

DIARY OF
ALEXANDER RICHMOND EDMISON

Microfilmed by
ONTARIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RECORDS AND ARCHIVES

September 1959

Alexander Bickerton Edmison was born on 17 January 1839 and died 13 July 1863. The diary which follows was apparently started by him about the middle of 1856, but the part which has been preserved covers only the period from the end of December 1856 to 16 November 1858. Although it was not by any means entered daily, it gives a fairly detailed account of his life as a school teacher, his efforts to improve his education, and his ambitions for the future.

The diary has been lent to the Archives for microfilming by Mr. J. A. Edmison of Ottawa, who states that the writer "apparently achieved a very good local reputation as a teacher before his early death, and was given a post of responsibility in Peterborough by Egerton Ryerson." (Letter of 7 August 1959 to Mr. Edwin C. Guillet).

This is the diary of Alexander Edmison, eldest son
of Thomas H. Edmison.

rolling around the floor, starving and I can't help it.
Let them starve, they are not my children, I can-
stand the cold. What an abominable profession is
school teaching, I hate it as I hate the devil.
There is one good subject good at school to day I think
she would make me a pretty little wife.
28th December

Today I engaged for a year to teach
at my old school house, salary \$75

1st of January 1838

It is now a few minutes past 12
I have been at the watch meeting and have just got home.
It beat last night with Mrs Lyons, it was three o'clock
23rd we fell asleep, I felt twelve months ago I
was sitting in Fisher's classroom, how quickly has
the last twelve months slipped away and with how
little improvement. The first two months of the year
I was at the Union School, the next two and a half I
was at home working, the next 2 1/2 I was at the Normal
school and the last five months I have been here. On
the whole I have spent the year poorly. Another year is now
opened before me and it is my firm determination
to spend it better than the past year. May God
Almighty help me and enable me so to do.
1st January.

This is my last day in this section. There are only 10 pupils
present - it is intensely cold, the fire gives no heat

9th January 1837 Friday, My Father came up to Madell
for me yesterday. When we got as far as Boyce's I
jumped off, went in, and staid all night; I got
home to day at noon. I commenced to teach on Monday
I am right glad that I am done with Section No. 7,
I have been there five months and taught faithfully
and done my duty but yet not pleased the people.
My name at present stands low as a teacher I
must exert myself to the utmost to raise it
18th January, Sunday

On Friday night Mr Pritchard and I went
out to his Mother's, we came home yesterday morning, it
was a terrible Journey. Yesterday was my 18th Birthday
I think I will remember it

15th January, Sunday

I recieved my money from School Trustees
of Section No 1 Yesterday, After paying my board
I have £ 30/15

16th February, Sunday

I was in town last night and bought a
watch for which I paid 15 dollars

17th February Tuesday

Last Wednesday night I was
at Peter Millar's wake and sat up till 6 in
the morning. Last Friday night I was in town
James Dixon George Edmison, and I did a
curious thing. Last Saturday night I was at
the fortune teller's

3

9th March, Sunday, Last Tuesday the board
of Education met, I appeared at the examination
and took out a first class certificate.

14th of April 1857 Sunday

I was at the Division room
in London last Tuesday night, last night I was
at the fortune teller's and took a young lady
in with me. My thoughts to day have been
centered on the fair object I took last night
to the fortune teller's

21st April

Yesterday I was at the funeral of the late
Mr Thomas Polkison. five years ago I attended his school.
It was with him I first commenced to learn

27th Saturday night at the, Sunday

I have three months to put in before my engagement
but this season is out, and, from the present
miles of my mind, I prophesy that I will
make more improvement during that time, than
I have for the past fourteen months, "the Intellectual"
the form, which has haunted my imagination day and
night for the past 24 months, now haunts me no
more, I feel freed from the power which she
exercised over my daily and nightly thoughts.
I have made more improvement during the past
three months, than I have in any other three
months, since I left the Normal School, this
may be assigned to the Division,

12th September—, I was at the division room last night, and took the most active part in the debate. The debate has been going on now for the last three nights, and is still to go on, since its commencement I have made five addresses speaking each time on an average more than ten minutes. All my reading and studying for the past five weeks has been on Napoleon and Wellington. This subject occupies all my thoughts, I have not yet come to any definite conclusion what to do next year. it is a matter yet hidden in the obscurity of the future.

~~12~~ September the 17th

I was thinking to day that it would be a good plan for me to teach on until I came of age. If I took

and read, "The Swiss trials," out by which time
it was one o'clock, Yesterday morning I did
nothing - Last night I read "Gaiety" from
beginning to end.

30th September, Time is
flying on wings of wind, 1857 will soon
number among past ages, I got home from
the voices last night about 12, I then sat
down and read the whole of, "The things own"
by which time it was nearly three in the morning.

