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316 8/10/1851 *From:* W. A. [Augustus]

*To:* O O Howard

Howard

OOH-0297

Peekskill

West Point NY

*Source:* Bowdoin

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Confidential

Peekskill August 10th 1851

O O Howard  
West Point  
Dear Cousin

If you remember some months since you and I mutually engaged to correspond. I told you then however, that you were not to expect anything entertaining, or in any degree worth the trouble of perusing. So, by a dim lamp, with poor eyes and a poorer brain, I sit down to introduce our long wished for correspondence.

The times with me are pretty much as <usual>, not so full of action as I could wish and I find this propensity to action is very apt to lead me into scrapes. You are aware of course, that your Father & Mother, accompanied by a very pretty young lady (I have forgotten her name) paid us a short visit, but their stay being of so short duration I had not much time to cultivate her acquaintance; but should judge her fully worthy the attention of a young, gay, enterprising, martial genius like yourself. Oh! what a clever circumstance it would be, to have such a wife, with her fortune, I have now and then an affair of petty gallantry, which might entertain you if you were acquainted with the different characters, I have to deal with, but, without that, would be very insipid.

Perhaps my dear fellow, you and I may meet yet in the same place, say New York, there would be something like a field for exertion,, and if you will direct your wishes there, I will also, that is to say in a few years. The Society of Peekskill I like but I like a bigger scope to exercise in, than this little town affords, not that I am possessed of such extraordinary talents, but but what little I have got, cannot be made a good use of.

Did two young gentleman from this place, give you a letter of introduction, from Father, last Friday? They were going to the Point, and wished to see the Elephant, when they got there, and for that reason, got the old-gentleman to write you, as I have not seen them since they returned, I did not know, whether they gave it to you or not.

Remember me in the most friendly manner to Rundle as he is an old school mate of mine and thereby associated in the happy days of boyhood; shooting marbles &c but as they are times gone bye, never to return they are hardly worth recounting in letter.

We would be happy to see you down this way, as soon as convenient to yourself, and spend a day or so with us, or any length of time agreeable to you, but hoping this will answer for the first letter, my illness having prevented me writing you before, I must close, hoping you will answer immediately.

I remain Yours &c  
W A Howard [Augustus Howard]

[Envelope]  
O O Howard  
Cadet  
West Point N.Y.  
[Postmark] Peekskill NY AUG 11

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317 8/14/1851 *From:* Otis Howard

*To:* Cousin [Augustus Howard]

OOH-0298

West Point N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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West Point N.Y. Aug 14th 1851

Dear Cousin, [W. Augustus Howard]

I was much pleased to receive your letter, glad to find you able to write and so cheerfully too, and also that you have opened our correspondence, which I myself should have done ere this, had not a sort of indolent languor played the dance with my energy & thoughtfulness at the same time. I am really glad to see you so much of a man, so little desponding. It is easy if a man chooses, to be contented & happy place him in any circumstances you please. If he has little of this world's goods, why, he is content, cheerful and full of hope for the future. If he has much he does not set his whole heart upon it & thus make himself miserable, by fear & refining at every little loss or disappointment. Yes! Cousin, above all, give me the cheerful spirit. The man who can always hold his head up, and bid defiance to this deteriorating influence of ill health or ill luck, exhibits a true & noble spirit. But adieu to lengthy dissertation.

In writing to you I would strive to entertain you if I knew how, but this is a difficult thing - I mean it is a difficult thing for the writer to tell when he strikes a vein that will interest his friend. He can do it after he becomes acquainted with his tastes & peculiarities, unless he be afflicted with that very common malady of all epistolary writers - egotism. But a person may be a little egotistical in this way without being selfish - he may like to talk about himself, because he is more deeply interested in himself & more intimately acquainted with himself.

I have bored many of my friends with the demerit, unhappiness & neglect, that pure jealousy, aided and abetted by malice, has caused me in the Corps of Cadets, but as the subject of so many words has become stale with me, I will not draw upon your sympathies, by depicting difficulties; and of which my yankee ingenuity & persevering spirit is soon to derive much good.

What shall I write? Suppose I attempt to stir up a bad memory and see if it can furnish me with any thing worth the telling from my boyish history. The first objects of which I have any distinct recollection are of course, my father & mother. I remember my father used to teach me pieces, make me step into the middle of the floor, make a bow and declaim them. Oh! How proud I used to feel, and delighted too when some stranger who happened to be at my father's would listen to my boyish eloquence with a smile of approval, & reward me with a dime or a penny. These they used to tell me grandfather Otis like, I would horde up in my little box: little thinking then that I would care, so soon, so little about money.

