Journal of Lake Erie Female Seminary

Sept 7, 1859 - Feb 3, 1875

A transcription from handwritten journal entries
copied from letters written by Lake Erie Seminary’s faculty
to their friends at Mount Holyoke Seminary and its other daughter institutions

Edited by Chris Bennett

2018
Reports and Their Authors:

Maria H. Beardslee: Reports dated Sept 7 1859 – June 1 1860
Covering the Seminary’s first fall, spring, and summer terms of 1859/60

Ellen M. Wright: Reports dated Oct 3 1860 – June 20 1861
Covering the Seminary’s first Anniversary (Commencement) and the fall, spring and summer terms of 1860/1861

Sarah Dorr: Reports dated Oct 10 1861 – Dec 12 1862
Covering fall term 1861 through fall term 1862

Ednah M. Lyman: Reports dated Oct 8 1863 - June 11 1864
Covering the July 1863 Anniversary through June 1864

Ednah M. Lyman: Reports dated Sept. 17 1864 - Feb 11 1865
Covering the 21 July 1864 Anniversary through February 1865

Mary E. Flanders: Reports dated Sept 18 1865 - Feb 21 1866
Covering the 1865 Anniversary through February 1866

Sarah E. Dorr: Reports dated Sept 19 1866 – Feb 25 1867
Covering fall term 1866 through February 1867

Mary E. Flanders: Feb 4 1868 Report
Covering the 1867 Anniversary through February 1868

Ellen C. Parsons: Reports dated Jan 25 – June 17 1872
Covering fall term 1871 through June 1872

Edna Baker: May 1874 Report
Covering fall term 1873 through May 1874

Edna Baker: Feb 1875 Report
Covering the 1874 Anniversary through February 1875
Preface

Lake Erie Female Seminary first opened for classes in fall 1859. This was a college for women modelled after Mount Holyoke Seminary, which was the first college in America to offer young women an education equivalent to that of men’s colleges of the time. The new Seminary’s principal, Lydia Sessions, and most of the other teachers were Mount Holyoke graduates who had been teaching there, and they sent regular reports to their alma mater on the progress of the new Seminary in Painesville. Copies of these letters were also shared with two other ‘daughter’ institutions of Mount Holyoke’s, Western Female Seminary in Oxford, Ohio and Michigan Female Seminary in Kalamazoo. These letters were copied into a handwritten journal, which has been transcribed here.

The journal entries cover the period just before the Seminary’s opening in September 1859 through the early winter of 1875. They were written in installments throughout the school year, and there are a few gaps between the journal entries, especially covering the summer terms and Anniversary (Commencement) events. There are no reports for the spring and summer terms in 1863, and the report for the entire 1872/73 school year is missing. The authors of these journal entries changed often over the years, and they vary in style and focus. Gradually, fewer reports were written throughout the year with less detail, and by the 1870s the entire school year was being summed up with a single annual entry.

The typescripts of these journals were made by Lake Erie College student workers in the 1980s, and while generally accurate, there were mistakes and misinterpretations of the handwritten sources that have been corrected. Since the original manuscripts are only available through February 1865, however, the later typescripts have been corrected without benefit of the original texts.

While the authors’ nineteenth-century spelling has been preserved, their punctuation has been edited to help the reader make sense of the text. The original writers left many marks on the page, written in very thin lines, which can be interpreted in various ways. Sentences will appear to be broken or end with commas, semicolons/colons (or possibly exclamation points) and dashes (not necessarily intentional), so choices had to be made on the reader’s behalf.

Also, the journal entries are clearly copies from the original letters, and obvious words get left out or repeated, or things simply get garbled once in a while. These mistakes have been judiciously corrected. Undecipherable words from the manuscripts are represented as spaces within brackets: [     ]. Also, rambling, amorphous paragraphs have been divided into rational units.

These journal entries were originally letters sent to friends and colleagues at Mount Holyoke, and copies were sent to other ‘daughter’ institutions such as Western Female Seminary in Oxford, Ohio and Michigan Female Seminary in Kalamazoo, whose teachers were Mount Holyoke alumni and teachers (and sometimes Lake Erie Seminary alumni and teachers). This was a close community, and the journal entries reflect the common backgrounds of the correspondents and their readers.
Notes have been added to help the reader keep the myriad names mentioned straight, and to clarify the many references to nineteenth century events and culture (and especially Mount Holyoke culture). These women were intelligent, well read, and kept up with their times, and their references to current events, literature, the bible, hymns, etc., are identified as much as possible. The Seminary’s staff, supporters, and visitors are also identified.
Reports by Maria H. Beardslee dated Sept 7 1859 – June 1 1860
Covering the Seminary’s first fall, spring, and summer terms of 1859/60

Painesville Sept 7th [1859]

Dear Holyoke friends,

[Fall Term 1859]

Have you found time to-day, amid your vacation pleasures, to give us at Painesville one passing thought, and would you like to hear how our new Seminary is progressing? We want to tell you, if it will not be wearisome for you to listen.

Three of the teachers — Misses Sessions, Prescott and Smith — came last Thursday, Sept. 1st, almost worn out with their long journey these warm, dusty days. We pitied them, for having been over the same route, we knew just how tedious it was, still we could not help rejoicing a little — a place of rest is so grateful at such a time, and so they must have pleasant first impressions at least. Indeed how could it be otherwise, as they went first to the house of our kind friend Mrs. Barriss, Miss Bronson's home during the summer. They were impatient however to see the Seminary, and only allowed themselves time for a little rest before they visited it.

Since the building was not fully completed, they expected to see everything in confusion — piles of lumber, bits of brick, heaps of sand, etc., dotting the front yard, and so were quite astonished to find grass growing close up to the door, to find walks laid out and bordered with trees and evergreens — the trees not very large or symmetrical in form to be sure, but giving good promise for the future.

And now came the pleasure of examining the interior arrangements. Did your friends ever build a new house while you were away, and when you went home didn't you enjoy visiting all the rooms, looking into all the conveniences, tracing resemblances everywhere you could, to the old house where you had always lived?

No matter if they were not quite ready to move in, if, in the room which was to be your mother's, the plastering was not quite done, and if all around there were unfinished plans; your imagination

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1 Lydia Ames Sessions (1833-1912), Lake Erie Seminary’s Principal from 1859-66; after graduating from Mount Holyoke in 1856, she managed that institution’s Domestic Department so capably that she was offered the Principal position for the new Lake Erie Seminary, which she would leave after several years to marry Rev. William Walter Woodworth, the local Presbyterian minister.

2 Lucinda Tucker Prescott (1829-1904), an 1853 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-95; she was in charge of the Domestic Dept. and over the years taught Botany, Astronomy, Chemistry, and German.

3 Harriet B. Smith (1838-1865), an 1859 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught Latin at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-64.

4 Mary Pelton Bronson (1833-1865), Lake Erie Seminary’s Associate Principal, was an 1858 graduate of Mount Holyoke who had taught there before coming to Lake Erie Seminary six months early to prepare twenty of the new students for their first year, and to help organize the new building for opening; this effort proved too much for her health, however, and she was forced to leave Lake Erie Seminary just three weeks into the fall term; she married Thomas S. Bridgman in 1860.
filled up all deficiencies, and you saw just how it would look by and by. The lack of finish gave you something to plan about, and you were happier all the rest of the day for the survey you had taken.

When those teachers entered their new home by one of the lower rooms, there was no need that Mr. Hawkes ¹ should say "this is the Domestic Hall,” for though there were neither sinks, stove, kettles nor ovens, they recognized it at a glance, and were glad to trace in it some likeness to the dear Seminary in New England.

"Can this be done in time" they said, with much doubt in the tone we thought, but in one week, hammers and planes in the hands of skillful work men have done much towards it. The Dining Hall pleased them much, 'twas so light and pleasant they thought, and the bright cherry tables gave it such a cheerful aspect.

The rooms upstairs proved such a strong attraction however, that they were easily satisfied with a survey of the basement, and were ready to leave long before they had heard how things were to be arranged there.

Ascending the stairs they found themselves at the door of the Seminary Hall, which they evidently thought was an uninviting place, and how could we blame them? Given, a room 55 by 57 ft. with ten long uncurtained windows letting [in] a glare of light, and half filled with unpainted chairs, tables etc. To find something home like and pleasant: that was the problem that puzzled them, and that would trouble most any of us. Farther on in the same hall, they found the Reception room, Reading room, and the room designed for the Principal. These were only in embryo and so it was quite a relief when the door of the Drawing Room was opened to find it beautifully furnished. When ever before, were Brussels carpet, sofas and marble topped tables, so grateful to the eye? These were the result of a festival given by the ladies of Painesville, so the Seminary had some warm friends already.

In the next story were five recitation rooms — they did not seem now, like Room A or G at South Hadley, ² but then who could tell how it would change them to be occupied — to have long rows of happy faces all around the sides. The third and fourth stories seemed much like the second, and then nothing remained to be seen, only the two immense water tanks in the attic and the observatory. This last is a room in the tower, rough and unfinished, but commanding such a fine view that one never thinks of the place.

Perhaps if you at Holyoke could see from here the two great features in the landscape, Lake Erie and “Little Mountain,” ³ you might almost be willing to exchange and give us instead the twin

¹ Rev. Roswell Hawkes (or Hawks), was a Massachusetts minister who worked with Mary Lyon to raise funds to establish Mount Holyoke, and who served as that institution’s general agent. He was also instrumental in raising funds for Lake Erie Female Seminary.

² Metonym for Mount Holyoke Seminary, located in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Lake Erie Female Seminary was established as a ‘daughter’ institution to Mount Holyoke, and most of Lake Erie’s new teachers came from there.

³ A prominent hill featuring interesting ledges and caves located seven miles from Lake Erie Seminary. Beginning with this first school year, it would become an annual tradition for everyone at Lake Erie Seminary to take a break in studies to make a trip to Little Mountain for a day of recreation. The June 21, 1860 and June 20, 1861 entries describe visits there.
mountains Holyoke and Tom. After this specimen of Western scenery the company left the Seminary, looking very cheerful, nothing daunted by the prospect of hard work before them. And there has been so far, work enough and to spare, for every pair of willing hands. The ladies of the town have very kindly come to our assistance, and now our rooms are so neatly arranged that we shall go to the Seminary to live, to-morrow. Two more of our teachers are with us now, and with six, we shall not be altogether lost even in so large a house. Miss Esty came this morning, after we had expected her for two or three days, and the afternoon train brought Miss Wright. We saw the omnibus drive up, and soon after word came to us that one of the young ladies was here. None of the rooms were ready, and how could we help saying, "What did she come so soon for? Where shall we put her?" When we knew who the young lady was, our knotty question was disposed of immediately.

Sept 13th [1859]

We have been at the Seminary now for four days — they have been happy days too, and we shall always love to remember them. We wish some of our friends had been with us last Friday evening, when we took our first meal here. We are sure they would have enjoyed it, as well as we. We were not lonely if the Dining Hall was large, for our table was small and cozy, there was plenty of pleasant conversation, and our hearts were full of good cheer. How good it seemed when we adjourned to Miss Sessions’ room for devotions to have her read the 27th Psalm. “The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?” The last verse especially seemed to us so precious. “Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.”

Miss Fisher joined us to-day, and now our number of teachers is complete with the exception of Miss Dorr, whom we hope to see soon. Miss Smith and Miss Esty have proved most aspiring, for they occupy No. 69 in the 4th story. Misses Fisher & Wright are in 37—3rd story, Miss Prescott in 17-2nd story, Misses Sessions and Bronson in No 1, 1st story. We are somewhat scattered and lonely now, but in two or three days, we expect plenty of near neighbors. There are two or three young ladies with us now, so that we had occasion to test the truth of the oft repeated assertion, that “Western girls would never be willing to work.” We very much doubt whether any Holyoke dish circle of one would have done better than ours did this noon, or whether any two would have cleaned tables and put the Domestic Hall in better order in the same

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1 Mountains in the vicinity of Mount Holyoke Seminary.
2 Julia Esty (1838-1920), an 1859 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught General History at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-65, and later at the Michigan Female Seminary with Jeanette Fisher.
3 Ellen Maria Wright (1837-1904), an 1856 graduate of Willoughby Seminary, worked at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-62 teaching history and vocal music.
4 Jeanette Fisher (1837-1916), an 1859 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught Mathematics at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-1866; she left to assist in opening the new sister institution Michigan Female Seminary in Kalamazoo, serving as Principal there for 12 years.
5 Sarah E. Dorr (1836-1915), an 1858 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-1866; in addition to teaching Physiology and Christian Evidences, she provided medical care to the students.
6 Students at Mount Holyoke were required to do ‘domestic work’ (cleaning, cooking, etc.), both to instill a Puritan work ethic in the students, and to save money on housekeeping staff. The ‘Western girls’ in distant Ohio were not expected to easily adhere to the same work ethic.
7 The students were organized into ‘circles’ for doing various domestic tasks.
time. Our Oxford friends¹ proved this long ago, and we knew it before, too, but we know of some that are hardly convinced yet.

Sept 17th [1859]

The first Saturday of the first term! This will hereafter stand in our minds for a most delightful season of rest. To be sure we have not been entirely free, but there seems to have been far less of perplexing care than on the other two days since school commenced. The examinations of those that were thoroughly prepared are for the most part over, and we shall commence regular recitations on Monday.

We have almost forgotten to tell you anything of our first days, but you are all perfectly familiar with these ingathering times, and so need no description from one. There were arrivals of loaded omnibuses — the hurry and noise of transporting trunks — gatherings in the parlor, waiting anxiously for rooms to be assigned, etc., all of which seemed so natural. We only felt the need of some who would be glad to see the dear place once more, and we longed for a good hearty welcome such as we were wont to receive from the old scholars,² rather than always those timid, half-homesick glances. Not a little sorrow has been felt at parting with Fathers and Mothers, but now as we look around at the ninety we have enrolled, we find but few tearful ones. We hope they may become reconciled to absence from home soon, and that the Seminary may prove a delightful home to all.

Were any of you over inclined to believe what Upham and Haven³ tell us of not being able to entertain but one thought at a time? You surely would have been cured of the skepticism by half an hour’s tarry in the Domestic Hall after dinner on Thursday. The work was to be done by volunteers, and though all were desirous of doing their very best, their hands were unused to the way, and with few capable of leading we had really laughable times. Those who cleaned tables needed instruction, those who worked in the middle room, the knife circle, dish circle, etc.—so many to learn and so few to teach, that we felt it would not be amiss if each one had the ability of doing as many things at once, as had Bonaparte. We have heard people, after they had seen Calisthenics practiced for the first time, wonder how a circle was ever formed again, after so much turning, passing and repassing, after so many columns, semicircles, etc. — and just so we wondered, if out of this seeming confusion, order could ever be brought. No one would have thought, could they have looked in on this hurrying to and fro, that in an hour and a half, we should have been left alone in our orderly Domestic Hall — yet so it was.

There has been so far no need of cooking, for our tables have been bountifully supplied by the ladies of the place, and today we have made our first attempt at bread baking. Never was bread watched more faithfully from yeast cakes to loaf than was this, and we are sure none ever repaid

¹ Lake Erie Seminary’s sister institution Western Female Seminary in Oxford, Ohio, established in 1855 following the Mount Holyoke model, and whose teachers came from Mount Holyoke, like those at Lake Erie.
² Returning students, which of course were missing in Lake Erie Seminary’s first year.
³ Thomas Cogswell Upham was author of Elements of Mental Philosophy, first published in 1831 and reprinted over 50 times during the author’s life. Joseph Haven was author of the college textbook Mental Philosophy: Including the Intellect, Sensibilities, and Will, first published in 1857 and reprinted many times, which was one of the texts used in the Seminary’s Senior Year curriculum.
the watching better — 'twas as nice and light as any one could wish to see. Those that made it seemed really to have a housekeeper’s pride in the success, and judging from their appearance, it will be a real joy to see the girls as happy as they will be, when on Monday noon we sit down to a meal all prepared by our own hands.

Oct 1st [1859]

Tuesday, word came to us that we were to have company the next day — company too that we should all be glad to see, some one from South Hadley.¹ Who it was to be we could not find out by dint of inquiry, and so there was no way to satisfy ourselves except by making conjectures. It might be Miss Chapin,² for she was much interested in the Seminary, but then she only went East late in the Spring — was it Miss Jessup³ coming to gladden us by her presence — was it one of the teachers, or some one of the young ladies that we had all known? We thought and wondered, but our field for guessing was so extended that it was not at all strange we did not approach the truth, and that the mystery was only solved by Miss Hopkins’⁴ appearance at the breakfast table next morning. She could remain but one day, and as we could not have her leave without a sight of our Mountain, a ride there was forthwith planned. Miss Hopkins’ visit there was not as pleasant as we hoped it would be, however, on account of an accident that happened to one of our young ladies who accompanied them. In attempting to step across a fissure in the rock, she missed her footing and fell some 10 or 12 feet. As the sides and bottom of the caves are jagged rock we feared her injuries might be very severe, but this morning they seem to be confined to some spraining of both ankles. We can hardly afford to be deprived of one of our old scholars so soon, but forgetting this our present loss, we will only be thankful that our good Heavenly Father saw fit to spare her life, and that there is a prospect of her return in a few weeks.

Oct 12th [1859]

Wednesday morning — Miss Catherine Beecher⁵ has just left the Seminary after remaining with us one night. We hoped when she came she might be able to address the young ladies, but she left before they could be assembled. She gave the teachers however a caution against allowing themselves too little recreation, and strongly recommended that teachers and pupils should meet as often as once a week, in a well ventilated room to play. We tried to listen with deference in our manner, and perhaps the advice did us good — certainly we had more than our usual amount of merriment, in trying to picture ourselves all engaged in one great game of "blind man’s bluff" or "puss in the corner." Whether we shall put the advice in practice remains to be seen.

Oct 13th [1859]

We are to have our Thursday evening meetings for the first time this evening and we are full of

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¹ Metonym for Mount Holyoke Seminary, which is located at South Hadley, Massachusetts.
² Mary W. Chapin, Principal of Mount Holyoke
³ Emily Jessup, Associate Principal at Mount Holyoke, who held this same position at Western Female Seminary 1862-77.
⁴ Catherine Hopkins, also Associate Principal at Mount Holyoke.
⁵ Catherine Beecher was a 19th century American educator who promoted women’s education and the benefits of kindergarten. Her siblings included abolitionists Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe.
anxiety concerning them. Nearly one half of our pupils are impenitent, and have so far, with a few exceptions, appeared fearfully careless of their Eternal interests whenever we have addressed them. Yet, besides the privileges of the Sabbath they have, for these four weeks, bowed together morning and night before the All Merciful, and for them the recess meetings, those sources of such rich blessing, have been open. Now another means of grace is to be theirs, and if they neglect to improve this one more is added to the list of misimproved opportunities for turning to God. When we think of our responsibility in this matter, we are ready to sink down with the cry, "Lord who is sufficient for these things?" — until this refreshing promise comes to our minds: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." ¹ While many have steadily refused to acknowledge God's claims upon them, He has not forgotten to be gracious, for He has, as we believe, drawn one wandering soul to Himself. May He grant this may but be the beginning of the good things in store for us. Will not all of you to whom prayer is precious often remember us at the throne of grace? We need a plentiful blessing, and our Father bestows such gifts as we desire, in answer to the fervent entreaties of His children.

Nov. 10th [1859]

We can scarcely bear to tell you that dear Miss Bronson left for home today; it seems so sad to have her gone. We never dreamed that she could leave, for she seemed almost identified with the Seminary itself, but though now for six weeks she had tried faithfully every means for regaining health — having been at the house of a friend in town,² for where she was entirely free from care, all seemed to result only in a gradual decrease of strength, until we all thought and she reluctantly acknowledged that a journey East would be her best course. Who will wonder that she was nearly worn out, when they know how much she found to do, during the six months before school opened. The preparatory school of twenty pupils occupied six hours of the day — then often afterwards a walk to the building was necessary, where advice was needed concerning a floor, or partition, or closet, or some other thing necessary to the greatest convenience. For Wednesday and Saturday there was planning for Seminary quilts and bedding in general, and besides, as a sort of recreation, letters to be written in answer to the oft-repeated ones coming from anxious Papas and Mammies, asking first what comforts and conveniences and afterwards what kind of intellectual advantages daughter Sarah or daughter Jane might expect to find.

Though Miss Bronson left the Seminary three weeks after the term commenced, she had endeared herself to all hearts, and all regret that we must lose her even for a short time. We have, however, her oft repeated promise that she will return as soon as she may be able.

Nov 28th [1859]

To see how like old times every thing is moving on this morning, one would hardly believe that the long looked for day was actually past: that we had really enjoyed our first Thanksgiving Time, which there has been so much talk of — but so it is, and we are to give you its history now as nearly as can be. We need only to mention the day and you will be ready to form some idea of its duties and pleasures, but will you not remember that, while all [of] you at Holyoke and

¹ 2 Corinthians 12:9
² Most likely Margaret Barris, at whose home Mary Bronson had lived while teaching preparatory classes before fall term began.
Oxford are familiar with Seminary Thanksgivings, either by report or by participating in them, every thing had the charm of novelty to our young ladies.

Soon after the first bell on Wednesday, we were aware of an unusual bustle in the halls, which seemed gradually to increase until, when the five minutes bell rung, the progression changed from Arithmetical to Geometrical, and that with no inconsiderable ratio either. There were overjoyed expressions at the respite we were to have from school duties, wonderings as to what there would be to do, and what would be each one's part until we were summoned to breakfast, where all must sit just so long, apparently with patience, while in reality so impatient to be initiated into the mysterious secret of preparation. The meal once over, busy hands were soon at work throughout the house, and while up stairs the wreaths and mottoes grew most wonderfully, the more substantial comforts were attended to below. All worked with zest, and such good cheer prevailed that we took no notice of the flight of time, and night was close upon us before we felt hardly ready for it. Though all was not done, the Chapel seemed quite another place — we had once during the evening just a glimpse of it from the end of the hall, and looking through the line of posts so gracefully trimmed with hemlock, with the chandelier above draped with the same, was strongly suggestive of fairy bowers. Truly it seemed like bringing fairy land and very earthly things in close proximity, when after that pleasant sight, we went to the basement to see shelves loaded with pies and cakes, and every table filled with something towards the next day's dinner. The morning brought as fine a day as we could wish — warm and without a cloud — and on their way to church, all must at least have rendered thanks to God for this, that he had given them maturity capable of appreciating beauty, and of being rendered happy by it.

We dined alone, having reserved our company until evening, and then set about doing those "last things" which often prove so numerous, even after we are sure all is nearly ready for the guests. The mottoes were tastefully arranged upon the Chapel walls — small wreaths suspended in the windows, with each a lighted taper — tables filled with curiosities and ornaments from the young ladies’ rooms, placed here and there — and then the guests, who were by this time in the parlor chatting merrily, were invited to our grand reception room. They were greeted by two tableaux which had been arranged upon the platform, and the silence which at once prevailed showed that they were not looked upon by unappreciative eyes. There was no need to announce the design of either — words could not have told it plainer than did each one by appropriate dress. Was not that Spring, whose simple dress was ornamented here and there with pale green loaves and delicate flowers; Summer so profusely decked with bright flowers; Autumn crowned with bearded grain and bearing luscious fruits; and Winter almost hidden by a snowy veil? Then who but Faith could, with such childlike confidence, look up while bearing such a heavy cross — who beside Hope herself could lean with such unquestioning trust upon the anchor — who but Charity look with so much love upon all, even though pressing to her heart the Best of Books. We fear that after this neither the sweet song "Still the angel stars are shining"1 nor the defiant "Winter is coming"2 received their due share of attention, unless the almost deafening din of voices was intended for applause.

Our grotto proved to be the principal attraction of the evening, and it was worthy of it, for its mossy banks and miniature lake were beautiful, but we had planned to have that eclipsed entirely

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1 Song version of Adelaide Anne Porter’s poem “Echoes”
2 Likely “Old Winter is coming” by Joseph Anthony to music by George F. Root
by a model of the Holyoke Seminary, which we failed to finish. After we had spent two evenings on it, we were disappointed not to have it done, but perhaps the amusement we had out of it was worth our time. The model was to be a foot and a half high, and of corresponding proportions — we could think just how it ought to be, and the task seemed already accomplished when we saw the blank walls standing without the semblance of a door or windows. We found out our mistake afterwards when we were cutting these same doors and windows from book binders board and trying to allay the smart of blistered fingers. It must be night and we would have this house illuminated — and with this thought we were so much elated that forthwith a candle must be introduced that we might witness the effect. It was all one blaze of light, and so would never do — could we not contrive some way to make it dimmer? Very opportunely we remembered than in our room half of a curtain had been blown away — the other part was just the thing for us. No such good fortune was in store however, for when this was brought and carefully pasted around there was no light at all. "Sic Parcas volvere"\(^1\) thought we, and at once we abandoned our design. So the pine boughs that were to make an orchard in lieu of cherry withered in disgrace in our back yard, and Prospect Hill, that was already made upon the platform, was levelled to a bank and filled with house plants. All this was unknown to our guests, and while they were admiring these, they did not guess how many ludicrous ideas they were suggestive of to us.

Dec. 23rd [1859]

Our first term of school closed yesterday, and now, while we are writing, many of our young ladies are at their homes. We hope they enjoyed as much as they anticipated in meeting with the Charlies and the Annas and scores besides of the dear little ones at home. For days and days — weeks we might almost say — vacation has been the common theme at table, and it was good to see the eyes brighten and the faces light up at the very mention of that "good time coming." All were to be away, so there were none to grow sad at the sight of others' joy; none to pine in secret for that happiness which given to some, was yet to be withheld from them. Rarely have we seen a happier group than was last night collected around the door waiting for the omnibus, and when at last it came, the good byes that were spoken had not after all much of the real good bye sound in them. We were really lonely after they were gone — every thing seemed so deserted. Those that were left behind gathered in groups to talk of things that were to happen in the morning — of probable good times, of possible surprises, of what they might be doing “tomorrow night” etc. until they grew impatient of the slow flight of time and wished the night would ever go. So it has gone, and they have gone, and I only am left to send a good bye to you.

From all our scattered family
M.H. Beardslee

[Spring Term 1860]

Jan 2nd 1860

Dear distant friends,

\(^1\) “So the Fates decree”
Our vacation is drawing to a close, and our duty to you will soon compel us to a description of school matters, so by way of getting accustomed to the use of the pen, we will give you a little insight into our pleasant vocation times.

We had scarcely begun to rejoice in our freedom, when a disorderly Domestic Hall and house in general claimed our attention, and we had one of the busiest days we ever spent in the Seminary. It was not without its pleasures however, not the least of which was the assembling in the evening, to talk over and plan for our Christmas festivities — for we had determined beforehand to celebrate this day in good old fashioned style, and a tree had been agreed on as the pleasantest way of giving what presents we had to give. Monday evening was thought to be the best time, and it was curious to see how absolutely necessary it was for everyone to visit the stores either Saturday or Monday — to see too, how willing they all were to display their purchases, only now and then, very adroitly tucking a little parcel in a safe place under their shawl.

Whenever, during those days, we entered another's room, we felt a strong attraction towards the bureau drawers, and not unfrequently they were opened to give us a sight of some present — sly sights they all were, for only by the unfortunate opening of a door, they might be discovered to the wrong eyes. Perhaps in that time, no one wondered what was destined for her — sure we are no such thing was spoken of.

At last came the question, how the things were to be hung on the tree, without revealing the secrets — not quite so easy a thing to do, as in a family, where Santa Claus will not come no matter how much he is longed for until Sleep has come, and the eyes that must-not-see are closed. It was thought best to go singly into the sanctum of the Christmas saint, and we are sure, judging from the dimness of the light when we went in, no one could have been much wiser for what she saw there. The presents were distributed early next morning, with frequent exclamations such as "how good you were to think of me" — "this was just what I needed," etc.

So we had a pleasant Christmas time and we hope you as well as ourselves may enjoy many such. The other days have for the most part been given up to quiet rest, and we feel nearly ready to commence our work again.

Jan 7th [1860]

The young ladies came together again yesterday, seemingly happy to meet each other, and to be back at the Seminary. It was pleasant to hear them tell how they had enjoyed the holidays — how warmly their parents welcomed them on the day of their return — how rejoiced the little ones were, etc., etc. Now one, whom we heard relate just such a story, has been summoned home on account of the death of a little sister. The very day her sister left, her clothes caught fire accidentally, and before the flames could be extinguished, she was burned beyond recovery. We hope that this sore trial may not be without its good effects, both to her on whom it falls so heavily, and to all, teaching them how fleeting are all worldly things, and that it is our best wisdom to fix our heart’s affections only on Him who changes not.

Jan. 12th [1860]
When we tell you that yesterday was moving day with us, you will think “why, we know all about that” — but we very much doubt whether, in all your experience, you ever passed just such an one. It was the first one for most of our pupils, and a moving day it was, in every sense of the word. It was so much of a novelty that some commenced work on Tuesday as soon as their last recitation was over, and by yesterday morning the house looked much as we would imagine an inexperienced housekeeper’s might during her first cleaning — empty and unobstructed in the most out of the way places, and, just where room was most needed, filled with household goods heaped in confusion. If, during the whole year, she had regretted that the house was not more lavishly furnished, she would be ready now to sit down discouraged, thinking that all these displaced things must be put in order once more. So when our halls were filled with trunks, and band boxes,¹ and carpets, whoever succeeded in making their way around could read on many a face "how can we ever get our rooms arranged again?" Then came the assembling in the Chapel for the rooms to be assigned, and we waited anxiously to see how ready each would be to give up any preference she might have, if the general good required it. We think they gave good heed to the instructions they received and did well considering the newness of the trial, but the tears and disappointed looks showed they had not yet learned to deny themselves so cheerfully, as we hope they may. How much easier it would have been, had they before them the example of a large band, to whom such little self-denial had become a pleasure.²

One night has done much however, towards obviating the unpleasant feeling, and we are sure all are better satisfied than if they dwelt in the second story, with as thick a population as there would have been, had all the requests been granted.

Jan 14th [1860]

There came sad tidings from our Oxford friends today — they have been visited by fire³ and all their pleasant places are laid low. This seems a dark providence to us, one hard to understand, yet we are assured that our Father who metes out to all their portion, knows at all times what is best. We hope this will seem to make us more grateful for the kind protection we have so far received: certain we are, it will cause more vigilance in our nightly tours around the house. Indeed we have seen this effect already — for it has been suggested that one tour around is not sufficient, and the proposition is that some one be employed to watch. Should such an one be hired, her pastime is to be, scrubbing the halls! Perhaps some of our young ladies would for a time, most willingly be deprived of this their Wednesday's work, but we imagine even half a night's experience with a broom and mop around their doors would work surprising changes in their feelings. Do you ask if so great an innovation on Holyoke customs is to be allowed? We answer in our own private opinion, no! though it is yet to be officially decided.

Feb 24th [1860]

We hardly know how to tell you of our fast day, since words must give you so feeble an idea

¹ Hat boxes
² Since this is Lake Erie Seminary’s first year, there were no returning students to provide an example for the new students.
³ Western Female Seminary’s Seminary Hall was destroyed by fire January 14 1860, fortunately with no loss of life; a new building was erected that year.
how good a day it was. If, mingled with our longings for it, there was any lack of faith, if there were any misgivings lest any of our young ladies would not be disposed to profit by its privileges, God has in his own way reproved us for them all, and we feel the need of humble thankfulness. The notes of those who were Christians cheered us by their spirit — they were not only ready to observe the day, but had with us desired it for their own spiritual good and for the good of those who knew not the Lord Jesus.

Some, with whom we knew the Spirit had been striving, expressed the wish that this might be the birthday of their souls, and only five or six appeared indifferent. We met to pray that night with full hearts, confident a blessing was in store for us, still trembling lest for our unworthiness it might pass by. God did not so design, however, and we trust the day was blest to many a soul. The meetings were all well attended, and wherever the voice of prayer was heard, there seemed to be nearness of access to the mercy seat. All through the day there were groups interceding for impenitent roommates and friends. The one which elicited our warmest sympathy was that our old scholars 1 met to ask a blessing on the only two of their number who are yet out of the Ark of Safety. We trust our prayers were answered even before the day closed, for, as the different sections assembled in the evening, we were sure that some who were indifferent in the morning seemed subdued, and even ready to listen to such weak counsel as we could give them. We only hope the effect of the day may not pass away, and that we may yet see many of these dear ones gathered into the fold of the Good Shepherd.

Feb. 29th [1860]

We have been to a real bona fide sugar party today — just such an one as we should imagine our forefathers had in “the good old days of yore” — if indeed they had sugar parties then. Whether they did or not, we imitated their party customs in one respect at least — we went directly after dinner, and were safely housed again long before sundown. This rare treat had been promised the young ladies for several weeks, and when, in general exercises yesterday, the invitation was given out for each one to go and take her spoon, they were all as much delighted as they were amused. We all remember well how anxiously we have watched the dawning of a day that was to bring us some long-looked-for pleasure, and so can understand how sorely tried they must have been at the prospect of a rainy time.

And it did rain all the morning until noon, and even past noon right on without relenting towards the time we were to go. Then, if ever, we were prepared to be thankful for the invention of omnibuses and carriages, for by their aid we reached our kind friends’ house with very little inconvenience. As soon as shawls and bonnets could be disposed of, the kitchen proved a strong attraction, and it was amusing to see the long files, going, spoon in hand, to claim a portion from the huge kettle of boiling syrup. The entertainment provided an enlivenener of the tongue, and soon parlor and hall and porticoes were filled with the sound of pleasant chat. One would have thought a group of old friends had met after a long separation, rather than that we had spent three months under the same roof.

How many stories we did hear of similar occasions — of good times at the sugar bush, when all

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1 Returning students
the home people were there and, as the enthusiastic relaters said, "there was just snow enough on the ground to make wax so nice!" "Wax!" said a dozen voices "isn't that the best thing?" "I wish we could have some!" Just then word came that there was ice in the kitchen and that the "very best thing" could be made here too, so all readily adjourned thither.

It seemed strange that our drivers could not have been so well satisfied with a sight of our pleasure, as not to tire of the rain and chilly air. But they could not, and were disposed to hasten our return. We had a fine ride home, however, in spite of the good time shortened, and think we could not have enjoyed the day much better. If the saying that "blessings brighten as they take their flight" is a true one, this day may afford material for a more enthusiastic description than some that have been rehearsed in our hearing today.

March 2nd [1860]

Our cares had so much increased within the last two weeks, as reviews and examinations were drawing near, that we found it necessary to have additional help, and so yesterday Miss Emma Reed came to us. She entered upon her duties as teacher today, and we might tell you if she will excuse us of a most ludicrous mistake she made. She had been told that she was to have an Arithmetic class and the recitation room had been pointed out to her, so at the appointed time she was in her place. She was somewhat surprised at the size of her class, since she had heard it was but a small one, but supposing all was right she took their names and, this done, turned to one of the young ladies asking What is a unit? Now was their turn to be surprised for instead of preparing for questions on the fundamental principles of Arithmetic, they had been puzzling their brains over the conjugation of "amo" and the roots of verbs, and "why, this is a Latin class!" burst from a dozen voices at once; as the truth flashed upon her mind she quickly made her exit, remembering only, as she afterwards said, that as she passed out she saw Miss Smith apparently ready to take the seat she had left, and looking withal very much amused.

Friday March 30th [1860]

Yesterday was a most interesting day since we observed it as a fast, in accordance with a request from the young ladies. They were so well assured that the other had been blessed as a means of good to many, they were anxious to have it repeated and the question was often asked us, "Can we not have another before we separate?" Before we decided that it was best, Miss Sessions spoke of it in general exercises, and requested that all who would esteem it a privilege to have such a day should write her a note to that effect. When so many were anxious for it, and requested so earnestly that they might be particularly remembered, we felt at once that the question was decided. We are persuaded the day was one of much prayer and of heart searching among Christians, and one or two have already expressed the hope that then they first learned to love Him who was crucified. In the evening Miss Sessions invited those who hoped they had become Christians this year, together with those who were fully resolved to delay repentance no longer, to her room, and there were nineteen present. If all these should indeed be true lambs of the flock, what abundant cause would there be for gratitude.

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1 'Jack wax' is made by throwing hot maple syrup onto snow, turning it into a taffy-like candy that can be eaten with the fingers.

2 Harriet B. Smith (1838-1865), an 1859 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught Latin at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-64.
April 4th [1860]

The month so proverbial for showers has come, and with it, mild weather and green grass and greener moss. This last all seem inclined to enjoy, and the house is full of what the young ladies call grottoes. We think however this may be a wrong application of the word unless it may by a little stretch of imagination, be applied to quite a different thing from what I have supposed. Webster\(^1\) defines a grotto to be “an artificial cave intended for coolness and refreshment.” We have no need of such a thing, for as to coolness we have enough of that in the weather, and there is no time for such refreshment, as this is the proper time in which to refresh our minds with the truths learned during the year. Whatever cognomen may be given to these mossy collections, they are really pretty. They are diversified with every variety of hill and dale, and have always in some little nook a bright surface supposed to represent water, but in reality strongly reminding one of the tin circle.\(^2\) These would be lakes have often quite romantic banks which are ornamented by gaily dressed lads and lasses (China ones we mean) thus giving them something of a foreign air. We have been quite puzzled to decide what country was thus being rendered famous — the little people are dressed in such costumes as we had imagined the Arcadians\(^3\) wore, but their universal occupation seems to be fishing, which we believe was not peculiar to the people of poetry and song. Can any one help us out of our quandary by reconciling the apparent discrepancy?

Pretty as these are we shall not need them long, for our yard gives promise of abundant attraction soon. For two or three days there has been busy work around the house — load after load of turf has been brought for the back yard, and all the day long our ears have been greeted by the lively chat of Tommy and Pat as they were laying it. We could easily persuade ourselves that they enjoyed doing the work as well as we did seeing it done — they surely liked the praise that was so lavishly bestowed by those who had looked all winter on the barren sand. The work was finished this afternoon, and though it does not look as nicely as we could wish, we expect, when the growing time comes, we shall have a yard that will compete with any in the land.

Apr. 12th [1860]

Everything has passed off so quickly this term — one day has been so nearly the repetition of another in cares and duties and quiet pleasures that we can scarcely believe our own testimony when we say, examinations closed yesterday. We thought best, for this year at least, to vary the time-tried customs of South Hadley,\(^4\) and so the last two weeks were devoted to reviews. We imagine some were never so busy in their lives before — books were the constant companions of all, then, if never before. The young ladies studied while they were taking their exercise and while they were doing their domestic work, and some, who had manifested lack of inclination for study during the whole year, were so affected by the general influence that they even put books

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\(^{1}\) Noah Webster, Jr., whose *American Dictionary of the English Language* was a standard reference in the 19th century

\(^{2}\) A mirror made of tin

\(^{3}\) Arcadia was an area of ancient Greece idealized by Virgil and other poets as an idyllic paradise of simple peasants leading pastoral lives.

\(^{4}\) Metonym for Mount Holyoke Seminary, which is located at South Hadley, Massachusetts
under their pillows at night. What the effect of this was we do not know, or even if there was any effect, but we conclude it must have worked wonders for some poor terror-stricken schoolgirl, else it would not be in such universal good repute.

All this time conversation on common topics was at a discount, and in its stead we heard the comparative merits of Virgil and Nepos discussed, Astronomical facts, Rhetorical examples, etc. We had literary treats at all our meals too. If we could have had some "Autocrat of the breakfast table" to report for us, the public might have regaled themselves with some choice bits of literature, perhaps been entertained with greater certainty of hearing the truth than were some at our examination, who were assured that "a terrible resurrection occurred during the reign of _______," and at another time that "should anything occur to disturb the harmonious movement of the heavenly bodies a disastrous dissolution of the Union would inevitably take place. A mistake quite apropos if made in the hearing of some of our southern Senators and Representatives.

Good friends, do not straightway infer from this that our public examinations were not creditable to the success of the young ladies. On the contrary, we are sure each tried to do her very best and we think that was well, though we are aware we were not uninterested listeners. Can we say anything better than that everything went off in true Holyoke style? The requests which are so familiar to us all, that seen so simple and yet are so necessary for the general quiet of the house, were well observed and the house was quiet. What a contrast when soon after the last exercises of the last day, the omnibus was announced. Our visitors (for we had visitors — a whole Chapel full) were content to stand in groups and watch the departures. The charges and promises that are so abundant then, and which are to us like a more than twice-told tale, were interesting to them, either from their newness or because they brought back the memories of childhood, their "long time ago." They were interesting to us that they remained for they gave promise of such freedom from care as we enjoyed in the last vacation — the school girls long time ago.

[Summer Term 1860]

May 2nd [1860]

With our new term has commenced the summer arrangement of rules, and all are rejoicing in the additional freedom as something they did not at all expect. They seem inclined to make the most of it too, as far as rambles for wild flowers are concerned, and almost every evening the woods and even marshes for a considerable distance round are thoroughly explored. The two hundred flowers that must be analyzed and the few to be pressed seem to weigh heavily on the minds of the young botanists, so that it is hardly possible to create greater enthusiasm than to announce a new flower. The violets, spring beauties and the dandelions seem fully to appreciate this sore need, and up they came everywhere, sometimes surely at great inconvenience to themselves, but the others for the most part, show no pity and hide away just as usual.

Very few will escape unseen, we think, if all show as much perseverance as did two young ladies

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1 The Seminary’s Latin students would first study works by Cornelius Nepos, a Roman Historian who had a simple writing style, and then progress to works of the poet Virgil.
2 *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* was the title of a series of essays by Oliver Wendell Holmes.
one night last week. They left the Seminary soon after tea, determined to leave no spot on our own grounds unsearched, and having but little success there, they wandered on and on, sure the place before them was the best place yet, until night overtook them. Then they were surprised to find themselves far from the Seminary, and with no idea as to its direction — and still more so, we imagine, to hear from the first person they met that it was fully three miles back, and that by a strange road. Being without bonnets and shawls, they hardly dared stop to inquire the way, but coming to a place more kindly looking than the rest they called and found its inmates ready to bring them home. They have not told us the particulars of their ride, but it must have been a cool one. We think they richly earned the flowers they found and hope they counted well on both lists.

May 13th [1860]

If you could have seen our front yard as we did this morning, just then the sun fell for the first time on trees and shrubs that were literally dripping with dew, you could not have helped saying with us "how beautiful!" There is one new feature since we last looked on it, which we noticed particularly — the beautiful evergreens which were presented us by a gentleman in Cleveland, and which were set out yesterday. It gives the house a much more home like look to see them scattered about in groups of threes and fours, as if they might be having a real cozy chatty time.

