

that the Athenian populace were always jealous of character and ability, fearing to intrust a strong man with power lest he should grow too strong for them; preferring to suffer from the dishonesty and incapacity of a weak ruler, whom they might set up and pluck down at will; and indeed we need not return to ancient history for notable examples to justify this jealousy of ambitious ability, or to find apologies for the popular instinct, which, preferring freedom to prosperity, dreads tyranny more than

it admires genius. With these views we may commend our modern "nominating conventions" and universal suffrage as patent safeguards against this dangerous element in public affairs. And when by subtlety or oversight it sometimes occurs that a strong man slips into place, we are reassured by the zeal and promptness with which that special guardian of our liberties, the Press, unites to quench the dangerous light and bury the aspiring patriot under a monument of mud.

VASSAR COLLEGE.

BY ANNA C. BRACKETT.



MATTHEW VASSAR.

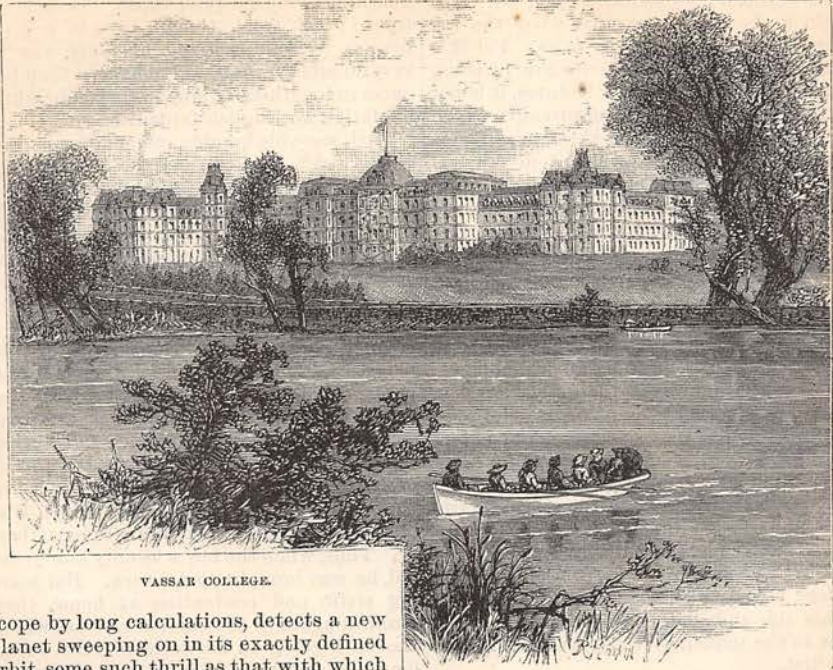
IT has been wisely said that to be free in this world of reality means to be master, not slave, of the things of time and space. But mastery over the forces of nature—the victory which leaves the spirit free—is to be attained only through knowledge. The old Hindoo bent before the might of nature, only because her ways were to him inscrutable. The Persian, through his feeling of the violated majesty of nature, persecuted the men who dared to profane her laws by plowing the earth for purposes of agriculture. But one veil after another has been torn away from the hidden forces, and exactly in proportion to the knowledge of man has been his ability to turn even destructive forces to his own use. For although nature sometimes, as in an explosion or a tornado, seems to re-assert her power, she is willing to be led and controlled. It is by science, and only by that, however, that man has risen from the position of

her crouching, cringing slave to that of her master.

The same is true in the spiritual as in the material world, for he who tames and leads captive minds and hearts, he who digs new channels in which the established streams of thought are henceforth to run, is he who knows. The man who knows is the man who can, and he is, no less actually than etymologically, the king, and no longer the slave.

The ever-increasing and peremptory demand of women for a general, a gradual, and a wide education finds its justification and its irresistible force in this truth, and for just this reason; because it is the utterance of this everlasting truth has it acquired such headway and force. It has already wrenched the bolts from the doors of many a college and university, and it gains in effective strength with each victory. That Vassar College should be an object of intense interest is due mainly to the fact that it was one of the first answers to this urgent demand.

The mind of the founder, in its straightforward earnestness and simplicity, felt the strong sweep of the current of thought before many of his contemporaries, and joyfully, though modestly, acknowledged its claims by dedicating to its service most of the material results of his whole life. That his honest instinct was truer than the skeptical wisdom of the world was proved on the day of its opening, September, 1865, when its halls and corridors were crowded with applicants, and it started out on its work with three hundred and fifty accepted students from all parts of the United States and Canada. It was evident that the heart of the noble old man had guided him truly, and there was no longer any force in the statement that it was useless to offer a course of higher education to women because they did not want it. Something of the same feeling as that with which the astronomer, after carefully setting his tele-



VASSAR COLLEGE.

scope by long calculations, detects a new planet sweeping on in its exactly defined orbit, some such thrill as that with which the chemist beholds his carefully prepared experiment leap into a confirmation of a long-doubtful theory, must have filled Matthew Vassar's heart and moistened his eyes on that day. He had, in the face of opposition, doubt, and even derision, staked his all on the instinct of everlasting truth in his generous heart, and he had won. All over the country earnest girls and women answered to the test, and the doubt of preceding months and years, which were also years of national prostration and calamity, became a joyful certainty.

Moreover—and this was a better thing, and it was a wonderful thing—when in the first months there was question as to what should be the standard of the college, as to how severe and broad should be the culture and training to be given, it was the women within its walls who modestly but firmly demanded the highest and severest possible. They were in advance of the trustees, they were “in advance of the men of years and experience with whom the decision rested.” To the women, therefore, belongs the credit of the fact that a full and strict collegiate course was adopted for Vassar. And so the work began.

The college has now completed its first decade—a decade of constant and increasing prosperity. To attempt to give any idea of its intellectual success by giving an account of any number of recitations listened to would be a shallow and unworthy mode of proceeding. To say that this or that instructor is exact or thorough would be to

reduce this article to the level of a report of a school examination. Individual men and women pass away, one instructor succeeds another; there are left now in the faculty not more than four persons who were members at the opening. The point to be considered is Vassar itself, not any one or two of its professors or teachers into whose recitations I may have happened to go. If I spoke particularly of them, such criticism would be like giving an account of the character of Cologne Cathedral by describing the curves of a pillar or the color and size of the stones that constitute the floor, or it would be like trying to convey an idea of the painting of the “Last Judgment” by describing a half dozen detached figures taken at random out of the many groups.

Nominalist or realist though he may be, every one at all conversant with the internal life of any school knows that every such institution has an actual character of its own, which is in and through all its daily workings, though professors and teachers may come and go, and it is with that that we are concerned.

Again, to spend five minutes in the gray old cathedral or before the colossal painting can give us no true idea. The building and the picture must be known at sunrise and sunset, in shade and sun, within and without, in general and in detail, and then, and only then, can we say what it as a whole really is: so with Vassar. By day and night, term time and holiday, pupil and teacher

must become familiar, and then we shall begin to be able to express what the ten years of Vassar have to say to us. For it is not alone what the students are learning from their books and their lectures, it is not only the physical health and strength which they are gaining, though these are important factors; it is the general tone prevailing, the general spirit and character in process of growth, with which we are concerned; and even this we care to know, not alone for the sake of Vassar itself, but for the sake of the great demand to which Vassar is only one answer, and to the justice of which it is only one witness. In this spirit, and this alone, I endeavor to give to those who have never been there some idea of this college.

