
434 2/11/1853 *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

To: Mother [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-0408

West Point N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. Feb. 11 53

My dear mother,

I received your kind letter yesterday and the money you sent me. Your letter reminded me of my neglect. I wrote three letters at the close of last week, one to Rowland, one to Lizzie and one to Perley, and intended to write still another to you, but time was wanting. I am obliged to go to the dialectic society sat. night so that I have to get permission to have a light after taps to get my lesson for Monday. I almost wish I did not belong to the society, then I would have Saturday evening to myself.

I am not sick and have not been. I was and am now occasionally troubled with indigestion or a species of it. I throw up my breakfast now & then, but it does not amount to much. It is because I eat too much for the amount of exercise that I take. Soon the spring drills will commence and then I will be obliged to take plenty of exercise.

When you read in the report from Washington the prohibition with regard to letting the Cadets have money, you must regard that as a general order. It was found that many Cadets went off limits, bought 'contraband articles' as these things which are forbidden by the regulations of the Academy are called and smuggled them into barracks. Now to prevent this the law is that cadets shall have no money. Money of course does the Cadet no injury unless he spends it for an improper purpose, as for drink &c.

This law is not stringently enforced here. Lee <G.> the son of the Superintendent also has money. They say his father never gives him any, but his mother always does when he wants any. If the authorities found a letter filled with money they would make the Cadet who received it deposit the money in the treasury or send it back to his parents, at his option. If he deposits it, it is put to his credit, and he can have it at graduation or when he goes on a leave. No letters are ever opened, and none suspected to contain money unless they have in them some heavy coin.

My money was not taken by an inspecting officer, for Inspecting Officers never use anything but their eyes. It was taken by a thief and that thief was probably a Cadet. I now keep my money in my watch pocket and since my pocket goes with me, my money will not be very likely to be taken. The grand difficulty that the loser meets with is that he cannot have a search made by search-warrant or otherwise, since the law does not recognize him as a holder of personal property. I went to our confectionary and left the name & mark of one of my bills, but it did no good. Lost money has been recovered that way & the offender discovered and sent off. I told Capt Alden about losing my money before he left & he said he would do anything he could to assist me in discovering the thief.

I told you it was hard work to study. This every student will find to be sometimes the case, but he must not let it make any difference with him, but continue to drive ahead. It is like every other labor. There are times when a man works and takes pleasure in his tasks. But there are very many times when this is not the case. Occasionally I feel a little down & perhaps a little discouraged but not oftener than I did in College or even at home where I had without realizing it, all the comforts that heart could wish or affection bestow. So think no more of what I wrote. When I am sick enough to make any account of it, I will see that you know immediately for I have found by experience this open course the best to pursue - for heretofore when I attempted to conceal from you my sickness I failed of my object & gave you more anxiety than was necessary.

I am almost delighted at the prospect of father's visiting me for I want to see his face very much. I shall expect some little token from each of you. Do not send me any big presents for they would be worth to me no more than little ones that cost nothing.

I heard tonight that a Bill had passed the House for increasing the course here to five years instead of four, commencing with our class. I think this arrangement will not begin with our Class, however. I do not care about staying here another year after the four are up under my present circumstances though I have no doubt it would be highly beneficial.

It is now nearly nine o'clock. I have been to the Dialectic society, made a speech from there to the Concert given to Cadets by the Band (this being every Saturday evening during winter when we have no dress parades)

I received a letter from Rowland a short time ago, but you have received one since. Give my love to Charlie & Dellie. I am glad they are good boys and know they will make good men. Give my love to Roland A. Tell him if he is gloomy that he has no right to be so and no need. Tell him it is an easy thing for a man to pester himself and eke out a heap of misery from this life, but it is as easy to enjoy oneself, and this is done simply by cultivating a cheerful spirit. When I say this to him he will look in the fire and say to himself How easy it is to say "cultivate a happy & cheerful spirit." Yet how impossible for one situated as I am to put such a maxim in practice. He may be married one of these days, and after a few months he will wonder why his wife does not make him a happy man. Ah! she will, if he tries to make her happy. Here then is the secret. In order to be cheerful, one must cultivate generosity, be generous in little things, generous to all those who are around him. It is difficult. But begin by doing a kind act to somebody, without letting him know your intention, without wishing for a return. Try the experiment again and again. It won't be long before kind acts & kind thoughts & kind feelings will become a habit. Roland would like me if I should come home, always treat him kindly, share every pleasure of mine with him, always be polite & gentlemanly & considerate. Will he not try such a course for himself. What is the use of sowing the seed and reaping the fruit of gloom. It is beneath a noble soul to do so. Cheer up man, you are as well off as & better off than your brother Otis, if you will admit me as such. And I would not be gloomy & thus be my own worst enemy. I would rather face the cannon. Give my love to father. Remember me to all at the Center: Laura, Uncle, Aunt Martha, John, Hellen, Ollie, Aunt Aurelia, Thomas &c. And remember that I am

