

March 18th 1866 -

My Dear Parents.

I received your letter Friday morning and can fully appreciate under what difficulties it must have been written -with the house torn up so I am doubly obliged for it. I think you would have felt repaid for writing it if you could have seen me when I read it - I was so interested in every-thing you wrote-- It Is so lovely here this morning -warm-pleasant & springlike The sun is shining in our window so brightly and the little birds are singing my canary so sweetly that I have just told the girls it reminds me of Dicky and then I wondered what would become of the little fellow while the house is so torne up. Emily suggests that perhaps he is paying Louise a visit How Is it?- We seem to enjoy the beauty of this day more I think from the reason that yesterday the wind blew very hard all day and in the evening it was cold It dreary and everything betokened a dreary day to-day. Even Miss Lyman spoke of it at Chapel service in the evening - but we are all happily disappointed - We all came in from breakfast this morning and had a long talk about going home Very foolish perhaps you will say - but nevertheless a subject which is very engrossing to us - It commenced by our looking at the little Almanac which we have pasted up on the door and from which we mark off a day every morning. The first thing we did this morning was to count the number of weeks we have yet to stay then we commented on the fact of its being only two weeks before we will commence to go "down hill" as we say- that is to day the time will be half gone. Then we reckoned the number of times we will each have to fix the room for you must know we take turns, each taking care of it a week- We found we would each have it three times more which we thought a very nice way to reckon in order to make the time seem short-for instance I say-I have only got three times more to take care of the room and the first time is next week--Is'ent that nice? But this is enough of our foolishness for one letter. And now I want to tell you how I spent yesterday for I feel as though I accomplished so much and yet enjoyed myself so much. The first thing I did in the morning was to correct and copy a composition I had written during the week and which is to be handed in to-morrow--- We have to write once in three weeks now-Then I wrote a letter to Louise Beers of over four pages and another to Kate of over eight pages- Then it was dinner time and after dinner I sat down and wrote another letter of over five pages to Ella Hall. You will say I think that I did a good business in the way of writing but I made up my mind when I got up in the morning that if it was a possible thing I would write to Louise and Ella during the day for i had not written to them but once since I have been here and that was the first of last term soon after I came here, and they answered quite soon. So you see I had good reason to wish to redeem my character of a poor letter writer. After that Emily Julia Mary Cornell and myself went out and had a game and a half of Croquet- It was not very pleasant to play but we were obliged to take our hours exercise and thought we might as well take it that way as any other. It is the second time we have played- The other was on a lovely warm after-noon and I enjoyed it very much. It is so pleasant for us four to play. After we returned from that I dressed and then took my embroidery and Em. her work and we sat down by the window and just the cosiest time you can imagine till tea time. There was no one else but Mary with us and we talked about Ithaca-Marshall etc, and told all the funny incidents we could think of in our previous life-- Don't you think it must have been pleasant? Then after supper Chapel etc. We studied until eight o'clock and then Julia came down with her work and we worked and read aloud. We commenced, "The Mill on the Floss" and each one read a chapter in turn until

after the warning bell rung. Now don't you think that was a well spent Sat-?— But I believe in my last letter I mentioned the Concert we were expecting to have so I must not forget to tell you about that. First Mollie and Mr. Bartlett did not come why— we do not know. I wrote to Mollie, inviting them, on Thursday and have not received any word from her at all. Julia and I are quite provoked for we thing she might have written us a line at least telling us she could not come. The evening passed off very pleasantly indeed though there were not as many here as they expected from outside I suppose because the roads were quite bad. They had it arranged quite grandly about the way of seating— At seven o'clock the bell rung and all who took part in the performance took their seats in the gallery— At ten minutes past seven the bell rang again and the rest of the girls took their places in the front part of the Chapel with the exception of those who expected company and they repaired to the library which you know is opposite the Chapel. At 20 minutes past seven the doors were opened and the company who had been received by one of the teachers in the parlor below,—were sent up stairs. At the top they were met by ushers to whom they gave the name of the young lady who invited them, who was then called from the library, provided with programmes and shown to their seats in the Chapel by the ushers— The ushers were appointed, one from each corridor. Miss Granger and I were appolated nominated on this corridor but I told the girls they must not vote for me as I expected company. I was very glad to have so good an excuse for not being one as I do not think it would be a very pleasant thing to do— The music was very good. I will send the Programme, as we could only have one, to Louise and tell her to bring it down to you and then if you please I should like to have it put in some good place as I should like to keep it I think. But I must begin to think of drawing my letter to a close as Emily & I have a walk in contemplation and as we must be back by twelve it is time we were starting if we wish to walk long. I did think some of writing about some things I want you to send and about my clothes but I suppose there is no hurry so I think I will put it off for another time. Julia is expecting a box next week and another in April. I wish I could be home with you to day if you are going to have as good a dinner as you had last Sunday for I suppose we will have a miserable one Sunday & I heard Mr. Smith had said he is not going to give us any more good Sunday dinners— I am sure I don't know what they will be for they have always been the worst we have had---The living gets worse & worse I think every day. Almost every one is complaining of it & even the teachers own it though they do not like us to speak of it. They have pork or ham so much & hardly any of us will touch it for fear it has that disease & the vegetables are sure to have worms and the homming or rice which we are sure to have two or three times at least a week you can imagine what we find in that from our experience with cracked-wheat, so do you wonder I long to be home and have some of your goodies that I shall know I can eat with no fear. I do so long for pickles or something of that kind that is good & sour. Nellie sent down to Po'keepsie yesterday and got a little bottle of horse-radish put up—which is very nice & which she is going to take to the table but I do not sit at the table with her or I suppose I should get some. However I did not mean to write so much about this but I have forgotten myself I hope Mother will find time to read this - I am afraid you will have trouble to read it it is written so badly but I wrote so much yesterday I do not feel like writing much to day so please excuse me for I had so many things to say. I must go now- Love to all.

Ever your loving

Ellen

Emily sends love.