

I had nothing in particular to write to you except to remind you of the uncommon long time since we heard from you. R. wrote me he had written you a long letter, and now should be looking out for one from you, said he should write to Lizzie soon, your father has not been in here once to hurry me about my letter, but I expect him every minute for I hear him on his feet now, I think there is a letter on the way for me now if you are in good health, or nothing else has befallen you I shall draw to a close with much affection. Eliza Gilmore.

Oliver. J. Howard.

Leeds, Dec. 1852

My dear Son,

It is now two weeks since we received a letter from West Point; I was truly disappointed, last evening when the mail came in, but recollecting, that I mentioned (R's immediate departure for Topham) in Charles letter, I thought he was the favored one, and consoled myself that nothing had befallen you, R. has written ^{home} two letters since he went to Topham, which are quite satisfactory, Mrs L. was here a few days ago said she had received letters from Warren since his return to West Point, but ^{he} had not then seen you, I am glad to learn from your letter, that your intellectual enjoyments have increased, and that you feel more like one moving in his ^{own} proper sphere than formerly, yesterday ~~for~~ ^{not} I went to Wayne to visit Abba, found him quite comfortable though ^{not} able to get out, he can rise onto his feet with the help of two canes, and then walk half bent to the table or bed, an abress on each side that discharges constantly, and one limb drawn half ^{way} up, a good appetite and ^{the} ^{his} tones of stomach good, has grown quite fleshy. seems in good spirits, cheerful, and social, I met with Mr. Sampson in a store, said his wife was about home but in poor health, I told him I would call, but your father made different arrangements about returning and I was obliged to go the rounds with him in consequence did not see Abba. I have been out to church to day, Mr B gave us two very good sermons the morning service was pointing out what our heavenly father requires of us as Christians, and the afternoon service was requiring repentance and the final consequence of not repenting, very few people attended meeting so little is the privilege of the Sabbath regarded in this place, we have good sleighing, with but little snow, our little grey horse carried us swiftly over the ground to church, and then home again, I saw Laura and John, and wife and boy, they all looked nice ly.

your father is very much engaged filling out his papers, preparing his
yearly report for the railroad company, our rail road is completed
to Livermore falls, in spite of all the hindrances heretofore endured
a survey is now going forward from Livermore falls to Farmington
to extend the road to that place, we have sad news from Sacramento City,
almost the whole city in ashes, my interest, ⁱⁿ Holdison, and other sargent
^{has been} all alive, and Aaron and Sarah must have had a fearful time of it
but not so much so as if they were there in the fire O! what
an amount of suffering must have been in that
flaming city, we have had the Altos Californian a paper which
gave a particular account of the fire and the relief they
received for ten days, I have ^{not} visited Hallows for a long while
but believe they are all in pretty good health, William made quite
a long visit at John Chis and Maria has been stopping in Portland
a long while the post bell and winter I understand C. H. Strick
is going out to Orleans this winter, Frederick is put to a farm
in Gloucester for two years, Melvin Howard is confined
to his room will probably never go out again, we have a good
school this winter boys are very much engaged in their studies
I am very much pleased, every day, with Charlie's developments
of character, he seems to have an abiding principle he is a great
benefit to Rodolphus, he truly loves him and likes to please
him, although he is a selfish little fellow he is willing, I should
do well, the teacher has offered a prize to the one of the class
who shall stand at the head the most nights, Dellie says
he wants Charlie to have the prize if he can't, he studies evenings
to get his lessons, I am seated near the stove by a table in the front
room and Charlie reading near me, Dellie came in a little while
but found this room a little too quiet for his nature, and went out

