

Miss M. Gertrude Smith

Nurses Hospital

Brooklyn

N.Y.

Apr 12 1886

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 2<sup>nd</sup> father, Oliver Otis Howard



Apr 27<sup>th</sup> 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 posession 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

14<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>n</sup>). 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 <sup>long</sup> 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  
<sup>[?]</sup> 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 <sup>[?]</sup> 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 steepes. Should  
any thing happen (which Heaven forbid!)  
then come over alone. I mean without  
bachelors  
a king, for we have several <sup>^</sup> 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  
<sup>with</sup> 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.