
243 1/1/1851

From: Rowland Howard

To: Brother [O O Howard]

OOH-0235

Yarmouth

Source: Bowdoin

Yarmouth Jan 1st 1851

Dear Brother

I wish you a very happy new year. We have got an adjourn today, though I don't know what for. So I say again Happy new Year.

This is one of the mornings, such as you remember. Thermometer 10 below zero and no grumbling, but for all that it as pleasant as you very often experience. The air is clear and bracing, making one feel as though, if they did have to fly round to keep warm yet they were able to. I sat upp last night to see the old year out and the new one in, and some of the boys gave a first rate treat, to which we all did ample justice.

Then some of the students made so much noise this morning as to get Mr. Jewett out an hour before his usual time (8 oclock) and cause him to address them in no very conciliatory manner, merely remarking that such a noise as that was better fitted for the cedar swamp, than North Yarmouth Acad.

I have not heard from home since I have been here except through you. From you I first learned that Roland had got home. I see by the paper that the dividend to the working members of the Co. was \$1800. a small sum truly for such a risk, but he has obtained I suppose in some degree what he told me he was mostly going for, to see the country, yes! I think he has seen California to his hearts content, else he would not come home satisfied with enough of its golden treasures to comfortably start him in business there and double in a short time. But perhaps it is better as it is, as I see by the papers that the cholera is raging fearfully there, besides other death dealing diseases of the climate.

I was into Portland on Thanksgiving evening, but went in the evening train and came out at 7 o'clock in the morning therefore had not time to call at Mrs Waites. We had a Thanksgiving dinner a Christmas supper and New Year's holiday so I think we have fared quite well this winter. We are at present reading Cicero, have read the first 2 orations. I find several convenient pomes in the book I bought of you.

In Greek, my little class which is not so far advanced as the first one, is reading mythology in the Greek Reader. I find Greek is a great deal easier to me than at first though still rather a bore, but I shall come round by and by.

Perley has been at home spending his vacation, and yesterday on his way to Portland he stoped here. He apears in good health and spirits, says he has been blocked up at home all through vacation by the deep snow. Msrs Jewett & Robinson are going into Portland with him this afternoon to hear Pres Woods speak before the Lyceum. I should like to go in myself but went <[torn edge]> the 'change' makes me stay at home.

I seriously fear the state of Maine will fail. She is unused to such losses as the Insane Hospital & the State Prison, and if the State House should go I think, as, the saying is, she would be "dead broke".

Vaughan is with me and enjoys himself very well and I think is learning some. His father seems quite anxious about his learning. He has written me twice concerning him.

Perley & Jewett say give him my respects, and the former says 'answer my last letter' and the latter 'You will hear from me soon'.

Vaughan had a letter from Maria the other day. She is well and was going to Bath to spend Christmas. Says that William is keeping school. I did not understand where. Do you ever hear from Silas Lee. If you do, how is he, Mr Sargent, Sarah, &c.

I saw an article in Sartain's Magazine entitled, A Morning Visit at West Point, [Note 1] and the lady makes it out a delightful place filled with delightful people. You had better get it and see what you think of it.

Write me all about Christmas. I should like first rate to come out next Summer if I was prepared for College and had money enough &c. Do you have time to read any. If you do, and have not read "The <Caltors>", read it. I have read it three times and find the last the best.

Uncle Henry is in Portland. Got a great store. I saw it, but not him.

Your Brother
Rowland

[Note 1:
A Morning at West Point
By Amy Lothrop

A short ride in the cars, a sail across the river, and a beautiful up-hill drive, brought us to Mr. Ryder's hotel one morning in time for a late breakfast. We were so unromantic as to have good appetites, and so thoughtless as to spend a long time in satisfying them. I say thoughtless, not because I advocate fast eating in general, but because our stay at the Point was to be a short one, and we wished to see everything, and the "lions of West Point" are numerous.

"Let us go and see the cadets ride, first of all," said Florence, "the Newtons went every day while they were here, at eleven o'clock, and they say it's perfectly lovely." The proposal was immediately adopted, and we all scattered, each one exhorting the others to make haste. But there is no hurrying some people, and one or two of our party tarried so long at the toilet, that of course we were late, - ladies always are, if one may believe gentlemen, and though we intended to walk very fast, it was no easy matter to accomplish. We were so glad there had been no drought, and the weather was so fine, and it was hard to take our eyes from the plain, and the flag, and the mountains - (I confess mine were fairly entranced) - that when we reached the exercise hall the groups of people outside the windows, and the quick passing horses' heads within, warned us that the riding had begun.

"We shall not get in!" was on every one's tongue, but at the moment a dragoon opened the door, and we entered. All I took in at first was, that two strings of mounted horses were passing rapidly round the hall; that the quick beat of their feet, the smell of the tan-strewed floor, and a certain metallic clang which resounded through the apartment, formed a combination somewhat confusing to my nerves; and that at the far end of the ellipsis there was a place of bonnets, and shawls, and safety, could I but reach it.

