

Vassar College

April 18, '80.

My dear Mither -

It seems so long since I last wrote to you that I really had to stop and consider whether or not I did write to you last week. Quite an event has happened to us this week- our new Laboratory has been dedicated with appropriate ceremonies. We had for a long time known that the exercises were to come off on the 16th and had speculated on how many recitations would have to be excused on that account. A few nights prior to the day the Prex made the formal announcement and said that there would be no college exercises after 3.15 P.M. except Chapel service. So our dream of a half-holiday vanished in thin air since the last class is over at 3.15- and dinner is the only college exercise from that time until Chapel. But it so happened that I had two recitations with the President on Friday and he had to excuse his classes to attend the meeting of the Board of Trustees. A great many strangers were present and they were invited for 2.30 an hour earlier than our invitation, so we understood that we were not wanted to investigate the Laboratory with them. At 3.30 there were exercises in the chapel and the Trustees and teachers etc. all walked over from the new building in procession - fortunately the rain held up a little just then - One trustee is an old man over eighty and he has never missed a single meeting since the college was organized. There was a large choir of the girls and they sang one of the psalms for a composition of Prof. Ritter's. President Caldwell presided and introduced Matthew Vassar Jr. as first speaker- As he said to one of the girls in the afternoon; the family was not a speech-making one, and he was not an educated man, but when he made mistakes they must think that they came from the head and not from the heart. He gave a sort of historical sketch of the founding of the college and of the alterations and additions which had been made; and then presented President Caldwell with the keys of the building. The President made a speech in reply and then introduced Prof. Cooley who made his little speech and a very nice one too. Then after singing by the whole congregation and the benediction all the guests and "those students who had already been invited" were requested to partake of a collation in the dining hall. The poor Profs, had been told in a notice read in the dining-room the day before that as so many strangers were to be present, they would have to wait and be served after the others were all through. We appreciated the advantages of seniors then, as we had second-best seats assigned to us. We had a delicious collation and afterwards the best after-dinner speeches I have ever heard. The President called up about seven or eight of the assembly and made some very bright remarks himself. Young Mr. Silliman the architect of the building was called upon and made a very neat little reply. In substance it was: that he had no more expected to make an after dinner-speech than Daniel did when he went to a dinner-party with the lions, but Daniel had managed to get through it somehow and he guessed he should and that the way an architect was accustomed to speak was in bricks and mortar. Prof. Backus also made a very good speech, for one that was highly appreciated for warmly applauded by the girls. We then adjourned to the parlors which had been beautified by contributions of sofas tables, for chairs from the girls' rooms, and promenaded around admiring the

flowers especially two large ornamental pieces sent by the father of one of the students from Albany. They were wreaths of laurel and on a ground of white flowers in the center were the initials of the two Vassar brothers who had furnished the funds for the building. I secured one laurel leaf which will hereafter adorn my memorabil book. The guests went pretty early as it rained very hard and there were either ever so many thunder showers or else one everlastingly big one. We spent a good part of the evening dancing in Room J. and had altogether a very jolly time. Tomorrow the classes meet for the first time in the new building. Lyman Abbot was present at the celebration and stayed over with us. This morning he preached and he will address the Society for Religious Inquiry to-night. He is a very interesting speaker and an awfully homely man, but in listening one can forget his looks. The first time he came here we thought him some hydrocephalic manager from the Five Points Mission and dreaded the services- The attitude of our minds soon changed though. The lawns are growing very beautiful & green and the early flowers are out. I have seen blood root and adder's tongues, & hyacinths, and this morning Jane & I found a pansy and some violets. Tell Min to investigate the old pansy roots in the garden and she may bet a bountiful reward. I hope she will keep up her Journal for we both enjoyed it so much last week- and I am already looking forward to the day when it will be my turn again. How does Grandmother get on? I think it was real provoking of her to go and choose this time to be sick just to get out of coming up here for Founder's Day. Lizzie Skinner and I invited Fannie & Norvelle Whaley but haven't yet heard whether or not they can come. If they don't I shall not have any one here. My dress reposes in a large closet which the house-keeper let us take fe hang our nice dresses in. What do you think about the fan performance? I wait anxiously to know. I wonder what has become of Marion. She hasn't written to me since long before vacation, and I don't know her address. If you have it, I wish you would send it to me when you write. I suppose it is vain to hope to hear from Rob. I suppose I shall be pretty busy this week, but will try to write again before it is over. I can't think of any more news so will say good bye-
Lovingly-
Mary S. Morris.