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513 11/1/1853 *From:* J. W. Sill

*To:* [O O] Howard

OOH-0474

Watervliet Arsenal

*Source:* Bowdoin

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Watervliet Arsenal

Nov 1853 [Day not written - Assume 1st]

Dear Howard

I would have acknowledged the receipt of your letter at an earlier period were it not that my numerous correspondents had imposed already so many serious obligations on my shoulders as to make it necessary to leave your own call unanswered though I assure you far from untended. I wish that you might find time amid your multifarious duties to give me frequent information of your affairs, interesting, as on all the incidents, of the to me now past but not forgotten Cadet Life. You are gradually shortening the long road which you have trodden with such varying success and intermixed & wavering steps, I congratulate you my dear fellow that you have advanced thus far so well, not complimenting you so much as rejoicing that you have been able with so many competitors to stand erect, with the consciousness, <Stamo Sem stihil humani a me ahinumi puto>. With that feeling uppermost, not puffed up by success unreasonably, not cast down by unexpected reverses, your career will be enabling to yourself & useful, & glorious, Sinn it too much upon an unwound consciousness of desert & ability which too frequently is the brother of conceit & vanity. But go forward trusting on the assistance of God & hoping for a right end to a right pursuit and a right purpose.

Every day convinces me anew that time well put in if I may use such an expression is not without a corresponding useful effect afterwards. And you will feel amply rewarded for your present labors when you get to a resting place when you can make a retrospect while at the same time your life can dimly take in the outline of the path which you will tread in company with your coming years. Let us then in the words of the great poet from your native state be up and doing with a heart for any fate, still achieving still pursuing learn to labor and to wait. I rejoice that your mind is in a serious mood with reference to the <Community> of Religion. My dear Sir I do hope you will not be led at any time either now or in your coming days of worldly praise & prosperity to forget the tenderness of that to which links you to the passing, fleeting things of time and sense. Sudden death might find you unprepared.

But suppose that bugbear as the religious term that solemn visitation of the Duty to be far away from your scenes, the stuff of life may show you going more slowly perhaps, but not less surely to the bitter end of the unbeliever. Such I trust may be neither your or my lot, but still it becomes us to tread manly when an erring step may thrust us down a frightful precipice.

I wish that you might be able to join me next year in this delightful situation. I wonder unceasingly that the ordnance should not be the first choice of those men who stand any chance of getting into it. I would not exchange my present station with any other in the Country. True it is the best ordnance station and I can not expect to remain here always. While I am here, I expect to be as contented and happy as ever hereafter, probably more so.

The superior officers are men quite to my taste, and as for society & books you are set down in the Garden of the <Stespinds>. You only have to put out your hands to pluck your choicest fruits. You will not be surprised then to hear that I am almost as much of a student as at West Point. In fact the real necessity of being & doing something never impressed me so strongly as now. The Army is not a very fertile field for greatness or extended usefulness, but there are so many occupations thrown open to an enterprising and thorough student that a West Pointer need not fear that he shall ever want bread. I have heard officers more than once express their regret that they had not when fresh from the Academy step into a more lucrative & useful profession.

Every one must of course be governed by their own feelings & interests. The polar star of a man's existence should be fixed & defined and then if he is a skillful navigator there need be no anxiety as to the <outcoming> he will sail into the wished for heaven with his sails set and his colours floating at the mast head.

You are aware I presume that during the coming week the Steamer San Francisco is to sail away freighted with the 3rd Reg. for California. If it had been an English Regiment and greatly distinguished as the English pretend all of their Regiments to be, I might have prepared gallant or invincible to qualify the designation. But our 3rd is

neither renowned for gallantry or invincibility. They fight bravely when the time comes and the officers are duly <>, but the gallant 3rd, would be an anomalous toast at a mess dinner. Our friend Smith sails for the rewards of the West with a heavy purse I imagine enclosing six months pay, but poor fellow I fear he has a counterpoise in a heavy heart. Smith is a singular fellow, the creation of a singular combination of circumstances. I admire him at one time and censure him at another. I always feel a stormy sympathy in his behalf on account of his misfortunes. I pity him for his failings. But who has not them? If you feel conscious of none, I must say that you enjoy a greater satisfaction than myself. Let me then gently draw a veil over what it avails not to expose.

