

16 January 21, 1869. Nubia, below
Derr.

My dear Wright. Let me begin a
line to you from this Ethiopian region.
The object is to enclose to you some fresh
seeds of Sycamore, *Ficus Sycomorus*, the
true Sycamore or Fig, - not bad to eat.
They were gathered at the 1st Cataracts of the
Nile, at ancient Syene, or between it &
Philæ. I think you may like to
send a part to Don José, for cult. in
Cuba, where it will be a good thing
to have. And the rest, let Guerinian
try to raise some, that we may have one
in the conservatory. I shall send, along
with heavy things, some nuts of the *Dorn*
Palm, *Strophanechea*, which branches
and is picturesque. That & Date Palms,
are the principal trees here. Besides there
is *Acacia nilotica* (the sort) and one
or two other *Acacias*, - and an occasional
Sycamore. Below a *Jujube* tree was
not uncommon, and plenty of the fine
Acacia (or *Albizia*) *Lebbek*, with its
great flat pods and large leaflets. But
none in Nubia. Up here the cultivable
valley of the Nile is just the slope of the
banks based as the river subsides after the
inundation, & ~~are~~ making a strip of green
crops from 5 feet to 5 rods wide,
all else is desert, either rock or sand as the
case may be. We came 24 hours ago
within the tropic, - a new thing for me, and
thought of Cuba & you. But it is just
completely warm. 70° in the shade as I
write - has been 76°. The nights down to 60°, or

No. - just nice & comfortable if you keep out
of the sun, which, tho. seemingly not hot has
an overpowering effect I never knew at home.
Our winds are steady from N. & N. W.
pushing us up the river steadily. About
60 miles more, or maybe 70, is the 2^d
Cataract, and our limit. Then we turn
our faces N. again, and descend - making
our principal stops by the way. For this
far, we have stopped only little or briefly
taking only such sight-seeing as came
in our way or took us little out of it.
Yet we have had a glance at several of
the greatest things. ~~At~~ Above -
Simbel. - the great rock temples of
this region, and the main thing to go
up into Nubia for, we hope to reach
tomorrow or day after. We should
have been there now, but were delayed
at Assuan by long negotiations before we
could get put up the Cataracts, and after-
ward lost 48 hours by breaking of the rudder
of our larger boat, & had to send back
to Assuan (Syene) for new rudder -
mast and a carpenter. No letters till
we get back to Thebes (Luxor) - some
weeks hence. Then I trust there is
something from you. Mrs. Gray has
been gaining moderation, is now back
again. I hope only temporarily - but
it is not encouraging. Ever yours

A. Gray



Gray, Asa. 1869. "Gray, Asa Jan. 21, 1869." *Charles Wright correspondence with Asa Gray*

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