Mary’s Diary:
Courting, Schooling, and Skating
in Mid-Victorian Plattsburgh, New York
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Elizabeth A. Allen

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Dedication

To Benjamin Fuller Allen, my paternal grandfather, whose lifetime interests in genealogy and Clinton County history inspired this work.
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Foreword

The diary of Mary Elizabeth Collins, a young woman growing up in mid-Victorian Plattsburgh, New York, begins with daily entries throughout 1884, then goes to entries every few days in 1885, then every few weeks in 1886, concluding with every few months in 1887. The sheer concentration of material in 1884 and 1885 makes that period the narrative focus. The following years, mostly summarized, give the impression of a gently trailing epilogue. The greater amount of early material makes Mary seem rather melodramatic, oversensitive, and introverted, while later material, more cursory in nature, makes her seem more composed. Therefore, the shape of her diary creates the illusion of change.

That said, Mary does appear to undergo actual maturation over the course of her diary. She starts off doubting her attractiveness, her intelligence, and her scholastic ability. But, by the end of her diary, she learns new skills – for example, how to ride a horse – with much less self-consciousness. She also writes papers for local educational assemblies, the Chautauquas, which suggests that she has dismissed some of her anxiety about her intellectual capabilities. She seems more confident.

Mary also becomes more astute in her dealings with suitors. Early on, she spends many entries moping after Mr. Bertrand, who abandoned her for Omaha, Nebraska. Then she embroils herself in the interminable saga of Mr. Parmenter, whose affection she does not reciprocate, but who can never be relinquished completely. After much self-examination of an almost philosophical nature (basically, she asks herself, “Who am I if I say no to him?”), Mary and Mr. Parmenter finally do break it off.

When her second serious beau, Ben Haynes, comes along, Mary entertains a less tortured, more playful relationship with him. She eventually throws him over, though, disgusted by his inability to state whether he seriously loves her. Though Mary’s break-up occurs with her usual florid flourishes (she burns his letters), she evinces a new decisiveness by making a swift, clean dismissal of Ben. Other gentleman friends move in to divert her.

While Mary grows up from 1884 through 1887, her essentials endure. She has a wistful, melancholy reflectiveness, especially when she reads past diary entries and compares them to the present. She fights an uncertain battle between rational restraint and messy passions. She makes friends (male and female) easily and flirts with gusto. She loves her family, especially her sister Birdie, as well as her constant chaperone, brother Ernest.

Finally, Mary is always an engaging writer. It is true that the spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary are indifferent (good times are always “pleasant” or “lovely”). It is also true that her major activities are worrying about exams and calling on friends. However, amidst her routine, one of her fervent invocations to God appears. Or she transcribes a conversation with postal clerk Charlie Ransom that clearly illustrates his sense of humor and his crush on her. Or she rhapsodizes about a moonlit night on Cumberland Bay. In such moments, Mary appears in her true light, which is anything but boring.

Mary’s words offer insight into her head and her heart. Though she may not be superlatively good, skilled, or famous, she is ordinary, interesting, and real. Her narrative voice brings the past to life, showing that, despite our technological advances, our primary human concerns – home, family, love, the future – have not changed at all since Mary wrote.

Elizabeth A. Allen
June 28, 2007
A Note on the Text

All presentations of historical material require a delicate compromise between historical fidelity and accessibility to the modern reader. The choices that an editor makes inevitably skew the reader’s perceptions of the material. I will explain my editorial practices so that any skewing may at least be more transparent.

I have transcribed Mary’s diary verbatim for the most part. Dates, names, places, abbreviations, underlining, and capitalization appear as originally written. When the transcription is a guess, the words are set off in slashes. Multiple question marks indicate letters, words, or phrases that could not be determined.

Mary’s punctuation is highly irregular, depending on line breaks and occasional periods. While many of her run-on constructions are retained, I usually put in periods where she uses line breaks. I decided against reproducing Mary’s original line breaks because that would have made the transcription take up many more pages.

Mary’s paragraph formation is also inconsistent, lacking indents. In the interest of readability, I broke her text blocks into shorter paragraphs.

I also omitted words that Mary crossed out. In my opinion, she only crossed out trivial errors, rather than anything revelatory that would have added to the text. I therefore left out her cross-outs to make the text flow better.

The most obvious change I have made in the original text is the imposition of chronologically bounded chapters. Each chapter draws its title from an entry within its period. This is probably the most editorially suspect choice I have made, since it could be argued that I am imposing a novel-like trajectory on a personal document that was not constructed as a novel by its author. In response, I will say that the chapter titles and divisions reflect the story that I found in Mary’s diary: one of self-definition through courtship. This is by no means the only subject of her diary; it is only the one that seemed most prominent and fascinating to me.

When adding explanatory details to Mary’s diary, I wanted to be helpful, but not obtrusive. To that end, I have used brackets sparingly, only when a key word has been omitted or the spelling is especially atrocious or obscure. I have also set off in brackets a description of the physical lay-out of certain entries, usually those inserted into the signatures of the diary, when I felt that this presentation was important to understanding the organization of the diary.

As far as footnotes are concerned, I footnoted all of Mary’s literary, poetical, and musical allusions, and reading material where possible, any words that she uses that are no longer current, medical treatments, products, locations, and customs with which readers today may not be familiar. Whenever possible, I supplemented Mary’s records of current events with contemporary commentary from her hometown newspaper, the Plattsburgh Sentinel. Though I have clarified the identity of certain people and places, I did not make the effort to figure out every single one mentioned. In my mind, such an undertaking would be tangential to the purpose of Mary’s diary, which is not to enumerate the people and places of Victorian Plattsburgh, but to describe what those people and places meant to her.
Me and Mary

Mary’s diary is no stranger’s journal for me, but a piece of family history. She and I are both descended from Major John Addoms (1737-1828) and his second wife Mary Townsend, whom he married in 1778. One of their daughters, Sarah or Sally (1791-1849), married Luther Hagar (1786-1853) in 1813. They were my great-great-great-grandparents through my father, Richard Allen.

Besides my great-great-great-grandmother Sarah, Major John Addoms and Mary Townsend had eight other children, including one John Townsend (1781-1868), who married Harriet Young. John and Harriet were Mary’s great-grandparents through her mother, Julia.

In other words, Mary is my second cousin four times removed!
Mary’s Diary in Context

Diaries were all the rage in the Victorian era, especially for women. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was mostly men who kept journals (Culley, 1985; Kagle, 1988). By the 1880s, however, Mary Elizabeth Collins was just one of many middle-class white women who, in a number greater than men, were keeping track of their days.

The spread of education for women contributed to the nineteenth-century diary boom in both western Europe and North America. Women’s secondary schools and colleges burgeoned throughout the nineteenth century. At the same time, many institutions became co-educational, allowing women more opportunities to study (Solomon, 1985). Though a fierce debate circulated about the supposed intellectual deficiencies of women (see Mary’s entry for March 14, 1886, in which the boys debate whether “the mind of woman is inferior to that of man”), co-education was commonplace by Mary’s day.

As they became more literate, women read all sorts of printed matter that affected diary-keeping (Blodgett, 1988; Hunter, 1992; McCarthy, 2000); as a matter of fact, women commonly recorded the books they read and their opinions thereon (Motz, 1996). Epistolary novels, or novels in the form of correspondence, showed female readers that telling about one’s impressions and experiences made for interesting reading (Blodgett, 1988). Conduct manuals – etiquette books that instructed readers on appropriate behavior – prescribed keeping a diary as a ladylike activity (Culley, 1985; Hunter, 1992; McCarthy, 2000; Rose, 1995). Published journals by rich or notable authors also gave women the idea that their lives were worthy of record as well.

Mary’s diary reflects a typical engagement with the world of print. She periodically notes what authors she is reading; she especially likes James Fenimore Cooper and Sir Walter Scott. In one case, she even compares her diary to a literary one, that of Irma, protagonist in On the Heights (1865), by Berthold Auerbach. Thinking the literary heroine’s journal “especially fine” for its deep record of feelings, Mary writes in her July 8, 1886 entry that her own diary pales in comparison. “[M]ine is mostly of what I have done not of what I have felt,” Mary says, an inaccurate rendering of her journal, which regularly bursts with passions. Mary’s reading lists and her reaction to On the Heights give one example of how female Victorian diarists used their journals to interact with the expanding array of reading material available to them.

Education and literacy provided bourgeois female Victorian diarists with the tools to write about their lives. At the same time, a general rise in the amount of leisure gave them the time in which to use their writerly tools (Blodgett, 1988; Hunter, 1992). While Mary’s entries show that duties of housework, schoolwork, and child care occupy much of her days, they also reveal a varied round of activities, including making social visits, writing and waiting for correspondence, reading novels, having photographs taken, loitering at the post office, ice skating, watching (and gambling on) polo matches, redecorating the house, singing with the Philharmonic Society, attending plays and concerts, and the quintessential pursuit of those with time and money, “shoping [shopping].” Seeing her packed schedule, one wonders where she finds the time to write in her diary. The point, however, is not that Mary barely has time to write, but that her numerous hobbies demonstrate how much time she has for leisure pursuits, which include the keeping of a journal.

While many women during the Victorian age kept diaries or journals, the formats that they used were diverse. Some, usually women in rural farming communities, wrote in pocket diaries, which were closely related to the accounting books kept by farmers or merchants (Motz, 1987). Pocket books were small, slim volumes bound with informational pages at the front. These almanac-like inserts contained information about planting schedules, lunar phases, and weights and measures (McCarthy, 2000; Motz, 1987). Compact enough to be tucked into a sleeve or a waistband, pocket diaries typically supplied only several blank lines for a day’s entry. Those who used pocket diaries wrote, almost of necessity,
terse, fragmented entries, usually about the weather, the day’s labor, and familial health and milestones (Bloom, 1996; Culley, 1985; McCarthy, 2000). Entries about emotions appeared, but sparsely (McCarthy, 2000). Women with pocket diaries chronicled less of the psychological development of their personal selves and more the shifting natural world, as well as their ties in their community (Culley, 1985; McCarthy, 2000; Motz, 1987).

A more introspective form of diary flowered at the same time, influenced by both spiritual autobiographies and the French tradition of the *journal intime*, or “intimate diary.” In the spiritual autobiography, imported from England by seventeenth-century Puritans, writers recorded their religious conversions, emotions, doubts, and prayerful thoughts. The goal was for the writer to reflect on his or her transgressions, to take solace in his or her faith, and to become a more devout servant of God (Culley, 1985; Kagle, 1988). The *journal intime* flourished later in nineteenth-century France; it encouraged its predominantly young, female writers to emphasize their inner lives – their thoughts, feelings, and fantasies – rather than their social milieu or larger world (Culley, 1985; Lejeune, 1996). Both the spiritual autobiography and the *journal intime* emphasized the writer’s personal sensations and opinions. The influence of these two genres made it acceptable for writers of introspective journals – usually more suburban and literate than the writers of pocket diaries (Motz, 1987) – to use their diaries as tools of self-exploration.

The pocket diary and the introspective diary represented two distinct forms of many that a diary might take in nineteenth-century America. Besides these, people also kept letter diaries (addressed and often sent to a family member or close friend), travel journals, and war diaries (Culley, 1985; Kagle, 1988). Sometimes two types of journal were kept at once, usually a brief memorandum book supplemented by a fuller, more private accounting in a personal diary (Blodgett, 1988; Hunter, 1992).

Various journal subgenres often mingled in a single volume. For example, in Mary’s initial entry (January 1, 1884), she speaks of her diary as “a confidential friend, one who I may and must confess to every evening.” The religious overtones of confession situate her firmly in the discourse of pious self-betterment typical of the spiritual autobiography. In comparison, when she begins courting Mr. Parmenter, her attraction, anxiety, and confusion impel her to a poetic self-examination (see her January 31, 1885 entry for an example) worthy of a *journal intime*. During happier days, her descriptions of Altona’s Dead Sea (August 11, 1884) and the Montreal Winter Carnival (March 19, 1887) have a sprightly, travelogue-like quality. Diaries such as Mary’s may tend toward the introspective, but cannot be categorically labeled.

While people today think of a diary as a private record, Victorian diaries such as Mary’s may be more aptly termed “semi-public” (Culley, 1985). Parents and older siblings sometimes encouraged girls to keep diaries (Hunter, 1992), in the way that Birdie suggests that Mary should keep a diary (January 1, 1884) and Mary’s mother requests that she track her expenses (January 9, 1884). In the Victorian era, parents often prodded their children to keep written records for the purpose of moral improvement, self-discipline, and refinement (Hunter, 1992). The diaries were then monitored for indications of proper deportment and maturation. Mary grumbles at her mother’s incursion into her financial life, commenting, “I thought it [keeping a ledger] would [be] to [sic] much trouble for the good it would do” (January 9, 1884), but such enforced self-improvement through diary was not unusual then.

Victorian parents literally sought open books in their children’s diaries, but young writers were more interested in showing their journals to their companions than to their guardians (Hunter, 1992). When exhibited to trusted associates, one’s diary became a symbol of one’s close connection with a friend. Indeed, the journal was often personified (“dear old Journel,” in Mary’s case) and addressed as “a confidential friend” (January 1, 1884), the entries becoming the equivalent of counsel between intimates (Culley, 1985; Franklin, 1986). Mary herself operates on the principle of diary as intimacy, allowing Birdie a look into its pages “even though it is supposed to be for my own special benefit”
(April 6, 1884). With this gesture – giving an important piece of herself “for my own special benefit” to her sister – Mary both demonstrates how much she esteems her sister and cements that esteem. Conversely, not being allowed to read someone’s diary established a clear limit on the relationship, as when Mary withholds her entries’ contents from Mr. Parmenter (November 5, 1884) because she does not feel as close to him. Diarists like Mary used their “semi-public” journals without compunction as social currency, a means of defining and reinforcing their circles of friends.

Though they were employed less covertly than today’s journals are, Victorian diaries contained an agitation for greater privacy (Bloom, 1996; Hunter, 1992). Mary’s attitude toward her writing reflects this trend away from the diary accessible to all family members and toward the diary for the writer’s eyes only. In her July 24, 1884, entry, Mary explains, “Dear journal you have again been neglected for two days this time, but the reason you should know is that Hattie has been in my room at the time when I usually write so I could or would not.”

Victorian girls guarded their diaries with increasing vigilance so that they could use their diaries to organize their thoughts, experiment with identity and sexuality, and even rebel without disrupting their families (Franklin, 1986; Hunter, 1992; Motz, 1996). Like most diarists of her period, Mary uses her diary for a variety of closely related reasons. The record of her relationship with Mr. Parmenter, for example, neatly crystallizes many of the above principles. On January 31, 1885, when she is dealing with the aftermath of Mr. Parmenter’s marriage proposal, she says, “He is not such a man as I wish to be my husband,” but she also admits that she cannot stop thinking of him. Her ambivalent feelings lead her to question herself and, more generally, the prevailing expectations of courtship and marriage, as when she prays, “Now I can only say God help us both and make him more worthy of some good woman’s love than he has been of mine.”

Because they were using their journals as tools with which to craft their selves, Victorian diarists lavished attention on the diary as document, often with an eye toward the future. They emended, commented on, and reread their entries regularly (Culley, 1985). Thus, Mary is not unusual when she writes on July 20, 1884, “Since we came home I have done all of my usual work lunched and read in my journal the record of two months that brought considerable of both pain and pleasure to me.” Mary’s frequent reference to past entries implies a comparison between her life back then and her current life. There is also an unstated expectation that she has changed and hopefully improved. The diary was not only a tool of present-day self-construction, but also a useful legacy to one’s future self (Franklin, 1986).

The diary’s utility in creating and addressing one’s future self appears in Mary’s anguished entry of January 31, 1885, where she writes about her marriage prospects. After her conversation with Mr. Parmenter, Mary feels disturbed and immature, calling herself a “poor creature half woman half child.” Her description of herself as not quite human (a “creature”), neither a girl nor a woman, typifies her self-perception as a scatterbrained, childish person. She chides herself for being broken-hearted, conceding, “I have not as yet become the woman whom I see in the future bearing my name and being known as me.”

Even though she is in a state of romantic confusion and emotional upheaval, Mary can still envision herself as a “woman,” a wholly mature and calmer being. She uses her diary to inscribe the vision of her older, wiser self, and then, through rereading and comparison, attempts to translate her written description into active reality. In a very real sense, Mary’s journal is much more than a repository of her days’ deeds. It is both the tool of, and a look into, the developing mind and spirit of a young woman on the cusp of modernity.
Mary’s Courting in Context

Mary’s diary details her various relationships with young men. She carries on an affectionate, even passionate, correspondence with her married cousin Emer Corey in Bismarck, North Dakota. She pines for a former suitor, George Bertrand, who, in her mind, abandoned her when he moved to Omaha, Nebraska. Closer to home, Mary maintains a close friendship and correspondence with her sister Birdie’s fiancé Matt. Her high-spirited flirtation with infatuated postal clerk Charlie Ransom adds regular notes of humor to the proceedings. She also spends much of her diary having crushes on, skating with, worrying about, and pining after Edward Parmenter, whose on-again-off-again attachment to her forms a major dramatic thread of her diary. Finally, there is Ben Haynes, with whom Mary jokes, flirts, gambles, and generally goofs off. While Mary is obviously not trying to secure, say, Emer or Matt as her spouse, her most significant relationships with the young men in her diary are dating – or courting – ones. Thus, whether in earnest with Mr. Parmenter or more casually with Ben, Mary is dating various people, going out with them in order to determine their mutual level of interest and suitability as prospective spouses. Mary’s experiences when courting are typical of white, bourgeois young women in the mid-Victorian period.

Before examining mid-Victorian courtship in detail, it is useful to note two cultural trends that strongly affected the courting process: first, a greater stress on self-regulation and, second, the elevation of Romanticism. In the Victorian mind, the stereotypical self-made man, who mastered the world of commerce and public action through his masculine virtues of ambition and intelligence, could only achieve occupational and personal success through restraint. A man’s raw, passionate drives could, if channeled correctly, allow him to dominate his world. Yet the same “uncivilized” urges could be his undoing if he did not rein them in (Degler, 1974; Halttunen, 1982; Welter, 1966).

Fortunately, in the bourgeois Victorian conception of sex roles, the ideal woman provided the perfect counterbalance to the “animalistic” aggressive tendencies of the male. Because the ideal woman was perceived to be more virtuous and purer than the average man, her piety, goodness, and meekness were expected to temper masculine wantonness. She would supposedly soften his rough edges and elevate his base instincts (Degler, 1974; Halttunen, 1982; Welter, 1966). What a Young Woman Ought to Know, a Victorian advice book for teenage girls, emphasized that moral policing was a feminine duty, especially in the context of courtship: “Girls have a wonderful responsibility in regard to the moral conduct of young men, and the self-respecting girl will guard herself not only from the contamination of touch, but also from an undue freedom of thought” (Wood-Allen, 1898, p. 161). Because the Victorians viewed sexuality and emotion as useful only when properly contained, middle-class men and women attempted to govern themselves according to high standards of propriety.

Mary internalizes the common bourgeois idea that she, as a woman, should restrain her male companions’ lust. Writing about a late-night conversation on her door step with Mr. Parmenter, she says (March 26, 1886), “When he finally bade me goodbye he put the other hand over [mine] as tenderly as could be and leaned toward me a little. I did not know but he was going to kiss me but I said good night in a matter of fact way that I guess he thought he would at least delay the operation.” She appears to interpret Mr. Parmenter’s desire to kiss her as a dangerous display of lust. Though she clearly reciprocates his interest, she takes refuge in a “matter of fact,” or less emotionally vulnerable, manner, in order to “delay the operation.” Her clinical language here showcases the lack of sentiment that she wishes to model for both Mr. Parmenter and herself.

Middle-class Victorian men were not the only ones expected to channel their emotions properly. As a matter of fact, a recurrent theme in Mary’s diary is her own struggle, in a paraphrase of her very first entry (January 1, 1884), “to take warning from last years follies and nonsense and be more sensible in the future.” Over the course of her diary, she feels a variety of strong feelings – love for Birdie, anxiety over the Regents, happiness about graduation, despair over Emer Corey’s death,
infatuation with Mr. Parmenter – that spring up strongly, then die down quickly. She tries to stop herself from having such effusive responses in the first place, as she thinks befits a proper Victorian young woman, but, she notes with frustration, her emotions respond poorly to her rational attempts to direct them. The surge/repression/exasperation/surge cycle sometimes occurs in the space of a single entry. On May 24, 1887, for example, she writes of burning letters from Ben Haynes after a rupture in their relationship:

I burned Ben’s letters today and in them I have cremated more than they were ever in themselves. […] He does not even try to live up to the good he knows and that I always believed to be in him.

[…] What a difference it makes when you see a thing. I would hardly have been so angry for I knew much of this before, but seeing a thing brings it home so sharply that these waves of passion are not good for me.

I wish that I need not have to meet them, but in spite of the discipline that my passions have received, they will come and then are swept away...all the barriers that I have built with so much care and patience.

I gathered brick brack for some fancy work yesterday and there was a good deal left this morning. I piled it in the fireplace a while, gleaming Leaf. And touched a match to it and, as the flames leaped out, I gave to their keeping the letters. One sheet fell outside the fire as though trying to save its self but it was doomed and no effort of its own could save it. The words look up at me in mute reproach, as though pleading for a kind thought to a long cherished happy friendship and thus they glowed red and bright.

They darkened and died and when the last little toung of flame had fallen, the wind crept in through the open door + whirled the ashes round and round and so it ended; then I went out and gathered my pansies. This is symbolical. Far in the future, though I shall travel, I shall come back for a moment to strew heartsease over the ashes of a dead past.

Mary’s “waves of passion” appear in the second paragraph, but she dismisses them, telling herself that they “are not good” for her. She acknowledges the damaging force of her feelings, but her resolve to master them is honored more in the breach than the observance. She talks about “disiplin” and “barriers,” but, in her mind, she lacks these, having been washed away by her tides of feelings. Angry at herself for permitting “these waves of passion,” she yet enhances them with two paragraphs of fire imagery, in which Ben’s letters become personified, “pleading for a kind thought to a long cherished happy friendship.” As Mary herself explicitly notes in her last paragraph, “This is symbolical,” so it is not too much of a stretch to say that she sees Ben’s letters as representing her affection for him caught in the fire of her passion. Indeed, elsewhere in her diary, she remarks on her inability to “adjust [her] feelings to there proper sphere” (March 3, 1885). Her imagery of self-modification and -limitation reflects not only a sensitive person trying to grow a thicker skin, but also the Victorian tension between passion and propriety.

The alienating effects of self-policing were offset by the cultural development of Romanticism, which carried with it a glorification of romantic love. As a movement, Romanticism introduced broad changes into nineteenth-century philosophy, literature, painting, architecture, and fashion. Romanticism infiltrated more than the arts, however; Romantic beliefs about human nature were especially influential in social relations such as friendship and courting.

Romantic doctrine described a person in two parts: the social and the private. The social self was a personality made up of the ways in which someone behaved publicly. Because a person followed societal rules of etiquette when interacting with others, his or her social, or outer, self was polite, reserved, and sometimes only partially truthful, as when concealing criticism so as to spare another’s feelings. The social self’s guarded nature frequently put it in conflict with the other part of a person:
his or her core, or authentic, self. Romanticism held that, in opposition to one’s public face, a person’s private self was a true measure of his or her character. It was expressive, passionate, and honest. Supposedly untainted by the repressive demands of society, one’s real emotions and thoughts lay in one’s private self (Lystra, 1989; Rothman, 1984). The Romantic perspective of the social personality as a barrier of falsehood to the hidden honesty of one’s inner self directed the course of bourgeois courting throughout the Victoria era.

The flourish of Romanticism in general brought a reappraisal of romantic love. For the purposes of this overview, romantic love is defined as “the intense intimacy between partners, created by sharing secrets and sustained by irresistible desires for the loved one’s personality and body.” Such a combination of personal admiration and lust was regarded suspiciously in the 1700s. In the eighteenth century, romance signified impulsivity, immaturity, and danger. It was antithetical to successful partnerships. Thus, in the ideal courtship and the ideal marriage, the man and the woman matched in reason, virtue, congeniality, and tastes, rather than in a deep, emotional passion for each other (Cott, 2000).

By the mid-1800s, however, beliefs about romance reversed themselves. Romance became beneficial, desirable, and central to the experience of middle-class courting and marriage. While congeniality and similar backgrounds were still championed as factors in successful courtships and marriages, bourgeois thought placed increased emphasis on the couple’s strong emotional desire for each other (Cott, 2000). In *Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America*, Ellen Rothman highlights this change: “[Romance] was no longer associated with wildness and youthful passion; it was made safe. Romance was redefined as the key to domestic harmony, rather than as a threat to it” (Rothman, 1984, p. 103).

Emotional closeness, as well as physical closeness, was also fostered by romantic ideals. Two key virtues of a romantic relationship were candor, or the readiness to speak one’s mind to one’s partner, and sincerity, or truth in self-expression (Lystra, 1989; Rothman, 1984). Conduct manuals of the period emphasized that courting partners should use sincerity to obtain information about one another. “It is...important that [a young woman] shall know not only a man’s character, but his peculiar traits, his likes and dislikes,” C.H. Kent asserted in *A Manual for Young Ladies, with Hints on Love, Courtship, Marriage, and the True Objects of Life*, written just before Mary’s high school tenure (Kent, 1881). Ideally, closeness in courting couples was predicated on detailed revelations.

In the protection of privacy, courting couples were supposed to have sincere and candid conversations in which they revealed secrets and foibles. Mary illustrates one of these conversations when she reports on a date with Mr. Parmenter (March 6, 1884): “Then we skated and talked. Talked from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell, theology justice mercy capital punishment whether the stars are inhabited ect ect, things in an endless list.” According to Mary’s report, part of her conversation with Mr. Parmenter covers fanciful things (“whether the stars are inhabited”), while another portion covers serious religious and moral subjects of great concern when in the search for a prospective spouse. From such discussions, courting couples were meant to build up confidence in each other.

In conclusion, the growing significance of self-control colored male-female interactions with a certain amount of caution. Romanticism campaigned against such alienation by idealizing close connections between the sexes. One was expected to penetrate another’s protective layer of propriety in order to discover the true and sensitive soul that lay beneath. The competing demands of self-control and effusive romantic expression produced a courting model fraught with tension.

So what exactly did middle-class Victorian youth do when courting? In contrast to the heavily chaperoned and formalized process of the 1700s, bourgeois courting in Mary’s day was more freeform. Away from the watchful eyes of familial or town elders, courting couples conducted themselves independently, at the same time in close relation to their peers. Dates occurred amongst the
amusements afforded by the burgeoning urban spaces. Courting men and women practiced a wide range of erotic interaction, though genital-genital intercourse was usually reserved until after marriage. Freedom from supervision, along with the new urban entertainments, made courting enjoyable for many participants.

At the same time, however, courting couples never forget the purpose behind courting: marriage. Courting was a time in which young men and women were expected to “try out” prospective spouses, eventually selecting the best. Young bourgeois women took this “auditioning” process very seriously, often engineering tests for their courting partners. In these tests, small or large, manufactured from the dramas of daily life, young women such as Mary sought to strengthen romantic ties between themselves and their partners and to evaluate the fitness of their partners.

The Victorian era broadened the range of courting activities available to young people. They took advantage of the amusements and public places afforded by newly urban communities. Young people often became first acquainted through regular socializing at school or at church. When they wished to date, they found things to do outside of these institutions. Single-sex groups of young men and women often roved the town after school or church, talking, joking, and hanging out at dance halls, concert halls, theaters, sporting events, ice cream parlors, skating rinks, and other gathering places (D’Emilio and Freedman, 1988; Rothman, 1982). Mary, for example, reports group social activities on the ice rink, at the Philharmonic Society concerts, at polo matches, and at the Montreal Winter Carnival. From the acquaintanceships between these loosely knit groups, young men and women might grow more interested in each other and start courting. If so, then they entertained themselves at the same places where their friends liked to have fun in groups. Courting youth also sought time alone, so they walked the city streets together, met up in shops or post offices, and escorted each other home on foot or by carriage, all so they could have chances to get acquainted.

Mary and other young people of the Victorian era courted with little intervention from parents. While parents or town elders were able to oversee premarital maneuvers in the small rural communities of the 1700s, developing urbanization made supervision of courting more difficult in the late 1800s (Rothman, 1982; D’Emilio and Freedman, 1988). As noted in the previous paragraph, with the expansion of cities, many venues developed in which young men and women could spend time away from surveillance. Courting couples expected solitude and spoke, walked, and met together alone at various venues (Rothman, 1982; Lystra, 1989). Mary, for one, revels in the privacy of the ice rink and the ensuing walks home with Mr. Parmenter (March 17, 1884): “Then we came home I was so very tired that of course we walked very slow. It amused me to see how much slower he walked the nearer our destination we became. After we arrived we stood a long long time at the gate he had so much to say, and listen to. It is a wonder he got away at all.” Her tongue-in-cheek remark (“of course we walked very slow”) highlights how Victorian courting couples even went to the extreme of making their own privacy by walking at a dilatory pace. Such determination to seclude oneself with one’s courting partner was not easily thwarted. Older generations tried to direct their children’s movements by instituting stricter chaperonage in the 1880s and 1890s, but to no avail (Rothman, 1984). Mary and her peers, accustomed to great social freedom, conducted their courting according to their wishes.

Courting Victorian men and women not only kept their own privacy, but also their own hours. With the same permissive attitude that allowed courting couples much time alone, parents of Victorian sons and daughters left their children largely unrestricted by curfews (Rothman, 1982). In some cases, courting youth returned to their houses as late as 3:00 AM with no objection from guardians (Lystra, 1989). Mary herself highlights her own courting timetable in her nonchalant remark about returning home “about half past eleven” from a date. “They [my family] locked me out,” she writes (June 2, 1884), “and I got through the window.” Her parents’ lack of objection to her near-midnight return (and her breaking and entering!) provides an example of the leniency in schedule granted to courting Victorian youth.
Courting in middle-class Victorian America included more than conversations, sports, games, and enjoying each other’s company. Despite the modern misconception of late nineteenth-century bourgeoisie as horribly repressed prudes, Victorian sexuality was not squeamish and passionless (Degler, 1974; Lystra, 1989). There were limitations on erotic activities between courting couples: As we have seen above, both men and women were expected to temper sexual interests with reserve and propriety. Furthermore, genital-genital intercourse was supposed to be reserved for marriage. At the same time, courting couples indulged in many of the same activities that people currently do on dates. They wrote letters to each other confessing their desires; language ranged from earthily explicit to poetically euphemistic, but the strength of feeling cannot be denied (Rothman, 1984). They held hands, cuddled next to each other when riding together, kissed, groped, fondled, caressed, and generally took advantage of the privacy that they assumed as a right.

Physical activity between Mary and her courting partners usually begins with flirting. As Mary’s repeated mentions of her inveterate flirtation point out, young women could be assertive in this case, signaling their interest with looks and facial expressions. As she says in one entry (April 4, 1884), “Oh, I had a very nice time [at the rink]. There was one gentleman there very nice looking who spent his time watching me. I got up some thing of a flirtation by my eyes and smiles, I wonder if I shall ever see him again.” Mary’s encouragements lead to formal introductions, conversations, escorts home, and more intimate situations. She writes of shaking hands, holding hands, sitting next to someone when riding, and kissing. Just because Mary and her peers set great store in controlling their passions does not mean that they never felt them.

The things that courting couples did were pleasurable and sometimes liberating, but never carefree or inconsequential. Ideally, courting would turn into an exclusive courtship, followed by a couple’s engagement. Finally, they would be married, having selected an appropriate partner. As the initial step in the process of choosing a spouse, Victorian courting was laden with significance and also with uncertainties that courting couples in earlier generations did not experience. For example, as the influence of elders on choice of partners dwindled, parental permission to marry a woman disappeared as an external measure of a match’s fitness. Without such means of vetting partners, courting couples looked to guarantees that they could generate themselves (Lystra, 1989). Thus, in order to determine the extent of their suitors’ devotion, bourgeois young women developed dramatic emotional tests for their partners to overcome. Men who averred their love and devotion despite these obstacles proved themselves worthy spousal material.

The test, in its simplest form, was a challenge and a call to one’s courting partner to prove the extent of his or her love. A test could be as simple or as small as a remark in a letter: “You write shorter letters to me and much less frequent ones than I do to you. Do you think of me less or with less passion?” Alternatively, a test could be as large as a temporary break in an engagement because of conflicting political or religious beliefs. Any everyday experience, from illness, death in the family, acquisition of a new house, or gain or loss of a breadwinner’s job, could provoke a test. Women also manufactured tests out of their own personal qualities, such as perceived character flaws, their religious interests (or lack thereof), or their financial position. No event was too large, too small, or too mundane to spark an interrogation of affection. Mention of Victorian women’s emotional testing even appeared in the advice literature; an 1890 pamphlet, The Mystery of Love, Courtship and Marriage Explained, by Henry J. Wehman, described such tests negatively: “There is a certain class of ladies who test and try their admirers in every possible way before they yield their love. They consider the conquest of the heart incomplete until they have pierced it through with many sorrows” (Wehman, 1890, p. 27). It is important to note, however, not to see romantic testing as a peculiarly feminine cruelty or expressions of universal, pathological self-doubt. Rather, testing was a culturally acceptable refashioning of daily life into a dramatic catalyst for examination of a relationship’s significance (Lystra, 1989).
Confronted with such tests, the respondents (usually men, since it was predominantly women who initiated tests) had several options. Assuming that both the tester and the respondent were interested in each other, the respondent took one of three tacks. First, he or she might attack the obstacles brought up by the tester; often, the respondent repeatedly assured the respondent’s love was so great that it outweighed the tester’s problems. Second, the respondent might respond to a tester’s challenge by offering solutions, such as a more lucrative occupation to offset the tester’s perceived poverty. Finally, in some cases, a respondent acknowledged the existence of the barriers enumerated by the tester. Then the respondent either stepped aside or called the tester’s bluff, putting the analytical control of the relationship back into the tester’s hands. In any event, testing was a common, even expected, part of Victorian courting, and those who were tested had a variety of ways in which to cope (Lystra, 1989).

Testing in Victorian courtship was an alternative form of quality assurance, but, beyond that, it had special significance for young women like Mary, who used it to ensure future security. Though married women’s property legislation, which swept through the United States between the 1830s and the 1870s, permitted women to retain property in their own names, most women in Mary’s time were not economically self-sufficient (Cott, 2000). Married women depended on their husbands for financial support after marriage. In order to receive such support, young women observed that they needed to stay on the good side of their husbands’ disposition so that they might also stay on the good side of their bank books. Thus courting women used testing to generate strong bonds of affection between them and their suitors. They hoped that their methods would assure them of spousal devotion and, perhaps more importantly, economic sustenance (Lystra, 1989). Whether they consciously recognized it or not, romantic love was for many bourgeois women a currency in which they invested for its practical effect of preserving income and safety for themselves and their children.

This middle-class Victorian practice of testing during courtship may provide insight into Mary’s heart-wrenching relationship with Mr. Parmenter, summarized below. (The dates listed correspond to the dates of diary entries that mention certain events.)

March 3, 1884: Mary meets Mr. Parmenter while ice skating.
They quickly become infatuated with each other, courting almost exclusively.
April 5, 1884: Mr. Parmenter advises Mary not to continue skating at the rink. Mary is angered by his attempt to control her.
April 16, 1884: Mr. Parmenter stays until after midnight at Mary’s house. Mary describes his behavior as “all together too…lovelike.” She herself feels ambivalent toward him. He apparently asks her if she loves him, and she evades the question.
May 4, 1884: An anonymous letter (Mary thinks it is from Charlie Ransom) arrives at Mary’s house. The letter warns Mary’s father that Mary is “keeping company with a young man who [is] not to be relied upon.” With great regret, Mary concludes that she must stop seeing Mr. Parmenter.
May 6, 1884: At Mary’s request, Birdie writes a letter for her breaking off the friendship between Mary and Mr. Parmenter. Mary mails it.
Summer through fall, 1884: Mr. Parmenter leaves town to go “out west.” Mary spends the rest of the spring, summer, and fall in the usual round of schoolwork, housework, church, outings with friends and family, group dates, shopping, singing, etc. She develops a close friendship with Ben Haynes. Their courting seems less formal than hers with Mr. Parmenter.
November 5, 1884: Mary notes with anxiety that Mr. Parmenter has come back in town to vote in the presidential elections.
January 10, 1885: Mary and Mr. Parmenter meet on the ice rink. They talk about “light things” while skating together.
January 31, 1885: Mr. Parmenter says that he loves Mary. He asks her to marry him. Mary turns him down, explaining that she does not love him in the way that he wants her to. She feels a great depression of spirit and hopelessness afterward.

Spring, 1885: Mary and Mr. Parmenter avoid meeting in person, but Mary cannot avoid thinking about him. She is uncertain if she loves him, but he obviously means a lot to her. At some point in the spring, Mr. Parmenter writes to Mary, requesting her permission to correspond.

April 29, 1885: Mary writes a letter to Mr. Parmenter saying that she does not want to correspond or continue her friendship with him.

May 5, 1885: Mr. Parmenter writes to Mary. He wants to meet in person, “not,” as Mary writes, “to ’plead his cause’ but to ask me some things and then to bid me a goodby which shall be for all time.”

May 21, 1885: Mr. Parmenter comes to Mary’s house. Mary describes her feelings as “pain and passion and heart break.” He claims that he can’t give her up and also that “thoes stories” perpetuated by the anonymous letter were false. Mary’s mother writes to her friend in order to discern the truth about Mr. Parmenter’s character.

June 2, 1885: Mr. Parmenter sends Mary a book, Molly Bawn, with her favorite flower pressed inside.

June 17, 1885: Mary responds to his package with some flowers and a card, in which she has written a poem which she describes as “a good farewell to him.”

July 21, 1885: Mr. Parmenter returns all of the letters he has gotten from Mary, saying that “he has been deceived in [her.]” He asks her to send back all of the letters from him. Mary does as he asks, enclosing a note about how hurt and angry she feels at his actions.

July 26, 1885: Mr. Parmenter sends a letter apologizing for his behavior and begging “so earnestly for forgiveness.” He explains that he was jealous because he assumed that Mary was courting Lou Smith. Mary forgives him.

August 2, 1885: Mary receives another letter from Mr. Parmenter. He asks again for her to marry him.

August 5, 1885: Mary sends her answer: “no in a box of pansies.”

August 13, 1885: Mary and Mr. Parmenter cross paths in town. Barely civil to each other, they agree that they should behave as strangers toward each other.

Fall, 1885, through spring, 1886: Mary and Mr. Parmenter avoid each other, although they miss each other painfully.

May 2, 1886: Mr. Parmenter tells Mary that he is going out of town. Hurt, she says “so many cruel things” to him.

May, 1886: Not leaving town after all, Mr. Parmenter visits Mary at her house frequently.

June 3, 1886: Mary writes of Mr. Parmenter, “We are the best of friends at present,” which actually seems to mean that they are cordial, but not close.

July 11, 1886: Mary, comparing herself to Gwendolen in George Eliot’s Daniel Deronda, admits that she still feels shaken, doubtful, and intensely sad over her break-up with Mr. Parmenter.

April 17, 1887: Mary writes about Mr. Parmenter for the last time in her diary. Looking back at her experiences, she reflects that “[i]t is like a book with all the actors playing a part. E.P. seems to have been an important one. … I meet him often but I think that no one who did not know would imagine that I ever saw him before.”

When we read this timeline of events, we, as modern readers, are apt to raise impatient questions. Why does Mary not make a clean break with Mr. Parmenter? Alternatively, why does she not quit shilly-shallying and tell him that she loves him? For his part, why does Mr. Parmenter not take no for an answer? What provokes him to offer marriage proposals after Mary’s most significant rejections? What is happening here?
The most instructive way to view Mary’s courting with Mr. Parmenter is, I think, to draw on the themes we have discussed previously. The courting can be seen as a conflict between the middle-class Victorian prescriptions of restraint, as epitomized by Mary, and the expectations of romantic testing, as represented by Mr. Parmenter.

Thus we can interpret Mary’s behavior not as profound indecisiveness, but a protracted struggle to communicate with Mr. Parmenter frankly, as sanctioned by Romanticism, at the same time following the dictates of Victorian reserve. Frankly speaking, Mary clearly enjoys flirting with Mr. Parmenter in a manner at once lighthearted and intense, as illustrated by their rapid and exclusive intimacy developed on the ice rink in March and April of 1884. But, as soon as matters threaten to become more serious, Mary turns uneasy. She writes on April 16, 1884:

I have had the greatest time warding off and answering questions. One especially [Mr. Parmenter] asked me and I did not want to answer it directly so I said something which meant neither yes or no.

He said Ah! That was very neatly turned. Oh dear I wish I could have a gentleman friend without there becomming something more.

