

Called on Lyell the Geologist.

1 23

We dined with Dr. Roget, the Secretary of the Royal Society, where we met Sir Francis Polkington, a great oriental scholar and traveller, Prof. Boyle, Dr. Broth, and two others whose names I forget. But best of all Dr. Broth brought me a letter from Dr. T. & Jane, dated Dec. 25 (Christmas), and I soon contrived to get into a quiet corner to read it; right glad I was to hear from home once more, I will answer it to-morrow. We left very early as Hooker was to go to Hampstead, where Sir Francis Polkington resides. Joe and I walked on with him, till he should find a stage; but as none overtook us and the night was fine we walked on the whole way, 3 or 4 miles, and having left Sir W. safe & sound, and seen Sir F. Polkington for a moment, the remainder of the family having retired to rest, Joe & I walked back again to town. I confess I am a little tired, and am quite willing to go to bed. A. Dine.

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan. 1839.

Breakfasted & dined with Mr. Bentham, and studied plants with him all day and a good portion of the evening, excepting an hour or so in the morning when we walked out & Bentham took me through the splendid house of the Athenaeum Club, and we also visited the National Gallery, and saw fine paintings in great numbers from almost every artist ancient or modern. It is very near my lodgings and I intend to visit it again. Here are some of West's original pictures, and likewise the paintings or sketches of Hogarth from which his well-known engravings were taken. They are much more expressive than the prints. Eliza would enjoy many of them very much, and especially some of Wilkie's of the same kind. I am to take my breakfast in my lodgings to-morrow morning; which I have as yet done but once. I sent yesterday my letter of introduction to Mr. Christy, who lives out of town, and received to-day a most polite invitation to dine with him tomorrow and meet Hooker & Joe.

Thursday. Breakfast at home. - Call with Joe Hooker on Mr. Cooper & then on Sir Astley Cooper; pleasantly received; saw some very curious preparations &c. - spent the morning with Bentham, and dined at Mr. Christy's, Clapham road, where I spent an agreeable evening. Returning wrote a letter to Dr. T. to go by mail tomorrow to Bristol for the Great Western.

Friday Evening

I breakfasted at my lodgings this morning, and afterwards walked out with Sir Wm. & Joe Hooker to Regents Park, went to the Coliseum to see the Panorama of London, and well worth seeing it is. It will save me a visit to the top of the dome of St. Paul's. I think, for the Panorama is said to be more perfect than nature. I will say no more about it as Dr. Jorvis has seen it. The illumined would be quite perfect were it not for some unsightly cracks in the sky!

We called on Dr. Broth, then went into the city. Our object was to visit the Museum at the India House (where the poor Lamb spent a great portion of his life). I made the acquaintance of Dr. Horsfield, the Curator, who also collected the best part of the Museum in Java & India. He is an American, if you can so call a man who has not been in the country. Since the year 1800, I was much interested with the Library, which contains a vast quantity of Indian idols, sculptures & antiquities, as well as fine Chinese engravings. It is immensely rich, also in Indian, Persian & Arabic Manuscripts - the best in the world in such things. Some of the Persian (Arabic) manuscripts are most beautifully illustrated or illuminated, and the writing is neater than you can conceive. There is moreover also an original petition of the India Company to Oliver Cromwell, with the answer in his own rough & strong handwriting. Returning we stopped to see Guildhall, the famous house of the London Corporation. We were so fortunate as to meet at the door Mr. Richard Taylor, a member of the Common Council, who showed us the whole house. We saw first the truly splendid Hall in which the Corporation dines on green, which contains some fine Monumental Statuary. In the two corners at one end of the room stand Hog and Mayors of famous memory. We were shown through the various rooms and offices, many of them containing fine pictures &c. We saw the antique sceptre which is put into the hand of the King when he comes to Guildhall &c.

We dined at Lambeth, where we found Ch. Brown, Mr. Ward, who has been looking for me, and immediately asked me to name a day to see his plants in the Ward-Cases, and on evening we long to examine some 20 or 40 first rate microscopes which he has in his house. After Dr. Portlock, Mr. Benson, a legal gentle man, a great scholar, author &c.

✱ I forgot to mention also some birds from Babylon, and with the arrow-headed charcoons, which were the most interesting objects of antiquity I almost ever saw!

scholar, and author. And last, not least, yet certainly almost the last person whom I should have expected to see, Lady Charlotte Perry (formerly Lady Charlotte Campbell) whom you will remember as the author of that book on the story of the Count of George IV & his Queen, of which we read together last summer, the deeply interesting story by Monmouth. Lady Perry is now supposed to be 80 years old, and was for a long time considered as the handsomest woman in Great Britain; she still looks well, though too on her point, and dresses like a young lady with short sleeves &c. She is of a high family, a sister of the present Duke of Angles, and is certainly talented; she is said to be quite poor. Her daughters are married into families of rank, except one (Miss Perry) who was with her mother at Lambeth, whom Sir Wm. Hooker thought remarkably handsome, but I did not see. As I have not a high respect for Lady Perry's character, I did not throw myself into her circle, and saw almost nothing of her the whole evening. We came away early.