There is only one thing to mar the beauty, and that is a row running the whole length of the house, trimmed into a stately conical shape. We always feel sorry to see such a mutilation, it must be so humiliating to be obliged to stand precisely upright in a breeze, when their more fortunate companions, that were allowed to grow just as they happened to, are tossing their branches about in every conceivable way. There is only one way to make amends that suggests itself now — that the inmates of the house visit each frequently, and that every inducement be held out to the birds to build nests in them. If these pitiable ones are among the hundred and fifty, we sincerely thank Mr. Case¹ for his donation, and would assure him that his memory will surely be evergreen in our hearts.

May 24th. [1860]

Today when one of us was showing Mr. Hawkes² some bird’s nests which have been built near the house — one in the balcony just over the parlor window — he remarked he wanted no better evidence that God smiled upon our work.

A bird's nest regarded in that light is something to rejoice over, but we have been granted far better evidence, for God has seen fit, this term again, to give us the influences of his Holy Spirit. Only a few have as yet dared to believe themselves forgiven, but among this number is the one of our Seniors for whom we have been so anxious, and in whose behalf so many prayers have

¹ William Case, a prominent businessman, politician and civic leader in Cleveland donated over 100 evergreens to Lake Erie Seminary (Cleveland Morning Leader, May 14, 1860 page 3); in the 1850s he began a campaign for planting shade and fruit trees and is credited with inspiring Cleveland’s nickname “Forest City.”

² Rev. Roswell Hawkes (or Hawks) was a Massachusetts minister who worked with Mary Lyon to raise funds to establish Mount Holyoke; he was also instrumental in raising funds for Lake Erie Female Seminary, and a regular visitor.
been offered. For nearly two years she has been wavering — sometimes almost ready to declare herself one of the redeemed, and again filled with doubts as to the reality of the great plan of redemption: but now in her own words — she “knows what it is to stand in the sunlight of God's truth, and feel that peace which passeth understanding.” How sweet to such an one must be the scripture — "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in Thee."¹ Now, when in a few weeks we shall send forth our first class, both followers of Christ, we shall have confidence that, God helping them, their lifelong work will be not to serve their own selfish ends, but to do the will of their Heavenly Father.

June 12th [1860]

There was a strange rumor about the halls this morning, running in this wise — that Miss Prescott² had told the baking circle to be careful in mixing the cake. Those that were washing glasses heard her say it, and they told the dish circle, and both together told all that chanced to enter the Domestic Hall, until the ominous fact spread through the length and breadth of the house. Surnises as to what such an order could mean, were numerous. They involved all possible and probable things, and some things that were not probable not even possible, and then the subject was laid aside to be discussed after general exercises, when perchance there would be more light. It was strange that, when they were all assembled, giving such a favorable time for revealing the secret, Miss Sessions could so calmly ask them to be a little more careful about doing their work in the work-room and a few more such unimportant things and then excuse them, no wiser on that one point than when they came in, but so it happened. They were not kept in suspense long, however, for the door bell soon announced the arrival of a few ladies and gentlemen who had been invited to take tea with the family. So it was nothing but our first tea party after all, and yet the stir it occasioned would almost remind one of the famous assembling that occurred

“In the good old colony times
When we lived under the king.”³

That wonder disposed of, all attention was turned to the row of white stones that had been placed either side of the walk to the gate. Such an unusual thing was sure to call forth the question “What are these for?” But the men that were sitting there did not seem much inclined to enlighten us, for whenever the question was asked they laughed slyly and gave an answer calculated rather to mystify than to make plain the mystery. It was finally concluded they might be for guides in a dark night or as one shrewdly guessed “on purpose to remind the teachers of the homes in New England and of the rocky highs of Holyoke.”

June 21st [1860]

Ever since warm weather came we have often been asked "Are we going to the Mountain this

¹ Isaiah 26:3
² Lucinda Tucker Prescott (1829-1904) taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-95 and in the early years was in charge of the Domestic Dept.
³ Reference to the Boston Tea Party, in which demonstrators threw a ship’s cargo of tea into Boston Harbor in protest of the Tea Act of 1773, a key action leading towards the Revolutionary War.
term?” – so, knowing it would gratify many, we departed from our usual Wednesday duties yesterday, and seventy of us spent the day where those who had been accustomed to mountain scenery were quite disposed to laugh at the idea of riding to the top, but they must have enjoyed the view as well as if they had clambered up steep, rocky places to get it, and the saving of strength for the day's rambling would be quite an item for some.

Soon after we arrived we were summoned to a table spread in a beautiful grove and which proved very attractive, either because it had been so tastefully ornamented with wreaths of oak leaves, or because the ride and exercise had helped to sharpen our appetites — then we wandered off in groups to explore the caves and search out the other curiosities. We went through dark passages without a light, and with a light, and visited rooms underground that might be attractive with day light to see then by, and room to stand up in, but which to us lost much of their beauty from the want of these very things. We saw the kitchen and bed-room of the "Old Man of the Mountain.” The old gentleman himself was absent, but we sang him a song and contributed largely to the echoes of his seclusion in other ways, before we reluctantly departed. Our next visit was to the "Grant's Causeway,” the largest of all the caves we believe. Whence it derived its name we know not, unless from the huge pile of rocks to be found in one place, every one of which is large enough to be a match for the giants we all used so firmly to believe in, in our younger days. We could scarcely tell you of all we saw or enjoyed, for the whole day was such a series of sight seeing and enjoyments as is refreshing in the midst of the busy time which the closing weeks of the summer term bring with them.

That busy time has come for us — the season for books and ready memories but for naught else — and this pen must be laid aside.

In behalf of the Seminary
M.H. Beardslee

Reports by Ellen M. Wright dated Oct 3 1860 – June 20 1861
Covering the Seminary’s first Anniversary (Commencement) and the fall, spring and summer terms of 1860/1861

Lake Erie Seminary
Painesville Ohio

Oct 3rd 1860

Dear Holyoke Friends,

October is rather a late month in which to give you an account of the closing of our summer terms, but the first anniversary of Lake Erie Seminary was an occurrence of so much importance, at least in our estimation, that we think the axiom "better later than never” will apply to an account of it. Any of us could have told you the story long ago, but as our last year’s journalist

1 Maria Hawley Beardslee (1834-1904), a graduate of Willoughby Seminary, taught at Lake Erie Seminary during the 1859-60 year; she later married Nathan Prescott, the brother of fellow teacher Lucinda Prescott.
has kept you informed of passing events without any care on our part, we did not think that any such duties might devolve upon us.

[First Anniversary (Commencement) 1860]

Anniversary\(^1\) was quite a new thing to most of our number, so it was not at all strange that the teachers were queried long beforehand concerning the doings of "Anniversary week," and as they replied to these questioners, their hearts almost misgave them, as they remembered the well drilled forces of "old scholars",\(^2\) who helped to bear the heat and burden of such days at Holyoke. But fears for the future were almost forgotten, when it was known that Miss Jessup\(^3\) intended to be with us; to know that she could be with us at this time more than counterbalanced the disappointment we had often felt at not seeing her before. The teachers were not the only ones interested in her arrival, for from the first, her name has been almost a household word among us, and we all welcomed her.

You all know how much there is to be attended to at Holyoke before Anniversary; well, it was just the same here — we would not talk so to any one but our mother and sisters — notes of invitation to be written; bills to be settled; company rooms to be arranged; compositions to be read and criticized; white dresses to receive finishing touches, etc., etc. This last item reminds us of the frequent injunctions of Miss Sessions against low necked dresses for that occasion, and the exclamations of the young ladies against prim looking high ones. It was not until Thursday that all realized the benefit of those directions. Then the uniformity of dress, and the absence of bare crimson necks and shoulders, were justly appreciated.

The Examinations began Tuesday afternoon, before a very pleasant company of visitors. About the middle of the afternoon the class in calisthenics went through with various figures, which to the uninitiated no doubt appeared very fine; but those who participated felt that they hardly did themselves justice; however, the next day's practicing, when all were arranged so prettily in white, was so gracefully accomplished as to call forth the remark from one of the room full of spectators that "he had never seen angels before." The success of the young ladies during examinations was scarcely less pleasing, and the music was pronounced almost as good as that at Holyoke. The hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul",\(^4\) sung to the notes of the song "When the swallows homeward fly"\(^5\) just after the beautiful conclusion of the examination in Evidences produced a fine effect.

Wednesday was an unpleasant day, yet, notwithstanding the heavy rain, our rooms were crowded. After the day's duties were over, the teachers met in Miss Sessions’ room to discuss the best place for the delivery of the address. Seats had been prepared in the beautiful grove just back of the Seminary, but the heavy rain of Wednesday afternoon and the still lowering sky seemed to forbid our venturing to meet there, so various plans were proposed and discussed.

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\(^1\) Lake Erie Seminary celebrated its first Anniversary (or commencement) July 17-19, 1860.
\(^2\) Returning students
\(^3\) Emily Jessup, Associate Principal at Mount Holyoke
\(^4\) 1740 hymn by Charles Wesley
\(^5\) Composed by Franz Wilhelm Abt
One was to go to the church. Now the churches are all nearly a mile from our building, and we could not think of having the school march down there through dust or mud as the case might be, so it was proposed carriages should be provided to convey us there. But we knew that the carriages would be nothing more nor less than long open omnibusses, in each of which so many young ladies would have to be placed, that the procession would be anything but beautiful or imposing. Then it was proposed to have the address in the Chapel, but the difficulties here were more numerous still: first, the room was too small to accommodate those who would come, and secondly, as the seats were arranged for examinations, the audience would be seated with their backs to the platform, not the most interesting position for listening to an address, so it would be necessary for them to be invited to vacate the Hall "en masse" till the seats could be arranged, in which case we should have no procession. It was finally agreed that we should wait till morning, when we could see whether the winds would be favorable or adverse. To our joy, the sky was unclouded, and the brightly shining sun had before ten o'clock dried the moisture entirely from the grass and leaves.

At an early hour our friends began to come, and, long before the examination in Butler¹ was completed, not only the Chapel but the parlors and halls were filled with visitors. By the way, we will whisper in your ear what Miss Jessup said of that examination — we would not talk so to any but our Mother and Sisters — she said she had scarcely heard it surpassed even at Holyoke, and expressed her approbation of all the exercises. We think a great deal of this because Miss Jessup said it.

Now what we write may perhaps appear ludicrous to you, to whom the same scenes are so familiar, but they were new to us, and we must tell you of them. The order of the procession having been given, the first division of the school, consisting of the four old scholars² from Holyoke and Oxford, retired to Room D, the singers to Room A, and the remaining scholars to Room B. The teachers then issued from Miss Sessions’ room and fell into the ranks ahead formed by the Trustees, Orator of the Day, etc. Then followed young ladies, after whom came ministers and their wives, guests of the Seminary, and patrons of the school, followed by the citizens generally. As the procession, preceded by the Silver Band of Painesville — the pride of the village — passed half way down the walk, turned, forming a right angle, and turned again toward the grove, the scene, so new and beautiful, excited in the minds of the spectators the most interesting emotions. To see such an assemblage of young ladies, the pride of fond parents’ hearts, and to think of the untried future before them, could but cause deep emotion, and many earnest prayers that those robes of white might be emblems of the purity of their lives.

The exercises in the grove were opened by prayer offered by President Sturtevant³ of Illinois College, after which followed the address by Rev. Henry M. Storrs⁴ of Cincinnati. The deep interest which the audience exhibited while listening to the address showed their appreciation of

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¹ Seniors were required to study Joseph Butler’s *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed* (1736) which provided arguments for justifying Christian belief.
² Students who had transferred from Mount Holyoke or Western Female Seminary in Oxford, Ohio.
³ Rev. Julian Monson Sturtevant was a founding professor and second president of Illinois College.
⁴ Henry M. Storrs, a Congregational minister known for his public speaking abilities; his father, Rev. Charles Storrs, was the first President of Western Reserve College.
his thoughts. It has since been published.¹

At the close of the address, Diplomas were given to the first graduates, our two Marys, Miss Burton,² and Miss Strong. President Hitchcock³ of Western Reserve College addressed them briefly, after which the choir arose and sang that very sweet anthem "How beautiful is Zion,"⁴ then, the benediction was pronounced, the procession marched back to the Seminary, and the company dispersed.

Invitations had been previously given to ministers and their wives, patrons, etc., to dine at the Seminary, which they did, and seemed to enjoy it, though they knew nothing of the feeling of relief which teachers and scholars enjoyed so much. Then came the partings, and then our great house was nearly empty.

By Monday, all the teachers had left excepting Miss Prescott, who remained in town for three weeks longer giving necessary directions concerning cleaning, painting, etc. And so our first year closed. God forgive us if we have not improved all the privileges we have enjoyed. We are thankful that He has smiled upon our efforts, and pray that the Lake Erie Seminary may realize all the high hopes of its founders.

[Fall Term 1860]

Miss Sessions returned three weeks before the opening of the present year, and found plenty of business to engage her attention until the gathering together again of all our scattered family. This year opened very pleasantly — it seemed so good to meet the familiar faces of our former pupils, and to notice their pleasure in returning. Last year all were "new scholars," and some time elapsed before they became wonted to their new scenes and duties. We wished very much that we could have Miss Beardslee with us again, but since the death of her mother, other duties have devolved upon her. Our number of teachers, however, is the same, for Miss Amelia Smead⁵ is with us.

And so we begin another year. May our Heavenly Father's blessing rest upon us.

Oct 6th [1860]

Father Gleason,⁶ so well known from his connection with Indian missions, visited us last

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² Mary Elizabeth Burton (1838-1924) would later teach at Lake Erie Seminary 1863-65.
³ Rev. Henry Lawrence Hitchcock was the third president of Western Reserve College 1855-71, and was a trustee of Lake Erie Seminary 1869-73; his brother Reuben was one of Lake Erie Seminary's founding fathers and a generous trustee.
⁴ By William Batchelder Bradbury
⁵ Ann Amelia Smead (1833-1920) graduated from Mount Holyoke in Lydia Sessions' class of 1856, and taught drawing and French at Lake Erie Seminary 1860-67
⁶ Rev. Anson Gleason was a Congregational minister from Connecticut who devoted much of his long career working with various Native American tribes. Since 1858 he had been working as the missionary to the "Six Nations" at the Cattaraugus Reservation in Erie County, New York.
evening, so instead of having our usual meetings we all assembled in the Chapel, and listened to his brief account of some of his experiences. He told of his first labors in the then distant West, and of the four timid pupils who hardly knew whether to trust themselves to the care of a white man or not; he told of the first lesson he gave them in music; how, after he had sung the line he wished them to learn several times, and asked them to repeat it with him; although they did not know one note, they carried four parts the first time. They afterwards learned to carry fewer parts, and make better harmony.

In speaking of the mental quickness of Indian children, he told about a little girl who attended his daughter's school upon the Indian Reservation in New York, and who heard him preach on Sabbath days. It happened that he one day preached from the text, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper,” and, among other things, said that one way in which sin was covered was by deceiving. Adam began the practice in the Garden of Eden, and it seems as though Satan, catching this idea, had stretched it all over the Earth, and down to the present time. The next day the little girl’s attention was attracted by a picture of Adam and Eve, and she, proud of her knowledge, said she remembered what the preacher said. She could tell how Adam's overshoes got stretched. "How?" asked her teacher. "Why," replied the dark skinned child, "Satan stole Adam's India rubber overshoes in the Garden of Eden, and wore them all around the world, and that’s the way they got stretched so.” You may be sure we all laughed heartily at this, and were very much interested in all that he said, for he told us much concerning the good work that has been done for the Indians.

After singing, and uniting with him in prayer, the young ladies gathered around the piano, to examine the specimens of bead work he had brought with him. They were very beautiful, much more so than the pieces we usually see; the mats, cushions, watch cases, etc. were sold readily.

When others had left, a few of the teachers gathered around Mr. Gleason to listen still longer to his good counsels. As he went away, he said, "Never be discouraged; the Savior is putting down long credit marks for you, and you'll know it some day.” Oh! May it indeed be that the Savior smiles upon us.

Oct 20th [1860]

We have again been favored with a visit from Missionaries. Mr. Williams\(^1\) and Mr. Pratt\(^2\) from Turkey addressed us for an hour Thursday afternoon. They told many interesting anecdotes illustrating the customs and character of the people among whom they labor.

Their evident enjoyment of their work and their genial good humor gave a very different idea of missionary life to one of our young ladies who had never seen such cheerful missionaries before,

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1 Rev. William Frederick Williams D.D was a Presbyterian minister had been serving at the missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in Beirut, Lebanon and in Mosul, Iraq, and would transfer to the Armenian mission in Mardin, Turkey later that year.

2 Rev. Andrew Tully Pratt M.D., trained in both theology and medicine, entered into missionary work for the ABCFM’s Armenian mission in Turkey, where for 20 years he preached and provided medical care, and became fluent in the language, writing a Turkish grammar for English speakers, a book on theology in Turkish, and was working on a Turkish translation of the Bible when he died.
and I doubt not but many among us thought that a missionarie’s life with all its hardships was one we might earnestly desire for ourselves.

Nov 3rd [1860]

This morning is a beautiful one, and we enjoy it more because of the dark days which have preceded it. Yesterday was a day of wind and rain, great black clouds came up so threateningly from the west, and the wind blew so furiously across the meadows and through the trees that we almost feared one of those dreadful tornadoes that have been so numerous this year. But we know that our Father rules the wind and storms, and will protect us from their rage, so we are happy trusting Him.

We are anticipating pleasant weather this month, as October has been unusually dark and stormy. We want these bright days to continue a little longer for we are anxious to have more of our late flowers blossom that we may finish some ornamental pieces we have begun. Are there ever times with you when every one seems seized with a desire to do the same thing? When certain kinds of fancy work are taken up by all? We occasionally have such times here. Last Summer term, the rage was for pine cone watch cases. This Fall, it has been for pressing flowers and arranging then in wreaths and bouquets to be placed in frames under glass. We have also wreaths of dried autumn leaves, though these are hardly as beautiful as the flowers. From our own grounds we obtain double Larkspurs, both pink, white and blue, and little violets who seem to have forgotten that their time for blooming is nearly over. The Chrysanthemums are just ready to open; we fear the snow will catch them if they do not open soon. Besides we have, all the time, in our rooms beautiful bouquets of Verbenas, Asters, Geraniums etc., from the gardens of our friends in town.

Nov 6th [1860]

When we awakened this morning the ground was covered with snow, the first we have seen this winter, and all day long, the great flakes have now and then been falling. Everything here has been very quiet of late, but the young ladies have conjectured a different state of things in the towns and villages to which they belong. Some of those most enthusiastic on the subject of Politics have taken the vote of the school and find eighty for Lincoln, twelve for Douglass, two for Breckinridge, and one for Bell. The "Wide Awakes" visited us last week, making a "Lincoln rail fence," as they came up the board walk and went back again. Notice of their coming was circulated a few moments before, and when they came in sight the whole building was illuminated, with the exception of a few rooms whose occupants thought it hardly honorable for them to smile with those whose principals they opposed. The display was beautiful on both sides. So much for the "Wide Awakes."

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1 Since women did not yet have the right to vote (and would not until 1920 in the U.S.), Lake Erie Seminary conducted its own in-house polls in election years; all of the students and teachers that year were from Northern States.

2 The “Wide Awakes” was a Northern political movement of young men that was cultivated by the Republican Party during the 1860 Presidential election; they typically marched wearing a military-style outfits and carrying torches.

3 Lincoln was popularly portrayed as “The Railsplitter” in his 1860 presidential campaign, referring to his rough-hewn origins as a farm boy.
Nov 12th [1860]

Your journalist must beg pardon for carelessness; perhaps practice will enable her sometime to bring all occurrences into the journal decently and in order. Two omissions have been made which, by your leave, will be introduced here.

A little while before Miss Jessup's arrival last summer term, it was noticed one day before dinner that the teachers were unusually happy, and whispers were circulated that some one had come, the whisperers knew not who, but "guessed" it must he some one from Holyoke, "because the teachers were so happy." So it was not at all strange that when all were assembled for dinner, there should be an involuntary glancing to No 1, where beside Miss Sessions, was a fine looking man of about sixty, who was soon found to be Dea Porter. Business, which had brought him through Painesville, soon called him away, yet his stay, though short, was exceeding pleasant — too pleasant to be omitted here.

The other omission was concerning some recreation evenings at the first of the term. The second Tuesday of the term was not a very pleasant one, and there appeared some signs of homesickness among the young ladies, so the teachers concluded to throw open the parlors, that the family might come together, and pass an hour in social chat, and so become better acquainted. Accordingly, at quarter past eight, we entered the drawing-room, which was tastefully arranged, and when well filled presented quite a cozy appearance. We have some fine musicians here, and with music for recreation, could scarcely fail to enjoy the evening. These pleasant gatherings have been continued occasionally through the term.

Nov 16th [1860] We are always glad to have pleasant Saturdays; ideas, as well as vegetation, seem to generate more rapidly under the influence of cheerful sunlight, than when clouds lower and rain drops fall.

We had a pleasant surprise on Thursday last. Miss Peabody took tea with us; her stay was short, yet it brought happy looks to many faces. The Oxford girls had many enquiries to make concerning their beloved Seminary, for you must know that since the fire, quite a number of young ladies have come from there to remain here until the second temple shall be built.

Nov 28th [1860]

Thanksgiving day, with all its pleasures is over. We hope that it was not merely a day of mirth, but that many heart felt thanks arose to the Giver of all our blessings.

We hope you enjoyed the day as well as we did; to be sure we missed the dear faces we knew were gathered at the old homestead, but next to being there, we felt it pleasant to be here.

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1 Deacon Andrew W. Porter was a successful Massachusetts businessman who was considered the ‘Father’ of Mount Holyoke, giving great personal wealth and attention in support of the institution for forty years.
2 Helen Peabody was the first Principal of Western Female Seminary; she and her staff were graduates of Mount Holyoke, as were the teachers at Lake Erie Seminary.
3 Western Female Seminary’s Seminary Hall was still being replaced after being destroyed by fire at the beginning of the year.
We began sundry preparations Tuesday eve, such as twining wreaths, cracking nuts, etc., and Wednesday were as busy as bees. Thursday was a pleasant day, we enjoyed the walk to church in the morning, everything was so quiet and pleasant. Mr. Bailey\textsuperscript{1} preached an excellent sermon on "To whom much is given, of him will much be required."\textsuperscript{2} Our only guests at dinner were Rev. Mr. Phelps\textsuperscript{3} and Hon. Mr. Blake,\textsuperscript{4} together with their wives. We would have been glad to have welcomed you here Thursday evening. As you entered the hall you would have seen the welcome "Good Evening," and just beyond the stairway, over the Reading room door the query, "What's the news?" The Drawing Room looked more pleasantly than ever, with its rails hung with beautiful paintings, while the mantles and tables were ornamented with vases of fresh flowers and crosses covered with moss and wreaths; but "the room" our Chapel was adorned more beautifully than ever before. Over the platform was the motto, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us,"\textsuperscript{5} and upon either side of the door were the two, "Nulla dies sine linea,"\textsuperscript{6} and "Verte est la seule noblesse."\textsuperscript{7} On one side of the room, just over the piano, wore the words "Give thanks and sing,"\textsuperscript{8} and upon the piano stood a beautiful harp with golden strings and frame covered with moss. The two rows of pillars through the center of the room were twined with evergreen wreaths, and loops of the same were suspended from pillar to pillar, crossing at right angles; one crossed just above the chandelier and from the other crossing depended a moss basket laden with fresh flowers. But what would have attracted your attention most were the genial faces of guests and pupils.

We have some warm friends here, and we love to see them in the Seminary. With pleasant conversation, entertaining music, and calisthenics, the evening passed away, and at its close we all united in singing an Anthem, after which Mr. Bailey conducted devotional exercises, when we bid our friends "good night." And now we resume our regular duties, thinking, once in a while, and saying, once in a while, "Three weeks more, and we shall be at home.”

Friday Dec. 19th [1860]

These quiet halls would seem really lonely tonight if the few teachers and pupils who remain had not determined to enjoy the vacation at all hazards.

General Exercise had scarcely closed yesterday, before Omnibusses were at the door to bear away those so eager to greet home friends again. We are glad that so many can spend this short vacation with their friends at home; they will spend much time in visiting, and those at the

\begin{thebibliography}{8}
\bibitem{1} Rev. Nathaniel P. Bailey, Painesville’s Presbyterian minister
\bibitem{2} Luke 12:48
\bibitem{3} Rev. Alanson Woodward Phelps (1812-1889), Painesville’s Episcopal minister, whose daughters Lydia, Eliza, and Mary were enrolled in Lake Erie Seminary that year; Rev. Phelps also served on Lake Erie Seminary’s board 1863-67.
\bibitem{4} Probably Harrison G. Blake, an attorney from Medina, Ohio, whose daughter Elizabeth was enrolled in Lake Erie Seminary that year.
\bibitem{5} Psalm 90:17
\bibitem{6} “No day without a line,” a quote attributed by Pliny the Elder to Apelles of Kos, a 4th century B.C. Greek painter who never let a day go by without working at his art.
\bibitem{7} “Virtue is the only nobility.”
\bibitem{8} From Isaac Watts’ 1719 hymn, “Sweet is the work, my God, my King, To praise thy Name, give thanks and sing.”
\end{thebibliography}
Seminary expect to accomplish great things in the way of sewing, reading and studying, before
the school again opens — we shall see. When we come together again, the merry time of
Christmas will be past, and a New Year will have dawned upon us, so, although it has not come,
we will breathe an earnest prayer that it may be to you and all this scattered family, a happy New
Year.

[Spring Term 1861]

Friday Jan 4th 1861

How strange it seems in writing the year, to place one where a cipher has so long been, but there
it is and there it must remain three hundred and sixty-five days, for the Old Year will never
return.

We were nearly all at home enjoying the vacation when the New Year came, but now we are
again gathered together in this our Seminary home. Most of our number returned yesterday, and
if we may judge by the hearty greetings and cheerful faces, all were glad to begin again the
routine of Seminary life. It was very pleasant after supper to smile in singing the hymn, "Savior
breathe an evening blessing"¹ and to listen to the beautiful words of the 27th Psalm.² This is the
day set apart by our President as a day of fasting and prayer.³ We could not observe it strictly as
it was the first day of the term, but we all united fervently in devotions this morning in singing
"God bless our native land." Miss Sessions read the ninth chapter of Daniel, and applied it
beautifully to our present state. A meeting was held in Room A. before supper in which fervent
prayers were offered that God would guide the affairs of this our nation, and lead us in paths of
righteousness and peace.

Jan 13th [1861]

Monday of this week was "fast day" and we found it very pleasant to observe it strictly as such.
Oh, how earnestly we wish that all our family were members of the family of God, yet forty of
this company of one hundred are still wanderers from the fold of the Good Shepherd. We have
tried to "wait patiently for the Lord,"⁴ yet our hope sometimes languishes as days weeks and
months go by, and the loved ones are still out of the Ark of Safety. Pray for us dear Christian
hearts, for we need your prayers. There has evidently been much thoughtfulness upon religious
subjects, but as yet only one has come boldly out upon the Lord's side.

Meetings for prayer were held during the day and in the evening all met in Sections. During the
week Miss Sessions has, in morning devotions, dwelt upon the different objects for prayer that

¹ 1820 hymn by James Edmeston to music by George C. Stebbins
² “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be
afraid?” (Webster Bible Translation)
³ Late in 1860 President James Buchanan issued a proclamation recommending that January 4, 1861 be observed as
a day of “Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer throughout the Union,” seeking to “restore the friendship and goodwill
which prevailed in former days between the people of the several states; and, above all, to save us from the horrors
of civil war and ‘blood-guiltiness’”; by February, however, seven slave states would secede to form the
Confederacy.
⁴ Psalms 27:14 and 37:7
Jan 16th [1861]

Were you ever visited by an Editorial Convention? We have been, and will tell you all about it.¹ Today, you know, is Wednesday, so of course the order of exercises for the morning was extra work: extra work in the rooms, extra work in the halls, extra work in the basement, and extra work in the wash-house; and by the time this was all finished, everything appeared as orderly, and clean, as everything usually does of a Wednesday noon; so we were not at all disconcerted by the appearance of two omnibus loads of Editorial fraternity, who had been invited by some one of the trustees to visit the Seminary when they took their trip to other places of note in the village. Mr. Wilcox² and Miss Sessions conducted them “up stairs, and down stairs, and in my lady’s chamber,” or rather I should say into some of the young ladies rooms, as they had expressed a desire to see the dimensions.

They were, of course, particularly interested in the basement, and were shown into closets for china, silver, tins, etc., rooms for bread, flour, milk, etc., apparatus for cooking, and everything else of interest to gentlemen, after which they were ushered into the Chapel, where, as some young ladies were at the piano, they listened to some music. Mr. Wilcox told these Editors something of the design of the Seminary, and some facts relating to its being founded, whereupon one of the members of the Press³ took it upon himself to make quite a speech to the impromptu company, after which they withdrew, and now we bid you, as we did them, a kind “good night.”

Jan 22nd [1861]

Have you any good skating places at Holyoke? And do you skate? If not, you may not be very much interested in an account of the new exercise sometimes practised here. A few weeks ago we had what some might call a January thaw, during which quite a miniature lake was formed in front of the Seminary grounds; this being frozen smoothly, made a very good sliding place, and was rather extensively used as such; but some of the young ladies owned skates, and had learned to stand upon them, so skating began to be practised forthwith; to be sure the skaters take some awkward positions on the ice, and make sundry unpremeditated moves, as might be expected of those standing on such slippery foundation — and then, after skating a while, they sometimes find it more difficult to move up and down stairs than before, but all these inconveniences are soon overcome, and the young ladies enter into the sport with such animation that they derive much more benefit from it than from walking.

¹ The Ninth Annual Convention of the Editors of Ohio met in Painesville on 16 Jan 1861, and visited Lake Erie Seminary and the local High School that day (Cleveland Morning Leader, 18 Jan 1861, page 1).
² Aaron Wilcox (1814-1881) was one of Lake Erie Seminary’s founders and secretary-treasurer of the trustees; his daughters Sarah and Juliet were enrolled in Lake Erie Seminary that year, and they and three more of Wilcox’s daughters would eventually graduate from Lake Erie Seminary.
³ Henry Slade, editor of the Cleveland Democrat.
Jan 28th [1861]

We have had a feast of fat things today, for we listened in General Exercise this afternoon to nothing less than the "Holyoke Journal." The teachers and pupils in that blessed place know very little of the feelings we cherish for them. We wish the record of our doings might afford them a tithe of the pleasure we derive from tidings from that "home where many children dwell." We are interested in everything there, we rejoice in every improvement made in the old home — and as the names of different dear ones are mentioned we wish we might be with them, and learn wisdom from their lips. We love "Mary Lyon" of blessed memory, we love all who have been with her and all who are connected with the school founded by her prayers and efforts, but we are not willing that even these should call her "our own Miss Lyon," if by that they mean to claim her to the exclusion of all others. As schools founded upon the plan originated by her, and conducted by her children, are springing up in different parts of our own land and even in lands beyond the sea, must it not truly be said Mary Lyon belongs to the world? Rejoicing with all those who have ever heard the name of Mary Lyon that the world has been blessed by her labors, we, for the present leave you.

Feb 6th 1861

Again we take our pen to give you kindly greetings — of which we always have an abundance—and to tell you what little there is transpiring here which will be of interest to you. Our journal seems to compare with yours, very much as the letters of a daughter, who has left the paternal roof for a home in some western wild, etc., with those she receives from home. You know [that], after some description has been given of her surroundings, she has not very much to send but messages of affection, unless perhaps some wild animal should bound past her door, or a painted Indian peer in upon her. We have not even these things to record (perhaps because we are not, like her, living in a wilderness.) Our cat and dog are the only animals that visit us unless, indeed, we except certain little thieving creatures who have a strange faculty of finding their way into cake cupboards, nut boxes etc., no matter how securely they are fastened. Ah! of these we have only too many. But meagre as our journal is, we hope you will take it as a token of affectionate remembrance.

And now, to look upon the other side of the picture, you can imagine just how pleasant it is for that lonely girl in the West to receive letters from home. The very envelope, before she has seen the contents, takes her in imagination back to the place from whence it was directed, and she sees the old house, the trees, the shrubs, just as she left them; she sees her father and mother, her brothers and sisters, and the kindly neighbors as they drop in for a short chat.

Oh yes! Just so each one of your missives to us is full of a thousand things not put down in black and white. When you mention Miss Chapin’s name or Miss Fisk’s, Miss Hopkins’, or any

1 Mary Lyon founded Mount Holyoke Seminary, the first women’s school to offer a curriculum equal to men’s colleges of the day.
2 Mary Chapin, Principal of Mount Holyoke
3 Fidelia Fisk, a Mount Holyoke alumna and teacher who had gone to do missionary work in Persia in the 1840s before returning to the U.S. in 1858.
others, can we not see them at once? Perhaps as they used to look when we gathered together in our blessed "recess meetings," or perhaps these names recall the whole "teacher band" ranged along the platform in the "Seminary Hall." That room too, looks just the same, only we know that some who used to sit as Juniors are now in places left vacant, and many are not there at all.

Feb 3th [1861]

We feel that we have very much to be thankful for, inasmuch as the lives of all who have been members of this school are as yet spared: The Angel of Death has hovered over many as young and loved as these, yet he has passed us by, and we thank Him who ruleth above, that we are "all, all, here," yet it is tremblingly that we offer the prayer, "Keep us, Oh Father, from sorrow and death," for one of our number is laid low. It is now three days since Miss Blake has been so sick; her disease is of the brain, and she talks incessantly of school companions, and school duties. Poor child; we can but leave her with "Him who doeth all things well."

Feb. 11th [1861]

As Miss Blake’s disease has progressed Miss Sessions has informed the young ladies of her condition each morning. When she said this morning "Miss Blake is better," a gleam of pleasure of thankfulness passed over all. Gratefully do we bow to Him who as yet saves us from the sorrow of witnessing the first death in our family circle, our happy home.

Feb 16th [1861]

We were all glad that our President elect happened, in his trip from Springfield to Washington, to pass from Cleveland through Painesville on Saturday. This morning was very pleasant, and as we were all on tiptoe, to see a "real true President of these United States," the young ladies seemed to be delighted to find that arrangements had been made, by which all who wished could ride to the Depot — "Ah! Then and there was hurrying to and fro" — and at nine, we were on our way in omnibusses, carriages, and buggies.

A large number of enthusiastic people from Painesville and vicinity had gathered around the platform which had been erected near the depot. We had not waited long before the expected train with its precious freight came in sight; the Band immediately struck up "Hail Columbia," which reminded the young ladies of fifteen minutes exercises in Room A, when various figures are gone through with, to the same piece not quite so elaborately performed. We remained in the carriages and from them had a fine view of Mr. Lincoln as he stepped from the car to the platform and addressed the assembly; and we were all pleased to find that he is much more

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1 Catherine Hopkins, an Associate Principal at Mount Holyoke
2 Reference to Charles Sprague’s popular 1837 poem “The Family Meeting,” whose speaker first states “We’re all—all here,” but then goes on to think of loved ones far away or no longer living.
3 Elizabeth Blake did recover, and the Feb. 18 journal entry reports she was now well enough to return home. Elizabeth did not return to Lake Erie Seminary, but later married and raised 5 children, two of whom attended Lake Erie Seminary.
4 Abraham Lincoln
5 Lord Byron’s Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, “The Night before Waterloo,” Canto III, Stanza XXIV.
6 A patriotic song that served as a de facto national anthem during the 19th century.
interesting in his appearance than his pictures represent him. Cheer after cheer arose as he left the platform and reentered the car; and as the Engine puffed and whistled and began to move off, the Band again played and we started for the Seminary, expressing many hopes that our President elect may reach Washington in safety, and be enabled to discharge faithfully all the duties that may devolve upon him. Upon reaching the Seminary, the young ladies went to work upon their compositions with redoubled energy, for it cannot be supposed that those who can find "sermons in stones" and “books in running brooks”¹ should take such a trip without adding something to their mental storehouses.

Feb 18th [1861]

Miss Blake has so nearly recovered that she started for home this morning with her mother.

Feb 22nd [1861]

The occupants of our Principal's room were quite startled last evening by a rapping at the window. Drawing up the curtain, there upon the sill was a poor shivering Robin — the window was raised, and in hopped the bird, glad enough to make friends with those who live in houses. It suffered itself to be caught, and was petted and caressed abundantly. After spending the night with us, Robin seemed impatient, so when the sun had arisen, the basket in which he had slept was opened and away he flew. We suspect he is one of a family of robins who built their nest last year on the porch just outside. The visit of this bird makes us think Spring is coming.

March 1st [1861]

It seems to us, sometimes, as though we in Seminaries like this might enjoy days of fasting and prayer more than others. It is pleasant to know the feelings and interests of those about us, it is pleasant to unite with others in praying for the influence of the Holy Spirit upon those we love who are still out of the Ark of God. Yesterday was a blessed day here — we hope its influence will be with us long. The prayer meetings in Room A. were well attended, and some, who before seemed carless, are now serious and thoughtful. Although there has been at no one time a general and marked revival of religion, we hope that some have from time to time "passed from death into life,"² and that there has been among Christians a continued growth in grace.

March 4th [1861]

Last evening we held our Monthly Concert, during which Miss Sessions read letters Miss Fisk³ had sent. Miss Fisk judged rightly that these missives from Persia so interesting to her would also be interesting to us. No one but can be touched by the sympathy between these children of the East and their Mother in Christ: bright stars may they be in the crown of her rejoicing. It is

¹ Shakespeare’s As You Like It, Act II Scene 1: “And this our life, exempt from public haunt, Finds tongues in trees, books in running brooks, Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”
² John 5:24
³ Fidelia Fisk was an 1839 graduate of Mount Holyoke who also taught there before leaving in 1843 to do missionary work in Persia, where she taught at a women’s seminary for 15 years before returning to the U.S. in 1858 in broken health.
very pleasant to us to hear of those missions in Persia, and especially to hear of Miss Fisk's school. All members of schools on the Holyoke plan seem like sisters. Oh, that we may all be sisters in Christ, members of the same holy family.

April 3rd [1861]

We are quite sure now that “Spring is coming,” for here before us are “wild flowers,” the first we have seen. Precious little things, they are the harbingers of multitudes which will soon be springing up in all these forests and over all these hills. Oh! They bring before us visions of happy companions, starting with baskets and botany boxes for Moody’s Hollow or the unfinished Railroad bridge, for the woods near the Lake or beyond the River. Yes — Spring is coming, and we are eager for its pleasures.

April 11th [1861]

Here we are quite through with the much dreaded Spring examinations, and you have not been told anything about them. Well — perhaps you'll not care — somehow it makes one tired just to hear about others doing a great deal, and being very tired. Now we are not absolutely certain that, should we tell you everything that has been done here each day for the past four weeks, you would draw long sighs and say "What martyrs they are to the cause of education,” though you might, and very likely would sigh that so much paper and ink had been wasted in telling you what you knew all about before. Examinations passed off very well; the music was not quite as good as it was last year, but we are going to atone for it by singing remarkably fine at Anniversary. The recitations of the Senior Class were particularly interesting. We feel very free tonight, for we have no school duties to perform for two weeks, and for a change we are glad.

[Summer Term 1861]

May 4th

Since our last record in the Journal, we have dispersed for vacation, have enjoyed every hour of that, have returned, and resumed our duties, and have passed safely through "moving day.” This is not very much for an ordinary Spring, but when taken in connection with all the exciting scenes through which we have passed, we think it is quite enough.

The war broke out while we were at home, and we could but be sharers in the general excitement. As we went away, Charlie, who, as he said, had been having his turn in conducting "General Exercise,” namely in carrying trunks — laughingly said he would keep the house from running away till we returned; but when we came back, we found the house here, to be sure, but Charlie had responded to his adopted country's call, and was then in the ranks of the army.

We willingly serve our country by getting along without him, although we miss him greatly. The first of May was moving day with us, as well as with many others. You can imagine just how our halls looked, just how anxious the young ladies were to know where they were to be located and

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1 A place just east of downtown Painesville where there is a high ridge along the Grand River
May 18th [1861]

A week and a half has passed since our flag was raised, and as yet you know nothing about it, so we will give you an account of the proceedings immediately. The young ladies returned so full of patriotism that they concluded they could study better under the stars and stripes; accordingly a subscription was taken sufficient to purchase a handsome flag, twenty-four feet in length, and sixteen in width, and Wednesday, May 8th was fixed as the day on which it should make its “debut.” The Painesville Band expressed their willingness to assist at the flag raising, and the Geauga Rifle Company, who were then encamped about a mile distant, were invited to be here. At three o’clock, they came — the Band first, playing “Hail Columbia,” then the soldiers, and after them a large number of citizens. They marched to the center of the yard where the Riflemen formed three sides of a hollow square, upon the outside of which stood the spectators. The young ladies then marched from the Seminary, singing “Red White and Blue,” and fell into ranks, forming the fourth side of the square. As the chorus of the verse was sung, “Three cheers for the Red White and Blue,” the flag appeared above the top of the roof, and was seen waving from the top of the staff. Then three rousing cheers were given by the company assembled, after which we sang the “Star Spangled Banner.” Interesting and patriotic speeches were then made by Judge Bissel, Rev Mr Bailey, Rev Mr Webster, and Capt Paine. We then sang the “Marseillaise,” after which the soldiers gave us “three times thrice and a tiger.”

The young ladies then marched into the house, and out on the balconies, after which the soldiers went through the various evolutions belonging to their drill, to the amusement of all and especially of those who had never seen anything of military life before. Parts of the Zouave drill were particularly entertaining. The soldiers then marched in front of the balconies, and at the order “right about face” wheeled towards the building, and gave “three times three” for inmates of Lake Erie Seminary, and marched away to the music of the band.