Since this whole entry concerns romantic entanglements, we can assume that the “something more” refers to love and that the question that Mary answered ambiguously was Mr. Parmenter asking, “Do you love me?” Mary’s admission that she “did not want to answer it directly” suggests that she felt that she had something to hide, something that she thought would upset Mr. Parmenter: a negative answer. Caught between a “no” in her Romantic, authentic heart of hearts and her training in bourgeois gentility, Mary avoids scrutiny with indirection. Complimenting her on her “neatly turned” phrase, Mr. Parmenter seems distracted enough by Mary’s clever wielding of etiquette to let the subject drop. Mary’s confusion cannot be diverted, however; she continues to switch between revelation and reservation.

As Mr. Parmenter pursues Mary, she continually retreats, but never marks a clear end to their courting. While she fears marrying him and while her acquaintance with him causes her much pain, she constantly softens her rejections in deference to the manners of the day, which required politeness and forbearance in all things. Therefore, Mary tells Mr. Parmenter that she does not want to correspond with him (April 29, 1885), but permits him to come to her house for a final meeting (May 21, 1885). When he gives her a book with her favorite flowers tucked inside (June 2, 1885), Mary responds courteously with an equal gift of flowers and a goodbye poem. The closest Mary comes to a definitive demarcation is in early August, 1885. Despite Mary’s repeated farewell signals, Mr. Parmenter asks Mary to marry him yet again, and Mary responds with “no in a box of pansies” (August 5, 1885), a phrase that perfectly encapsulates her dilemma. Anxious and fearful enough about marriage to reject it, Mary yet cannot bring herself to express herself in the dramatic, assertive way championed by Romanticism. She resorts to surrounding her rejection with flowers, the soft, yielding petals of which cushion the blow in the same way that her “neatly turned” response a year prior lessened the sting of her evasion by cloaking it in wit and courtesy. Mary tries to resolve her internal conflict by placing her direct, candid reply – no poem, just a simple “no” – in a framework of gentle, socially genteel flowers. In effect, she tries to be politely Romantic.

Meanwhile, from what we can tell of Mr. Parmenter, he appears to have a different challenge than Romanticism versus reserve. He believes that he and Mary are following the conventional white bourgeois Victorian courting narrative, even though this is not quite the case. Events begin as he expects them to, with flirtations, much skating, wide-ranging conversations, and late-night lingering at the gate. Even Mary’s non-answer to the question of love (April 16, 1884) proceeds as expected; her coyness may be seen, in Mr. Parmenter’s eyes, as typical Victorian feminine evasiveness or perhaps a polite wariness to reveal so much so soon. Mr. Parmenter most likely believes that Mary loves him back, but does not yet feel confident enough to say so.

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Mr. Parmenter’s faith that Mary has true, but unexpressed, affection for him seems to be the only explanation for his persistence in the face of what we today would see as “deal-breakers” for a relationship. Consider that he proposes to Mary directly after the most explicit rejections. His first proposal, which Mary records on January 31, 1885, comes after a letter saying she can no longer see him (May 6, 1884) and six months of separation, during which Mr. Parmenter is “out west.” Another proposal, which Mary mentions on August 2, 1885, follows months of silence, both of them returning letters they have received from each other, and a goodbye poem by Mary. It is obvious that Mr. Parmenter does not consider physical distance, emotional distance, or statements of rejection as serious obstacles. In fact, he seems to think that Mary’s negative answers will precede equally vehement positive ones.

Perhaps we should characterize Mr. Parmenter’s faith not as faith in Mary herself, but, rather, in the conventional middle-class courting process. As we have mentioned above, young women commonly tested their courting partners by creating dramatic obstacles out of everyday material such as perceived character flaws, familial illness, and financial fluctuations. These tests then provided an opening for the young men to use loyalty, dedication, and perseverance to overcome the test. Thus they proved themselves stable and emotionally (and economically) invested in their fiancées’ well-being. Immersed in such a narrative of rigorous testing, Mr. Parmenter most likely does not perceive Mary’s refusals as actual expressions of her thoughts, albeit hedged about with etiquette. Instead, he construes them as objections consonant with the formula of romantic testing. As such, Mary’s refusals may easily be overcome, in his mind, by repeated, fervent protests of the deepest affection. Assuming that he is playing his part in a typical Victorian courtship test, Mr. Parmenter acts as the devoted suitor by offering Mary the sincerest commitment he can think of: marriage. That he persists for a year and a half demonstrates the strong hold that romantic testing held over white middle-class Victorians.

Both Mr. Parmenter and Mary operate in a social world largely defined by their culture’s expectations of courting, but Mary at least does not accept them without resistance. More than general ambivalence, Mary often writes with something approaching panic when she considers the stated end of courting: marriage. What exactly scares her so much? Mary never explains directly, but we can hazard a guess. Part of Mary’s anxiety arises from her post-high school lull, during which, without a societally sanctioned career path, she has plenty of time to contemplate a wifely future and, frankly, how unstimulating it looks in comparison to her active, flirtatious, intellectually competitive school years. Much of her worry also stems from her view of marriage as an unknown state that would necessarily require her divorce from her beloved family of origin.

In her examination of late Victorian female adolescence, How Young Ladies Became Girls: The Victorian Origins of American Girlhood, Jane Hunter outlines one probable source of Mary’s marriage anxiety: “the crisis of suspended agency” awaiting young women after their graduation from high school (Hunter, 2002, p. 342). As Hunter explains, the increasing prevalence of high school education for young women in the Victorian ages meant that Mary and her compatriots learned how to think critically and achieve scholastically, often surpassing their fellow male students in academic prowess (Hunter, 2002). Mary partakes of such a pioneering and ambitious spirit when, in studying for the state Regents exams in January, 1884, she notes, “I shall try and oh I will pass, if I work night and day for it. There is all the more reason for my passing as I am to be the only girl to try I think” (January 22, 1884). As seen in this passage, Mary and other young women saw themselves as spokeswomen for the capabilities of their sex, and they sensed great pressure on themselves to succeed. Mary’s constant reports of late-night study (“O those regents they all most kill us,” she exclaims with exhaustion on February 22, 1884) show that she and others tried hard to live up to the expectations of academic excellence.

Mary and other young women of her generation honed their intellects during their high school careers, but then often found that they had no opportunity to apply their educational skills. As Hunter
points out, young middle-class men often left home after graduation, either to start a career or to attend college. Meanwhile, some women did attend college, but the majority, including Mary, stayed at home to learn how to be good wives. Their mothers and other female relatives taught them various housekeeping duties. For example, Mary writes (November 28, 1885) that she is accompanying her sister’s husband back to their house to “go back with him as housekeeper until Hattie” returns from her visit with her parents. In her position as substitute household manager, Mary no doubt trains for motherhood by minding her young nephew Leigh. Taught to keep their minds active and competitive, many young women found household chores stultifying compared to the social excitement and academic triumph they experienced at school (Hunter, 2002). Simply put, life after high school was, for many middle-class white young women, boring.

If staying home after high school, young Victorian bourgeois women were expected to learn the skills that would prepare them for marriage, but these tasks usually did not spark their brains in the way that their scholastic careers had. Therefore, they sought alternative means of igniting their intellects. With this in mind, we might read Mary’s post-graduation travel to Canada and her presentations at Chautauquas, during which she reads papers on the Magna Carta (November 20, 1886), William Shakespeare, and Isaac Newton (both mentioned on April 17, 1887), as her attempts to exercise her restless mind.

Without the daily occupation of school and school-related socializing, Mary and her fellow young women had plenty of time, but few acceptable objects for their mental energy. In the time that would have been taken up by school, they pored obsessively over the subject of courting and wifehood. Instead of achieving scholastically, they thought frequently about their social position as women and the institution of marriage. For example, Mary writes about listening to a debate among her fellow male scholars about the intellectual stature of women compared to that of men (March 14, 1884). Later, she mentions writing an essay about Belva Ann Lockwood, the first woman to appear on a US presidential ballot (October 31, 1884). In these and other entries, Mary shows a clear engagement in the broad Victorian cultural discussions about women’s changing roles and rights. It is not a far stretch to assume that she carries such critical thinking beyond her high school days and applies it to her own anxieties about marriage.

Mary has plenty to worry about. She and other Victorian women of marriageable age looked to wedded life ambivalently. While marriage of the mid-Victorian era offered some bourgeois women companionship, economic protection, and an exciting infusion of novelty after a stultifying post-high school lull, there were trade-offs. White bourgeois Victorian women confronted several disadvantages of marriage, including the burdens of living up to the aforementioned ideals of pure, virtuous womanhood and the probable sacrifice of their own ambitions. In Mary’s case, one prospect above all others threatens her: the possibility that marriage might remove her from her family of origin. Most of all, for Mary, marriage signifies isolation. She expects that, when she marries, she will remove herself from her family of origin, her childhood home, and all her social connections in town in order to join her husband, as did eldest sister Hattie and many other Victorian women of Mary’s cohort. Though Hattie stayed within close visiting distance of her family, Hattie’s frequent appearance in Mary’s daily life does not allay Mary’s deep distress over the separation from her family that marriage would entail. In one entry, Mary foresees sister Birdie’s marriage as a sundering of their sororal bonds (April 11, 1884): “Oh! What shall I ever do when she marries and goes away from me.” A year later, she still interprets marriage and its attendant change of locale as threatening (May 31, 1885): “I wish I could go away and never see this part of the country again. Oh why must I stay on and on when every day is torture. I know how I can do it, marry Edward and have him take me away but...” That she trails off in this entry suggests unwillingness. For Mary, marriage signifies a physical and emotional divorce from the home and people that she holds dear, and she is unwilling to accept that cost.
Mary’s ambivalence toward marriage continues outside the scope of her diary for the rest of her life. From 1891 to 1903, she corresponds with Fred Johnson, a miner working in Colorado and British Columbia. (Excerpts from his letters are included in “What Happened Next?”) While we only have his side of the correspondence from which to piece together the story of their relationship, apparently both Fred and Mary were devoted to each other. They each entertained fantasies about marrying and living together, but Mary consistently averts Fred’s attempts at marriage. She ends up moving in with her favorite sister Birdie after Birdie’s husband died; the two of them raise Ruth Ransom, Hattie’s daughter, after their eldest sister’s death in 1888.

In comparing Mary’s objections to marriage with Mr. Parmenter to those that she had about marrying Fred, we discover another reason for Mary’s anxiety about matrimony: She fears that it requires a level of love and devotion (see earlier discussion about the centrality of Romantic love) that she does not possess. In her diary entry written after she rejects Mr. Parmenter’s first proposal, Mary says (January 31, 1885), “To give him what he asked was impossible. I did not have it for him.” While obviously very interested in and intimate with Mr. Parmenter, Mary does not equate her feelings with the Romantic ones of passion that she believes should undergird marriage. In her view, love either exists between a man and a woman, or it does not exist. Because she does not love Mr. Parmenter, she perceives marriage to be “impossible.”

Nearly twenty years later, Mary holds out against Fred Johnson’s marriage requests with similar arguments that she cannot muster up the obligatory passion for her would-be spouse. For most of her correspondence with the itinerant miner, Mary rebuffs his advances. Then she becomes ill toward the end of 1903. Weak and bedridden, she writes to Fred asking him to come to Plattsburgh and take care of her. She promises that, when her health improves, she will return out west with him. Fred never receives Mary’s letter containing this dramatic admission; by the time both figure out that this letter is missing, Mary has misgivings about confessing her love. Fred recounts Mary’s objections in a letter to her (Johnson, December 15, 1903):

You say you would have come back with me then, but now you could not say whether you would or not, as duty called you to stay at home, and besides that, you say you are not sure whether you care enough for me to do so.

Later in the same letter, Fred expresses the hope that Mary reciprocates his affection, “although,” he admits, “you have really never told me so any more than that you love me as a friend.” Whatever Mary’s signs of love and devotion toward Fred, she apparently defines herself “as a friend” of Fred’s. Her implicit opposition of friendship and romantic love is clarified when she doubts her ability to “care enough” for Fred and thus “come back” with him to British Columbia as his wife and romantic partner. Faced with offers of marriage from two different men almost 20 years apart, Mary maintains the same position: She cannot marry, in part, because she cannot fulfill the Romantic ideal of marriage stipulating a passionate communion of united hearts. In other words, she holds high expectations of the emotional commitment needed for marriage, expectations that she herself cannot attain.

Mary’s stringent requirements about the necessity of mutual fervent devotion in marriage were not unusual among white bourgeois women of her generation. As mentioned earlier, Romantic conceptions of love infiltrated many social interactions between the sexes. Romanticism championed candor, or frankness about one’s emotions, and located such revealing discussions in the heart of successful male/female relationships. This culture of constant emotional revelation put pressure on both young men and women. Both sexes worried that they were obliged to constantly pour their hearts out to their courting partners, but that they might not be able to summon up unstinting founts of self-expression (Rothman, 1984). Mary, who never characterizes her attraction to any courting partners (including Mr. Parmenter, Ben Haynes, and Fred Johnson) as passionate and inexorable, joins the ranks of anxious fin-de-siècle young Victorian women who were convinced that they were disappointments to Romantic love because of their less-than-zealous relationships with beaux.
Faced with such high expectations of marital relations, Mary, along with a distinct minority of women in her cohort, did not marry; instead, they remained single, justifying their status as the logical outcome of high Romantic standards for conjugal bliss. Known as spinsters, women who chose not to marry were not a new phenomenon; however, several societal factors, including occupational and economic opportunities, contributed to their greater visibility in Victorian life.

The factories of the Industrial Revolution pressed some spinsters into the public sphere by offering them jobs. Single working-class women, who may have stayed at home in earlier generations, sought employment in mills, while women in the middle and upper class, such as Mary, were more likely to work as teachers (Freeman and Klaus, 1984; Jalland, 1986).

Greater education for young women also played a role in the mid-Victorian era’s burgeoning number of spinsters (Freeman and Klaus, 1984). By extending the number of years that young women stayed in school, high school (and, for a significant, growing minority, college) often allowed them to be students for several years past the age at which they were expected to marry. Such higher education thus disrupted the formerly smooth flow from courtship to engagement to marriage to family by foreclosing on courting while a woman attended to her studies. In fact, especially among women who, like Mary, received their secondary and post-secondary educations in the 1870s and 1880s, marriage and children occurred in inverse proportion to the amount of education that they received (D’Emilio and Freedman, 1988).

For various reasons, spinsters became a force to be reckoned with in the Victorian era. John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman, in *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, state the matter plainly: “Of women born between 1860 and 1880 – in other words, those courting between the late 1870s and about 1910 – 11 percent never married, the highest proportion in American history” (D’Emilio and Freedman, 1988). Thus Mary’s status as a spinster was unusual, since most of the women in her cohort did marry, but Mary as a single woman was not uncommon. She was a member of a distinct population and subculture created by societal shifts in the prospects for white bourgeois women (Rothman, 1984).

Though she was a member of a not insignificant group of women, Mary experienced real, material challenges to spinsterhood in a time where marriage and motherhood were glorified. The general opinion of spinsters, their character, their abilities, and even their looks, was largely misogynist. Novels, the advice literature, medical opinions, and social pundits all reinforced the idea that unmarried women were abnormal, thus dysfunctional, in every aspect of their lives. Medically speaking, spinsters were supposed to be sexually repressed and frustrated, a state that caused them constant anxiety and put them in danger of illness. Spinsters were especially susceptible to hysteria, a multifarious, catchall condition that could encompass paralysis, invalidism, expressions of sexual desire or orgasm, and other behaviors considered objectionable in women who were expected to be submissive, decorous, and discreet in their sexual interests (Jeffreys, 1985). Literature reinforced the negative portrayal of unmarried women by making spinsters into bitter, petulant, childlike personalities, of which Miss Havisham in Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations* was a well-known example (Jalland, 1986). By obtaining outside employment, furthering their education, or simply by refusing proposals, single women of Mary’s time transgressed the usual trajectory from maiden to wife to mother and were thus perceived as deviant and unnatural, a threat to the natural order (Chambers-Schiller, 1978; Freeman and Klaus, 1984).

The condescending view of spinsters as deformed, pathetic creatures glossed over the fact that societal pressures could make unmarried bourgeois women of the Victorian era miserable. Though mid-Victorian middle-class women had more job options than their foremothers, spinsters did not necessarily achieve stable financial independence; in fact, many unmarried women, including Mary, remained dependent on their families for support. Furthermore, spinsters were still idealized to ideals of motherhood and wifely behavior; they were expected to be motherly toward their nieces and nephews.
and wifely toward their male relatives. All in all, unmarried Victorian women often suffered understandable anxiety, unacknowledged by the contemporaneous stereotypes of spinsters, over a position in life that was socially and economically precarious.

Though I mentioned earlier that single women in Mary’s day had a world of work open to them that their mothers and grandmothers did not, spinsters’ expanded economic prospects did not necessarily liberate them from dependence on their families, especially fathers or brothers (Shelley, 1978). There were only limited kinds of work available, and only a smaller portion of these were appropriate for a middle-class spinster, who might not have even considered taking a factory job so attractive to her working-class sister (Chambers-Schiller, 1978). Even if single women did make money, at a time when women’s legal status was subsumed under that of their father, if they were unmarried, or that of their husband, if they were married, bourgeois Victorian women had little chance of possessing their own, legally designated money and wielding financial power (Shelley, 1978). Indeed, spinsters who were living in their brothers’ or fathers’ houses could lose their status or even their homes with the marriage of a brother or the death of a male relative (Jalland, 1988).

Mary knew firsthand the difficulty of a spinster whose living arrangement was dictated by the goodwill of her family. Her father Alonzo Collins’ will, written in 1889, both acknowledges and enforces the family-dependent status of the unmarried Collins daughters when Collins writes, “It is my wish…that my said daughters shall have their home as my house as long as they remain single” (Collins, 1889). Mary, who had been living in her childhood home all her life, thus required explicit provision in her father’s will if she was to continue as she had before his death. In giving her a place on his estate, Alonzo acknowledged that, as a single woman, Mary could not seek the economic protection of a husband, so she had to fall back on the aegis of her father, even though he was no longer there. In Alonzo’s specifically defined address for Mary and Ida, his younger sister, we see his care for them and his hope that they might be kept from the penury and possible homelessness that threatened some Victorian unmarried women.

Even if spinsters did manage some measure of economic security, their single status left them vulnerable to countless social demands from their relatives. Though unmarried and without children of their own, they did not escape some of the conjugal and maternal behaviors expected of mid-Victorian bourgeois women. Perceived as not having any particular demands on their time, spinsters were looked upon as ready resources for housekeeping, companionship, secretarial work for their male relatives, and child care for their nieces and nephews (Chambers-Schiller, 1978; Shelley, 1978). Mary’s diary demonstrates that she, as an unmarried woman, was subject to these expectations. She writes about staying as “housekeeper” at the house of her brother-in-law, Dr. Julius Ransom, in the absence of her sister Hattie (November 28, 1885). Many times in her diary she also writes about minding Hattie and Julius’ young son Leigh. In other words, spinsters’ domestic tasks for fathers and brothers exacted duties from spinsters most commonly associated with wives, while babysitting their siblings’ children challenged spinsters to achieve standards of motherhood, though they were not mothers themselves. Neither wives nor mothers, single women of Mary’s time were still expected to fulfill some portion of both roles, or else they risked being seen as unfeminine.

Faced with a societal rhetoric that condemned unmarried women and a life situation that was economically uncertain and sometimes socially exhausting, spinsters justified their single status with creativity. Some used work or a career as their means of maintaining their single status, while some pursued political action, especially in the women’s suffrage movement (Freeman and Klaus, 1984; Jeffreys, 1985). Some stated that they remained unmarried for reasons of financial and physical independence, though, as we have seen, spinsterhood was a vexed state for unmarried women. Finally, other women, including Mary, apparently viewed the single life as a way to avoid compromising high standards about love and marriage: if they could not have the ideal marital relationship, they would rather have none at all (Berend, 2000).
Zsuzsa Berend (2000) argues that some spinsters consciously chose their single status to reflect their adherence to the newly sentimentalized views on marriage. As we have seen earlier, strains of Romanticism strongly affected ideas of love and marriage during Mary’s time. The marital bond, formerly characterized by duty, companionship, and a slow flowering of mutual regard, changed with the advent of Romantic influences. Bourgeois Victorian marriage, by contrast, elevated candor, trustworthiness, intimacy, and a deep sympathy of emotions. To achieve such a close relationship was not an easy task; it required much dedication and emotional work. Some women who adhered to this vision of coupledom, Berend states, found that their daily courting interactions did not meet such standards. Rather than settling for a relationship that was not equal to their model, these women instead opted to keep their ideals and remain single (Berend, 2000).

Mary’s language in her anxiety-ridden diary entries about marriage suggests that she was like those spinsters described by Berend (2000); possessed of Romantic ideals about marriage that she did not wish to compromise. Mary writes after Mr. Parmenter’s first proposal (January 31, 1885):

But what could I do. To give him what he asked was impossible. I did not have it for him and moreover it is but to true as he said so bitterly, “You will not try to love me.” No I will not. God knows that all my efforts have been in a dicidedly oposite direction. I cannot! I will not! He is not such a man as I wish to be my husband. As Mary herself declares – “No I will not” – she is not the sort of person to force an attachment to Mr. Parmenter that she does not feel. In fact, with her “efforts…in a dicidedly opposite direction,” she tries to restrain her interest in him because, as she says, “[h]e is not such a man as [she wishes]” to marry. Though she does not explicitly say so, Mary appears to be comparing Mr. Parmenter to her ideal husband, but she finds him wanting, just as she compares her feelings for him to love and finds them wanting. She does not find sufficient love in her heart upon which to base a marriage to Mr. Parmenter, so she decides not to marry him.

Negotiating between the competing mid-Victorian demands of moral restraint and Romantic expression, Mary, through her courting activities, tracked her attempts at self-determination. Mary’s high school experience enlarged her worldview and gave her a greater intellectual scope, but mainstream options for mid-Victorian bourgeois women had yet to encompass women’s increasing educational achievements. Mary still saw just two options available to her: marriage or spinsterhood. Mary apparently did not consider marriage as an option, most likely because she felt that she lacked the requisite Romantic passion that was supposed to be the basis of a perfect match. Besides, she feared that a wedded life would mean comparative boredom, drudgery, and separation from her dear sister Birdie. Instead, Mary chose spinsterhood, an ambiguous position, often still dependent on family of origin, with many of the responsibilities, but none of the financial security, of wifehood. Though her position as spinster was largely contemned by society, Mary remained unmarried throughout her life, pursuing a career as a nurse and eventually creating an alternative family unit with her widowed sister Birdie and their niece Ruth (Ransom). In the decisions about courting that Mary makes in her diary, we can see her plot out her future: a path of anxiety toward independence.
Mary’s Circle

- Mary Elizabeth Collins: the diarist, 19 in 1884

Her Family
- Alonzo Collins: father, farmer and cattle dealer
- Bertha “Birdie” Collins: sister, 1 year older, engaged to Matt
- Ernest Collins: brother, 4 years younger
- Fred Collins: brother, 3 years younger
- Harriet “Hattie” (Collins) Ransom: sister, 4 years older, married to Dr. Julius B. Ransom
- Ida Collins: sister, 8 years younger
- Julia (Addoms) Collins: mother, housewife
- Dr. Julius B. Ransom: brother-in-law, married to Hattie

Her Friends
- George Bertrand: former suitor and correspondent
- Emer Corey: cousin and correspondent
- Edward Parmenter: skating instructor and suitor
- Charlie Ransom: friend, head postal clerk
- Matt: Birdie’s fiancé

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1 Information about Mary’s family and her siblings’ relative ages is derived from the 1880 census (U.S. Census Bureau, 1880).
Chapter 1:

“Take warning from last years follies and nonsense”

January, 1884

Jan 1

Last night I decided to keep a journal for the year -84 and as Bertha\(^2\) thought it would be a nice idea I have commenced it.

My intention is to make a confidential friend of this journal, one who I may and must confess to every evening, with the object in view of seeing at the end of the year what kind of a life I have been leading.

I know how easy it is to let a few days pass me with out writing but I do not intend to let that old fault of mine appear here and hope this one may be more perfect in all respects than my old one was.

I am aware that to day is the one for making a long list of good resolutions, but I have limited myself to one, which is “to take warning from last years follies and nonsense and be more sensiable in the future.” I know that this implies a good deal but I shall try my best and hope to achieve at least some good result.

Now to leave this part of my journal and take up the recurrences of the day which will form no doubt the greater part of it. This day has been spent not very brilliantly to say the least. The first part of it was passed in makeing cake and sewing, the latter part no sewing and eating New Years dinner. This evening was rather more cheerful, made so by having ice cream and cake as refreshments and music and chatting for entertainment.

Now as the finnishing touch to the day I am ironin g some things I washed out with the hope of going to Altona tomorrow. I do so hope I may and if I do I shall have to be up early so good night friend I am sleepy and tired.

Jan 2

Well I did not go to Altona today and shall not be very much desapointed if I do not go at all, though Birdie says I shall.

Sewing all day today, that is the usual way I spend my vacations. There is always so much to do, I wonder if there will ever be any less.

Jan 3

When I awoke this morning the wind was blowing fearfully just as I knew it would after the storm of yesterday. So I had to give up going to Altona on account of the drifts and wind.

The usual sewing has been deversified a little by knitting striped mittens. I am glad I do not have to earn my living in that way and I fear it would be rather a poor one, at the price paid for the work, only twenty four cents a piece. Just think of that Journel.

Well this day has seen one thing finished if nothing more, my blue jacket is done and is very neat and pretty. I am quite well satisfied with it and I suppose Bertha will rejoice, as I seldom am with my things.

This evening has been spent rather pleasantly eating apples and reading the long new book Leather Stocking Tales,\(^3\) and now it is late so good night.

\(^{2}\) Bertha also appears in Mary’s diary as “Birdie,” her nickname.

\(^{3}\) *Leatherstocking Tales*, a five-novel series by James Fenimore Cooper published between 1823 and 1841, follow the adventures of Natty Bumppo. Set in the unspoiled wilderness of 18th-century Otsego Lake,
Jan 4

The monoteny of this day has been some what relieved by, a pilgrimage to M and W-P [West Plattsburgh] that Bertha and I undertook and successfully accomplished in spite of the cold weather, and the disposition [disposition] of our pony to run away, and we really enjoyed it.

I purchased some blue flanel for under skirts and already have them cut and one nearly finished. Mother was worse this forenoon, but is better now. I shall add one thing to my daily account which is the time I write commencing now, a quarter past eleven.

Jan 5

A quarter past eleven that seems to be my usual time of writing in Jan.

Well I have something to show for this days labor. I have finished my suits made different kinds of cake beside doing much of the inevitable housework that allways is to be done.

This uneventful routine chafes me somewhat but I try to bear it cheerfully. I wonder if some day I shall look back upon this time and wish for days as quietly spent.

Jan 6

Sunday and spent as my Sundays usually are. In the morning breakfast after which get ready and go to church. After church read and get and eat dinner then do the work and write sing hear prayers go to bed, wondering as ever what tomorrow will bring forth.

It required considerable determination to start for church this morning, it was so cold and with all rather late, but we perservered, and Bertha Ernest and I went. The sermon was well worth the effort. Mr Bailey is such a plesent old gentelman. I like to talk with him. He is altogether to good for this place but I am not at all sory he is here.

I have written to Maggie tonight. I hope this letter will not make her feel badly, and have the effect of healing all wounds on both sides. It is a little after ten rather earlier than usual.

Jan 7

This has been a very busy day for me, and as a consequence I am all tired out. After the usual amount of work and /worry/ we started for Plattsburgh about eleven oclock arriving here at twelve. I might have gone to school⁴ I suppose but there was so much to be done. I concluded to send Ida and stay my self, and how I have worked but every thing is in apple pie order now, and I hope it will stay so for a while. The large stove is in the sitting room the small one in one bed room and now shall be more comfortable.

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⁴ Mary attended Plattsburgh High School. The four-story brick building, trimmed with sandstone, stood on the corner of Brinkerhoff and Oak streets, on the site of the old Plattsburgh Academy. The first floor contained the superintendent’s office and classrooms for the fifth-graders, while the “grammar school” was on the second floor. Mary learned her lessons on the third floor, where the small high school classes were held. On the fourth floor was the Academy Hall (which Mary refers to as “the hall” in her diary), where the public could listen to lectures, recitations, and other entertainment (Anonymous, 1891).
A little after five Ernest and I went down street. I mailed two letters and received two, one from J B Gilmore, a disarming letter for BC [Bertha Collins], and the other from Matt which one I of course enjoyed very much.

I am so glad to correspond with him. Does it not seem odd to correspond and be such friends with your sister’s betrouthed, any body but Bertha would be at least a little bit jealous but she is not at all. I never saw such a dear girl. I know Matt would agree with me in that. How much he does think of her.

I went down to call upon Mrs Brenan this evening. She and the girls had some very handsom Christmas presents. She read me part of a letter from her sister Frankie in Cal who is dreadfully homesick poor girl.

It is half past nine and tommorrow brings school and a resuming of the old cares and duties good night.

Jan 8

My first day of school went of very nicely. I do not think I am going to find as dificult to make up my studies as I supposed I would for which I am very glad.

I sent Maggies letter and present to day I hope it will reach her in safty.

I went to Mr. Millers for some things and the clerk asked me if fathers address was West Plattsburgh and I at once made up my mind that they entended sending him a bill but I have prevented that by securing it myself. What if they had.

From there I went to the office to mail the velvet Bertha wanted to her, when I went to direct it Mr Charlie Ransom came to super tend the arangement and make himself generaly agreeable, as he takes every opportunity of doing.

I was almost ready to go when he spied that bill in the front of my cloack, and took cool posession of it, would not give it back to me until he was satisfied what it was, and then remarked “That is the way you do it is to make debts down here then get hold of the bills and keep them.” David said “All men are liars” and, I will add, and pack of impudence, at least I know but two or three exceptions. And then he hinted as broadly as could to that he wanted to call upon me but I am very hard to take such hints as more than one man knows. I guess he will wait a while before he gets his invitation.

As I was going up the steps of the post office I met Mr McAllister, he envited me come to the meeting to night so Ernest and I went. It was a very good one, and E- was much interested for which I am glad. Mr McAllister was anxious that I should continue to come but I must attend my own church I suppose, although it is not realy mine until I join it. I wonder when that will be.

It is about eleven oclock and I must put you up and write to Bertha.

January 9.

This day has been spent as most days to come will be. In the morning the hurry of work and getting off to school, hard study until twelve then home, again to get and eat dinner return to school and more study, until a quarter of four.

The house work is all done up nicely and everything ready for breakfast so that it will not take more than ten minutes to get it. My lessons are partly learned but I am so tired I can not do any better.
I sent a letter to Bertha to day but did not receive one from any source. Mr Ransom promised me one for four ocklock but I did not go after it. There ought to one come in the /smaller/ mail but I am just about discouraged and do not think I shall look for it any more.

It is about half past ten! the children have gone to bed and I must go too.

Oh! I have commenced to keep an account of all personal expences. Mother has often wanted me to but I never have. I thought it would [be] to much trouble for the good it would do, but I shall keep one for 84 and see if it pays or not.

January 10

School all day to day, of course and no letters. I wish some would come.

After school to night I went to Baldwins for my pictures. They are very well finished. I gave them in payment what I supposed to be the two dollar bill Matt sent me but it proved to be the one. I have not had it changed and know it was a two he sent, so am at a perfect loss how to account for that other dollar.

The streets are fearfully isy [icy] just now and one is in constant danger of breaking their necks. I came near making a graceful downfall to day with Dr Bailey and his brother as audience, it was fearfully absurd but if I should have fallen they could have caught me I suppose and that would have been somewhat romantic if they had not both been married men.

It provokes me sometimes to think how many gentlemen are married, there are hardly any single ones left and there is such a quantity of girls. A very sad case indeed.

After we came from church I was seazed with a desire to sing for the first time in my life I think, and I sang piece after piece until it was time for prayers much to the detriment [detriment] of my lessons I fear. If Birdie had been here what a splendid time we would have had.

It is nearly eleven oclock and I have more lessons to learn.

I gave Annie Marsh my picture to day and expect one soon in return. I wish every body who I have given my photograph to would give me theirs I would soon have quite a colection. Let me count up how many I have been promised: Matt Dr. Hattie, Stella Mother Emer Annie Miss Marsh when she has hers taken.

I did not give Uncle James a picture but I beleave he said he would give me one and then told me, “he never gave a photograph who he did not give his heart.” But unfortunatly for my album I have more of his heart than his picture or rather just about the same amount which is none at all! Though to have heard him talk once on a time, one would have thought he was in danger of loosing if he had not already lost his heart to me. I just wonder if he thought I beleave all he said, it cant be he considered me such a goose. Well I was not if he did.

I never saw a man yet who made me beleave their nonsence however much they may beleave in. I am very thankful for the little sense I have, or as Matt terms it the cold streak in my nature. It will keep me from many a heart ache if nothing more. And I have found that there [are] enough things in this world to make ones heart ache with out adding those troubles and have resolved if I play with fire to have plenty of cold water always on hand to extinguish any flames that may arrise.

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5 The Baldwin Photography Studio was located in nearby Keeseville (Allan et al., 1988).
6 Mary calls her brother-in-law, Julius B. Ransom (Hattie’s husband), “Dr.”
January 11.

This has been a rather pleasant day considering all things. It has had its usual routine of work but it did not seem quite so hard for some reason.

Rather an amusing incident occurred in Philosophy class. Ryan went to sleep during the recitation and when it was time to be excused we went by the Profs direction one row at a time so not to disturb him. We all went out, Mr Holden shut the door and left him there to his repose. When I left the building he was still sleeping, how he must have felt when he awoke.

I bought some Balsam of Peru\(^7\) tonight hoping that I should be able to take off that horrid red spot on my face. I would give almost anything to have it taken off but am nearly discouraged, I have tried so many things without success.

Ernest and I started for church to night and wanted to the post office thinking I should receive a card, as soon as I came down and I was not mistaken. I received one from Bertha, Mr Ransom made me hunt over a whole stake \(\text{or stack}\) keeping mine at the bottom but at last I found it making me hunt for my letters is a fortunate device of his.

Mama has gone to Sarnac [Saranac] Father up the river. I am so glad she could get away. I know she will enjoy herself. She entends to go to Altona next week and then I hop [hope] Hattie will recover her temper and stop writing such letters as she now sends us.

Well we were late for church and as I had rather not go than be late we did not go. O what a beautiful evening it is. I never saw a more perfect winter night, almost as light as day, the air with just enough sting to make your face tingle pleasurably, the sleighing perfect. What would I not have given for a pony and cutter,\(^8\) but as it was I enjoied my self. As I have said we were late for church, as was natural our first thought was to return home, but I could not endure to go in it was so lovely.

After we had goten part way home I thought how beautiful it must be upon the bay and proposed that we go down to the point. It was a long walk but we were fully repayed. The lake is frozen and as far as the eye could reach there lay the hard whole gleaming mass, in its setting of dark shores, at the right of us lights gleamed out like brilliant stars in the blue firmement of old, above, the trees waved their bare specteral branches. The hush of nature broken only now and then by the tincle of a sleigh bell or a light laugh surrounded us and the whole was bathed and enwraped in cold moon beams.

I shall never forget that scene. If I could only paint it as it was in its calm majestic beauty that others might enjoy it with me but I shall allways have it and can not help being better for it.

The rest of the evening was spent reading Marmion\(^9\) to Ernest and it is now about eleven oclock so good night.

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\(^7\) Balsam of Peru is the sap of the Peruvian balsam tree, which grows all over Central and South America. Its antiseptic action heals wounds faster (Dalby, 2000, p. 153-154). Unfortunately, balsam of Peru can also cause inflammation of the skin as a side effect, as Mary learns in her February 27, 1884 entry.

\(^8\) A cutter is a small, light sleigh, usually for one person, drawn by a single horse.

\(^9\) “Marmion,” an epic poem by Sir Walter Scott originally published in 1808, follows nobly born Marmion, a favorite of King Henry VIII, as he schemes for possession of rich and beautiful Clara de Clare. Though Marmion has Clara’s fiancé blackmailed and exiled, Constance, Marmion’s partner in crime, takes revenge when Marmion abandons her. Marmion’s schemes fail when he dies in the Battle of Flodden, and Clara marries her fiancé, whose honor has been restored. Contemporary critics disapproved of the treacherous hero, but, as usual, audiences loved the story.
January 12

Contrary to our usual custom we were all here to day Ernest for the first Saturday since we came here.

I have passed much as all Saturdays do and I am to tired to think how that is.

Father came about two oclock Frankie with him. He has grown ever so much since I last saw him.

Birdies note contained as usual directions for some shopping which I went and did. I bought a blue velvet photograph frame for my cabinate picture. I think it very pretty endeed and the picture looks well in it.

Father came about five dinner was ready and he staied for it.

Ernest had gone skating, Eddie Kempter was with him and after they came back staied quite a long while, he and I talked and played checkers while E- ate his dinner, by the way I beat him. How hard it is to talk to little boys, even if they are rather talkitive. I like Eddie ever so much he reminds me of Jonsie.

Ernest has written a composition to day that is he wrote down what I told him to. That is one reason why my studies have not fared any better.

It is soon to look for results but I think that balsam is taking that spot off my face. Oh if it only will.

It is almost eleven oclock and I must put away my writing.

January 13.

Sunday This morning Ernest and I went to church and I witnessed for the first time the right of infant babtism. I had no idea how beautiful and impressive the service in which a child is given to God by the parents was. The baby was the most beautiful I have ever seen without an exception, and he beheaved so well, only crying now and then.

I wish they would have /Seth/ babtized. I am sure he ought to be. I feel more strongly than ever that, in neglecting through what is I think a mistaken idea on Fathers part to have us babtized when we were babies, Father and Mother deprived us of what we should have received and what would have been more to me than any other gift they could have been given me. I felt during the service and the sermon which followed a want that came never to be supplied.

I have written part of a letter to Matt learned mos t of my Sunday school lesson ect ect and now at half past ten I am going to bed.

January 14

I am writing in my journal rather early this evening as I am to tired to do anything else, and it is impossible to reason out Algebra or Arithmetic under the present conditions.

I have been very busy all day and to day noon came near meeting with an axsident that is of being late to school, I ran almost every step of the way and it almost killed me. I could scarcely see and to speak was imposiable. I coughed all the afternoon and was so weak as hardly to be able to get through my lessons.

When I returned home I found a satchel upon the stairs that had been left there by some one from home. Am glad I was able to see it for I knew it must contain a note from Birdie and milk and bread and butter which we were sadly in need of and I was not disapointed. Of course there was the usual letter to Matt to be mailed and a little shopping to do, I did not do the shopping but mailed the letter.
Mr Ransom wanted me to come in and call for half an hour but I declined with thanks. It seems that if he can not get me to call upon me, he will envite me to call upon him. As usual I went to the PO and was somewhat suprised by receiving a letter from Omaha Neb. A letter from Omaha means one from Mr Bertrand.

O dear, what shall I do. I thought he was forever settled when he went way off there and that I should never see or hear anything more of him, But it was not so to be it appears. He is like a Jack in a box when you think him barerly in out he pops.

To use Shakespears language To be or not to be ay thats the question.\textsuperscript{10} Shall I answer his letter or shall I utterally ignore it.

If he had said any thing at which I could take offence it would be different. But a part of his letter is absurdly formal and the rest is what any friend, scarcely more than an acquaintance, might write to another and ends with a respectful request for me to write to him.

I do not see how I can very well help it but mercy knows I do not want to. It would be rather dreadful not to and yet –

I shall not waste any pity upon him about his being away from home and its being such a comfort to hear from almost any one east. I shall take my stand on different ground from this I think, though he is but human and must feel these things at least in a measure. If he calls for me at all, as this request coupled with other things would seem to imply, ought I not to stop it right here before it has time to assume more definete proportions as I can never give him even as much regard as he now gives to me.

But one thing is certain: I shall ask Birdie and do as she says to. She will no doubt be able to weigh more correctally than I all the considerations in both sides of the question. If left to myself I think I might write one day and regret it the next. I am glad I have someone to decide for me.

What would Maggie says if she knew what these pages might tell her. But they never will reveal their contince [contents] in an honorable manner to any one but Birdie.

January 15.

My dear Journal it is a quarter of twelve so you must submit to a very little attention tonight.

I have received one letter from Maggie to day and have written three letters I have mailed Maggies card and Matts go tomorrow.

We did not recite in Phis. Geog. this morning because the Prof. was gone and this afternoon in Philosophy because Ryan was sick and Mr Holden had to see to him. He seems fated to make a sensation in some way. I could not find out what the matter was but he must have been quite bad as the Dr was sent for and remained some time.

I am no more decided about Mr B than last night but am indifferent now. He does not beleive one can be perfectally indifferent so I will say with a leaning to a will not. I wonder how I will feel tomorrow.

The thermometer indicates -27 and going down. Ernest said he guessed there would be an earth quake everything was cracking so.

\textsuperscript{10} Mary quotes William Shakespeare’s \textit{Hamlet} (1601), the famous story of a vengeful, murderous, and generally broody Danish prince.
Jan 16.

