

Cumberland Place. New. Dec. 29th. '50

Dear Lizzie, I am afraid the journal will lose in interest now we are quietly "settled down in lodgings;" for though I mean & expect to be very industrious, to study French & German, write letters prodigiously, read some learned books, & have innumerable small pieces of sewing & get all these will not be so interesting to transcribe for your edification & amusement, as visits to country neighbours, or scenes in Dublin - "Howsoever," we will see! - The Hookers are very kind to us - Sir William has given Dr. Gray a key admitting him into the garden at all times, & when my spouse may be a little more active, I hope to enjoy it much. But I feel a little shy in getting about a strange place alone - Friday Evg. Lady Hooker sent us a duck, with a kind note. Saturday Morn. Miss Hooker called again; & after she was gone, came a bunch of flowers from her - And they asked us to dine there today, which we declined - Friday Evg. Dr. Gray had his turn for doing mischief - The mantel piece of our little sitting-room is ^{or was} adorned with sundry small specimens of crockery & china, little basins, & fetchers, little jars & tatter ones, shells, &c. quite a toy shop; I had looked at it with some trembling, knowing Dr. Gray's hasty movements; when, with a sudden ~~movement~~ ^{motion}, he made a great crash! Fortunately only a little basin was broken - But later in the evening poor went the inkstand, on to the new table-cloth! & I sacrificed a sponge to wiping it up - The next Morn. I begged our landlady to remove the breakables, & we are not half so ornamental, but much safer - Dr. Gray complained of having cold Friday night, & last Evg. was much troubled with his throat, & pain in the old place in his side - I dread all colds for him now, for after such an accident they are often serious, leading towards pleurisy - I think one or two sneezes hurt him - But we took prudential measures for a cold at once, & to-day he has kept warm in front of the fire & not been out all day, & is much better - We have had a very quiet day therefore - I had a short walk this afternoon - I wish you could see our little, cozy rooms, I am sure you would be amused! But our two old women take very good care of us, & things are so neat it is a pleasure -

Tuesday, Dec. 31st. 1850 -

We dined yesterday at the Hookers, & had a pleasant day - I was anxious to have Dr. Gray come home before dark on account of his cold - It seems heavier always at night, but is so much better that I think with care there will be nothing serious from it - I long to have him his old self again - But the slowest part of a recovery is after one gets about! -

10 clock - Is my great delight the American letters have just come! - How I was longing for them! - They are from Sue & Charles - And as she indirectly alludes to having written the Sunday before (this one is Sunday the 15th.) a story of how it is useful - I must write to Susan again, & see whether there is any mistake about it there - But why, Charles, when you & I've wrote the same week, don't you enclose her letters on the same cover & p.p. takes two substantial sheets, & will save the one of you a quarter of a cent! - I speak only for the benefit of your pockets - Tell me, if my letters do not come within the shipping stamp - How I laughed & laughed over dear little Ed's impulsive honesty! I think mother ought to have kept the quarter for his sake - I am really afraid its presence interfered with his enjoyment of the drama! Sure! - Whether Charles would be as much fascinated by Kitty, if she were a boy? - But many, many, thank, Charles, for your nice accounts of her. In truth I learn more from you than anyone else about her - & her mother seems to consider her a very meritorious subject - Much obliged for Lillian's kind recollection of me - I should like to see him again - As for turning out Mr. Brown because he opposes the Compromise, that is certainly no reason for every man has a right to his opinions - But I think history will prove him wrong, & the very concession & admission of the Southern prominent men, when they have been making ^{their last} ~~their last~~ ^{expressions} for their own show that the Compromise had the right - I think Austrian policy cannot be too much despised or cried out against - As for Mrs. Brown's nomination as Professor of History, I think it a very good question whether there might not have been a better & more judicious appointment - ^{but now that it is made, the all-wise feelings are atoned.} - It means pecuniary need of an office, & says little even for his choice - What a queer state you seem to be in in Boston, judging from the papers, letters, &c. & how I wish Americans could learn that 'right makes might' is not party spirit, or degradation, or violence, or ill-will - And that Expediency is the most short-sighted, the weakest, the most miserable of policies; it won't patching, & shuffling & turning all the time - How I long to see some one else up who can be cool & nice, & just, & true, & straight forward for the right & true at the same time - Now that we look on at a distance without feeling the excitement - influencing people, we so long for something pure & noble - I am quite ashamed often to