We had no thoughts beforehand of making it so public an affair, but it passed off very pleasantly. It was estimated that there were about a thousand persons present. Our flag waves beautifully in

2 Judge Benjamin James Bissell, a Painesville lawyer who had served in the State legislature in the 1830s-40s and had been Joseph Smith’s legal counsel when Smith’s Mormon community moved to Kirtland, Ohio in the early 1830’s.
3 Rev. Silas Barnes Webster, Painesville’s Baptist minister.
5 A set of organized cheers followed by the ‘roar’ of the crowd — the ‘tiger’.
6 A marching drill popularized in the United States by Elmer Ellsworth’s “Zouave Cadets” drill company, based on the Zouave infantry of French North Africa; Zouave regiments were formed by both sides during the Civil War.
the breeze. We are too choice of it to let “nightly dews baptize it,” although the “early rays of the morning kiss it.”

May 6th [1861]

We think the patriotism of the members of our family is of the right stamp, for it has induced them to work for the soldiers. They procured linen for Havelock caps\(^1\) and yesterday and today have been very busy making them. Over one hundred are now ready to send. Many of them have mottoes written or marked upon them, as, "Our flag, defend it to the last.” "We honor the brave.” "Having for a helmet the hope of salvation,” and others equally good. These are for the "Geauga Riflemen,” who are now stationed at Camp Goddard near Zanesville.

June 4th [1861]

A nation is today mourning the loss of one of her great men, and we sympathize in the common feeling. Miss Sessions announced in General Exercise the death of Hon. Stephen A. Douglass.\(^2\) We cannot repress the sad thought that this Statesman who has thus early closed a brilliant career has been called unprepared before the bar of God. Our flag draped in mourning hangs at half mast.

June 5th [1861]

"Who came in the omnibus so early this morning?” was asked immediately after breakfast, but for a while in vain, the questioners being told to "guess” who was here from South Hadley\(^3\). Various persons were mentioned whom the guessers seemed to think ought to be here — and very soon they had named the right one. We were all glad to see Miss Hattie Sessions,\(^4\) and are enjoying her visit vastly.

June 20th [1861]

We took our annual trip to Little Mountain yesterday, and a fine day we had of it, too. The morning was neither too warm nor too cool, but pleasant every way. Miss Sessions had taken the names of those who wished to go on Tuesday in General Exercise, and immediately after the “extra work” was done, and provisions for our picnic prepared. The next morning the work was finished nicely and at half past eight the carriages were here, and in a few moments we were on our way. We went out upon the “Ridge road” which passes through one of the pleasantest sections of country anywhere about here. Of course we all walked up “the mountain,” which

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1 Linen covers for military caps with a long tail in the back to protect the wearer’s neck from the sun. These had been designed to protect fighters in hot, arid climates from sunstroke, however, and Civil War soldiers found them uncomfortable to wear since they kept air from circulating to cool their necks, and used them instead for coffee strainers, dishcloths, gun patches, and as bags for foraging.

2 Stephen Douglass was the Illinois Democrat who had just lost the presidential election to Lincoln; he is remembered now for promoting the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which allowed slavery in new territories (and which personally benefitted Douglass’ business ventures), and for the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858.

3 Metonym for Mount Holyoke Seminary, which is located at South Hadley, Massachusetts

4 Harriet E. Sessions, Principal Lydia Sessions’ cousin and Mount Holyoke classmate, who taught at Mount Holyoke 1858-61 and 1863-72
however was no Herculean task, as it is only a little mountain; in fact it is only a hill, not reaching the elevation which distinguishes a mountain from a hill by more than a thousand feet.¹

The ascent is very gradual, but when once at the top we begin to realize that we are somewhat elevated. We have a fine view of Lake Erie, ten miles distant, and to the right lie the villages of Painesville and Mentor, almost hidden in their wealth of shade trees, and to the left, forests and cultivated trees alternate.

After rambling a little, preparations were commenced for dinner, tables were placed under the old pines, and trimmed with wreaths of leaves. Wreaths were also used to adorn the strawberry boxes, and a pyramid of green arose from the center of the table, which was surmounted by a beautiful bouquet of flowers. Mr Bailey² and his family were on the mountain, and were invited to partake of our forest feast. As his voice was lifted in asking God’s blessing to rest upon us, we felt that He who inhabiteth Eternity was there in that forest temple. We enjoyed the repast for vigorous exercise had given us keen appetites.

Dinner being over, away we started for the caves. In passing along we crossed deep fissures in the rocks, whose edges were covered with moss, and from whose unknown recesses issued a cold blue vapor. Spring cave was reached first, into which having lighted our candles we passed; it is not large, but very dark, and in some places narrow — the timid ones clung closely to the hands and even dresses of those to whom the place had become familiar. In one corner of this opening in the rocks is a beautiful spring, clear as glass — we made cups of our hands and tested its quality. Coming safely out of this, all wanted to explore the next cave, the passage to which is long and narrow. After going through this one, we can look through an opening and see great trees growing thirty feet above. We then passed along into another dark cave through which a little brook murmurs. At the end of this one can step up on the rocks, and look over into a deep pool of water. We did not explore further, but leaving these, we wended our way to the dry caves, or rather the wide open fissures in the rocks.

On our way there we had the fortune to spy two large black snakes; immediately upon seeing us, they "dragged their slow lengths along," and slid off the rocks into the cracks below. We lost sight of one directly, but the other moved around slowly while we from above watched its motions and tried to kill it; its eyes looked very ugly at these attempts of ours, and instead of remaining there until we could get stones and finish our undertaking, it crawled away. We wanted to kill it, for we were very brave, and future visitors might be frightened at such a sight. We had no fear of seeing others, for snakes are rare on the Mountain. We did not descend into those fissures until we had passed some distance beyond his snakeship’s retreat, but when once down we forgot such things in the peculiarities of the place. Where we went down, a tree seemed to be growing on the bare rock, and, as if it could not find nourishment enough there, it had sent a great root directly down, from the rock some twelve or fifteen feet, where it buried itself in the earth.

We passed through a small crevice into a large cave, and seated ourselves upon the large rocks

¹ In the 19th century hills at least 1000 feet above sea level were considered mountains; Little Mountain’s elevation is actually 1220 feet.
² Rev. Nathaniel P. Bailey, Painesville’s Presbyterian minister
that lay around. After talking and singing and shouting as only girls let loose from school can
talk and sing and shout, we discovered that a little bird had chosen this as its dwelling place and
was sitting on its nest in a cleft of the rocks amid all our tumult. Oh, it was grand to be in these
old caves — and we sang to our hearts’ content. After exhausting the lighter melodies we joined
heart and soul in sacred music. As the tones of "Come with me" and Federal St. arose and died
away, we thought of caves where Scotch Covenanters1 met in the days of their persecution. Five
o'clock, the time for starting, came just when we were ready for it, and at half past six we were
again at the Sem. With this account we bid you an affectionate good bye.

In behalf of the Seminary,
Ellen M. Wright

Reports by Sarah Dorr2 dated Oct 10 1861 – Dec 12 1862
Covering the fall 1861 term through the fall 1862 term

[Fall Term 1861]

L.E.F. Seminary

Oct 10th 1861

Dear Friends at the East and West:

Can you take time to read or be interested in the daily occurrences of our quiet school life, when
such strange unheard of events are transpiring all about us? When the sound of war is heard
throughout all our land, when our brothers are rushing to the conflict, when the news of battle
and defeat fill the heart with dismay, when there is so much in all our daily journals of thrilling
interest: at such a time, to send you a few dry items concerning our quiet life, seems almost an
intrusion, but we will promise not to trespass very long upon your time and patience,
remembering Miss Jessup’s3 injunction “to be brief and concise.” Our gathering together at the
beginning of this new school year is marked by nothing of peculiar interest. Miss Smith4 did not
return until after the first three weeks had passed. Our number is now complete.

We have long anticipated the meeting of the American Board at Cleveland,5 and hoped to see
many of our Eastern friends here at that time, and Miss Sessions so arranged it, that all the
Teachers could have the privilege of attending some part of the time. The young ladies also had

1 Presbyterian groups in 17th century Scotland which suffered religious persecution from King Charles I
2 Sarah E. Dorr (1836-1915), an 1858 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-1866.
3 Emily Jessup, Associate Principal at Mount Holyoke
4 Harriet B. Smith (1838-1865), Lake Erie Seminary’s Latin teacher
5 A meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), held in Cleveland on Oct. 1,
1861. This was the largest and most important American missionary organization in the 19th century, and drew its
members from Presbyterian, Congregational, and German Reformed churches. Mary Lyon was a strong supporter of
the missionary movement, and made Mount Holyoke a training ground for women wishing to pursue careers as
missionaries; this interest was shared by the teachers at Lake Erie Seminary.
permission to attend. Tuesday evening and Wednesday, Dr. Perkins\(^1\) and Dr. Wright\(^2\) from the Nestorian mission in Persia interested the people very much, also Mr. Lindley\(^3\) of Africa. One gentleman spoke at length of the necessity of having more funds to carry on successfully missionary operations — he said the reason there was not a larger amount given was not because Christians were not benevolent, but because there was a lack of systematic giving. Another gentleman in the congregation proposed a plan, which was something like this. If out of the great number who were regular contributors to the American Board, the wealthier classes should pledge themselves to give ten cents per week, those in moderate circumstances but five and so down to one cent, none so poor but that they could lay by one cent per week for the Lord, he thought if this plan was carried, it would greatly increase the amount of funds, and so facilitate their operations. This plan was highly approved of, and it was proposed that Ministers form such a plan for their own churches, and Christians for their families. There were many things that occurred during the meeting of great interest, but you have probably read of them in the published reports! We all felt blessed by these excellent meetings and returned to our labors feeling more than ever, that it was an unspeakable privilege to be permitted to labor for the same great object, for which those venerable devoted Christians have so long lived and labored.

The people of Cleveland contributed very much to the happiness and comfort of those in attendance, by their kindness and hospitality. It was voted to hold the next meeting at Springfield Mass. To our great delight we found our good friends Dea and Mrs Porter\(^4\) there, with a promise from them to stop and visit us on their return — we hastened home to bear the good news to those there!

Oct 12t [1861]

This week has been one of great pleasure to us, as we have had quite a reunion of Holyoke friends. We first welcomed our dear Miss Jessup, then came Dea and Mrs Porter—afterward, Mrs Blakely\(^5\) (formerly Miss Sykes) with her husband and little daughter, also Mrs. Austin from Akron, a sister of Miss Stearns\(^6\) and Miss Lizzie Adams,\(^7\) both graduates of Holyoke. How glad we were to have them here! We wanted them to be reminded by what they saw about them "of that home by love made happy where so many children dwell,” and where they and we dwelt a long time ago. Miss Sykes(for we cannot call her Mrs Blakeley) seemed just as she used to,

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\(^1\) Justin Perkins was a Presbyterian minister who established a mission for members of the Assyrian Church of the East (also known as Nestorian Christians) in Oroomia, Persia (now Urmia, Iran) in the 1830’s, and developed into a scholar of the local Syriac language, publishing scores of writings and translations in Syriac.

\(^2\) Austin Hazen Wright was a graduate of Dartmouth College who served as a medical missionary at Perkins’s mission from 1831 to 1863.

\(^3\) Daniel Lindley, a graduate of Ohio University (which his father founded), became a Presbyterian minister and was sent by the ABCFM as a missionary to South Africa in 1834. He preached to both the Boer farmers and the Zulus, eventually establishing a mission in Inanda.

\(^4\) Deacon Andrew W. Porter (1795-1887) was a successful Massachusetts businessman who was considered the ‘Father’ of Mount Holyoke.

\(^5\) Gertrude Sykes (1832-1916), an 1853 Mount Holyoke graduate who became a teacher there until her marriage to Rev. Quincy Blakely in 1858.

\(^6\) Abigail Selah Stearns (b.1827), wife of Lorenzo Adams, who graduated from Mount Holyoke with her sister Mary Frances Stearns (1833-1872) in 1853; Mary taught at Mount Holyoke 1857-59 before marrying Rev. Augustine Root in 1860.

\(^7\) Elizabeth Adams (1832-1920) graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1853.
when she went about doing good, and ministering to the needs of the sick at the Seminary, and by her kindness gained many friends—Ellen is a playful, good humored child, and has, strange as it may seem, has had a large share of her Parents’ affection.

They all left on the afternoon train, excepting Dea and Mrs Porter, who spent the night with us, and left on the morning train at eleven. Before they left, we invited them into Miss Sessions’ room to dine. It was a small table, but good people sat around it, Mr and Mrs Hawks on one side, Mrs Porter and Miss Jessup on the other, Dea Porter at the head, and Miss Sessions sat down to serve them. We heard them say occasionally, “How much this does remind us of Holyoke.” That was enough, we knew then, that they realized it. We reluctantly bade them “good bye,” though they bestowed upon us many good wishes for the Seminary. It will not be selfish, if we wish that these good people would love our Seminary as they do that one that has already so many friends.

Dr Perkins called to see Miss Jessup this morning. We were quite overjoyed at the thought of having a long visit from him, thought he world tell us about his long and interesting work in Persia, and impart a new impulse to the missionary spirit among our young ladies. How disappointed we were to find him leaving after a call of half an hour! We are glad to keep Miss Jessup with us a little longer, and should only be more than happy to have her remain always. It is such a privilege to sit down and hear her words of wisdom and counsel. She does not know how much she encourages us, how she lifts the heavy burdens from our hearts, how she makes us feel happy in our work, and enlist all our sympathies for her in her suffering. It seems to us one of God's mysterious providences, as another has said, "that one whose hands were always uplifted for Israel's prevailing should now be helpless,” and her whose feet were always busy in ministering unto others, should now be ministered unto, but so hath God willed, and her cheerful, patient spirit is continually speaking to all about her of that submission, which has found a place in her heart. She consented to speak in our morning Devotions; what she said was very excellent. She speaks with all the animation of former years. As we came out of Chapel we heard one of the girls remark, "I don't wonder now that all Holyoke people love Miss Jessup so well.” We hope that the warmer climate of Southern Ohio will prove beneficial to her impaired health. Although we are very unwilling to let her go, fooling as children sometimes say, "that we have the best right to her.”

Oct 28th [1861]

It seems to be our misfortune to lose our journalist every year. Miss Beardslee left us the first year, now again Miss Wright has gone. We have had some misgivings about keeping any journal this year, thinking these Providences an indication in that way. Some of us had the pleasure of attending Miss Wright's 'wedding last week. We obtained a double carriage and horses and
drove to Tallmadge, her place of residence, about fifty miles distant from here. The first part of our drive was very delightful, it being the pleasantest of October days, but as we approached Hudson, toward the going down of the sun, it suddenly grew very dark, and commenced raining. Soon it became so dark that we could not discover the street and knew not whither we were going! Imagine our consternation, six miles from our place of destination! Unacquainted with the roads! Thick darkness all about us, and the rain pouring in torrents! But our horses were kind and steady, and, having greater confidence in their powers of vision than our own, we let them take their own way. At length, to our great joy, we saw the lights of the village gleam through the mist and rain, and, still happier, when we found we were not "too late" for the marriage ceremony. We saw our Nellie Wright a moment before she became Mrs Frank Nesbit! And now, she who has so often brought happiness and sunlight to our rooms, has gone to perform the same mission in another home of which she is a part! We returned the next day, grateful for our safe deliverance from the fearful storm of the night before.

Nov 6th [1861]

Dr. Seymour called last week to see if we were willing to do anything for the relief of the soldiers. We pledged seventy pairs of socks. The girls entered into the plan heartily, and each was ready to knit her pair. We have procured the yarn, and last night the girls came down to Miss Sessions’ room to wind it. It wasn't really a merry time, for we couldn't help thinking how many poor weary worn feet would find a covering under this yarn. Today it has been knitting at domestic work, knitting at recitations, knitting at table, knitting and walking, knitting and reading, knitting everywhere, no moments unimproved! We shall send them, when finished, to the Ohio 7th Regiment, who went from this vicinity. Many of the young ladies have brothers in the army for whom they feel the greatest anxiety.

Last Sabbath evening we had Monthly Concert. Miss Sessions gave the young ladies an account of the meeting of the American Board at Cleveland; she told them of the plan proposed for contributing weekly for Missions, and asked them if it wouldn't be pleasant to adopt such a plan here, and told them they would have an opportunity of expressing their feelings in regard to it, next day in Sections.

Today each Section Teacher took a list of the names of those belonging to her Section to the exercise and passed it around asking, each one to place opposite her name the amount she would like to give each week. Everyone put down something, many five cents, others less: We find by pursuing this plan the amount will be greatly increased from last year.

Nov 23rd [1861]

We have commenced our preparations for Thanksgiving earlier than usual this year, that we might have them all finished by Thursday, so that that day might not be wholly given to care and labor, but in it, some quiet hours could be found wherein we could remember all His benefits, and be grateful for "the crown of tender mercies" He hath so abundantly bestowed upon us, thus

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1 Nathan Perkins Seymour was chairman of the classics department at Western Reserve College in Hudson, Ohio from 1840 to 1870, and as an emeritus professor continued to lecture at several local colleges, including Lake Erie Seminary.
far, in the year.

Nov 25th [1861]

Preparations began in good earnest today. After General Exercises a large number repaired to No. 10 to make mottoes, another large company to Room D to twine evergreens, a third party to the Domestic Hall, where Miss Prescott,1 with all things ready for the work, assigned a portion to each. The girls are very happy in this kind of work, and seem much interested in all our plans. This willingness on their part makes the heaviest burdens light and pleasant to us all.

Nov 30th [1861]

Shall I tell you something more of our Ancient Anniversary Day now that it has passed? The principal part of the trimming was in the Chapel: as before the pillars were twined with garlands and festooned with the same; upon the right side, high on the wall we suspended "the stars and stripes" over which was the motto "Brothers defend it to the last"; on the left side, this motto, "Ora et Labora, Fidelis ad mortem;"² on one side of the platform was a large cross, over which was the motto, "Crux est mihi anchora;"³ on the other side, "Forget not all His benefits;" over the entrance "Let this be our motto, In God is our trust." The company assembled at an early hour, and after visiting awhile in the Parlors, went to the Chapel, where they were greeted by two Tableaux, one the Goddess of Liberty, pointing toward the flag, another representing Night and Morning; after chatting here awhile and looking at some curiosities arranged for the room, they were invited to the Dining Hall to partake of refreshments, after which we repaired again to the Parlors and Chapel, and were soon all invited to unite in our evening Devotions.

Dec 18th [1861]

For many days, happy hearts have been speaking through bright eyes; it must be something in the future that occasions this; now and then the soft low whispers come to us, along in the still halls. Tomorrow –soon – home. Ah! That last word tells all the secret of this gladness. If you had been in the dining hall tonight and heard the uncontrolled bursts of joy coming from expectant young hearts, you would have guessed at once that vacation was just at hand: and true it is. Tomorrow will be the last recitation day of the term. How welcome the rest will be to us all.

December 19th [1861]

In Devotions this morning there seemed to be an expression of sad thoughtfulness on every face. The truth for the first time seemed to come to them, that the world was just before them, and they about to step out into its conflicts and tumults to meet its temptations, to withstand its allurements, and although for a short time, yet some hearts feared and trembled lest, in an evil hour, they should not stand firm for Jesus. With firmness Miss Sessions commended them all to our Father’s care and guidance. The Teachers expressed fear lest we should not have good

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1 Lucinda Tucker Prescott (1829-1904) taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-95; she was in charge of the Domestic Dept. and over the years taught Botany, Astronomy, Chemistry, and German.
2 “Pray and work, Faithful till death”
3 “The Cross is my anchor”
recitations to-day, but tonight as we gathered in Miss Sessions’ room to talk over the events of the day, to our surprise every Teacher brought a good report from her classes. All had good lessons, were faithful to the last. How pleasant to have this remembrance of the closing day of the term.

Dec 20th [1861]

The girls have all gone, excepting the four who remain with us during vacation. The whole number who have gone today is not more then used to go in the early stage from South Hadley, but then our good Mother numbers her family by fifties and hundreds, while her second daughter can only count her tens. Still we despise not the day of small things "peradventure, the little one may become a thousand." The Teachers all remain here during vacation; our eyes turn loyally, wistfully toward our New England homes, but the way is long and the time short, so we "tarry by the stuff." Miss Beardslee, one of the former teachers, joins our company during these two weeks. She is a very welcome guest, and by her cheerful words and ways helps to make our time pass pleasantly away.

[Spring Term 1862]

Jan 2nd

The girls are coming back to us to-day, not much benefitted, we fear, by the two weeks’ vacation. Many have severe colds, sore throats, as the result of the exposure to which they have been unaccustomed before going home. We begin to feel quite sure that it is not a good time for vacation during the holidays! The constant round of parties and holiday amusements are not conducive to their health, and they then come back to us not as well as they went out.

Miss Smead does not return this term but goes to Massachusetts to spend the Winter; Miss Lydia Phelps comes into school this term as Teacher of Music. She is from last year's graduating class and promises to be a very fine teacher of music.

Jar 7th [1862]

Yesterday was fast day, being the first Monday in January: "We laid aside our usual duties for

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1 Metonym for Mount Holyoke Seminary, which is located at South Hadley, Massachusetts.
2 Enrollment sank below 70 for the 1861/62 school year, in response to the onset of the Civil War; the next year’s enrollment increased to nearly 100.
3 Isaiah 60:22
4 I Samuel 30:24
5 Painesville resident Maria Hawley Beardslee (1834-1904), a graduate of Willoughby Seminary, taught at Lake Erie Seminary during the 1859-60 year; in 1863 she married Nathan Prescott, the brother of fellow teacher Lucinda Prescott.
6 Ann Amelia Smead (1833-1920) graduated from Mount Holyoke in Principal Lydia Sessions’ class of 1856, and taught drawing and French at Lake Erie Seminary 1860-67.
7 Lydia Emma Phelps (1842-1916), daughter of Painesville’s Episcopal minister, graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1861 and taught there 1862-63 before marrying Linden Husted Morehouse, a commission merchant, and raising six children.
the religious observance of that day: quite a number of the girls were tardy several days in returning, and so the day did not seem as pleasant as it would have done had all the family been together, yet it proved a blessing to us, in the strengthening of Christian hearts, in the receiving of covenant vows, and in the forming of new resolutions for a truer and better life during the new year before us. Miss Sessions thought the Senior Class seemed especially quickened and blessed by this day of prayer.

Feb 18th [1862]

How busy the wires have been all over the land today, spreading the glorious news of the victory at Fort Donaldson. What joy it sends through every Northern loyal heart! How it strengthens our courage, and renews the confidence of the people. God has surely undertaken for us, our cause must prevail, and all the praise shall be given to Him. The prospect is brightening, some rays of light are already gleaning through the darkness, and we will rejoice. In our quiet village the cannon has kept up its jubilant roar all day. The distant hills have caught up the echo: the deep near water have murmured out their response. We also have tried to express our sympathy in the common joy, simply by unfurling the flag to the breeze. In a letter from Miss Esty, one of our former Teachers, who resides in Illinois, she says, "every school district in the state was represented in that battle." All glory to the brave sons of Illinois who fought so well.

Feb 26th [1862]

We are drawing near to our second day of prayer: Will Christian hearts everywhere respond to this call to prayer as cheerfully and willingly as they have ever done before? Or will the present exciting news of battle and victory so engage the thought and feelings that but few shall keep this day as sacred unto God!

It seems to have been forgotten in this place, as no notice was given in any of the churches last Sabbath of even a prayer meeting on that day! We, in our quiet home, welcome its return, we look forward with hope and tremblingly fear lest, by our want of faith, we may not receive the blessing we need, but we take courage as we remember how God has manifested his willingness to bless us on other days of prayer. A prayer meeting was appointed in Room A this afternoon at 3 o’clock. A large number were present, mostly Christians. The burden of every prayer seemed to be that the Holy Spirit, whose absence we have so long mourned, might come and be our abiding Guest.

Feb 28th [1862]

Yesterday was a still and solemn day, all the prayer meetings were well filled, Christian hearts seemed subdued and earnest, and among the impenitent ones, some thoughtful countenances and tearful eyes told us plainly of troubled hearts. Mr Bailey2 preached to us in Chapel in the

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1 The Battle of Fort Donelson took place Feb 12-16, 1862; the Union Army’s capture of this Confederate fort on the Kentucky-Tennessee border opened the Cumberland River to serve as an important avenue for the invasion of the South.
2 Rev. Nathaniel P. Bailey, Painesville’s Presbyterian minister
afternoon from the words "Take up thy cross and follow me." It was an earnest appeal to Christians: but we wished before he closed that he had said a few words to those who are asking the way to Christ. The meetings in the evening were solemn, and particularly the one in Parlor A, appointed for those who have recently become Christians and also for those who have fully determined to give that subject their chief attention. Quite a number were present; some, whom we least expected, were found there as penitents. So this precious day closed, and as we sat down in our rooms at night after all was still to review the closing day, surely our hearts exclaimed, "it has been a good day." Christ had been near waiting to bless. The Holy Ghost had spoken to some hearts, all had been quickened and refreshed. It was very pleasant to feel on that day, that we were remembered by you, and that our dear Mary Bronson, who feels so deeply interested for the Seminary, and a few other praying friends were presenting our cause before God, and that blessings were coming down to us in answer.

March 1st [1862]

We received the Journal from Holyoke to-day. It was very welcome. The Teachers all came down to Miss Sessions’ room to enjoy a quiet reading of [it] together, before it was read publicly. We interrupted the reader often to talk about familiar scenes "at home." It brought back the past very clearly before us, and awakened ah! how many pleasant memories of the past. We rejoice with you in the great mercies of God, which have been so abundantly bestowed upon you. How kindly He hath dealt with you in sanctifying that recent affliction to the spiritual good of the school.

March 5th [1862]

There being no criticisms to attend to this afternoon, Miss Prescott read the Journal to us. The young ladies all seemed much interested in hearing it. The sad account of Miss Rempson's death and the presence of God's Spirit which followed had a manifest effect upon all who listened. As they went out we could but pray that Christ would bless this fearful recital to their hearts and lead them to serious thought and reflection.

March 10th [1862]

There still continues some religious interest in school, and we have reason to believe that many are asking the way to the cross of Christ. This morning our hearts were made very glad, by being told that one of the Senior class had become a Christian, the only one in the class that was not a Christian. This one, now newly born, has been a member of the school for three years, always very consistent, and exemplary; few even among those professing Christ were more so. The struggle in her heart has been a severe one, "but the long silent siege is at length over," and He

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1 Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23
2 Mary Pelton Bronson (1833-1865), an 1858 graduate of Mount Holyoke, was Lake Erie Seminary’s Associate Principal its first year, but so exhausted her health in preparations for Lake Erie Seminary’s opening that she was forced to leave Lake Erie Seminary just three weeks into the fall term; she married Thomas S. Bridgman in 1860.
3 Lucinda Tucker Prescott (1829-1904) taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-95; over the years she taught Botany, Astronomy, Chemistry, and German, as well managing the Domestic Dept.
4 Eliza W. Remsen, member of Mount Holyoke’s class of 1862, died at Lake Erie Seminary on Dec. 4, 1861.
whose right it is to reign, reigns supreme in her heart.

March 26th [1862]

Rev Mr. Treat,¹ the Corresponding Secretary of the American Board, spoke to us last evening. He presented the cause of missions in a very earnest manner; he told us particularly of the missionary work in Turkey and China, and what great things had already been accomplished by the faithful soldiers of the Cross; he also spoke of his visit, several years ago, to these different missionary stations. His whole life seems given to this good work. It was a rich treat to hear him speak so earnestly and encouragingly of the final spread of the Gospel. We are not privileged as you are with frequent visits from such laborers, and you may be sure that we gratefully appreciate those we do receive. He preached in the Presbyterian church yesterday, and today leaves for Oxford and other localities, preaching the same word.

March 30th [1862]

We were all surprised this morning before the rising bell by loud reals of thunder! and quick sharp lightening! It quickly roused all the morning sleepers, so that there was no need of bell or tardy afterward. And what seemed most wonderful, instead of being followed by warm April showers, snow fell, light and soft, covering again bare patches of ground which have lately appeared.

April 3rd [1862]

Miss Prescott received the intelligence of her Father’s death tonight! She has for many weeks expected she might hear at any time that he had gone from Earth, but it came sudden at last! And to whom does not this sad messenger come unexpected at last, even though we have waited his coming. She is afflicted in his death, yet greatly comforted by the assurance that through death he passed into eternal life.

Our good friend Mr Hawks² spent the Sabbath with us yesterday, and spoke to us in the evening; he seemed, unusually animated and interesting, his subject was “the importance of doing present duty.” One thought he wished to impress upon our minds, and he hoped we might always remember it, was this: “We have but one duty to perform, and that is the duty of the present moment; that duty done, all duty is done; that duty neglected, all duty is neglected.” Mr and Mrs Hawks have been spending the Winter in Claridon, He is quite feeble and infirm, yet his interest in the cause of education does not abate. We think he does much good for the Seminary, by enlightening the public mind in regard to its true principles. He likes as well as ever, to dwell upon the three things³ necessary for the permanency of such an Institution.

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¹ Rev. Selah Burr Treat was a Yale graduate who first pursued a career as a lawyer before becoming a Presbyterian minister; he became secretary for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1843.
² Rev. Roswell Hawkes (or Hawks) was a Massachusetts minister who worked with Mary Lyon to raise funds to establish Mount Holyoke, and who was also instrumental in raising funds for Lake Erie Female Seminary.
³ Per Mary Lyon, General View of the Principles and Design of Mount Holyoke Female Seminary (1837): 1. The institution professes to be founded on the high principle of enlarged Christian benevolence; 2. The institution is placed on a firm legal basis; 3. The institution is designed to be permanent.
April 10th [1862]

Examinations closed to-day. They have occupied but two days, and were less public than usual; very few were present from without. This afternoon, however, quite a large number came in. The young ladies have persevered bravely through the fatigue of reviews and did themselves much credit in examinations. So the second term of our third school year closes, and although our numbers have been less this year than usual, yet the deficiency in numbers has been more than compensated by a cheerful cooperation on the part of the pupils to carry out the principles of the Seminary and establish a higher standard of thought and action in school. We think in this they have been successful.

Miss Sessions anticipates a visit to Oxford\(^1\) this vacation. We are glad to have her go, we know she will enjoy it very much, and she so seldom consents to leave the Seminary even during vacations, always sending away the rest of us for recreation and respite and remaining herself to look after the interest of the Seminary. In this as in other things, she prefers the happiness of others to her own. As vacation has been drawing near, how often has the wish escaped our lips that our N England homes were nearer. Yes, we really long to look in upon those we love, and enjoy even for a few days the sweet quiet of home life: but we wait patiently.

And now we bid you farewell, praying that "That blessing which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow with it"\(^2\) may be yours.

In behalf of the Seminary,
Sara E. Dorr\(^3\)

[Fall Term 1862]

Lake Erie Seminary

Sept 16, 1862

Dear Friends at Holyoke and Oxford,

The bright Summer days of vacation have passed away, and while the sun has looked calmly and kindly down upon green fields and bounteous harvests, it has also shed its light and glory upon fields of carnage red with blood. Our brothers have been fighting and falling in defense of freedom, while we have been away in our quiet N England homes, where the din of battle has not been heard, only through those silent mediums that weekly find their way up among the peaceful hills. We could realize less there than here that war was raging fearfully in our own land. There the faithful sturdy farmers were mowing and reaping and tilling the soil as ever before, while in the bustling towns, business of all kinds seemed [to be] flowing on in the same lucrative

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1 Oxford, Ohio, to visit the Western Female Seminary.
2 Proverbs 10:22
3 Sarah E. Dorr (1836-1915), an 1858 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-1866.
channels, undisturbed by this terrible strife. The days of rest and vacation for us are over, and we begin again another school year. We expected fewer in number than last year even, the term commencing as it does at this unfavorable time, when the country seems wrapped about in thick darkness, when the late sad reverses have cast gloom and sorrow over almost every home in the land. We did not expect daughters could be spared, when brave sons had been sacrificed on their Country's altar, but they did come, and our family numbers near one hundred, most of which have near relatives in the army.

Oct 2nd [1862]

We are getting pleasantly organized into a quiet, contented family. The feelings of homesickness, which are always so very prevalent at the beginning of the year, are wearing away as the young ladies become interested in the studies assigned them. They are just now very much engaged in organizing a Soldier's Aid Society. They had their first meeting to-night, and chose their officers, consisting of a President, Vice President, and other Directors. They are to meet for the purposes of working every Tuesday evening, and are auxiliary to the Aid Society in town.

Oct 10th [1862]

One of our young ladies is very sick to-day with congestion of the lungs. The Physician is not willing to say that she is dangerous, but says, “she has some very violent symptoms.” We acknowledge our Father's kindness to us as a family — He has never taken away one by death — nor ever brought one low in sickness, since our first coming together as a school. We hope now to be spared from such a sorrow. A Brother of the sick girl, a soldier from the ranks of the Army, has been to see her today— he manifests all the tenderness and anxiety for her that a brother could: but Alice¹ is not a Christian — and how dreadful it would be, if she should die now. "Our Father be merciful unto us.”

Oct 18th [1862]

The days of fear and anxiety for the sick one are passed — and she is slowly recovering, but the disease has left her with a severe cough which we fear may sooner or later terminate in Consumption.² Today another of ours and one that we cannot well spare, is stricken with disease. Our dear Miss Sessions for three days has been obliged to keep her room, with a severe cold accompanied by a cough, and at times a high fever. This is something very unusual for her, for she has always had such perfect health that never, even for a single day since her connection with the Seminary, has she been obliged to relax her energies, or be deterred from any duty, by ill health, so that she and the rest of us even had begun to think that it was quite impossible for Miss Sessions to be sick. We hope that even now our fears may not be realized, yet there is every appearance that actual disease has fastened itself upon her, though she is striving to overcome it with all the power of her strong and resolute will.

Oct 25th [1862]

¹ Alice Medbury of Youngstown, Ohio did recover, and married William Ward in 1866. Her brother Homer was a Sergeant in Company B of the 19th Ohio Volunteer Infantry.
² Tuberculosis
The week past has been one of such anxiety as we have not known before. Miss Sessions has been moved into the sick room where it is more quiet, and the Dr says “she has lung fever.”¹ How heavily this fell upon our ears and into our hearts this morning as we met together, to ask what we should do, and how we should get along, now that she, who has always stood at the helm, and guided us so safely and securely, is laid aside by disease! It seems now that for many weeks to come we must pilot our way alone, without her kind advice and gentle counsels. Miss Prescott,² always ready and equal for any emergency, takes her responsible duties and cares, and she meets them all bravely and bears them calmly and cheerfully! We wonder every day, as we see her in the midst of her multiplied duties in the basement, in recitations, in Devotions, how she can attend so faithfully to all these, but she is, as we have ever found before, “a tower of strength.”

Oct 30th [1862]

There was great joy and gladness in the sick room today where a low voice announced that Miss Sessions’ Mother had come.” It was an unexpected pleasure, for we had not looked for her coming so soon: her Mother's anxiety was greatly relieved by finding her somewhat better; the crisis in her fever is reached and it is gradually subsiding, though she is still suffering from a severe cough, which gives her little rest during the night. I went in early this morning to see her, and found her very patient and cheerful, although she had rested but little during the night; in reply to a question I asked her, she said, "Jesus helps me to be calm." She has been kindly remembered by her many friends during her illness, as the nice delicacies, fruit, and beautiful flowers so abundant in her room do testify.

Nov 14th [1862]

Four Sisters, daughters of Rev. Mr. Phelps,³ Rector of St. Janes Church in this place, have been in school during the past three years, exceedingly happy in each other’s society, always obeying that precept, "Be kindly affectioned one toward another."⁴ The eldest⁵ graduated two years ago, and has since been Teacher of Music here. The two younger⁶ were worthy and efficient members of the graduating class of this year. The fourth entered the Junior Class.⁷ When the Sisters returned at the beginning of the year, we noticed that Eliza didn't come and we asked why—and they said, "she isn't well, she has a slight cough, and decided to remain at home a few weeks until better.” After this letters came frequently from her saying "that she was getting better and would soon be with us.” Her Heavenly Father had another plan for her that she did not foresee. At a late hour last night when all the household were still in sleep, a messenger came: his face was very pale and his lips quivered as he said, "I want to see Lydia Phelps. I have bad news for her.”

¹ Pneumonia
² Lucinda Tucker Prescott (1829-1904), an 1853 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-95; she was in charge of the Domestic Dept. and over the years taught Botany, Astronomy, Chemistry, and German.
³ Rev. Alanson Woodward Phelps, Painesville’s Episcopal minister and a trustee of Lake Erie Seminary
⁴ Romans 12:10
⁵ Lydia Emma Phelps (1842-1916), Class of 1861, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1861-63 before marrying Linden Husted Morehouse, a commission merchant, and raising six children.
⁶ Mary and Eliza Phelps
⁷ Louisa Phelps
She was sent for and soon came down wondering who should want to see her at that hour of the night, never suspecting the sad intelligence that awaited her. As she went into the room I heard him say, "Eliza is dead" — — — the door closed, but the wild bursts of grief were heard long after! It was a long sad night of bitter weeping for the afflicted Sisters, but they were greatly comforted, as they repeated the last words of their dying sister over and over, "It is sweet to die Father,” and if she found it a welcome messenger — why should they mourn or wish it otherwise.

Nov 22nd [1862]

Saturday night has come, closing up another week which has again brought sorrow and sadness to our household! Almost every day has some sad message come to the dear girls telling of sickness and death at home. Two have heard of their brothers prostrated and suffering in the Hospital. With trembling they have been waiting so anxiously to hear something farther from them, but the night has come, the last of the long sad week, and no word to relieve their fearful suspense. Another has heard that her little pet brother has fallen a victim to that fatal disease Diphtheria, and that all the rest of the family are sick; she is greatly afflicted in her brother's death, it has aroused her to deep and serious reflection, and she asks in her grief "Why hath God done this?" and answers calmly, “it is all for me, for my sake He hath taken the sweet child. He has been calling these many years for me to come and follow Him, and I have promised the Spirit that I would, but I did not, and only hardened my heart. Now he has come in judgment against me. I can see it clearly;” and with all the strength of her firm and resolute will, she says, "I will without delay become a Christian.”

Another young lady came in bringing a hastily written letter saying that her Father, an Officer in the army now stationed in Cincinnati, is very low and cannot long survive! She wants to go to him — How can we meet such grief as hers, or comfort hearts so torn with bereavement? We can only bid them look up to Him, who has promised to be more than earthly friends to us!

In the dining hall this noon, as all stood still waiting for the first chair to be served at No 1, who should walk in quietly and calmly to her accustomed seat but Miss Sessions— there was a low glad burst of applause through all the room! The tremulous tones of her voice, as she asked the blessing of our Father to be upon us, told us plainly that her usual strength had not fully returned! We heartily joined the girls in their oft repeated exclamations — "Oh! It is so good to see Miss Sessions at table again.” It is five weeks since she sat with us around the family board; how good God has been to in sparing her to us. We praise his name for it. He hath been better to us than one fears.

Tonight on the late train came the three stricken Sisters back to our home and hearts, all clad in the garments of mourning. They seem sad, yet trustful and calm. They have left Eliza in the cold grave, but not without the confident hope that she was not lost but only gone before to the better land, so they call not the departed dead, for they know that "she lives and loves and waits them there.”

Nov 28th [1862]
The ancient day of our Fathers has passed, and we sit down in our rooms today, feeling a kind of relief that it passed so pleasantly. We hesitated a long time before we could decide how to observe the day! Miss Sessions having been sick so long, and being yet feeble, and there were so many afflicted ones in our family, we did not feel like making it a festive occasion, and so decided to have it a quiet day, and ask a few of our friends to spend the evening with us. As before, the girls had permission to invite their Parents; quite a number came and spent the entire day with them.

Miss Wilcox had the care of trimming this year and proved herself very efficient! The Chapel was tastefully trimmed, and the tables for refreshment were spread there instead of in the large Dining Hall below, which seemed much pleasanter as our Company was smaller than before. The long row of pillars through the centre of the Chapel were twined with garlands of evergreen and festooned at the side with the same. At the end of these pillars and over the platform was an arch like the one we saw at our Alma Mater last Summer, on which was the motto “our best is above.” On either side of this, and back on the wall, were two other mottos arranged in the form of smaller arches, the one at the left “Animo et Fide,” at the right “Omnia Labor vincit.” Over the doors opening into the Chapel was this — “Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness.” On the left side of the Chapel walls, the dear old flag was gracefully suspended, and over it this prayer, “God speed the right.” The windows were trimmed with festoons and wreath, and when all was finished, it presented a cheerful inviting appearance.

But one thing in the room suggests thoughts of sadness and sorrow. Away there on the Piano stands a “silent harp,” draped in crape. We do not need to ask what meaneth this, for down in the soft green moss, at the foot of the harp, is the name of Eliza. We look up at the arch encircling the harp and on that we read “She sings in Heaven.” We gather about this tribute in stillness and sorrow. It makes us remember how Eliza always had a place at the Piano, how she loved music, how much on all such occasions she contributed to the pleasure of the Guests, how her clear, full voice made sweetest musics; but now her voice mingles with heavenly music, she sings [of] a Saviour’s love, in “that home beyond the tide.” We miss her here, her sisters miss her, they had hoped that she would visit with them this week, they had anticipated a joyous Thanksgiving. They refused to mingle with the Company this evening, preferring to remain in their own rooms. Mr Webster very kindly remembered them in his prayer at Devotions and tenderly committed them to the care of Him, who hath said, “Blessed are they that mourn for they will be comforted.”

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1 Sarah Jane Wilcox (1840-1920), daughter of founder/trustee Aaron Wilcox, graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1861 and taught there the 1862-63 school year; the next year she married Peter Hitchcock, son of founder/trustee Reuben Hitchcock.
2 “Courage and Faith”
3 “Work conquers all”
4 Psalm 65:11
5 The name of a popular hymn (lyrics by William E. Hickson to a melody by Ernst Arndt) that was often sung at antislavery meetings.
6 Reference to Charles H. Dunbar’s 1860 sacred song, “A Home Beyond the Tide, or We are Out on the Ocean Sailing”
7 Rev. Silas Barnes Webster, Painesville’s Baptist minister
8 Matthew 5:4
Dec 6th [1862]

Mr Liebermann, an educated German, has been here during the week and given us some lectures on the methods of studying History. He knows well how to think, and, what is more difficult, how to make others think; he is very original, and with all a little censorious — but he has interested the young ladies very much, and his lectures are quite stimulating. For twenty years he was a firm believer in Judaism; he speaks very touchingly of that part of his life, and says “that was all lost life.” He has given lectures in the village and read several times from the Talmud, explaining their traditions and ceremonies. He gave us a beautiful description of the “Great day of Atonement” and how earnestly the devout Jew would plead for pardon in every other name but the one all prevailing name of Christ. He speaks of visiting Mt Holyoke during the spring.

