Samuel M. Irvin diary

Section 9, Pages 241 - 270

This diary was written by Samuel M. Irvin, and it contains a great number of details surrounding his activities during the period from January 1841 through June 1848. During the period covered in the diary, Irvin worked as the principal missionary at the Iowa Presbyterian Mission near Highland, Kansas. As a result, Irvin's diary discusses his duties in that capacity, as well as his day-to-day activities on the frontier.

Creator: Irvin, S. M. (Samuel Mcleary), b. 1812

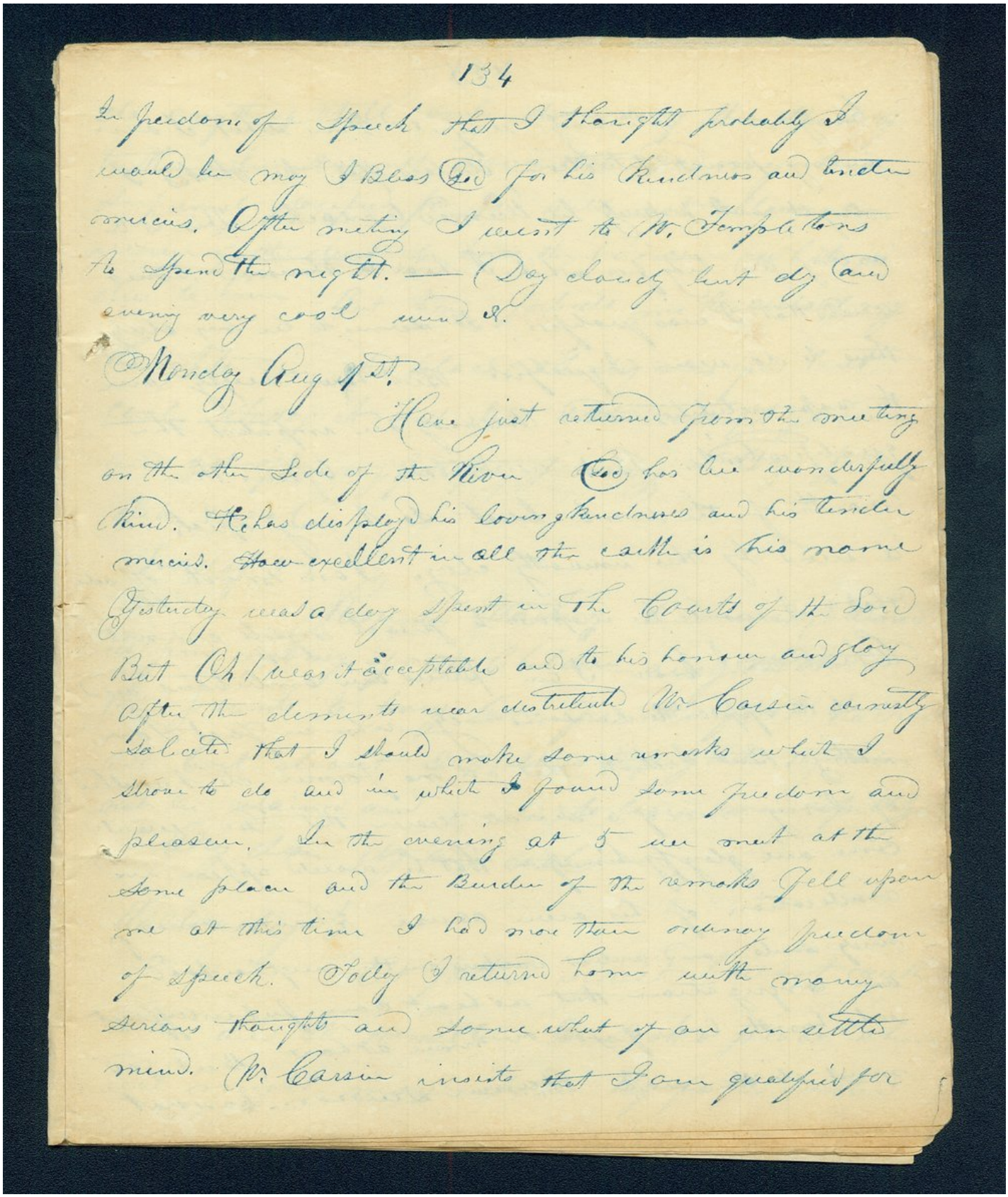
Date: January 1, 1841-June 23, 1848

Callnumber: MS Collection 403, Samuel M. Irvin papers, 1841-1849, Box: 1, Folder: Diary

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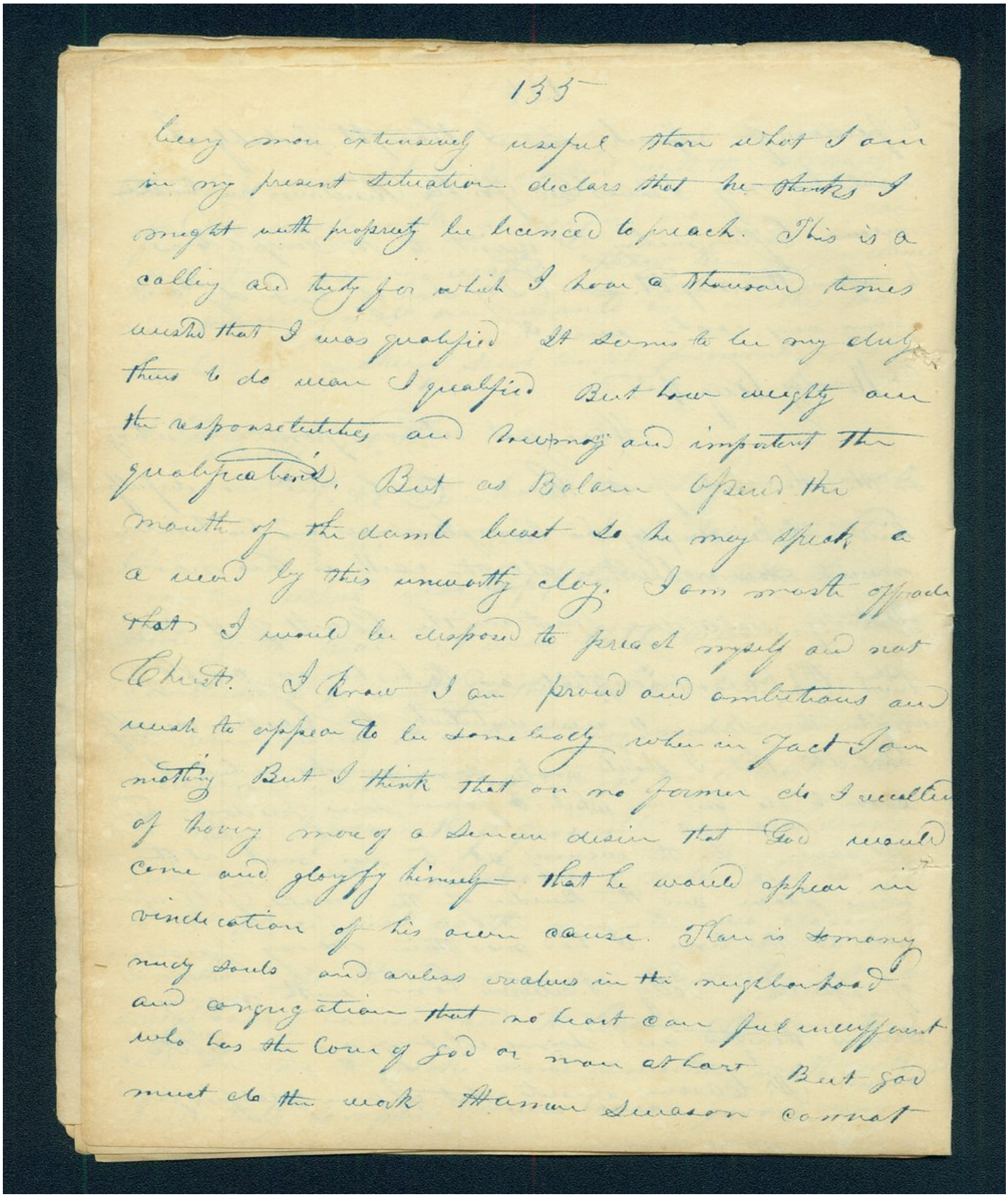


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Freedom of Speech that I thought probably I would be may I Bless God for his Kindness and tender mercies. After meting I went to W. Templetons to Spend the night. — Day cloudy but dry and evening very cool wind N.

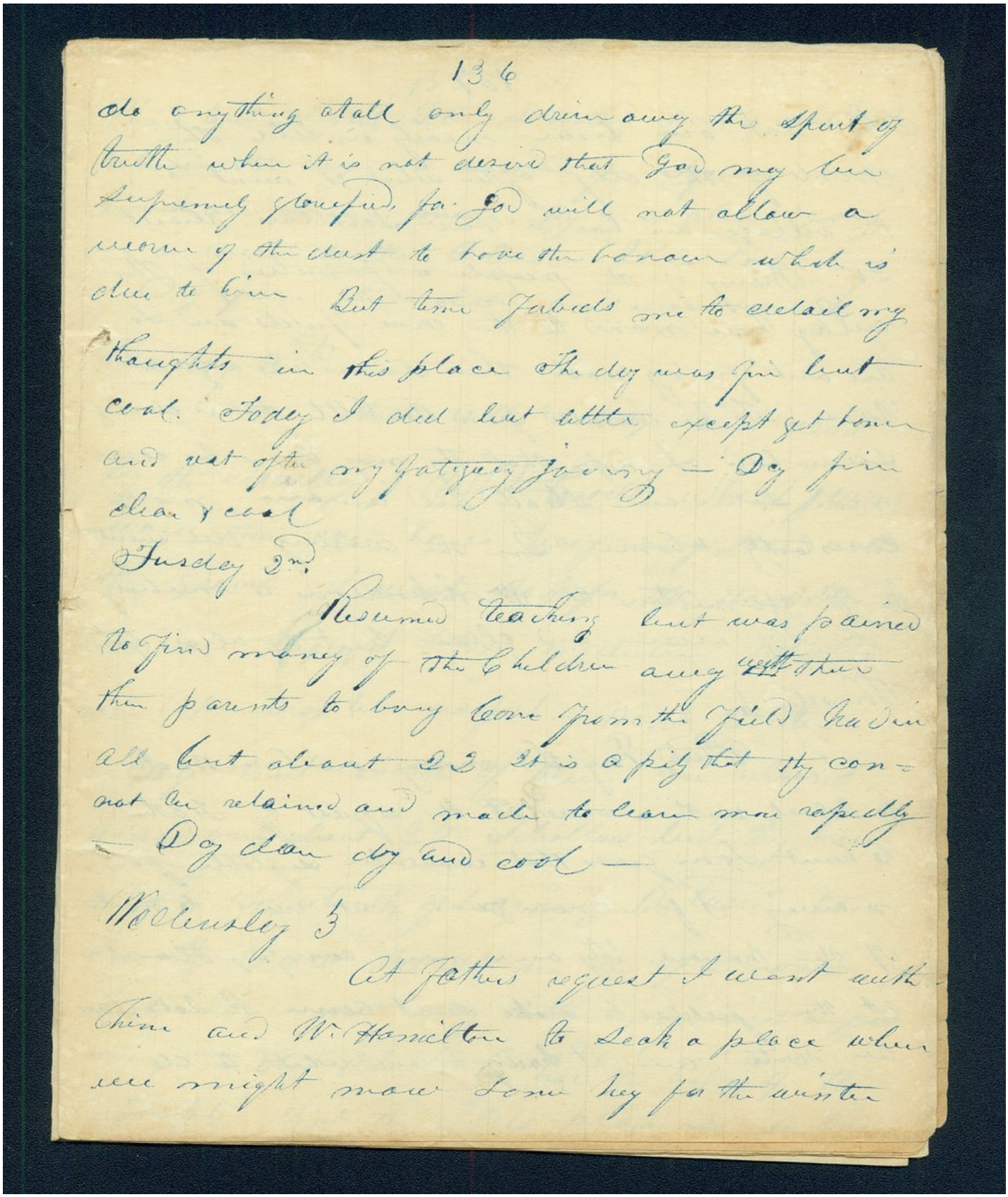
Monday Aug 9th

Have just returned from the meting on the other Side of the River God has been wonderfully kind. He has displayed his loving Kindness and his tender mercies. How excellent in all the earth is his name Yesterday was a day Spent in the Courts of the Lord But Oh! was it acceptable and to his honour and glory After the elements were distributed Mr Carsin earnestly Solicited that I Should make Some remarks what I Strove to do and in what I found Some Freedom and pleasure. In the evening at 5 we met at the Same place and the Burden of the remarks fell upon me at this time I had more than ordinary freedom of Speech. Today I returned home with many Serious thoughts and Some what of an unsettled mind. Mr Carsin insists that I am qualified for



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very man extremely useful than what I am in my present situation declare that he thinks I might with propriety be licensed to preach. This is a calling and duty for which I have a thousand times wished that I was qualified. It seems to be my duty thus to do was I qualified. But how weighty are the responsibilities and solemn and important the qualifications. But as Balaam opened the mouth of the dumb beast so he may speak a word by this unworthy clay. I am much afraid that I would be disposed to preach myself and not Christ. I know I am proud and ambitious and wish to appear to be somebody when in fact I am nothing. But I think that on no former occasion I recollect of having more of a sincere desire that God would come and glorify himself — that he would appear in vindication of his own cause. There is so many ruined souls and careless wretches in the neighborhood and congregation that no heart can feel sufficient who has the love of God or man at heart. But God must do the work. At times I season I cannot



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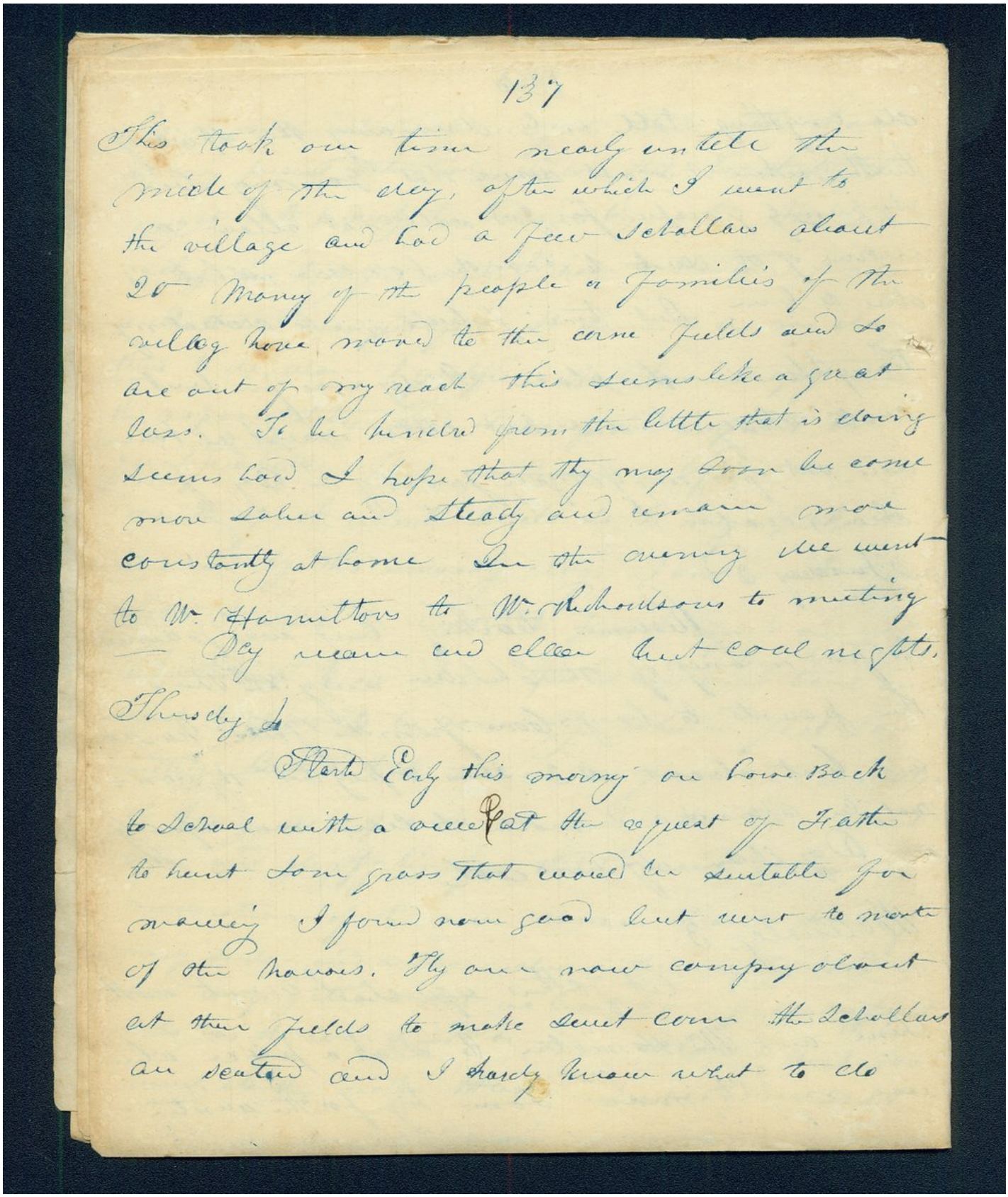
do anything at all only drive away the Spirit of truth when it is not desired that God may be supremely glorified, for God will not allow a creature of the dust to take the honour which is due to him But time fails me to detail my thoughts in this place The day was fine but cool. Today I did but little except get home and rest after my fatiguing journey — Day fine clear & cool

