

Vassar College 1876-78

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I can hardly realize that it is almost a year and a half ago that I came to Vassar College for the first time. I was but sixteen then and had never been away from home before. For a long time it had been my chief desire to attend boarding school, and in Sept. 1876 this desire was granted. Two days and half[sic] hard examinations preceded my entrance into the College. A large, spacious room with a north and west window was assigned and with Mary E. Hager of German Vally[sic] N. J. as roommate, I occupied it my first year. My roommate was not just such a girl as I should have chosen. Though she might have been worse. Tall, dark-haired and eyed she was not bad looking though rather melancholy in her appearance. Her mind however had not been at all cultivated and I found to my dismay that she could neither read nor write correctly. Though she was in many ways very annoying, yet I could comfort myself with the fact that "she meant all right." Charity can, if it will, cover a multitude of sins. She is here again this year but rooming at quite a distance from me. I think that it was Friday when I came to remain at the College and we had from then until Monday to settle ourselves in our new domain, to become acquainted with our neighbors and to explore the spacious and beautiful grounds adjoining[sic] the College. Next

door to me roomed a girl. whose acquaintance I shall be always thankful for having had. Lizzie J. Goudy. whose real home is in San Diego Cal. but who had been sent to the school by her uncle a lawyer in Chicago. Though looking much older than her age 21. She is very prepossessing in her appearance. She is very frank almost rude sometimes in the expression of her thoughts and feelings. Despite all that. she is my true and faithful and we are as good friends if not better than we were last year when we were thrown more in contact with each other. She is a devoted Methodist and a true Christian. I can hardly understand how she bears so well her long separation from her widowed mother but the path of duty seemed to be here at least for the present. Opposite us were Miss Briceway and Miss Perkins. The former was from Rockford, Ill. and the latter from Augusta Me. I was

quite fascinated by them at first. L... probably was born to be a leader and I was so timid and frightened that I admired her daring character. I have since learned to prize more highly the adornment of a meek and quiet spirit. In spite of her un-lady-like ways she is a girl of much natural brightness and capability. When she has learned that though[sic] who listen are as interesting as those who talk. I think that she may become a noble, useful woman Carrie was very unlike

her. sunny-tempered and with a kindness which sometimes amounted almost to officiousness. Her lessons never worried her until the last few minutes when to use her own expression, she would just dig. She and Lou still remain good friends and room together on the 4th floor. These were all the girls I became acquainted with during the first two or three days

Feb. 4, '78 after my entrance into the College. Perhaps it would be well to speak here, before I enter upon the after work, of my examinations The Preliminaries were passed without any especial trouble still I was very happy at the end of the first day when I received my card of admission from the President. The second day was a very trying one. first came Rhetoric. Contrary to my expectations and fears I passed it. I think perhaps that Miss Le Ron's kindness may have helped to render the verdict favorable. Second came Latin. Three hours of hard questions followed and great despair on my part. Miss Goodwin evidently disgusted with my ignorance used all her sarcasm upon me and I was thoroughly miserable. But I passed to Freshman Latin with the exception of Virgil's Eclogues and Georgics which I had never read and from reading which I was excused at the end of the semester. In Algebra I had had good previous drill and got through very nicely. On this day I met Emma Clarke and her brother from Owego. She was a very nice girl but she left the College at the end of the first semester. Friday morning , my

mother, who had been staying at the "Morgan Home" with me went home and I was left dependent upon my-self for the first time in my life. The entire novelty then kept me for three weeks from being home-sick but I afterwards suffered terribly from it as I do at times even to this day. Friday morning I took and passed the examination in Preparatory Geometry. So. on Monday, my studies were announced to me as Livy, Geometry and Physical Geography These were all studies of considerable interest to me and I enjoyed them perhaps more in anticipation than I did really I found the day here was divided into periods. My Geometry came at the 2nd period. In this study, I had as teacher Miss Church, now Prof. of Mathematics of Hilem College. I took a great fancy to her from the first which mad[sic] the study much pleasanter. She was exceedingly ... in her explanations and in her requirement of her students. I did not have to recite oftener than once inbut we often had hard

examinations. Physical Geography at the 3d[sic] period. Miss Hackill, the teacher, was quite an old woman and treated us as if we were students in a primary school. But, then she was a good old soul and really pounded a good deal into our heads. The drawing of maps was her hobby. 4th. Period. Latin under Miss Adams. If charity was not such a beautiful virtue I might be inclined to make some

comments here, but as it is, I think silence will be just as expressive. So in the study of these lessons and with drawing once a week, the days passed by. The first great excitement was the coming of my mother to visit me. This, I remember, was Election week. The excitement here was intense. A vote was taken, which resulted in a large majority for the Republicans. Many of the rooms were decorated with the National colors - An effigy of Tilden was displayed in one of the corridors. But to go back to my mother. I was so glad to see her: I met her in town at the depot, and we spent the night at the Morgan House. She came out to the College and spent part of the day and went home in the afternoon. I was pretty blue that rainy Saturday night but solaced myself with the sponge-cake and dried-beef she brought.

Feb. 6. '78 I remember well my first interview with Miss M..., who was familiarly called Miss "Pussy". She was very sweet. still I remember how unhappy I felt after it Since then I have come to like her very much. O- I must not forget Miss Mitchell, a very peculiar teacher in Latin. What fights she and Lou Brockway were to have! The poor woman was very unhappy here, and did not return this year As corridor teacher we had Miss Goodsell, now Lady Principal of ... College. She had a very lovely, kind disposition. In her eagerness to do us good she instituted a fifteen minutes prayer meeting at 9 o'clock Sunday night. I was quite a trial for me to go

as she wanted us all to take part. Miss Goodwin was our night corridor teacher. How she caught us one memorable Saturday night laughing and carrying on in "Silent time". The noise in the closet and Lizzie's trail was very suspicious, so I was not
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very much surprised when she said in departing "please request the other young ladies to retire to their own

appartments[sic]". To use a Vassar phrase, I was completely squelched. I remember how ashamed I felt to meet her next morning in Bibe[sic] Class. I must not forget Miss Carver whom I met her during the first part of the year. We were kind of cousins her grandmother and mine being own cousins. She was a very pleasant. kind girl, and I am very sorry that she has not returned this year. Time passed on until Thanksgiving came and then I went home for the first time I do not need to write down about it. I remember it just as well as can be. I did not want to come back at all but I became more contented after a time. A week after Thanksgiving came Phil. This is the anniversary of the society Philalethea. It is a great day. Miss Swift and Miss Ransom had a debate. Miss Bliss sang, and then there was a collation, conversation and promenading. The next great event was the winter vacation of three weeks.

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(It is almost a week since I wrote last. I shall try to do better in the future. The second semester I had Latin (Horace), French, Botany

and Ancient History. I had studied French some at home with Mrs. Wilcox as teacher, but did not feel enough confidence to undertake an examination, so, I commenced with the beginning class. Of course I found it very easy, and after telling Miss Morse, Miss Cowles permitted me to go in a higher French class without any examination. It was very hard for me, as I had three other studies. Botany was not very difficult, but Miss Haskell was rather hard to please. As for Latin and Ancient History I had Miss Adams, so you may imagine how pleasant they were. To add to all this, my room-mate had the chills and fever - So of course I had to wait upon her. But I managed to live through very comfortably. I also had courage to stay through the whole term without going home