

Nice, Nov. 30. '60

My dear Luc,

Dr. Gray by accident tore  
the sheets instead of one, so I have only  
these half sheets to write upon, as I care-  
lessly forgot in my hurry at Marseilles, to  
take more paper from my trunk, & we are  
only in valise & night bag.

I wrote my journal up to Friday night & our  
return from dinner at Prof. Martins. We rose  
up early the next morn. & had our tea in our  
chamber & took the 8 1/4 train to Marseilles.  
Service is curiously divided in the hotels. A  
man is chambermaid, & takes care of the room  
& does all the waiting on you. A woman sits in  
the covered Court-yard down stairs, takes orders,  
gives directions. An old woman in white, ruffled  
cap & quaint dress, is Commissionaire & gets a cab if  
you want one, & runs errands!

Just out of Montpeller is an enormous fort & barracks  
& one is struck wherever we have been with the fortifications,  
the soldiers, the sound of drums & military music everywhere.  
The same cultivation flows & grapes ran on to Arles. We must  
remember it is winter & the vines are bare of leaves, which

(Made a mistake & can't replace the room!)

\* I forgot out the influence of the front - One rarely sees front or  
fronts unless perhaps near some large town; & what he calls a fine town,  
note from, is easily seen - We saw the arches of the Amphitheatre



at Arles from the rail-road, much more ruinous than  
Nîmes, only the arches empty of stones. - Arles is a quaint  
old town with walls & narrow streets & great, blank, stone  
house sides - We would like to have stopped & seen the town  
& the pretty women, but knew mother & party would be at  
Marseilles, & so went on. While waiting in the station a  
train came in, & presently passed on, to Dr. Gray's regret,  
as he thought we should be joined in. But that was fate,  
the quickest of Express, & did not stop again until Marseilles,  
while we went stopping along, & reaching there an hour or so  
later, found mother & party were in that very train?

But the ride from Arles to Marseilles was very fine &  
picturesque. Wonderfully barren the country seems, each  
tumbled up mountains of bare rock, & yet often here  
faced & planted with olives, old, half ruined towns, scat-  
tered houses, growing more frequent & pretentious as we  
nearer Marseilles; some, that droll, French Country house,  
attempting a magnificent facade in colored bricks, even if  
only a wall with nothing behind in part - The station is  
very fine at Marseilles, & in the enclosure were fine  
century plants - We went to the Hotel du Louvre & de  
la Paix as agreed, no news of mother - We were shown to our  
room, Dr. Gray went to the P.O. & came back with two letters  
from Charles saying they should be there - He was just going  
of to Enghien again, when came a knock, & in came Mother  
& Charles - They had been put at the top of the house, the



more on seconds, so we made our room the saloon, (2)  
had a fire, & gathered there - Talk flowed fast, & yet  
it seems now as if I had scarcely seen them - We  
made a large party at table d'hôte, 9 of us, served in a  
handsome room, & lots of English; for two steamers were to  
sail Sunday, & one had just arrived from Alexandria.  
It is just the time when India passengers overland, are  
bound - They had all come thro' from Paris at one pull,  
leaving the Exp. before, & were very tired, so they went to  
bed early - But mother & Charles both tho't it very desir-  
able that we should stay over a week, they having all  
decided to sail on Sunday, & see the Corniche road, our  
only chance probably, & which they both think one of the  
most beautiful scenes in Europe - So I meekly yielded my  
long wished for plan of cutting short the sea voyage & sailing  
from Brindisi; & agreed to return to Marseilles to sail from  
there next Sunday - We all met at breakfast Sunday  
morn'g. except Mr. Anson, & while out breakfast Mr. Loring  
came in, & we agreed to meet him this morn'g. at the train  
at Hyères, he coming from Toulon where he passed the night,  
& come on to Nice together -

The ride was charmingly picturesque yesterday, the wild,  
rocky shore, often mountainous, & wonderfully bare, olives, olives,  
olives, the chief growth - The rocks make one think of Joazeiro,  
they are often so abrupt, & broken into such formed shapes you  
are sure at first they are ruined castles, & towers or abbeys -



The deep red colour too is very effective, especially when it comes upon the blue shore of the Sea - Hyères is a famous place of winter resort & full of hotels & houses to rent. And we got up early this morn. & so out after breakfast before going to the cars, & see some gardens where wonderful tropical things were prof., New Holland, & African, &c. &c. A single dahlia white & growing almost like a tree, was one of the prettiest things - And lots of our green house things great trees - Diosma 8 ft. high! - We took the train at 10 1/2 found Mr. Loring, & had a delightful ride here. The coast keeps much the same character until almost here, then curiously it looks more home like, for pines come in, & the hills were now closely wooded, & tho' not our pitch pine, it is very like it - Today too we have seen oranges, so pretty with the polished green & golden fruit; they began shrubs but are now trees, & stone pines we are seeing now with their flat, rounded tops - And oh such roses, so lovely in colour, & rich, green leaves, & full & round, I never saw anything like the hedges of them! We got here about 4, & are to-night quite grand, bed & washstands English style - Nice seems a large place & full of showy hotels - Last night we were at a quiet small house, an uncommonly nice dinner, but truly French washing accommodations in our chamber - But it has been very delightful, all this Mediterranean ride, with scenery & vegetation & soil pair. For dessert today medlar & fruit of arbutus just like strawberries - So that I passed in wonder -



middle, one sons! - We were all perfectly excited with the beauty & the grandeur, & the day, & it was almost a relief when the road turned & shut off the sunny peaks. Then we came in sight of the sea, blue & dark, & for a while, until the descent began, it was only base - We passed a tower, Roman it is said, & Dr. Gray & Mr. Dorsing made a detour to see it, a rude little village clustered near, & on a solitary peak round which we went without coming near we saw ruins among the old high houses a Moorish strong hold it was said - Then we came lower among vines, olives, then lemon trees, for we were in a milder climate - And so sometimes lower, sometimes higher, seeing Villa Franca harbor & Monaco on its isolated point, & at length the low down among walled orange gardens, & through olive woods, old barrelled trunks, we came to Mentone by dashing hills, through narrow streets, the market gleaming on one side, & came to the Hotel where Mr. Dorsing was to stop - We were very sorry to say good bye -