One string of horses had just passed, but I in my wisdom looked to the right hand, as well as to the left, and there were the second string, headed by a new figure in heraldry - a cadet and horse rampant, bearing down upon us sabre in hand. Don't anybody laugh, - horses do look remarkably large in doors, and cadets remarkably fierce with drawn sabres at the shoulder, and black straps under the chin.

Well, we waited to see the last horse whisk his tail, and then let out on a trial of speed, - not gracefully I presume, hurriedly I know. But we might as well have been graceful, for we could not reach the partition before tramp, tramp, they were upon us again, and once more I stood still while they clattered by. It was enough to make one think of the old legend of "The Wild Night Huntsman."

"Now you can go," said my companion, and a few steps brought me within the barricade - a slight one to be sure, but better than nothing, and where I had time to look about me.

In the place where I stood there was a sprinkling of cadets and officers, -

"Black spirits and white,
Blue spirits and gray," -

just enough to amuse any ladies who might tire of the riding; the rest of the spectators were "them things, sir, that do wear caps and aprons" - some sitting, some standing, some mounted on benches, so as to be more on a level with the aforesaid cadets rampant. The caps and aprons themselves were sometimes wanting, sometimes to be seen in new varieties. For instance, - a silk apron with long silk shoulder-straps, unmodified by shawl, cape, or scarf, and overshadowed by a flat, has to say the least a striking appearance, when coupled with those years which we term, "of discretion."

In front of this assemblage of sense and nonsense was a long oval, from end to end of which stretched two rows of pillars. Outside of these went the horses, and in the central space there stood two gentlemen.

"That left hand is Mr. B—," said an officer to me; "he has just come back from his furlough, and has not yet

donned his uniform.”

“And why does he stand there?”

“I don't know, unless to display his mustache.”

There seemed some plausibility in this notion; for Mr. B— stood looking our way in the most complacent manner, and for no perceptible reason.

And now the trot was changed to a gallop, and the orders to “take” or “loose” stirrups, were obeyed without any diminution of speed. The tan flew from the horses' hoofs to our faces, and in the full bright eye of each animal that passed (each quadruped of course), I read no guarantee that he would not take a flying-leap over my head the next time he came round. On they went, without stirrups, and so fast that the inclination to the centre was often so considerable in both steed and rider; bright sabres in hand, and the long scabbards jingling and clattering a most suitable accompaniment.

“Do they never get thrown!” I asked instinctively.

“O yes, often; but they are seldom much hurt. A day or two's medical treatment generally cures them.”

“Black Hawk is a little restive to-day,” added my friend presently, and pointing to a dark horse not in the line, on whose back sat cadet officer; “he don't like that sabre-sheath. Poor fellow! he has been curbed pretty well! - see, his mouth is bleeding.” And as the fine creature threw back his head in uneasiness at the powerful bit, I perceived that the open mouth was indeed of a deeper red than it should be. I was glad to hear “Halt” “Sheath sabres!” and “Dismount!”

Am I ill-natured! - it certainly did seem to me that there was some attitudinizing when the cadets were once more on their feet, - or it may have been that their dress made them necessarily picturesque, stand as they would. I will let the reader judge; but his imagination must furnish the high, Mexican saddles, the gray riding-jackets, and white pantaloons, my sketch would be nothing without them.

One cadet was most affectionately patting his horse on the head and shoulder; another stood half reclining, with his arm thrown over the neck of his steed, cap off, and hair brushed back, both horse and man facing the spectators. A third had confidently let go the bridle, and was now endeavouring, by dint of eloquence, to make the emancipated charger come to his extended hand. But moral suasion failed for once, - the horse was a true American, and though he didn't run away, he scorned to surrender. Mahomet was forced to go to the mountain.

Some time was given them to rest, and then came the remounting, without the aid of stirrups. There seemed to be a preparatory order and motion, and at the next word every cadet but one was in his saddle. He failed; and I was amused at the flushed and somewhat furious look which he gave the spectators, as he led his horse out of the line to make a second attempt. The riding went on as before, with one or two variations, a-la-March cotillion, and then the two lines drew up to go through with what they call “the sabre exercise.”

The instructor, Lieutenant H— who, during the riding had remained almost motionless in the centre of the hall, now rode slowly, among the cadets to criticise their performance. To describe it well, would require much more knowledge of the words and motions than I can pretend to.

Once in a while I could understand an order, as “the point a yard from your horse's head, at the height of a man's neck from the ground.”

Very comprehensible that!

Then there was another manoeuvre, in which the hand being raised in front of the face, both heads and sabre-points were turned towards us - the inoffending spectators; the cadets-rampant being transformed into cadets gardant (heraldic truth compels me to reject the more descriptive term of regardant), and it was hard to tell whether eyes or aabres were the most conspicuous. I had much ado to keep my countenance.