Let me see what has happened to day, nothing that seems as yet of very much importance. What the future may reveal it to have been of course I can not tell.

It was very cold no school this forenoon in Miss Woodard’s room especially. We recited one lesson and then she made us go through the most comical performances you ever heard of. She practiced upon me to show the others how to do. In the first place she took first the right and then the left arm and struck up all over from the shoulder /down/ with the weight of the hand, and they had done that enough she made us bend low from the waist and concussed I believe she said our spines. It had somewhat of the effect desired for we were somewhat warmer.

It is now about eleven and I must go to bed.

Jan 17

I think it is after twelve so you can see my dear Journal that I can not write long. Nothing of importance has occurred to day, only that I am coming down with another of those fearful colds. I have commenced a new book, Mrs. Halliburton’s troubles. It is good.

Jan 19th.

Good dear Journal, you were sadly neglected yesterday, and I am afraid will not fare much better today. But you must not blame a sick girl and I was sick yesterday and am not much better to day. I do not know what the matter was, all I know is that it was very painful.

I will give you a little sketch of yesterday so that you may not loose even one day, it would be such a loss you know. I did not sleep well Thursday night, a pain in my shoulder preventing me. Friday morning it was very bad but I would go to school. It was impossible for me to stay there, so I was excused after Geog.

Came home swept out all the house and straightened up everything. I could not go to school in the afternoon and the pain grew such worse that I had to give up trying to endure it quietly and went down to ask Mrs Brenan what I should do. She gave me a new /calcise/ pill and I stayed with her until Father came. Then I had to summon my courage and do some shopping for Bertha and went home. O how I did suffer and I am not over it yet.

To day I have /lounged/ around and /sewed/. Bertha and I have talked Mr Bertrand once quite thoroughly [thoroughly] and have come to no decision as yet. She will not say to or not to write but agrees with me that I must either write to him as he did to me or tell him that I do not wish to correspond with him. I hate to do that it, seems so horrid. Birdies advice is to /tell/ Matt and do as he thinks best about it. I do not know but this is the best thing I can do. He knows the gentleman better than either of us do and I think I will.

Jan 20.

None of us went to church this morning and we went back to Plattsburgh.

After breakfast I sat down to writing the letter I had decided upon last night. What will Matt say when he get it. He will think me a practical lunatic I fear. Mr Bertrand would

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11 Mrs. Halliburton’s Troubles, by the prolific nineteenth-century bestseller Ellen Wood, first appeared in 1862. The story tracks the misfortunes of destitute widow Jane Halliburton, who manages to raise three successful sons through dint of hard work, prudence, and faith in God. In contrast to the happy-go-lucky spendthrift Dares, the Halliburtons, like many characters in Victorian popular literature, serve as a moral object lesson, in this case touting the virtues of a Protestant work ethic.
never trouble me again if he knew about it. I am sure he would be fearfully angry and with reason. But I shall feel much better for having written to Matt and knowing his opinion.

It is fearfully cold as we realized while going and coming from church. Ida was almost frozen and my poor lungs how they ached and still ache. O if they would grow as strong as other peoples seem to be. About half past nine.

Jan 21

It is now about half past ten and I have only a few moments to converse with you. By a variety in school /???/ I took this afternoon an electrical shock. It is a pleasant sensation at first that is after you begin to feel it at all. Then it grows to be a numb prickly feeling. If you touch another person the current will pass from you then, with some pain to you I can not say how it is with /this./ I tride it thinking it might do me good and I realy think I do feel better. If I have an opertunity I shall take another.

I sent up the satin for Mothers muff and the loom for her knittings to day noon, and mailed Matts letter. O what will he say to my /plait/ [plight?].

Mr Ransom was in the office, we chatted smiled etc. He helped me put on my mittens. I told him he was having quite an effect and he said, “Why shouldent I, I have practiced enough.”

Oh what will tomorrow bring to me.

January 22.

Dear old journal, you take up considerable of my very precious time, but I do not wish it otherways, for you are a great comfort.

Well let me see what has happened to day. Nothing particular this morning, of course I studied all recess, I always do that.

At noon I went to the office but no letters awaited me. I wonder if tomorrow will bring any. I hope to receive one from Matt. I shall be upon nettles until I hear from him.

This afternoon we had our usual studies and in Philosophy class Mr Holden gave one of the boys a shock. So that we might see his hair rise. He is scared looking any way and when his hair commenced to rise he was simply fearful. The dime question books on phelosophy he gave to those who had sent for them.

After school I went to the prof. and asked him if he supposed there was any chance of my passing the Regents if I tried. He said I wanted you to. Your name was among those whom I requested to try but you were not here Friday.

I told him as I had lost so much time, I was afraid I should not pass.

12 Medical treatments using electricity were all the rage during the nineteenth century. In a typical Victorian advice book, Our Home Physician: A New and Popular Guide to Preserving Health and Treating Disease (1869), author George Beard extols “electrization” as a treatment for pain and paralysis: “Electrization frequently acts like magic in [cases of] neuralgia” (Beard, 1869, p. 740).

13 Regents examinations are curriculum-based tests that high school students throughout New York must take periodically throughout their careers in different subjects depending on what grade they are in. As of the twenty-first century, passing certain Regents has been required for students to obtain a high school diploma, but they were not mandatory in Mary’s time. Though Mary’s attitude toward Regents is characteristically dramatic and dire, Regents, which typically count for less than one-eighth of a student’s final grade in a course, are not a high-stakes matter. They influence only what type of diploma a student will receive upon graduation (Bishop and Mane, 2001).
Yes said he, and you have lost something of more importance than that: confidence in yourself. I was aware of that fact in a measure but had no idea he knew it, nor would tell me of it in the kind way he did.

I remarked laughingly that I might gain it perhaps and so it is settled. I shall try and oh I will pass, if I work night and day for it. There is all the more reason for my passing as I am to be the only girl to try I think.

I asked the Prof. to give me another shock and he consented. When he found it was for medicine I wanted it, he took down a battery and gave me a shock from that. He explained it all to me and I enjoyed it enormously. I wish I might take a shock every day until I am stronger.

I have moped [mopped] the kitchen and done lots of work some school and am so tired.

January 23
Nothing of very much importance has occurred today, that I am aware of.

Father was down and brought a note from Birdie filled with fears. O dear those /paper/ bills, they are enough to send one wild. I should be tolerably happy but for them.

It is as usual rather late and I am tired and sleepy. This weeks work has worn upon me very much. I hope next week will not be so bad, but do not see how it can be any better unless Birdie comes. I wonder what will happen tomorrow, something nice I hope.

January 24
As yesterday nothing of very much importance has occurred. The usual routine has been gone through with indifferent success.

I can not get my examples either in Arithmetic or Algebra. I do not know if my head is not clear or what is the matter. Anyway I can not do them.

No letters have come for me to day. I wonder if there will tomorrow.

January 25
Well the letter I have watched and waited for has come, that is, the one I wanted most though I expected others that have not come. Father did not get through his busnis untill nearly six so of course it was late when I received Birdies note with a letter and a package for Matt and a letter for Hattie to be mailed. But it had been seven instead of six I should have gone for Birdie would never have forgiven me if I had not got them in, in time for the morning mail.

Mr. Ransom was in the office he always is now, he stamped the packages and gave me the stamps for my letters. As I had my vail on I said, I think I shall have to ask you to do this for me.

He said then I shall see if they are to boys or girls, you did not think of that did you. When he saw that they were both directed to Ransoms he said, that name runs in the blood does it not. I rather think it does but did not tell him so.

But I had my reward, I got my letter, Matt answered me as I thought he would He evidently does not think it desirable that I should correspond with Mr B, or continue to consider him a friend. He says he is beneath me. I knew that before, but if we had formed an attachment for each other, he would say nothing beleiving he had no right to do so.
How glad I am that I had sense enough not to allow my feelings of that kind an opportunity to grow. I wish I was equally sure that Mr Bertrand was as free as myself. It kills me to think I may be the means of giving him pain and we all have enough to bear with out its being added to unnecessarily. Matt says that he is fond of me. If that is case if he indulges any wish or hope beyond the nearest friendship...

I see that the best thing I can do, nay my duty is to have nothing more to do with and not by word or deed encourage him. And so it is settled that I shall not correspond with him, there are more reasons than one why I should not.

The question now is shall I write and tell him I will not, or shall I not answer the letter and let him think what he pleases. I rather incline to the latter course, if I undertook to write it would be a delicate task and necessitate a considerable number of fibs which I object to telling. If he should write again which is hardly likely, I suppose I should have to answer it the best way I could, but sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

I am going to bed.

January 27.

Poor journal you were not treated very well yesterday, but it was caused by an unexpected separation, you must not complane especially if I tell you all about yesterday.

Well in the morning I awoke at about my usual time, and as it was Saturday morning I thought I might sleep a little longer so would just get up shut the door and wait for the room to warm a little. When I stepped back upon the bed down came the slatts. And I in thero [thorough] discouragement gave up and dressed.

Then there was breakfast to get all the work to do notting [knotting?] etc and it was not until after twelve oclock that I could study any. I had to call at Mr Hagars and about half past three began to dress.

I went made something of a call down stairs then went up to see Gill and the baby. When I first saw it I must say I thought it the horridest thing I had ever seen with its red face and dark hair. It is so very small, but now I am quite a devoted admirer of the small ladie she having wone me by her smiles. Gill is very well indeed considering babys age, three weeks tomorrow.

When I came down they insisted I must stay to tea and thus all night, although my lessons rose up to confront me I remained.

We spent the evening very plesantly reading talking playing dominoes and making molasses candy, pulling which I blistered both hands.

When bed time came of course we retired I did not rest well, with that fearful pain in my shoulder and lung how could I.

At half past eight I arose dressed made my bed and decended to the living room. Breakfast was ready shortly after which I was invited to attend church, but I did not have my church suit there so could not go unless I came home and dressed and, as I did not feel able to sit through morning service under Mr Burdick’s preaching especially, I excepted their

Made of brown sugar, molasses, vinegar, water, and a lump of butter “about the size of an egg,” molasses candy is boiled and stirred until a spoonful of the mixture hardens in a pan of cold water. As The American Girls’ Handy Book: How to Amuse Yourself and Others recommends, “When the candy hardens in cold water, pour into shallow buttered tins, and, as soon as it is cool enough to handle, pull it until it is of a straw-color. Splendid!” (Beard and Beard, 1887) Obviously Mary can’t wait for the candy to reach room temperature before she pulls it.
invitation to remain until after dinner any way if I could make my self at home and excuse them.

When Grace came home amidst other chat while we were with Gillian, she asked me if I played whist, and when I said I did not expressed her regret as she and two young gentlemen had arrainged a whist for some evening this week. I think they are to board there but could not induce her to tell me anything about them.

She said that one of them had proposed she invite some young ladies and the five would make up the party. She named /mawed/ /overt/ several and finaly said oh I know and then mentioned me. One of them had seen me, the other heard of me and both were anxious to see me and thought if I played whist I was just the one. I almost wished for the moment that I did play. But I do not play and never willing. Nothing good could follow from deserting ones principles and I could not care for the tear Grace said it would give me.

I was asked at tea if I did not feel lonesome here without Mr Bertrand and to tell the truth I did. He was so much a part of the place. I have never been there for any length of time without seeing him and it seemed as though he must walk in.

I sat oposite his old place at table, its very emptyness seemed to speek for and of him. The rooms where we had spent so much time together the tables the chairs the books and even the pictures which had witnessed his many acts of devotion and prefference toward me all pled with a silent eloquence of their own against my decision against him.

But it would take more than scilent pleadings to brake my resolve. If he is fond of me he shall never be more so if I can help it. I feel and always have that I have the power to make him so, but oh how I should despize my self for using it.

If he is worthy of nothing else he is that I shoul d treat his best feelings gently and try to do in all respects as I would that others should do to me.

As I lay in bed this morning the thought came to me what he will think when he receives my reply to his letter. He will think I am angry with him for the kisses he bestode upon me at parting and he will be right. I was and am, though I thought I might forgive him and let it pass as I never was to hear from or see him again. I am partly willing he should think this, but hope that by looking into his own s oul he will find the true reason why I must and ever will remain scilent.

January 28

Oh what a day of suffering this has been to me all night long all day long, not one moment free from the pain, and now another night before me to be like the last. About two ocklock this morning I awoke in perfect agony. If I relieved one place that ached it would go to another and be twice as bad.

I could not endure it so woke Ida and together we managed to make two mustard plasters. The pain made me so faint that I could only sit up a few moments but we got them

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15 Mustard plasters, once a popular cure for colds and congestion, typically contain dried mustard powder, mixed with water and flour to form a paste, which is then spread upon a piece of cloth. The cloth is then applied to the chest or upper back, with care taken not that the mustard does not come into direct contact with the skin. In a contemporary home reference manual, Dr. Chase’s Recipes, Or: Information for Everybody, Alvin Chase declares such a recipe “abominable,” saying that it causes “a painful, flayed spot, after having produced far less effect in a beneficial way than was intended” (Chase, 1888, p. 351-352). It is likely that Mary lets the mustard paste touch her skin, blistering her.
on I took a champhor /string/\(^{16}\) and finally dropped [dropped] asleep only to wake about five just as bad to take another /string/.

About ten I went to the Dr.\(^{17}\) He examined my lungs which I am happy to say he pronounced all right though they feel far from it. Put some iron on my pallet to change the shape of it, gave me liniment to bathe in night and morning and some fearful tasting stuff to take every two hours until relieved.

I guess I may go on taking it all my life for all the good it will do. I feel no better than I did then. First I am cold then hot and my feet and hands get dreadfully numb.

I have a box of neuralgia pills and it seems as though I could not keep my hands off them. If I should take two or three they would put me to sleep and then I could rest. But the Dr. did not want to give me /sperin/ \([\text{aspirin?}]\) so I must not I suppose, but if this pain does not stop I do not know what I shall do I am entirely worn out with pain now.

Oh if I only were at home. But if I were it would spoil Mothers visits and I am glad I am here.

January 29

Oh what shall I say for this day. It may be described by saying that I sat in my rocking chair all day and tried to amuse myself the best way I could which was not very well. I thought I should be well enough to go to school this afternoon but was not.

I have not suffered so much today as yesterday though constantly in pain. By tomorrow I hope to be well enough to commence my studies again. Oh I am so sorry to have lost what I have. It seems as though that part of my philosophy was fated never to be learned.

The children have been so very good to me. Ernest brought me oranges thinking I would enjoy them and Ida is more loving than ever.

I would give much to know what tomorrow will bring to me. I hope it will not be like today with its pain and weary waiting with every breath something to be dreaded.

January 30

As I intended I went to school today and though far far from well I managed to get along very well except when the Prof said something funny in philosophy class. I commenced to laugh but stopped rather suddenly. I thought I should have spasms or something else dreadful.

We made molasses candy this evening and I have two blisters from burns beside those from pulling the candy, quite a sufficiency I think.

It is about eleven and I must retire.

January 31

The last day of the first month of the new year, how long it seems since New Years almost a lifetime.

School tired me dreadfully to day. I thought we never would get through the lessons.

\(^{16}\) Mary is most likely referring to camphor, a wax-like substance found inside the camphor laurel, an evergreen native to southeast Asia. Used on the skin, camphor causes a cooling and slight anesthetic effect that may lessen symptoms of a cold. Taken orally, as Mary seems to be using it here, camphor works as a cough suppressant (PDR, 2000).

\(^{17}\) This doctor is most likely not Mary’s brother-in-law, Julius B. Ransom, who is referred to as “Dr.” without a definite article.
I received a letter from Altona one side of a page from Hattie the other from Maggie. Mother is in A and will I hope have a nice visit...
Chapter 2:  
“I feel so hard cold and unimpressable”  
February, 1884

Feb 1th.
   Friday night and it finds me where I so much wished to be, at home.  
   This day has been passed much as all the rest do. After school I searched all over  
Plattsburgh for gray fur for Hattie but cannot find any that I think she would want, I mailed a  
letter to her and when I reached home found four letters and a package B. had sent that I must  
mail which of course I did. Comming home we just escaped a tipover and it made nerverous  
for all the rest of the day.  
   There has been a perfect jubilee ever since we arrived. Birdie and I have read each  
others letters and talked ourselves to China and back again. And oh I am so tired.

February 2
   I am too tired to pay much attention to you to night, and not much of anything has  
happened to record. I have spent the day doing house that is what I could for as I had to stop  
to rest every little while I could not accomplish much. Birdie has been teaching me a new  
song, The lights far out at sea and it is lovely.

Feb 3
   This morning I attend service at Morrissonville and this evening at Plattsburgh. How I  
did enjoy this last service everything was just as it should be and the sermon was very fine. I  
do not enjoy the prospect for next week very much but it must be gone through with I  
suppose and /brewing/ trouble will not make it any better.

February 4
   I received a letter from Maggie this morning and wrote a card to Mother telling her  
ot to come home before Wensday.  
   Mrs Brenan told E- tonight about the burning of the farm for which Mr Brenan works.  
It makes things very uncertain for them.  
   Miss and I enjoyed the first chat we have had since we came up from down stairs  
while coppying work from the board after school. What fun we used to have together in spite  
of Miss Nash.  
   We are working dreadfully hard for Examinations trying to learn more in two days  
that we have for four weeks.

Feb 3
   It has been a very disagreeable day. Some sleet rain all contending for the victory and  
one of them succeeding.  
   We have algebra and Philosophy tomorrow. It seems as though nearly half of the  
philosophy I have never studied at all. I lost so much when I was out and have not been able  
to make it up.

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18 “The Lights Far Out at Sea,” by English composer Alfred Scott Getty, is a haunting song about a  
sunset over the ocean and the memories that it brings back for the speaker.
I am very tired but must keep on studying until I have worked through it all. Ernest is making some hot lemonade, I shall enjoy that if nothing else.

Feb 6

This has been a very busy day for an Algebra examination this morning and philosophy this afternoon of course. Every moment not spent over the examination was spent in preparing for the next subject, I did not take off my cloak or hat at noon and studied all the time.

This evening I have spent a good deal of time reading The Spy\textsuperscript{19} to Ernest. We find it very interesting.

I have been polishing up my knowledge of Physical Geog. for examination tomorrow and must continue to do so though it is late.

February 7.

We took our examination in physical geography this forenoon and as we had nothing this afternoon of importance I improved the opportunity of writing to Matt. I came very near writing several things that I am afraid would have hurt his feelings, but I think I succeeded at last in [not] putting anything of the kind in.

After school I made a call at Mr Hagars and it was a very pleasant one. Gillian is looking ever so much better and the baby growing finely. Uncle was always very kind to me but to night he was really tender. I wonder what made him so.

I came home by the way of the post office in order to mail my letter. When I went up the steps I saw Mr Charlie Ransom standing at the side gate talking with a gentleman. When I came out he was waiting there evidently for me.

He said, “good evening Miss Collins” and asked if he might have the pleasure of walking with me, and possessed himself of my book, and we started. He said that he saw me and waited thinking it might be pleasant etc etc.

I thanked him for his kind forethought, and in rehearsing the advantages of the situation he remarked well suppose a great mad dog should come down the street.

I laughed and said and what would you do run I suppose, and he with a great deal of candor said Yes I should run I am not very brave natureally.

When we reached the corner of the street he asked me which way I usually went and took my arm to prevent me as he said from going the wrong way. It was dark enough for all intents and purposes or would have been that for the moonlight, so of course that was all right enough, but I never expected to find myself walking arm in arm with Charlie Ransom. If Mr B had seen us he would probably have said the reason I did not write to him was because I had a new flame.

Mr R proposed as it was leap year I should see him home but I pleaded that I did not know where he lived and therefore could not. I was dreadfully afraid that he would come home with me in which case I did not know what to do with him. But there is more delicacy in his attentions than I gave him credit for.

\textsuperscript{19} Mary probably means \textit{The Spy} (1821) by James Fenimore Cooper. Set during the American Revolution, the novel centers around Harvey Birch, who remains morally upright, despite suspicion that he is a British spy. (He is actually a secret agent for George Washington.) Disguise, double-crossing, and moral ambiguity enliven a clunky set-up. The book has currently fallen out of favor due to its pre-Civil War prejudice against African-Americans.
It seems half strange to me how a man can be so nice and polite when with ladies and be what I have some reason to think he is with men. I can beleive it is a privilege to be a ladie especially one who gentlemen know they must be on their good behavior when with.

We finished the Spy tonight.

February 8th.

Examinations are finished at last and I am so glad. I know my marks in two subjects, geog. and algebra, 96.1 + 88.

Ernest has gone home and left Ida and me here. I am all worn out with my days exams, it did seem as though I never should be able to do my Arith examination.

I took a quinine pill\(^{20}\) but it did not seem to do much good but perhaps if I had not taken it I should have felt worse.

Ida and I spent the evening playing checkers, and I have read to her and at about half past ten I am going to bed.

Feb 9th

This day has been rather an inactive one, the most I have done is to write to Maggie and go down street. Perhaps the fact that a good share of the day has been spent lying down may be accounted for in that I am not feeling well. I can not think what makes me so weak and tired. I never used to be so.

I wonder if Matt will come, I am so sorry things have turned out as they have and that he takes them so to heart. It is a dreadful thing for a young man starting in his profession to settle in a place stay a little while and then start off some where else. I hope he will not do it even under the circumstances.

Feb 10

Sunday and I have attended church twice as usual, this morning at my own church and lissened to a very good sermon on missions. The text was If you love me keep my comandments.\(^{21}\)

This evening Mr MacAllister preached from the text. Yet one thing then lacked. The church was crowded, all Plattsburgh seemed to be there.

I have spent the day rather indolently having a dreadful head-ache. I can hardly see and my eyes are red and swolen, I am to tired to write more if I had it to write.

Feb 11

My poor Journal I came near forgeting you to day for some reason probably because I was so tired. Lessons all day as usual after school I got our texts for the consert to morrow evening.

To day was the one for handing in our composition but I did not know it and this morning had not even a subject, but I beged time untill tomorrow and now I have one ready to hand in.

\(^{20}\) Quinine is a bitter powder derived from the bark of the cinchona tree, found in mountainous regions of Ecuador and Peru. Perhaps most familiar today as a treatment for malaria, quinine has also been used to relieve muscle aches (PDR, 2000). It is in this capacity that Mary is probably taking it.

\(^{21}\) John 14:15.
The Dr. surprised us with a call and he gave me a delightful ride, he goes home tomorrow.

Feb 12

The great event of the day or rather night has been the concert given by the Philomonic Society. It was songs and scenes, with soldiers’ grand drill parade, martial music etc. I shall not attempt to describe it as a whole it would require more writing than I feel inclined to do to night.

The scene which I considered the finest was after the battle represented in this manner. The tents were pitched the men lying around and in them a faint light as of the moon shining around them while We are tenting to night on the Old Camp Ground was sung by one of the men all joining the chorus.

Another which was very effective was a home scene, representing a gathering of ladies making all kinds of things and packing boxes to send to there boys in the war. The closing was America sung by the whole audience standing. The program was good and well executed and we enjoyed ourselves immensely especially Ida.

There was one gentleman among the soldiers, who is a prefect picture of Matt. I think if there were dressed alike and were together I should not as, well as I know Matt, be able to tell them apart. More than all he had the same expression which I would not have believed another to have possesssed. He looked so good true and noble. I would give anything to know who it is if not to know him. I never was so struck with a face before very likely from the resemblance to Matt but it is one I would remark anywhere.

Feb 13

The event of the day was the marriage of Miss Williams. The streets were full of carriages and people and the church was well filled I should have liked to have gone very much indeed. The reception was this evening.

There were a good many absent from school and to get through was the chief object with all. After school Nettie Annie and myself lingered a little Annie waiting for Herb and we staying with her. We spent the time talking with Bud and Sperry.

I went down street with Nettie and got a letter from Mother. When I was coming back I heard a quiet rapping on the window. Looking up I saw the boys smiling down at me I smiled nodded and passed on.

I found out that the soldiers were not real ones. So my soldier proves to be a citizen and a member of the Relief Hose Co. It takes a great deal of the interest

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22 The Plattsburgh Philharmonic Society (mentioned, with various creative spellings, throughout Mary’s diary) provided myriad entertainments for residents (PS, Feb. 8, 1884). Several times a year, the Society’s “War Concerts” gave audiences a nostalgic and patriotic look back on the greatest war in their recent memory, that is, the Civil War.

23 “Tenting Tonight on the Old Campground,” with words and music by Walter Kittredge, was published in 1864, during the downturn of the Civil War. Sick of fighting, soldiers on both sides identified with the lyrics of the chorus: “Many are the hearts that are weary tonight / Wishing for the war to cease; / Many are the hearts looking for the right / To see the dawn of peace, / Tenting tonight, tenting tonight, / Tenting on the old campground.” Even after the war, “Tenting Tonight on the Old Campground” stayed popular, especially among veterans’ groups.

24 Whatever song Mary is talking about, it is not “America the Beautiful” by Katherine Lee Bates, which first appeared in print as a poem in 1895.
away and it quite /*****/ compared to what it was when I thought such a nature as his must feel in such an occupation. It is possible that it is Mr Patterson.

Feb 14

Another day is passed and nothing of very much consequence done or said. In spite of my dreams of many letters last night I received none. /*****/ Mr Miller /*****/ so much less on my mind.

Gillian did go to the reception so, if I did not, my bonnet did. I wonder if it was becomming to her. I am glad she liked my bonnet and wished to wear it calling it perfectly sweet. It is so different from every ones else that I have felt odd in wearing it sometimes.

Feb 16

The record of this days proceedings may be quite exceptable to you so I will begin. After breakfast Birdie and I talked and sang, sang and talked until nearly dinner time.

I helped Ernest then and after dinner we all began to fix to go skating. As my skates are to large for me I put on four pairs of stockings and mothers shoes and then they fitted.

Ernest and I went down to the /flat/ pond and we commenced to skate. I got along very nicely and can stand and strike out very well indeed. I only fell down twice and then very gracefully of course.

Birdie and Ida soon came and Ernest had to devote his attention to them for a time. I went to the house for some chairs to push before us and they did very nicely, for a change we sat in them and E- pushed us. It was delightful I have cleaned my skates and if possiable shall sell them and get a smaller pair.

Feb 17

Sunday but I am sorry to say that I have not spent it in such a manner as I wish I had. I have not been to church at all to day and usually I go twice and besides that omission I have read some in the newspapers brought down an old clock from the garret took out what were remaining of the works washed it off and got it ready to fix for a cabinet.

But Bertha and I put a picture into the top of my looking glass. It has a red /*****/ and looks very pretty.

I think that with a good deal of talk and thought upon the subject compleats the list of my sins for today now I must read and go to bed good night.

Feb 18

It has been a very bad day especially as by doing so it kept us from going to school by its constant storm, and finaly unable to wait any longer we came down in the rain, but I would have lost a whole day of school for which I am very sorry.

After we came down I had a check cashed mailed a number of letters and did some shopping all in the rain but feeling quite like myself as Birdie was with me.

This evening we have read and I have studied Phelosophy. Oh dear I wonder if I will pass.

Birdie and I made a corner bracket for my room this morning. The shelves are dark and the /lambra guine/ is red and white in scolops, When I had arranged it with books vaces [vases] pictures and cards it looked so bright and pretty that I had the whole family up to admire it. When my chair sofa and cabinet are done my room will be quite perfect.
It is a little after eleven so I shall do what I should have done some time ago, retire.

February 19

How fast the days fly. This one has gone and how little I have to show for it. I have learned my lessons recited them read some talked some sung some and then it ends I went to the office but received no letters. I wonder how long it will be before I shall have one. It is rather a hard lesson to learn that you are not of much importance anyway but when I have once well committed it I hope not to forget at once.

If I had answered a certain letter I might have more letters than now fall to my lot, but I must not talk in this way it sounds as though I regretted my decision.

I wonder if he is forgetting me as rapidly and entirely as I am him. No doubt more so for a man has so many more things to drive old memories away than a woman. But old memories do not trouble me much only to vex me. I feel so hard cold and unimpressable. If I continue growing in this respect as I have for the last three or four years I shall soon become an animated rock, and however bad that may be it is better in my opinion than being consumed by passion which I am not able to control.

February 20th

Oh dear another day has passed as most of the others do only I am sorry to say I came very near being late both morning and noon and had a sort of cramp in my limbs from fast walking. I had five dollars of silver changed for a bill and sent mothers missionary money.²⁵

Kate Sacks was at school this afternoon and I talked to her more than I ever did before. She is a very pleasant girl. It is to bad she is no prettier. I wonder if she really is engaged to Will Dunn.

February 21th

I was so confident that I should be at home to night that I felt the disappointment keenly. Mr Brenan went away just in time to make me stay and Ida is with me though poor dear she wanted to go so much. But Birdie would not let her and went herself. I do not know why. I wanted her to stay oh so much and when she went I was down stairs and she did not tell me she was ready and so I did not even see her to say good by. It was only a little thing but it made me feel dreadfully. I suppose I am silly to night.

We had an examination in Philosophy this afternoon while they were doing their exercises down stairs which made it so much easier. I never was so provoked at an examination in my life as this and don’t expect I have passed any thing.

I have been studying all the evening on Regents papers in Physical Geog. and as a consequence have found out how little I know and tired myself all out.

Ernest did not leave the watch so I do not know what time it is but I feel as if bed was the next thing to be discussed.

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²⁵ Missionary societies, such as the one for which Mary’s mother raises funds, and other benevolent organizations permeated Victorian middle-class life. Usually segregated by sex, though not by class, such societies advocated the spread of Christianity, charity toward the poor, temperance, children’s literacy, and other moral reforms (Bryan, 1981; Robert, 1997). Victorian women’s mass participation in such groups fed into campaigns that bore fruit in the twentieth century in the form of more humane labor laws, female suffrage, and the short-lived Prohibition.
I hope my mood will be better to morrow and that so many things that seem unpleasant will not occur. I wish I could see Birdie. I wonder what made her go. But then if she wanted to go of course she must I could not keep her and would not against her will.

I think she has acted rather queer lately. I suppose Matts troubles worry her. How very much everybody thinks of her. It must be nice to be the object of so much affection. I wish I could be but I must put up with what nature gave me I suppose and trudge along through this world the best way I can. I am glad there is an end to it I do not think it would be a pleasant thing to live always.

February 22

Washingtons birthday and to make us more thankful that he lived we have as usual a holiday.

Now for the record of my proceedings today. We did not get up until very late and so we took breakfast and dinner together after which I moped [mopped] out the kitchen and put things to rights which of course completely exausted me.

Then I studied untill about half past five when I got dinner and have been studing every since. O those regents they all most kill us. I wish I had more time to study for them, I need it bad enough.

February 23

Well I have done much the same as yesterday only I got up earlier and have not done quite as much house work but have studied all day with the exception of about half an hour that I went down street to order things for tomorrow, and time enough to eat my meals. I had coffee for supper so that I might studie.

Later. Oh: these regent examinations how glad I shall be when they are over.

The room is up to tropical heat. Ida has just fini shed her bath and I must bathe now.

February 24th

On the whole not a very momentous day. Went to church this morning since then have eaten read and written a letter to Birdie. I wonder what she will decide about joining the church. I hardly think we will. I am sorry they did not come down it will be so unpleasant for us tomorrow morning.

I do so dread tomorrow and its work. I dreamed all last night about Phelosophy and kindred topics. The Prof. can not ask any more of me than to study it all day and dream of it all night.

February 25th

This morning we took one examination in physical geography. It was very hard and I know I have not passed.

This afternoon I took Physics. There were a good many boys but I was the only girl in the room. It seemed rather odd I must confess. I have more hopes of this subject but fear that I have not passed.

Since school I have bought me a black jersey which I like very much visited with Mrs Brenan, made molasses candy that was splendid and read several chapeters of a very nice story to everybody. Half past eleven and nearly bed time.
February 26th

I have only a moment to write and not much to tell. I did not go to school to day untill nearly three this afternoon, then took one session in grammar. I do not expect to pass but do so much wish to.

After scool I went down and bought me the lovelyest pair of skates you ever saw, nickle plated clamps with beautiful heel and front supports.

When I was coming back I met Birdie. It was to late for our calls so we bought some things Hattie wanted.

This morning I bought some ribbon for my jersey. The large bow on the back improves it very much.

Birdie and I have spent the evening calling on Mrs Brenan.

February 27 1884.

It is very late so I must only write a few moments. This morning I did not have to go to school, so of course fussed around most of the forenoon. I put some Balsam of Peru on my pimples and oh I never had such a time in all my life, it came near blistering my whole face. I put glycerine on it and suffered fearfuly.

Brought my studies home bought some wool for my tam oshanter.

This afternoon I took two examinations spelling and grammar. I do hope I have passed. If I have not passed this spelling examination I never shall.

Birdie and I called at Mr Hagar’s and did some shopping, and I have read all the evening and am now about to lunch.

February 28

Not any thing of much importance has occurred to day. I went to school this morning but as there was an examination in History this afternoon and I had passed before I did not go.

It has stormed dreadfuly all day and now the wind is blowing a perfect gale. I am dreadfully tired and am going to bed.

February 29

Rather an odd day to day. This morning I went to school and the report was read and we were excused it being so cold.

I did not pass in anything. So came home and cried my self sick over it.

I did not go to school this afternoon but about five went down street with Bertha. We went to several places post office included and I had a nice little chatt with Mr Ransom.

This evening I read to Mrs Brenan while she worked upon my tam. I can not decide whether to have ribbon or a pompom for the top.

Half past ten good night.
March 1.

The first day of another month has passed away without my accomplishing very much. I have made part of my tam o'shanter and done some house work and read all the evening to Ernest.

Ernest and I went skating this afternoon upon the river. When we first went the skating was not at all good but down by the sewing machine factory.\textsuperscript{26} It was very nice. The trouble was that there were a lot of rough boys on the ice so I did not stay long. But on the whole I enjoyed myself very much. My skates are perfect beauties and go so nicely. I hope soon to be able to skate well.

Papa came this afternoon and Birdie went home with him she goes to Altona next week. He said Emer had sent his picture to me. They have it at home. I am very impatient to see it, I wonder if he has changed much.

March 2th 1884

The sabbath with its beautiful service and quiet repose has just past and tomorrow morning we must take up the burden of our daily lives which so many of us find so hard to bear.

Ernest and I went to church this morning Ida not feeling able on account of her burned foot to accompany us. It was communion Sunday and, after a most beautiful and impressive sermon, six united with the church, from the Reid family by letter and two by confessions of faith. How much I wished I had been among the latter and especially I felt it when I could not partake of the communion. But I most earnestly hope that the next time Birdie and I may enjoy that great privilege.

We all went to the Baptist church this evening and listened to a very good sermon. There was not so large a congregation as usual for some reason.

I got a Sunday school book this morning and have been reading to the children I guess it will be very good, if it has been Sunday and most of my day spent at church. I have decided what to speak next time, Consency [Constancy]. It is perfectly lovely I think and the greatest advantage is that I know it already, so you see it saves me the trouble of learning one.

I had the strangest dream last night and it has haunted and oppressed me all day. It all appeared so real that if I were a believer in dreams I should almost expect to hear that a part at least has been fulfilled. I dreamed that Mr Bertrand was dreadfully sick with some kind of fever, not exactly at our house, but very near and it had fallen to our lot to be his nurse and do almost every thing for him. Why I did not know perhaps that it might not be said of us, “Alas for the rarity of christian charity under the sun.” He appeared among us we had been so very sudden, he was so sick and worn out as if he had indeed walked all the way back from Omaha as he said he would if he failed.

In his rational moments he so much wished us to talk to him about Christ. He seemed so repentant and eager to learn. Birdie took the most care of him but I was about to visit him

\textsuperscript{26} The sewing machine factory was built on the banks of the Saranac River in 1881 (Palmer, 1893).
when I woke. As he lay there, how mean my latter course toward him did seem and out of dreams it seems so too but the other would have been more so.

His object in writing was something more than to keep up our acquaintance he cared nothing for. I know that he thought more of me than was good for him before he went away and how contemptable I should have been to allow him to think I cared for him even a little when at last I must say, “please dont torment me any longer.” But there, enough of him. I hope he will consent not to trouble me any more even in sleep.

March 3

If the old saying that, As Monday goes so goest all the week is true I am to have quite a nice time this week.

I went to school as usual and had all my lessons very well indeed. After school + after much debating and tears and intreaties from Ida who said I should not go, Ernest and I started for. We first went to the bay not liking to go to the river on account of the rabble that we found there Saturday.

But there was no skating so we went over to the town hoping some respectiable profit might be there. There did not seem to be any so I told Ernest I would walk along the bank till I found a good place to cross and he might skate up and help me. I did so and so did he, but when I got accross I could not indure to go without skating any and had him put on my skates.

There was a very nice looking young gentelman on the ice who watched us very closely and hovered near Ernest said like a hawk after young chickings. E took me out on the ice but had to change his skates so left me alone.

My strap loosened after a little and I skated up and asked Ernest to tighten it. Mr- had been talking to him and he raised his hat and inquired if he might have the pleasure of doing it for me.

Of course he might and when it was done and I had thanked him he again bowed and said if he could assist me in any way he would be most happy. So we skated away together much to E’s delight who had told me if I wanted any one to help I might get that young gentelman. We skated and talked, talked and skated untill I was all tired out.

Then we left the ice and he beged to introduce himself and the great unknown proved to be Mr Edward Parmenter. I never heard of him before but have seen him a great many times. He is a perfect gentelman and seems very nice indeed.

He asked if he might call me his pupil and said he would be delightful to teach me every night and seemed very anxious to have me come. Ernest was no where to be seen so he preposed to accompany me home, of course I excepted and home we went and the curtain falls.

I wonder what my married and ingaged sisters would say to that. I have had lots of fun anyway, whether the action is good bad or indifferent.

March 4

Not much of anything has happened to day school as usual, Papa took dinner with us and bought us a number of things but not Mr Emers picture. I am so sorry.

I wanted to go skating but did not on account of nerealgia [neuralgia] in my shoulder. Ernest went and said Mr Parmenter came down and skated a few minutes looked all around and finaly went away. I wonder if he was disapointed.
I have finished my tam o' shanter all but the ribbon which I should get it tomorrow. It is very becoming.

March 5
Went to school this afternoon as usual this forenoon, at noon bought some red ribbon for my tam o' shanter, had Mrs Brenan make the bow and wore it this afternoon. Everybody stared at me as though they thought I had taken leave of my senses and of course it made me feel very uncomfortable but those who said anything about it thought it very pretty. I met Grace and she expressed the same opinion.

After school I went up to Maggie's thinking she might wish to go skating but she was out, so E and I went alone. My skates were hardly on before Mr Parmenter put in an appearance and we skated for about half past four until nearly six.

He said he thought I owed him an excuse for not coming last night but when I gave it, he was perfectly satisfied. I had a splendid time and am learning to skate quite well. He is very agreeable and came home with me again.

I should like to see Maggie come up with a talk that would excite me. I could tell her I think each of us must be trying to make a "mash," but for my part I am quite secure in one way at time.

March 6th
Let me see what has been done and said today. Well school this morning was as well as afternoon. At noon I went to the office to write a card to Bertha. Mr Ransom was there and of course that means that I spent about as much time talking as writing.

He helped me put on my mittens. It was so very necessary and while doing so found a long hair which he deposited upon the shoulder of his coats. Then said "What will people say when they see it there." I remarked that they would not know it was mine unless he babbled it which he said with a laugh he did not think he would do. However I did not give him the opportunity as I took it away from him.

After school E and I went skating. The snow of this morning has not hurt the ice very much and there were a good many there especially girls for which I was very glad. E put on my skates and I skated a while alone then he skated with me.

I stopped once or twice to rest but still no Mr Parmenter. I was indignant and declared I would never skate with him again if he did not come pretty soon.

Finally as we went around a bend to the place where I have my skates fixed I saw him going up the walk. He had evidently been to the ice and was going back. I wonder if he was coming. When we were ready to start we saw him coming then I lost sight of him. E said he had passed us bowing as he did so but the sun was shining in my eyes and I had not seen him.

Anyway he was at the other end of the ice and coming back so we skated down and met him I saw him that time, E said I will deliver my hay to you suiting the action to the words.

Then we skated and talked. Talked from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell, theology justice mercy capital punishment whether the stars are inhabited etc etc, things in an endless list.

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27 A mash – an informal term for an infatuation – is an early slang term that prefigures "pash" (short for "passion") and "crush" as an evocative description of the state of one's innards when one is feeling flirtatious.
I am learning to skate quite naturally, he is a very good teacher. When I was tired out we came home. We made the most of our walk home as far as conversation was concerned and he kept me at the gate until I was attacked with sudden chills.

He has found Friday evening company to his expectations was not occupied and he seemed very anxious that I should go. But I am to be out of town at least so I told him and of course could not be there.

He suggested that I might be there in spirit if not in body and it is barely possible I may be. If I ever skate with him again I hope he will not have lost his skates and thereby make me wait so long for him.