Nothing is more true than the fact that the character and aims of those who give the first impulse to any educational enterprise leave their mark for years, long after the individuals have passed away. There is a spiritual as well as a physical inheritance, and the guiding thought of the first prime worker has a wonderful vitality. To look back, then, to the man whose name this college bears will not be a useless task, for in his life and character we shall have a clew to the tendency which was given it at the first.

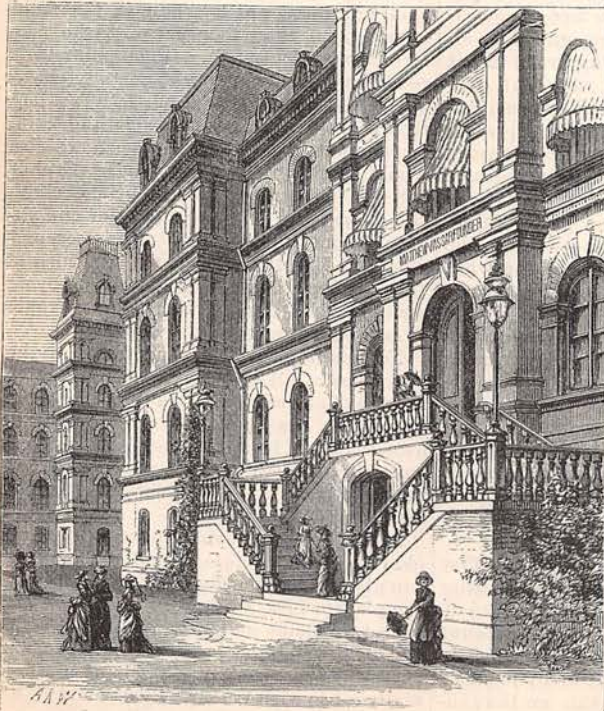
We do not find in Matthew Vassar one familiar in his early days with luxury, surrounded with inherited wealth, nor do we

find him living in quiet times. Descended from French stock, though born in a little town in Norfolk, England, his home was "a very humble farm-house not more than ten paces in length and a single story in height," his father an English farmer.

Such were his humble surroundings. But only a day's journey from the little village was the city of Norwich, and in that city towered one of the old cathedrals which must be unconscious educators of all the children who grow up under their shadow, and that this did not fail of its effect on the boy's mind the memory of the old man of threescore and ten abundantly proved.

His parents did not belong to the Established Church, whose coffers were full, and whose interests were affiliated with those of the monarchy. In the year of Matthew Vassar's birth, 1792, the French Revolution was shaking all the thrones of the Continent, and the threats of the royal party in England drove into exile many staunch Dissenters in search of civil and religious liberty. Thus, when the boy was only four years old, he was brought to America. But leaving strife and contention at home, they found it again in the excited canvass which was then going on between the rival Presidential candidates, Adams and Jefferson. After the election, however, they decided to make America their permanent home, and after much consideration and many disap-

pointments, Matthew's father at last bought him a small farm in Poughkeepsie, where the home-brewed ale of old Vassar soon became a more remunerative investment than the farm. By the time Matthew was fifteen years old he could not be induced to take any part in the brewing business, and equally averse was he to his father's next plan of making him a tanner's apprentice. But looking at his refusal as a boy's freak, the father went on with the preparations till the articles of indenture were drawn and the day set on which Matthew was to go to the tanner. The morning came, but the boy did not, for before that time he had enlisted his mother in his scheme of opposition. He was only following out his father's example when, with his extra wardrobe, consisting of



MAIN ENTRANCE TO VASSAR COLLEGE.

a shirt and a pair of stockings, tied up in a handkerchief, he stoutly trudged his eight miles to the New Hamburg ferry, and there kissed his tearful mother good-by.

He went across the river alone, with seventy-five cents in his pocket; but the river was to him what the ocean had been to his father, for it interposed a barrier between him and coercion. It was not long before he found employment in a country store, and in four years his seventy-five cents had grown to one hundred and fifty dollars. With this he went back to his father to become his chief clerk.

Then came another time of trial. His father's brewery was burned, and his eldest brother met a sudden and terrible death. All efforts to re-establish the business failed, and the father finally retired to a small farm, where he spent quietly the remainder of his troubled life.

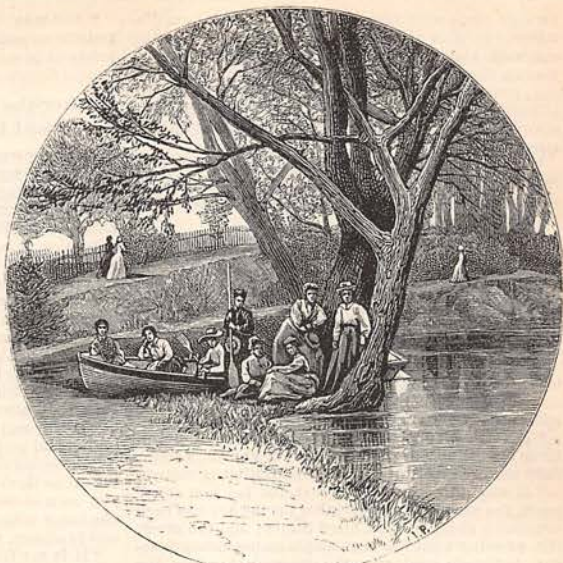
Thus, at twenty years of age, Matthew, forced again to begin his life, wisely chose the work which he understood, though on a small scale, and at last took up the business of brewing. Three barrels at a time were all that his resources enabled him to undertake, but he devoted himself diligently to his business.

Modest in his ideas, he ventured, however, to support a wife, the entire outfit of the young couple costing about one hundred and fifty dollars, and he rented part of a house at forty dollars a year.

In order to succeed, Matthew Vassar now needed capital as much as the Duke of York, in the reign of Henry VI., needed men. And as the men came when York, the ambitious duke, had proved his capacity, so, after two years of unaided struggle, the capital came to Vassar, when he was twenty-two years old; and after that time the record of his business is one only of success and increase.

The character, then, of the founder of Vassar College came of a good old stock. It was formed in danger, hardship, and poverty, and grew by self-dependence, honesty, earnestness, perseverance, economy, and a determination to do his best in a humble sphere. Such are the simple requisites for success.

I need speak no farther of Matthew Vassar's life, except as it is connected with the college. His economy was not parsimony, selfishness, or avarice. He had no children, and for a long time had revolved in his mind how he could most beneficially dispose of his great wealth. To be remem-



THE LAKE-SIDE. —

bered among men is no unworthy ambition. This the man did desire, but he was also anxious that his efforts should be turned into the channel where they would do the most good.

It seems to have been a woman's thought that first inspired his final purpose, and that the thought of a hard-working teacher, his niece. The idea, once planted, finally grew and ripened. Its fruit is Vassar College.

One can not help regretting that the practical woman who first originated it could not have lived to see her hope fulfilled, and to bear her share of the honor. The name of Lydia Booth ought to be remembered by the women of America.

