

London - Sep. 29th. 1852 -

John Cross, Charing Cross.

Dear Reggie,

Stairs & Scares, & others very famous - There was a beautiful Madonna
 there of Mansfield, and some very striking figures by Salvatore Rosa - A
 beautiful portrait by Rubens of his first wife, &c. &c. He was very anxious
 to see the pictures left of the king's collection - to satisfy, I felt, the
 Emperor of Russia bought to himself; & Mr. de Buns, of Dresden, with
 whom Dr. Jay had passed the 24th before, had kindly given us a letter to the
 Superintendent of the Palace. The pictures are not shown now to the public.
 And on presenting our letter, the gentleman told us he had been expecting the
 king all the morning & was still waiting for him, & that unfortunately we
 could not see them there - So we turned our steps, went into a Bakery
 & to some Italian restaurant for lunch, just half an hour's walk - I went to the
 Palazzo to get some little trifles for keepsakes for the ladies - such pretty
 things as we see from all parts of the world! - Really we have no idea at home
 of handsome things - Italy it secures a direct fortune to my class - be it
 back to the can just on time; & again to dinner for a late dinner. I, Sunday
 morning we went to the French Church, & heard a capital sermon on Death
 without words is dead - There we walked round the choir, & up to the summit
 of an old tower supposed to be on Roman foundations - And with the old church,
 a cathedral before the Reformation, & where were the monuments of many
 old Bishops & learned men. They were mostly very plain, quite striking
 from their quiet simplicity. One was a white marble slab, set upon a
 "temperatum divinationem." Built at the base was the date of his birth & death.
 In the centre of the church they were administering the sacrament - both
 priests sitting in turn & sitting round a long table. We heard the organ & the
 singing, & it was very fine, as also at the church where we attended. Some-
 times a hymn-book was handed, & each hymn in the music, & the leaders at
 the end of the psalmant the same - Some one sings, & sings in singing the time
 before they often sounded familiar, but the singing is so clear that it sounds like
 a chant - They all sing the same air, there is no harmony, but they sing
 very well, & the effect is very fine & pure. And you have all voices, women,
 children & children all blended in one grand effect! - I heard Sops very
 much. The streets so quiet, & shaded with trees, & almost all the buildings on
 a canal - so neat, & the houses with their large windows & comfortable
 look! - Our chamber looked directly over the canal, & I could not but think
 what a nice quiet way to carry provisions to market, when the large boat loads
 of vegetables float by so regularly - There are comparatively but few vehicles in
 the street - The Sunday is not kept so quietly there, so much less noise &
 every day business going on than one would find in continental cities - After
 our dinner we walked up to stroll in the Botanic Garden - And having
 promised Madame de la Roche that we would let her know when we came, we
 stopped at their house, one side of which looks into the garden. She was dining
 but promised to join us soon - The garden is my old, one of the oldest in the continent

I mailed a large letter, enclosed with many others to
 you, last Friday, addressed to you - In that I acknowledged I believe
 your letter contained in Rotterdam, & one from you & from Mr. Cross in London
 day, with one from Charles, & one from William - I received also one from
 returning from Brighton with the only letter we have missed, some
 which were sent so late to Birmingham, & which were so promptly followed
 as they were one from father a mother, for which reason, many thanks
 one from me & from Mr. Cross, the from which contains a very interesting account
 of his sea expedition, & one from Aunt Peggy in answer to one from about
 7 weeks after it was written! - I have had letters from every steamer, &
 you cannot tell how much I am grateful & how glad for content
 much! My letters are such comfort! - I hope you was not much busy,
 & now that I am in England again I shall be much more free of
 them from promptly, & will make great exertions that no steamer is missed.
 I left my journal, having just arrived, deposited in the care of
 in Amsterdam - He was no longer settled in our corner, than I should
 to change my views & early out right view - He went first to the
 museum, where there is a large & very excellent collection of the
 paintings of the Dutch school - And many other good ones of Italian
 & French - I am delighted with the Dutch masters, they are so
 true to life! to be sure the subjects are not very lofty, but they
 are often very pleasing, & the man seems always to express what he
 is feeling at. Pictures in many more poetic & imaginative
 schools you feel the ideal is still as far above the execution that
 the calm of want is the strongest feeling in looking at them -
 after seeing too Rubens' pictures, with the delicious soft brown colouring
 & the flesh that looks as if it must yield to touch, it looks so life-
 like, it quite spoils me for the Italian pictures, where though often
 the character is so much more lofty & grand it seems hard & cold
 & unnatural - I must say I have been disappointed in the Raphael
 I have seen so far, though they are I believe his inferior works - You
 must not judge, I see now very plainly, of either Rubens or Titian in