He told me he was forty for I would never have believed, but why he did I can not imagine unless he wanted to impress upon me how much older he was than I or it may be he wished me to tell him my age. If that was his object he failed miserably.

March 8

Yesterday is the first day I have written for some time but I forgot all about writing I was so busy talking to Bertha telling my stories. She was not so much shocked as them as I expected she would be.

I was not at all well and in the afternoon was excused from speaking on account of it. It stormed dreadfully all day so the ice is spoiled unless the wind of today has blown the snow from it. If I had been in town Mr Parmenter and I would not have skated very much in that storm.

Father came down and we all went home, just before we started he gave me the satchel that contained Emery's picture. I took it out gave one look put it into a book and came home. It is splendid. O how I do want to see him.

I showed Father my skates and he was not at all displeased at least did not appear to be.

To day has been spent in cooking, sewing, talking, singing, and housework in general, I fixed a pair of dress shields as satchets and put them with my jersey. I wonder how they will do. Birdie refilled the little blue sachet that Hattie gave me and made one for herself. We have added something more to my room. Next the bed we hung a small picture and arranged fans around it. The effect is very pretty indeed. What more shall I say than that I am exceedingly tired and am going to bed.

March 9th.

Sunday but none of us went to church on account of the drifts. Nor could go to P-[Plattsburgh] so I shall have to loose half a day out of school.

Ida and I have been having rather a hot time. The other night she heard Birdie say something about Mr B’s letter so to day she took it upon herself to investigate and found it and to finish up she had to tell mother to night. There has been some scenes [scenes] of course and she is still in a pickle.

Birdie and I all of us in fact have sung a good deal and I should have enjoyed the day very much but for Ida.

March 11th

Poor journal neglected again yesterday but I shall try to make up and it hardly seems more than one day anyway. We came down yesterday afternoon and as soon as we could
dress went out shopping Birdie and I. We did considerable for Hattie and bought a pair of boots for me. By the way I have worn them all the evening and do not like them at all. We met Mr Parmenter on the street, I wanted B to take a good look at him but it takes her so long to see any body that he was gone before she had time.

I did not go to bed until quite late then Birdie was to wake me when she was sleepy and she was to sleep until time to go. I thought I would write then but as she did not wake me until four, I was forced to write yesterday's occurrences today. I had not intended to take the train but I decided it would be so much pleasure for B.

We walked down to the Hotel, waited there a while and then went down in the bus. The train was late as usual so we had plenty of time to enjoy the beauties and comforts of the Plattsburgh depot. I told Birdie if my ship came in I would build them another. They certainly stand in great need of it.

When we went down it seemed like a village of the dead, so quiet and still in the uncertain misty grey light. When we came back it was just waking up. The workmen were going to their work and perhaps some just going home from there spending of the night.

I should like to explore a city at such an hour when all things seem strange and unusual when you “feel the /???/ of the river joy” and breath in that peculiar freshness that is never felt at another time, How near to nature and nature's God we then seem with none of the lonelines we experience among a multitude whom we do not know or care for.

March 12

Nothing of any importance has occurred today. As for the weather it has rained part of the day and thawed all the time but now the wind is blowing hard and it is freezing hard. I do so hope it will freeze hard enough to make the ice smooth and safe, then I shall have another opportunity of making myself sick again skating.

As I expected I received a letter from Birdie at noon containing orders for numerous things for herself and Hattie. I bought them after school. Will B waited upon me and we made the most of the opportunity to become a little acquainted. I think him very nice.

While at Barbers I caught a glimpse of Mr Parmenter. I wonder if he hopes there will be more ice and I also wonder if we will be any more acquainted than we are at present.

I wrote a card to Father at noon and as Mr Ransom was there, of course we managed our usual visit. I have a good deal of fun with him but Birdie thinks him detestable.

Examinations come next week but I am so tired when school is out that I can hardly study at all. It has been especially so tonight my lessons are not half learned.

March 13th

I wrote to Emer today in school and mailed it at noon but I did not receive any.

After school I went to the drugstore and bought some Sozodont. I have used some of it and like it very much.

When I got home Ida wanted me to get her a pair of skates so though very tired I went. I thought while I was out I might as well do some shopping for myself and did Mr Peter waited upon me, and he remarked “did I see you not skating.”

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28 Sozodont is a toothpaste in red liquid form, flavored with cloves, peppermint, anise, and cinnamon (Hahn, 1878).
I told him I had been and asked if he saw me. It seemed he did and tried to tease me about my very cordially of course and laying a good deal of stress upon the white dress goods. I do not know if he was poking fun at Mr Parmenter or me. If he was he ought to have remembered that he is more of a gentleman than Will Peter ever thought of being.

I met Mr Parmenter in the street he smiled and bowed. I wonder if he would have smiled more if he had known what Mr Peter had just been saying.

March 14th

School as usual and this afternoon the boys debated upon the question, Resolved that womans mind is inferior to that of man. I do not know how they decided it but presume in the affirmative.

After school I walked as far as the bay with Annie, where she met her brother.

I had a dreadful time with my rubber, it would come off in spite of all I could do. I sat down on a step where she got into the sleigh and put it on. It stayed after that. When I was coming home I heard a somewhat familiar step behind me and Mr Parmenter put in an appearance, and walked home with me.

Father drove up as we were coming up the walk but went into the house before we arrived at the gate. He told me that the ice had been good all the week and was today. He was out this morning. It makes me so provoked when I think of all I have lost by believing the ice unsafe as they all said it was, Ern to Mr Peter. I believe he had an object in view when he said that.

I told him I was going home to night as I intended to. We resume our lessons Monday night if the ice will permit. The last thing he said was Monday night than and I said, Yes. What would Birdie or Hattie say.

Father smiled remarkable and asked “What was that young sprig coming up the walk with you?”

I received a call from Mrs Brenan and called upon her this evening. She showed us some very fine views and we talked as we always do when together. Nearly eleven good night.

O I saw Miss Trembley tonight. She did not know me. How ridiculous she makes herself by showing so much anger. I wonder what she thinks I want of her Mr Bertrand. But I suppose his not being her Mr Bertrand is what prevokes her.

March 15th

This morning I did not get up until nine o’clock and all the rest of the day has been after the same manner.

I went down street and wriiten two letters one to Birdie and one to Maggie. I told her a little about Mr Parmenter just enough to make her anxious to know more.

I have studied a little played checkers with Ida and at a little after ten am going to bed good night.

March 16

Sunday and I have been to church twice today. Both morning and evening sermon was very good indeed and I have injoyed this days services very much, and so hope to be a better girl for them.
After Sunday school I stayed to change a book and Miss Baker waited for me. Mr Johnson the superintendent of the school was also waiting. After a little as soon as he could gracefully and he is very graceful, he asked Miss Baker to introduce him to me so she did and now we are acquainted.29

I have been wanting to for some time and I fancy he has too. I am rather amused to notice how much more anxious gentlemen are to meet me than ladies are but I suppose it is very natural. There can be no doubt that he is nice to know, for he certainly is a good man as well as handsome and pleasant.

March 17.

O dear I am almost too tired to write, but must, of course. It has snowed a good deal of the time today and I was in a dreadful pickle fearing I should not be able to go skating as I had promised to do. But after school it cleared up enough to allow of our going.

E- was very much opposed to it but we went all the same. When we were half way there E discovered that we did not have the [skate] key30 so I had to go back after it.

E went on and when I got there I found him just coming back saying that there was no skating but I would not return untill I had looked for myself I found a little ice and determined to make the most of it.

So Ernest began to put on my skates but before it was finished he had broken one of the buckles off. So he took his strap and fassened my skate with that. Then we tried to skate and such ice!

It was some time before Mr Parmenter came, he was detained downtown on business it seems. Then we skated as usual only his skate kept coming off every little while. When he first came we were neither of us in very good humor, both a little cross, I and him, he possiably because I was. I said a good many rather cutting things. I guess he knows by this time that I was not very well pleased at his long delay, but in time we became as good natured as posiable.

He evidentally enjoyed my company and intended to keep me as long as possiable. Though I preposed going several times he continued to linger untill rather late.

Then we came home I was so very tired that of course we walked very slow. It amused me to see how much slower he walked the nearer our destination we became. After we arrived we stood a long long time at the gate he had so much to say, and listen to. It is a wonder he got away at all.

It was nearly eight oclock and he had his tea to take and a meeting to attend, I think it very likely he did not wait for tea. It makes me think of the time Mr Bertrand lost his on my account. Mr Parmenter wants me to go out with him to morrow night but I am sure I do know I think I will not.

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29 In Mary’s day, there were strict rules governing daily social interactions, especially introductions. Here, for example, Mr. Johnson knows Miss Baker, but not Mary. Though he knows Miss Baker, he cannot treat Mary with equal familiarity until he and Mary have been formally acquainted. Before he can address Mary socially, Mr. Johnson must disregard Mary and ask Miss Baker to make a formal connection of acquaintanceship between him and Mary. Approaching a friend of a friend, especially a woman, without such a preface was seen as excessively forward and impolite. Tact was the watchword of the day (see Halttunen, 1982, especially chapter 4, “Sentimental Culture and the Problem of Etiquette”).

30 Mary’s ice skates are not incorporated into boots, the way that skates are now. Instead they are separate frames that are strapped around the feet with leather straps, then tightened around the soles of one’s winter boots using a skate key, which gets its name from its key-like shape (Yue, 1997).
It is St Patricks day and I have now a sprig of Shamrock Ruth Palmer gave me, also have dressed in green though I did not think of that when dressing.

March 18

I must write the first instead of the last thing tonight for if I do not I am much afraid I shall not write very much.

Well school as usual. At noon I went to the P.O. and met Mr Johnson. There was a letter and card for me, the card from Bertha the letter for her.

Mr Ransom would not give them to me unless I would come inside. I teased + teased but all to no purpose. He was so “soft” as usual. That is what Birdie calls it.

After school I went down street with Miss Hickock. When we were at Gilberts Miss Lansing and Miss Moor came in and Jennie introduced me to them. It amused me as there was a time when I knew them. They were going to the rink to watch the skaters so we went. It looks very nice and I should like to try one if the gentlemen invited us to but we declined.

Then I went to get my skates that I had left at Purdys. It was not finished so I had to leave it and go home.

I teased E to go skating with me but he would not, but said he would go down and put my skates on. So I was to meet him at Purdys at five. It was there and saw him pass came out and he was nowhere to be seen but Mr P- was so we went skating.

We skated untill nearly seven. I never saw any body so reluctant to leave the ice as he was. Then we came home and although he did not except my invitation to come in he kept me at the gate for a fearfully long time in fact untill I bade him good night, and he shook hands with me for the first time when he bade me good by.

He wanted me to go tomorrow night but I would not but promised to go Thursday. Oh! Dear I hope he is not going to make himself absurd like all the rest but he acted very much like it tonight. You see Journal I begin to turn the synic [cynic].

Poor man he was court-marshled and sentenced to be shot for being late at his meeting last night.

March 19th.

Examinations today, I did not get along as well as I might prehaps if I had not gone skating last night, but I do not care half so much as I usually do, it may be because I am so tired. I ought to have studied Geo. this evening but have been reading Other peoples Children instead and unfortunatly that will not make me any better prepared for examination.

Amy was at school this morning. She looks the same as ever, was very gracious to me smiled most friendly etc. I must say I am not very fond of her.

I hope I shall be able to sleep better than I did last night, if I do not I shall hardly be able to go skating tomorrow night even if the snow which is now falling disapears before then.

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31 Other People’s Children, written by John Habberton in 1877 [?], continues the story begun in Helen’s Babies. Told from the perspective of a governess, it follows the misadventures of several rambunctious, lovable children.
March 20\textsuperscript{th}.
Scarcely an eventful day. One examination this morning and the rest of the day spent
in study and an attempt to write a composition.

When I came out of school this afternoon I met Miss Woodruff. We had a nice little
chat and she invited me to call upon her.

I went for my skate but it was not finished and of course chatted a little with Mr
Henry. He is very pleasant and I wish I knew him better.

March 21
Not an exceedingly eventful day studied for examinations this fore-noon and took it,
Arith. this afternoon.
At noon I went to the office, got a letter from Birdie. Poor girl she is dreadfully
lonesome and walked up with Will Baker. He preposed carrying me over a puddle of water,
was he not gallant.

I went down and got my skate after school had to wait while SH went to get it. It is
fixed very nicely now.

I was hurrying home for I knew Father would be waiting for me when I met Mr
Parmenter. I did not hurry so fast after that. He walked home with me and of course Father
saw him. He trys to tease me about him and says he will have to look into the matter.

I find it lonely here without Birdie.

March 22
Well at least I have worked hard today I have written my composition subject /???
and cleaned house. My room is all cleaned and is so nice and fresh, every thing is finished,
except the carpet is not quite tacked down Father forgot the tacks.

This evening I made molasses candy and it was prefect, just as white as could be. I
should like Mrs Brenan to see it.

Mother told me today about the trouble between Matt and Father. I think Matt has
made himself prefectally rediculous as usual. Father will never never forgive him or forget it.

March 23
Sunday and I have not been to church this morning. Mother Father and I got all ready
to go but it was so late we concluded not to disgrace our selves by going at that hour. Father
brought Ida and me down. E comes tomorrow with his turnips. Ida did not feel like going as
it was dark and rainy, we staied at home from church this evening.

I have done lots of work read to Ida + written to Birdie now it is nearly half past ten
and I must read and retire.

March 24
School of course to day and I am so tired I wanted to take off history but hardly think
they will let me. After school I went for to Barbers for samples and as a reward for all my
trouble had a nice visit with Mr Pike.

Then I went to the office to mail then as Mr Ransom was alone it took me some time
direct it ect. When I started to go he teased me to stay longer. He told me that a nice looking
young gentleman enquired at the Post Office for Miss Bertha Collins. He told him that she
was not in trouble but her sister was, and when I got home I found him there. Young nice
looking indeed. He wanted the pay for that look, but I would not do anything about it so he left his adress and wished me to speak to her about sending the money when she returned.

March 25.
Not a very eventful day on the whole. School as usual and that is about all I have mopped the kitchen and made myself half sick doing it. I suppose that might ought to be recorded.

I sent Ernest down to see if there was any ice that was avaleable for skating but it is all covered with watter. I guess I may as well bid farewell to any skating for this year.

March 26.
Ah well today seems to do very well for events. The first thing when I awoke this morning I heard it raining hard. I knew then that I must bid farewell to anymore skating so concluded I had better wipe my skates off and put them away.

I asked Ernest to do it and he found that the straps of the toe on one skate were gone. I cannot find it any where and as they could not get away without hands I can not account for it in any way unless when Fred was here Monday he took them to tease me.

I did not hear from any of the girls to day and of course wrote to Mother to that efect. I told her to send everything just the same and perhaps they would come. Charlie Ransom and I endulged in our usual nonsence while I was writing. That is that last of it for my time, it is getting to stale.

A stayed at school untill nearly five. Nettie was waiting for the girls and wanted me to stay with her. Sperry and Bud were there and after a time Sperry got permission for us to go into the laboritory. Then we tried to pick /finets/ out of electrical watter and took shocks. The last one I took will last me some time I think. I screamed out and threw the balls right at Sperry. It hurt me dreadfully.

I had to go down street after that and when I was coming back I met Mr P. He walked home with me and stood talking a long time at the gate. He asked if he might call upon me some time, Of course I had to express myself as happy to have him do so.

Then he said he would call to night so he came. We had a pleasant time and a few minutes after nine he rose to go. He put on his coat and hat, then we stood talking in the hall for a long time any way the clock struck ten as we went down stairs. All steps seemed to be long ones any way he made quite a little call at the door.

Finaly he said, “I must not detain you any longer,” and put out his hand. I gave him mine then he stayed as much as ten minutes longer holding it meantime. When he finally bade me goodby he put the other hand over it as tenderally as could be and leaned toward me a little. I did not know but he was going to kiss me but I said good night in a matter of fact way that I guess he thought he would at least delay the operation. Well he is gone and I am going to bed.

March 27
Well for one thing I have not heard from Birdie to day + expected to so very much disapointed. I am sure I do not know what to think but am rather inclined to beleave them coming.

School and lessons as usual and after it I made some candy and have just come up from calling upon Mrs Brenan.
March 28

This is I am happy to say the last day of the term and now for institute. Maggie came today and the first I saw of her she was sitting in the desk in front of me at school. Was I not glad to see her. She had come with a Miss Bullis.

I read my essay and was told by a good many that it was very good. Miss Gamble read one a sort of reply to the boys decision upon the mind of woman. It made them very angry.

Maggie and I are here all alone now but expect Bertha tomorrow.

March 29

Well this day has not been so very eventful. Maggie and I did not get up untill after nine and then we had breakfast and before we had finished Birdie came. Oh how glad I was to see her.

After a time we went down street and bought a lovely spring hat a sort of perl gray to be trimed with perl grey velvet and pink roses.

When we were almost home again I thought of something I must have so Maggie and I went to order it. Before we came back we called upon Maggie Brenan and had a very pleasant time.

I have had the blues all day which I have tride with some success to shake off. What caused it I guess I will not state as I do not want to put it down. I think I shall [have] no trouble in remembering it.

March 30

Sunday and we have made the most of it as far as going to church is concerned. The sermon this morning was very fine, indeed one can not but be better for having heard it. O how thankful we should be, and I think I am, for such pure light. We went there this evening to hear Mr McAllister, the sermon was very good and we had a nice little chat with him after service.

Birdie told me to day of a plan Matt has talked about for camping upon the banks of the St Laurence a year from next summer. Would it not be delightful. I shall be have graduated the June before so it will be all the nicer for me. We are already talking of a camping party for next summer at [Treadwells?] Bay. That would be prefectly splendid. O I wonder what we will do, the time is so faraway and yet so near.

March 31

The first day of institute and I have had enough fun for one day. We went this morning but the profs. could not all be there so they adjourned untill two oclock this afternoon.

Then we went shopping and had a nice time at that. Then we called upon a Bessie Rutherford who is in Platts insurance office. We were late at the afternoon session but had enough of it as it was.

How I carried on we met Mr Bradwell. I fooled more with Vassa and Sperry than I supposed myself cabable of doing. What a time I had I cannot begin to tell it so shall not try.

After the session closed Bo Bradwell Maggie and I went to the rink. I skated with him and got up quite a flirtation.
M and I went this evening but did not skate. I should hardly have liked to when so many were there. Mr Ransom came very late and he went home with us. He told me there was a letter there for Birdie so I made him get it for me. So we went in and had a great time. He showed us the room where he sleeps. It is very nice indeed.

Mr B was not at the rink though he said he would be. O by the way that Mr Obrian wanted to be introduced to me but I would not be of course. I wonder how he liked my refusal.

I bade Jessie Birdie goodbye to night, I am so sorry they are going. That is the beauty of being a Medthist [Methodist] clergyman.

March is ended, what will the next month bring I wonder pain or pleasure, hope or disapointment.
April 1.

I must make my stories rather short to night though I have much to tell. I attended institute as usual this morning and saw one young gentleman whom I wanted very much to know. He would smile and I would smile till at noon I declared that the afternoon would not be compleat untill I made his acquaintance and I made it just the last thing before leaving. He is a Mr Dougless. I like him ever so much he is splendid.

I also met a Mr Stevenson and almost the first thing he did was to ask me if I with Maggie would go to the concert of the Amherst glee club this evening if he could get tickets which seemed doubtful. We said yes and he was to come for us.

When he came he had only been able to get two tickets together so he wanted us to decide, which should go. I said Maggie but she would not and we decided to draw straws or rather papers for it and she drew to go. But that did not satisfy Mr S and he insisted I should go and he would get another seat somehow so we did and we got the seats all right. The concert was splendid. I wish I could hear it again. I hate that Mr S. I am sorry he seems to have taken something of a fancy to me.

We went to the rink this afternoon and I skated with Mr B- and he came home with ME instead of Maggie.

O that club, I am going to have a picture of them if I possiably can get it.

Apr 2

Ah welladay. What have I not done to day. In the first place we went to institute this morning and did not have so very much fun only I was introduced to Mr Chandler and got somewhat acquainted with him. He is splendid.

This afternoon I met some of the Morris girls. Then Birdie Maggie Miss Baker and I went to the rink. I put on skates the first thing and had Miss B. walk around with me. Birdie wanted to try after the rest had gone so I spok to the manager and he said we might stay.

Mr Chandler and then Mr B came up. Mr C was very infortunate, he fell three times. I wanted dreadfully to meet him so Mr B struck an acquaintiance with him then introduced him to us. After a little while I found myself skating with him. And we had lots of fun. He came home with us and I like him ever so much.

This evening we went to the lecture. Mr B came home with Maggie and Mr Dougless with me. I think him prefectly horrid. I do not want anymore of him.

One would think from this journal that it was nothing but fellows fellows fellows but it will be over by Saturday and then I shall settle down into the even tennor of my ways again. I wonder what has become of Mr Parmenter. He did not appear so offten upon these pages as before.

Apr 3

Well what shall I say of to days preceedings. In the first place I went to institute with M and the event of the time was that I was introduced to Mr Strader. He gave me a picture of Prof /Newel/ and is going to draw one of my self. I like him.
Birdie came for me at the first recess and I went to the rink with her, we skated until nearly twelve. Birdie and Miss Baker went home and I stopped to order some meat, while I was coming back I overtook Mr Ransom and he walked to the academy with me. I should think he was completely tired out and half sick.

This afternoon I went to institute and to the rink, stayed until six came home had tea rested a little. Maggie went to the play with Mr B and Birdie and I, being too late for the lecture, went for the third time today to the rink. We took our first tumble together to night. I skated with a good many gentlemen and Birdie + Mrs Richards. Mr Douglass came home with us.

Oh, I had a very nice time. There was one gentleman there very nice looking who spent his time watching me. I got up something of a flirtation by my eyes and smiles, I wonder if I shall ever see him again. That Mr Douglass wanted me to go with him tomorrow night but I would not of course.

**Apr 4**

Ah well this morning I went to institute and bid adeau to it as I did not go this afternoon. I had a very nice time and got some considerable more acquainted with Mr Strader, he promised me a picture of Prof /P?????er/ but as I did not see him again I have not received it and do not expect to now.

We went Birdie and I to the rink and Maggie was to come after examinations, how natural it seems to be writing that word. We had a delightful time. I met and skated with Ben Haynes and Lieutent Weaver they are both splendid looking and Leut. Weaver came home with me.

I found out afterwards that he was a married man. It was a great joke upon me as I had not the least idea that he was.

Mr Parmenter came home with Birdie and she likes him for a wonder, as she seldom likes gentlemen. Sperry with Maggie and I, as I said before, with Leut. Weaver. What a funny picture we must have made six of us marching up the street. My hat blew off and he had to get it ect ect. through all the list of unpleasents and all the rest.

We went to the contest and as luck would have it sat behind Mr R and in front of Pike and Randal, we had quite a nice time when we could talk. I was not very well satisfied with the decision. Pike came home with Maggie Mr P with me, so endeth a sketch of today. What will tomorrow bring.

**Apr 5th**

Ah well I know what tomorrow brought. This morning I walked to the institute with M. did some shopping and came home. I did not go out again until about two. Then we called upon Mrs /Merchant/ who was not at home at Mr Hagars than went to the rink.

I skated mostly with Liet. Weaver. Mr M and Birdie I had a very nice time came home had tea then Maggie and I went to Mrs Brenans to meet the girls but they had gone, so I had to go to the depot with her.

When I was coming back I met Mr P and he walked up with me. It is very evident he does not wish me to go to the rink. He thinks it a bad place for me and he advised me not to even look at that Mrs /Richers/ again. It was what he called brotherly advice. He implied more than he said and I will remember.
We went to the play and enjoyed it very much. Fritz was splendid and we laughed until we nearly cried, Birdie quite. Mr P had a dreadful headache, the bad air made it worse every moment.

When we came home we all talked for some minutes, then Birdie went up stairs and we talked for a long time about everything. He is to call next Monday.

I was to mark this day as a red letter day for us. But pain and pleasure have been so closely mingled I hardly know what to call it.

Apr 6th.

Sunday the first day of a new week that must be spent oh so differently from the 1st. Of course we did not get up until late, Birdie not until the last bells rang so I went alone.

We have spent the day reading, talking, and singing. This evening we went to church and have been home but a short time. I have read parts of my journal to Birdie though it is supposed to be my own special benefit.

Apr 7th.

School is again the leading topic and will continue to be for twelve weeks longer. Mother insisted upon Birdie’s coming home. She did not go today but will tomorrow.

I am so sorry especially as I wish her to be here when Mr Parmenter called. She is sorry, as she wished to become better acquainted with him. She likes him quite well, far better than most men for which I am glad. I wish I could look forward a few months and see how all this would end.

I received a very nice letter from Hattie today and must answer it soon. Bed is the next thing to be considered.

Apr 8th.

Birdie is gone and I am very tired and lonesome. I feel just like cuddling up in her arms and resting.

I have worked hard since school straightening up the house so not to have so much to do tomorrow night for one thing.

It has been a beautiful day and it is a grand moonlight night. The very air makes one long for something we hardly know what.

I wonder why we always feel in the spring that rather odd feeling which perhaps Tennyson has rightly described when he says, “In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robins breast. In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest. In the spring a lovelier iris changes on the burnished dove. In the spring a young man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.”

But enough of this, I must not indulge such feelings even for a few moments for fear I suppose that they will run away with me, and I shall be more unable to control the weakness that assails me sometimes, the longing for someone to take me in their arms and love and protect me.

I went to Purdys today for some beads and Smith asked me if I had missed my skate straps. They were there and I have them now for which I am thankful.

32 Mary quotes “Locksley Hall” (1842) by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, which describes a tempestuous soldier’s melodramatic nostalgia for his lost love, combined with a paean to natural beauty and general technological progress.
When shall I use them again and who will I skate with. Mr Parmenter put them on and took them off the last time I wore them. We had a nice time that night if the ice was poor.

The new rink was opened to night and Ernest said there were any quanity of people going.

Apr. 8th.

Well ah me! School as usual, at noon I went to the office received a paper from Emer from which I learn that he has been sick again. I am very sorry. Charlie Ransom told me when I wrote to Maggie to give her his best wishes.

Mr Parmenter called this evening. He came about eight and staied untill about half past eleven. I enjoyed myself very much and he said he did.

He talked again about the rink. He does not think I should go there. He asked me how many boys would be there if there were no other attractions but the skating. He is right in what he says and I do not think I will go any more. If I do not I wonder when I shall get my red handkerchief.

It is rather odd he takes so much interest in what I do or dont do. Birdie says she believes he is dead in love with me and ah well! If he is either veering that way or else he is the biggest flirt in christendom.

He asked me if I was to be here Friday + Saturday. I did not know but if I was to be he wanted to come. He had better say all the time and done with it I think.

I am going home he shall not come here more than once a week anyway. He does not need to see me oftener than that I know. Where will this all end. I wish I could look forward a while and see. I wonder if there is no sooner way of putting a check upon him. I do not want him to make a goose of himself, or of me either.

Apr 10.

Nothing of much importance has occurred to day. Well let me see what has happened.

In the first place I have spent most of the day as usual in school where by way of variety a poor dog who some way got into the building jumped from the high school or gramer floor down to the ground floor and broke both of his fore legs.

At noon I went to the office and got a letter from Maggie. When I was both going and coming back I met Leut. Weaver. He smiled and bowed I wonder if he thought of the handkerchief.

After school I met Mr McAllister at Smiths and had a nice little visit. While there I caught a glimps of Mr P which is all I have seen of him to day for which I am thankful.

Apr 11

I believe I shall stop saying school as usual because it comes every day except Saturdays + Sundays. At noon I went to Barbers for that bill and mailed a letter to Hattie and of course chatted a few moments with Mr Ransom.

After school I met Uncle John on the street and he told me Aunty was at Mr /Lachlans/ so I went up there and had a real nice visit.

When I reached home I found a note waiting me from Mother and one from Birdie. She wished me to mail a letter and the Easter card to Matt. So I did. She has given me a card with a design of pansys. It is prefectally lovelly. She knew they were my favorite flowers so
she got them for me. My dear kind sister. Oh! What shall I ever do when she marries and goes away from me.

Hearts-ease I wonder if I shall ever need a great many of them while I live and how soon. It may be very soon. Oh the future what an uncertain thing it is. When I see them now it make me think of those lines from Poe: “A rosemary oder commingled with pansys Of myrh and the beautiful puritan pansys.”

I found something in a paper to night that applies directly to my own case that I will copy it in here and try to remember it.

“While we cannot too strongly prize the quality of self-reliance, which is so highly valued to day, we loose a great deal when we allow it to crowd out the faithful councils of a loving friend. This council is the one part of friendship that we imagine we can most easily dispense with, we prize our friend’s affection, sympathy, and good fellowship, and are often eager for his help in various ways: but, when he offers council, however much we may need it, we are apt to fancy that he is assuming a superiority of judgement or intruding upon our affairs, and we either openly resent or silently disregard it. The consequence is that our friend shrinks from offering what is so lightly esteemed and modern friendship is thus bereft of its most valueable results. It is true that advice of a certain kind is plentiful and cheap; it is often given without wisdom discretion or tact and is deserving of no better attention than it receives. But the counsels of true friendship are of a very different type. It is not the idle and officious utterance of one who cares less for the interest than the sound of his own voice but the deliberate and thoughtful opinion of one who truly desires ones best welfare.”

Of course when I read it I at once thought of Mr Parmenter and what he has said about the rink and to him I have rebelled at the idea of his presuming to tell me even in the way he has that this motion is what it seems to be, real interest in my welfare. O! The buts buts buts buts that one always meets.

Apr 12

I did not go out of the house until four oclock but Mrs Brenan did and bought a beautiful Easter card for Mr B. which she came to show me and made quite a little call.

Then I went to Miss Bakers and we went to Mrs. /Gambles/. There were about 40 there and we did what they usually do at missionary meetings then had a very nice tea and all together we had a very enjoyable time.

We went to the office from there and when I got home I found Mama here. They had been to the [Cumberland] Head and Father had gone down street for a few moments. He soon came and went home. I had some shopping to do so we did it and this evening have learned my sunday school lesson today. Been reading some.

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33 Mary quotes “For Annie” (1849) by Edgar Allan Poe, an overheated ode (as so many of Poe’s works are) to a beautiful dead woman.

34 The author of this passage is uncertain.

35 Missionary meetings brought together the women of a congregation, usually at a rich or socially prominent congregant’s home. Once there, the women enjoyed refreshments and testimonials of faith, as well as group prayer and songs. Donations were also collected to send to the poor and needy (Robert, 1997). While they were segregated by sex and relegated to a location outside the church proper, missionary societies and their meetings allowed women to achieve influence and power within the male-dominated religious hierarchy; they also provided a social outlet.
Apr 13

Easter Sunday, the day that I have been looking forward to for so long has come and now is nearly gone. I have attended church three times to day, in the morning at my own church in the afternoon at the Episcopal and the evening at the Baptist church. I have enjoyed all the sermons but the last two not so much as I would if I had not been so tired.

I went this afternoon with Miss Baker and when we came back stoped [stopped] and made her a little call.

When I reached home I found E here and a letter from Birdie. My poor darling what can I do for her? Nothing unless I comfort her a little and try to make the people better natured.

I saw Mr Parmenter at church and had a good look right into his eyes. How much they resemble his brothers, I was actually startled for the moment by it. I had seen just such calm brown eyes regard me intently so many times before that I suppose it is no wonder though. I wonder if Mr Parmenter knew I was in town and if he would have called Saturday night if he had known. I am glad I did not see him to night for I feel kind of...kind of – well the way he does sometimes I guess.

How I wish I could see Birdie. I am so glad she is coming Tuesday. What will happen tomorrow.

Apr 14

As I have been arrainging my account book and have my pen and ink out, I think I will write in my dear Journel now though it is somewhat earlier than usual.

The occurrences of the day have not been very numerous, regular school work which was harder than usual because I have not felt well. After school I went down street and bought a vail since then have read and worked and longed for Birdie.

It has been a beautiful day fine and it is a fine evening.

Apr 15

Dreary and dismal this day has been something like myself for Father came down at noon and brought me such a letter from Birdie. She is not well and did not come. How I wish she could, perhaps I could have comforted her a little.

There is so much trouble about those bills it is enough to send me wild and it almost has her. The trouble with Matt too does not improve at all I take it. O dear it seems as if there was nothing but trouble on every hand. If I had not faith in God to believe that all would soon come right and even now is for the best I do not know what I should do. I am afraid that for one thing my lessons would recieve less attention than they did this afternoon.

Since school I have worked read made molasses candy which was very nice, studied and still have more of it to do.

Apr 16

Well it seems to me that a good many things, as Maggie would say, have happened to day. At noon I went to the office and there met Mr Parmenter and he came home with me and arrainged to call this evening.

When I was coming home at night Miss Heath was upon her steps. She called out to me so I stoped [stopped] and chatted for a few moments. She asked me who I was walking with at noon; said she heard about it etc. I know I blushed a little, I could not help it.
When I reached home I found Grace coming down with the scarlet fever, at least we suppose it to be that. Of course it means no more school for us after tomorrow for some time and what else it may mean I do not dare to think.

Mr Parmenter called and stayed this time until after twelve. If he keeps on may be he will stay all night yet. He is getting all together too well to lovelike and what to do with him is more than I know. He wanted to call again this week. But in the present state of affairs I could not tell him where I should be either this or next week.

Then he tried to solve the problem of how he was to know if I was here, said he would see me directly after school. I told him I did not know if I should be there. Then he said he would be on Couch street. When I do he will know it. But he was sorry for it afterwards and said he did not think when he spoke, but I do not think I can ever quite forgive him, perhaps I am foolish but I can not help it.

I have had the greatest time warding off and answering questions. One especially he asked me and I did not want to answer it directly so I said something which meant neither yes or no.

He said Ah! That was very neatly turned. Oh dear I wish I could have a gentelman friend without there becomming something more.

Apr 17th
It is now just a little time after school for, as I have been waiting, I thought I might as well write now as later when I should be so tired.

There is not much to tell except that Grace is not going to have the fever. How thankful I am I cannot express. How fearful it would have been if she had had it. I know I should have had it for I feel as if I might take fever or anything else very easily.

Do you know journal that Mr Parmenter was very anxious to see you last night. I fancy he would like to know what has been said to you about him but he might not like it so well after he had seen it.

You should have seen him last night now carefully he drew my shawl around me to protect my throat; how anxious he was about my cold etc. If it is all put on, he is one of the greatest flirts I ever saw and if reality... Oh dear! I am very sorry but what to do I am sure I do not know.

I fear he will think me a flirt and I can not help it if he does. He may make as much of a goose of himself as he chooses. I shall not feel compelled to follow his example and do not think I could if I would.

Apr 18
I have only this to say to night, that I have attended school as usual, after which I went home and while doing so met Mr Parmenter, as he preposed. We stayed, at the gate, when Father came then said goodbye. He is to call again Wensday evening.

We had a tedious ride home but I was surprised to get here and see Birdie. I love her if I never do anyone else. My darling sister.

The house looks very nice and fresh thanks to housecleaning and paint. We think of staining the sitting room floor dark and then waxing it /???/ it be pretty for summer.
Apr 19th.
    Well as usual when at home I have worked all day long mostly at housework. We had company here to dinner Mr and Mrs Weston and her mother Mrs Emery. We had a very pleasant time and quite enjoyed their visit.
    I have just finished frying doughnuts. It is very late, and I am all tired out tired more tired most tired.

Apr 20th.
    I have only time for a few lines to night, as it is very late. I have just finished writing a long letter to Maggie.
    We came down this afternoon and went to church this evening the congregation was small. I suppose they had all gone to hear the new Methodist minister as I told Mr Parmenter they would.

Apr 21th.
    School of course and I received my magnifying glass, it is neat and I like it.
    After school Birdie and I went for a walk with a very little shopping as an object. We had a very pleasant time but I would have enjoyed it more if I had not been so tired.
    I have had a great deal of study to do and it is not half done yet.

Apr 22nd.
    I do not think there has anything of special importance occurred today. I have been at school most of the time and studied very hard. I have not been to the office. This evening I wrote a long letter to George.

Apr 23
    Ah well this day has been more varied. I went to the office at noon, had a nice little chatt with Mr Ransom, received a very nice letter from Emer poor man he has been very sick, and two letters for Birdie. One of them was from Hattie. She has heard something about Mr Parmenter and of course made a great fuss not half as great though as she would have done if she had known more, but I do not entend she shall if I can help it.
    Mr Parmenter called this evening as he said he would. We passed rather a pleasent evening and he succeeded in making it very plain to me, what he said about my cruelty which was done unintentionly unknowingly perhaps but still cruelty and what his eyes told, that he cares more for me than he should under the circumstances.
    He wanted to come again either Friday or Saturday evening but I told him that I should be, if I remained in town, too busy to receive calls. I do not know when he is comming again. He entends to go west in May or June, so that solves the problem. Every body goes west. I think it a shame but I do not know that I am so very sorry that he is going and yet I am rather, for he is a very pleasant acquaintance. Birdie says I wonder if he will want to correspond and if he does I think I will.

Apr 24th.
    I have felt rather odd all day the effect of last night perhaps. I awoke with a nice headache I knew I should.
I wanted to go to the rink as it would be the best opportunity I shall have of going with Birdie for she is going home to teach in Amys place who is sick. I am sorry and still I am very glad for she did need the money and it is policy beside.

We went for *arbutus* and had a long tedious walk but the woods is very nice and we got a good many flowers. Birdie is going to send hers to Matt. There were a good many children with us which I did not enjoy very much though I tried to be interested.

But I spent a good deal of time sitting on a trunk of a tree which overhung the bank that was a delightful seat and the best of places for indulging my dreaming mood. Perhaps it would have been better for me not to have done it for it does not make me feel any more selfreliant and practical, which is I suppose the best way for me to feel at all times and in all places. I am very sorry about the rink I wanted so much to go.

Apr 25th.

My odd feeling has not entirely worn off yet, mearly changes its form to a feeling something like dislike for, and rebellion against Mr Parmenter. It has centered its self on him and at last is not so vague as yesterday. In accordance with this feeling I have made a half engagement to go to the rink to morrow afternoon. I know if I do may as well bid farewell to his friendship forever.

Putting the other nights excuse and that together would be more than he would endure. I to be sure did not promise him that I would not go to the rink again but I did not go after he asked me not to so what amounted to the sa me thing and I suppose actions speak louder than words. Oh dear, I do not know what to do. The way I feel now I would not go tomorrow I may be very anxious to go, no matter what. What queer things feelings are. Mine are just like a weather-cock and I am prefectly disgusted with them.

Birdie went home and left me hear all alone with Ida. I had something of a visit with Mrs Brenan. Oh I am so lonesome, my Birdie, how I wish she were here.

Apr 26th

When I awoke I found my self as undicided as to what action as I was yesterday were best to presue. I did not want to go to the rink and the more I thought of it the more I dreaded going until finally I make up my mind to go down street see Miss Baker and cancel my engagement pleading the heat and the headache as an excuse.

I went but as I had some shopping to do I left seeing her for the last thing but before that I met Mr Parmenter on the street. Shortly after I saw him pass the drugstore went to the office and found him there.

I stopped a moment to talk to Charlie he said if any letters came for me that he would bring them up and then throw them over the fence. I thought he said he would throw Mr Beale over the fence. We had quite a laugh over it. I told him I thought he was going to do that so that Mr B and I might have an opportunity of becoming acquainted.

Mr Parmenter walked home with me. I told him that I had entended to go to the rink which caused him to look very queer indeed and myself to doubt the wisdom of telling him.

He staid for more than an hour at the gait and we talked of every thing. He preposed that we go maying. I told him I could not unless Miss Baker would go there enstead of to the rink. Finally we decided that I was to go and ask her if she would like to go maying and he was to call at half past two and receive the decision.

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36 To “go Maying” or “go a-Maying” is to pick flowers on or around the first of May.
I went. She was willing, happy to go there en stead of the rink. He called received the decision and was satisfied.

Oh I learned to day that he was an artist, that explaines why he spends his summer away from here. I suppose he is away sketching. I should very much like to see some of his pictures.

He has promised to take me out boating some time this summer. That will be delightful. He spoke of it long ago one night when we were out skating.

We were all to meet him at five and go from here. We did skating at about half past. We did not get back until nearly eight but had a splendid time. We all have brickbrack cards to remember the day by.

We went to the pulp mill and looked that over, and out on the platform that one looks down where I made a very pretty button hole boquet for Mr Parmenter. Then we came home chatted a few moments on the steps and he went home with Miss Baker.

My flowers are in water, I am fearfully tired, and I am going to bed.

In a sort of day dream last evening I saw we three out maying but did not think it would be relized. But it has and I hop [hope] he enjoyed it as I did.

Apr 27th

Sunday and I have been to church twice. Each time we had a very good sermon. Next Sabath is comunion. I did not know it came so soon. I wonder what we will do.

I wrote a long letter to Birdie but they did not come to get it.

A very unpleasent incident occurred this evening about the door for which I am sorry as it is an unpleasent way of ending the Sabath.