In 1861, when Mr. Vassar was nearly seventy years old, he had formed his resolution. The college was formally incorporated by act of the Legislature of New York, January 18, 1861, and as soon as possible thereafter Mr. Vassar called together those whom he had selected as a board of trustees.

I quote here, because no mere statement can do justice to their simplicity and nobleness, the exact words of the old man, before formally transferring to the trustees more than four hundred thousand dollars of his property.

"GENTLEMEN,—As my long-cherished purpose to apply a large portion of my estate to some benevolent object is now about to be accomplished, it seems proper that I should submit to you a statement of my motives, views, and wishes.

"It having pleased God that I should have no descendants to inherit my property, it has long been my desire, after suitably providing for those of my kindred who have claims on me, to make such a disposition of my means as should best honor God and benefit my fellow-men. At different periods I have regarded

various plans with favor, but these have all been dismissed one after another, until the subject of erecting and endowing a college for the education of young women was presented for my consideration. The novelty, grandeur, and benignity of the idea arrested my attention. The more carefully I examined it, the more strongly it commended itself to my judgment and interested my feelings.

"It occurred to me that woman, having received from her Creator the same intellectual constitution as man, has the same right as man to intellectual culture and development.

"I consider that the mothers of a country mould the character of its citizens, determine its institutions, and shape its destiny.

"Next to the influence of the mother is that of the female teacher who is employed to train young children at a period when impressions are most vivid and lasting.

"It also seemed to me that if woman were properly educated, some new avenues to useful and honorable employment, in entire harmony with the gentleness and modesty of her sex, might be opened to her.

"It further appeared there is not in our country, there is not in the world, so far as is known, a single fully endowed institution for the education of women.

"It was also in evidence that, for the last thirty years, the standard of education for the sex has been constantly rising in the United States; and the great, felt, pressing want has been ample endowments to secure to female seminaries the elevated character, the stability and permanency, of our best colleges.

"And now, gentlemen, influenced by these and similar considerations, after devoting my best powers to the study of the subject for a number of years past, after duly weighing the objections against it and the arguments that preponderate in its favor, and the project having received the warmest commendations of many prominent literary men and practical educators, as well as the universal approval of the public press, I have come to the conclusion that the establishment and endowment of a college for the education of young women is a work which will satisfy my highest aspirations, and will be, under God, a rich blessing to this city and State, to our country and the world.

"It is my hope to be the instrument, in the hands of Providence, of founding and perpetuating an institution which shall accomplish for young women what our colleges are accomplishing for young men.

* * * * *

"All sectarian influences should be carefully excluded; but the training of our students should never be intrusted to the skeptical, the irreligious, or the immoral.

"In forming the first Board of Trustees, I have selected representatives from the principal Christian denominations among us; and in filling the vacancies which may occur in this body, as also in appointing the professors, teachers, and other officers of the college, I trust a like catholic spirit will always govern the trustees.

"It is not my purpose to make Vassar Female College a charity school, whose advantages shall be free to all without charge; for benefits so cheaply obtained are cheaply held. But it is believed the funds of the institution will enable it to offer to all the highest educational facilities at a moderate expense, as compared with the cost of instruction in existing seminaries. I earnestly hope the funds will also prove sufficient to warrant the gratuitous admission of a considerable number of indigent students annually—at least by regarding the amount remitted, in most cases, as a loan, to be subsequently repaid from the avails of teaching or otherwise. Preference should be given to beneficiaries of decided promise, such as are likely to distinguish themselves in some particular department or pursuit, and especially to those who propose to engage in the teaching of the young as a profession.

"I desire that the college may be provided with commodious buildings, containing ample apartments for public instruction, and at the same time affording to the inmates the safety, privacy, and purity of the family.

"And now, gentlemen of the Board of Trustees, I transfer to your possession and ownership the real and personal property which I have set apart for the accomplishment of my designs."

After the transfer had been accomplished, Mr. Vassar thus expressed himself:

"I beg permission to add a brief and general expression of my views in regard to the most judicious use and management of the funds. After the college edifice has been erected and furnished with all needful aids and appliances for imparting the most perfect education of body, mind, and heart, it is my judgment and wish that the amount remaining in hand should be safely invested, to remain as a principal, only the annual income of which should be expended in the preservation of the buildings and grounds, the support of the faculty, the replenishing and enlarging of the library, cabinet, art gallery, etc., and in adding to the capital on hand, so that the college, instead of being impoverished, and tending to decay from year to year, shall always contain within itself the elements of growth and expansion, of increasing power, prosperity, and usefulness.

"In conclusion, gentlemen, this enterprise, which I regard as the last great work of my life, I commit to you as a sacred trust, which I feel assured you will discharge with fidelity and uprightness, with wisdom and prudence, with ability and energy.

"It is my fervent desire that I may live to see the institution in successful operation, and if God shall give me life and strength, I shall gladly employ my best faculties in co-operating with you to secure the full and perfect consummation of the work before us."

The most noticeable points in the statement are its straightforwardness and unanswerable arguments as to the right of woman to culture and development, the strong prominence given to the influence of the female teacher, the decided refusal to make the college sectarian in its influences, and the wisdom, as well as the kindness, which is embodied in the statement about charity and indigent students.

Here we have the spirit in which this work was begun, here the spirit which permeated the atmosphere of the new school. In the sentiments thus expressed there is vitality enough to be felt through every branch of the institution for years to come.

Ground was broken for the college building June 4, 1861, and the walls went up steadily all through the troubled times of the civil war, till, in four years, the trustees, finding the building complete, decided to open it the following September. The description of the building is as follows: "The main edifice is almost five hundred feet in length, with a breadth through the centre of about two hundred feet, and at the transverse wings of one hundred and sixty-four feet. The centre building and the wings are five stories in height, and the connecting portions are four in height. The height of the centre building from the foundation to the top of the dome is ninety-two feet. All of the partition walls are of brick, and are carried up from the ground to the roof. There is a corridor in each story twelve feet in width and five hundred and eighty-five feet in length, affording room for exercise in inclement weather. These corridors may

be instantly divided into five separate parts by iron doors connected with eight fire-proof walls. The latter are in pairs, standing ten feet apart, and cut the building into five divisions. These pairs of walls are connected only at the corridors, where the floor is brick and stone, over which the iron doors may slide and be closed, so that, should a conflagration occur in one portion of the building, the other parts would be perfectly secure from harm. These divisions of iron and masonry extend from the foundation to the roof."

Vassar is located about two miles east of the city of Poughkeepsie, New York, and it embraces in its immense building all the rooms necessary for the board and tuition of some four hundred students and their teachers. It will not be seen without some reflection what these words imply. The college authorities thus become not only the instructors, but the heads of the family of four hundred, and the immense complication of duties which this arrangement presents it is not easy to appreciate. We have at once before us a large hotel, with all the departments necessarily involved in that, and we must not put out of view the evident fact that, as this hotel is not in a city, it will be forced to provide its own supplies of water and gas, and to carry on its own laundry. We have next to include all that we expect to find in every college, with its full number of departments, adding to the number of professors requisite a resident physician, with hospital accommodations for the sick. We must not forget a treasurer's department, which includes, from the suburban situation of the college, post-office, express office, and telegraph—and we see at once that the positions of president and lady principal are situations demanding the very highest qualifications.