Roland A. has been confined to the house for a number of days
with one of his peevish turns began to go out this morning
our daily rounds are much the same as usual, some days a plenty of
Irish coming in to receive their pay out of the treasury,
which makes some variety, I was told at Wayne that J. Moulton
is married to Lucy Cross W. Cross daughter of North Leeds,
Elder Cross has three daughters less now than last year at home
I saw Elverson Cross yesterday who is depot master and post master at
North Leeds, one might suppose ~~they~~ those were quite profitable
offices, but I think in this case, the honor is greater than the profit
I saw him open his mail, he had perhaps one doz. of letters and
as many newspapers I don't know how much freight he has to
mark, everything seem to be tending towards the railroad ^{then} Elverson
has built a new stone on the line of the railroad, Orman King
has shut up his store, and gone to Elverson, and taken his wife and
child with him, in consequence of being detected in selling
rum unlawfully he passed through a course of the Maine
liquor law and paid his fine, which so enraged him
he could not be peaceable with any one, John Keen is now
being passed through the ordeal I understand the ~~chance~~ ^{supreme} me
court have found him guilty this last week probably will
be obliged to lay in jail a while how many wretched family
he has caused, I feel no regret ^{at} having justice overtake him
in the form of the Maine liquor law, our Ladies T. B.
meet ~~every~~ ^{not} every two weeks but so full as in warm weather
your father says he shall go to see his Mother this Winter
if he does I intend to go as far as Portland, with him and stop with
sister Martha while he is gone, and call on Mrs Waite and Lissie
this is my third page, filled, I fear it will hardly pay
the way for reading, although I determine to write

South Leeds, Dec 5th (57)

Dear brother

My mother was going to write to you I thought I would write to you. Charlie has come home from Portland. He came home last Friday morning. I am well, all but my legs. Last Thursday morning, I fell down and cut a place in my knee a bout ten more inches. But it has got most well ~~at~~ now; so I think I can go to school tomorrow; for it ~~has~~ ^{now} commences tomorrow. Mr. Sancelo Peterill is going to teach our school. The cars are running over our new Road father frays over them he says that Mr. Morse (the Engine) says that this Engine is the best running one he ever run. Father says the cars are the handiwork in the State of Maine. I shall go to school tomorrow and study ^{and} read in the Lewis Thout Reader, Mitchell's Geography, Smith's ~~Arithmetic~~ ^{Arithmetic} Wells Grammar. It rains today and there is no melting to say winter does not come upon us yet we have not had more than an inch of snow yet. All the snow is rained. It is ~~set~~ ^{we have} warmer here that ~~it~~ ^{we have} rains in the place of snow. Mr. Otis was here last Sunday. Thursday all day. Mother received a letter from you last night. Harley received one to last Tuesday last night. There was a blind Girls Concert. They were two ladies by the name of

Boy and Alson. Every body could
go in for 12 1/2 cts R. H. went, but no
body from here went but him, for it ruined
herd as it could. Nancy is rich to day.
George Blodhop has moved up to Lawrence
Hills and is going to ~~be~~ ^{keep} ~~store~~
- ~~ern~~ ^{It} has been sold enough to freeze the ice so
that I could ~~sate~~ ^{sate} on it. I have wrote all I can
think of now.

And so good by Otis

from your affectionate

Brother, Rodolphus

To Otis

Dear Brother

Monday eve 20m of eight.

Since I finished writing, a night &
a day have passed by in the tide of time. And as
I had time to spare tonight I thought I would fin-
ish Dells piece of paper, for my other is to finish my
sheet. This morning Dells ^{and} went to school to our new
school house & teacher. We liked them both very
much. I think Mr. Pettengill will be a very plea-
sant teacher. I asked him today if he would be
- as we recite in Latin the sater he would hear me
every night after the close up the school. I am
also intending to study Philosophy, Arithmetick, Geo-
- metry. The men folks all being gone to night I
& Dells were obliged to do all of the chores. I
think now I will go and find my Latin book
and look over the first lesson. R. Brother, Charles