Tuesday 2nd

Resumed teaching but was pained to find many of the Children away with their parents to bring Corn from the field had in all but about 22 It is a pity that they cannot be retained and made to learn more rapidly — Day clear dry and cool —

Wednesday 3

At Father's request I went with him and W. Hamilton to seek a place where we might move some hay for the winter

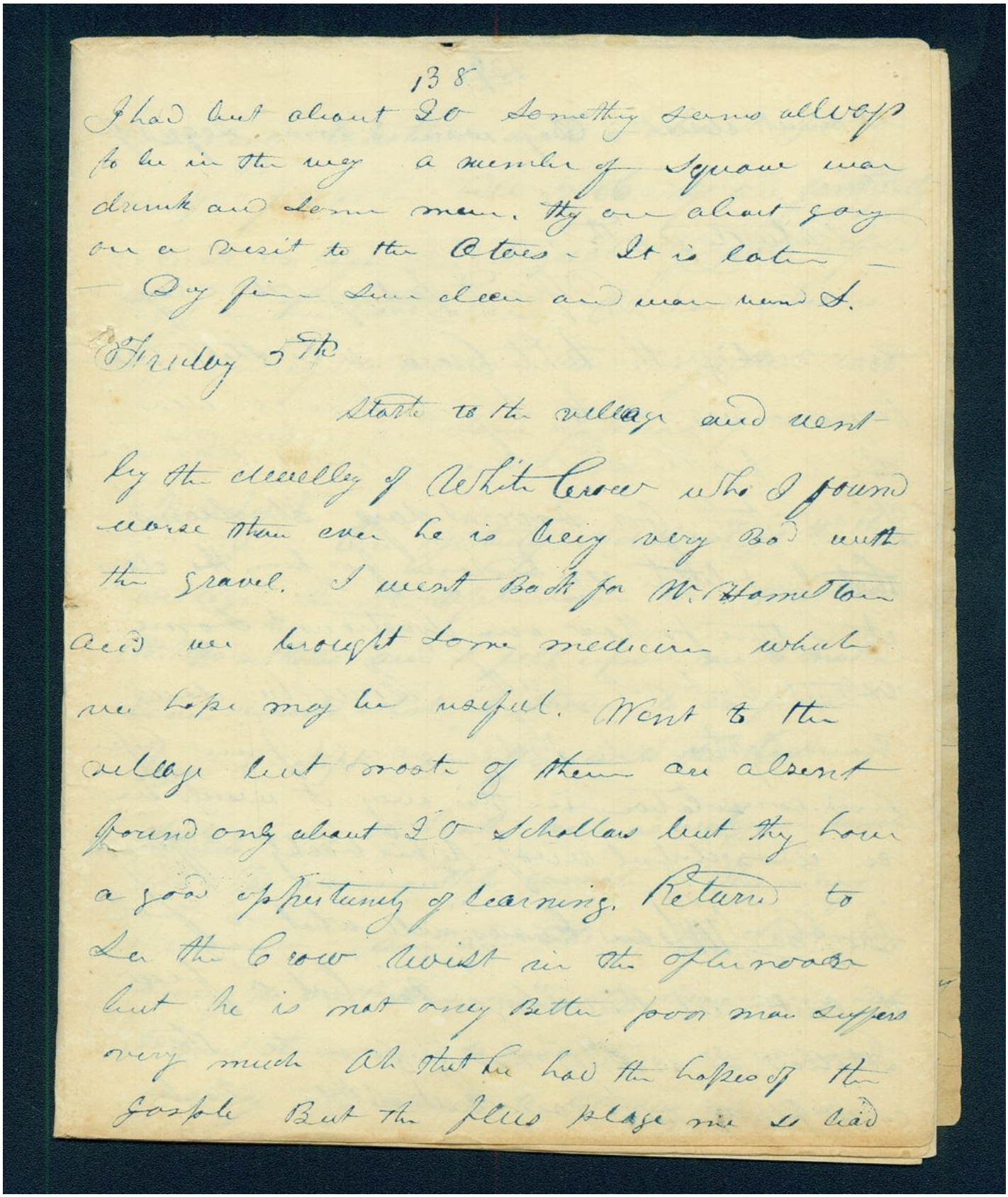


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This took our time nearly until the
middle of the day, after which I went to
the village and had a few Scholars about
20 Many of the people a families of the
village have moved to the corn fields and so
are out of my reach this seems like a great
loss. To be hindered from the little that is doing
seems hard I hope that they may soon become
more sober and steady and remain more
constantly at home In the evening we went
to Mr Hamiltons to Mr Richardsons to meeting
— Day mean and cloudy but cool nights.

Thursday 4

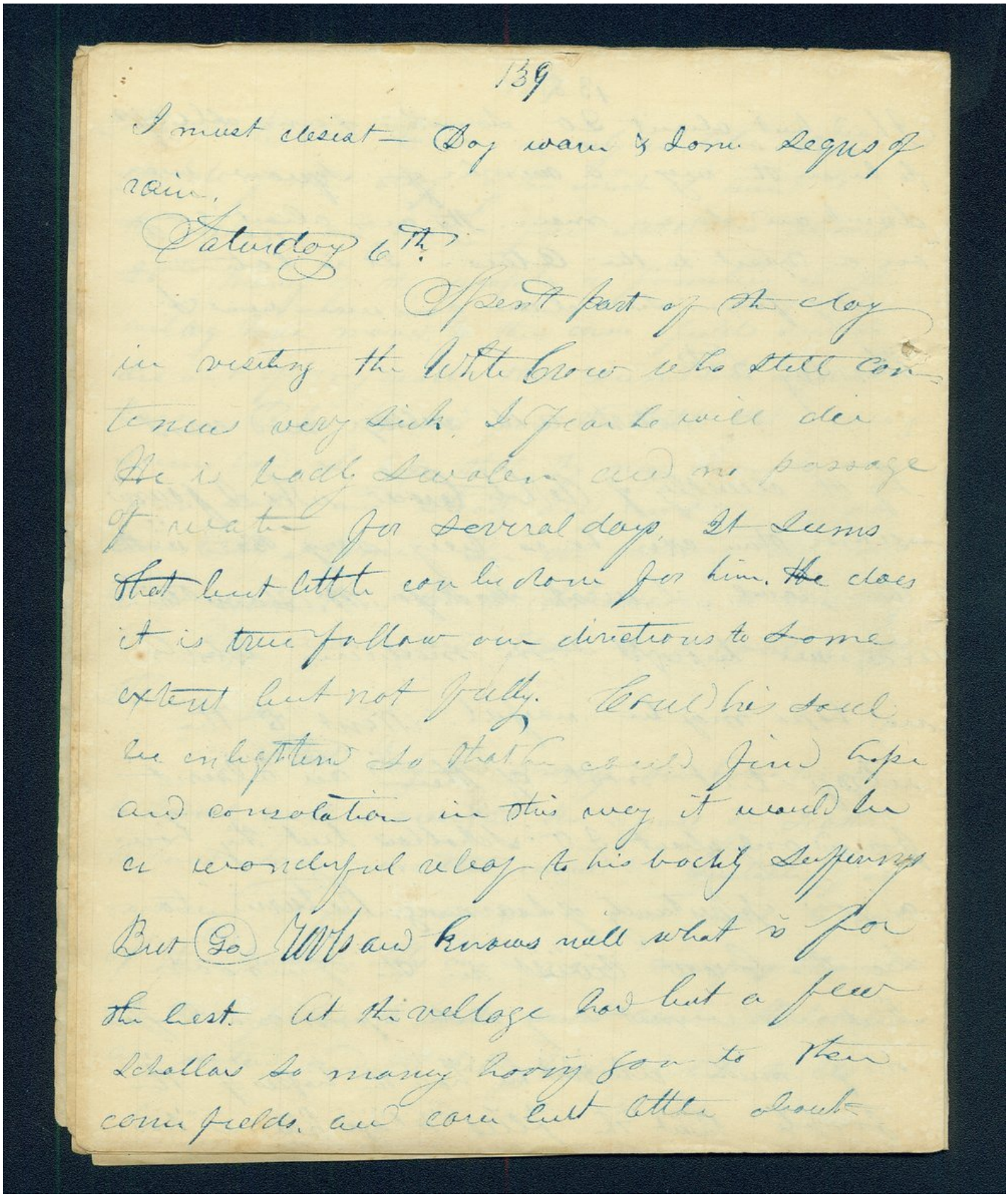
Started Early this morning on horse Back
to School with a access at the request of Father
to hunt some grass that would be suitable for
mowing I found none good but went to north
of the Ravines. The corn now company about
at their fields to make sweet corn The Scholars
are scatted and I hardly know what to do



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I had but about 20 Something seems allways to be in the way a number of Squaws was drunk and some men. they are about going on a visit to the Otoes. It is late — By Jim Lucas down and was send S. Friday 5th

Start to the village and went by the dwelling of White Crow who I found worse than ever he is very very Bad with the gravel. I went Back for Mr Hamilton and we brought some medicine which we hope may be useful. Went to the village but most of them are absent found only about 20 Scholars but they have a good opportunity of learning. Return to See the Crow Assist in the afternoon but he is not any Better poor man suffers very much Ah that he had the hopes of the Gospel But the Lord please me is said

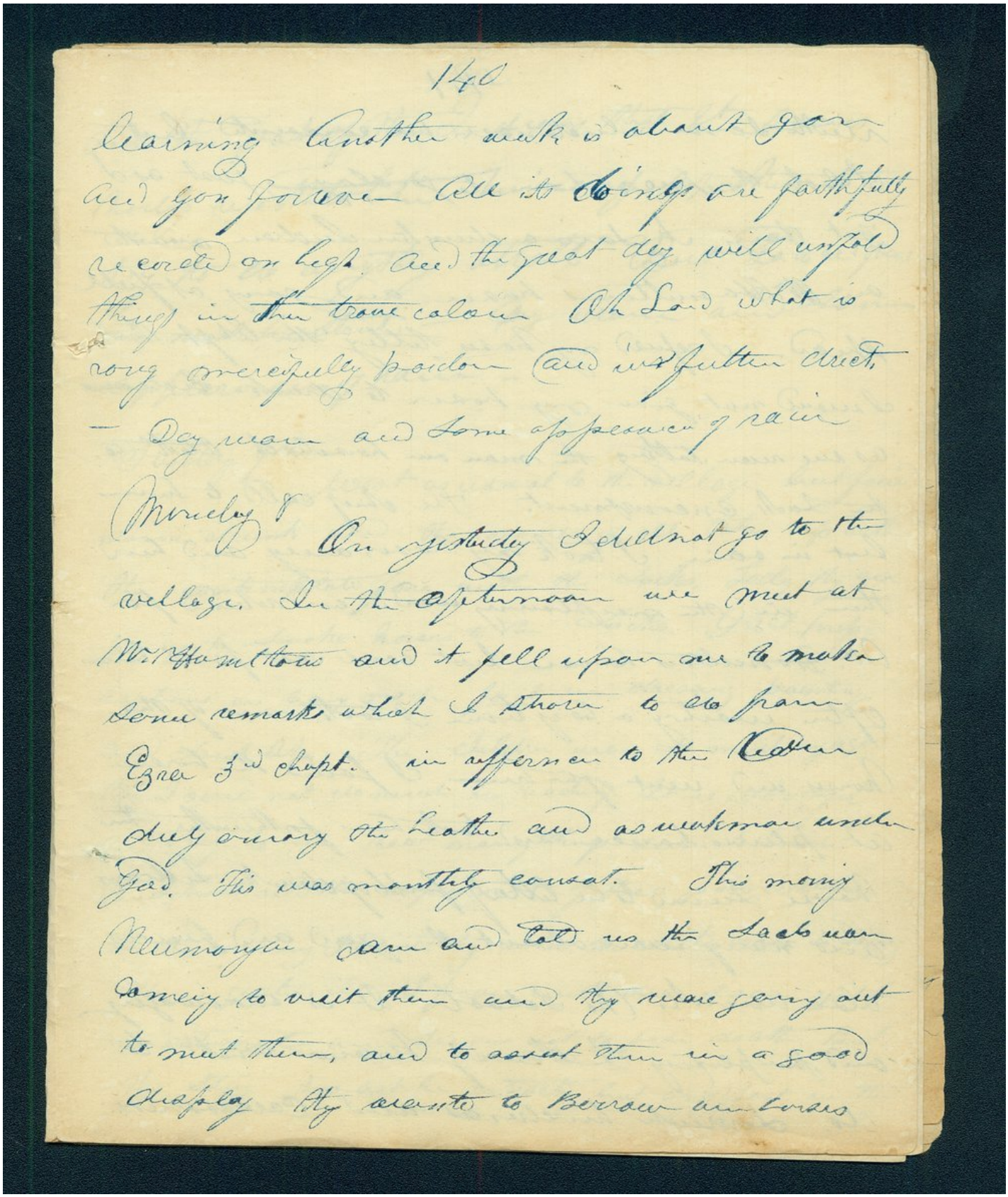


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I must desist— Boy warm & some Degrees of rain.