I do not mean that the direct supervision of all these departments comes upon the president and lady principal, but I do mean that, living in the midst of the community as they do, with so many different departments, the greatest executive skill is demanded in order that there be no waste of time from the clashing of one against the other, and in order that the intellectual work, which is the object of all this machinery, may go smoothly on. The college work proper is, of course, to Vassar what the brain is to the other organs of the human body. For that alone they all exist, and they must be all controlled for its convenience. But as in endeavoring to understand the human body we can not neglect the organs of repair, of nutrition, nor even the mechanical structure, so, minor though they be, we can not pass without notice the corresponding departments of Vassar College.



MATTHEW VASSAR, JUN.

We have, then, first, the outside department of the farm and garden; next, a department not generally reckoned as one, however—that of guide and messenger. This needs some explanation.

In the room of this officer is the clock in accordance with which, and by means of wires connected with a powerful battery in the chemical laboratory, all the regular hours are struck all over the house with the precision and regularity of the bells of a man-of-war at sea. These bells call the time for rising, meals, the beginning and close of each recitation, and so forth, through the day. In this office, also, are stationed the messenger girls, who, as their name indicates, are employed to convey messages from teacher to teacher or from teacher to pupil. Mechanical though this so-called department may be, it will be at once perceived that it is very important.

The janitor's department has the care of all ordinary repairs and of the portage, which, it is readily seen, is one requiring considerable skill at the beginning and end of terms.

Next comes the treasurer's department, which transacts all financial business, and whose office includes the post-office, express office, and telegraph, also a bookstore on a small scale for the supply of text-books and all needful school apparatus. To the judicious management of Matthew Vassar, Jun., the treasurer, and nephew of the founder, the college is largely indebted for its flourishing financial condition.

Fourth in order is the engineer's department, the duties of which are to furnish plenty of heat, light, and water to the small village. But in order to guard against all possible casualties from fire, this depart-



THE KITCHEN, ON SLAP-JACK MORNING.

ment, isolated like the sun from the earth, is placed at quite a distance from the college building. If, guided by the tall chimney, we make our way thither, we find an immense coal-yard, five large boilers, a complete apparatus for manufacturing gas, and steam-pumps for forcing water. A staff of six men, constantly employed, supply daily to the college building 11,500 feet of gas and 80,000 gallons of water, which numbers are of value only as aiding one to gain a vivid idea of the size of the college.

Through nearly fifty miles of pipe the steam traverses the distance to the main building and warms the whole, partly by means of coils in the rooms, partly by means of coils inclosed in brick chambers in the cellar communicating with hot-air flues. To show what the capacity of the steam apparatus is, it is only necessary to read the description of the size of the building, and to add that even in the coldest of winters there was but little complaint of insufficient heat.

Fifth, we name the matron's department, more properly that of the housekeeper, as her duties correspond exactly with those of the housekeeper in any well-regulated hotel. In her charge are all the rooms of the students and the college rooms, and she has under her orders a large corps of servants.

The sixth department, that of steward, includes the purchasing of all supplies, and the management in full of the dining-hall, kitchen, bakery, and laundry. Simply adding, for the same reason as before, the fact that fifty pounds of butter and three hundred quarts of milk are daily in demand, one can easily see that the office of steward at Vassar is no sinecure. The combining

of the laundry with the steward's office seems to be a measure of economy, as part of the servants thus can do double duty; but this arrangement does not prevent the necessity of a competent head for the laundry, which is now in a separate building.

Before we can come to the brain-work we must add still one more department, which might be called the pathological, for although the resident physician is professor in the college as well, yet her direct responsibility for the health of the students and her care of them in sickness do not properly belong to the intellectual side.

The office of this department is not only the consulting-room of the physician, but it includes the hospital proper and several rooms in the upper story, out of the way and of the sound of the otherwise omnipresent electrical bells, in which students who are not really sick, but who are tired, may be quite secluded during whatever time is desirable. It is an undoubted fact that the nervous strain produced simply by living in so large a family, and the constant and necessary demand for exact punctuality that is made on every student by the inexorable bells, are more wearing than any one not living in it can imagine. We all know that there is something in the very atmosphere of a large city which forbids quiet. With the best resolutions in the world as to refraining from overwork, we are, as it were, sucked in by the maelstrom, and our will seems powerless to extricate us. The very sight of Broadway, when one is weary of work, is almost unendurable, and though we are conscious of this sympathetic strain on the nerves only when our own are over-

taxed, yet it must always exist. Constantly repeated, it is very nerve-exhausting. More than half of the sickness for which Vassar has been held responsible is owing, not to the evil effects of intellectual effort on the young organisms, which need the brain-work, but to the exciting effect of this sympathetic strain on girls who are too young to be sent there at all. Parents do not realize this fact, though they are warned. Perhaps it is impossible for them to do so. They insist upon sending girls too young out from the quiet of their own small families into this intensely stimulating atmosphere, and when the inevitable evil comes, they wash their hands and blame Vassar. The future will remedy this injustice.

With regard to these quiet rooms, it was evidently none but the motherly care of a woman that provided these resting-places, where the girls, with a peaceful yet varied landscape spread out before them, a centre-table for their books and papers, amuse themselves in quiet till their nerves are rested.

If now, having passed in review the different departments whose duty it is to provide beforehand for the healthy action of the body in general, we come to the direct provision for the brains themselves, we find opening before us a wholly new set of departments in instruction. We review these only briefly, as they correspond, of course, in the main with those of any college, and, for convenience, place them in tabular form:

PHYSIOLOGY	{ Physiology	} Woman professor, and instructor in gymnasium.
	{ Hygiene	
NATURAL HISTORY	{ Physical Geography	} Professor and assistant.
	{ Botany	
	{ Zoology	
	{ Mineralogy	
	{ Geology	
ENGLISH	{ Elocution	} Professor and four lady assistants.
	{ Rhetoric	
	{ Logic	
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	{ Literature	} One German, two French ladies.
	{ Modern Languages	
*PHYSICS	{ Ancient Languages	} Professor and four lady assistants.
	{ History	
	{ Natural Philosophy	} Professor.
	{ Chemistry	
	{ Algebra	
*MATHEMATICS	{ Geometry	
	{ Trigonometry	
	{ General Geometry	} Woman professor and two assistants.
	{ Calculus	
ASTRONOMY	{ Intellectual	} Woman professor.
PHILOSOPHY	{ Moral	
ART	{ Design	} Professor.
	{ Music	
		Professor and ten lady assistants.

