

Vassar College.

March 24, 1894.

My dear Edie,--

Vacation has begun, and I am alone in my room now.

I think vacation will be very pleasant. It is a rest to have only a few girls here, and have it quiet-- Even though I keep busy all the time, it is a rest to do what I feel like doing, when I feel like doing it. During vacation we have to read DeQuincey's Confessions of an Opium Eater, and Joan of Arc and English Mail coach, for English -- Gertrude Smith and Arlie Raymond and I have been reading the "Confessions" today, one reading while the others darned stockings or sewed-- (Arlie Raymond is making over an old silk skirt into a waist). I don't like the book at all. I think DeQuincey is the most conceited, egotistical man I ever read. Miss Sweet gives us lectures in English class, and they are very interesting-- She has such an interesting, though peculiar, quiet way of talking-- Her lectures on Lamb were fine.

Most of the girls went away yesterday noon. Vacation began at half past eleven, but as Ray had no recitation before that, she started before breakfast yesterday morning, taking the 7:47 train for New York, and going from there to Springfield. She took a trunk along, and all her old clothes, as her grandmother is going to have all her spring sewing done for her there. She bought the cloth for several new dresses, two or three weeks ago, so she wrote, to Ray. Ray will be so fine when she gets back that I won't know her. She will have rather a quiet time at her grandmothers, I think, and I am glad, for she needs a rest. She has been working so hard. She is the kind of girl whom people always ask to do the extra things-- For Miss Richardson she and Gertrude Smith have been looking up the History of Algebra. They have read several works on the subject, and ^beside [crossed out: among] the English ones Ray has read a good deal of a German one, and Gertrude S. a French one. They are going to write out what they have discovered and read [crossed out: its] it in class after vacation. Ray's music lessons, too, have taken up an hour a day. I wish you had sent the paper which told about the Salvation Army in connection with Vassar. About two weeks ago Ray got a letter from her father, beginning: "My dear Rachel,-- Have you joined the Salvation Army? " She was perfectly thunder-struck, and not less so when her father went on to say that there had been an article in the Leader the night before saying that Vassar was much excited about the Salvation Army, and that fifteen girls and Mrs. Kendrick had joined it. That is all he told about it, and he did not send the article. If it had not been for this episode, I should not have had the slightest idea of what you were referring to: since I have not heard the Salvation Army mentioned (any more than casually, once or twice, when girls were discussing the different speakers who have been here) since Mrs. Booth was here. That perhaps shows how "excited(?)" the college is over it. About a dozen girls did join the Auxiliary League when Mrs. Booth was here. By so doing they gave five dollars to Mrs. Booth and promised to use their influence in favor of the Army, as the editorial from the Leader explains. That, however, excited no comment. I met Mrs. Kendrick in the hall the day after I got your letter, and spoke to her about it. She said no girl had ever joined the Army while she was a student here. There was one graduate who did, a young lady who joined it in London two or three years after she graduated, and has been an active worker in it ever since. Of course this is not saying that it not all right to join it, or that the Army itself is not a good thing; but it shows the facts of the case at this college.

As for the matter of "sermons" that was all past and over long ago, and I am sorry you have been stirred up over that. I was not at all convinced that it was wrong, though it seemed a little strange. However, I should probably ^have thought nothing more of it, if several girls had not come separately, to Ray and me, and asked us what we thought about it, and saying that they thought it was not right for us to have to do it. That is, they thought it was an excellent thing in itself, as every one does, and that it was a fine thing to be able to get the analysis of a sermon while listening to^it and thus being able to remember it much better; but they thought it was not right to do it for a weekday lesson; to do the work of a lesson on Sunday to be handed in Monday- any more than we would, on Sunday, get a lesson in New Testament Greek, if a course in that were one of our regular studies, because on Sunday we ought to forget all our week's work, and our lessons. So we thought It would do no harm just to speak to Miss Nettleton about it. So we did, and that would have been an end of the matter, if Mrs. Kendrick had not heard of it. But she heard of it some way, and thought it was not right for us to have to analyze sermons for lessons, and told Ray so, and there was the end of the matter. I was afraid all the time that we were just splitting hairs, but when I found that Mrs. Kendrick, and Dr. Taylor, and Dr. Vincent, and several other older and wiser heads disapproved of it, I thought perhaps we weren't after all. Nobody's plans were inconvenienced by a stop being put to it, for it was near the end of the semester, and that work was not going to be given to us again.

April weather has begun, and we have had no March winds yet. The girls who went away had to start off In a pouring rain yesterday. Most of them went at noon. Ever so many girls go down on the noon train to New York, always- They have to make their plans so far ahead, and hand in in writing where they re going, and what train they are going to take, and what baggage, etc. a week or ten days beforehand. Then three or four days before vacation the ticket agent comes and all the girls have to go over and spend a part of the afternoon in getting their tickets from him. The [crossed out] trunks have to be packed and taken from the building a day or more before the girls start. They learn to do it in short order too, Ray can pack her trunk in half an hour. It is amusing to stand in the front vestibule when the girls are starting. Some of them embrace and take a "fond and affectionate farewell" of each other, just as if no one else were around.

The college authorities have been talking lately about closing up the college during the short vacations, and making the girls who stay board some where around here so as to give Mrs. Kendrick, and the rest of the officials who have to stay and work, more of a rest. But they have not yet decided to do it.

With love to all- Your sister, Adelaide. ^Claflin