1st of October 1857, Thursday, has been a very
dull rainy disagreeable day, Last evening I
prepared part of a speech which I expect to make
on Saturday night at the, "Band of Hope Division."
I have three months to put in before my engagement
in this section is out, and, from the present
state of my mind, I prophesy that I will
make more improvement during that time, than
I have for the past fourteen months, "the Intellectual"
the form, which has haunted my imagination day and
night for the past 24 months, now haunts me no
more, I feel freed from the power which she
exercised over my daily and nightly thoughts.
I have made more improvement during the past
three months, than I have in any other three
months, since I left the Normal School, this
may be assigned to the division,

20th of October. Yesterday was a day almost lost by me,
the only thing I done was to finish the first volume
of Sophisti Wapikani. In the evening I went over to
Uncle John's and talked with my cousins till bed time.
8th October

Last Friday, about 4 P.M. Mr Lyon
came to my place and staid with me this morn
morning until nine when he took his departure.
He and I went to the division on Friday night, it
was a free night and the room was pretty full.
During the night I was called upon to make a speech.
I did make a short one and received great praise
for it. When I went to bed on Friday night
I felt conscious that by my speech I had done
something towards lifting my name from obscurity.
I also felt gratified by Mr Lyon's bestowing upon me this
company and friendship which increased my
respectability. On Saturday evening I went
over to the division on the river where I
made a short speech. On Sunday James
Lion came up to see me he and I spent
about all the afternoon receiving every desired
object with his telescope. On Monday evening
I was in town. On Tuesday evening George
Paul came to see me and staid the night.
Yesterday I was very sick and didnt go to bed
at 1 P.M. but lay till 7 this morning. I have
had no school today in consequence of my bad cold.

17th October, "Saturday at noon" I was at the division
last night I am not the least afraid now to speak in
Public - The greater part of my spare time during the
present week has been spent in, "making and getting
off a Temperance speech", which I expect to give at
the River road division this evening - I expect to spend
tomorrow with Mr Pritchard - It is fifteen months to day
since I was sailing down, "the Maple Leaf", "On the
blue waters of Lake Ontario", many and long and solemn
and hopeful were my thoughts that day - twelve
months ago to day I was toiling away in the north
part of the Township, "To day I am toiling away here", "where
shall I be next year at this time", - Three months from to
day I will be 19 years of age, I hope to make a good
deal of improvement before that time, I'm almost
sure that I will, I have taught every day this week,
but have not worked very hard, having only had, but
few scholars, - Whether "Excessive or Moderate drinkers
are the most injurious to society" is a subject for
debate next Friday night, I am appointed to take
the side of the "Excessive drinking" and have George
Edmison and George Milburn to assist me,
George Paul, Andrew Young and Thomas H. Milburn
take the opposite side - If I was rich I would
aim, to get into Parliament, and be one of the
leading men in the country, but however poor as
I am I expect to get that high in my lifetime yet
I saw Charles Manning this morning and was talking to him

20th October "Tuesday evening at half past six," Last
Saturday Evening I was at the vicaroad division and
made a speech, from the division room I went up
to Mr. Rogers with Mr. Pritchard where I staid
all night - On Sunday I heard Dicky Bell preach
Yesterday I made no improvement I have made
no improvement to day. Although I intend to make
some before I go to bed, To day I have had a great
notion of turning out Physiological Lecturer - It
has been exceedingly cold to day, there was also a
good crust of snow to day for the first time
I fixed the schoolhouse windows to day which
made it a good deal warmer - I was a bad writer
years ago and am a bad one yet, I shall never become
a good one until I become less nervous - I have to
go back to Mr. Metherell on the evening of the 30th of
this month; we are going to have a meeting that
evening for the purpose of trying to get up a Temperance
society in that neighbourhood,
21st

On the 17th of September last I made up my mind
to read 18 volumes of history; more than a month has
elapsed and I have only read one small volume; one
month ago to day I commenced to read the History of
Rome, but have not yet finished it, for to fulfill
this scheme I will commence to read De Aguir, in order
to fulfill this plan I pledge myself this day to spend
two hours out of every twenty-four in reading history, I

19
have 19 scholars at school today. I was at the class
meeting last night. Those were present, only, the classleader
myself, and sister Jane, after the meeting was over.
I went with Isaac to his place and got Watson's Institutes.
The debate on "Napoleon and Wellington" has done me
more good than a "Months schooling" it made me
a better teacher, a better father, a better speaker, and
a man of more knowledge. For the past few weeks
I have thought very little about the "Intellectual". It
is strange what a strange influence she had over
me for a year and a half, night and day I used
to think of her, I would at times have went miles to
have spoken to her.