Outside of all these, and serving as indispensable adjuncts, we must not forget the beautifully arranged library, full of valuable books of reference in all departments, and carefully catalogued by means of the card catalogues now in use in nearly all our

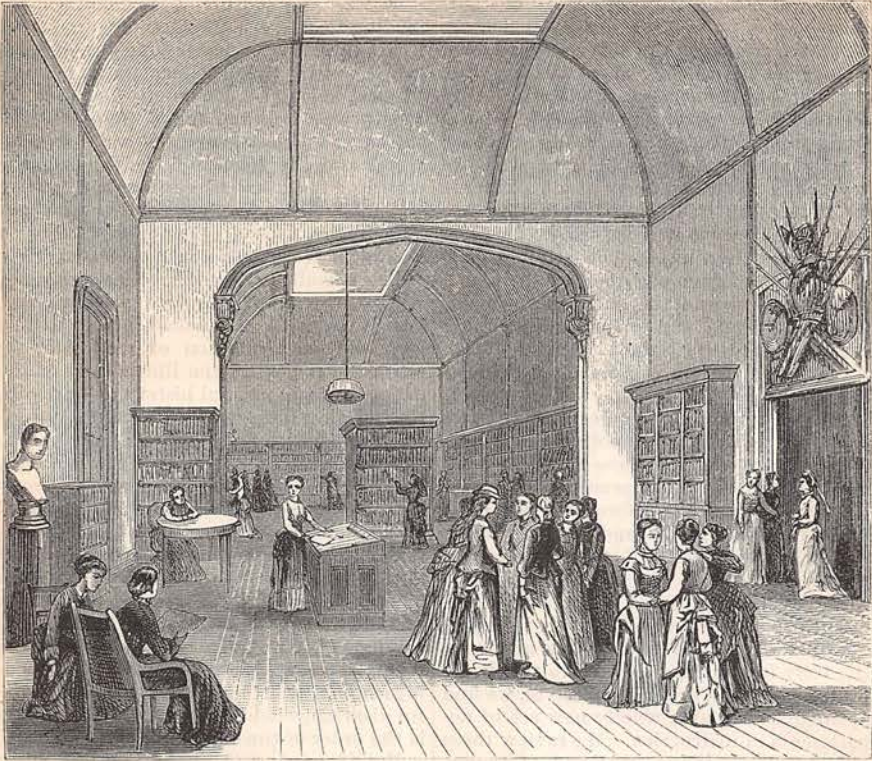
libraries. Nor must we pass unnoticed the reading-room, with its files of newspapers from all quarters and its long list of magazines, where, picking them up at random, I found, among others, quietly together the *Baptist Quarterly* and the *Unitarian Review*, the *Sailor's Magazine* and *Old and New*, *Good Words* and the *Herald of Health*; among a crowd of the usual magazines, both native and foreign, the *Contemporary*, *British Quarterly*, *Nation*, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, *American Journal of Science and Art*, etc., etc., etc.

If we walk across the college grounds, where, instead of men, we meet women, hastily shawled or cloaked, going to and fro, bent on recreation or recitation, we reach the rooms for the illustration of the departments of natural history and art. In the building formerly known as the gymnasium, and part of which is still devoted to the regular daily exercise of the students, we shall find, first, the new art gallery, only recently opened—a large and finely arranged hall, where the walls are lined with paintings, engravings, and photographs from the antique, the floor studded with full-size casts of the most celebrated statues, and where valuable books of engravings lie ready to the hand. We shall also find the drawing room, where unfinished paintings or drawings stand upon the easels, and the delightful disarrangement of the theoretical studio is the order of the day.

But if, passing through these, we enter the museum of natural history, we shall at once remark, not the abundance of illustra-

tions from all the departments of animal, vegetable, and mineral life that we can see in many museums, but the evident arrangement of all the specimens with a view to instruction, and not for the purpose of show. To illustrate: In one case we find together types of all the four branches of animal life, and then again, in the same case, types of the classes of each, so that, as the zoological student begins her work with the names

* Although these two constitute but one department in the printed statement of the college, yet, as they are practically two and distinct, I have so stated them for the sake of the spirit of the truth, and not the letter.



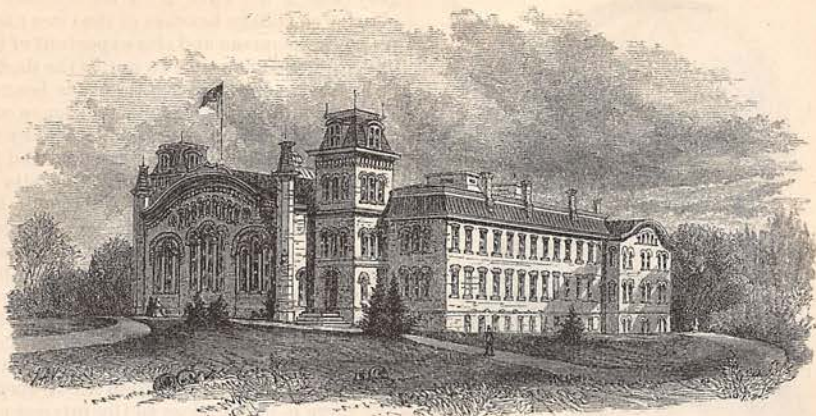
THE LIBRARY.

of the divisions and subdivisions, these will not be to her mere names, but she finds the illustrations of the otherwise dry text all laid out before her in order. It is as if one took at a comprehensive glance a survey of all the animal life on the face of the earth. The same educational arrangement is seen in the minerals; and I mention it not for its own sake, or for the sake of the individual mind which actually did the work, but because, reverting to the idea expressed in the beginning of this article, it is as good an illustration as I can give of the spirit of earnest, honest work and adaptation of means to ends—those ends being real education—which the impartial observer can not fail to recognize in every department at Vassar College, and which is an inheritance by right from the earnest, honest spirit of the founder.

But as we turn to leave the building by a long passageway, what noise is this we hear? At first one might fancy that he was in some large lunatic asylum; for a confused medley of sounds, high and low, and of metallic vibrations, recalls to our mind the terrible prophecies of our well-meaning friends. We begin to fear that the overwork at Vassar, too severe for the organization of woman, whose brain was originally

intended only as a servant and not as a master of the other functions of the body, has produced here the expected result. If all American women are to become incipient lunatics as the result of their mental training, would it not have been better for Matthew Vassar to have given his half million to Harvard University, where no such evil could result, and to have dismissed forever his chimerical idea, benevolent, no doubt, but foolish after all?

These doors conduct, doubtless, to so many cells, where the unfortunate victims of "identical education" are confined, and they are placed here so that their shrieks and groans and discordant pounding shall not disturb the remainder of the doomed community. Alas for the rarity of wise generalization from insufficient facts! The thirty doors, when examined, prove only entrances to thirty rooms where thirty students are practicing at thirty different pianos in all styles of art. As we look in, the work still goes on, and healthy faces and erect forms do not even turn to note our coming. We return, simply meditating, as we emerge into a charming little lecture-room, on the uselessness of this hallway experience for moral illustrative purposes. Here, instead of discords blending into har-



THE MUSEUM.

mony, we had found the polar antithesis. Every student was earnestly pursuing her own work. Each in her limited sphere, unconscious of the rest, was making harmony, and yet the result to the comprehensive ear was a most unmitigated discord. After all, illustrations must not be too carefully analyzed or carelessly applied.

We find our charming lecture hall ready for the meeting of the literary societies, and also prepared for the mimic performance of any of Shakspeare's dramas. Even as we enter, a spirited rehearsal is in progress of one of the acts of *Henry VI*.