Our good friend and father Mr Hawks¹ came to-day, and it seems so good to see him and his kindly face after an absence of a few months.

Dec 12th [1862]

This morning we sent away a box of clothing for the Indians on the N York reservation where Miss Joslin² is laboring. She is the only one our young ladies that has ever gone out as a Missionary, and we love to do all we can for her, in the way of aid and encouragement. She has been very successful in her efforts among the Seneca Tribe. We hope this box will reach her by Christmas, so that many of her thinly clad Indian children may be made very happy and comfortable by new warm garments.

It is very evident from the outbursts of joy that are heard in every part of the house, that vacation is at hand, for surely nothing else could excite such general rejoicing. The girls conceived the plan of studying and reciting on Wednesday and doing extra work and packing on Thursday, a plan in which we acquiesced, as we thought we might be more sure of good lessons by this means. With many good wishes we close.

In behalf of the Seminary,
Sara E. Dorr.³

Reports by Ednah M. Lyman dated Oct 8 1863 – June 11 1864
Covering the July 1863 Anniversary through June 1864

Lake Erie Seminary
Painesville, Ohio

¹ Rev. Roswell Hawkes (or Hawks) was a Massachusetts minister who worked with Mary Lyon to raise funds to establish Mount Holyoke, and who was also instrumental in raising funds for Lake Erie Female Seminary.
² Sylvia P. Joslin (1833-1919) attended Lake Erie Seminary in 1860-61 as a member of the Junior Class, at 27 being much older than the other students. She was from Springville, New York, close to the Cattaraugus Reservation, and she may have helped bring Father Gleason, who had founded the mission there, to speak at Lake Erie Seminary in early October 1860. Her missionary work is described in Harriet S. Caswell’s book Our Life Among the Iroquois Indians (1892).
³ Sarah E. Dorr (1836-1915), an 1858 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-1866.
Oct. 8, 1863

Dear Friends

This has been a drizzling week! We have been compelled to stay in doors ever since Monday morning. Have had abundance of time to reflect upon our neglected duties. Among these we remember the Journal. We have not yet told you of our Anniversary, but we have its scenes before us yet and perhaps can picture them for you.

[July 1863 Anniversary (Commencement)]

A damp earth and a murky sky; a long line of girls in white dresses covered with divers sorts of capes and shawls — passing through the gate and down the long side walk going to the Church; beside them a band of men freshly from the army with shining silver instruments and heavy drums; their music now throbbing with the thought of soldiers bleeding and dead; and now soaring and swelling with the thought of soldiers honored and immortalized.

Now all are within the Church bathed with sweet waves of soft music and mild light. They look very small beneath the high roof, but thoughts seem vast and deep — and no sight or sound from without can intrude upon this listening hour.

Always before on Anniversary day we had sat among quivering shadows — had heard the sound of murmuring leaves — and now and then the interlude of a sweet bird-song — floating clear and sad from some distant tree.

So listened to, the address had always been sacred and beautiful — What would it be without these accompaniments? We did not answer our own question. We would not think of it, but we felt there would always be a shadow over this Anniversary day. As we look back upon it now — the shadow is the warm rich light that rose colored curtains throw into our room.

The words we listened to that day needed no quivering shadows to add to their changeful sweetness. The thoughts within us answered back as the leaves do when the summer wind breathes through the forest. And the soul of our speaker rose with many an inspiring strain sweeter than bird-song could ever be. Our speaker! We call this man ours because we love him.

1 Gregory Thurston Bedell, the Episcopal Bishop of Ohio
Those that had gone before them had never been forgotten, and today they were with us again. All but five were here — the fourth story was filled with these old friends. We met them in the halls with their arms about each other — We saw them in the basement with their work aprons on — They were all home again and we were glad.

In the evening the family and family guests with a few others were met in the Chapel. The evening passed pleasantly, and when it was over some of us went into Miss Sessions' room to bid her "Good-night" as of yore. More came in and still more. Only two or three were away, and we sent for them that we might all be there. We stood around in a circle — twenty-four of us — with Miss Sessions just outside saying kind words and recalling pleasant memories.

It was good to keep up these memories. Should we not do it systematically, have a society for that very purpose? We all held up our hands. It should be done tonight, and we retired to the Reading Room to organize a Memorandum Society1 for Lake Erie Seminary.

We met again at nine the next morning. Committee presented a constitution which was unanimously adopted. It resembles the constitution of the Memorandum Society of Mt. Holyoke Seminary, but limits the membership to the teachers, alumnae and graduating class of the Seminary, with such others as they may choose to elect to membership. The fee for membership is $1.00. The letter written by each member to the Secretary every fifth year is to be written in July. The annual meeting is held at four p.m. on Thursday of Anniversary week. The constitution states the duty of each officer and makes provision for alteration or amendment.

Next year will be the fifth year of the Seminary, and the Society's first catalogue is to be published. There will doubtless be an abundance of room for each member to have her name in large capitals this time.

We came out from that morning meeting to find halls empty and still. Only one thought more for us going home. Some things were to be done before we could go. We had found no time yet for visiting with the girls who had come back to spend Anniversary with us. What a good day this was for visiting. Now quietly we sat in our rooms, fearing no interruption, haunted by no thoughts of coming labor. This year's work was done. Tomorrow we would do our packing and the next day would be a quiet restful Sabbath. Then with hearts refreshed and strong we would go to our homes and our friends. Monday morning saw Miss Sessions and Miss Smith depart — Miss Smith2 for a longer vacation than she had had before since she began teaching. She needed rest. She has had a cough for some time and was quite feeble.

Miss Fisher3 remained at the Seminary until Thursday morning. Her sister Charlotte was with her — and went with her to spend the vacation in Wisconsin with another sister of theirs. Miss Fisher's vacation was also to be a long one. She was looking worn and thin. Let her have the free Wisconsin air for a few months and she will be herself again.

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1 Alumni association
2 Harriet B. Smith (1838-1865), Lake Erie Seminary’s Latin teacher, had entered a more serious stage of the tuberculosis that would cut her life short in less than two years.
3 Jeanette Fisher, an 1859 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught Mathematics at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-1866.
And so in a week the Seminary was left to the porter and his wife. Doors were locked and silence reigned unbroken, except by a heavy tread that resounded sometimes along the lonely halls — with only one to listen to it.

Some one came however almost every day — and always with some thought of the coming year — the things we should need then and the improvements we ought to have. Thanks to Miss Prescott first, and then to Miss Wilcox, Miss Smith, and Thomas — our treasurer, steward and porter — that our coming back was such a happy one, so full of pleasant surprises wherever we went. Clean new paint was everywhere. There was a new furnace; not an ugly, square brick one, but circular of zinc. There was a new pump in the covered walk. There were new tubs in the wash room, and in the ironing room there was a new arrangement for heating flats and several new ironing tables. There were new glass doors to our Library. There were new cupboards in the basement filled with canned fruits and pickles.

There were innumerable things out of doors that we shall know better and think more of when the flowers came back to us.

But while telling you of the improvements we are rejoicing in, I should not forget to mention a box of books received about Anniversary time from the library of the late Rev. F.H. Brown — Elyria — one of our Board of Trustees and always a warm and faithful friend to the interests of the Seminary. The books were sent us by his widow. There were about sixty volumes. We received also at about the same time the remainder of the New American Encyclopedia from C.K. Bruce — Ashtabula.

These books will be welcomed by the students of General History and History of Literature. It was so provoking always before to have a topic among the last letters of the alphabet. These Encyclopedias are used very extensively for reference. We have a number of other books in our library — books that make quite an appearance externally which no one ever thinks of looking into. They consist mainly of Patent Office Reports and other state papers. They were sent by the Hon. A.G. Riddle. When we have leisure enough we will try to ascertain the real worth of these books to us.

We have one thing new that we do value highly, and that is a new Mineralogical and Geological Cabinet. It was presented to us by [ ] Seely of Georgetown CT. It contains many valuable specimens. We had the nucleus of a cabinet before. Several individuals had given us small collections of minerals and fossils — some of which were rare and beautiful.

We have no place for the cabinet at present but our Library. We have had small cases made expressly for it so that it does not crowd the books — Not that there is any danger that the books would have been crowded. We were quite free from fear on that score. Our library is small yet — but we think of the time when it was smaller and take courage.

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1 Probably Thomas Henry Dwyer [or Dewyer], born in Ireland in 1828, who had come to the U.S. with his wife Mary Brick Dwyer and was living in Painesville by the 1860’s.
2 Rev. Frederick Henry Brown (1804-1861) of Elyria, Ohio, was a trustee 1859-61.
3 Albert Gallatin Riddle represented Ohio’s 19th district in the U.S. House of Representatives 1861-63.
4 Probably Lloyd Horatio Seeley, M.D.
Perhaps while we are speaking of new furniture it might be well to mention a new Secretary and Book case in Miss Sessions’ room — long needed and much prized.

[Fall Term 1863]

We have two new teachers this year — Miss Burton and Miss Baker. Miss Burton1 was one of the two Marys of the first year’s class. Her name is always at the head of the alumnae. She was formerly a pupil of Holyoke [and] is a niece of Miss Grant2 — Miss Lyon’s old friend — and is not lacking in the same spirit that actuated that good woman. Miss Baker3 will be with us only a few weeks, having engaged to teach in another school before she knew she would be wanted here.

Sat. Oct. 17th [1863]

This is the last day of election week and we have had our election4 — Only three votes for Vallandigham!!!5 Was it not a shame that when we were so strongly for Brough,6 we should be represented at the polls by a Vallandigham vote! But so it was. There were some suspicions before hand that Thomas7 was intending to vote for V; but when some one ascertained by a direct question that he had actually cast that vote, the indignation of the young ladies — was so great that he felt he could not bear it — and threatened to leave if they did not stop. Well, they would stop on one condition — He was to wear a badge for Brough — So some one printed the name upon a card in large letters and put it upon his shoulders — and he has worn it ever since. He has concluded to be a Brough man — and does really rejoice in his election — for he is a loyal man and we think has been convinced that he made a mistake in voting for Vallandigham.

We have seen the Governour.

He passed through Painesville yesterday stopping to deliver a speech in the park. When we saw him he was in a procession — in a carriage drawn by four white horses. He sat with head

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1 Mary Elizabeth Burton (1838-1924) attended the Grand River Institute in Austinburg, Ohio 1853-58; Mount Holyoke Seminary 1858-59; and Lake Erie Seminary 1859-60. She taught at Grand River Institute and at Oberlin Academy 1865-66. In 1864 She married Union Army Colonel and Oberlin professor Giles Waldo Shurtleff.
2 Zilpah Polly (nickname for Mary) Grant (1794-1874) befriended Mary Lyon when she attended Byfield Seminary where Zilpah assisted the headmaster Rev. Joseph Emerson, a strong proponent of women’s education. Zilpah went on to found Ipswich Female Academy, where Mary Lyon served as her assistant and then principal before leaving to found Mount Holyoke Seminary. Zilpah was Mary Burton’s great aunt.
3 Probably Almira H. Baker (1842-1878), who had just graduated from Lake Erie Seminary that year.
4 Lake Erie Seminary held its own private vote for the 1863 gubernatorial election; women in the U.S. would not be able to vote in elections until 1920.
5 Clement Vallandigham, an Ohio politician and leader of the Copperhead faction of antiwar Democrats during the Civil War; after serving two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, he was convicted by court martial of opposing the war and exiled in 1863; that year he ran (very unsuccessfully) for Governor of Ohio from exile in Canada.
6 John Brough, a “War Democrat” who won Ohio’s 1863 election for governor
7 Lake Erie Seminary’s treasurer, steward, and porter; probably Thomas Henry Dwyer [or Dewyer], born in Ireland in 1828, who had come to the U.S. with his wife Mary Brick Dwyer and was living in Painesville by the 1860’s.
uncovered and listened while the young ladies sang "Rally round the Flag boys."\(^1\) He is a portly old gentlemen with a benediction in his face. We are quite in love with our Governor; had an unpremeditated illumination in his honor last Tuesday evening, and another on Friday evening, in common with the people of Painesville.

Our illuminations are much more beautiful than costly — The house looked like a palace of light and only for this reason — Every young lady had placed her lamp on the window sill instead of on the stand.

Oct. 24th [1863]

The early morning train brought Miss Smead\(^2\) to us. She comes to take the place of Miss Baker who left us ten days ago. She was not a stranger to us and not to some of you. She was of the class of ’56 at Holyoke. She comes as one of our old teachers, having been here all the second year and a part of the third. We welcome her as a faithful and valuable helper.

Tuesday Nov. 17th [1863]

Going into Miss Session’s room today just before dinner — behold Miss Fisher.\(^3\) We knew she was to come today and yet it seemed very strange to see her sitting there just as if she had never been away. Tomorrow she will assist Miss Sessions in arranging classes and then will begin her work with the new series.

Wednesday Dec. 2nd [1863]

We are just ready to give an account of our Thanksgiving. We think there never was such a Thanksgiving before. Not because we had warmer turkies, a larger and happier company, a more beautifully decorated Chapel and a pleasanter evening than ever before — though all these things were true — but because a whole nation was rejoicing and giving thanks, together singing the same hymn, "Sea, mountain and prairies, one thanksgiving song,"\(^4\) listening to the same glad news of victory and rejoicing in the same God.

But you would know something of ourselves. Come, then into the Chapel. Stand by the piano in front of the platform. Over your head is an arch upon which in evergreen letters are the words "Liberty and Union now and forever."\(^5\) Below this arch dropped the flag of our Union. At your right hand is a little rural scene — a miniature mountain of conglomerate rock with bare peaks and moss grown nooks. There is a cool, dark, rocky cave at its base and a forest on its summit. A

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\(^1\) Also known as "Battle Cry of Freedom," a patriotic song supporting the Union and abolition, written in 1862 by George Frederick Root; a modified version was used for Lincoln’s 1864 reelection campaign.

\(^2\) Ann Amelia Smead graduated from Mount Holyoke in Principal Lydia Sessions’ class of 1856, and taught drawing and French at Lake Erie Seminary 1860-67; she had spent the previous months of 1863 in Massachusetts.

\(^3\) Jeanette Fisher (1837-1916), an 1859 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught Mathematics at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-1866; she was returning from a much-needed vacation in Wisconsin.

\(^4\) Last line of “The President’s Hymn,” written by William Augustus Muhlenburg to music by Joseph W. Turner to commemorate the Thanksgiving Proclamation that Lincoln declared in 1863.

\(^5\) Quoting Daniel Webster’s famous 1830 Senate speech, in which he declared: “Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable”
little stream gleams out here and there through the thick underbrush and overhanging branches at its foot, and spreads out into a lake just far enough distant to reflect the mountain’s crest. There is a rustic bridge across the stream and that is full of soldiers on the double quick with drawn swords in their hands — and now you see the battery they are going to storm. Yonder is the camp of these soldiers. We can see the white tents and the floating flags. We can see the white flag of the hospital — Yes! and the hospital itself. It is a neat log house. Just outside the door stands the sentry. A card in a tree top has the words "Camp Green" upon it. The General\(^1\) will probably never hear of this little compliment. We think he could not have looked upon it indifferently. We could not.

But you wish to notice the trimming of the Chapel. The chandelier is directly before you wreathed in green. There is a beautiful moss basket hanging from it and Gill-oun [?] over the ground droops from every part of its margin and reaches almost down to the ornaments on the stand beneath. This basket leads you to notice others, and you find that there is one in every window, filled with flowers or drooping vines. The windows are festooned with evergreen and the pillars are trimmed with wreaths of it — but we look up at the mottoes. Those over the platform are on each side of the clock which looks out from a green recess.

On one side the motto "Via Crucis — Via Lucis,"\(^2\) on the other "Unhasting unwasting." On the south wall above the windows "We live in deeds — not years."\(^3\) Over the entrance "God is our Refuge and Strength."\(^4\) Outside over the entrance "Enter into His gates with Thanksgiving."\(^5\) We had a few tableaux [for] Thanksgiving — such as "Sunshine and Shadow," Literature and Religion, The North and South, and Little Red Riding Hood.

The Chapel was not the only attractive spot on that evening. The parlors never looked so inviting before. Two large and very fine engravings had been placed there since Anniversary — "The Annunciation" and "St. John leading the Blessed Virgin to his home."\(^6\) These pictures were presented to the Seminary by the class of ’61. The bouquets sent in by our friends were as beautiful as those of Anniversary and seemed much more so because we had not seen any flowers for some time.

We felt thankful that night. There was reason for thankfulness. God had smiled upon us. He had sent us a noble band of girls this year and more in number than we ever had before.\(^7\) Health and happiness have crowned our home ever since the beginning of the year. The Autumn has been beautiful. The forest, it seems to us, never did so much to enliven the landscape. The sun never shone in such unclouded skies.

Let us give thanks unto the Giver of all good and let us ask Him for one crowning blessing — the

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\(^1\) Brigadier General George S. Greene, whose efforts proved crucial to the Union’s winning the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863
\(^2\) "The Way of the Cross is the Way of Light"
\(^3\) From *Festus, A Poem* (1839) by Philip James Bailey
\(^4\) Psalm 46:1
\(^5\) Psalm 100:4
\(^6\) Possibly an engraving of William Charles Thomas Dobson’s painting, exhibited at London’s Royal Academy of Arts in 1851
\(^7\) 149 students were enrolled for fall 1863.
one thing that alone is needful — the gift of His Holy Spirit.

It has been among us, with a still small voice heard only by those who listened, but these have been too few — too few.

We who are teachers have held prayer meetings in Miss Sessions’ room at the fifteen minutes bell before supper every day for some time. We shall continue them, for they have done us good.

Saturday Dec. 17th [1863]

You know, now, as soon as Thanksgiving is over we all begin to turn our thoughts toward Christmas, and so it happens that the next thing I am to tell you about has to do with that day.

Miss Joslyn,¹ one of our former pupils, is now a missionary teacher among the Indians on Cattaraugus Reservation in N.Y. She is among Pagan Indians [who are] ignorant and destitute. She lives alone in a little school house in the wilderness — gets a few children to attend her school by paying them for it and furnishing them with suitable clothing. The way she manages this is not by a certain stipend settled upon each. This would hardly be possible with her small salary. She does it all by a Christmas festival and a Christmas tree.

Have we ever told you of the interest we have in this matter? Have we ever described to you the interest every one of this family has to make a merry Christmas for these little Indian children? We should not need to tell you, could you have stood at the Reading Room door this noon to see what we saw. The long table was moved out from the wall and filled with dresses of every imaginable color, and skirts, hoods, mittens, hose, and scarfs, pictures books and tin horns, dolls, drums, watches, toy dogs and geese, sheep and donkeys. Two or three were practicing on the musical instruments we have mentioned. One was trundling a donkey and laughing to see it nod its head as it moved along.

"Won’t this make some little Indian happy?" and "Won’t this keep some little Indian warm?" were questions that we heard asked as the objects were handled and surveyed. Yes, there was not an object there that would not make some child Indian's heart glad, and there were many that would not only do that. They would keep his hands warm or his feet — would protect his head or his neck, would teach him or do him good. There were articles enough to fill a barrel and a large box — more than we have ever sent Miss Joslyn before — and of more value. This was as it should be. There are more of us this year than before and we know more of them. Perhaps, too, we know more of the blessedness of giving — for I think that box and barrel can hardly cause more joy at that end of the way than at this. Our Christmas will be merrier that theirs is so.

May the Holy Father breathe the Christian spirit into all of our hearts, making their music an echo of the angels’ song "Glory to God, on earth peace, good will toward men."²

¹ Sylvia P. Joslin (1833-1919) attended Lake Erie Seminary in 1860-61 as a member of the Junior Class, at 27 being much older than the other students. She was from Springville, New York, close to the Cattaraugus Reservation; her missionary work there is described in Harriet S. Caswell’s book Our Life Among the Iroquois Indians (1892).

² Luke 2:14
[Spring Term 1864]

Thurs. Jan 7th

This first day of our second term finds us almost all together again. Eleven teachers were in Chapel this morning; Miss Hidden\(^1\) at the piano. As the section teachers looked down upon their sections they saw here and there a vacant seat that perhaps others noted not.

We have received intelligence that one of the loveliest of all our fold, who left us at the close of last term, with a heart full of hope, sure that she should be back promptly, will probably never be among us again. She was taken ill in the very evening she reached her home and is not expected to recover.

Sat. Jan. 9th [1864]

Miss Smith\(^2\) is quite low — Hemorrhage of the lungs, again — a very severe attack. It frightens us. We feel afraid she made a great mistake by coming back in mid winter. She probably would not have done so had she foreseen the terrible cold of those first January days. Days of suffering to us all, they were days of disaster and death to the consumptive. Mr. Smith, our steward, had a little son about ten years of age — a feeble boy — whose life his parents had tenderly cherished and vainly hoped to spare. Last week they laid him in the grave. There is a deep grief in the father's [face] that casts its shadow into all our hearts. That face has always before brought sunlight with it. He is as kind and good as ever and as thoughtful for all our wants. But his step is slow, and his face pale and sad.

Tues. Jan. 19th [1864]

It has been snowing for several days, and to-day snow is even with the tops of the fences. It is snowing still. The wind moans without and the snow sifts like sand against the window panes. We try to look out but cannot see the nearest houses.

There has been a serious railroad accident to-day. The express train from New York was snowed in a few miles from Painesville. Signals were sent back to the accommodation train that was following, but they could not be seen through the blinding snow, and so the train came in at full speed, splitting the cars, setting them on fire, and throwing the passengers into the snow, killing three and wounding and burning many more.\(^3\)

Two of the teachers, with Thomas\(^4\) for a driver, went to the scene of the accident, to see if there was anything they could do for the poor sufferers. They found them, however, well cared for, and did not remain long. When they came home, they were chilled through by the cold and

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\(^1\) Fanny M. Hidden (1842-1870), an 1862 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1863-65.

\(^2\) Harriet Smith’s tuberculosis would cut her life short the following year.

\(^3\) Five died in this accident, and four were seriously injured; the accident was serious enough to be reported in the New York Times the next day.

\(^4\) Lake Erie Seminary’s treasurer, steward, and porter; probably Thomas Henry Dwyer [or Dewyer], born in Ireland in 1828, who had come to the U.S. with his wife Mary Brick Dwyer and was living in Painesville by the 1860’s.
shuddered as they told us of the scene of the suffering they had witnessed.

**Tues. Feb. 2nd [1864]**

At ten o'clock to-day Mrs. Frances D. Gage delivered a lecture in the Seminary Hall. She told us of her experience at Beaufort and about going down to Fernandina, Fla., with two young ladies to establish them in a school for the contrabands. They were furnished, she said, with a building which our soldiers had occupied before them. They scrubbed it and made it clean and then decorated it with green branches and vines and then sat down to wonder what they should have for their dinner, for there was nothing in the house to eat. Just then a beautiful young girl with soft, dark ringlets came in, bringing a basket covered with a white napkin, saying that her mother thought they might like a luncheon.

They afterwards learned that this girl and her mother had been slaves before the war. And then she went on to tell us how much of beauty they found among the contrabands and how much of promise — how much to awaken their sympathies and call forth their affections, and make them glad and thankful that they were permitted to teach them. It was no thankless task to teach them. They were eager to learn, young and old. She told us of one old man — almost a hundred years old — who gave as an excuse for his zeal in learning to read that he always thought every thing good he got in this world he could take over Jordan with him.

She told us how much they talked about "over Jordon" and how much they sang about it — how all their music was touchingly plaintive, and their songs full of the rest that would come in death and the joy beyond the grave. Hopeless in this life, they had learned to fix their hopes on the life to come.

She spoke of their grateful affection, and illustrated it by the manner in which the children remembered her when she came away. She told them they might each bring her a flower and they filled the whole house with them — beautiful flowers which we cultivate in greenhouses — which grow there as common as weeds.

And then she spoke of the picture that lay before them and us and our whole country, and showed how it demanded of each of us the highest development of our whole nature.

She dwelt more particularly upon the outline of our physical nature, as that which we should be in most danger of neglecting, but without which the best intellectual culture and the highest moral qualities could not be made useful to the race.

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1 Frances Dana Barker Gage was a leading American reformer, feminist and abolitionist, who worked closely with other leaders of the 19th century women’s rights movement. In 1863 she went with her daughter to the Sea Islands off the coast of Beaufort county, South Carolina (at that point under Union control) to train the former slaves there, and befriended Clara Barton, who was working nearby. Following her husband’s death in Ohio that year, she served briefly in a medical facility in Fernandina, Florida before returning to the North.

2 During the Civil War the Union considered slaves who escaped to the North or who were freed by the Union army to be ‘Contrabands’ who would remain free and not be returned to their former owners.

3 American slaves identified with the Israelites in the Book of Exodus, who, released from slavery in Egypt, crossed the Jordan River to reach their promised land.
She had been able to do more than many women on account of her physical strength, which had been disciplined by hard labor during her whole life. She had always mourned over her want of intellectual culture. She never attended school except in a log school house in the woods. Nearly all she knew of books had been gained since she had family cares. Would we be faithful to our higher privileges and live to make the most of ourselves, and to bless the world? Under the influence of her earnest voice and tearful eyes, every heart made answer "I will."

You would have thought from the enthusiasm the lecture occasioned that we were all going forthwith to teach the contrabands. None have gone yet, though some do talk of it as a plan for the future — when school days are over.

Sat. Feb. 6th [1864]

As the January fast came during our vacation we thought best to observe another day instead of it. Today was chosen. We entered upon its duties in great weakness and fear. There were many in the family who did not intend to observe the day religiously, and those who did, seemed only half in earnest.

How could we expect a blessing? But we knew that God was the same God that He had ever been, and so we cast our care upon Him and found the day a good one. Christian hearts have come nearer to Christ, and there are some ungodly ones who have seen their sinfulness and resolved to seek Christ. Some have shut their hearts against Christ and gone through the day without comfort or blessing.

Mon. Feb. 22nd [1864]

Last evening a meeting was appointed for those who had recently become Christians or had fully resolved that they would become such. Some sixteen were present, and among them several that our weak faith had not dared to hope would be there; resolute girls that had resolutely turned away from Christ and now as resolutely turned towards him.

Thurs. Feb. 25th. [1864]

To-day is the day observed as a day of prayer for Colleges and Seminaries of learning. The teachers met in Miss Sessions’ room at eight this morning and held a prayer meeting, and came from it trustful and ready to work.

We felt that a blessing was in store for us — but we hardly expected so great a blessing as we received. Scarcely a heart has been unmoved. The whole house has been full of prayer. We have felt that our prayers were being answered as one after another has come to tell us how blessed she found it to cast her soul on Christ. This evening a prayer meeting was appointed for those who had resolved to seek the salvation of their souls. The others were to meet in sections. There were vacant chairs in every section room and thankful blessed tears were in our eyes as we looked at them for we knew that those who would have filled them were at that other meeting.

There were those left who should have been there, and we pleaded with them to obey the call of
Christ. Some who came to the section room halting between two opinions went away to cast
themselves at the foot of the cross and find peace in believing. To-night we thank God we have
been permitted to take part in so blessed a work, and pray Him that He would make it only the
beginning of many days of rich harvest gathering.

Friday Feb. 26th [1864]

There was a prayer meeting in Room A, at the half-hour bell before supper tonight, and the
teacher’s meeting in the evening turned into a prayer meeting. There was also a prayer meeting
of the young converts by themselves at the half hour bell before retiring. Two of those who had
been leaders in opposing all sacred influences came to obtain permission to hold a prayer
meeting in one of their rooms. About twenty were present.

Sat. Feb. 27th [1864]

This morning, while the rising bell rang through the halls, the girls were gathering in one of the
recitation rooms. They came in, one after another, and sat there in the dim light until the rising
bell ceased to ring, when some one struck up a familiar hymn, after singing which they knelt and
joined in voluntary prayer, rising at the stroke of the tardy [bell], to go with full hearts to their
own private devotions.

Mon. March 21st [1864]

The religious interest is still unabated. The daily prayer meetings are still kept up. Mr. Bailey
preached to us last evening. A meeting was appointed in Room A after supper to pray for a
blessing on the evening exercises. The text chosen was "I made haste and delayed not to keep thy
commands."1 The speaker analyzed the effect of delaying to keep God's commands, on our
usefulness, obedience and happiness, and showed that it was distinctive of all.

[Summer Term 1864]

Thursday April 28th

The first day of our summer term. The great gate has stood open for the last two or three days,
and the treasures of many happy houses have been pouring through it. And now they see almost
all gathered into our home and we feel rich again and happy.

The coming back is scarcely less joyful than was the going home. It seems like getting home
again, they say — and in happy pairs they stroll through the grounds — pausing by beds of
hyacinths and bending down to get their breath. They find wild flowers in the woods, and on the
most obstinate trees they can see buds that can begin to swell. A robin stands on the ground to
look at them till they come near, and then takes wing to the nearest tree and carols a welcome.
Old friends recognize each other, and there is joy on both sides.

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1 Psalm 119:60
This morning in Devotions, as we looked down at the happy faces before us, we thought there was as much beauty, growth and joy within doors as without, and asked much more for every soul that knows the blessed Life, and for the beginning of that life in hearts that till now obstinately shut out God and His light. We sang "Come gracious Spirit, heavenly Dove"\(^1\) and felt that we could trust that God who had blessed us to bless us still.

Two chairs on the platform stood close against the desk, and the teachers who usually occupy them are not to be found in their rooms. Miss Smead\(^2\) went to Cleveland to spend the vacation with a cousin. She has spent it mostly in her own room there. She was taken with the inflammatory rheumatism the day after her arrival. Has been a great sufferer — is somewhat better and hopes to come back in a week or two. Her sister remains with her.

Miss Smith\(^3\) is also in Cleveland. She went up on Monday to visit Miss Baker, and was persuaded to remain and consult a distinguished physician. During the vacation she had another attack of bleeding at the lungs. It did not prostrate her as before. She keeps about, though very weak.

A member of the Senior class was carried home with the inflammatory rheumatism on the last day of last term. She was bolstered into a great rocking chair and was unable scarcely to do more than to wink. We feared this class had lost her — but she has written for permission to be tardy in returning — expects to be here in a few days.

Mon. May 2nd [1864]

We only wish you were here to-day to look at the scene spread out before us. Did you ever see the white snow coming down from the sky when all the grass was a rich, new green with the damp, warm breath of Spring? And when the delicate leaves on the trees were just shading the dark branches? This is not a cold snow; the earliest flowers are all open and there are many buds in the woods that we are waiting for. But this snow would not harm flower or bud. It only comes down to melt away on the brown twigs of the little trees and strings them with pearly drops, to spread itself on the clover leaves and make the grass look greener and the walks homier. The sky is dark and throws just the right shade over the whole picture. It is a beautiful picture. There is something of sadness in it, too. It seemed like the last regrets of Winter weeping themselves away. Poor old Winter, at whose banishment we were all rejoicing, sends her own white drapery to make her rival and supplanter more beautiful to our eyes. We are sorry to lose you, Winter. We did love you. You brought us much of joy, and we would gladly keep you and have this young and lovely Spring, too. But since this may not [be], be content to know that your memory is and ever will be sweet and sacred to us. One sweet life, that at your first coming blends with our own, dies with you, and we hear to-day that is blooming now.

"Where everlasting Spring abides

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\(^1\) A 1720 hymn by Simon Browne  
\(^2\) Ann Amelia Smead taught drawing and French at Lake Erie Seminary 1860-67.  
\(^3\) Harriet B. Smith, Lake Erie Seminary’s original Latin teacher, would die of tuberculosis the next year.
And never withering flowers”¹

O, it does seem to-night that only a narrow stream divides that heavenly land from ours.

Saturday May 14th [1864]

There was rather an unusual scene in General Exercises this afternoon. The occasion was the signing of the pledge which has been adopted by the Ladies National Covenant.² The document itself presented rather a formidable appearance. Two or three half sheets of foolscap paper pasted into one long strip and laid solemnly on the piano — a shrine where we might come and offer up our [      ] and extravagances for our country’s sake. The school came up by classes, the Middle Class in two sections one after the other, and the four sections of the Junior class.

As the line was long, permission was given to communicate. It was enough to make any one feel a patriotic "swelling of the heart" to witness the eagerness and joy with which they came forward, one after another to put their names to the paper. Here and there was one who had not quite made up her mind, and did not step forth with alacrity when her turn came. Very soon a group would be gathered about her endeavoring to make plain the path of duty. The arguments were, in most cases, convincing. All but about twenty-five have pledged themselves to each other and to the nation to purchase no imported goods for three years or during the war. There was one who openly said that she was a Copperhead³ and ever since has decked herself with as costly, foreign goods as she could command without the least danger of exciting envy or admiration.

Thursday, May 19th. [1864]

There is sadness in all our hearts to night. The whole house is hushed. It seems as it does when we come home from a funeral — and the sad evening comes and finds one gone to return no more. Miss Smith set out for her home to-day. We cannot hope that she will ever dwell here among again. She has loved this Seminary. She has labored for it — labored when she needed rest. She has remained here and toiled on, with decaying health, against the entreaties of home friends, and finally against the remonstrances of friends here who knew not how to give her up. She has been a most faithful and successful teacher — has always made the interests of the Seminary her own and has labored and sacrificed and prayed for its prosperity — and it mourns her. It misses her. She loved to call it so — her own "beautiful home.” There is a more beautiful home before her. It seems almost in sight. Shall we for whom her prayers have been offered and her tears shed — shall we meet her there?

Wednesday, May 25th [1864]

Miss Sessions, who accompanied Miss Smith to her home, returned to-day, and we were glad to

¹ Quoting Isaac Watts’ 1709 hymn, “A Prospect of Heaven Makes Death Easy” (also known by its first line, “There is a land of pure delight”)
² A movement begun that year by prominent women in the North, pledging to refrain from purchasing or wearing imported luxury items as a show of solidarity for the Union’s war effort
³ An antiwar Democrat in the North during the Civil War
see her. The house seemed lonesome while she was gone, as it does at home when Mother is away. Miss Smith endured the journey well, [and] seemed better when she reached home than when she left us.

Thurs. June 9th. [1864]

The young ladies of the Seminary gave a Concert last evening for the benefit of the Seminary Library. Realized about fifty dollars. The admission fee was twenty-five cts. Thomas¹ said that a look into the Hall was worth that. He was not alone in his opinion. We had never before seen this room hung with paintings, but now it was like a fine art gallery, and like a floral hall too. Ornamental brackets were placed between the pictures, and vases of flowers placed upon them. The pillars were twined with wreaths of oak leaves and roses. Over the teachers' platform where the pianos and the singers were, hung the large chandelier from the drawing room and two side lamps wreathed in green and hung with moss baskets full of roses. The chandelier and side lamps that belong in the Chapel were trimmed similarly. Even the old clock looked down to us from a wreath of green leaves and white roses.

The audience seemed satisfied with the manner in which they had spent their evening looking about and listening. Some lingered to look after the concert was over and all went away with happy faces.

Sat. June 11th [1864]

The Holyoke Journal was read in General Exercises this afternoon, and listened to with rapt attention. This exchanging of Journals makes us feel that we are not strangers. We claim to be a true daughter of Holyoke, and love to be acknowledged such by the reception of these mother letters. By a letter from Miss Jessup we learn that we have no Oxford to receive a Journal from this year.² Since we read that letter, we feel more thankful than ever for our own health and happiness. There have been some cases of sickness, and several have been called home by sickness there. Yet we have been a healthy and happy family. During all these five years, Death has not once entered our walls to lessen our family circle. God has taken care of us. We consecrate our Seminary and ourselves to Him. Mary Lyon's God shall be our God. Like her, we have nothing to fear — through all the unknown future. We are looking forward now to our approaching Anniversary, which occurs on the 21st of July. If it were possible, we would hope to see some of you here.

In behalf of the Seminary
Ednah M. Lyman³

¹ Lake Erie Seminary’s treasurer, steward, and porter; probably Thomas Henry Dwyer [or Dewyer], born in Ireland in 1828, who had come to the U.S. with his wife Mary Brick Dwyer and was living in Painesville by the 1860’s.
² Miss Jessup, formerly Associate Principal at Mount Holyoke, was now Associate Principal at Western Female Seminary in Oxford, Ohio; early in 1864, students and staff there began contracting typhoid fever, forcing Lake Erie Seminary to close May 6th; four students and one of the teachers died in this outbreak.
³ Ednah Maria Lyman (1840-1911) graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1862 and taught there 1862-65 before marrying Dwight Locke Wilbur in 1866 and raising five children, one of whom, Louise, graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1892.
Lake Erie Seminary
Painesville O.

Sat. Sep. 17th 1864

Dear Friends;
This has been a busy week. The great house, that has stood almost empty for the last few weeks, has been filling up, as if by magic.

What power is it that has drawn so many young people from their happy homes — to this new home — to them, no house at all. Why do they come here? We cannot look into their young and blooming faces, without hoping and praying that they may get good here, and do good here, and here be fitted for usefulness and happiness in their future lives.

[Anniversary (Commencement) July 21, 1864]

Thomas K. Beecher\(^1\) delivered our last Anniversary Address. His subject was "The Negative of Destructive Illusions." He said it was easy for anybody to pull down and destroy, but only God and the God like could build. He illustrated this as only a Beecher could — turning even the wind that would blow his manuscript about to his own advantage — and then he admonished us all to build, to spend our lives in building things that should be lovely and useful; things that should be immortal.

We think of this, and ask God to teach us how to build into these growing characters things that are honest and of good report.

Prayers that were offered last year linger here still, and make the house sacred. There was a spirit of prayer last year, especially during the latter part of the year. It was seen in the Senior Class, whom we always consider a kind of spiritual thermometer of the school. During their last reviews and examinations, they were in the habit of meeting together at the five minutes’ bell before breakfast and holding a little prayer meeting. On Anniversary Day they met at the fifteen minutes bell. They were all professing Christians.

[Fall Term 1864]

We look, with hope, toward our new Senior Class. We expect good things from them, because "It is fair to argue from what has been to what may be"\(^2\) These too have all professed Christ, and

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\(^1\) Thomas Kinnicutt Beecher was a preacher, principal of several schools, and a close friend of Samuel Clemens. His illustrious siblings included abolitionists Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, and his educator sister Catherine had visited Lake Erie Seminary in 1859.

\(^2\) From the Latin maxim *Ab actu ad posse valet consecutio*
some of them are eminent "Light Holders."¹

In the school, which numbers about one hundred and fifty, there are only seventy who fear the name of Christ. We feel, however, that we need not fear. God hears prayer. He has heard. He will hear. And we have felt prayer arising from our hearts this vacation, as in our wide spread separation, we each prayed morning and evening toward this our Jerusalem. We knew, too, that prayer arose from within its walls.

Miss Sessions and Miss Dorr² were here, except during a fortnight's trip on the Lakes. And now, except Miss Prescott,³ who lingers yet among New England hills — we are together again — ready and happy for our work.

We never saw a set of new scholars with more cheerful faces or who seemed to come with systematic order more readily. The appearance of things about the house and within is very pleasant, these lovely September days. The beauty of Summer lingers yet, but softened by the tenderness and calmness of Autumn. Many shrubs are in bloom here and there, about the yard — they are principally Altheas.⁴ They look good natured, and have a tendency to make us feel so. The sky is clear without and within.

We shall have some pleasant things to tell you this year — some good things — perhaps some blessed things.

The Lord is our Shepherd and “Green Pastures are before us.”⁵

Tuesday Sep. 27th [1864]

When we wrote last we smiled and said — "We are happy, God is good" — but to-day we whisper low "We are mournful, God is good."

Sickness has entered our dwelling. He came with stealthy step — and laid his hand upon one we loved and needed.

Today a telegram was sent — we were going to say to Miss Fisher's⁶ parents — but we remember that her father died suddenly, during our last summer's vacation. A telegram was sent to her home — saying — "Jennie is very sick. Recovery doubtful." The whole house is hushed and many prayers ascend daily for her. It is one week today since she laid aside school duties. She would be able to resume them again, Thursday, she said, and the next day she did seem

¹ In the Genesis creation account, the sun and moon are called “light holders” in the original Hebrew, implying they channel light instead of producing it; similarly, the “Light Holders” among the students channel God’s light.
² Sarah E. Dorr (1836-1915), an 1858 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-1866.
³ Lucinda Tucker Prescott (1829-1904), an 1853 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-95; she was in charge of the Domestic Dept. and over the years taught Botany, Astronomy, Chemistry, and German.
⁴ Also known as Rose of Sharon
⁵ From Anna Letitia Waring’s 1850 hymn “In Heavenly Love Abiding”
⁶ Jeanette Fisher (1837-1916), an 1859 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught Mathematics at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-1866.
better, rode out to the Lake Shore and said her ride had done her good, sat in her easy chair and talked gaily with Miss Prescott when she came in the evening. But when Thursday morning came she was not so well and has been growing worse ever since.

On Saturday she went reluctantly into the sick room. She thought she could not go. It made her feel as if she were going to be sick — and she was not sick.

Last Sabbath morning when the teachers met for prayer, she was the burden of our petitions. And yet we knew not how to pray. We only knew that we wanted her here with us and that the work seemed to need her. But we can not look upon the matter from the other side — Heaven's side — and so we only breathe out our desires, and feeling that "He knoweth best, who knoweth all."¹

we leave her with Him.

She suffers much and needs much care. A friend is with her — and a nurse. Her sister Charlotte will probably come soon. She has two excellent physicians who watch her case carefully. All will be done for her that can be, and nothing, we hope, in vain.

Friday Oct. 14th [1864]

This morning when we met for Devotions, the beautiful sunlight came streaming into the Chapel — expressing as much happiness and as much desire to give happiness as sunshine could. It did not seem like mocking either. Our feelings were in consonance with it. Miss Fisher was very much better. We sang the hymn beginning — "Give to our God immortal praise"² and we sang it as if we felt it. Joy was in all our hearts. Happy faces looked into other happy faces and grew happier.

Since our last writing Miss Fisher has steadily grown better — though for a time so slowly that it could scarcely be seen or felt.

