

Vassar College,  
Dec. 6, 1866.

My dear, dear Mother,

Many thanks for your letter. I think you are so good to write us such nice long letters. Thank Father too, please, and tell him that I shall answer, his pathetic lamentation as soon as my nerves are sufficiently composed, and my hand steady - And now, in order to explain the hieroglyphic state of my chirography let me inform you that gymnastics are the cause of all my troubles. I have grown so very agile by means of skipping, leaping, and twisting over at the gymnasium, that I considered myself ably fitted to perform any feat of strength for which I felt an inward longing. Alas! my Mother! the heart is deceitful above all things &c - Saturday evening when returning from a rehearsal in the Chapel, feeling some what weary and not seeing the exact position of the staircase, owing the darkness, I attempted to put my gymnastics to practical use & fly, the result would have been most gratifying but for the intervention of a most stupid wall against which I most inopportunately bumped, and in consequence of which I lay on my = back all day Sunday and Monday feeling very much as I imagine a prize fighter might after losing the belt - Monday evening however I went up to the chapel, where some kind friends had arranged an easy chair for me, in the gallery, so that I heard all the exercises, and was only debarred from the pleasure of pushing them performers onto the stage. They went on however just as well without me, being impelled by the active tongue and arms of Miss Sarah Glazier - I am almost as well as ever now with the exception of the slight shakiness which makes my hand writing so peculiar - But I feel firmly convinced that if that wall had not opposed I might have been flying gracefully onward, even to this day - I am very much obliged obliged to you for our hats, they are beautiful - I always had a weakness for willow plumes. But Mother dear, I am very sorry that you sent me your muff, it was very kind of you, but that squirrel one looks very respectable and I can't bear to think of you without it - If we don't go to Burlington I shall send it back immediately. The vails are beautiful - I have no doubt that my hat will be very becoming to me, but I have not had my hair curled since it came (Saturday evening), and therefore have not tried it on - I am so thankful that you have seen Katie Penfield once more. How I wish that she could have stayed longer - Many thanks to Mr. Colburn for the agate - How are they all? I received a paper from Carrie a day or two ago, containing a long synopsis of Mr. Ballards Sermon. It looks good but I have had no time to write read it - We also had one from Father this morning. It seems more home like than anything else to see papers around the room - I am very glad that you saw poor little Barbara. Please give my love to her if you ever see her again. I think my Sunday School class in that Mission School gave me more pleasure than any twenty I could teach now. I have no doubt that Helen would have been delighted to accept her invitation to tea, if she could have received it a trifle sooner - Why didn't you telegraph - I do want to see you very much Mother dear, but just think! a third of the time is already gone! I must stop now, for I am some tired and I want to write to Willie - Much love to all -

Your daughter Mattie -