

Vassar College, Po'keepsie, N.Y.
Saturday a.m. Sept. 3d 1876

My dear Father,

I have reported myself at Pitt Street twice since returning to College, but I have waited for matters here to straighten themselves and settle down before trying to tell you how the College was doing, this year.

But now everything but the elevator is in running order. The elevator is only for the use of fourth and fifth floor students, and will be ready November 1st.

The German teacher is made "Professorin" of the department of modern languages; she still teaches only German, but has French teachers under her. Our class recites German at the first period, (8.15 a.m.), and we are reading an idyllic poem of Goethe's at present. At 9 a.m. we have Mental Philosophy with the President! but, as we go for the first time tomorrow, I can say nothing about it, except that we have Sir Wm. Hamilton's "Metaphysics," which, the Catalogue says, "furnishes a point of departure for the professor's views."

At 9.45 we go to Physics - Professor Cooley's department. "We" means those Seniors who have elected just these studies; Laura Wylie, for instance, has Herodotus, Astronomy and Mental; Rachel Jacobs and Carrie Swift and Helene O'Leary, our parlor-mates, have Physiology and Latin in place of two of mine.

Well, in Physics we are having lectures on Vibrations; afterward we discuss Sound, Heat and Light, which are all dependent on vibrations. Last Semester we had Mechanics, Hydrostatics and Pneumatics. We recite on Fridays from the topics of the lectures! Professor Cooley is as fastidious about recitations as about his experiments: and that cannot be exaggerated.

So, there are my three tasks: German, as a rule, two hours; Physics as a rule two hours; and I cannot yet tell how long I shall find necessary for Mental preparation. In these [five?] years I have just learned how to go to work. so I can economize time.

I have little outside work so far; president of one Society, and critic of another and serving on only one yearly Committee I was made Chairman of an important class committee, which would have held sittings Winter, but I resigned on account of these two weddings, which will take so much time, (not only in absence in body, but absence in mind), that I shall have to concentrate myself on lessons while here. It is outside work that wears: I shall not forget my Sophomore year: President, Chairman of five committees, writing the burles- on "Faust" for Trigonometry, and other tribulations.

This is all to "review the situation" so you may understand how matters are. When I write about Fraulein Kapp, and P.C. (Professor Cooley), and Dr. Raymond, you will see the connection.

About Miss Botsford: I saw Professor Backus on Tuesday and she is returned. I

deposited the \$300. and sent her the receipt, which was the proper way to let her know. She comes to 63 (our parlor) to see one of the girls, so I often see her. I have told you how well she stands. But she "fizzled," (excuse the expression, which has the sanctioned general usage) Friday in Physics, and I know no-one who has not done the same, before learning Prof. Cooley's peculiarities. He believes with Thucydides,- he who knows, and cannot tell what he knows, knows not at all.

Miss Avery, our essay-critic of last year, has just called; think of it! she goes to the Centennial next week and leaves the key of her pretty room with us, that we may use her room in her absence. That is quite an attention, you must know. Miss Wood, another critic in the English department and friend of mine, has given me the freedom of her room at all times. It is delightful when one's does not want to be interrupted by the girls' talk.

The evening I reached College, a week ago, I called on Miss Terry, to report, We had a very nice talk. I have found it well to go see her, before her official presence becomes oppressive! that is, it is easier to talk as one lady to another than as mistress and maid - even a senior-maid. We spoke of Heloise as Lady-principal, and of Mary Marvin's marriages as the story is long, and I always tell stories the longest way, I refer you to Willie for the details.

Mother wrote that you had another glimpse of the Centennial last Monday and Tuesday; and that you heard Mr. DeWitt. I believe I prefer your Sunday in Philadelphia to your Monday there. When with the Barnes family, I enjoyed the (3) days to the full. I "did" the Main Building in sections every morning alone; then after a scramble for two hours at the Vienna Bakery, we went to the Gallery or Annex or Machinery Hall. This last place is most distressing to me, for It seems more inexhaustible than any other building: a sight of the things is not all; nor the comparisons of kindred subjects; one wants to know the Low and the why of each, and the difference between one how and the other.

Professor Backus spoke of writing to you, the other day, about the College and a visit to us; but I told him it was not a question of inclination, but time. I do not despair of it by any means: this is the last of five years, and there must be the reward at the end - before Commencement which is only the epilogue-not written by this member of the company, as this member will not be in the cast, on that occasion.

The two Banfields, Anne and Helen are roaming just below me, and my old roommate, Sophie Nichols is in the same parlor; they evidently have a party of girls down there now, sewing and singing, for I hear their voices. It is pleasant to have them near. I did not buy Alice Kennedy's wedding-present, but I have the money here, which I will keep on account, as it was a bank-note.

I saw nothing suitable at the Centennial for anything like fifty dollars: in New York, I went to Maiden Lane, as well as Tiffany's but nothing in furnished travelling-bags, or anything good enough - and yet for that money - was to be had. A dressing-case in the trunk department was \$400.- unheard-of-and nothing at Tiffany's under \$125.; while Maiden Lane prices were from \$60 to \$100-little choice in goods. Other articles were as unattainable. So - will you or Mother just get something else

as you think best? I suppose it is not worth while to send back the \$50.- you gave me for that purpose.

Excuse the long letter: with my infirmity of diffuseness, (which I hope is only a temporary weakness,) it is impossible to tell you about the duties, the circumstances, the individuals and general surroundings of this last year, in a few pages. I have tried to write legibly.

Laura Wylie is not at all well, she is threatened with chills and fever and is under the doctor's care. She is better, today, and is fighting against illness. Abbie Dann has lost this week's work through neuralgia. I am very well.

With love to all.
Your affectionate daughter,
Mary Thaw.