

Free Town, Sierra Leone
April 12th 1796

Dear Doctor,

The Mohawk, a Bristol Slave Ship, will sail
for England, ^{in a few Days,} and I cannot let slip the Opportunity of telling
you I am very well. We left Spithead on the 23^d of Feb: 7
at 8 in the Morning, and anchored in Sierra Leone River
on the 19 of March at one in the Morning; our Passage was
short and very pleasant. Upon our Arrival here, we found
Dr. Winterbottom, and Mr. Afzelius had gone upon an Excursion
to the northward; the Dr. returned last Week, and had left Mr
Afzelius somewhere upon the Road too tired to come on.
From his not having returned yet, we all conclude that he
has met with Mr. Macaulay, who with Mr. Michell one of
the Members of Council is gone to the Company's Factory at the
Rio Pongas. I very much regret his Absence, because when he
does return, he will be here so short a Time, that I shall
have but little Opportunity to receive Instruction from him
in Botany; it is too a very bad Time to get Showers, for there
are very few Plants in Bloom now. After the rainy season is
over there will be Showers enough to be collected every where, but
then Mr. Afzelius will be gone. I have read a great Deal in the
Philosophia Botanica, with ~~great~~ Pleasure, and intend during
the rainy season to follow strictly the Plan of Reading you so
kindly laid me down, that when the fine Weather comes, I
may be able to sally forth & collect. The Weather is just what
I like; I have not had one Day too warm for me. The Ther-
mometer is in general from 85 to 89 - one Day it was 95.
I am fixed in a nice comfortable wooden House; and Mr. Can's

Son is my Inmate: I dine at the Governour's every Day, and when his House is finished I expect to have an Apartment there. My Society here is very good, and I live very happily; but still I can never cease thinking of my own ~~the~~ Country, cold and change-able as its Climate is, nor regretting the sad Circumstances that induced me to quit it and my Connections there, to encounter the intemperate Air of the Torrid Zone.

The numerous reptiles and Insects plagued me much at first; we have Spiders with Bodies as big as small Walnuts, and Legs three Inches long; Lizards crawling across the Room perpetually; now and then a Tarantula or a Centipedes find their Way into the House, and if you catch a pretty Butterfly, or Moth, & stick it upon a Cork, to preserve it, as I sometimes did in England, the Ants soon find it out, and eat it up in a very little Time; I have however been a Match for these voracious Gentlemen lately by floating the Cork in a Basson of Water. My Colleague M^r. Lowes has made a very fine & curious Collection of Butterflies &c &c, and preserves them from Insects by strongly impregnating the Box with Camphor. When I first took possession of my Room, I murdered every Spider I could catch, and drove the Lizards away, but since the Natives have told me they are very useful in a House, by destroying the Ants, Cockroaches &c, I have permitted the Lizards to crawl about just as they please, and have given orders that Spiders should not be molested, nor their Cobwebs destroyed.

I have not forgotten the request of my Friend Dr. Marshal; I find those Monkeys are not so difficult to be got as I had imagined, but the want of good Spirits to preserve them in, has hitherto rendered every attempt to send one to England unsuccessful. Rum and Brandy are the Spirits they have tried: I am now endeavouring to get a few Gallons of the O. P. Terbinthine, from some of the Ships now lying in the Rives, which I shall keep by me till I can get one of the Monkeys. Just before we came here, I am told a Man shot a very large one in the Woods, and cut off its Hand

which he brought to Town, they say, it could not be distinguished
from the black Hand of a Native.

To Mrs Sims, Miss Sims, Maria, Caroline, & Augustine
I beg to be remembered, I hope they are all very well, and the two
little ones also: Could you tell me what sort of Mats Mrs Sims
wished to have; my Room is hung with some made from the
Wamboo Cane split, and I have some upon the Floor made of
Rice Straw I believe; they are both very handsome. The former
are about six Feet in Length, and 8 or nine in Breadth; those made
of Straw, are about four Feet in Breadth, and six in Length; whether
they make them larger or not, I do not know. They are cheap, and
easy to be got; I intend to ask Mr. Affelins if they are the Mats he
was commissioned to get. - The Palm Tree from which the Oleum
Picini is made, grows every where here: I have tested the oil
made from it, and it is very good, perfectly free from the stink
you sometimes ^{meet with} in the Oil in England: I should like to know
far it would be worth while getting a large Quantity of
sending Home. I will enquire ^{how much} ~~about~~ ~~quantity~~ there
here, and how they sell it, and when one of the ^{you} goes
home, I will send you a small Bottle of it.

The religious Expedition to Teembo, has failed
entirely; when the Missionaries got here, they began seriously to
think about it, for the first time I am persuaded since they entered
into the ^{scheme} they saw Difficulties they never dreamed of, and fearful of proceed-
-ing any further, have refused to leave Sierra Leone: They will return
to England as soon as they can.

I shall hope to hear from you soon, and
tell you I have made some Progress in Botany, if my Health
will permit me to pay it all that attention I wish.

Adieu, my very good Friend,

and believe me to be,
your obliged, and obedient Servant,
Thomas Quest.

Pied Rivers
MUSEUM

Dr. J. M. Smith
H. M. Bridge Street,
Black Bourne,
W. M.



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