

Vassar College
Dec. 16, 1866

My dearest Mother,

Yesterday was Helen's birthday and she is now fairly launched into middle life. Hattie gave her a little white frame with that picture of a stag in it. It is very pretty indeed. I gave her a little poem by Bayard Taylor, "The Picture of St. John." Yesterday afternoon Mr. Wheeler came into our room carrying in his hand a most desolate looking bandbox, with a string tied round it, thereby supporting the top and bottom which would otherwise have fallen off. He looked at it a minute doubtfully, and said "Miss Dickinson?" Miss Dickinson took it and opened it, and found therein a lovely little black velvet bonnet. The only direction on it was "From A. M. Macadam Minnie L. Dickinson, Vassar College, Po'keepsie, N.Y." It didn't even say by express, or any thing to signify how it came. I suppose that her mother had them send it from there to save the trouble of sending it from home. It is a beauty, but Minnie considers it extremely foolish, for she brought beautiful velvet for a hat. I wore my hat and veil yesterday and it looked very pretty and becoming. Helen's is very becoming indeed, and she looks very well. I think that she has grown fleshy. While I was sick Miss Lyman sent me Miss Fiske's "Recollections of Mary Lyon." I think that you would enjoy reading it very much. There are a great many of her evening talks, or chapel talks, or wherever it was that you all used to assemble. I didn't read much in it, but I thought you would like it exceedingly - She also sent me an English magazine in which was an advertisement of a young ladies school which had the sentence "For gentlemen's daughters only" Aren't the English contemptible? I am thankful that I am not one. I had a letter from Sarah Thursday. She told me all about George's illness. Poor fellow! what a sad life he was. Do they wear very heavy mourning? How is Sarah now? Isn't Mrs. William's death sad? Her husband must feel very badly - He will be another widower for Mrs. Taylor to exercise her talents upon. Are they going to continue housekeeping? I should think Mrs. Avery would go and keep house for them. Only four days more before the holidays commence! Several of the Detroit girls are going home. I think they are very foolish, for, setting aside the question of expense it is a very tedious journey, and takes so long that the girls will have no more than to get well shaken out before they have to start home again - or rather back - Then they will be so forlornly home sick for several weeks. I must say that as far as we have been any service or comfort to those girls, they might have been in Egypt. I have never been in to Fannie King's room but twice or three times, since the first week. I have never been to see Delia Howard but once, and Cornelia Penfield not more than three or four times. I don't know why I'm sure - except that there is so little time for any visiting, and every time we go any where almost, it is into our dear Prof. Tenney's - It is so pleasant and homelike there, and they are always so glad to see u- How are all the people getting along at home? Next Christmas I hope you'll have some daughters at home, to help make things pleasant - And the year after! Won't it be glorious when I am fairly graduated and at home! Wait till you see the dignity which I shall bear next year as a Senior! As it is this year the Juniors overshadowing the Seniors by reason of numbers are obliged to carry double dignity - We have very pleasant times indeed. I never knew before how one's feeling for one's class becomes. We want to stop at Pittsford by all means and supposed that included in Vermont. I think it would be all together too much to ask Katie to keep us for two weeks, when Sarah and Jennie are also there. We mean to be in Pittsford at the same

time that Minnie is, and I know that we shall have a very gay time indeed - Minnie is going to spend part of the time with Miss Gilbert, & part at Yonkers, with Lillie Beers, a little friend of hers, who almost worships her. I think that the vacation is very opportune, for we are all tired and need rest and change. Please give a great deal of love to all, and a great deal to yourself.

Your loving daughter Mattie -