23rd October - "Friday" - I read half an hour in Herodotus
yesterday noon. Last night I went to town and got a new
pair of pants. I also paid Josiah Thomson what I owed
him. I now owe two heavy debts \$8.35 to Mr E Chase and
25 dollars to Mr J Robinson. I will have 262 dollars 50 cents
coming to me for my years wages. I have 10 dollars due
from James Babbie and other ten from George Edmison
and I have 3 dollars 22 1/2 cents on hand. I think I can
easily manage to put 200 dollars in the bank next
year. I have not yet made any arrangements for next
year but I have almost made up my mind to stay
where I am if I can get such an advance upon
my wages. I think if I don't teach here it would be
a good plan to go west where something might
turn out to my advantage. I am getting very nervous

24th October, "Saturday" I was at the division room last night, the debate on Excessive and Moderate Drinkers came off, Mr Lyon and I were on the side of the Excessive drinkers. We gained the debate, — The next debate is to be whether War or Intemperance has been the most destructive to mankind. I have to lead off on the side of war — I find that debates have an excellent effect on me; they raise my intellect, they give me an easier and less embarrassed air in Public, they make me a better conversationalist in fact they are to me an Intellectual tonic — Two months to say I was at Hordon's and talked hard all day; When I look at this time elapsed since then I think it nothing; When I look at the ~~some~~ improvement made since then I think it nothing; When I think what I might have done since I think that I have lost two months of my life; and when I think that I am two months nearer life's close, I reflect with with sorrow yet with hope, that months may roll round untill the last comes and finds me unprepared as ever to meet a sin avenging God.

26th October, "Monday morning" On Saturday evening I went over to Uncle John and staid there all night — On Yesterday forenoon Cousin Dick and I went over to Jimmie's and staid there till after dinner — In the afternoon I went over to Lewis and borrowed the half of Dick's books — I am to night and the next three nights going to prepare a speech which I expect to make on Friday night at Nethercote Schoolhouse.

Page missing.

12

at half past seven which is my usual rising hour these times
Mr Critchard came to my place last evening, after tea time I
went over with him as far as the Town Hall, from there
I went to town to see Mr Rutherford where I staid more
than two hours. I got home and in to bed about half past eleven
- I am perhaps on better terms with Mr Critchard than any other
young man in the world, I can place confidence in him, I can
tell him things that I could tell no other person. Although
I like Mr Rutherford I can't confide in him as I can Mr
Critchard - Mr C has although I respect him there is
something about him "I don't know what" that I do not
like - Mr Stuart I have much love and esteem for and
like to be in his company.

14th November

"Wednesday morning." - It is a year to day since
the pairing bee was at Madill's, I am a year older but scarcely
any better - I have not made up my mind what to do for
1858 but if the trustees of this school offer me £85 per annum
I shall likely stay where I am - I am told by almost every
person that I am Consumptive, that I will die of the
consumption, but I don't believe it, I may perhaps have an organ
that might by abuse fall into a decline but by proper care
I may in the course of a few years become a strong healthy
man - There is a coat of snow three inches thick this morning -
I had a great talk with Fred Sanderson last Saturday -
I repeat that John Liddell won't be well pleased because
I didn't call on him when up that way - I think that
I ~~retained~~ my reputation by being away last week - If the

popularity of a teacher may be judged by the attendance. I am the most popular teacher that ever taught in this school - 1858 is fast approaching and I am making very little improvement. How important a part of a man's lifetime is a year, and how easily it slips away; when it ends we are scarcely sensible of its existence, we think not that we are a long step nearer Eternity; that we are nearer Heaven or Hell, Happiness or misery, for innumerable ages.

5th November "Thursday Morning" - I shall be five years this night since I went up to the pulpit bench in this schoolhouse. I have made no religious improvement since that time. I am worn now than I was then, I have retrograded on the most vital subject that can engage the mind of man - When I think how the months and years are slipping over my head without any improvement on my part, I feel that I am wasting life; doing nothing, & none done in the wide world; My mind pants for something great, for something more than common. I cannot bear the thought of living and dying like ordinary mortals, if I don't get to be celebrated, I shall die of hunger and thirst. I would like to be rich, learned, respectable, and influential, looked up to, Honoured and respected by the people around me; I am amorous, I think I will get married as soon as I can assume to be able to bear the expense of new responsibilities. I have thought a little about this "intellectual" lately I would like to see her and be in her company - I was at Uncle John's last night and staid there all night Sarah and Margaret