Wednesday, Evening. My dear boys, at eleven O'clock I have
begun to fill up the Phosher sheet I fear it will be rather
lunatic fillings, no lines for a guide, I will tell you the
proceedings of this day with my family, it being the 1st
Monday in December a stockholders meeting of the
Androscoggin rail road company was holden at
Livermore falls today, your father R. G. R. B. L.
left here early for train and have but just
now returned and got well settled in bed your
father not returned, R. H. L. and R. H. C. have given
their first days school for the winter. You see
none remain at home but Mother, I believe I will
not attempt to tell you in what manner my day
has been spent, after so many leaving in the morning
and R. B. H. to leave for Topsham between 5 and 6, in
the morning to review his studies preparatory to
returning to Brunswick or Bowdoin College, you can
not conceive of my anxiety for his health but I
fear he will be sick if he sits day after day in a warm
room without much exercise, he is quite fleshy
but that is not always a sure indication of firm
health I find, nothing new or worthy of note with
us, our Ladies Temperance Band still continues
to meet and is quite interesting yet, I was chosen
a delegate to attend the general convention at
Newiston, in Nov, where I met a Hall full of
fine looking women both old and young, forty
different towns were represented the day I was
there, who knows how much good so much exertion
on the part of our sex may effect, I am heartily
glad you are in such good health and doing so well
I hope ere long to write you a letter that will appear
rather more respectable, with poor pens, poor paper
and fatigued hands, your Mother bids you a
good night in love Eliza Gilmore.
A. A. Howard.

P.S. I have just returned from a four o'clock ride to the depot with Rowland

South Leeds Dec. 5. 1852.
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My Dear Brother

My last note to you; you remember, was written in
Portland. I had a very pleasant visit in Portland, stopped
there untill Friday morning at 7 o'clock, Lizzie wished
me to stay still longer, but I could not because our school
began Monday. And I certainly do not wish to lose any
of my schooling this winter. for unluckily I have lost it this
past fall. But I will not complain but will be sure and
improve what time I do have allowed me to attend school.
Yes I think it quite a misfortune my losing my time this
fall. It seems to me more so now just as I am commencing
to study Latin, and also all studies with more earnestness
and perseverance; for I am old enough now to appreciate
the value of an education. And also know that now while
I am yet young is the best time to acquire an. I speak of
an education as though it could be finished but I do not
think that I shall ever or at least very soon finish mine.
But what I learn or add to my knowledge, now will never
have to be learned ^{again}. But I wish to tell you about my
visit in Portland. I enjoyed myself much. I think Lizzie
took much pains to entertain me, for which I am very than-
kful to her. She went out with me as often as she had
time to show me the wonders of Portland. She went over
the ferry to Cape Elizabeth with me to see the fort, perhaps wish-
ing to give me a little better idea of West Point but that
hardly could be, for I think as many times as you have pic-
tured your situation to me, my ideas of it cannot much be

improved. While in Portland I ~~stayed~~ part of the time with Aunt Martha, I was with her most of the nights for Uncle Henry was away from home and Aunt was afraid to stay alone, Uncle Henry is settling up his business for he thinks of going a tour to Philadelphia & New Orleans soon. Aunt Martha had not concluded whether to keep house or not while he is gone. She went to Hallowell last Wednesday on a visit & to bring home her little girl Lizzie who has been there about two weeks. — I was pleased to hear while in Portland that I had a letter in rest for me from Otis at home of four pages. And since I arrived mother has handed it to me to read. And last night we see another one. — I can speak of the weather being delightfully pleasant at West Point this fall! I can say the same of Maine for it is now the 3rd of Dec and no snow to be seen nor signs of it, even last night and this forenoon we have had a rain! It seems much more like Spring than winter. You wished me to forgive your blots but I did not see many to forgive but what I do see I willingly forgive hoping that you will grant me the same favor for I see that I have made a large blot by some water which dropped from my sand box. We certainly have ^{had} no blighting this fall nor have we had any thing near it. Eliza Lathrops death was very sudden to us all here as well as you for we had had no warning. You can have no idea of Mrs Lathrops grief she was almost crazed by the news. Speaking of Mrs Lathrops reminds me of what a time Lizzie and I had in getting to the cars that morning that Warren went through Portland, for the cars started some time before

