

Vassar, Dec. 1865.

My dear Nellie,

I can't wait another instant to tell you what a grand time we had yesterday - In the first place we didn't have to get up for breakfast until eight - i.e. we had breakfast at half past eight, and Miss Lyman gave express orders that no one should wake up her roommates but that every one should sleep as long as possible. After breakfast every one did what seemed good in her own eyes. Hattie and Minnie went up to Miss Sayles room to help about the tableaux, and I came home and read Aurora Leigh, until Helen Dana and Nettie Huntington came in and talked until chapel time at half past eleven. Pres. Raymond preached a very fine sermon. The choir chanted the "Te Deum". Cousin Emma (as she told us to call her), is a very beautiful singer. She and Prof. Wiebe sung the principal parts. I heard a great many remarks of the difference between her singing and Miss Wiley's. After chapel she came home with me, and stayed till about half past two during which time I recieved a letter from Charlie and one from you, wasn't I delighted tho'! I like her very much indeed. She is exactly my height - has light hair, and a very sweet expression. Likewise she is a very perfect lady. After she went I began to dress for dinner, and had just begun to curl my hair when Miss Griggs made her appearance saying that I was wanted immediately in the Art Gallery. I slipped on a wrapper and ran with my hair all flying. I was seized by Miss Fessenden, and told that I was wanted to act the part of a fashionable young lady fixing herself before the looking glass and must collect all the finery I could. Consequently I went home and finished dressing when I appeared very gorgeous in my alpaca and mauve ribbons. Then I rushed up to the chapel and saw the preparations, they had a curtain suspended across the chapel about a foot from the end of the stage, and a large frame, which black gauze stretched across for the front and black cambric for the other three sides making a sort of hugh box, with a seam ripped up on one side to allow us to go in and out. We flew around and rushed up and down, until a quarter past five when dinner was announced. All the Profs, and their families were invited and some other people. They filled three tables with the teachers, while the girls had charge of their own tables and carved their own turkeys. Minnie carved ours in the most highly scientific style, she and Prof. Tenney were the only ones who didn't stand to carve. Our bill of fare was as follows. Oyster Soup, very nice. Roast Turkey, cranberry sauce, squash potatoes (mashed), celery, gravy - third, plum pudding, fourth, nuts and raisins apples. It was very nearly seven when we left the table. Every thing was very nice, and the girls all seemed to enjoy it very much. Immediately after tea there was a reception in the College parlors and the Presidents, all being thrown into one great room. We went in for about five minutes and then disappeared. I rushed down stairs and in about twenty minutes or half an hour marched into the chapel gallery in the following attire. Minnie's blue silk skirt, Hattie Johnson's white lace waist, four bracelets and Hattie's white shawl. I ought to have told you that Madame Castani, a most remarkable woman, who makes her living in that manner, came a day or two before hand, with a quantity of Greek and Turkish costumes, which she was expected to arranged into tableaux - she watched the girls very closely to find those that she could trust to fill them out - The teachers made up seven, that afternoon which were American. Profs. Farrar and Vaningen assisted them, and they did nobly, adding very materially to the interest of the occasion. The first tableau was "A Pasha waited upon by attendants." It was very pretty and much admired. Next came "The Greek Fugitives," the principal figure of which was Minnie standing with her

