

1 AL/1876

Bedford College

11. Nov. 1883.

My dear Mother

You will be back at home now after your journeyings, in which I hope you got on well.

If you expect a glowing description of the "Show" you will be disappointed. The reason will be evident from the two post-cards enclosed: the first I did not answer as I thought it was not necessary: the second arrived at about one o'clock on Friday when of course the Show was going on. I was a good

deal disappointed, of course, but nearly forgot it in the afternoon in the excitement of going to the University to see the B.A. lists.

It was a curious scene in some ways so I will try to describe it all.

We started at about three, & as we went ~~down~~<sup>up</sup> Oxford Street saw banners here & there, & other honours of the day, but more especially a man who was shouting in a Stentorian voice "The Lord Mayor's show, - Lord Mayor's carriage & all the procession, beautiful colours, three yards long, all for one penny, only one penny & three yards long", while he waved about a faintly coloured kind of panorama book.

We went down Bond Street

& had some difficulty in getting along though it was not the fashionable time yet.

We turned into Burlington Gardens at last, & went through a couple of big swing doors into the vestibule of the University. For a man mostly young were standing near a notice board, & when I saw it I nearly shrieked "Oh here's the B.Sc. & Bessie's through". The sole cause of the excitement was a sheet of foolscap with 30 numbers on it, some beaded Second Class, some First.

We saw Bessie was second class, & looking at the other numbers, we found that all the women we knew of had passed, ~~all but~~ (viz, four), all but one, who has prepared partly here, & who has failed before. While we

were just making out this, a young man said to me, very politely "Can you tell me the number of the lady who took Physiology; there was only one & I am anxious to see if she has passed": but I could not enlighten him. Presently a sweet looking widow came, & asked us if we knew Miss Mitchell's number; so we told her, but said she had not passed.

By this time two or three more of our girls had come, & a good many men. We clustered together & gossiped & waited for the B.A. list. Presently we got tired & sat on the steps & told Examination stories: a very pleasant looking young lady of about who looked about 22 years old came in, & I was much interested to hear that she was Mrs.

Bryant, the first woman who was a B.Sc.

A good deal of running to & fro with papers went on, & Mr. Higgins a certain official who takes a great interest in all the girls who go in, came & asked us if Miss Collett was here: ~~Yes~~ She is one of our girls who was expected to do remarkably well. She was not there but presently arrived: we knew the results must be coming very soon now, for the Examiners had been having their last meeting & had run down the steps past us. So Miss Collett boldly went upstairs to find Mr. Higgins, & soon came down looking important. We begged her to tell us what she knew, but she said she could not be quite certain, & we must wait for

the lists; but she said she had passed, - which we were sure of before.

There were now 30 or 40 people about, some chatting in groups, some fidgetting, some pacing up & down - & for the most they were an uncommonly seedy looking lot.

I went towards the door to watch them come in: soon there was a rush towards the notice board, - I saw another paper was up, & in a second I was in the midst of a shoving eager crowd; by standing on tiptoe I got frequent glimpses, & kept telling what I saw to a short sighted girl beside me; - "Harriet's through Clara's passed, Dolly of course" &c &c

Then we knew all: - ~~none~~ <sup>our</sup> out of nine girls ~~eight~~ one had failed all the rest were in first division.

There was tremendous jubilation everyone grinned from ear to ear, but presently I and another girl were off to the Telegraph office - about a minute's walk. - We found it full of people who had come from the same place as ourselves. I telegraphed to Bessie Joone addressing it "Miss Joone B. & L." & just as I had sent it, I saw a young man with some of her writing in his hand, & looking at the message he was writing, I saw it was her brother: so I accosted him, & told him I had just sent to her, but I think he sent his too. Then we went back to the University & after waiting a little came back here three of us that is. We were in a wild state & hardly behaved properly I think: there was a gorgeous red ~~sky~~ sunset, - which the smoke improved

rather than otherwise. When we got in, everybody knew directly & there was such excitement.

I don't know how many letters & post-cards of congratulation went off in the evening but it was a good many certainly.

It is the greatest success the College has ever had, in that way.

I have written more about this than I meant to. I hope you will not find it very uninteresting.

Mr. Stewart told me yesterday about some microscopes he had looked at.

One, costing £25 (~~£30~~ when new £35) by Collins, who, he says does not finish his work carefully. It is well fitted up with lenses

& appliances.

A second is by, - I forget who, -  
but a very good maker, - originally  
cost £50, now £25.10s, & would  
be fitted with a different lens &  
one or two other things for £32.10s.

Mr. Stewart regards this as the  
more satisfactory as well as the  
handsomer of the two, - but it  
has not quite so many fittings.

So I arranged that it is to  
come up, - with the extra fittings  
during the week, - on approval.

If it seems all right & nice  
shall I ~~to~~ say we will have it?

I should think the best way to pay  
will be for you to send a cheque  
but I will write again about that.

The results of the Exam have encouraged ~~our girls~~ some of the girls so much that they are quite eager to try for Honours. Lucy Morland said she wanted to go to Germany to read during next Summer Vacation. And one of the others was talking too: I thought I would like awfully to go too, ~~so~~ and I told them about the Brédans. Lucy quite snapped at the idea, & is thinking of it most seriously. I believe. But they want to know about the cost: would you mind sometime looking up our bills while there, that we may know how much our board would be. Also if you can find what our travelling expenses thither were

but I could find that from a Cook's Excursionist if you don't know.

Our idea, - very elementary as yet, - is that we would go for a month or two during the summer, - and learn German, ~~if we could~~ & also study other things getting some of <sup>the</sup> Bonn University tutors perhaps to coach us in Mathematics & of course we should take excursions into the Siebengebirge & up the Rhine. Do you think you would sanction my going - if the plan ever comes to anything which probably it will not.

I have had a cold for a week or two: it ~~has~~ has reversed the usual order for it began with



a cough & has developed into  
a cold in my head, which  
causes me to snuff camphor  
liberally to-day. But it is nothing  
much, & has not interfered  
with my work.

Is anything being done with  
the Books left in the old office?  
A girl told me to-day that they  
sold some old books, - history, ~~poet~~  
theology, novels &c., & got \$5 for  
90 volumes: if we did half as  
well it would be something.

I send very warm love  
to every body, & remain

Your very loving daughter,  
Helen M. Wilson

Thanks to Father for his note. I sent  
enclosures to Alick.