

poor being everywhere in Mexico,
in one of the cities (visited by me
in March) 240 people had died
of it during a recent month. I had
abruptly left a place in the heart
of the country upon its breaking out
there. I knew it was common in
the city of Chihuahua; but, when
my friend died, I began to fear I
might linger there too long, and
accordingly packed up speedily and
came away. I hope to get my collec-
tion through the Custom House
tomorrow, and next day be spending
to my friends.

Risk, poor fare, etc., will soon
restore my strength. North Mexico
is getting very dry. The rains expected
soon will bring up a new and
fine flora and will probably check
the contagion. How I hope to go

X

El Paso, Texas,
14. June, 1885.

Dear Mr. Saverport,

I have been culpably
remiss in leaving you for a long
time in ignorance of my movements
and in doubt concerning my safety.

It is because since the first month
of my Mexican journey, ^{I have been} too unsettled
to speak of my plans, and have
postponed writing from week to week,
in order that I might solve my perplex-
ities. This I have now done for the
present at least, and now can
definitely report concerning myself.

I am on my way home. I sus-
pect you will not grieve over this
fact, as I do. I am in some measure

ashamed of myself for relinquish-
ing my undertaking; but the
promises I have made to you and
the rest of my friends to be careful
of myself and return safely to
you now demand this step.

When I last wrote you I
was planning a long journey by
mule-train through the Sierra
Madr. About that time I was
surprised by an attack of malarial
fever, a return of the disease con-
tracted in Arizona last fall. This
made me postpone my trip and
watch the progress of the disease,
while I worked near the line of
the railroad, careful not to get
beyond the reach of medical aid,
if I should find myself unable to
check the fever by my medicines
brought from home. The attacks

came with some regularity increasing
in severity and burning out my
strength and courage more and
more. They were not so regular
that I could tell when to expect
them, and so they usually surprised
me when far from home on the
mountains. A terrible afternoon I
would then have of it, compelled
to drag myself to the train and get
home. In a day or two I would be
off again though weak. I anticipated
being compelled to give up my work,
and struggled to accomplish as
much as possible before I should
get too weak. By the time my
strength got reduced so as to give out
at mid-day a dear friend of mine
died of small-pox in Chibuluma;
he was a young missionary from
Vermont. I had known of small-

P.S. I spent all my time and strength upon plants, regarding these as of first consequence, and exposed scarcely any dry plates —

back for a few months after mid-summer! I think I might do it with considerable safety. I have learned much to help me to live and travel in Mexico. It is a wretched country in some respects, but what a fine field for me!

The early summer season is not the best time for ferns, nearly all the time I was there they were shrivelled up almost beyond recognition, so dry as to crumble away at touch. I have three or four species, however, for my next distribution, and have found two or three species unknown to me, since I sent you fragments by letter. I minded you wish to see all forms of *Ch. myriophylla*, and gathered such as I met with, intending to have mailed them to you ere this time, and now I have to regret that in my hurried packing

up they went into my big boxes,
which must be several weeks on
the way home -

I feel gratification over the
size of the collection secured, -
175 species in fifties for sets, and
many odd species of a few specimens
each, - in all 9,000 or 10,000 speci-
mens - I never worked so hard a
region. Such vast areas that yield
at this season little or nothing. It
cost us much hard climbing and after
long tramps to gather 200 specimens
a day. It will be more fruitful than
after the rains come; then will be the
time for grasses; and a large collection
of Mexican grasses is a great object with
me. As yet I have only half a dozen
species for my sets. Leguminosae (Acacia,
etc.) predominate in my collection.

Reading this do you despair, and
fear I will cling to my infatuation
for botanical collection as long as
life lasts? Well, what else am I good
for? What else can take the
place of this in my mind and
heart? It were a great thing
to explore Mexico, as I am in the
way to do, and I might manage to
last, till I could do it pretty well.

But I cannot bear to break
my mother's heart and cause my
dear friends grief by such sacrifice
of myself. Else I should not now
be on my way home -

It may be two or three weeks
before I reach home, as I wish to
visit friends on my way.

Longing to see you, I am,
Yours faithfully,

C. L. Pringle - (over)



Pringle, Cyrus G. 1885. "Pringle, C.G. Jun 14, 1885." *George Edward Davenport correspondence*

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