

Vassar College.

Dec. 7. 1873

My dear Mamma & Papa,

Your letter reached me unusually early this week, because mailed on Sunday, I suppose. It seems so nice to get a letter from home the same week in which it is sent, and also wonderful when I remember in my first year here, your letters were never more than fourteen days on the road and sometimes more.

Our week of dissipation was very pleasantly ended by a visit from a colored troop of singers, members of the Hampton School for Negroes. The Superintendent of the School, Gen. Armstrong, accompanied them, and gave us in a few words the purpose and present prospects of the school. These singers are traveling about and giving concerts in order to raise money for building the School rooms, etc. The whole cost of the buildings will be seventy five thousand dollars, and they have now received twenty five thousand, ten by their singing and fifteen in contribution. They give a concert in Po'keepsie this week, and wishing to visit the college were invited out by the President to sing, we were not asked to give them any money, but our Prex. said that he thought we had "better take our pocket-books in our pockets, as there was no telling what we might feel moved to do." And I am glad to say that nearly all felt moved to give something, so that about eighty five dollars was given, and as there is some talk of giving them in thanksgiving offering of fifty, quite a nice little sum will have been contributed by a "white sister Institution." The darkies were very nice looking, seven men and five women, and I am sure will carry away pleasant recollections of their Vassar visit for I never saw the College so enthusiastic over anything before. The most celebrated singer could not have received half the applause that these poor drakes. We clapped and clapped, till we could do no more. I really feared my hands would be blistered. The singing was very nice indeed, and the songs were thoroughly negro melodies. In one song, one man sang "Oh! then my little soul will shine, shine in heaven," alone, while all joined in the chorus. And every time he began "Shine my little soul" the chapel was convulsed. Another song in which every brother and sister was enquired for in this manner, "I wonder where Brothie Lijah's gone!" was very good, especially when all sang together, "Now, Peter go ring dem bells!" very low and soft: there was a ring and mellowness about all their choruses which is never heard in white people's singing. A woman sang "Down on the Swanee ribber", exquisitely, and I cannot imagine anything much sweeter or sadder than the chorus sung by those full, rich voices. While we were at supper the darkies came down to the dining hall and sang us two more songs. One of them was first rate, both for the sentiment and heartiness with which it was given - It was in regard to the different denominations. A female voice began, "Foxes have holes in the ground, and birds have nests in the air, and everything has its hiding place, but the poor Savior have none!" Then all burst out with "Now ain't that hard!" with such vigor, that they just "brought down the house," as the saying is. One old man then sang that "Baptist was he, and Baptist he would die," another one sang "Methodist was he," &c, until finally one sang "You may go this a way, you may go that a way. You may go from doo- to doo-, but if you've not God's grace in your heart, the devil will get you, shore !"

Tonight Gen. Armstrong comes out to address the meeting of Religious inquiry, so we shall hear something more from them, - and their doings. It seems the school is not

alone for teaching "book learning", but more especially for teaching them what it will be necessary for them to know in order to make their livings. Cooking, sewing, etc. for the women, and other occupations for the men—

Tell the darkies, please, who always want to know if I see any of their complexion up here, how delighted the Vassar girls were with these singers, and how they welcomed them. One rather excitable girl went round and buttoned all the women's gloves upon their departure, and vowed she would have kissed them all if they had let her!

I do believe that I have written nothing only about the darkies. But I have no more time to write new, so will have to leave unsaid anything more I may have to say.

With much love,
Your daughter,
Julie.