

in in front, on which <sup>the fashion of round stone posts</sup> the sticks rest, & at the back a large  
skin plate on which were two figures, an old woman & young  
man, or young woman, affectingly embracing, & casting  
lingering, loving looks behind at the fire, before apparently  
they marched up chimney. But the large back, too,  
made me think of the Duchesse de Berni & her place  
of refuge. The shroud stone would have done breed to  
a museum of antiquities. And yet the room was a gar-  
niture of splendour & shabby; the red tiled floor, a bocking  
in the middle, was so uneven it made me half fiddly to  
cross it, & the chairs seemed as if they would fall apart  
if moved. We decided, as the rain still came down,  
to give up our plan of taking a Carriage to the Port de  
Garde & so to Tignes, & to take only a drive round the  
town & then railway to Tassin, & Tignes for the night.  
So we paid the bill to the polite landlady & departed.  
When the popes lived at Avignon, the papal palace &  
Cathedral were built <sup>(and before St. Peter's)</sup> on a rock in the middle of the  
<sup>from</sup> ~~river~~, & the city surrounded by a wall, which still  
<sup>dating almost to Roman times,</sup> remains. The streets to ascend to the Cathedral are only  
wide eno. for two carriages just to pass, in some not even that,  
in side-walks paved with round stones, for passengers must  
be ware. Some stately, ancient houses, with massive doors &  
iron-banded windows, skirted them, & then came Caute walk  
& rock, we could hardly tell where one ended & the other began.

Montpelier. Nov. 21<sup>st</sup>. 68

My dear Luc.

Thanks for your day with you all.  
As it is 1/4 to 9 P.M. here, I suppose if I allow for  
as I know later than we are, I may suppose you  
dining, where? Are you all alone as usual? Are  
are we in the South of France, among quite new  
scenery, & a climate that does not remind one at  
all of the last of Nov. at home, dear home? I did  
not think until we were on our way from Paris,  
that it was Thanksgiving this week, or I should  
have been tempted to try to pass it together. But  
Dr. Gray was so eager to get to this neighbourhood, I  
don't wonder he would be persuaded. So perhaps  
it is as well.

We left Paris Sunday Ev. at 7 1/2, running away  
from Charles, it fairly seemed. But my husband  
had finished his work there, & the season is not as  
tempting one, & victims have been before him of all to be  
seen here, & our only chance, probably, to off we came.  
You may wonder at our coming by night, but the trains  
are curiously arranged here, the only very quick one



you at night; & with the day trains you stop, & then  
must wait 24 hours to take it again, or else start in  
the P.M. or awfully early in the morn<sup>g</sup>, or the middle  
of the night. It was a difficult matter to manage,  
as you would have thought if you had heard the  
discussions over the R.R. guide, until I dreaded the  
sight of it. Besides the country is, they say, & some  
some scenery, especially at this season, between  
Paris & Lyons, & everyone who can go by night.  
The carriages are warmed by hot water & are covered  
with carpet, changed almost too often, & sleeping mis-  
fer like a hot poultice; & the seats are very comforta-  
bly stuffed. We had only four women in our compa-  
ny for 8, & so were not crowded, & I slept soundly.  
At the stations <sup>we</sup> was always waked by the loud call  
of the name, & "this minute it's out," or "five minutes,"  
or "just minutes," so one could get out if they chose.  
At Lyons at 6 in the morn<sup>g</sup>. Dr. Gray got me a bowl of  
soup with some slices of toasted roll in it, quite refreshing,  
& we reached Arignon about 9. But the famed French  
rail-ways are not perfect in their arrangements. They  
will not allow, as with us, to stop en route, & go on later;  
you must take your ticket to where you go, & get out  
there & buy anew to go on; baggage the same, & that must  
be weighed when your ticket is put, & no weight paid &

a paper account delivered, & lots of red tape & fussing;  
or it is slow work getting off on a French train. Then  
you are all shut in a room, if day passengers, & not  
allowed to go near the train until all the ~~comers~~ are  
discharged; & if it is up stairs or any distance, it is  
a rush with bag, laden, feeble folks. Then many places  
the train drops you in the mud, or else you must  
wade through to reach omnibus or fiacre; & the salles  
& attente are filled with tobacco-smokers, & a most  
mixed crowd, & the accommodations are abominable.  
English roads are better, & more attentive, guards, only  
there is nothing like baggage checks. And for quick &  
easy accommodation of a crowd, I think ours the best.

