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phia, 1879); *Baltimore Sun*, June 16, 1865.

15. There were two members of the faculty of the Medical Department of Randolph-Macon College, nephew and uncle, named Francis Joseph Mettauer. One of them was a Smithsonian meteorological observer from 1849 until 1852. Howard A. Kelly and Walter

L. Burrage, *American Medical Biographies* (Baltimore, 1920), p. 786; *Smithsonian Report for 1868*, p. 84 (where the name is rendered "Frs. J. Nuttaner").

16. Jean Marcel Pierre Auguste Verot, professor of mathematics and science. *Henry Pa-*

253. TO ASA GRAY

Washington Jany 18th 49

My Dear friend

Your favour of the 1st of Jany¹ was received last week by the hands of Capt Davis and I have delayed answering it until I could get some definite information as to the appointment of a botanist to the boundary survey.

I wrote immediately to Col. Emory who has been appointed to command the expedition but did not get a reply until yesterday. I enclose his letter.²

You have no idea of the difficulty of transacting business in this place and how much my time is cut up and dissipated by visitors and correspondence of an unimportant kind. To obtain a single interview with one of the heads of Departments during the session of Congress members having precedence of all others sometimes costs me several calls. Most of the business has to be transacted at this season of the year by letter and these answered by clerks. I make these remarks to excuse myself in part for the seeming neglect of your commission.

Naturalists of late have become quite plenty. I have now on my table six applications for assistance in obtaining situations as explores of California.

I doubt whether any appointment of the kind will be made this session. Benton³ thinks all operations of this nature should be performed by the officers of the Army or Navy. He has introduced or asked leave to introduce a bill for the discharge of all civilians from the Coast survey⁴ has attacked the geological surveys & the exploring expedition.⁵ Though he has but little influence at present yet he is feared.

I will see the secretary of state⁶ on the subject of your letter and endeavour to learn diffently whether an appointment of the kind can be hoped for from the present administration.

I am sorry to learn that Mrs Gray has been unwell but hope she will

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soon be restored to health. When you come again to Washington we shall be able to offer you and yours a room. We have taken a very pleasant house directly in the rear of the Patent Office and are now comfortably situated. The affairs of the Smithsonian are now getting into order. Prof. Jewett has entered on his duties and will relieve me of some of the drudgery to which I have been subjected as man of all work for the last two years.

The Board of Regents have adjourned after a very harmonious session. All the arrangements I was anxious to have made have been settled to my satisfaction. Your report will be printed as soon as it can be prepared—I think we shall be able to purchase 100 copies of your book provided you can wait until the end of three years. I received 1a copy of a 1a plate from Agassiz which I presume he intends for one of his papers in the Smithsonian Contributions.⁷ It is very beautiful.

I remain as ever
truly yours &c
Joseph Henry

Dr Gray

Historic Letters, Archives, Gray Herbarium Library, Harvard University.
Reply: Doc. 258.

1. Doc. 247.

2. Not found, but in Henry's Desk Diary entry of January 17, 1849, he summarized Emory's letter: "Law does not provide for botanist—apply to secretary of state organization not yet made—have promised influence to Mr Halstead." For Mina Halsted, see Gray's reply.

3. Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri. *Henry Papers*, 6:593n.

4. On February 17 Benton proposed deleting all funds for civilian employees of the Coast Survey from the 1849–1850 appropriations bill, and turning all the work over to the navy. Benton attacked the Coast Survey on two grounds: first, that it was engaged in activities far beyond its mission, including abstract science; second, that it was too expensive. Alert to the danger, Bache and his supporters orchestrated support from the mercantile, commercial, and scientific communities. Both James A. Pearce and Jefferson Davis rose in defense of the Coast Survey and Bache. In the end, Benton withdrew his amendment. *Congressional Globe*, 30th Congress, 2d Session, 1849, 18, appendix, pp. 196–212; U.S. Senate, 35th Congress, 2d Session, *Report of the Secretary of the*

Treasury, Communicating, in Answer to a Resolution of the Senate, a Report Showing the Amount Expended and the Progress Made in the Coast Survey, and also the Weights and Measures Furnished the Several States and Custom-houses and Their Cost, Senate Executive Documents, No. 6 (1858), pp. 148–177; Hugh Richard Slotten, "Patronage, Politics, and Practice in Nineteenth-Century American Science: Alexander Dallas Bache and the United States Coast Survey" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1992), pp. 171–174.

5. The attack was not made by Benton, but by Representative William Sawyer, Democrat from Ohio. On January 16, Sawyer criticized many aspects of the appropriations bill for 1849–1850. Among his targets were the Wilkes Expedition, the Coast Survey, the Naval Observatory, and, in general, "national observatories, and exploring and scientific expeditions at the public expense." *Congressional Globe*, 30th Congress, 2d Session, 1849, 18:271–272 (quotation on p. 272).

6. James Buchanan.

7. For a proposed memoir on fossil whales. See Doc. 263.