Apr 28th.

Ernest did not come until after we had gone to school and he brought the news that H is at home.

School as usual after which I went to the dressmakers for Hattie and have worked hard at different things since.

Apr 29th.

This day has scarcely been a pleasant one. I have suffered to much both mental and physical pain and through it all had to study oh: so very hard. Headache and backache are unfortunately common occurences but such letters as I received to day from Matt are not, thank goodness. If they were I should just about kill somebody.

After telling how very secretive he is about the least flaw or incongruity in any thing he goes on to tell me how abominably I spell and enlarges upon the same. Tells me that it completely spoils my otherwise interesting letters. Then he says how he would love to hear from me and know that he is forgiven.

I would have spared him those fibs, he need not have troubled himself to have told them. Write to him! Forgive him! When I do I guess he will know it.

I for one cant see what he wants of a ruined letter. It does seem that I suffer enough every day, to say nothing of what I have undergone in the past from that failing at the hands of strangers, to claim some indulgence from friends. But they do not, they make this cross as hard to bear as they possibly can.
He oh, he need not have wounded me in the way he did. He need not have written so much between the lines, I do not see how he possibly could be so contemptibly mean as to write such a letter.

I am no doubt foolish to feel as I do about it but I cannot help it and I never never never will forgive or write to him again. That contemptible letter is well crushed as it is and would be burned, did I not wish Birdie to see how kind Matt can be.

I wonder what he would say if he knew the tears I have shed and am still shedding, for try as hard as I may they will not be kept back, over his communication. He might perhaps be a little bit sorry and just perhaps. There is one thing certain, he can never be Matt to me again. I would give a good deal if I had never written to him about that letter.

Well what is the use of talking about this any longer. I better have not said all I have perhaps. But it is very hard to bear.

Apr 30th

The last day of this month and every body is mooning. I went to school as usual and after it I went to change Hatties shoes. As I went past Miss Baker came out and wanted me to go to the band concert I half promised.

Shortly after I met Mr Parmenter. He walked home with me. He wanted to call but I told him I had half promised to go with her. She proposed if she would not object to call for me then we would call for her. We did so and rather enjoyed it.

We got here at a quarter of ten and he stayed until after eleven. He said good night three times before he could tear himself away.

I should like to know how much he cares for me. I said something half indifferent half cruel to him tonight and I never saw such an expression on a mans face. He looked as though he were just about near to cry. I relented at once. O dear! My hands are so cold I can hardly write and my head aches fearfuly.
May 1st

Well on the whole things took rather an unexpected turn to day. When I came from school at noon I found E- taking down Mrs Brenans parlor stove and as that necessitated taking down one pipe I had one stove taken down and made up my mind to commence housecleaning by taking the sitting room to do. So we moved every thing out and took up most of the matting at noon.

After school we cleaned the room turned and put down the matting put up another stove and now every thing is nicely arranged and cleaned neat I am going to have long cheesecloth curtains over the shades and a lounge beside a fan more pictures which will add greatly to the appearance of the room.

Besides this we took up the stairs carpet cleaned them turned and put down again and did the usual work. I feel very much flattered at my success and hope soon to have all the housecleaning done.

May 2nd

My poor journal I am going to bid you farewell for a short time as I shall not take you home. School as usual after which I did some shopping and when I was returning I met Mr Parmenter. He as usual walked home with me and when we arrived at the gate met Hattie of all persons in the world.

Well since then she has taken me around from pillar to post until I am nearly dead. We are waiting for her now and Father is very impatient.

May 4

I almost hate to take up my pen to write what I must. I would like to forget what has occurred to day, it does all seem like a horrid dream from which I must wake in the morning but I know that then I shall only wake to a fuller relization of it and a half wish that I was in China.

Well this is the story. Soon after breakfast Birdie brought me a letter mother had just given her It was one father received last night from somebody unknown saying that they were a friend who has known him for years and that they wished to warn him that his daughter was keeping company with a young man who was not to be relied upon, who I was far from safe with, and that I had better take care while I was still all right etc etc.

I am prefectly sure that the unknown friend is Charlie Ransom both from the writing and something he said to me the other night. I do not know wheather to thank or curse him.

Of course it made a dreadful time and to keep it all away from Hattie was no small task. Father said I should not go back and I hardly expected to and my being here at present indicates a good deal of talk and skill.

Birdie wrote me a letter to send him telling him not to call and declining to know him should we chance to meet, but I think it would be unwise to send it, it would make him an enemy and he would be a bad one to have. Beside I can not bear to let him have even a little note from me.
I am sure I do not know what to do. What a day it has been. I hope I shall never have to endure such another one.

May 5
I did not go to school this forenoon as I didn’t feel well and wanted to see for Ida. I went down street and mailed a letter to Maggie. Mr Ransom made some more of his horrid remarks and we almost quarreled or at least I grew very angry.

I did not hear from Birdie and what to do about Mr P? I am sure I do not know. I had rather he called than for him to be able to say that I ever wrote him a note. I just cant nor wont.

I spent all most all my time after school calling on Miss Baker and shopping. I met Mrs Heath and she at once began to talk about the mash I had made and seemed to think it very funny. I wonder if she ment Mr Parmenter. Plague take them all! It makes me say naughty things I fear.

I have been very nervous all day came near to having another attack [of] hysterics right on the street too though not so hard as I had them last Friday night. It is to be hoped I shall not have them again right away. Especially if Birdie is not at hand.

May 6
Well I have done what last night I said I would, should, could, not do. I received a letter from Birdie, inclosed was a somewhat different note for Mr P and I have mailed it. Well so ends that episode in my life that has taught me a very bitter lesson.

What will he say when he gets it. I wish I could just see him when he does. And I do so wonder what he will do I hardly think he will give up without a struggle of some kind. Oh what will it be.

I received a letter from Maggie and she tells me the Mr Strader is engaged. She says I must give up all hope there as if I ever had any.

Charlie Ransom told me to night that I was a flirt. Of course I denied it hotly but how can I help what was born in me.

May 7th
My nineteenth birthday and what a day it has been. I took an examination in Biology this morning and studied this afternoon.

After school I wrote to Emer have just finished the letter. I sent a card to Birdie and talked with Charlie R. at noon.

I have had the blues all day and have all the week. Mr P did not come to night so I suppose has received and entends to act upon the instructions contained in the note.

O dear! My two month acquaintance. I wonder if he realy is as bad as they say. It does not seem possiable and I do not believe it that is. I do not know what to believe. But still he might have been acting a part and getting himself up for my ideal man. If so I just wonder what his object was but of course I shall never [know] that or wheather he cared for me or was putting that on too. But still I think if anyone ever cared for me, he did.
May 8

Well I have taken two examinations today. At noon I mailed a letter to Emer and received a letter from Hattie full of directions for sending her things by express and a paper from Emer.

I had to do some shopping for H and while I was at Barbers I saw Mr P go past. He looks graver than ever. I wonder if he cares. I fancy I look grave to at least I feel like it. I am in a constant fit of blues. I hope I may be spared meeting him. What would we do I wonder I know he must be very angry indeed scarcely with me though.

May 12

Poor journal I have sadly neglected you of late but I do not intend to do it again.

Birdie came later Friday night and spend Saturday and most of Sunday with me. To day I mailed the letters which we wrote yesterday one to Matt + one to Maggie, and at noon sent a card and package to Hattie.

After school I wanted to go for flowers but could not as it was rainy and I had a composition to write. It is not finished yet.

Miss Baker came about seven and made a very nice call. It was raining and she had no umbrella so I went home with her.

Then she had to go down street so I went with her. When we were coming back I heard a step that I had learned to know very well and Mr Parmenter passed us in a great hurry, I suppose he was in haste to get to his meeting. I do not think he knew us as we had the umbrella up.

She in return walked part way home with me and now I must put my dear journal up and go on with my work. I have the blues and suppose I shall continue to be afflicted for some time as they wont be shaken off. My face has grown about a mile in length.

May 13.

I have not anything very extraordinary, to day after school Ida Ernest Eddie + I went for flowers. We did not find much but blue violets but they were very pretty. I have made a small boquet for Miss Baker and a button hole boquet for /Cad/ and one for myself, beside one for the house of a combination of all other kinds we found. I feel better than I have for some time for which I suppose I should be thankful.

May 14.

I took my violets to Miss Baker this morning when I went to school.

At noon I mailed some papers to Matt and of course chatted with Charlie R.

After school I bought a ferrul [ferrule] and pad for Ida, tickets for Ernest and myself for Monday night, looked at a side saddle and visited a little with Smith, came home read studied and that is all beside housework.

May 15.

I have not been feeling very well especially this afternoon. My old headache is back again in full force. Nothing to day but study not even a letter.
May 16.

I am going home so goodbye journal until Sunday. No letters to day and nothing of any importance has occurred that is I do not know that there has.

May 17th.

I did not go to school this forenoon as we came down this morning and were late. After school to night I called upon Miss Baker and she walked home with me. Jenny Heath was out on the steps so we stopped and visited with her for a few moments. Miss Baker was delighted with the flowers I gave her and gave me a lovely white lily.

This evening has been one of a hundred for Ernest + I have heard Camilla Erso.\textsuperscript{37} Other playing is exquisit, one selection that was especially fine was The Carnival of Venice, then she played Swanee River and Last Rose of Summer. Oh if I could only hear it again. I wonder if I will. Miss Hall sang very sweetly, Herr Bauer plaied finely and Prof. Wm. Mason Evans pieces were the hight of the music.

I was somewhat disapointed in Camille’s looks, she is not tall enough but looks like a grand and noble woman, and such sweet harmony one could almost rise to the hights of haven upon it. How glad I am that I could hear her.

May 20th.

It has rained nearly all day so waterproofs have been the order of the day. When I was comming home after school this afternoon Miss Heath called to me and I went in to see her paint. She paints very nicely and is now at work upon a marble top for a small table. How I wish I could paint.

I have just finished a letter to H and now must study.

May 21th.

School as usual, after which I met Miss Baker and she asked me if I did not want to go to the Philomonic and at intermission go to the band concert and a little after seven she called for me.

We went to the office then down to the fire then up to the hall with Jenny Heath and her sister. There were not enough there to begin so we went down street again and up to the rooms of the C. A. R. [Children of the American Revolution?] which they are decorating. Then back to the hall where I spent the remainder of the evening not as pleasantly as I had expected perhaps.

I heard to night that Mr Parmenter was very quiet nice and liked by all. I hate Charlie Ransom. Never the less, I presume it is just a week.

May 22nd.

It has been decided at last that I am to take at least one subject in advanced regents. I did not entend to take any but the Prof. wanted me to try Chemistry so much that I at last consented.

\textsuperscript{37} Mary refers to the French Camilla Urso (1842-1902), one of the greatest violinists of the nineteenth century. A child prodigy, she began her solo career in New York City at the age of ten. Though unknown today, she holds a spot in history for her beautiful music and for her status as the first female violinist to appear in concert in the US (Kagan, 1977).
After school Ida and I went up to the woods. It is delightful there and I enjoyed ever so much. There is an old tree on a high bank that grows out like a seat. I sat there and leaned against the tree. The river rushed and roared beneath me a soothing lullaby for ones nerves. I dreamed, sang and rested and then we went home.

I have only finished arranging my flowers and doing necessary work so have not studied at all.

May 26.
To night after school I saw Ella and after chatting for a while she walked home with me. She told me all about how she got acquainted with Mr Parmenter, and it was something like the way I did. It seems that she went with him a good deal and then she said he deserted her, and the next thing she saw of him he was walking with me.

She went shopping with me and envited me to meet Blanch and Warren Gifford at her house this evening. She wanted me to go around with her and envite them so I did. I went down about seven and have just returned.

Warren came home with me and staied at the gait nearly as long as somebody used to. He is very nice and I like him ever so much. I guess he must be the other one. Another to tell Maggie about.

May 27
It is early yet but as nothing is likely to occur before bed time that is anything of importance and as I am waiting I will write up my journal for the day before putting my pen away.

I went to sleep this afternoon in school and slept as peacefully as could be for a while. I stoped [stopped] to see Ella for a while then she came home with me and made a call, then we went down street together.

I am debating wheather what I had better join the Philermonic Society. I rather think I shall.

May 28
After school Miss Baker came out and asked me if I did not want to go to the band concert and then to the Philomonic of course I did so we arrainged it. Then she walked home with me and made a call then I walked nearly home with her. She told me that Mr Parmenter was out of town fighting fire at Clintonville.

I went down a little after seven and we walked untill the band commenced to play. After they played there pieces we went up to the hall. We sang and fooled then went over to the new rink to sing.

I met Miss Jenny Mead to night and now I prepose to try my power with her for the pocession of a certain Mr Gifford if she would only leave him for a few moments and give him the slighest [slightest] freedom from her constant enbrace. I would soon show her she was not the only one in the world.

Oh I met Tom Smith and I like the society ever so much, did not join but will next week. Mr Brady just about looked his eyes out at Ella.
May 29th.

At noon to day I went to the office and when I was comming back encountered Warren and he came home with me. I would have given a good deal if Jenny could have seen us.

After school Ella called me in and I made quite a long call. Just as I was going away Mr Johnson came past and he accompanied me home.

Now I am home so will not have the pleasure /de????/ day promised. Birdie has everything fixed up very nicely but Matt is not here for which I am very sorry for she is /pointed/ /s????./

May 30th

I did not do all I entended to to day but a good deal that I did not intend to do. After breakfast I went out into the garden and from there to the bee house and I did not leave it untill dinner time, and it was all fixed new and clean the garden is also finished the ferns set out and everything.

Mama and I went to WP [West Plattsburgh] this afternoon. I drove Charlie, the pony Father gave me in place of Prince, for the first ti me. I like him ever so much. He is a dear good pony and ever so pretty.

Since we came back Birdie and I have been sewing and my dress is nicely started.
Chapter 6:
“If I cut one gentleman I can soon find another”
June, 1884

June 2th.

After school to night I saw Ella and she walked home with me and we sat out on the front steps and she worked while I made Matt's boquet one for C.R. one for her + one for me.

Then we went down street mailed Matts + gave Charlie his flowers, sympathised with him for the injury he received, he dislocated his shoulder, etc.

Ella wanted me to go to the rink so after much persuasion I consented. We went and had a splendid time. I received my own share of attention and two requests were made to see me home one of which, Mr Pike, I excepted.

Ella and Mr Brady have made up and I have been introduced to him. I kind of guess I will not take him off of her hands.

Mr P and I had a great visit. I have promised him to go riding with him some evening.

It seems that if I do cut one gentleman I can soon find another.  
About half past eleven, not so late as it used to be when Mr Parmenter used to come to see me. They locked me out and I got through the window. E- sat up for me but was asked when I wanted to come in. We sat on the steps a long time.

June 3

At noon I went to the office and sent a card to Birdie. Charlie is very much better.

To night Ella came with her lemonade and bananas. We worked a while and then went up to the woods. It is lovely up there. You could not emagin anything more so.

We read + sang and gathered flowers. At a little after seven we started for home, got here at about eight. I walked home with her and came home with Ernest.

I am dreadfully tired and still must study.

June 4th

I joined the Philemonic tonight and then went down to the rink. I put on my skates at once and skated for about an hour. I got acquainted with Mr Weeks and skated with him. He asked to see me home but I had already promised Mr Pike I would accept his company. He has just gone. I go riding with him tomorrow night.

June 8

I went home Friday night and have just returned, I did not entent so to do but as Matt was there, of course I must. Nothing was said by either about that unfortunate letter. How it may result in him I can not tell. He goes back tomorrow morning.

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38 For Mary, “cutting” is more than just the general practice of cutting an unwanted male acquaintance out of her life; it is a specific and subtle set of actions calibrated to communicate to someone that his or her acquaintance is no longer desired. While initiating an acquaintance depends on granting permission for someone to achieve social intimacy, cutting is all about denying permission. A person could cut another by staring blankly at the persona non grata, pointedly refusing to make eye contact, or even pretending not to remember someone’s name. Etiquette books of the period debated whether people should even practice cutting in the first place, but it was an accepted fact of social interaction (Halttunen, 1982).
Mr. Brace has at last tried to get a little better acquainted. We had only been here a few moments when he came to the fence. I bowed to him and he commenced to talk, then he talked politics with Father but did not go when he did but took a chair and talked with me until the last bells rang for church.

Ella came for me just as he was going away and I went to church with her although I had told him that I did not think I should go. It amused her very much to see Mr. Brace.

June 9

Philharmonic this evening after which by special invitation we all went to the rink. The object was a dance and they looked very nice. Mr. Pike escorted me home I was going to say as usual, he has become quite attentive.

June 10

Regents grammar this afternoon, then I went over to Ellas to practice our music. She was not at home so I went down street where I met her.

We went to the office and talked to Charlie a while, then home and up into the fields for daisys.

I went to the rink this evening and Mr. Weeks skated with me a good deal and went home with me. He is very agreeable and I rather like him.

June 11

Three examinations to day Chemistry Spelling and Grammar. O I do hope I have passed.

This evening the Philharmonic and after it was over we went over to the rink, the band played and there were a great many there. Ella and Al Baker came home with me. I am dreadfully tired.

June 15

Poor journal it is to bad the way I have neglected you but I am going to reform and write every night again, as of old.

I went home Friday night and all day Saturday we sewed as fast as we could, getting dresses redy for I and me to wear to the concerts. I am going to wear white wool in the afternoon and muslin in the evening.

We did not go to church as they are at work on the bridge, but we came down there and E and I have just returned from the Baptist church where they held childrens service, it was very nice.

Ella + Francis came up for us and we all went together. Al went home with her. He is quite enamored.

June 16

Well I have learned the result of all my labor over regents. I have passed in Grammar and on the principle of “Small favors thankfully received” am duly thankful.

Philemonic rehearsal to night and we did not get through until half after ten.

When I reached home I found Ida had all the lamps in our bedroom and the door locked. E could not wake her and finally at my suggestion crawled through the window to the eminent part of her neck.
This afternoon Henry Weeks offered me a quarter if I would stay away from rehearsal and go to the rink.

June 17

Well it is over at last that great concert that we have so long been expecting. I am too tired to write about it. So I will only say that it went off very well. Mr Babcock sang his best and the orchesty [orchestra] music as usual was fine.

In the afternoon I wore my white muslin and in the evening a white nuns valeng [veiling]. I had intended a reverse arraignment but, as the dress was not done, I had L wear it in that way and was glad I did for it makes a charming evening dress.

Another concert tomorrow morning.

June 22.

Poor old journal I vowed not to neglect you again but I find much to my guilt that I have. Wednesday night after the boat ride I was two tired to write. Thursday night the same old story and Friday night I went home. You by axsident were left here.

This morning we went to the Baptist Church at Morrisonville and this afternoon came down just in time for evening service. Ah me it is the last one I shall attend here for a long time perhaps ever.

Yesterday was Birdies twenty first birthday, how old it seems and yet in two years more I too shall be twenty-one.

I have been reading tonight of the time when Mr Parmenter and I were such friends and now I have not even the slightest idea of his whereabouts. Does it not seem strange that a friend may so soon drop out of our life and become as nothing and of no account.

June 23

Two examinations to day and I am just as tired as I can be. I finished and handed in my Chemistry exam at a quarter to three and then went up stairs to help them and they set me to making a cedar roof. I worked until six.

Harley knocked for me and we had a very nice time. I got more acquainted with him than I ever did before.

Then I went down to B- to try to find something for a riding habit but could not [find] what I wanted.

I received a letter from H asking me to be there for Friday as it is the aniversery of Mrs P wedding day and if I come they will have a ni ce little party. I want so much to go but do not suppose I can.

June 24

I took an examination in Composition this morning and this afternoon I wrote to George and Emer, went up to the hall and down to the market.

My latest victime is a Mr Roberson. He came home with me from the boat ride and to day he wanted Francis to find out if I was going to the rink tonight. I told her yes and she told him. He was there got skates for me and was my shadow all the evening.

He came home with me and we sat on the steps for some time. I wish he was twenty five but he is very nice and agreeable and I rather like him.
June 25

Took my last examination for the year this morning, Algebra, it was rather hard.

This afternoon I called at Mr Hagars and road around with Miss Heath. This evening Ella Ida and I went to the meeting of the State Press Association. It was very interesting. Roberson was on the scene and came home with me.

I received a letter from Maggie and wrote to her today. Also wrote to H telling her I could not come.

June 26

Well it is finished, at last the school year is entirely ended. We went up this morning to receive our reports and the rest of the day until about four was spent in discurcing [discoursing].

I went shoping with Ella then I took her up to see the decorations. Then we went to gather flowers.

She did not attend commencement but I did. It was very nice and I for one felt very proud of our class. The hall was crowded as usual and the decorations showed so nicely in the evening.

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39 Presumably this is the annual convention of the New York Press Association (NYPa). Though the members met for official business, open entertainment was also included. The Plattsburgh Sentinel chronicled “a public meeting, to which our citizens are cordially invited,” at which NYPa members and local politicians gave addresses. Music was supplied “by the home talent of Plattsburgh” (PS, June 20, 1884).
Chapter 7:
“A very busy day indeed”
July, 1884

July 12th

My poor journal you have been more neglected than ever before for you have been in P [Plattsburgh] while I have been at home. So two weeks of events have been to you a blank and I fear for the most part must forever remain so.

To day was Mothers birthday and she celebrated the event by talking to the women and going down to clean our house. That is all done now and off my mind. I had to keep house while she was gone besides make her a birthday cake. Fathers birthday was day before yesterday so they had there cake together.

I received two letters to day one from Maggie and one from George. I am so glad that Maggie took all I said so kindly and that there is nothing serious between her and Mr B. I am going to write to her to night.

Georges letter was perfectly comical. I have laughed at it.

July 13.

Sunday and we Ernest Birdie and I went to church at the Baptist church as the bridge was down and we could not very well get across. I saw Frank and had a nice chat with him.

I have written to Emer today and done the rest of the things we usually do on Sunday.

July 14.

Sewing nearly all day to day beside which I practiced considerably. The boys went to the office this evening and I received a letter from Ella which I must answer at once.

July 15

This day would not be considered of much importance as far as what I seem to have accomplished is concerned. I have sewed and read a little, practiced my music. Birdie gave me my lesson today.

This afternoon I went for cedars [cedars] for my room and have put them under the bed and in every place I could, took a nap and was nearly eaten alive by flies. I have fixed a trap for them and have helped about the house work. That is what I have done, good night.

July 16

I had a decided surprise to day. As I was sitting in my room sewing who should be announced by Ella, Frank and George. We had a very nice visit and I tried to get Ella to day but she could not. She may come next week.

I sent a beautiful bouquet of pansies to Charlie Ransom. For the rest of the day I have done as usual except some work on the stand and old chairs.

July 18.

I was too tired to write. The thing most worthy of note was that Birdie and I walked to the office, and Charlie asked what made us so tired.

Today I have spent mostly in quilting. After five father took B + I up to call on Amy she was not at home so we went [to] WP [West Plattsburgh] with him where he was doing
his business. We drove to the office. There were some drummers there who tried to get up a flirtation with us. They, that is one of them, was nice looking.

I received a letter from Maggie, she says she believes Frank is in love with me and that I had better take care or she will have to give me the same advice I gave her.

I have read aloud all the evening and have a dreadful headache.

July 19

This morning I did my usual work wrote to Ella and stained the chairs and a stand, also my hands, to perfection. Birdie finished the red chair this morning beside putting the top on the stand I have spent my time since and it is now nearly twelve and I think will be quite comfortable.

[July] 20

Sunday. We went to church Father Birdie + I to the Babtyst Church. I drove. Since we came home I have done all of my usual work lunched and read in my journal the record of two months that brought considerable of both pain and pleasure to me.

I have some old journals of my Great Aunt Young. They are odd old things so quaint. She died when she was fifteen. I wonder if a grand niece of mine will ever read this journal and comment upon it. If they do they will find it somewhat different from hers.

I should write Maggie but my head aches so that I do not know wheather to or not.

July 21

This has been a very busy day indeed. Housework and fixing the old white washstand occupied the morning. It looks very nice now that it is stained. It is to be made into a writing desk.

I took Birdies dinner to her today and laughed at her children.

I have made a foot stool to go with my chair and it is oh so comfortable.

Hattie, Dr. and Leigh came this evening and are very welcome indeed.

July 24th

Dear journal you have again been neglected for two days this time, but the reason you should know is that Hattie has been in my room at the time when I usualy write so I could or would not. But to night it is much earlier so I have my room all to my self.

Tuesday morning Hattie, Leigh and I drove over to WP [West Plattsburgh] then up to Mr Comstalks and envited Annie and the girls to spend the afternoon and evening. They did and we had a very pleasant time.

Yesterday housework and taking care of Leigh who is such a dear little rogue and just as cunning as can be.

At four it was raining so I drove up for Birdie and we went to the office. I received a letter from Emer saying that he could not come before Autumn. I am very sorry.

To day I have done housework visited with Hattie and taken care of Leigh. He bit me some time ago and the mark of his little teeth are on my arm yet.

I have been reading the Tales of a Travelier.

Drummers are traveling sales representatives.

“Children” refers to the students that Birdie teaches.

*Tales of a Traveler* by Washington Irving (1824) contains four sections, each populated with stories
July 25

This morning Birdie lost her key and we hunted until after nine without finding it. Leigh has disposed of it I suppose. That was the first excitement of the day.

The next was when they were backing out of the barn a board slipped + let Billys hind leg down. They sent for father and flew around as if distracted. All the household except Leigh and myself were at the barn. We feared his leg was broken but when they finally got him up, he was found to be a little bruised and that is all.

I took Birdie her dinner today noon and then walked over to the office to mail her letter. I was rather tired when I came back and stopped twice to rest once in a shady fence corner where I almost fell a sleep.

This evening I have been reading to the boys and my throat is raw, my eyes nearly fell out. Sixteen columns of fine print is rather to much.

I commenced a letter to George this forenoon but did not have time to finish it.

July 26

It has been a very busy day and now I work my head aching and undressed and writing in my beloved journal.

The woman came with berries this morning and I have spent hours taking care of them.

Mother, Hattie, Leigh + Ida went to Mrs L this afternoon so I had all the work to do but Birdie helped me get tea and we sat a long time over the table planning school for all and especially her. She may go to the New England Conservatory43 for a year or more. She proposes teaching in order to obtain the money.

This is the beginning of what may prove of great importance in the end and change the course of my life. Hers seems fixed while mine is still quaking with out anything to [take] hold of.

I, as I expected, received a letter from Maggie this evening. Among other things she assures me most gravely that I am a terriable flirt. Am I? I wonder and if I am now, what will I be a few years hence. Something terriable I fear. But I am gloomy to night, perhaps thinking of someone and what a mean, contemptable flirt he must think me has made me so. How sorry I am for that. I do not suppose anyone can ever know.

Maggie also tells me something that seems to indicate trouble between her and Mr B. What it is I can not guess and she will not tell me but I am to give him to understand that she is much offended.

July 27th

Sunday and this afternoon after much discussion as to wheather we could cross the river or not Birdie, Fred and we went to church.

about ghosts and spirits, pirates, and highwaymen. The critics lambasted this book so thoroughly as offensive and derivative that Irving shunned fiction for the rest of his career.

43 Located in Boston, Massachusetts, the New England Conservatory educates and trains musicians. While today the institution offers undergraduate and graduate courses of study in a variety of musical disciplines, the Conservatory to which Birdie looked forward was smaller in scale. In Mary’s day, the Conservatory acted more as an “advanced finishing school,” focusing mostly on singers and pianists (Broyles, 1998, p. 139).
Since then as usual, except Leigh got a cup of jam and put it all over the stair carpet and himself. How the little rogue did laugh.

Hattie has just been in my room and we have been having the nicest visit. It makes me think of the time before she was married. She is looking remarkably well.

July 29

I did not write last night as it was late and my head ached so hard. It is bad tonight but I must write.

Nothing but work and visited occurred until about six. Hattie and I started for a drive. We had got as far as Mr Meadows when all of a sudden we felt a shudder and then a thrill, something like the one horse shay, and the wheel came off.

We were suspended for a moment in air and then suddenly dropped to mother earth. But we hung on to the lines and stopped the pony. Charlie deserves a great deal of credit for the way he stopped [stopped]. He never tried to run.

Then gentlemen came out and hunted for the nut whose coming off was the cause of the trouble. But it was not to be found, and so they took a nut from the wagon, put it on and we drove back until we found the lost nut. Then we went back and returned the borrowed nut, had ours put on and continued our journey.

We went to Morrisonville and borrowed Mr Sutherlands side saddle. I do not know but I shall buy it. I am so glad to get it.

We were rather late home and Hattie has been telling me stories ever since...good night.

July 30

All I have done today is to sew on underclothes, do housework, play with Leigh and read Lucile.44

I received a letter from Emer this afternoon saying that he had every reason to hope for the appointment and if he got it would start for the East at once. I shall be so glad to see him. We will surely skate together.

July 31

Today makes quite an event. I have ridden Charlie for the first time. I was up quite early and so I thought it would be a good time to try him. I rode around the yard then up to the gate, then Hattie rode for a few moments. I wore my blue flanel, it does nicely for a riding dress.

I carried Birdies dinner to her and brought her letter back so that it could be mailed this afternoon. Fred has not returned yet and I am waiting rather impatiently for I half expected a letter from Ella. I do so hope it will come. Now I must write to Emer.

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44 Lucile, published in 1860, was a novel in verse format by Edward Bulwer Lytton, writing under the pseudonym of Owen Meredith.
Chapter 8:  
“I have enjoyed myself greatly”  
August, 1884

Aug 1

The first day of a new month and what will it bring to me. I comenced it by going to Plattsburgh. Of course I saw Ella and had a very nice visit. We staid there to dinner. Her oldest brother is home and he is very nice looking. She is coming up monday + going home with Hattie and me. How delightful.

At last I have learned what has become of Mr Parmenter, he is west supertending a cattel ranch for his father. I do so hope he will make something of himself at last. I know that there is the making of a man in him if he would only bring it out.

I slept for an hour after reaching home, my poor head ached so hard I could not do any thing else. I went to the rink but did not skate. I also saw Charlie for a few minutes and had quite a nice visit.

Aug 3

I was to tired to write last night so will say for yesterday that Hattie went to Birdies school picnic and I staid at home and took care of baby. They had a splendid [time].

I did not go to church today. My back, which I have blistered with /crolive/ oil to see if it would help my head, was to sore.

I have helped do the work writen to Emer and am now going down stairs to sing.

Aug 4

Ella came this afternoon and we have had a lovely time since. It was raining very hard when she came. She was realy rained down.

We have been out riding and made the pony canter this time. I rode twice to the gate and back, then Ella rode. We have sung and played nearly all the evening good night.

Aug 6

This has been rather a pleasant day. In the morning Ella and I went for Cat tails and grass, did not get back until dinner time, after which we took a nap then dressed and I made the jam and jelly. The girls took tea in the yard, as we did last night. Then Birdie Ella and I went to the office /?????/, got back a little while ago.

I just asked Ella if she noticed anything queer, about my teeth. She said why no, what is the matter. I laughed and said Oh nothing. She said in fact they must be false, then I shocked her by taking them out.

We go to Altona tomorrow.

Aug 8.

We came to Altona yesterday. Our ride was somewhat long and teagous [tedious] but we arrived at last. This morning when we woke, it was raining but the afternoon has been very pleasant.

We all went for a walk and enjoyed it very much. There are some grand views along the river. This evening we entend to go to the forge and I suppose we will have a nice time.
Aug 9

A good share of the morning after breakfast was spent in making pies and tarts.

After dinner we three went over to Dickons and in all had eleven pictures taken. What a time we did have and lots of fun. All of Birdies and Ellas were good but mine are horrid.

Dr took me for a long drive which I enjoyed very much and returned just in time for tea. We have planed all next week out and I hope it will be a success. We did not go to the forge last night and, as Mrs Palmer is sick and Dr always goes, I do not know when we shall go.

Aug 11

I did not write yesterday for some unknown reason, but went to church and heard a most original sermon sewed and read the rest of the day.

To day we were going to Altonas Dead Sea.\textsuperscript{45} The lunch was packed and we were all ready to start when the Dr. was called away. Of course we could not go so Ella and I took a long walk, came back sat on the steps and I sewed.

This afternoon we went to the Sea. Ella + I in our wagon, Dr + Birdie in another. We had quite a time getting there, but at last succeeded and enjoyed ourselves very much. It is a strange old place all around and especially the Sea. It looks as though an earthquake has rent the rocks in two, making room for the strange sheet of water, whoes bottom, if it has one, has never been found.

Dr wrote an account of our expedition, put it into a bottle, and threw it from the cliff. But the rock was so great that it skimmed it and it went down like the stones never to be seen again.

Soon after we came home and in spite of the story no /???/ around all night, and now I am going to bed.

Aug 17.

Poor journal you have been sadly neglected of late. I shall not promise never to do so any more for I believe I have done so before and then broken my promise.

Last Wednesday Birdie went home. Ella went and yesterday I came to M. I had writen that I would be here Friday evening but did not come because there were so many who had attended the French picnic on that train.

I spent the day with Aunt Ginny and toward evening Maggie came for me. We have been to church twice to day. I like the clergyman very well especially as a pastor.

I caught a glimpse of Uncle James. He has changed very much since his marriage. I hardly know him.

Aug 18

It has been a dreadfully hot day. We are having some of the hottest weather ever known in this section. I have read some, tride to sleep, sat under the trees. In fact the day has been a constant struggle to keep cool.

After tea Maggie and I went to the woods and since we returned have sat on the front porch and sang. We have but just come in. I have just had a glass of milk and am about to return.

\textsuperscript{45} Located two miles south of Altona town, the Dead Sea is an 800-foot-long pool bordered with sheer cliff walls and jack pines (Gooley, 1980, p. 2-3). During the 1880s, a berry farm surrounded the Sea.
Aug 19

Another hot day but it is clouding up now and we may have rain. I am sure I hope so.

I sent a letter to Ella to day. This morning we took a walk as far as Mr Fairfields hoping to send it by them but they were gone, so I sent it this afternoon. She will get it tomorrow.

Toward evening, Maggie + I went over to Mrs Bulises staied for tea and enjoyed ourselves very much. Maggie kept me laughing most of the time telling me funny stories about /Frank/. I am very glad he has the /Cornell/ appointment again. We sat on the porch and sang.

Aug 21

I was to tired to write yesterday and am not much better to night but of course I must write.

This morning we went to see my old teacher Mrs Daly. She has three pretty little girls and a nice house. We staid until about five oclock then came up to the village. We called upon the Misses Churchall but they were not at home. We then went to call upon Annie Sheldon + Carrie Talor and had very pleasant calls.

Maggie received a /preparative/ of the Teachers Association. Frank Norman and Mr Crandal are all to debate. We want to go very much and talk of doing so.

Aug 23

Home again and Maggie is with me. We came down on the Mooers train yesterday and did not get to P [Plattsburgh] until nearly three and left there about half past six. We found Jo and Wallace here when we arrived. I had quite a nice visit with Jo although they went that night. Today we have attended two services.

Aug 24

On the whole this has been rather a pleasant day! This morning Birdie fixed the saddle and we all went riding. I went first Birdie next, then Maggie. She is enchanted.

This afternoon we drove over to M then went up past Franks, a long walk turned around and came back. Frank was in the yard and we stoped and asked him if he knew where we could find a hired girl. Then we talked a long time.

I have the picture from June and the fourth.

We then went to W P [West Plattsburgh] and I got me a pair of boots and any quantity of hairpins. Alltogether we had a splendid time.

Aug 31

I have been either too tired or too busy to write all these day and even now I have been debating wheather I had better say any thing about what I have been doing and I have come to the conclusion that I will not, only say that I have enjoyed myself greatly. So has Maggie.

I have lost two pounds since I came here and now weigh 122 lbs.46 M has gained three and a half.

46 Mary shows a passing interest in her weight, but she treats the scale as a novelty, rather than a source of anxiety, as it may be for today's white, middle-class young women. Joan Jacobs Brumberg, author of *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*, elaborates: “Weight was not a critical part of female
We went to church as usual but someone was not there. It has been decided that we return to school, of course I am glad but I do not anticipate as much as I did before. Maggie, Ida + I are talking of going and she is astonished that I do not feel more rejoiced.

identity until the 1920s, when home scales and dieting became more common among American women. Until then drug stores or county fairs were the only places where young women could weight themselves” (Brumberg, 1997, p. 107).
Chapter 9:
“I wish he would not haunt me”
September, 1884

September 1.
Monday the first day of a new month and I have spent in this way: sewing housework
talking and this afternoon Maggie and I went to WP [West Plattsburgh] then down to Mrs
Bidwells to call on Miss Humphry. We had a good deal of both going and coming. M said
Franks ears must [be] burning.
It is a lovely moonlight night and I can not look out without thinking of his
propensity to be moon struck.
I wrote to Hattie to day.

Sept 2
House work and sewing has occupied most of the day but this afternoon Birdie,
Maggie + myself started for M to see about the school, of course Birdie was the one to see
about it. We just went along. Before we came back we envited Frank + Fred to go to the
[Cumberland] Head with us Thursday.
L showed us lots of pictures of his friends. He has a nice collection.
When we went home we found a Mr Smith from New York and a Mr Brown here and
have been very busy ever since.

Sept 3
We have been getting ready for our picnic nearly all day and now every thing is
ready. At one time I thought it was all of no avail for Father said we should not go but I
brought all the force of my eloquence to bear upon him and now I think we are sure to go.
Maggie + I have made the cake and it is very nice, our pickles are delicious and every thing
is delicious.
We took a walk nearly to the gate this evening. It is beautiful moonlight. I wonder if
Frank is struck by it to night.

Sept 6
I have not writen for some time so I must sort of /??/? my Journal I suppose.
Wednesday morning we got ready to go and waited a long time for Frank but no Frank came
so we gave up and went without him. We enjoyed our day imencely and got back a little after
ten. Then we camped, out in the flowers here and the next morning we have been settling
ever since and are not done yet. We have papered over the sitting room and it looks real nice
now.
Last night we started for the rink and got as far as Ellas when we learned that it was
closed so we spent the evening with her. The girls have gone this afternoon. We are all going
this evening. Fred came with some word and he told me that Frank came that day after
eleven.
Sept 8

The first day of school is over and done with and my work for some time to come decided. My studies are to be Civil Gov, History and Algebra beside which I shall take up something out of school.

I have not felt at all well to day but, as Maggie wishes to go to the rink, I must go with her. I saw a gentleman to day who [was] such much like Mr Parmenter. I think it must have been him. Naturally it made me think of a good many things. I should rather like to know how he is getting along. I wish he would not haunt me as he has for the last few days. Every time I turn around I see something to remind me of him.

Maggie staid with Ella while I was in school. To night I called for them. We all went to the rink for a few moments. I could not stay as long as she wished + so Ella came home with me and came in to see how the paper looked. We have hung the pictures etc and the room looks very pretty now.

Sept 9

Maggie went to school with me both this forenoon and afternoon. After school we walked down street then came back got an onvelope went down to the office visited with Charlie a while and were weighed. M weighs 126 ½, I 117. I have lost some.

Then we went over to Ellen but she was not at home. While waiting for her we saw Frank go by on to Mr Holdens. I found a sudden necessity to go to my desk for something. I went up took a book from the library and went down to ask Mr Holden if I might have it. Of course we saw F and had a nice little chat. He was much astonished to see us and somewhat embarased. What /????/ girls do.

Sept 12

Yesterday was, naturally, the 11th and it was celebrated here very well endeed. The parade in the morning was fine and the dress parade in the afternoon was extended the Durkee Hose the praise and they richly deserved it.

The town was crowded and of course we saw a good many we know, Frank among the rest. He came home with me and if he could arrainge as to stay in town he was to take us to the rink but he did not come.

To day I have made and put down the hall carpet and worked over the house until it is quite presentable. This afternoon we called on Ella went for a walk and to the rink, in fact spent a pleasant time.

Sept 15

School has gone very smoothly to day and after it I went to do some shoping for Hattie. I did it and sent the package this evening. Charlie printed the directions for me and we had quite a nice little chatt. He thinks my /tone/ very becoming.

When I reached home Ida began to cry with her tooth, so I took her down to the dentist. One was out so we went to another and when standing at the top of the stairs there was a colision and my cheak still smarts where the cigar struck it. Of course there was the

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47 Mary is talking about the commemoration of the Battle of Plattsburgh, which occurred on September 11, 1814. According to the Plattsburgh Sentinel, the city’s 1884 celebration of this event featured a review of the town fire department, a grand parade of local fire companies, hose races, a dress review of local soldiers, and bands at both the City and Riverside rinks (PS, Sept. 12, 1884).
usual amount of apology and declarations that I was not at all injured. I think the gentleman was JB Reilly but am not sure. He is very nice and agreeable. Idas tooth is still to be fixed.

Sept 16

Studing [Studying] all day. At noon went to the office saw Charlie a moment but did not get anything. Stayed at Ellas for my hat and Francis walked home with me.