Your very affectionate son
Otis

435 2/20/1853 *From:* R Howard G[ilmore] *To:* Mr O O H[oward]

OOH-0410

South Leeds Me

West Point
N Y Y

Source: Bowdoin

South Leeds Me Feb 20th /53

Dear brother

Mother received your letter last night. I thought that I would write to because you always like to have a little from your brother. I like to have a letter from you as you like to have from me. Silas Bates is here and a good many others. Rufus <Huit> is dead. He died with the Iryciphulous. Nancy been over to Monmouth to pay. Aldin & Julia Gilbert are here. George B. has come back here to work. We have had some cake eaten. We received a letter from R.B.H. last night. The grey horse has cut her foot so that we have to use the red horse we call both a great horses so we call one red & grey horses. I have been to meeting to day. R.A. had 3 valentines. Nancy 1. R.B. 1. He is comeing home this week and I guess he will stay a week. write soon.

From your affectionate brother

R Howard G

Mr O O H
West Point
N Y Y

436 2/20/1853 *From:* CH Howard

To: Cadet Oliver Otis Howard

OOH-0411

Leeds

Source: Bowdoin

Leeds Feb 20th 1853

Dear brother

Some time has glided away since I last addressed a letter to you. We were very glad last eve to once more rec a letter from Otis. And to hear that he is enjoying good health. We also had a letter from Rowland last night. He wrote that he should come home the last of this week & should not stop long. The term commences again the 7th of March. We had not received a letter from you for some time until last evening. Which caused us to have some apprehensions for your health. And it seems by your letter that you are not entirely well. I am sorry for health I think is a very great blessing, but you say that you are not sick. I think realy Otis that it will be too bad for you to be obliged to remain at West Point longer than four years.

I must tell you Otis about our excursion. Well, there was a committee apointed who were to make arrangements with the Railroad Co & with George Lothrop for the dinner. They agreed for the use of the cars last Wednesday to go the whole length of the road from Leeds Junction to Livermore Falls, for which they paid 30 dollars. There were 60 couples who bought tickets, so that it made the price but 50 cts a couple, or 25 cts apiece. It was pleasant in the morning, but it snowed before noon. Roland A Nancy Manwell & I went from our house. We with Capt Turner's young people went to Mr Brewster's store to take the cars. There were a few other who went there to take them, but not a great number.

When we arrived at Mr Fosters Depot, we found that there were a great many there to join us, and also at North Leeds. We arrived at Livermore Falls about half-past eleven o'clock. It then snowed pretty hard, but it is but a short distance from the depot to George's, so we did not go far in the storm. At George's the gentlemen passed into the Barroom & the Ladies up the stairway into the chambers to "take of their things". In about an hour dinner was served. We all dined at one time & in one hall. It was in Mr Treat's house which is but a few steps from George's. Our dinner was a good one consisted of roast turkey &c. After dinner about 3 o'clock we all attended a concert given by the Misses Macomber Twin Sisters. Perhaps you have heard of them, and you may have heard them sing. I was delighted with the music. There was a man who attended them and also another young lady who played the guitar. One of the Misses Macomber played the violin, the other a bass viol. One of the tunes which they played was "Yankee Doodle". Another was "Home of my boyhood" I can play that on my Aeolean. It is the piece of music that Lizzie bought of Mr Carpenter & gave me. But to go on with my description. After the concert, we went again to the depot. It was now about dark, the cars were lighted & we had a very pleasant ride down to the junction & back again to Mr Brewster's. Mr Davie was with us so we sung tunes which we knew from the book. But the worst of our ride was coming home after we left the cars. The snow had got to be about 12 inches deep but we arrived safely at home a little after eight o'clock in the evening. I think that the most of them enjoyed themselves much, but riding in the cars made some of them quite sick, among whom was Mrs Barrows, but she soon recovered from it after leaving the cars.

Good night.

It is now most nine o'clock sabbath evening. I have been to church at the center to day heard two sermons from Mr Barrows. I saw Uncle Ensign's folks. They are all well. He & wife have been down to Aunt Fannie's on a visit.