we got to the Depot but we got in after they started, a man helped Lizzie on. She was quite anxious to see Warren we rode up to the Boston depot and back safely but had a hard time getting on. — I have had a short pause in my writing. I paused to eat my dinner & while eating Mr Berry came in, then after dinner we had a sing. Mr Berry praised my playing on the Aeolian organ. I have got so that I can play 6 or 8 times pretty well. I thought as you see when I read of Mr Websters death, ^{and} of his belief to the last. I thought that it should ^{would} influence those who had not so goodly sound a mind & judgment as he. — I am very glad Otis to hear you say that ^{your} health is good I am doing well in my studies & have no enemies" yes Otis I am very glad that you are enjoying yourself. But I hope you do not enjoy your situation in the army well enough to remain there more than your four years. — You see I suppose by the date that today is sabbath day. There was no meeting today and if there had been it is not so this morning that our folks would not have gone, but it has cleared off this afternoon. It is so dark that I cannot write any more now. And I must go and do my Chorals. Good night Otis. And write soon.

O. Howard

From your affec brother
Charles

Popsham Dec 12th 1852

Dear Brother

Although I think that I do not have you a letter yet I am not sure that you would direct me to this place unless informed of my whereabouts. I came here a week ago tomorrow and room with and write to a College Classmate of yours... Mr Francis Adams. He appears like a wise & scholar and a good fellow. We found at Mrs. Groves having a fine room and good table. I think I shall study pretty well this winter and enjoy myself too, if my health remains good. I directed a letter of Charles to you the day that I came away and so I suppose that you have as late news from home as I can give you. On Saturday I went over to the College, to see old friends and find what kind of a Class I was about to enter, and remained there until this morning. The Students have at this time almost all left it being very near the close of the Term. Saturday and Sunday evenings I heard C. C. Fowler of N. Y. the great Pneumatologist, lecture. The first time on Pneumatology the second on Temperance. It was the most finished & impressive lecture I ever heard. It took up and treated the evil and remedy in a masterly manner, arguing the question by Pneumatology & Physiology.

he fortified his position by facts and science
and finally proved the Maine Law as the greatest
preventive of drunkenness yet found, and
consequently the greatest preventive of crime.
I have not enjoyed myself of an evening
so well for a long time. I went in to hear
Mr Adams preach yesterday afternoon. They
have had those wretched hard seats in the
Student's gallery, Cuthbert, and they are now
quite comfortable so much so that I don't
know but that I shall turn orthodox if I
return to college. I have been reading
Prof Hitchcock's (who you will remember takes
Prof Stokes place) eulogy on Webster delivered
before the Students. I would send you a
copy if I could obtain one. I had just
previously read Theodore Parker and I was
rather disappointed in the Prof. When
Pres Woods comes out I will endeavor
to send you one. It is spoken of very
highly. Greek and Latin come rather
hard to me after so long a vacation
but I am getting a little used to them
again. I am reviewing in both words,
Bowdoin seems to be flourishing. The three
lower classes having over 40 members in
each. I have a very pleasant almost
elegant boarding place and if I have good
health I see no reason why I should not

enjoy myself and make good improvement
I think I will write to Lizzie in a few
days for as I am among strangers I
am doubly grateful for the letters of friends.
I believe it is pretty well settled that I
never do me letters unless I ~~do~~ write once
twice or three times before hand. Lizzie though
has always answered me. But however
I suppose that most of you think that
I don't labor much on my letters and I
might as well be writing as not, and
it is about so. I expect by and by to
fall in — with some body that I shall
not wish to see my scribbling hand and
awkward paragraphs. Some one whose very
little opinions I shall deem — but there!
you know all about it, so it's no use for
me to tell what queer possibilities are in
the unknown future. Two of the wisest &
fellowes in the present senior class have
become pious. Southgate & Crosby. I knew
them both before their change but do not
know, nor cannot understand their ~~views~~
views. There has never been anything that has
so shaken and thrown down all my doubts
on these matters as the deathbed of Webster.
Not that I regarded or ever did regard Webster
as a true hearted Christian as we have
been taught to understand the term. But