When about three years old I distinctly remember many particulars of a journey which my father and mother took to Bangor, a city if you remember on the Penobscot, whereas Leeds is on the Kennebec. This is not forgotten, because I came near breaking my head. It was in the winter, and I rode between my father's knees covered up, head and all beneath the buffalo, where the noise of the snow giving constantly & the jingling of the bells, mingling together, & producing a monotonous sound, soon put me to sleep, in which situation miles would glide away seemingly in almost no time, occasionally a jolt would start me, or father would raise my covering and ask if I was cold. We got to a town called New Sharon and stopped at a Public House. Mother & myself were shown into a reception room, where there was a good warm fire, and father, as he was wont, staid out to see if his pretty grey nag, of which he was so fond, was well taken care of. I don't know why, but I turned round, after mother had seated herself by the fire to go out to father. I opened the door to pass as I thought through the dark entry. I very confidently walked ahead. When to my consternation down, down, down I went. I brought up on a stone platform, with life enough left to scream with no ordinary power, thanks to a pair of lungs well developed by constant exercise. A man heard me and came to my relief. I can see him now just as he looked when he stooped over me to pick me up, letting the light flash upon my face, covered with dirt, blood & tears. He carried me back to my mother, where my wounds were bound up, camphor put on my head and my crying hushed. Having so many clothes on, to keep out the cold preserved me this time. This little scene in the tavern is as distinct before my mind as if it happened but yesterday. The tall man, who looked so kind, the two strange ladies, who spoke so soothingly, my mother frightened and weeping, and my father coming in and looking as I thought so sternly upon my mother & me sitting in her lap, for some reason strongly impressed my memory, and thus has become the earliest incident to which I can revert in my not very eventful life.

I remember also various characters that I met with on that journey. I had one day gone away up stairs in the house of a friend of my father's to play with his pretty little girls. In my roguery I attempted to shut one up in the chamber, caught her fingers in the jamb of the door & squeezed them unmercifully. She screamed, then sat down and cried as if her little heart would break. I tried to soothe her & tell her I did not mean to hurt her, but it did no good & I began to cry too. At this juncture a young man who had a very peculiar look made his appearance. The <> One of his legs made an angle of little less than 90 at his knee. He took the little girl in his arms and looked at me very steadily. Then reproved me gently, which reproof not in the least allayed the anguish of spirit that had taken possession of my little heart at the deed I had done.

Dear cousin, this may seem very silly & simple to dwell on these childish scenes, which happen in every house & every day. But I was merely trying to see how far back into my babyhood, memory would conduct me. Then I want you to try your own powers in the same manner. It is a diversion and that is what we want, to keep us from fretting over things that can not be helped.

The next thing in the train of events which I can recall, is that one evening, when I came from school, & couldn't find my mother when I was looking for her, going from room to room and calling the tall personage, called aunt Ann [Eliza's sister, Ann Otis Lee], with her thin face & peaked chin, suddenly stopped my progress and hushed me up with her mouth drawn down looking very solemn. I was only four years old, but I was observant. I thought by her look something dreadful had come to pass. She said if I would go and eat my supper & be a good boy she would show me something very beautiful. I must not make the least noise for my mother was sick. I went to the kitchen, with my little head full of wonderment and eagerly & uneasily awaited the fulfillment of my Aunt's promise - to show me something beautiful. Presently she came in carefully carrying a little bundle of white blankets in her arms. I ran up to her eager to see the precious thing so carefully wrapped up. She opened the blanket when lo! There peeped forth the head of a little baby, "See your brother Otis!" "Will you not be very kind to him & love him!" Of course I would." I was in high glee, I danced for joy. "A brother, where did he come from?" How came I to come home & find a brother. Why, tells me my Aunt. The Doctor has been here while you were gone to school and took him out of his saddle bags". Heaven pardon the innocent fib! So often used to silence curious little heads! For my Aunt is a very pious lady & would not tell a lie for all the world. It was enough I had a brother - no matter how I got him. I always was delighted with him, till he got big enough to quarrel with me, till my father would pet him and tell me that I was not so much of a man as he. When very young Rowland was a delicate boy, but very active & sprightly & I think still my father did love him a bit more than me, but in my mother I never could trace the least show of partiality.