Saturday 6th

Spent part of the day in visiting the White Crow who still continues very sick. I fear he will die He is badly bowled and no passage of water for several days. It seems that but little can be done for him. He does it is true follow our directions to some extent but not fully. Could his soul be enlightened so that he could find hope and consolation in this way it would be a wonderful relief to his bodily sufferings But God Only and knows will what is for the best. At the village had but a few dollars so many hoeing for to their corn fields. and corn but little stalk

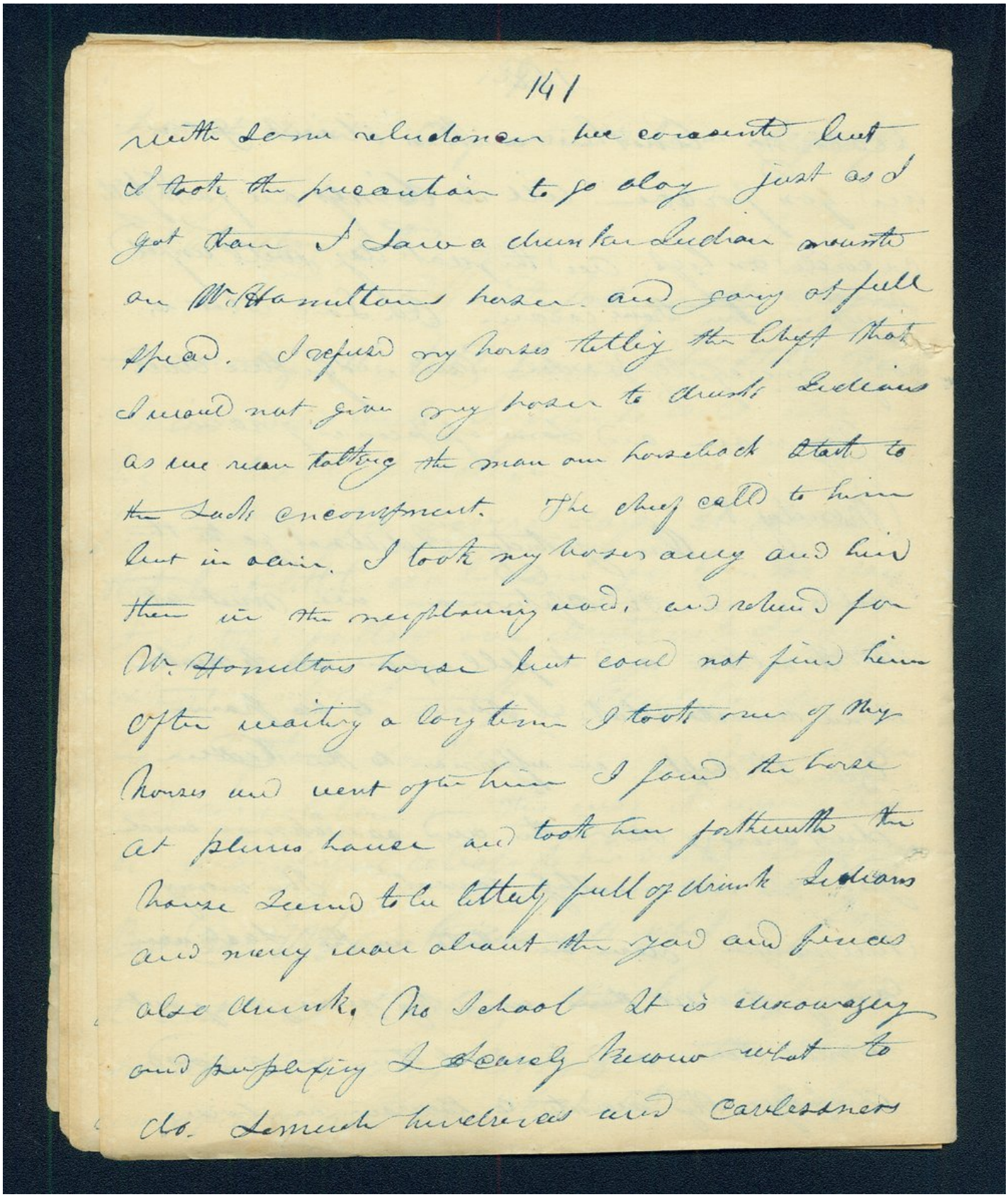


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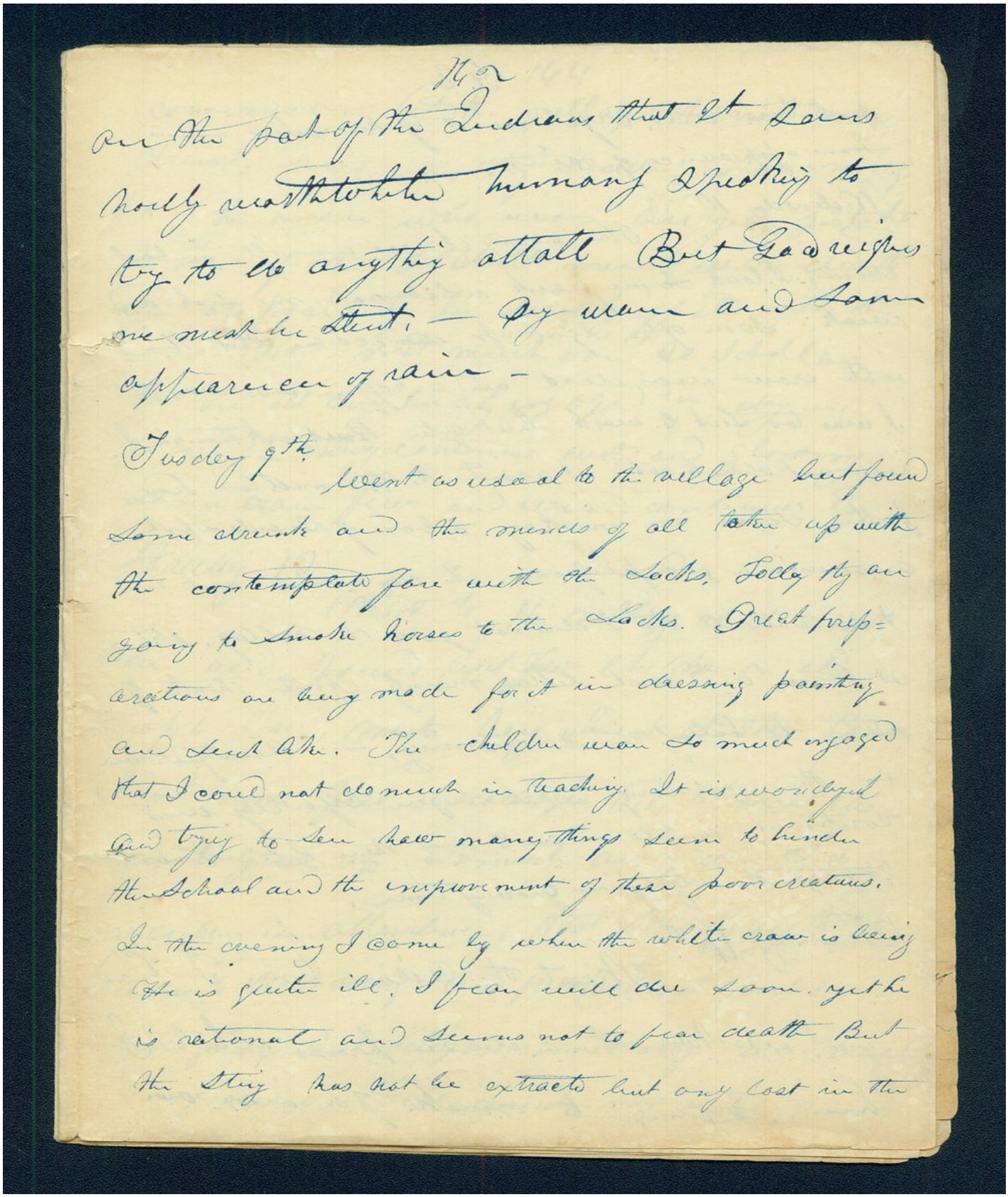
learning Another week is about gone
and gone forever All its doings are faithfully
recorded on high. And the great day will unfold
things in their true colours Oh Lord what is
wrong mercifully pardon and instruct.
— Dry warm and some appearance of rain

Monday 8

On yesterday I did not go to the
village. In the afternoon we met at
Mr Hamiltons and it fell upon me to make
some remarks which I chose to do from
Ezra 3rd chapt. in reference to the Nations
duly during the heathen and as watchman under
God. This was monthly concert. This morning
Mr Monyan came and told us the Indians
coming to visit them and they were going out
to meet them, and to escort them in a good
display They wanted to borrow our horses



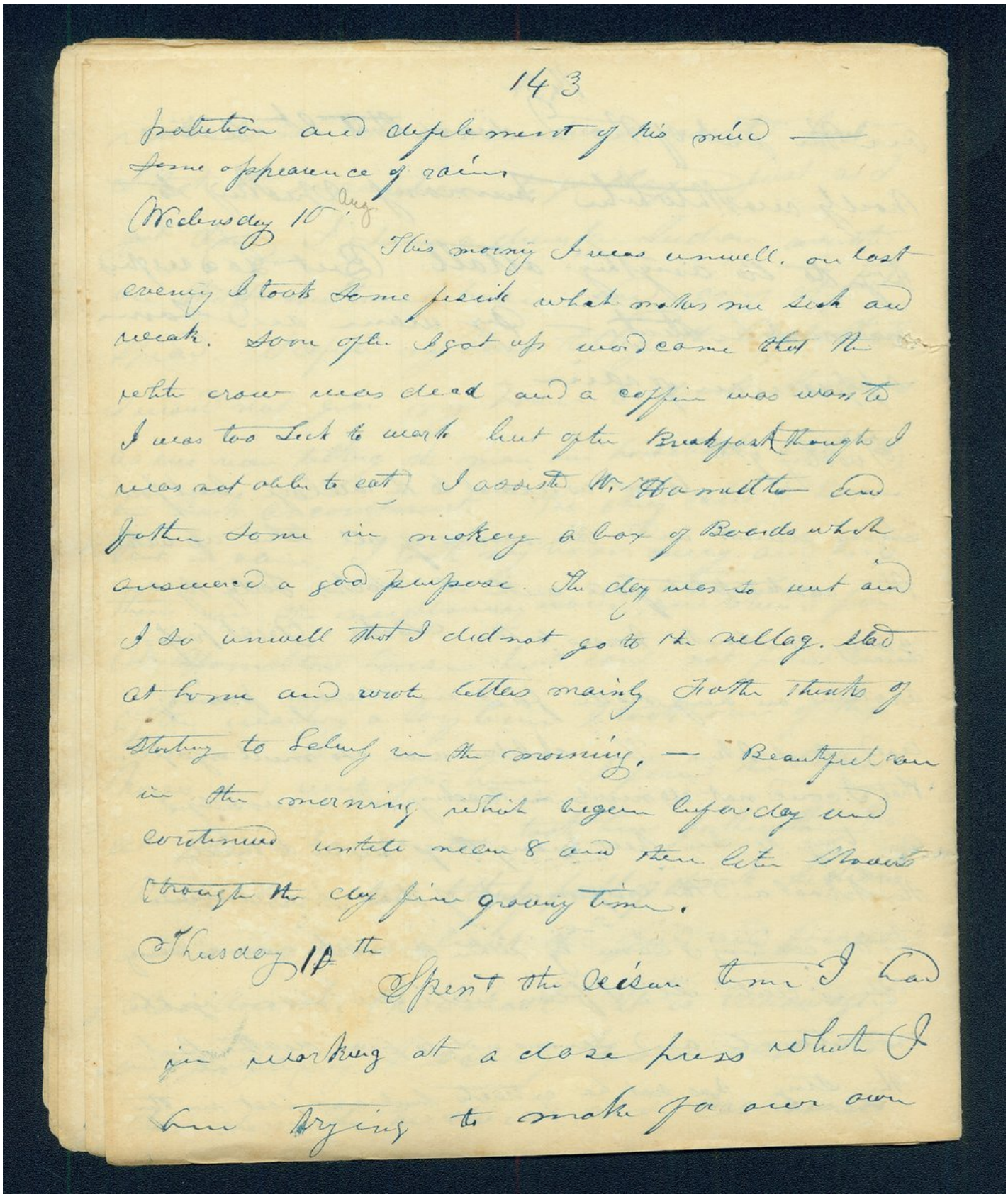
with some reluctance he consented but
I took the precaution to go along just as I
got down I saw a drunken Indian mounted
on Mr Hamiltons horse and going at full
speed. I secured my horses telling the Chief that
I would not give my horses to drunk Indians
as we were talking the man on horseback start to
the Sacks encampment. The Chief called to him
but in vain. I took my horses away and tied
them in the neighboring woods and returned for
Mr Hamiltons horse but could not find him
after waiting a long time I took one of my
horses and went after him I found the horse
at plums house and took him for the
horse I found to be totally full of drunk Indians
and many more about the yard and fences
also drunk. No School It is discouraging
and perplexing I scarcely know what to
do. Lemuels hardiness and carelessness



No 2

on the part of the Indians that St Louis
really was ~~what~~ who ~~he~~ was any thing to
try to be anything at all But God wishes
me must be ~~Lent~~. — By noon and Sam
appearence of rain —

Tuesday 9th went as usual to the village but found
Some drunk and the minds of all taken up with
the contemplated fare with the Sacks. Today my am
going to smoke horses to the Sacks. Great prep=
arations are being made for it in dressing paintg
and such like. The children were so much engaged
that I could not do much in teaching. It is wonderful
and trying to see how many things seem to hinder
the School and the improvement of these poor creatures.
In the evening I come by where the white crow is living
He is quite ill. I fear will die soon. yet he
is rational and seems not to fear death But
the sting has not be extracted but only lost in the



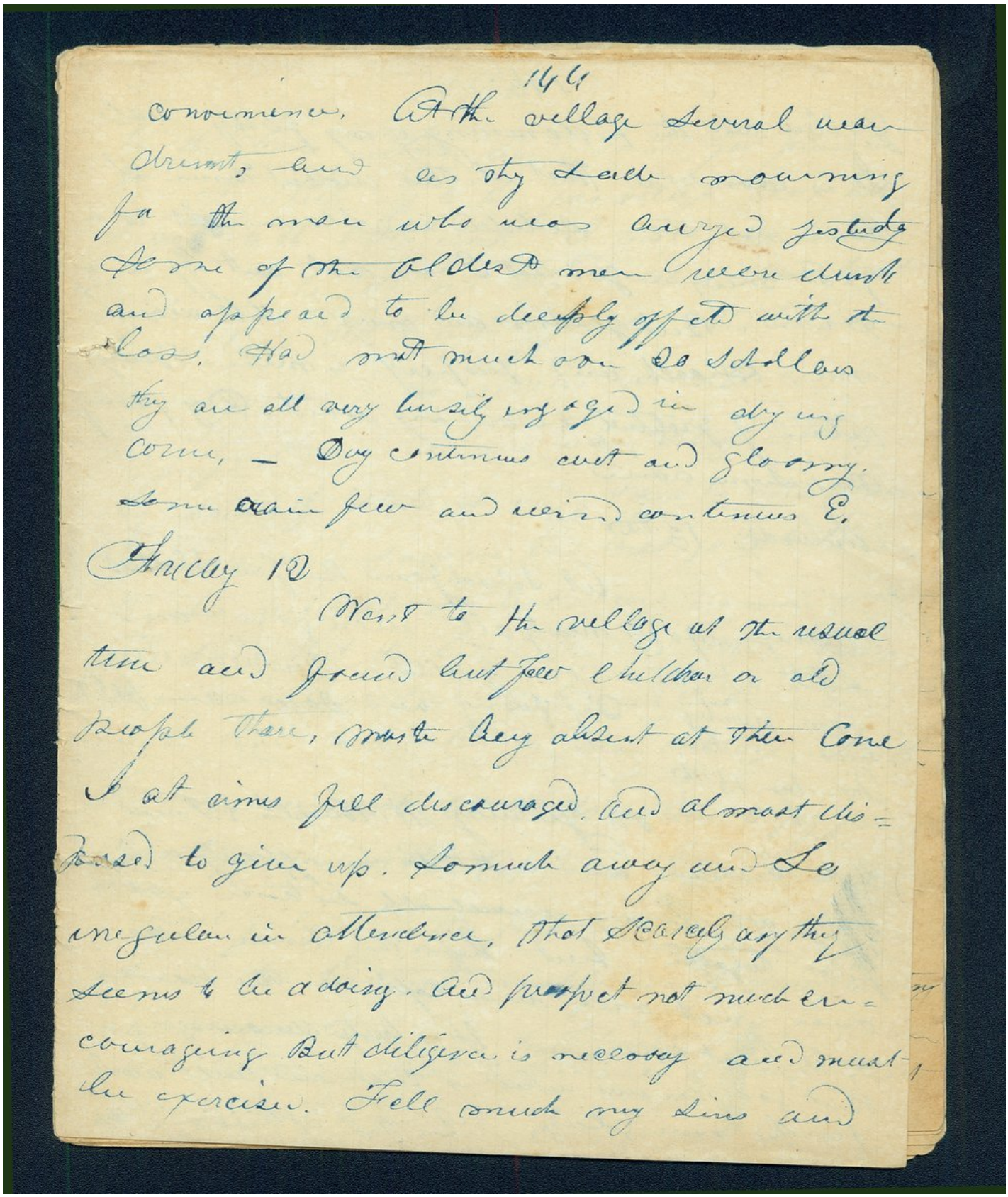
pollution and depilement of his mind —
Some appearance of rain.

Wednesday 10th Aug

This morning I was unwell, on last evening I took some fusick what makes me sick and weak. Soon after I got up word come that Mr Pettit crow was dead and a coffin was wanted I was too sick to work but after Breakfast thought I was not able to eat I assisted W. Hamilton and Father Some in making a box of Boards which answered a good purpose. The day was to wet and I so unwell that I did not go to the village. Staid at home and wrote letters mainly Father thinks of starting to Selma in the morning. — Beautiful rain in the morning which began before day and continued until near 8 and then like showers through the day fine growing time.