After this the performers twirled the sabres over their horses' heads, and over their own (with an occasional admonition to “take care” of the former); and it was interesting to note the different adroitness and limberness of different hands and wrists.

Meantime some ladies were retiring - in other words, walking off in sight of everybody and a cadet would come

back in great haste for some forgotten shawl, or with a message to some left-behind friend.

N. B. Men should never run.

Or, as that might be a hard maxim to follow when a lady is in one place and her scarf in another, suppose it be adopted that people should never look at them when they run.

But the running ended, and so did the sabre exercise. The cadets dismounted, the dragoons came forward to take the horses; and while the riders "fell in," we walked out, flushed with excitement and the heat of the room, and felt the sweet, cool air, playing about our faces, and a good degree of satisfaction playing about our hearts.

People sometime attain ends which they never aimed at; and I fear I may have made that ludicrous on paper, which in reality was but amusing. If so, my apologies are due to all the horsemen herein mentioned; for they did ride remarkably well - for beginners, and "stuck on" to admiration.

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245 1/4/1851

From: R. H. Gilmore

To: O O Howard

OOH-0236

Leeds

Source: Bowdoin

Leeds, Jan 4th 1851

Dear Brother Otis

I wanted to show you how well I could write. School did not keep yesterday. Roscoe and I went a skateing. Now I am going to make some Letters. Ss. Tt. Ff. Mm. Nn. Uu. Xx. Aa. Hh. Kk. Gg. Cc. Ii. Jj. Yy. Qq. Bb. Dd. Ee. Ll. Pp. Oo. Rr. Ss. Ww.

From

R.H. Gilmore [Rodelphus Howard Gilmore, b. Feb 14, 1842, Bowdoin College Class of 1863]

O O Howard

[Envelope]
Paid 3 cts

O. O. Howard
West Point
N.Y.

246 1/5/1851

From: Oliver O. Howard

To: Mother [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-0237

West Point, N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point, N.Y. Jan 5th 1851

Dear Mother

I did think that I should not write again till the result of the examination was known to me, but as our examinations are necessarily very long lasting perhaps three weeks, I feared that you might have some degree of anxiety on account of my delay: therefore I write. My health is very good indeed, and my spirits are on a par.

The examination commenced on Thursday last. The Board of Examiners consists of all the Officers and Professors on the Point. The officers in Uniform & the Professors, with their long & serious faces were convoked at nine o'clock in one of the largest rooms of the academic building. My section was the first called. As we entered the room it seemed more like a solemn tribunal about to administer justice to a set of trembling victims, than like a friendly examination of a set of young men, all radiant with hope & <emulation>. I had seen such solemn visages before, and was neither afraid, nor abashed. Many of my mates were however. When called up some would turn red, some pale & very few would say just exactly what they meant. I gave my demonstration in a voice clear & distinct; and not one word was spoken during the whole of it: I hesitated afterwards when questioned once or twice, but answered nothing wrong. Mr. Abbet will stand at the head of the Class this January & Cadet O.O. Howard, if he is, Fortunate in his English Examination, as in his mathematical will stand No (2) in General Standing. Mr Lee & myself are just about alike in mathematics, but in other studies I am much ahead of him, therefore in general standing I shall stand above him. This is as much as I expected after I found that many of my classmates were my equals in point of a previous education. And if I can graduate among "the five" who are called the "stars" as the five distinguished for scholarship. It is as much as I can covet or my friends can expect. But a truce to rank.

I have paid a visit to Uncle Ward since I wrote and had a very pleasant time; only it gives me pain to see my cousin who once had prospects as bright as my own, so terribly afflicted. Night & day those convulsions continue, and still he can find no remedy. It wears upon his father. I don't think he will ever be well. I was gone one day (& a little over).

I wrote to Rowland Bailey Friday last. From him I have not heard excepting through Mr Jewett, since his return to Yarmouth. Mr Jewett merely said that he & little Vaughan were there & well.

Now how do you all do at home? Four months & over have now passed away since I left that home, whose charms & comforts I have better learned to value by being deprived of them, for more is my mind & my heart turned towards them than if I lived in luxury. It is good for a young man of reflection to leave home for a place like this. He can never half comprehend the true merit of affection, until he goes where no hand is ready to supply his every want, when no heartfull of sympathy can anticipate, and assuage the slightest pain. We are all fools, but experience, strange to say, will often cure us of folly. A blessing is a curse to him, who knows, who feels it not, but a curse is a blessing if it opens our eyes to truth, and makes us able to appreciate what is truly valuable.

