chance to ransack the Sandwich Islands where is yet much to be done, in the mountains.

The last package sent to you contained:
Lindley India Orchidacea pts. 1-4.
Walp. Repert. & Annals Syst. Bot. 9 vols. bound.
Hooker (Bauer) Genera of Ferns —
Muller's Species Muscorum. 2 vols. —
Botany of Expl. Exped. in S. Seas — vol. 1 (text) & etc.

MacKenzie's vol. on the ~~Leaves~~ Ferns is all printed (under 400 pages) but not yet out. The atlas of plates is to be out at the same time, or nearly.

With best wishes for a good time and a safe return, I remain, Dear Friend,
Ever Yours
Asa Gray



Gray, Asa. 1854. "Gray, Asa Sept. 20, 1854." *Charles Wright correspondence with Asa Gray*

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