many of the Dutch painters from ^{the} 17th century, for what looks coarse
in them is soft & rich in the colour - But I rather fancy the station
school appears to have ^{no} advantage, & one conquered after seems a dis-
tasteful engraving with its sweet & angelic face that the engraving
adds more to it than it really does, & fancy the painter's ideal;
rather than the real picture - The engraving which you have seen
by in your sitting-chamber, Sue, & which we think so pretty, the Dutch
landscape I mean, is a 17th century painting, & when you sit in the shade
of the landscape, & the cattle is especially one, you would scarcely
recognize it for the same thing were it not for the outlines - But
I must say I did not like it to tell so many others - There are in
the Antiquarian Museum some most famous pictures of Rembrandt,
fine portraits of 17th century. Most especially finished pictures of nature
I think. I am that you can scarcely believe can be painted. Some
which interest & delight almost as. Some of the perfectly finished parts
of grand dows. Every hour painted in the old man's hand, & a beautiful
candlelight scene by him - Comic sketches by you seen, one of Santa Anna
see, great heads by Schalken, wonderful birds & game & hunting scenes
by 17th century, a magnificent fruit & flower piece - There are only
or 2 of Rembrandt - Some of the landscapes are beautiful - Scenes where
houses are introduced by 17th century, beautiful sea pieces by 17th century,
& I think the loveliest landscape I ever saw by 17th century - A catarract
your little piece with cattle in it, 17th century - Who painted it 17th century or
17th century? - I saw some things very much in that manner by one
of these artists, I cannot remember which - But it is impossible I
will know to give any description of the style of different masters by
words, one must see them to get a clear idea - But still study helps
one very much, & I am sorry I have not studied more about painting,
a man to by this winter, especially before I go to Paris & Italy -

After we had waited a long time then, we left to find our way to the Blaine garden, Mr. Shaw having a letter for Miss Engle. It was a time when one of the annual fairs are held in Rotterdam. And the women have such a very noble costume. There were plenty of portraits about, and, of course, some refreshments. There was one. I was soon afterwards that I did not stop at a table some of the characteristic white dress - a woman sat on high with her foot of her on the table. I was trying about 2 feet long & 1/2 broad, filled with flannel, paper, over that - at the proper distance is an iron pan with butter or bacon down at regular intervals. By the side of the woman is a large shining brass horn of true European

