

Martha McMillan Journals

[Homer graduates from Cedarville College—the 1st graduating class—a class of five members.]

June 10, 1897

“Mr. Mc, Clayton, Jason, Paul, and Uncle Joe and I attended the first commencement of Cedarville College, at ten o’clock in the Opera House. The five graduates Raymond Poster Garbald of Ross Ohio and J. W. Bickett, of Xenia Ohio and J. ? Orr, and Cal. C. Waston, and our son Homer McMillan, all of Cedarville, and the trustees and faculty filled up the center and side of the stage. Rev. Charles Frederick Pass of Cincinnati delivered the class oration. The principle thought he tried to impress on the class was to consecrate, devote and dedicate their life—soul and body to the best and highest good in life. The blessings and privileges we enjoy today is the gift and sacrifices of those who have gone before us. The greatest height that is possible to be attained is through consecration and dedication and devotion to what is best and highest in life—that reaches beyond the present—the speaker said there was a hallowed charm and beauty and brightness and interest in this day that the graduating class that sat before him could never forget but would follow them to their latest days.

“Dr. David McKinney of Cincinnati, President of the College, conferred the diplomas. He said— young men of the graduating class—and my boys—I can not dismiss you without a few words from my heart. You bid your alma mater farewell today. We say farewell. We can no longer direct you or bid you to do this or that. But boys we will follow you with our prayers. We hope however high the position you may attain you will never forget Cedarville College or duty. Consecrate yourselves to God. Live helpful lives. And God will bless and direct you. This was a grand gathering in the Opera House today. If the graduating class can never forget this day I feel sure that some of the rest of us will always remember it. It will always stand out above and over days bright and beautiful. But while I speak of this day, I remember another day that stands bright and beautiful too and towers above the ordinary days of life—that day is the 11th of June 1896. It is a year ago tomorrow since father and I sat in a gathering in Monmouth. The “Commencement Day” in Monmouth College—then another son was counted among the graduates, Fred McMillan. We were happy there. We were happy today. May the remembrance of that day and of this day help and strengthen us through the years. “Commencement Day” not finished but beginning! May all that is good and best and highest and grandest and noblest and holiest in life crown my boys is the prayer of this Mother.”

“Harlan came down from his place in Springfield and helped to brighten the day with his presence. He came home with us to dinner—and late in the p.m.—he went to Homer and Clara at Aunt Marys. Uncle Joe remained in C—[Cedarville] to be ready for the meeting to night. Father and Clayton and Jason and I went to the Opera House to the Society Contest. Martha Ramsey and Mary Knott on Essay—Robert Harper and Mrs. Rife on Oration—James Pollock and Mary Little on Declamation—and Jas. McQuilken on Debate—Question ‘Should the American Protective Association receive the support of the American people.’ Homer took the negative side—and James McQuilken the affirmative. When the judges handed in their decision Homer failed just enough to say he lost it. The other society won much to the surprise of the audience. Homer won a great deal of praise for his manly [?] after his cause was lost—I feel almost sure, from what has been said that the defeat gained him more friends

than victory possibly could have gotten him. He spoke grandly tonight. We met miss Praff at Aunt Marys. She came around on the train from Y. Springs this evening. She is Prof. of Elocution in Antioch College. Mary Kitchen at Aunt Marys. Harlan went with her and Clara, and Miss Praff to the Opera House. After the contest he went back to Springfield. The Opera House crowded—the interest great.

“Paul home with Louis, the old painter, Dick and Nellie and was asleep long before we reached home. I forgot to note that Rev. Chas. Scott of India opened the Commencement exercises with prayer and Dr. Morton pronounced the benediction.”