he forty
and for
presentation
consequence
I have
so well
Mr. A
have a
shaken
quite
know
return
Prof. H.
Prof. S.
before
copy of
previous
rather
Pres. W.
to send
highly
hard to
that I
again.
Bowdoin
lower C.
each, &
elegant
health &

in his last hours when he had to ~~confront~~
and quietly finished all his earthly ~~business~~
there is something startling in the entire ~~calm~~
~~quiescence~~ of that great mind in the ~~face~~
those simple but eternal truths. If there ~~is~~
one thing more than another that makes an
man an infidel it is pride of intellect. ~~While~~
He is so surprised at the extent of human ~~capabilities~~
capabilities, he concludes that they are ~~omitted~~
What man, had the intellect, and who so proud
of it as Daniel Webster. Yet what was all the ~~pride~~
greatness when the shadow of Eternity ~~crept~~
upon him. He knew how weak, how feeble
weak even he was, those were the words of
tottering child. Thy rod—Thy staff— yes the ~~rod~~
What I want. I feel, and I cannot if ~~you~~
would, avoid it. that if the strength of thy
was such weakness. that if he needed thy
and the Staff of God. when he approached ~~at~~
dark valley and shadow, who shall do ~~with~~
~~it~~. I cannot reason, I am too small, too weak
but Webster could reason, and he, when
the hour of trial came could find but ~~one~~
source of power, and there he placed his ~~trust~~
I have said these facts have made a ~~deep~~
impression upon me, they and the thoughts ~~which~~
have suggested have swept away all ~~other~~
in regard to ~~human~~ necessities—

My mind is convinced of this last, and
for the total ~~want~~^{absence} of desire & feeling
in the matter. I am persuaded I should be
a Christian. We all look upon great men with
reverence. We have watched them in our Country
and seldom do they say one word or write one
sentence in behalf of Bible Truth. I mean great
political men, the members of our Congress, the
Judges of our Courts, the writers of our
literature, all keep silence on these matters
how like Willis belie their own thoughts by
their own acts. I will come back and say
perhaps I don't know as you feel as I do,
I have looked at all these and thought they
would open through life and many of them
are without religion and they should die.
The advocacy of religion is left mostly with
those who make it their sole profession, not
of leaving their hopes of a future world
to them it, but also their livelihood for the present
and I have regarded these as slight evidence
compared with the great mass of my Countrymen
who when I see them one after another surrendering
like Wesmen on the threshold of the tomb.
I am convinced that man must surrender
somewhere. Does the early or the late man make
his best terms with his God? It is only a question
of time - I don't know now as I ought to send
this but if I do, don't misjudge me. There are
all

my own secret thoughts & pressed without
arrangement or care. I don't wish to appear
wise. I ~~but~~^{only} desire to make a confession
of my brother as I would of one who is
and trustworthily. I have written so far with
stopping. I hope you can read it, and I hope
you will forgive its faults. Write me soon
at Lepsheim. I've got lots of things to say
to you but I will not write them now,
but perhaps I may change my mind before
I write again and not write them at all.
Sub good By, tonight and God bless you
as ever your

aff brother

Rowland



PAID

Place
(Chy)
(Cash forward)

Col John Gilmore
Ed John South Lead
Maine

Dec 13/62
Mrs. J. B. B.

West Point N.Y. Dec 13th, 62

My dear mother,

Since I have a few moments leisure after returning from Chemistry I will begin a letter to you, in order that I may at least get it into the Post Office in time for you to get it Saturday. I feel a little dull to day as I usually do Mondays, for I get up at four o'clock. This practice may do very well for those who can retire early, but to get to sleep about half past ten & be up at four is rather too much of a good thing to suit my taste. I think every Monday afternoon, as soon as I begin to feel stupid & dull; Now you will learn to get your lesson Saturday so that you can have a good sleep next time till sunrise, but Saturday always manages to pass over without my Monday's lesson being got. (Tuesday Dec. 14.) It is now after tea, I have put my quilt to my window to conceal my light, so that I am safe from being reported. Yesterday, when I was writing, a young man came into my room, who had to be entertained & he staid so long that all my leisure time was consumed. I was on Guard this evening besides having a very hard & long lesson for the morrow which I made out to get over once just before the taps' beat. After I got to bed I began to think how anxious you would feel if you did not get a letter Saturday. So although I feel tired & sleepy I will try to write you a few lines now to let you know I am well & will write you a long