Thursday 11th

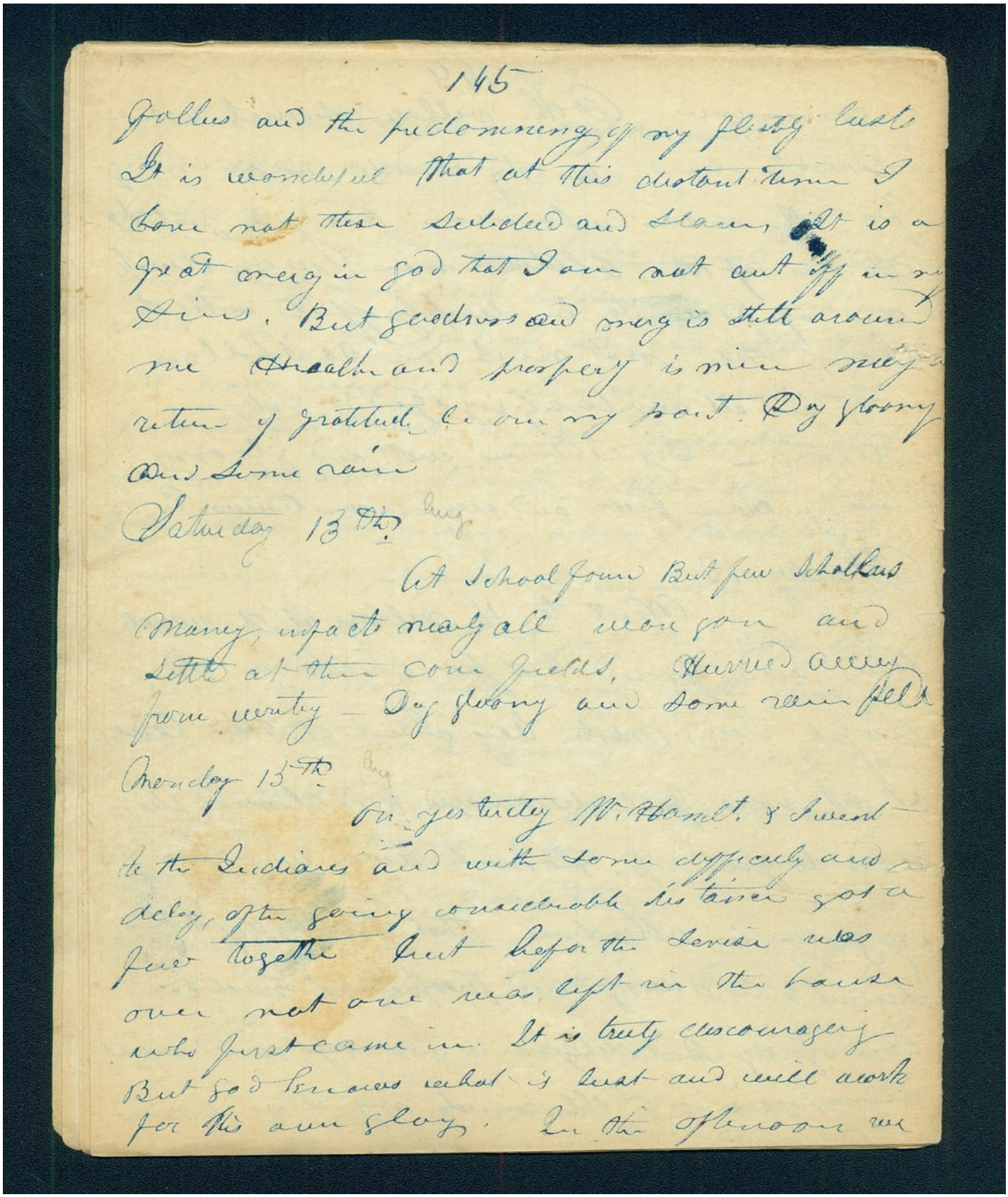
Spent the forenoon time I had in working at a close press which I am trying to make for our own



commence. At the village several mean drunk, and as they take mourning for the men who was buried yesterday some of the oldest men were drunk and appeared to be deeply affected with the loss. Had not much corn to shell as they are all very busily engaged in drying corn. — Day continues wet and gloomy. Some rain fell and wind continues E.

Friday 12

Went to the village at the usual time and found but few children or old people there, most being absent at their Corn. I at times felt discouraged, and almost disposed to give up. So much away and so irregular in attendance, that scarcely any thing seems to be a doing. And prospect not much encouraging. But diligence is necessary and must be exercised. Tell much my sins and



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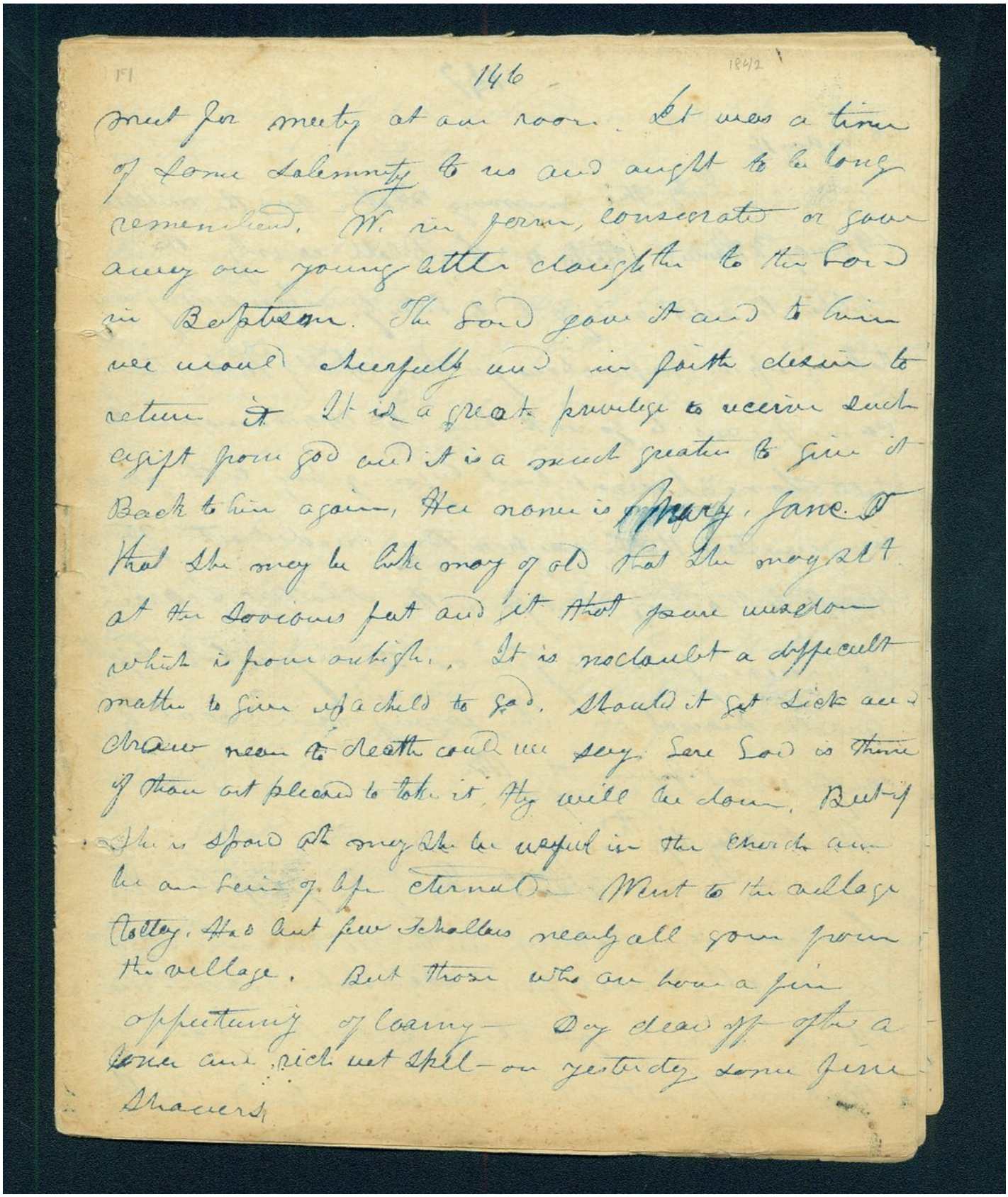
Gollus and the predominancy of my fleshy lusts
It is wonderful that at this distant time I
have not been deluded and blame. It is a
great mercy in God that I am not cut off in my
sins. But goodness and mercy is still around
me Health and property is mine may I
return gratitude be on my part. Dry gloomy
and some rain

Saturday 13th Aug

At School some But few Scholars
Many, impacts nearly all mow corn and
settle at their corn fields. Hurried away
from verity — Dry gloomy and some rain fell

Monday 15th Aug

On yesterday M. Hamlet & I went
to the Indians and with some difficulty and
delay, after seeing considerable [illegible] got a
few together but before the Service was
over not one was left in the house
who just came in. It is truly discouraging
But God knows what is best and will work
for his own glory. In the afternoon we



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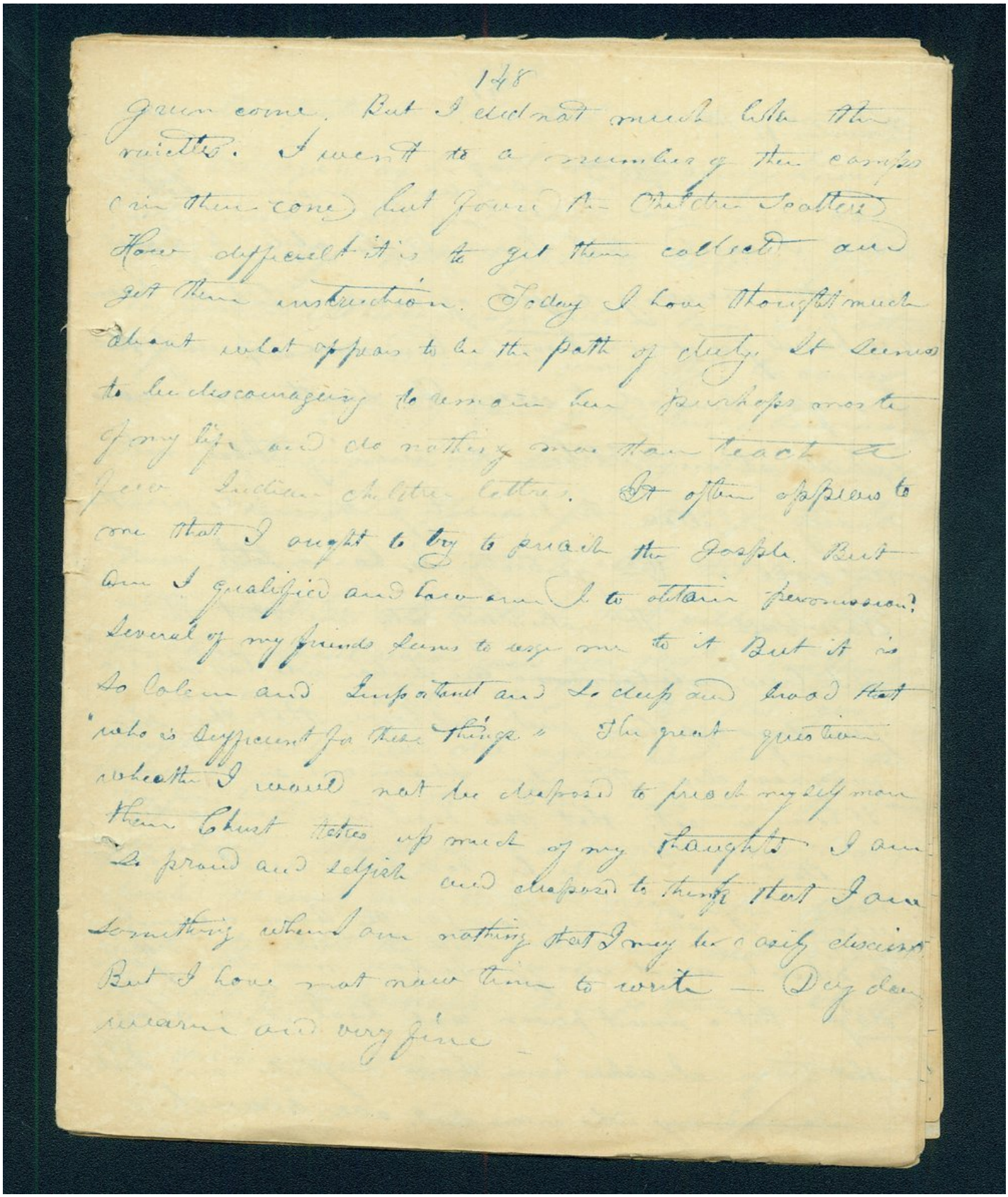
met for meeting at our room. It was a time of some solemnity to us and ought to be long remembered. We in person, consecrated or gave away our young sister daughter to the Lord in Baptism. The Lord gave it and to him we would cheerfully and in faith desire to return it. It is a great privilege to receive such a gift from God and it is a much greater to give it back to him again. Her name is Mary Jane. O that she may be like many of old that she may sit at the Saviours feet and sit that same wisdom which is from on high. It is no doubt a difficult matter to give up a child to God. Should it yet sicken and draw near to death could we say Save Lord is thine if thou art pleased to take it. Thy will be done. But if she is spared she may she be useful in the Church and be an heir of life eternal. Went to the village today. Has but few scholars nearly all gone from the village. But those who are have a fine appearance of learning. Day clear & for the season and rich wet spell. On yesterday some fine showers.

Aug
Tuesday 16

Early this morning Father and the children (Nancy & Rhoda) Starts to the Platt county the children to visit and Jo the to Liberty. Stevenson was Rising up in preparations for this. Judg Richardson came for me to go with him to Wathamonie to Court Some I went but Cefore getting to the place we were told that he was from home we did not go. Went to Reading But found the Dollars Scarce I however found a few on the way which Cost me made Several — The Evening rain cool & high wind from the N.

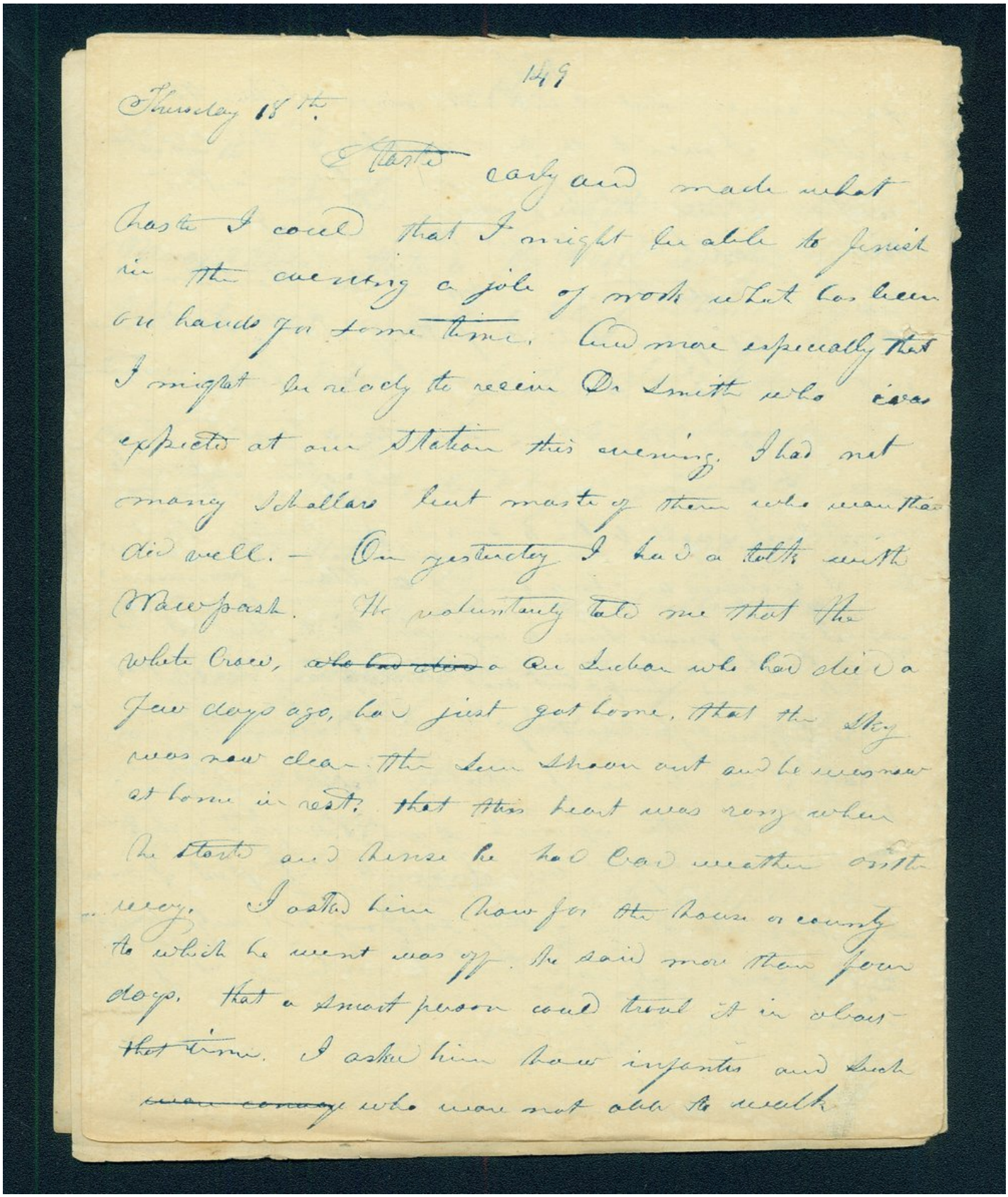
Wednesday 17th.

