

like gooseberry bushes. Such now the fruit is ripening & we saw
the process of cleaning & drying. In flower the fields much
look much better. Rice is grown in the valleys in small terraces,
one above the other water being let into the upper & gradually
finding its way to lower levels. There are no great savannahs,
to be flooded like your rice fields. A vast expanse of ground
is already covered by coffee & before long most of the hills
will be so clad. Alas for the perishing botany of the land! -
Ageratum conyzoides is the great plague of the coffee planters,
it grows like groundsel every where. Rose hedges are their
fences - very pretty. A S. American *Lantana*, with orange flowers,
(*maculata*) is along all the roadsides - naturalized - & often
in fences. So is *Pyrusmanica arborea* - sometimes a plaguing weed.
Several other western plants are now weeds here & ill over too.
The river courses & stream beds wear our ground - the jungle
being mostly impenetrable. Here we had ferns in great beau-
ty - but not of very many species - *Blechnum orientale* being
the glory of the densest, and a tall *Alsophila*, of the tree fern
often 20 or 30 feet high. Balsams, purple tubicils of very
many kinds - & great beauty glistened on the wet rocks - &
we gathered a curious *Podostemon* (*P. Gardneri*) in one of
the rivers. Specimens for Asa by thy, if a good boy - Very
few *Compositae* here - I only gathered 2 *Plumeas*, 1 *Solidago*,
1 *Senecio* & 1 *Adenostemma* - none of them wonderful. I hope
to gather him a fine set of these at King's passage Sound -
from which my next letter may be dated. If you write
to me at K.G.S. Adelaide address to care of Penn. & Dr. Steam
Co. Agents. I expect to leave K.G.S. in April - & to leave Adelaide
in June next. After that, till December address care of
Geo. Washington Walker, Hobart Town V.D.L., or R. Gunn, Lau-
ceston, V.D.L. - either will do I trust. - If I prosper I shall
write to you. If not, don't expect it. At present I look
prosperous - my Ceylon trip being, so far, a decided
failure. - My health is quite good - never better. The climate
at Peradenia is delicious, neither hot nor cold - it is 1800 feet
above the sea. At Galle & Trincomalee I was in a constant
sweat - the moisture oozing from every pore - but otherwise
no inconvenience. On the whole, I think the climate of the
island healthy & far less disagreeable than that of Key West.
No insect plagues of any moment - *Landleches* a "living fear"
if you tread on grass - but you can wear gaiters & balk them.
Yours affly. W. H. Harvey

Botanic Gardens, Peradenia
Ceylon.

Oct. 6. 1853.

My dear Mrs. Gray.

A little scrap of a note, enquiring the fate
of your unfortunate tating, arrived at Kew a day or two
after I left it, & reached me by last overland mail. - & I
read it whilst driving from Kandy to this place - after
making fruitless enquiries at the Post office for my
home letters, which were not delivered till the following
day. I had already answered your tating queries, and
written fully to Mr. Harvey of New York to undo all she
had done & I hope you at last got possession of the
matters - but they are now in Mr. Todhunter's care - to do
& undo as may be right. I should like to hear they were
safe - but if even I do, it may be in Australia or New Zealand.

