

New-March 4th '51

(1)

Dear Lizzie, I am afraid without meaning it, I told some traveller's stories in my last. But I didn't mean to, only I never can remember figures! Well, they say those wedges of gold in the Bank vaults were only 500 £'s each, & the bags in the treasury contained only 1,000 £ each. - So: I have amended my offences to the best of my abilities -

And now for the Queen's Menus - You enter through a little court-yard, with a handsome iron railing & gates, & porter's lodge on one side, & And porter consequential enough to be my Lord Mayor, & a flunky in long, light, drab ^{great} coat with gilt buttons & a gold band on his hat, ushers you through a large, handsome, arched gate way leading into a courtyard paved, & surrounded by grave looking buildings; you enter a door on one side, & see "Stable No. 1" & are handed over to a groom who bids you enter, & announces, "Prince Albert's riding 'orces." - These stables are not a common stable, dark & with rough walls - No, it is a long hall, the walls nicely plastered & colored, & lighted on one side by windows high up - The opposite side has recesses arched, & between each recess wooden partitions, dividing off the stalls, nicely painted - Each horse's name is painted on a label over the recess; & if the horse were out, his blanket & halter were neatly folded & laid aside - The recess holds the crib & manger - A wide walk was neatly paved with brick against the side next the windows, & the rest ^{the floor of the} stalls were covered with clean straw - The horses were fastened by halters running through a ring & a weight at the lower end - It is quite a palace for horses, you may well imagine! They were beautiful creatures many of them, & in such high keeping & beautiful order! - Many were singed, which seems to be a most funeral custom here for saddle horses - They tell me it is done by smearing prop-
thia over a horse & then lighting it - But I must say it sounds rather Baron Munchausen - I should think there were from 6 to 8 horses in the saddle horse ^{& how many stables I don't remember} stables. - Recently came ponies for the royal children - A pretty little creature the Prince of Wales rides, one larger for the Princess Royal, one in training for her still larger, &c - But my particular admiration was one which the hostler

introduced as a pueral favorite, & which he said always went with them wherever they went; it was a sort of Mouse Brand marked with white, & seemed very good-natured. - Then came the Queen's saddle horses, at the very least two stables full - And among them an old white one she used to ride as Princess. Then came carriage boxes of various sorts, & I noticed that in naming a pair as they stood side by side, the names began with the same letter; for instance, *Dancer* & *Dreamer*, &c. &c. Among the saddle horses was a Arab, a present from the Sultan of Muscat - It was a small horse & I did not especially admire it, for it was a light grey, almost white, & I have rather a prejudice against white horses; I like a handsome bay, or the beautiful brown they have here so much, it is neither cool or chearful, much better. - We saw some superb black ones - Some of the horses were very good natured & we could go into the stable & pat them; others again seemed to be watching a chance to give us a good kick, & we were warned to be careful & not go too near. - Some of the stables for carriage horses were larger & double, having stables running down each side; & of this fashion was the last stable we were ushered into, where were the cream-colored horses & the blacks for state occasions. The creams were beautiful creatures but the muddy color we sometimes see called cream at home, but with coats so soft & delicate they looked like a beautiful buff satin, & such superb manes & tails, long & silky, the mane of one was at least a foot long! And they had such peculiar eyes! But they seemed unusually docile & gentle, liking to be caressed like a kitten. - The horses struck me as very young, they pointed out blacks 1 pair, one & the other 5; & one beautiful creature they were just reaching me, only 3. How much I thought of you, father, & longed you were there! - You would enjoy seeing the beautiful creatures - One thing struck me, & that was the enormous harnesses, in the saddle-houses they considered. - Especially good - At least so it struck me - There were 12 cream-colored horses & I noticed that stable was lighted with gas - I did not notice the other - And a man sleeps in it every night - Then we