Starts Early to fulfill the business of Justicely with Wathamonie and at his house found all Sober and had the pleasure of partaking with them in a Buckwheat feast, which was well Boiled with



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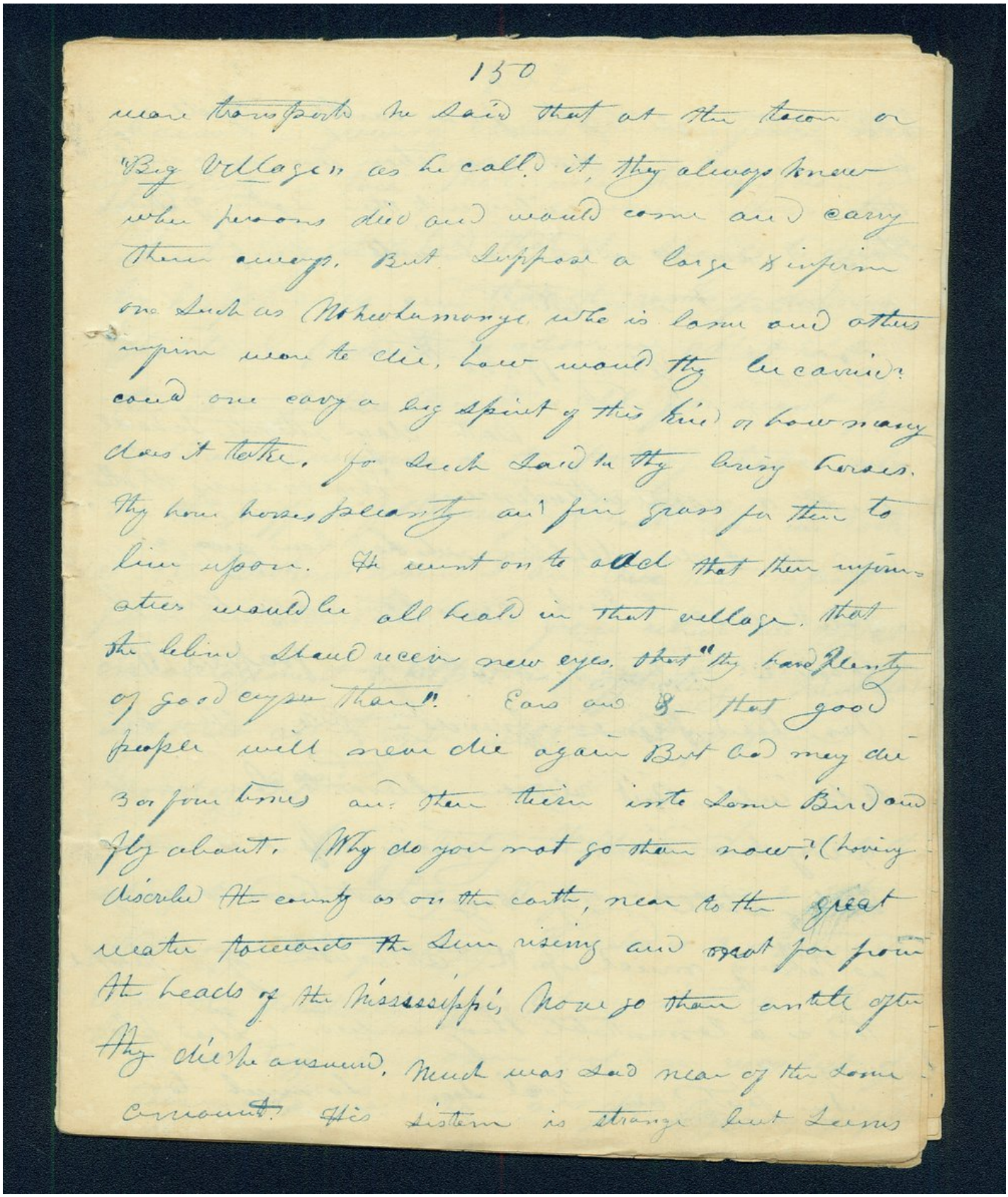
grain come. But I did not much like the
variety. I went to a meeting the evening
(in town one) but found the Christian Scatter
How difficult it is to get them collected and
get them instruction. Today I have thought much
about what appears to be the path of duty. It seems
to be discouraging to remain here perhaps more
of my life and do nothing more than teach a
few Indian children letters. It often appears to
me that I ought to try to preach the Gospel. But
am I qualified and have am I to obtain permission?
Several of my friends seems to urge me to it. But it is
so solemn and important and so deep and broad that
"who is sufficient for these things" The great question
whether I would not be disposed to preach myself more
than Christ settles up much of my thoughts I am
so proud and selfish and disposed to think that I am
something when I am nothing that I may be easily deceived
But I have not more time to write — Dog dear
remains and very fine —



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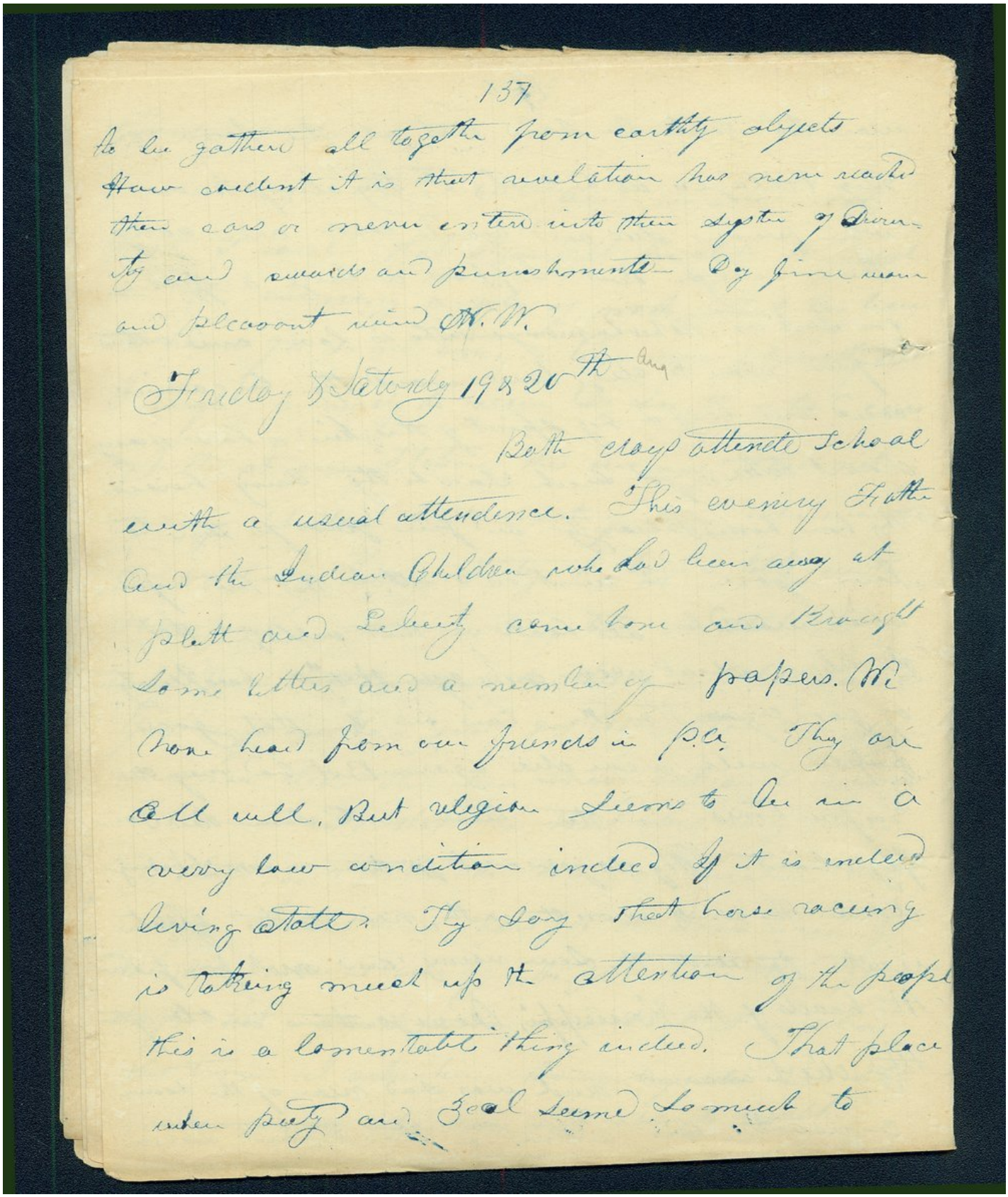
Thursday 18th.

Started early and made what haste I could that I might be able to assist in the evening a job of work which has been on hands for some time. And more especially that I might be ready to receive Dr Smith who was expected at our Station this evening. I had not many dollars but master of them who wanted did well. — On yesterday I had a talk with Wawpasha. He voluntarily told me that the White Crow, who had died a Sac Indian who had died a few days ago, had just got home. That the Sky was now clear. The Sun shone out and he was now at home in rest. that this heart was sorry when he started and hence he had bad weather on the way. I asked him how far the Sacs & county to which he went was off. He said more than four days. that a smart person could travel it in about that time. I asked him how infantes and sick who were not able to walk



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near transports he said that at the town or "Big Village" as he calls it, they always knew when persons died and would come and carry them away. But I suppose a large & infirm one such as Mokelumoxye who is lame and other infirm were to die, how would they be carried? could one carry a big Spirit of this kind or how many does it take. So such said he they bring horses. They have horses plenty and fine grass for them to live upon. He went on to add that their infirmaries would be all healed in that village, that the blind should receive new eyes, that "they had plenty of good eyes there". Ears and &c. that good people will never die again But bad may die 3 or four times and then turn into some Bird and fly about. Why do you not go there now? (having discribed the county as on the earth, near to the great water towards the Sun rising and not far from the heads of the Mississippi, Rivers so there until after they die he assured. Much was said near of the home country. His sistem is strange but seems

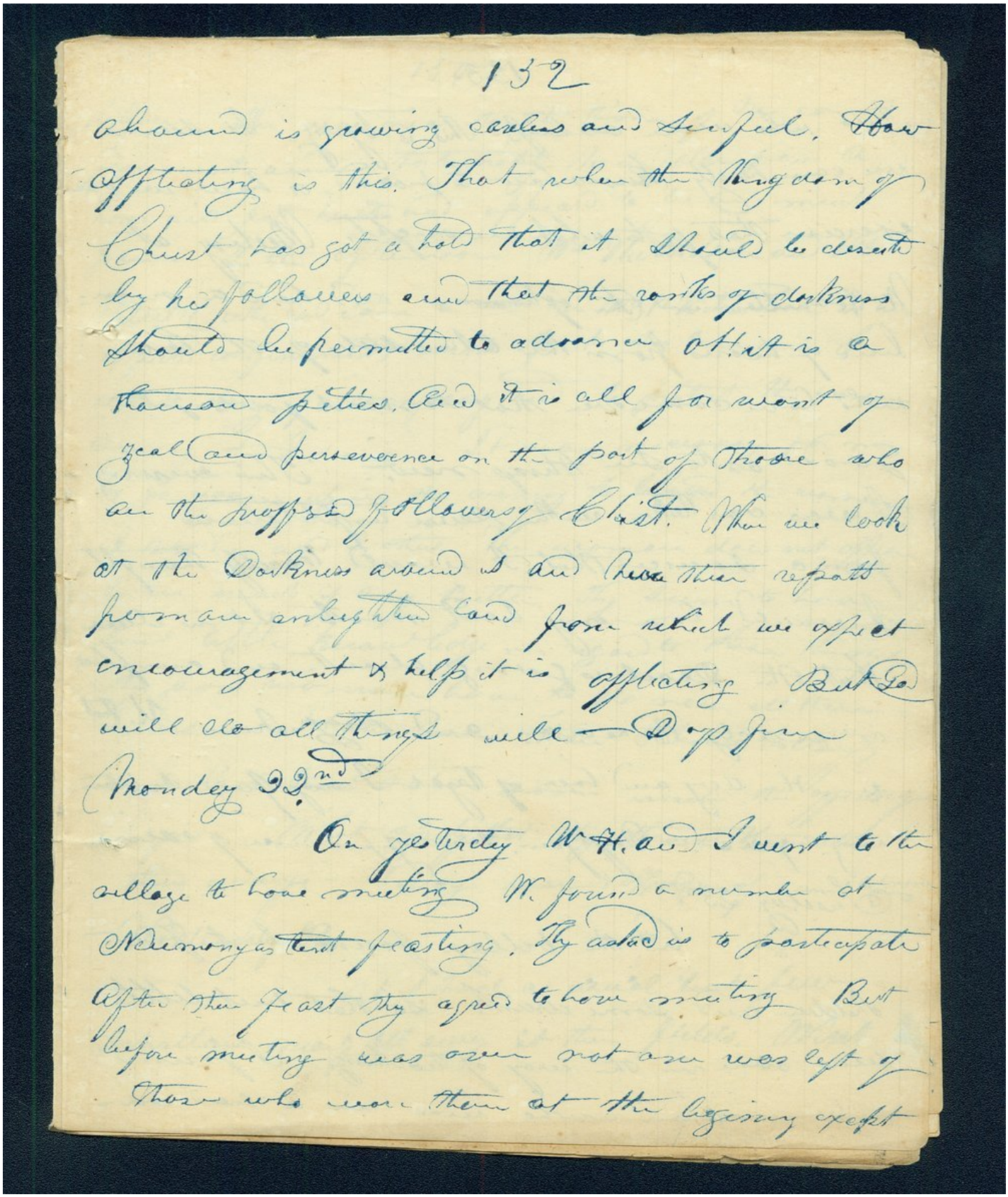


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to be gathered all together from earthly objects
How evident it is that revelation has been made
them ears or never entered into them heart of divine
joy and rewards and punishments Oh for fine mans
and pleasant mind Amen.

