

At sea December 18th 1853

My Dear Doctor

We hope to be at Sidney or off it day after tomorrow wind and weather favoring - but we will only leave our letters and pass on. It would not do I suppose to stop lest our men should prefer gold-digging to navigation. We have had a prosperous voyage from the Cape the winds except the first three or four days being remarkably favorable constantly aft or more or less on the quarter or abeam not a moment ahead. Yet they have been stirring making a rough sea and cold - sometimes accompanied with rain-squalls and drizzly rain. About midway on our course we had a succession of gales our pretty severe obliging us to send under very little sail (close-reefed mainsail & close-reefed fore-top-sail) These lasted a number of days - yet we made good speed two hundred miles per diem more or less. We left the Cape on the 9th ult.

I collected at that place about eight hundred species of plants among which the Compositae are pretty numerous ⁽¹²¹⁾ - the ⁽³⁷⁾ ~~Trid.~~ ⁽²⁶⁾ ~~Lil.~~ ⁽²⁶⁾ also numerous Leguminosae (66) Ericaceae (33) Laphnoid (25) Cyperaceae (47) I have been the last few days studying the Leguminosae few of which I can determine specifically to my satisfaction - the descriptions of DeCandolle being so miserably brief. Almost every thing which has flowers and fruit I have been able to refer pretty plainly to its place in the system except one genus of which I

have three species and though the character of both flower and fruit are perfectly clear and I spent much time with the recent flower, hunting through Centaurea for a corresponding description I ended as I began completely in the dark - It is not very probable that I have any novelties though the plants be more likely to be procurable at the Simons than at Cape Town notwithstanding they are only twenty-five miles apart - the extremity of the cape having doubtless been less examined. The Proteaceae judging from the few species (24) I have seen well deserve the name if it comes from that ~~family~~ ^{family} many shaped & gentleman unwound in ancient mythology. I was a little surprised to find so few Euphorbias only seven having been collected I suppose they must grow further up the country - the alvies likewise only two or three of these being met with. I found ten Mesembryanthemums besides a few - which were too sappy for me to attempt to dry up on shipboard with the labor of months and after all make such specimens as would disgust a goat or a jackass. I can say much of the few which I have succeeded in depriving of their native juices as far as the beauty of them goes.

I wrote to you about some books - I must have Walpers and Loughs to have any and all books which in a moderate compass embrace the whole family of which ~~it~~ ^{they} treat. Such an one on the mosses can be procured and you doubtless know of others. I will have a good deal of time for study when a great

disturbance at sea which I would be glad to improve. The commander says he will approve a requisition for such books as I may order and if you can get them for me you will make me much obliged humble servant & I will send you the money with as little delay as possible. How is Lindley progressing with the Orchids & Hooker with the Ferns and how much longer are they going to "drag their slow length along" I should think it impossible to make anything of many orchids without colored drawings of the recent plants - some most beautiful ones making very ugly specimens - commonly of a winter (I don't mean snowy here I fear not) I can hear by sit still enough to make a legible scrawl but you generally pay me in kind.

26th Instead of getting into port or off it "day after tomorrow" as above written we are at the end of a week off the harbor (10-15 miles distant) just at night and in a dead calm. We will be anchored in all probability before tomorrow at this time if we have no better speed than we have had the last week which has been one of heat winds light & baffling ones or calms.

I do not learn how long we will stay. It is supposed that we will not go up to Sydney only send up - we naturalists however hope to be allowed to take a run on land or wherever the interests of our calling respectively lead us. The last week I have studied out most of the Compositae but some of the largest - the *Phellipsea* - or those with large solitary capitula ^(immultiflora) puzzle me amazingly.

27th We anchored in Port Jackson yesterday morning but I have had only one run of a few minutes.

on shore just before night Today I think of going to
an exhibition at the Botanical Garden A ship sails
tomorrow for California and I close to be ready for
that opportunity

Ever yours

Charles Wright

Dr Asa Gray

Cambridge Mass

Dr Asa Gray
Cambridge
Mass



Wright, Charles. 1853. "Wright, Charles Dec. 18, 1853." *Charles Wright correspondence with Asa Gray*

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