were taken round into another yard, where they were marked "Foxes", & seemed more like little common stables for any two horses - In one we were shown the Shottland ponies, four nice little creatures! I am sure the smallest was not larger than Jack, & they seemed as playful as dogs; & more than half mane & tail - Then we were taken to see the state harnesses, red morocco gilt for the creams, & black & gilt for the blacks; heavy, gaily things! Here were hanging the little, nice bridles for the ponies, & underneath them the ponies in which the young children sometimes "take their young exercise" - They are made like wicker low baskets with red cushions - We were not shown the Common carriages, only an ornamented great state, like those we met - But I was more charmed in that house with a darling little vehicle for the babies - A little four-wheeled chariot, perfect in every respect, & lined with dark blue terry velvet, & adapted to the smallest Shottland pony, I should think - I should like to have carried that off! - We wound up with the State Carriage used for Coronations, Opening Parliaments, & such like - It is all gilding & painting, but I must confess a clumsy piece of antiquity, & I pity the Queen when she has to ride in it, & wish that the front is one great piece of glass, that must be pleasant - But imagine such a carriage in shape as you see in pictures of some 100 years ago, large & heavy, III this rather sort of chariot body, the panels are painted in miniature with allegorical figures in landscapes, mountains, Neptune & his trident, the fine arts, &c. & this I thought the prettiest part, for some of the groups are very pretty; the rest is all carved, & gilt all over; great wheels, helmet-like, as trophies on the corners of the roof, which rises somewhat, & is surmounted by a crown in the middle. - It is hung on enormously long springs; the wheels were off, but the carriage hangs quite between them; & over the back wheels are two lions, supporting, blowing horns, great leuty boys! in front the same, pulling apparently at great gilt cords, as if they were drawing the coach. The coachman's seat was over them, with the gilt embroidered velvet harness cloth, & his foot board is ^{an imitation of a} great Coach shell - The inside is lined with red velvet heavily embroidered with gold, but quite tarnished & worn; for this elegant piece of furniture is of George the III's time, & in the characteristic style of that age - I do not know anything that looks more shabby than a small

ed gold ~~or~~ velvet - And one of the crimson silk window curtains which
was down, was quite ruffed - If I were a Queen I'd make a bow I
wouldn't put my foot in such a proteque, ~~some~~ by, old thing! I
should think she would consider ^{it} a sort of meritorious act of
penance to ride in it, & quite expiation for looking as cross as they
said she did that leave day - For the vain attempts to form a pro-
sperment, they said had quite put her out, with all the trouble &
squabbling behind scenes, & she looked anything but sweet -
The state coach was the last thing we saw - And we were allowed
to depart - Fees amount to something on visiting such a place, for
as you are handed over to a different man almost every place you
enter, & your flunky waits outside to escort you to the gate in the
end, and ^{as} it is rather an uncommon sight & the royal stables, you
are expected to give each one something handsome - This giving of
fees makes a good deal of English sight - seeing no trifle - But at
the bank nothing was expected; & in some places there are printed
notices requesting you not to give the attendants anything - But in
private establishments & visiting noblemen's places it is part of the
servants' perquisites - They say sometimes the servants pay for a place
for the sake of the fees, that may not be true, but ^{it} is true that often
they are paid very little & expect to make it up in this way - But
I have got so used to this & a good many other things, that I scarcely
notice ~~them~~ ^{them} now, though when I first landed they were very unpleasant -
We came round by Buckingham Palace & by its new front - Of in-
describable architecture - And saw the famous gateway which a letter
in the Times the other day, has made so notorious - The letter pur-
ported to be from the Lion on the gate, who requested to state his
pitiable case as follows - The architect to complete the ornaments to the
gate ordered the royal arms; the centre to be surmounted by the shield,
the side ports with the lion & unicorn - But by some blunder the lion
was, to be sure, on the right, ^{but} of the spectator, ~~but~~ ^{to the} left of the shield!
Some herald noticed the horrible blunder, & pointing it out they were
transposed; but of course having been cut to go the other way they
now turn their tails on her Majesty as she drives out of her own palace!
The letter was capitally written, full of fun, & wound up by stating some
horrid consequences of such a shocking want of etiquette; that an Austrian
Count on going to Buckingham Palace & seeing the horror, had im-
mediately returned to Vienna, saying he could not remain in a country