Ask Roland if he did not sometimes feel a little desolate, a little heart sick, when he had toiled all the day for gold and retired to his quarters, to find no pleasant room, with a churning fire glowing upon the hearth, no warm supper, upon a neat & inviting table, no friendship, no sympathy, no anything which is comfortable. He must have said to himself sometimes "How foolish I was to be unhappy, to be discontented with myself & my lot, when I was surrounded by everything that a man could desire." Why the very atmosphere of home must be friendship & sympathy to him now. How I wish myself could fly to you as easily as my fancy, but my voice will not be heard in the family circle for a very long time. Yet I shall never be forgotten, nor shall I ever forget, or underrate the value of my home. Nature has bound me by a strong cord & though, it may be elastic, it is invisible and will never be severed.

Lizzie wrote that she was just going to Livermore. Have you seen her? If she has made you a visit you must write me. Have you no thoughts, no plans for the future, or determinations for the present that will be of interest to me to acquaint me with. I know your time is employed. I know that your pen can't be so active as mine, for I

am young & full of thoughts such as they are. They flow without regularity & I am sorry to say, often with very little sense. But there is no other way, you will be obliged to write to me a great deal, for you remember my restless nature, & from it you can easily see that I cannot be with you much again, although I may. For concerning the future we can only conjecture aided perhaps by the present & past. Everybody, almost, says I am well situated (?). yes, I am well situated, but not well settled. Before coming to this place, I had marked out the course that I should pursue with much precision. All my plans are disarranged, and in all probability the chance which placed me here has changed the whole course of my life. Would you like to see me an officer in the United States Army? You do not think I shall continue in the Army long after I graduate, neither do I. But to confess the truth, the habits, the companions & the influences of a military institution, over a young man, whose character is just forming, can only be fully understood by him, who has been subjected to them. Who can tell whether four years in this place may not almost wholly change my nature? But why reason so? You might judge that I was discontented & wished to leave. It is not so. This is my way. I would not leave if I could now; for this reason, that every thing in the world appears so uncertain. I always want something solid to stand upon. Should I leave, ie resign, I should not know which way to turn. Therefore I will hold my tongue, or rather teach my pen to say proper things & not complain. What a glorious motto for a young man is this: "Press steadily onward; take care of the present & fear not for the future."

I can imagine, yes more, I can see Charlie & Dellie, standing near & listening to the above. But methinks it must be rather dry to the little fellows. Tell Charlie that I have been studying grammar, & that the other day I was asked the definition of Orthography & I stupidly gave the definition of Etymology. Ask him if he could not have done better? Give them both my love; and little Johny too. I must not forget him with his laughing face. They must all be good boys & carry all the letters to the Post Office for me, that can be found. My love to Roland & Father. Don't forget that you have written but very little, about Roland & his travels as yet.

Believe me ever your affectionate son
Oliver O. Howard

Warren was well when I last saw him. I presume he writes home often. Excuse me to Laura Howard for my delay. Tell her that I will make up for it soon. My respects to all my friends & relatives.
Otis

247 1/8/1851

From: R B Howard

To: Cadet O O Howard

OOH-0238

Yarmouth

Source: Bowdoin

Yarmouth Jan 8th 1851

Dear Brother

The devil is in the mail. I know, for I assure you, that, neither "laziness sickness and serious engagements" could hinder me from answering your letters. Your last letter was written on the third and came to hand this morning. As soon as I rec the one before the last I answered it, and you should have got it by this time. I wish that you would just speak to the Post Master General, through your friend the Sec of War in order that after this, the mails may do their duty. If they do not, I shall just clap mine (letters of course) aboard the Telegraph which runs through this place and I advise you to do the same and then I guess that Uncle Sam, will be willing not only to reduce the postage, but quicken the mails, ahem!

Old Robinson has made the following miserable arrangement for a fellow's comfort, viz, the recitations of the first class will be heard in the forenoon alone. Now it must immediately occur to you from the above, that as a natural consequence, if we study at all, we must study in the afternoon, and that, Wednesdays & Saturday afternoons the same as usual. Now this you perceive is depriving us of our cherished "dignity" (what, <afu> college terms already).

Jan 11th 1851

I wrote the foregoing just after I rec your letter, but was prevented from some cause from sending it. I rec a letter from mother same day I did yours. The folks at home are all well. Roland A rather lonesome and homesick and takes a great deal of interest in Calafornia affairs. I should'nt wonder if he returned or went some where else. I don't think <he> is the person to be contented in Leeds after having been to Calafornia, unless indeed he finds an 'Oman to suit him and then <perhaps> he will "settle down". Mother writes me that time goes rather slow with her, the sleighing is so bad she is not able to get out. I hope you write her often. I know that I have not done my duty in that respect. Sometimes I think very doubtful whether I get into College next fall, if I was a little ahead or behind what I now am, there would be little doubt. For If I were behind I should study hard and if ahead I get in without studying hard, but as it is, it is a doubtful case. I am exceedingly unpopular here this term, for the reason that I am in an office. I am pres. Of the Philogian Society and am Supt. Of the Read Room, in one of the offices I have to quarel about order in the other <> the papers. The Sec of the Soc has got my <> me and resigned, and the consequence of these is a treat anywhere I am not invited besides a thousand other little neglects that show <a> person that his company is not wanted. I must own that I am not a "good fellow" for I do not drink, and have sworn off playing cards. But all I have to say is, catch me in office again in Yarmouth. That's all.

