

Pontrilas House Oct. 18th. 1850.

Dear Lizzie, My letter to Sue, which I sent yesterday, & which I did not even have time to read over, ended with the Archery day at Whitfield - The next day's plans were for Dr. Gray & Mrs. Bentham to return directly after breakfast to Pontrilas, & Mrs. Bentham & I were to have the carriage after lunch - So we all gathered round the pleasant breakfast-table, & then as Mr. Clive was going directly past Pontrilas, he took our gentlemen to leave them there. Dr. Gray had been expressing a very strong desire to see a hunt, & Mrs. Clive had promised him that when the regular hunts began in this county she would take him to see one - On reading her letters over after the gentlemen had gone, she found a note among them from Lady Gifford, saying that in making some appointment with Mrs. Clive, she would meet her the next day, as she was to drive Lord Gifford to the Court at the 10 mile stone - Mrs. Clive instantly said Dr. Gray must see it, & proposed that we should stay until the next day when she would drive us in the Chariot to see the meet at the 10 mile stone - She was so heartily earnest that we could not but agree, & so it was arranged that a messenger should be despatched after lunch to the gentlemen telling them they must return to dine, & could join Mrs. Clive who was to return at dusk from some country meeting bringing with him two gentlemen - one of whom had joined us at breakfast in the morning - Mr. & Miss Threnewasser took their leave, Mrs. Clive went to attend to her children, & we had the morning to amuse & occupy ourselves as we pleased - I went to my chamber & busied myself in writing & in reading an amusing book I found there, & came down stairs before two to be ready for lunch - The ladies met again at lunch, (cold & hot meat, vegetables, pudding & tart, for it was the children's dinner, & we were not expected to go through the courses, but choose) Then Mrs. Clive asked whether we would prefer a drive or a walk. We preferred a walk, & Mrs. Clive said she would go on her pony, & the children begged to accompany us - We went through the edge of the wood bordering the park, keeping at first the gravel-walk. You must know a park is not a lawn all kept close shaven & swept like the lawn round the house - That looks always smooth & neat like a carpet - And if you get up early enough in the morning you will see old women sweeping the grass & gathering the dead leaves from under the trees - That extends only for a certain distance round the house & is generally divided from the park by a sunken fence or a wire one - The park is kept to a certain extent cleared, but in many parts they let underbrush & fern grow; & cattle, sheep, horses & deer graze there. In truth it is a sort of civilized pasture - There were no deer at Whitfield - But to get back

Monday Morning about 12 o'clock the gate bell rang, & in came Mrs. Olive presently, driving a pony chair & the two children with her. She said she had come to take us to see Kentchurch, Col. Scudamore's place - Mrs. Scudamore is Mrs. Bentham's sister - So lunch was ordered as soon as possible, & before we were through Mr. & Mrs. Foulke, & some ladies staying with them, arrived, to propose to drive us to Kilslesh - A curious old church - He had to decline for that day, & after they had gone, Mrs. Bentham & Mailey & Mrs. Olive driving, took our seats in the pony chair - A groom had led Mrs. Olive's pony, that she ^{might} ride while we walked in the park, & little Alice was mounted on that - I wish you could know what a charming little thing a pony chair is! - It is a little, very light & very low sort of four wheeled chair without a top, & with a little seat behind, which can be shut down if not wanted, thus holding four people; & a pony seems to be a breed of horse peculiar to England - Very much smaller than a horse yet larger than a Shetland pony, & wonderfully strong for the size - A grey pony, which Mailey rides, drew us all with the greatest ease, trotting along most briskly - Alice, followed by the groom, came cantering behind, & when almost there, when she got a chance to speak to her mother, cried out "Mamma, I don't like Mamma as well as Sue; she leads so with the wrong foot!" "But you mustn't let her, Ally! Check her in & make her start again!" - It sounded so queerly to hear that little creature hint that a horse could lead with a wrong foot cantering! - The ride was very charming, such sweet views of wooded hills, & green meadows, & snug cottages. - But something about the place where we were going - The Scudamores are an old Welch family, tracing their descent even from Owen Glenllawer in the time of Henry II. - And the old tower, which is part of the house, was said to have been built in his time - Col. Scudamore owns a great estate here, including many farms for some miles - He owns the tithes house, & Mrs. Bentham rents it - Kentchurch is the name of his residence, also giving the name to the little hamlet & church at the park gates - They are generally in the country at this season; but in August last they went to Boulogne, Mrs. Scudamore being just recovering from a severe illness - The first night they were there Col. Scudamore walking on the pier after dark, by some misstep or accident fell from the pier upon the stone steps below, some 20 or 30 feet, breaking the bone of one leg, & shattering the knee pan of the other - It was a wonder he escaped with his life; & happily the tide was only a foot in, or he would have been drowned - He is now lying at Boulogne, though every week brings accounts of his continued improvement, & they hope he may be able to move to London or Paris by the end of November - Miss Scudamore is the only daughter ^{& child} & a great heiress - We were not able to enter by the great gate & avenue, for in the absence of the family it is kept locked, so we drove by the back entrance through pretty fields & park to the stables, which were in an old courtyard with great arched stone gates, looking like the old strong entrance to the tower in warlike days; & so I could not help fancying the gates might have been built for that, though perhaps it was all my imagination - Dr. Gray & Mrs. Bentham met us as we rode up, they having left before we did & walked it being about 2 1/2 miles - We all descended, & Mrs. Olive mounted her pony & we sallied out to explore the park -