where such manifest disrespect & such an insult were offered to
 Royalty - The lion piteously begs to be taken down & broken up; some-
 thing done to relieve him! - When you get in front of the gate
 it is so ludicrously true you cannot help laughing - The animals
 being rampant, so manifestly turn their tails on the gate, & the
 face of the unicorn looks like such a grin of delight at the feat,
 that it is capital. - Oh, how cold & raw it was as we crossed
 the green park to Piccadilly! - As disagreeable as a genuine Boston
 East wind - While Dr. Gray accompanied the Wards to Regent St.
 to get them an omnibus there, Cooke having bade us good bye, (he was
 to go to Paris next day,) Miss Wenslow & I refreshed ourselves with a
 bowl of soup in a confectioner's, & when Dr. Gray came back we took an
 omnibus to Kew - Poor Miss Wenslow had a very heavy cold, & was
 quite done up, & has been in the house with it ever since. - And
 I felt very tired & some threatening of face-ache; so I sat in front
 of a good fire, had a tub of warm water for my feet, & went to
 bed with the batics; & consequently waked next morning quite
 bright, & teeth as comfortable as possible - Friday of course was
 busy writing - And Saturday afternoon I walked up to see how the
 Wrothers were - I saw Lady Wrother for the first time, being allow-
 ed the privilege of going into her chamber for a little while -
 Miss Wrother I did not see, she still suffering from her cough; & poor
 Miss Wenslow was so hoarse she could scarcely speak - However I
 sat with her until Dr. Gray was ready to go home to dinner -
 Thursday, March 8th

No steamer this week, & I must live without letters! You have
 all been so good & faithful in writing, that truly a week's abstinence
 is quite a trial! - However next week brings a double portion, & I
 hope Sunday will announce the steamer's arrival.

Sunday, Dr. Gray & I walked to church to Richmond - It was a lovely
 day, so spring-like! The poplars have hung out their tassels, & in some
 places in the pleasure-grounds the grass was white with snow-drops,
 & the birds were so merry! - In the afternoon we had a most
 pleasant walk through the gardens, visiting the houses - The occa-
 sia house is very handsome now, the different acacias being in flower,
 from pale straw colour to deepest yellow, & some as large as a small tree

are covered with flowers. In the heart house two beautiful heaths
are coming in flower, such superb great plants! And in the oriel-
house some of the beautiful, fantastic air plants are coming out.
They have their showy stems in the green-houses here more in
May & June, the London season. But the Camellias have been in
just fine & variety in the gardens.

Monday I walked to Richmond to get some few little things.
The ship-men here are not used to our quick despatches of business,
& it seems sometimes forever before one can get what they want.
Mrs. Butler complains in her book that the ship-keepers with
us would talk to her. I am sure it must have been from her
public character; for the ship-keepers here seem to expect exactly
more conversation than with us. Remarking on the weather &
& kidding you always find something when you come in & go out. I
could not go by the ship for the Original Maids of Honor without
stopping for its great benefit. And you may be a much puzzled as
I was to know at first what it meant; whether the Maids of Honor
went there, or whether they provided Maids of Honor, or what, &
pondered long; until it was explained as a little cake, the wife
bake to order from Queen Elizabeth's ladies, which has been handed
down in this place from those times, & whence their name. They
are a little sort of Cheese Cake & very nice. - 11. 20. 21. again.

Richmond, you know, was a gay roomy place in Queen Elizabeth's time,
& then (the old name for Richmond) Palace one of her favorite resi-
dences. There is another green spot on the main road as you
enter; old Mrs. I judge, if we may judge from the form of the building,
but underneath a small portion of an acre, is written as follows -
Excellent ass & milk sold; & keep a stand for hire.
If donkeys famed for going well, they seldom ever lie -
One angel honored Malanin's ass, & stalked him in the war,
But Cravall trump through Richmond pass with angels every day!
I was much amused as I left Richmond on my way home, by the
sight of one of these antient quadrupeds. A man came out of a pas-
sage leading one ass & another following, but the followers finding himself
in the wide dusty road, could not resist the temptation for a roll

