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Mary Henry Diary, 1864-1868

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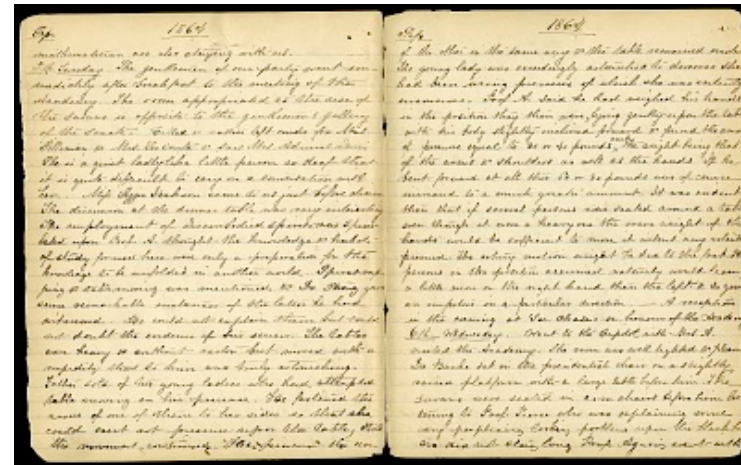
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Sep. 1864 mathematician are also staying with us. 5th Tuesday The gentlemen of our party went immediately after breakfast to the meeting of the Academy. The room appropriated to the use of the Savans is opposite to the gentlemen's gallery of the Senate. Called or rather left cards for Mrs. Silliman & Mrs. Lee Conte & saw Mrs. Admiral Davis She is a quiet ladylike little person so deaf that it is quite difficult to carry on a conversation with her. Miss Lezzie Jackson came to us just before dinner. The discussion at the dinner table was very interesting The employment of disembodied spirits was speculated upon Prof. A. thought the knowledge & habits of study formed here were only a preparation for the knowledge to be unfolded in another world. Spirit rapping & table moving was mentioned & Dr Strong gave some remarkable instances of the latter he had witnessed. He could not explain them but could not doubt the evidence of his senses. The tables were heavy & without caster - but moved with a rapidity that to him was truly astonishing. Father told of two young ladies who had attempted table moving in his presence. He fastened the arms of one of them to her sides so that she could exert not pressure upon the table, still the movement continued. He pinioned? the arms? end page



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Sep 1864

of the other in the same way & the table remained motionless. The young lady was exceedingly astonished to discover she had been using pressure of which she was entirely unconcious. Prof A. said he had weighed his hands in the position they then were, lying gently upon the table with his body slightly inclined forward & found the amount of pressure equal to 30 or 40 pounds [^][each] the weight being that of the arms & shoulders as well as the hands If he bent forward at all this 60 or 80 pounds was of course increased to a much greater amount. It was evident then that if several persons were seated around a table even though it were a heavy one the mere weight of the hands would be sufficient to move it without any voluntary pressure. The rotary motion might be due to the fact that persons in the position assumed naturally would lean a little more on the right hand than the left & so give an impetus in a particular direction. A reception in the evening at Sec. Chase's in honour of the Academy
6th - Wednesday Went to the Capitol with Mrs. A. visited the Academy. The room was well lighted & pleasant Dr. Bache sat in the presidential chair on a slightly raised platform with a large table before him. The Savans were seated in arm chairs before him listening to Prof. Pierce who was explaining some very perplexing looking problems upon the blackboard we did not stay long Prof. Agasiz went with

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