

AK/1889

College Hall

8 Nov. 1885.

Dear Mother

I was very much dismayed yesterday to see the result of the School Board Election. How disappointing it must be for Father & all of you! And though it was managed so badly I suppose that those who were kept out from voting were not enough to alter things materially. It is dreadfully disappointing to see that people will not appreciate what is for their own good. Things educational will probably stand still now for

three years, won't they? They can not well go back, I imagine, - at any rate ~~they can't shut~~ the schools that are now open, can't be shut.

I suppose the fact that he will no longer be chairman will not lessen Father's work, - for he will have to be busy keeping the majority out of mischief.

The Election in London seems nearly as bad as far as I can make out. When will people appreciate education properly?

I hope this is not supposed to be a foretaste of the Parliamentary Election. But perhaps those who ~~supported~~ disapproved of what they called extravagance in the School Board will disapprove of Jory ~~extravagance~~

in Parliament, - at least we may hope so. But what a shame if people have no feelings except in their pockets, & not enough sense to distinguish between a good investment & a bad.

I was glad to see that Hallam is to be contested, and I should think Sir Charles Warren will be a capital man. For a very great many people, perhaps for all, assurances of the ^(as distinguished from the wrongfulness) uselessness of wars come with more force from a soldier than from a Quaker, & especially when the soldier has practically demonstrated it. Have you seen Punch's account of "Colonel Rabbit's ^{new} plan of campaign", & how the authorities liked it. It is rather good.

I do wish I were at home now. It must be so exciting with all these various elections.

How I suppose I had better tell you about my "dissipation" this week,

On Wednesday, the factory girls had a tea, & annual meeting to which I went. Their appetites compared unfavourably with those of Sheffielders and I only saw one saucer used as a cup! Miss Foxon came & sang to them, & ~~she~~ afterward they held the meeting & then had games. I recited the Pied Piper, & little Aline Robson, the meeting-house keeper's daughter, said Kimpsey's poem of the doll that was lost on the heath (Gertie will be interested to hear this). - but she would not let me put her on the table to say it. Several of my suggestions were carried at the meeting & I hope will help to give the Society a fresh start.

On Thursday I went up to Hampstead to have tea with Miss Lee. Several old friends were there, whom it was pleasant to see, but there was nothing exciting.

Friday was the Debate at Bedford College. Lucy Morland & Harrie Carson came up from Croydon for it, & had tea

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with me. As we were all ^{three} to miss our regular evening meal we had a good feed up in my room, - the first time I have had such a party. I ~~was~~ had to buy bread, butter, & meat & to borrow knives & plates, but we had a very good time!

The first business at the Debate was to elect officers. They chose me President & I had to march down to the table & sit facing the audience. I don't know whether I ever felt quite so conscious of the smallness of my stature. However I got on all right, - but twice missed chances of calling people to order.

The Debate was on the motion "That Theatres ought to be abolished." There was a good deal of speaking & uncommonly little nonsense ^{was} talked, but I don't recollect that anything striking or original was said. But it did modify my views a little I think. At least now I think that perhaps there is nothing wrong

or unworthy in theatres themselves, if they could be reformed. But I know that that is a very big "if." When the vote was taken, the motion was lost by 21 to 2. The two were the opener & myself!

I came back that evening with Miss Berry, my Socialist friend. She told me about an interesting club for youthful thieves which a lady conducts single-handed. She goes to them every evening for ~~some~~ some hours, & does not attempt to teach them, but lets them sing comic songs & play games; only she will not let them use very bad language. She has quite reformed several, by getting an influence with them in this way. Miss Berry asked if I would go to see it, & I think I shall.

I was very much staggered by the account of her method at first,

and was very doubtful whether it could give good results, - but I am beginning to see more in it now.

Miss Williams, a very intelligent student here was talking to day about socialism, & then about how to raise the lower classes. Her theory is that the right way is not for one or two cultured people to go among a lot of uncultured, & try to raise them, & give them more refined ideas, - but to mix them in assemblages where the majority is cultured, & so have the others surrounded & overwhelmed by intelligence & refinement, so that they can't help absorbing some of it. She says that some people in London have done this. They have parties consisting of about equal numbers of friends of their own station & of working people. I think there is some

sense in this view.

Lily Sprigg is going to open a Debate on Free Education at University College in ~~three weeks~~ a fortnight, & wants arguments for it, - though she has several. I promised to find out for her where she could get a copy of the Code or so much of it as to know what subjects are compulsory. Perhaps Oliver would let me know about this.

At the Sch. of Med. Debating Soc, - we are to have a debate on the Proposition "That modern fiction does more harm than good". It is not a good subject, & will not I think produce a good debate.

To-morrow I am going with Dick, our eccentric Australian to try & see something of the Lord Mayor's show.

With much love to all
~~You~~
Your loving daughter
Helen.