My father seems in the distant view with which my recollection furnishes me to have been very stern - sometimes his brow would relax and a very pleasant winning smile would light up his countenance. But such is a childish judgment. Oh! Augustus, how I wish I now had my own father! I wish I could see him now - how would he look, how would he act to me now that I am grown! Do not misunderstand me cousin, and think that I am dissatisfied with my step-father, for I am not. He has always treated me & mine with much delicacy & kindness. He has preserved what little property I possessed for me with the most scrupulous care, and I always respect him. Yet none can supply the place of one's own father. Be thankful Augustus that yours is spared to you. Be always kind & respectful as I know you must be, to your father; for should you outlive him, this conduct will be a source of real happiness to you, will have a beneficial influence over you. I despise a man, who will suffer himself to treat with indifference or disrespect his father. It discovers a trait of meanness, too degrading for me to look upon with patience.

To resume, much time passed between the birth of my two brothers of which I have but a partial recollection. I had these my childish joys hopes & disappointments. About this time I was delighted with my first pair of boots. I remember what agony a dream caused me - the first night after my father brought them home. I thought some one had been in the night & cut them to pieces. Neither could I be convinced of the contrary till they were brought & put upon the bed beside me. A man came one day to my father's & gave me a little dog. You can hardly imagine with what fervency I loved that animal, and I believe the affection was mutual, for he never would leave my side unless compelled. One day he & I were sauntering about near where the hired man was at work, when Diamond (that was his name) discovered a woodchuck under a large rock in the wall. The dog in his eagerness to get at him, pushed his head under the rock & could not withdraw it. How he did cry. The man said he could not get out, he would not help him. He laughed & hectoring me, the animal would cut his nose off &c &c. Oh what agony possessed me & I cried! I lay down by him, caressing him & patting him. I don't know what I did; but I know that I never have felt such deep heart rending grief as I experienced for those few moments. At last I said I would kill him myself or release him. In desperation I seized him by the legs, & pulled with all my might. He came out whole. Then what a sudden change to joy. This dog was the best companion I ever had. If I should ever be blessed with a wife, she might consider herself blessed with an excellent husband, if she could develop in me half the affection I cherished for that little animal. A bad boy of the neighborhood at last

shot him pretending that he thought he was a skunk; for which act of cruelty & falsity I hate him yet. I was consoled somewhat for my loss by the present of a turkey & some chickens. These I cherished & nourished with unremitting care. But they would die, and then I would grieve. It seems strange to me now that I could have loved animals to such an exclusion of everything else. But so it was. It may be natural. This was before restless ambition took up its abode in my heart, which inevitably drives away all the gentle natural affections, which so beautify the human character.

Time sped on. When I was eight years of age another brother came into the world, smuggled into the household by the same officious Doctor. He became a beautiful boy with a calm mild face. He is yet my favorite. One day about a year & a half after his birth, my brother & myself were sent early one sabbath morning to father's corn field to keep the sheep &c from the corn. It was far from the house & the wind was blowing. When it was time to get ready for Church, father called to us. To make us hear he had to exert all his strength. He halloed very loud indeed. I wanted to stay at home & he let me. About noon, the servant called me from the barn and said my father & mother had come. This was unusual. They had never before come home so early. I ran into the house - saw my father bolstered up in a high-backed chair as pale as a cloth. He held out his hand, and said, my son, I have been spitting blood. He never recovered eight months I think he lingered with us bleeding now & then till his blood was all gone. He died. I don't know how it seemed to me then. I did not feel his death, as I should have, for I did not know the worth of a father then.

I will close now to resume again if you like my method. When I came to College life, perhaps I can please you by rehearsing more manly incidents. Your father's letter of introduction was not given to me. I have been refused a permit to visit you. If your father will write me a good strong request to come stating if its true, that he thinks it would do you good to see me & that you are hardly able to visit the Point. I think by means of such a letter I can get a permit. Ask him to write immediately, if he thinks best, so that I can go next Saturday. But he must take you all & make me his promised visit if possible. Commend me to him & to your brother & sister. With a deep interest in you all & especially in yourself, remember me your new Cousin & Friend.

Otis

P.S. I will tell you about the young lady one of these days. I am glad she pleases you. How does my cousin Elizabeth think of her?

