

Wethersfield, Sept. 16th 1872 - 4 AM.

Dear Dr Gray:

Please accept my thanks for a copy of your little book "How Plants behave" which came a few days ago: whence I infer you have arrived home. I trust you and Mrs G. have had a pleasant excursion. I hope to hear from you when you are through the mass of correspondence awaiting your return.

I haven't found time yet for that "rest" Dr Torrey wrote me about, but it's been dig, dig, dig: and the digging is only just begun. But I have succeeded in keeping the greater part of the hoed crops measurably clean. I say I: for if it had not been for one there would have been a crop of weeds rather than a more useful one, I fear. I have worked early and late and between whiles. Besides the pullback in the spring caused by our hired boy's accident - breaking his arm - the first of August my brother fell sick with fever and ague when I again had to play boss and run the machine. About a month was this partly lost in his running down and creeping up. We had the good luck to hire just then a very good steady faithful man. But don't he eat? - keeps the women baking, you bet. But ^{for} with ^{standing} all the bad luck to contend with and the weeds, the result of past neglect, to fight, we have been successful in securing most of our hay in good condition. Our beans were somewhat hurt by wet and will need much picking over to prepare them for market. This work I do nights and rainy days & other odd moments. Potatoes promise a small yield. Our corn has been woefully smutty - otherwise it looks well. If we should make all our apple into

(By two overflows of the river we lost, in spring, some beans & corn & drowned) and in August a little hay

cider we could have a long "big drink" if we chose. We are now eating some pretty good pears of which our few trees bear us as large a burden as they can well sustain. For the first time in many years we've had one tree-load of quite good pears and we have another similar or larger load coming on if the tree don't break down under its burden. If I were to suggest sending you some of our apples you might remind me of "sending coals to Newcastle" — the fruit is so abundant everywhere, I believe. You are abundantly welcome if I had the time to gather pack and forward it. I have already stored a few bushels for our own use or to sell — if we can get anything for them. But my brother is no market-man — hates peddling truck, by retail particularly.

We've had frequent and plentiful rains all through the season, and we are now in the midst of a northeaster which does, as all, suit our convenience, or, at least, we think so. We want to prepare a piece of ground and sow rice upon it, which I fear can not, now, be done for some days. We have some winter cut which won't dry in such weather. Two fields of corn & one of potatoes remain to be gathered and housed (with some topped stalks from the former) and a few pumpkins and squashes and our crops will then be secured. Then there will be a hundred little or great jobs to be done in preparation for winter. From the above you may judge I don't suffer from ennui.

And this brings me to say a few words of our past and possible future relations. My residence in Cambridge & my connection with the Bot. Garden, Herbarium & yourself have been particularly pleasant to me and I feel a reluctance to give them up. But I have got the impression, from occasional remarks, that you

would like to make a change if you could find another man who could fill my place and at the same time assume other duties which I was unwilling to do or felt myself unfitted for. I don't know but you have found such a man in Mr. Watson. I shall miss ^(the) the pay I received monthly. Now, I get only my board and lodging, but I have the society of my brethren. I should miss, also, very much the scientific & literary privileges and advantages I then enjoyed. Yet here we are not quite destitute. We have our daily evening paper, besides which we take three or four weekly and four monthly publications of different kinds. These give us a considerable variety of useful and entertaining mental food and subjects for reflection and discussion. Please let me know your wishes, frankly.

I've done nothing in botany beyond drying a few fungi, which the boys may have eaten for we had ~~not~~ no time to poison them.

^{Phylas}
~~Phylas~~ Science Monthly, makes schooling work of your vocabulary. Have you any more of Bentham & Hooker's new Genera Plantarum?

The Botanical Plants lie piled away in the barn. I haven't touched them. Please don't tell Brewer of it. I am very sorry they have been crowded out of the way. But I hope to get to them soon. I hope you'll write me before long, as I want to know what plans to lay out for the future, which I can not well do till I am sure whether ^{or not} (I shall go to spend much time, again, in Cambridge. However it ^{or not} may be, perhaps you will at some time have a job or jobs for me to do, which may make it worth the while to spend a part of the winter or other time, when farm work don't drive, in doing it or them. I would like now & then a job to earn a little spending money.

Besides those products of our farm already mentioned we've had as different kind came in season all the garden "sarce" we have needed and some to spare—peas, beans and sweet corn for succotash, and, now, those that love them are luxuriating on tomatoes. Cucumbers were plentiful also for such as eat them. I seldom or never taste them. Now we have, for us, a plentiful supply of water & muskmelons. On our land they generally do not thrive so well as in many other places. Today (it is now after dinner) we had a large watermelon which gave seven of us as much as we could well eat. Milk is a large article in my diet. Nearly all summer bonny-clabber or lobbared milk with sugar has formed my supper ^(now & then bread and sweet milk—bowl of bread & milk)—the supper of farmers eaten as you know about nightfall—6-7 P.M. Sometimes I would use honey in place of sugar. Our bees haven't done very well. Of nine swarms last fall but four survived the winter and two only of these swarmed. We've taken ^{(honey from) (hive)} but one this summer and that was done when my brother was quite unwell—otherwise he would probably have taken more. If I remain at home I shall take more interest or a more active part in this ~~branch~~ ^{branch} of rural labor than I have heretofore. I love honey as well as the next one.

The enclosed for Agassiz from Gundlach will you do me the kindness to enclose & drop in the P. Office or at his house or the museum as most convenient. I suppose the Professor has not yet arrived home yet.

Where is Parry? I've not had a word from him since he left here in the spring or early summer.

Very truly yours

Charles Wright

P.S. Kind regards to Mrs. L., to Watson, to Guerinian & family &c. &c.

I nearly forgot to say that during the pressing harvest work I was much troubled with piles and last month I had dyspeptic spells but I am much better now—much like my old self again.



Wright, Charles. 1872. "Wright, Charles Sept. 16, 1872." *Charles Wright correspondence with Asa Gray*

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