

Amsterdam - Sep. 19th. 1852 - Thursday

Dear Sue, Think of my dating a letter from this capital of Dutchdom! Somehow I have always thought this one of the most difficult places to get to; something like the source of the Nile or Niger - A ~~place~~ ^{place} that was famous in past days, but traditional now - And yet here actually I am - In this sort of Dutch Venice, with its canals, & gable-ended houses, adorned with stucco & carving, its trishuits for gondolas, & heavy Dutchmen in loose breeches & wooden shoes, for swarthy Italians - And here at last, through a week of more disappointments, vexations, & mishaps than all the rest of our journey put together! And nearly smothered into some extraordinary specimen! - This everlasting smoking! - I can bear one or two cyars of pretty good tobacco quite tolerably, but when it comes to 5 or 6 in one small car, & the abominably bad & strong cyars they smoke here, I am quite overcome - Every pleasure has its skeleton, & I am sure fleas & smoking have been pretty grim skeletons to me some of the time - If one could only get away I should think it unreasonable to complain, but there is no retreat - On the steamboat I cross from one side to find two on the other; I take a seat at the stern & the smokers are there before me - I stay the cabin, but old gentlemen who don't like wind, have taken refuge there with their pipes - Sometimes on some ^{rail} roads a smoking car is attached - But Germans generally seem to consider it quite a charming thing, tobacco smoke, & that to deprive anyone of the privilege of sharing it is not to be thought of - At the table I note the dessert is scarcely on the table before we come the candles for the cyars, & the men fall to smoking - You come down to breakfast & find several apparently contenting themselves with smoke for their morning repast - You go into a waiting room at the rail-road station, it is lined with cards forbidding to smoke - But what of that? - In come the cigars & pipes in florid indifference - In the diligence it is not allowed to smoke if disagreeable to any of the passengers - So though there may be none in the interior, it does not hinder the occurrence

parts of the Empire, the conductors & the driver from repelling themselves with the odour of tobacco, & favouring you with it so that either you must shut the windows & suffocate, or submit to the abomination - Even in your chamber you are not safe, for the German custom connects every room in hotels, by a door, with the next; and Myrskoeer must smoke himself to bed, & it permeates itself through the cracks; or else he sits at the window & the breeze brings you puffs. I believe they don't smoke in church - Hence one gets such a long parade - But this morning I had an extra charge of it, - in a car containing 25 people I think, & as nearly as I could see, bore smoking, & only 3 1/2 windows open - Ever since I have had any trouble in my liver the smell is particularly deleterious, & gives me a bad head ache & makes me quite sick - And I am quite out of patience! People may say what they please of Americans - We are a great deal nearer & more civilized people - There is more regard to the comfort of all, and one thing I think a thing is forbidden with us, it is edged: - Give me nothing over smoking! - She me offends my sight, but I can shut my eyes, but I cannot shut my nose - I needn't think it quite an outrage, when riding on horseback in the morning at home, if I don't see anyone smoking! - It's a puff to sully the pure air - But, poor thing, I was young & innocent then! - Now it is a whole day when I can be free from tobacco smoke - You should see the small boys puff their noses! And even saw hood so-so, with a large, heavy pipe in their mouth - I don't think half as much of Sir Walter Raleigh as I used to, & seriously question whether the introduction of the potatoe were as great a blessing, as that of tobacco a curse - Even as a question of political economy, think what sums of money are puffed away! - If it were expended in education or even soap instead of smoke, what an improvement, mental & physical, on the German people! -

I wrote to father from Heidelberg on Sunday, briefly reviewing our work & saying I must defer my journal sheets till the present between June & August - so having completed myself with this little notebook, I again at Heidelberg - Sunday the 18th. I employed the morning in writing - and in the afternoon we went up to the castle to wander round among the ruins - It is built on a steep hill