After school Ernest and I went to our old place on the river bank. It is as lovely as ever, only they have just put up a barbed wire fence that we have to crawl under. I read to him a long time.

Ida and Ernest have gone out to spend the evening and I have just finished a letter to Hattie and as I am not feeling very well I guess I will retire.

Sept 20th

Poor old journal you surely have been badly neglected but I shall not make any promises for the future, as now I do not write when I do not want to, which I suppose is not the way I should do but still I do it. How well I remember telling Mr Parmenter that no matter how tired I was I would not omit writing in you because if I once did it would be so easy to do it again and my experience has proved I was right. I wonder if he /ever/ thinks of you or me now.

We came down as usual this afternoon and Ernest and I went to church. We called for Ellen and went to the Baptist church. I saw two gentlemen there whom I should like to meet, one sat behind us the other just across the seat. The one who sat behind us would be nice to flirt with, the other I should like to know. They were both very nice looking.

I have just read, Ernest has gone to bed and I shall follow him, so I will say good night.

Sept 22ed

It has rained all day since about ten, I did not have any wraps or umbrella at school so waited for E to bring them to me. Miss Woodard wanted to know if she might walk with me so I went hom with her when Ernest came.

I saw the Dr on the street this evening, he came this morning but did not have time to come to the house.

We had our first Philharmonic rehearsals this evening and after that was out I went to the rink for a short time.

Sept 24

Last night I was so busy reading that I forgot all about writing and there was nothing to write, except that we went to the torch light.

That afternoon I was excused from school because I did not feel well and I brought my books home entending to study but have not done so still have my lessons to learn.

The band gave a concert this evening and I went + did not entend to go but as it is the last one, they are to give and I believe the band is soon to disband, I must. I engaged /???

and entend to have it here by Friday.
Sept 28

Sunday night and I am back again in Plattsburgh. I went home Friday night and Saturday Birdie and I went to Denamora [Dannemora]. Twelve long miles of hills to climb but we did not mind it so much for we were together and there was so much lovely scenery to be admired.

We called at Mr Fullers and had a real nice visit. There is a Miss Burdick there who is very pleasant. When we were coming home we got some of the loveliest leaves I ever saw. I was very very tired when we reached home and ever so glad to get there.

I have just come from church. George walked up from Mr B with Birdie. She says it was because he waited to see me, eny way when I came, we stood a long time at the gate and talked all sorts of nonsense.

Sept 30.

I received a letter from Emer at noon. He is coming out in Jan. and takes quite a trip, New Orleans Washington New York and here. I am so glad.

I bought Birdie a pair of Roller Skates this after noon and she likes them very much. We had a candy pull this evening which was quite well enjoyed.
Chapter 10:
“I think I have written enough about the gentelmen”
October, 1884

Oct 1
We girls are going to the rink this morning but I am going to write now for I shall not feel much like writing when I return I fear. I wrote to Emer to day in school to and must now study. Ella and I took our usual walk after school and that is about all, if anything occurs worth recording I can add it as a P.S. I have been reading parts of you today dear Journal.

Oct 2
Going to the Rink again to night but Birdie is not. I am going + love her skates. I have studied hard all day and am tired but expect to feel better when I have had tea.
Birdie and I went to the rink for a few moments this afternoon and Warren walked part of the way home with us. He is going to the rink too.
I have written to Maggie this evening.

Oct 5
Sunday again and a new week begins. I went to church this morning and wore my new dress which looks very nice. Birdie did not go. Ernest and Ida came down this afternoon and E went to church with us. I had a dreadful time keeping him awake.
We stoped [stopped] a few moments at Ellas and have just reached home and disposed of lunch. It has been a lovely day and is a pleasant moonlight evening.

Oct 7
I find that last night I turned over two pages and therefore wrote in the rong place. But I think I shall leave it so and endure it.
I went to school this morning as usual also this afternoon. At three Birdie called for me to go to the rink with her. The City rink was closed so we went to the River-side and such a place and such an assembly. I had never been there before so did not know what I should find, but you could not have hired me to have skated there. We staied about two moments and then came down all very much amused.
Ella came home with me and I worked on my mittens, which by the way I have finished and commenced the other, and she worked on her /shawl/.

Oct 8
School and school work until five when I went to the rink and Birdie was there and put on her skates for a little time. Then I came home. Blanch walked nearly home with me and I walked part way home with her.
I have spent most of my time nitting and [the] mitten is going finely.
Francis + Ella came up for a little while and I walked a way down with them. It is a lovely evening, but I think I must study a little so good night.

Oct 9
After school to day Ella came home with me and we all staied here working until dark. Then as it was raining I went home without Ella.
When we were almost to Mr B- Harry Ransom overtook us and we staied a long time at the gate. Ella walked a short way home with me and we met Henry Wells. Of course we had to stop and talk, which we all rather enjoyed.

We went to the Philharmonic and on our way back stoped at the rink. Mr Brady after a little came and sat down by me and commenced to talk, after a time Tom Smith appeared on the scene and had over a lot of his nonsence which Ella and I could fully equal.

Mr Brady came home with me. He is dreadfully, dreadfully soft. He tried to get me to tell him if I had many gentelmen friends and callers. I guess he knows just as much about it as he did before.

Oct 10

Just as I started for school today Mr Brace came out of the yard so we walked down together. He remarked the fact that in all the [time] since Sept. we have never been to speak. We had a real nice visit.

After school I went to the rink and had a splendid skate. Birdie and I have learned to skate very nicely together.

Oct 12

I received a letter from Emer and enjoyed it ever so much. I shall be so glad when he comes.

Birdie took her first Grammar lesson to day and Mr Kiley brought up the piano. I am so glad it is here for now we can comence our music.

Birdie and I went to the rink this evening and had a very nice time. We are both learning to skate very well. I skated Boston dips\textsuperscript{48} with a /???/ and succeeded very well for the first time.

There was a match game of polo\textsuperscript{49} so of course we staied. It happened that we all sat near Ben Haynes and he and I made the most of our oportunity. I had promiced Mr S that he might see me home and after he had disposed of the skates, he came down when Ben and I were having such a nice time and took it all in. I know he thought Ben had taken his place. He did not like the idea very well I know for he said when we were coming home that he would tell me about the game of polo, for he did not think I saw very much of it. But he has forgiven me I guess and I should not care if he did not. I had rather talk to Ben any day.

Ben told me L thought if our fate kept tally it must have a great deal to do. Well it would especialy institute weeks. He can never see me but he has to say something about Lieutenant Weaver that seems to have somewhat impressed him. He introduced me to a Mr Lord who is very nice looking. I wonder if I shall ever get acquainted with him.

But I think I have written enough about the gentelmen and will go to bed.

Oct 13

I have just returned from the lecture, on Scotland, which I enjoyed thoroughly. It would be hard to say which view I liked the best. The pictures of Scott and Burns were

\textsuperscript{48} A Boston dip is one of the movements in a Boston waltz, a popular dance in 3/4 time that is slower than the Viennese waltz, its predecessor. In the Boston dip, both partners bend their knees deeply or “dip” in unison (Aldrich, 1991, p. 21).

\textsuperscript{49} The polo that Mary writes about is not the game played on horseback. Instead, it is a game in which small teams of players on foot use sticks to hit a small ball across a smooth wooden rink in order to score goals. The game was also called “roller polo” (Appleton, 1888), known today as roller hockey.
perfect and you seemed to be with them. The scenes from Tam O Shanter very much prevoking, specially where the old bard Ind is helping him to /??/? Guy Meg and where the witches are after him. I shall never forget how Ellens Isle looked, that seine [scene] was a perfect jem. Melrose abby /with/ le Scott’s grave and the east /??and??/ were all perfect. I might enumerate all of them and say the same thing. I had rather thought of not going tomorrow night but now I surely shall.

I received a letter from Maggie today, also one from Hattie, both of which I must answer at once but now I must study or nit so good night.

Oct 14

We have examinations to do. I took one in History. I wish I knew how I stand.

Mr Brace walked down to school with me at noon and home with me when I was comming back from shopping. If we keep on we will get to be quite well acquainted.

We went to see the torchlight procession, Republican, of course. We were watching them at Broad Street and one of the gentelman called for three cheers for the ladies which they gave with much goodwill. The whole procession looked very nice indeed. After that we went up to the lecture which was on Spain and Merocco and very good.

Oct 22

I have kept my promice about not writing unless I felt like it so since the 14th I have not writen, sometimes because I did not wish to write what had occurred, but though it would be nicer to remember it without writing as that would in a measure spoil it, and again because I was two tired.

I received a letter from Frank this morning asking for the picture I promiced him, so I must have some taken. Then I suppose B will want his. He will think me great to have them taken for some other gentelman friend when I would not, not for him.

I suppose L went to day and that I shall not see him again for three months or more. What amused me most was the other night at the rink when Eliza was there, he was most devoted to me, skated with no other lady and never looked at her. Of course he came home with me and stayed. Oh he told me never to give him away so I must not even write it here.

I wonder where the poor little kitten is and if it will ever follow us, or anyone, again.

We went to the Philharmonic this evening and Mr Brady came home with me. Bah!

Oct 23

I commenced a letter to Emer last night and finished it this morning. After school Ella and I went to the rink and saw the fancy skater. He is rather odd looking and still quite handsom.

I have practiced my music for about an hour and a half this evening, read some and commenced a mitten for Ida. I am very tired so good night.

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50 Robert Burns’ poem “Tam O’Shanter” (1791) tells the story of the inebriated, lusty Tam who encounters a hallucinatory witches’ sabbat as he rides home one night.

51 This small forested island lies in Scotland’s Loch Katrine. It is notable for appearing in Sir Walter Scott’s poem “Lady of the Lake.”
Oct 30

Poor old journal you have been treated most shamefully, but it seems your fate to be so treated.

I have a very hard cold and a most uncomfortable face, swolen etc. I was to have my picture taken yesterday but my face looked so I could not. When I can is the mystery, so Frank must wait.

I wrote to George yesterday and sent a picture to Frank. I expect to have his soon.

We went to the Philharmonic and then to the rink last evening where I obtained something of an addition to the cold I caught last Tuesday at the Grand Mass Meeting. The parades both in the afternoon and evening were fine and I shall long remember the day for other things than this cold. Both Fred and Ernest marched with their companies. They are quite enthusiastic over the campaign.

I have worked very hard at my studies all day and still have much to do beside my music. Birdie has gone to the rink with the girls so I must sit up for her. Good night.

Oct 31

This has not been a very pleasant day for me as I have had to stay indoors all the time and so of course missed school and the chance of reading my essay on Belva Lockwood's inauguration, for which Mr Holden expressed himself as very sorry. My horrid cold...when will it get well? I am sure I do not know for it is now to night and the prospect is hardly a pleasant one.

52 A “grand mass meeting” is a large political meeting.
53 Belva Ann Lockwood (1830-1917) was a pioneering US attorney, politician, author, and feminist. She was the first woman to appear on the ballot for a US presidential election (that of 1884). Her candidacy prompted a nationwide controversy and derision. An article in Mary’s hometown paper, the Plattsburgh Sentinel, pronounced her campaign “peculiar when we take into consideration the fact that the Constitution of the United States does not recognize the right of women to vote or hold office” (PS, Sept. 19, 1884). Given this so-called absurdity, Mary’s essay is probably a speculation about what would occur, should the unthinkable – a Lockwood victory – occur at the election. As we know, Mary holds conventionally dim views about women’s intellectual capabilities (see her March 14, 1884 entry), so her essay is probably pessimistic on Lockwood’s success as a President.
Chapter 11:
“The most contemptable of flirts”
November, 1884

November 1
Another month has come and its first day has been to me rather uneventful. It has rained nearly all the time and I have not been out. Thus my occupations have been limited to reading a little, studying less, working and practicing my music and now I have just finished my book and am going to bed.

Nov 3
School today with its usual routine and humdrum. This evening Ella came up and we finished my fan.

Then, as Birdie and Francis had already gone, we went to the rink to see them play polo. After we had been there it seemed an age, who should walk in but Ben Haynes. He came at once to me and then he got me skates and we skated untill the bell rang. We staied a while to watch polo. Then I grew very tired and we came home.

It is a beautiful moonlight night and, as I could not get in, we went for a /???./ When we came back Birdie and Ida had returned so I could get in, but in spite of that Ben staied till twelve. He tride all his force of presuasion but he will never get what he wants or says he wants. He did not get any bark on his hat this time and two Slaves came along with his /lantern./

Nov 4
Election day, the one to which we have so long been looking forward, the one which is to decide so much here. I hope Blaine will be elected. If he is not –

I wore my badge for the first time today. Oh, but you do not know any thing about my badge. Ben wanted my pink satin one so I gave him mine and he gave me his. I like it ever so much. It is a shield shape set with many stones of red, white and blue seperated by gold lines. The letter B is on the red, L on the white and 84 on the blue. I think it very tastey, and it is a memento of him and the night.

I have not been in school to day, this morning according to appointment (I am shocked at myself but still I did it) I went to the rink instead where I met Ben. We had a delightful skate and he gave me my pound of candy, although we did not fall. Of course he came home with me, bade me good by after many intimations about my picture and now he is gone and I can not say that I am very sorry for if he stayed, we should see so much of each other that we would soon see nothing. But I must stop writing to you and write to Maggie.

Nov 5
School all day and any amount of hard work trying to make up for yesterday. I did not leave the building untill nearly four. Miss Knight and I were working Algebra.

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54 James Gillespie Blaine (1830-1893) was a career statesman who was a Representative (R-Maine) to the U.S. House, Speaker of the U.S. House, U.S. Senator (R-Maine), and Secretary of State under Presidents James Garfield and Chester Arthur. Gillespie ran for President on the Republican ticket of 1884 (Muzzey, 1934). He was, however, defeated, much to the disappointment of all Collinses.

The first news that came this morning was that the state had gone democratic and Ida said, “Oh I do not want any breakfast” in such a heart broken way one would have thought it her death sentence. But different news has come and now we are in a state between hope and fear. I still wear my badge and shall continue to do so untill I am compeled to do so.

I heard something to night that caused me nervous feelings. He came to vote I suppose, but, as I had not given his return a thought, it rather supprised me. I wonder if he will remain all winter. It is very possiable that he might.

If he had seen me with Ben yesterday he would have thought me the most contemptable of flirts and indeed I am beginning to believe that I am what every one calls me: a flirt. What would Mama say if she knew how much of it I realy do? Oh dear what a girl I am.

Ben wanted to see you yesterday. Do you remember when someone teased me to let him have just one look at you? Ah me, what a long time ago that was.

I went home Friday night and, as I was very busy all day Saturday, did not get much time to study.

I asked Papa for the money for my dress and he will give it to me just as soon as he can get it. I expect to have it some time next week. I think I shall have a lovely suit.

We did not come down until late and then I did not feel well enough to go to church. Birdie went. Maggie Brenan has just called and we had a very pleasant chatt. How my head does ache. Good night.

Nov 10

I have taken two examinations today and am glad that my higher regents are through with for a time. Tomorrow I take spelling + do hope I will pass this time. I am just about discouraged.

At three I was out and went over to Ellas but she was at the office and I went over and staid there until nearly six.

I do not know wheather to go to the rink or not. I want to go and still do not. I guess I will not go.

Nov 11

I rejoiced this morning in the fact that I should not have to go to school so I sewed all the morning, but when Ernest came at noon I was informed that Mr Holden wanted me at half past four to take reading and I knew that that meant I had just passed in spelling. I am so very very glad. If I had not passed this time I believe I never would have tried again.

Birdie and I went to the rink and I put on my skates which, by the way, I had a terrible time keeping on, to say nothing of all the other troubles. I was going to learn to skate a tour. There was a very nice looking gentelman there whom I notice when I first went in. We favored each other with mutual glances for a long time. Then he asked if he might assist me. He assisted me and I found him very pleasant. When we stoped [stopped] I investigated into who he was and have found him to be a Mr Rockwell who, after a five years absence, has just returned from Chicago.
I rested a while, then skated a little and we skated together again until I had to go to take my examination. I took it and came back and at five we all left and we girls went over to the office to see Ella, and she and I went shopping.

When we were coming from the office I met Mr R in the street. I think him real nice. Birdie has gone to the rink but I was too tired to go with her. Good night.

Nov 13
I was excused from school this afternoon because I did not feel well, then did a little shopping with Ella. Then we came up home and worked.

After three I called on Mrs Brenan and talked dresses etc. She advises me not to get a braided jersey. I think I shall buy one of Mr Brenan and I do not know but I shall buy my dress off him. Any way I shall not buy until I see him.

The girls came up and we had a real nice time. When they went to go they found a couple of boys waiting for them. They had been walking around here for I do not know how long.

Nov 18th
School work all day and I am so tired. The Prof is not here now so the work is somewhat taken up.

I went to the office at noon but no letters rewarded me, though I hoped for them.

As I was going home tonight I met Birdie and she was going to the rink, so I went and studied there. She had a real nice skate and Mr Rockwell came home with us. He is rather peculiar and I can not say I should ever like him very well. He has not enough individuality so in /??/? you might lead him with nothing, at least so I am impressed. Mr McLan calls him my better half and Ben my worst half but I think the reverse. Mr McLan spent nearly all polo time last night trying to teach me about them.

I have been sewing all the evening and am oh so tired. Birdie has been giving Ida and me Government lessons and she says I still have to read.

Nov 19th
I was excused this afternoon intending to come home and sew. I stopped to see Ella and we went down street, bought a basket, then up to the greenhouse for flowers to fill it. It was to be given to Will tonight after polo. It was very pretty.

We went to Philharmonic which was very enjoyable and then to the rink to see the game. I chose the Resolutes for my side, Birdie the City Rink. I proved fortunate for they won by one goal. If Ben had been here he would not have enjoyed it. I surely wish he had.

Nov 20
Well school today with the usual, only I was late this morning. After school I walked up with Sadie Weaver and she lent me a book entitiled Myths and Legends of the Poles and I have been reading it all this evening. It is very nice.

Birdie went to the rink and Harry Price came home with her. She has just been telling me some of the step scenes. They are very amusing.
Nov 22

We did not get up till late this morning and I went down street as soon as I was dressed to order some things for dinner and get some for breakfast. Birdie and I have spent nearly all day sewing and mean time have planned our dresses for the Carnival if we go. I think I shall tonight. Birdie, Maud, ????/ – the girls came up about five and Birdie and I went back with them, she to some stitching.

Johnny Prendal is here this evening. They say the rink is fixed up very pretty. The oceans are to remain.

Nov 23

Sunday and, naughty girls that we are, none of us have been to church. We were going this evening but it rained so that we could not. It is raining still. I hope it will get through and pleasant tomorrow so that I can have my pictures taken.

We have sung a great deal and I have finished the book I was readying. It has been very entertaining. Birdie says I have been sitting up late until my eyelids are growing black and, if that is the case, I am going to bed early comencing tonight.

I am not going to the carnival but home Wednesday. I dislike to give up the carnival but perhaps others would be happier if I did. Ida can have her party there and I know she will enjoy that. Well, I am glad that it is all settled and do not think I shall change my mind.

Nov 25

I got my grey fur tonight and it is just lovely. What a pretty suit I will have. I also got my grey bonnet. I got these things after school. Ella was with me. I had been up in the office with her and we went out together. I mailed a letter to Hattie and Will Ransom told me I had better get an anchor to keep me from blowing away. The wind today reminded me of a certain day last spring. How long ago that seemed.

Nov 30.

Dear Journal, according to my previce [previous] resolve I went home Wednesday night. I did one good thing before I went, was excused from school and had my pictures taken. I wore my cream collard [colored] ??/?/ which is cut pointed in the neck and filled in with lovely lace. I think the only trouble with the picture will be that they will flatter me to much, a rather odd complaint to make, by the way.

I am glad I went home for they would all have been so disapointed if I had not and Ida’s party, which she enjoyed very much, would never had been. Yes I am glad I went though it seemed hard to give up the carnival and all the fun I might have had, especially so Ella, who was here when we came tonight, enlarged upon the subject and told me that I did not know all I missed, for Ben was there with Eliza. Like it would have been so delightful for me to have seen him with her.
Chapter 12:
“What a change a few months will make”
December, 1884

Dec 1

The lights went out last night before I had finished writing, but, on account of it, I have something that has amused me ever since.

Today school of course and at noon Birdie went down to see about my pictures. They are splendid and they say natural. I wonder if the one who dictated the way I was to dress will like them. I wonder if we will ever exchange.

My dress came this morning and after school I took it all over to Mrs B. It is to be done by next Wednesday. The goods is lovely and I think I shall like it very much.

I went to the rink this evening, did not skate but staid to polo. I am so tired good night.

Dec 2

Ernest and I went skating this evening. It was lovely, warm and moonlight. One could not stay in.

We could not get to the ice, only by going through Mr. Parmenters yard. Edward must have heard us for he came to the window and looked out. It is the first time I have seen his face since he came back when we came back. Someone staid before a drain and put back just enough to look out. I think it was he.

I have not written so much of Mr Parmenter for a long time or thought so much either. Every thought about the man took so much as it did when we used to skate then together. He is here and so am I but what a change a few months will make.

I had my dress fitted ect, ect, ect.

Dec 4

Yesterday was the War Concert\(^56\) and it was quite a success. That is, we enjoyed it and it went off well. How it was financially I do not know.

Harry came home with me and stood more than an hour at the gate. I got a letter from Maggie this morning full of news and pleasant nonsense.

After I got through my Civil Gov. ex I staid until half after seven. Birdie came up twice, the last time with Francis, and we talked over that horrid letter. I like my new teeth better than the others.

Dec 9.

Well let me see what I have done, as that forms the great subject under discussion in this volume.

Of course I went to school as usual and after it this afternoon I went to Mrs B’s to have my dress refitted, then down street to look at pins and bracelets. I found some very pretty ones, but none that I could buy.

\(^{56}\) A Plattsburgh Sentinel article, written a few years after Mary’s war concert experience, describes the war concert as a patriotic concert under the auspices of the Grand Army of the Republic. The concert celebrated the Civil War with choral and symphonic arrangements (PS, March 4, 1887).
Mr Cotterwell made himself very agreeable and gave me some of his daughter wedding cake. I suppose I must sleep on it tonight.

When I was coming home I saw Adrian who had just come out of the store waiting to speak to me. I did not suppose he would [do] that. I guess he does not bear much malace. Then I met Pierce; he bowed to me, but, as I told the girls, I put up my chin two degrees higher and passed on. He must have mistaken me for B.

I found Birdie at Ellas and we all went down street, bought some thing, came back and ate candy, then came home. I have practiced and done all the work and now I must help Ida with her examples.

Dec 10
To day would be principaly remarked for the fact that I went to the play this evening. There were four in one party: Miss Baker, Francis, Ella and myself. The play Hazel Kirk\(^57\) was very good and I enjoyed it. I should like to go tomorrow night.

I saw Charlie twice today and a little chatt with him both times. He is as odd and “jolly” as ever.

I have studied and practiced my music very hard today and I guess that is all.

Dec 11
Father and Fred came over today and the boys brought each of them a suit of cloths and some books. After school this afternoon I went down street where I met Ella + Francis and we all went to the office where I wrote a card to M. Charlie, Will and Harry were all there and of course we carried on a good deal.

I have just been writing a poem for a composition entiteled A day dream. Birdie helped me so of course is entiteled to a good deal of what credit there may be.

Dec 12
This morning we did not get up until very late and then I went down street before breakfast. I received two letters, one from Maggie and one from George. Poor Maggie, how badly she feels. I hope she will come out Christmas.

For the rest of the day I have done housework and practiced. My head has ached horridly all day, so much so that when Ella came up this evening and wanted me to go to the play with her, I could not. Birdie went and has not yet returned. Good night.

Dec 14
Sunday I went to church this morning. Birdie could not get her /shoe/ on so did not go. Ella walked home with me and it was so lonly we could not think of going in so I walked back with her. Then we came back again. She came in and stayed a while.

This evening B + I went to church and stopped at Mr B after. We had a very pleasant call. George and Nelson were with them. George came home with us. What a case to carry on he is. He is a perfect boy but I like him.

\(^57\) More information about this play is not known.
Monday [Dec 15]
Birdie, Ella, Francis, and I went to the rink this evening. I had a good time, though I
did not skate. We stayed to polo and I bet a pound of candy with Mr William on the result.
My first bet and I won it. Of course I bet on the Resolutes. The game was very well played.
All the rest of the day has been spent much as usual, so it is hardly worth telling of it.
Ben was in town yesterday.

Wednesday Dec 17
The events of today are school and at noon I received a letter from Frank. Charlie says
he does not know about those letters from Ithaca. Frank is delighted with the picture and say
that some of the students who saw it when it arrived cast very envious glances at it, also that
he /????ed/ a frame for it at once and now with Maggies it occupies the post of honor etc etc.
We went to the Philharmonic this evening then to Smiths where we saw Mr
McAllister then to the rink for a moment.
Last night we spent at Mr Baker’s and had a lovely time. We got ever so well
acquainted with Nelson. He is splendid I think. I have not flirted so in a long time as I did
with him. Of course he came home with us.

Dec 18th
The surprise of the day has been the reappearance of George Bertrand upon the scene.
I went into the post office to direct a letter and while there who should walk in but George.
We were mutually astonished to say the least. He came last night and stays about a week. He
is better looking than when he went away, but otherwise just the same George Bertrand.
I did not go to school this afternoon and we went shopping a little and bought three
cards, one a book of poems and pictures with both covers beautiful fringed cards. That is my
present for Matt.
We also made a very pleasant call at Mr McAllister and went to see the girls. I am
horribly tired good night.

Dec 19th
The last day of school and this forenoon George B was up there and this afternoon
lots more were up. I had to read my poem which I was not anxious to do.
At noon I went to the office, saw Charlie and bade him goodbye for I thought I was
going home. Mr Brace came in while I was there and we walked up together. I heard about
the Keeseville Carnival and how Ben Haynes chaiced [chased] the girl who told me all
around the kitchen with a chicken bone.
After school I went to Mr Bakers and waited for Birdie. Nelson soon came so of
course it was pleasant. Birdie came and went out shopping again. It was [time] for me to go I
said, but after a few moments I went out with Ella. We got back very soon then.
Oh oh it is terriably cold. On our way home we called upon Jenny Heath and had a
very pleasant time. Since then work. We have the large stove up in the hall and it makes a
very nice sitting room.

Dec 21.
Yesterday was a day of troubles and proved the old addage that troubles never come
singly. We were in a peck of trouble about that acct and yesterday got some more of it when
Fred came for us. He and E were going down street and I informed E that his face was dirty. He went to wash it and knocked down the stove pipe. There was not much fire in the stove fortunately but enough smoke came out I can assure you.

We would put it together in one place and would come apart in another. While we were engaged in this pleasing occupation, Ida looked from the window and found the horses had gone. Fred had forgotten to tie them. The boys dropped the pipe and ran. Birdie and I put it together at last.

The horses were found on Court Street. They had tipped the wagon over at the first corner and draged it the rest of the way. The front part was all broken to peaces. We did not get home till nearly eight oclock.

After the house was cleaned somewhat, I went to do some shopping while at Mr C getting a sled for Birdie for Christmas. I looked over some pins and admired one very much, therefore he insisted I should receive it as a christmas gift. It is very pretty and odd, the head being a rough /???./

Just as it was picked up Birdie says it is nice to have the old gentelman take a fancy to you and realy he does seem to have taken quite a fancy to me.

Today, as we could not go to church on account of the storm, has been spent in reading. I wish Birdie has been here. This evening I have writen to George.

Monday [Dec] 22nst

I went for Birdie today as both Father and the boys had gone fox hunting. By the way they were successful and we are to have the skin for a rug.

I got my pictures and after taking almost every thing there was in the house, we started for home. It rained most of the way and I have a pretty cold as a result.

We have found out more of those letters. The whole thing seems more absurd than ever. Francis is very angry.

Dec 24

Christmas tomorrow and all day has been devoted to preparing for it. I have made eight cakes for a part of my part. All seem in the best of humor which is as usual, by the way. Birdie has made a lovely scar[...]

We expected Hattie and Dr today but they did not come on account of the storm I suppose. We are to have sleighing now I guess. We sang a good deal this evening Christmas music of course.

Dec 25

Ah well, Christmas day has come and to all entents gone. Dr and Hattie came this forenoon and our little darling Leigh. How the boy has grown + he can talk very well now. Matt comes Saturday, he sent Birdie his presents: a card and The Lady of the Lake beautifully bound. I receved Romila from Birdie. I like it ever so much as a card from Ida.

58 Sir Walter Scott published the long narrative poem “Lady of the Lake” in 1810. It follows the rivalry of King James V and the clan Douglas and how this animosity affects the lovers Ellen, a Douglas, and Malcolm Graeme, loyal to the king but kindly disposed toward the Douglas clan. When Ellen and her father take refuge on an island in Loch Katrine, the king in disguise falls in love with her. Despite romantic complications, the
Father and the Dr have done nothing but talk politics all the evening. I hate to hear anyone talk them.

I am very tired and as my Bird[ie] has just sent for me I suppose I must go, though not until I have told you of something that distressed me very much today. When I was helping H out of the cutter her shall [shawl] I think caught in my pin and drew it out. I could not find it any where on her wraps, in the snow, on the robes, eny where. I serched and serched but all to no avale. I gave it up in dispai r and could hardly keep back the tears but at last just as I was starting out to serch the snow again, Mama braught it to me. She found it by the piano, then very glad I was.

Dec 27

Ah well this day is nearly done and now I must sum up its occurrences. Hattie and Dr went this morning. It was to cold to go yesterday, although they entended to do so.

After they were gone we went to work at the house straightening it up. It was done at last and we had the pleasure of seeing every thing in the best of order.

Matt came this evening. He has let his beard grow and now looks rather odd, to say the least. I do hope he and Birdie will settle their affairs [affairs] comfortably. If they do not what will happen. But then they say ausum [assume] to make everything all right.

Dec 28.

I wonder if I shall ever forget this day, perhaps so in time, for they say every thing will [be] the same a hundred years from now. Even broken hearts will stop aching when they shall have become dust.

I could not believe they should settle it in that way, that it would be as Birdie expresses it, all over. It does not seem true at all and I find myself clinging to the hope that all may yet be right.

Matt goes this afternoon. Birdie says he is heart broken, which strikes me as very odd after what he has done. All this is terriable and tears are the order of the day with a portion. I explain mine away as nervousness and Birdie can readily account for hers because Matt is young.

Birdie gave what I bought for Matt to him though with out letting me know she was going to do so, for she well knew I would not let her if he knew. The first I knew of it was when he thanked me a few moments ago. But it is just as well for what he said made me feel more kindly toward him than I have been at all disposed. I wonder how he accounted to himself for the appearance of my eyes for I have been crying most of the time since Birdie told me.

Oh my poor darling, if I could only do something for her. I would just like to tell Matt a few things but it would only make matters worse if I should. How will this day end. I can not give up all hope. It must come right in time. I am going to think so anyway.

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king’s affection for Ellen brings Ellen and Malcolm together and mends the feud with the Douglases. The poem proved hugely popular with the public, generating a surge of tourists to the real-life “Ellen’s Isle.”

Romola (1863) by George Eliot takes place in fifteenth-century Florence, where high-minded intellectual Romola proves herself much better than her hero-turned-villain of a husband, Tito. If they were not overwhelmed by the sheer erudition that this broadly scoped novel requires to fully appreciate, contemporary readers found Romola’s deep psychological insights and moral messages illuminating.
Dec 30

Matt did not go when he intended not till yesterday afternoon and it is more than true that he will never come again. My head ached so that I could not wright last night and perhaps it is as well for it was only pain all day. It nearly kills Birdie.

Today we have sewed all the time and made plans for the future. I try to make Birdie see how much ground there is for hope and why should it not all come right when they both love each other as they do. It will I am sure.

Dec 31th

It is after one and realy I suppose it is Jan 1 1885. There I have writen it for the first time. Nothing of importance occurred during the day. Frank Bradwell came about seven for a little call and staid until about eleven when we envited him to stay and watch the old year out. He finaly agreed to stay. It did not take a remarkable amount of urging by the way and said he would go out and see about the horse.

So he did and found the horse gone. He was searching for him, in distress I suppose, when Fred came out and informed him that he saw the horse was getting cold so he put him in the barn. So Frank came back and we chatted and read New Years poems, had a delightful little lunch and he went away about one. So after all Birdie and I kept our watch over time very pleasently.

Do you know old journal it is just a year since I began to keep you and it was to be only for a year. Shall I continue or shall I not is the great question now. I am sure I do not know. I have rather enjoyed it and I should like to keep the next year if for nothing more than to compare it. Well I will decide to morrow.

Well the old year is gone and the new one that fair white page is opening before us like a scroll. Oh God help me to write its record with no faltering hand and may there be no blots upon its whiteness. May my motions and my deeds be fine and help be given to thoes around me and thou oh God help me. Amen.
Chapter 13:
“Poor creature half woman half child”
January, 1885

Jan 1st 1885.
Ah journal I had half made up my mind but it seems impossible not to do so I will continue for a time at least.
I finished my jewel case this morning. It is very pretty. Practiced my music etc for the day. I have been sitting up to finish reading Romila. It is a magnificent book. I can hardly say much in praise of it.

Jan 3.
Saturday night and I am oh so tired. I can hardly write and indeed there is not much to right about, only that after my morning work was done I sewed until supper time and after nine fixed a whole panful of cakes and made pies and tarts.
The papers say that in the news that Carrie Taylor is married. I am glad and hope she will be happy. She has married a musician and they go to S.A. [South Altona]

Jan 5
We came down this forenoon but did not go to school. Ella gave me a lovely /??/? for a Christmas present. Both the girls have been up to call and after five Ernest Frank Lewis and myself went down to the ice. The ice could not be better and we enjoyed it. We went to see them play polo but they did not play so we came home just around and am now going to bed.

Jan 7
We went to the Philharmonic this evening and enjoying the rehearsal very much though there were but few there. After it was out we went to the rink with Jenny Heath and no one or almost no one there. The Philharmonic girls with a few gentelmen got up a game of polo which we did not finish. It was to commical for any thing and we all enjoyed it sincerely. Such a headache as I have. It is terriable.

Jan 10
All my old fellows seem to be reappearing. I wonder who will be the next arrival. Yesterday as I was coming from the office, who should overtake me but Geog. Bertrand. He walked home, which by the way was a very natural thing for him to do. I can assure you we did not talk of the letter, though he did through [throw] out a feeler but he did not feel much I fancy. He went this morning.

About two oclock this afternoon we went to the ice. I put on my skates and tried to skate alone. Ella was sitting on the bench and call to me to know if some one was not farther up the rink. I did not know but turned and went in the oposite direction.
I was soon tired of skating and started to go to Ella when I saw Mr Parmenter talking to her. I would not go near them and skated away again but I was too tired to keep that up long and finally I had to give up.

As I came up he stood and looked at me and I looked at him and bowed slightly. He raised his hat and came to help me over the rough ice, held out a long stick with a laugh saying, “let me draw you in.”
I had to concentrate or fall and I chose to concentrate gracefully. Well we skated together and though there was constraint we chatted of light things. No one to have seen us would have imagined what lay behind.

I am half disgusted with myself for treating him in the way I did. But I could not do differently especially as he found more than half the way for an easy footing for us both.

Ella is coming to spend the evening with me.

Jan 25

Poor journal you have been sadly neglected of late but I had no heart to write, the past days have been so bitter that I could not record them. But now I turn to you as a sort of refuge + relief from this bitter pain.

Longfellow speaking of his troubles says: “But now they have fallen from me. They lie buried in the sea and only the sorrows of others fling their shadow over me.” My own are by no means buried in the sea but the shadow that others troubles fling over me is so deep and heavy that it becomes no longer a shadow but a living throbbing reality.

Oh my own Birdie, my darling, mine alone now. I used to share her with Matt and his part was so much the largest: but now she is all mine. Oh Matt Matt how could you have given her up, you little know what you have lost! I would not could not believe it would be so but it is all settled at least, and how! How I could scream those words.

My poor darling I am holding her hand in mine at this moment, but how long shall I thus hold it. Her only chance of life is in going away from here, away from me. It is long since she has been strong and this makes it so much worse. I could almost ask God to take her to himself where there is no more sorrow or crying, no more of this terrible pain, no more breaking hearts. I could not move her if he did but God knows best and I can only say “Thy will be done.”

Jan 28

We did not have any school this afternoon on account of the rooms being so cold. Ella came up and we made candy and Birdie finished arranging to play How Kate was /dared/ and I think we will like it.

This evening we went to Philharmonic but seeing no lights in the hall we concluded that there was no rehearsal so we went to Ellas and spent a very pleasant evening. Nell was there and came home with us. Birdie and Franye went to the telephone office and called up Ben Haynes. He was not at the hotel but when they inquired who wanted him they said Miss Collins.

Jan 31 [on writing paper stitched into diary]

I am sitting here alone tonight, alone in my arm chair. /Woolen/ work is here before me, lessons that should be learned and are not. And I am sitting here with that dull ache that so constantly of late has been tugging at my heart. I said dull, but how often is it acute anguish. Ah how often: When I am haunted by a face, a form, a voice, a voice full of anguish and chocked with sobs.

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60 Mary quotes “The Bridge” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, published in *The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems* (1845), about a mournful speaker who watches shadows on the water. From his vantage point of the bridge, he reflects on how many people have come to the bridge bearing their “burden of sorrow.”

61 More information about this piece of music is not known.
From my window I can see the moon just rising above the “eastern wood.” I wonder if he too is watching her. Clouds veil her face and I can hardly trace her form. Above her are clouds more dense than those through which she is now passing.

Shall I take her progress as a symbol for my life and watching her trace my destiny. Ah the light grows clearer as she ascends and the bare arms of the trees stand out sharply defined against the sky and what a beauty now is theirs, a glorified beauty.

A thought comes to me and it is that perhaps when I shall have passed the early part of my journey and stand in a fuller light shining from my Father’s throne, that light may bring into relief these very days as the moon now does to the trees, and I shall see that there was beauty and a kind providence in them.

But even that thought does not make them that much easier to bear now. Perhaps I should not take it so much to heart, perhaps I should do as he told me, forget him entirely and never pain myself in the least with a thought of him.

I can not forget him and then when I think he said it, he meant it just about as much as I did when I told him I wished that he hated me instead of loving me so. I don’t want him to hate me but I do wish that he did not care for me as much as he does.

But what could I do. To give him what he asked was impossible. I did not have it for him and moreover it is but to true as he said so bitterly, “You will not try to love me.” No I will not. God knows that all my efforts have been in a decidedly opposite direction. I cannot! I will not! He is not such a man as I wish to be his husband.

Then poor creature half woman half child why do you grieve. You are by no means obliged to marry every man that asks you so to break your heart after refusing him.

I know it and no doubt that is the right way to look at it, but I have not as yet quite become the woman whom I see in the future bearing my name and being known as me.

Now I can only say God help us both and make him more worthy of some good woman’s love than he has been of mine.

The moon no longer shines in at my window and by the darkness outside I know that clouds again conceal the night. My life! My life! And will it always be so?

God willing, yes but when I go to Him he will wipe all tears from my eyes and I shall be all the happier for the clouds now. And oh God may He be there too, may He be there too.
Thursday Feb. 5.

Five days of another month gone and this is the first I have written in my journal. I do not treat you very well do I but I can not help it. I can only write when I feel like it or wish to quiet my feelings. I find it a good way for it gives them vent.

I had two examinations to day and have been studying, trying to study, all the evening but my thoughts have been very truant [truant]. Why? Well I saw Mr Parmenter after school the first time since three weeks ago last night. Three weeks ago last night, shall I ever forget that afternoon and evening, Jan 14th 1885. I think not, at least not as long as I feel its effects as keenly as I now do.

How I have commenced this year not one day but has been full of pain for myself and others and all the time I had to smile and look so happy that people think I am one of the happiest people in the world. Happy – I do not believe that there is a thing as happiness in the earth.

His dog was with him. What a handsom old fellow he is. He used to know me but now has forgotten me entirely.

I did not think that just meeting Mr Parmenter would make me feel as I did. O that terriable feeling at your heart. I know what it means. It is that you are as white as death and almost to weak to move. I do not know what kind of an expression I wore but if I looked as badly as I felt he must have thought I did care a great deal after all. And so I do but not as much or in the ways he wishes.

He too grew white and there was such a look in his eyes to think I should cause such pain to anyone and especially to one of whom I thought so much as I did of him. I saw him go up the street, after I left the store, I went to, so tall and straight, and walking so slowly.

Can a back speak. Anyway his said a great deal to me. I wonder if he is sorry that he saw me. But what is the use of grieving talking or writing. We can never be more to each other than at present and evry day only widens the gulf already so wide between us. May God help and keep us both for Christs sake. Amen.

Feb 14.

A wretched day, or nearly so for although I have been busy not much seems to be accomplished, nothing worthy of note and still I find I am writing. Probably if any thing had happened I should not be writing, that is about the way I have treated you of late.

