

Not long after I returned to Chilimalma suffering far more severely than ever before from an attack of malarial fever. My hope then was that I should be able in the Sierra Madre to master my fever, but an interview with an English civil engineer just in from traversing that region with a large government-exploring party caused me to abandon the project. He told me that though there had been a slight start of some plants on the summit, all vegetation on the mountains was then fast drying up; that I should not get enough to pay for travelling there; and respects malaria, all the mountain valleys were infested with it—

Then I had the alternative of struggling with these adverse circumstances, dosing heavily with quinine all the while, or of returning to Vermont, and I chose the latter. There with but little

(Camp by the Sierra Madre, 20 m. S. W. from)
Guerrero,

Estado de Chilimalma,
Mexico,

28th Sept., 1887.

Dear Dr. Gray,

I am thinking you must be getting home about these days; and am anxious to give an early account of myself.

I am sorry to be compelled to begin with a narrative of disaster. It was a sad mistake to assume, as we did last winter, that there must be rains and snows on these Sierra Madre mountains of North Mexico during the winter and spring months, and to come expecting to collect to advantage in botany before midsummer.

When I arrived in Chilimalma

at the beginning of April, I found the outlook unfavorable. My friends of the mission had written of vegetation starting; but it was only a feeble and transient start under the influence of a few light showers. The summer heat was coming on, and the country getting dryer even than in the preceding dry spring. When I tramped through the Mapula and other mountains, I could find scarcely anything in growth even the evergreen oaks had been unable to blossom or to renew their leaves except in the feeblest way. I incurred peril on these trips; for I could find only a trickle of water that was not green and stagnant.

My enquiries about the condition of the Sierra Madre gained for me the fact that there too as about Chilimalma the winter had been an exceptional one; that there had been practically no

snow or rain there during all the winter. Just before my arrival a few inches of snow had fallen and a few showers continued to come, encouraging ranchmen to hope for more and a better state of things.

In spite of so discouraging a prospect, it seemed best for me to go ahead according to our plan; so I proceeded to get together a suitable outfit of wagon, horses, saddles, etc. For two or three weeks, whilst these were being constructed in Chilimalma or fitted for any use I tried to improve the time by collecting from the railroad train and along the southern end of the road. There my assistant, whom I had selected as a hardy farmers boy, soon succumbed to the influence of heat, dust, bad water and unaccustomed diet, and got into a condition so hopeless of recovery in this country, that I had to send him home.

my wagon, and soon had an outfit together, and with another assistance so far reliable and efficient was on my way to Cusihuiriachic.

Everything now goes well. The rains this year have been heavy. We are camped some 50 miles beyond Cusihuiriachic and nearly as far down the Pacific. Eastward from us a plain stretches away to a range of mountains (to be visited later) which is the continental divide, and this edge of the plain is covered with a forest of *Pinus macrophylla*, Engelm. Westward a mountain chain rises; and beyond that no plains lie, only a sea of forest-covered mountains terribly cut by cañons and valleys. In eleven days within a mile or two of this camp I have collected for my 20 sets almost 100 species, plants for the most part strange to me, and it would seem that I might get almost as many more in this vicinity. By wagon

I can follow the upper Yaqui for nearly 100 miles north and south, and can penetrate the bordering mountain ranges on either hand in many places. Plants thus accessible should be first secured, to save transporting the same over long mountain trails; so I don't know as I can this fall near the Sonora line. The trouble is the time is so short—before frost comes. We came in good season for most species, and as soon as the torrents daily falling abated in quantity, so we could ford the streams.

I am hopeful of making sets of some 400 species. If I do so, I will be able, I believe, to pay my debts without parting with my herbarium or any of my small patrimony. The letter of credit, I noticed on receiving it—ran for six months, March 5th to Sept. 5th; but will not Messrs. K. P. & Co. let the account run, till I can sell my collection? I shall pay this as soon as possible, if I live; if I do not live,

well I have sufficient assets to meet
my debts.

To attempt to botanize this interior
of North Mexico except during the
autumn months is so hazardous, I must
never again ~~attempt~~ undertake it.
An intelligent Mexican emphatically
assured me yesterday that there are no
plants to be gathered on these mountains
between November and August.

Yet I wish I might keep right
on in this way till I get 1000 species for
sets. Perhaps I might drive through the
Guadalupe pass, farther north, and
work on the other side in the "Terra
caliente" of Sonora and Lima.

I have felt-compelled to trouble
you with so long a letter, — a worthless
return for your great kindness, — quite
aware that it cannot be a pleasant
one to you. Faithfully yours,
C. G. Pringle.

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medicine I cleansed myself of ma-
larial poison; but I was greatly per-
plexed as to my further action. If you
had been at home I should surely have
advised with you. I had wasted several
hundred dollars in a fruitless attempt.
Yet to give up for good upon so miserable
a failure and to abandon an enter-
prise toward which I had been advancing
for several years, the idea was intolerable.
By using all of K. P. & Co's letter of credit
and the funds which were to have been
applied on that, I could command funds
for another journey. I don't know as you
would have approved of my doing this.
But I felt-confident of being able to repay
the letter of credit in a few months; and
my hope was that I ^{might} make more than
the expenses of this journey and recover
some of my lost money, as I did in 1886.
So, hearing of abundant rains
here, I came back in August. I had stored



Pringle, Cyrus G. 1887. "Pringle, Cyrus Guernsey Sept. 25, 1887 [Pringle to A. Gray]." *Cyrus Guernsey Pringle letters to Asa Gray*

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