

Botanic Garden, Cambridge. July 17. 1852.

To Capt. Milnes, U.S.N.

My Dear Sir

Being out when you called yesterday I regret that I lost the opportunity of seeing you. As I may not have the good fortune to meet you, when I call this afternoon, it will save valuable time, perhaps, if, I without waiting for your written statement of objections to pass sundry small items of my account, now before you, I reply to the objection, as made in conversation, - trusting that I may remove all doubt from your mind of the propriety and justice of the items in question.

The items objected to are those for freight and carriage on boxes of specimens, the property of the U.S. Exploring Expedition, from New and London to Liverpool, and from Liverpool to Boston & Cambridge.

The objection is, if I rightly apprehend it, that, by the contract, I am to receive a certain specified sum, and no more, for

performing the duties specified in said contract: and I suppose you had informed that the expenses in question were a part of said duties.

It is true that these items of expense were strictly necessary to be incurred, in order to the fulfilment of said duties. But they are not the duties, nor a part of them, for which the sum named in the contract was the equivalent. The duties are the "describing of all the parts of the Botany of the Exh. Exped. not previously contracted for" --- "also to revise the proofs and superintend the printing not only of my own MSS. but of all the botanical work."

These charges for transportation I understand to come under the same head, as similar charges for transportation between Washington & Cambridge.

It may, however, be said, that the collections once delivered into my hands here, the Library Committee had no intention of being charged for their further conveyance to any place

to which I might think it needful to take them.

To this I would reply, that they were so taken abroad under your sanction, in compliance with an original statement of mine that this would be necessary, - that the specimens were by your instructions put into tin packing cases in view of the sea voyage, and directions in respect to the mode of their return were given by you, - showing that the whole was a pre-arranged and understood matter. So that I was, I think, justified in supposing that the expenses of transportation were to be borne by the Committee all the way to England and back, as well as to Cambridge, and on the same grounds.

And as the Committee did sanction and defray the expense of the conveyance of these specimens to England, &c. - I think I was justified in charging them with the expenses of their return from England.

I would not wish, however, to place any improper or doubtful charges in my accounts; and I had no idea that those would be ~~thus~~ so considered. I must not, therefore, plead

that a part of these items have already
passed without objection and have been paid.

If they are wrong, they must not only be struck
from the present accounts, but I must refund
what has already been paid on similar items.

I feel confident, however, that, on consid-
ering that ^{the taking} ~~these~~ ^{abroad of a large part of the collection} ~~expenses~~ ^{was} originally contem-
plated and arranged for, and that they were boxed
up with this view, with written directions from
you that they should be returned to this country
in the same closed tin cases, &c., I may
reasonably hope for your decision in favor
of defraying the expenses incurred in said
transatlantic transportation, on the same
principle that warrants your paying for
such transportation from Washington to Cambridge
and back again.

I remain, Dear Sir

With much respect

Very truly Yours

Asa Gray



Gray, Asa. 1852. "Gray, Asa [to Charles Wilkes] Jul. 17, 1852." *Charles Wilkes letters related to the United States Exploring Expedition* –.

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