

Oxford - March 24th - 1881 - Star Hotel

My dear Sue, Behold us in the classic shades, & with a regular rainy day, though the morning promised bright - For the last few days or rather weeks, we have quite experienced all the changeable nature of an English climate! - Friday afternoon I went, after selecting the things for packing, to call at the Hookers - Lady H. came into the parlour to see me, & gave me a little parcel for her sister Mrs. Jackson at Oxford, to whom they had kindly written to say we were coming - They had received a letter from Dr. Hooker from Malta, saying that he would probably be at Southampton Monday or Tuesday, so our absence will come at the right time - Saturday morning, having sent our luggage beforehand, we walked to the station to take the 10 minutes train for Windsor - It began to rain as we went over, & the hopes for a passing shower soon passed away, for as we went on it settled into a determined pour - The rail-road passes very close under Windsor Castle, which rises finely from a high steep elevation, & looking over a high wall - Its size is truly regal, but though much larger I do not think the front as beautiful as of Heidelberg, & there is something to my eye peculiarly beautiful in the red stone of the latter - It certainly seemed a very shabby rail-way station to be just under the nose of royalty, but I saw as we drove away they were building a new & handsome one - Dr. Gray told the man to drive to the Slough Station, meaning the station in Windsor, but he understood the station at Slough, so we had a drive of 4 or 5 miles instead of a rail ride, & as we were too late for the train we should have taken at Windsor, we hoped we still might take the mail train at Slough - But had the satisfaction of seeing it pass by as we were 3 minutes off - The trains seem never to reach the places at the time they should, so if you have made any calculations to make different roads play into each other, & the few minutes for passing from one to the other depending on their punctuality, you may be very sure of missing! - The next train for Oxford did

not yet quite 11 o'clock, & as it was then 10 o'clock we had 2 hours before us in this dreary station with heavy rain, so that we must be content to stay where we were. But Dr Gray got the Times for himself & the Illustrated News for me, so you may be sure he was happy. On our way from Windsor we passed Eton, a collection of fine old buildings of red brick with stone accents, in the Eigan northern style.

We reached Oxford about 3 1/2, & had about 1/2 a mile's drive from the station outside the town to our hotel. Dr Gray went out at once to make calls & deliver letters of introduction, having ordered dinner at 5 1/2, and I changed my dress; I was just nicely comforted and established in the sitting-room, when he came in, & said in calling at Dr Jackson's they had invited us to dine at 6 1/2, so there was no choice to be made through again! - So poor I must always wear a cap, & so a bonnet is inconvenient, & the streets were wet with rain, we took a Cab. On Dr Gray ordering it where to drive, in "own Court" directed the waiter. I saw his house & a room, & Dr Gray explained that the quadrangle took its name from the hall, great room of windows, which was on the lower over the gateway leading with their Court of Christ Church - Now to give you some idea of Oxford College, you must know that a College is a great building of stone built around a square courtyard; the entrance is by a great gate with high door, generally in the centre of the side fronting on the street. Of course they are in different styles of architecture, having been founded at very different times, but almost all Gothic, & you may imagine the fine effect of these stone buildings, some quite old & weather-beaten, surrounded by these green embankments with the town grass plot in the centre. And the curious antique effect of, from the streets, these long ranges of buildings in three ancient styles, broken only by curious windows, which generally on the street on the ground floor, (though often there are windows till the second story) are patterned with iron bars. Hence the College is large, there is another Court yard beyond, also surrounded - the side of the Court yard is generally occupied by the Chapel & dining hall, sometimes the chapel has an entrance from the street, but often only through the Court yard - Here are 14 Colleges in Oxford & 8 Halls all

are separate & independent of each other - The Halls are different from the Colleges inasmuch that they have not endowments of lands or, & are more connected to the students themselves. Attached to the Colleges & Halls are various establishments, they keep a great store of Bibles, & a small Church & a Rectory, & a great & best endowment of the Chapel, is a Cathedral, & are houses in the College, which is internally arranged as follows - And now schools, where boys great numbers close to the College, I had only time to look at the main building, & at the gate, the one is I had to get out & was flying back in it, for it had only just started, & then great some old wooden door the & yourself in an