Jan 13th 1851

I guess (Yankee) by this time you think it <takes> me a great many days to write a letter. But something calls me off every now and <then> and so the letter mopes along. I have <just> come in from my Greek recitation in <which> I for once sailed well. We are reading <> Mythological Notices. Greek grows easier every day. <Cicero> is so easy I fear I do not study it enough. You know how it is if a fellow feels that he has got a great deal to do. He will do it, but if not much that little is half done. At least that is the way with me.

I hear Mr Jewetts voice at the door. He has just come in to dinner. I like him first rate. Although Robinson is <> professor of religion, yet I think Jewett is <> best man. I suppose you think the same. <> goes the dinner bell, so here I go to eat <> beans as inseparable to a Monday's dinner <> (well there I can't think of a comparison) after I try their virtue. Good by.

After dinner.

I don't want you to answer me untill you rec this (<drill>) then you must. I am glad your standing in your class is so high for next to my own and almost the same, your success is nearest to my heart. Thus ends this miserable letter.

Your affectionate Brother
R B Howard

Cadet O O Howard A13

P.S. Vaughan is well and enjoying himself, not studying much though at present.
R B Howard

248 1/17/1851 *From:* F. T. Sargent

To: O. O. Howard

OOH-0239

39 Smith St.
New York

Source: Bowdoin

New York Jany 17 1851

Dear Otis

Having a few leisure moments after the toils of the day I thought I would just wish you a happy New Year, commence an answer to yours of the 27th Dec, and trust to luck for an opportunity to finish it. I was glad to hear from you, and that you were "still in the land of the living"; good living I hope - and from your report of being "ragged & robust" I fancy you are in no great danger of starving.

How could you for a moment suppose I could make so long a visit as three or four months in Maine? I had hard work to get a furlough of three weeks and an extension of one more when they were up, but I enjoyed them very much I assure you. In one of Sarah letters a few weeks ago she said "Otis promised Mama & I that he would write to us but I have not heard from him yet" - dint you fulfill such promises to the ladies? Look out for your reputation, but that I suppose you think is well established in Portland on that score, and you don't fear much from other sources. Well! You certainly are under greater obligations there than elsewhere, and I don't think if I were you that I would neglect that one for any others but if you can find a leisure moment or two, I know Sarah would be very glad to hear from you. She is in Hallowell.

What did you do New Years day? In Maine and other Eastern States it passes off nearly as quietly as any other, except perhaps the young men get up a sleighing party or something of the kind. But how different here. It is surely a great day and most all seem to enjoy it. Then you have an opportunity of reviving old and cultivating new acquaintances. You have a right to go into almost anybody's house that you please, but there seems to be but very little pleasure and less heart in making calls upon those that you care nothing for. Being disappointed in not leaving town on that day I could not avoid calling upon my friends although I felt but little like it I can assure you. About 12 o'clock I made my first call (some start as early as nine) which was upon a young lady with whom I had met but once and that once at a concert, but feeling a desire to see her once more I mustered courage and went in. She hardly knew me, but soon recollected who I was. I sat a while and had a very pleasant call. During the day I made nearly forty calls, got through about nine, and was very tired indeed. I enjoyed the day very much more than I anticipated, and was not at all sorry that I had undertaken what I called a task in the morning. My last call was upon a young married couple (the bride I had never seen) and as it was late and a little hungry I told them I thought I should get no better dinner than their table offered, and as I intended that my last call I should invite myself to a repast, so my friend and host sat down with me and we fared, sumptuously, Roast Turkey, Oysters in different styles, chicken, Ham, Penguin &c &c & after leaving there I had to walk about 4 miles to get home, which settled the dinner so that I was not troubled much at night with indigestion.

Silas I believe made a number of calls in New York. He is a great hand to make acquaintances, and many of them I regret are unprofitable, he is a great hand to spend his money among the young men thinking thereby (but very erroneously) that he gains their esteem, and makes them think that he has plenty of money, foolish boy that he is, he does not know that true friendship can not be bought with dollars & cents, or that a too free and reckless manner will win the esteem even of those who are of the same cast. Understand me, I don't mean to say that he is one of this class, but he has some foolish ideas that would soon lead him into it. I would prefer that you say nothing of what I have said to you. I shall have a talk with him soon, and hope to be able to convince him of something that he has yet to learn, I think him very much like his father. How can there be such a difference as there is between him & Sarah? He has always listened to me with respect and attention and I hope I shall be able to make him think for a short time. He cares but little for what Epes or Dr Brown (his friend from Boston) says to him, although I think they often touch him on a tender point. You know his weakness. Write to him and give him some good advice.