14
have just come from Detroit where Robert G. Leming now
lives and where Sarah had been on a visit of four months
I have spent the greater part of my life in a literary
way; from seven to thirteen years of age I went to school to
Old Mr. Huston; after that I went a twelve month to the Union
School in Detroit at four different times; when I have taught
other two month I shall have taught two years and a half
and earned altogether 470 dollars

6th November "Friday morning" I was at home last night
and read the Boston Bby through - When I was at the
Normal School I studied about two months, I found it very hard
to begin to study, when I sat down to study my mind wondered
so much that I made very little progress. I think if I
were going to school now I would have hard work to get
into studying order; I am kind a afraid of going to school
now I feel as if I would rather stay where I am and have
five times and little to do - I am well aware that as
Teacher of this school I have not done my duty I have
wasted a great deal of time and often taught any
thing but faithfully. I have often cut short the lessons of the
Bible and thought about other things when I should
have been thinking about my scholars - I have studied
very little during the past six months, yet I have
greatly increased my respectability and fame -
The average attendance of this school is much greater
than it was last year at this time; it is also much
greater than it was in "Section No 1" last year at
the same time; in fact everything here is encouraging

15
7th November "Saturday" I was at the Division room last night and enjoyed myself very well. I got the officers prevailed to go up to Hethercut's schoolhouse and initiate the new division on Thursday evening next. I also suggested a plan for amusing the division by placing a box in the gate room for the deposition of letters which are to be read by a reader. This plan was adopted by the division and I was appointed reader. These temperance affairs keep me from studying I would have been reading history for the past month had it not been for preparing Temperance Speeches. I often think what a fool I was last spring for going to the fortune tellers, I paid a dollar to have my fortune told, I paid half a dollar to have a Young Ladies told, and I advanced a dollar to have my fortune written down which was very short as she slipped off so suddenly. It was me when I think that I permitted myself to be fooled by an old hag; I hope that this incident may prove a salutary lesson to me as the buying of the whistle was told Benjamin Franklin.

8th November "Sunday at four o'clock" Last night after supper time I went up to Mr. Lewis where he staid all night until ten this morning, when I came home. I have been lying around doing nothing; It has been raining all day and raining all last night. I am now getting rather anxious about what I am to do next year, but am yet as in the dark. I may teach here, I may teach somewhere else, or I may teach myself.

"16th November 1857 Tuesday" I made no improvement of
 mind yesterday, neither did any thing remarkable happen
 or did I do a good days work. This morning is
 clear and cold I have observed Ice for the first time
 this fall - I read the first book of Pope's Homer
 yesterday and liked it very well - One Sunday not long
 ago I read and Relished Byron's English bards and
 Scotch reviewers. On Sunday last I read a chapter
 in Macaulay's History of England - I wish and have
 wished long that I was a good writer, when I was at
 the Normal school I thought writing a trivial thing,
 I thought I could learn to be an excellent writer in a
 few weeks, and so confident was I that I could that I
 told John Ford and Ladue that I would be as good
 a writer as either of them in two months; sixteen
 months have rolled along since that time and I am
 at best a miserable writer and I fear that I will
 never be a good one - I have always been proud of
 my knowledge of Euclid, I have many a time boasted
 of it, at the Normal school I was unsurpassed in that
 delightful study - At the time I left the normal school
 I was getting tired of the close life I led there and had it
 not been for Joseph's death I would have rejoiced very
 much when I left. The short period of my life spent
 at Toronto was a stirring time for me, I very much
 regret that I did not keep a Journal when there
 one Journal of it now would give me the greatest
 pleasure and at the same time much instruction

19th November "Thursday" There is a thin coat of snow on the ground this morning - I was in town last night and spent six shillings and sevenpence halfpenny for which sum I brought home "the Parsonage" "Sidonia" a story by Samartini "two words by Irving" "An Almanack for 1858" "A lock and key" and half a pound of Cream Tartar - I also got last night a letter from Uncle Robert Ricketon who is now in the state of Illinois and who has been for the past four or five years in Kansas and Nebraska - The attendance of scholars at school at present is very good - I saw Robinson Rutherford last evening and had a talk with him - Some of the members of our division are going to make a subscription of a quarter.