This sketch of with any last letter as a rough plan of Oxford } Three No 33

camped & furnished; shown upstairs to the person, sweet & my brother. The little western is a striking & the most abrupt of what he does say. fellow of Magdalen. He is a queer little ex is abrupt it is quite sort of way, & a helms attendants after drawing room, for the dining room is on the ground floor, & Mrs. Jackson proposed to take me up stairs to show me her children, for Lady Fisher had told me I must see her baby. These are 8 children, & the eldest is 9 years

not yet quite 11 o'clock, & as it was then 10 to 11 we had 2 hours to pass
in this dreary station with heavy rain, so that we must be con-
tent to stay where we were. But Dr Gray got the Times for him-
self & the Illustrated news for me, so you may be sure he was
happy. On our way from Windsor we passed Eton, a collection
of fine old buildings of red brick with stone openings, in the Egan
Gothic style. —
We reached Oxford about 3 1/2, & had about 1/2 a mile drive from
the station outside the town to our hotel. Dr Gray went out alone
to make calls & deliver letters of introduction, having ordered dinner at
5 1/2, and I changed my dress; I was just nicely completed and in-
stalled in the sitting room, when he came in, & said in calling
at Dr Jackson's they had invited us to dine at 6 1/2, & there was
no chance to be gone through again! — So poor I must always wear
a cap, & so a bonnet is inconvenient, & the streets were wet with
rain, we took a Cab. On Dr Gray's ordering it where to dine, in "own Court"
near the water, & my entrance & announcement, told Dr Gray again
that the quadrangle took its name from the side, great view of
winch, which was in the tower over the gateway leading into the
Court of Christ Church. — Now to give you some idea of Oxford College,
you must know that a College is a great building of stone built
around a square court-yard; the entrance is by a great gate with high
door, generally in the centre of the side fronting on the street. Of course
they are in different styles of architecture, having been founded at very
different times, but almost all Gothic, & you may imagine the fine
effect of three stone buildings, some quite old & weather beaten, surround-
ing three grass court-yards with the main gate plot in the centre. And
the curious antique effect of, from the street, three long ranges of build-
ings in three ancient styles, broken only by curious windows, which
generally on the street on the ground floor, (though often there are
no windows like the second story), are raised on a high base. These
the College is large, there is another Court just beyond, also surrounded —
the side of the Court yard is generally occupied by the Chapel & dining hall,
sometimes the chapel has an entrance from the street, but often only
through the Court-yard. — There are 14 Colleges in Oxford & 1 Hall, all

are separate & independent of each other — The Halls are different from
the Colleges inasmuch that they have not endowments of lands &c. &
are more supported by the students fees — Attached to the College &
Halls are beautiful gardens, & many other old establishments they keep every-
thing in nice order — Dr Jackson is Regius Professor of Divinity, & a canon
of the church, & is the officer of canon of Christ Church & a Rector of a
Country parish — Christ Church College is the largest & best endowed of the
Colleges, founded by William I, Christ Church besides being the College Chapel, is a Cathedral
church, & so has Dean, Canon &c — The Canon have houses in the College,
that is in a wing a portion of one side of a quadrangle is internally arranged
as a house for modern inhabitants of three days — And now behold
a drive down on foot of the handsome tower, where boys great & small
important I supposed we were going to some house close to the College,
I expecting to step from the carriage on foot, I had only three steps
& in front, imagine my consternation when the door pulled up,
& said in answer to Dr Gray's order to drive in at the gate, "No one is
allowed to drive in, Sir, on any account." So I had to get out &
walk through this palace above their court, now cap flying back in
the wind, & pushing my steps through the wet, for it had only just
stopped raining, to Dr Gray's at great great distance, & then great sense
about it! — The room as we were in inside the old wooden door the
whole appearance was changed, & you found yourself in an
apparently modern house, handsomely arranged & furnished;
we took off our things in the study, I was shown upstairs to the
dining room — The parson is a very pleasing person, sweet &
gentle, & with much less manner than Lady Butler — He is the
youngest & lady to the eldest of the sisters — Dr Jackson is a striking
looking man with a fine intellectual head & the most abrupt
& labored manner, but pleasant, worth hearing what he does say.
Dr Jackson, Professor of Rhetoric & Chemistry & fellow of Magdalen
College, pronounced Brandon also lived there — He is a finer little
man, short & rather stout, & though his manner is abrupt it is put
the reverse of Dr Jackson, being a free, quick sort of man, & I believe
there is nothing remarkable in his scientific attainments — After
the parson we went up stairs again to the dining room, for the
dining room is on the ground floor, & Mrs Jackson proposed to take
me up stairs to show me her children, for Lady Butler had told
me I must see her lady — There are 8 children, & the eldest is 9 years

