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White Bear, Piccadilly, ~~Jan 1~~  
18<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup>, 1839, Friday evening.

I am not yet in private lodgings, but hope to be so to-morrow. You must not expect me to mention half the things I see in a day here in this busy metropolis, where as yet every thing I have seen has been viewed in the most desultory manner. I breakfasted with Hooker & Richardson, who left me for an hour at the Adelaide Gallery, where I saw very many things to interest me, which we will not stop to talk of now, as I hope to be there again, - among other things, - a fine Gymnastical or Electrical reel, which gives powerful shocks, they say, for I did not choose to feel it myself. Thence we visited the Museum of the Zoological Society, for which Dr. Richardson not only procured us free admittance but procured for us an order to visit the Zoological gardens - made calls with Hooker, whom Joseph & I left with the Chancellor of Exchequer in Downing St., while we passed by Westminster Hall and Abbey, down to Bartham's, who has a beautiful residence as retired as the country. Found Bartham an exceedingly pleasant and amiable man; spent an hour or ~~two~~, till Hooker came in, - accepted an invitation to dine with him tomorrow, - Went into the City; introduced to Richard Taylor at his printing office, was all invited to breakfast on Tuesday morning next - went to Longman's famous book-store & ware-house; - one of the young Longmans politely showed us over the building; showed us room after room filled with solid literature, a most surprising quantity, - went by St. Paul's again, saw the Bank &c. &c. - took in omnibuses again to West End; passed by the London University &c. &c. - Joe Hooker & I went to dine with J. E. Gray, who has taken it into his head to show us no little attention; he has lately married a rich wife, a widow, much older than him, - and much more sensible; indeed I was quite pleased with her. Went to the Botanical Society; - poor concern, and then to hear Faraday give the first lecture of the season at the Royal Institution, Mr. Gray having kindly offered us tickets. I was unexpectedly introduced to Faraday just before the lecture; pleasant man, with a very quick and lively expression of countenance. The lecture was on Electrical Eels &c. - not elegant



Lecturer he is; brilliant and rapid exponent,

I hope to hear him again

Saturday Evening Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>  
I am now in lodgings, no 38 Northumberland St.  
- near Northumberland House, Charing Cross, - in the  
rooms just vacated by Dr. Richardson. - 16 shillings a  
week, and a shilling for my breakfast when I choose to  
take it there. It is half past eleven; I have just come  
in, no fire, but fortunately my occupation for to-day  
is soon told. Hooker, Joe & I break-fasted with Brown  
at his house, and stayed with him until 4 o'clock in  
the afternoon! I have a good deal to say about him  
but not here. He is a curious man in other things  
besides botany. He has a few choice paintings, and a  
few exquisite engravings he has picked up on the Continent  
I coveted them for you. They are just what we should  
be delighted to have. I dined for dinner, then I went  
with my baggage to my present lodgings, and then took  
up Hooker & Joe for Bentham's dinner at 1/2 past  
6, where we met Lindley & Mr. Bridges: - the dinner  
was just the beam ideal of taste and simple elegance.  
In the drawing-room coffee was first served up, and in  
an half hour Assam Tea. I am greatly pleased with  
Bentham, and delighted with Mr. B. But more of this  
more. We are to breakfast with him on Monday and  
then make up a party to Kew & the Horticultural gardens  
The house he lives in, a pleasant place, plain but tastefully  
furnished and arranged, was the one where Jeremy Bentham lived.  
For the present good night.

Sunday Evening, 20<sup>th</sup> January, 1840.

I found myself this morning in sad perplexity, in a matter in which  
I had anticipated many difficulties. I had intended to hear the  
Rev. Baptist Noel, of whose talents and usefulness I had heard so much.  
But I was unable to find any directions or guide-book that gave  
any information whatever concerning churches or their pastors. I badly  
perplexed I walked out by chance, here & there making such inquiries  
as I could, but with no success. I passed by Westminster Abbey,  
in which service was going on (the Cathedral service usually begins at 11  
o'clock), went in and stayed for some time; but this service, was in  
such a noble building, I do not strike me either as blown or subdued;  
so when the ordinary hour of morning service arrived, I went to the  
nearest parish church, which was well filled with an apparently devout