21st November, "Saturday" On Friday forenoon about half past ten I was surprised, a carriage drove up to the door, it was Livies with Aunt Ricketon and cousin Robert George. They went up to Father's and staid there till after dinner and then went down to Aunt Jane's. After the school went out I went down to Aunt Jane's and brought Robert George home with me; After that I went up to the division where I had a pretty good time of it, there was a debate on "Intemperance and Beer" I was on the side of Intemperance and was the means of gaining the debate for that side; After the debate it was agreed that there should be a free meeting two weeks from that time and that I and others should make speeches on the occasion - On Saturday I had no school and was in town until after

three o'clock when I came home when I got as far as the
 schoolhouse I found two young Ladies cleaning it out
 I stopped with them until seven; I then went home and
 got my tea; then Robert George and I went over to Uncle
 John and staid there till nine when we came home
 and went to bed - On Sunday morning Robert George
 and I went over to Livings where I staid till eight P.M.
 Aunt Bickerton, Mrs Betty Robinson and Uncle Johany were
 there; I enjoyed myself pretty well; I had my likeness
 over with me Aunt Bickerton got hold of it and is going
 to keep it - In or Monday last I cannot remember anything
 only that at night Aunt B came over to our place and
 staid all night, I was glad when I saw her coming into
 the house - On Tuesday there was a coat of snow was on
 the ground all day; My Father was driving around in his
 cutter, Aunt B staid all night at our place, - On Wednesday
 morning Aunt B left our place when she left I promised
 to go down to Livings on Sunday and see her, At night
 I was in town I sent a letter off to Uncle Ralph - Thursday
 was a very disagreeable day; at night I in company
 with others went up to Wetherscutts schoolhouse and
 attended the North Smith Division; it was twelve o'clock
 when I got home - Yesterday nothing remarkable happened
 At night I was at the division; I made a short speech
 and read a letter that was in the letter box; there
 was not many there It was let out at a few minutes
 past eight - I have not made the least improvement
 in the world during the past nine or ten days

28th November - Last Sunday I was at Livick's, Aunt Richardson was not there, she had gone away, there was two young gentlemen from Peterborough who came this way home with me and gave me a ride - On Tuesday last at evening I was at the class and prayer meeting - Yesterday I had no school as it was a holiday on account of the British army in India, I was helping my Father to draw wood a great part of the day, at night I was at the division and made a speech, there was a great many at the division as it was a fine night. Mr. Spier Wilborn made a speech and observed that while I was speaking he thought I looked like Sir Francis Winch and that I might yet be useful to the province as he has been.

1st December 1837.

"Tuesday Evening" have just come home from the class and prayer meeting, there were only five there, I had quite a talk with Isaac, after it came out. On Sunday last at evening I heard the Reverend Mr. Porter's friend Mr. W^m Agerson's discourse - Yesterday evening I was in town and heard speeches by Mr. Porter, Mr. Agerson, and Mr. Melles, they were excellent, particularly those of Mr. Melles and Mr. Agerson - I was wishing to day that I had the means of graduating at the University of Toronto, it would only take about ten thousand pounds, what a pity that I couldn't have it, what so many useless strutting fellows have more than what they know to do with - I observe that the election of members of Parliament comes off in the latter part of this month there will then be a great political feud for the next three months it will be a good time for me to leave.

20

something about political affairs. It is wonderful that man who lives here but a short time pays so little attention to the things of eternity. To this failing in man may be attributed the poverty and barbarism of mankind. Last evening I missed a good opportunity of doing myself a good turn. I was at meeting, Thomas Milburn was there, he was walking I was riding on horseback. I went riding past him and offered him not a bit of a ride. Now had I given him a ride he would be much more apt to do me a good turn than he is now.

9th December "Thursday evening" I was at Mr Roberts's and Mr Sanderson's last night, it was eleven o'clock when I came home. I have almost decided to day to go to McViear's academy next year and study Latin and Greek. I have been up seeing Mr Milburn this evening and have just come home.

5th December "Saturday morning" Last evening I was at the division last night, after coming home I read the lives of Murray and Dryden, two distinguished linguists. I am thinking these days what to do next year, whether to stay where I am or go to Toronto, were I to consult my own inclination I would stay where I am and if I go to Toronto it will be because I think it the best thing for the long run. Last Wednesday evening Mr Roberts told me of getting drunk being a shame to a teacher and that Mr Ward had actually been reduced to that low degradation. I was sorry when I heard it, sorry to think that a young man like myself should be so regarded in the estimation of all decent people.

21

9th December, "Wednesday evening at nine." It has been raining ever since I got up this morning. It is very disagreeable weather: there is no snow on the ground, and the roads are almost impassable. - Last Sunday I was at the Baptist Church in the forenoon and in the afternoon I was at Michael Sandersons and got wet in coming home. - On Monday evening I was at Uncle Johns. - Yesterday evening Misses Ruth and Famer Milburn were at my place; George and Henry Edrison were also here. - I am yet undetermined what to do next year; I shall have to make up my mind very soon as I only have 13 days more to teach until my time is up.

