

Vassar College,  
Oct. 14, 1866.

My dear, dear Mother,

I have directed my envelope, so as to be sure and finish my letter before dinner, it will probably seem absurd to you, but I always feel as if my letter was half done when the envelope is directed and lying ready to start. It is a beautiful day today, the air seems laden with the audible quiet, if I may use the expression, peculiar to a Sunday morning, the house is much stiller than usual this morning also. I think the new scholars are quieting down generally, but at first they certainly seemed to us much more noisy than we were last year. Miss Lyman says they are not, and perhaps it's our vanity. Minnie went on a Geological excursion over the Hudson yesterday. Prof. Tenney took part of his class, but I didn't feel like going, and Hattie, with her usual self denial, stayed at home to go with me. They had a delightful tramp. The girls, all but four, wore their gymnastic suits. You don't know how nice they are for climbing rocks, and jumping brooks, last time they tore their dresses and caught their hoops, and came to grief generally. If ever I go, I'll send you a full account of the place, and what we saw. We had such a nice time Friday night in our Chapter. I believe that I told Willie that we were to have a magic circle, and what the different articles were to be. Every thing went off beautifully - Helen was fixed up as the most remarkable old maid imaginable. She had her front hair curled, and a black lace head-dress over the back, an under handkerchief, and broad collar, a pair of black mitts, a reticule, an enormous handkerchief, and no hoops completed her attire - You have no idea how comical she looked. Minnie had the desk draped in black and the scrap-box on it. She spoke beautifully. Her oration was unanimously voted the best feature of the evening. I think our Society will be even pleasanter than last year. We are to have a lecture on the subject of Literary Societies from a Mr. Pierson of Waterford N. Y. At least we are going to try to get him. We are also talking of a course of lectures this winter, which I think would be very pleasant indeed, as very few of the girls are able to go to Poughkeepsie to hear lectures there, and even there we seldom hear of them until after they are over. I think that it will be a source of great improvement to all of us. Gough was in Poughkeepsie last week and talked of calling at the College, but I don't think that he did it. Minnie makes a capital President for our Society. We accomplish five times as much business in one hour as we used to with Dr. Raymond in three meetings. Then she presides with so much dignity that it makes us all proud of her - I don't know what Vassar College will do next year with her present Seniors gone. Even the immense dignity and learning of her now Juniors advanced to Seniors will not be sufficient to counterbalance their loss. We do have such good cozy times in our class that it is delightful. We are all nearly of an age, and all like each other, which I think makes a great difference, then we are just a table full, and so get acquainted much faster and better. I do believe people form firmer friendships when they sit at the table together than almost any other way - Then too we always avoid disagreeable subjects at the table which I think is another good thing and a very important one. We are going to have a class organization and a motto. I have no idea what but I presume a Greek one, the girls all prefer Greek to any other language. We have just read Horace's Epistle to Lollius, and I was astonished to find almost every sentence has become a proverb, such as "Anger is a short madness." "Dare to be wise" "A deed well begun is half done" - and so forth. I enjoy Horace better every day, better even than I did Homer. I don't know about that though I do believe that if Prof.

Knapp had heard our Homer class, I should have enjoyed it better than Horace. Miss Geiger is our teacher in Herodotus. I like her very much indeed, she is a continual mystery to me - I like her better & better all the time. She seems very sociable, and glad to see us when we go to see her. How good it was for Aunt Mary to write us such a good long letter, and to tell us so much news. How funny it is for Frank Rice to marry Miss Leonard. I always supposed he was rather a frisky young man, but Hattie says he is sober and quiet. I hope he and his bride will live happy - Mary wrote me a full account of their presents, they were very nice weren't they - I suppose that by this time Mr. & Mrs. Griffith are absent on their wedding tour. Beloved ones! How I envy them - Aleck McGraw, Tom's brother, is to be married Tuesday to a Miss Beecher of Battle Creek, they are going to call on Minnie while on their tour. Won't it be pleasant? Have you heard or seen anything of Mrs. Dr. McGraw? Wasn't it a shame that we didn't call on her, and yet how could we. Minnie didn't call on her either. How are your eyes now? Don't think because I have said so little about them that I have thought little. I assure you Mother dear, that I have thought of them almost every hour since I first heard that you must have the operation performed - and I can't tell you how anxious I felt till I heard that it was over. I do hope you will be careful and not overdo yourself in any way. What would become of you without Aunt Mary? Does Eliza prove as efficient as you expected? Love to everyone. Please don't imagine that I've been taking writing lessons of the chickens. I don't know what makes me write so, but I suppose its partly owing to the fact that I've been talking most of the time faster than I've been writing - The elections are almost here are they not? Has Father gone to Maine? Has Mr. Ballard been installed? Who preached the sermon? I knew that Mrs. Ballard was an authoress to some extent, but not how far. Mrs. Pratt looks just like it - I presume she has had her picture taken for some book and has worn her hair so ever since. Tell Father to write me again soon - Good bye Mother dear, nearly six weeks of the forty are gone -

Your loving Mattie -