I was tired & rather cross when we reached Arignon,  
& am afraid the chrysanthemums & roses in blossom in  
the little squares & gardens, were rather lost upon me, as  
we rode to the hotel. But after a 'the complete' Dr.  
Gray went to table & I ate breakfast; I was surprised enough  
to notice the large, quaint chamber, looking as if it had  
been furnished 70 years ago; & especially to observe the  
fire-place, old, of white marble, low & long, surmounted  
by a very handsome clock under a glass shade, & over ditto,  
a pair of heavy plated candle-sticks, & a large mirror  
above. Below the fire-place was tiled into the deep side,  
no undrains, but iron shelves coming out on each side & rounding



lands of people living in it - And one saw what a small hole it made, with its deep white arches & massive walls, for the poor to cluster in. They are now rebuilding & restoring it, & though they keep the form, it seems almost a fifty years more than just preserve it. I shall not try to describe, if I can send some photos, they are better. Then we went to the Traian Forum, the perfect little ancient temple. The great inside, but that is only a little modern museum of pictures, & some also Roman remains, they are constantly finding <sup>every</sup> at times. Then we went back to the hotel & laid down, while Dr. Ray went to see the palace & the temple of Traian. The bath almost perfect from the Romans, in one of those huge up-springing fountains, a river almost at once, & the temple a small ruin close by, both in a pretty garden & grounds, laid round a hill, surmounted by the mind of a tower, making a most picturesque object in the landscape, as we saw from the top of the Amphitheatre & from the railway when we left.

Our horse ride to Mompelieri was most delightful. The lovely air, the exquisite purple hue on the bare Abruzzi hills, the little towns & villages clustered in the valleys, the near ending olive & fig trees, grape & peach. Near we did see some handsome plateaus & fine looking houses. And the blue edge of the Mediterranean on one side, & a most picturesque mountain peak & range on the west.

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The street wound round & round, up ever higher, so steep it seemed almost like going up stairs, until we came upon a Place where was the entrance to the old Palace, on many landings, rose a huge terraced, & above the Cathedral, still higher a picturesque rock rock, interspersed with garden & beds of trees & shrubs, the edge, walls from which one had a fine view of the river, the two handsome bridge, the old one only a few arches & the middle of the river left, beyond on a hill lay an old walled town, a sleepy place, Dr. Gray said, 30 years ago, a could not hold more than 200 or 300 people. The Cathedral is small & of various date, "built in protestant", was of the time of Charlemagne. Louis XIV restored part, part even later, for the outside has picked up, & a great gilt statue of Mary in a niche over the door. <sup>quite new</sup> The old round arches are kept, & the tower was the junction of nave & choir is curiously painted inside with fresco, much effaced, 14th century, the old man said, who showed us Pope Joan XXII (?) tomb, & the stone altar of Brasimonte, behind a modern structure all jibbing & shew. We saw too the chair in which the Pope was consecrated.

The ride down to the quaint ancient town, the first view we had, the old village, now with north facing, & we took it for Larascon, where we changed cars, & then Fieschi. Reaching there after dark.