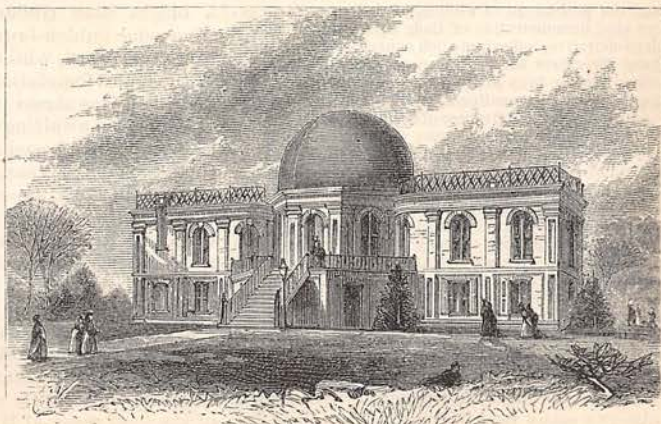
The observatory, where is located the department of astronomy, is also a short distance from the main building, and contains, besides the rooms requisite for observations and recitation, accommodations for the professor. When the telescope was mounted it was inferior only to three in the country, the diameter of the object-glass being twelve and three-eighth inches, and its focal length sixteen feet six inches.

The reader will of course have noticed, in looking over the list of departments and teachers, the large number of women instructors. This was in accordance with Mr. Vassar's idea at the start; and here, as elsewhere, it seemed to be only the women themselves that stood in the way of the professors' chairs being all filled by women.

One would suppose by the anxiety

with which people seek after and assume the title of professor that it was to be highly valued; and yet what is a professor but a teacher, after all, as Louis Agassiz at the height of his fame taught us in the beginning of his will—"I, Louis Agassiz, teacher." So the simple words run, and they may well put to the blush many a half-fledged pedagogue of a country school who prefixes the title of professor to his unknown name on every possible occasion, and with no provocation.

As we enter class-room after class-room at Vassar it does not seem at all odd to see women presiding over the work in a style for which we can have no criticism except respect. And yet if these very women were called professor the world in general would be much surprised, not to say offended, though their acquirements and professional tact might far surpass those of many a professor suddenly elevated to his position, with scant intellectual acquisitions, and no experience whatever in the art of educa-



THE OBSERVATORY.



MISS MARIA MITCHELL, PROFESSOR OF ASTRONOMY.

tion. The title is of but little consequence, but it is of consequence that the world should judge fairly, and award to great capacity and long and varied experience their meed of fairly won honor and fairly merited recompense. As it is, it will be evident by a glance at the list of school departments and teachers before given how far Mr. Vassar's desire has been carried out, that there should be a "full co-operation of women in the labor of instruction and discipline in the college." I quote again his simple and noble words:

"It is my hope—it was my only hope and desire; indeed, it has been the main incentive to all I have already done, or may hereafter do, or hope to do—to inaugurate a new era in the history and life of woman. The attempt you are to aid me in making fails wholly of its point if it be not an advance, and a decided advance. I wish to give one sex all the advantages too long monopolized by the other. Ours is, and is to be, an institution for women, not men. In all its labors, positions, rewards, and hopes the idea is the development and exposition, and the marshaling to the front, and the preferment of women, of their powers on every side, demonstrative of their equality with men—demonstrative, indeed, of such capacities as in certain fixed directions surpass those of men. This, I conceive, may be fully accomplished within the rational limits of true womanliness, and without the slightest hazard to the attractiveness of her character. We are, indeed, already defeated before we commence, if such development be in the least dangerous to the dearest attributes of her sex. We are not the less defeated if it be hazardous for her to avail herself of her highest educated powers when that point is gained. We are defeated if we start upon the assumption that she has no powers save those she may derive or imitate from the other sex. We are defeated if we recognize the idea that she may not, with every propriety, contribute to the world the benefits of matured faculties which education evokes. We are especially defeated if we fail to express by our acts our practical belief in her pre-eminent powers as an instructor of her own sex."

As we go through the building we shall observe many peculiarities. Instead of the uninteresting tints of black, brown, and

gray which we have been accustomed to observe on college benches as the class gathers at its summons and sits expectant of the professor, we have time to notice the dashes of brilliant color and the taste for beauty. The combination of a seal-skin sacque and a pretty white apron on one attracts by its novelty. The most perfect freedom and independence seem to prevail. One sits in full out-door costume while absorbed in her book; another, with her sacque carelessly thrown open, holds her hat in her hand; one, in house attire, has a crimson rose-bud slipped into the button-hole of a gray dress; and another a scarlet shawl flung round her shoulders. Some have come from exercise, some are going to it as soon as the recitation is over, some are from their rooms. But there is no doubt as to the interest and attention as the work begins and goes on; and when the professor leaves the stand, and scarlet shawl, crimson rose, and seal-skin sacque disappear as the class unceremoniously adjourns, we know that we have been in no play-room, but in an atmosphere of honest work.

As we stroll by the students' bulletin-board we select the following advertisement as of an unusual character for a college bulletin:

"**L**OST—A tiny oriole wing, brown and yellow, very precious to the owner. Please return to Room No. —."

But as directly beneath we read,

"**L**OST—Manuscript book containing calculations for solar eclipses. Finder will confer a favor by leaving it at Parlor No. —."

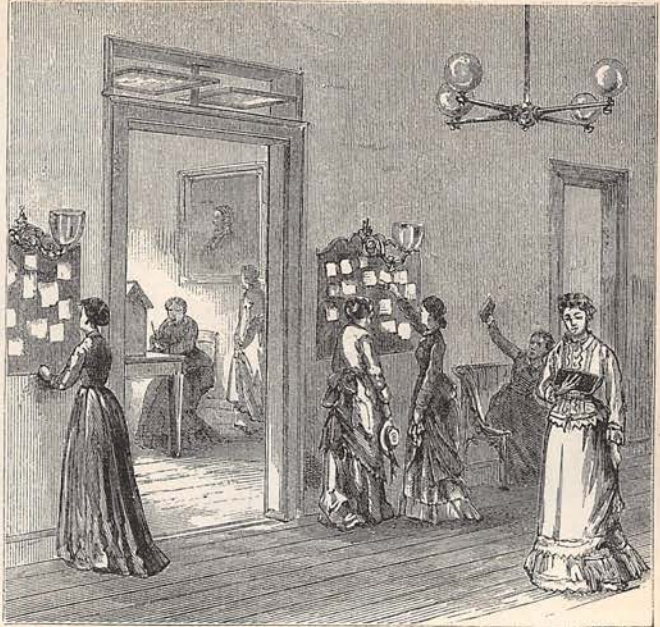
we do not feel that the dignity of the college is at all impaired if students do give part of their attention to tiny oriole wings.

The same combination arrests our attention as we come through a corner door into a hall where sleds, leaning against the wall at the orthodox angle for practical coasters, bring visions of quickened circulation and rosy cheeks. On the bush by the door hangs a bright blue ribbon, evidently dropped from some golden-brown curls, and waiting to be reclaimed, while so near on the edge of the stone foundation that the end of the ribbon sweeps across it, lies a heavy volume of logic, also awaiting its owner.

But one soon becomes accustomed to such combinations at Vassar, and imbibes meanwhile a healthy appreciation of the facts that intellectual work and taste for the beautiful are not incompatible, and that really cultured minds do not necessarily lose their native love of art.

