

Euler to Wettstein  
Berlin, 8 January 1754  
Letter 282 (2783)

[...] I have been pleased to learn from your letter that you and your wife are doing well. With the coming of the New Year, I hope from the bottom of my heart that the good Lord renews unto you all of his blessings. These are also my mother's wishes and all my family who, along with me, care for your well-being and friendship.

I would be much obliged to have the payment for last year's almanacs, the bill for which was sent to you last year. When I wrote you the last time, I had not yet received it, but that was due to my mistake. The frequent walks that I take to Charlottenburg have taken me away from my visits to Mr. Splittgerber, and finally when I saw him, he explained that he had had orders from Mr. Battier to pay me the money. Since I thought that Mr. Battier would have been advised, I did not think of writing to you expressly for that reason, especially since Mr. Splittgerber could not possibly be held negligent in this respect. However, at this occasion I repeat my very sincere excuses for the trouble that I have caused you by asking for books and especially for tobacco which I am infinitely grateful.

I am very upset that the bookseller Spener only sent you the letter of the Russian officer in German. I had given orders to our commissary to send the almanacs, I had requested Spener to give you the papers that you had asked for, and I had indicated expressly all of the papers that have appeared on the subject of Delisle's maps. For when I asked him for the note of what he had sent, the package was already wrapped and sealed and Spener apologized because he did not think that one should send anything "in duplo". If the opportunity presents itself I will not hesitate to find a way to get you the French translation, but I

would not have thought that German was less known than French in England, and that this oversight might have cost you some embarrassment.

This same bookseller Spener would be more than willing to enter into a deal with Mr. Meyer, from which he hopes to pull the first books from England which are excessively expensive. He should take the opportunity to establish a storage facility from which Mr. Meyer could handle the books from England, and into which he would receive all the German books, since the ships go from London to Hamburg and that the trip to Hamburg is also done by the waterways, this undertaking could take place with the least amount of expense, however it would require a friend in Hamburg in the capacity of an expediter. Mr. Spener is awaiting Mr. Meyer's address as well as the first order of books that will not only satisfy him but will bring about orders in return.

I wish to thank you a thousand fold, Sir, for the Chinese letter that you most graciously sent to me on the ancient observations of eclipses from 2000 B.C. It will certainly enable us to clarify the acceleration of the sun and the moon. It was to be wished that father Gaubil had provided us with a detailed description of the time and the circumstances revealed on these Chinese monuments. However, instead of that he reports on the eclipses, as they should have happened according to the tables and he corrects the marked dates, instead one could have used these periods to correct the lunar tables. It is without question that the moon's movement is far faster than it used to be and the gifted astronomer Mr. Mayer from Gottingen has proved this in an incontestable way. Therefore the moon is approaching the earth more and more, from which we can assuredly conclude that after a great number of centuries our system will certainly experience a great catastrophe. It is also not possible that this system has existed for a long time, because the moon would have been so far away that it never could have been its satellite. However, I do not promote this theory. I am against those who support the theory of the earth's eternal state that is held today; and I do not believe at all that the earth began 6000 years ago and that it will only last a few more centuries. Even when the

shortening of the months and the years will be much shorter than it is now, the argument will always be indisputable for the former argument.

Our illustrious President Mr. de Maupertuis is still in St. Malo, where he is staying in perfectly good health, after the serious attacks that he experienced here, he is only counting on returning sometime during the end of April. It was last June that I received the package of seeds from Mr. Collinson, and I thought that I had told you. Some of them have sprouted admirably, however since the season was so far along we decided to wait until next spring. As for the mulberry bushes, I have already explained that we lost a good number of them but that we will try to graft the ones that are still remaining, the fruit trees have almost all been successful, however the exotic plants had suffered too much from the cold so we were not able to save them.

I had taken the liberty to ask you, Sir, if since the last number of Transactions that you sent including the most recent one, if there is not one missing and in case that there is, to please be willing to complete the volume set and that when the moment comes to repeat my request.

As for Mr. Buass's vegetation it is different from the efflorescence that our chemist speaks of and, it is worthy of all the attention it is receiving. This efflorescence must be a known entity; it certainly cannot hide any secrets.

Baron de Gorgier is perfectly well and all of his difficulties due to some Estate problems have disappeared. He still toasts your health and has requested that I give his most important esteem and affection. All of our compatriots join theirs to my family in wishing to you from Charlottenburg their continued affection and friendship.

I have the honor of being [...]

Our chemists have told me that one should consult the Memoires of the Academy of Paris, where one can find a number of papers by Lemery and Geoffroy on the infinite variations of efflorescence.

The Russian Academy has just proposed the subject for a prize of 100 ducats for 1755 as the physical cause of complete theory of electricity and I am hoping that it becomes public.

I still ask for a thousand pardons that I have written this last letter too hastily, the posting of the almanacs has been rushing me.

1<sup>st</sup> Edit 12/2/03