

mauvaise foi. As to representative government—I
begin to be tired of it and have come to the conclusion
that more public good can be done by a wise King,
surrounded by wise heads, than by a set of barons
who have at heart their selfishness or their vanity.
"Humanity cannot create anything perfect; but I see
here more security, more justice, more honesty, more
true happiness than I have of late seen in the U.S.

If you have anything to ask in Paris, write to me;
otherwise I shall hear from you with great pleasure.
I will not return before October.

With then, my dear Dr. Gray, and with my best
respects for your lady, I remain very cordially yours.

E. Durand

86 Boulevard Beaumarchais,

and Sept 5. Paris July 27 1860.
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Prof. A. Gray, Cambridge,

Dear Sir,

Above two months have already elapsed since I am
in France, without even thinking of our science. I have
seen, passing by, many old acquaintances in the fields;
and past many Oregon and California flowers in the
gardens without scarcely looking at them. All my attention,
so far, has been spent upon my numerous family who
has been feasting the return of the long exiled brother
and uncle. You will be astonished to hear of the immense
increase of that same family, during the thirty five years
of my absence. I had left six brothers & sisters, with eighteen
children, and I have found that number increased to
seventy eight, belonging to four generations and all healthy
and in prosperous conditions, all cordially united and all,
if not personally acquainted with their American relative,
having either corresponded with him, or heard their father
or mother affectionately speak of their youngest brother,
the American citizen. The reception I have met at the hands
of those good friends has been most cordial and, so far, I have
devoted all my time to the best portion of them, visiting
alternately each side of the mean trunk and passing my
time most pleasantly. I am now starting for old Brittany,
my native province, to see the rest of the family and, only
then, shall I be permitted to think of Botany and Botany.

On my arrival in Paris I delivered your good letter of
introduction to Messrs. Decaisne, Spach and Gay. I have
seen Mr. Decaisne three times, Spach once and the kind-hearted
Mr. Gay more frequently. They have all received me kindly

and I will see more of them when I return. Mr Gay having had occasion to see Mr Vilmorin and to speak of me, she expressed the desire to see me, and begged Mr Gay to bring me to her house, when she would be in town. A time was appointed and I saw her yesterday. Otherwise, I would not have called upon her, as I had a quique against her deceased husband who had not, as I thought, acted kindly towards me in relation to my memoir on Michaux. I did not know the bad state of his health for which I am now to account for his neglect.

M^{rs} Vilmorin received me in the most graceful manner; every thing in her brought back to my memory the happy expression of one of your letters: "That she was the best type of a French lady that you had seen." She inquired much about you and your lady to whom she very justly returns the compliment addressed to herself by you. She showed me with some exaltation your portrait hanging over her mantle piece and told me that, since the death of her husband, she had not had the courage to write to Mr Gay, but promised me to make me the bearer of a long epistle to her. I shall not fail to call and see her at her country seat, and remember the promise she has made me. I will also see old Mr Michaux.

Mr Decaisne asked me some inquiries about the Comandra; if I had remarked that it was a parasitic plant? I recollected only that I had generally found it under the shed of large trees. He suspects that all the Santalum are parasitic and requested me to inquire if the Baccharis

was not so? I think he has written to you on the subject. A large specimen of Comandra livida, which I have seen at Mr Gay's in a collection of British American plants by Bourgeau, has ^{an} every indication of parasitism. The roots are very long, almost horizontal and equal in size at the two extremities and are abruptly broken.

In the same collection, which is really beautiful, were numerous specimens of Hedysarum. My idea that the 3 species described in your flora, might be varieties of the same, is quite wrong. There were two very distinct species, one marked borcalle has very large brown stipules, the other labelled MacKenziei had smaller pale stipules, with larger flowers. Dr Torrey has justly named his Utah Hedysarum H. MacKenziei and mine belongs to the same. As the Lathyrus venosus, our plant shows many different forms, some with large oval leaves, others with narrower & smaller leaves. The same with the flowers.

I am happy to say that I found considerable improvements in France, in every thing. The progress in agriculture are immense; the roads are splendid; the cities embellished and admirably clean and the people apparently happy and content. I have verified the expression of our Bishop Porter of Philadelphia "The French ^{are} nation is a nation of well dressed people and happy faces; I have not seen a ragged man in the whole of France!!" They talk abroad of liberty - I have met here every liberty possible; I have heard the freest conversations. The only restraint is on the press - the press which withers is too frequently scandalous, lying, abusive, jealous et c.



Durand, Elias. 1860. "Durand, Elias M. July 27, 1860." *Elias Durand letters to Asa Gray*

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