

is attached, over which we know the linen collar.
All my good broom shirts, I will exchange for plain
shirts when you come, if you think it best. I don't
know how good my shirts will be at a year from
this time. There are a good many little conveniences,
of which I am now deprived, which you can bring
me. I shall mention them now & then in my letters.
I count every thing ^{upon} your making me a visit - next
June, & especially upon Lizzie's accompanying you.

I should judge from your letter that you had not then
received my last: in which I gave you a short-
description of my visit to Leekskill. I began this letter
yesterday (Wednesday). The air is more chilling to-day.
Every thing seems to look gloomy & solitary about West
Point. The mountains look bare & cheerless; and the forests
that surround us, but a short time ago, so green & flourishing,
have put on their winter dress. My birthday comes to-morrow,
my twentieth birth-day! This period of life is said to be the
happiest. Well! perhaps it is so! But I presume the principal
was not drawn from the experience of Cadets. I do not
now look forward to the future with any fixed determination.
Everything with me rests on probabilities & conditions. I may
resign at the end of two years; I may graduate & then
resign, or I may stay in the army. If I should by any
chance fall short of the 5th stand in my class, - I
shall most certainly resign, unless my opinion changes.
I find, however, that it is doing me great good in many
points of view to recite in the manner we are obliged
to do. It will not be time lost, even if I do ^{not} become an
officer. My pages are filled, so Good bye, your affectionate
Son Otho

O. Howard

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West Point N.Y. Nov 12th 1850.

Dear Mother

I received your letter this morning and as I
now have a few moments to myself I will spend ^{them} in answering
it. You know that I promised to write to quite a number; & as
I have but little time, at the most, you must not expect
that I shall be quite so punctual in writing to you as
I would like to be. But you may be assured that there
will not many weeks pass at any one time without my writing.
I am now doing very well in all respects. The face of things
has remarkably changed since I first came here. When one
enters a military Institution every thing at first must
seem new & strange: but in a very short time all those
things which at first appeared so severe & unnatural,
become habitual & easy. It is almost as easy for me to march
now, as it was formerly to walk alone. I have but very
little time for giving way to gloom & low spirits. There is
much excitement & rivalry in the class, as there must neces-
sarily be, where high standing is of so much importance. I have
now fairly embarked; I partake of the excitement &
rivalry, and keep on studying. I am sorry to hear
such news from Warren's mother & brother, and hope that
with regard to Elias it may not be true. Warren Lottrop was
in N. York when Arza was there, & saw him there sick.
I hope he will get better now he has got home. Rowland wrote me
about his visit ^{going} into Portland. I am glad he has got acquainted
with Lizzie for it will be pleasant for him to visit

There now & then while he is at Yarmouth I also at Brunswick.
It will also afford him pleasure to have him come.
I wrote to Lizzie that she must make you a visit as soon
as she can. She wrote me in her last letter that ~~as~~ she
wished to write to you, but was afraid to do so.

Perhaps you can imagine why she is so diffident.

If you can find time I should like to have you write her
a few lines, and she will answer you. Then the ice will
be broken, and she will enjoy writing to you.

Your picture of the little boys Churning, pleased me. I like
to have you tell me of such little things transpiring around
you. Such little pictures of home-scenes, always quicken
the fancy & the memory, and make one think ^{for a time, that} he is at home
& in the midst of the happy circle. I could hardly tell you
what I eat: but I am sure that we have a plenty of
bread, dry bread & butter. Soup comes at dinner once or
~~the~~ twice a week; tough beef on other days. We never have
the least luxury except molasses to eat on our bread, once
or twice a day. & a sweet potatoe about once a month;
no pies; cakes; puddings, &c. — Notwithstanding our
"ordinary fare", I never had such an appetite before: if I would
permit myself I believe I should "eat every thing all up", but
as I know that "eating too much" is not congenial with hard
study, I am obliged to be a little abstemious. The Battalion
drills have ceased for this fall & will not be again resumed till
next Spring. We now have, every evening, at half past four
or five o'clock, a dress parade. I like these parades first-
rate. Now, we have such splendid music and the
appearance of the Battalion is so grand. It will not, however,

be quite so interesting when the weather gets to be a little
cooler, to be obliged to stand out there with our fingers &
ears freezing. But I came from a ~~cold~~ cold country
and therefore should not cry for cold. I do not see Warren
very often, not oftener than once in a fortnight. If he was
a commissioned officer, he could visit me any time. I hope
if he remains in the Army that he will get a commission.
Whatever a man's talents may be, if he is an enlisted man, his
associates must be confined to enlisted men. He does not
enjoy the attention & respect he deserves. He is almost absolutely
under the control of every & any commissioned officer, & to
such must bow the knee & do his bidding. It is different
with a low commissioned officer. He enjoys more respect
& receives more attention whether he deserves it or not &
is so far independent that he can resign when he pleases, &
never can be degraded into a common soldier. I almost
envied Warren's position, when I first came here, but I
begin to see the disadvantages of his situation. His
present liberty arises from his good luck in having
a fine man to command the Company. Warren is a fine
fellow & has much ~~penetration~~ ^{penetration} & information. He
will make a splendid officer if he is advanced.