& lieged behind; the man in front called to a boy to drive him on,
he advanced a few steps, & then deliberately scolded himself for a
roll; his master went on, thinking he would presently come,
but the donkey once rolling seemed to think he could not get
enough, & at last quietly said still without offering to move,
the man looked back & stopp'd, the donkey did not stir; he
went on, that made no difference; & the last I saw the man
was waiting with one donkey, the other lying a long distance
off on the road, each evidently unwilling to sport himself.
I wonder which joined the victory, whether the man came
to the donkey or the donkey to the man.

Tuesday was again a lovely spring day & I had a charming
walk in the gardens, where it seemed so spring like. They
have some handsome birds on the little pond in front of
the palm-house. Strange ducks, a pair of large fowls, & a beautiful
pair of swans. One is quite one's own ideal, & comes sailing through
the water, plunging at with its white breast, with curved
neck, & wings arched over the back, in truly Swan-like beauty.
Wednesday was rainy, & I did not go out. - But I thought it
best to be prudent. - My cold ended in a turn of dyspepsia,
which is however now much better. - But this winter has
shown me I am not to be quite the giant in strength I
thought last autumn. - If you expect to see the fair going
back & take a bath, what all the afternoon, & dance all the
evening, you will be disappointed; for that young woman is
passed long ago. - But if you will see a true specimen of woman
kind, who can walk two or three miles easily, late pretty
much like other folks, can do a little visiting, but must be con-
fident of strength & avoid over-exertion, & bear patiently every road
& then a little yellow & a little down turn, I do not think either
you or I can be reasonably disappointed, or feel the year's
journey quite in vain. - One cannot be always having the best.
So now I have been to dine with the Woblers & had a very
pleasant day. - Dr. Gray brought the good news Sunday evening

that Dr. Hooker was on his return from his Eastern journey, & would be probably home in a few weeks - Of course they are all rejoiced at the news & I hope it will do them more good than the doctor, & Miss Hooker looks very delicate & coughs much; Lady Hooker I saw up stairs again for a few minutes - Sir William was quite bright & Miss Benson seemed much better. Shouldn't you think she would be glad to have Dr. Hooker get back? - She & I have arranged a little shopping excursion into London tomorrow - When we are so boldly venture alone by ourselves, sensibly making use of the omnibuses - The Hookers are very kind to us in every way - I must tell you a little ~~meeting~~ Dr. Gray & I had Sunday - We were in one of the houses, when a door opened at the other end, & supposing (as the gardens are not open to the public Sunday & we have a private key) that it was one of the gardeners, I quietly continued my comments to Dr. Gray on the acacias - Presently a young girl came sweeping by. - She was tall & very large, with a great, florid face, & dressed in mourning; but with such a grandiloquent air, that Dr. Gray could not resist a little comment on its magnificence as she was passed, she was followed by a shorter woman with dark eyes, who had also a put on air of grandeur - We quietly continued our circuit; & the young lady after talking in a very loud voice, began to sing in a noisy style, & cut some flowers; the manners were so coarse that Dr. Gray & I were both quite surprised; & he thought it some gardener's daughter. On describing her at the Hookers today, who do you think they said it was? Guess! Some actress? no - Some countess? a little higher - The Princess Mary of Cambridge, the uncivilized republicans! - So - that has been my nearest approach to Loyalty! - And I feel inclined to conclude in a favorite proverb of Dr. Gray's, as he quotes it from the mouth of a ^{Southern} country damsel, "Too much freedom breeds contempt!" It is not the ~~silken~~ ^{silken} gown or the title makes the lady -

I close my letter this evening as I expect to go into London tomorrow morning - Hears & hears of love all round

from your ever loving sister,
Lizzie! What do you think the English
principally see in me? My bones, my baldness, & my big mouth!
Alas & alas for the representative of my country women as Nancy said!



Gray, Jane Loring. 1851. "Gray, Jane Mar. 4, 1851 [to Loring]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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