letter next Saturday or Sunday. I shall have to study pretty closely between this & January, or I will lose my standing in Mathematics (Mechanics) this January. You will observe I have been second for two months. Mr Ringer 1st, Lee 2^d. I would have been 1st last month but for one bad recitation. If I do well at the January Examination I shall expect to retain my place still. I went to see Masson, Saturday while the battalion was at supper & staid with him about an hour. He brought me into his little room. a bowl of coffee with some bread & meat, so that I made a grand supper. He told me he saw you all, said Charlie looked a little pale, when he met him on the cars with Lizzie at Portland.

I received yours, Charlie's & Delli's letter last Friday.

Ask Charlie why he says he hopes I do not like well enough at West Point to remain in the Army after I graduate from this place? Ask him what he thinks I am to do. What I am good for - if I ought to study three or four years more for another profession, with poverty staring me in the face. I have not made up my mind yet on the subject. I think, however, I shall remain in the Army at least a year. I'm rather of the Corps that I will be likely to go in. The duties will be very light. I shall have good pay & about half of each day to read whatever I may wish & study law. Give my love to all. I will not write more tonight for I am too tired. From your affectionate son

W. C. Howard

I presume Howland is at Topeka already - is he not. Mr Adams was a very good hearted good principled man. I liked him very much. He maybe a little too quiet for Howland. Mr Lou -

W. C. Howard

Peterkill 19 Dec 52

My dear Nephew

Can you make
us an annual visit the coming
Christmas, come down on Friday
Evening & return on Sunday.
Myself and your Cousin would
be highly gratified to have you
with us on that occasion,
separated as you are from
family & friends with the exception
of my family - I flatter myself
your commanding Officer Major
Smith (I think it is) will grant
you the privilege of this annual
visit to your Affectionate Uncle
& Cousin

Yours sincerely
Ward B. Howard

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Bellevue, N.Y.

My dear Mother
I am much obliged to you for
the letter of the 11th inst. and
the money which you have
sent me. I have just received
it and am very glad to hear
from you. I am well and
hope this letter will find you
the same. I am very
affectionately yours
Your affectionate son
Wm. B. Brown

I continue to get along very well in my studies. I got in Mechanics a maximum every day last week. 9.9.3. 9.9.3. 18 - This you would think was doing pretty well. You perceive too by my monthly standing that I am getting on a little better than last year. In Chemistry not so well as I expected. I study it very hard but I cannot remember it as it has to be got here. I never was good at storing up a list of separate, independent facts; such is Berley's fort. But after all I do well in it. I never can make it seem that I do well, unless I do the best - which is an impossibility in everything & at all times. Rowland wrote me that Melvin Howard was worse. If you see any of Uncle Barna's family - remember me affectionately to them & especially to Melvin. I fear I have seen him for the last time. I saw Warren not long since - He was well. His Corps ~~are~~ is engaged in study now, as usual in the Winter. How does Charlie get on with his studies under your teacher? Where does the latter board? Remember me to Uncle Ensign's family. And tell Aunt Aurelia the Uncle Ward tells me always to send his love in my letters to her. Rowland said he wished I would write to Thomas - I would like to, but I cannot. I can not do justice to my present correspondents which are few indeed, since with the exception of Lippie they are confined to my own family - You - Charlie & Rowland. Once in a great while Releg & I exchange letters. Good night - Give my love to Charlie & Delie. They must improve their time this winter. My love to Father Rowland & all. We are having a rain - storm indeed - no snow yet, but ~~plenty~~ plenty of mud. God bless you all. -
Yours affectionate Son
O. Howard.

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O. Howard

West Point N. Y. Dec. 20th 1852.

