

Baird G. W. Russell
May 17th 1856

Dear Sir,

I forget whether I have written to you since I reached Central America. At all events I am not much your debtor for your last to me was that which you wrote on the eve of your departure for Paris to attend on your sick relative. You doubtless know of my preconceived plan which however I was not able fully to follow. I managed to keep myself busily employed for about six weeks though the vegetation was quite autumnal in character. I hope and trust I made a reputable collection of specimens & I certainly have a large number of seeds. And this recalls to mind what I have mentioned above as doubtful. I remember I did write particularly respecting the seeds which I was collecting but you may not have received any thing I sent for a strict espionage was kept over the mails and no letters were allowed to be sent through that channel which contained any thing disparaging to the powers then existent in Nicaragua. Though I can not remember that I alluded in the most distant manner to political affairs in any of my letters. Whether letters ^{sent} for me were seized or delayed none came. The failure to receive intelligence from my correspondents the loss of part of my material and the breaking up of the line hastened my departure from the country and I left at the end of a six weeks' stay.

I visited the island of Brusapet in the lake and ascended to the summit of the mountain, making quite an interesting collection having found the vegetation of the island much fresher than that of the main. On returning to Virgin Bay I found every thing in confusion - a part of my papers was gone - taken away by mistake for government stores (afterwards returned to me but too late for any good) the town full of Watken men and little to eat - which fears of an attack by the Costaricans filled all minds - at the same time a rumor was afloat that the lake and river steamers were just starting on their last trip and if I delayed any longer it was very uncertain when another opportunity for leaving the country would be presented - in view of all these rumors & contingencies and the prospect of doing but little more if I remained the resolution was taken to leave for home and this has proved a tedious and unpleasant business I was several days on the lake & river boats when a part of the time I actually had to beg for something to eat - a little hard-tack at that although I had plenty of money I had very inconsiderately bought a through ticket - yet when I reached Greytown it availed me nothing as the line was broken up - still I had money to get home by almost any conveyance which might be presented. But besides myself there were upwards of thirty others most of them worse off than I. A brig & a schooner were lying in port both going to New York if they could get a cargo. We united our purses and endeavored to charter the schooner when that command Parker & French

stepped in & wanted to be "big man" The attempt failed and one or two successive ones in like manner. Meanwhile the English mail steamer came in but positively refused to sail for Aspinwall in time to connect with the next New York steamer. Rather than go there and be over two weeks I spoke my passage on the big Genl. Russell and then helped all I could to charter the schooner which was effected and we sailed the same day 10th Ap. On the transit and above Greytown I picked up a few small specimens such as I could save in books and continued my collecting seeds. We stopped one day at the little Corn Island and more than a week at San Andres taking in coconuts. Here too I added to my previous ones a few packages of seeds but was unable to preserve any specimens. Before leaving Virgin Bay I entrusted my collection to the Express agent of Wine & Co. rather than be troubled with it myself and it was sent on to San Juan all right at the same time that I came on myself. I would like to have you look it over if I should find it in New York on my arrival could you not spare a few days to run over & see me at Washington. I dare say you could spend them quite pleasantly if your College & other duties should not be pressing. We counted then overhauled the collection and you might find something among them which would repay you for the time & trouble.

Have you published a new edition of the Manual or any more of the Flora? Are you doing any thing with the projected work on the Forest Trees? Have you worked up any more of the

Gen. Ill.? Has Engelmann published my Bactaceae or
Euphorbiaceae? I have not had a line from him since
I left on this Expedition to Mr Zuckerman doing
anything with the Lichens or Sullivans with the mosses?

We are approaching New York and hope to reach it
tomorrow and by the 20th I think I shall be home I shall
look for a letter from you unless you substitute your pres-
ence therefor Let me hear from you or see you soon

Give my kind regards to Mrs G. and any inquiring friend

Yours Truly

Charles Wright



Wright, Charles. 1856. "Wright, Charles May 17, 1856." *Charles Wright correspondence with Asa Gray*

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