side, of a red stone - There are many buildings of different ages surrounding an open court in the centre, which you reach through a gateway under an old tower, where still goes the clock, & where still stand the quaint & rude old stone figures supporting the roof of some of one of the first buildings - The handsomest front we see in this court, and they are fine specimens of different styles & times - Some richly ornamented with carvings & statues. Since of the latest buildings were made by the Elector Frederic who married Elizabeth, James the King's daughter & Charles I. sister, & who was afterwards, Queen of Bohemia - One was erected for her, & is called Lady Elizabeth's Palace - The immediate outside is surrounded by a very high, thick & strong wall. - And at the corners massive round towers - So thick & strong, that when the French tried in 1744 to blow ~~down~~ ⁱⁿ with gunpowder, it only split in halves, & one half fell into the ditch below, sliding slides down from its place - On the top of the towers & walls the Elector Frederic had out a garden for Elizabeth, which is still called 'the lady Elizabeth's garden' - And you pass through the center, the ^{the place} ~~place~~ ^{place} in imitation of a trunk surrounded with ivy leaves, which is placed in honor of their marriage - Looking north over the town & the lovely valley of the Sackar, & commanding also part of the Rhine, is a fine broad terrace of stone, with carved stone balustrade & seats, & opening directly from one of the fine parts of the castle - It must have been a stately place, for the old dawns & cavaliers to promenade upon it, and one could not but fancy the days of splendour, when ladies strolled out here to watch the mailed horsemen in the valley below, or come by moonlight to encounter some in arms - And it looked sad & solemn to see a regular fire shot laid out, & large trees growing in the roofed woods, with the stone carved fire places still standing, & the lofty stone framed windows still pouring in the sun - Round the foot which made as a deep dry ditch - In some places laid out as a garden - Then again a massive wall, & beyond terraces, & walls, &c. till the whole hill side is fortified - It must have been very strong! - The last destruction was by fire. It was struck by lightning August 1764. The last year or two the Elector has hoped in parts to possess them better - And people ^{very many} ~~are~~ ^{are} in different parts, & can hang up pictures of furnished Halls to let. I have quite a fancy to see

some time there - It is one of the most interesting, beautiful, & striking places to me which I have seen - When we were here before we went through some of the rooms where old armour is kept & the relics found here & some of those in better preservation - ^{the old chapel & pulpit monk still in the confessional -} They are kept locked, & you pay a little fee to a woman to show them - This time we only went through the ruined parts, & having seen a splendid sunset from Lady Elizabeth's garden, descended the hill to the town - We met at the Castle Dr. Howe & his wife - I scarcely recognized him with his moustache - And was quite grieved to see him look so sick - He said he was still sorely troubled with dyspepsia - Instead of spending his summer travelling he had been in England & Paris - They were on their way to Italy -

We packed & were all ready the night before, for we were to take the 5 o'clock train to Mannheim, to take the steamer down the Rhine; so we duly got up at 4 to 4, & when almost dressed the porter came to call us! - When we went down stairs at 4 1/2, he was still the only person visible; Dr. Gray scolded & tried to hurry, but he only shook his head & talked German, there was no omnibus or carriage appearing, & time was fast going - An Englishman & his sister, whom we met at dinner the day before, were going too - At last the head-waiter came - The bills were paid, & after a desperate effort a carriage was got, we hurried in & had the satisfaction of seeing the train roll out of one end of the station as we drove in at the other - It was very provoking when we had got up so early & been all ready ourselves! I think it would have been quite a gratification to Dr. Gray to have gone back & scolded, but as there was a train for Frankfurt at 5.13 am we decided to take that & try & catch the steamer at Mayence - So we hastened across to the other train, the baggage was weighed & ticketed, & we got our places - Fortunately that rail-road (I mention it honorably) was furnished with smoking cars - We had a few minutes at Darmstadt to snatch a cup of coffee & a roll for breakfast, & got to Frankfurt in time for the train for Castel (opposite Mayence on the ^{Rhine} ~~Main~~) & reached there for the steamer in good time - So that mishap ended well - On the steamer we found Mr. & Mrs. Myers & daughter of London - Mrs. Myers is a botanical gentleman, & we had been introduced to him at the Conversazione at Regent's Park garden; so with them & the young Englishman & sister we had a very pleasant day -