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318 8/15/1851 *From:* F. T. Sargent

*To:* Otis [Howard]

OOH-0299

New York

*Source:* Bowdoin

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New York Aug 15 1851

My dear Otis

I am quite ashamed of myself for not having written you for so long a time, but have no apology to make now, for want of time. I am also very sorry I have not been up to see you before. I made arrangements last week to go today to Newburgh and come down from there with a pretty girl to see you but that's all knocked "into <pi>", as I received a letter from Sarah who is in Boston, and promised her if she came up I would go on, so I am quite happy to fulfil my agreement. I shall go this afternoon, and return some time next week.

I went last Monday afternoon to Baltimore & returned on Wednesday Morning, remaining there one day, and riding in the cars two nights. You may readily perceive that it was no pleasure trip.

I intend to come up to see you before you break up. Don't know that I have written you since I saw your "Lizzie" - was quite well pleased with her and sorry she did not stay longer that I could show her some civilities.

Excuse my haste as I have a deal to do today.

Truly Yrs in haste  
F T Sargent

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319 8/17/1851 *From:* Eliza Gilmore

*To:* O. O. Howard

OOH-0300

Leeds

*Source:* Bowdoin

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Leeds, Aug. the 17 1851

My dear Son,

We have finally received your letter of date July 11th.

After going to Liverpool and back I have dwelt much on your situation, since my return from West Point, and should be glad to be a counciler but am not capable. Don't you think other cadets have had such or similar grievances as yours. Are you the only sufferer. You must remember my son it is no small thing for a young man to take the first rank in his Class where rank is thought more of than any one thing. I have just reread your first letter after you left home, written in Newyork City after seeing Mr Ally. He said you could take a high stand in your class but it would be disputed, and you feel it, very sensibly to have demerits marked against you the second year, after having escaped them the first.

The world is full of vexations. I hope you will not sink in your own estimation. I hope falsehood (if you are accused) will not be your resort, or any other meanness of which you are accused. I am thinking whether you have these taunts thrown in your face from the parties themselves or whether you have tattlers at West Point, if you are shunned you would seek to know the cause, in some way to be sure. I hope your disponding feelings do not exaggerate nor aggravate the matter. You mentioned in your last letter of having 20 or 30 marks of demerit against you. I would like to know in what they consist. You spoke of your artillery drills, How do you like them.

The first word I received from you after leaving you was the 9th of August. You never can know how much I thought of it. You who had been so good about all at once entirely quit writing to his Mother. I could not think a letter would miscarry from West Point here, but the clerks in New York City sent it to England, and it returned here 16th of Aug.

You did not mention in your letter how it happened that Cadet Gordon was injured. I should like to know how it happened, and what was the result.

I have been to Hallowel since my return form West Point, had some talk with your Uncle John. He had seen Mr Gardiner and said Mr G said you stood high in the opinion of the officers and proffessors generally and your Uncle Ward said he was acquainted with the Professors and they spoke highly of your talents and said you were a hard student and spoke highly of you. Envy and malice are always in the world. Let us go where we will. It will come in some shape or other. I have felt it so much at sometimes in my life that it has given me a distaste for society. I have sometimes scanned every motive of my heart, and looked everything over, and concluded the will disposer of everything, permitted it for some wise purpose that was unfathomable to me.

I told your Uncle of your being unpopular in your class. He thought it would make you uncomfortable but thought it a matter of course & repeated some things you told me of Mr Abbot. He thought your course toward him perfectly right. He thought him mean minded to take the course he did.

19th Aug. You will see by my letter the abrupt manner of leaving my writing. I had an unexpected caller, on the sabbath. One who gave me great pleasure. It was no less person than your own dear Lizzie. Her Call almost changed my train of thought. Charlie went to meeting and found her there, and Mr Perley, who had a tremendous head ache, went his uncles and Charley brought Lizzie, and Cousin Laura Howard here to see me. They stopt two hours. I feel my son as though you had many blessings yet in store for you. To be sure you have deprived yourself of many present enjoyment for the sake of, or in hope of, future advancement, but don't augment your perplexities by an unhealthy imagination. I wish you to look to that, my son why I think of that, is because I have many times in my life found myself conjuring up things from appearance which reality would or could not prove, and I think you partake in some respects of your mothers nature.

You spoke in your letter of July 11th of being shuned by your Corps or the most influential of them. Even if it is so, live them down by good conduct. Have you not been rather taciturn, my son, since being at West Point,

being rather inclined to be homesick, have not some shunned you because they thought you did not wish their company. I saw something care worn or anxious in your look all the while I was there. Very likely all close observers noticed the same. I do not wish my son to be vain but to feel in his youth so care worn as to carry it about in his face or the expression of his countenance, as thou he had been guilty of crime, cannot make him happy and casts a gloom on all around him.