The next day after our last date — Wed. Sep. 28th — there was a wedding in town to which some of the teachers were invited. No one thought she could go while Miss Fisher was so sick at home, but as the bride — Miss Sarah Wilcox³ — was one of our graduates and teachers — the daughter of Hon. Aaron Wilcox — our trustee and most devoted friend — Miss F. would allow no one to remain at home on her account. The next day — Thursday — Miss Fisher's sister came and she has been growing better almost every day since. Her room is now a pleasant place of resort — a good place to read and talk and laugh. She sits in an easy chair with a loose dress on, and enjoys everything except her food — which — however grateful to the taste — ceases to be

¹ In Caroline A. Mason’s poem “The Mothers of 1862” this phrase expresses what a mother tells herself upon learning her son has died in battle.
² 1707 hymn by Isaac Watts, based on Psalm 136
³ Sarah Jane Wilcox graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1861 and taught there the 1862-63 school year; she was now marrying Peter Hitchcock, son of Lake Erie Seminary’s co-founder/trustee Reuben Hitchcock.
an enjoyment as soon as it is eaten. Her disease was a bilious\textsuperscript{1} typhoid fever,\textsuperscript{2} and it seems to take a long time to get the digestive apparatus in working order again.

Monday Oct. 31st [1864]

This day closes a month of blessings. We have told you of the returning health which it has brought to Miss Fisher. It has brought a greater blessing to many others. When one that was dead in trespasses and sins comes back to life; when the Great Physician lays his hand upon a deceased soul — and gives it strength to rise and labor — and sends if forth rejoicing in a new life, a life of happy union with Himself — a life made sweet and contented by a calm trust in an unfailing Friend — bright with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ — safe and blessed with the Lord Jesus and all that He has and is — that is more than any earthly joy. That causes rejoicing among the angels that are in heaven. There has been joy among the angels — joy over us — during the month that goes quietly out tonight. It takes not with it the blessing it has brought. They will go on widening, deepening and brightening in the expanding soul forever.

About thirty have begun this new life, have found this new Source of health and strength and joy. Is that all? That would be worth more than we could estimate. But is it nothing to Our Father in heaven, when His children take hold of Him with a deeper trust and serve Him with happier hearts and more untiring devotions?

Is it nothing to Him when their faces look up to Him and reflect His light — when their hearts come and take shelter in His infinite heart, when their souls rise as on eagle’s wings toward the Everlasting Light? Is it nothing to Him when those whom he has sought long and vainly turn to seek Him? Is there not joy in heaven over Christian hearts drawn nearer to Christ, and over those who have said “I will arise and go to my Father” although they do not yet feel themselves folded to His heart? We can hardly realize that one month has done so much for us — and yet it has not been a month since the harvest here began.

We had noticed a good degree of attention in religious exercises — had felt that there was a strong undercurrent of feeling, but were somewhat surprised when Miss Sessions received a note asking [for] a day of prayer. We hesitated about laying the question before the school, feared it would not be in accordance with the general feeling, prayed over it, and finally, when we appealed to the young ladies for their decision, it was almost unanimously in favor of such a day. The day fixed upon was Monday the 24th of October. It is a day that we write — blessed. It seemed that day as if every heart were drawn powerfully by the magnetism of the cross. Some, no doubt, resisted, but this resistance was not so evident as it sometimes is.

The house never seemed more full of sunshine and calm joy than on that day. Sweet hymns floated upon the ear, and when the voice of prayer was heard it seemed as if a living Christ were

\textsuperscript{1} In the 19th century, a bilious fever was any fever accompanied by nausea and vomiting.

\textsuperscript{2} Typhoid fever is a bacterial infection caused by unsanitary water supplies; untreated, it runs through several stages over a three week period, leaving the survivor emaciated and exhausted. During the Civil War, over 81,000 Union soldiers died of typhoid or dysentery, far more than died from battle wounds; these were unhealthy times for the country.
really present to hear and speedily to answer. Prayer seemed to take hold on Christ with a firm confidence. Faith seemed almost sighs.

The Rev. Mr. Woodworth, pastor of the Pres. Church, had preached to us on the afternoon of the previous day (Sabbath) from the text, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved." Mr. W. is a man that "carries Christ in his heart"—and as he stood before us with outstretched hands and earnest pleading voice — repeated the words of the Lord Jesus "Come with me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," it seemed as if Christ were pleading with us, to come and take refuge in his open arms. He spoke in the most feeling manner of Christ and His sacrifice for us, and showed how safe it was to believe that Christ would do all that he said he would for us—that He would accept us if we came to Him. "He makes it so plain that I can't help believing," said one.

The prayer meetings, held on this day of good things, were for definite objects — the first for Christians, the second for the Indifferent, the third for the Inquiring, the fourth for former pupils and absent friends. Requests for prayer were brought into them, and fervent prayers offered, some of which have already been answered.

"Our dear Room A" we had sometimes called our largest recitation room, from associations that had gathered about it here before on every day like this. But on this day we could have no meetings there. A partition had just been erected near the east end of the room. A chemical room and stationery closet were to be put there. The room was strewn with lumber, lathing, and mortar. So the folding doors between Rooms B. & C. were thrown open and the meetings held in those rooms. They were pleasant — on some accounts more pleasant than Room A. One felt more retired in them, for no person could either see or be seen by all.

The associations of this past day may well be distinct from every other day of prayer. Never before have we observed such a day in the first term of the year — and never was one so marked by joy and peace in believing.

In the evening section meetings were appointed, also a meeting for those who had become Christians since the beginning of the year, and one for those who had resolved to become such. The last two meetings, indeed all, were solemn and interesting. The section meetings were small — but earnest prayer was offered in them — and heard for those who were in another place of prayer.

This you will remember was on Monday. On Wednesday evening Mr. Woodworth came and talked to us for an hour "On the cost of becoming a Christian." The next evening, Thursday, a meeting was appointed for the inquiring — also the usual meetings for those who had no interest. There were two. Till this time there had been three. That night the two were small and solemn. At one, only six were present and the message to them was, "Behold, your house is left unto you

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1 Rev. William Walter Woodworth, D.D. (1813-1890), Painesville’s new Presbyterian minister, studied theology at Yale and had preached in Massachusetts before coming to Painesville.
2 Acts 16:31
3 Phrase attributed to Saint Ignatius of Antioch
4 Matthew 11:28
desolate.”

Saturday evening came, and Teachers' Prayer Meeting was held in Miss Fisher's room. She had been able to be about some and to share with us in the joy of these days, though not, as she desired, in the labors. She was sitting in her easy chair by the register in the Chapel while we were listening to Mr. W's sermon the Sabbath before. And now, for the first time since her sickness, we met her at our own prayer meeting. Her face was thin and pale, but her complexion was clear, and her eye bright. The look of care had left her face. There was repose in it and happiness. We prayed especially for a blessing on the coming Sabbath, and our prayer was answered. When the morning came, it was a stormy morning. A meeting was held in Room B. at eleven o'clock a.m.; another at 2 p.m. to pray for a blessing on the afternoon exercises.

Mr. Woodworth came at 3 p.m. His text was "Quench not the Spirit.” He spoke of the different modes by which the Spirit wrought upon the heart, and especially of the different ways of quenching the sacred flame — by neglecting to feed it — by plunging into worldly pleasures or worldly business — or by direct resistance. He spoke of the efforts that we sometimes made to destroy the influence of the Spirit in the hearts of others, and illustrated the enormity of it by the case of a person recovered from the water while drowning. He is apparently dead, and will certainly die if every effort is not made to restore life in him. His friends use all suitable appliances with all diligence till the man begins to show signs of life. He gasps for breath, but a bystander from the crowd hastens forward, and, placing his hand upon the patient's mouth, stifles him to death. In some cases the man will himself keep back his own breath, smother the retiring life that God awakens in him. He pictured the fearful condition of a sane life of God. We were breathless with horror. Some who had been stirring with all their power to quench the flame God had put into their hearts decided then and there to do so no more.

Friday Nov. 25th [1864]

Yesterday was Thanksgiving day. We are coming back to our duties after a day spent in recounting the mercies of God. Life seems richer and happier, and every thing seems — life. Some of the green forest has found its way into the house — and some of the joy and rest of the forest came in, too.

As we sit together in the Chapel and listen to the words of life, they come into our hearts with unwanted sweetness. As we leave the Chapel for our recitations, we catch an inspiration from the very walls, and our step grows lighter, and our hearts braver. As we sit together in the dining hall a sweet home-feeling steals into our hearts.

Our dining hall is growing like home. It has a piano on the north side, and on the south side, in a pleasant row by the windows, are the plants that bloom in summer from Miss Prescott's flower beds, some now in bloom. In the center of the room is a large oleander, so tall that the central lamp hangs down among its branches.

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1 Matthew 23:38
We began our Thanksgiving day by singing at the breakfast devotions "I'll praise my maker with my breath,"\(^1\) the piano accompanying. The 103rd Psalm was then read. The sweet words lingered in our thoughts: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." We sat there, together, a happy family, forgiven, healed, redeemed, crowned. Miss Fisher led us in prayer for the first time since her sickness.

After breakfast was over, some of us lingered in Chapel for a while. A little more was to be done there. Letter by letter, the mottoes went up, 'till we read above the platform, "Who crowneth thee with loving kindness," and opposite it, on each side of the entrance, the mottoes "Tout est vie pour lui qui est vivant"\(^2\) & "Fortiter, fideliter, feliciter;"\(^3\) on one side of the room, the words "Union in Freedom," and on the other side, "The world waits for help."\(^4\) A harp of green with golden strings stood against one wall; opposite this, a cross — also in evergreen — and above the entrance, within, an anchor. Pictures were hung on every side. Tables were placed about in various parts of the room, and covered with books and ornaments.

The Chapel being arranged, we went to church and heard a sermon from the text: "Be careful for nothing; but in all things, by prayer and supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."\(^5\)

The day was cold and bright. The ground was covered with snow, and when evening came, we heard the sound of merry sleigh-bells and saw happy faces pressing in.

Every one looked beautiful and happy and thankful. There seemed to be more freedom and social enjoyment than usual. We attributed it to the arrangement of the Chapel. It did not seem like a public hall trimmed for some festive occasion, but like a parlor of our own.

Our Parlor had several new pictures, a large oil painting over the piano and two smaller ones over the mantels; also a fine photograph of the Rev. Roswell Hawks.\(^6\) He was with us as usual. He has been in feeble health, and was confined to the house for many weeks last summer, but seems to have come back to take up life again with a relish we had not noticed in him before. We inquired anxiously after his health. He said he was better, very much better, but there was a disease upon him that would never be cured. It never had been cured, and never could be. It was Old Age. But, said he, his countenance brightening, "We ought to be willing to grow old and die. Principles of the highest benevolence would make us so. This world is happier for having a succession of generations. We ought to be willing to retire from life that more may enjoy it." His benevolence is not falling into decay. It seems to absorb his whole soul — and it will, forever. That belongs to the imperishable part and will never grow old and die.

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1 1719 hymn by Isaac Watts based on the 113\(^{th}\) Psalm.
2 "All is life for him who is alive," from Arnold Guyot, The Earth and Man: Lectures on Comparative Physical Geography, in Its Relation to the History of Mankind (1849)
3 "Boldly, faithfully, successfully"
4 Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Aurora Leigh
5 Philippians 4:6
6 Rev. Roswell Hawks [or Hawkes] was a Massachusetts minister who worked with Mary Lyon to raise funds to establish Mount Holyoke, and who was also instrumental in raising funds for Lake Erie Female Seminary.
A bit of gossip was whispered in our ear Thanksgiving evening. Our Miss Burton had on that day become Mrs. Col. Shurtleff; was to go on a bridal tour, and then return to the Seminary for the remainder of the year. She is to be, as last year, our teacher of Latin. Her husband will be in the army. He has been wounded and at home. Miss Burton has not been here this year. Mrs. Shurtleff is expected next week.

[Spring Term 1865]

Saturday Feb. 11th 1865

It is a beautiful, bright day and the sleighing is good; and so the afternoon exercises are hurried to give an opportunity for sleigh riding.

While we wait for the teams to return, we will talk with you. Let us go into the Library. The girls are coming to return the books they have been reading, and to draw new ones. Look about for a few moments and see how the shelves have filled, and with what handsome and valuable books. One hundred and sixty of those new volumes came as a Christmas present from Mr. K. Moody of New York, and C.A. Avery of Painesville; and — No! the money has not been expended yet — but $75.00 were given by the ladies of Painesville, as a New Year's present to the teachers, to be expended for the Library, but as a token they said (in the note that contained the money) of their "high appreciation of the faithful labors of the Principal and Teachers of the Institution." If you will look into Miss Sessions' room you will see another token of appreciation — also from ladies of Painesville. It is an elegant, first class, Florence sewing machine, which came yesterday morning as a present to the teachers, with the hope that it "would relieve them of much labor and fatigue in the future."

These things are pleasant, indeed. They cheer our hearts and lighten our labors. They make us feel that we have a name and a place where a few years ago we were but strangers.

We have another help this year, which we think we know how to appreciate — the help of our ministers — especially those of the Presbyterian and Episcopal churches.

The Rev. N.R. Bailey, former pastor of the Pres. church, resigned his pastorate last May — and for a time the pulpit was supplied miscellaneously. But since the 1st of October, we have been favored with the ministrations of the Rev. Samuel Woodworth. He has a spirit of devotion to Christian labor like that of Paul — a love for Christ like the apostle John — a love for souls like Christ. He found the church worldly and lukewarm, and, to some extent, prejudiced against

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1 Mary Elizabeth Burton (1838-1924) attended the Grand River Institute in Austinburg, Ohio 1853-58; Mount Holyoke Seminary 1858-59; and Lake Erie Seminary 1859-60, one of the “two Marys” who comprised the Seminary’s first graduating class. She taught at Grand River Institute and at Oberlin Academy 1865-66. In 1865 she married Union Army Colonel and Oberlin professor Giles Waldo Shurtleff.

2 Charles Austin Avery (1816-1909) was the largest subscriber towards the founding of Lake Erie Seminary, providing the land and overseeing the construction of the original Seminary building; he remained a trustee until 1908.

3 Rev. William Walter Woodworth, D.D. studied theology at Yale and had preached in Massachusetts before coming to Painesville; he became a regular visitor to Lake Erie Seminary, and would marry its Principal Lydia Sessions in 1866.
himself; some even calling him "fanatical," because he was so much in earnest and took Bible statements so literally. A change has been effected. Those who called him fanatical are themselves filled with the same holy fanaticism; and now, many of the church pray with him for the outpouring of God's Spirit and the conversion of souls. He has done much for us by prayers and labors, holds himself in readiness to come at our every call, and rejoices to come if he may only by all means save some.

We observed a Fast Day not long ago. It was on the 30th of Jan'y — the first fast of the new year. On the previous day, Sunday, Mr. Woodworth preached to us in the afternoon from Psalm 85:8, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly." After dwelling awhile upon the necessity of listening to the voice of God, and the joys of that peace which God speaks to the believing heart — he spoke of the folly of sin, especially of the sin of turning again after having once set our faces Zionward. There were four or five of those who, a short time before, bade fair to be earnest followers of Christ, who had thus fallen away from him, but on that day and the day which followed the Spirit of God was with them each, showing them the sinfulness and folly of their course. Now, they seek Him whom they have grieved, and we hope soon to welcome them to a full trust in Christ, and a new and entire consecration of themselves to Him. There were several who upon that day made choice of Christ for the first time. It was a good day, but not so marked with evidences of God's power, as the preceding fast day.

Another day of prayer is coming. We are looking forward to it and praying that God will give us a blessing that shall reach every heart. Some forty-five have become Christians. Thirty are still impenitent.

And now, before we close, let us say a few words about our teachers. We have said a good deal about Miss Fisher, but you will wish to know how she is now. She has not been well for many weeks — has a hard cough, is unable to perform her ordinary duties — rooms in the sick room, but retains her section.

We have a new teacher — Miss Hawley¹ of the class of '61. Miss Greer,² class '62, who came to spend a few weeks at the beginning of the year, until Mrs. Shurtleff should come, is still with us. Miss Dorr³ — we hear sad news from. She left us on the 28th of Nov. to go home to N.H. and take care of her aged parents, who were both sick. When she reached home, she found her parents more comfortable, but was herself sick; had an attack of lung fever,⁴ recovered from it, and on the 27th of January, lost her only sister — Mrs. Green of Westmoreland. We expect the return of Miss Dorr at Spring Reviews. Miss Smith⁵ still seems to belong to us, though we can hardly hope that she will ever be with us again. She is very feeble, and is growing more so. She

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¹ Augusta M. Hawley (1842-1919) taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1864-66; in 1877 she married banker Elisha Bills Pratt.
² Sarah Almaria Greer (1839-1924) continued teaching at Lake Erie Seminary through 1866; taught at the Michigan Female Seminary in Kalamazoo with Jeanette Fisher 1867-68; returned to teach at Lake Erie Seminary 1869-75; and married lawyer George E. Treadwell in 1876 (her daughter Lucy attended Lake Erie Seminary 1894-97).
³ Sarah E. Dorr (1836-1915), an 1858 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-1866; as the Physiology teacher she also gave medical care to the students, so her absence was especially hard to fill.
⁴ Pneumonia
⁵ Harriet B. Smith, Lake Erie Seminary’s original Latin teacher, died of tuberculosis 11 March 1865.
is unable, now, to do any reading or to listen to any except for a very short time.

We shall trust that you will sometimes think of us, with a deep prayer in your hearts that God would fill us with His blessing and make us like a city that is set upon a hill, whose light cannot be hid.\(^1\)

In behalf of the Seminary  
Ednah M. Lyman

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Reports by Mary E. Flanders dated Sept 18 1865 - Feb 21 1866
Covering the 21 July 1865 Anniversary through February 1866

Lake Erie Seminary.  
Painesville, O.

Sept. 18th, 1865

Dear Friends,

Another cycle in the calendar of Seminary life has begun its revolution. No unusual occurance has marked the commencement as an epoch in the history of human events, yet we trust it will prove an epoch in many an individual life, if not in the great world life. Ours is not a miraculous age, save as being and nature are constant miracles; we are not looking for unaccountable developments, yet there is one ever able "to work exceeding great and wondrous things\(^2\) — and while our life shall flow onward in the old channels, we pray to Him that its current may grow deeper, purer and broader, year after year, until it shall lose itself in the bosom of the "Eternal deep.\(^3\)

We like the faces of those who have come to us this year — through the eyes that look into ours we catch glimpses of earnest thoughtful souls, and take these from a prophecy of good. We observe too, that the "popular girls" so called, are not of the usual stamp, most of them being Christian, and not scoffers as is often the case; this also seems an omen of "better things," and with hopeful hearts we bring our energies to the work before us. May the spirit of our God rest upon us and inspire us to more earnest and effectual efforts that the development of these souls shall be unto beauty and not deformity.

[Anniversary (Commencement) July 21, 1865]

But while our hearts and hands are busy with the present weaving of the life of today from the

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\(^1\) Matthew 5:14; this image was famously used by Puritan John Winthrop in a 1630 sermon to admonish his fellow colonists that their new Massachusetts Bay Colony would be “a city on a hill” serving as an example to the rest of the world; similarly, Mount Holyoke and her daughter seminaries were serving as examples of institutions for the higher education of women.  

\(^2\) Psalm 136:4

\(^3\) Wordsworth, “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Childhood”
loom of Time, we must not neglect to gather something from the Past to bring you. The terminus of a year's work is of too great importance to be omitted entirely from its history. The Anniversary of 1865 was doubtless very like other Anniversaries in outline, yet varying in minutiae. The frequent showers just previous had excited fears lest it should be impossible to hold the exercises in the grove, according to our much-loved custom — but the morning of the 21st dawned bright and beautiful enough to awaken melodies in all hearts. The thirsty sunlight drank up the rain drops from the foliage above and grass beneath, and when at last assembled in a temple of God's own handiwork, we felt freer and happier than we could have done crowded in a church. Some expressed disappointment on learning that Mr. Monteith1 of Cleveland was to be orator of the day, not from personal prejudices, only he was not a "great man" like Henry Ward Beecher. At the close of the address, however, each had forgotten her disappointment in her interest and delight in the words that fell from his lips; we wish you could have heard them, too. A Beecher could not have said better things. The subject of the discourse was "Natural Individuality," and we were told that to be powerful, to be happy, to be beautiful, we must be ourselves. Rev. W.W. Woodworth of Painesville addressed the Senior class; this class numbered eleven, being next to the largest that as yet graduated from here; their final examinations were of high order, meeting the approbation of both teachers and friends. We expected much of the class of "65" and sent them from us with the hope that theirs might prove an earnest and noble life work.

Miss Sessions did not as usual spend the vacation at Painesville, but, leaving Miss Fisher2 and Miss Dorr3 in charge here, in the quiet of her New England home found the rest she needed. We have something good to tell you about this vacation. The Seminary is no longer in debt; at the close of last year the finances were very low, but the arrears, some twenty thousand dollars, were assumed by our magnanimous friends, the trustees, and now we shall have better courage to seek the perfection we desire. We were quite delighted with the improvements that had been made about the Sem'y building during our absence. The lower halls especially looked very grand with their beautifully marbled walls. We have not "gas" yet to make them as imposing as they might be, but we are going to have; when the "good time comes" we will invite you to the illumination. We miss several of our last year's co-workers from among our band of teachers — Miss Esty, who was one of the first workers here abides in the far west4 — The "cruel wars" being over Col. Shurtleff has claimed his bride,5 and together they are teaching in Oberlin College — Miss Lyman6 we were obliged to give up or feel that her health would be a sacrifice — Miss Hidden7 it is whispered is soon to become Mrs. Page — But we have some new hearts to work with us —

1 Rev. John Monteith was a Presbyterian minister, educator, abolitionist, and founding father of the University of Michigan; at this time he was retired and living with his daughter’s family in Elyria, Ohio.
2 Jeanette Fisher, Lake Erie Seminary’s Mathematics teacher 1859-66, had apparently recovered from the serious illness she suffered earlier that year.
3 Sarah E. Dorr (1836-1915), an 1858 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-1866.
4 Illinois
5 Mary Elizabeth Burton (1838-1924), one of the ‘two Marys’ who made up Lake Erie Seminary’s first Class of 1860, who had been teaching there since 1863; she had married Union Army Colonel and Oberlin professor Giles Waldo Shurtleff in 1864, and he was now returning to civilian life.
6 Ednah Maria Lyman graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1862 and taught there 1862-65 before marrying Dwight Locke Wilbur in 1866 and raising five children, one of whom, Louise, graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1892.
7 Fanny M. Hidden, an 1862 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1863-65; she indeed married Rev. Benjamin Greely Page in August 1865.
We wish you could have been here today to share our entertainment — Did you ever hear about Shaw Loo?\(^1\) We will tell you the little we know of him. He is a native of Burmah — was early educated to the Christian faith and came to America to be educated, graduated last year from an Eastern college, and, on his way to Cleveland, where he is to study medicine this winter, he visited the Seminary. He came about the time for hall exercises, and, having been introduced by a friend, began at once to talk to the young ladies. He was quite young, not more than nineteen, and really intelligent looking, was turbaned and cloaked after the fashion of his own country, which costume added much interest to his appearance. We were greatly amused by many of his anecdotes of customs and life in Burmah; having entertained us for about half an hour we said good bye to his Burmahship, with the promise of another visit some time in the future — perhaps when he brings his dark-eyed bride from over the waters, as he said he hoped to do in a few years.

Two busy weeks are gone — the time of cloudy faces is past and the sunshine of content seems all the brighter for the old shadows. The examinations of the new scholars have been unusually satisfactory this year. The plan of requiring a higher standard in these examinations seems to be an admirable one. Several have been obliged to go home, not being able to enter as we desired, and the effect upon the less ambitious pupils is very marked, the brightening of ideas is quite evident.

Wednesday, October 27th [1865]

Life has been a poem to us this day; we don't say it very often, because we find life to be mostly "prose," but today we've listened, and caught the rhythm of the fast filling measures. All things coarse and meagre have seemed forgotten under the inspiration of such October sunlight. Looking from our window this morning we enjoyed a scene of rare beauty; it was one that had stopped us from work many afternoons, but somehow we never seemed to have quite appreciated it before; there were not "white caps" on the Lake, but there were sails, and now and then a steamer swept near the shore. Just below lay the Western Part of the village, so embowered in gold and brown of the maple groves that only the towering church spires told of its existence. The touch of Autumn was upon these grand old forests, the veil of Indian summer delicately softened the rich beauty, and gazing we felt such a thrill of ecstasy as comes to the heart only a few times in a whole lifetime. But it was not of our feelings we intended to tell you, but of our experiences. Everybody can enjoy the beauty of a perfect day, but everybody can't spend a half

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\(^1\) Dr. Mong Shaw Loo (1835-1929) was born to a Christian Burmese family, and inspired as a boy to become a medical doctor through his friendship with American missionary Adoniram Judson; he worked his way from Burma (now Myanmar) to America as a cabin boy, and spent five years earning a B.A. from Lewisburg (now Bucknell) University in Pennsylvania before coming to Ohio to earn his medical degree at the Cleveland Medical College (the Medical Department of Western Reserve College-now Case Western Reserve University); he then returned to Myanmar, where he worked as a teacher.
day there on the shore gathering shells and beautiful stones, or, finding some quiet spot among
the rocks close down where the waves are breaking, feel that it was good to be there, looking out
upon the pure bright waves, because it filled the heart with pure thoughts and high inspiration,
neither can they go to the lighthouse and hear legends of the sea. Everybody couldn't do this, but
we did, and had just the nicest of times. We retain many mementoes of this day of pleasure, and
one might think, from the collections of stones and mosses on the mantles and tables, that "Old
ocean" had been spoiled of half of his treasures.

We have had a nice visit of late from one of our Holyoke friends, Miss Bowers,\(^1\) we like to have
our friends visit us and wish more would come. Miss B. spent three weeks with us and then went
on west to Chicago, promising to call here again on her return.

One of our sister teachers is fast recovering from a severe illness — Miss Sperry\(^2\) was unable to
be with us the first of the year on account of her ill health, but as her assistance was much
needed, as soon as it seemed the least advisable she came and assumed her duties; but after a few
days she was again prostrated, and for weeks was unable to leave the sick room; now she seems
growing better each day and we hope soon to have her fully restored to us.

Wednesday, Nov. 15th [1865]

Now that our hearts have grown less anxious we can tell you of the terrible accident that
occurred in our family last week. As usual upon Saturday afternoon "Thomas"\(^3\) was engaged
sending up wood and coal through the trap door in the East end of the building. It seems to have
been a great oversight that these doors when open had never been protected in some way. We
have often trembled thinking what if somebody should in careless haste fall through them, but
took no precautions to prevent such an occurrence. Our worst fears have met a sad realization.
While Thomas was busy fastening the ropes, two of the young ladies were skipping backwards
through the second hall — neither being aware of danger and there being nothing to stay them; in
a moment both had disappeared through the fatal door. A crowd of terror-stricken ones gathered
upon the first floor where little Ella Burnell\(^4\) had fallen and lay stunned and senseless — she
looked so stiff and white that many gasped — "she is dead!" — But where was Emma Heustis?\(^5\)
shrieks from the basement below called us thither to find the poor child lying upon a pile of
wood, her face fearfully gashed — she was carried to Miss Dorr's room and with heroic courage
suffered the ugly wounds to be sewed up by the physician — We feared it would disfigure her
face sadly, but were too thankful it was no worse, to think much about this. Miss Burnell's
injuries were the most severe, she having fallen with her back upon the hard floor — she has lain
stupified most of the time since, but her recovery is not considered at all doubtful. Miss Heustis
has been removed to a friend's near town and is doing as well as possible. This event has

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\(^1\) Ellen Priscilla Bowers, an 1858 graduate of Mount Holyoke who taught literature there 1861-ca.1890
\(^2\) Naomi Sperry (1843-1869) graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1865 and taught there 1865-67 before marrying
Russell B. Pope in 1867.
\(^3\) Lake Erie Seminary's treasurer, steward, and porter; probably Thomas Henry Dwyer (or Dewyer), born in Ireland
in 1828, who had come to the U.S. with his wife Mary Brick Dwyer and was living in Painesville by the 1860's.
\(^4\) Ella Electa Burnell (1848-1872) of Jamestown, New York survived her fall and later married Dr. Charles
Hazeltine.
\(^5\) Emily Heustis (1848-1915) of Loda, Illinois was married in 1866 to Selleck Byron Warren Jr., a farmer who
eventually became a grain merchant, and raised three children.
produced a marked effect upon the school, there seems a stillness and a seriousness as if they realized that in the midst of life we might be in death.

Saturday, Nov 25th [1865]

We have had a visit this week from Mr. Taylor\(^1\) of the Madura Mission. Twenty years of untiring labor enfeebled the health of both himself and wife, rendering their return to this country a necessity. A return most joyfully welcomed by a daughter\(^2\) who graduated from here last year and who had not seen her parents since a child. We were much interested in Mr. Taylor's account of Missionary life in India, and felt a deep reverence for the man who had sacrificed fortune and friends, yet, who can estimate the recompense of that influence that shall widen and widen — cycling throughout all Eternity! Mr. Taylor made some valuable additions to our cabinet in the shape of rare shells, minerals and mosses collected in "heathen land."\(^3\) There were also some books of the natives and other articles of their own workmanship. To Miss Sessions he brought a miniature pagoda — it is carved from white wood and placed in a glass case — this heathen temple is a rare and curious ornament.

Wed, Dec 6th [1865]

The "good time" has come! No longer is the march of many feet through the long halls and "dim corridors guided by the meagre light of an oil lamp"— Oh no! The days of "oil" are of the Past. No longer do me stumble over coal boxes — enter wrong rooms, all because "we couldn't see." No! No! The days of darkness are no more — listen to the secret of this change — we use gas! Our first public intimation of this great event was upon entering the dining hall tonight. All unconscious of what is "to be" we direct our steps hither, we press down the stairs — we enter the door — we stop! Bewildered! Astonished! Whence this great light? Has the night turned into day? No! This light is not of the day, and as our amazement subsides we are enabled to perceive that it is real gas light — for the purpose of introducing which those mysterious personages were probably here today — we surely feel very much obliged to them and this obligation is greatly increased upon ascending into the halls to find these also resplendent with a new light. Tomorrow will be Thanksgiving day\(^4\) and we keep thinking how much grandeur this new feature will add to the entertainment in the evening. A large number of guests have been invited and the preparations are nearly all completed. Many of the girls are still at work in Room "A" trimming the evergreen and finishing the mottoes.

Friday, Dec 8th [1865]

Another Thanksgiving day has come and gone. We enjoy these annual festivities breaking like waves from the outside world upon our quiet life; they make our own little world none the less peaceful, but make the blue skies bluer, the sunshine sunnier, and our hearts healthier and

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\(^1\) Horace S. Taylor and his wife Martha Elizabeth Sturtevant Taylor were American missionaries who spent 26 years working in southern India; they visited Lake Erie Seminary during their only trip to the United States before resuming their work in India.

\(^2\) Martha S. Taylor, Class of 1865

\(^3\) Whose inhabitants are not of the Christian, Jewish, or Muslim faith

\(^4\) Apparently Thanksgiving was celebrated late this year to give time for installing the new gas lights.
happier. The entertainment of last evening was quite a success — the pleasantest of all pleasant Thanksgiving parties, many thought and said. The Seminary hall was unusually inviting with its pictures and evergreens; we think we never saw it look better. Among the decorations we noticed a miniature "Rebecca at the well." ¹ The beautiful maidens, the servant of Isaac and other features of that old, old scene, were very artistically represented. Contrary to our usual custom we had devotions in the dining hall immediately after the serving of refreshments, and liked the arrangement exceedingly. It was so much more quiet and pleasant than before, when devotions came later in the evening.

Thursday, Dec 21st [1865]

The great house is still. The last goodbye has been whispered. The last trunk packed on the omnibus, and with yearnings for home, faces we shall not see turn away. How quickly this last term has glided away. The days have been filled with pleasant duties and we hardly missed them as they touched our lips in parting. It has been a good term in many respects — although we think the religious interest has not seemed so deep or general as during the corresponding time of the year last. Last Sabbath evening, meetings were appointed for those who thought they had become Christians during the term, and for the inquiring ones. Several have learned during the months to sit at Jesus's feet, and manifest a spirit of active earnestness — if the older Christians would work with equal earnestness in the withered fields, we might hope for a joyous harvest time. We long to have our hearts roused from their lethargy and filled with holy zeal in the cause of our Blessed Master.

[Spring Term 1866]

Saturday, Jan 5

Tonight closes the week of prayer, and as we were unable to observe it as we wished on account of our duties, many seemed desirous that today should be set apart and devoted especially to prayer. It has been a good day to us, a good day to Christian hearts. Many prayers have arisen from our alters today, and we wait for the spiritual blessings so earnestly desired. It is very quiet through the house tonight — a holy calm seems resting here, a calm and peace which we hope to carry in our hearts for days to come. "Father Hawks" ² is staying with us yet — the form grows more bowed — the steps more feeble, but the mind grasps thought as clearly as ever. He was here a part of last term and during vacation. Education and schools are, as ever, the all engrossing subjects of his life. His efforts this winter have been to effect, if possible, an enlargement of this institution and to procure an endowment. We think his share of the great work is already done and that his "old age" ought to be one of quiet and rest. But rest would perhaps mean death to one of his intellectual strength and energy. He says his mind was never better fitted to work than now.

Jan 19th [1866]

¹ Illustrating how Rebecca spontaneously showed her suitability as a wife for Isaac in Genesis 24.
² Rev. Roswell Hawks (or Hawkes) was a Massachusetts minister who worked with Mary Lyon to raise funds to establish Mount Holyoke, and who was also instrumental in raising funds for Lake Erie Female Seminary.
A week ago little Tommy Irwin, the porter’s child, was attacked with scarlet fever, and tonight the little form is still and cold. He was an interesting child of only two years and quite a pet with us — we shall miss sadly the bright face and pretty child ways, the little voice at our door, the little feet in the hall — we feel so sad for the poor mother — she had already buried five little ones, add this last blow seems to crush her quite — "I did think the good Lord would spare my little Tommy" she sobbed in her great grief. But there is wisdom in all God's ways, and it is pleasant to think He leads us; even when the waves are beating against our souls, we remember His words "when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee" and we are comforted.

Saturday, Jan 23rd [1866]

How can we write of this day — with the tears still choking in our hearts for the good bye we've just been saying? Our beloved Miss Sessions has left us. For weeks we have expected this day, but grew more and more unwilling to give her up. How could we do without her? Who could fill her place? But all our grief and fear could not make it less a fact that she was surely going to leave us. We felt almost hard toward "somebody" for wanting to take from us our best treasure — then we thought of the long years she had worked for us, always devoted, always earnest, and felt rebuked for our selfishness. It was not known through the school that she was to go from us today, though suspicion aroused at devotions was confirmed at Hall exercises. She conducted all through the day with her usual calmness. In the morning she read from the fourth of Philippians, commencing "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord my dearly beloved" and we sang the hymn "Stand up for Jesus." Her remarks were very earnest and will long be remembered by many of us. At the General exercise she met the young ladies alone and after having arranged the seats and disposed of other business matters she told them she must leave them tonight — kindly and calmly she talked to them, exhorting them to be faithful in every duty and strive to make the duties of government and instruction fall as lightly as possible upon the teachers. It was a tearful time for all the girls. Those young hearts cling tenderly to her. Her impartial kindness and interest in all had rendered her beloved by all, and it seemed like losing their best friend to give her up. Long before supper the teachers had all gathered in Miss Session's room — we wondered she could be so cheerful when we were so sad, yet we knew her heart was sadder than ours — that it was her unselfish regard for our feelings that enabled her to maintain such calmness. At the fifteen minutes' bell we had our usual little prayer meeting in Miss Session's bedroom, for the last time perhaps with her, we kept thinking. She conducted the evening devotions as usual, and at ten o'clock started for her home in Mass. She has gone! And our hearts are lonely, so lonely — we cling together like motherless children, wondering what we shall do, and how we shall succeed since the head of the house hold is gone. We feel weak and incompetent of ourselves, but there is One sufficient for all things, and in Him we will put our trust.

Feb 4th [1866]

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1 Isaiah 43:2
2 Principal Lydia Sessions left Lake Erie Seminary to marry Rev. William Woodworth that year.
3 1858 hymn “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus” by George Duffield Jr.
Three weeks have passed since we lost Miss Sessions and while we miss her sadly, miss her every where and in every thing, we have been too busy to think much of our loneliness. The duties of a Principal are shared by the older teachers, Miss Prescott having a general supervision. This new order of things succeeds beyond our expectations, and we strive in all things to make our loss seem as light as possible.

During the last weeks there have been several cases of illness in our family — two young ladies are just recovering from Scarlet fever, and another is still very low with typhoid fever. We feel very anxious about Miss Parker but do not yet lose hope — she is not a Christian, and to think of her so near the borders of the "Dark Valley" without the hope of heaven is sad, so very sad — we think of her and pray for her continually, either that God will spare her young life or fit her to dwell in His kingdom. As yet during all these years the angel of death has never entered our household, and while we pray even this time, also for the sake of this precious soul we may be passed by.

Feb 21st [1866]

Miss Parker is very much better now, and hopes soon to be able to return to her home; we feel that God has indeed heard our prayers for her recovery, and that in His own time He will guide her wandering footsteps into the way of life eternal. There have been no new cases of scarlet fever, and the excitement which its presence here excited is beginning to subside. Anxious fathers and mothers become quite alarmed for their daughters’ safety and occasionally one was sent for — but the panic is over and we cannot be too thankful for this fresh manifestation of God's goodness.

We wonder if the Journal readers are becoming impatient for a word from us. So quickly have the months stepped one with the other, that we scarcely realized how the record was lengthening, and close the pages now feeling that we ought to have done so long before.

In behalf of the Seminary
Mary E. Flanders.

Reports by Sarah E. Dorr dated Sept 19 1866 – Feb 25 1867
Covering fall 1866 through February 1867

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1 Celia A. Parker (1848-1918) of Coldwater, Michigan did not return to complete the school year; in 1868 she married dentist Jefferson Woolley, and (as Cecilia Parker Woolley) became a novelist, a Unitarian minister, and a social reformer. She was president of the Chicago Women’s Club and founded the Frederick Douglass Women’s Club, one of the few interracial women’s clubs in Chicago.

2 Scarlet fever is a streptococcal infection spread by infected people’s coughing and sneezing. Even in the 20th century it remained a leading cause of death in children worldwide.

3 Mary Elizabeth Flanders (1845-1925) graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1865 and joined its faculty for that year’s fall semester, returning to teach 1866-69; she also studied at Oberlin, the Paris Institute, and the University of California-Berkeley; in 1876 she married teacher Frederick Feitshans, and raised two children; she also served as a member of the Illinois State Board of Education 1888-92; her daughter Frederica attended Lake Erie Seminary 1896-97.
Painesville Sept 19th 1866

Dear Friends,

We send you kindly greetings this morning from the Seminary by Lake Erie. If you are not too weary, come with us for a little while into the upper room in the tower, sit down by this wide open window, the air is cool and fresh up here this morning! Look out over the forests to that broad sheet of water lying so still and calm in the morning sun, see how it blends with the sky far to north and west, count the snowy sails that have ventured out from their night moorings in that safe harbor; it is [a] peaceful, restful scene, you will not grow weary of looking at it. Here at the south is the famous Little Mountain, all the one that Northern Ohio can boast of — you would say it is nothing more than a hill — a slight elevation — so we said, who have been accustomed to those grand old Mountains in New England; but when you are told that it is nine hundred feet above the level of the lake, you feel that Little Mountain has a right to its name after all — and then it is such a wondrous place, with its winding caves and deep ravines — but we will not tell you about it for we want to take you out there some pleasant day and surprise you with its beauty. Down here at the right is the village of Painesville, closely shaded by the dense foliage, only the church spires get a gleam of the sunlight.

[Fall Term 1866]

This has been a busy week to us. Our home, that has stood closed and silent during all the summer weeks, has again thrown wide open its friendly doors, and permitted strangers and old friends to enter alike its hallowed halls. A deep shadow rests over us as we come together at the beginning of this new school year. Tidings of our dear Miss Kendall's death¹ have just reached us: we had not thought it possible that one so full of vigor and strength and who, to all human eyes, had the prospect of a long and useful life, should be cut down so suddenly. She had belonged to our Corps of Teachers but a year, but in that time we had learned her value, we found her possessed of a rare and noble spirit, "a heart at leisure from itself,"² brave and strong to do the work of Christ. You at Holyoke knew her worth and loved her as we have done and so ours is a mutual sorrow. We miss her bright cheerful face everywhere, especially when we gather in Chapel for morning Devotions or evening services, that silent Piano speaks to us ever "while we wait with ear and eye for someone gone, who once was nigh."³ She lived so beautifully here it was not strange they wanted her in Heaven.

We welcome to our home and hearts another of the dear Holyoke! How much we are indebted to you for these many gifts! We are glad to have Miss Edwards⁴ with us and the place left vacant by Miss Sessions filled by one so worthy as we know Miss Edwards to be. We believe this healthful climate will give her vigor and strength for her many duties.

¹ Harriet E. Kendall (1843-1866), an 1865 graduate of Mount Holyoke Seminary, had taught at Lake Erie Seminary the 1865/66 school year.
² Anna Laetitia Waring, from her hymn “Father, I Know that All My Life”
³ John Greenleaf Whittier, Snow-Bound: A Winter Idyl (1866) lines 418-419
⁴ Anna Cheney Edwards, M.A. (1835-1930), an 1859 graduate of Mount Holyoke who taught literature there before coming to Lake Erie Seminary as its second principal 1866-68; she returned to Mount Holyoke in 1868, eventually becoming Associate Principal 1872-88; in 1888 she earned her M.A. from University of Vermont; she taught ancient literature, Christian evidences, and, after turning to the study of science, geology.
Sept 15th [1866]

This first Saturday morning will be remembered by those who were present at Devotions: Miss Edwards set before us very clearly what it is to be a good Christian; and then called upon all who thought they had good evidence of being such to rise as witness for Christ. There seemed a larger company than usual and as the Teachers went down and quietly took their names one by one, we could but pray that all these might have their names recorded also in the Book of Life. How kind of our Heavenly Father to send us so many Christians at the very beginning of the year, only forty who do not love Him.

