

Hospice of the Grimsel (about 6000 feet high)
 Saturday, 29th June, afternoon.

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Villeneuve (East end of Lake Lemano) 4th July, 1859.
 Thursday Morning, 9 o'clock.

If you are this morning in the city, you are just now in the midst of the noise and confusion of our National Jubilee; but I dare say you have taken refuge in the country, and are now with the little dears, at Fishkille perhaps, or some other pleasant place. I hope at least you have not had the bother of making banners this season.

Being unexpectedly detained here for a few hours, almost at the close of my Swiss pilgrimage, I resume my pen, which I have had no time to use for some time past, and must bring up my journal in a hurried way to the present. Since I broke off I have seen more than half the wonders of Switzerland. I can only now tell you where I have been from day to day; but I shall have much to give you *viva voce* some of the evenings of the rapidly approaching autumn.

Grindelwald Thursday night (a week ago); watched the clouds striking against the Wetterhorn and the Eiger and rolling down its sides. — terribly cold. —

Friday 28th — Rose at four; started at five, in fine walking trim, after paying an exorbitant bill for very indifferent fare; was very confident that the guide paid nothing, and therefore suspected a connivance between him and the Aubergiste to put all on my shoulders. — one of the evils of a guide; they are more than useless on all the usual routes, indeed anywhere, except in ascending very high mountains and crossing glaciers. — felt a little inclined to punish my guide, and therefore set off at a swinging pace and took him up the Little Scheideck much more rapidly than he ever went before. I buttoned up my coat and pretended not to be making any effort at all, while the poor fellow ~~stripped off~~ first his coat, then his waistcoat, the perspiration running off his face; until finally he pronounced it impossible to keep near me, and lagged far behind. At length I took pity on him and walked slower, but we crossed the Scheideck and reached the Nengern alp, a journey of four hours and a half, in a little less than three.

As we came up alongside the vast precipice of the Grand Eiger, a man stood ready to fire a gun that I might hear the echo, — which was very extraordinary. — the report thrown from peak to peak was distinctly repeated for six or seven times, and then sounded fainter in the distance for almost half a minute. From the crest of the Little Scheideck (6300 feet) I got my first near view of the remainder of the high Bernese Alps, the Monk (12660 feet) the Jungfrau (12670 feet) — I have been giving you the height all along in French feet, as they are put down in Keller. — In English feet the numbers will be considerably higher) — with the two white peaks (the Silber-Wörner [Silver-peaks] which belong to

Still beyond, tho' not quite so lofty was the Grosshorn, the Breit horn &c. — The point where I then stood commanded nearly the whole view, from the Engelhörner, Wetterhorn, a glimpse of the Schreckhorn, the Matterhorn, Eiger, Mönch and Jung-Fraun, as I stood just in the mid-distance — an unsurpassed view it is. As I descended the other side to the Niesen Alp I lost those more to the East, but came still nearer to Jung-Fraun.

"Above me are the alps,
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
And thrown through Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The Avalanche — the thunderbolt of snow!
All that expands the spirit yet appals,
Gather around these summits!"

It was here that the greater part of Manfred was mentally composed; — just the place to form grand and terrific ideas. — At the Jung-Fraun Hotel. — a mere chalet on the side of the Niesen Alp. we were close under that magnificent mountain, separated only by a narrow gorge; and elevated just enough to have the most perfect view from base to summit. — Had heard the day previous the crash and roar of falling avalanches on the other side of the Wetterhorn &c. — and was very anxious to see one: before long saw two, one of them a pretty good one, come tumbling and roaring down Jung-Fraun. — Soon a thick cloud came and enveloped these mountains. so that I departed earlier than I should of done. — it ~~th~~ threatened to rain. — descended into the valley of Lauterbrunnen, which is very deep and narrow, and had on the way a fine view of the valley, and the mountains and glaciers that close its upper extremity. — Saw the celebrated fall of the Staubbach, and was disappointed in it. — It only wants more water to be all that is said of it. I think the scarcely-visited valley of the Engstler very much finer than that of Lauterbrunnen, — seven times as many fine water-falls. — But this is accessible to carriages from Interlachen, and thousands of fashionable English Travellers drive up here, then round to Grindelwald, and then return, next day perhaps thinking they have seen the Oberland. — Yet England furnishes also more travellers of another stamp than any other country. — the most difficult passes are often surmounted by English Ladies. — Walked rapidly down the valley of Lauterbrunnen to the Lake of Brienz, turning aside so as not to pass through Interlachen, which is a little British Colony. — took a boat to the opposite end of the Lake (8 miles); had a heavy shower and much wind. — saw the falls of Giessbach from the lake, seven very fine cascades one above the other, — the rain prevented me from going up among them, where the views are highly spoken of. — Landed at Brienz; took a char up to Mayringen again, looking at the beautiful water-falls from each side of the valley, now very full from the rains. Arrived at my own lodgings at five o'clock, having accomplished in the twelve hours, fifty miles, of which thirty-two were travelled on foot.