I have our friends see American papers - And such strange ideas as they have, & must needs have, of many things now going on! - Today is the last day of the year! What an eventful year it has been! Chequered with joy & sorrow, & bringing in its train many many changes - The last day of the year is always a sad day to me! - And I suppose you are all at home with preparations! Why didn't you tell me, like some of the little things you were doing? I wish to come early on these anniversary days - They go by so unmarked here - I did not see Ginas at all as I thought I should - Dr. Fay was feeble & could not go out except to Clapham, & I saw less Thomas lights than I expected - Except the butcher's shops filled with meat, & occasionally a bully (rough) stuck in, ^{the meat} the posthouses with their displays of turkeys, & the grocers with 'provisions' rather fresher & more abundant, everything looked as usual - There does not seem to be ^{so} much Christmas feeling as with us, & they say the games & peculiar sports are very little kept up - In truth I must confess I was very much disappointed - But perhaps I expected too much - And in truth am quite out of the way here. I suppose, if I knew what there may be to see - But I don't believe they keep ^{any more} ^{as much} as we do at home - But Henry Keble made the same complaint with us - Mrs. Southern wrote me a very pleasant account of many customs at Sales Christmas &c. Mr. Rogers has a great fancy for old customs as well as old furniture, & got up many old English customs - Had all the school children to dine, & then an enormous pile of, drawn by the boys with great exertion, into the large fire place of the diningroom, where it was burnt with great ceremony, cards being all the while - I wish I could have been there! - I believe I regretfully forgot to mention my old Christmas boy - Mrs. Ward gave me a very pretty card at last - Dr. Harvey with me Thomas day, that he had a cow & a myrtle in his bottom hole, pulled that morning in the open air! And there was nothing to surround them of winter, ^{Harvey} but the forenoon & solley - He was at his brother's place at Limerick - There it is milder even than in the East coast of Ireland -

I had a new bonnet come home the other evening - I wanted a handsome one, for after I am in London, I suppose I shall have calls to make; so I ordered an smart blk. velvet, (terry they call it here) & it is much worn in morning - It was to be very simple - And certainly there never was anything more English & right! I look as if I had on an Irish woman's night-cap, under a large, broad-mouthed coal scuttle! - I must send it back & see if it can't be improved - They dress very much more here in morning than they do with us - They make things one can only wear in black, but quite daisy & ornamental - Blk. lace flowers, blk. embroideries, &c &c -

I am very glad the Cologne letter has been found! - How naughty Aunt Mary is not to write to me! Not a line, & it will be 7 months we are gone when you get this - Almost half the time we are to be away!

New Year's day -

Happy, happy, New Year to you all! I fancy now, for as it is 10 here it must be five with you, you are all gathered round the table at father's, after the children have finished their meeting; & I am sure you cannot wish for my presence more heartily than I would be with you! - I have had a pleasant day, but I do not know when I remembered the day so little - I received & gave the New Year's wishes from Dr. Gray; & that is all, except that Lady Hooker drank them after dinner - for we dined there today - I went to church with Aer & Miss H. this morning at Northlake, their parish, & we came back through Richmond, quite a town - They dropped one here, & I drove up there this afternoon, as they dined late today - He had a very pleasant dinner & came home about 9 - Dr. Gray seems better this evening - Yesterday Ev. we came a note from Dr. Harrey enclosing last week's letters, which it seems had been quietly lying on his table all the time he was in Limerick - So I had a double feast yesterday, & nice New Year's presents they made - I must thank you, dear Lizzie, & Sue & darling little Charlie - Sue certainly is a most faithful correspondent - How I laughed over Charlie's bean ideal of a residence - I hope Sue has sent to see if it's all in the child's fancy or not - This time, Lizzie, you really write like a mother, & thank you for your nice account of Kittie; & thank you much for teaching the little darling my name, I long to see Aer! - I am so pleased, dear Lizzie, you have had ear-ache again! & give most sympathizing & affectionate love for me to Aunt Bancroft & Lizzie. How very, very glad I was to hear you had grandfather's pew!