They had been travelling in Tyrol & enduring the discomforts of Austrian currency which is all paper. Even bills about the value of one of our cents, & to make some small money they took a larger bill in Rhine. The scenery on the Rhine did not look so beautifully as when we ascended. One evil was that it was in the middle of the day, always one of the most disadvantageous times for scenery, for it was bright sunshine & no shadows. Then after being among the Alps, hills which had seemed high before, looked quite minute. The season has been so cold as to be very unfortunate for the grapes. They say there will be scarcely any wine-crop this year. Which is a general misfortune there, for many depend on the vintage for the year's income. The wind was very cold all day though the sun was warm. We enjoyed the beautiful old castles, most picturesque old ruins, and many associated with old traditions & stories, for which, vide Murnag. Among them Bishop Hatto's Tower. Perhaps you may remember Southey's ballad about him & the rats. Then Rolandseck. A picturesque fragment of a ruin, said to be the remains of the tower in which Roland, returning from the Holy Land & finding his lady-love had entered a convent, built ^{here} & passed the rest of his days as a hermit, was found at last dead, still gazing from the window on the convent beneath where the love of his heart had taken refuge. The sunset glow was beautiful on the Rolandseck & Brachensfels opposite, as we drew near Bonn, which we reached in good time, so that Dr. Gray went at once to Schloss Sippelendorf, & found all the gentlemen away, it being vacation time. So as he could not accomplish his business, there was nothing to detain us, & we decided to leave by the steamboat next morning at 8 1/2. pass the day in Cologne, & our plan had been to go down by steamboat to Arnhem in the night, & so be ready for the early morning train for Amsterdam, & so have Wednesday in Amsterdam. But we found that unfortunately Tuesday night was almost the only night in the week the steamboat did not go down the river, so we must wait & take the day boat Wednesday. We tried a new hotel this time in Bonn, & were most comfortably accommodated at the Golden Star, and the climax of its perfections in my eyes was completed the next morning, by the landlord's giving me a lovely little bouquet. ^{at breakfast} We were down at the steamboat very punctually, & after waiting (with what degree of patience you may imagine) till 10 o'clock & being all that precious time, the steamboat came down at length, & we sailed down to Cologne. Having deposited our luggage at a

Hotel, we sallied out at once sightseeing - First we went to an old church, in which, as old Roman Catholics, serves as baptist's church just - It was a tawdry church inside, with tired wooden figures of our Saviour & his mother, &c. &c. painted with adorned with artificial flowers, over the side altar - In the most offensive taste! - I am tired of these tawdry decorations & sacred dolls! - The outside of the church was very old, before the introduction of Gothic architecture - Since we went to the Cathedral, which certainly is most magnificent, & of even finished I shall recall want to come to Europe again to see - I found my former judgment about the stained glass quite wrong - The old windows, from not displaying as large masses of colour, have a more softened & harmonious effect on first looking at them - And the new ones cannot rival them in the beauty & intensity of some of the colours - But when you look across the church, & take in the whole effect of the new windows, in how one window is complete in itself, each compartment, dividing the whole, & take in the whole arrangement - they are exceedingly magnificent - You must know each window is about ^{30 or 40} feet high as from the ground to the top & as broad as wide - And they are divided by arabesque or other designs into compartments - The lower portion serves for base as it were, & contains in one window, medallions with the heads of the apostles, &c. &c. is the main portion, & some large pictures - is painted here, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Virgin, the Descent from the cross, &c. - Above is some smaller pictures in the window seem to draw to a point, the Visitation to the temple, &c. & the termination point above is filled in each most brilliant colours, almost like a rainbow - The figures & faces are most of them very fine, the ^{the} superior of the most brilliant colours, & you may form some slight idea of how splendid they are - In the choir, the oldest portion finished before 1500, the windows are all in landscape patterns, some brilliant colours, others like delicate penicillings - The new windows in the nave were a present from the late king of Bavaria - The old saints on opposite have also figures, but somewhat picturesque, occasionally the instance Abraham lies in the ground his back resting on a pillow - but his body comes a tree bearing on its branches the 12 sons of Jacob - Below this picture is the date 1509 - the top of the window - But it is useless to try to divide the cathedral, & pictures give but a poor idea - They only serve to recall it more vividly to those who have seen it - But for magnificent simplicity