It is just a month & a day since I landed at Ceylon and
I wrote that I were leaving it tomorrow, but am compelled
by a train of mischances to remain two months longer - &
therefore fortunate indeed in finding such a friend as I have
(Director of these gardens) ~~who I am~~ with whom I am as freely
at home as if I were at Cambridge, Mass. - who is a man perfect
after my own heart & a first rate botanist to boot. I cannot
give you a full journal of my months residence - but you shall
have the outlines. Take a map. Landed at P. de Galle, the southern
point of the Island - found S. W. monsoon blowing such a surf & swell
into the harbour that it was impossible to explore the Alga or to
redge. In evil hour a vessel offered to take me to Trincomalee
on east coast - thither I went to find no Alga! or only a few
common ones - & also that I could not get back by sea till
the change of monsoon (a month or six weeks) & that the only
means of extrication was a journey of a week, by land, in a
palanquin, at considerable expence to this place - leaving behind
me my heavy baggage to await a change of wind & trustship to see
it at a future day. I can't leave for Australia till said baggage get
to Galle - hence my compulsory detention. Here am I still at Peradenia,
4 miles from Kandy - wasting my time & taking short excursions
as the weather permits - but at the worst season of the year
for botany! I ought to have arrived in December, & to find
till Feb. Had I done so, I should have seen all that was
interesting in the Island. By bad arrangements, I shall
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now see very little, I yet be detained as long. Well,
tis a jolly to get. —
And what do I think of Tropical Botany. The day I landed
at Galle, I was much struck with the magnificence & the
luxuriance of the vegetation — which there is extremely
rich. Two thirds of the bay are bounded by a deep
margin of Cocoa Nuts — always a magnificent tree, and
here peculiarly so — & there is a plentiful sprinkling of
Breadfruit (Artocarpus) & other large leaved trees — Areca
Palms & Caryotas — the first all grace, the last massive
& grand — & when you enter the jungle, and have passed
the Cocoa margin a thousand flowering shrubs are mixed
with the tall forest trees & ferns & small plants cover
the ground. Plumerias, Muscandus & Syora coccinea
repeated over & over on a large scale has a fine effect.
I took a drive of 7 miles through these the day I landed,
& it was all a case of wonder & admiration the whole
way. How I wished for Mr. Ward, who would here have
been in the seventh heaven. — This was however all
I saw of the rich tropical jungle — every day since has
tended to improve the impression in my eyes.
I was hurried from Galle, as I have said & had a 3
days voyage to Trincomalee, where I found great pic-
turesque beauty in deed — but scarcely any tropical
aspect — Cocoa & Areca Palms being there planted — not
wild — & looking often poor & mean. The harbour is more
like English lake scenery — wooded shores & islands — than
any thing else. But the sky was not English. The only
time for being out of doors was from six (sunrise) to 8
in the morning, & from 5 in afternoon till dark — Now there
being no twilight this gives but two hours before breakfast
& one in the evening. — & the remainder of day to spend
in a tumble down "Rest House" — & enjoy 90° in the house.
If my morning walk afforded plants, I would spend half
of the day with them — If not, I would lie on the bed & read
or sleep. I went out 2 days myself to collect & nearly
got knocked up — & then sent my servant out two or

three days more — I got little by it — so I was right
glad to get away by the end of the week — A friend lent
me an old sea cot, which, slung on a bamboo, made an
extempore Palanquin & off I set. The distance to travel was
116 miles — the time occupied 5 days — the expense about £9.
Railroad good & cheap tickets! — Morning leaving, & whenever
it was not too hot I walked, — the rest of the time I lay on
my litter & was carried. It was not unamusing to me, though
the botany was mostly dried up, for rain had not fallen in
many places for 5 months — & all the smaller shrubs were
flagged or crisp. Large Cassias, Syora, Jonesia, Larrea, Can-
thium, Gmelina &c were in flower, & where any moisture
remained there were convolvuli &c. Thousands of butterflies
sometimes trooped through the road, which for a great way
is cut through the forest, shrub closer over it now & then,
& except at noon shades it more or less. But for this the heat
would have been intolerable. A great part of the way Elephants
abound, but they are only Night walkers, & so we saw them not,
our coolies taking good care to avoid darkness. We often passed
their recent traces, & one morning early heard them roaring in
a neighboring tank. Large Wandering Monkeys leaping from tree
to tree were the biggest beasts we saw. Our quarters each night
were at Rest Houses, built up by Govt, where food in a
raw state may be purchased. My servant always had Tea
(what I carried with me) on arrival, followed by Rice & curries,
poor breakfast & supper — my two meals — & so I got along very
well. Raw rice & live chickens (had I no servant) would have
been all that was to be had at most places.
Since I have been at Paradamia (which is a small Paradise in
its way, a bot. garden of 140 acres, bounded by a River & sur-
rounded by wooded hills) — Thwaites and I have made a weekly
excursion to the uplands, our intention being to visit the
highest Mt. (Pedra) in the Island — which we have not visited
being turned back by rain & mist. We had however 2 or 3 good days
botany among the hills. The upper country is a succession of steep
hills & deep vallies, with the usual number of streams & waterfalls.
Some of the waterfalls are of great height — 400 to 500 feet. I would
be thought much of in Switzerland. Some of the vallies strongly
reminded me of those of Switzerland (minus the Alps) — others of
those of Devonshire (minus farm houses & church towers). The coffee
plantations are not picturesque — The bush is cut short at 3 feet
from the ground & planted in rows, 4 or 5 feet apart. They look



Harvey, William H. 1853. "Harvey, William Henry Oct. 6, 1853 [to Jane Loring Gray]." *William Henry Harvey letters* –.

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