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Levi Pennington

People

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6-9-1946

### Levi Pennington writing to Mary and Cecil, June 9, 1946

Levi T. Pennington

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June 9, 1946.

Dear Mary and Cecil, and Maybe I ought to include  
Bertha May and Esther.-- I do not know just  
when they are to be home:--

Today seems like the real beginning of the commencement program, though the commencement concert occurred on Friday evening. It certainly did not seem much like the concerts that used to be given at commencement time under the consulship of Plancus. But of that later. This afternoon comes the baccalaureate service -- you see I am writing the beginning of this letter before we go to church, all three of us for Bertha May is home for this week end -- tonight is the final meeting of the Student Christian Union -- they are too good for the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. these days; tomorrow evening is the class day program, and Wednesday -- I mean Tuesday -- is the commencement exercise proper. But why tell you all this? I am enclosing a program.

I don't like to brag, but I'll tell you about the concert. It was in charge of Roy Clark, head of the music department and the man who made the attack on President Gulley in the face of the yearly meeting last year. He is a very good man -- he admits it; you don't have to prove it, and I'd not undertake it. Every concert must be opened with prayer, and the one Friday night was no exception. (Once when I was there for a student recital he asked me, without warning, to offer the opening prayer. Well, "Men ought always to pray", so I did the best I could.)

Clark announced at the opening that there were a number of folks listed on the program who were absent -- he did not say why, but there were four of the numbers listed that were not presented -- and there were at least that many more which would have improved the program if they had been omitted, too. It was strictly a student program, aside from some accompaniment which he did, and some of the students had not learned much.

I suppose the first number was pretty good, though I did not particularly like the music chosen. The Cadd who was scheduled for the next number was not there, the Cadd! Nor was Miss McClintick there, so we did not get over the Hills of Home nor into the Garden of Her Heart, which perhaps was just as well. The violin number which came next was pretty good, though we could not help comparing her with her cousin of a few years ago, who was a much better violinist.

Quincy Fodge (Oh! Fudge!) sang his song of fellowship, but he was not the right fellow for it, and he should have waited for his ship to come in before singing it. Miss Schweitzer was not present, so the only Rain! Rain! Rain! that we got was what was falling outdoors.

Miss Antrim proposed to do her two piano solos from memory, and in the midst of her Sibelius number she lost her way. She tried to go on but with no success, so she packed up to one of the secundary starting places, and this time she



made the grade all right. Her second number went better, only it was too heavy a piece for her tender hands.

Then came Miss Tamplin, who takes her vocal lessons in Portland. She has a rather tiny, piping voice, with which she essayed to do vocal gymnastics, with a fair degree of success. The violin obligato on the last of her three numbers added much to its effectiveness.

Mildred Haworth's piano numbers went well enough, though I could have chosen selections that would have pleased me much more, less technical, perhaps, but more pleasing to the ear.

Then followed four deeply religious vocal solos, the first three prayers, and the last one a solo on the style that the sailor said made an anthem. He was asked what an anthem was, and he said, "If I should say, 'Joe, bring me that 'andspike', that would not be a hanthem. But if I should say, 'Joe, Joe, Joe, Joe bring me, bring me, bring me, Joe bring me that 'andspike, Joe bring me that 'andspike, spike, spike, Joe bring me that 'andspike, 'andspike, spike, spike, ahmen, ahmen, ahmen,' why that would be a hanthem." Well, that last song was one of the songs which said, "These are they, these are they, these are they which have come up, which have come up, which have come up out of great tribulations; these are they which have come up out of great tribulation" etc., etc., etc., etc., and I never did like them overmuch. And the voices of all of these four singers needed a lot of cultivation, and then they'd not have been much good.

The young lady who tried "Carnival of Venice" on the trumpet was trying something that was a bit beyond her, with a lot of triple tonguing that she was not quite up to, but she did her best, and finished with a grand finale in which she fairly blew her front teeth out, and she got more applause than anybody else on the program, and probably deserved it.

Shadrack was not on hand (nor was Meshach nor Abed-nego) which was probably in our favor. The program closed with Malaguena by Lucuena, done well enough, and I was willing to leave for home. The program had been plenty long even with the several excellent omissions.

