Dear daughter:

Your welcome letter with all its paraphernalia is at hand. As you don't have to be married at any particular time (and I can't help being sort of glad of each postponment) because you know the best of men are sort of uncertain, i.e. till you know them after the wedding, perhaps on my July visit I can give away the bride - but?; who knows? Tell Mr. Crawford, I shall never cease to mourn that I was born one generation too soon. I envy him.
but as I was born in 1830 & not in 1850, he need not be the least bit jealous, except to make you a good strong, manly, masterly husband. I have, as you know, wished I had been born a woman; and I do think I should have married, if I could, just such a man as he; I should have wanted one full of physical & mental & moral & spiritual energy, and then I should have been just the most submissive loving, devoted little wife that a man ever took to himself. Mrs. Howard, Bessie & Harry are en route from Chicago; Lt. Greble wife & baby are en route from Ft. Leavenworth; John & I are here. Tomorrow night by a "Special car" (just think of being a Major-General) we set out for San Francisco. Give much love to your mother, and keep as much as a precious small friend like yourself can, in view of the formidable circumstances that await you sooner or later. I shall be very proud Gertie to be at your wedding and shall be very happy, if there or not there, if
you two are as happy as you
deserve to be. God bless us all
and grant that we may so live
and die as to meet & walk & talk
together to our fill in the better
land. And I hope you will be "Gertie"
with all her sprightliness & not somebody
else. Goodbye -- au revoir!
We leave Chancy here to farm,
carry on Douglass Co. Nursery" &
attend to "Subscription Books." I think
Alice Rustin has got what he had left
of heart after that [Mass ?] escapade, but
engagement & marriage are not yet on the docket.
Your aged 2nd father, Oliver Otis Howard
I enjoy your descriptions of the children. How does my classmate Lazelle seem? If he will forgive me as I have forgiven him for Miller's mistake - we may call things square. He did not call on me at Omaha - and I did not see him. Would it be well to be trampled on at my age.

Well, au revoir - Ich lieben dich - bitten.

Sincerely yours,
(sgd) O. O. H.

Dear Sladen:

Your good letter came yesterday. We are yet in "the suds" to some degree. I wish you were down here, so that I could express my mind. The wind blows as hard as at Cheyenne - the sun keeps in clouds. The house is like that elephant that got killed. I can't find a family room. Prayers almost seem out of place - family Altars at "Black Point" are rare. But I will "fight". my

Apr:27th 1886.
way to some home life in spite of the spirit of McD or the example of Mr. Pope. The clerks (messengers who cannot write raised up for long & faithful service to clerkships) take possession of me & say "Go here! Go there!" My wife watches me and Bessie distracts me. Poor people, poor friends they will have to give over. You couldn't make a Winfield Scott out of me by much splicing. Well, in desperation I have applied for you to come here & teach the soldiers how to shoot - and I hope you will come here & get into a decent sized mansion, flowers or no flowers, & with me to come & see you. I don't care if you dine on onions & cabbage & talk slang at the table. Only be sure not to play the great man - nor swell because you belong to the Division of the Pacific. I wrote Dunn today - so as not to get snubbed by the Sec. of War - asking permission to detail you as "Inspector of Rifle Practice." Give our love to Mrs. Sladen and all. Mamma has written Grace.
June 2 [1886],

Capt. J. A. Sladen
14th Inf. try.
Vancouver, Was. T.

Dear Capt. Sladen:

With a feeling
of sorrow and some indignation at
the stone which bruises my toe
I enclose to you this handsome
card. Wood reports you this morn­
ing as well. With kind regards
to all and wishing better luck
next time I am

Faithfully yours

(sgd) O. O. Howard

Maj. Gen. U. S. A.
My dear Gertie:

Your good letter of March 28th lies before me. Is it possible that I have let it lie in my basket so long! It was because I said when dictating to the other 1000 correspondents, I said to myself, "Oh, I wrote her always in my own hand." Thank you for your warm congratulations. Now we have moved - leaving Guy at Niagara, Jamie at Troy, & Chancy at Omaha. Jno, Harry, Bessie, Mamma & I are here bag & baggage. We have a big house & plenty of flowers & are waiting for your wedding trip; here at Fort Mason [Black Point]. It is where Van Ness [Avium?] prolonged would touch the S. F. Harbor to the North of the great city. Don't fail to come. It will do you & Mr. Crawford good to take this trip before you sit down to the more solid comfort of domestic home life. We have not seen Grace nor any of her four babies yet. She has got greatly the start of you, Gertie, in the race of life, but she will be an old lady while you are yet young & active. I know you are not envious. Give my love to your good mother & me best regards to Mr. C----- if you & he are still all right. We go to the 1st Cong. Ch. - just 20 minutes ride off from here. We attend in the morning & stop to the J. S. I have a Bible Class that meets in the pastor's study. Then home for lunch; for evening we have at the Reading Room a service of our own. I wish you were here to sing. A Chaplain comes over to us from Angel Island.
I have two offices, one here & one at the Presidio (?), (the Hd. qrs. Mil. Div). This home office has all my books & letter-books &c. that keep me organically connected to the post. Is Mr. C--- waiting till he gets "the cage" before he catches the bird & puts it in? Mr. Cleveland sets a good example. He is evidently not sure of the Winter-? house for another term, so he puts his "cage" in Georgetown.

Gertie, there are lots of saucy things I should like to say, but nonsense looks ill in ink; so I will wait for the wedding tour; then perhaps the journey and the getting married may so change & subdue you that I shall be cautious.

I have just been up to Ft. Gaston crossing a double range of mts. on mule back. Perhaps you would like to have ridden thus, & have a little over me. Well, we will wait till you come and then if you are still an approximation of your old self we will show you, stable, horses, Presidio (?), Old Point Cliff - House & what not? This is a fine place; foliage, flowers shrubs, German (?), trees in super abundance. We look out upon the harbor full of islands & ships little & big. I saw it ruffle itself. When the wind comes down from the Golden Gate - how it roars at night & howls when the water is stopped in the rocks & beneath the rocky steeps. Should any thing happen (which Heaven forfend!) then come over alone. I mean without a king, for we have several unqueened bachelors hereabouts, and you know who defends you & who really loves you beyond your adventures & without envy or jealousy - even till beyond the gates. Mrs. Holloway's son is here with my force now & well. aff & paternally

O.O.H.
Dear Gertie:

This will not reach you much before the great event of your life. Somehow it makes me sad to think of and change in you; but it must come. And indeed for you it will be a change fraught with hopes & joys that probably you do not even yet begin to realize. That you are to marry a noble man, worthy of you, would have been your dear father's consolation at giving you into the hands of a husband;
so it is mine who have tried

to cherish you as a daughter.

Now may God especially bless

you & Mr. Crawford and your

mother - bless you as you go

out & in before Him - bless you

in your house & your home-

door life and in all that shall

be yours. Mrs. Howard

will write you also today

and give her benedictions.

Let our mutual hope,

strong like an anchor, the

hope of Eternal life, be

ever ours, and it includes au revoir

Your affectionate friend

O. O. Howard

Miss M. Gertrude Smith

Brooklyn, N. Y.