

York 24/8mo 1861

Dear James

The 2 Wardian boxes for "Harrowby", containing *Gleichenia alpina* we have arrived, & I am glad to say in better condition than heretofore. Although nearly all the fronds were dead, yet on careful examination we found that in many of the sods not only were the rhizomes alive but multitudes of young fronds were coming up. The *Hymenophyllum* were in admirable condition; some of the them (the 3 delicate & pendant *H. flabellatum*

especially) were as fine & as healthy as the most sanguine importer of ferns could desire.

They are now growing most luxuriantly, & are the admiration of "all beholders". I quite hope that the young & very slender fronds of the Gleichenias will strengthen & that we shall succeed with the species at last, but there is always a time of danger, when the old fronds are destroyed, & the "breasting apparatus" consequently taken away.

I have remitted to Benington & Co £21.15.0; that is £11.15.0 as per account received, & £5 extra on each case, as promised, making the aforesaid

total. As it will take some little time before the Gleichenias become fit for free sale, I will not order more at present, but hope we may eventually have a good return upon them, so as to make another lot desirable. Meantime, please accept our best thanks for the trouble taken on our behalf.

I do not know whether any opportunity ever occurs at Hobart Town of communicating with Norfolk Island (which I am aware is now no longer a Government penal station, but inhabited (still?) by the Pitcairn Islanders, who originated with the mutineers of the "Bounty".

- Such is my impression, however, - though perhaps incorrect? If there be any direct communication by vessel, I should like extremely to make an effort to obtain roots of a fern which grows there

"Trichomanes Bauerianum"

"grows on the west & southwest slope of Mount Pitt (Norfolk Is^l) in a ^{tufted} shuttlecock-like form, with pellucid, fern-like fronds, much divided, & a foot high.

It would be easy to have a small Wardian Case (say ~~24~~ 24 inches long, 12 inches wide & 20 inches high at the back) sent there, if there be an "opening" for transit.

All the care required would
be to dig up 40 or 50 tufts
without soil (or as little as would
inevitably adhere to the roots nat-
-urally), or as many roots as
would fill the Case full standing
erect side by side in close
contact. They should be
put in fresh & green, but dry
(that is with no visible moisture
on them) & not watered at all,
& be tightly & permanently
screwed down at once, so as
to exclude all air. We would
gladly give £5 to any captain
who would undertake it, in
addition to paying freight &c.
Father says that the fern is

Common in the locality named,
& "a delicate ^(almost transparent) much divided
fern-like fern, a foot high,
growing in shuttlecock-like
tufts" could not well be missed.

I should not like to miss a
good opportunity, if even more
than £5 was required as remun-
eration, but I think many
persons residing on the Island
would procure a lot gladly for
so less. Nothing would be re-
quired but to dig them up: a
child could carry 50 with perfect
ease.

Do not put thyself to any
trouble about it please, only
if thou does happen to hear of a
ship going, or of any kind of
communication, I should feel

greatly obliged by advantage being
taken of it, I would amply com-
pensate thy trouble as well as
the captain's.

Father & I have recently been for a
fortnight among the mountains of
Perthshire. Though fine summer
weather in the "low country", it was
often stormy & bitterly cold up there.
The weather was very wet, & some-
times on the mountains the wind
was so violent that human endurance
seemed to be taxed about to its uttermost.
We found many interesting alpine
plants & ferns. I have brought home
numerous roots for our rockery, on
which plants of that class flourish
beautifully. Father is now travelling
with certificate in the north of Scotland
& will probably be in the Orkneys to-
morrow. He is accompanied by W^m
Miller of Edinburgh. My cousin
Tho. Backhouse has been on the Continent
having had a 2 mo^s leave of absence

from the Bank. I think he has been
in Germany & Switzerland, but we have
not seen him since his return.

Another little James Backhouse was
added to our household at West Bank
on the 14th of 7th mo. Lovie is much
pleased with her little brother. She
grows a very nice child.

We have had a warm & fine, though
somewhat showery summer. The
crops on the whole very fine, - some
uncommonly luxuriant. The harvest
will I expect, exceed an average.

It is a great favour, considering
the sad state of America. That
unhappy country seems indeed to
be reaping most bitter fruit. I under-
stand that the Federal war expenses
are about one million dollars per
day! A second reverse (at Springfield)
to the Federal arms is reported in the
papers to day. Genl. Logan killed, & one
or more of the Confederate genls also I
believe. With dear love, in which
Aunt E & Mary join, I remain
Your affec^t friend
D^r Backhouse Senr