left hand pointing to the Turks in the distance, two children hanging to her skirts, while her noble liege lord squatting on the floor had another one with him. She looked vary grand indeed, and made quite an impression. Next came "Siote defending his sister" which they said was beautiful but I didn't see it as I was at that time in the dressing room. Next was the "Flower of the Family" Every one's expectation was high when the curtain rose and there sat the baker with his cap and apron on, and by his side - a barrel of flour of course there was great laughing, when the curtain ross again, when the baker hammered the hoops as if to open it and when they were all loose out came little Nellie Raymond from the barrel. She looked a pretty and cunning as could be, and as you may wall imagine the effect was capital. Next came "The old plan and the new, or the old plan, and our plan." It was a tableaux in two parts, a screen being drawn between them, sufficiently to prevent their seeming one picture, and yet allow all to be seen. On one side were Miss Mary Granger with a pallet and brushes in her hand standing before an Easel, while Hattie Johnson siting by a table piled with books was criticizing her picture, the background was formed with the College flag so arranged that "Vassar" was plainly discernable. On the other side stood Hattie with her hair done up in a knot, her hoops off, an old calico wrapper on, and her sleeves rolled up, her dress pinned up, and a calico apron on. In one hand she held a mop and a pail stood beside her, altogether she was a most capital Irish girl. Helen Dana sat beside her dressed in a calico dress sewing dilligently, while not far off (on account of the limited space) stood Marthy Spooner herself, dressed as described above, with the addition of a great heap of blue and white flowers on top of her hair, a waterfall cushion underneath her curls, making them stand out not more than half a mile a long white ribbon around her comb, a red opera cloack trimmed with swan's down hanging down her back, her best handkerchief in her hand, busily engaged in fixing the flowers on her hair, looking in a mirror for that purpose. They said it was very good and I have had quite a number of compliments. Next came a Greek tableau of which I don't remember the subject. The American tableaux were all prettier than the Greek ones, at least we thought so. The "Rose of Castile" excited much anticipation and a table nicely piled with Castile soap caused great laughter. But when the "Real Rose of Castile seen in the light of other days" was announced, we all expected something grand, and I assure you, that the same soap with a tallow candle burning before it raised a shout. "Faith, Hope, and Charity," was the most beautiful of all. Three girls in white robes, one resting on an anchor, another holding a cross, and the third dropping her charities on the floor. It was very beautiful indeed - A portrait of Schiller attracted great attention. She was Miss Treadwell from Jackson. Her face is very much like the pictures of Schiller. The closing scenes were first a Godess of Liberty, steading by Union, while at their feet sat a weeping slave with chains around her. In the next scene Union had lifted her up and Liberty had thrown her arm over them They all went off beautifully, and every one went home feeling highly contented with herself and friends - I didn't tell you about the other Greek ones, as it would have been tedious. Miss Avery came back yesterday and brought out all her infirmary - Miss Lyman thought we could do great wonders, if we could have such fine tableaux on so short a notice. I was delighted to get your letter. What was the matter between Mrs. Birch and the Dr? I am utterly discouraged about them if that is what they are going to do. What a polite young person Miss Lawrence is! I wonder Lucy is really engaged. Of course any of us would have said the same under the circumstances. I am very glad that you had such a pleasant time at that quilting. What did you do yesterday? Write soon and tell me all about it. I do hope you had a

good time. I presume you have long before this discovered the whereabouts of your paternal relative and could enlighten me as well if not better than you I. I am very sorry to hear about Eva Standish. How are her sister and niece? I wish I could set my two eyes on you your relatives and neighbors - also on her blue silk trimming. I had a letter from Charlie yesterday, he says his duties may call him here any day and wants instructions how to proceed. Please ask Mother to write him a little note of introduction to Miss Lyman, and tell him to take the Vassar omnibus, & that will unlock all doors -

What a goose Mattie is. I am ashamed of her. I'd go out as nurse girl before I'd be dependant as she is, to say nothing of spending money for a plume when my family were suffering - Remember us to Jenny Davy. I would give a great deal to see her. Give a great deal of love to Mother, Willie, and all the loveable people. Minnie wants Father to send her ten \$ too because her ma is an orphan. Don't you think I've written nearly enough? I do. Ask Carrie Hawley if she has decided to drop me. I haven't done or thought of a single thing for Christmas With a great deal of love from all of us

I remain your off servant - M.S.W.

Mattie didn't see the second "Rose of Castile". It was a row of knives, saws, instead of soap. She was'nt near enough to see the distinctly and had not heard it before I don't we you a letter. I am going to write to you a decently long letter some time. Christmas is coming - aren't you glad we are away?