When day-light came. Wednesday morn<sup>g</sup>, <sup>we</sup> was struck into  
the changed landscape - There were many orchards,  
everywhere fruit trees carefully pruned - If one saw  
trees besides, they were generally tall stiff poplars, standing  
perhaps the road or leading to some house. The roads  
winding up or lying beside the railway, running thru  
the green land or brown fields with some fences or barriers,  
unless near some little town - The houses look like por-  
tifications, solid stone, thick walls, few windows. Some  
barn & out-houses often all under one long roof, & farm-  
yard surrounded by high walls, looking, as one saw only  
the great white gate to enter, as if wild beasts & savage  
men did not dare a great way back - One misses the  
sun & warmth & comfort of English cottages & houses, even  
when scattered - And for me, I cannot see so much  
picturesque, where there is the air goes much discomfort.  
We passed before reaching Argyron, through a curious rocky  
pass between mountains, the Rhone muddy at our side,  
not the lovely blue of Geneva Lake - Ruined castles few  
in sight, old walls, probably Roman, showing a height,  
Sometimes excavations in the rock made chapel or  
stronghold - We soon came upon Chaux, I knew them at  
once, they look exactly as I thought, white, gray green, yellow-  
like only duller & stiffer - Then vineyards, the aspect of  
the vine! imagine fields of row Scrubby currant bushes

stems trimmed! But they are bare now of leaves -

We reached our Hotel at Argyron in time for  
lunch & late - And the grandeur of the dining saloon de-  
fied me - Low, arched, gilt mouldings - The walls a brilliant  
green, painted, & dotted with gilt fleur-de-lis in high  
relief - At one arched end, three windows, the other a  
huge mirror filling the arch & doubling the room  
apparently - Baskets of artificial flowers upon the table,  
& a very nice dinner - (Five courses for five the last  
of November!) I think we should pay high, & for our  
large pleasant chamber, well furnished, though with  
polished wooden floor & large cream-pitchers for water.

But our bill was very moderate -

We walked yesterday morn<sup>g</sup>. & a lovely day, soft & fresh,  
such a sky as blue & clear & yet soft! Our room looked  
out on the great square, & after breakfast ~~we went out~~  
painted Pompeian, we went out - The square  
fine buildings around, a new church next us, & in the  
middle a very beautiful fountain, of which I am sure you  
have seen photos & pictures - After admiring it & Dr. Gray held  
me still a moment, & looking off a little, I saw at one end  
the <sup>Amphitheatre</sup> ~~the theatre~~ startling one with its completeness - We  
took our way round it & then explored inside - It is  
wonderfully perfect for its age, & the destruction has been  
more the taking the stones away from the inside for building  
during the time - The custodian told us the monument was then



spread lined & covered with lace, like lace curtains. The  
dinner was dinner-stairs on the ground floor, & of the finest  
& most delicate. Soup (barley with rice) joints of calf's brains,  
sausage cakes, turbot, olives, fillet de boeuf aux truffes, & omelette, three  
stables stewed with sauce, salad, whipped cream in a sort of  
Charlotte, <sup>then dessert</sup> - Very nice apples, little Transvaal figs,  
bushes of stone pine, candied angelica, plums, &c. & quince jam.  
Everything was a separate course & change of plates the rest of.  
knife & fork, except the dessert. The wines were very nice too,  
St. George of the country, & Transvaal, Bordeaux. It seems an  
immense dinner, but the helps are small to each thing, & as  
one is generally helped at table & the one does not seem to  
get one. Here they helped a second time if one wished, & we  
need not take every course. Mr. Hanckon another Hospital  
connected with the University, & Mr. Chancel <sup>Off. of Comm.</sup>  
istry, dined with us. Mrs. Martin & Hanckon speak  
English, but not at all. I could easily understand  
Mr. Martin's <sup>French</sup> ~~English~~, but not at all Chancel's. And when  
the conversation grew very lively & animated I lost much.  
Gustave ladies left the table, & <sup>together</sup> Café noir was carried up  
stairs. He had a very pleasant Ep. & Mr. Martin's went back  
with us to our Hotel. Dr. Gray was full of stories of the garden  
of which he is Curator, & which is 300 years old & has many  
interesting stories connected with it. Montpellier is an old  
University town, & famous in history too. Many men of note have

