

Near Louisville Ky. May 9th 1835.

My kind friend -

Absence from home for a couple of weeks, on a visit to an only Brother living near Cincinnati, has prevented me from writing to you sooner. On returning home, I had the pleasure of finding your two favours of the 10th and 19th of April together with the box of Berlandier plants and the seeds &c. from Sir William Hooker. For your obliging kindness in sending me these things, and forwarding the various parcels to Europe, you have my best thanks. Inclosed I send you a check on the Bank of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, for twenty Dollars (\$20.00) which I suppose will about repay for the various outlays you have been put to, in attending to these little matters.

Berlandier
My first business on returning home was to commit Sir William's seeds to the ground, and the next - I had almost said, to commit the Frenchman's trash to the flames! - Nothing saved them but my regard to yourself, and respect for the time and trouble you have so patiently and generously bestowed upon them. But what should be done with any scamp, or the memory of any Scape-goat, who after spending the many years in such a country, should have been content to gather such a harvest? Independently of the most inexcusable carelessness in gathering his specimens, as is self evident from what remains of any of them, he seems to have been too lazy to dry or press them properly, and then too indifferent to take the necessary care in preserving them from damp and insects. Altogether

that I never saw, and hope devoutly I shall never see again, such a miserable pack of trash - the worst negro who has ever been sent to Africa, without the ability to read his Bible or write his name, by the relentless conscience of a dying look-oner, should be converted back to slavery, if he could not make out a better representation of the people of his adopted country. I am truly sorry that I have had any agency whatever in subjecting you to the loss of so much precious time and labour, as the unwholesome of this mass of rotten rubbish must have cost you; and I thank you kindly for not having specified my name, in any shape or form, with such disgraceful specimens. Surely with all your patience and acumen you can make nothing satisfactory out of them, since there is scarcely integrity enough about the best of them, to hold an awn and a seed together. - I was under the impression that one Frenchman (or whatever he was,) had sent all his earlier collections to Europe, and that these were among his last; but I see some specimens marked as for books as 1828 - which, at this time, I suppose, have been left to the tender mercies of bugs and water!! - I dare say that this same Berlandier was much better prepared and supplied with all the aid and facilities for gathering and preserving plants, than either Drummond, Wright, Fendler or Lindheimer, and yet look at the difference in the results of their labours! - Sincerely, would it not be best for us still to throw these Berlandierian into the fire? I there not great danger that they are so super-saturated with mould and rot, and so riddled with bugs and worms as to ruin any collection into which they may be distributed?

I am well pleased to learn that you have taken up the cudgel in defence of your friend Henry, and I shall look

for your defence of him with much interest. I have always feared that the location of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, and the direction of its affairs, placed on the heads of politicians, argued unfavorably for its extensive usefulness. Demagogues who may manage to get into its directory will not hesitate to make it, if they can, and as they would do if they could, every thing in the way of Hall, subservient to their own aggrandizement.

I congratulate you and the other friends of Harvard on the liberal bequest of Mr. Bowen. I thought however that "Natural History" in the general referred on the shoulders of your colleague Agassiz, and that your Department more exclusively uses Botany. - This leads me to observe that I have not in the proper place acknowledged the receipt of your last favour of May 2. which reached me last evening. I thank you for the determination of some doubtful plants in the parcels last sent you - but I beg that you will give yourself no trouble or hurry in returning others which were nameless. If they reach me by fall I will be as early as I require them.

Have the plates of your Report on the Botany of the U. S. exploring expeditions been yet published?

You see I have written you a long line, in return for your several short favours - But whether long or short believe me, my dear Sir, every truly

your friend and
obliged Servant.

A. C. C. Short

Prof. Gray

Prof. Asa Gray

Cambridge

Mass.





Short, Charles Wilkins. 1855. "Short, Charles W. May 9, 1855." *Charles Wilkins Short letters to Asa Gray*

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