I congratulate you most cordially on your success in your studies. I hope you may continue A1 (as we rate our ships) through your whole studies, and have no doubt you will. Your leave of absence on Christmas was indeed a short one, but as it was so hard to get, I presume you enjoyed it, was not aware that you had an uncle anywhere near you. It must make it pleasant for you, and yet he might almost as well be a thousand miles off if you cannot visit him. You must be looking anxiously for summer, or rather waiting anxiously when you hope to

see those you love. Well tis not far distant, and e'er we are hardly aware of it, it will be upon us. How rappidly does time fly, and as we grow older the faster it seems to fly. How important then that we shall try and make a good use of it, and strive to grow better as we grow older. I sometimes feel a desire to be good, of course there are but few who do not have this desire when they think of the matter at all. But I mean that I am led to reflect often upon what is the true road to happiness, and I feel sure that it does not consist alone in this month's gross.

I shall be right glad to call up and see you some of these odd days, and if not soon, and I live, I think I shall come on the glorious 4th. Perhaps "Lizzie" will be there about that time. I should like to see her, much, let me know when they come to the City and I will call and see them with great pleasure. Here I am at the bottom of my sheet without hardly knowing it, I dare not read this over for fear I should not send it. You must take it for the <> it is worth. I have written in a great hurry and hardly know what I have said. Respects to Webb & believe me

Very truly yours,
F.T. Sargent [Francis Taft Sargent]
39 Smith St.

249 1/18/1851 *From:* Oliver O. Howard

To: Mother [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-0240

West Point N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. Jan 18th 1851

Dear Mother,

To tell you the truth I have got out of paper; and after getting out, it is three or four days before I can get any, as every thing is obtained by orders; these orders must be put into a certain box, from which they are taken to the superintendent, signed by him & returned with the "check" or account book. Very often, too, he does not see fit to sign them, then the only alternative is to wait his movements, & after a time put in another order. Therefore have I, after Rowland Bailey's fashion, taken two half sheets, which I happened to find in my portfolio.

Your's & Charlie's double letter I received in good time. Charlie improves in his handwriting and in his manner of expressing himself. Tell him there is no doubt that he will become as good a writer & I hope, a better writer, than his older brother by the time he has seen as many years & written as many thousand pages.

You must never permit yourself the least uneasiness on account of the severity of the discipline under which I am placed. Every thing here has long since ceased to be irksome to me. After a man thoroughly knows what his duty is & forms the habit of performing it promptly, however hard it may be at first, it will grow less & less burdensome, till he will almost wonder how it ever seemed so difficult. Such is my case. At first I met with crosses & vexations at every turn, so much so that I was often sick at heart; but those times have passed. I am now treated as a man & a gentleman by all, and probably shall be thus treated as long as I behave like a man & a gentleman.

I received a letter from Rowland to day. He seems in good spirits as usual. For some cause or other he has not got my letters so regularly, as I have written them. I have written him many letters, & I always fill my sheet. I don't think he has any reason to complain or think of my punishing him. I like to find his letters lively, & jokes, though I do not deal in them over much, please me, rather than awake any feelings of <resentment [right edge is cut off]>. As Rowland is taking the same course, that I have already <pursued> through, I shall watch him with interest. I am glad to find that he has an independent spirit, and is not too easily influenced by companions & those into whose society he must necessarily be thrown. But I fear sometimes that he may carry his independence too far and by this means mar his own enjoyment, thus also rendering society & study less beneficial to him. I know, however, enough of human nature not to be too prodigal of my advice to a brother. Officiousness & long sermons are anything but agreeable to the most patient & affectionate listeners. With a brother example has more weight than advice.

Warren received Roland's letter, or rather his brother's brought by Roland. He did not know that Roland brought it. He said it was marked "way" without any other post mark. He said he could not tell, to save his life, where it came from. I have had them marked the same & explained the mystery.

Uncle John writes me at long intervals, and sends me papers almost every other day. He sent me one the other day containing a sermon, delivered by Mr Fisk of Bath, particularly applicable to the slave law. It was very good, especially enjoining obedience to law. Uncle also sent a letter of introduction written by Mr Sawtell to Capt Williams, of <Maine>. I believe I have spoken of Captain Williams, Judge Daniel Williams' son. He passed through the war in Mexico unscarred, and is now an adjutant at West Point. I have not presented my letter yet, but I think I shall this afternoon (Saturday).

Lizzie writes me that she did not stop at Livermore but a few days and the roads were so blocked up that she could not go any where. She is attending school; says when it is done she shall make you a visit at Leeds. I wrote Uncle Henry Strickland a letter, <some> lines complying with Aunt Martha Jane's request, but he has not answered it yet.

