



Washington, D.C. Sept. 19 1871

My Dear Dr Gray

Since writing you on my return from the west, certain matters have come to light here that seem to require a more private and particular explanation than I could properly give in an official letter. I refer to the new administration of the Department under Judge Watts, and particularly to the indignity, interference and ignorant dictation to which I am subjected under the present recently appointed Chief Clerk Mr Swanwick. He not only dictates as to how I shall carry on the details of my division, but is constantly making foolish and unnecessary corrections of my official letters requiring frequent recopying; he refuses to recognize as properly pertaining to the business of the Department the correspondence I have had with you and other botanists, and interposes objections and hindrances in every possible way to interfere with the proper performance of my duties as Botanist. Whether or not he will

be sustained in these proceedings and high handed measures by the Commissioner I cannot certainly say, but matters will certainly come to a crisis soon, and if Judge Watts sustains his Chief Clerk, I have no recourse left but prompt resignation. I may also say that I am not alone in this matter of complaint which equally affects all the Scientific branches of the Department and will probably involve a similar course on their part by the heads of the different divisions.

What I at present aim to do is to submit as quietly as I can to these annoying provocations and procure evidence of interference and incompetency in which to base official charges against this official to be presented to the Commissioner for his action. As I received my appointment to this position mainly on your recommendation, and have been materially assisted and encouraged in my duties here by your friendly advice and assistance, I deem it proper to consult you on the subject before taking any important steps and it might be desirable to have at hand

some statement from you as to my qualifications for the position I hold; the satisfactory manner in which I have performed my duties hitherto and the importance of not interfering with my plans for carrying on the botanical work of the Department - Such a paper might be placed in my hands directed to the Commissioner to be used as occasion may require

I have however no hopes that anything short of the permanent removal of the present Chief Clerk or even the pro tem Commissioner will effect any material improvement. In the mean^{time} the work of disorganization is going on and the efficient plans of Genl Capron for promoting the great interests of the Department are being overthrown. So that its management will render it ridiculous in the view of all sensible people

I have written to the same effect to Dr Torrey and am waiting the return of Prof. Henry to make a full statement of

these matters to him. In the mean time
I should be pleased to receive as heretofore
your friendly advice as I have no desire
to do anything that is not perfectly right
and honorable

In case of my forced resignation, I
shall be under the necessity of making public
the main points of this controversy so that
I wish to accumulate as much pertinent
documentary evidence as possible to present
a strong case in my own justification
as well as to show how official matters
are mismanaged here

Very truly yours

C. C. Parry
Bureau of Agr. Dept

P.S. I put in this slip to inform
you that on leaving the office this PM
received an official letter from the
Commissioner. Preempting and
without any reason given discharging
me from the position of Librarian
Addres Answer to Smithsonian Institution



Parry, C. C. 1871. "Parry, C. C. Sept. 19, 1871." *Charles Christopher Parry letters to Asa Gray*

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