

Peter Jan 15th 1864

My Dear Dr.

Three days ago I returned from my excursion of eighty - found your letter of Dec 1 with enclosure from Engelmann & Tuckerman & yesterday came that of 2nd inst with the list of names of plants. Grisebaker's note & the draft on Hamburg for £. 20 which I shall not want immediately as in this excursion I was unable to spend anything but by thanks to the hospitality of the people. I wrote you about the 20th ult fr. Los Remedios. Hope you have the letter by this time. A day or two later I went to La Grifa - new ground & here I got another dreadful poisoning by Amanite. Christmas morning early I went with my kind host on an excursion & collecting some bushes with a figgy look I broke some branches tho' without fr. & put them in my portfolio - The leaves were finely denticulate. Looking about more carefully I saw the mother tree. I went on to a laguna & as I had not washed that morning proceeded to wash my hand & face. But the moment I put the water to my eyes I felt the poison I told my friends what had occurred & begged to return to the house. Soon my eyes burned like fire & before we got there I could hardly see. The light was painful I went to bed put wet cotton on my eyes but found no relief. The pain subsided by night but my eyes were very sore & gave me pain on opening & shutting them. The day following I could hardly see objects as men in bulk & could distinguish nothing clearly. The 27th I was better but with vision very much confused. At the first glance I could recognise the letters of a word but in a moment they became mixed & confused. With time I grew better but for a number of days my sight was very much impaired & even now I hardly dare say

that I see as clearly as I did before. In that region
of pine wood & lagunas, I found quite a number of
nice things. What do you think of a Cuban Ralmia?
I think I have one a little back a few inches high
I shall examine soon. The last days of Dec. & the
first few of this month I passed Guama & after tra-
versing some new ground returned home thro' the
same mountain tract that I examined nearly at
the same season last year. Of course I did not
collect much. But I am continually meeting new
plants not in flower & hearing thro' friend Blair &
others of novelties in plants which I have not yet
visited. Many laggard & defective specimens out of season.

In my last of I remember well I wrote nothing of
the war or public matters willing to drop our little
sparring. You don't seem so inclined. So I shall make
some quotations & criticisms. "Peace Democracy
— is dead." Perhaps so — perhaps only scotched. We know
what killed it — ^{the} allowing Republican soldiers to go
home to vote while the Democrats were retained to
keep their posts or be killed off — either case worth
just the wise-juggler. "The reelection of Lincoln by
acclamation seems probable." Doubtless after the manner of the
Roman Emperors during the "Decline & Fall" (Vid
Gibbon) not in the old constitutional ways which
by the way seem to be falling pretty much into dis-
use. Since the palpable unequivocal sanction of
secessionists by the erection of wooden Virginia
into a new state & its admittance as such I am

not surprised to see the Government adopt the
most ^{extravagant} measures.

"You can come home in the spring, or even now." Can
I? How gracious. I am of the same opinion. But the con-
dition? — "take the President's oath of allegiance." I don't
know the President had an oath of allegiance. As
a good man which I profess to be I am quite
ready to swear obedience to the constitution & laws
of my country, or ^{to be forced to} to do so by a bitter pill
of any other where I may be. But to
swear to the proclamation? Never! It is neither con-
stitution nor law. I know but little of it in my
present state of mind. I shall not swear to it tho'
it may be a very harmless affair. — "and be a good
and peaceable citizen (subject) of A. Lincoln's Do-
minion." A. Lincoln's Dominion! A. Lincoln's Do-
minion!! A. Lincoln's Dominion!!! Pray where
does that Dominion lie "en este mundo de Dios"?
I don't suppose you would write or write thoughtfully.
Let us see what you say Sept. 18th. "U. S. America
belongs to loyal Americans." This suits me better
much better. Why put subject in parenthesis? Heretofore
we have not considered ourselves as subjects. Are we
really changing to a despotism or to an empire or to
a kingdom where the people are considered as subjects?
I shall come to my native land however I snap
my fingers at Mr. Lincoln's Proclamation I
know a way & shall follow it if absolutely necessary;
just otherwise.

And now to secure this let us talk of money matters.
In future I would be glad that you ^{or} arrange that all
~~payments~~ ^{sums} of money ^{in Europe} due for plants be payable in Cuba.
Let this be the standing arrangement to be followed or
abandoned as we think best. Even you will admit
that Spanish gold is more solid property than U.S.
Green Backs & if I had all my property invested in it
I would feel richer than I do. But let things remain
as they are except in answer to your question "How
shall I pay you?" If you don't want the use of the
fund or the care of them turn them all over to my
brother. That matter is soon settled. And you can
continue to do so with any funds you may hereaf-
ter receive from subscribers at home. He will invest
the money in some way to my benefit so that when
I am old I shall have something to live on, unless
as he suggests the whole country becomes bankrupt
& the Government contractors become owners of the
whole country (the public debt now amounting to $\frac{1}{4}$
of the assessed value of all kind of property in the
whole country) in which case we shall be subjects
of a few villainous speculators who are sucking the
life-blood of the nation. If I can get the value of my col-
lection still unsold in Spanish gold I shall have some-
thing sure. No thinks no sane man can cease such a
course.

