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CHILLICOTHE ACADEMY, 1853-1856
A PUPIL'S JOURNAL

(Editor's note: The following "Journal" is believed to have been written by Teresa Blair while she was a student at the Academy of the Sisters of Notre Dame, Chillicothe, Ohio, in 1853. The Blair family, originally from New York State, were prominent members of St. Mary's parish, Lancaster, Ohio, before moving to Shawnee, Ohio, where they operated a drug store. The "Journal" was found among the Blair family effects in the store when it was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Louis Montel, residents of Shawnee, and presented by them to the Catholic Record Society. Also found were three small volumes of a work entitled, Fetes Chretiennes (Christian Feasts), published in 1838, and presented July 12, 1855, as first premium in botany to "E. Blaire", a student at the Chillicothe Academy. She was likely the Ellen Blair of Lancaster who was registered as a student at Notre Dame Academy, Sixth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio, for the year 1853-1854. She apparently transferred to the Chillicothe Academy the following year and was probably the sister of Teresa, author of the "Journal". The manuscript reveals life in a girls' boarding school of that time. The first two pages of the original are missing, and the text begins with a date in September, 1853.)

.No time to indulge vanity. Two by two we were drilled into the chapel for morning prayer and Mass -- after Mass such a kissing between Eugenie and the girls I never witnessed. At breakfast I again met the little Sister of last night who kissed poor lonely me and sat me next to her at table. I have cried nearly all day, but I am now resolved to control myself, and devote every thought to the purpose for which I came here.

September 2. Evening. I feel more cheerful thanks to the gentleness and kindness of the Sisters and pupils. Was examined in the different branches of learning and was disappointed, being placed in the second senior class, but received the assurance that an earnest application to mathematics for a couple of months would place me on an equality with the first class, another incentive to industry and energy.

Sept. 3. This morning Sister Aloyse, the music teacher, took me to test my knowledge of music. I played and sang for her, and she appeared well pleased saying that she would make a fine musician of me, which assertion I trust may be verified. I wish I could describe her - it almost made me cry to think that one so young and beautiful should bury herself in a cloister.

Sept. 5. Had a long conversation with Sister Clarisse, the one who met me on the night of my arrival. She sees (feels) that I am still home sick and pities me. She has sought to win my confidence, but I cannot give it yet - it is not my nature to confide. I am too self-reliant, but I love her already. Eugenie

says she is almost worshipped by the girls. She is small almost as I am, with bright blue eyes and the loveliest mouth and teeth I ever saw. One would think her thirty, though she is nearer forty.

Sunday. A long lonely day this has been to me! How happy I pass it at home; but my repinings are childish and useless and I must look more cheerful if it is only to please Sister Clarisse whom I love better every day. But a bell is ringing and Eugenie tells me it is for benediction, so I must put on my bonnet and go in the chapel. How beautiful and sublime is our religion. If there is anything on earth that can stir the silent depths of the soul and make the proud self-reliant heart sink in trembling awe and humble adoration, it is the mysteries, ceremonies, and music of the Catholic Church; human heart unless dead to all that is beautiful, cannot remain unmoved and young ladies there though of different faith reverently bend the knee and bow the head at the benediction. I asked strength to conquer my vain longings for home and hope I obtained it, for I now feel very cheerful and am going to have a game of "hide and seek," with the girls to make our suppers digest before retiring.

December 12. Every day and hour since I last wrote has witnessed my struggles for distinction, and my highest hopes are realized; and yet, though my ambition is satiated, I am not happy. Why cannot I go as I see other girls and cast my entire confidence on the good nuns; then many heart-pangs could be soothed if I could bend my shrinking selfish nature to ask sympathy.

Christmas eve. There is something in this hushed and holy evening that seems to herald the bright feast that is about to dawn upon us. The silent and deserted study hall, the subdued murmur of youthful voices or a gushing strain of music floating through the halls from some of the music rooms, all have a soothing holy influence. As usual, I do not feel sad, but pensive, and glancing around the little groups of senior girls, I see that others are in a less enviable frame of mind than I am. Standing near a window and gazing out upon the moonlit winter scene, is Cora la Reve, the most beautiful girl in the institution. In beauty, wealth and social position she has no superior, and yet she is impatient and fretful under the thralldom, as she terms it, in which she is kept; and jealous of the mental endowments of a plain homely girl that she would probably scorn to speak to had she met her in the gay world. Many a rude jest or sarcastic taunt has passed her beautiful lips at my expense. But I care not, or if I do, I am too proud to treat it otherwise than with contempt.

