

Vassar College

April 22, 1877.

My dear Mithery-

Your last Sunday's letter was a great triumph.

I have not had the pleasure of unfolding so voluminous a letter in a long time at least not one from New Haven. I have about made up my mind to spend the Commencement week at home and shall probably invite Millie to spend most of it with me, as I find she was only going to be in N.H. class-day, and I think she ought to be there the whole time. The unfortunate St. Nicholas which has made so many journeys to and from the college, made its mark last Friday night in Beta. Lill Millie and George were on the committee for the entertainment, and Lill and I decided to have some chickens. We picked out one very large girl, one smallish one - Jane - and two very small ones-Lill & Minnie Hoyt.

We had dreadful times getting up their costumes, especially their bills. These we finally made by crumpling up newspaper & winding it into the desired shape, and afterwards covering it with bright buff paper on which Lill & Jane painted long black lines to represent the division between the upper & lower bill. In Room N, where they were to be exhibited there was a little room partitioned off by screens in which we were to dress our four specimens. The meeting was called after seven o'clock, giving us about ten minutes after chapel time. The girls had to run to their rooms and take off most all their clothes and then tear up to Room N-- In their wrappers of course--. Very soon after they got there the audience began to come in, so we had to be very quick, and also take all necessary precautions not to knock down the screens.

First we tied pillows on to the unfortunate victims backs, the old hen had to have two on; then we tied their bills on their foreheads with a string and then put on a little tight fitting cap which had a comb & wattles, and eyes fastened on it. This came down around the bill & gave a very complete and also very wicked air to the head of the victim. Then they put their feet through the sleeves of a nightgown and we tied what was left over up into a bunch on the top of the pillow. You saw the picture in St. Nicholas so you can form an idea of their general appearance. If there wasn't much hem to the nightdress we tied in a lot of stiff white paper, slit up to look like tail feathers.

As soon as one was done we sat her down across a chair -- so as not to mash in her tail---and proceeded to array another. Jane was the most killing sight of any of them. Her head had a peculiarly wicked look, & her tail was the bobbiest and most upstart production ever seen. Lill was the one little brown chicken, & was made out of a calico wrapper with one of Jane's aprons sewed into a cap for her head.

When we had dressed them all except the few last touches, the preceding exercises of Beta were hardly begun, the space withing the screens was small any way and particularly so when the animals were seated around and we had to look out and not hit their tails or bills when we stirred. Jane would not sit still and kept cocking her head around in the most unendurable manner. They read sober things out in the audience, and before they were through it seemed to Millie and me as if we must perish.

Sometimes Jane's legs would ache and then she would wave them wildly around, being sure to hit Minnie's tail, and set it to crackling. Finally she became weary and

leaned her head against the \ wall, her attitude in most striking contrast to her eyes & ridiculous tail. Finally MA Barnyard Scene" was announced. We added a few last pins & pats and then turned back the leaf of the screen^ The old hen sauntered out just in a comfortable easy manner clucking and calling the chickens who trotted along after her. Jane was the enterprisfcig one of the whole lot. She jumped & pranced around, cocked her head at the audience, kicked Min's tail under the screen when it came off, had a fight with Lill, over the results of her scratching h managed to be left out last of all & come tearing and shrieking in after the others had disappeared.

The audience were so pleased that they all trotted out once more, and afterwards the girls came in and examined the birds. It was, altogether, a most decided success and had the additional charm of being something quite new. I am to be waitress Founder's Night, so yesterday purchased

materials for an ^ apron to wear on that occasion. I intend that it shall be something quite cute and pretty if I can make it so. After our next play, when I shall have something to say I think I'll have to write to Grandmother B, but I can't get up anything for Ned. Do tell him how awfully busy I am all the time. What about that acquiescence to my proposal concerning a box?

We're awful hungry. JLove to all--

Mary S. Morris.