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36 Northumberland Street, Strand, London.
February 5. 1839 (11. o'clock evening)

My ever dear Friend

Again seated in my room my first business is to resume the pen which so late I quitted. Having been so highly favoured as to receive two sweet and interesting letters from home just as the time for closing the New York mail by the Liverpool drew near, I set down to make such hurried answer to them as the time allowed. I think I mentioned in those letters how yesterday was spent, viz: that I rose very early took stage-coach for Farnham Green, near Chiswick, where Lindley resides, breakfasted and spent the day. Lindley was certainly very civil, Mrs. Lindley is a quiet lady of plain manners and apparently very domestic habits. Miss Drake, whose name appears as the artist in all Lindley's plates almost was present and is I judge a member of his family, and perhaps a relative of Mrs. Lindley. I saw Lindley's splendid *Pedium Orchidaceum*, and a much more luxurious work, the *Orchidaceae of Mexico & Guatemala* by Bateman, a very large-paper work after Audubon. We looked over some families together in a desultory way, and I took up the *Lupinus* and compared ours carefully with Lindley's which was named by Agardh. At dinner met Dr. Duckett, a microscopic man of high order, and Mr. Myers a traveller in Brazil. On reaching my room I found a note from Bell the Zoologist, to whom I brought a letter from John Carey, but left it at his house not being then able to see him, inviting me to dine as his guest at the Linnaean Club, before the meeting of the Linnaean Society. Fortunately, as I do not like Club-dinners, I had previously accepted Bentham's invitation to dine quietly with him & Mrs. B. on that day, so I sent a note of declination. I have already told you of my failure, by my own carelessness, of seeing the opening of Parliament, which I regret as I should like to see the Peers in official costume, & the peeresses in full dress. It did not break my heart, but I returned to Bentham's and looked over plants until the hour approached to take my place in the Park to see the Queen, and what is finer her superb horses, - with what success I have already said. Thence to the Horticultural Society where I received the welcome letters. After despatching my parcel of letters I took a Cab for Bentham's, as it was raining finely, where we dined in his quiet elegant way. I don't think

Dr. T. saw enough of him, at least in his own house, to appreciate him fully. Though not, I fear, a Christian he is a more serious person, and altogether different from the other London botanists of eminence. You may well infer from my being so much with him that he is my favorite. Went to the Linnean Society where we had a valuable & pleasant meeting. Mr. Foster, V. Pres. in the Chair. There were nominations to fill up the list of the foreign associates of the Society, which are very limited and select. I was truly gratified to see as one of them the name of Dr. Torrey. I intend to work hard now for two or three weeks and to keep clear as possible of all engagements that are not likely to lead to valuable results.

Wednesday Evening.

After breakfast to-day I sat down to Lamberts, thinking to finish nearly the examination of Bentham's plants, but found Lambert on the point of going out, so the morning was unpleasant. As I was obliged to retrace my steps, and as a darker resort I went to the British Museum, and commenced the examination of the Banksian herbarium. Brown was there most of the time but did very little except to read the newspapers and crack his jokes. I broke off at 4 o'clock, went down to the city, called on Mr. Putnam, took a parcel of late American newspapers away with me, - dined, went up to Dr. Botch's where I spent the evening so pleasantly that eleven o'clock arrived before I thought of it. It is now 12. On my return here I found my parcel had arrived from Edinburgh, the beautiful copy of Wallis's work, a very complete & pretty set of British Algae from Dr. Brenville, and some letters of introduction for the Continent which he has obligingly favoured me with. I must write a letter of thanks to him now, but now I must look over the American papers, and retire as early, as may be, as I promised to be with Bentham about half past eight, work with him a few hours, and then I am engaged with Mr. Ward to see the Tunnel, the docks &c.

Friday Evening, February 5th 1829.