Leiden The Garden is very old one of 10 the oldest in Europe. (2)
+ & was known well to Linnaeus - After going through the various houses & walking about, we met Madame de Vries, & she summoned the porter to show us the Room in the University where are hung all the old portraits of the Professors quite from its foundation - The room is quite lined with them - And there we saw the Standard worked by the ladies of Leyden, & presented by them to the students who enlisted & formed themselves into a company to go to the defence of Holland when last threatened by the French in 1830. It is very handsome, of white satin worked with green cherries & floss, a wreath of ^{Laural} ~~olive~~ oak on one side & a motto - On the other some crest in gold, &c - The University was founded after the defence of Leyden against the Spaniards - The King offered the people some commemorative reward, & they chose the University - One of the daughters accompanied us - A pretty girl about 16 or 17 & looking so like Anna Brace! She spoke English very tolerably - We went into the house to take tea - And soon Prof. de Vries came in with Mr. Brown, he had gone to Amsterdam to join him, & we had tea - There were several children, one pretty little thing of about 2 years, & the mother of Madame de Vries, how she did love & pet the little one! - We had a very pleasant visit - They talked French & some of them English - We were to leave early the next morning, for though disappointed in finding our boat on Monday from Rotterdam to London, we hoped it would start Tuesday morning, & as we had a parcel to put up to send to America, we must have some hours in it - So we were up before light to take the diligence to Hague to join the early cars from there, for there was none until late from Leyden - We beheld unpacked, breakfasted soon on our way to the office - But on reaching the diligence, lo! it was like one of our stage coaches, & filled with men - On getting our seats & settling off they began to smoke! & people there were inside, & 5 smoking! - I had my window open & the man opposite me a little narrow one, & that was all - They seem to detest fresh air! - Oh how that man injured me to the little nasty end of his cigar - ~~He~~ ^{He} made it last all the way to the Hague! I sat with my head out of the window - But got so sick & such a headache! Poor Dr. Gray who sat more inside, said his eyes were almost put out - Of course it interfered with the pleasure of the ride, which would otherwise have been quite entertaining - For one got quite among the quaint Dutch villas just on the suburbs Every house & yard is surrounded with a ditch, & a bridge crosses to the Avenue, & in the centre the gate - I was quite amused with seeing at one house a little narrow plank with cross pieces to a hole in the wall, evidently for the dog or chickens! - Then the summer-houses quite overlook the little ditch, generally fronting on it - They did not always smell the sweetest - The ditches & canals were quite full of water - And in some places the

canals were banked up & higher than the fields - I think on the whole I should not like to live in Holland - To be at the mercy of a storm or frost must be an awfully way of living - In Syria the land was so unsafe when the Station R.P. was built, that they had to drive piles & sink a raft to hold the foundations! - Yet it did not look as flat as I expected. They plant trees very much along the roads, & the dykes are so broad they look so like hills, that you did not see as much wearisome level as I expected. - Every field is bounded by a little canal or ditch, & a bridge across to get into them. - There were fine cattle in the fields - And I saw nice horses, especially cart horses, in the cities - We reached Rotterdam in good time & there found the Steamboat did not sail until Tuesday at 10 o'clock, so we might as well have taken it leisurely - So we put up our parcel, strolled through the streets, picked up some little things, & availed away the time - I did some writing - I dreaded very much the sail across, fearing it would be rough & uncomfortable - Our Hotel was directly on the quay, & a vessel for New York almost opposite our windows, & the cries of the sailors hoisting in caps, almost made me sea-sick by anticipation - We went on board Tuesday noon with a pleasant warm day, & sailed down the Rhine to the German Ocean. It was calm & pleasant, & we had a good dinner quite in English style - After dinner we went on deck again & made acquaintance with an English gentleman, a Tutor in Trinity College, Cambridge, as we afterwards learned. He was most unusually agreeable, with a fund of information & pleasant anecdote on a great variety of subjects - And the dreaded voyage promised most agreeably - I having sat up till after 10 talking with our pleasant acquaintance, I retired to ~~the~~ cabin, where a most attentive Chambermaid tucked me into my berth, & wished me good night - And I must then leave for the present or I shall not be ready for the mail, & I have written at least four hours this morning - The end you see is no longer London, but Rotterdam House, where we are very pleasantly established since Tuesday of having left London that morning. Sue's letter wh. I got yesterday, says there is a letter from you, dear Lizzie, on the way - I say give most affectionate love to all & believe me ever most lovingly yours, Jane.



Gray, Jane Loring. 1850. "Gray, Jane Sept. 29, 1850 [to Loring]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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