Eugenie is seated at the piano and she and Sister Clarisse are singing a plaintive French song that seems to call forth a crowd of old memories. Maggie H. and Bell G. are chatting very confidentially about a certain George H., brother of Maggie's, in whom Bell is greatly interested. But the bell is ringing and I must put writing away.

Christmas. The merry chimes are pealing through the clear morning air, exalting the soul, filling it with that peace and good will which was first wafted on angelic pinions over the moonlit plains of Syria. Was present at Mass, Vespers and benediction.

Dec. 26. Eight of us hired an omnibus and took a ride ten miles in the country. There was little in nature to interest the eye except the ice-fettered Scioto. But found food for fun by hailing every one we saw along the road and enjoying the wonderment of the bumpkins who doubtless considered us very rude ladies.

Dec. 27. Boarders gave a grand dinner and invited all the Teachers. Studied all afternoon, as next week is second examination.

Wednesday. Studied all morning; took tea at Jennie McLaine's.

Dec. 28. Had a theatrical representation, a farce, to which we invited all the -----.

Dec. 29. Studied all forenoon; had a taffy-pulling this afternoon.

Dec. 30. Spent the day writing letters and romping.

Dec. 31. The last day of the year has gone to be reckoned with the things that were, but are no more. I have been wondering for half an hour what has happened to Mary R. Her finely arched brows are contracted, a bright is burning on each cheek, and her eyes, still red with weeping, fairly scintillate as she converses to Dora Le R., but she beckons to me and I must go over to their corner and hear her grievance. I now have an opportunity of putting Mary's name in my journal as she has often jestingly asked me to do. Today she received a box containing the most exquisite bons bons. Supposing it sent by her family, she requested Sister to assist her in taking them out, when lo! in the bottom was a love missive from the cavalier who sent them. Sister read the note, repacked the niceties, closed and directed the box to the young gentleman.

January 1, 1854. Another year has gone to be numbered with buried ages, bearing in its records many bright anticipations realized and enjoyed, many bitter disappointments and sorrows, endured where happiness was hoped for. Received several calls today from the day scholars; also a letter from Cousin filled with so many glowing pictures of domestic holiday enjoyments that all my old longing for home returns, and that feeling of desolation, called "home-sickness," is upon me. Six long months I must stay yet, but I am much attached and were the life a trifle less monotonous, I would be well content to stay.

Jan. 2d. Examinations are to take place next month. Studied hard all day.

Jan. 3. Rec'd letter from home. Will have to close my journal for a month, as I will not have one minute to spare.

Feb. 1st. First class was examined today in Modern history and Geography combined. Did not miss a single question.

Feb. 7. Intervening time has been spent preparing Ancient history and Geography. Examination took place today.

Feb. 12. Another examination is over, Natural Philosophy. Luncheon is just over and as it is Saturday evening I have nothing to do. The wild wind is moaning and whistling alternately round the eaves of the building. Winter is almost past and seems to be spending all his fury.

Feb. 13. Sunday. A cold bleak morning with snow-drifts piled up in every hollow. How glad I am that I don't have to walk half a dozen squares to church. After Mass I intend to write home.

Feb. 14. Today came several valentines for me, but Sister thought best to keep them herself. It is contrary to the rules to give them. Was examined in botany today. Along about eight this evening, it being clear starlight, Eugenie,

Alice and I went out in the garden to trace the stars, but our scientific amusement was interrupted by the sudden appearance of two human constellations of the masculine gender on the top of the high wall; we all took to our heels, leaving the globe to take care of itself. Every step we screamed, which screams were answered by the peals of laughter from the wall. How I would like to know who the scamps were.

