

Come after 25 Mrs Gray

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Wednesday morning, June 11th. Settled down to usual New routine; glad enough to get back to quiet and superlative neatness, ^{to} less elegance than our Parisian quarters, but decidedly more comfort. The only thing that distresses us is, that we cannot translate dear Mrs. Brook bodily to Cambridge, Mass. Sure we would if she were younger; but the dear old creature will now ere long be translated to a far better land. ~~A~~ unpacking (which in interminableness is only second to packing up). Dr. G. went down to the Hooker's, (Saw Dr. Hooker; but Sir Wm & Miss Hooker were gone down into Devonshire); and in the afternoon we both went over to Clapham to see the Wards - stayed to tea, - got home after 10 o'clock. Mrs. Ward poorly; gave the Miss Wards a nice pair of French gloves.

Thursday was a real specimen of English drizzle & wet. I did not go out the whole day. Dr. G. worked at Hooker's as usual.

Friday, after writing & despatching letters home, we went up to London, shopped &c. in the city; streets nasty (the English word is very appropriate - no wonder they always use it), and such a contrast to beautiful & gay Paris, which is vastly more convenient & agreeable for shopping. Went to the Bortts. Heard that the Lovells were going. Last heard of Bon Amsterdam.

Saturday, got my ^{lame} ~~fine~~ stender foot at length into a pair of shoes, & went up to call on Lady Hooker, after a little stroll in the gardens, which were looking beautifully, the trees loaded with rich foliage, and the great masses of Rhododendrons in blossom.

In the evening Dr. G. & Dr. Hooker went together up to the

(last) Prince of Land Rome, the President of the Royal Society, - too late to ^{see} Prince Albert, who came and went early. Saw the usual ones, Mr Charles Lyell asked if Dr. Gray had stayed abroad all the time since last year, or had just come over fresh. I stayed at home in bed with a horrid face-ache, caught, I think, from the exposure and the night ^{of} ^{lay} brooking in sea-water on board the boat from Duff, and the dampness & chilliness of London air.

Sunday. Stayed at home - face better, but stiff and tender. Dr. G. went to church at Mottlake, with Dr. Hooker. In the afternoon Hooker called, & Dr. G. then went to the Garden - and drove back in lurch by the rain.

Monday, we went up to town in the afternoon, called on some of Dr. Harey's relatives near in London (a nice warm day); then wandered about the - no - it was the Laurence & Mrs. Russell Murgis we went to call on that day, - for on our return from Paris we found a card of invitation to dinner from the Angis' - some time in May. Did not get in,

no united utility with elegance & brought a Borey Coffee-maker (I wrote a brother of our lady) (and an exciting working-fork, which I want not like a telescope) which Dr. Gray carried in his hand all the way to the Rail Road Station, - besides a small lobster which he was tempted into in passing through Stamp's market, - to the imminent hazard of losing the train, which we only secured by a good run, & reached the train, just as it was on the very point of starting, - much to the satisfaction,

I fancy, of Mrs. Congreave, of Kew, who was in the carriage we boarded into. He did not recognise us (as we had scarcely met) until we got out of the train, at Kew, when Dr. G. addressed him, and we walked across the bridge and the Green together. I carefully concealing the lobster under my arm (which I had taken from Dr. G. lest he should display it) - still it would not & then poke its red claws out of the paper wrapper. We sat down to dinner at once, and had hardly begun, when we were startled by a ring from a footman in livery, who brought an invitation from the Congreaves, to dinner on the next Thursday.

Tuesday was enlivened by the usual weekly tid-bit of letters from home: after dinner we had a charming walk ~~with~~ walk along the river-shore & across the pleasure-ground.