just round the house is smooth, shaven green, & by a dumb fence surrounded
 by a wire one it is separated from the park, a large extent of ground, stretching
 a long way up the hill, looking fresh & green, & occasionally fine large trees,
 & then clumps, & on the summit quite wooded - We spent a long time
 walking over a part - It grows very wild in some places, & is beautifully broken
 into hills & dale - And as we gained some little hill, beautiful views were be-
 fore us, (the hamlet & ^{church} ~~village~~ of Kentchurch below, more distant the spire of
 the church at Fossfont, & the ruins of Fossfont castle; & some fine high
 hills, some lying in long ranges, others rising in one sharp, bold outline, the Skyrin
 & the Sugar-loaf, (for everything, & place, & point, & ~~wood~~, & lane, & farmhouse, have
 a name here,) made a fine back ground - The park was full of deer, & we
 saw the graceful, pretty creatures running about, & started them from repose in
 all directions - There were some fine old trees, a remarkable pollard oak, which
 looked as if it might number 5 or 600 years, & grew with great trunks, which
 Dr. Gray could only reach round with four stretches - There were also sheep
 & cattle grazing, for Col. Scudamore takes great interest in farming - And buys ex-
 tensively cattle which are fattened & then sold again - They say the home farm
 is well worth seeing, with its great stables & barn yards, &c. And I hoped to have
 seen it, dear papa, & have edified you with my remarks; but we had only time
 to go to the house - The front of the house & the greater part used is modern, within
 in some 50 years, & is of handsome face stone, fronting a terrace & smooth
 shaven grass-plat - The east side joins the old tower, & is beautifully covered & cur-
 tained with ivy & very picturesque - It looks out on one of those lovely gardens cut
 in the smooth green turf - Each prettily shaped bed filled with some one gay
 flower, prettily contrasting with its neighbour - A sort of high picturesque mound
 was made of old stumps, filled with earth heaped up together, & planted with
 all sorts of things, for in this nice moist climate things grow so easily - One side of
 a broad terrace walk, with stone steps & pillars at each end, was lined with fine
 hybrid roses in full flower, & the other side was a sort of shrubbery with laurestians,
 barbetas & sundry pretty things, which won't stand ^{out} with us - I begin to think Eng-
 land the climate for gardening, you see so many pretty things - Such lovely shrubs,
 the Laurels, the beautiful green polished holly with its bright red berries, the
 graceful arbutus, &c. &c. & in every cottage garden are these pretty China roses, still
 very pink with flowers even now, & have been all summer - The garden at Kent-
 church was prettily surrounded with trees & shrubbery, & that side of the house
 was one of the prettiest things I ever saw - They had sent down from the house
 to unlock the gates for us, so we drove down through the Avenue - Little Alice follow-
 ing at a jockey trot & rising in her stirrups quite perfectly - She passed us to have
 a good center down the long avenue, which is finely shaded on one side with large elms,
 & it was indeed wonderful to see the little creature sit her horse - And let me tell you
 again she is not 7 until the end of this month - It was quite dusk by the time
 we got home again, but we had had a very pleasant excursion -

