

Vassar College.
Oct. 31 [1893]

My dear Mother, -

I must not fail to write to you on Sunday after this, for something is sure to happen on Monday so that I cant. Last night we heard a lecture by Dr. Haweis, of London, on "Tennyson, the Poet of the Age." He is the same man who preached for us on Sunday, but I like him much better as a lecturer than as a preacher. He has so many peculiar mannerisms that are funny and interesting in a lecturer, but seem out of place during a sermon. This man had had several interviews with Tennyson, and his lecture was very interesting. The teachers all gave us shorter lessons, on that account, which is a privilege that you don't get at home.

We had such fun Saturday night. The Seniors gave us a party, and it was a fancy dress affair, that is, everyone was supposed to dress in costume, to represent some particular time or country. They did not invite us till Thursday evening, so of course we were not expected to get up elegant costumes. Ray and I had not the slightest idea what we would wear, until Saturday noon. In fact every one seemed to be rather dismayed at first, but the result was fine.

Saturday morning Ray went over to see Carrie Hardin, and they concocted the idea of our going as a Syrian family. Carrie Hardin is the daughter of missionaries in Syria, who are well acquainted with Ray's brother there. Carrie's mother is in this country now. She was up here last week and we met her, but she is going to start for Syria next week. Well, Carrie has some Syrian scarfs and jewelry, and Ray has some Syrian and Persian scarfs and sashes. So Ray was to be a man, I her bride, and Carrie my mother. Ray wore her gymnasium suit, with a short skirt, and a sash round her waist, another across the front and back, and another wound round her head for a turban. Her belt was adorned with paper knives and gilt pasteboard daggers. She blackened her eyebrows and made quite a fierce looking man. I had a loose cheesecloth dress which one of the Sophs lent me, and tied it in at the waist with a gaudy sash. I made a wreath of chrysanthemums (they were beautiful white ones which Mrs. Dwight had given us, and we still have them.) Over the wreath hung a tulle veil, but not so it would cover my face. Then my hair was streaming down my back, and I wore a whole lot of jewelry-necklaces and bracelets, among them a real Syrian necklace of Carrie's. Carrie herself did not have to take long to dress. Over her face she wore a blue figured veil, that she brought from Syria. She could see through it plainly, but no one else could see her. Then she wrapped a sheet around her in a certain way, so as to cover everything except her face that was covered by the veil. So of course no one could tell who she was.

There were ever so many good costumes there - several men, who wore coats and collars and neckties, with ^long skirts - There were Quakers and Puritans, ladies with old-fashioned dresses and powdered hair, babies, in white dresses and little bonnets, and curls, little Sailor boys, an old farmer and his wife, etc. etc. even policemen and mail carriers. During the evening they had pantomimes that were awfully funny. A great big white sheet was stretched across the end of the room, and a light behind it, so that when girls were just behind the curtain their shadows were cast on the sheet. One girl read "The Courtin'" and one or two other poems like that, while other girls acted them out in pantomime behind the sheet, bobbing about in the most exaggerated

and ridiculous fashion. It was awfully funny.

While one girl was reading, her hair caught fire in the candle beside her, and she just squeezed it in her hand, and went on reading, without saying a word.

We got our gym suits Saturday. They cost seven dollars, which I think is a good deal. They are full trousers and a blouse waist, with underclothes. The stuff is dark blue flannel, trimmed with black braid. They are pretty well made, I think, – the buttons all sewed on tight, and buttonholes well made, and the braid is sewed on straight enough to suit Edie. I don't know when the work in the gym will begin.

It is pretty cold weather now. We had some snow on Monday, just a little bit, of course. There are such heavy frosts every morning. The leaves have almost all dropped off the maple trees, but almost all the trees that I can see from my window are evergreens, so that it will not look so forlorn in winter. Today is Hallowe'en, when the Sophomores always play a joke upon the Freshmen. So we are on the lookout all day. We expect that they will do something while we are at chapel tonight. This morning when we got up, we found a small tack hammered into the outside of ^our door. We gently but firmly removed it. We found that all the Freshmen around us had small tacks in their doors, too. Mamma, I notice you always spell my name Adalaide instead of Adelaide –

Your loving daughter Adelaide.

[Adelaide Claflin, '97]