

Portraits House - Nov. 3rd 1850 -

Dear Sue, How fast the weeks fly round, here it is Sunday again, & October is gone & November begun - I hope before November ends we shall be quietly settled in London - Tuesday we ^{shall} have been here 5 weeks! - And as just at this time Mrs. Bentham is expecting other friends to visit her, I am sure we are in the way - And though Dr. Gray is happy & contented at work, I sort of think it would be convenient if I could disappear, for a gentleman could be stowed away anywhere, & a lady takes so much room! We propose to go to Dublin on our way back to London, & I hope to announce soon that we depart in a fortnight from tomorrow - Don't suppose that they are not all that is kind here, or ever let us suppose that we are in the way; but it is very different to me, than if it were a visit of love & affection - And I always have the feeling that I don't wear well, I know I grow stupid & dull - Pretty nonsense to begin one's journal with! - But the weeks may fly as fast as they please, that bring me nearer you all again - Don't you think I need a desk? - My portfolio is so full that my paper gets badly tumbled & shabby - I ought to have got one in London - and shall as soon as I go back -

After I had finished my letters on Thursday, there was quite an excitement - A poacher was brought to Mr. Bentham to be tried, as he is a magistrate - He was obliged to send for another magistrate, & one could not come that afternoon, so they were obliged to postpone it until the next morning, & meantime the man, though hand cuffed, managed to escape from the constable, so there was no trial after all - Friday afternoon, as Mrs. Bentham & I were just on the way for a walk, we met Mr. Fowle coming to see if we would walk to Howstone, a little church about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles off - So we turned our steps, through about as muddy a lane as one could well imagine - But we plodded on, holding up our spectacles dauntlessly - The church was charmingly situated at the foot of a hill, & yet on a little elevation, commanding a charming view in front, of hills & valley, wood & field - There was a church yard round it & many fine old yew trees - And just in front of the porch there rose a sort of pyramid in steps, & in a hole in the centre stone or step, was the mark where the ^{top of the large stone} cross used to be - It seems it was the custom in old times to have a cross thus elevated on a ^{by all church yards} pedestal, a sweet custom which I think it a pity has passed by - The remains are not common now, but this was very conspicuous - This church had again the old round arch, & such quaint carvings on the door way! It was dedicated when built to St. Peter, & crests are carved round the capitals of the pillars, with wings & tails queerly interlaced with

tinacy, & over the door is a most singular carving of our Saviour seated in a circle, miserably covered with white wash! - The door was so heavy of thick work & studded with nails! - The interior was not so striking as this, but, a little singular, there are some of the same figures as there, only half the size, & seemingly a present figure of the apostle Peter, as it holds the keys. On each side they see just heads down - there was a most odd candleabra - A sort of iron crane, with the joints (you see in) Catholic churches to put candles in, & looks more alternate with flam de la - The church has shared the common fate of white wash - A large stone post was quite covered with it, but Mrs. Stule & I thought we hid round. Some traces of carving, & he said he would come some day with a knife & say it. When it had cracked away in one place, it showed that ^{from the wall} whole interior of the church had probably been painted once in dark green. - He saw in the top of the tower was a clock after the same fashion as there in the candleabra - The canal runs across the fields, & one saw the necessity of these foot paths; for the lanes deep in between the hedges, scarcely an dry old water, but in the fields it was nice pleasant walking, & the air was fresh & ^{pleasant}. Saturday Mrs. Bentham had a letter from her brother saying he would come next Friday. - The story is quite a little romance. - It seems Mr. Bayford Bayford has been greatly in the habit of visiting Canada, & at one time took a sort of lease of a house there, & passed months there at a time - his nearest neighbour was a retired naval officer, Captain Montfort, who had a large family of four children, the eldest a little girl - Young Mr. Bayford obtained in England the house burned down, quite to his sister's satisfaction, who feared he would settle in Canada - As his children grew up, Captain Montfort moved to Ram in Lake Huron, rather more of a town, & during a visit of Mr. Bayford some two years ago, Sept. '36. did very suddenly, leaving his family in very retrograde circumstances. Mr. Bayford had always talked a great deal of their young girl, & there was supposed to be some attachment - but once it was thought all was broken off. - But the last day of last August he set sail for America, landed in New York, procured F. & Co. & Co. & Co. to Ram, was married, set off for Boston, & sailed from there the 18th of October, having been absent less than two months when he married abroad - They went at once to his place, Rockville, in Rockville, in Wales - If ever there is a great excitement, & curiosity to see Lady Bayford, what sort of a person she may be, brought up in such a sort of the way part of the world - And as it now she may suppose placed so suddenly at the head of an establishment & settled there - This is the story as I have gathered from the thing Mrs. & Mrs. Bentham say at times.