There is a subject for reflections & sympathy. The ways of the duty are not our ways we may be sure. Here we anchor our hopes for one moment while the zephyrs play over a sunny & untroubled sea. But the night may find us struggling on the breakers, with a sky shrouding every star in midnight blackness. Poor Smith nurtured not in care but harassed with biting poverty, loving and not beloved, yearning for the gentle attractions of quiet, peaceful living, and yet thrown among the rough & rude company of the Indians & the wild mountaineer, to live where noting & <> hold nightly converse with the small hours of morning and the hymn of praise & thanksgiving gives place to the prolonged nails of bacchanals. Surely he is of adamantine firmness who yields not to the only call which allows him into <forgetful ends> of deep seated sorrow. Surely God must keep a heart pure and fervently pious that yields not to despair and subtly down it to stem misanthropy. Life is brief and eternity holds out a cheering prospect for the true Christian. "The alarm, the struggle, the relief. Then sleep <> side by side". I have been peculiarly favored and it will become me to be thankful. I hope that if many years are before me, they will not attest a lack of improvement or at least a disire to avail myself of their passing opportunities. You see I have given you quite a long talk though much has been about my own important self. You must make one allowance for all exaggeration.

Now for business. I left some sheets at W.P. which I stand greatly in need of. I do not remember whether I gave them away or not. If anyone has them and says that I gave them to him let him by all means keep them. I am under the impression that I put them with my books in Closson's trunk. Please oblige me by making inquiry. Don't post a notice in No 10. That would be going a little too far.

Give my regards to Clossen and Chap. I will answer their letters at the earliest opportunity.

Your friend  
J W Sill

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512 11/1/1853 *From:* Jno N Jewett

*To:* Friend [O O] Howard

OOH-0473

Galena Illinois

*Source:* Bowdoin

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Galena Illinois  
Nov. 1st 1853

Friend Howard

Your favor of the 24th ult. was duly received & it gives me much pleasure to acknowledge it. You are indeed becoming quite prompt, very respectably so & I suppose that as your term of confinement is approaching its conclusion, your duties are less irksome & perhaps less arduous, & therefore leave you in better humor with yourself & "all the rest of man-kind," especially your friends.

Well I wish you much joy during this, your last Term at West Point, for I suppose you have entered upon your last term by this time. I well remember the Sensations & hopes with which I commenced my last quarter of College Life. It began to seem like breathing free & clear again, but then I had the dingy walls of a school Room for a year (finally lengthened into two) before my vision & this was not very pleasant prospect as you can testify.

You now go forth with business all assigned you, if you choose to accept of it & very good pay at that \$65 per month. Well I should have accepted that with pleasure tho' about the Service I am still in doubt. Well I have got through my school days, my days of teaching & the incipient stages of professional Life. I am in the eyes of the community an independant man having an individual responsibility, & a reputation to establish & sustain. I shall endeavor to put myself through according to the principles which, I judge, should govern a man of honest purpose & ambition.

The result of my efforts I shall leave for future development.

Townsend is here, doing just exactly for all the world as he did when in College. He reads when & what he pleases, goes & comes when & how he pleases, is a gentleman & a gallant to any extent he pleases, but as for business & business qualifications he has very little inclination that way, I believe. I have come to the deliberate conclusion that he can & will be of very little Service to me & have already made other & better arrangements for the future. I have formed a partnership with a Lawyer of good practice & reputation, a shrewd business man & practitioner. The firm name will be Weigley & Jewett, the arrangements are all made, the Articles drawn, & nothing remains but to sign them. This I think will be for my advantage. We shall have business connections in New York & elsewhere, & expect to win a large & profitable establishment of course. Tho' not proposing to get rich, at once. I shall probably realize enough to pay expenses so long as I remain in single blessedness of which I have a good prospect for the present.

You complain of not hearing from Perley. I have not received a letter from him since soon after commencement. I am surprised at his not writing you. I intend to visit Maine next May or June, part of the way at least on business. I shall be most happy to see you if possible. I hope your fears in relation to Miss W are groundless. My respects to her & others.

