

Vassar College

Nov. 3, 1818.

My dear Mithery -

You may as well make up your mind to a regular siege - lend Ray, & twist your hair up tight - for I have a string as long as from here to Poughkeepsie to tell you. Such an exciting time as we have had the last of this week.' As the children may have told you last Thursday was Hallow-e'en, at any rate we remembered that it was. The airy seniors were going to have a grand time over in Society Hall - a sort of masquerade, & the witch scene - with embellishments - from Macbeth.

Just before dinner the Juniors decided to have a class-meeting. When I requested that some one should state the business to be brought before the meeting - it was moved that as the senior corridor was to be clear in the evening a committee be appointed from the Junior class to go to every room & make French beds - empty all the water pitchers - hide the matches put court-plaster over the gas burners & do anything else they could think of. Of course it was carried in about three minutes, & almost faster than I could possibly attend to it, sixteen girls were put on this committee of whom your eldest daughter was one. I had a dreadful time trying to preserve my dignity & quiet in the class. Well they started off about eight o'clock & all went but three girls, & these stayed in rooms on double alley ways which rather bothered us. Ada Thurston & I were together & made beds emptied pitchers etc. in our allotted rooms. When all the parlors- except the two occupied ones had been doctored some girls went around & chalked a great death's head & cross-bones on the inside of the parlor doors & Ada & I followed with the mucillage bottle & annointed every door-knob.

There has been great impatience concerning the senior parlor this year, & wondering when it was to be opened, but no one had been able to hear much about it. Ada & I were preparing to give a little dab to this door-knob when we discovered the key in the door. We were quite overcome & after trying it to make sure that it was fastened walked off with the key.

Well I wish you could have seen or rather heard the seniors. They came home early to have a private opening of the parlor & couldn't get in - The corridor was very dark & they stuck on the mucillage. As soon as they entered their rooms they went for the matches but as they didn't think to look under sofas and in such places they had to go out and borrow some. Then they went to wash their hands, couldn't find a drop of water and so had to go pitcher in hand to the bath-room where they stuck to another knob. They probably had some trouble in lighting their gas, & when they came to brush their teeth they found salt in their mugs & brushes, & finally couldn't go to bed with any great celerity on account of having to re-make their beds. You ought to have heard the racket the girls over us made that night. The next day a note came to us requesting the pleasure of our company in the senior parlor the next night from 8 to 9. We hadn't the blindest idea what it could mean. Of course we very politely accepted but in secret class meetings we cogitated. We knew that the seniors were sure we had done it & concluded that after successfully getting the joke on them we didn't wish to get sold in any way ourselves, So we

prepared ourselves at every point. – Oh I mustn't forget to say that we returned the key the next noon – In case we found the door locked when we arrived, we were to take chairs in front of the door & hold a Junior sociable there, singing "We won't go home until morning" etc. & were each to be provided with two crackers for refreshment. There were ever so many other plans too, & a special told one of the seniors that '80 was equal to anything they might do, & in order to prove this what did those girls do but vote in class meeting that in case we were politely & well entertained the president of the class should at parting make a polite acknowledgment of the same & deliver a little farewell speech. How I hoped they would play some beastly trick on us, so that our orator already chosen for such an emergency might make her cutting reply.

Saturday A.M. we received individual invitations from the members of '79 & in the evening they came for us. We all dressed with great care though all I could swell out in was my black silk with fancy stockings, "that ruching" my white satin belt & white illusion around my neck, with some bright flowers. By the time we were ready to go we were pretty sure that nothing very bad was to happen to us, for "coffee for seventy" had been ordered in the steward's department, etc. Well our escorts arrived & we were taken up the central stairs & beheld from afar the senior corridor one blaze of light & the parlor door open, while near the parlor, in the corridor were numerous easy chairs & sofa's. We were taken in to admire the parlor which was exquisite. Some of you ought to come up here, if for no other reason, at least to see how elegantly the girls can furnish a room. The curtains are beyon description, likewise the sinking chairs & sofas, not to mention the Eastlakey cabinet & little knickknacks - bits of carving, beautifully painted china & all sorts of rare unusual things. After we had admired for awhile we were seated in little groups & regaled with the nicest kind of coffee with whipped cream, & served in little glass cups, & besides, two kinds of fancy wafers. I was seated with five or six girls I knew pretty well & two of them related to us some of the performance that had been going on over in the hall the night before, but all the time they were laughing & carrying on I kept saying my little speech over & over. I know that I said it every bit of twenty times from beginning to end, and every time I'd get a shade more cold and scared.

Well finally the silent time bell rang and I knew it was high time for me to be performing. I had intended to say "Dear friends in '79 allow me in behalf of '80 to tender you sincere thanks for the delightful evening we have spent in your company. We congratulate you upon your lovely parlor, which has already with us at least established a shining reputation for cosiness & comfort. We can wish you no greater happiness than that you may during all the year enjoy it as much as we shall always enjoy the memory of this loveliest of evenings. And so again expressing to you our thanks & congratulations, we wish you a good night & pleasant dreams."

That was the very best speech I could get up before we started, & the thought of getting it off to that class made my blood run cold. In the first place I had to break boldly in while they were all talking & laughing, & when they suddenly stopped the change was so great and my voice sounded so queer that I got stuck in the second sentence, but I made a desperate grab for the third and sailed through some how, so surprising Em Jordan the president of '79 that she hadn't a word to say & so you see, after all '80 had the last word in the matter. About all one could hear from a Junior that night was "Oh girls haven't we had a grand time & won't we give them a howling swell party next summer", though of course we didn't all use such

reprehensible slang but thought that we had passed a very enjoyable evening, & hoped that they would find their party next summer, all they could expect.

So far no one has said or acknowledged that '80 knew anything about how '79 was harrassed on Hallow-e'en night, & '80 considers the little reception in the parlor a very polite attention, though among ourselves we say that '79 did a very cute thing instead of trying to get ahead of us on our own ground.

Dear me I have spun along so that I have but little room left to tell you what a success Alpha's hall-meeting was last Friday night, but really we have hardly thought of that at all, our minds & conversation have been so full of the other subject.

Estelle's sister in law "Mrs. Viola" was up here on Friday evening & enjoyed the meeting very much. Our two singers, who are the best in the college, I believe, sang, there was a very cute rhymed critique of the previous meeting, a little farce, & lastly Addison's article on teaching the use of the fan. Annie Bailey took his idea, made herself into a perfect Italian—for she can be that just as easily as John Chinee, Cupid, or a washer-woman—made his opening remarks in beautifully broken English & introduced his class of young ladies. I took part in this too & enjoyed it no end. We were dressed in every variety of evening costume, our hair dressed high & holding a little fan for a comb. This was a bright idea of Bailey's for the little fans were so bright & pretty. We all had our hair powdered & several wore very tall ruffs--fan like—. I know that mine, which was made of essay paper scratched my ears dreadfully & came up to my puffs in the back. Before the curtain rose the audience beheld, fastened to it, two immense white paper fans bearing the advertisement of the class which met in "Fan well" hall.

Mrs. Iddings called on us the next day & admired our parlor very much. I have finished another water color, & begun on the fourth. Next I am going to paint some flowers from nature so that in the course of time I can paint china.

Well I must bid you farewell now, hoping to get a good long letter on Tuesday telling me all about Ray & everybody -

Love to all --  
Mary S. Morris.