

Nov. 16 or 17 - 19th - 1850
 Bentleys House

Dear Charlie,

It seems to come each one's turn to be occasionally
 cut with a short letter - But one cannot control events - Tell how-
 ever that fancy Mrs. Jackson, that I do not think the comparison be-
 tween the stocking-basket & journal holds at all - In the first place the
 stocking-basket is a thing of the past - Then if she were here she would
 find ^{so} much writing & so many things to do hard to accomplish - If she were to
 look at my letter-book she would see that I have not been idle; & then there
 is sewing to fill odd moments which one can't carry down stairs; walking
 takes a good deal of time, now that it is dark soon after four; And then
 it is cold work writing in one's room, & the fire is only lighted there shortly
 before dressing-time; it is not agreeable, nor does it seem to me quite sociable
 & civil to be writing much down stairs, & not particularly so taking a long
 time every day up - Besides we read aloud in the morning, I have sundry
 sketches often for others, & occasionally a drawing to trace from some of Mrs.
 Bentham's botanical plates for Dr. Gray - We count up sometime the
 number of sheets of journal, & the letters & notes I have written from Pen-
 tildas - And then prick her to the heart!

But I left my journal very abruptly, saying (like Mrs. Bentham ex-
 pected - viz. Mr. Harcourt & Lady Frances Harcourt - a daughter of the late
 & sister of the present Earl of Bedford - or Lord Bedford, as they always call it.
 And now be enlightened, oh ignorant Americans! & know that when the
 daughter of a peer or Lady, she keeps it when she is married - though the
 husband has no bit of a title at all - He is still plain Mr. or Capt. but she
 doesn't become Mrs. but puts the Lady Ann or Lady Fanny on to his name -
 as Earl Somers daughter is Lady Harriet ^{of Mr. Grey's house} ~~Grey~~ (euphonious that!) where
 as a baronet's wife or a knight, who has a Sir, is Lady with his last name,
 as Lady Bydges, Lady Hooker. - Mr. Harcourt is son of the late Archbishop
 of York & of old family, but is a rather bluff, rather red-faced, not very stout,
 oldish gentleman, choked in monstrous cravat - He is not much of a
 talker, but has travelled a great deal, & when he does speak is sensible
 & agreeable - Though his style is rather jerky - Lady Frances is best described
 as fat, fair & forty - Quite handsome, with a charming smile, so full of mean-
 ing & good nature - As Mrs. Bentham says of her "she looks very happy herself,
 & glad to make others so" - She had a little of the English stiffness at first,
 but it truly pleasant when you get over that - She is always busy sewing or
 drawing &c. & indeed the English ladies generally are, some fancy work or some-
 thing seems always at hand to take up in the evening, or when sitting down -
 We had a very pleasant dinner Monday, for Mr. & Mrs. Bentham & the

Harlequins have travelled so much in Germany & Russia, & Turkey & Italy, that there were many new & interesting things to hear - Mrs. W. B. posted from Petersburg 6 weeks ago, & gave us various things painted & written in Vienna, in Florence, &c. &c. They have travelled a great deal in Europe & I am trying to persuade them to turn their faces westward.... Under the rose, I would say, that I got hold of Lady Weymouth by a little manoeuvring, & civilized a little the trimmings of the Vestine maidens - So I thought it a shame the bride should appear in such garb, & she had had no chance to get London as yet & get clothed - And between you & I English ladies have not much skill in contriving trimmings - You should try, for the maid or the suitor is to pretty much all - I have come to the conclusion that a maid is an expensive luxury, to judge from the amount of calico the maid said it would take to make a wedding from this ruin for Mrs. Bentham - And if I had ^{in mind} ^{it} would certainly trim my case myself. But a good maid makes her lady's dress, gets up her nice smelling, makes her caps, & trims her bonnets, sews her plain work, & always dressing her hair, &c. & putting out what she is to wear, & looking away what is taken off - I should have said before that Sir Harford departed in the morning for Boulogne to pay a short visit to General Anson, & meantime Lady Weymouth occupies the single room & leave the large room & dressing-room for the Harlequins - I suppose money was paid on every side, there being so many ladies so scattered, more than usual. After lunch Lady Fanny said her carriage was at door this service, & it was proposed we should drive to Kentchurch - The carriage would only hold three, so Mrs. Bentham proposed as we were the walker, that one should walk there & the other back - I & Fanny agreed to walk there with the gentlemen - Mr. Gray thought he could not spare all the afternoon, so I discreetly & quickly accompanied the gentlemen, so as I am practicing control over my tongue, scarcely ventured a remark, & only listened to their conversation, which turned some-what on building cottages for the laborers &c. It seems Mr. Clive is doing a great deal in that way - One likes to know what they hear about him - He seems to be such a good hand to be. They spoke kindly of the laborers, & got it sounded strongly the sort of quiet way in which they talked of them as beneath, I expected ought to be treated; in truth what I think struck me most is the general want of feeling that the town classes stand on the same broad platform of morality & humanity - I can't exactly say what is the feeling, but it is disagreeable to me - And I sometimes feel how often all we stand all alike as Christians, & how the first shall be last & the last first - They cannot understand ^{us}, & when I speak of anyone rising to fill the first place from any place, they say "oh, so it is he!" & bring forward instances -

