

Vassar College Poughkeepsie

Nov. 18th 1865

My dear Aunt Susan,

As you well know how little I have been away from home, and the little acquaintance I have with school life, you can realise somewhat, how very strange all seems to me here. All duties must be performed at the specified time. Walks are restricted to certain limits, and "thus far, but no farther" the rule of college life. Young men's college life is much freer, than this, they are not so bound and fettered by this and that rule. I would like to know if young ladies cant be relied upon, as well as young gentlemen. But notwithstanding all this, life here is pleasant and improving, though one is not exempt from the "blues", by any means, occasionally. The parlors and bedrooms are very pleasant, affording us a far greater degree of privacy, than is usually enjoyed at boarding schools, these rooms may be made to look as homelike as one desires, with pictures, plants, rocking chairs and so on, and some look very prettily. The president. Dr. Raymond has a family, who live entirely apart from the school family. He has three daughters and a son, the eldest daughter is twenty-two or three. Then there are three professors with families, each keeping house too, and having little children of various ages. Besides these there are other professors, and all the assistant teachers, who eat with the scholars. Then there are the housekeeper, and steward, carpenter and about sixty servants. This may give you some idea of the great number of people under one roof. The chapel and dining room are in the central part of the building. An organ is now being put up in the chapel, quite a large one. The aisles and platform are carpeted, and the seats furnished with magenta cushions. There are twenty-five or thirty tables in the dining hall, each seating thirteen persons, and a teacher presiding at each, as far as the number will go. The bell strikes for any meal, we go and stand behind our chairs. Miss Lyman gives the signal for sitting, by doing so herself. She sits at the head of the first central table. Then when quiet reigns, she strikes a bell for a moment's silent prayer, and eating follows. From breakfast we may be excused at any time, but not from dinner or tea, we usually sit at those meals forty or forty-five minutes. We have very good bread generally, biscuit, coffee and tea, remarkably nice milk, corn bread sometimes, usually meat and potatoes for breakfast, and soup and meat, or meat and pudding or pie for dinner. Good butter and white sugar are freely supplied, and as you may Judge, used. So much for eating. I said something about teachers in Aunt E's letter. Miss Lyman, our Lady Principal, is a lady in every sense of that word, and earnestly seeks the welfare of those committed to her care. She dresses a great deal, wears grey curls each side of her face, and white caps more than black, trimmed with bright colors and ends each side either of ribbon or lace trimmed. Mrs. Medcalf an assistant teacher here taught with Prof. George Fisher in Worcester about fourteen years ago and sends her love and regards to him if you think worth while deliver them to his sister. I dont know her maiden name. Walter and I can compare notes in regard to college life. The end of my sheet brings me to the end of my letter. Is the baby named? What are the people doing In Wrentham. I s the Episcopal church flourishing. Mrs. Vassar was dressed in black not In mourning wore a white straw trimmed with black. It is a lovely day. Do write soon to me auntie please and with much love to all I am

Yours affectionately,

Augusta

This blot came auntie since my letter was finished and in some mysterious manner please excuse it.