Wednesday: we were off early in the morning, to make our first-visit to the Great Exhibition. We went up to town by Rail Road as usual, - walked over Waterloo bridge, and having reached the Strand, had the satisfaction of seeing nine omnibuses pass westward - all full, despairing of all hope of getting into an omnibus, we were just turning to look for a cab, when a well-dressed & respectable woman, who had been making similar unsuccessful attempts, rushed up to us, exclaiming, Oh, are you going to the Exhibition? Will you not take a cab with me? I have been trying for an omnibus in vain this half hour, and I have made an appointment with some friends there at 1/2 past 10. We agreed at

once to this remarkable and very convenient proposition,
and we shared the expense accordingly, with many expressions
of thanks on the ladies' part. Before we had
reached within half a mile of the Crystal Palace
we were obliged to fall into dense line, with a close
double file of cabs, carriages, dog-carts, and other
"vehicular conveyances", ~~a great~~ all wending their
way thither, a similar double file of empty carriages
returning on the other side of the street, - the side-walks
as well as the roads in side the park all crowded
with pedestrians. Early as we were, a vast ^{number of people} ~~crowd~~ were
already there, but scattered through the vast interior,
they scarcely made a crowd, until mid-day, when the
the more attractive parts of the structure - the principal
streets and squares, so to say, were thronged.

As to what we ~~saw~~ ^{saw}, is it not written at length
in the great official Catalogue (as far as that
prudent document is yet published), besides the
Abridged Catalogue, ~~an~~ itself quite a sizeable book, -
which we meant to bring home - with the Synopsis, &
other things - quite a library, - and I dare say you
have read & read quite enough about it. (I doubt
whether you have seen the ~~the~~ excellent and spirited
series of articles in the Times - beginning long before the
building was finished, which give a most admirable
and lively account of every thing.)

The general impression of the interior was not quite so
imposing, did not give such an idea of vastness, as
when we saw it in April, less full, & the long spaces un-
broken.

B

On our way down the river, we stopped for a moment to see ~~the~~ the Kosh-i-nov. - but the mountain of light, looked to us little brighter than a piece of cut-glass. It does not come up to the general expectation. Manage it as they will, it does ^{not} shine at all wonderfully, - & the people got it into their heads that the authorities were shamming them with a glass imitation instead of the veritable Kosh-i-nov, - an idea well expressed by Punch, who called it "the Knave of Diamond." We determined to show our patriotism by going first of all carefully through the American department, - and quite a trial to our patriotism it is, - a great space, very scantily filled with an ill assorted, incongruous collection (although they have given up to Russia & France about one quarter of the space that Mr. Laurence asked for and insisted upon having): - one long shelf displayed only half a dozen common wooden pails; another side was decorated with a miserable collection of cast-off specimens of autumn-leaves, - and below with a case containing 5 or 6 dozen bottles of Prepared Magnesia - all just alike. - flanked at the sides, with a similar collection of Old Zach Townsend's Arrow-poilla, surmounted by a portrait of the illustrious inventor. The strength of the nation has gone to Jaguerotypes, of which there are about 2000 - very good specimens of the art, it must be said, & better than they can produce in England. The same may be said of many things, creditable in themselves, - but of which they have filled up their space, or attempted to fill it, with an enormous number of specimens - where one or two would suffice. But whenever

any thing is quite poor and commonplace, the exhibitor is sure to make it up in brag, in which it must be confessed we do "beat all creation". (Logan's Lane, near H.Q.) The great difficulty is that so large a part of our exhibition has fallen into the hands of third-rate people and humbugs, and many most ill-chosen articles are sent. There has evidently been no system, and scarcely any control. It would have been better if Mr. Lawrence, instead of asking for more space than was originally allotted, had used his influence with the government at home, and with the leading Boston & New York men, and have secured a more complete and more select representation of American products.

Thursday, Warm day. Mayd home and send.
 M half past six went to the Breyfuses to die. -
 Mr. & Mrs. Breyfuse, with her mother & an unmarried sister.
 Miss Vanhant, who had travelled in the U. S. recently, and
 had been very kindly received (as a casual acquaintance) by
 Mrs. Wm R. May, in New York. - after whom Miss May
 she inquired with much interest. Mr. Breyfuse (brother
 of the one Dr. Gray was so much pleased with at Oxford -
 one of the tutors at Christ Church) - is a funny man - quite
 a striking and patient character, - active in manner, but
 with a vast deal of information and good sense at bottom.
 He is a ^{London} barrister. (Died) at 3 o'clock &)

He is a barometer.
Friday, May 14. Came home and we dined at 3 o'clock, &
were just going up to Lundy, when Lady Hester's eldest daughter called
in a carriage - took us in, and drove us as far as Ken-
tish - we walked over, took train, called a Mrs. Stanger, of Bath,
& the Misses - then up to Lundy - they were out - then went
shopping about thirty at West End - Mrs. Bond M. & - tell go
clock - & returned by 9 1/4 train to Ken again, quite fatigued
as usual. I don't imagine this an evening business, for it was

still bright day light, or here by twilight, when we reached
Kau at 10 o'clock.

