

Paris, Jan. 30th. '57 - Thursday - (1)

My dear Lizzie, It seems quite a hopeless task to undertake to give an account of Versailles, where Monday took us - But I fear it would not be quite satisfactory to say, Monday we went to Versailles - For you would have no idea what a pleasant excursion it was & how much we enjoyed it - So I will try to give some faint idea of how we passed the day - I believe we all looked anxiously at the clouds, & were delighted to see a bright sun-shiny day, which had not been for some days - So at 10 o'clock two carriages came - Aunt Lizzie, Ella & Sarah took their places in one carriage, & Uncle Charles got upon the box - Uncle Lowell, Lizzie & I went in the other - The environs of Paris do not look so prettily now as about London, it is not so green, & I do not think there is as much fine order & high keeping & there seem, to me at least, more suburbs of shabby houses; but winter I know is not a fair time to judge though, except in the loss of leaves & want of vegetation we see nothing else like winter - It is wonderfully mild & warm - Versailles is some 10 miles from Paris, & on the way there you pass the Iron fence & Lodges & gates, & looking through see the long avenues of trees which lead up to the Palace of St. Cloud - The approach to Versailles is through an immense straight avenue, rows of trees on each side, you pass through the gates & continue on a straight road, buildings on each side, some private houses & others public, until you come to two long & massive ranges, one on each side, which were built for the stables to the Palace - One is now turned into a school for Cavalry & the other is a sort of Agricultural institution - They have handsome fronts, sweeping in semi-circularly, with court yards enclosed by iron railing, & these fronts are towards the palace which stands at the end of this fine avenue - A long courtyard comes down surrounded by an iron-railing, & gradually rising towards the palace; down each side are enormous statues of famous distinguished men of France, some of which formerly ornamented le Pont de la Concorde - There were formerly iron railings separating this courtyard into two more, & they still retain their names - The palace is shaped somewhat in this fashion, that is the (the) sides of my elegant plan should be equal) the immediate front set back, & the wings project - It is rather bewildering from its immense size & numerous wings - But after reaching the front of the palace, before entering within the iron-gates, we turned to the right suddenly, & went down the main street of the town, then again to the left, & after passing through a long avenue of trees drew up before the Grand

Guinon - This was a smaller Palace, built by Louis XIV for Madame de Maintenon. And was Napoleon's favorite mansion when he used to come from St Cloud - And about Philippe when exterior Versailles lived here - It is still furnished as when he last lived there - The set chamber was superb, & there were a suite of rooms prepared for the Queen of England for her expected visit to Louis Philippe, the bed chamber & bed were very handsome, but the rest of the furniture I did not think to very elegant - But the rooms were very high & handsome - All was on one floor - One dining room was very splendid, & a long gallery connected two wings, & Louis down on each side, & beautiful pictures on the walls - There were many beautiful & interesting things about, a superb malachite table formerly Alexander, beautiful antiques, &c. &c - Then we went to the ^{Chateau} ~~Trancon~~ built by Louis XV for Madame du Barry - Louis XVI gave it to Marie Antoinette - And the last person who inhabited it was the Duchess of Orleans, widow of Louis Philippe's son - It is a little gem of a palace, only just rooms enough for one good suite - Then we walked through some lovely parks, which Marie Antoinette had out a landscape, which were charming now, though she has lost some of the trees, & a little pond where she had built a little bridge of Swiss houses, & where you know the wood to have her dairy - Then we drove back to the Palace of Versailles, & driving through the iron gates drew up at a side which where we got a guide - There is a splendid bronze statue of Louis XVI in the middle of the court, and such a man as you stand in the ^{alluvial} ~~dipland~~ & rather cut before the Palace; the great Avenue in front leading to Paris, & great avenues on each side stretching as far as the eye can reach - ^{all country here} the courtyard, quite up to the Palace, are paved ^{all over} with small stones - First we went into great galleries where are arranged statues of all the great men, then through galleries of paintings of great events, great events of arms with all the kings of Napoleon, then suites of marine views, then up into a magnificent gallery made by Louis Philippe by borrowing a long ^{range} of rooms into one & richly ornamented with columns & painted ceiling, &c. & hung round the walls with pictures of events of French history from Louis down - I looked at battles until I was sick of them, & thought wonder how at what the French had attained, felt it was not worth the terror & the bloodshed - It was a relief to go higher into a