20 min after 5 o'clock Monday morning

Otis, I again resume my letter. Things are passing the same as they usualy do Monday mornings and perhaps very nearly as they used when you were here. George Bates is "pounding the clothes", Lucia washing them. That old pounder is thumping the same as I have heard it about every morning (when I have been at home) since I can remember. Our mother is preparing breakfast. Father sits at the table writing, and looking over his papers. The Co is preparing to make a report, when it is printed I will send you one. Since our school finished I have studied three Latin Lessons each weekday except three. I wished if possible to enter the class which I left last fall when I was taken sick. I don't know though as I can, for the term commences the fourth of March at Readfield & 7th at Topsham. I think that I shall go to Kents Hill this spring. It is not quite sunrise yet. It will be a

pleasant day I think. Father is going to Barkers Mills. Mother is going to Warren's visiting & I wish to send this by them to mail so I must close & harness the Horse.

Write soon. From you Affectionate brother
CH Howard

Cadet Oliver Otis Howard

437 2/20/1853 *From:* Rowland [Howard] *To:* Cadet O O Howard

OOH-0412 Topsham

Source: Bowdoin

Topsham Feb 20th 1853

Dear Brother

Your last was duly received and I could realize the truth of the old Proverb, which says "better late than never." I should like to see your hard exercise first rate. I should think it would be a kind of recreation for you. To me, that and similar exercises would be all that could make West Point 'bearable'. They must relieve the tedium of Study especially to one who is so fond of physical exertion as you are.

I don't know but that I wrote you before that I received a good long interesting letter from Lizzie in answer to one that I wrote her. I have since replied to it and am in hopes to have another before a great while. I really hope that Mr Perley & "Annie" will coalesce I should think it 'a first rate match' in a worldly and all other points of view. As far as I am conversant with the facts.

Yesterday I went over to the College and met many old friends and had a good time talking over "old times." I don't know much about the Class that I am going to enter except that it is very large numbering at <meuyr> nearly fifty. Mr Samuel S Pike is The new Tutor. Perhaps you were acquainted with him. He was in the Class of '47. The Freshmen think very highly of him. In fact, I believe that a new broom always is thought to sweep clean even if it does not. It was thought that they never could replace Mr Sewall. But now they say Mr Pike is worth three of him.

I notice in the papers that Miss Larua A Cram of Wayne memory, is married. She set hers at <cach> <pined> that Mr Dyer, which I was afraid she never would do. He will probably now reform, and devote himself to his wife as a good Husband should.

Leonard Maxim is in Brunswick taking medical Lectures. He was in to see me this morning. I believe he likes it very well. What kind of an M.D. do you suppose he will make?

I have been to meeting all day today and heard Mr Gillpatrick, who is certainly one of the dullest preachers without any redeeming qualities such as Mr Barrows has. Mr G possesses neither talent, education nor yet much good sound common sense. He is loud and boysterous in his delivery with out producing effect, which I consider the only excuse of that loud declamatory style which the Methodists practice. I shall probably be examined on Tuesday and then I shall spend a few days at home, from which I have been away about eleven weeks. I hear from Leeds that R.R. Excursions are all the rage there. I suppose the people are trying to make the Androscoggin Rail Road 'pay'. Rather a hard undertaking I should say.

I shall not stay at home more than a week at most, so you can direct your next letter here as usual. Mr Adams has gone home as he usually does on Saturdays. He says give my respects to Howard and tell him that "Georgiana" is not married. Mr Adams is much respected in Topsham and is liked very well as a Teacher. I am in hopes that his income from his School will increase somewhat the coming Term. If it does not he will have to abandon it. He is reading law and intends to make a lawyer. I tell him he hasn't crass enough for that profession.

The Maine Law seems to be triumphant all round. The triumph in sermons is the greater that it has seen since its passage in Maine. They can in truth then call it the Peoples Law, and they cannot as they do here twit its friends of legislating against the popular will, and of forcing an obnoxious Law upon the 'People'. The Friends of the Law have recently held a Spirited Convention in Augusta and I believe the general opinion is that the Law will be made more stringent and easier of execution at this Session of the Legislature. If Maine does not do a little more, She will lose her place as the standard bearer of this Reform. Neal Dow and others of our leading Temperance men have been chosen to act in conjunction with the Legilative Committee to remodel the Law and put it on a firmer constitutional basis at the same time they will put on What is called the "Vermont grip" which is imprisonment of a drunken man, that he may testify where he obtained his liquor. I expect the next thing will be thumb screws after the manner of the Old Inquisition.

I believe with Gov Crosby, that the People of this State demand a Law sufficiently stringent to close every Grog Shop in the land, and such is the law I want to see upon our Statute book. We have come within three votes of having a Whig U.S. Senator but I fear those three cannot be obtained. I should really like to see Pitt Fessenden in the US Senate from Old Maine. She has been disgraced by such a man as Bradbury long enough.

When I am examined I will make some enquires of the Prex in regard to your Diploma. Perhaps I may hear something from it, but I should like to know in the first place what Perley <did> about it.

Write soon and Remember me as
Your aff. Brother
Rowland

Cadet O O Howard