Sept 20th [1866]

We have just seen a letter from Miss Kendall's father telling us more particularly of her death. Miss Edwards read it to the young ladies this afternoon — there are many sincere mourners here for that departed one, many who loved her very tenderly and now cherish precious memories of her: her Father says, "She left sweet assurances of full preparation and readiness for the heavenly state; I have found snatches of poetry and expressions of feeling here and there in her diary which show that she anticipated a change and a joy in view of it. She loved the Seminary, her associates and pupils very dearly, her whole heart was in the work. I said to her, when [she was] almost beyond hearing, Hattie, your Father is still with you. 'I know it, and my Heavenly Father is too.' This was the last we heard as she passed over the river – her end was emphatically peace.” May ours be like hers even if it comes speedily.

Sept. 25th [1866]

The Senior Class have gone to Hudson today with Miss Fisher¹ to examine geological specimens found in ledges there. The class is unusually large this year for us, numbering eighteen. They are all Christians and represent four different denominations; we are glad of this and other indications that the school is not sectarian. Who should come in this afternoon, in her usual quiet-manner, and surprise us all but Miss Blanchard² right from Holyoke. We were glad to shake her friendly hand and bid her welcome, but very sorry that her eyes must be shaded from the pleasant light — she seems to bear the privations cheerfully — we wish she might remain with us many weeks, but she says not and will leave soon for farther west.

Oct 10th [1866]

The first church Presbyterian in this place have recently given Rev. Mr. Hayden³ of Meriden Ct. a unanimous call to become their Pastor, he accepted and this week comes among his new people

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¹ Jeanette Fisher, an 1859 graduate of Mount Holyoke, had taught Mathematics and Science at Lake Erie Seminary since it opened in 1859.
² Elizabeth Blanchard, M.A. (1834-1891) graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1858 and taught there twelve years before become Associate Principal 1872-83 and then Principal 1883-88; she also served as Acting President the first year Lake Erie Seminary became a College 1888-89.
³ Rev. Hiram Collins Haydn (or Hayden) served at the Painesville Presbyterian Church until 1871, when he became Pastor of the First Presbyterian church of Cleveland; he also served as President of Western Reserve College (now Case Western Reserve University) 1887-90, and was a trustee of Lake Erie Seminary 1873-1904.
cordially received by all. Prof Cowles\(^1\) of Oberlin was here yesterday and spoke to us in the afternoon; his subject was prophecy. He has just issued a Commentary on the "Minor Prophets."

There are some indications of the Spirit’s presence in our family, quite a number are asking the way to Christ; those who have been followed here by the prayers of Christian parents and friends are the most easily reached, and usually the first to consecrate themselves to Christ. We trust our Father has many spiritual blessings in store for this year.

Nov 10th [1866]

Mrs. Ingalls,\(^2\) so long a missionary in Burmah, was with us during the Sabbath, she is a woman of rare qualifications for the work which she has devoted her life to; always cheerful and trustful, she loves her work and is happy in it. The girls were exceedingly interested in what she told them of her life there — she speaks with much ease and earnestness and has awakened a deeper interest in missions than has been felt here before; she returns to Burmah in June, and wishes to take with her two or three ladies to assist her in the establishment of schools. Mr. Ingalls was the successor of Dr. Judson\(^3\) and for fifteen years occupied that field when he was called to leave the Christians' service for eternal rest; since that time Mrs. Ingalls has remained there alone, carrying forward the work with much success, she is a brave noble woman. You will be interested in reading her *Ocean sketches of life in Burmah*.\(^4\)

Dec. 4th [1866]

Thanksgiving day came with its usual preparation, and passed, as previous ones, pleasantly. A large company of friends gathered with us in the evening. Miss Parsons\(^5\) from Mass. came during the week to take the position made vacant by Miss Kendall's death. How many the changes that came to us this year, yet God hath kindly directed it all. Prof. Lang Cassels\(^6\) of Hudson commenced his course of lectures on Geology this evening; they will continue through the term — he stands quite in contrast to Prof. Chadbourne\(^7\) of former years at Holyoke: being

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1. Henry Cowles, a Yale graduate, served as a minister before joining the faculty of Oberlin College, first as a professor of Latin and Greek and later of Theology; he edited the *Oberlin Evangelist*; and over the years published 16 volumes of commentary on the Scriptures, donating the profits to the missionary movement.  
2. Mrs. Marilla Baker Ingalls married missionary Rev. Lovell Ingalls in 1850 and joined him in his missionary work in Burma (now Myanmar); following his death in 1856 she continued working as a missionary in Burma. This visit took place during one of only two trips she made back to the United States in her life.  
3. Adoniram Judson Jr. was an American Congregationalist (and later Baptist) missionary who served nearly 40 years in Burma; he was a friend of Shaw Loo, who visited Lake Erie Seminary Sept 23, 1865.  
5. Henrietta Danforth Parsons (1840-ca.1920) was an 1864 graduate of Mount Holyoke who taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1866-68 before marrying William C. Howell in 1869.  
6. John Lang Cassels (1808-1879) emigrated to the U.S. from Scotland as a young man, earning a medical degree in 1834; he first taught at the Willoughby Medical College before joining the faculty of Western Reserve College in Hudson to co-found the Cleveland Medical College (now the medical college of Case Western University) in 1843. He taught chemistry, pharmacy, materia medica, toxicology, and botany, and worked as a geologist for Cleveland industrialists.  
7. Paul Ansel Chadbourne was an American educator and naturalist who served as President of the University of Wisconsin, Williams College, and Massachusetts Agricultural College (later the University of Massachusetts); for twelve years he gave a course of chemical lectures at Mount Holyoke Seminary.
stout and fleshy, a good-natured Scotchman full of wit and humor, with a mind well skilled in all the natural sciences.

Dec. 18th [1866]

Vacation is drawing near. The girls are getting quite merry in their anticipation of home pleasures. Most of the teachers will be absent during the two weeks. Miss Eddy,¹ so long a teacher among the Seneca Indians, will go to visit them again; her interest in that pagan people is very great. We fear sometimes that her self-denying spirit is so ready to do her Master's work [that it] will lead her away from us to them; while this is the spirit we do most earnestly inculcate, yet when it calls upon us to give up our best for others, the test is a severe one.

[Spring Term 1867]

January 4th

We wish all our friends in the East, in the West, and in the distant land of sunrise, a happy, a glad new year! Miss Edwards told us in Devotions this morning that this wishing each other a happy new year implies that all the previous years have not been happy ones, and more, that this new one may be happier and better than any in the past. She told us that the discipline God had in store for us this year was just that which, if improved, would tend to our highest development in mental and spiritual culture; that we must open our souls to receive this training, even though it be severe, for God has doubtless said of each of us, "dig about it and prune it this year also, peradventure it may bring forth fruit."² Our vacation is just over — and from the festive home scenes and the pleasures of the holidays the young ladies return to us — some of them with slowly lingering footsteps, finding it hard to break away from the entreaties of friends to remain with them a few days longer! Quite a number are detained by sickness at home. One to watch by a brother's bedside — another to minister unto the necessities of a sick Mother. We are sorry to have their places vacant in our household, but glad that they can perform such kindly offices as these — and so follow the example of our blessed Lord who came not into the world to be ministered unto but to minister.³

Jan 6th [1867]

Yesterday was our first fast day of the year, that ancient day so long set apart by Christians all over the world for special prayer. How gladly our hearts responded to its call. On Saturday evening, the young ladies as usual were asked to write notes expressing their feelings in regard to the observance of the day. Those little white notes, so neatly folded, breathed a good spirit. Every Christian heart felt the need of such a day and was glad of its near approach. When the day dawned it seemed as if the Spirit of the Lord came down and overshadowed our home. Early the incense began to rise from lowly, prayerful hearts and many a quiet place was sought out and

¹ Cornelia Eddy (1839-1893), an 1859 graduate of Mount Holyoke who taught for Lake Erie Seminary 1865-67; before coming to Lake Erie Seminary she had been teaching at the missionary school in the Cattaraugus Reservation in New York. She later became Principal of Michigan Female Seminary in Kalamazoo.
² Parable of the barren fig tree, Luke 13:7-9
³ Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:28
hallowed by prayer! All the meetings during the day for social prayer were well attended, and there seemed a readiness among the praying ones to offer voluntary prayers. How good those are that come forth spontaneously from the heart, that needs no urging, no asking, no waiting! Such prayers are offered in the spirit and are most effectual in arresting the attention of the thoughtless — and most sure to reach the ear of the Omnipotent One. Mr. Hayden\(^1\) came up and spoke to us a little while in the afternoon, from the passage, "My ways are equal saith the Lord,"\(^2\) showing that the service Christ requires of us is not hard, exacting service, but a delightful one when taken up cheerfully from love to Him. There were no listless inattentive ones that afternoon, but all gave good heed to the spoken word. The end of the precious day came too quickly. We could have asked to have its "moments so rich in blessing” lengthened into hours, that its record need not be closed up so soon. Christian hearts were quickened, revived, strengthened, by this baptism of prayer, and some impenitent ones were reached, who before had resisted all religious impressions.

Jan 16th [1867]

Doubtless you have all heard, long ago, that the good people of Michigan desired to have a Mt. Holyoke Seminary established up in their State. Eight years ago the corner stone of such an institution was laid at Kalamazoo;\(^3\) quietly year by year the work has gone on, until a few months ago the topmost stone was laid amid great rejoicings; then it was furnished and ready for opening, but, where were teachers to be found? Certainly they were essential for its successful commencement. The honored and worthy Alma Mater\(^4\) was sought: it was thought she had some to spare for such an enterprise; she was always ready for every benevolent work; she had sent forth many of her teachers to do pioneer service in this and other lands. There must be one there now to take up and carry forward this new and glorious work in that Western land. But Alma Mater's Corps of Teachers have been thinned somewhat during the year. Our good Mr. Hawks\(^5\) would look frowningly and say, "They have been attracted from a greater to a less good, how shall such calamities be prevented?"

Next they appealed to us: Have you not a brave and strong one to go on up and establish this Mt. Holyoke for us? We thought not, our ranks were just complete, we could not well spare any of ours; but they were not to be refused. They called Miss Fisher by name and invited her to go and undertake this good work. She objected, had many misgivings, but finally was induced to go, taking with her another of our Teachers, Miss Greer,\(^6\) to assist her. Miss Fisher was one of the original six who came out the first year to help establish this Seminary, and through all these eight years has labored most faithfully to bear the burden and endure the heart of these toilsome days; we were sorry to part with her! sad to have these links so long binding us together broken...

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1 Painesville’s new Presbyterian minister Rev. Hiram Collins Haydn (or Hayden) would be a regular visitor to Lake Erie Seminary until 1871, when he became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Cleveland.
2 Paraphrasing Ezekiel 18:25
3 The Michigan Female Seminary, a new ‘daughter’ institution to Mount Holyoke
4 Mount Holyoke
5 Rev. Roswell Hawkes (or Hawks) was a Massachusetts minister who worked with Mary Lyon to raise funds to establish Mount Holyoke, and who was also instrumental in raising funds for Lake Erie Female Seminary.
6 Sarah Almaria Greer, an 1862 graduate of Lake Erie Seminary, first joined the teachers as a temporary replacement early in 1865, but had stayed on; after teaching at the new Michigan Seminary 1867-68 she returned to teach at Lake Erie Seminary 1869-75, and in 1876 married lawyer George E. Treadwell.
one by one! yet the highest benevolence would lead us to say to her, go in the strength of the Lord God, go and lay those foundations in the broad and pure principles of benevolence, make it a true and genuine Mt. Holyoke; let all the arrangements be made according to the pattern shown by Miss Lyon in the Mount and the Lord shall make His blessings to abound toward you more and more. We hear pleasant reports concerning the successful opening of this new school at Kalamazoo. Shall we not rejoice that these schools are being multiplied and that those principles which were first wrought out by the consecrated life and service of Mary Lyon are becoming so widely diffused?

Jan 25th [1867]

As we entered the Dining Hall this evening, we thought the gas burned with unusual brilliancy, all the room looked bright and cheery, the girls chattered merrily as they do after the day duties are done, when suddenly the lights began to grow dim and burn low; then they kindled up brightly again long enough for us to see the faces of our friends sitting opposite, and in an instant more went out entirely, leaving us in deep darkness! There was a quick dropping of spoons, knives, bread, cake, and all around the hall there was a general reaching up to turn off the gas so that the next misfortune might not be suffocation. In a moment the little bell from No. 1 rang its call to order, and Miss Prescott, who presided that evening, said in her calm way, "keep quiet young ladies and we will have some lamps brought in." Those were strange moments, waiting there in the dark, presently the lamps appeared one by one, and the Dining Hall resumed its usual cheerful appearance. What occasioned this strange "freak" of the gas we do not know. Thomas, our good Irishman, said "it was a very cold night and the gas having so far to come from town froze up."²

Feb 8th [1867]

We have mentioned to you the name of Mong Shaw Loo:³ a native of Burmah, who has been in America eleven years, for the purpose of educating himself for the Missionary work among his own people. We have been greatly interested in this foreign boy, he is so intelligent, active and earnest! He has educated himself entirely by his own exertions during these eleven years of hard study. He graduated at Lewisburg, Penna, both in the scientific and theological departments, and is now in the Medical College, Cleveland, where he will soon finish the study of Medicine; then he expects to sail for Burmah in June with Mrs. Ingalls⁴ and other missionaries. He gave us a very interesting lecture Sabbath evening, concerning the religion of Burmah and the changes

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¹ Lake Erie Seminary’s treasurer, steward, and porter; probably Thomas Henry Dwyer [or Dewyer], born in Ireland in 1828, who had come to the U.S. with his wife Mary Brick Dwyer and was living in Painesville by the 1860’s.
² The natural gas could not have frozen, but water inside the gas lines could easily freeze and disrupt the flow of gas.
³ He first visited Lake Erie Seminary Sept 23 1865; Dr. Mong Shaw Loo was born to a Christian Burmese family, and inspired as a boy to become a medical doctor through his friendship with American missionary Adoniram Judson; he worked his way from Burma (now Myanmar) to America as a cabin boy, and spent five years earning a B.A. from Lewisburg (now Bucknell) University in Pennsylvania before coming to Ohio to earn his medical degree at the Cleveland Medical College (the Medical Department of Western Reserve College-now Case Western Reserve University); after returning to Myanmar he worked as a teacher.
⁴ Marilla Baker Ingalls married missionary Rev. Lovell Ingalls in 1850 and joined him in his missionary work in Burma (now Myanmar); after his death in 1856 she continued working as a missionary the rest of her life; she visited Lake Erie Seminary 10 November 1866.
wrought there by Christianity during the last fifty years. It was our regular evening for Monthly Concert, and we were very glad to have a representative from heathen lands\(^1\) with us to stir up in all our hearts a deeper interest in the blessed work. Monday morning, before he left, the young ladies gave him twenty-five dollars as an expression of their good will towards him; he looked much surprised and said, "Not so, young ladies, I came not for money. I came to visit you for my own pleasure and if some day I should see one of you a missionary in Burmah, I shall be doubly repaid." When he goes East in June he intends to visit you at Mt. Holyoke; this may serve to introduce to you our dark-faced brother, but let us assure you that you will find his soul bright with Christ's love.

Feb 18th [1867]

Who ever thought that we could have a tea party or a social at the Seminary? Miss Edwards, always thinking about the happiness of the young ladies and seeking in every way to promote it, said one day, would it not be pleasant for the girls to become better acquainted with their own Ministers while they are here, so that each may feel that her Pastor knows her and has an interest for her, and also to know personally our Trustees, who have done and are still doing so much for us? This suggestion met a ready response from all the Teachers, so we planned to have an old-fashioned tea party for Wednesday evening, to invite the various clergymen and their wives, Trustees and their wives and a few other friends! It was also proposed that we have a little Musical entertainment for the evening, so Miss Parsons,\(^2\) with her usual readiness for every good word and work, arranged and prepared this part of it with great zeal. Our friends came at five o'clock; we had tea at the usual hour of six. No. 1 Table was extended into a very large one, so that all our guests could be seated together. It seemed pleasant indeed to have these good people with us around our family board, and better still to hear their voices uniting with ours in the evening offering of praise and prayers. After Devotions they went up into the Chapel, which had been tastefully decorated during the day by many willing hands. On the platform was a delightful arbor formed of house plants, with many a little bird in his cage half hidden beneath the twining ivy hung beneath the brightly burning gas; small tables and easy chairs were scattered here and there over the room, making it seem most cheerful and inviting. During the evening, the young ladies came down and were introduced to one and another until they were chatting busily in groups all over the room; presently the music broke in upon our sociality; several Duets, Solos and Choruses were played and sung by the girls; we enjoyed most, however, the singing of some of those choice pieces such as "Only Waiting,"\(^3\) "Tears, Too Late" by Miss Parsons' own clear voice. The evening passed quickly. Our guests, as they left us, said, we never had so pleasant an evening at the Sem'y.

Feb. 18th [1867]

For many weeks there has been an increasing religious interest in all the churches in town. The young men's prayer meeting has been a place of peculiar interest; very rarely that a young man has been seen in a prayer meeting in Painesville. This one was established some months ago by

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\(^1\) Whose inhabitants do not practice either the Christian, Jewish, or Muslim faiths

\(^2\) Julia Taylor Parsons (b. 1843), an 1865 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught music at Lake Erie Seminary 1866-69; in 1872 she married Sumner Bodfish.

\(^3\) Possibly Frances Laughton Mace’s 1854 hymn “Only Waiting Till the Shadows”
the Young Men's Christian Association; at first not more than two or three attended, and these at times felt quite discouraged, so much so that they talked of giving up the meeting. But by and by Jesus began to meet with them. He strengthened their faith and encouraged them to continue. Several weeks have passed, and how changed the scene: now they tell us of one hundred and seventy and even eighty being present. Young men from the workshops, counting rooms, and billiard halls have been seen pressing their way with eager feet and anxious hearts to that place of prayer. Many of these have already renounced their former wasted lives, and began the new and better life in Christ. This good work has spread abroad, and [has] been deep and thorough in all the churches. It seems wonderful for Painesville; for many years Jesus has seemed to pass by this place and visit all others around, so we rejoice that in His infinite mercy He has come to save this people from their sins! Many strong, stout hearts have bowed before Him; many who have long trodden the broad road of sin and death until their heads have whitened with age have now turned their feet into the narrow way and lay hold of the eternal life.

Rev. Mr. Goodwin\(^1\) of Columbus has been assisting Mr. Hayden in the Presbyterian church during the past two weeks. Mr. Goodwin delivered our Anniversary address last summer, and the few days that he and Mrs. Goodwin were with us were those of great privilege, we thought. They manifested a deep interest in the Seminary, and we felt that they were our trusted friends. Since he has been in town this time, he has been very solemn and impressive; quite a number are seriously interested for their soul's welfare. There are now only fifteen who remain the enemies of Christ. One dear girl, who long ago consecrated herself to Christ, has been for many months in thickest spiritual darkness, with no ray of Christ's love to gladden her soul, giving up all hope, and in her despair returning again to the meeting of the impenitent. All the school have been moved to pray for her, and have given to her their tenderest sympathies. During the past week, this poor suffering soul has been led into the brightness of Christ's love; how sweet the rest to her! Her weary doubts have ceased, her "tossing soul found anchorage, and steadfast peace."\(^2\) Her lips have been unmoved in prayer for more than a year; now they speak forth the praise of her Redeemer, and our Freddie is joyful in Christ.

Feb 25th [1867]

Yesterday (the Sabbath) was a most precious day; the presence of the Holy Spirit was even more manifest in our family. We had only to stand still and see the glory of the Lord. Those that we looked upon as being scornful and hardened in heart, that we could not reach them or persuade them to come to Christ, were sought out by the deep searching spirit. Mr. Goodwin spoke to us in the afternoon; his subject was "Tests of Christian character," speaking from the words, "If any man has not the spirit of Christ he is none of His."\(^3\) Some, who had long borne the name of Christ, felt during the sermon that perhaps they never had the true spirit of Christ, and therefore were not His; during that hour impressions were received which cannot soon or easily be forgotten. As we passed out of Chapel we found several young ladies waiting to ask if they might go in and speak with Mr. Goodwin personally; they did so, others followed, and soon all of the

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\(^1\) Rev. Edward (sometimes given as Edwin) Payson Goodwin, pastor of the Congregational Church in Columbus, Ohio 1860-67 before being lured away by the First Congregational Church of Chicago; he was a fiery abolitionist and anti-Copperhead preacher who often visited the Union troops in Ohio during the Civil War.

\(^2\) Horatius Bonar, “Is this All?” from *Hymns of Faith and Hope* (1862)

\(^3\) Romans 8:9
impenitent ones but two came down to ask of him, "What they should do to be saved?" That was a wonderful hour; just at the going down of that Sabbath sun, the voice of prayer was heard in every part of the house. All of the section had prayer meetings by themselves in various rooms. The Teachers also were praying, and the burden of every prayer seemed to be that those souls, in their struggle for eternal life, might be able to lay hold of Christ by a true and living faith. Later in the evening we found that our prayers had been heard, that these inquiring ones were rejoicing in a new-found friend, even the friend of sinners. All but those two: how we prayed and wept for them! Would they not be gathered in this good harvest time, so that this household would be one in Christ?

March 1st [1867]

Yesterday was a day of peculiar rejoicing to us, our thanks-giving day we called it: The last Thursday in February, you all know what a blessed day this has been to all our Seminaries! We felt sure that we were remembered by you, and from our places of prayer many earnest petitions went up to God in your behalf. Miss Edwards at Devotions gave us [a] subject for prayer during the day, and told us that, while we rejoiced over the harvest work of the Holy Spirit in our family, we must also seek for a truer consecration of ourselves to Christ and His work. The meetings were fully attended, and a spirit of free earnest prayer pervaded them all! Mr. Green¹ from the Methodist church spoke to us in the afternoon. You will be surprised to know that those two mentioned before passed through that door of prayer and were not reached — not saved. Our faith was disappointed but not shaken: God's promises are sure, we will trust Him. We must now bid you farewell, praying that you all may have the constant presence of the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of Christ, day by day.

On behalf of the Seminary,
Sara E. Dorr

Feb 4 1868 report by Mary E. Flanders
Covering the 1867 Anniversary through February 1868

Lake Erie Seminary

February 4th 1868

Dear Friends:

[July 1867 Anniversary (Commencement)]

Many weeks have come and gone since the early Autumn unclasped this new volume of school life, but before we open it to your reading, we would turn again to the closing pages of the last year's history. The summer term came with all its sweet beauty and gladness of material life and

¹ Rev. John M. Greene (b. 1833) was Painesville’s Methodist minister 1865-67; before coming to Painesville he had preached in several Pennsylvania communities and served as an Army Chaplain early in the Civil War; he left the ministry in 1868.
sped quickly away, as seasons of inspiration ever do. On golden wings came the last and busiest
week of all the year, bringing as usual many kind friends to share our hospitality and to see the
crowning of our labors. Though so full of anxiety and care, those last days were bright with
success. The examinations were generally creditable, and we thought ourselves pardonable for
any manifestations of pride in our senior class — even for other reasons than that of its being the
largest class\(^1\) that had ever received honors from Lake Erie Sem'y. President Loomis\(^2\) of
Allegheny College delivered the Anniversary address – subject: "The Dignity of Labor," and Mr.
Hayden, the new pastor of the Congregational Church\(^3\) in Painesville, gave the charge to the
graduating class. Very earnest and beautiful were the parting truths presented to them — making
life seem wonderful and holy in its possibility of dignity and grandeur — and as we looked into
those earnest young faces and saw written there prophecies of a noble life, we felt as never
before the sweet rewards of service.

[Fall Term 1867]

During the vacation many hands were busily at work to brighten the old home and make
welcome the coming of those whose presence was to be gladness and joy within its halls. Nature,
too, wove her kindliest smile. Summer beauty still lingered in the forests, and there was heard
not a whisper of parting in the deep green that clothed the lawn so royally. And, when again
came the beginning of another year of busy life and work, somehow we thought the old home
had never before seemed half so dear and beautiful. Many a delighted exclamation was heard as
the young ladies first entered their rooms and discovered the white walls and freshly painted
furniture; it seemed almost as if some good fairy with transforming wand must have wrought the
changed appearance so unexpected and delightful. All was air and bright, and when at last the
carpets were down, pictures hung, books arranged, etc., the rooms all seemed so cozy and home-
like that [we] had little fear of our sunlight being darkened by sorrowful faces that should tell of
homesick hearts — and we were not disappointed.

Among those who were to come back to us, we watched in vain for the bright young face of
Emma Grandin, and soon we knew that she would never be with us more. She had gone from us
with the happiest anticipations for the vacation; had returned from a pleasant excursion on the
lakes which she had taken with some friends and, after an illness of but a few hours, God called
her to Himself. The earthly melody of her glad young life was hushed — as we trust only to
swell in sweeter harmonies the heavenly chorus. She had been with us three years, and during the
last year had given assurance of a hope that we trusted would make her life earnest and noble;
but they had need of her in Heaven, and took her from us.

We had anticipated a smaller school this year, having advanced the standard of scholarship
required for admission in order to diminish the preparatory class so that all might enter the junior
department before the close of the year. Many applications were received that could not be

\(^1\) 18 students graduated in 1867.
\(^2\) George Loomis had been President of Wesleyan Female College in Wilmington, Delaware, but due to his support
for the Union cause he accepted the presidency at Alleghany College in Meadville, Pennsylvania in 1860; his
support for women’s education was such that he worked to make Alleghany coeducational by 1870.
\(^3\) Painesville’s Presbyterian church had now become a Congregational church.
accepted, thus rendering the proportion of new scholars considerably less than usual.¹ However the faces that smiled into ours were so bright and interesting, so good to look upon, that we soon ceased to think with a sense of loneliness of the vacant seats at hall and table, or of the desolate fourth floor whence came no more sound of voices and the echo of footsteps. The senior class, though not as large as that of the last year, still was larger than that of any other year before, numbering fifteen — and one too that gave promise of much honor [to] itself and its Alma Mater.

The Autumn was a glorious one, and teaching us what a grand sweet poem life ought to be if tuned in harmony with Nature's measures. Many were the days when

"Through every fiber of the brain,
Through every nerve, through every vein,
We felt the electric thrill — the touch
Of life that seemed almost too much."²

Days when earth seemed to touch very closely upon heaven; when the veil of humanity seemed to hang less heavily before the soul — and all nature seemed voiceful with the name and being of God. Patiently we conned our lessons from the written page while the beautiful hours sped by — but when the tasks were done, we went forth with the thought of the poet:

"I grant to the wise his meed
But his yoke I will not brook
For God taught ME to read —
He lent me the world for a Book."³

We had many active pleasures too. There were pleasant rides to the ever delightful Little Mountain; quiet hours upon the lake shore; the Geological expedition to Thompson ledges,⁴ a place almost as famous and wonderful as the mountains; and then every day there were numerous croquet grounds to furnish pleasant healthful exercise for the recreation hours. The "melancholy days"⁵ were not melancholy to us, but rich with beautiful life and holy inspiration. We loved them as a soulful friend from whom we graved to part, and we had no glad welcome for the dreary winter that came at last, hushing the rustle of the leaves in the forest, stealing the smiles of the patient flowers, and freezing up all the sweet breath of the lingering Autumn. Yet we knew that there was no dreary life, no Winter time to the heart resting in God, and so we grew to be on better terms with the old Norseman and ceased to mourn the beautiful dead life, knowing that it would rise glorified at the Spring time resurrection.

Thus far in the year there have been but few events to make, by their occurrence, even ripples on the surface of our quiet life. Early in the Autumn we had a farewell visit from our old friend

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¹ This measure cut the student population almost by half, from 151 in 1866/67 to 79 in 1867/68.
² Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “A Day of Sunshine” (published 1864)
³ Jean Ingelow, “Dominion” from A Story of Doom, and Other Poems (1867)
⁴ A site with impressive ledges cut out of sandstone/quartz conglomerate 15 miles east of Lake Erie Seminary.
⁵ William Cullen Bryant, “The Death of the Flowers” (1825)
Mong Shaw Loo, the young man who had completed his studies of Medicine and Theology and was now prepared to return to his native country. He seemed buoyant with hopeful, ambitious life, and with heartfelt earnestness we bade him God speed to his beloved Burma — to the dark-browed maiden waiting to become his bride, and to the great and good work of which his energy and ability seemed prophetic. In October we had a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler — lately from Eastern Turkey — who had come to America to seek helpers to return with them to their mission among a people dwelling in a land rendered of interest to every intelligent mind by its associations with the earliest history of mankind. We listened with peculiar interest to all that Mr. Wheeler told us of the Armenians, of the establishment of missions among them, and of their gradual elevation from the depths of degradation and darkness, remembering that this very land, over which the shadows had gathered so deeply, had been the cradle of the human race. One evening Mrs. Wheeler entertained the young ladies two or three hours by descriptions of the Armenian women and their life, and also told them much about the Seminary for girls at Harpoot. All seemed to enjoy their little visit with us very much, and we felt that seeing and hearing these earnest workers fresh from their labor had given us an intelligent and abiding interest in their work. Perhaps too, some of us, in the deep silence of our hearts, heard as never before the cry of perishing souls, and the voice of the Master calling to the ripened harvests. Still later we were favored with a visit from another missionary — Mrs. Muzzy — lately from the Madura mission and formerly of Ceylon. Her account of the customs, traditions, and religion of the Hindoos was truly interesting, and, as she told us of her own life among them, we felt that such work as hers, requiring such devotion and self-abnegation, such courage and strength, must more than any other work yield its own rich reward of blessedness.

Thanksgiving day came to us as usual, though it did not bring the usual observances. Instead of the old time custom of giving an entertainment to invited guests, we decided to have a quiet social time by ourselves, and entertain our friends from the village in small parties at other times. The day was a leisurely one and glided pleasantly into evening, when the parlors were lighted and the young ladies came down from their rooms. Soon the chapel was thrown open and we were invited in to be entertained for an hour or more by charades — tableaux — pantomimes etc., superintended by the senior class; considering the impromptu character of the entertainment, it was really good and quite enjoyable. About nine, refreshments were served in the parlors consisting of oysters, cakes, fruits, nuts, etc., and so the day passes happily away, bringing real restful enjoyment to all.

A few weeks since father Hawks, who has been with us since the commencement of the year,

1 Dr. Mong Shaw Loo travelled from Burma (now Myanmar) to gain an education in the U.S. and had just completed eleven years study, earning a B.A. from Lewisburg (now Bucknell) University, and a medical degree at the Cleveland Medical College (now the Medical Department of Case Western Reserve University); he previously visited Lake Erie Seminary on 8 February 1867.
2 Rev. Crosby H. Wheeler D.D. and his wife Susan Brookings Wheeler traveled with their young daughter from Maine to Harput, Turkey, to teach in a theological seminary educating clergymen for the Armenian Evangelical Church; they worked there for the next 40 years.
3 Mary Ann Capell Muzzy had left Quincy, Illinois in 1845 to work as a missionary in Ceylon before marrying Rev. Clarendon Fay Muzzy (1804-1878) in 1848 and joining in his work at the Madura mission until 1856; after returning to the U.S. they did missionary work with a remnant of Mohican Indians living in Connecticut.
4 Rev. Roswell Hawks [or Hawkes] (1788-1870) was a Massachusetts minister who worked with Mary Lyon to raise funds to establish Mount Holyoke, and who was also instrumental in raising funds for Lake Erie Female Seminary.
had a slight attack of paralysis. For some time we were quite anxious about him, and feared his earthly life and work were soon to end, but after a time he seemed to recover from the shock, and now plans with all the old interest for the promotion of the cause that has absorbed the devotion of his life. Still, the bowed form and the faltering footsteps tell us that it can be but a little way farther down the hill side to the borders of the spirit land.

[Spring Term 1868]

After sixteen weeks of uninterrupted school life the holidays came and vacation. Then the great house was closed until the two short happy weeks shortened and we be gathered back to the old life. Old Time, said to possess such a remorseless disposition, certainly gave us no occasion to think better of him, and after a few fresh breaths of life from the outer world, we were again at our work digging for the riches of knowledge. And now the Winter is gliding quickly by — bringing even to us in our renunciation of the world such pleasures as the stern hearted monarch generally grants his subjects. There have been many affectionate days when the sun smiling lovingly upon the fair robed earth has made us dream of summer beauty. The sleighing has been fine much of the time, and many merry rides we have taken on pleasant Wednesday afternoons. There have been lectures too in the village by eminent men, which those who wished have been permitted to attend — proving to many of us a source of real soul enjoyment and mental profit. And so we find in the world and life about us enough of beauty, enough of earnest work and inspiration to noble living, to make all the days sweet with glory.

In behalf of the Seminary
Mary E. Flanders

Reports by Ellen C. Parsons dated Jan 25 1869 – May 1870
Covering fall 1868 through May 1870

Painesville,

Jan 25, 1869

Dear Friends,

[Fall Term 1868]

If you had been present at the opening of our school year in September last, we fear that, though in the old home, you would have felt yourselves strangers. Not strangers in the evergreen-lined avenues, under the oaks and the maples, on the lawns; not in the dear familiar grove, with its crimsoning oaks and yellowing chestnuts and beaches; not by the purling brook that faithful ripples and flows for the cheer of every newcomer; no strangers in the old hall, Chapel, Reading Room, Library, or Tower; but you would have missed old faces everywhere, and upon the platform the change was most marked of all. Miss Edwards was not here. She had resigned her position of Principal at the close of the last year, and though greatly exhausted by over-work had
gone back to be a comfort and strong support to the teachers at Mt. Holyoke. Miss Dorr\(^1\) and Miss Eddy\(^2\) were resting at their homes. Miss Fisher\(^3\) and Miss Smead\(^4\) as you already know had gone to Kalamazoo to build up that new Mt. Holyoke in the West.\(^5\) But Miss Prescott\(^6\) was at her post, the mainspring of the Domestic Department. Rooming with her in No. 7 was Miss Julia Parsons,\(^7\) planning the music classes, and their faces and pleasant parlor, with its blossoming plants and climbing ivy would have seemed to you natural and home-like. Miss Bentley\(^8\) and Miss Lawrence\(^9\) were in 16. Miss Flanders,\(^10\) whose journals have made her name familiar to you, was in 35, and with her one you will recall of the class of ’64, Miss Ellen Fisher.\(^11\)

Be introduced to the new occupants of No. 1., Miss Evans and Miss Lizzie Ballantine. Many Missionary friends, who have delightedly read Holyoke Journals for several years past, do not need an introduction to Miss Evans,\(^12\) and many visitors to the gymnasium there will very easily recall the slight figure at the head of those classes which kept such perfect time with dumb bell and wand. They have spared her temporarily from Holyoke; Painesville [wishes] that it may be for always.

Miss Ballantine,\(^13\) you have already guessed, is the second daughter of the dear Missionary family at Ahmudnagar\(^14\) and long time a valued teacher at Holyoke. These all hold together and the wheel is started, the year begun.

Our friends, you were praying, were you not, that strengths might be given according to our day; that the new hands might be fitted for their work. God heard your prayers and brought us safely through the difficulties that beset the way. There were about seventy scholars, of whom fifteen are our Senior class, and among the forty Juniors a considerable number are younger, and so less

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1. Sarah E. Dorr (1836-1915) had been one of the original teachers; she would not return to Lake Erie Seminary.
2. Cornelia Eddy taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1865-67.
5. Michigan Female Seminary
6. Lucinda Tucker Prescott (1829-1904), an 1853 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-95.
7. Julia Taylor Parsons, an 1865 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught music at Lake Erie Seminary 1866-69
8. Luette P. Bentley (1841-1922) attended Mary Bronson’s preparatory classes before joining Lake Erie Seminary’s first class in 1859, and after graduating in 1865 she immediately joined the faculty, teaching at the Seminary (and later College) until her retirement in 1909. In addition to teaching physiology and hygiene, she served as Associate Principal 1878-98 and Dean 1898-1909.
9. Martha Elizabeth Lawrence (1842-1928) was an 1864 graduate of Lake Erie Seminary and served as its Latin teacher 1866-1909.
10. Mary Elizabeth Flanders graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1865 and joined the faculty for that year’s fall semester, returning to teach 1866-69
12. Mary A. Evans (1841-1921) had graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1860 and immediately joined its faculty; in 1868 Judge Hitchcock convinced her to become the new Principal of Lake Erie Seminary, where she remained until her retirement in 1909. In addition to her administrative duties she taught Ethics and Art History; her leadership and high expectations for her students defined Lake Erie Seminary in the 19th century.
13. Elizabeth Darling Ballantine (1838-1912) was born in India to a missionary family; after graduating from Mount Holyoke in 1857 she taught there 1860-69 (except for her brief stay at Lake Erie Seminary) before marrying Rev. Charles Harding and returning to India to pursue missionary work there.
14. Elizabeth’s parents, Rev. Henry Ballantine and Elizabeth Darling Ballantine, served as missionaries in Ahmednagar, India 1835-65; her sister Mary graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1855, as did her sister Julia in 1862.
mature girls than used to come here before; the standard of the scholarship was lowered.\(^1\) One of Miss Evans's plans for the school was to make the Composition Department a separate one and to take charge of this. Miss Ellen Parsons,\(^2\) of the Class of '63 at Holyoke, arrived about the middle of this term, soon after Miss Ballantine was obligated to return to Holyoke to fulfill a previous engagement there, and in this time of our necessity Miss Greer,\(^3\) one of the old staff of teachers here kindly came to our relief.

It was one mild night in November soon after the Presidential election\(^4\) that we joined all good Republicans in making famous celebration. The gas was turned on everywhere and busy feet went up stairs and down till lamps and candles were glowing brightly in every front window of our big house. The flag dropped gracefully over the front entrance and Chinese lanterns hanging on the evergreens here and there over the lawn made a weird fantastic picture. The special entertainment of the evening consisted in our ride about town to see the private buildings, finely illuminated as many were, but most of all to visit the Park, which had been changed to fairy land. Oh 'twas wonderful! Banners waved everywhere. Gen. Grant, in engraving and photograph, looked down benignly from a dozen windows at once, fanciful mottos adorned posts and wall, and multitudes of Chinese lanterns, red, white and blue, with all sorts of devices of star and eagle, encircled the whole Park, covered the trees and hung a few inches apart on a long line from the top of the liberty pole to the ground. It was like stepping into some gorgeous Eastern tale, like an Arabian Night story, but next morning when we beheld the place silent and deserted, it seemed most like a dream.

Some of us, accustomed to the New England Thanksgiving festival, were rejoiced to find it is not ignored here in Northern Ohio as in some parts of the state, and the Union morning service and big turkeys at dinner had in them something of the traditional flavor. The afternoon was devoted mainly to preparation for the evening, for it had been proposed among the young ladies to dress in costume and entertain ourselves in the Chapel. So friends, if you had stepped in upon us there you should have been introduced to ladies of a century ago, in trains and ruffs and powdered hair; to queens, peasants and flower girls; but the strong-minded woman of today would have introduced herself, and, leaning upon the handle of her umbrella, presented a petition for "Woman Suffrage" which she would have urged you to sign; and you would have needed that no one should point out the unmistakable, "Miss Grecian Urn"\(^5\) who with commendable self-sacrifice devoted herself to showing us how it is done. Thus merrily the evening passed, and the next afternoon we were all the better prepared to take up our studies, for this little resting period.

The term of sixteen weeks that looked so very long in the beginning, drew near its close as such always do. It had not been entirely fruitless of good in spiritual things. Of about twenty who came among us without a hope in Christ, six had one after another found themselves lost sinners without Him, and, as we hope, became penitent children through Him. Just before the close of

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\(^1\) Raising the entrance standards for new students the year before had cut enrollment nearly by half
\(^2\) Ellen C. Parsons (1845-1899), an 1863 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1868-75 (she is the author of this journal entry); in 1876 she married Albert A. Lyman.
\(^3\) Sarah Almaria Greer, an 1862 graduate of Lake Erie Seminary, first joined the teachers as a temporary replacement early in 1865, but stayed on; after teaching at the new Michigan Seminary 1867-68 she returned to teach at Lake Erie Seminary 1869-75, and in 1876 married lawyer George E. Treadwell.
\(^4\) Ulysses S. Grant had just been elected President.
\(^5\) Apparently a parody of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
the term, Mr. Douglas of the Baptist Mission in Southern India\(^1\) visited in the place and to our
great satisfaction conducted a Sabbath afternoon service in our Chapel. It did our heart good to
listen to him. In a clear, interesting style he told us of his work in India, but more the work [to be
done] there. Many of us thought we never heard the condition of the women of that land so
forcibly explained and illustrated, and the call to go to their relief made more necessitous. The
next night we asked a few of our friends, chiefly ministers and their wives, to take tea with us,
and invited the Senior class to spend the evening with them in the parlor. Mr. Douglas was the
center of attention here. However we scattered, we were sure to find ourselves again in a circle
about him listening to his singing in Telagu, or to long, delightful stories about India, He amused
the young ladies very much by telling them as he shook hands, that he was looking for the
"Missionary grip."

Arrangement has been made for public examinations in the last day of the term, so as to avoid
pressure at Spring Reviews. Mr. Douglas, his good friend Mr. Sykes, pastor of the Baptist
Church, and Mr. Hayden of the Congregational Church, constituted the small but appreciative
audience, outside of the school that listened to Algebra, Geology, Theology, which, sandwiched
with compositions and Music, followed one another through the day. The last composition
closed by wishing us all a Merry Christmas, the school sang "we're going home tomorrow"\(^2\) and
with the last note we felt the burden of the term rolled from our shoulders. A number anticipated
the words of the Chorus and went home that same night, for which we were very thankful when
we rose the next day and found the greatest storm of the season upon us. By noon the last had
gone and Miss Prescott and Miss Julia Parsons were left to keep watch and ward for two weeks.

[Spring Term 1869]

Not at all like this wild, stormy day was the one on which we came together two weeks later, Jan.
6th. We marked the kind care taken of us all the more because rough weather followed, which
would have delayed some of us if it had come a day earlier. The teachers found a great pleasure
waiting them in the arrival of Miss Julia Ballantine\(^3\) to take her sister's place. She was known and
loved by some of us at Holyoke, and her name was open sesame to all the hearts that had become
attached to Miss Lizzie.