I have now two days to account for. Let me consider what I have been about. In the morning yesterday I went by appointment, between 8 and 9 to breakfast with Bentham and to spend the early part of the morning in examining plants. I left him about noon, took an omnibus for the City, stopped at Mr. Putnam's office, concluded an arrangement for some books, and then went on to the far eastern portion of the town to see Mr. Ward. We dined at half past one, according to our arrangement, Mr. W. Mrs. W. their eldest daughter, a young lady of 16 or 17, and

myself. Ward lives in a plain house, and by no means in the pleasantest part of the town. We had a plain quiet dinner, and then got out for the Tunnel, accompanied by Miss Ward, passing through the classical region of Wapping, and crossing the river in a small boat, like those of our Whitehall boatmen. The descent into the tunnel ~~of through the~~ down the enormous shaft looked rather awful, but once in the horizontal portion, all looked pleasant, it is so warm and dry, well-lighted and in every respect comfortable. I will send the little book Ward gave me, from which you may really receive a very good idea of the work. We soon got again into upper air, for not being allowed to go forward to the place where the excavations were going on, our curiosity was soon satisfied, recrossed the Thames, which is, as some American traveller before me has with more truth than elegance called it, - a big mudpuddle, passed along London Bridge, but it was too late to enter, which I regretted as I wished to see an American ship again, just something from home! We had tea, Miss & Mrs. Ward regaled us with music, and both play extremely well, - then Ward and I looked over plants until nearly half past ten, when we had supper, a very substantial one and I took my leave, arriving at my lodgings a little after twelve.

This morning I breakfasted at home, and went to Lamberts, continued my examination of Bentham's plants, until half past four, where I returned to my lodgings, and wrote a letter to Dr. Brenville. - Dined at a Coffee-house, and then, having no other engagements for the evening I concluded to go down to Bentham's parlor. I found, just as I expected, Bentham in his quiet little study, with Mr. B. and his brother Mr. Briggs. Tea soon came in, and soon after Bentham brought in a bundle of duplicates, which gave us occupation for a good part of the evening. So much for these two days! It is now just twelve. I will write a few lines to Dr. T. for a sheet for him is lying beside me, and then I have a little time for reading. Don't soon. May all blessings attend you.

Saturday evening, Feb. 6th.

I was occupied all the morning at the Botanical Society, in the examination of Walter's herbarium. Toward evening I went to the city, saw Mr. Putnam, but his papers by the last Liverpool packet just arrived, had not yet come in. He informs me that he will send a parcel of letters to Liverpool.

on Monday evening; so that I hope to close this on Monday morning and entrust it to his charge. I have made more than one attempt to find Burnett's Inn, but am still unsuccessful in my enquiries. I shall still try my best however. The janitor at the Horticultural Society gave me a fire in one of the rooms this evening, and I worked there until about half past 10 this evening, but it will still require several hours on Monday.

Sunday evening, 10th Feb.

Another Sabbath with its privileges has come and gone. I have returned from evening service in a distant part of the City, and as I sit down to give you some little account of the manner in which it has been spent, I am reminded that there is a stricter record than mine, and that I shall have a more solemn account to give. I am sorry that I did not try to bring letters to some pious people and ministers here. I greatly long for religious society, a blessing I have not enjoyed since I left Dr Griville's. I have been thrown wholly upon myself and left to make the discovery of how little strength or life I have. I am however privileged to attend upon the ordinances of God in public worship, and to hear the gospel preached in simplicity and purity. I cannot expect this to continue long, at least in the degree I at present enjoy, for I may soon expect to be in semi-heathen lands, and be obliged to spend Sabbaths where the gospel is not preached, or if it be in an unknown tongue. If I need the prayers of those that love and care for me now, how much more shall I then! You, my dear sister, I know will not forget me. I am wholly alone on Sunday except when in church. My companions, besides my Bible, and the Hymn Book I got at Edinburgh, which I find very pleasant, - are two books from the Religious Tract Society, which I am reading with pleasure, and I hope with profit. These are "Gwen's Practical Exposition of the 130th Psalm", (which I suppose has not been reprinted in New York) and "Havel's Saint Indeed" which is a little Epistle upon Prov. IV. 23. I am not sure it is the same, but I suspect it is well known to you under another title. I will send them both out to you, to whom they will not be the less interesting from having been my companions (indeed I ought not to complain, when I have such good ones), and they may be added to my prized little collection in the corner of your room. . . .

