

Tuesday Morning, 28th May, 1839.

I spent the morning yesterday, as before, at the Imperial Cabinet, and after dinner visited the Imperial Arsenal, a vast establishment, containing one of the largest armories in Europe. The lay gallery contains 150,000 stands of arms, beautifully arranged, a great store of ancient weapons, and an interesting series of suits of armor of the earlier Austrian forces &c. - Also standards, horse-tails, and weapons conquered from the Turks. The great courtyard below is decorated with the enormous chain of 8000 links which the Turks threw across the Danube at Ofen to obstruct the navigation of that river, in 1529. It is hung in festoons around the walls of the courtyard. Here is an immense collection of Cannon, of all sorts. One piece taken from the Turks is 24 feet long and projects a ball of 124 lb weight. Among this I had a long walk into the

Vienna, 24th May. Friday ²⁷₃₀ Evening. ³¹

Ever dear Friend

Glad am I to set down once more and
commence a sheet to you. The superscription tells you where
I am, in this almost extra-European city, which seems much
farther away from home than ever Rome, and in truth I think
it is. I have just returned from a stationary ship where
I sought this paper, together with some to exchange the plates
I have collected in Illyria. I asked for sheet I wished in
French, and at length a clerk appeared who spoke that language,
and soon discovering that this was not my native
tongue, he asked Vous etes Anglais? to which I unceasingly
replied yes; but corrected myself and said Americain.
Oh, C'est beaucoup plus loin! says he; and I have
ever since been thinking how very, very far distant it is,
and how many a weary step I must take ere I see it and
all that is dear to me.

My letters from Trieste, closed on Saturday night
last, and given to the Captain of the Brig Edward I send for
New York in a week or so, with information of my proceeding
up to that time, and of my prospects about getting to Vienna.
Perhaps, however, this may reach you first, as the voyage
from that port is a long one. Sunday was a most lovely
day, and the sky so clear that I saw for the first time the
immense Alps which approach closely the head of Adriatic
Sea, then craggy summits white as the fleecy clouds with which
they were surrounded. I had lost this view both from Padua
and Venice on account of the cloudy weather, and this was my
last chance of seeing them. I attended Church at the English
Chapel, for there are English enough to support a considerable
place of worship of their own; I heard a pretty good sermon; I
was thankful to have the opportunity of hearing any at all.

The great fete at the Broths of Adelsberg, of which I wrote you was to take place on Monday afternoon. Mr. Phil. (the Painter) and myself took a carriage to that place and ~~arrived~~ ^{arrived} in good time, saw this very strange grotto with grottoes and ~~travels~~ ^{travels} and ~~other~~ ^{other} more curious circumstances. I suspect there was ever done by Americans before. I had all the next day before me, as the Coach from Trieste did not arrive till evening. My Companion was taken somewhat ill and kept to his house, while I took my post-holes and walked thro' the fields of this retired valley to a bold and high mountain range, more dis-

=tance than I had calculated on - climbed the rocks with much difficulty, enjoyed a charming prospect from the summit, filled my portfolio with plants, got back about five o'clock, regularly tired and hungry, had just time to eat my dinner and secure my specimens before the coach came from Trieste. We took our places just at dusk (Tuesday evening) have been on the road day and night, stopping just long enough to take our meals, until this morning, when at early daylight just as I opened my eyes from such deep & one might catch after three consecutive nights of such confinement, the Vale of the Men and the beautiful city of Vienna lay before me, the green fields reaching up to the very ~~mountain~~ gates. It was a lovely sight. I have never seen the like. It began raining very soon, however, and has rained all day, so that I have seen little. Philip, who undertakes to man my bear confined to his room by illness - But as soon as I got my breakfast and was fairly fixed in my lodgings, which we found as difficult to get as if we were at New York at this season (I am at the Gasthof zur Dreyfaltigkeit, and the head waiter speaks French, a good and cheap house) I took a guide to direct me to the Joseph Platz, where the Imperial Library and Cabinet is, to find Endlicher. I found the room in his den, and the moment I put my letters into his hand he recognized Beatham's writing and addressed me by name. Beatham, having apprized him of my intended visit. Endlicher received me very cordially, and I remained with him till two o'clock. He is extremely good looking and younger even in appearance than I expected, although Beatham told me he was about his own age. He looks about 35. I had the pleasure to present in person the copy of those designed for him. The usual dinner hour here is from 12 to 3. The common people dine at 12, the gentry from 2 to 3. The Imperial family setting a good example by dining between one and two. After dinner I went to the Police office to procure the necessary leave to remain here for a week or so, answered all the questions which are put in such cases to the Traveller, such as where I stopped, how long I intended to stay, what my business was, produced my letter of Credit, in order to show that I was not like to run away with unpaid bills, which is said to be the chief object of all this to ascertain this point is said to be the chief object of all this enquiry. When you arrive at any hotel and remain over night, you are presented with a blank formula comprising still more particular enquiries, which you are required to fill up, and

[illegible]

it is sent to the police-office. You give first your name, then your country, age, religion, occupation; state whether you are married or not! whether you are travelling alone or in company, where you came from last; your probable stay; whether you have letters of credit or not, with some other equally particular enquiries! I went next to my bankers, found no letters! I drew some money, and obtained a ticket of admission to a commercial Reading-Room, which is well supplied with English and French Newspapers. Here I stayed until sun-set, reading up my English news, in which I had got far behind, and which on the present occasion I found very interesting. I gleaned occasionally a little news from home, but vaguely. The information seemed in general satisfactory, but one letter from home were worth it all!