15th December, "Tuesday morning" Betty Robinson and Mary Smith were at our school. - Last Friday and Saturday - I was at the Band of Hope Division. - Last Saturday night and made a short speech. - I was at Mr Smiths all Sunday and came home at 8 P.M. in the evening. - There is to be a free meeting at the North Smith Division shortly, I will be invited there to make a speech, I will attend. I must prepare a better speech than I have ever yet made. - If I do so I will attentively study how to conduct myself in order to raise my name much higher than it at present stands in that part of the township. - I have not yet determined what to do next year but I think if I were offered to go for a year I would stay where I am. - Last Friday I posted a letter for Uncle Robert Richardson.

16th December "Wednesday Morning" - I was in town last night and took my old pair of boots to Waddell to be polished for which I have to pay three dollars and a half - I am entirely out of money at the present time, and I am also in great need of it; George Edmison has some dollars belonging to me, I must try to get it from him before Christmas, Mr.ritchard owes me 50 cents and I owe Mr. Rhase eight dollars and thirty five cents - The election is now getting pretty hot; it lies between "Short" and "Conger", "Lawers" having no chance; I think it is likely that Short will be re-elected - I have the largest number of scholars in attendance at school now that I ever heard of for this time of the year, there was thirty nine here yesterday, I have only seven more days to teach and then my present engagement will be out; the day before Christmas will be my last - After my present time is out, and I receive my pay, and pay my debts, I will have 200 dollars to the north; this sum I must take care of as it is all that I have, no more now in paying myself to eminence.

17th December "Thursday" I was at Uncle John's last night, there was Miss Swinson and Miss Jane Milbourn were there, I was so dull that I could not enjoy myself, I sometimes feel so dull in company that I am a regular bore. I believe that I am too sensitive for school. I suppose when in company I am harassed afterwards by very troublesome reflections. I believe that the reason I am so dull in company is that I have no very large amount of conversation.

22nd December "Tuesday morning" Last Saturday evening Thomas Milburn and I went over to the "Land of hope" division to see about getting by law for the two divisions; Mr. Pritchard was there; he came home with us; we got home about twelve; -- On Sunday forenoon Mr. Pritchard and myself went over to Uncle John's where we staid till (3 P.M.) George and I then went a part of the way home with Mr. P; When we got as far as St. Scotts we left Mr. P and staid there till nearly nine -- This is fair day; there has been muddy roads for the past two or three weeks, but there is good sleighing this morning; -- If I have school tomorrow and the day after my time will be out -- I still know nothing of what I am going to do next year; I have made up my mind to hire again at \$75 no more; I have been thinking lately that it would be a very good plan for me to study Phrenology and turn out Pictures;

24th December "Thursday morning" A stormy cold morning, the last day to teach. In 1857, I have fulfilled my engagement and earned \$75 since I left Andover. I was in town on Tuesday night and staid to the division there, there was a debate there on the present election. Mr. Scott was on the side of Conger, and Mr. Rutherford on the side of Short. -- If I remain here next year I shall take two of the best papers in the province in order to gain a knowledge of politics. After to day I shall have nothing to do for ten or twelve days; I must study pretty hard all the time.

27th December "Sunday evening" - Last Thursday
I finished my year teaching, after the school was out I
went down to town along with Cousin George, there was a
great many people and great excitement in Peterboro, the polls
were just closed, and it was pretty well understood
that "Short" was in; I saw Frank Sanderson in town,
he offered me \$75 per year to go back to Pecton
and teach, I refused the offer at once. I spent over
two shillings upon frocks and such like trumpery -
Friday was Christmas; In the morning I went down to
the schoolhouse and swept it; I there and then learned
that "Short" had been returned with a majority
of 319; I was astonished, I attribute it mainly to
the influence of George Brown; in the afternoon
I went up to Jos. J. Milburns and from thence he and I
went up to John J. Milburns and made out the Rate Bills;
I was then asked if I wanted to engage another year.
I told them I would if they gave me \$85 per year; after
some hesitation they concluded to do it if Peckell would.
- Yesterday I was in town and was informed that
Peckell did not exactly agree to my proposal for teaching;
I am therefore yet as ignorant as ever of my fate for
the ensuing year; There was a great fair in town
yesterday, processions were marching through the town
in honour of Santa Claus; I saw Mr. Chase in town,
he and I played watch, he giving me four dollars
into the bargain; I came home with Aunt John's
and staid there till nearly ten o'clock at night

25

To day I have never been out of the house; I have
read from beginning to end the "Old Dominion"
a tale of the origin, progress, and termination, of the
love of a certain man named Conway, for a young
lady named Bessy Davenport; I don't think it has
done me much good, my head is so full of it, that
I cannot do any thing else; Next week at this time
1858 will have ushered himself into existence and 1857
will be numbered with the years that are past. O that
I could improve each moment as it flies, but, alas!
I cannot; time is slipping away and I am getting
no better; Would to God that I could better improve
my time and act more wisely:-

21st December.