The weather has been quite warm & pleasant for over a week. The snow is almost all gone. In fact we have had but very little snow at all. The winter here hardly equals ones in Maine.

Our examination is over; and twenty three of my classmates have been found deficient & sent home. Some of

them felt very badly indeed. A few declared they would not go home. Others, however, had got sick of the place, and, notwithstanding the disgrace of "being found", were glad to get away. Among them were some with a good education, who depended too much upon former acquirements, and did not study quite enough. Mr. Abbot stands at the head of the class in General Standing, O.O. Howard second. Mr <Ruger> of Wisconsin, third, Mr Lee, of Virginia (Col Lee's son) fourth, & Mr. Deshler (of Louisiana, I believe), fifth. These are "the five" of our class for the present. Mr Treadwell one of my room-mates stands seventh. Mr Browne, 26th. Mr Browne studies night & day. I never saw a greater share of perseverance centered in any one man. He is bound to do well in the end. Lazell stands forty fifth. He has improved very much, treats me well, & therefore I get along with him now first rate. Now we have got to study steadily for five months. I know I would enjoy a vacation of a few weeks, but as I cannot have it, I must make the best of the matter, and take things as easy as possible.

(Saturday evening)

For several weeks past our Band of music have given a concert every saturday night. I have just returned to my room after attending one of these concerts. That is glorious musick. It thrills one often with indescribable feelings. It serves to allay all bitterness & sadness, and awakens a kind of joyousness, a lightheartedness, which has a favorable reaction upon the weary mind. Have you ever noticed that the mind can be tired? Almost every one has at some time exhausted his physical strength, and this had produced a corresponding exhaustion in the mind. But this is not what I mean. The mind when it is weary in my sense of the term, becomes even more restless, when you are awake it is not clear, it is misty; when you are asleep, it continues to labor over angles, triangles, theorems, without coming to any conclusions, it labors like the hero of mythology, who kept rolling a large rock up a steep hill & as soon as he got it to the brow, & thought his work almost done, back it would roll, and again he must roll & toil. My mind sometimes takes to itself such fits.

Well, when in such a state, then the music of the band has a strange & pleasant effect. Why I can sleep after a concert as quietly almost as when a child my mother would hold me in her lap, or put me in the "trundle bed", & tuck me in.

I made Captain Williams a call this afternoon, but he was not at his room, therefore I shall not introduce myself to him till next Saturday afternoon. I saw Warren to day. He is in good health, but scalding sadly, because his friends at home do not write him.

Give my love to all. Tell Roland, to enjoy himself just as much as he can, now, that he has got back whole. He must every where find open ears among the curious people of Leeds, and can probably tell them some hard stories, without in the least stretching the truth. Tattoo has just beaten, & hence we have a half hour to make our beds & stow ourselves away before the three last "taps", which say "tis" "time", "rest". Good night,

Your affectionate son
Oliver O. Howard
West Point, N.Y.
Jan 18th 1851

251 1/23/1851 *From:* C. H. Strickland

To: Cadet Howard

OOH-0241

Portland

Source: Bowdoin

Portland Jan 23 1851

Cadet Howard

I recd your letter some time since & Martha & I were much gratified at the content of it. We were gratified that you were so well pleased with your situation & that you were trying so hard to keep yourself up & ahead, in your class. It is a trying situation for you, to have to form all new habits & in fact to revamp yourself all over new, as it were. Yet it is an effort that you will be well repaid for in future years. It is trying now, but will be gratifying by & bye. It is a course that gives character & tone to a man, when he is thrown upon the world & nothing to depend upon but his own resources.

We have hardly yet got settled in our new quarters. We are boarding at the U. States House as yet, shall probably get to housekeeping in course of a month or two. Business opens pretty well so far, hope we shall be able to make a line of it, & make something of it. I shall make the requisite effort & hope to succeed. We see Mrs Waite & daughter quite often, think them very pleasant. They feel that you are fixed for a long time, yet that it is for the best.

Your taste is pretty good, as we all give you credit for. If you both can keep your plight for the requisite time, you will be worthy of each other. Your Father has not been down since we have been here. Ensign was down, I just saw him once. He staid a little while & did not call on Martha. He says Will Otis is at his house, having met with some trouble in his school, & left it. He lacks for perseverance & feels that his Father must help him along in the world, a bad idea for any young man to take into his head, as every one ought to have a feeling of dependance upon his own resources & then if all others fail him, he is not cast like a log upon the waters tossed hither & thither at their pleasure, but he takes his place in Society an independent man. Will has got some severe lessons yet to learn if he lives.

Mr Perley calls on us often. He is pleasant & I think will make a smart man. He has some corners in his character & appearance, that will get knocked of by contact with the world at large, as is the case with most of us.

Martha sends her love to you & says she wishes to see you become all that the most ardent wishes of your friends could desire. Adeline my Sister is at Gorham. She made us a visit last week. She likes very well. Maria is also there. She came in & made us a visit likewise & Vaugh who is at Yarmouth.