Another great pleasure, and partially an unexpected one, was the reformation Santa Claus had
wrought in our Reading Room. Or, since the mystery of that benevolent myth is only held
nowadays by the children, the change kind friends in Painesville had effected for our Christmas
gift — O the fresh paint! The new light paper, the dark green carpet! The papers had been put on
file against the wall last term, the long table was removed and a small round one for the
dictionaries occupied the middle of the floor. Mr. Avery\(^4\) had sent photographs of Beecher,\(^5\)

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1 Rev. Francis A. Douglass and his wife were Baptist missionaries in Ongole, Andhra Pradesh, India 1855-65.
2 Hymn by Sophia T. Griswold, to music by Philip P. Bliss
3 Julia Ann Ballantine (b.1841) was born in India like her sister Elizabeth, and graduated from Mount Holyoke in
1862; she married Congregational minister William Greenwood in 1874.
4 Charles A. Avery, probably the wealthiest resident of Painesville, was one of Lake Erie Seminary’s founders and a
board member.
5 Henry Ward Beecher, Congregationalist clergyman, social reformer, abolitionist, and speaker; in 1875 he became
the subject of a highly publicized adultery trial.
Theo. Cuyler,¹ and others to adorn the walls, and Mrs. & Mr. Storrs,² who has shown a marked friendliness for us before, now gave two large and lovely hanging baskets for the windows. The teachers afterwards secured one of Rogers' statuettes, "The Country Post Office,"³ as their gift for this room, and now we think you would call it [a] very attractive place. We, ourselves, take immense comfort in it, and hope it will be an educating and refining influence in more than one way. We are grateful to these friends who have thus remembered us and to Mr. Hayden, who originated the plan. Grateful, too, are we for the kind words he often speaks for us in his pulpit and out of it, and for the prayers he offers in our behalf and solicits others to offer for us.

The first Monday in the new year had been observed as a day of prayer in the Churches of Painesville. In the Congregational Church there had been a marked quickening among Christians, and prayer-meetings were held every morning, which we found it delightful to attend when possible. Through the first term recess meetings had generally been well attended; the young ladies had listened attentively to Miss Evans's earnest words at our daily Devotions and to the different ministers who had held Sabbath service with us; but we felt that we had great need of the Holy Spirit in our midst, and looked forward to our first Fast day "with earnest prayer and strong desire." We set apart the second Monday after our return for this purpose. The Sabbath before was a good and quiet day; we took it as a promise of blessing to come. Several of the Senior Class said they wanted the day blessed to their own souls and felt it would be so. We, too, felt that God would remember us, and, when we saw the thoughtful faces at our family Devotions, were ready to praise Him for this indication. Miss Evans read the 51st Psalm and gave out the hymn

"With broken heart and contrite sigh
A trembling sinner, Lord, I cry;" etc.⁴

She drew our attention to facts connected with the establishment of this day of prayer, made appointments for meetings through the day, and gave the usual directions for the observance of it. At eleven o'clock Mr. Hayden met us for a short service in the Chapel. In the afternoon Miss Evans held a meeting in the same place. She read Miss Fisher's account⁵ of Nestorian Sarah's request that they might have "a day to care for their souls.” She spoke very earnestly and appealingly upon the passage, "To-day if ye will hear his voice,”⁶ dwelling with emphasis upon each of the first four words. It was a very solemn meeting. We felt that we would take off our shoes when standing on such holy ground. Throughout the day we gathered at appointed hours in

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¹ Theodore L. Cuyler, a leading Presbyterian minister and religious writer of the day.
² Rev. Henry M. Storrs of Cincinnati, who had delivered the address for Lake Erie Seminary’s first Anniversary in 1860.
³ John Rogers' plaster sculptures depicting everyday scenes of American life were enormously popular in the 19th century; his 1863 sculpture “The Country Post Office: News from the Army” depicts an emotionally-charged Civil War era scene of a woman anxiously waiting as the postmaster examines an official letter for her that he has just drawn from his mailbag.
⁵ Presumably a letter from Jeanette Fisher, a former teacher at Lake Erie Seminary who was now Principal of Michigan Female Seminary in Kalamazoo; “Nestorian Sarah” would be Mount Holyoke alumna and missionary Mrs. Sarah J. Foster Rhea, who worked for decades at the Nestorian Mission in Oroomiah, Persia (now Urmia, Iran); Mount Holyoke teachers and alumnae had taken a special interest in this mission since their alumna and fellow teacher, Fidelia Fisk, had gone to work there 1843.
⁶ Hebrews 3:7 and 3:15
the Reading Room. The subject of one prayer meeting was "The Conversion of the World"; another "The Church of God"; another "our Home Friends," at which written requests were presented; and through the day we remembered what Miss Fisher had said, "The more you pray for others, the more you will pray for yourselves." But when night came we gathered in Sections and the hearty prayer was offered again and again that God would bless this family as He has in days past. The day was greatly blessed to Christian hearts. We had reason to think some wondering ones came back to their first love and young Christians were confirmed in the good faith they had chosen.

March 4th, 1869 Inauguration Day

Our thoughts have traveled with yours, dear friends, to Washington, the central, attracting point in the country today. Like you we have imagined the scenes in its thronged streets, at the Capitol, at the Inauguration ball tonight. Like you we have been thinking of the past, remembering this day four years ago: looking forward hopefully to the new Administration. Miss Evans reminded us this morning of God's goodness to us as a people, upon what foundations the stability of a government must rest, and of our duty to pray for the incoming Chief Magistrate and his counselors. We held a pleasant meeting for this object before dinner.

To go back to last month. Gen. Howard lectured in Painesville under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A., and we had the unexpected privilege of entertaining him. All the school went out in the evening to hear him upon his experiences in the South and the next morning he spoke to us at Devotions, not about war or the Freedmen but the work of his Master and ours. He talked [in] an appropriate way upon God's plan in our lives. How thankful we were to shake that good left hand and receive such instruction for this life. For half an hour after, he met the young ladies informally, shook hands with them, spoke of those friends of theirs he had known in the army, and told war stories. Would you like an unpublished anecdote of this unostentatious Christian man? He was preparing to go to the train and Dea. House was assisting him to put on his overcoat, saying at the same time "it was a privilege to do it for one who had given so much to his country!" "Thank you," said the General, "but don't do it just for me. Help any poor fellow who has been out in the service. If he lies drunk in the gutter, pick him up and tell him to go home and not drink any more, and," turning to us, "keep doing so; keep doing so." The last week in Feb. we had a snow storm — a commonplace event enough some winters, but extraordinary this year. For six weeks the ground has been quite bare, and latterly the sun smiled down warmly; the roads were dry; the full bubbling brook hurried on its way towards the Lake; the boys played marbles on the sidewalks; adventurous bluebirds and robins sang everywhere; and a few inexperienced Spring Beauties were found budding in the grove. Encouraged by all these signs we fancied spring had come, when lo! this great storm. The boys abandoned their marbles to take a sleigh ride; an icy roof hushed the voice of the brook; the birds beat a masterly retreat; and one shudders to think of the Beauty buds’ fate.

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1 Ulysses S. Grant’s inauguration as the 18th U.S. President
2 Gen. Oliver Otis Howard, known as the “Christian General” for his basing policy on his deeply held religious beliefs; after the Civil War he was placed in charge of the Freedmen’s Bureau, with the mission of integrating freed slaves into Southern society and politics.
3 Howard had lost his right arm from battle wounds.
[March 23rd 1869]

Tuesday the 23rd ult., we carried out a plan that has long been under consideration, viz., to invite the friends of the young ladies to a little evening entertainment, half literary, half musical. We had a social chat in the public rooms till about 10 o'clock, when Miss Evans led the way to the Chapel where seats were arranged, and for an hour a pleasant variety of good music and Compositions considerably assisted in its flight. We were assured on every hand that this kind of entertainment had given great satisfaction and were urged to repeat it as often as possible.

Fast day, we trust, found many hearts waiting for it. Miss Evans read again the 51st Psalm at Devotions, explained the purpose of that day, and entreated the Lord for a spirit of supplication to fall on us. At eleven o'clock, Mr. Hayden\(^1\) conducted a service in the Chapel. He read for us the 12th Chap. of Eccles. and the last part of the second Chap. of Joel. He commenced by telling us that whatever interests us interests him, and of his great desire that this day might be blessed to us. He unfolded reasons for this observance, especially dwelling upon this one that, as the influence of educated minds is so much greater than others, so they will do greater service or greater harm to the cause of Christ. He illustrated by comparing the work of two educated men living the same time, Adoniram Judson and Theodore Parker.\(^2\) He urged us not only to meditate but to pray and to bring "large requests" unto God. The time for contemplation for Madame Guyon\(^3\) and Thomas á Kempis\(^4\) is past; times for being saved ourselves but not caring to take others with us are past. In these days the Church will utilize everything for herself. Boards, conventions, associations all bear witness to that. It is a great thing for the person to be saved; even to be saved so as by fire — a great thing for the person, but now-a-days that is not [of] so much consequence to the Church. She wants something more. It is her great concern what quality of Christians her members are. He went on to say that one quality which all times demand of Christians is constancy, and illustrated its nature by our relations to our friends. We are not fickle towards our Mothers. Why should we be towards Christ? We sang

"How sweet and awful is the place
With Christ within the doors."\(^5\)

and he lead us in earnest prayer. He was not well that day and we felt his coming a great kindness. We believe his words were good seed sown in good ground. As Miss Evans said, he can always put his hand at once on the pulse of the school. In our various meetings through the day we prayed for all schools and colleges, but especially for the dear kindred schools in this land and on Missionary ground. It was a source of strength that was wanting to us on our first day of prayer, to know that so many Christians were keeping that day with us, and so many prayers for us would rise to heaven from places far away. The Middle Class were, as a whole,

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1. Rev. Hiram Collins Haydn (or Hayden), Painesville’s Congregational minister.
2. Judson devoted his life to spreading the Christian faith to heathens as a missionary in Burma, whereas Parker was an American Transcendentalist and Unitarian minister who did not accept the concept of the Trinity - a destructive kind of Christian from Rev. Haydn’s point of view.
3. Jeanne Guyon was a 17\(^{th}\) century French mystic who advocated engaging in constant prayer throughout the day.
4. Thomas á Kempis was a 15\(^{th}\) century German-Dutch priest who wrote *Imitation of Christ*, one of the best known books on Christian devotion.
5. Isaac Watts, “How Sweet and Aweful Is the Place” (1707)
more awakened than any other, but it was a day of some progress among all, and at night one or two ventured to hope that they had found Christ for the first time. There are now but five left in our family who have no hope whatever for themselves. Two of these expect to be Seniors next year and we are burdened for them.

Monday, March 22nd. [1869]

Miss Flanders left us about the middle of the term to connect herself with our Episcopal school in Cleveland,¹ and Miss Upson² of last year's class came to help Miss Parsons,³ who was overburdened with the charge of Music. She has sole care of that department since Miss Parsons went home three weeks ago for a little vacation. Miss Prescott,⁴ too, for the first time in all these ten years, has consented to be off duty. She was really needing rest, and, we hope, will be much improved by the beginning of the next series, when we shall expect her back. You will observe there has been a frequent coming and going among the teachers all the year and we are feeling that it might not yet stop, for Miss Lawrence⁵ is also in need of rest.

We are in the midst of Spring Reviews, but it does not mean quite that hurried anxious season of years before, on account of those examinations at the close of last term, which we daily congratulate ourselves are well past. The Senior Class are reviewing their Bible studies in daily recitations, and will be examined in that study with the others.

We have been accustomed all through the years to have our attention drawn at Monday morning Devotions to some department of the Christian work. One week Miss Evans would give us Mr. Lloyd's "Story of Jim." Another time she would try to make the school acquainted with Miss Fisk and the other workers in the Seminary at Oroomiah. Again our tears would flow while listening to Mrs. Rhea's account of the death of her husband, or the story of Mr. Ballantine's leaving his work in India and his death at sea.⁶ Or, we would hear of one "Witnessing for Jesus" in the crowded tenement houses of New York; of Mrs. Durant⁷ in the Beach St. homes for young women in Boston. Or, Miss Evans would take us out on the frontiers and direct our attention to the work there — to the privations and struggles of the Home Missionary.⁸ Very often would some familiar name among the teachers in Turkey be mentioned, and occasionally one of their letters be read in our hearing. Thus is this school being instructed in the work. Today we were

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¹ Cleveland Female Seminary, a boarding and day school for girls founded in 1854 by Rev. Eli N. Sawtell; the school struggled financially from the start, and eventually closed in 1883.
² Mary Virginia Upson (1848-1931) an 1868 graduate of Lake Erie Seminary, soon moved to Little Rock, Arkansas, where she continued to teach before marrying James Torrans in 1875.
³ Julia Taylor Parsons, an 1865 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught music at Lake Erie Seminary 1866-69.
⁴ Lucinda Tucker Prescott (1829-1904), an 1859 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-95; she was a mainstay of Lake Erie Seminary who ran the Domestic Department, a demanding responsibility.
⁵ Martha Elizabeth Lawrence (1842-1928) was an 1864 graduate of Lake Erie Seminary and served as its Latin teacher 1866-1909.
⁶ Fidelia Fisk was an 1842 Mount Holyoke graduate and teacher who joined the mission in Oromia, Persia (now Urmia, Iran) in 1843; Sarah J. Foster Rhea (an 1855 Mount Holyoke graduate) and her husband also worked in the mission at Oromia; Rev. Henry Ballantine, a missionary in India, was the father of Lake Erie Seminary teachers Lizzy and Julia Ballantine.
⁷ Pauline Adeline Fowle Durant, wife of Henry F. Durant (co-founder of Wellesley College), founded the Boston Young Women’s Christian Association in 1866 with some of her friends.
⁸ Member of the American Home Missionary Society who ministered to the destitute in this country.
reminded of the Lord's commission to the workers, "Go ye forth into all the world."¹ Instead of
the usual application of this passage, Miss Evans suggested that the end of the term would be an
opportunity for some to make themselves known as Christians, for the first time in their homes.
She enjoined it upon all to identify themselves with the work of Christ. She spoke of the
delightful communion service permitted to many of us yesterday and proposed that we all unite
with the large part of the Christian Church, who, this week, follow Christ through the last days of
His life on earth, to Gethsemane and Calvary, to the celebration of His resurrection next Sabbath.

We believe you would like to hear about our good Monthly Concerts. Miss Ballantine conducts
them. Born herself in the Missionary fields and having had an experience of more than a year in
India since her graduation, she knows that whereof she affirms, and there is a vividness about her
accounts of heathen life and Missionary operations that only an eye witness could import to
them. What if some anecdotes are related that cause a smile or even an audible laugh? So is the
attention gained, and we trust with the hearing ear, God will give an understanding heart.

[Summer Term 1869]

May 12th.

A week ago this morning Mrs. Snow² of the Micronesian Mission, was leaving us. She was on
her way home from Chicago and intermediate places when she has addressed Ladies' Missionary
Societies. Such a society has just been formed in the Congregational Church here, and she did a
double work in Painesville by addressing its members and our school on the same day. To many
of us her name has long been associated with that most trying lonely field occupied by our
missionaries, and it was a reproof to our indifference and a stimulus to our devotion to hear her,
bearing as she did marks of service for the Lord Jesus on her face and in her silvery hair, say that
she did not believe one of her schoolmates had found half the satisfaction in life that she had
found. "Our religion," she said, "is largely made up of compensations and all sacrificed is light
compared with what Christ has done for us." It was good to ask her of the Bingham,³ the
Gulicks,⁴ and others of her Missionary associates, so good to take her by the hand and hear from
her lips how the Lord's work prospers on the islands of the sea.

Mr. Harding⁵ of the Mahratta Mission spent the Sabbath with us, speaking in the Chapel in the
afternoon preaching in the church in the evening, and again, before he left on Monday, giving us
first the little talk we needed by explaining that an enthusiastic young missionary may be
disappointed in his expectations concerning the work. He will not find, as he may have imagined,
the heathen only waiting to hear the word before they come to Christ. "The natural heart in
India," he said, "is just the same as in America, enmity against God." Neither are the self-
righteous Brahmins grateful for having their narrow way of life pointed out to them. The
Missionary going to his untried field must not expect to be upheld in his work by the gratitude of

¹ Mark 16:15
² Lydia Vose Buck Snow and her husband Rev. Benjamin Galen Snow left the U.S. in 1851 to begin missionary
work in Micronesia, remaining there thirty years.
³ Hiram Bingham II and Clara Brewster Bingham
⁴ Luther Halsey Gulick Sr. and Louisa Lewis Gulick
⁵ Rev. Charles Harding was working in Bombay (now Mumbai).
those for whom he labors. He must go only for Christ, expect to be sustained only by the approval of his Master, and the joy that comes with such labor, he too, like Mrs. Snow, testified to be better than houses, lands, or kindred. We are grateful for these visits, and trust they have given a fresh impulse to the Missionary spirit in our family.

Sad tidings have reached us of Mrs. Woodworth's bereavement in the loss of her precious baby boy. Whether we have known her or not, she is identified with the past of this school, and we cannot but feel a tender sympathy for her.

As we told you, Miss Prescott went home for a rest. She is now back again, but it had been ordered that her resting time should be full of sorrow. She kept watch beside her mother's death bed and follows her to the grave. And she also walks in the shadow of a great affliction. May He who has conquered Death and the Grave give light to all such!

Our summer term is well under way. Prof. Cassels is giving us Chemistry lectures, the Botany scholars are largely exploring the woods, the Seniors' faces grow a shade more thoughtful over Butler, the teachers feel that the time is short for them to work. Anniversary will complete the first ten years of this Seminary's existence, and we hope for a larger homecoming of graduates and gathering of friends.

And now, while the leaves grow green and the shadows softly lie upon the grass, amid all the freshness of the beautiful spring time, we send you loving greeting and pray for you and us that our fellowship may be in Christ as our hope is in Him and our trust.

In behalf of the Seminary
Ellen C. Parsons.

Lake Erie Seminary

May 1870 Report by Ellen Parsons
Covering July 1869 Anniversary through May 1870

May, 1870

Dear Friends,

Shutting our eyes to the green leaves and orioles outside, and our ears to the sounds of the Wednesday morning circle within, we undertake, not journalizing, at this late day, but to give a brief summary of the events of the present school year.

[July 1869 Anniversary (Commencement)]

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1 Lydia Sessions Woodworth, who had been Lake Erie Seminary’s first Principal.
2 John Lang Cassels of the Cleveland Medical College.
3 Seniors were required to study Joseph Butler’s *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed* (1736), which justified belief in Christianity by presenting a series of patterns (“analogies”) observable in nature and human affairs.
When we came together in the Autumn, it was with the memory of our successful tenth anniversary, our delightful reunion of old teachers and graduates, fresh in our minds. We were still thinking of the high standard of Dr. Lyman had put before us in his address upon "Culture;" of the earnest, strong words Judge Hitchcock, Mr. Woodworth, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Hayden, and others had spoken at the Reunion exercises. We were thinking of the class of fifteen that went from us, well-furnished, as we hope, and beside them our Senior Class of four seemed very small, but we remembered Mr. Hayden's remark that "the wealth of an institution is not in his monies, her Professorships, or scholarships, so much as in her graduates," and we tried to feel ourselves all the richer for their absence. And, indeed, when we saw the seventy loyal daughters that came back at the Mother's call last summer, we felt glad that not only we are richer than them, but the world they work in is richer, and the Church of God to which so many of them give their "prayers and tears" is richer too, and we wondered, as is often, how Mary Lyon, with her capacity to rejoice enlarged by these years of life in Heaven, joys over these trophies of redeeming love.

[Fall term 1869]

God blessed us greatly in the new scholars that He sent. A large proportion of them were Christians, and disposed to appreciate their opportunities, and increasingly, as the months have gone by, we have found comfort in them as scholars. Best of all, we may tell you that God has been seen again — a covenant-keeping God. Though we may have not witnessed the great outpouring of His spirit, as we have longed to do, as, thanks be to His Name, you of the clear kindred schools have seen it; though we have not had a great revival, as Miss Evans says, we have had revivings. The weekly prayer meetings of the impenitent, that in the beginning of the year numbered twenty-four, was diminished to six, and now, through the accessions of new scholars, includes again eleven precious souls without God or hope. Among those who were born again in the early part of the year, were two of our Senior Class, who after questioning and arguing and doubting so long a time, at length became as little children to enter the Kingdom. They have since united with the Episcopal Church.

The last Sabbath of our first term was a marked day among us. There had been a growing attention to the reading of the Word. Since we had adopted the plan of responsive reading in the Psalms at devotional exercise on Thursday mornings, and meditation upon those same Psalms in the evening, our weekly Thursday night prayer meetings had been delightful. The young ladies were ready to recite passages and there had been signs of life in the prayers and praising. The last Thurs. night of the term brought us the penitential fifty-first Psalms. Miss Evans remarked that the passage might seem incongruous, coming as it did in the midst of all our anticipation of Christmas, but we had not planned it so and must believe God had a lesson in it for us, appropriate to that time. She then showed us that we could not receive Christ, born into the

1 Rev O.A. Lyman D.D., Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of East Cleveland.
2 Reuben Hitchcock, a founding father of Lake Erie Seminary and president of its board of trustees.
3 Rev. William Woodworth, husband of Lydia Sessions Woodworth, Lake Erie Seminary’s first Principal.
4 Rev. Hubbard Lawrence Jr., a minister in Brecksville, Ohio, had become an advocate for women’s education through an encounter with Mary Lyon, and became a trustee of Lake Erie Seminary in 1870; his daughter Martha was Lake Erie Seminary’s Latin teacher 1866-1909.
5 Rev. Hiram Haydn, the local Congregational minister.
6 Founder of Mount Holyoke Seminary
world, without repentance for our sins, so the prayer "Create in me a clean heart"1 was just the prayer for us. The whole Psalm was faithfully set before us and followed up at devotions the next morning, with evident blessing to the school, and so on this last Sabbath, we saw that the word of God is "quick and powerful and the Spirit of God convicts of sin."2 There was a wonderful stillness through the house, and a new tenderness among Christians. Almost all of them could pray anywhere that day. A few came to the Savior for the first term, but the term closed that week, the school was scattered for vacation, and with some the impression was like the morning cloud and early dew.3

The two days of prayers we observed in the winter term were not altogether fruitless of results; especially were they blessed to God's children here, and more than one said with trembling voice, "I never spent such a day before." Not until the seals are opened and the books are read,4 shall we know what an impulse in the divine life such days have given to members of these Holyoke schools.

Just before Christmas vacations one or two of the teachers rec'd pleasant surprises in the way of gifts from their pupils, and Miss Evans received Edwin Landseer's pair of large engravings, "The Sanctuary" and "The Challenge,"5 a tangible proof of the affection of the whole school. They hang in her parlor and help greatly to relieve the bareness of its high walls.

[Spring Term 1870]

We felt forlorn and motherless the day she went away, soon after we were started on the winter term, but there was to be a wedding at home, and we knew she needed a resting time, and she almost promised to see Holyoke for us, so there was not a word to be said, but we set up a white stone and remembered the 8th of March, gratefully, for bringing her back to us. She had been giving the school lessons in elocution several times a week, and during her absence our good friend Mr. Wells,6 the Episcopal minister, who finds about twenty from his flock from our family, gave us a course of lectures upon the "Reformation." Without any pretension to originality, they were an excellent abstract of a much more extended course of reading than our girls have yet been able to take, and were particularly opportune for the History classes.

Company has been a delightful circumstance with us this year. A larger than usual number of fathers and mothers and friends of the young ladies have been here from time to time, and we are always glad to meet and know them.

It was a great pleasure to welcome Mrs. Wilder, well-known here both as pupil and teacher by

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1 Psalm 51:10
2 Hebrews 4:12
3 Hosea 13:3
4 Reference to the Seven Seals containing information known only to God which were to be opened at the end of days, described in chapters 5-8 of Revelations.
5 These were engravings of two of Landseer's nature paintings: "The Sanctuary" (1842) depicts a stag that has just swum to a safe lake island to escape its hunters; "The Challenge" (1844) shows a stag at the edge of a lake, bellowing a challenge to another stag swimming towards it. These subjects may seem odd for a gift to a woman, but Queen Victoria herself had purchased the original painting of "The Sanctuary."
6 Rev. Thomas B. Wells
her name of Miss Ednah Lyman. She brought her rosy, dark-eyed little Louise with her, who is spoken of, to this day, as "that sweet baby," by the girls.

Prof. Mead, who had lately come to fill the chair of Sacred Rhetoric at Oberlin, gave us a little visit, and those of us who had known him in the pulpit at South Hadley and received our diplomas from his hands were very glad that, after Mr. Hayden had gone abroad on his trip to Egypt and the Holy Land, Prof. Mead was engaged to supply his pulpit every alternate Sabbath. He brought Mrs. Mead and the two children with him to spend the first of these Sabbaths with us, as they were on their way to their new home. He has spoken to us several times on Monday morning, and we regard it as one of our special privileges to listen to such power; and, calculated to produce impressions upon the text, "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," he brought out the idea very clearly that, as we all indicate our thoughts by gestures and expressions of the face, so Christ did when on earth, and now that his body has passed through the grave — no more words fall from his lips — his hands are no longer reached out to bestow benefactions and the healing touch — he has chosen another body, his true church, which is, through teaching [the] obedient member, to show forth his thoughts and will in the world.

Prof. Ellis, also of Oberlin, alternates with Prof. Mead in the pulpit of the Cong. Church. He had kindly preached for us once, and promises to do so again.

Through the influence of Miss Hitchcock from Hudson, who has been teaching with us a part of the year, we had Prof. Cutler of Western Reserve College to address us one Sabbath.

After our return from the great meeting of the Am. Board at Pittsburg, where we went, teachers, pupils and last year's graduates, a company of thirteen — who went and saw and heard and enjoyed more than can be told — there was a great deal of interest awakened in the school concerning the Board, its officers, individual missionaries, and, we trust, through these accessions in the very work itself. This interest was kept alive and quickened, from time to time,

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1 Ednah Maria Lyman graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1862 and taught there 1862-65 before marrying Dwight Locke Wilbur in 1866 and raising five children; her daughter Louise would graduate from Lake Erie Seminary in 1892.
2 Rev. Hiram Mead had been the Congregational minister in South Hadley, Massachusetts (Mount Holyoke’s home) and a trustee of Mount Holyoke before moving his family to Ohio to teach at the Oberlin Theological Seminary.
3 Massachusetts town where Mount Holyoke Seminary is located.
4 The local Congregational minister Rev. Hiram Collins Haydn (or Hayden) had been a regular visitor to Lake Erie Seminary, but the next year would become pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Cleveland; he retained his interest in Lake Erie Seminary, however, and served as one of its trustees 1873-1904.
5 His son George Herbert Mead became a prominent pragmatist philosopher, sociologist, and psychologist.
6 1 Corinthians 12:27
7 John Millot Ellis was an abolitionist minister who taught philosophy at Oberlin College 1866-96
8 Sarah Melissa Hitchcock (1846-1916), an 1867 graduate of Lake Erie Seminary and daughter of Henry Lawrence Hitchcock, President of Western Reserve College and brother of Lake Erie Seminary’s co-founder/trustee Reuben Hitchcock and trustee Peter Hitchcock; her sister Clara Hitchcock who would teach philosophy, psychology, and education for Lake Erie Seminary/College 1888-1917. In 1874 Sarah married Thomas Day Seymour, who became a classics professor at Yale; their son Charles would become president of Yale.
9 Rev. Carroll Cutler was a professor of philosophy and rhetoric at Western Reserve College 1860-89, and served as the College’s fourth president 1871-86
10 The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) held their annual meeting in Pittsburgh on Oct 5-8, 1869.
by a series of delightful guests. First came Dr. & Mrs. Anderson1 to make us a call, to be
introduced to the school and to speak to each one in heartfelt words of their sympathy for
Christian educational enterprises, and of the connection between disciplinary training in a
Christian school and work in distant parts of the great harvest field.

Following them came Mrs. Wilder2 with her twenty years’ experience among the Zulus, and her
simple story had all the greater weight since we knew something of her sacrifices in the past, and
that she is preparing to offer that greatest one in the Missionary Mother can offer, in leaving her
children to be educated in America while she goes back to the work overseas.

Next came Mrs. Rhea,3 and almost all of you who will read this page have seen her and listened
to her burning words, have felt the power of her devotion and zeal. The school were thrilled as
she called on them to tell where the Mosque of St. Sophia is, [and] whether it belongs of right to
the Mohammedans or to one king. We shall often think of her when Coronation is sung and
how she reminded us that every brick of this Seminary and of all "Mary Lyon’s schools"4 as she
called them, ought to be a crown for Jesus, and how she begged each of us to crown Him with
every power of our minds and hearts; to crown him over and over again, and all in love and
gratitude for that strange crown he once wore, the crown of thorns. The ladies of Painesville
came in and filled our Chapel one evening to listen to her, and were now amused, now touched
with pity and now solemnly impressed, as she unfolded customs, life, degradation and sin in
Persia.

The next Missionary friend to make us glad by his coming was Mr. Wilder, whose wife had been
here before. Some of us flattered ourselves that we grew quite intelligent while he was here, he
gave us so much information about the Natural History, Botany & Geology of South Africa. We
were sometimes convulsed with laughter, as when he told us that our methods of hairdressing
had prevailed among our Zulu sisters before they were introduced here, and assured us
encouragingly that the styles are not all exhausted yet.

Mrs. Lloyd, or Mrs. Lindley,5 as we must call her now, whose very name is sufficient to create
an interest among our scholars, has not written to us directly, but in consideration of the fact that
our Junior Class supported a boy in her school last year, some of her interesting letters have been
forwarded to us. A journal from Mrs. Harding6 has also come to hand. Dr. Clarke7 is the latest
representative of the Missionary cause to pay us a visit. He stopped with us one night on his way
to Chicago, whence he goes to the Sandwich Islands. He said he had not been in the house three

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1 Rufus Anderson had been the ABCFM’s secretary 1832-66 and continued to serve on its Prudential Board until
1875.
2 Abbie Temperance Linsley was an 1848 Mount Holyoke graduate who had been doing missionary work with the
Zulus in South Africa with her husband Hyman Augustine Wilder since 1849.
3 Sarah J. Foster Rhea was an 1855 Mount Holyoke graduate who married missionary Rev. Samuel Rhea in 1860
and joined him in his work in Oroomia, Persia (now Urmia, Iran)
4 Schools based on the model Mary Lyon established in Mount Holyoke.
5 Katherine C. Parker Lindley had worked at the Zulu mission since 1862; her first husband Charles H. Lloyd had
died 1865, and she married Dr. Newton Adams Lindley (son of missionary Daniel Lindley) in 1870.
6 Probably Mrs. Elizabeth D. Harding, who was doing missionary work with her husband Charles for the Marathi
Mission in India.
7 Rev. E.W. Clarke, who had been doing missionary work in Hawaii
minutes before he heard the Holyoke quickstep, and that evening began his delightful informal talk to the young ladies by saying he considered these schools "the sheet anchor of the Church of God." He told us about missionary teachers abroad, particularly of those who have gone from Ohio and of Miss Warfield\(^1\) and her death at her post in Harpoot.

We have lately had the great pleasure of greeting and sending on their way representatives of two of the kindred schools, Miss Eastman of Oxford\(^2\) and Miss Jennie Smead\(^3\) of Kalamazoos. The only thing to mar our enjoyment in these visits was Miss Eastman's frail health. May our Father give her speedy restoration and many years of service for Him!

Miss Taylor\(^4\) of the Madura Mission family, sister of our only graduate in the foreign field, spent a day with us, lately, and Miss Dorr\(^5\) was here for a Sabbath, on her way East. Her eyes have failed so that she has been obliged to leave Ripon and the doctor orders entire rest for them.

Latest of all came one, honored and beloved, for whom our welcome was waiting, and when the tall figure and benevolent face, so well known to some of us, was ushered in at the east door, just at dinner time, it was whispered up and down that Dea. Porter\(^6\) had come. If "children's children are the crown of old men,"\(^7\) he does not lack his crown, for though no child bears his name, he talks of his thousands of "daughters," and his heart expands to take in the grand-children of the West. It was a great privilege to sit at his feet and hear the story that never grows old of toil and trouble and victory, in those early years at South Hadley,\(^8\) and one day and night seemed all too short for his stay.

Examinations at the close of the winter term were unusually gratifying! A little entertainment, partly literary and partly musical, afforded our friends an evening's pleasure as they professed, and several rides together have been agreeable variation of the monotony of school.

One of these, our trip to Indian Point,\(^9\) on a sweet Autumn day, will not be soon forgotten. Our hearts were touched to see with what true Holyoke spirit of helpfulness the girls all flew to the

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\(^1\) Mary E. Warfield had, at the age of 24, joined the Eastern Turkey Mission in 1867 to help run a girl’s boarding school in Harpoot, and died there in February 1870; she was known to Mount Holyoke people because shortly before leaving for her mission she had attended the Seminary’s “Day of Prayer” ceremonies.

\(^2\) Western Female Seminary, located in Oxford, Ohio.

\(^3\) Jane “Jennie” Smead was an 1865 graduate of Lake Erie Seminary who joined her sister Amelia (who taught at Lake Erie 1860-67) as a teacher at Michigan Female Seminary in Kalamazoo; in 1877 Jennie married Leonard Lincoln Pierce.

\(^4\) Lucretia “Lulie” M. Taylor, daughter of Horace and Martha Sturtevant Taylor who were missionaries in India for 26 years; her sister Martha S. Taylor, an 1865 graduate of Lake Erie Seminary, returned to India to join in her parents’ work.

\(^5\) Sarah E. Dorr (1836-1915) was one of Lake Erie Seminary’s original teachers, who had been teaching English at Ripon College in Wisconsin 1868-69; fortunately her eyesight recovered, and in 1870 she joined the teaching staff at Michigan Female Seminary in Kalamazoo.

\(^6\) Deacon Andrew W. Porter was a successful Massachusetts businessman who was considered the ‘Father’ of Mount Holyoke, giving great personal wealth and attention to supporting the institution for forty years.

\(^7\) Proverbs 17:6

\(^8\) A site 7 miles from Lake Erie Seminary where there are earthworks left by the Whittelsey Culture people on a 100 foot ridge overlooking the intersection of Grand River and Paine Creek, now a park.
Domestic hall to dispatch the work there before the omnibuses came soon after dinner; how the half dozen left behind surprised us with our supper all in readiness on our return; and how, after supper, wearied as they were with the climbing and rambling, no one was willing to be excused till all the housekeeping matters were wholly cared for. We thought, that day, that anybody who can't see the use of the domestic work here and disapproved of it, might have gained a hint, if looking on. The health of our family has been wonderful thus far. During the first term of sixteen weeks a physician was but once called here. A few have left us from sickness or some other reason.

[Summer Term 1870]

Our summer term is half gone. The Seniors are absorbed in Butler¹ and Literature;² the Botany classes scour the woods for fresh trophies and all expect to write victory on their banner in about six weeks more. When we look on the school the work is precious and our hearts are full of hope, but the outlook for the school is overshadowed.

Our number of scholars for the year has not averaged more than sixty-five; our debt has not been cancelled, and while the school is so small, this is accumulating. The Trustees have decided to send out agents in our behalf in Northern Ohio and Penn., and two of our dear teachers, Miss Lawrence³ and Miss Fisher,⁴ for the love they bear the school and the cause, have gone forth together to represent us in this region, to make the school known to fathers and mothers [and] to speak many words in favor of a thorough Christian education for the daughters of our land. It is yet too soon to estimate results; the beginning has been prosperous.⁵

Dear friends, we solicit your faithful prayers for our success in this effort and a blessing on the temporal interests of this Holyoke school. We, ourselves, desire to trust our Father more, to believe His word, that He will "not leave nor forsake,"⁶ and to have stronger faith that His vine He has planted He will also nourish and cause to bear fruit unto His praise.⁷

And, dear friends, while none of you can seem like strangers, some of you have become less of so of late. We have looked upon your faces, we have taken you by the hand, we have seen you in your work; it has greatly strengthened us, and our greeting is more full of love. We rejoice to hear of the prosperity of the Mother school. Anything that should threaten it would touch our hearts in a tender place. The Lord enrich you all and pour abundant blessing on every teacher and every pupil, and when He make up His jewels⁸ may every daughter of these schools be a chosen

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¹ Joseph Butler’s *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed* (1736), a required text for Seniors in justifying Christian belief.
² Seniors studied Karl Friedrich von Schlegel’s *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern*, first published in English translation in 1818.
³ Martha Elizabeth Lawrence was an 1864 graduate of Lake Erie Seminary and served as its Latin teacher 1866-1909.
⁴ Ellen Frances Fisher, an 1864 graduate of Lake Erie Seminary, taught there 1868-95; she married James B. Vincent in 1896.
⁵ These efforts paid off, and within three years the student population nearly doubled.
⁶ Psalm 27:9
⁷ John 15:1-27
⁸ From William Cushing’s 1856 hymn “When He cometh, when He cometh”
one, for His Name's sake!

In behalf of the Seminary,
Ellen C. Parsons.

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**June 8 1871 report by Mary Evans**

Covering fall 1870 through June 1871

Painesville O.

June 8th, 1871

Dear Friends,

Circumstances have thus far prevented the keeping of a regular Journal, and it will not be easy to gather the events of a whole year into the compass of a few pages. But the year deserves a record. Mercy and goodness have followed us all its days, and it would be ingratitude without excuse if we should fail to make mention of the good hand of our Lord upon us.

[Fall Term 1870]

At devotions on the first Saturday morning of the year more than three-fourths of our family of seventy-five confessed their faith in Christ. Our hearts were cheered and we hoped for great progress in things spiritual. But as the term passed we were disappointed. It was not the many, after all, who were on the Lord's side, but the few, if by their fruits we should know them. There was not positive denial of Christ. It was a pleasant family, remarkably united and happy but something was wanting. Our meetings were sustained by a few, the mass of professing Christians seeming to feel no responsibility in carrying them on. The Spirit was not altogether grieved away — in the meetings of the impenitent, He spoke, and one and another heard and heeded, till at the close of the first term of sixteen weeks, a little company of ten came out and were separate, very young and feeble ones in Christ, but His is an everlasting covenant.

[Spring Term 1871]

The second term began Jan. 5th, and that we might unite with Christians in the week of prayer, we laid aside all school duties on Saturday. Those to whom the letter goes, do not need a description of such a day. Days of prayer in these dear Seminaries stand out in your memory as no other days. Yet each has something distinctive. No two can be perfectly alike while human experience is so varied. With us it was high time that Christians should awake out of sleep. The young believers were more watchful than they, but the example of the others affected them, and the one great neglected duty of confessing Christ in the prayer-meeting was the sin of the family. It was the old story of Meroz. They came not up to the help of the Lord. We feared lest the

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1 Mary A. Evans was Principal/President of Lake Erie Seminary/College 1868-1909.
2 The Song of Deborah and Barak in Judges 5, a victory hymn on the Israelites’ defeat over the Canaanites, includes an angel’s curse against the townspeople of Meroz for refusing to assist the Israelites in this battle that Yahweh had
curve upon this indifference might fall upon us.

Near the beginning of the term a series of meetings was held in Painesville under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A. Among other speakers was the earnest K.A. Burnell.¹ We attended these meetings and many were roused from their apathy. A deep and thorough work was going on in the Congregational church. When we could, we attended the daily morning prayer meeting, and when Mr. Hayden² could spare a little time from his pressing duties he spoke to us with a power and earnestness that could not but prevail. His sermons on the Sabbath, to which a large proportion of our family listened, were remarkable. As the Spirit moved on the hearts of his people, he seemed endowed with wonderful energy.

And so the work began — rather, we could not tell just when and how it began with us. There were inquiry meetings each evening in which we wept to hear new voices raised in broken prayers. One proud will that had set itself against all revivals was broken at last, and became as the will of a little, loving child. Some came into these meetings who had long thought themselves Christians but had never taken up the cross for Christ. The work seemed greater among such than elsewhere, for here had been the great need. When the last Thursday in February came, a hallowed, blessed day, we saw what God had wrought and tried to thank him. There was room for a greater blessing. Not all were safe, but there were more to pray for those still impenitent. There were no long pauses in the meetings — there was so much to ask for, so much for which to give thanks. A work of grace will show its effects elsewhere than in prayer-meetings. It makes all things new, down to the least domestic duty, which after all may not be least, but may be the means of developing character as nothing else can. The genuineness of conversion often manifests itself in the domestic hall as truly as in the place of prayer. And how helpful and loving those become whose hearts have been opened to the love of him who came not to be ministered unto but to minister.³ We never saw a plainer illustration of this than on the morning on which the family separated at the close of the second term. Often in the excitement of the last day, there will be a general forgetting of duties, below stairs and above, and most teachers can remember some weary hours of work, when the heedless, happy children were on their way home. For such labor we girded ourselves with aprons and descended to the Domestic hall after the last goodbyes had been said and resaid. But there was no occasion. Every sink was as clean as faithful hands could make it. Every stray cup and dish and spoon was in its place in the china closet — the floor was swept, the tables guiltless of a crumb — and we stood in the perfect order with nothing to do, but exclaiming with happy tears, "What dear girls! Was there ever a school like this?" We have said it more than once this year. They have not been perfect, except in health. In this respect we have been greatly blessed. We have not known the least anxiety on account of sickness. The physician's calls have been few and far between, and the universal comment of visitors is, "What healthy, happy faces!" With such abounding health, it is not strange that animal spirits should sometimes overflow, but when there is no rudeness and disobedience we rejoice with those that do rejoice in the full tide of youth and health, and we

ordered them to fight; this became a symbol of apathy towards God's will.

¹ Kingsley Abner "K.A." Burnell was an evangelist who had just crossed the country and back on a speaking tour using the new transcontinental railroad system.
² Rev. Hiram Haydn (or Hayden), Painesville’s Congregational minister and a frequent visitor to Lake Erie Seminary.
³ Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:28
give thanks that there has been scarcely an occasion for reproof or discipline throughout the year.

We have been blessed in things temporal. Last fall Mr. Hayden, with his customary thoughtfulness, started a subscription for the purpose of adding books to the library and headed it generously. Miss Lizzie Hitchcock 1 solicited subscriptions, and six hundred and twenty-five dollars was the almost immediate result. This sum was made up of very few donations — two of two hundred dollars each, two of one hundred, and one of twenty-five. Mr. Hayden selected the books in New York, the teachers having previously made lists of their heart's desires in their particular departments. The firm of whom they were bought, personal friends of Mr. Hayden, made such generous deductions that it was as if another hundred dollars had been added to our sum. That was a memorable evening when the books arrived and we unpacked the treasures — three hundred and forty books, two beautiful chromos 2 for the Reading Room, a fifty dollar microscope and an astronomical globe.