I believe my spirit is with you, many a night since I returned from W.P. have I spent in an anxious worrying frame until worn all down with fatigue would get my rest towards morning and nothing in my imagination but Otis! Otis! I have wished in such instances that I could hear the voice of sympathy, but that is not my lot. There are certain rights which belong to every man, and I would hold up my head and enjoy them. I have associated so little with you for several years that your mental enjoyments I seem to know nothing about, but I seem to think you enjoy the Works of nature, you speak of drawing. I seem to think you will not fail entirely. I have looked a good many at those pieces you brought from Monmouth when you were a boy. But perhaps that little talent is wasted for want of cultivation. Don't be over anxious about anything, but try be happy in well doing.

In looking after your letter of 11th July I took up Mr Sawtelle's letter written to your Uncle John after visiting West Point last March. In closing his letter he says at West Point rank all of H. in the highest commendation and praise. Now has the tables entirely turned. Look the subject over well, and try to have a right view of the subject. Anyhow you seemed to have earned a good name.

Abroad your two letters since my return seem to savour so much of melancholy that they almost alarm me. Don't be so distressed.

I am glad Silas Lee has been to see you. How did you spend the Fourth. Don't anything give you pleasure. And G. Lothrop, he could not be called a "lous" caller. One of the justices of New York City. I think your Uncle Ward is kind to come and see you. Now Otis have you any reason to complain. You are as high in rank as you could ask and when sick you had all the care you could ask, and you have kind friends all around. Put a complacent face on matters and cheer up. Only think of Arza Gilmore how much pain and sickness he has to encounter. When we returned to Brooklyn from you, we found Arza having a truss made. He had a small bunch on the side of his bowels near the hip that the doct called a rupture. He wore the truss three weeks and became satisfied it was not a rupture and had it examined by eminent Physicians who then said it was an abscess and talked very discouraging, so much so that he sold out his so much and so long desired Apiary to his partner in the business and returned here with his wife and child. They have been here two weeks. His abscess broke soon after his arrival here. It discharged as far as we could judge nearly two quarts. All the doctors expected he would be laid aside when it discharged but contrary from that he has never laid in bed one day and now rides out and will soon go to housekeeping.

Charlie is well and cheerful, so is Dellie, and has done well at school this summer. Johnny is as happy as ever. His father has not been to see him yet. I understand Sarah Lee has gone to Boston to get the filing, getting married. I shall be obliged to stop for want of time and room.

From your affectionate Mother  
Eliza Gilmore

(Don't neglect writing)

O. O. Howard

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320 8/18/1851    *From:* Otis [O. O. Howard]    *To:* Charlie [C. H. Howard]

OOH-0301

West Point N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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West Point N.Y. Aug. 18. 1851

Dear Charlie,

Mother told me how much you liked a letter and especially from your brother. I cannot understand why my letters have so much interest for you, unless it be that I am your brother, and that your love for me myself invests my homely thoughts with more worth than really belongs to them. After all, affection & interest in the writer is the best passport to the reader's attention. These feelings make the commonest letter more than agreeable. I wanted you to come and see me very much, when father & mother did, but I understood your exacting jealous little heart; and knew that you would go away unhappy, if I did not pay you sufficient attention. Some time while I am here you shall come and take all the pleasure you can in seeing me and West Point.

I have told you of your cousin Augustus. I promised him & his father that I would correspond with him, in order if possible to divert his mind from the fatal effects of his lamentable disease if it was in my power. To undertake the task would afford me much pleasure; but as my own internal sources seldom furnish me with anything either humorous or diverting I was at a loss how to begin, how to touch upon themes that would suit his turn of mind, or become sufficiently ample, to give any kind of character or sufficiency to my side of the correspondence. But I love to do good when I can and especially to one, whose bright hopes have been nipped in the bud, whose future life, so full of expected happiness to us who enjoy health & vigor, has been rendered a mere blank. I resolved at last to make a trial of my poor memory, to see if in kindness it would not furnish me with the many little incidents in my own history from my earliest recollections, up to the present day, where I find myself an aged man of almost twenty one, calling upon him, if he can do so without any painful exertion to favor me with a similar sketch of his boyhood.