Friday & Saturday 19 & 20th Aug

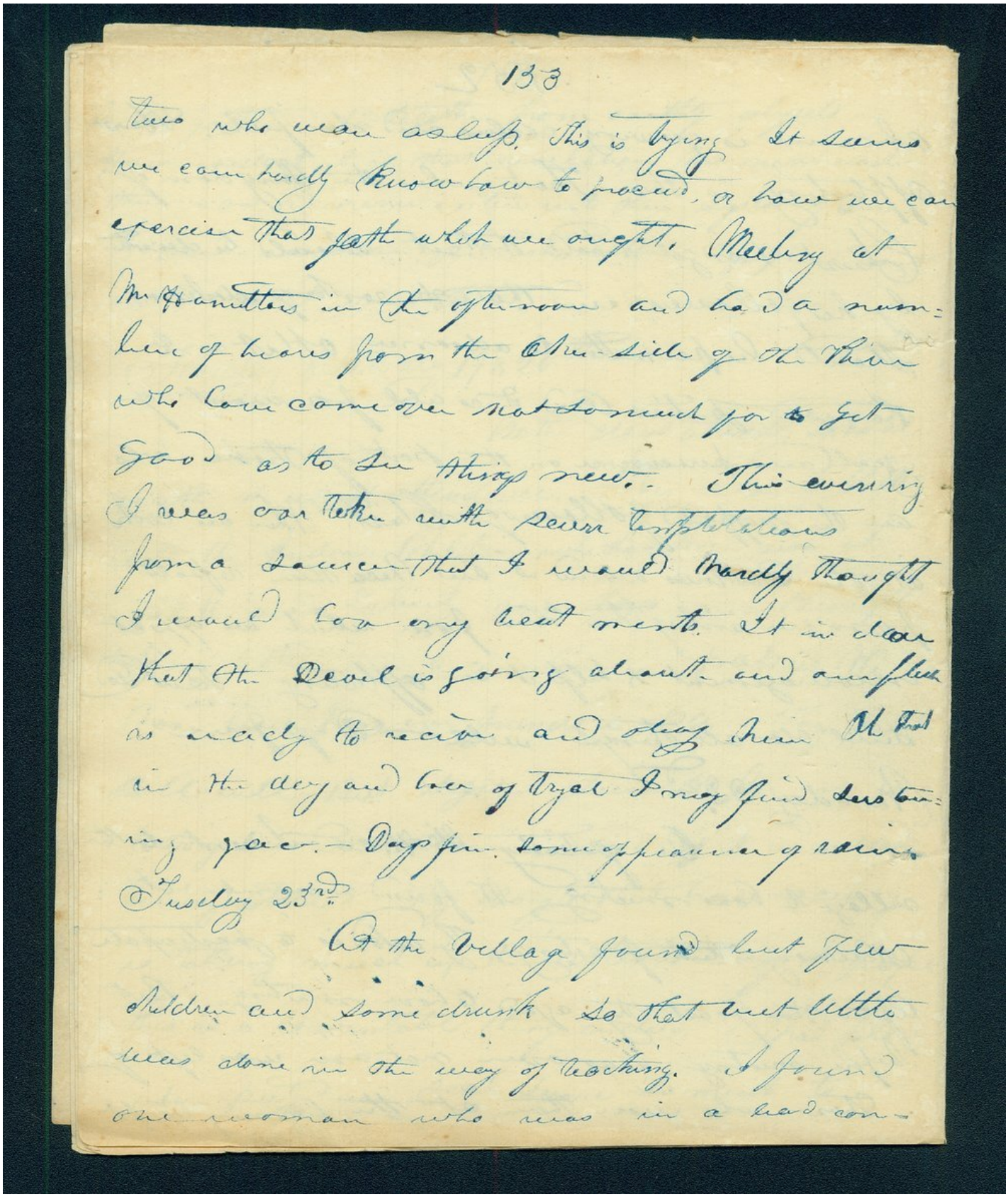
Both days attended School
with a usual attendence. This evening Father
and the Indian Children who had been away at
platt and Detroit came home and brought
some letters and a number of papers. We
have had from our friends in P.A. They are
all well. But religion seems to be in a
very low condition indeed if it is indeed
living at all. To day that horse racing
is taking much up the attention of the people
this is a lamentable thing indeed. That place
when piety and zeal seemed so much to



around is growing careless and sinful. How
afflicting is this. That when the Kingdom of
Christ has got a hold that it should be deserted
by his followers and that the ranks of darkness
should be permitted to advance on it. it is a
thousand pities. And it is all for want of
zeal and perseverence on the part of those who
are the professed followers of Christ. When we look
at the Darkness around us and how then repent
for man and enlightened and from which we get
encouragement & help it is afflicting But God
will do all things well — Drop Jim

Monday 22nd

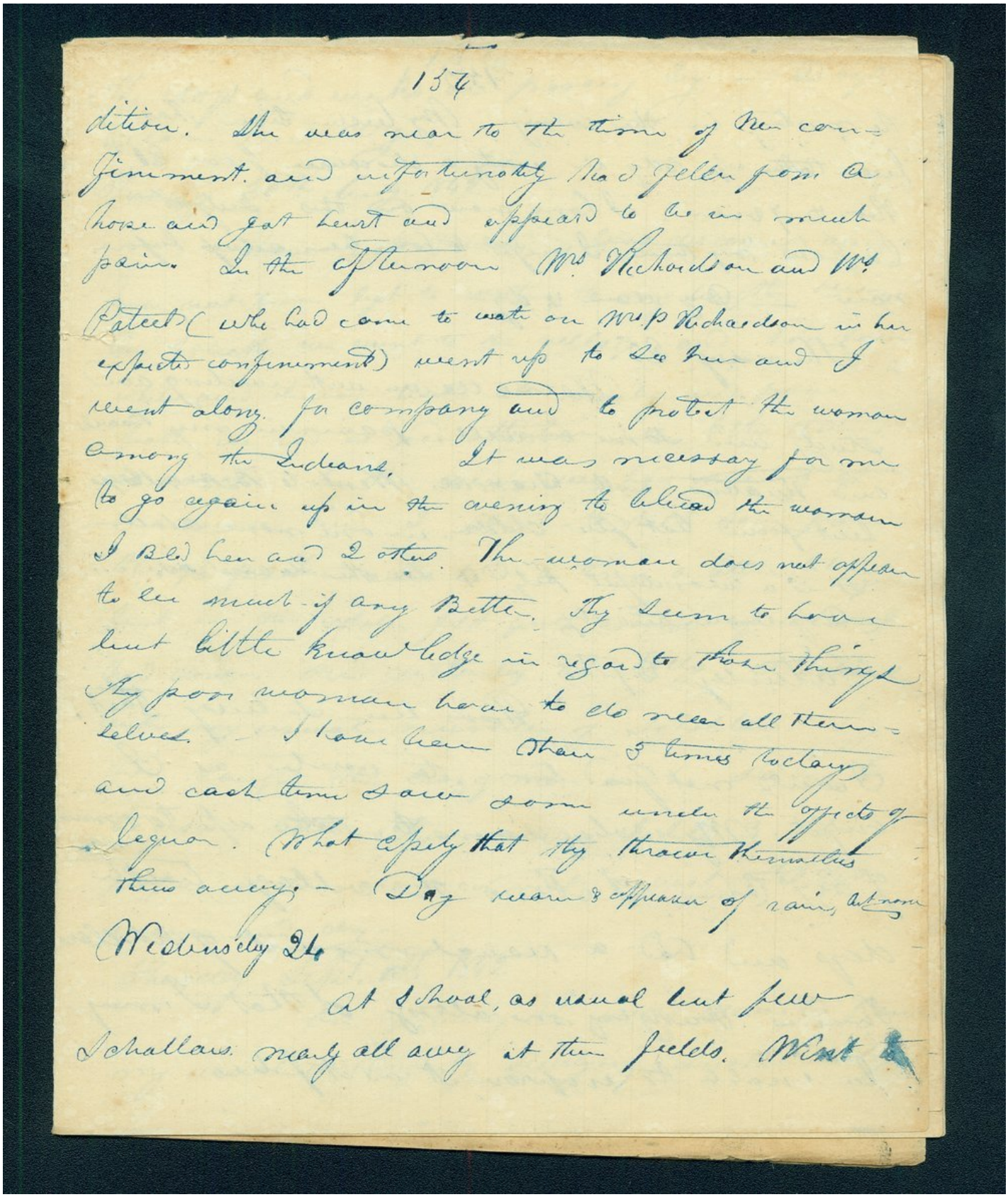
On yesterday W. H. and I went to the
village to have meeting. We found a number at
Ceremony as usual feasting. My advice is to participate
After the Feast they agreed to have meeting But
before meeting was over not one was left of
those who were there at the beginning except



two who were asleep. This is trying. It seems we can hardly know how to proceed, or how we can exercise that faith which we ought. Meeting at Mr Hamilton's in the afternoon and had a number of hearers from the other side of the River who have come over not so much for to get good as to see things new. This evening I was taken with severe cramp colic from a cancer that I would hardly thought I would have any such. It is clear that the Devil is going about and our foe is ready to receive and devour him. O that in the day and hour of trial I may find strength for me. — Days fine. Some of pleasure of rain.

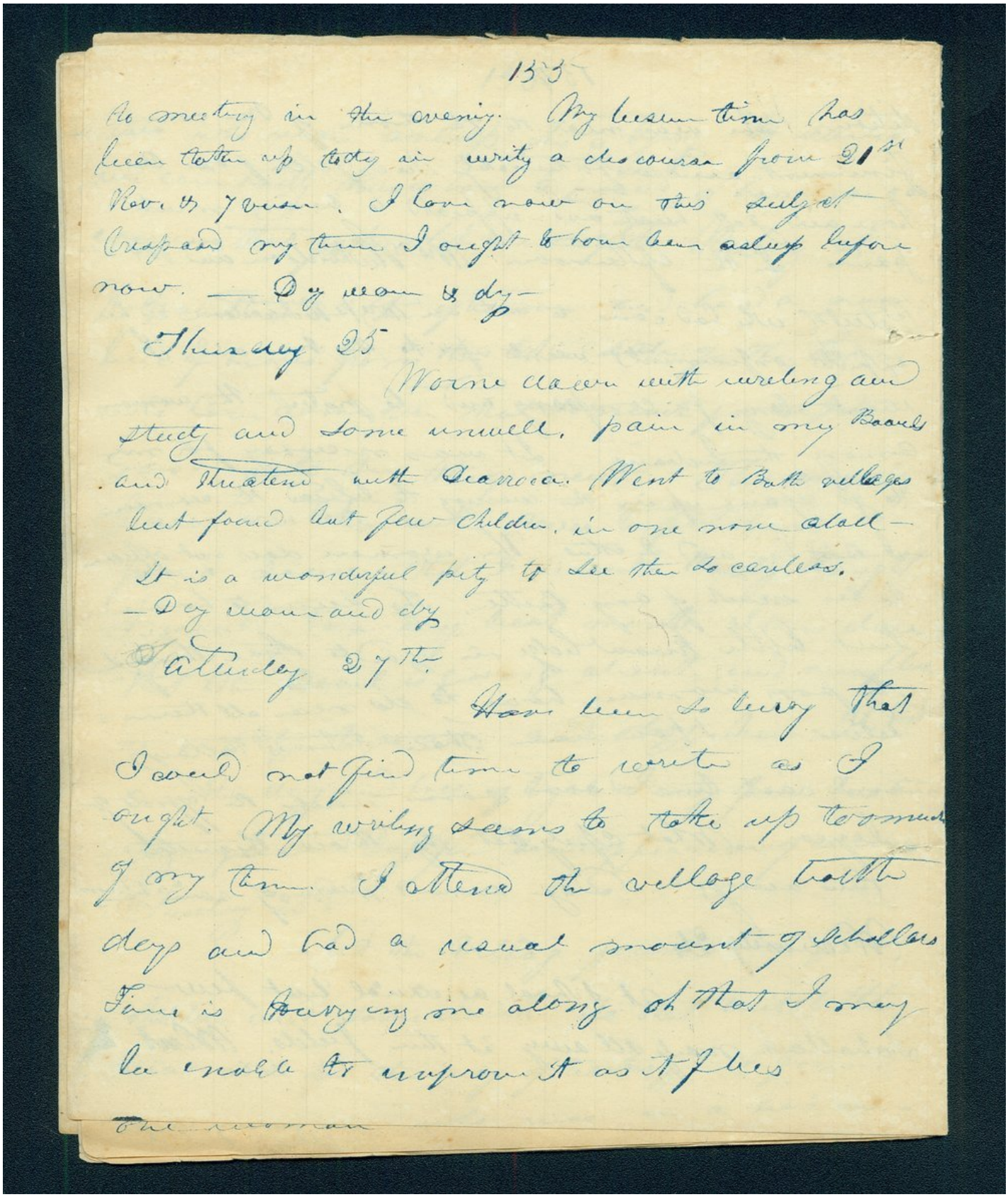
Tuesday 23rd

At the village found but few children and some drunk so that not little was done in the way of teaching. I found one woman who was in a bad con-



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dition. She was near to the time of her con-
finement and unfortunately had fallen from a
horse and got hurt and appeared to be in much
pain. In the afternoon Mrs Richardson and Mrs
Patee (who had come to wait on Mrs P Richardson in her
expected confinement) went up to see her and I
went along for company and to protect the woman
among the Indians. It was necessary for me
to go again up in the evening to bleed the woman
I Bled her and 2 others. The woman does not appear
to be much if any better. They seem to have
but little knowledge in regard to their things
They poor woman have to do near all them-
selves. I have been there 3 times today
and each time saw some under the effects of
liquor. What a pity that they thrown themselves
thus away. — Day warm & appearance of rain, at noon
Wednesday 24
At School, as usual but few
Scholars. many all away at their fields. Went



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No meeting in the evening. My lesson time has been taken up today in writing a discourse from 21st Rev. 8 verse. I have more on this subject and my time I ought to have been asleep before now. — Dy mean & dy —

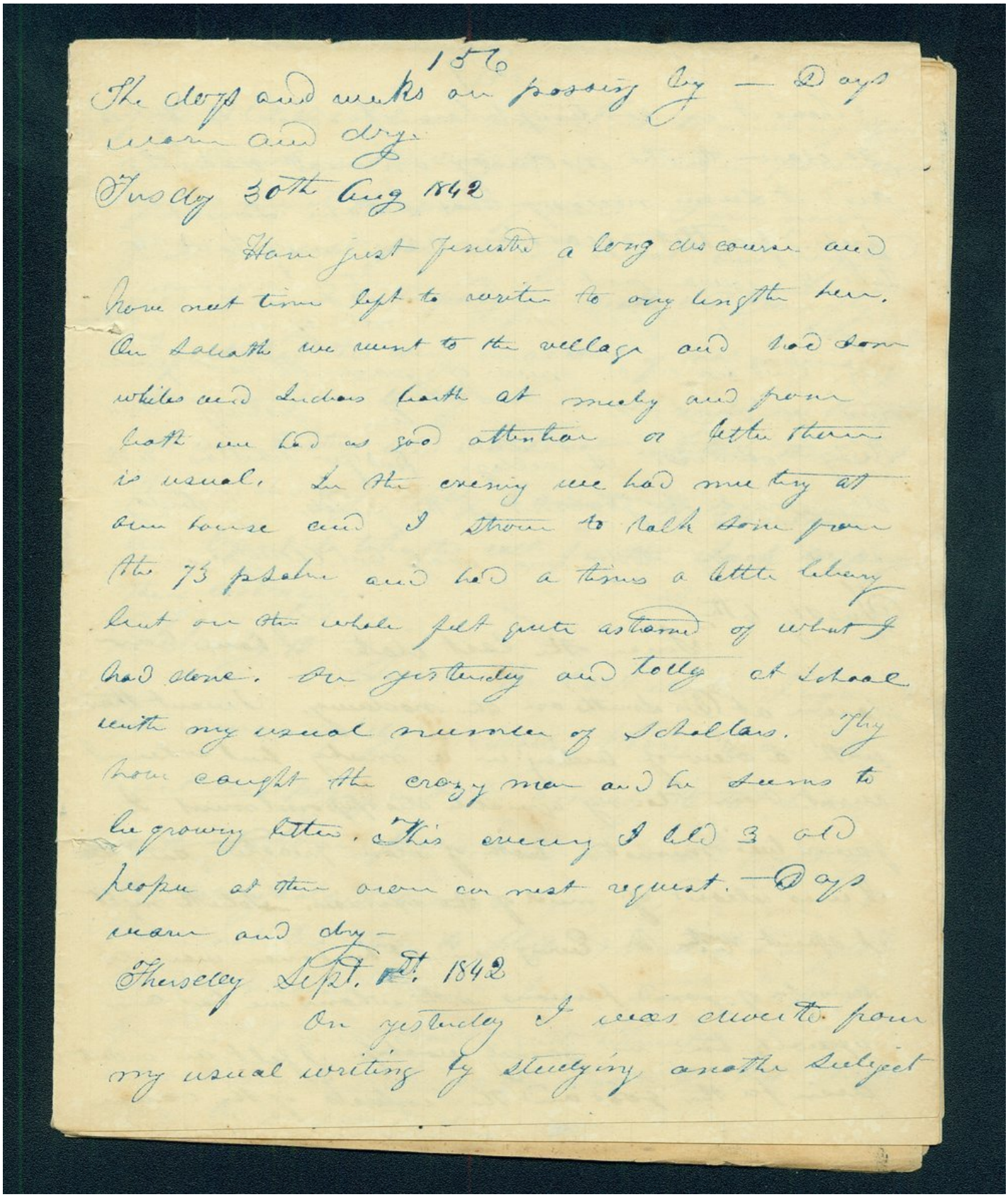
Thursday 25

Worse today with swelling and stuck and some unwell pain in my Bowels and threatened with Diarrhea. Went to Both villages but found but few Children. in one none at all — It is a wonderful pity to see them so careless. — Dy mean and dy