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I dearly love old John Flavel, and will get all his works if I can find them.

This morning I attended one of the larger Methodist Chapels, where I heard an excellent sermon from 1 Pet. V. 7. - "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." A portion of the Episcopal service was read at the beginning from the desk; but afterwards the clergyman ascended to the pulpit, when the singing and prayers were in the ordinary manner. In the afternoon I went to hear my old favorite Baptist Noel, who was to preach a kind of charity sermon for the Infant schools of St. Clements, Danes. I felt satisfied that we should have a close and fervent sermon, and truly I was not disappointed. His text was 1st Samuel XXVIII. 20. a singular one as I thought for such an occasion; but starting from this point he traced back the mournful history of Saul - showed the effect of passion upon a naturally amiable temper - and the radical fault of Saul, that of indecision and of not giving all his heart and being obedient in all things whatsoever. From this he deduced, as you may well imagine, most important lessons, urged the importance of immediate and entire surrender of the heart to God with a plainness and directness which I have nowhere heard surpassed. At the end he addressed a few words to the children, and closed with a fervent exhortation to their teachers and parents. Mr. Noel stands in my mind next to our own Dr. Skinner. You will ask why I do not send you notes, but this is impossible. He preaches extempore, but has the most perfect facility of language - the words drop from his mouth without any apparent effort, but he never repeats and all seems equally important: so unless I could write as fast as he speaks I could give you no proper idea of his discourses. His manner is so exceedingly placid that you wonder how he fixes the attention of his auditors so perfectly. There are many other clergymen of the establishment who have the same ardent piety, and the number I hope is increasing, so that one cannot help expecting great things from this communion, if it once gets free from the contaminating influence of the political power. These men all preach continually to crowded houses, which is another good sign, and proves that the people are ready to hear sound doctrine. I hoped to have heard another of the same stamp this evening, and went all the way to St. Sepulchre's where Mr. Dale preaches in the evening, but he was out of town.

Nevertheless the very large Church was crowded, and an excellent sermon was preached from Hebrews, X. 38-39.

I forgot to mention that the hymns this afternoon were all sung by the infant school: the scholars were of about Henry's age, or one size larger. The hymn sung at the close went to my heart as you may well imagine. It was the little hymn, "Here be our grief & pain" which I have so often heard Henry sing; I assure you it brought you all before me most vividly! I did send you the dedication of copies from the hymn book used in Mr Noel's ~~Chapel~~ Chapel. I think not. Here it is.

"To the Congregation in St. John's Chapel, Bedford Row"
"Not in the Church, alone, (though that tis sweet
"To hear the melting notes of praise ascend)
"But in all scenes, to our Almighty Friend
"Let us, with constant love, our hymns repeat;
"When, for our brethren, our chosen friends we meet,
"Round our domestic altars meekly bend;
"Retire, an hour in solemn prayer to spend;
"Or walk, in tranquil thought, the crowded street;
"For He is worthy of unceasing praise,
"To whom in all vicissitudes we cling;
"Whether the hours fleet by our joyous wing,
"Or gathering sorrows darken all our days;
"His love, in Heaven, angelic myriads sing,
"And we, not favoured less, our humble praise will bring."
D. W. N.

Monday 4. P.M.

I have been all the morning at the British Museum and have just returned to take my letters down to Mr. Lubman, who has an opportunity of sending to Liverpool for next packet. I must in haste say

Adieu

ply
It is a pity to send you so much waste paper -
but I must take this down immediately, a closer
my choice. Love to the children and all the
family. Your devoted M. May



Gray, Asa. 1839. "Gray, Asa Feb. 5, 1839 [to Torrey]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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