old I think. First we went into a room where on each side of a large bed, were two little beds, & in each a little boy asleep. The oldest light haired, & the youngest a pretty little dark-haired fellow had his thumb in his mouth, how it made me think of little Pat! Then in another room was a little girl alone, who had not yet gone to sleep, & who seemed a little astonished at the strange face over her pillow; then we went into the nursery, where sat the nurse maid, a woman of about 22 or 3. I should think, & a young girl 15 or 16, both in caps, & both rose & remained standing all the time we were in the room. Here in a little basket cradle, lay a sweet looking baby asleep. It is about 9 months old, & had a little night cap on. Mrs. Jackson said the cradle was always carried down & put by the side of her bed the last thing, but I fancy she is much more devoted in this way than the generality of English mothers, who I rarely fancy go so far as to have their children in their chamber to sleep. These rooms were all above, & coming down to the same floor as the drawing-room, she took me into her chamber; at the foot of the bed was a little bed where lay a little chatter-boy, who only lost the use of her tongue for a moment as soon as she saw a strange face, on the side of the bed was a crib & a sweet little girl sound asleep in it, & going into a little room adjoining was another girl, the oldest. It was a pretty sight. The boy, the next oldest of the family, is away at school. I had a pleasant Exp. with Mrs. Jackson until the gentlemen came up stairs; Dr. Daubeny did not appear again. You cannot imagine what a strange look is in the aspect from the parlour windows was. In front this Court I have before described, behind a little courtyard surrounded by cloisters, two sides made by the Cathedral, Christ Church. And shortly before we went at 9 o'clock, we could see the windows lighted from within for evening service for the students, & hear indistinctly the chanting; at 9 1/4 great Tom peals forth 101 strokes, there being so many fellows, or "Students" as they are called in this college, on the foundation. So rich & deep as are the tones of this great bell! It is worth hearing! I thought of you, Will, who, I believe, share in my fancy for a heavy sounding bell. We went back by 9 1/2. Sunday morn. Dr. Gray was up & off by 8 o'clock to attend Morn. service for the students, when being Sunday they all appear in white surplices, excepting the noblemen's sons & gentlemen commoners who are privileged to appear in their blk. silk gowns. Christ Church being a cathedral church there is service every day at 8 in the morn. 9 in the Ev. for the students, & 10 A.M. 4 P.M. for the Parish.

As there seemed to be some difficulty in a lady's getting a seat at the students' service, I expressed my preference for Kate rising, & that Dr. Gray should go alone. He came back to breakfast by 9 1/2, & at 10 1/2⁺ we went to hear the Bampton lecture, delivered in the Parish church of St. Mary's. It is supposed all the students have been to prayers in their own chapels, & so they assemble at 10 1/2 at St. Mary's to hear a sermon only. It is a handsome, simple, Gothic church inside, not very large, & the nave fitted up for preaching; the greater part of the floor is taken up with seats for the College dignitaries, & a gallery running down one side is devoted to the students. It was quite full, but there could not be room for anything like the number of students in the University; but as there is nothing to oblige them to go, very few ^{in proportion} really go. And one person told us that a man had been known after taking his degree, to ask the way to St. Mary's - just now the Bampton lectures are commencing, they are I think 8 sermons, on one of a certain number of specified subjects. And in truth it was a very fine sermon, some I little expected to come to Oxford to hear: so liberal, & so wise & powerful. Henry B. Wilson is the lecturer this year, & this was the first one, in which he announced the subject he had chosen, as the article in the Apostles' Creed, the Communion of Saints. And he exhorted against taking the fathers of the 4th, 5th, 7th. or even 10th. century as final exponents of scripture or creed; that the mind was constantly advancing, & that scripture & creeds were unfolding newer & higher meanings. It was such close logic it was rather difficult to follow, especially as we were at some distance, & so it needed great attention to hear, & ^{beside} a man near us had a serious influence. Before the sermon they merely sang a psalm, & the clergyman read a "bidding prayer," that is to say enumerated such & such things for which I pray. For the Queen, for the Nobility, for Parliament, &c. &c. for the colleges, especially St. John's of which he was member; & then were enumerated sundry benefactors of the colleges for whom they were to return thanks, especially John Bampton the founder of these lectures, which to my ears did not join very reverentially with the usual thanksgiving for creation, preservation, &c. ~~the coming of our Saviour.~~ After the sermon was only the usual prayer & blessing. It rained hard when we came out, & after waiting awhile in our hotel it seemed to brighten a little, & we set out for a walk, went up & around the Martyrs monument raised to Cranmer, Latimer