Our day at Vassar begins by the simultaneous chiming of the bells for rising, but there is no perceptible stir till the second chime, which announces breakfast, and which is equal in its effect to the summons of the pied piper of Hamelin. At first dim and indistinct, then louder and increasing in

volume, from above, from below, from all sides, sounds the step of multitudinous feet; and then from all directions, down stairs and up stairs and along the wide corridors from both sides, come trooping the students, slowly and leisurely at first, pausing for a greeting or a joke, but very soon hurriedly and more and more rapidly, the latest stragglers perhaps adjusting a cuff or tying a neck-ribbon as they speed along to the wide open doors of the dining-hall. The throng passes slowly in, as when the doors are open of a concert-hall or a theatre.



THE BULLETIN-BOARD.

In less time than it

takes to write it the many tables are full, each student standing behind her chair. The bell of the lady principal, at the head of the faculty table close by the door, strikes, and all are seated. Another bell, and through all the long room for one moment there is utter and perfect silence—the silent grace, a custom brought from his old Nantucket home by the father of the astronomical professor. It is but a moment, but for that moment the hall is like the enchanted palace of the Sleeping Princess, and then the spell is broken, and the hum of voices and the inevitable clatter of knives and forks begin.

Here are, alas! some unfortunates who are late, and who now come in, each pausing as she enters, for a recognizing glance and nod from the lady principal as permission to take her seat. The students *must* remain at the table for a certain length of time, the end of which is announced by another bell, before which, however, it is quite possible that some notices may be given which concern the whole college; as, for instance, if the day is very bad, that students are excused from out-door exercise. The original source of such permission is the resident physician, who, seated at the faculty table, before commencing her own meal, is writing her orders for the girls who for any indisposition are excused from coming to table. The first bell strikes, and the most anxious of the students go out one by one as they choose, the rest following in their own time. We can not avoid remarking the erect car-

riage and the firm and even gait of the girls as they pass us. I think that fine walking is a very noticeable thing among the Vassar students, also a very self-possessed and quiet pursuing of their own affairs. These girls are learning the value of time and the meaning of the word business, and the knowledge will stand them in good stead when they come to take their share of the world's work.

From quarter past eight to twelve, from half past one to half past five, and from seven to eight in the evening are assigned to work—either study, recitation, or exercise; but as no student is allowed to pursue more than three full studies at once, it follows that much of this time is spent in study. We can wander at will during the morning study hours from one recitation or lecture to another, hearing every variety of topic discussed. I note the interesting discovery that out of the Sophomore Class of fifty, twenty-seven, or more than half, had elected to go on with their mathematics when the study became optional, though I do not propose, as I before stated, to give any detailed account of special recitations. I will only say, because it bears out my theory of inheritance, that I found every where the same atmosphere of honest work. More I can not say; and every teacher who has by long experience gained the professional quickness of perception corresponding to that which interprets to the skillful physician the flush of a cheek or the beat of a pulse will know how much that means.

So goes on the day at Vassar, broken by



STUDY HOUR.

the dinner at noon and the old-fashioned tea at sunset, followed by prayer and the singing of a hymn in the chapel.

If during the day we vary our round of class observing by dropping into one of the cozy little parlors, we find a cordial politeness and courtesy. The three or five proprietors have spent their ingenuity and taste in adorning it, and we find them quietly at work, as if in their homes. Every where it is evident that the students are self-governed. A European teacher would be amazed and horror-struck at the perfect freedom which is given to them. They take their daily walks when and where they please, and if one asks, "What is there to prevent these girls from going away if they choose?" the answer is, "Nothing."

But this is a nothing which means every thing, for it is the self-respect which is native-born at Vassar, and which is more of a safeguard to our American girls than the constant espionage and the strictly limited inclosures of traditional schools to their European sisters. It is the Venus of Milo that is at home in the art gallery of Vassar, and not the Medicean Venus.

The Senior Class have some privileges, dating mostly from last year. For instance, while all the rest are under the supervision of a corridor teacher, whose room is just at the end of the corridor, the Seniors have no corridor teacher, except so far as the lady principal calls them her own; and the room designed for that purpose has been placed in their hands as a Seniors' parlor. Into this privileged sanctuary no one but a Senior is expected to enter, unless introduced

by one of the class, and to adorn and beautify it the whole class unite. Vines are trained over the white walls, pictures enliven them, and tasteful furniture and delicate curtains complete the arrangement.

I should have spoken before of the vines which are trained over the walls in other rooms. The English ivy seems to take kindly to an intellectual atmosphere, and flourishes, spreading its branches far and wide. Indeed, there is scarcely a room in which one can not trace a cultivated and refined taste.

At night the bells chime the hour for rest, the innumerable parlors grow dim as the gas is turned off, and sleep settles over the family, save the night-watchman, whose duties now begin.

The professors and the president have independently arranged houses, which are incorporated in the building, and they carry on in them an entirely separate house-keeping.

It is doubtless true that in any large collection of women and girls there is danger of sentimentality and narrowness, just as in any corresponding collection of men and boys there is danger of coarseness and brutality, but I think the impartial observer will find that this danger has been overcome at Vassar. Hard pure study is the counterpoise in a girls' college, as it is where it exists in a boys' college, and the sickly flicker of sentimentality and the blaze of animal forces grow dim in the clear dry light of truth. But it must be the dry clear light of truth, and no pretense, which will do this; and in the fact that there seems to be almost

no sickly sentimentality among the Vassar girls, either in recitations or in their private rooms, I find a corroboration of my professional impression that Vassar is not the home of shams in work, and that what it shows is an honest showing. The very carelessness with which she opens wide her doors to inspection is presumptive evidence of this.

When a visitor finds herself left to come and go at her own will from class to class, and is continually reminded of the lines,

"None shall ask thee what thou doest,
Or care a rush for what thou knowest,
Or listen when thou repliest,"

she begins to feel a respect for the work, before the necessities and importance of which she is of no consequence. Not that visitors may be satisfied is the inspiring spirit, but that the work may be done. The blacksmith casts, perhaps, a sidelong glance upon us as we draw near his forge, but he hammers and turns the iron afterward in sublime unconsciousness of our presence; the engineer may offer us a seat in the locomotive before he blows the whistle, but afterward he stands with hand on the lever and eye straight ahead; and when we see those signs we rejoice, because we may be reasonably sure of good horse-shoes or a safe journey.

It would be absurd to say that there might not be improvements at Vassar. The original plan of making one large family of four hundred students may be unwise. With the increase of numbers comes an increase of the nervous tension before spoken of, and this is probably bad. It would perhaps be better if the large body of students could have been divided into twenty different buildings. Practically, however, this plan has also its difficulties. Where are the twenty women to be found who could

and would act as mothers to these comparatively small families? This is no light question, for the position is one which demands a very unusual combination of qualities of mind and heart.

It is often stated as against sending girls away to Vassar that the atmosphere must be a very unnatural one, and it is implied that it is therefore not good for the girl. But all education is unnatural, from its beginning, when the tiny fingers are taught to hold the pen by an unnatural effort, to the end. Man in a state of nature is the raw material of the Art of Education, not its product. Educated man is not natural man.

It may be well asked whether one of the means which its science authorizes us to use be not this very removing of the subject for a limited time completely from family relations. In no other way can a girl learn what the family signifies; in no other way can she gain a true, though perhaps severe, knowledge of herself; in no other way can she realize the full meaning of individual responsibility. Taken entirely out of her



THE SENIORS' PARLOR.