Feb. 18. Two more studies have been reviewed, Chemistry and Mythology. We have just had a romp in the yard. It is balmy as May, and the moon is shedding its soft silvery beams over every object. Sleep would not close my eyes for an hour if I were at home; but the bell is ringing for night prayer, and I must go to bed; but I'll have my revenge by taking a "cut-up" in the dormitory. I know it is forbidden, but it is no harm to "scare" the girls a little. Sister Anne watches tonight and she is near-sighted.

Feb. 19. Agreeable to previous determination I did all the mischief I could last night. Went in the wash room and put all the basins so far over the edge of the tables that the Sisters would brush them down as they passed through. The result was as I desired. About ten o'clock a terrible clatter of tin ware greeted our ears and as school girls are very easily frightened when there's nothing the matter, some were so terrified that they went off into hysterics, declaring that there were robbers in the house. I thought I would add a climax by slipping under the beds, and heaving them up. Confusion reigned throughout the dormitory till midnight when all overcame their fears so far as to fall asleep. Sister Clarisse was aware of a trick by some one, but I do not think she suspects me.

Feb. 28. My head has been throbbing with pain all day, consequently I am exempted from school studies, and am permitted to wander where I please. But my lessons trouble me, for tomorrow I must study twice as diligently if that were possible to make up for lost time.

March 1. Today commenced the month dedicated by piety to St. Joseph. We are to make a visit every day to the chapel to perform certain devotions in his honor.

March 2. Spent all day with Eugenie, making problems on the globes in preparation of tomorrow's examination.

March 17. We have a holiday in honour of Ireland's Saint, and a procession of the girls which was anything but an imposing sight. However it is but natural that having no Irish blood in my veins, I cannot understand their display of nationality.

March 25. Feast of the Annunciation. After hearing Mass we took a long walk, the day being beautifully clear and mild. At benediction Sister Marie sang and never did her voice make such an impression on me as it did this time, as she sang the soft melodious notes of the evening hymn and then let her voice swell out to its full power in the grand and thrilling "Tantum Ergo".

March 26. Received a visit from a Lancaster lady who brought me a letter and several presents from home. Had a misunderstanding with Alice, indeed, a quarrel, or at least sharp words, and all about "Ould Ireland." She is brilliant and quick-witted like all.

(To be continued)

THE REBELLION IN ROME
(Continued)

(Excerpts from the "Journal" of Sylvester H. Rosecrans, seminarian, and later first Bishop of Columbus, published here through the courtesy of the Archives, University of Notre Dame.)

June 5 (1849). Today has been passed in continual firing (as well as last night) and to all appearances we are as far from the term as yesterday. The French are still outside the gates, and as it seems retired from the wall as only now and then a gun is heard from the barricades. How many have lost their lives; how the French feel we do not know. They must have sustained a severe loss in these days. Tonight the streets are full of people taking an evening walk. It would be impossible for me to write a history of the thousand conjectures that shoot through my fancy now. Is Oudinot mad? To charge up at a high wall through a storm of cannon and musket balls. What end could it have?

June 6. A letter was sent from Oudinot who had taken Villa ----- to the Assembly saying he was at their service. By a majority of two they determined to fight it out. Afternoon there was a thunderstorm and as soon as it ceased the firing of cannon commenced, and continued about two hours. All is still now. The night is cloudy and probably there will be no more hostilities tonight.

Tomorrow is Corpus Christi, and I am going to communicate. I got up this morning and found difficulty in reading the lives of the saints. . . .

June 7. Today, Corpus Christi, was not celebrated in Rome, but in the forenoon all was quiet. In the afternoon an occasional cannon shot was fired from each side. The French do not seem to wish to enter the city. It is probable they are waiting for some order of their Assembly. We are still in prison.

June 14. Today the firing was unusually sharp for a while. There are vast numbers of wounded now in the city. You see the black banners waving over a number of homes. Today we learned the upshot of an affair of the government to take our college for the Trasteverini. The Rector had tried in vain until at last the American consul (1) being applied to took us under his protection and using his influence with Massini. . . saved us from being turned first into the other part of the building, and next into the streets. The Rector was very grateful to him, and invited him to come and see us.