Saturday 29th

Now in good condition, fresh footed, and pasted

with my kind and thoroughly Swiss Landlady at 5 o'clock, went up the Vale of Blanche (one of the finest in Switzerland) for the Grindelwald, the wildest and grandest pass across the Alps. It is a four-part, or at best a middle-part. I set out alone, with my knapsack on my back. I ascended a considerable distance

where the clouds sunk lower, and it began to rain, then I had the satisfaction to see down the valley, that the sun was shining at Grindelwald. Passed the last little village (Bettmatten) a lonely place. Here the scenery grew to the very height of gloomy grandeur, immense blackened granite mountains, clothed at the base with black stunted firs, above all naked tremendous rocks and peaks; between just soon enough for the river to tumble along forming here and there a cataract. The view was heightened much I doubt not by the cloud and storm, so entirely in character with the scenery. — I have before enjoyed a lovely rainy walk so much.

At the height of about 4500 feet, and in the midst of the very wildest and most lovely scenery reaches the falls of the Sar at Châtelain, the finest in Switzerland, and indeed the only sublime waterfall here. Viewed it first from below, then from the rude bridge thrown across just a few feet above where it leaps into the awful gorge: the scene and all is in character: for Savage grandeur I have seen nothing to compare with it. Stopped at the Chalet near — the only dwelling within some miles. Waited a little for the rain to subside, and finding that was vain here, a traveller's first wants had been pretty well provided for, I made an early but most excellent dinner upon bread, butter, cheese and honey, the last especially excellent. No signs of better weather, stated on passed a spot where the falling avalanche every winter and spring had swept over a vast space of rock and completely worn it smooth.

was now above trees, — here and there a bit of scanty vegetation, but almost any step to the end was now on rock or snow. — Near the rain turned to snow, and I walked on to the Hospice near the summit in the midst of a snow-storm (1½ hours). Knowing it could scarcely accumulate sufficiently to obstruct or obscure entirely the path, until I could reach the place of shelter, I enjoyed it intensely, but had quite enough when at one o'clock I reached reached the Hospice (20 miles) near the summit of the pass surrounded with unmelting snow, above 6000 English feet above the sea. It is as comfortable a place as can be expected in such a situation, now kept as a kind of inn during the summer, and in winter left in charge of a single servant, with a store of provision to last him until spring. The winter before last it was crushed by an avalanche of ice but the man and his dog escaped, and reached Grindelwald in safety. It is now repaired; the stone walls are extremely thick, the roof protected against the winds, as is usual here, by laying huge stones upon it. Laid aside part of my wet clothes, and lay down before the fire to dry the remainder; felt asleep, — on waking had just begun to write; but when I had given the heading, in came three more travellers, — two Germans whom I had met before at Grindelwald, and a young Englishman, all thoroughly

wet with the storm which was now more violent. We all had to huddle about one fire, so there was an end of writing; took our supper together, and all went to bed. The remainder of my adventures on the Grindelwald I will tell you after I get to Geneva.