dining-hall, which has a singular & very handsome roof highly ornamented & springing from one central column - He could not get into the hall.
~~Monday~~
We went at once to Dr. Daubeny's - He has a comfortable house opposite to
Maudlin, where he has his botanical library - And in it are some ~~very~~
very interesting works belonging to the college, being original drawings of Kauer's,
of the Flora & Fauna *proca* - We went round the Botanic garden
under umbrellas, but it is not large, & the ^{few} houses are small - Dr.
Gray went back in the afternoon to look over some botanical specimens
most of some of the early botanists, which are in a little herbarium
kept in a little, old stone - Mrs. Jacobson had kindly sent to invite me
to dine with them, as Dr. Gray was to dine in Hall with Dr. Daubeny, &
I had a very pleasant time - A Mr. Stokes, a fellow of Chr. Ch., was there.
Having heard of my wish for a wild primrose, Dr. Jacobson had kindly
got me some himself - I came back early to write - And when Dr. Gray
returned from the Goshenslean Society, where he had been after dinner,
& which is a sort of Academy of Science, he found a note from Mr. Church,
another fellow to whom Mr. Stowe had given us a letter, inviting us
to dine with him ~~Friday~~ - X

Thursday Mornf.

I am afraid my journal must needs be rather behindhand
this week for there has been so much to see & to do, that to get time
for writing is very difficult - We have enjoyed our visit here ex-
ceedingly & been received most kindly! And certainly Oxford is a most
interesting place! - I cannot answer this week's letters either - For they
are waiting for us at Kew, & our movements have been so uncertain
we have not had them forwarded - I think now we shall go to Ely
tomorrow, & stopping to see its cathedral, get to Cambridge Saturday Mornf.
& return to London Tuesday - But to get back to Oxford & our break-
fast Tuesday mornf. with Mr. Congreve - We walked up to Wadham, hap-
pily without rain, & were ushered upstairs into his rooms - The first
was a good sized room, a large table laid out for breakfast, a smaller
arranged as side-board - Wain with plants & engravings, comfortable
red curtains; easy chairs & couches, books & desk about, & to take off my
bonnet he took me into an inner room, pretty & fascinating, surrounded
by book cases, looking out into a charming, quiet garden, & pretty statuettes,

ornaments, &c. about it - Should you think fellows would want to be married & leave all these nice things? Mr. Maskelyne, reader of Jester, & two undergraduates were there, & we had a nice breakfast, tea, coffee, rolls, toast, fried eggs & fried chicken - The members of a college are served with breakfast in their own rooms, & the college plate is generally handsome - Mr. Congreve is a large, pleasant, easy Englishman - Full of life, & talking in a very amusing way, extreme radicalism - He has travelled, & is agreeable & well-informed - A little of the world for a Rev. though very good-hearted. I should think Mr. Maskelyne is a handsome little fellow, intelligent & smart, the real English clever - The other young men said little but seemed easy & pleasant - After a long breakfast, with Mr. Congreve's kind assistance I got on my trunk & sack, & we went down to see first the chapel, which has a handsome pavement of black & white marble, a very handsome stained glass window at the end, and handsome windows also in the ante-chapel, which came in well looking down over the carved-oak screen - Then we went into the dinner-hall, which has an uncommonly fine oak roof, supported by carved beams - It is hung with ^{murders & fellows of the college} old portraits, & the great dais windows quite fascinate me with their cushioned seats & stained glass - It has the magnificent look of an old baronial hall - Then we went round the garden which lies behind one side of the building - And is surrounded by a high wall, planted with trees & shrubs, & the place one would fancy for a quiet students' walk - Maskelyne went with us when we left, & took us over the Mineralogical Collection, where are some curious fossils, & fine specimens of minerals, & then took us down into his room under the Ashmolean rooms, where he showed us some pretty arrangements of polarized light, & then some fine saltotypes, which are sort of Daguerreotypes on paper, & have a beautiful effect for landscapes & buildings - On getting back to our hotel we found Mr. Church had called, & would come again at one - So at one he appeared, and he is such a contrast to Mr. Congreve! With a thin, earnest face, ~~which reminds one much of Mr. Bartol~~, particularly in the brown eyes - He is a scholar, & has travelled much, particularly in Greece, & a simple earnestness marks him in every thing - He offered to go with us to visit some interesting places - So taking our umbrellas we set off - First to the Radcliffe Library, a circular building