Last Monday I was at the temperance
soiree in toron, I was in ston nearly all day, in the
evening at a late hour I went with Mrs C. Fitzgerald to
his place. - On Tuesday morning I went up to Mr. Boyer in
the evening Mr. Pitchard and I went to Mrs Wallace and
Franklin's. - On Wednesday I was at Mrs. Pickolls nearly
all day. - To day at morning in company with Mr. P. I
came to toron, I then went to Madeline and got two
pair of boots, then came home. - I am not yet en-
gaged for the next year, I think the Trustees have
behaved very curious in not coming to some kind
of terms long before this time; I think it is likely
if I don't engage here this week that I will
go up to Toronto in the latter part of next week.

1858

26

1858

First day of January 1858, "Friday Morning"

I went away this morning at 10 A.M. and came home at 9 P.M. When I went away I went up to old Robins and paid my Father's taxes; I then went over to Baptists and staid till James Baptist, Alice and Margaret Paul came when we all went sleighriding. In the evening I was at the division where I was elected and installed Recording Scribe.

8th January "Friday" I was hired to teach another year at the rate of 330 Dollars a year on Wednesday evening - Last Saturday I was in town and saw Robert Kincaid whom I had not seen for a year and a half - Last Sunday I was at the Baptist Church in the morning and at John Pauls in the afternoon - Last Monday evening Thomas Milburn and I went to the tea party at Madells - On Tuesday evening I was at the Class meeting - Last evening I was at the Temperance meeting and made a short speech at the commencement. I also presented the form of a petition for laying before the Township Council which after some discussion was submitted and approved of - I have come to the conclusion to take the Globe and also the Leader for this year, my reason for so doing is that they are the two leading papers or organs of the two great political parties into which this country is divided, and by reading them I get the opinions and views of all parties, and thus be able to form just and reasonable opinions of my own.

17th January - On Monday last I was at Christopher
Guin's along with Sirich's people. On Monday last I
commenced school again. On Thursday evening I
was back at Mother's schoolhouse and made a
speech. Yesterday I had school in the forenoon
and in the afternoon I was at town. I bought
Shakespeare's works one day last week and have
been reading one of his plays this forenoon. I am
going to have a larger school this winter than I ever
had before. I have received all my school money except
26.25. I have thought a good deal about the larger
Intellectual during the past week more I am
afraid than has been for my good.

21st day of January "Thursday"
Last Sunday I
put around home until after dinner when I
went over to Uncle John's, ~~Wm~~ Fowler and
Jonathan Sirich were there. After some chat
George and I came over to our place. Hitched
up horse and cutter then started off for
Hudsons reached that place at ten times and
remained there until 10 P.M. On Tuesday
morning I was at the class and prayer meeting.
After that went out I went down to the
Good Templar house which was not worth
going to. Yesterday evening I was at the
Baptist Missionary Meeting. It was not much
there was no good speaking or singing.

25th January 1858 "Monday" I had forty six pupils at school today. On Saturday last Mr Chase came over to see me. Last Saturday I got my first Leader. Last Saturday I got a letter from Uncle P. Bickerton. Yesterday morning I went over to Lirish, when I got there, they were just starting for Donnelly's; they asked me to go with them; I went, and have thus become acquainted with the Misses Donnelly's. A week ago today, I lent Thomas Hutchinson forty five pounds for which he has to give me forty six pounds on the 18th of April. On New Years day, I had a play side with the small intellectual, I have not been in her company since, neither have I wished to be.

31st January "Sunday" I had no school yesterday and was in town, I brought home with me twelve Yankee smithies ten of which I shall sell to the scholars, I also brought Allot's life of Napoleon for which I paid 4.50 cents, I also received yesterday my first "Globe" and my second "Leader". Last Wednesday evening I was at a party at Mrs. Stubbis, it was fine in the morning when I got home, I did not enjoy myself at it. I was a mere blank as I always am at such places. I have been at home all this forenoon and intend to be all this afternoon and am trying to get up a speech for Friday night. I anticipate great pleasure in the perusal of the life of Napoleon.