long suite of rooms filled with historical portraits, beginning with the grandest & steepest ^{of nearly every French} down to the present time - Oh how much there was to interest there! What beautiful women the Madames & mistresses of Louis XIV & Louis XV, among them Marie Antoinette, & then La mare of Napoleon & all his family, then Louis XVI, &c - then present times; then was a portrait of Victoria, of Albert, & distinguished Englishmen; & many portraits of Calhoun, Webster, Washington, the Presidents, &c. &c - One could well spend days there! - Louis Philippe did an immense deal for Versailles! And very soon the French people is very proud of him - Versailles was so dilapidated after the frightful revolution, & he began to restore it, & collected every thing together, & ~~now~~ ^{then} was no longer a royal residence, but destined to be the state apartments of Louis XVI, except beyond anything I have seen, & these magnificent historical pictures still surrounding the walls - Some things still left, the table of council & fanteuil, of the grand monarch - Things of Louis XVI & Marie Antoinette; we saw the bed on which Louis XIV died, & we saw as well it since, & from the ^{palace} ~~palace~~ of that room Louis XVI addressed the ~~rest~~ ^{rest} the night he was seized in from Versailles to Paris - Then through the private suite of apartments of Louis & Marie Antoinette; her wardrobe, her dressing room, her bathing room - In some of the rooms her furniture still left, but the curtains were of expert white damask of the time of the Empire - These rooms were also very interesting from their historical associations of the former inhabitants - Then the famous salon of the Ball de Soisy, then Marie Antoinette's state apartments, the room where her friends were killed during the entrance to her room the night of the 10th of October, the little secret door through which she escaped from her bed chamber when she sprang from her bed - These rooms are now hung with some of David's great pictures of Napoleon - He came down a most superb staircase of marble built by Marie Antoinette, & up which the people rushed that fearful night - He saw most costly carriages, all gold & silver & enamel paintings, of Charles X & others - Indeed I cannot say the half of what I saw, so give you my idea -

I suppose there is nothing in the world which compares with it - And one must notice in what nice order the French government keep these places, everything so neat & in such good order, the floors all nicely waxed; men in various directions to point the way, & all so well arranged. - He did not get back again until 8 or after - And I spent the evening cramming French history. - The next morning Tuesday it rained hard, but cleared when Aunt Lizzie & I went out about 12. He went first to "la mère de famille," where one gets all sorts of very fine thread silks &c. &c. - And then went to call on Madame Grand Pierre, Fanny's sister, & from whom I had a note to her - We were just leaving our cards, understanding she could not see us - When she came running down stairs - She is a very pleasing person, looks something like Madame Sandoy - She talks a little English - We saw there her niece Madlle. Chollat a younger sister of Mina's - Who is going to school in London for a year - Poor child she is about 16 & cannot speak a word of English, & knows only one person in London! I have promised to seek her out & see her there - They live a long way off, quite out of Paris, outside the barrier. - On our way back Aunt Lizzie & I stopped at the Palais Royal, the lower story of which is shops opening under a high arcade, the second story making the roof, & round the open square in the middle, with its fountains; on a fair day, crowded with people, it is a very gay & pretty sight - I bought a dressing case, very compact & nice, & neatly furnished for 26 francs. - And I tried my first attempt at bargaining, for they say it is a thing the French always expect; And Aunt Lizzie & I were quite vexed we had not offered less, for they agreed at once to the reduction. - Then we drove in a hurry to get a bunch of flowers for Lizzie's hair for the party - You never saw such lovely flowers, it seems as if every new flower were introduced at once; & there were the girls making them up to order - They made a very ^{pretty} bunch of clematis while we were waiting. - Thanks to Ella & Sarah's taking a dancing lesson we were home in good time for dinner. - Uncle Lowell, Aunt Lizzie, Lizzie & Augustus went to a party at Mrs. Rives in the Evf. - Aunt Lizzie looked beautifully; she had on a dress made in England, a sort of pale drab & white brocade beautifully made & trimmed, a wreath of blue & silver with Brussels lace lapels, & a beautiful Brussels lace mantle over her shoulders; Uncle Charles ^{thought} we had quite the fun of the party in seeing her dressed -

Paris. Feb. 3rd.

