

Pontillas House. Nov. 10th. 1852 - & 14/11 -

Dear Lizzie, To continue a plain story very abruptly, I should say that on Wednesday I wrote Dr. Harvey, saying (Would we) be in Dublin Saturday Evg. Nov. 23rd. Is that Dr. Gray could attend the Academy meeting on the 25th - Is that the time is fixed for leaving Pontillas, if Dr. Gray can possibly achieve it - Mrs. Bentham & I had a nice walk up the Spite House Lane to meet Mr. Bentham, who had gone after lunch to Kentchurch on some business there. It was wonderfully soft & mild; & though the leaves have fallen <sup>very much</sup> ~~scarcely~~ the last few days, still the landscape was lovely. The fields have grown browner than I supposed they would; I thought they would be green all winter; some are still perfectly fresh & green - But I wish I could tell you how pretty the hedge rows are: the sweet briar & roses are covered with bright red hips, & interspersed in the charming holly, so green, so polished, & bright shining through the scarlet red berries! It is quite my admiration! Every now & then one finds a honey-suckle creeping along, & can get a late sweet blossom - Indeed one must see these wild, straggling, tangled hedge rows to know how pretty they are. When we came back Mrs. Bentham got a bunch of roses & violets from the garden - And it the 6th of November! - Mrs. & Mrs. Frole dined with us, & were sociable & pleasant as ever - One would get a very false impression of the English, if one judged <sup>them</sup> from their manners in travelling, or on being first introduced - In travelling I must confess, it is generally positively disagreeable to meet them - There is a supercilious stare, a pray-sorry-business-have-you-here manner, that offends one at once, though on speaking you often find it gone - Then too they expect to find everything conforming to English manners, & all is bad & wrong & objectionable which differs from their standard, which they often insist on carrying through, no matter to what inconvenience to those around them - And when you are first introduced or meet them, there is a shy sort of coldness, & mauvaise honte, & distance, which is very freezing, but once break through that, & they are very cordial & kind & agreeable, & you like them exceedingly -

Thursday morn'g. was passed as usual in writing, & as I said we intended, at the close of my last letter, Mrs. Bentham & I struck off across the field to lunch with Mr. & Mrs. Frole - On our way we met two boys on their way to school - Mrs. B. asked them where they came from, & they answered "Up there from Paradise!" - I must say they did not look much like cherubs in their smock frocks & clumping shoes - But Paradise is an earthly residence on the hill near by in the shape of a farmhouse - After lunch we went with Mr. & Mrs. Frole to visit the school - It is a very



Stone. Miss. close to the church, & was in old times the little vicarage - But a wing has been added, & it enables a nice school-house for the boys & girls, giving a part for the school-master & his wife & his wife in - I was surprised to see the master & mistress so young. I am sure neither could be over 20. The best place in the house being learning the School for next Sunday, & the girls in a smaller room adjoining sewing, knitting & mending. There were also, apart from my family & as old as the mistress, & <sup>there</sup> were some very pretty bright-eyed little things - but looked at the work, & one little thing quite excited my admiration. It is a long stocking she had just knitted. It looked at the top like, criticised the knitting, &c. &c. <sup>She</sup> played the lady patroness because for - It seems to be the custom for any lady residing on an estate, to look some dress up after the village school in her neighborhood. - But I could not but think them different. This "intruding the scholars" was from anything said us - Afterwards we laid out to ship for some others, for I have been exercising my faculty in examining a little, in Mrs Bentham's school, for Lady's Maids have not much taste in such matters. - Then we went up to Little Down, where the old castle of Orap baron, overlooking the village, formerly stood. Impressively there are no remains left, the last vestiges having been taken. It built cottages with: But even a lovely site & such pretty views, & the little stream cascading the base & to come back over the fields & under the trees.

Friday we all lunch with us, & there was quite a state of excitement in preparing the table - Mrs Bentham was sweet & tranquil as ever, though I doubt she that there was a little under current of agitation. - She & Walter sat down in the terrace together. I wish I could tell you how sweet & pleasant she is. One cannot help loving her dearly. - Secretly Mr Gray joined us, as it was dark, & I proposed that he & I should take a longer walk, for I thought in a quiet way it would be as well for, about when Sir Harford arrived. - I then departed, & took a pleasant walk with the prettiest little Maids of a moon to shine over us. And we talked about plans for our Cambridge time. I want, if ever we can afford it, to put a wing in the west side of our parlour, swallowing up the two windows, & I think enlarging & improving the room very much. - I've built a castle in the air about it. - I think for we must have curtains or a black paper in that room, it is so dimly light & staring. - As we drove near the house we heard Mrs Bentham's clock peeping in the night - You never heard a clock so so deep. - And a grand, it was one laughing, wherever I hear it! - He peeped in at the back door to end the carriage there, & after a short stroll of again, came to the conclusion it would be safe to go. - Sir Harford joined me most cordially, & my first enquiry, in the strength of having known Mr Gray before, Lady Bingle was seated with almost her back to me, turned very true. (They had ridden 20 miles from Kendal's brother's) & was very quiet & shy. - But then, I think it was rather an ordinal. - And what might add to our trials, coming in a bride & killed. To be presented to our new relations from a far off sequestered place, the trunk containing her clothes was left behind,

as she landed in England with only her travelling dress - And had to have a white muslin made for a dinner dress in London, the last country town about a mile from Sir Harford's place - And you may imagine what an English country muslin may be; however it is more pleasant than one would suppose. - She seemed to be a nice little body, some very handsome things about her, but entirely wanting, at present, style & carriage. - However I suppose that will come in time, & when a good driver makes a musician get hold of her, she will be much improved. - He is about 21, & I am sure Sir Harford is so. - He is a little short man, & I wish looks in the face like Mr. Lacey, his voice is pitched very high, & he is a great talker. - But I don't think you would pick them out for Sir & my lady. - Saturday the Misses Crawford & brother called on their return from Wharfedale. - They had since the day before. - It is a real pleasure to hear Miss Crawford talk, she is so significant. - I should have said Mrs. Eliza had called some days before & asked Mr Gray to go to see Thursday at their house & visit Harford from there. - But Mr Gray had declined, as he was to busy. - He had a drive back to see another Church Saturday afternoon, Langue. - There are churches enough here - 7 within 1/2 miles & 13 within 5. - And all old, long, long before the English Reformation. - Sunday we all went to church in the afternoon. - Monday Mrs Bentham expected.

Oh - Oh - Oh - There comes Mrs. Eliza to take us to a ploughing match & I must close thus shabbily!

Adieu  
J. Gray



Gray, Jane Loring. 1850. "Gray, Jane Nov. 10, 1850 [to Loring]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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