Woke Sunday morning and found myself in mid-winter; very cold, snowing hard, and the wind howling frightfully around our humble but snug place of refuge. The other travellers determined to prosecute their journey, spite of the cold and the storm, and to go by way of the glacier of the Rhône, the other side of the summit of the pass and about four miles distant. They sallied out with their guide, and left me to myself, which was one advantage. But in three hours they returned, giving an alarming account of the difficulties and danger of the way. When just abandoning the attempt they heard a cry for help, and succeeded in securing another party of three with their guide who had lost their way in the thick mist and storm, and were wandering about in the Gletsch, suffering extremely with the cold, and they as well as their guide had given up all hope of reaching the Hospice unless their cries should perchance be heard and bring them aid. All returned to the Hospice together and no further attempts to leave it were made that day. Then left alone I had the fire to myself, and was spending the time in as profitable manner as possible, thinking a little too of the strangeness of passing the day in such an elevated position: so this return, with an accession to their company, the very reasonable for them, was not so favourable to me. And then of all people in the world the Germans are the noisiest talkers: Spanish men are nothing to them; the few which dried their clothes and warmed their fingers, loosened their tongues and they kept up a continual gabble for the greater part of the day. Besides a winter passer there some persons are just back in this pass during such storms. A gloomy lake, on the summit of the mountain, into which the bodies are thrown for burial, receives the name of "the lake of the dead" (see below).

Monday Morning. Still enveloped in the clouds, but the storm apparently over. Found it not use trying to make a visit to the Rhône-glacier, the clouds were so thick we could scarcely hope to find it, and the secret snow so deep nothing could be seen. The dead passers also by these same clouds in getting a view of the High Bernese Alps. Particularly Grindelwald and the glaciers from this side; but determined not to wait here longer: so set off at half past ten in company with a native of Valais who was travelling towards them and served as guide. Travelled through the deep snow, climbed up to the summit of the pass, more than a thousand feet higher, where at first we were so completely enveloped in the clouds that we seemed actually to be travelling through them and on them, — thus a specimen of two of Soldanelle out of the snow to serve as a benchmark. At length the wind arose and now and then sent a hole in the clouds, to give me some glimpses of the desolate yet grand scenery through which we were passing. Soon I got a view of the valley of the Rhône almost at

its commencement, with the river flowing through like a more rivulet, looked down upon Oberwald - the highest village in Vallais, a collection of little chalets all huddled together as if to keep themselves warm, - as indeed they have need. - got out of winter and snow and into the valley at the little village of Obergesteln, and walked on the same day, through a quick succession of most retired little Swiss villages of the humblest sort to Brieg, on the Simplon road, near the Mountain of that name, which I reached at 9 o'clock in the evening, making a journey of 40 miles (a portion portion through the snow, in ten hours and a half. I would like to tell you much about the Upper Vallais, a region seldom visited by travellers, but have not time. - people kind and simple - got nothing to eat on the way except hard and dry brown bread that may have been baked ten days. - passed two villages where avalanches had fallen in former years and crushed many people. - the scenery much more picturesque than I expected, but was most interested in the people and their little villages. - women mowing, reaping, and doing every sort of the hardest labor. - all awfully afflicted with goitre, scarce a person wholly free from it, - actually saw one woman with a goitre, not quite as large as her own head certainly, but about the size of that of the child she held in her arms apparently a year old! - saw one Cretin stopped a few moments at the principal ~~village~~ auberge in the village of Viesch, found the priest with two of his parishioners playing a game of cards together. A stranger being a curiosity in that region, one of the persons accosted me very politely, and took me up the valley a little way to see the glacier and mountains. - Reached Brieg utterly worn out;

but got a good supper and bed; this being just where the famous Simplon road commences the ascent of the mountains, there are many travellers and a good hotel (though dear). Rose Tuesday Morning at four o'clock; feet and legs very stiff and sore; thought of going up the Simplon road into the mountains to see some of the galleries and bridges, and get fine views, but the morning was cloudy and I did not like to lose the time: started off down the valley but got on slowly and very painfully, however walked as far as Leuk, I believe about 24 miles, and there hired a char, which took me on to Sion (the capital of the Canton) about 22 miles further, where I slept.

Wednesday, rose at four, and feeling pretty stout, I started off at five on foot, and tho' certainly in very far from the best condition for walking went on to Martigny to breakfast, which place I reached at half past ten, 24 miles according to the guide book, but the latter part was very painful. From this place one may go to the Hospice of St. Bernard in 10 hours, - would have been glad to have seen so famous a place, but as to scenery it is decidedly inferior to much I had already seen. One may go to Chamonix in nine hours, getting the superb view of Mont Blanc from the ~~summit~~ summit of Col de Balme in the way. Thinking it impossible to walk farther,

I hired a mule, and a pason with him, and went up to the top of Col de Balme (5 hours) passing the vale and glacier of Trient. Reached the summit at four o'clock, enjoyed a fine view of Mont Blanc and his attendant peaks from top to bottom, or rather ^{view} at top and bottom, for there was a belt of clouds about the middle, — a most superb and complete view, Mer de glace and all; repeated of course, the lines —

Mont Blanc is the Monarch of Mountains,
They crowned him long ago,
On a throne of rock, with a robe of clouds,
And a diadem of snow.