You think that in a year longer slavery will have ceased
to exist. I would like to know who then will drive the nags?
— for without driving they'll not work & if they ~~don't~~ work

how will the south "get to be something"? as you say
in a former letter. Give 'em Yankee Drivers & make
'em free slaves. Yes give 'em Bradford and they'll soon
be crying for their old massas and "de good ole times"
The severity of Yankee Drivers is proverbial. But don't
imagine, a moment, that I shall weep for the aboli-
tion of slavery. Try it on all you that wish it. all
in a lump. I wash my hands of the whole concern.

It is encouraging to know that near $\frac{1}{4}$ of my collections are
"as good as new". It seems that in my naming I have
jumped astraddle of a number of old names & been
pitched off. Pray let me lie there & not show me up
in print covered with mud or dirt. The cause of the re-
jection of most of my names ^(the rejects ones) I can clearly see—prior
or preoccupied ones or barbarous compounds (*leucostylus*) I should
have been *leucogynus* which wd have stuck. The substitution
of *Phyllanthus rubra*. m. for my *Phyllanthus purpureus*
and of *Acalypha radicans*. m. for my *A. reptans*. ^{See, I see, why is}
it? And why is it "remarkable" that *Stenosperma* should
"be found in the West Indies"? when Rich published long ago
his *S. cubensis*. & what has become of *Picra scandens*? Gris. won't
recognise it? And *Euphalea leiandra* why rejected for *B. hypoleuca*?
And where are all the *Euphorbias*. I should think there ought
to be a dozen. There is a *Pisonia* or something of the sort collected
in abundance certainly overlooked or postponed. Perhaps however
all these will come out when the whole come under examination.
Richard James ~~Gay~~ writes me for plants & in such terms as
to indicate that he considers me pledged to him which I surely
am not. He wants them too in small detachments as he being
as he says a poor man can not pay the whole sum at once
& is unwilling to incur obligations which he ^{may be} unable to
fulfil. I shall write him that I will do my best to gratify
him but can pledge you to no conditions of any kind. His

but positions indicate an honorable man & confirm the favorable opinion I had of him at our first & only interview.

I returned from my late excursion my mind fully made up to settle all my affairs here speedily go on to Habana dispatch every thing north that I have collected go on east, and as soon as the season should become comfortable at home—say June—embark for my native land. But now getting these encouraging letters the still unpleasant state of matters at home the conviction that there is yet so much to do yet here—nearly all the palms for example not collected or in small quantity—the advice to stay of friend Blain, the strong desire I have of making an excursion in company of Goodlack—these & other reasons make me hesitate and I will wait at least awhile longer. Letters from Yakobus inform us of the dangerous illness of my good old friend Descaille. In July he performed a hard journey to Cuba & back (and he rides always as if the wheel was after him). He took also imprudently repeated doses of a powerful medicine & was prostrated & confined to his bed. He is getting out too well on to 70. His friends have little hope that he will recover. His daughter has returned from France quite accomplished and as good as she is accomplished.

When again you have occasion to send books or other matter (I wait anxiously the remainder of Gris. G. Br. N. I. I.) be so kind as to send a copy of Pl. Mr. Cub. & Filices for Friedrich Blain. We are under the deepest obligations to him. I will give you too a new address better I think than Dr. Sawalle. "Dr. Dr. Felipe Poey Calle de la Amistad No. 120 Habana."

I sympathize with you & her in Mrs. Grays of—

flections & hope that with the return of warm weather if not before she will pick up. I conclude you are as well as usual as you say nothing to the contrary and am glad I too continue in good health. Thank God!

And now if you should think my criticisms severe & perhaps they are don't imagine that they are made in an unfriendly temper. Far from it. I think you laid yourself open to criticism. But if you think as you write & your party as you do. God help us. if it gets the upper hand.

Another thought has occurred to me. As in future I can not expect to find novelties by the dozen & my remuneration must be more a labor of love for science than a remunerative one for me. It would aid me much if I could know partly near what species are all taken up so that I could collect these only & neglect such ^{as} still remain on hand. I will therefore inquire if you could possibly tick off such as are wanting or the company. for my guidance I can not ask you to do it if it should prove much of a task tho' it would doubtless greatly contribute to the perfection of Cuban botany by directing attention to such things as are of value & saving the labor which might otherwise be bestowed on worthless plants. Perhaps more subscribers may come in & I might keep at work much longer or not with great profit at least gaining a little all the while. And when you send add a list of the contents of the parcel over to the most trivial object of the custom house agents will put a fine (multa) upon me several of which I have already had to pay.

I have about finished all I have to say & fill my sheets nearly. I must now close & dispatch. so. Pray God work yourself to death the coming summer.

Yours ever Charles Wright

[illegible]



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