Now that is a lot of stuff to write about the commencement concert, but it was so strikingly different from the sort of program that the Halls used to put on that I could not help but notice it. And later, when Wagner and Hirtzel and Goodnow and Mrs. Murdock were here, we had excellent programs. Many a student recital was far superior to what we had Friday evening -- well, a student recital was all that this was.

Mother and I had our first taste of strawberry shortcake yesterday, and we'll probably have our last one today. The crop here in the valley is practically all gone, and the price is still plenty high -- I paid 65 cents for these two little boxes -- and they had some other berries that were 39 cents straight. Mother would like to put up a few, but that price seems tremendous. Maybe the mountain berries will come in and be a bit cheaper, but I do not expect it.



#### And now it is late afternoon, and I can tell you about more of the commencement program.

It cut loose and rained enthusiastically the last half hour before the baccalaureate service, and I suppose that cut down the crowd materially. Still there was quite a company present, to hear a message from President Guiley that was very much worth while. The college chorus sang two selections, and did a good job of it, and Emmett spoke unusually well from the text, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." He dwelt on the many advancements that have been made in many lines during the past fifty years especially, but showed the folly of depending on these things, such as radio, motor transportation, airplanes, motion pictures, etc., but showed how these have been perverted to the destruction instead of the blessing of mankind in many ways and in many cases. He pointed to the way of Christ as the only way that can save the world.

The reception at the Girls' Dormitory was not largely attended, but it was carried out very well, with dignity without stiffness.

After the reception the three of us went out to the home of Gervas and Amy Carey west of Dundee. They have the greatest display of flowers that I know of anywhere hereabouts, and I never have seen strawberries like theirs. We are to have a crate of them tomorrow, a cannery crate, 16 ounce boxes instead of twelve, and the berries all "hulled", that is the stems removed. Still the price of \$3.75 a crate seems plenty high. I do not care as much for them canned as Mother does, by quite a bit; but we both like them preserved, and that's the way we'll put up at least some of them.

And now it is 8:30 P.M. Bertha May has gone back to Portland, expecting to be back for the next week-end, too, which will be the week end of yearly meeting. I don't want to wish away any of the remainder of my life, but I am always relieved when yearly meeting is over. Don't know what will come up. Gervas Carey tells me that only one person has spoken in criticism of his speech in favor of President Guiley a year ago, but he says that if many people feel as that man did, he'd not be surprised if there was a movement to put in a new clerk this year. He declares that he will not take the place if there is any controversy about the clerkship.

Their daughter Elisabeth, who has been in library work in Hawaii, was to have been married in the not distant future, but Amy told Mother this afternoon that that match had been broken up, and that Elisabeth will be home this fall, but not to be married.

You remember Mrs. Madsen, sister of Charley Wilson. He died some months ago, as you perhaps know, and she did not long survive him. Her funeral occurred the day before we returned from the coast. She has been desperately ill for months, I suspect from an inoperable cancer, though I do not know for sure. She suffered intensely, and though we all hated to lose her, we were all glad that she was free from her suffering. For a considerable time before her death she did not know anybody.



I'll be looking for these poems of yours as soon as you can get them to me, Mary; and if Bertha May brings any home with her, I'd like to read them, too. A number of students told me today how much they enjoyed the verses I read to them in that class in Twentieth Century Poetry -- only one mentioned it at the close of the class. One of them suggested that I ought to write some more this summer to read to them next fall when college opens again.

We are to have as our guests during the early part of yearly meeting a Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Williams from the meeting at Radnor, Pennsylvania. They have been working with the American Friends Service Committee in California, and do not expect to be here more than two days, we are told.

And now I am sure I have gossiped enough, and I'll end this with the hope that all you dear folks there have a very happy and profitable summer.

With love from both of us, and I know Bertha May would want to be included, to all of you and to the friends we met there,

Affectionately always,

Cecil and Mary Pearson,  
13 Marion Avenue,  
South Glens Falls, N.Y.

We just had a wire from Otis Knight, son of Otis I. Pennington, of Birnamwood, telling us that he is to arrive in Portland tomorrow evening at 9:30 by air. That is the time of the Alumni banquet, and I am going to see if I can get a message to him so that he can come out here by bus instead of my having to drive to Portland and half way to Troutdale for him.