Irite satisfied without going to Chamonix, so returned to Martigny at 8 P.M. another good days' work. Particularly as I walked both up and down the worst part of the road, being merciful to the beast. On my descent obtained a splendid view of the Bernese Alps.

Much amused at looking over the Register at the Hotel, where the travellers expressed their opinions of the different hotels on the road, in very praising some, and speaking of others in terms of great reprobation, good plan. — I think if the proprietor of the Hotel at Sion (a very dirty hotel) could read all that is written in his own book he would burn it. One man writes opposite his name, — "The worst and dirtiest house on the road!" Another kindly warns his successors thus: — "Bugs in No. 9!" — A capital plan.

Lay down and slept till midnight: Thursday — took diligence at one o'clock A.M. for Villeneuve, saw the falls of the Salenche by moonlight. — arrived at Villeneuve at half past seven, just after the morning steam-boat had left for Geneva. — am confident we were delayed on purpose, to induce us to go on in the diligence instead of the next boat. For myself I did not mind waiting till one o'clock, that I might make myself look a little decent, tho' I had not the means here of improving my appearance much. As to my boots, and indeed all my habiliments, they were much in the condition of those of the Gibeonites when they made their visit to Joshua. — wrote a little, went out to take a look at the

Castle of Chillon, which is near, — the building itself not remarkable but the situation fine; and well described in the sweet little poem, — And then there was the very small island, the only one in the Lake, which the prisoner might readily see "from his dungeon deep and old!"

"And then there was a little Isle,
Which in my very face did smile
The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seemed no more
Scarce broader than my dungeon-floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain-breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it were young flowers growing
Of gentle breath and hue."

Took the steam-boat in the afternoon, passed Veray, Lansanne &c. — and after traversing the whole length of this much-admired, most

Beautiful Lake arrived at Geneva just at sunset; — having seemed
plished my pedestrian tour (long to be remembered) in ten days (including
the Sunday)

This is written, at Madame Wolff's, Friday evening
late, — July 5th. —

July 6. —
Went yesterday morning to my bankers, and found no letter, the first I
had received in a long while, that of dear Jane, and the Doctor, dated May 6.
Calling immediately on DeCandolle (who fortunately had just returned from
Paris), and the happiness to find another of much closer date (M. Mosch
to which I then to thank Jane, whose name I should have written (the
signature), Clara, and the Doctor. — But I will answer these specially
on Monday; and send a letter by the Swiss packet of the 11th inst.
I am filled with alarm at the accounts of dear Mrs. T.'s health; the
latest letter states that she is better than she was a month ago, I
shall feel the deepest anxiety until I hear again and more fully.

Geneva Friday, 19th July, 1839.

I am now ready to leave Geneva and expect to be off to-
morrow morning. I write a long letter, from the
packet of the 18th inst., which has altered the trouble of writing
here, particularly as I have little to say, since my last date.
My mornings, between 11 and 4 have been constantly and
fully occupied at DeCandolle's. Earlier in the morning I have
spent much time with Mr. Duby, a botanist, and colleague
one of the government pastors here, and it is said almost
the only one who is a *pius* man. I have yet to pack up
a box of my gatherings, and to send to the luggage to be forwarded
to New York. After dinner I have sometimes made
little excursions in the neighborhood; once or twice I have been
accompanied by Madame Wolff and the two daughters. They
are very fond of walking and often make long excursions on foot.
The two daughters walk too fast as I can find, in fact one of
them nearly laid me down the other day, when we were
returning in order to watch the effect of the setting sun
on Mont Blanc.