I have this evening changed the plants I have drying, and have taken care of my companion Philip who is quite sick with the fatigue of his journey and so forth. I have endured it very well, but must get into bed. Not having had my clothes off for three nights in succession, nor enjoyed rational sleep I wonder much that I am not more fatigued. Endlicher asked me to go to the Opera this evening, where there is some especially fine music, as he says, but I declined, telling him that under present circumstances I should sleep thro' the finest music in the world. I suppose it would be perfectly impossible to make him understand how one could have any scruples against this amusement.

Saturday, 25th May, 1839.

I went early this morning to the Imperial Cabinet, remained there until two, when the rooms are closed. After dinner I explored about the city until sunset, ~~saw~~ many of the public buildings, the gardens &c. I understand the localities of the town proper very well. The city itself is not large; the strong walls that enclose it are still kept up, and immediately outside of this there is a large open space, planted with trees and laid out into roads and walks (the ~~Boaten~~ ^{Park}). Beyond this are the Faubourgs or suburbs, large many times than the city itself, very pleasant, but rather inconvenient to reach. Most of the public buildings, the shops &c. - are in the city itself. I went to see the fine old gothic Cathedral of St. Stephen's. It is a very old, and exceedingly fine large building, but the roof is very awkward. The spire is the finest thing I ever saw. In

the way of Gothic architecture. It is 465 feet high, and is the very Poetry of steeples. I intend to climb to the top presently. I passed by the Imperial Palace, which has not a very imposing exterior, and spent some time in the Volksgarten which is about as large as the Battery, and laid out in the same way but more shady; it has two pretty Coffee-houses, and in a little pavilion before each a band of music is stationed in the evening, for the amusement of the hundreds of people who lounge on the walks or take their coffee or ice cream on little tables in the open air. Tho' it was not yet evening I heard some very fine music from a large band. I looked into some other churches; that of the Augustines for one; and saw the monument of Canova of the Archduchess Christina with the group of Statuary, which are very pretty. I forgot to mention the group of Thesauri playing the Centaur by Canova, which occupies a house in the Volksgarten built in imitation of the Temple of the Thesauri at Athens. I walked around a good part of the city on the walls which afford a broad and convenient promenade and give you good views of the city within and the suburbs without. After this I strolled through the streets looked at the shops &c until it was dark, and spent the evening at home.

Monday Morning, 27th May.

I find we are in a different climate from Italy. It has been cold ever since my arrival here, the first day was rainy, and yesterday it rained from morning to night and was very cold and unpleasant. Of course I kept my room nearly all day. I had also to take care of Mr. Philip, whose indisposition has turned into an intermittent fever, such as he has been subject to at Rome. It is a most distressing thing to be sick in a strange land, and I cannot be too grateful for the uninterrupted good health I have enjoyed ever since I left you.

I have deferred telling you any thing about the grotto of Adelsberg, on account of the great difficulty I find in conveying any idea of it. It is without doubt the most wonderful thing of its kind in the world.

Adelsberg itself is a little German village perched upon a steep conical hill which is crowned with the ruins of an old castle; it is at one border of a circular plain, several

miles in extent, dotted here and there with little hamlets and surrounded with mountains, so that it is like a large basin, and seems wholly shut out from the rest of the world. It is so still and quiet that it would do very well for the Valley of Rasselas, but the mountains do not form precipices except on one side, where they are accessible at a few points only, and these with much difficulty as I had occasion to know. The streams that come down from the mountains unite to form a little river, perhaps nearly twice the size of Fishkill creek; and this after running about the valley and seeking an outlet in vain, at length in despair, as it seems, dives into the solid rock at the foot of the range of hills near the village. The entrance for visitors is a small hole above this, which opens into a long gallery, perhaps two hundred yards in extent. From this you descend into a vast hall, called the Dome, more than one hundred feet high and 3 or 4 hundred feet in length. As you descend you hear the roar of the waters confined in their deep prison-house, and at the bottom you meet the river which rushes swiftly to the distant extremity of the hall and there plunges into the dark depths. Instead of a stupid monument and inscription by the late Emperor placed above this, it would have been much better taste to have placed in the stream a piece of Statuary representing Charon and his boat, for never was seen so perfect a keen ideal of the fabled river Styx. This is the last you see of the river Poik; but the Wind, which bursts forth a large stream from the rocks at Blauina is believed to be the same. The river is crossed by a bridge

Phidias Vastus.

I left this account of
the Adelsberg Castle, and my journey through Albania and Thyrre for
the first convenient opportunity: - a time that never comes; so that
I must send as it is. The castle is wonderful, but all description
and our visit was very opportune; the whole scene not soon to be forgotten.

deep corner
castle; it is at the corner of



Gray, Asa. 1839. "Gray, Asa May 24, 1839 [to Torrey]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/225927>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/262576>

Holding Institution

Harvard University Botany Libraries

Sponsored by

Arcadia 19th Century Collections Digitization/Harvard Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The Library considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection

License: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.