23

(2)

Wednesday the 29th. in the morning Aunt Lizzie, Uncle Lowell, Lizzie & myself went over to the Gobelins to see the manufacture of tapestries - You cannot tell how magnificent they are - We first went into a room where finished ones were hung up, & I thought certainly they were the richest oil paintings, had no idea until I came close to them, that they were tapestry - They will bear most minute inspection, for the shading of colours, say in a limb, is so exquisite, & delicate you cannot tell where one ^{shade} ~~colour~~ ends & the other begins - They take beautiful pictures & copy them in this most exquisite & brilliant way - We went into the rooms where they ^{were} at work, & saw these splendid works in progress - I watched as closely as I could, but could not make out the way it was done - Great frames are filled with cords running side by side ^{up & down,} then the outline of the pattern is traced on these cords ^{in pencil, then} woven in by hand with various wools, which are all dyed in the establishment; the pattern hangs over head or behind, and they work on the wrong side, so that the right side was towards us - The ~~woven~~ ^{worked} look exactly like silk - Then we went down stairs & saw the carpets; they are woven on the right side & cut like velvet - And look like velvet carpets, only ^{the} greater delicacy & richness of the patterns, & the carpet seemed finer - We have learned since that it takes some 20 years to make a large picture - And that they cost, say for a piece large enough for a curtain to a large door, \$6000. When we left the Gobelins we went to the Hotel de Clugny, which ^{is an old building which has filled a great many offices, & was last bought by an old gentleman who was a great antiquarian, & who collected all sorts of antiquities, carvings in ivory & wood, most beautiful cabinets, tapestries, China, books, dresses, vases, coins, &c. &c.} ^{before the French government bought it at his death & have added a great} The whole house is filled, & it is a beautiful specimen of old French architecture in itself - Adjoining is the Palais de Thermes, the remains of an old Roman Palace & of baths - Charles Storrer dined with us - And in the evening Mr. & Madame Grand-Pierre came to pass the evening & Mlle. Chollet - The Grand-Pierres are very interesting people, and we all like them very much; Aunt Lizzie & Uncle Lowell had known them before -

Thursday morning Aunt Lizzie & I drove out to see the church of St. Denis - Under this church the kings of France have been buried from the earliest - The church was very much desecrated & injured during the first revolution & many of the tombs violated; Louis Philippe did a great deal to restore it - It is an imposing building in a singular style of Gothic - And has beautiful doors of bronze - The effect on entering is very good, for it is

lighted by windows of richly stained glass, some are modern; & the roof is high with fine large columns - On one side near the entrance is the tomb of Daphnet - Higher up are imposing monuments of Francis II. & his Queen Mary of Medicis & Henry II. & Catherine de Medicis & Henry II. They are lofty of piers supported by pillars, & underneath are any trifery - Above kneel the figures clothed as in life - One side of the altar is filled up as a Chapel, chancel & choir it is called, & a monument erected by Henry, Duke of Orléans, to the memory of her husband Francis II. - In the choir stand the painted reliefs of George, before which Napoleon was married to Marie Louise - The side chapels around the choir are also painted by antique style, but as there is not so much light, & the pillars from which the arches spring are of white marble the effect is much better than in the chancel & choir - This by antique is modern, but only a renewal of the style in which the church was built - In one of the transepts is a large square surrounded by an iron railing, enclosing a platform with a large white oval on a high round painted upon it. Beneath is the entrance to the royal vault where are the bodies of Louis XVI. & Marie Antoinette: & at the foot of the stairs is the body of Louis XVIII, awaiting until the next king buried, take its place - The second into the crypt & began into the monument of Louis, came round to those of the family of Louis XVI, they are in niches & alcoves - And you must imagine this crypt a low, heavy place, supported by low solid columns, & lighted by small windows - He could not see the front of Louis & Marie Antoinette, but we saw a beautiful statue to her, said to be an excellent likeness - These monuments were taken down & concealed during the revolutions of '93, & now are replaced - And they said all were original, except the first & most ancient - they are generally figures stretched upon the tomb - But there are some more classical & some busts - On our way back down steps & stopped & walked round the Palais Royal, & then found our way home as fast - In the evening went along, Thérèse Charles, Eugénie, Angélique, Elia & myself all went to the Opera - He found it the Theater of Louville instead of the Opera, & I was glad for your sake, Charles - It is a very handsome house, but the boxes I should think were poor places, for they are only half the size of ours, & the partition is carried quite up to the ceiling, so that there is no one but cannot see there in another - And they do not come quite to the front, so round the balustrade in front is a row of great