I took the picture Forever + aye down baught some drawing paper went to the office and mounted it. Of course Charlie helped and after it was framed I took it up to show him. It is framed in oak with gilt moulding and is very pretty. I asked him if he would take part in our theatricals and he said he would. He promiced Ella to help so I think we will do nicely for charades.

I should have writen a composition but it is not done. I can dream much better than I can write. Indeed thoughts that it were better for me not to indulge have been spoiling all my work for the past few weeks. I am so very very tired good night.
March 3.
How differently in some respects than one year ago today was. In others it has been
the same. School has been disposed of as it was that day and with about equal success. I did
not go skating and the morning of that day has saddened this more than I should like to admit
to anyone but you.

Just one year ago almost to the moment since I first met Mr Parmenter and seven
weeks tomorrow night since we bade each other good by, a good by which will most likely
be forever.

Ever since that night I have been striving to adjust my feelings to there proper sphere
and thought I had succeeded to a degree that might be considerable remarkable but today has
brought back the old pain which if not so sharp as at first is still enough so to make me
anything but happy.

The day is much the same only a little warmer perhaps. I do not know if the ice is
good. I have not taken much interest in that subject of late. My skates stayed as he straped
them, hang where I hung then when I came in that night. They seem so much a part of that
part of my life that in putting that away it seems as though they should be put out of sight and
memory. But they wont be. I shall try to be sensible in spite of feeling and heartache.

March 5th.
Dear Journal are you supprised at my writing again so soon. It is so different from my
usual custom.

It has been a lovely day so bright and sunshiney but full of spring langor that it almost
makes me wish for the biteing cold of winter. I feel it more than usual and can hardly drag
myself through my round of duties.

Birdie has gone to the rink with Frances and Ella and Ida is sitting by me working
examples + calling upon me for help.

Last evening was the last one of /????/ and I did not go at all. I know I should not
enjoy it while the remembrance of last year and my reward were still so accute. I know to
feel as I do is more than folly and I shall not endulge even a shaddow if I can help it.

I would like to give myself a shake and put myself down with a bang. It might do one
good.

March 17th.
St Patrics day again and I have turned back and read how I spent it last year.
Oh me what a child I was then and so much happier than now. I wonder if he
remembers how we spent the time after school that day. I do anyway. It seems burned into
my memory.

As for today, school as usual, at noon mailed a letter to Frank and had quite a visit
with Charlie. We are good friends, yet though how long we may remain so more than I know.
I believe he entends to leave town soon. He asked me to day who I did belong to and I told
him he should not ask such questions.

The girls entend to go to the rink I guess but I shall not. I must study for
examinations.
Apr 5.

Sunday and I am sorry to say that although it was Easter I have not been to church. I did not wake until after ten so that explains it.

Institute is over and the girls have gone. They went last night. Ella, Birdie and I went to the depot with them and when we were coming back we saw Mr Parmenter at almost the same place I did last year. I wonder if he remembered.

We stoped [stopped] at Ellas and had been there but a short time when the bell rang. Ella went to the door and soon came back saying that Mr Patterson wished to see me. He had brought my fan which he had forgoten to give me the night before. He wished to know if I was going home soon and if he might escort me. I told him yes so he came and we went home.

He made a call which was very pleasant and asked if he might see me home from church to night but as it is raining now I do not know if I shall go.

Mr Leo called yesterday afternoon. I think him rather pleasent. Although last week was quite a success. I have Charlies picture and he has been more attentive than ever. He is a very pleasent friend although there are some things about him that I do not like very well. I wonder if he will ever forget the grey fur. It was worse than Bens hat. I never shall if he does.

Apr 9.

All day long have I been working trying to reduce things to some thing like order and of course have succeeded in doing a little something, though in compairison to what there is to do it seems very little indeed.

We are home now and shall remain. No more school for me this year. We came Monday. Oh dear, dont ask me to recall the discomfort of that day. Will Patterson was among the last to bid me good by. He was my shaddow so long as possiable and wanted me to stay that night and he would then bring me home.

Charlie is somewhat angry and Birdie has been preaching to me not only about the way I flirted with Will but all the rest. She makes me out very bad endeed but...I'm not.

April 10th.

Well Journal what do you think of a seven mile walk over snow banks, through wind, slush and watter for an undertaking. Anyway that is what Birdie and I did to day. We were tired of our cage and were trying our wings just to see what we could do. I am prefectly astonished at myself.

I think I should like to see Charlie tonight. I am growing rather lonesome I believe and not home a week yet. What will I do before fall?

Apr 14th

I really think I must write in spite of its being about two oclock. I have just returned from a sugar party given by Freds band. It was the first thing of the kind I ever went to here and so it was some thing new to me.

I made myself generally useful and agreeable. I flatter myself that I did, at least anyway. I enjoyed it very much.

I received a letter from Maggie this morning and have writen to her.
An unpleasant event occurred this morning which I cannot bring myself to record. I was and am still very angry and what was worse my passion affected me physically in a very unpleasant manner.

Apr 29.

Nearly a month since I last wrote to you and not an uneventful one. Hattie is here and dear little Leigh and we are having a delightful visit.

Yesterday morning about five Fred brought me a letter. I knew that it was from Mr Parmenter before I opened it and it contained his photograph.

It is lying before me as I write watching me with those grave brown eyes that have grown so much graver than they were a year ago. If he could see me just now I wonder if He would draw a grane of hope and comfort from it.

His letter was written the 26th, the anniversary of our Maying that happy day. He had gone over all the ground we did last year even visiting the birch tree and cutting a card which he sent. He told me all about it and his letter would have touched a much harder heart than mine. He does love me truly or he would not do as he does.

I half promised him one of mine if he sent me one of his pictures. He had them taken on purpose for me and wrote that he had never given anyone his picture before. I suppose I must send him one of mine as soon as I can have them finished.

At the same time he was in the rain and forgot our of the most unpleasant of days, going over the ground we went a year ago, I was writing to him. Refusing his request that I should write to him. Refusing him any hope. Refusing him every thing that he most desires.

I sent the letter yesterday and he would get it tonight. He must have it already. I wonder – ah poor fellow I am so sorry for him.

I have been working all day in my room and working hard to. The chair and lounge are covered and look very pretty indeed and the dressing table is the prettiest thing in the room. I can not forbear to tell you how it is made. An old chest padded a very little on the top and covered with my old blue sattin turned rong wide out. The glass is hung over it and draped with long cheese-cloth curtains with a big bow of blue satin upon the top and another bow of ribon and the corner of the table finishes it. It is prefectly lovely.
May 5.

This morning brought me two letters, one from Matt asking if Birdie had received the letter he had written to her and the other was from Mr Parmenter. I think my feelings when I read it could “be better imagined than described.” He thanks me for being so candid with him and begs for one more favor. He wishes to see me once more not as he says to “plead his cause” but to ask me some things and then to bid me a goodby which shall be for all time.

I shall see him I think, just as soon as Hattie is gone. Oh Edward Edward why do you love me so?

What that meeting will develop I can not know. All I know is that I have taken my stand and must stand firmly.

I have not been feeling very well to day. I guess my letters this morning must have been too much.

Birdie and Hattie went to town today and H. saw Will and Charlie, and C. asked, “where the dear girl was anyhow.” I should like to box his ears or rather I would not touch him. I hate that man.

May 8

Not a very eventful day but perhaps it is more so than many that are to come. I received a card and a letter from Ella, such nice ones too.

I wrote to Mr Parmenter to day telling him that he might come. I do not know that I am wise but I can not help it.

I have worked hard all day but have not accomplished much but the pillows for the lounge are ready to cover.

May 9th.

Well they are gone. How hard it was to let Birdie go. It did seem as though I couldent. I do so hope that she will get well and strong very soon. How lonesome the whole house is without them all.

Last night baby Leigh was playing up here and tonight there is no danger of any things being disturbed. I wish there was, my little darling. But I must not mourn over thoes that are gone but try to make the ones that are left happy.

May 14

I have just turned back and read the entree of a year ago. It records a head ache. Well I have that but the rest is not the same.

I worked in the garden this morning and as far as the bed making goes, it is nearly done now and some of the seed are in. My fern bed is done too and is very pretty.

When I came in I wrote to Birdie did my housework and spent most of my afternoon at my fancy, then helped to get tea and went on an errend for Mother.

Mr Parmenter was to have came yesterday but he did not. Of course I was angry and although I tried to look upon it as Birdie would and partly succeeded, it seems to have put the
finishing touch to my indifference to him. He must have some good excuse, men alway do, and though I can think of half a dozen, I do not know which can be right.

May 16<sup>th</sup> 1885

I made beeswax all the forenoon and have done nothing so far all the afternoon. I got two letters one from Birdie and one from Edward. He did not receive my letter until Wednesday evening so of course he could not come. I have been debating the question if I should ask him again to come. What shall I do. I wish Birdie was here to tell me but as it is I must decide it alone.

May 21.

Well I did decide it, wrote him to come and he came yesterday. O Journal dont ask me to tell you about it I cant. O the passion and the pain and heart break and when he said O Mollie Mollie I cant give you up, it was hardest of all. He will keep hoping although I tell him not to.

Oh dear what shall I do. He utterly denies those stories about him and that all may be satisfied in regard to them Mother wrote to Mr Hall to day asking him to tell her of Edward.

I mailed that letter and one to Birdie, walking over for the purpose. Will came up this afternoon and made a very pleasant call. Father told him I was not at home and poor fellow, I dont know what he thought after Sunday. I hope Will will never give me as much trouble as some one else has.

May 31.

Can it be that it is ten days since I last wrote. Well it is so.

To day is Sunday and all day I have been thinking thinking thinking. All that I seem able to say is what shall I do? What shall I do? We are still waiting to hear from Mr Hall. His reply may decide what I shall do.

I am half sick and so restless and uneasy. I wish I could go away and never see this part of the country again. Oh why must I stay on and on when every day is torture. I know how I can do it, marry Edward and have him take me away but...

Turning back to read I find that I once wrote “Charlie and I are good friends now but how long we may remain so I do not know.” I may as well record that our friendship has snapped [snapped] like a thread. He thinks a good deal of me, I know from his voice + eyes, and tried hard to make up but I would not, no thank you. I am having very hard times, that is certain. What bad thing will happen next I wonder.

June 2<sup>nd</sup>

I thought Edward had forgoten but he had not. Molly Baum<sup>62</sup> came this morning and between its leaves were hearts ease. I could not help sheading a few tears over them. They surely were not true to there name as far as my heart is concerned.

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<sup>62</sup> Probably Mary is referring to <i>Molly Bawn</i> (1878), by Margaret Hungerford. A conventionally plotted romance novel of its day, the book features the titular naïve Irish protagonist who arouses her lover’s jealousy with her ignorance of social conventions. Hungerford, who was published under the pseudonym “The Duchess” in the United States, gained widespread popularity for the quick pace and the light banter in her stories.
The book is delightful and I have read it all through. Now Journal I must put you away and write a letter of thanks to him. Oh Edward Edward, every letter I write to you I say shall be the last but it does not seem to be does it?

June 16th
The first strawberries of the season and an accident have relieved the tedious of the day that bid fair to be so like the other hum-drum days that it is hard to tell them apart.

The boys started to drive two head of cattle Father sold this morning as far as the creek. Soon after Ida Annie + I went out strawberrying. We had been out some time and I was standing by the field road when I saw Fred coming driving as fast as he could. He stopped and took me in and I asked him what the matter was. I was afraid something had happened to Ernest and was relieved to find that one of the creatures had, while crossing the RR track broken its leg. Fred had come back for Father.

How fast I worked to get some supper ready and then ready to go back. When I thought I had done everything I could I went to spring them into the woods. While there I remembered that I had not sent Ernest anything to eat. I ran most of the way back + got there just in time to put up a lunch. My dear boy I would not have forgotten him for anything.

I have arranged everything for another supper when they come back but I am sure I do not know when that will be. It is most distressing and perplexing all around. I had rather nothing would happen than such horrid things as this.

June 17
I am really writing again tonight and why I hardly know unless it be to record that I spent a good share of my time this morning winding splints for the creatures leg that is now set and doing well. That I have been all day very busy and in better spirits than for some time and that while working in the garden this afternoon I lost one of the perls out of my ring.

I set three beds of plants and do hope they will do well. The first pansy I have had opened to day. The dear little blossom how I love it.

The other day I rewrote those verses that are intended to be sent with a gift of pansies. I wonder if the one of whom I thought when I wrote them will ever receive them. It is possible he may. They would be as now written a good farewell to him and I must say it sooner or later for I am now perfectly sure that we can never never be more to each other than we are now.

June 19th.
I have just finished washing my hair and am now going to bed. Yesterday I hung all the paper in the dining room and today I painted the floor. I have fixed the sitting room lounge and spent ever so much time hard at work in my garden. My beds are set now except a few plants in one. It was too bad. So many of my seeds refused to come but I did the best I could under the circumstances. I am so very tired and still have my hair to do up.

June 24th
Frank was here tonight and we had a delightful time. We went riding and got back about 9.30. It was lovely moonlight and I showed him my garden etc etc.

We had more fun over good night. I was willing he should follow the Spanish custom but he wanted what he called old English. He made me think of Ben when he said “just one.”
He told me of one of the students who was “gone” on my picture. He used to come into Frank room and stand gazing at my picture until Frank would throw something at him and order him to stop. Ha ha!

July 6th.

Ah well why I write to night I hardly know unless it be for amusement. I have worked quite hard to day in my garden and house work. I get tired so easily some way. After tea I lay in the hammock for a long time and read Molly Baum to Mother.

How did I spend the Fourth, as usual until evening when Frank came over and we went to town to attend the play. It was splendid and we had a lovely time. I saw Ben but only to bow. We did not leave town until after twelve and did not reach home until two o’clock very early, was it not.

I have a lovely silk cap Frank put on my head when I took off my bonnet, it was so heavy. He said he would give it to me for a kiss but it is needless to say that he did not get the kiss. I love his cap and he has my fan so we are even, only the cap is more valuable.

What a time we had coming home. Frank said he did not always act so and for my part I was glad to have it. Will Patterson was at the rink and of course he saw us together. Oh was I not glad glader gladest he has.

July 21.

Something has happened which now seems very strange to me. And I have been sick all day from the effects of my anger. Fred brought me a letter this morning from Mr Parmenter. In it was a sealed package. I opened it and found my letters + the flowers and card I had given him. He says he has been deceived in me so returned my letters and asks for his.

I have just put together the books letters flowers ect. that he has given me and shall send them to him tomorrow. I have written him a letter that I think will not amuse him and shall send him the one I wrote the other day which if he cares for me at all will make him feel any thing but complacent in his actions.

July 26.

Well journal shall I finish telling you of this. Thursday I sent him the package. Ernest + I went down and Ernest took it to him.

To be sure what a time we had getting started. I had to help do the chores before we could go.

The next mail brought me a letter, such a sad humble one that I have entirely forgiven him. Even if I had wished I could not have done other wise. He was angry because he thought I had made an appointment with Lou Smith of all the men in the world. Ah well this little episode has ended every thing for us. He says he desires it should but begs so earnestly for forgiveness.

I do forgive him fully but could not trust myself to a man with such passions. I have answered the letter as kindly and firmly as I could and hope he will act about it as I know he is able to act.

Frank came over last evening and we went driving. I never saw a more beautiful night. We did not get back until eleven and then I gave him a beautiful boquet.

Today I went to church and heard the /Presidency/ Elder for the first time. I rather like him.
The most of the rest of the day I have been writing.

Aug 2\textsuperscript{nd}.

And is it a week since last I wrote. It seems so. This morning the boys and I went to church. I hoped so much to get the comfort and strength I need and did to a degree, although an answer to the question that is ever before me has not as yet come.

Friday morning I went to West P. [Plattsburgh] and found waiting for me a letter from Edward...and such a letter it has nearly broken my heart. He loves me so and what can I do. What can I do. I know not. Oh how my head aches. I think and think and think until it seems as if it would burst asunder.

I wrote to him asking for time to consider and to Birdie imploring her to come home. What the next few days decide may mean life or death, happiness or misery to us both and I can not see one little bit into the future. But my bible tells me to trust in God and I do trust and pray that he will do all things well leading me as his child.

Aug 5

Well journal this tale is nearly told, the story that has not been two years in telling, but which means so much, so much. I have decided and my answer is sent, no in a box of pansies.

This is the third time I have refused him. I do not believe I shall have to do it again at least I hope not. It is all too terriable.

Aug 10\textsuperscript{th}

I hardly know why but I have been reading of the first of my acquaintance with Edward, noting each step, recorded as I took them, and have seen my oft repeated wish that I might look forward a few months and see the end. The time has passed and now I know the end, heartache and misery a crushing of the best hopes of a life.

I now know only too well what then I nearly guessed at. I by means of my heartlessness have escaped free or nearly so and he...God forgive me and help him. It is hardly probably that I shall ever record his name again and do you? I may bid it farewell and say with Wooley, “And now farewell a long farewell to all,” not to greatness but to that love and life which were so freely offered and which I refused. A love which I may look back upon and wish, oh so fruitlessly, that it were again mine.

Again I say good by and shut the pages of this book upon the story of a love, a passion, that very nearly swept me away with it. That has changed me from a girl into a woman who must ever bear the memory of an agony she could not stay of [off], help needed that she could not render. Again good by, how many times must I say it, I say it now for the last time, good by.

Aug 13\textsuperscript{th}.

Ah I thought I had said good by for the last time. I have been mistaken before many times and I was that time. But now, now I am sure and I exult in it. Oh yes. He said I had changed since the old happy time, that I now am cold, so cold. Ah yes I am. I am rock, adamant, so cold that my coldness burns me as of true fire.
I went to town to have my teeth fixed and when that was done it was late, very, but still I had more business to do. Just as I had finished it and was going to Mr H for my horse, who should I meet but Mr Parmenter. He passed me and then came back.

And although it was dark and raining and he knew I had only little Ida to go home with me, he insisted upon my taking time for an explanation. Well he has got it and I hope he is satisfied. I do not believe he loves me as I had thought he did. If he did he would hardly have done and said many things that he has to night.

It seems to me we would not have parted as we did. How? As strangers if you please. When he said good by he raised his hat. I held out my hand and said will you not shake hands. He gave me his, the reverse of what it usually is you see. What would I not have given if I had not been obliged to answer but at length I said Yes I…I…think it is better so. Then he said if we meet again we are strangers, I wish it.

Said I “Very well. Good by.” I hardly knew my own voice, it was so calm + hard, cold and cutting. Not much as I had spoken half a moment before. I turned and left him.

We got home all right no thanks to him though. Barely escaped upsetting two or three times and once I had to get out to find the road. Mrs Brenan has a little boy baby such a darling. I saw Frank has not seen him since last Saturday when he called.

Well suppose I do not write queer all night.

Aug 19.

All day to day as busy as possiable we are, that is, Fred, Ernest, Ida + I are going to Queen City Park to morrow and I had to get the lunch ready and finish Idas dress and I refitted my black back. Everything is ready now even to the lunch being packed and I am going to start at once.

I went to town yesterday and by the way had quite a nice time. I caught a glimpse of Mr Parmenter in fact, more that a glimps, for we looked into each others eyes for it seemed a full moment. He was…ah! I can not write where he was. Every day, every moment, makes me more thankful that I did not marry him. I think he wanted me to marry him secretly if I could not openly. I never could quite forgive him for even requesting it.

It seems to me now as I look back as if I had been snatched back from the very gates of distruction. How fervently I thank God that he did thus save me.

Aug 21st.

What have I done today? Well not much of enything but read and work in the garden. I went yesterday and had a very nice time. The park is a lovely place. We attended the Spiritualist meetings but did not have much of their belief.

63 This park is across Lake Champlain from Plattsburgh, in Burlington, Vermont, the state’s most populous city.

64 The Spiritualist movement, which flourished in the US from the 1840s to the 1920s, was founded on the belief that communication with the spirits of dead people could be achieved by especially sensitive living persons, also known as mediums. Mediums, many of them women who otherwise had no forum for public speech or self-expression, fascinated groups with seances, trance lecturing, automatic writing, and other forms of alleged communication with the dead. Traveling Spiritualist rallies in the 1870s and 1880s typically focused on “materializations” of spirit hands, birds, flowers, even whole spirit bodies, which were generated by
I got acquainted with a Mr Hart who is rather nice looking and very agreeable. Of course as there was no one to introduce us it was a catch acquaintance. I gave him a buttonhole bouquet and he gave me a very pretty fan. Quite a “mash” it amuses me eminently.

Milton Broadwell and I came near being left at the park. We had to jump aboard. Just think of it!

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mediums hiding in spirit cabinets (Braude, 1991). According to the Plattsburgh Sentinel, the Spiritualist “camp-meeting” to which Mary refers ran from mid-August to mid-September in Queen City Park, Burlington, Vermont (PS, July 18, 1884). Evidently, Mary is not impressed.
Chapter 16:
“Then was I in the furnace, now I am once more at rest”
September – December, 1885

Sept 1.
Birdie came to day. Oh I am so glad. Fred goes early tomorrow morning, I have just
finished packing his trunk. I am going to slip in Birdies and my picture where he will find
them when he unpacks. I think he will be glad to see them.
I must record that I went to Barnums Show saw Fred and petted Dumbo. Quite an
event!65

Sept 26.
How long it is since I have written and not much has happened. Hattie and Baby have
been here and Ida has gone home with her. Frank and I have quarreled, willing on my part,
and what friendship there ever existed between us is a thing of the past.
Will and I...well I do not know if we have quarreled of not but at all events our regard
for each other will not hurt us any.
Yesterday I went to the [Cumberland] Head and had a nice time.
And now I have something to tell you that I never thought to have but I was mistaken
you see. The other day I wrote to Edward asking that he return my letters. Thursday I received
a letter from him asking that he might retain them and my forgiveness + friendship. And I
have written to him to day granting what he asked. Ah me I wonder if there is another act in
this drama.

Oct 4.
Oh old journal, what have I to write. Here I am at home disappointed about going to
Mooers but I intend to go to Graces wedding. Friday Birdie and I went to town and she got
the velvet for her dress. Mrs B is making it. It is going to be lovely.
And I, what did I do. Shopped [Shopped] a little. Went to see Will but he was not in. I
shall have to go again. And then I met Edward and spent about three hours in his society
walking + driving.
I suppose I should not have done it but poor fellow, how could I refuse him the little
comfort there was to be got from it. He takes it so hard and it is very evident that his whole
life is centered in me, but I can not marry him, it is impossible. That was decided some time
ago.
I do wish I could do something for him if I only knew what to do. If I either hated or
loved him my position would be much easier, but as I can do neither, it is doubly hard for
me. What will come next. I do not know but I can almost surly say “The end is not yet.”

65 Mary is talking about Barnum’s Greatest Show on Earth, the precursor to the Barnum and Bailey
Circus, for which over 14,000 people, along with Mary, mobbed the streets of Plattsburgh. The Plattsburgh
Sentinel reported that there was an impressive opening parade. A baton-twirling drum major led the procession,
with men and women on “gaily caparisoned” horses followed, as well as “chariots drawn by different animals,
the large herd of elephants headed by the lofty Jumbo, the representatives of foreign tribes bringing up the rear”
(PS, Sept. 4, 1885).
Oct 31st.

The last day of the month and I must write a little, though I am so very very tired. Mama is sick and so is Birdie, Birdie with vaccination, I expect my turn will come next.

I have just returned from a three weeks visit to Mooers and Altona where I had a delightful time and met so many pleasant people. There did not one horrid thing happen all the time I was gone, rather wonderful for me was it not. Charlie Churchill was my best friend there, they came for me at last post only because Ernie had come. Oh was I not glad. He has spent some time here already and we have had a delightful visit. He brought photos of his wife and little boy and they are lovely children, so sweet and lovely.

The 9th I went to Graces wedding and had a lovely time. George Bertrand was there and Ben and he brought me home. We had a great visit. Grace looked lovely and married a very handsome man, a Mr Sweet. The whole wedding was perfection, what more could I say.

But I must stop saying anything take my bath and go to bed. Good night and good by for the present.

Nov 10

How very very lonely I am to night. Every body seems so far away and unreal. All my friends seem to have departed I know not where. I dread this winter how I do dread it with its never ending lonely days. Ah me ah me. I got a letter from Emer to night. He is in Ohio. I suppose he went that Monday night.

There is a grand concert in the new Methodist church. Oh how I want to go. Perhaps we may. If we do not I shall go to a basket social at Mr Clinton Bradwells. I wish it were somewhere else, still why should I let him keep me away if I want to go.

Nov 21st

Well old journel I may as well write to night for this week has been as eventful as any that are likely to come. I have spent three days in P-[Plattsburgh] this week. Father + I went down Wednesday morning to attend the dedication of the new ME. Church. And I stayed down until Friday afternoon. I had a delightful time. Bishop Bowen preached the dedication sermon. Father and I went to church there this morning. We will attend church in P-[Plattsburgh] after this.

I got a letter from Emer Friday. He is home now.

I hope to have a new cloak this winter. I will tell you when I get it.

I saw Mr Holden and ever so many more when I was down.

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66 Mary refers to the effects of a smallpox vaccine, which she too anticipates receiving. There was a smallpox scare in Plattsburgh during the autumn of 1885. A new hospital was erected to hold the anticipated smallpox sufferers, but the outbreak never materialized (Palmer, 1893).

67 Combining potluck and auction, a basket social (also called a box social) required women to each bring a meal, usually for two, prepared in a decorated container. Baskets were sold to the highest bidders, usually men, and funds often went to local churches or reform societies. Basket socials offered an opportunity for young people to socialize and flirt (Kacirk, 2005, p. 21-22).

68 Mary refers here to the Methodist Episcopal Church on Oak Street overlooking Clinton Street. An elaborate two-story brick building with stained-glass windows, electrically controlled gas-jet lighting, and a top seating capacity of nearly 1,000, the new building was the pride of the town (PS, Nov. 13, 1885).
Nov 26 1885.

Thanksgiving night and unto My God who has shown me so many mercies; who has cared for and guided me for the past year, yea for all the past years, I offer my most fervent thanks and an earnest prayer for future guidance and mercie.

When I took up my journal it opened to a place where I speak of sitting where I do tonight and of watching the moon through my window. The same moon looks in to night but how different is the one upon whom it looks. How far beyond in feeling I am from the poor tossed soul who then wrote. Then was I in the furnace, now I have by Gods grace passed through and am once more at rest.

But the expearences of the past year, terriable as they then seemed to me, have not I trust been without a good effect. Much of the dross has been purged away in the flames and I hope that that which remains is purer metal.

I am sad to night but have thrown it off and passed a merry evening with the boys. Fred is home and how much he has improved in every way my own dear boy.

Nov 28

Good bye old journal for how long I hardly know. Dr and Hattie came down last night and I am going back with him as housekeeper until Hattie gets back.

Bens picture came last night also a very nice letter and of course I must answer and send him my photograph. I also got a letter from Emer. He is at home now and has sent me a package containing a present for everyone. Again good bye I must finish getting ready.

Dec 28th.

Monday and I after many days am again writing a little to you and am using the gold pen Fred gave me for Christmas. The dear boy. Ernest gave me a silver thimble, Father a pair of /seggns/, Birdie a pocket case and Ida a waste paper basket and pen wipe and Fred also sent me his photograph. They are very good of him. Taking all things together we spent a very pleasant Christmas.

Frank is home for vacation. I just wonder if he will come over here. Hardly I think I would not were I in his place, anyway.

We are having school in the house and I am trying to learn something but with indifferent success I fear. I went to the office this afternoon but did not get anything. Well good night, I am going to bed.
Jan 1
I say this for it is after twelve oclock. Another year has begun and I wonder what it has in store for me. I remember of wondering last year what 1885 held for me and now I know. The story of that year is told, the book is closed and put away, its white pages well covered with what God knows and the Judgement will reveal.

To night I will write for the first time 1886. The year has comenced which shall bear to me good or ill. God help me to make it a more profitable one than the last has been and grant unto me that there be less of pain to endure.

Jan 3erd.
Sunday and none of us went to church. The roads were very bad and the wind blew a gale.

Friday Birdie and I went to the office + I got a letter and photograph from Ella. I was supprised and very much pleased.

Yesterday I went to the office by the way of M, mailed a letter there and had quite a visit with Mark. Bah. I hardly know what I am writing for I am sick and wretched to day, a terribale cold on my lungs and in my head, which is worse. Now I must write to Fred and Maggie.

Jan 5th.
Scholl and work as usual to day but I write to record that Birdie has made her first leather work and it is quite a success. She has made all of her tools to. Did anyone ever see another like her.

I have just writen to Mrs Stone asking for a photograph of Willie but I donot know if I shall send it. Eleven oclock.

Jan 13th
What have I done to day, housework, studies and sewing. A little reading a little writing and now I think it is nearly twelve.

I receved four very nice letters tonight one from Emer, one from Fred, one from Ella and one from Ben. I shall answer at least two of them Sunday.

A year ago to night considering days since Edward first asked me to be his wife. Can it be, and yet it is. How far I have traveled since then.

Jan 18th
Do you want me to tell you what I have been doing all day. Well it is this, coloring and my usual work. Mama + I colored lots of things among them my blue flanel dress. It looks very nice.

I have just finished reciting my Geometry and now must go to bed for I have to go for the /??/?/ early early tomorrow morning. I attended Mrs Purdys funeral on Sunday. Good night.
Oh I had forgotten to tell you Mr Hart my Queen City Park acquaintance sent me a catalogue and card for Christmas. I was very much surprised and somewhat pleased.

Jan 31st.

The last day of the month and surely I must write something if only to let you know that I am still alive and well. I am very sad to night, why I hardly know but I feel heart broken.

Yesterday Mother, Birdie + I went to a Matinee and enjoyed it very much. I have not heard Blackwells orchestra before for nearly two years. It was splendid. After the concert I met Ben on the street and he walked to Mr Hagars with me but he was not willing to let me go then and wanted to know if I did not want some candy or did not have some shopping to do or something for an excuse that we might have a little more time together. Well we went and surly [surely] we did have a nice visit. he bought the candy and we ate candy and talked and ate candy etc etc. You know Journal one ought to buy this time.

Ernest, Birdie + I went to church in P [Plattsburgh] to day. We go to church there now and like it ever so much. Ah good night I am going to read.

I saw Miss Woodard yesterday and am going to take my Geometry examination Wednesday. Ah I do hope that I will succeed.

Feb 10.

I have been very lonely all day. I hardly know what to do with myself. Birdie went.

March 7th.

Oh Journal what shall I say. I have been in P [Plattsburgh] since Sunday night. Last night I went to take an examination. I passed about 95%. And now another night of hard study is before me.

Did I have a nice time or did I not. I saw a great deal of Ben and know him better than I did. I now no longer fear him. I almost wish I might never see him again.

While there I recived a letter from Mr P. ful of wrath demanding his letters. It is getting somewhat /overot/ [overwrought] /???. I think I am going to do them up as soon as I stop writing to you. I shall be glad to get rid of them. He is a good example of what a goose a man can make of himself if he tries.

Today I burned a journal that I kept when I was sixteen. Will that be your fate I wonder.

Mother and I have just got back from church. Fred came home last night and Ernest has sprained his wrist poor boy.

Ben told me I was the handsomest girl in P [Plattsburgh] and as surly [surely] as he is the handsomest man we must make a handsome appearance when we are together. He has been very devoted, and of course I enjoyed that. I wonder if he will write.

Apr 11th.

Sabath and I have spent it in town and have just come from church for the second time today. I am attending school here now and am getting along as well as could be expected.

Ben is as attentive as usual, only more so. He has come to be just about my shaddow. If it was anyone but Ben I should be frightened but as it is – of course I am not.
He called this afternoon and we had a very pleasant time if Anna did favor us with more of her company that was just desireable. By the way he gave me an invitation to drive with him as soon as the roads were good which I hope will be soon. We have never driven together but once and that was some time ago.

Oh Journal I want to tell you Birdie and Matt will be happy again I think. Oh I am so glad. It was all so cruel for both of them.

I joined Mr /G??/? Sunday school class to day.

Good night, when will I write again.

Apr 15.

Dear Journal it has amused me so much but really I must tell you about it. Jane Bird commenced at me to day about my best fellow, as she calls him, and told me the perfect tables about him. Dora Solomon has all but told her…She! Think of it! Naughty to cut me out and how Ben was with her yesterday.

All this was amusing enough but to night he and I were out walking and who should we meet but Miss Dora. Such a /??/? as she gave him. Oh it was to funny. I have not enjoyed everything so much since I cut out Eliza. What good friends Ben and I have always been. I wonder how long it will remain so.

Apr 28.

I am writing again, you see, but still I hardly know what to say. I took my last Examinations in Geometry to day. I am so /???. I hope I have passed a good percent.

Monday Ben and I went Maying. It was the 26 two years ago that day I went with some one else. One year ago, I wrote him a letter that meanly broke his heart and mine, two and this year –

I feel like a culprit. He haunted my every step and kept whispering in my ear my forgetfulness of him. I saw him twice to day but he is a stranger to me now. But in spite of that I had a delightful time. Oh I am a wicked cruel girl.

The band is playing to night and its drives me nearly frantic for the first time it played after the 26 we went to gether. What would he say, what would Ben say were they to see this.
Chapter 18:  
“I am no longer a school girl”  
May – June, 1886

May 2nd. 1886.

I shall begin to believe in dreams I think, for one I dreamed a while ago has come true at least in a measure. It was about EP [Edward Parmenter] and Friday night when I was coming from down street I saw him hovereng around. I could not think what was coming but when he came to me, said that he was going away and asked for five minutes in which to say good by, I knew what was to be.

I would not have believed that I could say so many cruel things to anyone as I did to him. But I did. We understand each other now I think. He has gone I suppose and I am so glad.

He said Don’t suppose Miss Collins that I go on your account. As if I were goose enough to think he did. To go away once on my account is enough. I don’t know but I think he has had some trouble with his family and that he goes because of this.

He told me that there was a current rumor that Ben + I were engaged and he wanted to congratulate me upon the happy fact. The idea!

Ben called on me Friday afternoon. At night I went home cleaned house and papered all day Saturday. Came down this morning have been to church and Sunday school and when I come home put on my new green dress which is done at last and is very pretty and now I must write to Maggie.

June 3

Poor journal you have been sadly neglected of late but then you know I do not make any pretence of writing as I used.

First let me tell you that Mr P has not left town. I do not believe he had any entention of going. The…well…it is not ladylike to call names but I hate him for what he has done making such a fool of me.

Beside that being with him came near ending everything for Ben and me. He was angry and I do not wonder after all he has said about him.

He and I went walking Monday evening and then he came in and stayed until almost twelve and last night did do. The band played last night.

I shall not undertake to tell you the no. of times he has been to see me in the month. I have not writen for realy I have not tried to count. We are the best of friends at present and it is to be hoped that we will remain so any way until I go home which will be in about a month, as I graduate about the 29th of the month.

I finished my essay to day, that is I have it ready to hand in for the first time. I am so glad. I hope Miss Woodard will like it.

I have had a new black dress with a white silk vest cut square in the neck and filled in with lace which is just lovely. I have never worn it but once. That was to a concert that the Philharmonic gave two weeks ago.

I have not been to bed until after twelve any night this week so far except Sunday and I think I will try to do better to night, that is if I get my work done, but I must stop writing to you if I do.
Oh they have got one of the electric lights on our corner and we do not need any light in our parlor now if we open the blinds. But to tell the truth we leave them closed and let the lamp burn low.

June 15th 1886.

Well for some reason I am writing again. What shall I tell you about. This is nearly the last of school and I am sorry or glad. Which? Sorry I guess, yes I know I hate to go home where it is so lonesome. I wonder if I could not get away some where. Ben was just here for a little while. I had not seen him since last Thursday when he called twice in one day and which is also memorarable as /??/? the time his sister peeked at us through the crack thinking to see something wonderful, I suppose. But she came too late and must have been disapointed.

I rehearsed for the first time to day and will twice tomorrow and ditto for all the rest of the days which unfortunately are not many.

I saw Mr Parmenter to day but did not see him, my parrisol did good service, it was a fancy. Since that time I have seen him several times but he is but of the country even as far as I am concerned. I just mentioned it to show you how it was with us.

The most prevoking think I have had to encounter lately is that the envitations to the boat ride which are from all the members of the class. All our names are on them. That one will go to him of course I could say nothing. It would cause misery and that I would not like very well.

I have been enviting all my gentlemen friends to the exercises. I want lots of boquets you see. Some more shelfishness [selfishness]! I am afraid that I am abominably shelfish [selfish].

But I must leave you for it is getting late and I must study. Good night.

Oh I have decided that my name will appear Mary Elizabeth Collins. Oh it was hard butt still I think it sencible.

June 27 1886

Well dear Journal my school life is finished, at least I fear that it is. It is finished at far as Plattsburgh is concerned. I am no longer a school girl for I graduated last Wednesday night.

Every thing went off beautifully. The honore was that Mr Draper State Superintendent was there, presented the diplomas and made the address. He is so handsome and just splendid. Our class was pronounced a very fine one and we were all said to have done splendidly.

My dress was beautiful. Every one liked it and I was told many times that I never looked so well as I did that night on the stage. I have been over whelmed with complements. Our class did not have our picture taken when they left on the boat ride or they thought they could not afford it. But I shall have some taken just to show my dress you know.

Ben took me to the boat ride and I had a very nice time. Saturday evening he came to say goodbye and staied until rather late and to day I called him in to give him some books he had left or rather that I had had. He wanted to come to see me, also to write to me, to both of which I naturally assented. They were sorry to have me go and I was sorry too but it was inevitable. Oh I got lots of flowers and a beautiful book that night.
I shall not write any more unless it be just to record on the last day of the summing up of the summer in perhaps a longer time. I mean to work at music German Algebra and my garden this summer which will keep me busy I think.

Goodbye Journal. You have been a comfort to me many times and I hate to give you up entirely but no other book would seem like you and as you see I have come to the last page so good by and sweet rest. Good night.

Your own
Mary.
Chapter 19:
“Is my belief in myself shaken?”
July – August, 1886

July 4th.
Dear Journal, You know I said that I would give you up but I can not do it. I am lonely without you, therefore I beg leave to introduce to you a few new pages and I will endeavor to write more carefully both as to manner and matter.

I have been home just a week to day and I can hardly tell what I have done and yet I have worked hard all the time except Wednesday when I went to Dennemora and had a very pleasant time to. The air is delightful there.

I have not been to church but have done house work and written a letter which most likely I shall never send. It is almost to long for an ordinary occasion. But I shall have to say good night as I have [to] get up before four tomorrow and it is after ten now.

[All following entries are written on ledger paper, folded in half and glued in the back of the original book as a new signature with lines perpendicular to those of the original book.]

July 8th
Dear Journal, I am tired so very tired that I hardly know what to write or think. Shut in here we persue the same routine of work day after day with little or no variation.

I just have left my writing and rushed to the window to prevent Ernest from killing a little /Count/ bird which has been around here for some time. Its squack is anything but pleasant but the little thing seems to enjoy living so much that I can not endure that its life should be taken.

I wish I could tell you all about a book I have been reading. It is On the Heights. 69 Ben lent it to me and he said I would like it and I did very much. There are many fine thoughts in it. Irma (the heroine) kept a journal which is especially fine. Hers was a record for the most part of what she felt and mine is mostly of what I have done not of what I have felt. How far apart our feelings and acts often are.

July 10th.
Papas seventeth birthday and we have been having a little fete in honor of the event. We also celebrated mamas. Hers comes the 12th and we have always celebrated them together.

We put the parlor curtains up to day and they look lovely. The rods and rings represent a triumph of ingenuity. I have not space to tell about them or I would. The fireplace curtain is also done. We have accomplished a good deal in the last two days and I am so tired that I must go to bed.

It has been raining all day. I did not weed or water my garden tonight.

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69 On the Heights (1865) by Berthold Auerbach (pseudonym of Moyses Baruch) follows the story of Countess Irma von Wildenort, chambermaid to a German queen, who gains unwanted attention from the king. Gossip about Irma and the king clouds Irma’s reputation. She tries to atone, even going so far as to fake her death and retire to the mountains. After both she and the king have purified themselves of their base affections, Irma dies in a tragic and morally instructive manner, closing the novel.
July 11th 1886

The close of another day which has been as full as most of my days and more so than many. I mean full of pleasant things.

I went to church and Sunday school and enjoyed both in no small degree. It seemed so nice to be back again and yet I would not live in Plattsburgh on any consideration.

The baby is so much better and stronger. They have had his hair clipped and he looks prittier than ever. He is such a darling baby.

I never hear, see, or write the word darling without thinking of — and I also remember once when dear was said to me in such a way and at a time that even now, after all the lapse of time, all the many events which have occurred, my heart aches in remembering.

How well I remember home he said “If you ever have another love,” and how he seemed to imply that it was likely that I never would and how I then smiled at the idea, and how I almost smile now in a proud sence of my own ability.

Nevertheless it struck me as a blow both then and now. It may be so I deserve it no doubt. And Ben said, When you find one whom you would wish to kiss you, that one will not and I laughed and answered, will they not, and still with the sence of my own power strong upon me.

