

Monte Verde, Aug. 31st, 1859.

Dear Dr:

The last day of Summer. It is now ten weeks or more since I sent off my collection - a time of great anxiety with me, when the fruit of my toils is not in my hands, or yours; & I don't know what treatment they may receive. That "diablito" must be cutting up his capers, again, in the Cuban mail-bags; or some other "mal-intencionados encantadores" are bent on persecuting me. It is high time your letters & other matters were making their appearance. I have been rather idling for a few days past, employing what sunshine the first half of the day ^{affords} in drying some obstinate Orchids, Bromeliads, & fungi; preparatory to packing up & sending off what I have again accumulated. Besides these I have hardly anything now in press.

I intended today to have a spree - reading newspapers & sent to a neighbor to borrow; but got instead his excuses; that his "journaux" were "en course," (on file I suppose) & c. & c. so I must amuse myself, as best I may, reading Don Quijote & drying my plants. If such a miracle as a dry afternoon - or a fair prospect of one - should happen, I may go out botanizing. I would like, very much, to know the quantity of rain that falls here, annually. It must be very great.

Sept 2nd Yesterday I made an all-day job of it in the woods & for a wonder I got no rain on me. For the first time, if I remember well, I found staminate plants of the dioecious Hedyosmum. A few days ago I got the monoecious species. I hit upon another locality of the second species of Dorstenia & got a plenty - also one more specimen of the Yogo of which I got before a single one. They are rather conspicuous plants & hard to find or scarce. I found a few specimens

of a Rubiaceae, with flowers she measures more in length ^{and width} than
oval 1/2" long or more. The stigma recalls the ^{mericarpia} of some recently collected ~~species~~ ^{fruits}. It belongs, I think to the section
Hamelia. I sent you not long ago a scrap of what I took to
be some queer Rubiaceae & I don't now know what it is if it
does belong to that order but in two ^{important} points of structure it seems
to differ, the stamens are epigynous, & the anthers exserted. The
ovary is two-celled with a single pendulous ovule in each cell. The
flowers are on a common receptacle like the first subsection
of Guettarda. The terminal bud is, often enclosed in a yellow
green and bears no distant resemblance to cow's horns. From
a single bush of some other Rubiaceae I got four viscous
things growing from the tree itself & the fourth upon one of
the others. From another thing that has been a puzzle I
got a little bit of satisfaction ~~from~~ the discovery of a good
ovule or seed. I refer it at first to Ericaceae because the
anthers hang by fibres. The ovary is 5-celled with a single ovule
at the apex of each. The embryo I find to agree with Ericaceae
Quercus sabs? I passed by a tree which I have referred, with
a good deal of doubt to Hypericaceae, in hopes of getting fruit,
but obtained it quite young - little better than the flowers, and
here it may not be out of place to put down what I have observ-
ed with regard to ^{the} flowering time of trees. It must be two
months since I first collected specimens from this tree & there
are yet plenty of buds on it. The period of flowering of any one
plant lasts many times longer than in temperate latitudes.
At last this is true of some fact. So you see one of the dif-
ficulties of getting fruiting specimens from the same tree
whence the flower were obtained. Another little tree of
this character ~~has~~ have been watching some time & have not
procured only buds & flowers - and leaves. It must be some
new gen. of Meliaceae. Cal. short cup-shaped 3-5-toothed. Cor.
strictly 1-lipate 3-5-lobed. Stam 1-ad. 6. Anthers constantly 6,
with as many acute sterile points. Stigma like some
Apocynaceae or thus & ovary 2-celled with two collateral pendulous ovules

in each. Leaves pinnate-lyrate 3-5 pairs with terminal one
subopposite narrowly ovate. Inflorescence axillary shorter
than the leaves - a compound raceme or slender racemose
panicle - which you please.

There is a youngish Frenchman at a near neighbor-
hood - a kind of literary man - at present engaged in teaching
- something of a poet withal, as is said (not much of a
recommender in itself) who takes a fancy to collect
objects in natural history on a small scale especially
insects & fossils. I endeavored to persuade him that it would
be more profitable if he would devote his spare time to the
collection of plants. He did not seem to have quite confi-
dence enough in my word to undertake the business, &
went into France but has yet received no reply. I think
it would be a good plan for you to speak a word for him
with Standelle or some of your botanical friends at the
Jardin des Plantes. It may be of advantage to you too
in the end for I perceive plainly that I shall not be
able within any reasonable time to make clean work of it.
I gave him some instruction in collecting & drying. He
is a good woodman (which I am not) & would be able
at any time to revisit a locality where he has seen
any thing interesting but out of season.

