

Vassar College. Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

January 30^f 1897.

My dear Mother,-

Exams, are over, and a new semester is about to begin.

I am so glad to begin all over again, and not have back work and special topics piled up over me. I am going to try to keep my work right up to date the rest of the year. I had to cram more than usual for my exams, this time; the kind of subject makes so much difference with the exam, and all my things needed reviewing. We had our Ethics exam, the first thing Monday morning, and we were all glad to have that off our minds early, for there is so much memorizing in it, that it took up a great deal of room in our brains. After the ethics exam, is over, every year, it is customary for the class to give some yells to Prex - as a sort of farewell to him as a teacher. So when we left the gym - where we had our exam, and came out into the hall we lined up in two rows, by the lockers, leaving room enough for Prexy to walk out between the rows. But when he appeared, he looked rather embarrassed, and instead of running the gauntlet he bowed and remained standing where he was- We gave first "Rah, rah, rah." Rah, rah, rah.¹

the customary yell of ^V-A-S-S-A-R,- Prexy!" Then we recited in concert four favorite maxims of philosophers we have studied - maxims which we have had again and again in class and had joked about with Prexy. The first was Jeremy Bentham's - "The quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry." Then Aristotle's "We become good by Jan. 30, 1897 -2

doing good" and John Stuart Mill's "Better be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied"- We ended with the one which we thought most appropriate to the examination season and our state of mind - the famous saying of the sceptics: "We affirm nothing,- no, not even that we affirm nothing." Prex had laughed at us in class because we remembered these epigrams always, even when we could not remember another thing about the philosophy to which they belonged.

When we paused from our yelling, Prex said he hoped that our papers - which he had under his arm - would be as eloquent: then we yelled our other old yell, "Goodbye, Prex, Goodbye Prex, Vassar, Vassar, Vassar's Rex"- which we used when he started for Europe last year.

We are quite sorry to be through with Ethics; we had quite Jovial times with Prexy sometimes- He told us such a good Joke in class the last week - He had heard it given by Thomas Wentworth Higginson at a Vassar Alumnae Reunion in Boston recently. Mr. Higginson said that Emerson used to describe the typical college student as "a meek young man, who lived in a library". Mr. Higginson said that a good many people thought this description no longer applied, but, for his part, he thought it still held true, for when he watched the Harvard men strut across the campus, he was sure they looked as though they had already inherited the earth.¹ Perhaps you will wonder what connection this has with Ethics; it comes Jan, 30, 1897 -3

under the head of Practical Morality- Prex was giving us a lecture about our attitude and duties, as college graduates, toward the rest of the world. He told us, on the one hand, not to be so stupid that people would say they "never would have guessed that we had seen the inside of a college" and on the other hand not to answer to the description of the Harvard men above-referred-to; but whatever we did, if it was only washing dishes, we ought to do it the better for having been through college.

On Monday, in addition to ethics, I had an exam, in English,- which was not so hard as Z had expected. Tuesday I had no exam, so I spent the day on my special topic in History- Wednesday we had Greek, which was easy for a Greek one, though I did less than two questions out of the five. Our history, on the contrary, was harder than we had expected- Most people were through with their exams, by Thursday, but I still had German - for Friday morxdag.

Ray and Winifred and Gertrude Smith and Carrie all went down to Brooklyn or New York, Friday morning right after breakfast. Gertrude is back now, but the rest will not be here till tomorrow night. So I have had the rooms all to myself - in quiet. It seemed very queer not to have studying to do on Friday afternoon and Saturday, but I found plenty to do, with Vassar ion work and mending- The sleeve was half torn out of my Apr. 26, 1896 - 30

nightgown, so I spent some time patching that, and also in hemming up the binding and facing of my red fern dress. Edie asked about ideas for a Eton

waist. Most of the new ones here have some kind of a littleAjacket effect, either all the way around or else just in front, like this and the back perfectly plain, and broad belts or girdles.

I have also had the pleasure of reading a large part of "Sentimental Tommy"-a thing which I have been anxious to do for some time.

There was no church here this morning, and I did not go to town either, but stayed at home and read- Prof. Burton finished his course of Bible lectures last Sunday, and the man who was to have given us a course we

of four or five now, cannot come, so^will have none for a few Sundays. It has been very cold here for about two weeks - as it seems to have been all over the country - We are glad to get around the registers all the time. I keep thinking of you without a furnace.

Give my love to the neighbors and friends, and lots to the family- JLovingly your daughter

Adelaide. (Claflin,

Some dresses have rows of braid around instead of the girdle- If that would be easier, I would like it just as well.