Saturday 27th

Have been so busy that I could not find time to write as I ought. My writing seems to take up too much of my time. I attend the village both days and had a usual amount of scholars. Time is hurrying me along & that I may be enable to improve it as it flies

the moments



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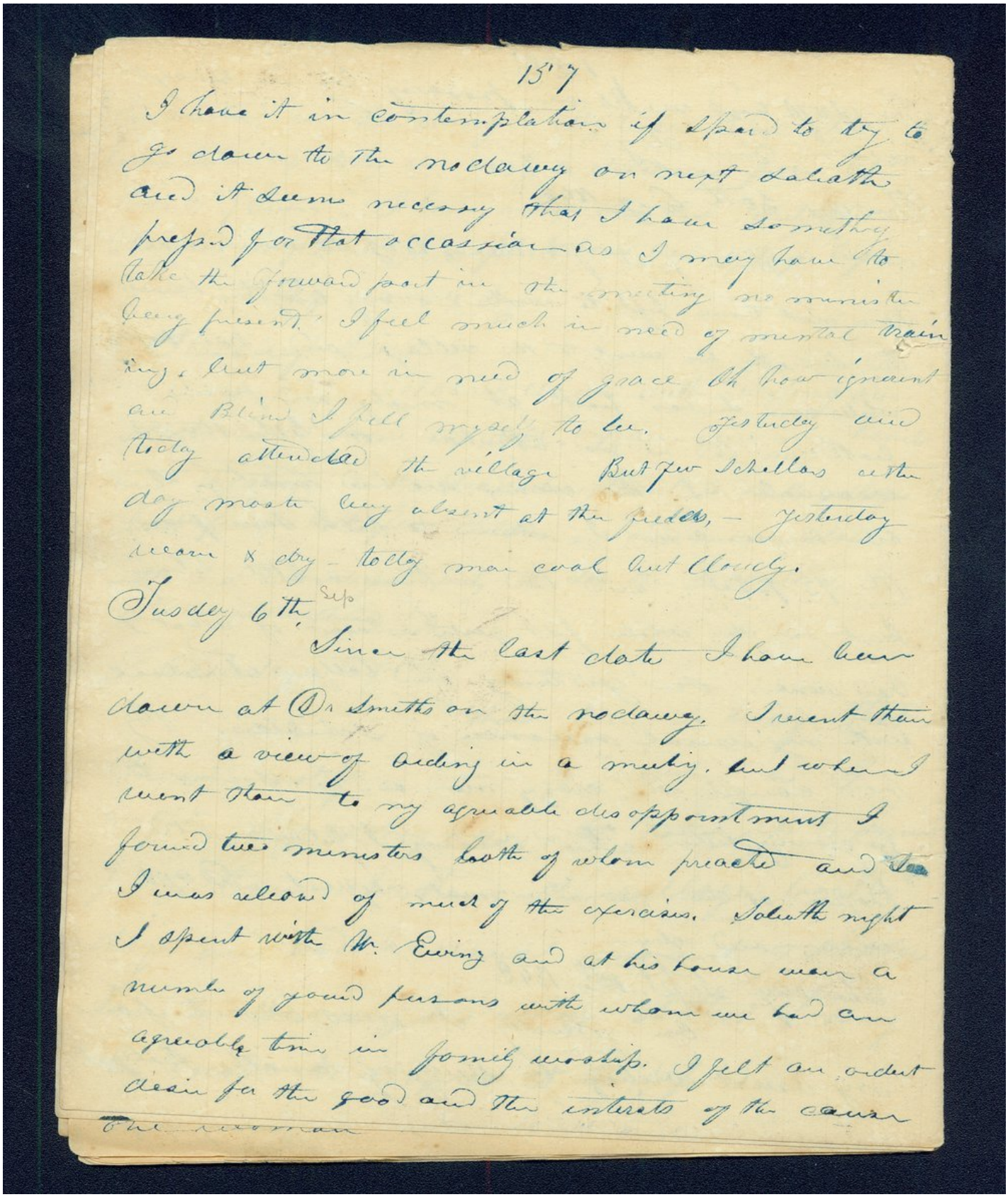
The days and weeks are passing by — Days mean and dry.

Tuesday 30th Aug 1842

Have just finished a long discourse and have not time left to write to any length here. On Sabath we went to the village and had Sam white and Lucian Smith at meeting and from both we had as good attention as ever there is usual. In the evening we had meeting at our house and I strove to talk from from the 73 psalm and had a times a little liberty but on the whole felt quite ashamed of what I had done. On yesterday and today at school with my usual number of Scholars. They have caught the crazy man and he seems to be growing better. This evening I held 3 old people at their own on next request. — Days mean and dry —

Thursday Sept. 1st 1842

On yesterday I was about to pour my usual writing by studying another subject

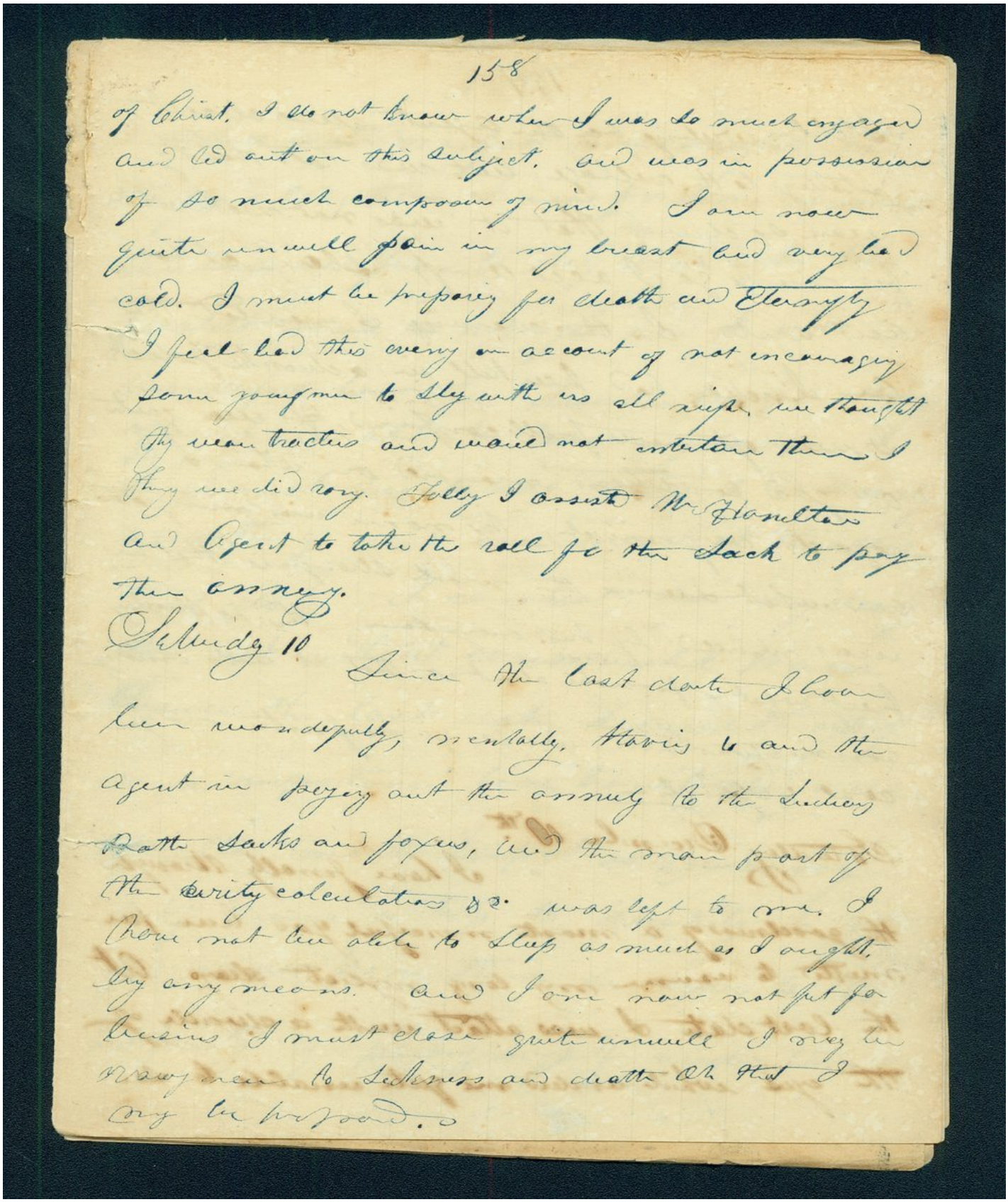


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I have it in contemplation if I spare to try to go down to the no daway on next Sabath and it seems necessy that I have something prepared for that occassion as I may have to take the forward part in the meeting no minister being present. I feel much in need of mental training, but more in need of grace Oh how ignorant and Blind I fell myself to be. Yesterday and today attended the village But few Scholars at the day most being absent at the prairies, — Yesterday warm & dry — today mar cool but Cloudy.

Tusday 6th Sep.

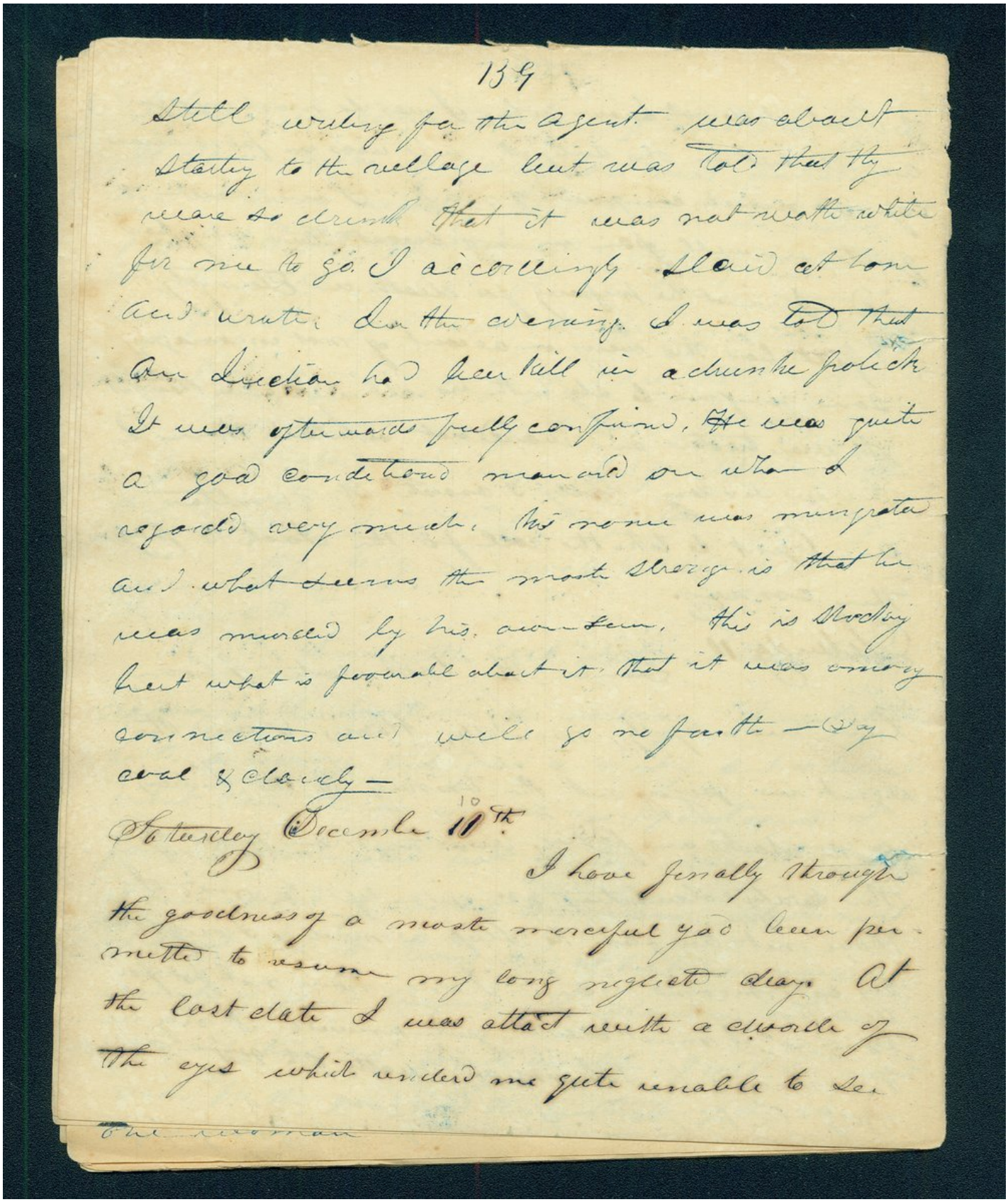
Since the last date I have been down at Dr Smiths on the no daway. I went there with a view of doing in a meeting, but when I went there to my agreable disappointment I found two ministers both of whom preached and I was relieved of much of the exercises. Saturday night I spent with Mr. Ewing and at his house were a number of good persons with whom we had an agreable time in family worship. I felt an ardent desire for the good and the interests of the cause the wo[illegible]



of Christ. I do not know when I was so much engaged and led out on this subject, and was in possession of so much composure of mind. I am now quite unwell pain in my breast and very bad cold. I must be preparing for death and Eternity I feel led this evening on account of not encouraging some young men to stay with us all night we thought they were traders and would not entertain them & they were displeased. Billy I assisted Mr Hamilton and Agent to take the roll for the Sack to pay them annuity.