Give my love to one & all of the family, and write ^{for you} me
as often as you can. I don't think it worth the trouble to
bother me any drilling pants. We are obliged to have
them fit perfectly. They are purely white. I ought to have
known about my shirts before I got them made. A linen
bosom is worse than useless. The uniform coat, buttons
up close to the throat, & instead of a collar ~~the~~ a binding

O. Howard

West Point N.Y. Nov 10th 1850. 157

Dear Mother

It is but a few days since I wrote to you. But as Francis Lathrop is here & on his way home and would like to carry a letter from me to you, I thought I would scribble you a few lines. Francis looks natural, but he seems to me much changed. He looks almost worn out. Francis will give you some idea of things here. He thinks I have not changed much since he left, not so much as his brother. Everything with me is about the same as usual. The round of duty follows day after day. In fact there is very little variety in anything except in our studies. The excitement of study & the strife for high standing, keeps us alive. Francis will have much to tell you about Roland: for he has been with him all summer. He says Roland has not overcome that gloomy disposition of his, but will often sit & sing or whistle to himself some mournful songs, as he used to do. I shall be glad to see Roland back. Laura Howard wrote me a letter, which I received at the same I received your last letter. She said that Franklin Lane was to be married the day his lady died. I should think the circumstances would have made her death doubly sad. I was not surprised to hear of Merrill's death, for I did not think she would live long; but it is sad for me to see the companions, the playmates of my childhood drop away one after another. How rejoiced Mrs Lathrop must

he to meet her son after so long a separation: and
his wife too, whom he left so young & so soon
after his marriage. The length of time is not so
bad, as the anxiety, & the uncertainty that his situation
has given rise to. But he is now safely back; it is
true, with no more than half the energy, vigor &
enterprise, he carried away, but with experience &
perhaps with money: Time will repair all the injury done
to his health & spirits. I wish I could go with him
from West Point but it is folly to wish, especially to
make a future wish. I got permission yesterday
afternoon & evening to visit Francis. Mr. Warren came
up to my room towards evening & stopped till after
Parade. Was Sarah & Mr. Gargent made you
a visit yet? When he has been to see you, you
must tell me how you like his appearance.
Give my love to all the family. Tell Dr. Good
that he must visit me on his way to Philadelphia,
if he can make it convenient. Give my best regards
to him & all my friends, whom you may meet at
Leeds. It is now Sabbath morning, and a beautiful
morning it is too, I presume you are all preparing
to go to church. Laura said that Mr. Barnard
was to teach the school that I did last ^{winter}. It seems
as though I should like to teach that school the
coming winter, if by so doing I could be in Leeds.
I have not written to Uncle ^{John} yet. If you see him give
him my best respects & tell him I am doing very well here.

Is Maria at Gohran now? And where is William? Let me see.
Rowland's vacation will come before a great while: and
I reckon, he will enjoy a visit home. I can recollect
how pleasant ~~vacations~~ ^{vacations} were to me when at
Yarmouth. I should enjoy this place much better
if we could have a vacation once in 6 months or at
least once a year. But it is + well to make the best of
our circumstances, whatever they may be. I have voluntarily
put myself here, & hence denied myself many privileges,
but it was all for some purpose; and that purpose
is as clear now as it was when I decided upon coming.
It was not particularly to learn the military art, but
especially for the sake of mental discipline. And
I know that there is no other place in the wide world,
where I should or could apply my mind, as I am
here, in a measure, forced to do. For, here, punishment
& the worst of disgrace immediately follows neglect
of duty, and true merit is sure of its reward.
I have just returned from Church. We had a very
good sermon, suggested, our Chaplain, said, by a visit
from him to a young man in the Hospital. ^{This young man's} ~~His name~~
^{name} is Polk. The Cadets of his acquaintance say that he is
very ^{sick} ~~long~~. Write me what you know of my
father's relatives (excepting Uncle Ward's family), who reside
in N. York. Remember me to Arza. Tell him I should
like to be with him while he is sick. I suppose he is
with you. Remember me again to all, in much
haste from your affectionate son
A. A. Howard

had been on the Point over a year. So my invitation appeared to be quite complimentary, either to my looks, my talents, or my moral character, I hardly know which. I shall be glad when the panning examination is over. This is an examination upon which every thing depends. You might think that I had passed such ordeals often enough to rather ~~then~~ coolly by this time. So I have, but instead of growing cool, I become every day more excitable: I cannot make so clear & good a recitation as I used to do in college. I shall expect to have a letter from you very soon. If any are unwell you must let me know it. You must tell me what Francis Fortmeyer had to tell. I did not see him to talk with him so much as I could have wished. I have not seen his brother for more than a week, but shall go to see him tomorrow (Saturday) if I can. Give my love to all the family. Write me as soon as you can.