Truly yours  
Jno. N. Jewett

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514 11/6/1853 *From:* [Rowland Howard] *To:* Brother [O O Howard]

OOH-0475

Bowd. Coll.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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Bowd. Coll. Nov. 6. 1853

Dear Brother

I am solicitous to hear from you frequently, for a cause which I am very sorry for. The more I reflect on your affairs, the more I am mystified. How she could ask me to let her accompany me to New York, how she could visit our relations with me, and thus confirm the opinion that she belonged to our family, I can't understand. It is so foreign to the modesty & delicacy which I supposed characterized her. When I think of all these things, I cannot make myself believe your suspicions true. Since you have so deeply interested me in this matter. Do write me, on any new development. If these things are so. I should have liked to send your last letter to Percy, that he might see the disposition of the man whom he has injured.

That letter lies quietly in my draw, but I shall never forget it. Lizzie has written me a letter, recently in her usual pleasant vein, and this morning I thought I would answer it but when I had got one sentence down, such a feeling came over me as caused me to throw the paper aside, in disgust, but perhaps I shall feel better by & by and finish it.

Charley has written me a letter somewhat similar, I presume to yours, giving me an account of his conversion and his present convictions of duty with many warm hopes that I should pursue the same course. Charles manifests feelings in this matter honorable to his head and heart. I anticipate for him a cheerful and happy life. From Mother I have not heard for three weeks. I fear she is sick. Write me if you have heard from home lately.

I am having a very pleasant Term in College, and if it was not for the frequent "screws" I should enjoy myself well enough, but those I am getting used to as the eels get used to being skinned. My themes cause me as much solicitude as anything. I have written two and am now on the third. It is new work for me and I do not succeed so well as I could wish. Thanksgiving comes a week from next Thursday but I do not think I shall go home. It is rather a road about & expensive road and I am trying to retrench a little this term on account of my New York excursion.

This morning when I awoke I found it snowing merrily. I should think there was three inches fell, but it is fast disappearing before the Sun. It will make the street muddy and uncomfortable. I am my own monitor and therefore do not have to attend meeting today as the walking is bad and I am

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515 11/14/1853 *From:* Margaret Hetzel

*To:* My dear Mr [OO] Howard

OOH-1735

Washington

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[321]

Washington

Nov 14th [1862, (written in pencil) –see note.]

My dear Mr Howard,

The kind interest which you expressed for my boy while I was at W. Point encourages me to appeal to you now in his behalf. I am unusually anxious about him, having just received the report for October giving his number of demerits – as 94!! Why he has been so grossly <cached> I cannot imagine – not for what offences or negligences this great number have been received. But I am in despair about him. For certainly when he had already so many at the beginning of October, if he could not go through the month without adding 22, there is little hope that he will pass through two months, with no more than six. Is there no hope that some of these dreadful demerit may be taken off? And will you not give him some assistance or advice that may be useful to him? I do not know what, or how, but beg that you will see him and do what you can for him.

He has some absurd notions on the subject of demerit which I wish you could disabuse him of - and he fancies that 12 of his will not count because he received them before the 22nd of June. Now that is impossible because he did not enter until the 20th. I commend him to your kindness, and will consider it a great favor if you will do what you can for him, & write me a line giving your opinion of his prospects - if they are not already passed all hope.

With best wishes for yourself,  
I am - truly & sincerely yours  
Margaret Hetzel

[Note. S. Sheldon Hetzel entered West Point in July 1, 1853. Thus Otis, in his senior year, would have overlapped with him in his freshman year. In the June 1854 Official Register of Officers and Cadets USMA, he had acquired 99 demerits, in the June 1855 Register he had acquired 90 demerits, and in the June 1856 Register he had acquired 200 and had been suspended since April 5, 1856. He never graduated from West Point. His mother must have been asking for Otis' help prior to his suspension. Since Otis graduated in June 1854 and did not return until 1857, this letter was probably written before Otis graduated, presumably on Nov. 14, 1853.]

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516 11/26/1853 *From:* Epes Sargent

*To:* Friend Otis [Howard]

OOH-0476

New York

*Source:* Bowdoin

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New York Nov 26, 1853

Friend Otis

I feel almost ashamed and in fact I really do that I haven't answered your letter before. I was sick some ten days after your brother left, and when he returned from W.P. I understood him you would not want the cigars. When I got about after my second sickness I found so much to do that I was obliged to neglect my friends until now as I am little more at leisure. I will send the <nadfull> now with pleasure if you want them.

Frank and Addison returned ten days since. Both are well now. A. has been sick.

Let me hear from you soon. I will try & be more interesting next time.

Yours Truly  
Epes Sargent