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So fresh as the sun went down, a last Ep.  
we had a fire in our chamber, as we did not go to  
bed as the Ep. before at 7 1/2. The sun came shining  
in this room, & in the great 'old' our window. As  
one, from being seen here make the trees look shimmering.  
Dr. Gray went out last Ep. before dinner, & saw Dr. Martin  
the botanist here. Today was to be a quiet day  
of rest for me, but I must begin by going in a place to  
the La Vigore, a sort of elevated promenade, bordered &  
with borders for flower, trees & shrubs, where were rows  
in blossom, great century plants flourishing in the air.  
At the upper end is a temple, the end of a most rapid  
aqueduct, a modern Pont de fer, crossing the valley on  
double arches, & I suppose distributing into pipes, beginning  
under the Temple. A pretty fountain, running streams over  
rocks, covered with green-growing things, makes a pretty  
pond, stone borders, where the hands descend towards us  
for something to eat. The view from the upper plateau  
was superb, commanding the town, the country about, the  
distant mts, & the shimmering sea. Opposite the en-  
trance was a handsome Arch, & the fine buildings of the  
Ecole de Medecin; lower the botanic garden, not much  
larger than ours, & very poor, says Mr. Martin. I must go  
there to see palms growing in open air, & then through  
narrow, gloomy streets, the great, dark-looking houses towering

waited there -



up with their peated meadows - though occasionally, there  
a great folding door, one got a peep into a pleasant court-  
yard, & the terrace where is a fair gallery of pictures -  
But we could not get in, so we walked back to our  
Hotel, where I stay quiet, until we go to dine, at 6  
with Prof. Martins -

Tomorrow morning for Marseilles, & our future  
movements depend on our meeting there all there.  
Nov. 29. Marseilles - You see, dear Sue, a few days makes a differ-  
ence! Here we are leaving Marseilles ninety &  
uncomfortable, thinking to get a quiet Sunday after here,  
Charles, mother, George, Mr. A. & the Schuyfers sailing  
for Marseilles at 4 this aft. - But we found to our  
dismay the hour a half by rail-way, by no means bit  
us to Marseilles, there were three or four miles of omnibus  
rides, so I got here tired & could only rest till dark -  
We have quiet, for we are in an out of the busy hotel &  
every body is away Sunday aft. being a fête, & all the world  
out of doors. We are waiting now to be summoned to  
table d'hôte - The moon is shining bright outside our wine  
dow, & the light-houses glimmer & revolve across the bay  
on a rock of land looking like a mast-head - But one could  
not make anything else look near home, for in the one  
abovance in front stands a date palm, & came this aft.  
through hedges of lovely roses, & saw on the street palm

trees, not shrubs or bushes, but tall, & more graceful  
than I had fancied - The women too in broad straw  
hats or only white caps, & sitting sociably together out of  
doors is not like the last of November with you -

Friday was not to be as quiet as I had thought, for Dr. Gray  
came back to say Mr. Martin would get us into the Tuesday,  
& presently he appeared escorted us there - It is a very  
choice collection, the first gift to the town, from the last  
connection of the Countess of Albany (the Pretender's widow  
& Alphonse's love) Mr. Fabre who originally came from Monte-  
pelier - Then a rich citizen bequeathed some treasures of the  
Dutok School, & of France, &c., & now the director is giving  
very valuable specimens of the modern French schools -  
very different, some beautiful, some rustic, some ugly,  
many rightfully pretty in subject - But interesting as  
studied & contrasts, especially as the Mr. has had his portraits  
painted by 20, I should think, thus contrasting their styles -  
Among the older ones we saw a wonderful Pietism, A Thapsalus,  
Grand Drive, "Jill with pearls" & "Monstrous", "Amiens", "Palades",  
Ringsdahl's landscapes, lovely groups, &c. &c. -

At 6 I was duly conveyed in the Pk. with, high neck &  
long sleeves, & we went to Mr. Martin. Madame received us with  
many apologies, up two or three flights, in her chamber, but the  
salon was being repaired - But except for the bed it was itself  
a very pretty parlour, the bed too was ornamental, the dark curtain



Gray, Jane Loring. 1868. "Gray, Jane Nov. 26, 1868 [to Susan M. Jackson]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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