June 16. The usual firing of cannon to little or no effect. We heard today that the French intend to enter before the 21. Is it true? A good satire on the Republic yesterday. . . They have let a great many bombs and grenades burst over the city, but have not injured anyone I believe. The Romans go out nearly every day and receive a defeat. They say today we have beat -- yesterday abbiamo avato. Poor fellows, how many of them have waked up in Eternity within these few days. There went the boom of a cannon across the night air. The weather is intolerably hot. We are sighing for the fresh air again.

June 17. Today again there was a very heavy firing of cannon with now and then a musket shot. Another French commissary is come. The French are battering away at the walls, but have not opened upon the city. They say they have sixty or seventy mortars. We read this afternoon a most beautiful address of the Spanish Prime Minister on a proposition not to send troops into Italy. He spoke

of the Pope, Pio IX, of the Popes in general, and his necessity and right of nations to unthroned him, described things in Rome, related the action of the Spanish government in the whole affair, state of things on Rome. I have seen nothing to compare with it in the whole affair. There is a vastness of view and deep earnest religious spirit truly noble.

June 19. Yesterday was published a letter of Massini in reply to the note of the French Ambassador. He is violent against the French. He accuses Oudinot of treachery in taking Monte Mario &c in time of Armistice. He says the French are meaner than the Austrians because they dare not tell what they come for, and that they will do the Papacy an injury &c. The letter is most artful, but full of false assumption. . . .and cunning declamation. There was a little firing today and yesterday; but things have little appearance of a (close?). Well patience is the motto. We have not breathed any fresh air since April 20. Two months. There is no turbulence in the city now. The shops are opened and everything as usual minus customers. A report came from our civic organist two hundred priests have been shot within the last month. The "Tablet" and "Universe" come now with an occasional letter, but letters do not generally arrive detained as they are opened in the P.O.

June 21. Yesterday there were even less than the ordinary cannonades, and I went to bed last night without a thought of being disturbed. Now and then to be sure there was fired a cannon shot, a usual thing in the night. But at two I was roused from sleep, and the bombs were clashing around at a fine rate. They seemed sometimes to break very near. As the quarters under my window (of namely about 30 boys without uniforms) there was quite a stir. I heard the French have entered at Porto Portesi and "all night that they have not taken Porto St. Pancrasius or S. Pietro Montorio" and "there must have been some betrayal" and "son entrati da prigionieri" - but I could not feel sure of an authentic rumor being afloat. About two and three quarters of the "giovanotti" were aroused and marched off. "They will not stop fighting before night," said the man. About 3 the drums began to beat and continued from that time incessantly until 6. Armed "seculari" went as usual. The firing continued also until we went down to dress, but at present 8½ a.m. I hear no cannon. They say there was firing all around. And a horseman came by warning the people to have their windows open. There may be musketry now but I can hear nothing. So wait.

8 P.M. The French entered at the breach and stand now within the walls. I do not know where. At about 9½ A.M. the tocsin rang, and the citizens armed themselves. I saw the Romans on a little height behind their barricades in their shirt sleeves running backward & forward. I could see the fire flash from the mouths of the cannon and afterwards hear the report. There is a place inside the walls completely riddled, behind which the French were supposed to stand. The firing is not very heavy. The French fire but seldom and the Romans do not seem to have many cannon on their barricades. There is an occasional shot now. God help the poor mortals that thus perish under the anathema of his Church and convert the rest of them. Tonight we look for something in the direction of Monti Puccio. Two tremendous batteries are planted on Monte Mario. The French have yet to do.

June 24. Today the firing continues as usual. The troops not having yet changed their position on either side. There was a turn out this evening for the funeral of a Gen. Novera. The Capuchins were employed. There was a certain no. of the three sorts of troops behind. His sword and scabbard were crossed on the top of the coffin. There came a commissary again today to offer to occupy

the college. The Ambassador had a firm squabble with the Triumveri; and they yielded to his rights. But they begged him to do an act of charity. And he sent to the Rector to ask if their was any part of the College separated from the main building - which the Rector would choose to give up. He ceded the Cardinal's part.