Sunday 10

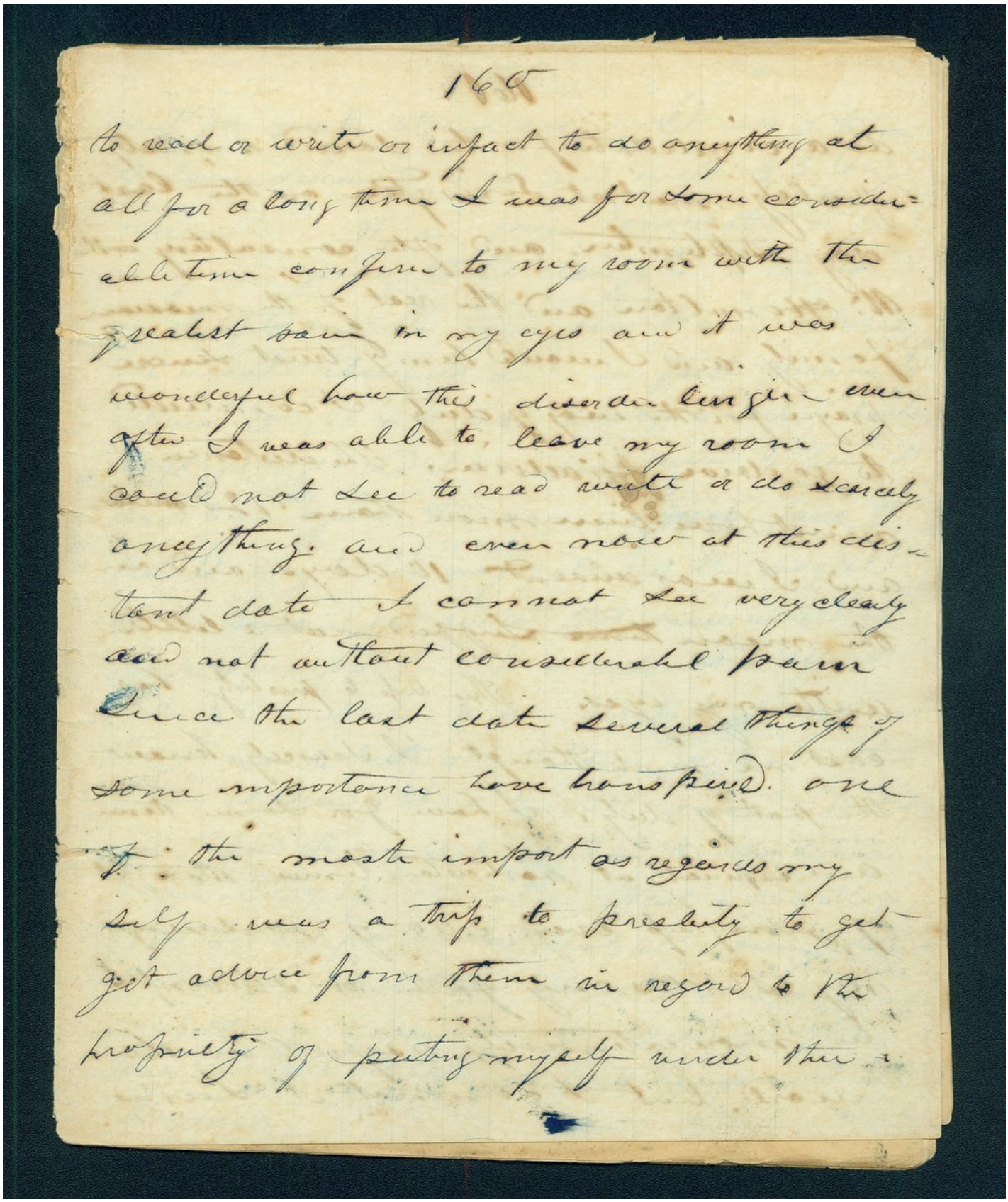
Since the last date I have been wonderfully mentally, staving & and the agent in paying out the annuity to the Indians Sacks and foxes, and the main part of the security calculations &c. was left to me. I have not been able to sleep as much as I ought, by any means. And I am now not fit for business I must close quite unwell I pray to be ready even to sickness and death & that I may be prepared.



Still waiting for the agent. was about starting to the village but was told that they were so drunk that it was not worth while for me to go. I accordingly stayed at home and wrote. In the evening I was told that Jas Lindsay had been killed in a drunken fight. It was afterwards fully confirmed. He was quite a good conducted man and one who I regarded very much. His name was mangled and what seems the most strange is that he was murdered by his own son. This is Monday but what is favorable about it that it was every sunday and will be so for the — Day cool & cloudy —

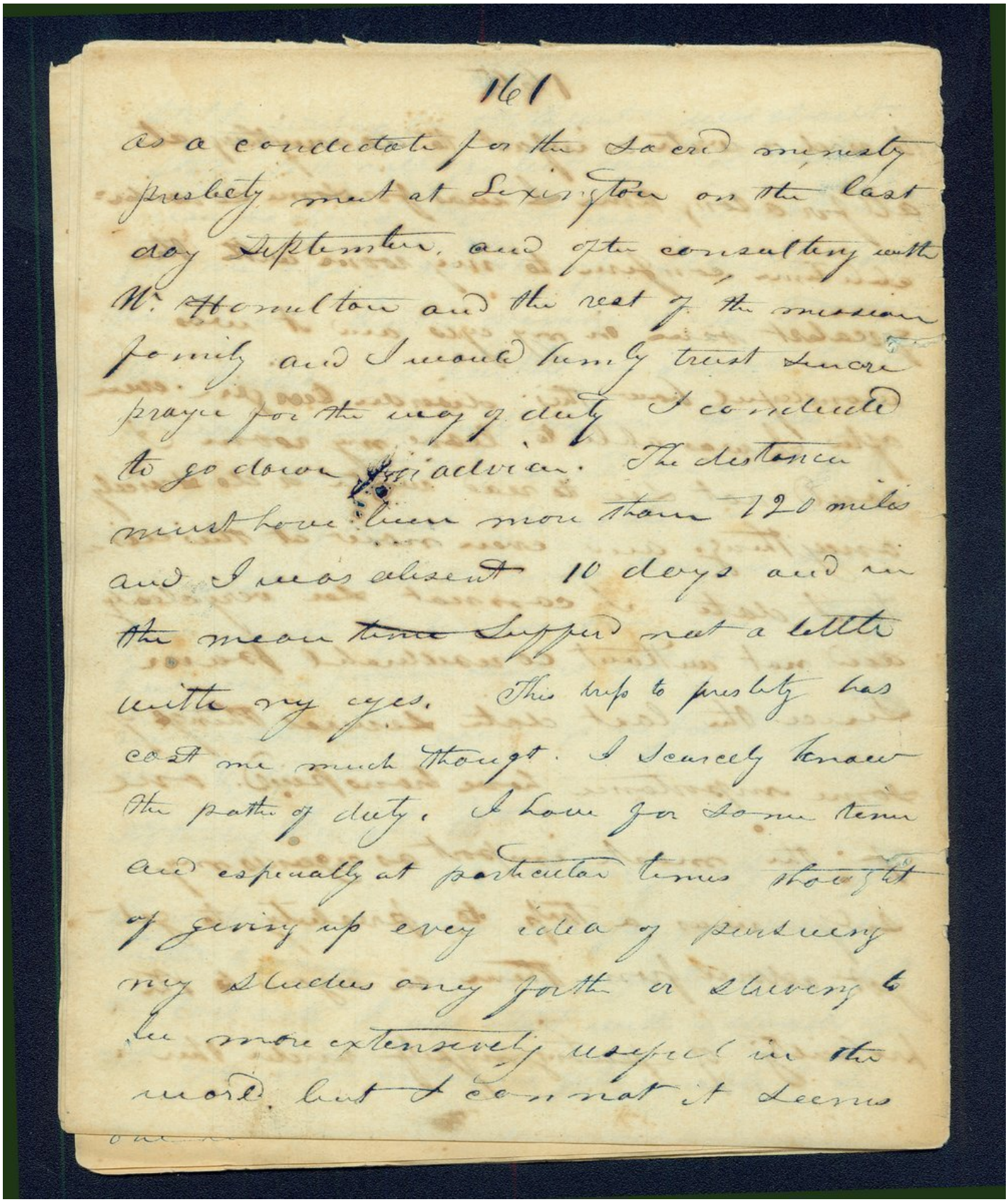
Tuesday December 10th

I have finally through the goodness of a most merciful God been permitted to resume my long neglected diary. At the last date I was attacked with a disorder of the eyes which rendered me quite unable to see the [illegible]



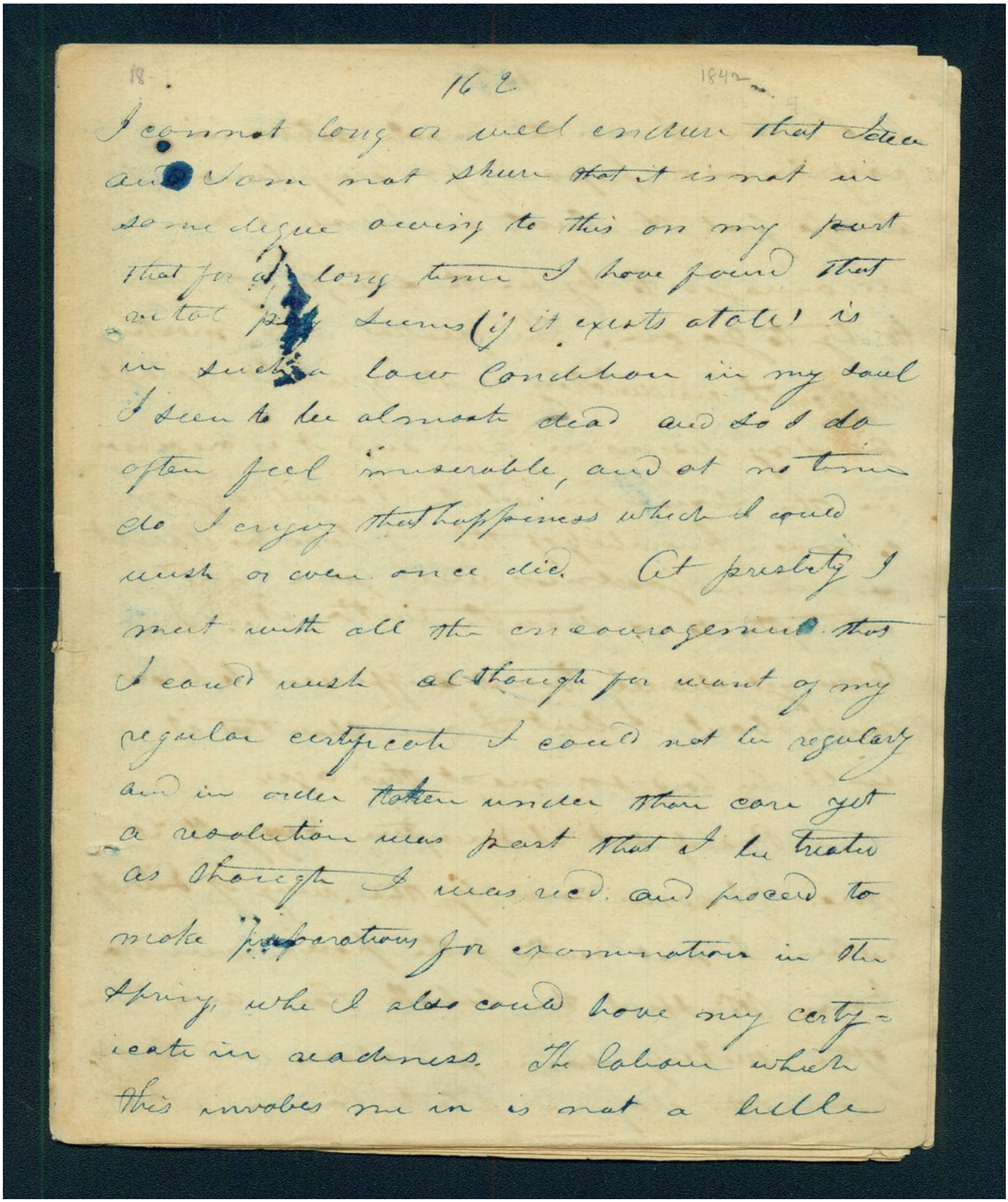
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to read or write or infact to do anything at all for a long time I was for some consider-able time confine to my room with the greatest pain in my eyes and it was wonderful how this disorder lingered even after I was able to leave my room I could not see to read write or do scarcely anything. and even now at this distant date I cannot see very clearly and not without considerable pain Since the last date several things of some importance have transpired. one of the most important as regards myself was a trip to Presbury to get get advice from them in regard to the propriety of putting myself under their



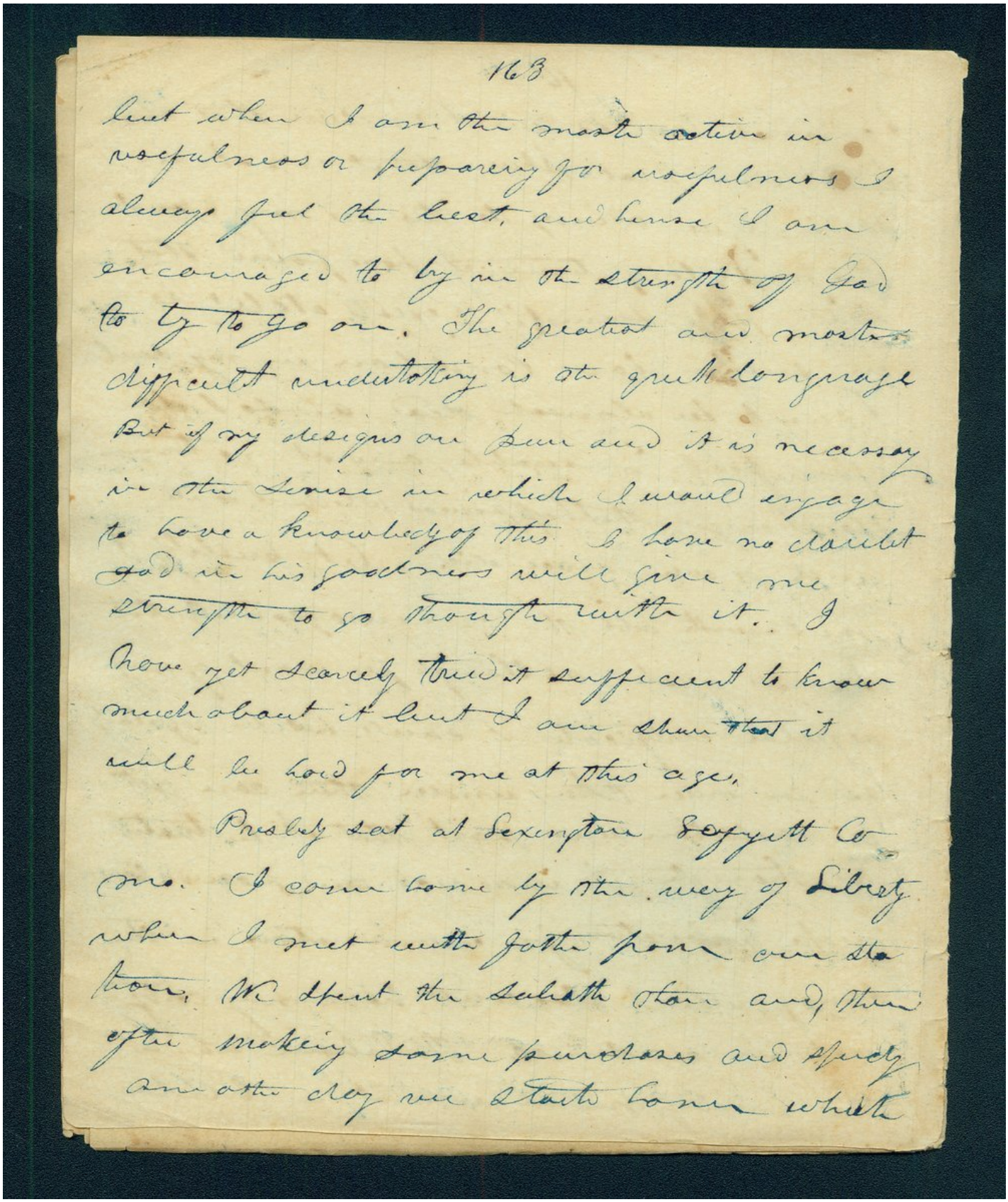
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as a conductor for the sacrament
presbety met at Lexington on the last
day September, and after consultery with
Mr. Houlton and the rest of the mission
family and I would humbly trust sincere
prayer for the way of duty I concluded
to go down to adrian. The distance
must have been more than 120 miles
and I was absent 10 days and in
the mean time Supper met a letter
with my eyes. This trip to presbety has
cost me much thought. I scarcely know
the paths of duty. I have for some time
and espeually at particular times thought
of giving up every idea of pursuing
my studies any forth or devoting
be more extensively usefull in the
world. but I cannot it seems



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I cannot long or well endure that state and I am not sure that it is not in some degree owing to this on my part that for a long time I have found that within [illegible] (if it exists at all) is in such a low condition in my soul I seem to be almost dead and so I do often feel miserable, and at no time do I enjoy that happiness which I could wish or even once did. At present I meet with all the encouragement that I could wish although for want of my regular certificate I could not be regularly and in order taken under their care yet a resolution was past that I be treated as though I was received and proceed to make preparations for examination in the Spring, when I also could have my certificate in readiness. The labour which this involves me in is not a little



last when I am the most active in
usefulness or preparing for usefulness I
always feel the least, and hence I am
encouraged to try in the strength of God
to try to go on. The greatest and most
difficult undertaking is the gaelic language
But if my designs are pure and it is necessary
in the sense in which I would engage
to have a knowledge of this I have no doubt
God in his goodness will give me
strength to go through with it. I
have yet scarcely tried it sufficient to know
much about it but I am sure it
will be hard for me at this age.

Presby sat at Lexington Fayette Co
Mo. I come home by the way of Liberty
where I met with Father from our station.
We spent the Sabath there and then
after making some purchases and ready
on the day we start home which