

October 12, 1921

Dear Mother, Father, and Lester:

I am glad you sent the cake. Jeannette, who lost twenty pounds this summer through dieting, has consumed about one half of it.

I went over to see Miss Ballantine about the gym deficiency yesterday afternoon. Everything has been settled without difficulty. When I wrote this summer and the dean's office sent the word over to her, she was leaving for her sister's funeral and neglected to look the case up. She apologized profusely. When I start gym in November I shall start in a special class, the idea being that she wants me to go it easy at first.

When I got back at five o'clock Jeannette was here, so I couldn't finish my history topic. Helen, she, and I went over to the Lodge for dinner, and after dinner Jane Rothschild, and two other Freshmen and I went to Temple. Jane had asked me to go with her, as Freshmen are not allowed to go to town at night without an upper-classman. I certainly felt funny, acting in the capacity of semi-chaperone for them. The other two attached themselves. We got there during the English sermon. One of the noble officers of the congregation was standing in the vestibule, and he said that the rabbi was talking in English and we had better wait till he was through, but I said that that was the part we came for. So he opened the door and we went in. The rab stopped till we got seated and the whole congregation, without exception, turned around in their seats to see the new arrivals. I have rarely seen anything quite so funny. His sermon was a scream. He was very dramatic, and bellowed in that little room loud enough for New York Carnegie Hall. In the course of his discourse he spoke of the material prosperity of his community, but lamented their lack of real religious feeling. They judge by false standards. For instance, they have their

Russian schul, and their Galician schul, and their Roumanian schul, and their German schul. This is a very fine building. This, they tell me, is the German Schul. At that the whole place absolutely burst out laughing. I guess there are perhaps two Germans in the congregation. Then he went on to Dr. Levy's pet criticism. As soon as the service is over, they will smoke cigarettes in the vestibule. No, they won't. This is Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur they wait till they get to the corner, but next Friday night they will smoke in the vestibule. Then he went on to say that if the calendar is kind and makes a holiday fall on Sunday night they will get Minyan, otherwise they will have to get it at some place of amusement. But the funniest of all was when he spoke of the bitter need of a Talmud Torah, and said that the community was prosperous enough to provide the funds for it. He said, "I ask you, (and this in a very bargaining Jewish tone), is there one millionaire among you--one man worth, say, \$900,000? If there is, raise your hand". And one proud mortal raised his hand. Whereupon the point was proved that they had the money circulating in the community to [have the school]. He went on to say that he never talks with a manuscript and that he could therefore go on for three or four hours, but would keep the rest of what he had to say for today. I am sorry I missed the beginning--it was worth the price of admission. I forgot another funny part of it. He started sneering at reform. He said that now that their congregation is rather prosperous, they think they have to be reform. And what is reform? First, the men and women sit together. That makes it sociable. Then, a cantor doesn't suit, for they have to have English and English without music is bare, so they get an organ. They can't get a Jewish young lady to come up on the pulpit and sing, so they hire a christian young lady. And lo and behold, the Christian sings 'Schma Yisroel,' and when a Christian sings 'Schma Yisroel' it is no longer "Schma Yisroel'." I wonder if you realize, Father, what a terrible cause you are supporting! It certainly was a rare sermon from beginning to end.

After the sermon came endless prayers and cafe-clatsch and getting up and visiting back and forth. I had taken my prayer-book down, and we

all read the service in it, to the great curiosity and amusement of our gossiping neighbors. What a terrible impression a service like that would make on an outsider. It surely is religion without spirit. Just what do you make out of a service where a man stands up in the congregation and waves to the noble president on the pulpit that it is time to draw the curtain of the Ark? The rab looked for all the world like a chef in his white cap and coat.

Jane and I decided that we were going to the most orthodox congregation today, if that is the reform one, but then we suddenly both thought that on Yom Kippur they take off their shoes, so we decided not to. Perhaps we are wrong about it, but I think not.

Henrietta Butler went home last Sunday. She has withdrawn from college. I think she is one grand fool to do that her Senior year.

I just saw in the Miscellany today that inter-class debate is the twelfth of November. That is very early compared with last year. If I make the team, Pete, there will be no leaving college that week-end.

More tomorrow.

Love,

Fannie