

Gill Bell. Somerset East; Cape of Good Hope.

July 24

My dear Dr Gray.

I have just received your welcome letter of Apr. 26<sup>th</sup>.

It is most kind of you to remind me of the long interval since last dates, but in truth I have only recently heard of your return, and was desirous not to add immediately to the formidable heap of accumulated correspondence which must have met you at home. By last air going on me, however, I forwarded a little bag of Mesembryanth seeds, and by the "Surprise", Capt Hickerson, a box of 3 of our most curious dwarf Euphorbiae was sent last week. These were just meant as a token that not altogether "was man separata in genis".

Our I.D. succulents deserve praise for their tenacity of life; it is indeed a wonder that the last unlucky consignment did not turn out altogether blank. Aided by an intelligent Karroo farmer, I am now getting together a living collection of these Gods & Van-Dals flora flora, establishing them fairly in boxes that to await the descent of their sap + a safe opportunity of travel. Mesembryaceae do not seem to bear confinement well; the light is perhaps necessary in a greater degree than moisture. As they grow most readily from seed, that method will best enrich your garden. The children of my Karroo friend have collected all those sent, - they can be trusted to keep different sorts apart, to dry them faithfully in air shade, but from such sources obviously the nomenclature is the difficulty. To distinguish two Mesemb. by capt only would be a task like that of the epicure who could tell Ruitopian oysters from Luciferine by the taste!

Thanks for your introduction to Mr Webb. I will write by this next mail to him. Already I have seen a few of his excellent + conscientiously prepared plants from Wern Hall + Cawley. But it will be some months before I can send him a parcel of any size.

Dear Mr. & Mrs. B. G. — I am sending you a copy of the "Journal of the American Revolution" for 1886, Vol. 1, No. 1, containing my article on the "Revolutionary War in New England." It is a very good journal, and I hope you will like it.

Yours very truly,

John C. Miller

I have been too busy in the laboratory to get out into the mountains save by rare  
scratches of leisure, and my midwinter run to Gray River was singularly  
scanty of result at least as far as duplicates are concerned. I obtained a few  
choice and very rare plants, but being in light marching order could only  
secure a small number of specimens of each. A few of these are laid out for you but  
not in greatest worth sending by themselves.

Dr Warren's decease is one of the saddest cases of early scientific promise cut off by  
consumption that I have ever seen. I shall value your touching tribute to  
his memory and abilities. Might not some of these feeble but valuable lives  
have been preserved throughout a good working span in warmer climates.  
Here, we often think Dr Harvey died more of Irish fog and bad weather  
than ofught else. Your stay in Egypt has, I hope, given you proof of the  
wonderful restorative power of the clear dry African atmosphere. How  
it seems to lubricate the tired wheels of life! One has not, as in damp middle  
latitudes, to wrestle daily with Death for each day's existence.

We have left Grahamstown for Worcester last, losing the sea-board flora of the lower  
plains, but gaining the sub-alpine series of the great Kastberg, Kogaberg, Bosch-  
berg ranges, and are within a sharp day's ride of the extreme E. limit of the  
Karoo. Your letter came perfectly right. The Govt accord me the privilege of  
free post transit for colonial letters & parcels connected with my Deptt here; hence  
as you may imagine, I have no need the souls of post contractors & postmasters  
with fasciculi coming & going, that there is small chance of their forgetting  
my whereabouts.

An amateur botanist at Algoa Bay (P. Elizabeth) Mr. J. R. Holland well known to the Herbarium Agents, will always receive for me. He has taken much trouble to get favourable terms of freight, or even free transit for botanical



MacOwan, Peter. 1838. "MacOwan, Peter July 24 [no year]." *Asa Gray correspondence. Senders McA-Ma*

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