

M 1870

Bedford College

Feb. 11th, 1883.

My own dear Father,

I hope I shall see Mother on Tuesday but still I ~~think~~ must write home to give you a proper account of this last week which has been rather more exciting than usual.

On Monday, we had a debate; the subject was that delightfully sweeping one "That it is our duty to support every species of Unconventionality." I was kept cutting up crayfishes so that I did not get in till about the middle. The debate was more lovely than some

The opener, a Miss Young, defined conventionality as "Custom without Reason," & mentioned as conventionalities that should be dropped, objections to wearing false jewelry, - the custom of introductions, - not letting children have bare arms & legs till a greater age, & many other things, some reasonable, some otherwise. Her first opponent made, I believe, a rather personal speech, alluding to ladies riding on the top of omnibuses a direct hit at Miss Young, who very readily acknowledged the charge & did not seem much ashamed. There were several clever speeches & a good many very wide of the mark. The wearing of gloves was discussed & seemed generally regarded as a nuisance. Finally, they carried by a large majority an amendment "That in order to treat each other as rational beings we must often

disregard conventionalities." The original ~~was~~ motion was, by special request put afterwards, & defeated by 12 to 6. It was an interesting debate but I don't think it will produce much practical effect.

I'm afraid I have not made that very interesting, but I will try to do better in describing Wednesday.

We had breakfast rather late, and at about 10.30, I & two other girls drove in a Hansom to Burlington House. After depositing our umbrellas ~~so~~, we went into the rooms. The first two were filled with pictures by Linnell who died last year, & seems to have been chiefly a landscape painter. I have not got the catalogue so I cannot describe the pictures properly & systematically. ~~The~~ Very many of the pictures contained sheep, usually beautifully painted, but in some ~~of the~~ cases arranged as well as a company of soldiers drawn up

in a hollow square, & in other pleasing & natural attitudes. There were some cornfields most beautifully painted; one very good one was a group of labourers asleep at meal-time, with their heads in the shadow of the sheaves & their mouths open. But in all the pictures there was a natural look, a feeling of bright sunshine, or real shade; the skies were better painted I think than any I have seen. Almost the most striking was ~~one~~ a very large one of harvest time, with a lot of people in a field & a very black storm coming rolling up behind. There were a good many sketches, & it was interesting to see out of what shapeless doubts some lovely pictures had grown.

From the Linnell pictures we went to the Rosetti ones. These had a good deal of family likeness; they nearly all represented pale women with very thick curling lips & immense quantities of black or red hair, in æsthetic costumes. That, is how a scoffer would describe