7th February "Sunday" Last Monday evening I was at the Bible Society meeting in Peterboro where I heard Sachlin Taylor make one of the most brilliant speeches I have ever heard it was principally on Italy where he had been travelling he also made some brilliant remarks on Macaulay and other celebrated personages - On Tuesday evening I was at the class meeting and had quite a chat with Isaac - On Wednesday evening I was at Uncle Johns where there was a spree which lasted till half past two in the morning - Last night I was at John T. Muller's where there was quite a company - To day so far I have been reading the Globe and Abbotts Napoleon
18th February

"Thursday": I have just finished my days teaching - Last Thursday evening I was at a soiree in the back end of the township, I was on the platform but was not called upon to make a speech, I was almost frozen both in going and coming - Last Friday night I was at the Division room and was scolded for not making a speech on the previous free night - On Saturday night I was with Mr Pritchard at W^m Tully's - On Sunday night I was at home - On Monday evening I was at the Band of Hope division, I came home with the Hotharts and stayed with them all night - On Tuesday evening I was at

the prayer meeting. Yesterday evening I was at
Liricks. I have read the Globe and Leader
very attentively since I got them, I cannot say
which of them I like best. Uncle Robert
talks about coming to Canada in the spring.
I hope he may, alone all men I would like
to see him. I have now taught 31 days
in the present year, I wish my time were
21st February "Sunday Morning"

Mr. Proffat brother
of the celebrated lecturer of that name was with me all
last Friday night, he and I were at the Division, there
was a debate there on the Maine Law, took a part in it.
— On Friday evening I was in town and posted a
letter for Uncle Robert. I think I shall commence
the study of Latin in a short time, I shall get
Henry Edmison to assist me. I was last night thinking
seriously of becoming a phonologist, I think there is plenty
room in Canada for a good practical scientific
phonologist
9th March.

"Tuesday Morning" This is fair day and I
have no school in consequence. In the evening of the
22nd of February I read *Whistle*, I enjoyed myself while
reading it, it is the first of Shakespeares pieces I have read.
On the evening of the 23rd of February I was at
Liricks, there was a small party there, I enjoyed myself
at it. On the evening of the 24th of February I

31

was at John Smith's wedding. On Sunday last I
was at Uncle John's all day. Charles Boyer and Johnny
Nicholls were there. Last evening was at home
but read nothing but the Globe.

4th March 1858

"Thursday evening" I have been
reading to night in order to prepare for a
debate on Navigation and Printing and a
speech for a missionary meeting on
Tuesday evening next. I find that there
is no kind of knowledge more useful than a
correct knowledge of history. In almost every
debate and discussion it is useful or necessary
and in some it is of the most essential and
absolute use. No train of thought can be
indulged in without reference more or less
to historical facts. To the statesman and
the politician history is of the highest importance.
To writers and public speakers it is as useful as
tools to a carpenter or a farm to a farmer. In fact
in whatever way we view History, we find it a most
excellent study, alike important and useful to
every man who makes the least pretensions to
Literature or respectability.

18th March

"Thursday evening" The snow has entirely disappeared
during the past few days and the roads
are very bad. There has therefore been very few letters.

at school this week - I felt gratified to day when I considered that the money I lent to Hutchinson two months ago to day had already made me \$19/40. It is a grand thing to have money making money - During the past three nights I have sat up until 11 P.M. preparing a speech for to deliver on Saturday night at the division. I have it composed already it fills three pages of foolscap. - I was away from home every night last week, one night it was five in the morning when I went to bed, another it was three, and another it was one; such was the efforts I made last week to pass away time and enjoy myself - I have been at more sprees and parties since last New Year's day than I have in all my previous life, I enjoyed myself best at Simpson's and worst at Stubbs, I cannot enjoy myself at such places unless I am one of the heroes of the company - I am tired of school teaching and would like to abandon the business yet I don't know what I would like to be at.

22nd March "Monday evening" On Saturday last I had a long talk with Mr. Delart; I also received a visit from Mr. Jett who called at the school house and staid with me about half an hour. In the evening Mr. Pritchard came to see me. I was very glad to see him. he and I went to the Temperance together, there was quite a number of people there. I made a speech which I think was the best I have ever made. Yesterday morning (Sunday)

33

Mr Pritchard and myself went over to Uncle John's
My Grandmother was there. I had not seen
her for three years, she knew me she said
by my long nose: Mary Ann Paul was also
there, we staid there till 3 P.M. we had a very
lively time, we didn't spend the day very much
like a Sunday: After I left there I went up to
John T Milburn, Thomas was going down to
Petersboro in the buggy, I went with him and staid
in town and heard Mr Scott preach and got
home at 9 in the evening - the Division has now
lasted a year and is still in good working
order, it has been the means of doing me a great
deal of good, it has made me study and think
and read and more than that it has excited
me to action. I have become a better speaker and a
better talker since its commencement and in fact
what little improvement I have made during
the past year may be ascribed to it - I do not know
what business or occupation I may follow in after life
neither do I know what station in society I shall
fill but I know I shall be possessed of some
knowledge: My mind craves after more I must
know more: While there are such vast oceans
of truth to explore in every direction I can
never be at rest: Oh! that I had the means
that some have I would perch in some
field of a home atmosphere a bright