But here they are exceptions with us the rule - Now don't imagine, Sir, I deliver orations or pronounce lectures - I feel as if what I should say would not be understood; & then the day I saw the less inclined am I to plunge into battles for principles, partly I fear that I care less for them, partly that a great deal of enthusiasm is damped & gone, & partly that I have a more distinct notion of my own powers & capability - and fear that foolish words injure the good cause - So I listen & am still - But you meet some people, dreadful radicals others call them, who seem to feel quite differently - And I like the words because he feels more as we do at home - But of course this feeling is perfectly natural in people born & brought up as they are - Their caste is acknowledged by all -

Kentchurch looked finely but not so well as when we were there before - the leaves had fallen very much - We went into the lower rooms this time - There are fine suites of apartments, & very handsome saloons & entrance, the entrance we floored with stone & raked, the rest of oak - The rooms of course looked bare & desolate, for the carpets were up & the covers of the furniture, & every thing simplified up - I should like to see them when the family are there - They hope to return about the 1st of December - It seems to me a wonderfully speedy recovery. St. Buda more can get about already in another with the help of his servant & it is only three months since one leg was broken & the bone of the other shattered - The great quantities of bloody ointment in the beds, & some most superb incense, almost as large as a poppy, red & blue & cream - Mrs. Bentham walked back, & I took her place in the carriage - Lady Fanny was very pleasant, & asked after Mr. Coult, whom she had heard dead once in Harford at some public meeting - she said he was much regretted in England - He had a pleasant voice & benign - Wednesday morn. At breakfast came as usual my package of letters - One from Mr. Bartol & a line from your Charlie - Thanks for Charlie for your passionate love about sandpiper - Dear, dear son of father! I am sure another week cannot bring me news of his being still living - It is very, very sad to receive sad news away from home to enough strangers - And I had so hoped when I left home to see him again! - But it would be a relief now to hear of his death, for I would not have been his sufferer - And I fear he did, from the last accounts - So thank Mr. Bartol very much for the letter from him, & say I will answer it soon - I was so very much gratified by receiving it - You must have had a fine autumn, & very much still at Dover at the end of October - Thank Patrick for kindly keeping the letters to send me the latest news - Pray give Anna Grace

kindest remembrances from me if she is still in Boston - Sue means to be quite a linguist, but I am glad of it - As many languages as one can have the better - Tell her to teach Pat & Charlie as much French as she can now - It will be good practice to talk it with them, & save trouble as they grow older when they come to study it - The children here are taught French very young, the mother often speaks it with them, and so when grown up they talk with great ease - And faults & blunders are more easily cured than a new language is acquired - As to the shingling at Cambridge, what is it? Nothing more than the back kitchen I suppose, for nothing else needed it - The initials which you liked so much, I see, they have just been reading here; & Mrs. Bentham says it is a capital picture of the manners in Munich & Germany -

