

Simon's Bay Nov^r 4th 1853

My Dear Sir

I was aroused this morning by the uproar of heaving in the anchor—but from that time till now (about midday) it has been dead calm or if now and then a cat's paw appears it has been from the east dead ahead. Besides when the orders were signalled to the other ships, behold one of them had not her water on board.

This has been the best day I have had in some time for drying and I improved it early. Yesterday the wind blew from the southward & eastward almost a gale and I stayed on board all day.

I have made what I consider a fine collection of plants. For a seaboard this place excels any I was ever in for the variety of species on a limited space & no place I ever visited can compare at all with it except Northern Sonora where I was two years ago. The longest excursion I have made was but about fifteen miles and most of my rambles have not extended more than from one to four & back.

Plants dry off very quickly even some of the smaller *Helianthemum* sooner than our *Zalium* and bushes as done. The Orchids too give one less trouble than I expected they would. Like many of ours they make by change of color unsightly specimens though I have not met with any very pretty.

We leave here in utter uncertainty so far as I am concerned where we will ~~land~~ land next The Commodore some time ago or when I was ordered on board this ship told me we were going to Australia but now there is a common report that we will not go there at all or if we do it will be a mere touch and go I don't know that I shall regret it must for it will be in midsummer when vegetation will be very much parched up

I have had but little conversation with the Commodore since he ordered me on board for I have not been very amiably minded and I have learned that he has not displayed the most mild temper at times so I was not sorry that he had no occasion to send for me I have wished to make out a requisition for some new books but I would go without them till doom day rather than ask him and be treated as he treated Stimpson refusing to ^{necessarily} fund expenses incurred in the service — though Stimpson has certainly been more lenient in his outlay than he ought to have been

I must have Walpers and I would like the genera Filicum of Hooker and Lindley's Orchids &c I see no way to get them but to ask you to send them to me & I will try to have the expenses covered by a requisition hereafter I sent home by Mr Ames to be given in charge to Prof. Bacon some eighty-five dollars to be subject to your order You can take that which will cover a part of the cost & before

payment day comes I will arrange to have the rest forthcoming If you think of any other books which will be particularly useful to me during my long passages from one port to another you can add them to the list so that they do not cost too much remembering that in my situation I must look out for the "multum in parvo"

Between this and the next port I shall dry off and arrange and study as far as possible what I have already accumulated which will probably thence be sent back to Washington What will be done with them then I don't know I suppose if I wish it they will be kept for my study when we return I hardly know whether I will then be content to house myself up in a city for two or three years poring & puzzling over dried specimens or whether the locomotive propensity may not so far overcome me as to set me again roving

I suppose if you so desire you can have a hand in bringing out the Botanical Report though it may be rather premature to be studying over the matter at present

I have enjoyed excellent health since I have been here ^{and} I do not anticipate much danger even in the sickly climate to which we are soon going Strict temperance & regular habits I have faith will carry me safely through

I don't feel quite at home here as I did on board

* After some general work in the Museum

the Steamer Some of my mess then I believe sympathized
with me or at least showed a disposition to favor me
and as I think esteemed me. Hence the majority of the
mess have a most sovereign contempt for science
and no esteem for its devotees. They shall however
respect me. I have never yet failed in the various
situations and companies into which I have been
thrown to secure that respect which a consistent
course of conduct & industry are apt to inspire
in others. Nor do I doubt that a similar conduct
will produce similar effects here.

They are about to close the letter box & I must also close
my letter.

As ever

Yours Truly

Charles Wright



Wright, Charles. 1853. "Wright, Charles Nov. 4, 1853." *Charles Wright correspondence with Asa Gray*

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