Saturday Evening

I paid a visit, this morning, in company with Joe Hooker, to the Zoological gardens in Regents Park, where we saw all kinds of four-footed beasts, and fowl, and creeping things. There are 4 crocodiles, but none quite so large as those we saw in Madras. There was a very fine Burmese orang-utan, very gentle and remarkably amiable, a curious spider-monster, and other curious animals in great plenty. The finest residences I have seen in London, are those which look upon Regents Park. Returning we called upon Lambeth, Saturday being a kind of public day with him, and there met that Nestor of Botanists, Mr. Menzies, whom I found a most pleasant and kind-hearted old man; he invited me very earnestly to come down and see him, which I will try to do some day. Meanwhile I expect to meet him on Tuesday at Mr. Ward's. We just had time to go down into the City to call on Mr. Putnam (Publisher) & to hear that a copy of the Flora had arrived but was not yet cleared from the Customs-house: then took a hansom-coach to dine at Sir Andrew Dalrymple's. Excepting Hooker & Joe I almost forgot who the guests were. I was not interested in any of them particularly. Sir Francis was very agreeable; his conversational powers are almost equal to his erudition. His lady, who looks much like Sir, Hooker, is like all that family, learned and accomplished. I was glad also to meet Hooker's oldest daughter Maria, who is less handsome than Elizabeth, and more sedate, but very sensible. The boys interested me much: I think I never saw more intelligent lads. Sir Francis asked me to call at the Chapter House, Westminster Abbey, his office as Keeper of the Records, and he would show me the Domesday Book. How a sight of it would electrify Dr. Barratt! He asked me at dinner the meaning of the term *locus focus* as applied to a party in the U. S. I gave him the story of the meeting in Lambeth Hall, which gave rise to the term designation, which afforded much amusement.

Sunday Evening, Jan. 27,

I was better prepared than last Sabbath, for I took pains to call yesterday at the Office of the Religious Tract Society, and found out where Baptist Noel preached. It is St John's Chapel, at considerable distance from here. Nevertheless I attended there today and have reason to be glad that I did so, for I heard a most excellent sermon in the morning, from 103 Psal. 10-12. Mr. Noel is a most simple winning preacher, and his sermon was the most thoroughly evangelical and earnest I ever heard from an Episcopal Pulpit. I wish I could give you some idea of it. I took notes for your benefit as well as I could, and have written them out, but they will give you a very imperfect idea of it. The Church, a large one, with double galleries around three sides, was crowded. This afternoon his assistant Mr. Garwood preached and there was room enough, but we had a good sermon. This Mr. Garwood, you may have seen by the papers has lately been persecuted a little by his bishop, for acting as Secretary to the London City Mission. Both he and Mr. Noel are doing much good in raising the standard of piety and active benevolence in the Church they belong to. I hope by next Sunday to inquire out Dr. Reed's Church. I have not been out this evening, but have employed myself in ~~looking~~ copying out my poor notes on the morning sermon, which I trust soon to forward to you. If I hear him again, as I hope to do, I think I shall be able to take more copious notes.

Monday Evening, Jan. 28. 1837

I spent the morning with Bertham, by appointment, with whom I breakfasted, and looked at Leguminosae until 2 P.M. Then joined Joe Hooker (took leave of Sir Wm this morning, who has returned to Glasgow, via Hoburn) made calls, among others on Dr. Bostock, who received me very politely; we then dined together at a Chop-house; called on Dr. Booth, spent an hour or two in his very pleasant family; then attended a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, in which all that interested me was a paper by Prof. Robinson of N.Y. on some interesting matters of ancient Geography connected with his travels in Asia Minor. The paper was read to the Geograph. Society by a learned German Geographer; it excited much interest. But best of all I received the two most welcome letters from Dr. T. & yourself, for which I cannot thank you sufficiently, viz: those of the 1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> of January, by the <sup>Singapore</sup> London packer just arrived. I am going into the city to-morrow and will close these sheets, and drop them in the letter-bag of the next London Packet, if I can find it; so I will ever break off at the bottom of this sheet; and subscribe myself

Ever Yours

A. L.



Gray, Asa. 1839. "Gray, Asa Jan. 23, 1839 [to Torrey]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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