In reading Linnaeus' account of the Guianensis I find
a great blunder. He says the most northern sp. is the Guianensis
Pithecellobium pubescens, overlooking the Old World ones, Durum
biphalanthus, Mitchellia & I don't know how others.
I found passed by another tree of Durumia pedunculata & got
a plenty of the flowering specimens & some ripe fruit.
I call to mind another plant illustrative of the ob-
servations I have made above - a sp. of Schmidelia. For
months it has had plenty of buds but I have found no fr.
I got it before in fr. Altho, simple leaves
Sept. 30. I took it pretty long time today without finding

much novelty of any thing. However, I got some very acceptable fruits and added here & there a few more specimens to some that were scant. In the Pinal there is a composite with long wand like branches & alternate 3-lobed shining small leaves. It scrambles over bushes to the height of ten feet or more. Soon after my arrival here I found empty capitula but all my searching gave me not fl. or fr. Nine months have now elapsed & it shows no preparations for blossoming & I am afraid I shall miss it. I have seen it only in the Pinal.

The Mayoral sends to town tonight (6th) but I hold back this in hopes I shall get letters tomorrow. I think I shall go in myself in a few days. I am winding up here preparatory to going to Sonora Sept. for a few days & then to the neighborhood of Loma del Gato & Nimaniana.

The name of the French gentleman spoken of above is Jean Baptiste Donet. If he were to receive an encouraging letter from any French botanist of reputation I think it likely he would be induced to collect plants as well as insects.

7th. Just got yours of Aug 16th. With its vexations. I'll go to town just as soon as I can pack up & see about matters. When I found Dorstenia tuberosa ^(dichondraefolia silt) it was the first I ever collected & as my book accessible to me says any thing about tubers I thought it a good name. Certainly change it for a better. ^{the since found a second with tubers also.} You'll find among the Portiacac. scanty specimens of the stam. plant belonging to that pass. with fleshy rachis. If you wonder at my long silence. I might well wonder at yours July 6th — Aug 16th & I all the while looking for the acknowledgement of the receipt of the plants. If this leguminous plant is Sarcobata ^(abominable misnomer) liquida, just invite D.C. to change it to herbacea or fruticosa at least.

Don't send me jack-knives or any thing else I can get here

* when I sent it I had not seen the stem in situ

[Aug 31, 1859]

My folks sent me months ago a box of clothing nearly all I left behind me & that is all I know about it (to the contrary!!) I wish I lay alongside your interest and I don't the book — why useless!!

I am very sorry for Mrs G's misfortune. I wish she could come on here. Mr Brooks is somewhere in the States. If you could fall in with him I dare say he would take charge of her & see her safe as far as Salt Lake at least & if not quite as far as M. T. would give her a good escort thither.

I don't put on my letters if I were you the E before Cuba — Isla de Cuba or Islan de Cuba is better. Here where alone any great particularity is useful they know only the divisions, Departamento occidental, central & oriental. The E is useless if it may not serve as a puzzle.

What is the authority for the gender of words ending in "anthos"? Dietrich has them in the masc. while those in "anthos" he makes fem. It seems to me they should both be neuter.

If the distribution of this coll. depends on the naming of them & that naming depends on Gris, I fear I shall be dead & forgotten ^{without profiting by them} & my herb. (I don't know who they'll be) will be the only ones benefited by my labors & sacrifices — for it is a great one to pass months in total ignorance of all that is going on in the wide world.

When I asked you to save me a set of my collections I did not mean that the important sets such as yours, Sprengel's Hookers, & C. Britton for Lindley, should be curtailed for that end. It is by no means essential that it include every species. Whenever there is enough to supply the working botanists & one to spare put it in my set. 9th I have just packed up ev

Saltwater 10 No matter what I commenced
to say over the leaf I couldn't finish it for the ink
wouldn't run. Well I've got yours of the 25th & am
sorry it doesn't report the arrival of the plants - but they
assure me they were despatched on the brig Brothers
but they can't or won't tell me when. In fact Mr. McKin-
ley isn't Mr. Brooks & appears but little disposed to
satisfy one in these little matters. A vessel for New York
is expected here in a few days & he can't tell me her name
I don't know that I can do better than to leave my plants
to go by her. They promise me to use their influence to ^{have}
them well cared for. They are put up securely in four bales
like tobacco.

No more at present - Hot & sultry here. I return
tomorrow & think that in about ten days or two weeks
I shall go to Nouvelle Sophie.

I expect to be sleepy soon so Adios

Yours ever

Charles Wright

P.S. You had better direct to Cuba next or Santiago
de Cuba.



Wright, Charles. 1859. "Wright, Charles Aug. 31, 1859." *Charles Wright correspondence with Asa Gray*

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