audience. The sermon, from a portion of 1 Peter, 2, 17, "Fear God" -  
was cold and formal. I wished myself, when I hope you  
were, under the voice of the good Dr. Newman. I spent the  
greater part of the intermission, which is free shop, in endeavouring  
to find a dissenting Chapel, and thought I had succeeded,  
but found after I had taken my seat that it was an Episcopal  
Chapel. But as it turned out I had no reason to regret it,  
for we had a truly evangelical sermon from Isaiah 55: 6-7, -  
valuable as good, as I could have heard in America. I hope to  
be better provided against another Sabbath, and to call soon at  
the Religious Tract Society's rooms, where I doubt not I  
may obtain the information I desire. The evening I have  
spent comfortably and quietly by myself in my new lodgings.  
I am glad to have such a touch of rest after the whirl of the  
past week. Indeed I hope I shall have a few evenings of the  
present week to myself.

Tuesday Evening Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>

I have to account for myself for two days' truant; but  
fortunately this can be done in general terms in few words. The  
1<sup>st</sup> to enter very fully into particulars I should fill several sheets.  
Yesterday Sir Wm. N. Joseph Hooker & I, breakfasted, according to  
appointment with Bentham, and set out, although the day  
was rainy for a visit to the Horticultural Gardens at Blenheim.  
We went in an omnibus, and I noticed, on the way, Ashley  
House, (Duke of Wellington) and the monument to his Grace  
in Hyde Park near his house (What is the good of bones indeed  
if one can not see them). Holland House, which I saw  
from some distance &c. - We found Lindley at the Gardens,  
and looked through the grounds. They have very few nettles, however  
as yet, but have just dug the foundation of a very splendid one  
which is, however, to form one wing merely of the general plan.  
We went on to Kew, about 2 miles farther, and looked through  
those fine old grounds, gardens. The collections & the collections  
in them were much larger and more interesting than I had anti-  
cipated. They are particularly rich in Mr. Holland & Cape Plants.  
There is a new conservatory for large plants, a fine one  
caterpillar, which cost Sir Thomas 10,000, and the roof was  
taken from a green-house at Buckingham Palace and  
therefore cost nothing. It seems an extravagant job, and  
Mr. Bentham feels sure a much better use of the same ore  
could be built for £4000. While here we paid a visit  
Francis Baines, now 85 years old, and much like Tom, but  
still sharp at work, and making as beautiful drawings



as ever (beyond comparison excellent), and as delicate microscopical examinations. He has lately been working at fossil Infusoria, and showed me figures of Bailey's Plate in Tillman's journal which he had copied. He was greatly pleased when I offered to send him specimens of the things ~~themselves~~. He showed me the original Red Snow from Arctic America, and also his splendid drawings.

Returned to town, and dined with Brantham in a family way. This morning we breakfasted with

Richard Taylor in the city; and went afterwards to the College of Surgeons, by appointment Hooker had made, to see Prof. Owen, and the fine Museum of the College under his charge (John Hunter's originally); — a magnificent collection it is, in the finest possible order; and the arrangement and plan of the room is far, very far better and prettier than any other I have seen. I shall make some memoranda about it.

We then met Mr. Darwin, the naturalist who accompanied Capt. King in the Beagle. I was glad to form the

acquaintance of such a profound scientific scholar as Prof. Owen — the best comparative anatomist living; still young, and one of the most mild, gentle, child like men I ever saw. He gave us a great deal of most interesting information, and showed us personally throughout the whole Museum, I am every day under deeper obligations to Sir Wm. Hooker, to whom I owe the gratification of forming so many acquaintances under such favorable circumstances. Hooker stays over night often at his brother-in-law's, Sir Francis Palgrave, the great antiquarian and Saxon scholar, Keeper of the Records, of whom I have read so much in the British Reviews &c. His eldest daughter, Maria, is spending the winter there. On Hooker's return on Monday he was so kind as to bring me an invitation from Lady Palgrave to dine with them on Saturday, which will be the last I shall see of Hooker, as he is to set out on Monday for home.

In the afternoon we spent an interesting hour in looking through the vast halls of the British Museum, particularly through the Sculpture, the Elgin Marbles, Egyptian antiquities &c. These last are much more grand than I had supposed. Indeed I was struck with wonder, I hope some time to spend a day or two in looking through these rich collections.





Gray, Asa. 1839. "Gray, Asa Jan. 18, 1839 [to Torrey]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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