Thursday. Oct. 24th -

Yesterday morn'g brought me again the lucky mail from home - From Sue, from Lizzie, John, & from Joe - Many, many thanks! - I was so prieved though, to hear of dear little Charlie's illness - Thank God! You could write me he was better! - And dear, dear grand father, how I wish I could look on his face once more! - It seems to me that sometimes I can scarcely wait for next August to be among you all once more! Oh only to find you the same! - Dear Sue, I wish I could hear that you were joining! It seems hard sometimes, that health is coming back to me, & you still doomed to feebleness & suffering. - How all the faces I last looked upon rise up before me! Little Charlie crying so bitterly in the window as the carriage drove away, thinking that we were all deserting him - Little Pat smiling so blandly in the street below - Sue's pale face, in that pink bonnet, at the carriage window, & Patrick's earnest, determined by cheerful look to the last - Will's kind smile & Charlie's big eyes with their deep gaze, & their figures standing in the bales & waving their hats - I was blinded my eyes then, & tears rise now when I think of it - And how I am surrounded by mementos of you all! - Father's trunk stands comfortably before me whenever I enter my chamber, Mother's admirable little writing box is one of my most constant companions, Lizzie's bag is swelled out of all peaceful proportions, it so blithely holds every odd thing. I never dress myself that I do not thank Sue's kind stitches; when I look through my spectacles I look through your eyes, Charlie; I remember Patrick when I sold Dr. Gray's ointment to tuck them into an odd corner, & that last Monday morn'g. is always associated with Will's kind patience - Even the children with the peaceful little wafer, & knitting sheath! - You cannot think more of me than I do of you all! - And I long, long sometimes to be at home again - Though I enjoy so much, & am happy, & sitting pleasant recollections for life. - Dear Lizzie, how annoying that robbery at your mother's must have been - Pray tell her how sorry I am for her! - Do you know I was so wicked as to be disappointed that John had bought at Gutter - I had hoped he would have built at Cambridge & I should have the neighbour - I think Patrick must buy that lot opposite the garden-house & build there - Oh how very nice it would be! As for Jimmy Lind I am quite vexed people are making such fools of themselves! - There are really other things to be admired in this world besides a fine voice, & success is not the only good thing under the sun - And one might receive a public character, without mortifying her life out, or disgusting her & the rest of the world with exaggerated praise & flattery & attentions! - I wonder the clergymen don't preach from the 2nd Commandment - "Thou shalt not make any idol unto thyself" - I should like to hear her as well as anyone, & should like to pay her any civil or respectable attention - But the Americans seemed determined to outvie each other in folly, if one may judge from the papers. You say nothing of any of my letters - You are all wonderfully patient & good if you have received none - But pray tell me when they do come, for truly I have written faithfully - I should think Louisa Norton's engagement a very nice one - As for Fanny Brewin's pray congratulate Uncle Gray & Aunt Sally on their new Aunt - Susan exclaims at Mr. Francis being at a concert - Why? -

Pray give most affectionate warm love to all from your loving, Jeanie -

If you send the children's daguerrestypes pray send them by private hand, & ask the bearer to put them in his pocket when landing to avoid the duty - Dr. Booth 24 Upper Gower St., London, or Mr. F. B. Ward, Clapham Rise, near London would take charge of it for me -



Gray, Jane Loring. 1850. "Gray, Jane Oct. 18, 1850 [to Loring]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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