Your affectionate Son

Oleiver C. Howard.

O. C. Howard

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West Point N.Y. Nov 23 1850

Dear Mother

I have taken out my portfolio I placed my paper upon it without having any definite idea of what I am to write. Always when I have a little leisure I think I must spend it in writing letters. This employment constitutes my recreation. I believe that I have grown old since I have got to be a soldier, if not in looks I seem to myself to be as much as five years older than when I left home, in my feelings. That is, I am seldom so boisterous, light hearted & joyous. One of my chief enjoyments is receiving letters from my mother & my old friends. These sources of pleasure seem to have failed me of late. Day after day I go to the Post Office, but, some way or other, nobody takes pains to write & I am bound to come away disappointed.

I think, I have never said any thing in my letters of my room & room-mates. My room is situated in what are called the Old Barracks, in the third story. It is about as large as two of our College rooms & twice as old & "untidy". Four of us room together: Each has his furniture; a little iron bedstead placed ^{in a particular position} just wide enough for one, a trunk & a chair. As I sit now with my back to the fire, when I raise my eyes I see Brown, L., Treadwell, Howard, Lazelle. printed in large Roman Letters & stuck upon the wall over the heads of the beds. The beds are folded: first the mattress is turned up leaving half of the bedstead bare; then the rest of the bed is folded

and arranged at the head as neatly as possible. Between the
names of beds is a row of pins, upon which our caps &
clothes must be hung. At the head of the bed the trunk must
be kept; under the foot the shoes. Opposite the door is the
gun rack, in which there are just four places fitted for each
for a gun; over which there are four wooden pins, to hang
our belts & side arms upon. We have between us four, two
tubles which are made of the best of iron, & which stand
and one pail. We have also two lamps & a broom.
Every thing as I have told you has its place, and if any
thing is out of place the inspecting officer will detect it
immediately. We have a grate in the fire-place in which
is burned coal [see coal or anthracite]. None of us are allowed
to touch the fire, & in fact there is no need of it; for a man
comes in every morning at half past four o'clock & puts
on a supply of coal & keeps it the fire well supplied
all day. My room mates are all from New England. Mr
Browne from Maine; Mr Treadwell from New Hampshire
& Taggell from Massachusetts. Mr Browne is a queer genius.
He is large & fine looking & has much of the Yankee perseverance.
He studies about all the time night & day. We are obliged to
go to bed at 10. But he frequently gets up again about
half past 10, and studies till one, or two o'clock. He now stands
in the third section, but fears that he shall fall. He is one of
those who come here with a common education & common
ability. With his ambition & iron constitution I think he will
be able to master the course; though he gets rather a low

mark now. Mr Treadwell, is a fine young man & a smart
scholar. He stands in the second section in Mathematics & in
the first in Rhetoric. Taggell I don't like over much. He
"bores" me a great deal for assistance, and doesn't appear
sufficiently grateful. He stands in the 4th section in
both studies. He does not seem to me to be very good
hearted & his habits & manners I don't like. None of
my room-mates use tobacco. By the way; I have not made
use of tobacco in any shape since I have been on the point; &
I have now been here three months. I think I am entirely
cured. Henry Clay's Grandson is in my class. He is a queer
boy & a very smart scholar. One of my most intimate
friends of my class is a Mr Abbot of Boston. He is a little ahead
of me in Mathematics & very little behind me in Ethics: in
marks. He is now called the first scholar in the class: He
is so good a disposition & always so gentlemanly & kind
that none would envy him his place, were he to stand
at the head of his class. If I cannot do it myself, I hope he
will be the one. He told me the other evening that he
was intimately acquainted with Mr Charles Vaughan's
family, that moved from Hallowell, - now in Cambridge.
Professor Sproule, the Chaplain, very unexpectedly sent me
an invitation, last week, to visit him on the following
Saturday evening following. After getting permission to visit
I went with two other young men, & took tea, & spent
a very pleasant evening indeed. One of those who accompanied
me had letters brought - letters of introduction, and the other

Exeter 23 Nov 1850

My Dear Nephew

I met Mr Kundle at
Coldspring & came down with him
in the cars, I am sorry you could
not have accompanied him,

I have the pleasure to inform you
that my family are in good health expecting
Augustus who is much the same, I will
in due time address a letter to either
you or to Capt Brewster requesting leave
of absence to visit us at Christmas,

And you must not fail in availing
yourself of it, I hear nothing from
the Eastbards they seldom if ever write
Mrs Henry my daughter residing at Kustow
made us a visit the last fortnight, she
expressed a strong desire to see you
& may possibly be here at Christmas
accept our kindest regards and
best wishes for your health &c &c

M. B. Howard