My dear Mother,

When I last wrote you my letter was of necessity so short, that I hesitated about sending it till I could fill it up better, but I thought you might feel some unnecessary anxiety if I delayed writing so long. This evening my lesson being unusually short I have concluded to devote my spare time to you. I mailed a letter to Rowland this morning, in answer to one I received from him a few days ago. He wrote me a very good letter indeed, seemed well pleased with his situation at Mrs Frost's, as well as with his instructor Mr Adams. I am glad that he has got so good a place and am in hopes he will now persevere in his studies to advantage. I received a letter from Uncle Ward to day giving me a pressing invitation to spend my Christmas with him & his daughter. So many have applied for leave to visit relatives who may be living anywhere in this vicinity and have been refused that I think it highly improbable if I succeed in getting a leave. I dislike to put so kind a man as Col Lee usually is to the necessity of refusing me a favor. He says leaves of absence interfere with our studies now. He will not have objection to granting us favors during Camp. I am looking for a letter from yourself. If you do not write me oftener I fear you will get so out of the habit of writing that by & by you will not write at all. I believe Charlie is the only one who speaks plainly his opinion upon my remaining in the Army after I graduate

I would like your opinion too. Does it not seem rather too bad to have spent all this time in hard study & not reap any immediate benefit from it? Would it not be better to take up with the pay of the Army Officer, with his duties which are generally in no way very arduous, till from rest I had recovered sufficient energy to prosecute my studies further & fit myself for some other profession? Is it wise or right for me to throw myself on the world in comparative poverty with all the uncertainties of life on my shoulders, when in my profession, in the profession I am studying for, there is certainty of a livelihood? Ask Charlie these practical questions - let him think of them and answer them as he thinks. Had I the head of Daniel Webster undoubtedly a struggle with poverty might tend to develop my dormant energies, might call into action hidden talents and give power & character to an intellect filled with a heterogeneous mass of Shakespearian material. But however much vanity may make me swell with importance, after all I am only Old Howard; whom it becomes never to trust to chance for his fortune while he is within the haven of security. Still I have not resolved to remain in the Army yet. In all probability I will not many years - for many reasons. Some civil profession is more in accordance with my taste. I want a home - a permanent home. Peremptory Orders, sudden & unexpected changes of station, any little foreign difficulty, which leads the Government to put itself in shape to resist danger. These & many other matters of a like nature are not very consistent with the quiet of a domestic life that I covet. Again I would like to have it my power to go to war or not as I thought it my duty; of I thought the cause was a just one. Our homes - our liberties - our institutions under which ours has become so happy & prosperous a nation, if I saw

them in danger, it would be my duty in common with that of every son of America to be ready & willing to defend them. The only real importance ones life has is its usefulness or its capacity for usefulness. And if like the Martyrs of old or like our fathers that we so much reverence, we see that the sacrifice or the exposure of our lives is the only alternative by which those principles can be maintained that involve the interests of millions, then it becomes not if we would be noble & generous to make the sacrifice. It is always a hard doctrine to maintain with mothers & brothers, or with those whose affections may be attached to you - but it is the doctrine of common sense. But on the contrary if I believed from my heart a war to be unjust, I would have cheerfully to ask the blessing of my God to rest upon me in its prosecution. The Army Officer, even here in America, is not his own master, the citizen is or may be. Hence on this account the position of the latter is preferable. What may be my lot hereafter - I know not - life itself may not be spared me. Now it is my duty to do my duty - and if I keep on thus all will be well. We had the proceedings of a General Court Martial published this evening. Four or five young men were suspended for one year. Three dismissed whose sentences were afterwards remitted. One of those suspended was my old room-mate Henry M. Lazelle. His offence was merely speaking to a reporting officer (a cadet) about a report & asking him if he meant to insult him, telling him if he thought he did he would strike him. Had I been the Cadet Officer I would have told him to strike away if he wished. But I would not have given him such a report. I once gave Lazelle a pretty good whipping in that big room where father found me ^(a year ago) last summer - for telling me I was a liar &c. So I do not think he would be likely to say much to me about any report that I might give.