

West-Chester, Penn^a. Feb. 7. 1848.

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My dear Sir, Your kind favor of the 23rd ult. came by due course of Mail. I had received the Newspaper, containing the notice referred to, and supposed it must be a member of your family that was deceased. It is, indeed, a consolation - even in the midst of our anguish - to see our dearest connections depart this life with resignation and composure, and under the benign influence of the Christian's Hope. The recollection of that placid readiness, and even willingness, to escape from bodily infirmities and suffering, is the only thing which has tended to reconcile me to the sad bereavement experienced within the past year: Yet, withal, I feel too surely, that the little remnant of my days must be deeply tinged with melancholy. I had known what it was to lose Parents, Sisters, and Children - including a gallant Son, who was the pride of the family; But, believe me, my dear Friends, - trying as were these privations, - they are not to be compared with the loss of the Bosom Companion, who has been the Counsellor and Stay - the Light and Life of the domicile - for almost forty years. This you will find to be a solemn truth, should it ever be your misfortune to test its verity: though I sincerely hope it may be a much longer period, ere you can know it by experience. I congratulate you on your approaching nuptials, and would admonish you to avoid unnecessary delays; for life is too short to admit of needless procrastination. No doubt you will be disposed to indulge the Lady in a Bridal Excursion; and I would suggest that our Village should be made a point, in the tour. I should be exceedingly gratified by an opportunity to welcome you both to my humble Cottage; and I beg you not to overlook my claim, when you come to plan the journey. You speak of the Lady as being so kind as to be your future amanuensis, or aid in your Correspondence. If she should prove so

conspicuous as to assist you in that way, I shall indeed be proud of the privilege of thus hearing from you; and I think it will present an additional reason why you should come this way, and let her see what sort of a correspondent she is to take charge of. ^{At all events,} you will please to make my most respectful obeisance to your chosen one, and tell her, that if any of your old correspondents are to be honored by a transfer to her department, I shall certainly expect to be of the number.

I shall be greatly obliged by the copy of your Manual, so kindly promised; and shall await its arrival with a becoming degree of impatience. I shall also be much indebted to Mr. Emerson, for the copy, with plates, of his excellent work on the Trees & Shrubs of Massachusetts, which I shall take care to acknowledge as soon as received. Your Manual will, of course, be the vade mecum of all the Herborizers of the Middle & Northern States; and I shall have a poorer opinion of my Countrymen, than I have, yet permitted myself to entertain, if the demand do not in some degree remunerate you for your labor in preparing it. As to your illustrated Geneva, I apprehend you will have to look to an European demand, for an adequate requital; though I doubt not so far as reputation is concerned - your reward will be sure.

I wish you could get along, also, with the N. B. Flora. A feeling of dependency comes over me, when I reflect on the probability that I cannot be permitted to see it entire. I have the same feeling in reference to Dr. Candolle's Prodromus. By there no word, yet, of the 11th part?

With respect to the notice of my "Agricultural Botany," which you kindly offer to send to Mr. Downing's Magazine, I may observe, that Mr. D. did notice the work in very flattering general terms, in the September number; and that is, perhaps, as much as he would wish to do, in a

Journal devoted more especially to Horticulture. It was also noticed, in laudatory general terms, in the "Farmer's Librarian" - edited by my old friend, Jno. S. Skinner, at New York: yet, probably, if you ^{had} more particular notice of the nature & design of the work, & its applicability to the service of an intelligent Yeomanry, already prepared, I think Mr. Skinner would be very willing to insert it in the "Librarian." I should be sorry to tax your good nature, to write such a notice, under the pressure of your other engagements; but if the one you sent to Belknap can be recovered, it would probably answer every purpose.

You will decide for yourself, between Downing & Skinner; if you should incline to honor the book with a notice in either of their periodicals. As I made a present of the manuscript to my son (who is a printer), on condition that he would take the risk of publication, of course I have no pecuniary interest in the success of the work; yet I could not fail to be gratified to see it well received by those for whom it was prepared, - and, especially, to see it commended by a competent judge. I therefore commit the whole matter to your discretion & convenience.

I have been occupied all winter (when other & more indispensable concerns permitted) in looking over, & compiling extracts from, the Letters received by Humphry Marshall, between the years 1759 and 1800. The family have caused me much extra trouble, by bringing me the Letters in three instalments - instead of giving them all at once. I believe I now have them all; and they are quite numerous. I have made rather copious selections, in order to be ^{on} the safe side; knowing that we can mark out

out such as shall be deemed unworthy of publication. I distrust my own judgment, in the selection; for I have a sort of passion for old correspondence; and, I apprehend, feel more interest in such letters than the public, generally. I always feel, or think I feel, better acquainted with a man's character from reading his letters, than from any other writings: and I form an opinion of his tastes & habits, even from the letters he received from his correspondents, - as in this case. However, when I get them ready, they shall be submitted to your judgment & decision. -

In the midst of this pleasant employment, of rummaging among the many Epistles received by good old Humphrey (and whose character, by the way, has been much enhanced, in my estimation, by the proofs,) - I was interrupted by the mortifying disaster of the Robbery - of which you have heard. We have not yet caught the Robbers - nor have we recovered the notes: but we have made such progress in substituting a new issue for the old, that we hope to circumvent the rogues, & defeat their purpose, of profiting by the use of the notes. My own loss is nothing more than as a Stockholder; & that, we trust, will ultimately be trifling. The new issue, however, has given me a heavy job of signing my name; having to sign about 25000 notes - which will take me all this month, to finish.

I believe I have now said all that I had to say, on this occasion; except to repeat the assurance of my Prof. A. Gray, } sincere respect & esteem. Wm. Darlington
Cambridge, Mass.)



Darlington, William. 1848. "Darlington, William Feb. 7, 1848." *William Darlington letters to Asa Gray*

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