The books are all fresh and interesting, some rare and beautiful in design and finish. Of course we remember the grand new libraries at Holyoke, in the presence of which our own is humble — but this is so great an addition that we cannot rejoice too much. We have a library of more than thirteen hundred volumes which we need not be ashamed to show to strangers, and as we pass through the cabinet on the way to the library we do not fail to mention the patience and thoroughness with which the Senior Class have arranged the specimens, thrown together last fall in a promiscuous mass, that they might acquire practical discipline in discovering their places.

The Journal cannot be written without frequent mention of one generous friend who does not grow weary in well-doing. He desires no flourish of trumpets and his best praises are in the hearts of those whom he has made happy, but we could not write the record of the year without telling what Judge Hitchcock 3 has done for us. He has set apart a fund for those who find it difficult to obtain an education. When Professor Morley 4 of Western Reserve College, in delivering our lectures in chemistry this last winter, discovered our great need of apparatus and suggested a supply of the deficiency in Germany, where chemicals are so much cheaper than here, we had but to mention the need to Judge Hitchcock and the means were forthcoming. The cherished plan of our hearts has long been to have the building heated by steam, a need which we feel with a special force in a building heated with soft coal, the water often black with particles of soot and our clothes soiled continually. It has seemed too much a castle in the air to have foundations, but what was our surprise and joy this spring to hear Judge Hitchcock offer to bear the greater part of the expense if the trustees should decide this to be the greatest need of the Seminary.

At this juncture of affairs General Casement 5 of Painesville began boring for gas with which to

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1 Elizabeth Melissa Hitchcock (1842-1897), daughter of Lake Erie Seminary co-founder/trustee Reuben Hitchcock, attended Mount Holyoke in 1858/59 and then attended the Lake Erie Seminary 1859-61; she married George Walter Morley in 1875.
2 Chromolithographs, colored pictures printed by lithography
3 Reuben Hitchcock, co-founder of Lake Erie Seminary and president of its board.
4 Edward Williams Morley, chair of natural history and chemistry at Western Reserve College.
5 John S. “Jack” Casement (1829-1909) was a successful railroad contractor who directed construction of Union Pacific’s section of the Transcontinental Railroad linking the East and West Coasts of the U.S. He was an infantry officer during the Civil War, and was eventually appointed brigadier general by brevet commission due to his
heat as well light his elegant new house on the other side of the river. It was thought wise to wait for the development of this new means of heating, by which both fuel and lights may be furnished almost without expense. This gas well proved a marvelous success, furnishing gas enough to heat and light twenty houses. In less than three weeks a derrick towered above our vegetable garden, a steam engine puffed its smoke into the branches of the great oaks at the entrance of the grove, and we went down to see the beginning of the process. There have been some drawbacks caused by the caving in of the well, but also encouraging features in the appearance of surface gas early in the boring. We hope to know before the close of the term whether the experiment will be an entire success. This mode of heating, which reminds one of stories of genii in the earth, is not altogether new, having been already tried in France with artificial gas, and in Erie, Pennsylvania, where it has been used in manufactories instead of steam.¹ The same stores and grates now in the building will be used, the pipes being introduced into them as they stand. Some prophesy a failure in the supply, but if it should last but a few years it would repay the expense of boring, and whatever may be the result, it is enterprising to try.

Through the influence of Mr. Fitch² of Ashtabula, visitors have been appointed to attend our Spring examinations by the Presbyteries and Congregational Conferences of Northern Ohio. We hope this will be a permanent arrangement, and that it may embrace representatives of other denominations. It gives interest and encouragement to the teachers and scholars, and spreads acquaintance with our work. On one of the last evenings of the term, we gave to our visitors from abroad and our friends in Painesville a literary and musical entertainment, of which it may not be egotistical to say that it was worthy of the Holyoke schools. A pleasant episode in winter term was the debate of the Young Mens’ Literary Club of Painesville in our chapel one evening. A visit from Miss Shattuck³ and Miss Janes⁴ on their way from the ruins of the Seminary at Oxford⁵ made us realize as nothing else could, the fiery trial through which you, dearly beloved, have passed. On the Sabbath evening, which they spent here, we gathered round them in a corner of the chapel to hear the story from their own lips, and then together thanked God for His goodness through it all, for the grace He gives you and for the hope that another house shall rise from these ruins.⁶

[Summer Term 1871]

¹ H. Jarecki and Co. Petroleum Brass Works in Erie, Pennsylvania was the nation’s first industrial user of natural gas.
² Orramel Hinckley “O.H.” Fitch (1803-1881) was a lawyer, newspaper editor, and politician living in Ashtabula, Ohio; he co-founded the Ashtabula Sentinel, and had served in the state legislature and as prosecuting attorney for Ashtabula County; he was a member of Lake Erie Seminary’s board 1856-68, and his daughter Fanny graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1861.
³ Lydia W. Shattuck was an 1851 graduate of Mount Holyoke who had been teaching there before joining Western Female Seminary’s faculty for the 1870/71 school year.
⁴ Sarah P. Janes, an 1862 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Western Female Seminary 1866-80.
⁵ Seminary Hall of Western Female Seminary in Oxford, Ohio had been destroyed by fire in 1860 and rebuilt the same year; this second building also perished by fire on April 7 1871; fortunately, there was no loss of life from either fire.
⁶ A new building was erected by October that year.
This record of the year is written on Little Mountain, seven miles from the Seminary, whither we annually wend our way for a day of real recreation in the perfect June weather. The whole family came up on Wednesday, returning in the afternoon, but the Senior class, with two of their teachers, are to stay till Saturday, recruiting for the hard work immediately before them, writing anniversay compositions, studying and reciting Butler's Analogy\(^1\) under the trees, with the cosy rooms of Mr. Avery’s\(^2\) cottage for our nominal abode, but living out of doors nearly all the time, and as a result getting remarkable appetites and losing the nervous fears that sometimes beset seniors and teachers in the last weeks of the summer term. The class will not soon forget these happy restful days, and, more than all else, they will love to recall the sweet hour of prayer in the quiet twilight when all their way is committed unto the Lord, and not theirs only but the future of the Seminary. It is bright with promise, but our hope is in the Lord; ”He is our strength and our shield.”\(^3\)

Yours in behalf of the Seminary,  
Mary Evans.\(^4\)

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**Reports by Anna F.J. Cowgill\(^5\) dated Jan 24 – June 17 1872**  
**Covering fall 1871 through June 1872**

Lake Erie Seminary

Jan 24th, 1872

Dear Friends,

This blustering morning in mid-winter, let me take you back in fancy to the last day of August, the opening day of the thirteenth year of the school.

[Fall Term 1871]

The sombre doors of the Seminary are opened wide, inviting, from fierce sunlight into cool halls, those with faces familiar and with faces strange. The number is uncommonly larger than for several years past, at one time soon after the opening of the term 98,\(^6\) and the building is silent, for work resounds with glad quieting and happy laughter.

When we all gather in Chapel next morning we find a little change among the teachers. Miss Prescott's place is vacant for the first time in the history of the school. Are we henceforth to have no Domestic department? How can we be a "Holyoke school" with that feature removed? It was

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\(^1\) Seniors were required to study Joseph Butler’s *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed* (1736) which provides arguments for justifying Christian belief.

\(^2\) Charles A. Avery, the wealthiest resident of Painesville, was one of Lake Erie Seminary’s founders and a board member.

\(^3\) Psalm 33:20

\(^4\) Mary A. Evans, Principal/President of Lake Erie Seminary/College 1868-1909

\(^5\) Anna F.J. Cowgill (1849-1873) graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1869 and taught there 1870-73.

\(^6\) Enrollment had hit a low of 65 in the 1869/70 school year.
since explained that Miss Ellen Fisher, absent last year, would take charge of this department, and that Miss Prescott had gone to Europe. So glad were we for her joy, that we all gave sundry pokes to the furnace fire; soon the steam was up; the great wheel began to move with a little oiling here and there; we were well started on our journey of a year.

Early in October a Republican mass-meeting was held in town and we longed to give vent to our patriotic notions. Unfortunately, we had loaned our flag, and means were wanting for decoration. But we soared above opposing circumstances, called for a red scarf, and the call was gallantly answered. Two window curtains turned blue by the action of the sun's rays, and sheets, with scarfs, made graceful drapery for the entrance to the grounds; and as the country that day made by, no one suspected that we had been driven to such extremity. As the speakers of the day passed, we sang "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and [    ] now Gov. Noyes made brief remarks, after which we all returned to duty.

Later in the fall came the news of the dreadful Chicago fire. Miss Evans read the daily paper aloud in general assembly, and then invited all to bring articles they wished to send to the sufferers to No. 1. Soon an enthusiastic throng found their way thither and two large boxes were filled and sent. On Tuesday evening of the next week we all met in chapel to work for the [    ] Society in town. The chapel was brilliantly lighted and the [    ] of the family discovered sweet music as was [    ]. We rejoiced in the thought that we were pre-planning to alleviate the suffering of helpless, homeless ones, although we could not resolve ourselves with a "Soup and Blanket Society."

Soon our own household was made sad by the news that Miss Evans was suddenly called to the bedside of a dear friend whose feet seemed nearing the brink of the dark river. The lesson of the week previous had been "In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." Recent occurances afforded illustrations of the sudden coming of the Death Angel, making careless ones more thoughtful. Many hearts seemed tender and some of the dear wanderers have come into the fold of the good Shepard. Miss Evans went away expecting to be gone three or four weeks, but, owing to the protracted illness of her friend, her absence extended over twelve weeks. We realized during this time that the confidence felt by us in the scholars had not been misplaced.

In expectation of introducing gas, pipes had been laid throughout the building in the summer vacation. When the gas was introduced, the flow was irregular and insufficient in steadiness, so we tried it in stoves on the third floor. As the quantity was too small to avail for warming rooms we abandoned its use except in the basement, where it is employed in heating the range and furnace for rooms on the first floor.

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1 Ellen Frances Fisher graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1864 and returned to teach 1868-95.
2 Lucinda Tucker Prescott (1829-1904), an 1853 graduate of Mount Holyoke, taught at Lake Erie Seminary 1859-95.
3 Probably the 16'x 24' flag purchased by Lake Erie students at the beginning of the Civil War.
4 Also known as "America," with lyrics written by Samuel Francis Smith in 1831 to the tune of "God Save the Queen" (oddly enough taken from a symphony by Clementi that quoted it); this was one of the de facto national anthems in the 19th century.
5 Edward Follansbee Noyes was governor of Ohio 1872-74.
6 The Great Chicago Fire of Oct 8-10 1871 destroyed over 17,000 buildings, killed an estimated 300 people, and left over 100,000 residents homeless.
7 Matthew 24:44
Late in the fall, we were startled one morning by the cry of "Help" proceeding from near the east end of the building. A drain was being laid there and three feet of earth had caved in, burying one of the workmen. One of the young ladles seized a shovel and did a good execution therewith. Soon the man's head appeared, and shortly after he was completely exhumed. No serious results attended but some of us were thoroughly frightened.

A short time before the close of the fall term, Rev. Dr. Clark\(^1\) of Boston, Secretary of the American Board,\(^2\) spent an evening with us, speaking to us in Chapel on the subject of Missions.

Just before the winter vacation, Judge Hitchcock\(^3\) gave us a Christmas present of ten thousand dollars. This is by no means the first record of his generous deeds \([\ldots]\) have made. Instances of like beneficence have called forth our gratitude many times.

June 17th 1872

[Spring Term 1872]

The beginning of the second term found Miss Evans in her old place, and the first days passed rapidly, bringing in days of prayer. There was not such manifest out-pouring of the Spirit \([\ldots]\) in last years, and as we had prayerfully hoped for; but who can estimate the good in all received? Some souls lost their will in the \([\ldots]\) will of God, and others have been led to think of things spiritual as never before.

A few weeks after Rev. Mr. \([\ldots]\) of Harpoot, Turkey, visited us and met the family familiarly in the Chapel. We took in \([\ldots]\) and asked questions as we liked, and as he talked with us our interest in the school at Harpoot greatly increased. He described the work most impressively.

In March we secured the services of Prof. Churchill,\(^5\) of Andover Theological Seminary, for an evening reading. We sold tickets enough in Painsville, so that the Chapel was full. Some of Prof. C's selections were Dickens' "Christmas Carol," "Grave digger scene in Hamlet," "Handy Andy,"\(^6\) and "Trial scene in Pickwick."\(^7\) The primary gain was small compared with the enjoyment, but we found ourselves richer by about $20 which helped to purchase several volumes of the American Animal Encyclopedia.

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1 Nathan George Clark
2 American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the largest missionary organization in the U.S. in the 19th century.
3 Reuben Hitchcock, co-founder of Lake Erie Seminary and president of its board
4 Manuscript illegible: at that time Rev. Crosby H. Wheeler (who had visited Lake Erie Seminary in fall 1869), Rev. Orson P. Allen, and Rev. Herman N. Barnum were serving at the mission in Harpoot, Turkey (now Harput or Kharput, Armenia).
5 John Wesley Churchill was Andover's Professor of Elocution; his reputation for public speaking was such that the British poet Matthew Arnold turned to him for assistance when he came to America to give a lecture tour.
6 Protagonist of Samuel Lover's 1842 comic novel Handy Andy, about "handy" Andy Rooney, a likeable Irishman who does everything wrong.
7 Chapter from Charles Dickens' comic novel Pickwick Papers, in which Mr. Pickwick defends himself against his landlady's claim that he has proposed marriage to her.
At spring examinations, the Board of Visitors, appointed by Presbyterian and Congregational Conferences of Northern Ohio, were present. We were not at all ashamed of an Examination, and felt that they were a fitting close to a term, not eventful, but prosperous, throughout which the loving kindness of the Lord had followed us.

During the spring vacations, the chemical apparatus, ordered for us in Germany at Judge Hitchcock's expense, arrived. It's laid reposed in undisturbed serenity in the New York custom house from Nov. until March, so that the class in chemistry of this year failed to derive any benefit from it. With joy, we hailed its arrival here, admiring and appreciating the test tubes and retorts, thermometers, aerometers, and chemicals, and most of all, a fine spectroscope. The apparatus was selected and put up with special reference to the experiments explained in a textbook so that they can be performed by the teacher or members of the class. 

[Summer Term 1872]
At the opening of the summer term, we learned that Miss Prescott\(^1\) intended on immediate return to active duty in the Seminary. One evening, just at dark, word was brought that she had arrived in town. Soon a lamp was burning brightly in [the] bay window, and we gathered at the last entrance to sing a song of greeting as the carriage rolled up the drive. A few moments later, we teachers formed an eager group as we gathered around her, listening to her descriptions and adventures. Best of all — Miss P's health \[^\] greatly benefited, and with renewed vigor she enters upon her familiar duties.

During the summer term, we have, with a few exceptions, given a tea party every Monday evening, also sometimes on Friday. To these have been invited those whose hospitality we have enjoyed.

Once more, with praises we write the name of Judge Hitchcock. This faithful steward of the Lord has just given five thousand dollars toward payment of the debt on the Seminary. At a recent meeting of our trustees, it was decided to pay the remainder of the debt on the building and to put in pipes for steam this summer, so we shall realize at length the fulfillment of our long-delayed hopes.

We look back thankfully over the year, so near its completion. God has so tenderly led us through the way and his loving kindness has followed us all its days. Of those whom He sent us this year seventy-five are Christians, and it is not too late to hope others may be led to Him. The prospect for a full school next year is encouraging, and in the expectation of added conveniences enhancing our comfort and trusting to God for his help we look forward hopefully.

In behalf of the Seminary,
Annah F.J. Cowgill\(^2\)

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\(^1\) Lucinda Prescott, one of Lake Erie Seminary’s original teachers, had taken a leave to travel in Europe.

\(^2\) Anna F.J. Cowgill graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1869 and taught there 1870-73.
Painesville, Ohio. May, 1874

Dear Friends of the Seminary,

[Fall Term 1873]

The absurdity of sitting down this May morning to write what will go by the name of a journal for the year, seems to me very striking. It is as if one rose and dressed times enough in one day to answer for the whole three hundred and sixty-five. And yet the events of the last year, though not remarkable, are worthy a chronicle, even though September occurrences are written up when the sights and sounds of a fresh spring morning make autumn seem like a myth indeed. But in spite of the witchery of May, we can all remember a day last fall when we came together to take up work that had been dropped for the summer weeks. The last year's class of five,\(^1\) and many old scholars\(^2\) besides, were missing, but new ones came in rapidly. The rooms were filled soon, and we began to wonder what could be done with the numbers.\(^3\) The fourth story has not been used for private rooms for several years. To be sure, tradition says that young ladies have roomed there in time past and been happy, but latterly this has not been required. At the end of the first four weeks, however, when the rooms were to be arranged it seemed necessary to use these vacant places. Miss Evans\(^4\) called for volunteers and several young ladies took up their lives in their hands, as the rest thought, and offered to go. They found a pleasant little colony at the head of the west flight of stairs for a long time, but some have since come down to lower stories.

On account of the state of her health, Miss Evans felt obliged to leave the school for a time, and, as soon as the young ladies were settled in their new places, she left us for her home in Woodsbury, N.J. The strongest hand was thus suddenly withdrawn from the work here, and missing and needing her everywhere, it seemed at first that we could do nothing more than sit down and commiserate \([with]\) one another, but of course duty would not tolerate any such idleness. Miss Luette Bentley took her place and affairs ran on smoothly as usual.\(^5\)

Last year we depended for music teachers on the Conservatory of Music just established in the town. But the corps of teachers was continually changing and the "new professor," English, French or German as the case may be, with his different ideas and ways of teaching was a trouble throughout the year.\(^6\) This fall Miss C.E. Skinner\(^1\) of Kalamazoo Seminary came to take

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\(^1\) The 1873 graduating class

\(^2\) Returning students were called “old scholars”; in the 19th century not many of Lake Erie Seminary’s students bothered to earn degrees, since there were so few professions available to women at that time beyond teaching.

\(^3\) There were 123 students enrolled in fall 1873, up from a low of 65 students in the 1869/70 school year.

\(^4\) Mary A. Evans, Principal/President of Lake Erie Seminary/College 1868-1909

\(^5\) The capable Miss Bentley would serve as Lake Erie Seminary’s Associate Principal, and later Dean, 1878-1909.

\(^6\) The Sutter Conservatory and College of Music had apparently suffered from Dr. Henry Sutter’s death the previous year; the new teacher with “different ideas and ways of teaching” was August Huber, described in the Conservatory’s ad as “a graduate of the Munich and Stuttgart Conservatories, who was very successful as performer and teacher in New York, and the principal cities of the New England states” (Northern Ohio Journal,
charge of the instrumental music. A musical club was formed, the study of the lives and methods of the best composers as well as their works was taken up, and the interest in the study perceptibly increased.

Among other good things of the fall, our patriotism received an impulse, which it hasn't lost yet. The war, which many of us could remember almost nothing of, was beginning to seem like a brilliant tradition. So happy were we in its results that we were growing indifferent to the memory of its struggles, its sacrifices, its glory, its desolation and its acres of graves. Lookout Mountain, Atlanta, Savannah were famous names but we had half forgotten why, till General Kilpatrick\(^\text{2}\) threw new light for us along the line of that famous journey in his lecture on "Sherman's March to the Sea."\(^\text{3}\) The General seemed to imagine himself once more dashing over Southern roads at the head of his [     ] cavalry troop, and his enthusiasm, the subject, and the presence of many soldiers, some his own men ten years ago, interested us thoroughly, and we went home in a rare state of excitement. If we had been men, I cannot say what cheering and trumpeting and parades and illuminations we should have engaged in, but being women — ah women — we curbed our patriotic souls, forgot our country's flag and went to bed.

This first term, though pleasant, with many glad times, was saddened for us by the death of one of our teacher band, Miss Anna Cowgill. She graduated at this Seminary in the class of '69 and had taught here three years. Soon after last anniversary, in company with her sister, she went to visit friends near Boston. When we came back in the fall we knew she was ill, not very sick, she wrote, and spoke of coming in a few weeks. Then her letters were shorter and plainly showed they were written by an invalid's hand. Afterward her sister wrote saying Miss Cowgill was worse, not able to write herself, and would not come before spring, she thought. Still we did not take alarm. Then speedily on the track of the letter, one cold blistering morning in early November came a telegram with the intelligence of her death.\(^\text{4}\) It seems even now as if we cannot connect thoughts of her with death. No one ever planned more for a long life of better enjoyed living than she. Her hands were the readiest, her feet the most willing, her brain the quickest to work and plan for other's help, and no matter what gloomy days stood before us her voice and face were ever most cheerful. Though bodily absent, the remembrance of her Christian hope which showed itself every day in her life is with us still, doing us good again and again even as her presence with us has done before.

Our usual Thanksgiving recess of two days made a pleasant break in the long term, and after this the days fled swiftly away until the Christmas holidays.

Mr. William Yorke\(^\text{5}\) of Dindigul, India, spent Thanksgiving Eve at the Seminary. He was

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1 Caroline E. Skinner (1851-1942) was a graduate of the Michigan Female Seminary in Kalamazoo, and taught piano at Olivet College before coming to Lake Erie Seminary 1873-75; she married minister David Mack Cooper in 1883.
2 Hugh Judson Kilpatrick, nicknamed “Kilcavalry” for his apparent disregard for the lives of soldiers under his command, nevertheless won enough victories to be awarded the rank of brevet major general.
3 General William Tecumseh Sherman conducted a ‘scorched earth’ campaign across Georgia in 1864, destroying military and civilian property and infrastructure, which had a devastating effect on the Confederacy.
4 Anna Cowgill died at age 24 of Bright’s disease (acute or chronic nephritis).
5 William Yorke, of the Wesleyan Training College in Westminster, England (now part of Oxford University), had
engaged on a lecturing tour for the benefit of schools in the Mahratta mission field. A. R. Haratune of Aintab\(^1\) lectured in town at about the same time. He is being educated at Oberlin College and preparing himself to return as missionary to Turkey.

[Spring Term 1874]

We had seen the beauty of the summer and of the autumn, and the beauty of the winter seemed to culminate in the January ice storm. Trees, ground, everything was covered with solid white ice. Heavy shining twigs an inch in diameter hung from the branches and made them sweep the ground, so that our familiar trees seemed suddenly transformed into most strange shapes. The air was quiet and the creak of the overloaded and falling branches could be heard a long way off from the still forests of ice. This was beautiful, but the sun came out one afternoon and worked a new wonder and then the whole melted away; and now the new leaves are covering up all trace of the ice storm of 1874.

We were glad to welcome back this term Miss Ellen C. Parsons.\(^2\) She has taken up her old work in composition and literature. The force of teachers being still too small, Miss Fannie Hosford\(^3\) of the class of '72 came to help for one term.

Early in the year the Methodist Episcopal society of this place projected a plan for building a church. All people took notice and were hasty to help. The ladies of the church threw their wits into the works and many were the strange inventions they brought forth for making money. They built the church for awhile with charades and readings at the mite societies.\(^4\) Then they built it with pincushions and hose and embroidery which they sold at a fair. Then they raised the walls a little higher by a series of entertainments, consisting of lectures and concerts. For these last many of our young ladies held tickets, and so when the capricious entertainers chose to come, whether Monday or Friday or Saturday night, we went out in a body, forty or fifty strong. These evenings passed off pleasantly, except that the elements seemed to defy the Methodist Episcopal society to build a church, for we went nearly every time in a storm. Dr. J. G. Holland\(^5\) gave the first lecture on “The Elements of Personal Power,” and all agreed in counting it the best.

The last Thursday in January was observed, as usual, as a day of prayer. Miss Bentley conducted devotions in the chapel in the morning, and in the afternoon Mr. Daly,\(^6\) the Congregational Pastor, gave us some good thoughts on the subject of Prayer. Last year we kept also the last Thursday of February, but this winter, as all the churches seemed agreed on January 29\(^{th}\), we had decided not to observe this second day. A little before the time, however, four-fifths of the

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\(^{1}\) Now Gaziantep, Turkey  
\(^{2}\) Ellen C. Parsons, a teacher at Lake Erie Seminary since 1868, had been absent the 1872/73 school year.  
\(^{3}\) Frances Juliette Hosford (1853-1837) was an 1872 graduate of Lake Erie Seminary who taught there 1873-75 and 1887-88; she taught high school in Cleveland 1875-1880; was principal of Elyria’s high school 1880-85; taught at the Oberlin Academy 1888-1916 where she also served as girls’ dean 1911-16; and was assistant dean of women at Oberlin College 1916-20. She earned her M.A. from Oberlin in 1896.  
\(^{4}\) Societies that collected funds for charities through small contributions  
\(^{5}\) Josiah Gilbert Holland was an American novelist and poet who also wrote under the pseudonym Timothy Titcomb; he was the co-founder of *Scribner’s Monthly* magazine.  
\(^{6}\) Rev. J.A. Daley
school signed a request for another prayer day. We were glad to do as they wished. Mr. Peters of the Baptist church addressed us this day most earnestly on the words, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." The feelings of all seemed to be in accord with the spirit of the time and in some respects our second day of prayer seemed more blessed than the first. Miss Evans wrote often in those days and her words helped keep the school steady to its anchor of faith.

For two winters we have rejoiced in a steam-heated house. For years before, each room has been supplied with a little coal stove. In these we burned soft coal, which was the beginning of trials. Then the stoves had a fashion of smoking when the wind was contrary, and of burning poorly for no reason at all. Now, on the coldest days, the house is pleasantly heated from tower to basement. For all this turning of winter into summer our thoughts go thankfully out toward our steadfast friend Judge Hitchcock. Within the last five or six years he has given the Seminary twenty-five thousand dollars. Part of this has been used toward the payment of the debt, and last summer some part of the amount for putting water closets on each floor of the building and eight thousand dollars went for the heating apparatus. For several years he has put in trust one thousand dollars for the assistance of those who wished to enter the school.

During the latter part of the year temperance has been the all-exciting topic in many towns, especially the southern ones of Ohio, and finally the interest reached Painesville. The ladies organized a band for visiting saloons, mass meetings were held weekly, and various pledges were circulated in the town. The total abstinence pledge was given to us for signers. The young ladies brought up the usual powerful objections, that they liked wine in their sauce, didn't like to sign away their liberties and so forth, but finally right feeling gained the victory and one hundred and sixteen in the family signed the pledge, also the janitor and his wife.

[Summer Term 1874]

At the beginning of the summer we had an "event." The Monday after coming back had been a changeful day, and while we were at dinner the wind began to blow. "Ah," we said, "probably we are going to have a storm." Some of the young ladies bethought them of plants on their window-sills, and other articles in unsafe places, and went up stairs. The wind rose and soon dust and leaves came driving into the windows of our basement dining hall. Immediately two chimneys tumbled their bricks down, not many feet from those who were sitting at table on the north side of the room. Then there was a panic and a rush up stairs. On looking out we discovered an immense pile of boards and timbers and rolled up tin lying near the Seminary near the carriage drive. And while many were looking and wondering, it flashed over the bright minds that some of us hadn't any roof over our heads. The news of the accident soon spread and people from all directions came hastening to see. Friends and enemies jumped into carriages on Main Street and drove up in loads. Newspaper men came to the door and wished to go up stairs to see the spot. Small children from the public school near by, scores hatless and bonnetless, showed their hearty sympathy by racing up and down and climbing into the tin ruin to beat a tattoo that added greatly to the variety of the scene. Truly they were happy, for something was going on,

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1 Rev. T.R. Peters
2 Joshua 24:15
3 Reuben Hitchcock, co-founder of Lake Erie Seminary and president of its board
and they, more fortunate than poor Glory McWhirk,¹ were in it. Although no one was much alarmed the young ladies were all anxious to be in the center of the excitement, and were only distressed that they couldn't tell exactly where it was part of the time. In less than half an hour nearly all the tinners and carpenters in town were at work patching up the roof to keep out the rain, and before many hours the trustees announced to us that the building was safe for the night. The next day work was begun in earnest and steadily carried on till the damage was wholly repaired. The whirlwind took off the west end of the roof, loosened the tin for about half the length, and broke into three of four upper rooms. Our chemical apparatus and precious skeleton were in two of these rooms but escaped without harm. No one was hurt, no one was seriously alarmed, and we remember with thankfulness that the God of the Storms is our God.

This week, which began with a whirlwind and progressed through changing rooms and work, ended with something eminently pleasant, for Saturday noon brought Miss Evans. She came into the house very quietly while the family were at dinner, but the news soon got abroad and she was most heartily welcomed.

For a year we have been feeling very rich and much puffed up by a prospective manakin; now we are happy in possession. The order was sent to Paris last summer, this summer the apparatus was shipped, and, after the necessary delays at the custom house, came a few weeks ago. There are, beside the manakin, magnified models of the eye, the ear, the larynx, a longitudinal section of the head, a section of the brain, and some other organs. For these valuable aids to the bequest of Mrs. Wooley,² a friend of the Seminary who lived in this place, and died here about a year ago. We have as yet no room fitted up for our physiological apparatus. The human skeleton is under lock and key in some unused room of the fourth floor, the skeleton of the ostrich has hidden in another corner, and the manakin in another, and smaller pieces startle us in various [places]. These unhappy members seem to haunt the house and demand a resting place, and we hope soon to put them into proper quarters.

The work this term began very promptly, has gone on steadily since, and is now bringing us to the closing duties of the year. Nearly all, we trust, have added something valuable to their knowledge treasure, though there are the usual few who have too much waited for the jewels to fall into their hands, and we are pained that some come to the end of the year lacking still the very beginning of wisdom. Our senior class number six. They are now in the tribulation of commencement ruffles and essays, but are coming out of it successfully and in good reason, for July second. One of the class has been sick for weeks; she is still unfit for hard study, and whether she will be able to take any part in anniversary exercises is doubtful.

The season has finally brought out all its beauties, and yesterday we took our usual summer ride to Little Mountain.³ The day came very near one's ideal perfect day of June. The smooth roads, the clear air, the vegetation made fresh by late rains, seemed a part of God's plan for our enjoyment, and we looked and listened and thought and took all of the good gift we could. This is the last event I can record, and it is fitting the last should be pleasant, for this year which began

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² Philena Healy Woolley (1795-1873)
³ A prominent hill just over 1000 feet in elevation, featuring interesting ledges and caves, located seven miles from Lake Erie Seminary.
so well, promises to end hopefully, and its experiences have proved to us once more that our God is a helper.

Yours for the teachers and pupils of the Seminary,
Edna Baker.

Feb 1875 report by Edna Baker
Covering the 1874 Anniversary through February 1875

Painesville, Ohio.

Feb. 3rd 1875

Dear Friends of the Seminary,

It was on a hot day in June that our last word to you was sealed and sent away; since then the long fall days, and later the continuous cold which has frozen the Lake and spread the streets with snow and ice, have almost put summer heats out of mind, and with them the scenes with which they are associated. But this mid-winter day is mild. The ice in the street is water, little pools all over the yard are making brilliant pictures of the sky, and the Lake has its summer color except where a few pieces of prosaic white ice remember the time of year. This soft air reminds us of spring, and from spring our thoughts run on to summer, and so we are brought around to the hot day in June and the writing of a journal letter again.

[1874 Anniversary (Commencement)]

Our anniversary was held July second as the catalogue predicted. The class of six graduated entire, although two had been sick part of the summer, and one was only able to stay in chapel long enough to read her essay. One of the class is a daughter of Mrs. Taylor of the Madura Mission, India. The day was fine, and as usual we went out to the grove for the closing exercises. For the first time we went without music. The band had quarreled with the town, and to fill up the measure of annoyance for the stubborn people who would not give them the money they wanted, they refused to play for anniversary.

The address was given by Rev. R.G. Hutchins of Columbus, on the well-worn subject of woman's capabilities and prospects in the world, and Rev. H.C. Hayden of Cleveland, formerly pastor of the Congregational church in this place, addressed the class. The diplomas were then presented, the parting song given by the school, the benediction pronounced, and we marched

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1 Lucretia “Lulie” M. Taylor, daughter of Horace and Martha Sturtevant Taylor who were missionaries in India for 26 years; her sister Martha S. Taylor also graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1865 before returning to India to join in their parents’ work.
2 Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Columbus, Ohio.
3 Before becoming pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Cleveland, Rev. Hiram Haydn (or Hayden) was a strong supporter of Lake Erie Seminary; he had just joined Lake Erie Seminary’s board in 1873 and would serve on it until 1904.
back to the house. The afternoon was spent with the collation,¹ the planting of the class woodbine, class reunions, an alumnae meeting, and various pleasant gatherings in the chapel and parlors.

The next day a huge task confronted us. Something was to be done to the house that summer; we did not know what, for the whirlwind in the spring had demolished some of our plans for improvement, but something. So when the last guest had started depot-ward we turned our backs upon the public and fell to work. Pictures, brackets and statuettes were taken from the walls, and with other Seminary valuables put away in a room on the first floor; carpets were taken up, books packed away, chairs carried up stairs and down, and anniversary adorning bundled away with as little regard as if we had not spent half a week in getting them together. Finally the work was done and we went off to our summer rest feeling more than willing to wait for any revelations that might be made in the fall.

[Fall Term 1874]
Anyone who has ever visited the Seminary knows how the rooms looked after burning soft coal for fifteen years, and gas from our unfortunate well for part of the winter. But during the summer a marvelous change was worked. The dents below and the cracks above, the rain stains by the windows, and, above all, the dear familiar smokiness no longer met us when we opened the doors. The walls had all been kalsomined² and tinted; each room had a color different from the rest, and a pretty border added much to the freshness of its appearance. The woodwork in the rooms was painted white, the hall floors a dark drab, and the hall side of the doors stained a dark color. A room for physiological apparatus was made by throwing into one two rooms on the fourth floor, and the writing room was refitted. The cases in the library were varnished and numberless touches given here and there to make the renovation complete.

The school that gathered in the new rooms in the fall numbered only ninety-nine.³ The examinations showed more preparation than usual and seemed to promise good work in the classes.

Fine weather, as well as new paint and a prosperous school, smiled on us that first term and made us doubly happy. And as each pleasant Wednesday came around we promised ourselves it would surely be the last, and so made great efforts to improve every hour. We visited Little Mountain,⁴ famous for being a trifle higher than the land around it, and Indian Point,⁵ noted for lying at the distant end of a rough road and for its irregular ridges, which traditions say are the remains of an Indian fortification. When the days were warmer we went to the Lake, and the greenhouse across the river was a resort in any weather. We rode up and down the hills of Moodey Hollow,⁶ a place which we dwellers in the plains make much of, but which is no doubt seems a very ordinary dent

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¹ A light meal.
² Whitewashed: painted with a low-cost paint made from slacked lime, to which colors could be added.
³ 20 students less than the previous year.
⁴ A prominent hill just over 1000 feet in elevation, featuring interesting ledges and caves, located seven miles from Lake Erie Seminary.
⁵ A site 7 miles from Lake Erie Seminary where there are earthworks left by the Whittelsey Culture people on a 100 foot ridge overlooking the intersection of Grand River and Paine Creek, now a park.
⁶ Moodey’s Hollow is a site just east of downtown Painesville where the Grand River has carved out a high, curving ridge.
in the earth to one familiar with mountains.\(^1\) Twice the school was invited to pillage orchards or farms a mile or two away. As a last venture, we went to Cluff Brook Canyon, twelve miles distant, and called it rare pleasure to sit on damp and ancient logs and eat our lunch while the chill wind made our fingers blue and drove clouds before the sun. But Cluff Brook Canyon suggested scenes among the mountains of the West, and that was sufficient to hush all complaints about the weather. Soon after this the fall storms shut us indoors, and we gave up these pleasant places to the rain and snow.

Thanksgiving was the usual pleasant recess of two days, and there was the usual unappreciated pity bestowed on us who were absent, because we were not at the grand dinner, and did not see the inevitable Mrs. Jarley\(^2\) in the evening, nor hear the mock concert, nor attend the pleasant little supper at which everybody present was toasted with great fairness.

At the end of the term it was thought best to give a literary and musical entertainment, but on looking over the evenings of the last week we found that each would engage some of the friends whom we wished to invite. The evening of the day before the close of school was to be given to a lecture in a hall down town, to begin at eight o'clock. Miss Evans said we could have our company first and still give them time to finish up the evening at the lecture. So said we all, and our friends were invited to come Monday night at four o'clock, which some were prompt enough to do. At five the little company was gathered in chapel to listen to the compositions and music. At six we had supper in the dining hall. We hope no one was urged to eat faster than inclination prompted him, but of course there was no time to be wasted; for every young lady had perpetually before her mind's eye the fact that a lecture began in Child's Hall at eight o'clock, and the dining room must be cleared before she went. As soon as the most leisurely had arisen from the table, and while a few guests were still lingering and talking in little groups around the room, everybody addressed herself to the work. Young ladies rushed hither and thither, moving chairs, carrying eatables into the domestic hall, and falling into each others arms in the hurry; pushing back the stands we had been using for supper, and wheeling the long tables into their places amid a deafening noise of screeching castors and clattering dishes and laughter and talk. Meanwhile, out in the Domestic Hall a relay of dishwashers were carrying on their work and singing an air caught from the Tennesseans who gave a concert here last summer. Before eight o'clock our halls were quiet and a good part of the waiting audience in Child's Hall was made up of people who had spent the early part of the evening at the Seminary, and of young ladies who had just been giving a literary entertainment, and singing negro songs, and washing dishes.

**[Spring Term 1875]**

The present term is going on with a school somewhat smaller than that of last fall, but work has started out well. Our course of Chemistry Lectures has been already begun by Professor Morley\(^3\) of Hudson College. Professor Morley is an enthusiastic [teacher] and his coming seems to give a jog to all the life in the house. He arrives on the noon train Wednesday, [and] after dinner takes

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1. Mount Holyoke is located in a region with true mountains.
2. A character in Charles Dickens’ serial novel *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41) who was proprietress of a travelling waxworks show; perhaps the Seminary’s entertainment involved one student impersonating ‘Mrs. Jarley’ with other students portraying her ‘waxworks.’
3. Edward Williams Morley, scientist and professor at Western Reserve College in Hudson, Ohio.
his black bag up to the Chemistry Room, where he works all the afternoon preparing experiments for the evening lecture. This lecture takes up most of the evening and the next morning he is off on the early train to meet his engagements in Hudson.

At the beginning of the term almost our first thoughts ran forward to the day of prayer; and we prayed that it might bring to us the best blessings by which such a day is ever attended. Our friend Mr. Haydn took the day from his work in Cleveland and gave it to us. He held a service in Chapel at ten o'clock in the morning, and his first words brought everyone into sympathy with the spirit of the time. No matter what each one believed, he said, she ought to be glad to meet the day, for it was one of special privilege and might bring her good in some way, if, beating unhappily around the harbor of safety, she ought to welcome the high tide of the hour, which might float her in if the opportunity were properly used; then going on with the thought suggested by the words of Christ, "He that believeth in Him is not condemned." In the afternoon, at a similar service, Mr. Haydn took the latter part of the same verse in the third chapter of John for his subject, "He that believeth not is condemned already." The earnestness of the speaker made both these services very impressive. There were other meetings held throughout the day. The effects of the day of prayer, as we now see and feel them, do not seem to be in numbers added to the band of Christians who made up two thirds of the school at the beginning of the year; but are apparent rather in the many than in a few individuals. There is a greater reverence at devotions, a clearer moral atmosphere, which has enabled some to see as plainly wrong what before looked fair enough, and a kinder quieter spirit everywhere.

Misses Bentley and Lawrence are absent this term, one at her home, the other in Boston, and Miss Mary Hart of the class of '69 is here taking part of their duties. The care of the sick has passed from Miss Bentley's hands to hers for a time, and the new physician has had a somewhat extensive practice, but a mild and not particularly varied one, for the malady has been sore throat. There is a United States History class of three in this house, of which two are very much inclined to sickness and absence. Their teacher said the other day that the disability of the class had taken a new shape, for now they all come to the classroom but are so hoarse they cannot recite. It seems to be the sudden changes in the weather and the frequent winds, added to the unusual cold of this winter that produces many throat troubles, and possibly United States winds have a specially marked effect on United States History.

Our seniors this year are nine. They have been very fortunate in taking holidays together and particularly fortunate in varying one of them by an interesting accident. Coming back from the

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1 Rev. Hiram Haydn (or Hayden) had been Painesville’s Congregational minister before becoming pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Cleveland in 1871; he was a strong supporter of Lake Erie Seminary, and joined Lake Erie Seminary’s board in 1873.
2 John 3:18
3 Luette P. Bentley (1841-1922) attended Mary Bronson’s preparatory classes before joining Lake Erie Seminary’s first class in 1859, and after graduating in 1865 she immediately joined the faculty, teaching at the Seminary (and later College) until her retirement in 1909. In addition to teaching physiology and hygiene, she served as Associate Principal 1878-98 and Dean 1898-1909.
4 Martha Elizabeth Lawrence (1842-1928) was an 1864 graduate of Lake Erie Seminary and served as its Latin teacher 1866-1909.
5 Mary M. Hart (1850-1925) graduated from Lake Erie Seminary in 1869 and pursued a teaching career locally until marrying Norman Frost in 1877; her daughter Helen Frost attended Lake Erie College 1902-03.
house of one of their number one afternoon this winter, a young lady was holding the reins, and the rest, confident in her ability to do the same, with glory to herself and safety to all others, were thinking of anything but horses. Suddenly the erratic steeds dashed into a snow drift, threw all of the party who were in that sleigh out upon the snow into a clump of brier bushes, and flew away over the road toward town. But they were stopped after a while, the party were taken in, and all came safely home, with no unpleasant proof of the overthrow except a few scratches from the insulted and much-suffering briers.

The reception of a gift has distinguished one day of the term above the rest. Mr. Hayden, whom we have to thank again and again for his kind remembrances of us, put into our library not long ago fifty new volumes and a large Atlas and Dictionary besides. The excitement occasioned in the library by the introduction of fifty new books to its cases has been completely outdone by a maneuver of its steampipes. They have at last utter a dismal protest against this cold weather by bursting. Now, chairs tables and geological specimens are huddled up together away from the leak till the pipes can be mended, and the room is nearly as cold as the front steps. So we are now back in the ice and snow again, and far enough away from the mild day when this letter began, but nothing can put out of our minds the hint of spring which this day gave us.

Just as we are about to begin on a time when the year is truly new, we close this long letter, for we have written as far as we have worked and a journalist can do nothing more.

Yours for the Seminary,
Edna Baker.