June 25. The firing continues but there is no musketry nor bombs. Garibaldi's adjutant went to play the French a trick dressed as a mountebank but the sentinel shot him. Garibaldi and the ministry addressed a note official against the French General Oudinot to the citizens of Rome today. He says the moment one of his soldiers goes out of the city they surround him and shoot him. "The rascals," as Smith said, "they treat him badly." Our family neighbor will come to us tomorrow. Mr. (Lewis) Cass (American Ambassador) has conducted himself very nobly in this affair. I saw his secretary here yesterday, a man of middle size with a yellow brown mustache. The news of the Revolution in France is published in the monitor. It dampens prospects a little now. But the "gentlemen of the Reformation" have hopes yet. In spem contra spem. We seem still in the beginning of affairs. What have I done today?

June 26. A heavy day as usual. Our friends came today to see us, or to live with us, I mean. The French are working away at three different points in order to clear the plain out there of Romans. They say they are making immense ditches there and preparing to plant batteries. They will probably take the Janiculum this week. They have an immensity of artillery especially for bombarding. The frati of the Gesu and Maria have been imprisoned on some accusation. The frati at San ---- were going to send across the river into the damaged houses in order to give place to some families from there. Stubini has been around distributing paper money among the people to show the care of the government for them.

June 27. There was heavy firing of musketry for some time last night and this morning. The French seemed to have taken a new position in front of the ruined palace. Today all day they have had four batteries playing one on the barricades down by St. Pietro Montorio, and the other three on the "altura". Since 3 o'clock the Romans seem to have been driven from the altura. The Garibaldini came into the city tonight as they are said to have said because they had fought enough. The French are said to have planted a battery within musket shot of San Pancrasius. There are heavy discords here among the military. An occasional cannon is heard yet. Things have progressed a little today. We are very lean.

The French played a trick on the Romans who wanted to mine the aqueducts whose waters had been directed by them. At a proper time they had a lucky thought and at the water. (????)

June 29. Last night I had nothing particular to write, and I would have the same tonight, only I have ten minutes and a principle. The French did nothing today except make a new breach behind the altura. They commenced the firing against a little house which forms part of the wall. Gavassi had made a panegyric on an officer of Garibaldi, comparing him to all the saints and martyrs and giving him the palm of heaven. They were mere martyrs of faith whereas he was a martyr to his country.

June 30. The tocsin began to sound at 4½ A.M. At 2½ we were wakened by the bombs crashing around us; falling in Monte Pincio in the Piazza d'Espagna, and all about us. The camerata next to the roof were packed downstairs to the corridor of the schools and our doors were opened. They roared around us at a fine rate for an hour and a half. The people were running away towards Monte Cavallo by dozens; men, women, children together laughing and running. Sometimes they would stop to look back and then when a bomb would come whistling over them they would run together like sheep, and after it was past they would say didn't it whistle? One fellow thought it an infamous thing to bombard that way in the night. I heard two talking: "It isn't much!" says one. "Not much! not much!" said the other astounded; "Why it rains them!"

The Dr. brought the news that the French took the altura last night at the point of bayonet. The Romans are now driven some distance into the city and the French are planting a battery on the altura. The "generale" is beaten furiously from time to time. The poor sexton of St. Andrew's has been working away as his bell clapper for really three quarters now. All this before six o'clock A.M.

There has been nothing since of importance. A bulletin was issued by the Triumviri saying that the French with their wonted rascality had taken the hill and that ours had made two efforts to retake it but had failed. The French seem to be planting a battery there now. A rumor is going that Oudinot has said that if the tocsin sounds any more he will bombard the city from all parts. It seems our bombs this morning were all grenades. The Romans have lost over five hundred. The line refused to charge bayonets on the French and Garibaldi set his own on who were nearly ruined. My wagon maker did not leave his house today although they came and rapped for him twice. He has not had his coat on all day. The other one limps says Dawson whenever the drums begin to beat around. All is quiet now though about noon there was a terrible firing. The first, fourth, sixth & seventh are come down to sleep in the recitation rooms. The corridor is full of benches.

(1) Editor's note: Pope Pius IX had fled from Rome Nov. 24, 1848, and went to Gaeta. He did not return to Rome until April 12, 1850. On Feb. 5, 1849, the rebels arranged a Solemn Mass in the church of Ara Coeli. The American minister, the only foreign minister to remain in Rome, had the bad taste to assist at this sacrilegious Mass. The American minister was Mr. Lewis Cass.

(To be continued)

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