the lower story you walked & read, the library above - And passing through
that we went up a winding stair-case, upon the top of which round
it had a fine bird-eye view of Oxford & looking down into many of the
Courtyards - All dark, the nearest one, particularly struck me with
a great sort of aristocratic air - It has, I think, no students, and its fellow
ships are, I believe, sort of retirement for men of rank & good families, who
are glad of such a respectable asylum - The figure of St. Mary's from
the face to the top were beautifully before us - the same looked down
all the time, but as I had long since given up my black silk & my
bonnet as altogether quite finished, I grew indifferent to outward effects -
Thence we went to the schools & Bodleian, which are in a building
surrounding an open square - One side of which certainly agrees in
an extraordinary style of architecture, & an extraordinary statue of
James I. - Dr Jackson was presiding over a disputation, & we went in
to the Divinity school to hear it - The entrance is through a fine porch,
& the roof of the hall is most curiously carved with drooping pen-
dants, like little shrubs, mixed with long low pointed arches, &
the mouldwork of curious tracery & coats of arms - They keep up
to many old, old forms in Oxford! Thence sat Dr Jackson in a
green little pulpit, & in two rows on each side at a little dis-
tance opposite him, were two men, one of whom was reading a dis-
sertation in Latin, which when finished the other one would make
some objection, & this is a necessary preliminary for a certain degree -
The two were in front, & Dr J. was in front & cap with something
scarlet about him - As it was not very entertaining we, constituting
the only audience, retired & left the three alone - The interior of
a great library is a hopeless thing to describe - The Bodleian looked
very ancient with its dark oaken roof & pillars & alcoves - And there
were some curious & interesting old portraits, especially in the passage
above - And some odd relics too, my father's lantern, &c - In the room
below, Mrs Cox the librarian through Mr Courcel's kind office, showed
us some beautiful manuscripts, some early printed ones - She had
really the most beautiful order I ever saw - The most exquisitely
delicate & beautiful scrolls you can imagine, in shades of white on
a pink ground, not too bright, & thrown out by flowers, insects &c.
painted in bright soft colors - Letter headings chapters formed in these

some scrolls, & beautifully related by some soft flower in the centre -
Another was very beautiful, & the miniature drawings, exquisitely
painted & touched, so as almost to bear microscopic examina-
tion, were by Albert Durer - From the Bodleian we went to Merton
college & chapel - Merton is very old & yet the stone has worn
better than in many other buildings, where it has badly crumbled -
The chapel has a roof which was painted the last year by one
of the fellows in ancient style - The upper part of the flat east
window is very fine stained glass - And the choir is recently im-
proved an incense burner, & there are two very ancient wooden
musical braces which are preserved in the pavement
Let not stone ^{any more} ^{in the pavement} ^{some} ^{quant} ^{old} ^{artist}, &c. Thence we went through
two arched passages into a small interior court, where we could
see the treasury, a very ancient building, with very narrow pointed
windows not much wider than your hand, & slated, & the roof
very steep, & in truth a flat wall, only slanting - Thence through
another archway into the quadrangle whence we entered the
library - The oldest looking interior I ever saw! With small pointed
windows, some having old coats of arms & stained glass, & on the top
occasionally a larger oval window thrown in to give some light -
narrow wooden benches were between the cases on each side of the
aisle left some books chained to the immovable red above - Ah,
I cannot tell you how quaint & odd it was! And study in those
days was a hard & laborious matter, so far as books were went -
As Merton college was close to Bodleian, which Mr Courcel is fellow
& also Greek reader, we left him there, after having inspected
a door curiously covered with six scrolls, formed by extending
the hinges most elaborately - These great heavy doors, Thence we
returned to meet a little man, meaning to go to service in the chapel
at 5 p.m. Mr Courcel came for us at 4 p.m. but I was so tired, &
determined to remain & rest, especially as we were to dine out
with him & you may imagine I was a little uncertain as to
dress, & how to wear a cap under my bonnet & look neat when one
got there; but at length decided a high neck with loose lace above
length young ladies I was more befitting a dinner with gentlemen in college room

It raining still we had a fly & were dropped at the gateway & passing through the outer quadrangle & into the inner were escorted to the "common room" - First through a large room where the table was set for dinner into another high with handsome curtains but simply furnished & not quite so luxurious as Magdalen where we found Mr. Church & some other gentlemen -

I have only time to add best love to all &
good bye from your ever loving friend



Gray, Jane Loring. 1851. "Gray, Jane Mar. 24, 1851 [to Loring]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/225927>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/262620>

Holding Institution

Harvard University Botany Libraries

Sponsored by

Arcadia 19th Century Collections Digitization/Harvard Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The Library considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection

License: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.