Some days after we made another excursion
to visit their pastor. He was not at home, so I missed him,
but saw his pretty garden. On the two Sundays I have
heard one of the preachers of the Evangelical Society preach in the
morning, and the clergyman of the English Chapel in the
afternoon. I have also had the satisfaction of seeing Mr.
Molan, who when he called here, the other day was so good
as to hold a long and edifying religious conversation with me.
He is a very respectable and agreeable, and in conversation.
Indeed I have been thrown here into the midst of religious
society of a high tone and a great sweetness and simplicity.
I hope I have secured some benefit from it. As I leave
here I shall love all this and shall see nothing more like it
until I get home again.

I was subjected last Monday to a most grievous disap-
pointment, which I have not yet got over. On Saturday
evening letters and papers arrived at Geneva from the New York
packet to have of the 16th June. The family here got
letters, and I went to my bankers early Monday morning, on
the pretty confident expectation of finding some thing from home.
My expectations were not realized, I am sorry to say. I think
I ought to have had some letters. I was left to glean what
news I could from a file of the New York Observer I ran to the B.
line which Mr. Duby kindly lent me. I could only console
myself with the thought that all must be pretty well, for if
there had been any painful intelligence I should have heard
it is useless for me to do not you to write now, for soon after
the time you may receive this I shall hope to be on the
way myself. I have this morning made my adieu to
Mr. Duby. The two DeCandolle's were just in the last
moment a letter came to me at DeCandolle's from Hooker,
a truly affectionate one, but relating some painful trials
to which he has been recently subjected. The two daughters
who were at home were gone to school at Kensington,
the other (youngest) in the Isle of Wight. Joseph had gone to
join the Barmen expedition for an absence of 4 years — is to sail
on the 4th August. Does not expect to return to Glasgow again
before sailing, though his father will see him at Portsmouth. —
But more painful than all, on the very day that we
left home William was married to a young lady that
his parents had not the slightest idea he was paying his ad-
vances to, and it seems the parents of the lady were equally
ignorant of the affair. The family are greatly mortified, as you
may imagine. The young lady's family is respectable, though quite
inferior to Hooker's; she is handsome and gently brought up. —
That Hooker says of her had been proposed, appeared he thinks he
should have made no objection. William has since been
taken sick for an alarming cough with spitting of blood, and
his poor father is still in a critical state.

Hooker remarks that he has not heard from Dr.
Torrey since I left. I learn this parcel of written
should to be committed to the charge of a gentleman of New-
York — a Mr. Bear (or Bear), who I supposed has already
arrived in the country, and who is daily expected here to
marry a young lady. He is to retire in great haste
to New York, so that it will reach you soon; and I think
I can trust it to the hands of Mr. B. or his wife. But
you will very probably receive a later letter from me before
this reaches you. The box which I have just packed
and shall send by Roulay to Geneva is addressed to
Dr. Torrey, and contains chiefly the following:

My Knapsack (which I used in my journey on foot)
contained ^{with} botanical Memoirs - the gift of DeCandolle
Duby &c. - A copy of Tournefort. - of Griesbach
Gen. Spec. Gentianarum, - other botanical pamphlets.
- a parcel of the laws & regulations &c. - of the Academy
(University) of Geneva - with annual reports of the Rector.
My Rogers Italy, and other small matters. - A set
of pamphlets (same as mine) for Dr. J. - An old work
of plates of DeCand. on the plants of France - for Dr. J.
I myself (mine encloses also a portrait of DeCandolle
which I bought to-day) - Two parcels of plants from
Herb. Torr. returned. - Three parcels of plants for
me. - A most beautiful and valuable large col-
lection of Spanish plants from Mr. Boissier - about
which I wrote to Dr. J. - The first and largest set is for
me. The others are placed in my charge for such Ame-
rican botanists as will send good collections to Mr. Boissier.
The best one (no. 2) I am sure Dr. Torrey
will be delighted to have. I think he should offer the
next to Dr. Short - Perhaps Sullivant should have one
and Dr. Chapman. The other, But this according to Dr.
Torrey's discretion. - Excuse me for troubling you with
so much botany and business.

Love to the dear girls, more than I can say. Tell
them I long for the time to see them: - and dear little
Herbert I hope to see by the time he can stand alone.
I have lost sight of him during almost his whole baby-
hood. Remember me to Mary and Caroline if they are still
with you. Did Caroline hear from her father, as he
promised me? - Love to Dr. J. - and also to thee!
from your attached (but rather
neglected) Gray



Gray, Asa. 1839. "Gray, Asa July 4, 1839 [to Torrey]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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