

Retro Aug 20th 1866

Dr. Asa Gray M.D

My Dear Dr

I'm not well, and I want now your medical advice. For a number of years past I have been somewhat troubled with piles - in fact ever since my voyage of circumnavigation if not before. But not until lately have they given me any real alarm. I have always been convinced that the disease was not only troublesome & offensive & annoying but that it might grow to be very much so if not dangerous to life to say nothing of the general health. In years past it only visited me at intervals of short duration. Now it is an almost constant companion. I fancy - am almost sure indeed that as yet the flow of blood is only from enlarged veins of the rectum - veins the walls of which from the very enlargement have become so thin that they can not resist the pressure.

Now the question is what shall I do? I ought to seek not only relief but a cure if possible. This I have thought might be effected by tying up these enlarged veins & turning the blood into other & firmer channels. I would thus ^{be} relieved, perhaps cured radically. These swollen veins produce "prolapsed ani" or something like it ~~producing~~ ^{causing} a constant uneasiness and a continued effort of the will to keep the parts in their proper place, which is the office of the sphincter in a healthy state of the system. I might also observe that I never suffer any pain & ~~more~~ for the most part the flow of blood is imperceptible to any sense but that of sight - hardly so to the touch.

I have thought so seriously of this matter for a few days past that I have almost come to the determination to run home for a few weeks if not for the whole winter. I have now become so interested in the subject of the Cuban flora that I very much dislike to leave it. But health is of more importance than the accomplishment of any scientific work. If I spend the winter in the north I might perhaps write out a good part of it except what relates to new species which will need more time & care. I returned today from another trip to the coast where I collected a very resinous Polygonum which I have had in my head for two or three years. Once before I saw it without fl. or fr. & saved a bit which you have doubtless. Now I have plenty of specimens. It paints itself on the paper. I haven't had time to examine it & it would be of little use if I did as it is not in L'eprie, certainly & his account of that family in the Catalogue I haven't yet got. I found also an Eichhornia? very much like one I used to see at Bayamo & the streams about them. But this grows in still water - lagunas which become quite dry in ^{winter} ~~summer~~. I got also a little Commelina-like plant which is not in L'eprie - not even the genus. I wrote you a few days ago via Mother's field & should not have troubled you again so soon but for my anxiety about my health. Riding on horseback is notoriously harmful & uncomfortable to those afflicted with piles and this last little excursion has made so deep an impression on my mind that is my duty first of all to attend to my health on which depend my future labors

that I am nearly resolved to wind up & come on next month with all I have gathered and seek first a cure to return immediately or work then till spring.

If you are willing to give me your opinion or advice do so immediately - and even in this case it may meet me on my way home. I shall probably make one or two more little excursions first. and - I may get better Quien sabe?

Kind regards to Mr. G. & to my friends down the street

Yours ever
Charles Wright

P.S. "Mr Wright" On envelope. Markite pencils "Who? Mr Charles or William or who?" (You'd better write on little paper. Make your letter single if possible for your own sake as well as mine - fold & seal - put my name in full on it - nothing else - just in envelope - direct this "~~Reverend~~ J. M. Morales" to Havana"

"By the way Reichenbach has me to ask you to get him orchids for the Hamburg garden." Let him tear away! I can't get at the little meteoric orchid now. It is packed up with the others at Balisleva. After much study I suppose you meant to write "Tea"



Prof. A. A. Gay
Cambridge
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Wright, Charles. 1866. "Wright, Charles Aug. 20, 1866." *Charles Wright correspondence with Asa Gray*

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