

Amesbury

Monte Verde
April 23^d 1857

Dear Dr

I got your letter of July 19th day before yesterday. This is the one that came by the Cambridge. I don't know why it should have lain so long overlooked in the office. I got your subsequent one containing the letter of Prof Lindley some time ago. And I may as well tell you at once what is the prospect of doing any thing for him. I cannot now call to mind a single plant (a few ~~wild~~ excepted) that I think would answer the wishes of the Society whose desires he presents to me. There are passion flowers that creep all over crevices and trees that mount up to heaven both having handsome flowers but all the herbaceous plants that I have seen & small shrubs are remarkable for their little inconspicuous flowers. There are eight or ten cactaceae of which those that produce handsome flowers are of large size. I have found some handsome orchids but I don't know whether they are ever propagated from the seeds in gardens. At some season of the year I could probably get some handsome Liliaceae but I have not seen any yet.

There is an opuntia that grows exactly like any other tree without the slightest trace of division into joints that bears fine leaves on twigs not quite so

long and slender it is true as those of willows but much more so than a considerable proportion of the firs. The flowers are purple of few sepals & petals. Young & thrifty sprouts from a stump are awfully spiny. The old trunks have few remaining and the burs a pretty good share of long & very delicate ones more like the thorn of ordinary thorny bushes than the spine of common pumpkins.

The queer thing of which I write you I can venture to say emphatically is not Tobeliaceae. The reason I did not send you a flow may be that it was not easily accessible. And I will remember that at first when my attention was particularly directed to it I had found but one or two flowers but plenty of fruit. Subsequently when I found plenty of flowers I had quit wondering what it was & had put it down as an anomalous individual among Gesnerioids I hope before many days you will have a chance to examine it.

I wish you had written to me before stating your desire to have branches of wood sent. For you also lianas. That term by the way is about as indefinite as the word beech here. As the latter means almost any sort of a bush the former means I believe almost any kind of a vine so that you would have pappeas, pothos, Arums, Bignonias, Phytolaccas, Platanus, many of which to identify with the flowers you would have to cut or climb large trees & then you would have the unpleasant job of

untangling the one you want from its neighbors or of tracing each from its stem to its flower. ~~With~~ Unless the means of identifying the plant to which the wood belongs were given I imagine the trunk here would be of little value. If I had known your wants when I was at Mr Bradford I could have done something for you but I have so much other work to do & the increasing heat of the weather makes me less energetic or more lazy if you please than I hardly know whether to give you any hope of such things. Beside as I have already made a beginning for Hooker & given him reason for hope for more I ought perhaps to make him another collection and then are here ample materials for it.

The rainy season has fairly set in. Showers are frequent the ground wet and even the secaderos patches of sunshine infrequent and small. Seven or eight days of the eleven I have been here it has rained more or less though I have had pretty good luck in drying by giving particular attention to it. The mornings are continually without rain though the dew is abundant. From the middle of the day onward the showers come on.

I doubt much if I shall need the last lot of paper. I have yet some of my original stock remaining.

24th Today I went to a small Pinal near here and procured specimens with young & old fruit. I procured also specimens of another Gesneriaceae - a tree a foot in diam.

or more near the ground and sixty ft high. Then
may be larger specimens. I picked up a few other
things among which was a large ^{shrubby} Euphorbia 10 ft
high with large flaming red bracts. I was driven away
from the Pinal however by the rain with out enjoying
the opportunity of examining it even cursorily. I
shall return to it tomorrow.

Remember me to Mrs Gray

Very sincerely as ever

Yours

Charles Wright



Wright, Charles. 1857. "Wright, Charles Apr. 23, 1857." *Charles Wright correspondence with Asa Gray*

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