Why do I write so? Is my belief in myself shaken? It has been rudely jared [jarred] more than once I must admit, but like Gwendolens\(^70\) it always rised strong and perfecting again after its downfall.

But at last hers was crushed, utterly crushed, will mine be. Her need was to have the whole world at her feet. Such is mine. She did not accomplish it. Neither shall I.

There are a great many people in this world besides ourselves and even in my little world I have to realize the sharp fact that most of its inhabitence are utterly, perfectly indifferent to me. Of how much importance am I anyway. I could almost count on the fingers of my hands all to whom it would make the least difference were I to die tomorrow. And this from one whose desire even as a child was always to be first and of my account.

This is not the right spirit to indulge. Why can I not be content to do the work which comes to my hands and in doing it well earn a right to do higher things? Why this insatiable desire for homage? I do not deserve it. I know of many who deserve much much more than I, who to all appearances do not receive as much.

And even if I did have the whole world at my feet would I be satisfied even then. Then I would not for even now the more I have the more I want.

The sermon to day was on content. It was preached right at me and yet so far I have really very little good from it but when I have worked out some of its ideas I may find help in them.

Help in them? No here lieth my help. I will go to the Lord my God, who is my sure help in trouble, my shield and my defence, the rock of my salvation.

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\(^70\) Here Mary compares herself to one of the main characters in George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* (1876), Gwendolen Harleth. The beautiful, flirtatious Gwendolen suffers various emotional tortures throughout much of the novel. Her wealth disappears early on in the book so that she is forced to marry the cruel Henleigh Grandcourt to escape penury. Though she wishes her husband dead, he abuses her and crushes her spirit. Gwendolen pursues Daniel Deronda, but he refuses her, advising her to live a moral life, which eventually prompts her self-examination and betterment.
July 17th

I am tired so tired and yet I will write a little for I do not enjoy the recolections of yesterday as well as I do those of to day. Nothing of importance occurred till this afternoon when Birdie + I went to town. I intended to have my picture taken but Mr Baldwin was out of town.

We went around and did our shopping and as I was going past the PO, Mrs Smith called to me and said there was a package for me. I went and what do you suppose I found: a rod and reel from Mr Hart. There are lines flies and everything a complete outfit. They are all of the very best quality, the reel nickle plated and perfect beauties everything. Is it not good of him. I am delighted. What a nice letter I must write to him.

I got my verbena plants and had just finished setting them at ten to night. I hope they will do well.

I had a lovely time in town. The baby is ever so much better.

I sent a letter to Ben yesterday in answer to a very nice one he wrote me. I do not know, what if I have been wrong all this time. Whoes fault will it be if I was?

Aug 22

Dear journal surely I have neglected you and it may be that what I do not write is the best part of my writing. Let me tell you know a little of what is and shall I attempt to say what is not. No that were to /bast/ a subject.

Hattie is here and not at all well. The baby,71 I told you that we had a new baby did I not, is well and is so sweet and pretty.

E and I went to visit Aunt Clara at Sarnac [Saranac]. Went up Friday and came back Saturday evening. Dear Aunty how glad she was to see us and what a nice visit we had.

Sunday last I came home from the [Cumberland] Head where I had been visiting Carrie. The Sunday before I spent there and Ben came over and we went out driving and, need I say it, had a delightful time. I enjoyed my self ever so much while there and christened my rod by catching a rock bass. I also met five young gentelmen from Montreal who I liked very much. I have one of Carries pictures which I think good.

Last Thursday morning I took Birdie + Leigh to P [Plattsburgh] and while Birdie did her shopping Leigh and I drove around. We met Ben and stoped [stopped] to talked. Then he got in the carriage, we have a new one, and we went down and got the candy I had won from him on a wager, about going in talking.

Then we went for a drive and enjoyed ourselves so much, drove until I thought Birdie would be ready, then I took him home, a sort of leap year preformance was it not?

I have not been to church to day. But after Hattie came back I did go for a little drive. I am reading the Last Days of Pompeii72 and think I shall like it.

Have I not brought up the past days to a full enough extent? Oh I got a letter from Mr Hart the other night. I do not know if I shall answer it or no.

I may as well tell you I suppose. Hattie does not like my going out with Ben and has kindly said that I might speek to him when we met but as for any further intercourse it was

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71 The “new baby” is Ruth, Julius’ and Hattie’s daughter, born in June.

72 Set in first-century Rome, The Last Days of Pompeii (1834) by Edward Bulwer-Lytton covers the adventures of Glaucus, a high-class Pompeiiian who is caught in a love quadrangle that meets an explosive (hah) climax when the volcano Vesuvius erupts.
not to be thought of. That was Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning I took him out driving. But I did not feel obliged to tell her or share the candy with her as I did with the others. If I had offered it I do not suppose she would have taken what so wicked a man bought. Ooh yes she would too.

I wonder why she can give no one credit for a good thought or act and will persist in believing them all alike, bad. I dont care what she says. I will not believe unproved evil of anyone.
Chapter 20:
“What a delightful time we had”
September – December, 1886

Sept 1
Dear Journal writing again as you see and now while I [have] just a little while let me
tell you of the last few days.
Dr is here and Hattie is somewhat beter. He goes tomorrow morning.
Last Saturday I went down to P [Plattsburgh] to have some teeth filled and did not get
back until last Tuesday night. I has a very nice time. For one thing, I was not deserted by my
two greatest admirers. Ben called on me four times and was out of town one day during my
stay and Will came three times and walked home with me once.
It seems absurd at it is but they evidently wanted to make the most of there
opportunity. Ben gave me two pounds of candy. He wants to make me sweet I suppose. I
would give a good deal to know just in what light he regards me but I would not want him to
tell me and, as no one but himself can know, I shall undoubtedly never know.
I hope though and believe that he thinks just as I do and is content in what we will
always be, good friends. If he wishes more he will not get it that is very certain, and I
sometimes feel as though I ought to tell him so but how can I say such a thing to him or
anyone. No it will have to go as it is. I can not help it that I can see.

Sept 3rd.
Morning and here I am sitting before my little trunk which holds my treasures, letters
ect and a lovely collection it is. Sitting here eating the last of Ben’s candy and he, with eyes
that see not and ears that here not, is before me. And yet he looks so natural that it almost
might be he. Of what good are photographs any way save to recall what has been and is not.
It is a perfect day and I know where I would like to be, at the lakes fishing. Ah me I
wonder if I will go.

Sept 12th 1886.
Dear Journal, I have but just returned from Hemmingford Canada where I have been
since Tuesday. I came last night. Papa and I drove out and reached there in the evening. I had
not ever been there but a short time before. Miss Helen Latham took me to a social where we
both enjoyed ourselves very much indeed for me met there two young gentelmen from
Montreal, Mr Parker whoes people came to H. this spring and Mr Armstrong. Their mothers
introduced them and Mr A. and myself got along so nicely together. They went home with us
eect ect.
The next day we only saw them to bow and the next they were going. But very
fortunately they missed the train and so staid. I too had ment to go to home that morning but
Helen said if I would stay and go to the fair she would come home with me Saturday so I
stayed and went.
Of course Mr P. + Mr. A. were there and what a delightful time we had. They drove
around the rinks and what a nice time Mr. A. and I had. He was my special attendant. Then
we walked down together to where we had left our horse and he took me home. The road to
/Harlach/ is lovly and I never shall forget that drive.
They called in the evening and went away the next morning. Helen says that Harry Armstrong, that is his name, is completely crushed and the table said so to and really he acted like it. And to tell the truth I liked him too.

We went to church to day and saw Will and Grace. They have been here since Wednesday night. They are coming up tomorrow and I am going to try to have Will and Ben come up together for an evening.

Sept 18 1886.

Ben and Will did not come up together but Ben and Mr Morris did Wednesday evening. Will, Grace + I came up Monday and, for the first time in my life, I became realy in the least acquainted with him and to tell the truth I enjoy my new acquaintance. He is very nice and we got on famously. I have bade him a final goodbye three times and I am quite sure that the one I said today will be the last one, as he goes tonight.

As he could not come, so I enivted Ben and then went to envite Fred /Roleson/ but he could not come either so I sent word to Ben to bring some one and he brought Fred Morris. It must be a Fred matter!

We had a lovely time and nice refreshments, food was delicious. What more can I say except that I see Ben again today.

Oct 19th

Dear old Journal, how long it has been since I have writen to you. I have told you nothing since…ah since when.

Ben visited this morning although my work is all undone here, I am writing for I am somewhat in the mood for it. Realy I must tell you that I have sent by /Helling/ for the velvet for my jacket and expect to get it monday when I shall immediately have it made.

And that Mr Amesbury and Mr Parker came out to see me about a week ago. How surprised I was to see them and what a delightful time we had. I must write to Mr A soon. I wonder if we shall have nice times when I am in Montreal? I hope so.

I spent the most of last week in Plattsburgh and had a pleasant time. Shall I record it? Victor Weaver saw me home from the Festival one night. I was pleased and amused for I had made up my mind that he should pay me some attention.

Tom Smith said he was coming up today. I wonder if he will. To be sure it is an engagement but I hardly think he will keep it. I wonder why he will persist in trying to force his attentions on me. He can but know that I do not find them agreeable and I donot think it is because he likes me particularly. I think him my evil genius.

But good bye. Duty calls and I must away. I hope to meet some /shie/ boy as Mr A said. How oddly I feel today, what ails me I wonder.

Nov 20th

Dear Journal, I have just returned from Plattsburgh where I have been since Wednesday and have had a very nice time. Went down to attend the Chautauqua and read a paper on the Great Charter that was very well received.

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73 The Chautauqua movement, in vogue from the 1870s through the 1930s, was like a carnival of ideas and culture. For three to seven days every year, many rural communities set up pavilions, and, under the eaves, thousands of people flocked to sermons, concerts, political orations, comic shows, plays, and readings. Founded in 1874 as a residential summer camp for Sunday school teachers on Lake Chautauqua in western New York,
Thursday afterward Ben came over (I saw and had quite a long visit with him Wednesday.) about half past ten and stayed till after five. He said I was not to consider that a call, it was a visit. He was the same as usual, only more so.

I can not make up my mind if he cares for me or not. Sometimes I think he does and sometimes not, most often not. It is better I fear, of course we both understand that all this can never amount to anything. Still I hope that we may always be the best of friends.

I do not think John looks with as much favor or attention as he used. I wonder if Will said anything to him. I have a good mind to ask.

Last night I went to a social at the M.E.B. Will was there, gave me refreshments, came home with me and stayed till twelve o'clock. I don't know why but I don't think he ever tried me as much as he did last night. I am afraid we would not be friends long if I saw much of him. Every three days for instance.

The fun of it was that when we were coming home we met Ben ha ha. I don't think Will knew him but I did. Ben was coming to see me tonight but had to go as I am not there. This /????/ fun tonight they did before though.

Oh Ben and I were together today and who should see us but Mr Parmenter. I am awfully glad. Ben says Mr P is mashed on me... if he only knew. But I do though he knows more than I can account for and, as I can not account for it, he must the first chance I get.

Dec 25th 1886.

Christmas day and a sadder Christmas I have never never known. Emer is dead and I who would drape the world in black [do] not even wear mourning. Emer is dead, oh journal do you... can you know what that means. My dear Cousin, my best friend and... I could not believe it, I could not believe. I strive to think there must be some mistake but to day I received what must be the last link in the chain of evidence as paper telling me of his death and burial.

He died a week ago last Sunday night the 12th of December. One week after, almost the hour of his death, I wrote him the merriest of Christmas letters, all unconscious as I was that the one to whom I was chatting was far beyond the reach of mortal tongue or pen.

Wednesday I sent him a Christmas box Birdie and I had made. Such a lovely fine screen and I made Emer the prettiest watch case that I ever saw and I bought cards for the children. Thursday I again went to the office, but the mail was gone and I thought I would try to catch it at Morrisonville. They gave me my mail and I noticed a black banded letter but supposed it was from H.A. so did not wonder at its sombre border. I put it in the front of my cloak without looking at it and drove home in the best of spirits. How I enjoyed the drive, the last I shall enjoy for many a day.

While waiting for Mark to come out I could not leave so I settled my self down to the enjoyment of Carries letter when... Oh journal, I can not tell the rest nor mention the bitter bitter grief of the last five days.

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the Chautauqua idea quickly expanded. In less than a decade, copycat Chautauquas appeared in rural locations across the country, providing education and entertainment for the masses. Based on an ideal of populist empowerment, the Chautauqua assemblies brought information to people who were not rich or centrally located enough to pursue higher education (Tapia, 1997).

Mary refers to the Magna Carta, the English charter, originally issued in 1215, that established legal restrictions on the King's power and legal protections (notably habeas corpus) for his subjects. The Magna Carta had a great influence on Western common law and the U.S. Constitution.
Emer is dead – that ought to tell enough without another word and yet I can not make it seem so. He never seemed so near me as at present. I can almost feel his touch and hear his cheery voice. If he were to come into the room this moment it would hardly surprprise me. His face has haunted me all day just as he looked as he was going away last year. When he looked back to wave me his last adieu, how little I thought it was his last that I should never never see him, never on earth. He and Susie and the children were coming in the spring.

Oh Emer Emer life is cruel but death is terriable to those who are left behind. Oh Emer you who are the first of my friends to die, stretch out your hands across the mystic river and quench me. Clasp them close and draw me over.

Journal you will not care to hear more of this sad sad Christmas. I will not tell you more, only this, that about two months ago Emer sent a photograph of himself that is a perfect likeness. Can I tell you how I prize it? That with his letter and some other things I shall put away in memory of a life that for a time mingled so kindly with mine and then went out leaving me in darkness.
March 19th 1887.

Dear Journal, How long it is since I have written and I almost thought I would not write again but every one is away but Baby Ida so I am going to I am going to tell you a little of what I have been doing.

In Feb. I went to Canada and was in Montreal the week of the Carnival. I enjoyed it all very much and would like to tell you all about it but have not time or space. The storming of the ice castle was magnificent, the Art Gallery very fine, the city all that I had expected and my friends attentive and kind, what more could I ask. And really I enjoyed the week.

I spent another week in Hemmingford two weeks in Mooers and have been home just one week yesterday.

Helen + I had our pictures taken in our toboggan suits and they are very good. Ben has some new ones taken and when I saw him Sunday he told me he would give me one if I would give him back the old one, but I hope to have both.

You see Journal that he is still on the horizon, so is Will. So are they all in fact unless I except Mr Armstrong who is engaged to a Miss Mary Bond. But we are the best of friends and most likely will always remain so. Mr Parker has been devoted and somewhat taken the place that Mr A can not now fill, though I do not like him half so well.

I never expected to get a love letter and the announcement of the writers engagement to some one else all in the same envelope, but such was the case when Mr A wrote me a note to tell me of his. It was a new experience for me but many have come since I last wrote. I think more of him than ever before for that letter however, it was so honorable and manly and true to all involved.

Baby is crying and I must take her so good bye for I dare not say how long.

Apr 10th

Easter Sunday. Did I write a year ago today? I hardly know. I have not been to church although the day was a beautiful one. The snow is fast departing and really spring is here.

I have not been very well for the last few days and today have the addition of the blues. Maggie has been visiting me but went home Wednesday. Tuesday night I gave a party for her. All seemed to enjoy themselves, at least they said so. Ben and Fred Morris were here but Helen was not. I have written to her today, oh I can not write good bye. Floren Grey just sent me his picture.

The yearly Carnival in Montreal, Quebec, Canada ran for a week and drew visitors from both the United States and Canada. During the 1887 Carnival, an ice palace of over 14,000 square feet attracted crowds. In an impressive display, the castle’s 100-foot-high tower was defended by Gatling gun “when attacked by the Snowshoers’ phalanx. The gun [shot] volleys of colored fire, with all the effects of a battle,” the Plattsburgh Sentinel reported, as awed as Mary was with the “storming” of the castle (PS, Jan. 28, 1887). Carnival goers also enjoyed smaller ice sculptures, ice skating, tobogganing, parades, and free admission to many museums and conservatories in the city.
Apr 13th.

Ernest is making sugar and today I took his dinner up and ate with him thinking to enjoy it as I once did. But the old feeling would not come back. I enjoyed it but not in the old way. I never can ever feel a child again.

Apr 17th

I have been reading in my Journal and can hardly make it seem that I am really the me who wrote it. I look back at the past and smile at my folly and pain and anger. How could I ever have felt in that way.

Yet it seems that I did. It is like a book with all the actors playing a part. E.P. seems to have been an important one. Yes quite important and now I find that more than once he wished that me might be strangers, but always came back. I wish it now and the result is that we are. I meet him often but I think that no one who did not know would imagine that I ever saw him before.

Oh he has gone out of business again I suppose, the confinement was too much for him. Ben told me of it. He likes to keep me posted on that quarter.

I am writing an article for Shakespeares day of the Chautauqua. They manage to keep me writing. The time before I have a paper on Newton.76

Dear Journal how would you like to go to Bismarck. Did you know I thought of going there to teach. But it may all come to nothing.

May 7th.

Dear old journal, this is my birthday. My twenty second birthday and – ah well. Why should I afflict you with the pain and unrest of the last few days especially today. Every body seems to be going to Europe and I so want to go and of course can not. Probably I never can and all for the want of mony. I almost feel tonight as thought I would sell myself for an unlimited supply.

We are cleaning house and I have been working hard all day and am so tired. I hardly think so.

Fred Morris father is dead. I am so sorry.

I have a new picture of Ben.

My garden is nearly made. Good night for ever so long.

May 8th.

Papa gave me a colt for my birthday and I am delighted with it for I love horses. No one can object to that or tell me that they are not good enough for me. To bad to be so very desirving is it not.

May 24th.

I burned Ben’s letters today and in them I have cremated more than they were ever in themselves. He is doing what I imagined, an injustice to himself, and probly it is only imagination, for can you call an injustice to one better self that which we take delight in and

76 Presumably Mary is writing about Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727), the British scientist who discovered universal gravitation and codified the three laws of motion.
have always done. Hardly I think. He does not even try to live up to the good he knows and that I always believed to be in him.

Was I mistaken. Did I, while condemning others for the same thing, clothe him in the attributes that I admire and think then his. I have not quite decided.

What a difference it makes when you see a thing. I would hardly have been so angry for I knew much of this before, but seeing a thing brings it home so sharply that these waves of passion are not good for me.

I wish that I need not have to meet them, but in spite of the discipline that my passions have received, they will come and then are swept away...all the barriers that I have built with so much care and patience.

I gathered brick brack for some fancy work yesterday and there was a good deal left this morning. I piled it in the fireplace a while, glistening Leaf. And touched a match to it and, as the flames leaped out, I gave to their keeping the letters. One sheet fell outside the fire as though trying to save itself but it was doomed and no effort of its own could save it. The words look up at me in mute reproach, as though pleading for a kind thought to a long cherished happy friendship and thus they glowed red and bright.

They darkened and died and when the last little tongue of flame had fallen, the wind crept in through the open door and whirled the ashes round and round and so it ended; then I went out and gathered my pansies. This is symbolical. Far in the future, though I shall travel, I shall come back for a moment to strew heartsease over the ashes of a dead past.

June 18th.

Dear old Journal. Saturday and this afternoon I am going to P [Plattsburgh] and spend Sunday night with Miss /Huell./ Monday morning I start for Barre to attend commencement. I expect a lovely time. Fred says we shall have one. Minny Hollister may come back with us.

July 1st.

“The very same scene in which you are the only ones concerned is nothing to you it is everything to me.”77 Ben’s father is dead. How sorry I am for them all. I have seen him and Mrs March. How terrible it is for everyone.

Lillian and her cousin Elmer Eastman were here yesterday and we had a very enjoyable time. I rather like him.

I am going down to Port Henry with Lill when she goes home. Wont I have a lovely time. I enjoyed my trip to Barre oh so much and met lots of lovely people and have as Lill says something ahead.

Sept. 5th.

Dear old Journal. How many days weeks and even months have passed and still I have not written to you and now that most of the company has gone and the house is quiet, what shall I say. I hardly know how it came about but Mr Parker has been here and spent two or three days and I – well I can hardly say it for what will you think of me, but it is true I could like him very well if he were only better looking. But as it is oh dear...he is quite devoted to me and frightened me half to death, but I guess he can take care of himself. I shant undertake the task.

77 Mary appears to be quoting an essay by H.R. Haweis, “My Musical Life.”
I did not tell you of Elmer Eastman, Lillian’s cousin who was here visiting her and with whom I must confess I flirted most outrageously. I have his photograph + he has mine. By the way I have some new ones. We correspond and he seems to think a great deal of me and I like him ever so much. Mrs Hogan is much exercised for fear I shall marry him. Poor Elmer it would be such a calamity. I rather expect to go to PH [Port Henry?] quite soon with Lillian but he will not be home so my mind is easy for proprieties.

Will Hogan has come home and they have all been up here and I am some what more acquainted with him the result being – oh he makes me shiver so – another one whom I liked gone. When will I find one that I can respect and admire from first to last.

Ben and Fred Morris were up here last night so that we made the last of Helens stay quite a success. We had a great time and I think we all enjoyed it ex. we had to pack, sleeping dress breakfast and get to the depot in the mean time, that is 7:17. I am tired good night.

Oct 15.

Dear Journal what shall I tell you how I went to WP [West Plattsburgh] and did not like the place and what a lovely time I had and after all Elmer was at home and I was delighted when I got there and found it out and how we visited springs mines graves furnaces festivals boated drove walked gathered specimens went to Lake George and saw the most lovely lake in the world. The moon rose while we were there and I shall never forget Lake George by moonlight or our long walks on the pier. Oh how lovely it was, it is as a gem in my memory. He gave me a book of /??/? on the Lake and a paper weight of P.H. [Port Henry?] granate both of which I prize most highly.

Our grand musical convention is next week and I expect it will be the finest that we have ever had. Elmer is come up and I expect a very nice time. Baby is ill with /??/ fever but not dangerously so. Dr is here. I have just writen to Floren Cory a new correspondent you see. Miss /Stevenes/ sent me her picture the other day in exchange for mine. Elmer put the one he has in a beautiful frame.

Mr Parker went to Hemmingford when he thought I was there and I was not. I wonder if he will come when I am there.

Oh I am learning to ride and get on nicely and enjoy it oh so much. Elmer + I are going to try to ride while he is here, wont it be splendid.

I have seen Charlie Ransom + had quite a nice visit with him. He has changed some and wanted to bring me home but I would not go. I wonder if he remembered.

Ben went to Lake George and if he did enjoy it, enjoyed seeing Elmer + me together.

Good night.

What motive has a man to live if not for the pleasure of discourse.
Socrates.
What Happened Next?

Mary

After the period covered by her diary, Mary’s life was scantily documented, but, from various official records, we can glean the traces of her later years.

The most detail about Mary’s post-diary life may be found in Feinberg Library’s Special Collections at SUNY Plattsburgh, in Plattsburgh, New York. The Collins papers held there include letters written to Mary by Fred Johnson. Fred was an itinerant miner whose family lived in Plattsburgh. He himself worked at various mines in British Columbia and Colorado. Coincidentally enough, Fred’s letters show Mary engaged in a protracted, ambivalent courtship with Fred, similar to her relationship with Mr. Parmenter in her diary.

Fred’s letters to Mary span over 10 years, from 1891 to 1903. While we only have his side of the correspondence, we can piece together the full story from his summaries of her letters. They obviously loved each other very much, and Fred wanted to marry Mary, but she demurred. Below are excerpts from Fred’s letters:

Fred responds to a refusal of Mary’s. She was probably turning down his marriage proposal:
The International Hotel, Nelson, BC
July 10, 1891
My dear Miss Collins
… I hardly know how to begin my letter to you, though your answer was no more than I could expect. I would much rather have spoken to you than to have written, but, the last evening I was with you, it was so late when we returned that I had no chance to speak to you. I loved you from the first time I met you, but (may I call you May), May, I do not want you to blame yourself, for this for you never gave me the least encouragement, though I hoped you might care a little for me, but perhaps I understand your reasons and think I do, but I hope we may still be friends. I will not trust myself to say any more on this now, except that I do not blame you in the least and that you will always find in me a sincere and devoted friend and hope that you will continue to correspond with me as before, and may I say I will not refer to this again. …
Yours very sincerely
Fred

Mary apparently worries that Fred might marry someone else, but he basically assures her that he would not:
Crystal[, CO]
August 8, 1893
My dear Miss May
… There is not much danger of your dream coming true about my marrying an unknown correspondent – or any one else in fact – with the present outlook for my finances, but of one thing you may be sure: I would never marry a person with whom I was not very well acquainted, but, speaking of writing to the advertisers in those papers, I have had lots of fun with some of them and have had several good correspondents. There was one in particular who resided in Washington DC with whom I had a very pleasant correspondence,
and I found out through a friend of mine all about her and was very much surprised that a young lady in her position should put an advertisement in the paper. …

Yours very sincerely
Fred

Mary expresses her attachment to Fred indirectly by saying that she does not want to see him married because then she would no longer have him as a friend. Fred responds in kind with an indirect testament of his affection, explaining how much he trusts her and values her companionship:

Cripple Creek, CO
April 29, 1894
My dear Miss May
… So you would not like to see me get married because you think you might lose a friend. Could we not still be friends if I was. I would not like to think that that should make any difference in our friendship. I could never understand a man could not have a lady friend to confide in as well as to have a gentleman friend, and the fact is I tell you more of my affairs than I do any one else, for I know I can trust you, but you know that better than I can tell you. …
Yours very sincerely
Fred

Mary expresses her wish to live up north, i.e., with Fred. Fred adds that he loves her very much and, though Mary has not reciprocated, he thinks that she loves him back:

Vancouver, BC
February 11, 1898
My dear May
… You say you would like to live in the north – you like the snow so much – so, when I come down from there and if I go back, I will do my best to persuade you to come with me if there is any means of transportation, but a trip there now under present conditions would be more than I would like to see you undertake.

You say in your letter also that it may be better that we should not see each other before I go. Perhaps it is so, for we would have so much to say to each other, and the parting would be much harder, but I do not think you know what the parting now means to me, and you say you will not ask me to care for you, as it would be useless. I do not think you ever realized how much I do care for – how much I do love – you and ever since I first met you – just think it was nearly eight years ago, and I remember it as well as though it was yesterday and the many drives we had together afterward, and if you knew how often you are in my thoughts, you would then know how useless it would be to ask me not to love you, and yet I know you only cared for me as a friend, but thought you might sometime come to look on me differently, and I want you to know that I will always love you the same, though I know you are far too good for me, and my love for you has made me try to be a better man. …

Yours sincerely
Fred
Fred claims that no one will ever shake the firm hold that Mary has on his heart. Again, he wants her to come to live with him. He thinks it is a good thing that they did not see each other at Christmas, or else they would have monopolized each other’s company:

Dawson [Creek, BC]
January 13, 1901
My dear May

... In your last letter, dear, you asked me if there was someone else I cared for more than you and if so to say so. No, my darling May, there is not and never will be anyone who will take your place in my heart, and my only regret is that I am not in a position at present to go to you at once and bring you away with me, but then I often wonder, dear, if you would care to come to such a cold country and where you could not have all that you were accustomed to. It would be such a change for you, such a different life to that which you have lived, and yet, dear, I believe it would be better for both of us. We might have to be economical for a while, but I believe yet I shall succeed here.

If I was only with you this evening to talk to you, we could talk it all over so much better than writing, and we could settle everything definitely. My one wish, my darling, is to have you with me, and, if certain matters come out all right this spring so that I can start the hay business I spoke of there, it will be a big step towards a home.

So the reason you did not send the photo was because you thought you had changed so much. Dear, did you think that would make any difference to me. My dearest, I love you too well for that, and I hardly think, dear, you realize how much I do care for you. You said you wished I could be with you for Christmas. Well, dear, you did not wish it more than I did, but I am afraid if I had been there that some of your company would have been neglected. I think I would prefer to see you when you did not have so much company, for we would have so much to talk over that we would prefer being alone. ...

Yours as ever
Fred

Mary worries that, if she were married to Fred, she would drag him down and reduce his freedom. He does not think that would be a bad idea:

Dawson [Creek, BC]
March 24, 1901
My dear May

... You asked me what kind of a house I would build if I got the land. It would be one of either two or three rooms and will be built warm and comfortable, but there will be no bucks fastened to the wall, for I know you would not like them and I want it the way you would like it.

My dear, you say you are afraid you would be a burden to me and that, with you, I would be tied down and could not always go and come when I pleased. Well, I think that would be the best thing for [original missing]...

Mary’s misgivings about moving out west do not prevent Fred from dreaming about a homestead with her:
My dear May

... I wish, dear, I was able to go back and see you, but do not want to go until I can bring you back with me and want to have a home to bring you to and, as soon as I can get permanently located up there, will try and go back to see you and bring you back with me...that is, if you will come for, dear, I want you – you do not know how much – want to have you with me and have a nice little home of our own, even if it is a humble one at first. Do you think you would come. ...

Yours as ever
Fred

Sick and weak, Mary writes to Fred, requesting him to come back to Plattsburgh and take care of her. She promises that she will return with him out west when she feels better. But the letter with news about Mary’s illness never reaches Fred. Instead, he only receives a later letter from Mary in which she asks why he did not reply when she was sick. Fred says that, if he had received the letter about Mary’s sickness, he would have immediately attended her, but he cannot do so now. This is the last letter from Fred that appears in the Collins papers:

Vancouver, BC
December 15, 1903
My dear May

... In your letter, you asked me why I never answered your [other] letter which you asked me about. I think I told you in one of my letters from Koyokuk that I have not received it. You say that you wrote it while sick in bed and asking me to come home. No, dear, I never received it, or I should certainly have not only answered it, but would have gone as, at that time, I could have done so, and, if you was ill and wanted me to come, I would certainly go if it was at all possible, as I hope you know, dear, I could not bear to think you was ill and wanted me and [I did] not go. I love you to well for that, dear.

You say you would have come back with me then, but now you could not say whether you would or not, as duty called you to stay at home, and besides that, you say you are not sure whether you care enough for me to do so. Well, love, if I can possibly go back next fall, I shall go, and then we can talk it over and hope you will care enough for me to come for, dear, I believe you do care for me a little, for no one can love you as I do and not have a little of it returned.

My dear, I cannot find words to tell you how much you are loved, though I wish I could, but, as you know, I am not good at expressing what I feel...that is, with a pen, but you will, I hope, believe me when I say I love you with my whole heart and soul.

You tell me that, if I should grow to love someone else, you would not complain, but I will say now, dear, that you will never complain for that cause, for I never expect to meet any one who will be as dear to me as you are, but I once told you, if you met someone whom you could love and whom you could give your whole heart, that I wanted you to tell me, and then I would give you up and wish you Godspeed and yet would keep only loving you. You care – or will I say “love me” – a little, I think, although you have really never told me so any more than you love me as a friend. So now, love, I hope you will understand how I feel towards you.
If I could possess your love, if would be the happiest hour of my life, but, if not and you love someone else, you will never hear one word of complaint for me, for your happiness is all I care for, and to see you happy I will be content, however much it might hurt me. Is that not the way you would wish me to feel. I hope so.

... I wish I could see you all again. I remember as if it were yesterday the first time I called at your house and your mother came to the door. I was not sure I was at the right house until I saw her, and then I could see the resemblance, and I will remember my last visit and how I wanted to tell you how I loved you, but could not. ...

Yours sincerely
Fred C. Johnson

During Mary’s epistolary drama with Fred, Mary’s father Alonzo died in 1899. In his will, he bequeathed two things to Mary. He stipulated that she and Ida, her younger sister, could remain living on the family farm as long as they were unmarried. He also left $500.00 to Mary (Collins, 1889).

Mary eventually moved out of the house she had grown up in. The census for 1900 showed Mary’s mother Julia as the eldest in a household of various Collins children and servants, including Mary (U.S. Census Bureau, 1900), so she must have struck out on her own after that.

The historical record is silent about Mary’s activities until 1920, when she appeared in the U.S. census as a member of a three-person family in Alexandria, New York, containing herself, her widowed sister Birdie, and the sisters’ niece, Ruth Ransom, daughter of Mary and Birdie’s deceased eldest sister Hattie. Mary’s age was listed as 54 and her occupation as “newspaper manager” (U.S. Census Bureau, 1920).

Along with Birdie and Ruth, Mary eventually moved to Sarasota, Florida. The 1930 census showed that the three owned their own home, valued at $5,000.00. The census did not record Mary’s job at this time (U.S. Census Bureau, 1930), but, according to her death certificate, she worked as a nurse for approximately 10 years before her death (Florida State Board of Health, 1938).

Mary died on November 16, 1938, at the age of 73, of “cardiac decompensation” (Florida State Board of Health, 1938). In other words, her heart stopped. Her obituary in a local Plattsburgh paper read as follows:

Miss Mary E. Collins, a native of West Plattsburgh and for the past 29 years a resident of Sarasota, Florida, passed away in that city on Nov. 16. She was a daughter of the late Alonzo and Julia Adams Collins of West Plattsburgh.

Miss Collins is survived by one sister, Mrs. Bertha [Birdie] Martin, of Sarasota; two brothers, Frederick M. Collins of Chicago, and Ernest R. Collins of Plattsburgh; four nieces, Miss Ruth Ransom of Sarasota, Mrs. Royal Nonner of Elizabeth, N.J. and Miss Levena Collins of Plattsburgh; also one nephew, Ernest M. Collins of Elizabeth, N.J.

The funeral was held Friday afternoon, Nov. 18, in Sarasota. Interment was in that city (Anonymous, 1938).
**Alonzo and Julia**

Alonzo and Julia both participated actively in the Clinton County Farmers’ Association (CCFA), which held its first annual meeting in December, 1890 (PS, Dec. 12, 1890). Alonzo regularly spoke to CCFA members about diverse aspects of farming.

While her husband addressed the practical tasks of farming, Julia took a more philosophical view of the subject. She regularly wrote essays on the traits of successful farmers, which she then read at CCFA meetings. For example, her first such essay, “Thoroughness as an Element of Success,” read at the CCFA’s 1890 annual meeting, began by praising the Yankee values of preparedness, organization, sobriety, and assiduity. While some people are born with these virtues, “[w]ith most,” she observed, “it must be the result chiefly of training and education” (PS, Dec. 19, 1890).

Julia then went on to advocate an organized, accredited correspondence course for “agriculturalists.” She proposed a method of instruction “similar to the Chautauqua school,” where students studied independently most of the time, but had the opportunity to attend lectures annually in person at the campus in Chautauqua, New York. Once future farmers were thus well educated, predicted Julia, young men would not be so quick to flee to the city for more lucrative professions. “Then farming, which was the first, [and] is therefore time-honored, will become among the most honorable occupations of men,” Julia concluded, no doubt to thunderous applause from an audience full of those whose livelihood she complimented so highly (PS, Dec. 19, 1890).

Alonzo Collins died on February 8, 1899, halfway through his 82nd year. He was buried in the Addoms-Collins Cemetery in Plattsburgh, close to Hattie. Ernest and Fred were executors of his estate (PS, Mar. 24, 1899).

Julia stayed on the farm, where she presided over an expanding family. In 1900, according to the census, she lived there with Fred and Georgana, his wife, Mary, Ernest, Ida and Ruth, Hattie’s daughter. At this point, the farm required the services of two hired men in their 20s, a testament not only to the farm’s increasing population, but also its burgeoning prosperity. One Hellena Crayman, age 10, listed as a “stray” “at school,” also lived with the Collinses, perhaps helping out with housework and small chores (U.S. Census Bureau, 1900).

Julia died on April 14, 1909, three months before her 79th birthday. She was buried in the Addoms-Collins Cemetery next to Alonzo and Hattie.

**Birdie**

Birdie gave lessons in voice, violin, and piano in nearby Chazy in the early 1890s. “She is recommended as a teacher of the thorough method,” the *Plattsburgh Sentinel* informed readers, “and a fine musician; hence we have no doubt of her success, and that of her scholars” (PS, Sept. 25, 1891).

After some time as a single music teacher, Birdie got married, but not to her beau Matt, featured so prominently in Mary’s diary. Instead, Birdie married Hebert Danforth Martin (Allen, 1956). Because the 1930 census puts Birdie’s “age at first marriage” at 29 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1930), Birdie must have married around 1893. She moved to Alexandria, New York, in the 1910s (U.S. Census Bureau, 1920). Birdie and her husband had no children of their own, but raised Hattie’s daughter, Ruth Ransom, with Mary’s help.

Birdie suffered the early death of her husband, but did not want for a livelihood. The 1920 census showed her as the head of a three-person household that contained Mary and
Ruth. She was ably supporting her family at age 56 as a “newspaper proprietor,” presumably of the same paper for which Mary was the manager (U.S. Census Bureau, 1920).

After some years in New York, Birdie relocated much farther south. She moved with Mary and Ruth to Sarasota, Florida (U.S. Census Bureau, 1930). There she outlived her beloved Mary (Anonymous, 1938).

Ida

Ida apparently stayed in Plattsburgh. She was unmarried and visiting relatives in Lobdell, New York, as of January, 1902 (PS, Jan. 31, 1902). She married Hiram E. Bills on January 11, 1914. She died on July 21, 1932.

Ernest

Ernest took over his parents’ farm. He married Francis Curtis (Allen, 1956), affectionately called Fannie. They had a daughter, Lorena, in 1907. Lorena moved from the area after high school to become a teacher in New Hyde Park, New York (PS, Sept. 9, 1927). Lorena eventually returned to West Plattsburgh, occupying the Collins family farm, which was broken up and sold after her death (Allen, 1956).

Ernest also followed in his father’s footsteps by joining the CCFA. While Alonzo thrived on debate and public speaking, his son shied away from these extroverted pursuits. He took a more behind-the-scenes role in the CCFA, on the committee for the annual picnic, for example (PS, Aug. 19, 1899). Despite his more retiring bent, Ernest was no less locally influential; when the New York State Department of Agriculture organized a free educational Farmers’ Institute in the city in 1898, Ernest was a member of the “arrangement committee” (PS, Dec. 2, 1898).

Fred

Fred married Georgia [Georgana?] Hawley. They had four children. By the time Mary died in 1938, Fred and his family resided in Chicago, Illinois (Anonymous, 1938).

Hattie and family

Hattie’s busy, cheerful family unit – Julius, Hattie, Leigh, and Ruth – lasted only briefly after Mary ended her diary. The first tragedy struck on September 28, 1888, when Hattie died of tuberculosis (Allen, 1956). She was just 28, laid to rest in the Addoms-Collins Cemetery in Plattsburgh where many of her relations were buried.

Leigh, whose mischievous antics so captivated Mary, grew up to be a classically educated young man. He graduated from Plattsburgh High School in 1901 as class president (PS, May 24, 1901). He then pursued a college degree at Cornell University, in Ithaca, New York, but became ill in the typhoid epidemic of 1903 (PS, Oct. 7, 1904). He never fully recovered, and, before his graduation, he died of the same disease that killed his mother (Allen, 1956).

As for Ruth, she was two and a half when Hattie died. In a move that was not uncommon in that time, she joined her mother’s family’s household. In other words, she came to live at the Collins family farm. The 1900 census showed her living under the care of Mary’s widowed mother Julia in the farmhouse where Mary had grown up (U.S. Census Bureau, 1900). Birdie and Mary raised her as their own after Hattie’s death.
Though she did not live with her father Julius and her brother Leigh, Ruth visited them regularly in Dannemora (PS, Jan. 27, 1899). But Ruth’s closest bonds were with her aunts. When Mary and Birdie moved to Alexandria, New York, in the 1910s, Ruth, single and in her 30s, followed them (U.S. Census Bureau, 1920). From there, she moved with her aunts to Sarasota, Florida (U.S. Census Bureau, 1930).

Ruth lived in Sarasota until her death on September 11, 1961. She was buried in Sarasota Memorial Cemetery (Genealogical Society of Sarasota, 1992).

Julius Ransom, Hattie’s widower and Mary’s brother-in-law, pursued his career after his first wife’s death. He was appointed in 1889 as head physician of Clinton Prison in Dannemora. In this capacity, he established the first ward for inmates with tuberculosis. He became an expert in the disease, all the while maintaining his general practice. Dr. Ransom married a second time, had two other children, and worked at Clinton Prison until his death in 1923 (PS, Mar. 23, 1923).

Charlie Ransom

Charlie Ransom left his position as head postal clerk in Plattsburgh and apparently moved to Omaha, Nebraska. But he returned to town on the night of November 8, 1888 to celebrate Benjamin Harrison’s victory in the Presidential race. As reported by David Kellogg, the town’s doctor, “[the] crowd of about 30 went all over town. They had brooms, torches, red lights, and drum corps. A little before eight, headed by Charles Ransom, they went into the post office and swept it out…” (Kellogg, 1970, p. 53)
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Most Plattsburgh Sentinel articles were written anonymously, but some of them, such as the transcript of Julia Collins’ 1890 address to the CCFA, have obvious authors. In the interest of consistency, however, all Sentinel articles have been cited the same way: (PS, date, year).

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