inside it is unrecalled - For the true effect of stained glass you need these great churches, where the light comes in such great masses, & is softened by the eye inside - In our small buildings, it is only a disagreeable glare & confusion - After dinner we went to St Ursula's church - She is one of the patron saint of Cologne - The tradition is that she was a British princess, converted to Christianity, who with her lover, 11,000 virgins in her train, travelled to Rome, was there, baptised, & on their return they were all martyred by the heathen at Cologne - In this church are preserved the bones of these laid virgins - He were not at the door by a man whom he may incident from his dress must be a priest, but I think he could not have been anything but a priest - At any rate he was humming in such an audible voice all the time that it put me very much in mind of Mr. Cuck - It may have been some of the chants in the service, but the effect was any thing but solemn - The first thing you see on entering the church, are painted glass in the walls, in long rows with gilt frames like windows, & behind them in plain array the bones of the 11,000 virgins, in bones & arm bones, &c. &c. above, below, around - There are certainly 11,000 bones there, but whether truly feminine & human is beyond me to say - Round the choir are the skulls - seen behind glass in the walls in the same way, & many adorned with a glittering circlet - There are also quaint old pictures representing the adventures of St. Ursula, where she appears with any number of maidens, in vessels decked out, loaded, then reaching Rome, then the baptism, apparently standing quietly with clasped hands & is surrounded by a soldier, & her lover is equally complacent, while her maidens about, eyes & heads are turned around her - These pictures were coarse & poor, but we saw at Bruges in the old chapel of St. John, a shrine containing the remains of the saint, which was beautifully painted by Memling, one of the first inventors of oil painting - The paintings were perfect little miniatures, & though somewhat quaint & prim from the custom of those early days, they were most interesting from their exquisite finish, the brilliancy & perfect preservation of the colour - Though ^{almost} every face was carefully protected ourselves with staining at the dorsal sight, the Thronian enquired whether we would like to see the golden chamber? - So we pushed into a wide chapel, where were cases round the wall in niches & on shelves - The cases represented female heads & busts

The draperies & hair gilt, the faces tin - They opened on the top of the head & were said to contain the skulls of Ursula's chief attendants. He took down one, opened the top, & unfolding a wrapping of crimson silk, shewed us a skull encircled with a diadem of precious stones, & hair still upon one side, & marks of a wound in the top, & some black substance which he assured us was blood - Then wrapping it up he put it back, & took down St. Ursula, & showed her skull with a crown of gold & pearls. And he also showed us a stone arrow-head, called in silver, which he said was taken from her heart! - He opened two doors & shewed rows of skulls on shelves, the lower part all masked in red velvet untroubled with gold & precious stones! - Tawdry & faded rows of pearls where the mouth & teeth should be!! - I wonder whether the man believed it all himself? I suppose so. For Mrs. Mucis told us when her daughter went, ~~they~~^{he} said, "Now when your friend refuse to believe all this, you can say you have seen it with your own eyes!" - I wanted to laugh at first; it seemed so absurd - But afterwards I felt too indignant, too sorry, too angry that men should shew such things! - It was a pitious spectacle, & the poor ghostly skulls, tricked out with jewels & velvet seemed to mock it all! - From there we went again to the cathedral to see the shrine of the 3 kings - The three kings are the three wise men who came to worship our Saviour on his birth; they are made by the Catholic church to be 3 Eastern potentates, one a negro; & even the names are given, of which I can only remember one, Balthazar. In some war some old German king or Emperor took their skulls from some more southern city & presented them to the city of Cologne. they are also the patron saints - so you see Cologne has enough of guardians in that way - Their shrine has been for centuries in the Cathedral, indeed I believe the Cathedral itself is partly dedicated to them - He paid a fee for seeing the shrine & the church treasures, which goes towards the fund for completing the cathedral - Oh I forgot to say on leaving St. Ursula the old de vol man, not content with the fee St. Gray dropped into his hand, said he must have twice as much for two! -

At the Cathedral we were first taken into the old vestry & robing room built out on one side & very ancient - Then we were shown the shrine of St. Engelbert - The shrine is a little sort of miniature Cathedral, about 8 feet long, 1 broad, & from 1 to 1 1/2 high. It is of silver, gilt in parts, & part silver, & there are some beautiful chasings