This method I have begun and find very interesting to myself; for it calls to my mind continually many almost forgotten little acts of kindness shown me first by my own father & mother then afterwards by my brothers. It will serve to bind me by means of past remembrances more nearly to you all than my every day, selfish existence is calculated to do. I more frequently see you in your little frock with a bright, shiny belt encircling your little waist, just as you looked when we left the old House, for a new home. I oftener think of you thus - a bright lovely little boy, than as the great one you have grown to be.

You must take good care of your health, Charlie, but don't for the world be spleeny - that is, be careful not to think yourself sick when in reality you only feel a little languid & lazy. You can scarcely imagine how much one may add to his health by cultivating a cheerful, independent sort of a spirit. Do you know the secret of cheerfulness & sprightliness? Unless a person is afflicted with some corroding, deep-settled sorrow, it is easy to be cheerful. The method I would propose would be - cease to do everything merely to gratify yourself. If you are away from home among strangers or cold-hearted, non-sympathizing acquaintances, your own rights must be rigidly maintained or you will be trampled upon as weak & spiritless; but in the family circle, where in the main you receive nothing but kindly attention mingled with the best-intended reproofs, there is the sphere to make yourself happy by affectionately extending your constant aid & sympathy to your father, mother & brothers. Accustom yourself to do little acts of kindness. You will soon become forgetful of self, a pleasant feeling will soon be uppermost in your breast. You will become cheerful & I doubt not your own cheerful spirit will become contagious. Try it, Charlie. Your home will be dearer to you one of these days for the experiment.

Perhaps you think this officious lecturing. Rowland says his elder brother is apt to write sermons. Well then you must forget the unpleasant words, but remember the intention is based on an affectionate interest in you my brother.

My health is good. We shall go out of camp in less than two weeks, and return to our very interesting studies. I look forward to the coming year, with both hope & fear. I require a great deal more strength of character than I have got to carry me safely & easily through the difficulties I have to meet here, much less sagacity than I wish I had that I might turn every circumstance to good account. Yet one thing is sure, I never despair, nor would I if the clouds hung around me ten times as dark as they ever have done before. But I will try not to burden you with trials, which are particularly calculated to make a man of me. Opposition is a harsh but an efficient tutor.

Pity & flattery make a fool of a man. The former makes me scowl & sometimes cringe; while enmity makes the cup bitter; but the latter make me feel decidedly silly.

Give my love to all - tell Rowland, when he gets home if he is not already there, to write me; no matter if he scolds me for forgetting to send his letter after I had written it. Has a register been sent home from West Point? Tell mother I have resolved to go into barracks with Mr Browne. In many respects he & I are uncongenial spirits. But he is double hearted and has maintained me and my cause when almost all have <accosted> me. Langdon, my present tent mate & I agree first rate, but I am a little suspicious of his habits of study. Browne I know from experience will study with unremitting assiduity, and his example will keep me from flogging. Tell me how Dellie looks, if he improves; if you & he live pleasantly & happily together. I shall be surprised if he does not make a smart strong minded man one of these days; for he has got the materials within him. Remember me again to all the family and write me as soon as you can.

From Your affectionate brother  
Otis

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321 8/23/1851 *From:* O. O. Howard

*To:* Mother [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-0302

West Point N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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West Point New York Aug 23d 1851

Dear Mother

I was surprised to learn from the letter which I received from you this morning that my letter was over a month in reaching you. You have already suffered too much solicitude to take away your peace of mind. If you reflect a little you will remember that it is contrary to my nature to be gloomy cast down or desponding for any length of time. Be assured that I have now a more cheerful countenance this summer than ever before, neither has it been all outside show. As I had previously considered myself generally beloved. The sudden burst of feeling against me took me unexpectedly and wholly unprepared. There was no open insult, or ridicule, for such I could face down, but my classmates were many of them made officers, some of them insinuating mischief making and very popular at the same time. The first class officers took sides against me without giving me a hearing. I was forbidden to see Lothrop. Capt Alden went away, unjust reports were given me and would not come off. All this would make a stronger man than me a little blue. In such a mood I wrote to you. By degrees I set myself right, Capt Alden returned and took my side. I stopped these insidious reports. I became very military, guarded my movements on all occasions.