tomb separately, & called the balcony, & they are about the pleasantest seats in the house - The front of the balcony was open with richly placed, the ceiling was handsomely painted, the boxes were lined with red, & the balcony & seats in the parquette where we were were covered with red plush - & in the parquette side rows were armchairs - the parquette occupied about half the pit, & behind were the common pit seats - The scenery was very handsome, & looked substantial, & the dresses were very handsome - The chorus was excellent, & there was a very good orchestra - Madame Montoy was Kirina, Lakache the old man, & Calzolari Elmorova - He is a young man quite handsome & with a very agreeable voice - Eggers was capotally played, though the man was not quite as graceful as Kossi, said - But he had a very fine voice - Lakache is perfectly immense - He makes everyone who like a baby in the stage beside him, and his voice mostly in speaking seems like an organ - And in the midst of the most rapid music, every word is most distinctly & perfectly uttered - His appearance was more like the Jewish prince after taking the audience to make him pass fat, than we saw the last night before I left you, than anything I can describe - But he acted the part most capably - He is an excellent actor, & made the part amusing, without caricaturing it as the actor in Boston did - They introduced a scene which I am sure I did not see at home - He appeared at the window after the scene made a throw a note out - And some little things were left out which I saw before - As for Montoy we cannot describe a voice upon paper, but such delicate, beautiful, bird-like warbling I could scarcely imagine - Her execution is wonderful perfect, & the high notes are more deeply sweet, clear & soft - Dr. Patman thought her superior to Jenny Lind, & he & I exchanged sympathetic smiles of delight - He is not as active, pretty, though she is pleasing in appearance, & I could not believe her so old - The character of the young ^{of this scene} one, we saw even as to express much passion or expression, so I could not judge of her in that way - But the whole all taken together was as much superior to our Theater of Louville at home as possible - I should have preferred, on the whole a different Opera, something more sweet & improved - For though the music is most graceful, & so, still, & some parts beautiful, I find it always most difficult to recall, & it dwells very little with me -

I suppose you would like to know the style of dress. It is not full dress, though some people appear so - But rather more in some little dress, bonnet, crêpe lace, &c. or with a pretty head dress, & in high neck & long sleeves - The French do not wear low neck & short sleeves nearly as much as we

English, & I think it in better taste — New-^{York} Feb. 7th — Friday —

I got back from Paris yesterday, dear Lizzie, after sundry delays: & such a budget of letters as I found awaiting me! — For I had not received all of the week before, & got three too late to answer last week. — But to my especial delight, the daguerestypes were here — Oh thank you & Patrick so many, many times for them! They are all ranged in the mantel-piece — And I cannot go across the room without stopping to look at my row of little darlings — Little Pat has grown a great deal & looks older, but still so very like himself — Charlie is his manner so precisely! so dignified, & decided, & condescending; some very grave & absurd remark is lingering behind; I do not think he has changed at all — Fittie's is the least satisfactory in that way & for that very reason the more valuable! How the little witch has grown! I cannot fancy her the baby I left, she looks two or three years old! — And I trace a great many resemblances in her face. — Oh my little, little darlings! — I am so impatient sometimes to see them. — I was quite touched with little Pat's affection for the house & his wish to make a foot pilgrimage thither — Now Patrick please give all the three children a treat from me — get a vegetable & take them out there, & let John pay the expenses to our account; & I shall write for Caranagh to give each a little bunch of flowers from me —

And now for the letters — 2 from Sue, from you, dear Lizzie, from Charles, from Ida, from John, from Patrick? one of his nice envelopes — As for washing, Lizzie, I have not known a family, where I could know about such things, in which it was done in the house! — In great establishments they have a laundry, perhaps off in the park — Generally an entirely distinct establishment from the house. — I should like to join one of your nice little suppers! — Do not be anxious about our living, Sue, for our old women cook very nicely. — But, dear me! I never shall grow fat I fear — Ah, Sue! to think you ride, only in going so far as father's! I wish I were as patient as you are! — The children's "Prayer books" were very edifying! — But I like to have children begin to go to church, for it gets them into a good habit — And the idea is something, though they may be too young to gain much from the service — I wish the plan were settled for Charlie to join us! — Think of the honour of the mathematical tutor! But I fear it would be too hard work for you, Charlie — Don't pray throw away strength now-a-days! Is waste, ^{strength} is the worst foolish & irreparable of losses — I thank you very much, & say I will answer soon — I am very sorry Aunt Sally has had so much illness in her family — Cooke has called on Dr. Gray while I was away & will I hope come again soon — George Upham escorted me from Paris — I found besides a letter from Aunt Anna, from Joe, & from Mrs. Driscoll to Dr. Gray — I am sorry not to write up the journal better, but have two or three to write still & must lay the aside. With most affectionate love to all, ever your loving, Jennie



Gray, Jane Loring. 1851. "Gray, Jane Jan. 30, 1851 [to Loring]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/262613>

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>.