& little figures upon it. It is said to contain the bones of the saint. There were also there some very handsome monstrances. The vessel in which the host is elevated & displayed. There was one beautiful one presented by the present pope, of most graceful design, & of gold & silver, with beautiful pearls tipping the ends of the crucifix on the top. There was one of pure gold, & one very ancient one covered with the most superb jewels - Topaz, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, &c. There were many other parts of the church furniture - very rich & splendid. But what interested me much, were the old sword with its richly chased & enamelled case, borne an olden time by the archbishop on the coronation of the Emperors of Germany. A very ancient bishop's crozier, & the jewelled crucifix also borne in the ancient ceremonies. The treasures having been again restored to their cases, & locked in all sorts of queer mysterious cupboards in the walls of the old room, we were again ushered into the cathedral, & into a chapel behind the high altar in the choir, where is the shrine. The man unlocked the heavy iron doors, & pulling out a match lighted 4 gas lights in the corners, & so displayed the large shrine almost filling the little chapel. I believe it is of gold. It is about 4 feet long, 2 broad, & $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 high, covered over with jewels, cameos, paintings in enamel, figures, 5 inches high at least, of the apostles stand in niches on the sides. There was one topaz certainly 4 inches by 3. He took down a sort of dorr at one end, fastened by a precious stone, & showed behind a grating the three skulls, ranged in a row, & crowned with crowns of gold & diamonds, & in front of each was its name in rubies on the grating. The shrine was said to be immensely valuable, worth over two millions of dollars before the French overran Germany. Then as they appropriated & carried off everything movable, & destroyed what was not portable, the guardians of the shrine fled with it to some safer place, many of the jewels were sold to support its keepers, others lost, & the places are supplied by imitations, & by silver gilt. It is still however the scene of great treasure, & some of the cameos are very valuable antiques. But I came to the conclusion that one must know the value of precious stones to know that they are rich. The effect is never so fine as one imagines; the gold is dull & tarnished, & many of the stones being recent do not show their splendour. Between the altar & the shrine, under a stone in the pavement is buried the heart of Mary of Trudecis. And there are some interesting old fonts & monuments in the side chapels; especially of the early bishops who first helped to build the cathedral. And one very ancient fine old painting before painting in oils was invented. The rector, in a crimson cloth gown bordered with black, unlocked the iron gate for us between the choir & nave, & we passed through the cathedral to go out, as the declining sun gave the most superb light to the painted windows; & with another admiring gaze on the noble pillars & lofty arches of the sides, we bade it good bye.

towns seldom above one story, & with very large windows - generally opening as casements in the middle, &ashes are uncommon - And such fine large glass! - In Germany on the contrary there are but few windows in a house, in the farmhouses particularly, & they ordinarily very small & deep set in the stone walls - Dr. Gray paid an unwitting compliment to Dutch cleanliness on being deposited in our room at Arnheim, by putting his head through one of the large panes of glass, supposing the window open! - We were up & off early in the morning for Amsterdam, which we reached by 10 o'clock -

London - Sep. 2nd -

Here we are back again, & I must hasten to finish for the mail this afternoon - I am in quite a hurry, for I am to go & pass the day with Aunt Lizzie - We reached London Wednesday afternoon, & I went that Ev. to see Aunt Lizzie, & was pained to find her quite poorly - She has been quite sick but is now recovering though still pale & feeble - Ella looked nicely, & Sarah has grown a great deal - Yesterday Ev. we saw Uncle Luke & he seems very well - He got down to Hereford Tuesday, & I must leave till I get there my account of Dutch cities; for with shopping, packing, seeing people, &c. I scarcely find time to sleep!

I received your letter, dear Sue, in Rotterdam, the one of Sep. 1st. & one from John - And yesterday from you again (the 2nd. Sep.) & from Lizzie, Charlie, & Lizzie Putnam - Many, many thanks for them all! - I am sorry my letters have not arrived more in time - I addressed 3 journal sheets to you from Geneva which were begun at Chamouny - Then 2 sheets to Lizzy were sent from Antwerp, containing an account of our visit to Chamouny; & 1 sheet again, addressed to Charles, was sent from Zurich continuing the journal to Geneva, Monday, Aug. 19th - Let me know what do not reach you, for I want to make up the missing sheets - I meant to have written you, dear Sue, a long & separate epistle - But my note is always better than my deed! - How pained I am to hear that dear grandfather is so feeble! My most aff. love to him -

And with love untroubled to you all -

Love your very aff. friend.

I am quite longing to be quiet in Hereford: and to get out of stirrups & carpet bags for awhile -



Gray, Jane Loring. 1850. "Gray, Jane Sept. 19, 1850 [to Loring]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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