

VASSAR FEMALE COLLEGE,
Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Dec. 13 1865

My very dear Sister Nell,

I don't owe you a letter to be sure, nevertheless, I feel moved in spirit to write you a birthday epistle in as much as I can't give you any birthday kisses. What a pity that you did make your advent into this world in summer, and then we could all celebrate together. I haven't any thing remarkable to say, having used up all my ideas on your last letter. The all absorbing topic at present is, "When are you going to leave?" A great many are going Wednesday, but we stay till Thursday, thereby going down with Cousin Emma, and seeing the last of the College also. We received a very urgent invitation from Aunt Mary this morning, via Miss Gilbert. I wish that we were not engaged for Brooklyn, as she says that it is probably the last vacation she will be keeping house. Fanny Miller has written us, not only inviting us for the Holidays, but for all other vacations we may have here. (What a pleasant thing it is to have friends. Libbie Trowbridge has sent us word that we must let her know as soon we reach Brooklyn. Hattie had a letter from Charlie yesterday saying that he expected to be at Poughkeepsie this week. Miss Lyman has given positive orders, that no young lady should be seen, save under cover of a letter of introduction. But Hattie told him to ask for Miss Gilbert, and she'll electioneer him through, having much influence at head quarters. We have had an addition to the ornamental furniture of our room, in the shape of a philipena present to Minnie, from Mother Hubbard. It consists of a man! named "Thursytes" in honor of the "homeliest man who ever came to Troy." His stately figure measured four inches in his stocking feet. His dress consists of one pair of pants, of red delaine, made very loose and gathered at the ankle, a green jacket or sack, trimmed with one row of very narrow serpentine braid, flying open to display a most beautiful red waistcoat, some what disfigured by paste, and a belt of red and white which looks as if it might have bordered white cotton cloth. His head bears a blue cap bordered with red, in the center of which is fastened a rubber cord by which he is suspended to the gas fixture, then when the dear little fellow is pulled, the elasticity of the cord causes him to undergo a series of gymnastics truly wonderful to behold. His face as nearly as my unskillful pen can portray it, is as followed. as far as I can see that is quite natural. Minnie might not recognize it - Minnie has just recognized in this portrait her long lost sow Thursytes. We were much delighted by a letter from Willie this morning. How he has improved in letter writing since last year. It is as good as a feast to read one of his documents. I have taken to reading my old letters Sunday, and find it highly profitable - If you will come up here next Wednesday, we will entertain you with a translation of the first book of the Odessy. We are a were a very fine class, I beg leave to inform you. We read the whole book to Miss Grant a very fine Greek scholar, and she said it was a fine a translation as she overheard. Miss Gilbert is proud of us. I am very sorry to be obliged to stop without finishing the page, but if you have the letter Friday, and I have any dinner, it must stop here. Minnie and Hattie send much love and many wishes of a happy birthday - Give oceans of love to Mother, Father, and Willie from your ever loving sister

Mattie -