One time Mr Turnbull, acting sergeant-major, reported me twice in succession for not keeping eyes to the front at guard mounting. The second time I suspected what he was about from the manner in which he ordered me into the rear-rank: & steadily kept my eye fixed on an object in front of me during the whole of guard mounting, which lasted upwards of half an hour. This was painful & you can imagine how exasperated I was to hear myself reported for not keeping my eyes to the front. I positively denied the report & carried my denial to Lieut Jones then acting Commandant. He was highly incensed at my language, said that my excuse was not only highly insulting to him as acting Commandant but also to the reporting officer. When Capt Alden returned he treated me very differently, sent for me, told me I did perfectly right & called Mr Turnbull. He said Mr T must appear before a Court of Inquiry & swear that he gave me my report justly & not from malice. I have heard no more about it since, and I have not been since reported.

These young men began to find that they were losing ground and if they continued, in the end would defeat their own object. The object evidently has been to throw me from the head of the class this next year. This they have already accomplished, unless I do much better this coming year than last. This remains to be seen. The cards are gradually turning in my favor. When this present first class graduates, my footing will be better still. I have questioned the expediency of remaining here time & again and have come to the decided conclusion that nothing which can happen here will tempt me to leave.

Now forget any apparent gloom, cease to be filled with anxiety, for my situation and prospects with three Corps of Cadets like this my open enemies, would be far preferable to those of the majority of young men - much brighter than mine might have been, had I never seen West Point. This worrying & fretting when things do not go right is what I despise in theory, and if I do not always promptly resist & banish it in practice, be assured it is but a momentary humor & will not last long. When you were here I had several things to plague me and might not seem so careless & cheerful as usual; but you would find if you were with me every day that there is much levity left yet in my composition. It will not be a very important loss if I do not stand ahead next year. I will warrant you I will not be far from that place. I shall do my best. If I fail, why I can take it as coolly as I have learned to take the refusal of a permit to go to see my Uncle. Between the first five there is so little disparity in talent in industry & previous acquirements that the least thing, the turn of a straw almost will throw one of us ahead. We must take our chance & be content with the result.

We shall go into barracks in one week.

I did not know that Lizzie was gone to Livermore. It seems that she made a very short visit with you, probably she came again before returning.

It is Saturday afternoon. I have been to see if I could see Warren before he started for home. I find he has gone. Excuse me to him if he says anything about my apparent neglect. I would rather associate with him than

with any Cadet, but I now find it next to impossible. He will soon, I hope, rank me. Then he can pay me back in my own coin. He can give you a pretty good account of West Point. Tell him I saw Sergeant Holloway who told me that he had gone on furlough but did not say how long he had been gone. I went down to his barracks but did not stay long enough to make many inquiries for fear, as we say "of being hived" off limits.

Give my love to all. I wrote to Charles a few days ago. You probably have got the letter before this. I cannot understand why my letter went to England, for I certainly directed it to the right place. I think this is the fourth letter I have written you since you were here. That will be a letter once a fortnight. I would write oftener, but I fear my letters will not be so well filled if I do. I really depended on seeing Warren before he went, but I was afraid to invite him into Camp for reasons which I will explain to him one of these days. I wished to send many a word by him. You can send any thing you wish by him & I can get it. Perhaps he will be on his return before you get this.

Remember me to all my friends at Leeds. In ten months from this date I hope to be with you.

It is really wronging yourself to feel so much anxiety on my account. It is painful to me to know that you do. Tell everybody, tell yourself that I am doing well. Write me as often as you can.

From your ever affectionate Son  
O. O. Howard

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322 8/24/1851 *From:* Rowland [B.  
Howard]

*To:* Cadet Oliver O Howard

OOH-0303

Leeds

West Point  
N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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Leeds Aug 24th 1851

Dear Brother

Again I begin a letter to you dated at home sitting in our old parlor, the boys playing and Arza humming in the kitchen the same as ever. I came home yesterday about 11 ocl. Rodelphus performed the wonderful exploit of driving to Greene to meet me. Since that memorable occasion he has been decidedly on his <Taps>.

I suppose you feel some interest to know how I prospered at my examination at Brunswick. I went down on Thursday and visited at Teachers Institute at Topsham on the afternoon of that day and staid with Kendall that night, whose conduct struck me as being rather officious, but however I was much obliged to him for his kind, gratuitous tender of a lodging. Our Examination began at 8 ocl next morning and lasted till about four in the afternoon. I passed a favorable examination on all the studies in which I presented myself. I took a dead on Jugurtha and of course have it to make up this vacation.