Thursday Nov. 7th -

Sunday morning brought me a letter from John Swell, on the eve of his sailing, from Liverpool - I was just beginning to start him early for his journey, pray thank him if occasion offers, & say I will answer it shortly - He went to church in the morning at Long's hall, & Dr. Jones being a little indisposed to face such a quiet home, we staid at home when Mrs. & Mrs. B. took their afternoon walk - What do you think tomorrow? - Well, I never had such a thing before, & I am sure was never so dependent on believing my feet from cold & damp as I have been since in England - But my feet swell so I can scarcely fit my shoes on sometimes, & one may be sure it does not add to the pain & ease of my motions, & my nothing of the burning & itching & aching - I bathe them in cold water & rub them with spirits of turpentine - And at times they are so much that Monday noon was rainy & threatening, & I made up my mind for a stormy day, for the wind blew & heavy clouds drove over the city. But the climate so far was so good of driving - By noon it was clear & bright, & though when Mrs. Bentham & I walked after lunch to see at the carriage (found it very strong) dark clouds came up, there was no rain - Monday morning I got such a nice lively letter from Mr. Bentham - such a funny story as he told about a little piece of his sister's family are, at home, & such & they told at times "mother's meeting" as they are called, when the reading is supposed to be especially adapted for the young people - but I'll write him - Well, her mama took little Lady to the "French mission" - all right - But on the course of the day yesterday her saying to one of the other children - "Well - all I heard at the mission was - damnation - my dear friends - the apostle Paul" - so, there was not much room to put in their text! -

Tuesday I made myself exceedingly busy, & I have been for several days, lately, in tracing some plates (drawings of plants) for Dr. Jones. I do not little work I receive from - Mrs. Bentham has read, & she is so from home - "Ship William" & her sister "by" - "The last trumpet" - I should of you see - How much fun & but there is no time - Saturday was the 6th of November, when as Dr. Jones says,

"Last night the day, I tell it with great sorrow,

When we were all to have been blown up tomorrow -

So according to Mrs. Bentham,

"Remember remember, the 5th of November,

And I see not on reason ^{for fear's} plot -

That gunpowder treason ^{has} should be the plot -

There seems to be a great deal of excitement in England just now about the act of the Pope in appointing Roman Catholic bishops, & the "Guys" were particularly numerous & good this year in London - I should like to have been there to see them - And I should like to be there on Saturday the 9th, which is Lord May's day - The day show must be worth seeing - They say even in this quiet place, they got up a bonfire on the common, a large bare hill unenclosed over the village - But I did not see it - Mr. Kentham reported a bonfire on the prai, a high hill seen from the back of the house - But he thought it only the "burning forge," which we have seen several times lately - Mr. Kentham & I mixed up the evenings with a game at back gammon occasionally, in which I shone with my usual brilliancy in being beaten -

Wednesday morn'g. At breakfast came my weekly budget - It is an awkward time to get letters, & the consequence is I almost lose my breakfast once a week - such a quantity as came! From Sue & Patrick, from Lizzie & Wm., from Charlie, & from Sue Phier! - You say I am probably surfeited with letters, well, no danger! try me - I am sure I could ever cry more, more - And I do enjoy them - I wish, dear Sue, I could hear that you were better - You are always patient - But I rejoice in my strength that I may fill somewhat again my old place to you, when I get back - Can come in to see you, can do your errands for you, &c. Pray say & kiss the children for me - My most ^{warm} antihorseas, I congratulate you! What an honor to see me of the female portion of the family in print! I have the papers for me by all means, Lizzie! But do you know you & Wm. actually filled a sheet & never said one word about Kittie! - I'll turn my back on them, Kittie! - I must shake hands with you, Charlie, on resigning your post, & I hope after those "two closets" are arranged, it may be a long time before you have anything to do with house keeping again - I think you have had quite your share of that trouble of life - And you are very much mistaken, young man, if you think your sisters don't appreciate your quiet & patient faithfulness in that sphere - Thank you, well, for your nice hints about politics, & Dr. Jay thanks you for them - I am sure he would have messages to send, would I ever point that sanctum on such an unimportant errand - And, Patrick, I engage you to write me about the children - I quite picture the parlor in my mind now, & particularly admire the new grate - I am quite out of conceit with most of the grates at home, after seeing the pretty ones here -

I am going to close with only a message! I shut today, for Mrs. B. & I are going to lunch with Mrs. Frode & visit the school, & I have promised to shorten my epistles accordingly - We have agreed to be on Dublin on fortnight from Saturday - leave here a fortnight from today, probably just as you receive this - Most truly yours.

Don't the letter Lizzie acknowledges from London, the first from Patrick? It should have reached you when you wrote -



Gray, Jane Loring. 1850. "Gray, Jane Nov. 3, 1850 [to Loring]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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