

taken here, and the confidence shown in me by those who have at heart the intellectual development of this country, make my return to Europe impossible for the present; and, as you have well understood, I prefer to build anew here rather than to fight my way in the midst of the coteries of Paris. Were I offered absolute power for the reorganization of the Jardin des Plantes, with a revenue of fifty thousand francs, I should not accept it. I like my independence better."

The fact that Agassiz had received and declined this offer from the French government seemed to arouse anew the public interest in his projects and prospects here. It was felt that a man who was ready to make an alliance so uncompromising with the interests of science in the United States should not be left in a precarious and difficult position. His collections were still heaped together in a slight wooden building. The fact that a great part of them were preserved in alcohol made them especially in danger from fire. A spark, a match carelessly thrown down, might destroy them all in half an hour, for with material so combustible, help would be unavailing. This fear was never out of his mind. It disturbed his peace by day and his