

Retiro June 15th 1866

Dear Dr.

At the risk of fatiguing you I must give you an account of an extraordinary orchid—a real phenomenon. But as you will only have to read & not answer here goes. I have written to you & doubtless also spoken of a little orchid which Don Jose has several times met with in the savanas but which for want of time to collect ^{was not secured} or from his own subsequent carelessness or that of servant has been lost after being saved. He found it first by his name—"un olor magnifico"

I went to Raquel on the 8th. He went to San Cristobal on the 10th & both going & returning he found again the little orchid "por millares de millares". I returned here on the 11th and the next day I went to get more of the plant (he had brought me about a dozen—not half so many as my curiosity excited by repeated failures in searching for it made me desire to have) arrange to tell not a single flower could I find & but one fr. An intelligent mulatto boy who was with him when he found it in such abundance and who describes it as in "manchones"—great patches—accompanied me that there might be no mistake in the locality. Yesterday I went again and spent half an hour or so in zigzagging the ground but again without finding a single flower. Now what do you say? Is it a meteoric—a fungus? Well last year about this date I was in the savanas near the great Ciénaga de Zapata & there I found a single flower of a little orchid which I believe is the same thing—and afterward a few fruiting plants. The soil & all favors the belief. It is a progonia looking thing ^(as described in Griseb.) but I remember that for something in the pollinaria I could not put it in that genus. Another curious circumstance is that of 10-15 plants which friend Blam ^{brought} and planted in a box a considerable portion remained visible 2 or 3 days & two are still so: one giving promise of ripening its fruit

The scrap of a letter from Santa which you sent me gave me a little stimulus. So when in Rangel I went into the Pango somewhat. I also stripped off from palms a good many lichens—a difficult operation as the crust is very brittle and can hardly be cut off ^{or} escape in very large thick slabs or in very minute bits. Those peculiar palms of the dense mountain woods are covered with a rich & varied growth of lichens. I also got one ripe blackberry from the Cuban Rubus. It is small, ^{but} I ventured to taste a single carpel (there were not very many) which I thought palatable.

Mr. Morante writes me that letters directed to their house, that is, "J. M. Morales & Co" are charged no entrance postage. Now this is an important item. So please write on fine paper (for your sake as well as mine) ^{for the convenience} large enough to fold so as not to need an envelope, and direct the envelope simply to the house. This will save me 12 1/2 cts every letter. The postage from the city inland is only 5 cts.

We are in the flush of the mango harvest. & Don Jose has the very best and in abundance. If I could only send you a few dozen that you might get fonder of them as I am almost. But then is no use in wishing for what is next to impossible. You I suppose are about in the season of strawberries which are better than mangos.

No news yet of the Stereographtes. I doubt if ever they left the Districts. I haven't made much of a letter this time but as I am going to the village, I'll finish it & send it away.

We have had some days of lovely showery weather but it seems now to have changed.

Please dispatch the two letters inclosed. You have at liberty to send the one to Springfield if you have time & inclination—and the other for for that matter.

Kind regards to Mrs. Gray & the children from

Yours truly, Charles Wright



Prof. Asa Gray
Cambridge
Mass

at
m.
and
m.



Wright, Charles. 1866. "Wright, Charles June 15, 1866." *Charles Wright correspondence with Asa Gray*

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