

Miss M. Gertrude Smith

Nurses Hospital

Brooklyn

N.Y.

Apr 12 [188] 6

Dear daughter:

Your welcome letter
with all its paraphrenalia is at
hand. As you dont 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

Apr 27th 1886,

I enjoy your descriptions of
of the children. How does
my classmat 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 yrs.

(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

way to some home life inspite
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 ~~we~~
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 tables.
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~~
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.

Miss M. Gertrude Smith

Nurses Hospital / De Kalb Ave.

Brooklyn / N.Y.

My dear Gertie:

[cc - June 9, 1886]

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. Dont
fail
il 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. Divⁿ). 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 ^{long} 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 forbend!)
then come over alone. I mean without
bachelors
a king, for we have several [^] unqueened
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.

Cal.
Fort Mason, San Fransisco

Nov 2nd 1886

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-
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.