JOHN H. RAYMOND, PRESIDENT, AND PROFESSOR OF
MENTAL AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

family, the girl sees it at a distance under a new light. She returns to it again with a fresh sense of its value and of her duties; but she comes back to it also with a new recognition of herself as a member of society at large. In this view, which I am more and more convinced is the true one, the "unnatural atmosphere" of a large school, away from home and among strangers, is, as far as the mental education goes, one of the essential means for fashioning noble women out of impulsive girls. And if any thing can be devised which shall lessen the physical nervous tension in the first years, or, better, if parents and guardians would not allow girls to go to college till seventeen years of age, I am strongly inclined to believe that even the large number of four hundred in one house might be not only unobjectionable but very beneficial.

The plan on which the building is constructed admits of much just criticism in several particulars. The ventilation is insufficient, consisting of the usual holes in the wall, opening into flues full of stationary air, and in some rooms on the upper floor the evil is perceptibly felt. Modern science could completely obviate the difficulty, providing flues through which a constant current of heated air should be driven. And with the amount of steam heat which is always at hand the work would seem to present no practical difficulty. Ventilation may be expensive, but physicians are more so; nay, even headaches are more so.

It was a consideration for show rather than health which planned the long and wide corridors against the outside walls, and gave two out of three of the sleeping-rooms no windows except into the corridors. Clear sunlight and air direct from the sun-

lighted external world are especially indispensable to a sleeping-room.

Connected with the subject of ventilation and sunlight comes the ever-pressing question of drainage; and with regard to this much might be suggested at Vassar. We Americans seem to prefer to be taught by typhoid fever and diphtheria rather than by the milder persuasions of science, that where so many are congregated this is a matter which will not take care of itself in the same way in which it was supposed to take care of itself on a New England farm. Though much improvement has been forced at Vassar, much more might be effected.

Again, it is a fact worthy of being publicly recorded that when the house was opened and housekeeping began with three hundred students and a large force of servants, there was not one single closet in the whole house. The need of closets had not once occurred to the minds which directed and planned.

It is stated that when the defect was spoken of to Matthew Vassar, he replied, as if puzzled, that the girls could easily have two nails on the walls of their rooms, one for their school dress and one for their best dress, adding, "What do they need more?" The want has been remedied by coffin-like wooden boxes, which stand upright in the corners of the rooms. The story only points a moral, which is, that in the office of every architect engaged in house planning there should be at least one woman. She might be called the suggester simply, this being a humble and modest title, not implying to outside parties that her advice is to be taken; and thus dignity might be preserved, while the convenience of the women who are to live in the houses and do the work would be secured. There is a Spanish proverb which runs thus:

"A woman's advice is no great thing,
But he's a fool that doesn't take it."

With this motto inscribed on the wall of every architect's office, and with the last line carefully concealed by graceful drapery, which the office suggester could easily arrange, much weariness and much unhappiness might be saved.

Every student at Vassar ought to have a separate room. Even if this were impossible, she ought to have a separate bed. This also was a matter not thought of importance by the men who planned, because they were planning for women. But it is a matter of no small importance, and the rights of individual privacy should have been acknowledged before this time, and enforced even against the wishes of the girls themselves, if these existed. Into each parlor open three rooms, no one of which is large enough

for two people to sleep in during the night. Each student should have one of these absolutely to herself, and three proprietors are quite enough for one parlor. If it be objected that funds will not admit, I answer that funds should be created.

There are many men who, while theoretical believers in the right of women to a full education, yet practically deny this by the consideration with which they treat them as students. The girls who demand a college education ask—and they ask it unani- mously—"a fair field and no favor." But it is almost never that one finds, at least east of the meridian of eighty-seven degrees west, a man who in his teaching uncondi- tionally grants this. He gives a fair field, perhaps, but he gives favor, and that is just what the girls do not want. The case is different when one sees a class of girls con- fronted in a direct contest with an equally able and prepared woman. She grants no favor. The attack and defense are on level ground, and the challenger is only proud and glad when the respondent proves her power. To be conquered by a brave knight is no dishonor, and the truest teacher is she who helps her pupil to be her own suc- cessful antagonist, if not to prove herself her superior.

This trouble, felt in classes of girl stu- dents taught by men, is avoided by co-edu- cation, for there the boys grant no quarter, even if the professor otherwise might, and the matter takes care of itself. But if it should be found that it is impossible for a man to grant absolutely no favor in an in- tellectual contest to his girl students, then it must come to pass, sooner or later, that girls' colleges must be taught by women alone. I am not sure that otherwise this would be best; but I am sure, under the supposition that the yielding tendency of the masculine mind is unconquerable, that the pressure of the students themselves will finally force the appointment of women for professors in all our girls' colleges. The problem is a general one, not applying par- ticularly to Vassar, but dimly felt by all girl students, and recognized by practical women. It is only one of the problems which this nation has to solve for itself un- der the new conditions presented by this country and this age of the world.

There is one danger into which the move- ment for the education of women is likely to fall—nay, is falling. It is the same error which has been inevitable, perhaps, in the past, but is not inevitable in the future, and which has kept so low the standard of American colleges. It is this: they have been founded, one after the other, on in- sufficient endowments, and every man who desired to help the cause of education has founded a new one, instead of turning his half million or so into the treasury of one

already started. If every brook were to run on in its own channel into the sea for the sake of retaining its own name, we should have nowhere a river deep enough to float an Upper Mississippi steamboat. And this is just what has been the trouble with the men's colleges, their medical, the- ological, and law schools. The tide sets in the same way now as to women's colleges. Is it too late to plead, for the sake of jus- tice and womanhood, that it be checked? Let us profit by past experience. Let us not have a dozen women's colleges in one State, every one struggling, every one forced to such shifts as those above spoken of, for pecuniary reasons, every one utterly unable to command the best teaching talent in all or any one of its professors' chairs. Let us have at least one noble, fully endowed col- lege, one fully endowed university, with the best of every thing.

Let the men and women who are now asking themselves what they shall do with their wealth in the coming day pause, while Vassar exists, before they endow another girls' school. Were it not better to fill her coffers, to secure proper accommodation for her students, the women of America, than to start another college on the same basis? Give Vassar another building, give her five, call each by the name of the giver, if nec- essary, but found for the present no more schools of the same kind, to fail in some of their best efforts through insufficient provi- sion.

I must enter here a personal statement, lest I should be suspected of having some personal interest in Vassar. I myself should send a girl to Cornell or to Michigan Uni- versity, and not to Vassar, simply because I believe in co-education. But if all those who believe in educating girls apart would give their money to Vassar, it would be freed from many impediments which now fetter it, and give its faculty the chance of showing the world what they desire to do, and under those circumstances could do. The entire preparatory department could be dispensed with, the standard for admis- sion raised, and many a girl in many a coun- try village, who sees her days of youth go- ing by while insufficient means prevent her from applying for admission, could be pre- sented with a scholarship. Thence would come forth a long line of noble, brave, and well-appointed women, who would lift with a powerful lever the whole level of our pri- mary education, and with it all the rest.

Vassar should have scholarships in abun- dance, for the whole business of the school education of this nation is rapidly and inevi- tably passing into the hands of its women; and the man or woman who founds schol- arships there for able girls thereby becomes the benefactor of the whole nation, not only for the present, but for all coming time.