Saturday - A very warm day. Stayed home - received call of Mrs. Gayle - at 7 went to die at the Walker's to meet Mrs. Burdow and Miss Burdow - the latter for the last time, as she returned Monday to Hitcham, where she remains till she is married - on the 15th inst. - they perhaps a town, & will not be at Ken until after we finally leave it. A pleasant time, as usual. -

Sunday morning we were off Melrose in the morning to Vauxhall by Railway - then a cab to the Ward at Clapham - Mrs. W. having very particularly desired us to come for a day or so before she went down to Margate where she was to go Tuesday - to stay a good part of the summer the sea air agreeing with her very much. We went over in time to go to church with them in the morning, (Mr. & G. walked our fields & to Norwood) In the afternoon Mr. Ward & Mrs. Ad. Ward came over to dinner - Spent the evening, We slept there. The next morning, &c.

Monday we took our bag & walked to Vauxhall Station, left bag; took a ~~car~~ and walked over Vauxhall Bridge, and by a set of ourrickias got to the top of Regent's Park to the Zoological Gardens, a very extensive, in fact ^{fine} - the richest collection of animals of all sorts in the world. Saw very much amused with Markays of all sorts & sizes, from those little layer than a rat to the great & sedate orang outang just armed, who ~~was~~ is quite a human & a very respectable grave old fellow. We saw the hippopotamus too, but he lay sleeping in the sun, and would show no signs of life, except occasionally flaring his eye and giving a snort. But one of the most amusing sight was the little suckling elephants with its mother, and it was curious to see ~~that~~ the little

thing use its trunk as perfectly & knowingly as its mother.
Particulars of all the beasts I defer till I have a
chance to write a letter about them to Pat & Charlie,
and the other young folk. I got fatigued
enough, & I wanted to see ferocious animals fed at
4½ - no great sight, as they behaved extremely proper,
and then we hurried back to the station & came home
to Kew.

Tuesday came the letters from home acknowledged last
week. In the afternoon Mrs. Miss Miss & Sir Mrs. Miss
Storke called - all at the same time - our little room well
filled.

Wednesday Next up to town, late in the morning, called at
the Laurencis (not at home), then on the Sturges^d (ditto), who
had sent us invitations for the Saturday evening from us - then
on the Voatts - thence took a cab ~~to~~ to Westminster,
had another good view of the Abbey, & at 5 o'clock, went
to the House of Lords, for which Mr. Laurence had written
for us to the usher of the Black Rod. We were lucky on the
whole - though there was not much done, yet some legal
questions brought up Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Campbell - Lord
Brougham of course (he spoke 3 or 4 times); also we heard
the Marquis of Lansdowne the leader of the administration in that
house, Lord Blairmore - a few words from Lord Stanley & Lord
Ellenborough. - I saw Duke of Wellington, Cambridge - Argyll.
The first of a handsome & very young looking man - & Lord Carlisle - whom I
knew at once from his portraits in Punch. - He is extremely ungainly
& heavily, but with a most good natured countenance. -
I was much disappointed in their appearance as an aristocratic
assemblage; many of them were any thing but lovely in looks. But their
manners toward each other were pleasant & very gentlemanly. & their
whole bearing extremely most easy, like a familiar party of old
friends. We came away in the midst of a long Report read
by the Lord Chancellor, - a little old man looking like an old
woman - to whom even his full-bottom wig could impart no air of
dignity -) and were home at Kew before it was fairly dark.



1851. "July 11, 1851 [to Loring]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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