It is with pleasure that I announce to you the presentation according to time honored custom of the College Laws and Bond, which I with accustomed carelessness lost on my way home. I was rather lonesome at B on account of my not seeing you there. I have not been there before since you left and it seemed odd not to have a room to run to in which I could do as I pleased so long as I pleased its owners. But, however, I find many students kind and gentlemanly, and probably friends will not be wanting on a closer acquaintance. But there is a certain patronizing peculiarity and <overwearing> care for my welfare which some manifest, especially two or three in the present Freshman Class, contemptible alike for diminutive minds and dwarfish bodies, that seems to me a mere looker on, like portraying in a miserably insipid manner the peculiar beauties of the  $\chi\psi$  institution. But such things of course will be only for my mirth, so contemptible are these figured sprouts of College life.

I leave Yarmouth with a high degree of friendship and respect for Mr Jewett, your old friend. He has uniformly treated me like a gentleman that he is and I shall always remember him with a great deal of pleasure. He will stay at Y another year. The Trustees have advanced his pay to \$600.00. At present he has gone to Bangor on business. Robinson is a very good teacher and understands Greek and Latin, one way, pretty well, but there is not the slightest degree of original thought about him or if there is it never finds vent in his expressions. The same illustration which he borrowed and used in 1850, suits his turn very well in 51 and probably will some years hence and the poor man imagines that it is equally aplicable and witty when told to the same persons for the fortieth time, that it was on the first relation. Such is 'Old Robb', as we called him. Much good may he do, especially to himself in the course of his honest, upright life.

Nearly all of the Proffs recognized me as your brother, and when that fact was clear to Goodwin I thought it made him amazing closer for he did'nt take me up but once in Cicero, while the others were "screwed" most unmercifully and Proof Bordy screwed his wry face into a smile and served as a dictionary while I was reading Sallust and even the Prex, when he handed me those honored Laws, said you sir are a brother of the Mr Howard at West Point. Come early in the term and get you a good room and Chum.

Our folks are all well. The cause of Charles sickness is not removed although he calls himself well. I hope for him while I fear. I have now over four weeks vacation which I mean to employ (after reading Jugurtha of course) to the best of my ability, that is if Father and Providence are willing.

Now Otis I am going to put the real business in the postscript and ask what in the devil is the matter with you. I have plunged about in the dark regions of doubt and conjecture long enough, now misled by this and now by that paragraph in your letters. I have conjectured among other things as a cause of your unhappiness. Jealousy. Envy. Homesickness. Distant Love. Present hate. Pride. Poverty. Wealth. and the Old Nic. knows what else. But still I am more and more in the dark what should cause you that constant mental pain and anguish which your letters seem to imply. You have constantly mentioned this as a fact but never have intimated a cause sufficiently great for such results. To be sure, for me to know what the matter is, may do you personally no good. but I assure you that it is something more than idle curiosity in me that prompts me to ask

you as a brother what is the real cause of your unhappiness in your present situation. Everybody I see envies your place, your rank, and your advantages and you alone not only think lightly of them but declare yourself entirely disgusted with your situation and prospects. Is it the hatred, prompted by envy of those around you that has filled you with a seeming abhorrence to almost the very atmosphere of West Point and has caused you to look upon your place, your classmates and teachers like so many plague spots on the human body entirely revolting to your thoughts and feelings?

Aug 26th

Since writing the above I have been reading some of mothers letters and the mystery of your feelings is partly explained. One little passage struck me as peculiarly pertinent. I refer to that "ideal" of social happiness compared with the "sore" reality of life at West Point. I am sorry you have that anchor on a lee shore. But still I hope it will not materially change your course on the ocean of life. I did not know till now that you got so far discouraged as to write to father to resign your warrant. Neither do I think such a course consistent with your nature, if I am acquainted with it at all. You know that when I told you not to go on a piece of ice, you was sure to go. Judging from that little fact I supposed your spirit would rise with difficulties till they were overcome and as I told Father yesterday, difficulties never alone can change your resolution, but imaginary pleasures might. But my thoughts on such things can change nothing and in no manner effect the result. So I will leave my speculations here.

Mother says she has rec a "register" from whom she does not know. Things at home look as usual - the garden with its little modest wicket fence and gay arrangements of bright flowers looks really charming. I think some of taking the little boys with me to Lewiston today to see a Managerie. Dellie says he is going to write you and if his letter does not look better than this I shall not let him send it. Would You? Write soon.

Rowland

[Envelope]

[Postmark] LEWISTON ME AUG 26

Cadet Oliver O Howard

West Point

N.Y.