Friday - Jan. 3rd -

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It is such a dark, dark day! This morning when I got up at 8 one could barely see to dress one's hair - And these dark days you really need candles to read or write by at 3 1/2! - And they say 'tis much worse in London than here (in the country more) - I am sure now I could not write the other side of our little room! - Charlie asks in his letter, "when did Dr. Harrey leave the country?" Why don't you remember before we sailed we had a letter from him announcing his arrival in Liverpool & wishing to know how I ^{should} like "Old Smoky," as he calls London - He left New York in the Atlantic on her first voyage. - So Boston is very gay this winter! I fancy you hear more music there & have a much gayer time than I do here, so near this great metropolis - But in Boston, 2 miles from London seems very little; here you find it quite far enough to put you out of the way of all London sights, &c. - But don't fancy I complain, for I like the chance to study & work - Only don't wonder if I see nothing - I must answer Luis little burst, comparing the lower classes of England & Germany with slaves - First one sees nothing of it travelling or living in the country; & granting it true in individual cases, they are not so bound (but that instances are constantly occurring, where those of commanding talent & ability rise & do rise to high station & influence; the slave never can - then it is a sad truth that the lower classes are dreadfully degraded in many parts of Europe - But wise & good men around them & nearest them are trying & striving all the time to ameliorate their condition, to improve them, to raise them. True it is a slow, sad work it can only be learnt, the best way, by slow, sad experience; there are many counteracting influences in the very frame work of society, & often one feels almost discouraged to see how much sin & wickedness & blindness & indifference there is in the world - But at home has the class which has the power yet begun to see or feel the evil in their midst, or to strive, wisely & patiently, gradually to remove it? - The very publishing these books, they are brought so strongly before the eyes of the upper classes in the journals & papers & reviews, to make them see & know; and I have been truly surprised to see in the London Times, the Englishman's paper, how boldly & daringly it often speaks on these subjects - To be sure there are many people who won't learn, & it is the slowest & hardest task that society can offer, to remove the prejudices of a community - But will the South allow the matter to be presented as an evil? Will even many good & enlightened people at the North allow it to be talked & written about as an evil? And last & chiefest, where is there any excuse, any reason for our doing or the world to shut our eyes to our sins, because society sins elsewhere?

He we looked upon as a great experiment, many would also take a lesson from our example - And I say let the nations cry out as they please against our sins, it should only do us good & help us on! Our enemies often tell us our faults more sincerely than our friends - And the better for the growth of the nations in all virtue, that their sins & errors be their reproach in the world - Away with the pride & the vanity which would have only our virtues seen!

Yesterday Morning Miss Hooker kindly took me to town with her, as she had a carriage to go in to make some calls - I carried the bonnet & displayed it to the miliner, in all its splendor, who could not but acknowledge it needed attention - It is to come back this eve. - I bought a pair of fur cuffs also - You & Sue will laugh, Lizzie, & I sometimes wish I had my Ooa as a victorine & cuffs - But these will keep me comfortable - And how I could have bought anything more in the room allotted me, I do not know - What do you think the charge was for Engraving a card plate? Half a crown = .62! 2 card plates & 4 packs ⁴⁰⁰ cards for 15 shillings = 3.75! - I left Miss Hooker to make the calls while I went to Regent St. - It was a neat little hired Brougham & the Hooker's footman accompanied to open the door &c. &c. Quite in style! He came back by Piccadilly & through Hyde Park by the "Crystal Palace" - Which is indeed a wonderful structure - And truly adds a good reason for coming to England next summer - You ask, Charlie, what I think of the Britannia bridges. After seeing them & this great glass structure for the Exhibition, I wonder man could have had the daring to plan such things, & then that they could have been accomplished! He is a wonderful bit of dust, this man! And London is a wonderful display of his powers - Great, great, great place! But give me dear, little Boston to live in! - I got back just to see Mr. Ward walking away - Had a fruitless race after him, & the mortification of seeing him put the toll-gate betwixt us without turning round, & miserable I in my hurry, had left my purse behind! - So he was forced to take the rail back to Clapham without having seen us -

I have a real old-fashioned cold in my head, of four half-power Kate Greenough would say - Dr. Gray seems better. Is in Sir Wm's herbarium all day - I have had a letter from Mrs. Bentham, & they are going to Boulogne to see her brother-in-law who is still unable to get away, & hoping the change may do Mrs. B. good - She writes one that she hears from Lady Rydges in good spirits & making a round of visits -

With dearest love to all, most affectionately Yours, Jane -
5 weeks today since Dr. G's fall!



Gray, Jane Loring. 1850. "Gray, Jane Dec. 29, 1850 [to Loring]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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