

November 13, 1921

Dear Mother, Father, and Pete:

Please appreciate the respectable paper!

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Junior debating team was victorious last night by a 2-1 decision. It was not a wonderful debate. The subject did not inspire anyone. Mr. Burges Johnson, not because he voted against us, though, gave the craziest reasons for his vote that I have ever heard. But it may interest you to know how he did it. He worked out a marking system--like a child--and graded everyone for various points. 5 was his highest mark. The two things that I excelled in will amuse you! The highest mark he gave for stage-presence was 4 1/2, and that was awarded to one soph and me. Likewise I tied a soph on 4 1/2 in power of argument. He objected to the affirmative conclusion of the debate (which was mine), as a mere sentimental appeal. He said he didn't like it, where upon Miss Reed, who was strong for us, turned around to him, and said, "That's because you lack sentiment in your makeup". He got the laugh on that. C. Mildred Thompson was there in full force, pulling as hard as she could for us. Toward the end of the discussion after the debate a bunch of our squad collected around her, and in the course of her talking she said, she hoped I wouldn't allow what Mr. Johnson said about my conclusion to influence me if I went out for intercollegiate, because she considered that the weakest part of Vassar debate in the last few years has been cut and dried "We have shown, they have not shown, therefore we consider that we have won, etc., etc." She said she was very glad I had considered it a very strong point in my favor. Another bright thing Mr. Johnson pulled off was to show how I should have elaborated on one point I made in rebuttal, instead of trusting to the intelligence of the audience to get it without indefinite explanation. I was aching to say to him, "Mr. Johnson, do you realize I was allowed five minutes for rebuttal, and that it took you two to make that one point?", but I wisely refrained. Only it annoys me when people are so dumb. He said[sic] he wanted to be treated like a stupid child and have everything explained to him. [He acted it.]

To show that I am fair-minded, I must confess that Miss White showed no more intelligence than he did, in spite of the fact that she voted for us. Miss Reed had voluminous notes, and was most "efficient" in her criticism. Another thing that will amuse you--I heard Miss White tell someone that I was the only one in the debate who showed any trace of humor. But I felt as handicapped as though my tongue had been cut off, for the committee absolutely forbade my using sarcasm, and I just revel in it in debate. All I could do was to provoke a laugh twice, and I like to keep the audience laughing.

I counted fifteen faculty in the audience--among them friend Bess Cowley, who amused me beyond expression when I mentioned the fact that a girl derives comparatively little benefit in the way of logical thought, when she takes freshman math against her will, after several years of math in prep school. I wanted to see her reaction when I said, and her face seemed to be saying, "That poor

deluded girl. What a fool she is! And I spent two good hours her freshman year trying to persuade her to elect math Sophomore year". Pap White, head of the department, sat through it like a gentleman. Miss Wells and Miss Cummings of the math department were also there. Millsy sat in the back all by himself, and grinned all over whenever the negative made a point. He thinks the present curriculum is heaven itself. I have asked him various questions about possible changer, and he sat on every one of them. The head of the Spanish department and the Spanish addition to it were also there. The history department were well represented by Miss Ellory, Miss Thompson (who promised to grin at us like a Cheshire cat) and Miss Brown. The two people whom I missed were Miss Wylie and Miss Salmon. Miss Wylie does not believe in required Freshman English. We have been spouting Miss Salmon's ideas so much that I really think someone should have gone down-town to call for her. We have talked about "the big fish" so much that it ceased to be even funny.

None of the faculty would let us quote them. There is much delicacy of feeling on the subject of the curriculum. It amuses me. I don't see why they should be afraid to stand up for their

convictions. They took a rising vote before and after the debate, and C. Mildred was the only one who voted. Miss Ellory sat with some of our committee. After our speeches, before the rebuttal, she said, "You've won". And when the votes were announced, "She said, "I'm amazed at Mr. Johnson". The maddening part of it is that he has been away on endowment fund campaigning, and Bish wired him almost two weeks ago, asking him to judge. She got no answer Miss Ellory to judge in case he wouldn't. She would have made it a unanimous decision. When Mr. Johnson left, he said to Bish, "Well you have the consolation of knowing that if you had asked Miss Thompson to vote instead of me, you would have had a unanimous decision". And she said, "Yes, and if we had asked Miss Ellory, we would also have had it". So he decided that he didn't know much about judging. I think so too.

The outline may interest you. I did not use it. Please return it.

So much for that. I feel like a wreck today. I could hardly sleep last night. My mind has never worked at the speed it did last night, when i wanted it to stop. I am dead today.

Now for real work until Thanksgiving.

I seem to have left the outline in Students'. I'll send it sometime again.

Also, that darn fool Mr. Johnson gave me the highest grade for rebuttal. And I was generally complimented on my flow of oratory! Hurrah! And kidded for my Pittsburgh pronunciation of the word "English" I don't pronounce the g. Do you?

Love,

Fannie

Too bad, Father, you didn't speak at State College and get "Ella" to tell you nice things about me!

JUNIOR-SOPHOMORE
DEBATE

STUDENTS' BUILDING

NOVEMBER THE TWELFTH
NINETEEN TWENTY ONE

Junior Committee
Beatrice Bishop, Chairman
Helen Campbell
Elizabeth Cannon
Beulah Clap
Frances Faust
Phyllis Harman
Margaret Taylor

Sophomore Committee
Evangelia Waller, Chairman
Helen Cheney
Mary Crews
Janet Fine
Elizabeth Hamlin
Natalie Shipman
Alice Kean Stockwell

Judges
Assoc. Prof. Amy Reed
Prof. Florence White
Assoc. Prof. Barges Johnson

QUESTION: Resolved, That a freer elective system be adopted for
Freshman and Sophomore years.

Chairman, RACHEL HIGGINS

DEBATERS

Affirmative, 1923	Negative, 1924
[3] FANNIE AARON	AUGUST CLAWSON
[2] LOIS BARCLAY	HARIET DAVIES
[1] EMMA McDONALD	EVELYN KUHS

ALTERNATES

GRACE BOURNE	ISABEL CARY
MARGARET HILL	ELEANOR ECKHART
FRANCES KELLOGG	ELIZABETH LEWIS

[enc w/ 13 Nov 1921]