Jan 25.

I have delayed writing the rest of this until today. Last evening Miss Waite called at our room, said She had just recd a letter from you & you were well &c.

We should be glad to hear from you at your leisure, as we are always glad to hear of the well doing of our family. So when you nothing better to do then you can write to us. By the way we had a letter from Addison a day or two ago. He is doing well, very healthy and contented. California he likes very much. I think Addison will make his fortune out there. I am sorry his Sisters have not been more fortunate, both in their own home (this & others house) & their husbands. As I learn that two of them, Lydia & Emily are not married well. But you hear all of this news from your Mother.

Martha wishes me to give you a great deal of love & also that she feels a deep interest in your welfare & in all that concerns you. As I have no more time at present I must close.

Respectfully Yrs
C. H. Strickland

[Note: Charles Henry Strickland was Otis' uncle. His wife Martha Jane Otis was a younger sister of Eliza, Otis' Mother.]

252 1/31/1851 *From:* O.O. Howard

To: Mother [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-0242

West Point

South Leeds
Maine

Source: Bowdoin

Jan 31 1851. West Point.

Dear Mother,

Some considerable time has elapsed since I have taken my pen to perform the agreeable duty of writing to my mother; for I consider it a duty, in as much as my prolonged absence together with my peculiar situation, has tended to increase the natural anxiety, which a mother feels for a beloved son wherever he may be. I feel it my duty, in a measure to allay any such undue solicitude by keeping up with you a constant, familiar, regular correspondence, placing before you myself as I am, and my situation as it is. But from some cause or other, my studies press harder & harder. I can scarcely steal time enough to write three letters a week. In Geometry we have gone two thirds through a book that we were over three months in completing in College. In French too nearly half of the first Section can speak the language, so, our instructor showed no mercy in giving lessons but taxes our utmost capacity. In Geography we are obliged to learn everything to recite "at tongues end" & to draw the maps from memory on the black board, containing all the principal features, lakes, rivers, towns, &c. This exercise is interesting, but requires time and industry.

Still, I shall write as often as I can. I received a letter from Rowland this noon. He says Mr Jewett is sick of a slow fever. Mr Jewett has done a great deal of labor, for the past four years, and I wouldn't wonder, if he had over burdened even his strong constitution. Rowland thinks, however, that he will soon be able to proceed with his school.

There is no snow on the ground here, but it is colder than Greenland. It had been very warm till yesterday morning, when it set in cold. At parade yesterday I thought I should surely freeze, but as good fortune would have it, I had bespoken a great coat & got it last night. This is the first of my wearing one this winter, but it feels nice & comfortable I can tell you when we are obliged to face the cold, raw wind coming down the river.

The Cadet over coat has, like all things else belonging to us, a peculiar construction. It is made of grey cloth, much longer than common over-coats, having two rows of bright buttons stamped "Cadet U.S.M.A." and a large cape, which we turn up round the face, when it is excessively cold. Those mittens you gave me, were the best article of clothing I had; especially when I went on guard, but I have lost them somewhere; and since we have no pockets, they surely are not "in my pockets" this time. I have worn my uniform dress coat four months steadily till my elbows begin to creep out. I put in an order for another, three times over, but they were not granted, so I went to see Capt Brewerton & showed him my white elbows. The next day he gave me an order for a coat & over-coat. I have now mended my elbows & put my new coat in my trunk.

I received a letter from Uncle Henry yesterday from Portland. He says, he is doing very well, but Rowland writes that his wife is homesick, because she has not a house of her own. When Warren was here to see me, he was scolding about the neglect of his correspondents in Leeds. He seems pretty well content with his situation, desiring, of course, like the rest of us, somewhat a little different, a little higher. I hope he will get promoted, if he is to stay in the Army; for, so long as he has no commission, he is liable, for any little thing, to be degraded into the ranks. So long as he has his present Captain, there is not the least danger of this, for the Capt thinks very highly of him. Warren is called one of the finest looking men on the Point. He does indeed look better than he did a few years ago, with his "bended neck & rounded shoulders." Tell me all you can learn of his relatives, for I like to have something to tell him when I see him.

Uncle Henry says Lizzie calls to see them often. He tells me that he approves of my taste, and with some "ifs & ands" dismisses the subject. He writes me a very consolatory encouraging letter, but with all quite distant.

Lizzie says that she means to make you a visit as soon as her school is done to make amends for not going to see you when at Livermore. She is now attending a High School. The Instructor is brother to my old friend & instructor, Professor Packard. I hear that William Otis has left his school. If you see him ask him to write to me, for I should not know where to direct to him.

Give my love to all the family and believe me

Your Affectionate Son
O.O. Howard

[Envelope]
Col John Gilmore
South Leeds
Maine
[Postmark] West Point N.Y. 3 Feb 5