Lady Fanny was so obliging as to promise to copy a drawing, which Mrs. Bentham has off Pontillas House, for me - Mrs. Bentham had told me she would get it copied for me, when I proposed making a lame attempt myself (it is such a nice picturesque old house) and Mrs. B. asked Lady Fanny, who draws very nicely, & she kindly agreed, & began Wednesday morn. before they left - They went at 12 - Meantime Mrs. Bentham had been advising Dr. Gray to stay a little longer, as there was still so much work to do, & so Dr. Gray thought, & was not very hard to persuade to postpone our departure for Dublin for a week, so I wrote to that effect to Dr. Harney - Then Dr. Gray & I went off to ^{lunch} ~~George~~ with the Fowles to meet a clergyman who had been in America, & was tutor for a while to Henry Clay's sons - He was very anxious to meet an American - Such a very of black coats as were there! Friends staying with them - The gentleman I particularly liked, an uncle of Mr. Fowles - Mrs. Fowle showed me some beautiful plaster medals of some of the more famous works of Thorwaldsen, Canova, Antiques &c. ^{sculptures} they call them - They were lovely - The party walked back, ^{to} Pontillas with us - Thursday morn. I wrote diligently, & was up in good time - The thought Mrs. Clive would come to take us to the ploughing match at 1, instead of which she appeared at 11, & we had to just fold our letters, & hurry on our bonnets & with the britschka - There were 5 of us, Mrs. Clive & a young nameless lady with her, Mrs. Bentham, Lady Grey & myself - It was a wonderfully easy carriage, & the fine sorrels drew us - We met at the field quite an equestrian troupe from Whitfield, Mr. Clive & Mr. Wicksted on horses, Mrs. Wicksted (Mrs. Clive's sister) ^(Capt. of Regt.) Lady Oxford, Maizey, Alice & a young daughter of Mrs. B.'s on ponies, & all but Lady Oxford's pony from Mr. Clive's stables - I saw ploughing with one two & three horses tandem(?) & 2 horses abreast (C.D. ploughing) & hedging - but cannot say I was as much edified as I wished, as I had no one to ask questions, though Mrs. Clive helped me through a hedge to see the hedging after we got out of the carriage, & partly explained it -

but I was afraid of being a bore -

Dear father & mother,

I last left my journal at the account of the ploughing match - I was in hopes, dear father, to have learnt something which should be amazingly edifying to you on English farming matters - But I cannot say that I have succeeded - In general matters stand upon such different grounds, that what does for one will not do for the other, & climate & cheap labour make the whole affair quite different - And then I have very little opportunity of learning - The ladies garden a good deal themselves & seem to understand it; but there again, their cool climate & cloudy sky is greatly to their advantage - As for cattle they are generally very good looking, but I am not very learned - I can only say that I scarcely saw a red cow between Liverpool & Dover, they were white or the Durham colour - whereas here it is quite an exception to see anything but a red cow with a white face - Mrs. Bentham has a nice little Alderney cow which supplies them with milk, cream & butter! She must be a good milker, for they must use a great deal of butter - Just now they say, as she is drying up - But then again it must be an easy matter to keep a cow here, where they can be pastured pretty much all the year! - They have a nice fashion of serving the butter at breakfast in little ^{stamped} pats about the size of a cent, & floating in water - But such delicious butter as one finds every where in England & on the Continent! I am afraid I shall despise the common productions of our market at home - It is generally quite fresh, & a salt collar is put upon the table for those who like more salt -

And as for the people who were present, I did not see much more of them - Nor did I much care - Lady Oxford's marrying such a man as Lord Oxford is quite enough in my opinion though people do not seem to think it strange here - Lord Oxford is a miserable man every way & intoricated they say half the time - He was a younger son & neglected in his youth & left to run about the streets of Rome - But the elder brother meeting with an accidental death he came into the Earldom - He is moreover in straitened circumstances - a not uncommon thing going with the title as far as I can judge -



Gray, Jane Loring. 1850. "Gray, Jane Nov. 16, 1850 [to Loring]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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