

Vassar College.
Oct. 27. 1868.

My dearest mother,

Fearing that some of the New York papers would get into your hands among the greater variety of newspapers afloat during the campaign, I thought it best to write you about the sickness in the college before you could see any exaggerated account in the papers.

I have not thought it necessary to write you anything about it before, but yesterday I learned that in several N.Y. papers it was stated that more than half the young ladies had typhoid fever

at Vassar College, and all of us who have not mentioned it in our letters think that we ought to do so now. It is true that there never was nearly so much sickness here before and that seems to be true in all parts of the country about here.

Wednesday morn. Such a beautiful, sunshiny day as we are blest with is enough to frighten away sickness and almost the very king of horrors. Well to continue my acct.; about two weeks ago the girls began to be sick of colds and gradually feverish symptoms were noticed. Things gradually matured till there were a good many cases of quite severe illness. The Infirmary was full some time ago and a part of the south 4th. corridor has been taken for the sick ones. There has been very little excitement so far, but a good

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many of the girls have been telegraphed to come home at once- Hattie Harrington has just bidden us good bye, having just recd one and she leaves in the 2 o'clock train. I am very sorry that such alarming reports should have got circulated for it will cause much needless alarm. Miss Lyman is willing to have the girls go because no one can tell what the end will be and, if they or their parents will be uneasy, she thinks they had better relieve themselves at once.

There is only one case that is very dangerous. Miss Skeel - one of the seniors - was thought to be dying yesterday at 2 6'clock; but she is not quite so low now. The sickness is kept entirely away from us and we are not exposed to the least contagion if indeed there could be any in typhoid fever.

They exercise great precaution and we all have the best oversight possible. Of course I take the best care of myself and do not feel any more uneasy than I should at home. Yesterday I had a very hard headache and some fever, but was invited to ride for a hour in an easy pony carriage and at 9 o'clock bathed my head in cold water - took a bath, and am feeling bright and well today. One of my classmates who was not well all summer came back on condition that she should be allowed to go home when she felt unable to stay. She went two weeks ago and now has congestion of the brain in its worst form. Till yesterday they had no hope whatever of her recovery, but she really is more comfortable now and we hope she will live-

I hear good reports from the sick this morning and a few days of this kind of weather will be salutary in their effects. A great many letters have been recd from anxious friends, and those who are very sick have their mothers here. Do not worry at all about me. If I am sick Miss Lyman will write you immediately and the truth too, but you are not of the anxious sort. I am glad to know and I don't expect to hear that you are much alarmed- Miss Lyman invited Hattie Palmer and me to spend the hour before tea yesterday in her parlor. It is a beautiful room and she said it might seem more cheerful to us at such a gloomy time. Wasn't it kind?

I recd, a letter from Em last Saturday and shall write in the course of four or five weeks, just as soon as she answered mine. Nell has not written yet. I suppose in the interval before Christmas I shall probably hear from her, probably not at present however. My friends all have more time to write than I do and I shall not do anymore of it than they do- I must not spend any more of my time in writing now, but I want to tell you of a pretty sacque that you might make for Gracie if you had time and patience. Make it of scarlet flannel and dot it all over with small chalk beads, like this

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They are lovely both for young ladies & children, but I don't want one.

Your ever loving
Mary.

[Mary (Parker) Woodworth, '70]

Nell's and your letter came this morn. Yes I will answer Sunday and her when the proper time comes. I enjoyed the letter very much.