After Mentone came the French border, the road wound quite along the beach, then mounted again, crossed a wonderful gorge, a bridge with an arch 300 ft. high, passed under Rocca Bruna, brown, & old on the hill side, founded a promontory, & below on the point were pointed out Palazzo Dungs. We left the carriage at a little Auberge, paid the driver, deposited bags & valises, & with a pretty little Racheval <sup>as guide</sup> with a gay cotton handkerchief tied over his head, zigzagged down the terraces to the house - Rising at last in front of us from a garden laid out with stone bordered plots, & fountain in the middle of stone ponds -

Dec. 2nd. Palazzo Dungs - from Mentone - (3)  
How I did wish yesterday, my dear Sue, I could only have put you all with me into Carriage to enjoy the same magnificent scenery & delicious air! I could not help feeling that it seemed more than my share of blessing to be having it to myself, & to think of you all in winter at home, with fires & fun, & base taxes & taxes! I thought of Kate's talk, & wished I could too over the Atlantic the lovely oves & orange blossoms that were hedging the road-side part of the way - It is a day to be always remembered by me, that Dec. 1st, 1880, & I was quite exhausted at night with pleasure! -

We looked a little doubtfully at the clouds in the morning, but the sun now promised a good day, so we left the landlord of the Hotel d'Ayglestone (a very nice comfortable hotel it was) to engage a carriage for us, & went out to take a turn round the esplanade, - on which our hotel looked, open to the sea on one side, the other pretty much surrounded by hotels; which also ran on the land side of the broad street skirting the shore, & connecting by a bridge with the old town, where is the harbour - We overlooked from one side, where the river runs in, & saw all the women of the town, one would think, washing - At Hyeres a little stream was brought into a long stone tank at which they could easily stand, & there was a row washing - They must wash clean, one would think, from the washing & pounding & wringing, & use plenty of soap, - & you scarcely ever pass a stream of running water, that you don't see women kneeling on a flat stone & washing in another. The little square of shade trees in the centre of the esplanade was beautiful with palm trees & oaks, & many wonderful things to us Northerners -



He found the carriage in front of the door, a two seated one, the front seat & the top throwing back. A seat in front for traveller, where is usually the coachman's boy, his stick fastened in front - two trough, little horses, the ends of white horse tails hanging at their ears, which they shook incessantly - They were smart little creatures, the road all the way or hand & smooth & even, & it was surprising how quickly they went & how fast we drove - I was inside, Tom, leaning in the front seat where Dr. Jay joined him, except when on foot, for all the long ascent from Nice he preferred to walk -

Nice is at the mouth of a river, only now a straggling stream through a broad, sandy bed, but a huge torrent in spring when the mountain snow melts if one may judge by the high walls built on the far sides to contain it - A high mass of hills & rock at the mouth divides old town & new, & we crossed the bridge round through the old town, & began ascending the mountain side which walls in the main valley - Time & fine for an idea of the famous Corniche road, you must not imagine it always on the ocean shore; & you must form for these famed lands new ideas of beauty - Lush & abundant vegetation, abundant green there is not. It is wild mountain, almost broken, rough. Often plunging abruptly into the sea, sometimes falling back & leaving a green border to be cultivated - or at the foot of a gorge making some level land - But the green is scarce, or, where cultivated, olives, grapes, orange-trees - The hills are terraced up to the top wherever possible, & that is one of the characters - The road winds under high walls on its hill side - The gorges are often wonderfully mild, great masses seem to have fallen from the rocky summits leaving strange caves & hollows - Water is precious, & takes liquid form & runs everywhere top & down on the hill sides, & covered troughs into which trickle streams, are all along the road-side at intervals.

We passed too, out of the region of wheeled carriages, except for these great roads - Many nice looking houses & whole villages are only accessible by paths for mules or asses, & every where we meet asses laden with produce, or packs clung across, or a pair of mule keps, & man or woman perched up between - Patient, little creatures that jog along under loads that look enormous -

Well, up we moved from Nice, up the valley turning our backs to the sea, mounting higher, higher, skirting under villa walls (their cellar walls), looking down on pleasant country houses with their orange-gardens, on the great bed of the stream, on little dotted cottages on the terraced hill sides - The children ran along at our side with little bouquets of flowers, roses, oranges - blossoms - "Jesu, Jesu, Monseigneur," "Jesu, Jesu madame," in a sort of chant - One must buy, & when we stopped a moment to rest the horses, such a bunch of roses as Mr. Loring cut from the road-side! The rags lay in front of me on the carriage seat, & the leather strap buckled shold in, roses, orange-flowers, such daisies, & all sorts of lovely things, a perfect feast every time my eyes turned towards them - Enormous century plants were at times on the road-side, prickly pears hung down in masses, & in plants in huge wreaths one could scarcely lift! - Recently pruned & cultivated fruit trees, the rocky tops bared & more abrupt, & between them, first a snow peak, then another, until a beautiful range came in view! And over all this soft, soft sky & lovely sunshine, & in front of me roses & orange-blossoms! - On the highest part, came a little boy with a bunch of violets & rose-hud in the



Gray, Jane Loring. 1868. "Gray, Jane Nov. 30, 1868 [to Susan M. Jackson]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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